

# Mind the Gap

**A Research Project Supporting Black, Asian and  
Minority Ethnic Communities into Apprenticeships**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The aim of this research was to explore the underrepresentation of Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups on Apprenticeships in Ipswich; in the wider context of skills, enterprise and employability. In particular, in terms of identifying how BAME owned Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) access relevant skills and business development opportunities and what barriers there are for BAME groups.

Eleven BAME led businesses, employing between 1 and 250 staff were interviewed between February and April 2014; informal dialogue took place with a further 8 BAME led businesses and 5 non-BAME led organisations providing Apprenticeship opportunities. Two focus groups took place with young BAME individuals and detailed interviews with 3 BAME apprentices.

## **Research Findings:**

### **Skills**

The data suggests that there is a lack of dialogue between training providers and BAME organisations, both in terms of Apprenticeships, the wider offer available and the development of relevant provision. These business owners expressed an unease in engaging with other organisations and government programmes / initiatives; the language used and the perception of support is available has resulted in a lack of uptake of support.

### **Enterprise**

Apprenticeships appear to not always fit business need. Alternative skills and business training is often sourced; this allows for relevant, innovative and bespoke provision, tailored to employer need.

There is a clear lack of engagement and uptake of business support and skills provision among the BAME-led SME's interviewed in Ipswich. Language and cultural barriers, have led owners to question the relevance of the support offered (if at all), particularly where they have successfully run businesses in another Country. This means some businesses are being established without consideration of a realistic business model.

### **Employability**

BAME-led communities often use their own family and community support networks to build their business; this includes training and employing relatives.

Apprenticeships are not a priority for micro and smaller organisations, due to the support needed, cost involved and the time spent running the business.

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## Section 1: Introduction

Realise Futures Learning and Development, MENTA (the Suffolk Enterprise Agency) and Unity in Diversity, successfully secured funding from the Skills Funding Agency Equality and Diversity Innovation Fund 2013/14, to undertake a research project exploring the underrepresentation of Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups on Apprenticeships; by analysing current provision and researching the barriers to participation in Ipswich, for learners and employers.

According to national statistics only 9% of adult learners on Apprenticeships are from BAME groups, compared with 19% in adult learning as a whole, demonstrating equality issues in terms of participation<sup>1</sup>. This imbalance is mirrored in Ipswich, Suffolk, where participation is low compared to the resident BAME population.

Statistics show that the East of England has a high proportion of BAME-led organisations. However, details at a more local level and information on and/or demonstrable engagement, with these organisations in terms of business support and skills provision is not readily available; this includes the offer of Apprenticeships.

Therefore, key research questions that have led this project are:

- What are the barriers to BAME learners getting on to Apprenticeships in Ipswich?
- What learning opportunities are needed to support progression of BAME learners into Apprenticeships?
- What are the needs of BAME led SME's to support business development and encourage provision of Apprenticeship opportunities?

This research was designed to explore the perception of business owners and individuals regarding growth, skills and support; the relevance of Apprenticeships, role modelling, social responsibility and the range of other expectations that may be assumed when working with BAME communities.

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<sup>1</sup> FE Data Library: Local Authority Tables *FE and Skills Learner Participation Breakdown by Local Authority District: 2011 to 2012* [online] Available at <<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-local-authority-tables>> [accessed 5 March 2014]

## Section 2: Context and Background

The largest urban area in the County of Suffolk, Ipswich is a thriving and growing town. According to the last census (2011), the population increased from approximately 117,150 to 133,400; this accounted for 27.4% of the total increase of Suffolk’s population.

Ipswich is a more ethnically diverse town than ever before. The BAME population of Ipswich saw a significant increase between the 2001 and 2011 census with a 4.5% rise from 6.6% to 11.1%, this was much higher than Suffolk as a whole, which saw a 1% increase. Recent estimates suggest this has now risen to 17.1%<sup>2</sup>.

Alongside the rise in the BAME population of Ipswich, the town has seen an increase in the number of BAME-led businesses opening. Norwich Road is one of the main arterial routes into Ipswich and is an area that has experienced a visible demographic change over the last fifteen years with an influx of diverse ethnic groups into the area; this includes the establishment of a rich and diverse number of BAME-led businesses, from hairdressers, to restaurants and retail outlets. Despite this concentration, any business/support networks have been difficult to maintain and the area has remained on the periphery of mainstream initiatives.

### 2.1 Skills

According to national statistics only 9% of adult learners on Apprenticeships are from BAME groups, compared with 19% in adult learning as a whole<sup>3</sup>, demonstrating equality issues in terms of participation (see table 1.1). This figure is reflected in Ipswich with 8% of adult learners on Apprenticeships from BAME groups, compared with 16% in adult learning as a whole (see Table 1.2).

Table 1.1 Ethnicity of Adult Learners Nationally

Type of Provision	Total no. of Learners	Ethnicity of Learners - NATIONAL DATA			
		Black, Asian or Minority	White	Not Known/Not Provided	% BAME
Apprenticeships	806,500	76,900	722,800	6,800	9.5%
ALL FE and Skills	4,216,600	796,700	3,342,000	77,800	19%

Source: (FE Data Library)

<sup>2</sup> Pinter, T (2013) *Ipswich Borough Council State of Ipswich Executive Report* [online] Available at <[https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/sites/www.ipswich.gov.uk/files/State%20of%20Ipswich%20Report\\_0.pdf](https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/sites/www.ipswich.gov.uk/files/State%20of%20Ipswich%20Report_0.pdf)> [accessed 10 January 2014]

<sup>3</sup> FE Data Library: Local Authority Tables *FE and Skills Learner Participation Breakdown by Local Authority District: 2011 to 2012* [online] Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-local-authority-tables> [accessed 5 March 2014]

Table 1.2 Ethnicity of Adult Learners Ipswich

Type of Provision	Total no. of Learners	Ethnicity of Learners - IPSWICH DATA			
		Black, Asian or Minority	White	Not Known/Not Provided	% BAME
Apprenticeships	2,110	170	1,930	10	8%
ALL FE and Skills	9,710	1,560	8,000	150	16%

Source: (FE Data Library.)

While statistical data at a more local level has recently been published on the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) website, detailed ethnicity data is not readily available e.g. level, sector, applications vs. starts. This means provider analysis and exploration at a detailed level is difficult, for example, investigating and addressing specific sector underrepresentation etc.

There is a recent body of research on the under representation of BAME groups on Apprenticeships; with a number of consistent themes running through this. Research commissioned by Union Learn (2013) categorises the barriers to Apprenticeships as ‘demand-side’ i.e. related to the individual and their circumstances, this includes cultural perceptions and family expectations; and ‘supply-side’ where barriers are coming from employer and provider practice, such as recruitment practice, relevance of offer.<sup>4</sup> Primarily, studies have identified the need for better advice and guidance in schools in conjunction with local employers and learning providers, better parental engagement and community presence (including marketing strategies). ‘One size fits all approaches do not work’; studies support the need for more work to be done with different ethnic communities and with Employers to explore barriers on the supply-side<sup>5</sup>.

Progress is being made towards the issues raised around the advice and guidance given to young people preparing to leave school. In September 2013, the Minister for Skills published an ‘Inspiration Vision Statement’ outlining the intention for the National Careers Service to work more closely with Schools, providers and employers to ‘inspire’ young people; offering impartial advice, guidance and mentoring on the full range of opportunities available, including Apprenticeships and aligned to local skills priorities. Subsequent publications have reinforced this, including statutory guidance from the Department of Education, which outlines why education establishments must provide independent careers advice<sup>6</sup>. As part of the

<sup>4</sup> Newton B and Williams J (2013) ‘Under-Representation by Gender and Race in Apprenticeships’ London: Union Learn

<sup>5</sup> IES (2012) Report 496 ‘Review of Apprenticeship Research: A summary of research published since 2010’ [online] Available at < <http://www.employment-studies.co.uk/pdflibrary/496.pdf> > [accessed 15 January 2014]

<sup>6</sup> DfE (2014) *Careers Guidance and Inspiration in Schools* [online] Available at < [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/302422/Careers\\_Statutory\\_Guidance\\_-\\_9\\_April\\_2014.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/302422/Careers_Statutory_Guidance_-_9_April_2014.pdf) > [accessed 15 April 2014]

new delivery model, The National Careers Service will expand its offer to Schools and Colleges, who can choose to commission additional support from providers.

This is reflected locally in the New Anglia LEP Skills Manifesto (2013), which identifies a number of priorities for action. This includes providing young people and their parents with better information on possible employment options; making sure young people have the skills that employers need and working more closely with SME's to better understand and plan for future skills needs<sup>7</sup>. Suffolk County Council is currently developing a new programme of marketing and community outreach events (Summer 2014) that build on the promotional work done with schools.

## 2.2 Enterprise and Employability:

The key priority growth areas identified for Suffolk, by the Local Authority and New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (NALEP) are: Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering, Agri-Tech, Energy, ICT/Digital Culture and Life Science. These 'high impact' sectors have been identified for their potential to bring economic growth to the NALEP area. A further four 'underpinning' sectors have also been identified Agriculture and Food and Drink, Financial and Insurance Services, Ports and Logistics, and Tourism and Culture<sup>8</sup>.

Suffolk has a low skilled, low wage resident population, with Employers regularly reporting that employees/potential employees lack essential work skills, including 'action and behavioural skills'; this is particularly true of young people and is reflected in the high levels of youth unemployment in the area. However, a survey of 200 businesses in the NALEP area revealed that 25% of employers with recognised skills gaps are not doing anything to address them, with three in ten SME's not providing any training for staff in the last year<sup>9</sup>. This suggests that as well as developing skills provision that meets Employer needs, SMEs themselves need educating on the benefits of staff training opportunities; this includes Apprenticeships.

The need to make Apprenticeships more accessible to SME's has been widely recognised. Jason Holt's recommendations in his review 'Making Apprenticeship More Accessible to Small and Medium –Sized Enterprises' (2012) focused on:

### 1. Communication: raising awareness of the benefits of Apprenticeships

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<sup>7</sup> New Anglia LEP (2013) *New Anglia Skills Manifesto- Part 1* [online] Available at < <http://www.newanglia.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/New-Anglia-Skills-Manifesto-Pt1-Print-copy-PDF.pdf> > [accessed 15 January 2014]

<sup>8</sup> New Anglia LEP (2014) *New Anglia Strategic Economic Plan* [online] Available at < <http://www.newanglia.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/New-Anglia-Strategic-Economic-Plan-V2.pdf> > [accessed 10 April 2014]

<sup>9</sup> New Anglia LEP (2014) *New Anglia Strategic European Investment Strategy* [online] Available at < <http://www.newanglia.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/New-Anglia-LEP-EU-Investment-Strategy-January-2014-Final-version-for-Government-310114.pdf> > [accessed 10 February 2014]

2. Empowerment: SMEs to get the best from their training providers
3. Simplification: Ownership and responsibility for the Apprenticeships programme and removing barriers<sup>10</sup>

According to estimates Suffolk has approximately 25,910 SME's<sup>11</sup>. The 2012 Small Business Survey, recorded that '7% of all SME's had a person from an ethnic minority in sole control of the business, or had a management team with at least half of its members from an ethnic minority'; at 10% the East of England has one of the highest percentages of BAME-led SME's, behind London and the North West.<sup>12</sup> However, data at a more local level and how skills and business support provision meets the need of BAME-led SME's was not readily available.

National research has identified the need to better recognise the barriers and needs of BAME-led businesses. A review of 'Ethnic Minority Businesses and Access to Finance', published by the DfCLG in July 2013, found that while raising finance can be an issue for SME's across the board, loan applications from BAME groups are more likely to be rejected than white run businesses. However, 'there is no evidence to indicate that disparities are due to racial discrimination per se'<sup>13</sup>. The review went on to give 6 main points to action, including the responsibility of LEPs to consider the needs of BAME businesses when developing priorities and to play a part in enabling them to access business support and finance.

No prominent local studies on business support and skills training for BAME-led businesses were available.

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<sup>11</sup> New Anglia LEP (2014) *New Anglia Strategic European Investment Strategy* [online] Available at <<http://www.newanglia.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/New-Anglia-LEP-EU-Investment-Strategy-January-2014-Final-version-for-Government-310114.pdf>> [accessed 10 February 2014]

<sup>12</sup> BIS (2011) *BIS Small Business Survey 2010 Minority Ethnic Group (MEG) led businesses boost* [online] Available at <<http://www.msduk.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/MSDUK-BIS-small-business-survey-2010.pdf>> [accessed 10 February 2014]

<sup>13</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government (2013) *Ethnic Minority Businesses and Access to Finance* [online] Available at <[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/225762/EMBs\\_and\\_Access\\_to\\_Finance.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/225762/EMBs_and_Access_to_Finance.pdf)> [accessed 10 February 2014]



### Section 3: Methodology

Between February and April 2014, 11 BAME run micro/SME’s employing between 1 and 250 staff were interviewed, using a structured template (see appendix 1). A further 8 organisations were engaged in informal dialogue within the same time period. Although the BAME population is spread throughout Ipswich there is a large concentration of BAME led businesses located on Norwich Road, one of the main routes into central Ipswich. This was identified as the sample to explore within our research project; there exists a variety of business types and the concentration provided an opportunity to explore issues around networks/integration/experience. All the businesses are micro or SME’S.

Surveys were sent to 500 micro/SME’s to gather quantitative and qualitative data from a wider number of employers already offering apprenticeship opportunities (see appendix 2). Despite follow up calls with a number of organisations, only 3 surveys were completed in full. Unstructured dialogue took place with 5 non-BAME led employers in Ipswich.

Structured interviews were carried out with 2 Ipswich based training providers, to explore barriers to skills provision and methods of engagement with BAME organisations; both are active members of the Suffolk’s Apprenticeship Provider Network.

2 learner focus groups were undertaken with BAME learners in Ipswich of school leaving age. Semi structured interviews were undertaken with 3 BAME apprentices (see appendix 3).

#### Businesses by broad sector:

	Hair and Beauty	Wholesale and Retail	Health	Training	Catering	Business & Financial Services	Arts	Other
<b>BAME led Businesses</b>	2	9	2		3			3
<b>Non-BAME led businesses</b>				2	1	1	1	2

This primary research was framed by an initial review of relevant publications, data, local and national strategies and was supported by a stakeholder group, who provided valuable input in terms of current activity and issues. This group was made up of representatives from the Local Authority, Training Providers, Business Support Organisations and Community Organisations. Please see diagram 3.1 for an overview of the research model.

# Mind the Gap - Research Model

## Supporting Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic Communities into Apprenticeships

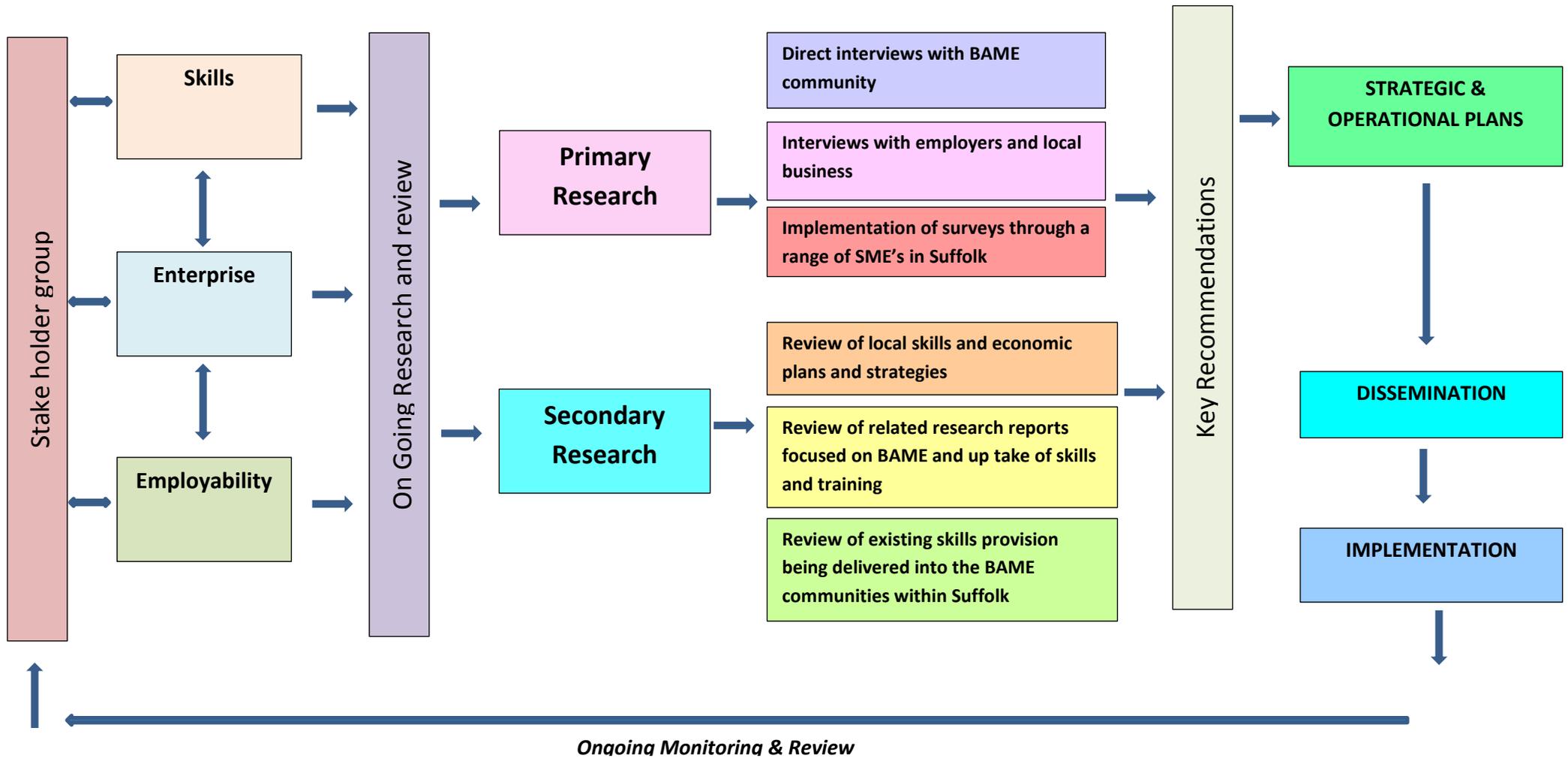


Diagram 3.1

## Section 4: Discussion

### 4.1 Skills

Those BAME led businesses interviewed were aware of Apprenticeships and the underlying principles of work based learning, but most had little or no information, on how to go about offering this; nor of any of the employer incentives that are in place and the wider business benefits.

Of those interviewed 3 BAME-led organisations offer, or have offered Apprenticeships. One mental health organisation currently employs three apprentices and is now looking to offer more opportunities, recognising the value to the business and the opportunity to foster and progress young talent. Even though 60% of the organisations workforce is from an ethnic minority, none of the apprentices are (or have been) from a BAME background; the employer commented on the distinct lack of applications from minority groups.

Whilst there is movement to ensure employers play an active role in designing Apprenticeships in line with their skills needs, providers are not always able to offer certain specialisms. This is largely due to the need for specialist tutors and/or finding enough learners to make it financially viable (e.g. afro-Caribbean hair styling). This can be particularly challenging in a rural County like Suffolk and was reflected in the dialogue with Apprenticeship providers:

*In an ideal world, every one of the apprenticeship frameworks should be available in every locality. However, 70-75% of apprenticeship frameworks are offered through independent providers ...they have shareholders....so you need a critical mass of employers, employing people doing the jobs that the apprenticeship frameworks can be matched to (to make it financially viable)....You can't offer everything, its supply and demand.' (Ipswich based Training Provider)*

None of the young people spoken to as part of this research felt their ethnic background had been, or would be, a barrier to securing an apprenticeship.

*I don't really see me being young as a problem... The same as being a black guy, I don't see why it would stop someone listening to me or anything like that'.  
(Apprentice)*

All felt more could be done in terms of promoting apprenticeships. Whilst an Apprenticeship route had been discussed, through advice and guidance provision, this appeared to be minimal and had made little impact. Comments included:

*'...in the last year of my school, I don't think I knew anything about*

*apprenticeships at all. I assume it was mentioned to me by a family member or something, I am not sure. But yeah, it wasn't put to me as an option to do so...maybe if it was I could have done something.'* (Focus Group)

*'Whoever comes to speak about apprenticeships, they can't just do it one time and expect things to change with that.'* (Focus Group)

*'I think apprenticeships could be promoted a lot more; it was easier for me because I'm online, but not everyone has access to that.'* (Apprentice)

This was supported by local providers, who commented on the difficulty of getting in to schools to promote Apprenticeships and the limitations of the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) website. When providers are invited, they've not necessarily given the same time and 'standing' as other potential school leaving options.

*'I do find the Apprenticeship service website is not well known, it's had a lot of promotion and I think you may find this the same for groups across the board.... You can see there's been a big push, but it's still not massively out there.'*  
(Ipswich based Training Provider)

Equally, providers themselves recognise that different and longer term marketing strategies by the sector could greatly increase awareness; this includes changing the perception of families and accepted/expected cultural norms.

*'Providers focus on the short term rather than the long term. Most of the marketing is done in years 10-13, when they're coming up to an age that they can get onto an apprenticeship. What needs to be done is to go in at year 7-8.....that's when young people start to get their ideas, like university and that when awareness needs to be raised.'* (Ipswich based Training Provider)

*You have to get the information out there and encourage as many young people to apply as possible ... and particularly if their cultural background isn't one where learning a trade on the job with another employer (is acceptable)....A lot of cultures have family businesses, so you will come into the family business. Or the level of academic qualification is seen as the measure of success.... they don't always hold Apprenticeships in the same esteem (as other routes).* (Ipswich based Training Provider)

The Local Authority has started to build on the outreach work they do in schools, by introducing a new programme that includes community, promotional activities e.g. at community events. This is also in recognition of the influence that families and communities have on the choices that young people make and the need to get information to parents, to change perceptions and increase understanding of the

offer – this is particularly true of BAME communities, where parents and older family members may not be familiar with, or recognise the value of, Apprenticeships.

As discussed, these issues are also being addressed at a national level, with the changing expectations of Schools to offer/commission independent careers advice.

There was a general perception that young people can innovate and bring a new dynamic to the business, but one organisation commented that

*‘They need a lot of training...young people don’t apply themselves as much as they could.’ (Norwich Road BAME-led Business)*

Some owners questioned the business benefits of an Apprenticeship, due to the time and cost involved in training, against the demands of running a small business; ultimately this means they are not always seen as a priority.

Employers could not identify any specific skills needs for BAME applicants; the need for good written and verbal communication skills for application and interview, applied to young people across the board.

## 4.2 Enterprise and Employability

Issues were raised around the quality of the Apprenticeship offer, with some Employers preferring to offer their own bespoke training schemes that are more innovative and relevant to the organisation.

*‘We don’t do any formal Apprenticeship opportunities..... What we do however, is we recruit locally, one trainee per annum to train up within the business and develop it ourselves. The reason why we don’t use any nationally backed Apprenticeship scheme is in the past when we’ve tried it – and we’ve done it on a number of occasions - we’ve found the actual methodology in terms of the tick box approach and the quality of the candidate we have got is not that great, compared to the ability for us to go out and get who we want, when we want them.’ (Norwich Road Business)*

It was further suggested that Employers themselves should be given funding incentives to upskill their workforce, putting training schemes in place that better fit individual needs.

*I would get rid of all government training grants and give an incentive, like a rebate, to every company for training. If the company is worth its salt, it will train its staff. (Norwich Road Business)*

The skills that organisations are looking for are changing and these are not always reflected in the Apprenticeship frameworks.

*I have changed my style of recruitment over the last few years. I have started looking for ones who show interests in the business and ones who have creative skills...It's not just about the hairdressing side, it's about everything in business..*  
(Norwich Road BAME-led Business)

Only two of the BAME-led businesses interviewed had received any formal business support. This suggests that some businesses are being established without consideration of a realistic business model, or plan in place. In some instances, relevant business training had been undertaken, such as book keeping, where deemed essential to running the business. However, this was independently sought, rather than being signposted.

Where businesses were signed up to business support organisations they didn't necessarily use the services on offer:

*'Yes I am (...a member of the Chamber of Commerce...) but I don't use any of their services. I hardly use any of the services'* (Norwich Road BAME-led Business)

The perception of what support is available and how relevant this is, has led to a lack of uptake from BAME organisations, who rely more on family and community support networks to establish, finance and staff their organisations. Some organisations felt that they would like more formal advice, if providers were more easily accessible and actively engaged with different communities.

*'If people make themselves available (business support) you do always listen to what people have got to say about growing and supporting your business.'*  
(Norwich Road BAME-led Business)

The language used and the information that organisations are asked for, can be off putting, whether for business support, financial support etc. Small business owners often lack the time to do this and/or do not want to provide detailed information to organisations they regard with an air of suspicion.

*'Everything is an application form. It's not just one piece of paper, its 8-10 sheets of paper...and sometimes they are going into such great detail, I can't deal with that.'* (Norwich Road BAME-led Business)

Formal support agencies/channels were regarded with an element of suspicion, following failed attempts to access support.

*'(the biggest blockage in my business) It's generally external services, from agencies to individuals, whether it's a communication issue, or a racial/cultural issue – these things are blocks to the business cos we can never get to the bottom of it'. (Ipswich Business Owner)*

Broader issues were raised around the infrastructure of the Norwich Road area and the need for finance and support for people to buy their premises. There was a feeling among some of the interviewees that property ownership, led to better integration in the area; in terms of network and a collective interest/responsibility in improving and growing the business community of the area.

Depoliticising economic development was another key point raised; the need for an accountable body, free from bureaucracy, working together towards a common goal.

*'You need one body, everybody need to give up their agenda. You need to be radical about it. I would say we're not going to have an 'economic development' department' we're going to merge – authorities/LEP etc.'*

Work is being done to ensure a more collaborative approach. During this research the 'Greater Ipswich Partnership' was launched, in May 2014. The partnership includes New Anglia LEP, Suffolk County Council, Ipswich Borough Council, Ipswich Central and Ipswich Chamber of Commerce. The aim is to create 'a better place to do business in, to live in, work in, attract inward investment and bring up children in'<sup>14</sup>, with priorities split into three key areas: physical, image and infrastructure. This has been welcomed across the Greater Ipswich area.

The tendency for BAME-led businesses to be in 'non-priority' sector areas, such as retail and catering, is seen as another reason for businesses remaining on the periphery. Typical responses when asked if local and national business strategists were aware of their needs were:

*'There isn't a retail strategy....it doesn't fit the criteria to get money from the government...'* (Norwich Road BAME-led Business)

*'No. You are basically on your own'* (Norwich Road BAME-led Business)

*'We don't work together – they are not aware of our needs cos we don't ask them anything and they don't consult us to develop strategies'. (Norwich Road BAME-led Business)*

An underlying theme of this research has been around the use of 'BAME' as a homogenous term, being counterproductive. These groups are diverse in their needs and would prefer not to be consulted under an umbrella term that assumes the same issues, needs and solutions; engagement should be on an individual basis.

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<sup>14</sup> Greater Ipswich Partnership (2014) *The Vision, Values and Priorities* [online] Available at [http://issuu.com/allaboutipswich/docs/013658\\_ips\\_central\\_gip\\_vision\\_value](http://issuu.com/allaboutipswich/docs/013658_ips_central_gip_vision_value) > [accessed 15 May 2014]

## Section 5: Summary of Key Research Findings

### Contextual Findings:

- 1) Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Groups (BAME) do not reference themselves to this overarching category - This is restrictive and not seen as representative of a community or its issues
- 2) Local Business support organisations and Local Authorities do not record business data by ethnicity it is categorised by employee size, turnover and SIC coding.
- 3) Providers do not target based on ethnicity.

Issues	Skills	Enterprise	Employability
Lack of take up of Apprenticeships by BAME groups and organisations within target area.	No dialogue between specific training providers and BAME organisations.	Apprenticeships appear to not add quality to the business need. Additional skills training or alternative training is often sourced.	Strong family and community integration for skills needs within a business - e.g. utilising sons daughters relatives etc.
Lack of engagement by business owners with support from mainstream organisations.	Business Owners fear of engaging with other organisations and government initiatives.	Businesses established, without consideration of realistic business model.	Language used and the perception of what business advice is available, has resulted in a lack of uptake from business owners. Business support organisations have lack of cultural awareness.
Lack of Dialogue between BAME organisations and existing providers of support.	Language used and the perception of what business and skills support is available, has resulted in a lack of uptake from BAME organisations.	Relevance and understanding of business support for BAME SME's / micro business.	BAME communities utilise families and communities to build business and employment opportunities.
Family and cultural value differences.	Value of apprenticeships and the perception of peers and family members.	Cultural values and integrity are key to traditional BAME business development e.g. accessing finance.	Apprenticeships are not a priority for micro SME's - due to cost, time and running a business.

## Section 6: Key Actions and Recommendations – Plan for Change

### STRATEGIC PLAN - IPSWICH & SUFFOLK ACTIONS FOR BAME IMPROVEMNET - SKILLS – ENTERPRISE – EMPLOYABILITY

				Strategic Plan for Change		
Issues	Skills	Enterprise	Employability	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
Lack of take up of Apprenticeships by BAME groups and organisations within target area.	No dialogue between specific training providers and BAME organisations.	Apprenticeships appear to not add quality to the business need. Additional skills training or alternative training is often sourced.	Strong family and community integration for skills needs within a business - e.g. utilising sons daughters relatives etc.	Culturally relevant promotion and engagement with local business community – via community representatives and volunteers.	Highlighting features, benefits and added value business opportunities, within an on-going framework supporting BAME communities.	Creating a sustainable framework and model of engagement to support and assist BAME communities; developed in line with Local Enterprise Partnerships and Local Authorities.
Lack of engagement by business owners with support from mainstream organisations.	Business Owners fear of engaging with other organisations and government initiatives.	Businesses established, without consideration of realistic business model.	Language used and the perception of what business advice is available, has resulted in a lack of uptake from business owners. Business support organisations have lack of cultural awareness.	No cultural bias integration, supporting the needs of businesses within diverse communities within their communities.	Increase of awareness of diversity innovation and business support models available to support business growth.	Creating a sustainable framework and model of engagement to support and assist BAME communities; developed in line with Local Enterprise Partnerships and Local Authorities. To maintain a lasting relationship, peer support and informal networking.
Lack of Dialogue between BAME organisations and existing providers of support.	Language used and the perception of what business and skills support is available, has resulted in a lack of uptake from BAME organisations.	Relevance and understanding of business support for BAME SME's / micro business.	BAME communities utilise families and communities to build business and employment opportunities.	Cultural integration and direct targeting of mainstream activities to BAME Business.	Community focused through volunteers and ambassadors and embedding a culture of trust and integration, and promoting the added value benefits of support.	Creating a sustainable framework and model of engagement to support and assist BAME communities, within business support organisations and Local Authorities' promoting representation at a community level and aligning with community self-sufficiency for skills, enterprise and employability, with cultural relevancy.
Family and cultural value differences.	Value of apprenticeships and the perception of peers and family members.	Cultural values and integrity are key to traditional BAME business development e.g. accessing finance.	Apprenticeships are not a priority for micro SME's - due to cost, time and running a business.	Cultural integration and direct targeting of mainstream activities to BAME Business.	Addressing those needs in a proactive fashion, in line with business support requirements.	Utilising those organisations that have received support in the modelling and development of culturally relevant support structures.

**OPERATIONAL PLAN - IPSWICH & SUFFOLK ACTIONS FOR BAME IMPROVEMNET - SKILLS – ENTERPRISE – EMPLOYABILITY**

				Operational Plan for Change		
Issues	Skills	Enterprise	Employability	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
Lack of take up of Apprenticeships by BAME groups and organisations within target area.	No dialogue between specific training providers and BAME organisations.	Apprenticeships appear to not add quality to the business need. Additional skills training or alternative training is often sourced.	Strong family and community integration for skills needs within a business - e.g. utilising sons daughters relatives etc.	Direct contact from Training Providers with businesses who have offered their support to this research.	Identify business and training needs through existing funding models delivered locally in appropriate community settings.	Maintain an active community relationship through volunteers and community representatives to inform skills and business needs.
Lack of engagement by business owners with support from mainstream organisations.	Business Owners fear of engaging with other organisations and government initiatives.	Businesses established, without consideration of realistic business model.	Language used and the perception of what business advice is available, has resulted in a lack of uptake from business owners. Business support organisations have lack of cultural awareness.	Promote to all new and existing businesses the opportunities that are currently available through mainstream support organisations.	Identify and address the direct needs of those BAME businesses and communities enabling support to be offered in an appropriate style and setting.	Maintain direct links with the community, following positive integration with those who have benefited from the previous actions implemented. Distil the myths of the communities being disadvantaged and enable positive approach to skills and business enhancement.
Lack of Dialogue between BAME organisations and existing providers of support.	Language used and the perception of what business and skills support is available, has resulted in a lack of uptake from BAME organisations.	Relevance and understanding of business support for BAME SME's / micro business.	BAME communities utilise families and communities to build business and employment opportunities.	Identify trends between BAME communities and businesses and address those skills needs as a cluster group, enabling efficiencies and cost effectiveness.	Identify a range of local support to assist with understanding of business and skills support. Promote the features and benefits of accessing support. Create an environment that is progressive for change.	Utilise existing networks of community leaders and families who have accessed support and have benefited from local delivery to spread the positive word within their existing communities, building a sense of trust and relationship with those who need support and advice.
Family and cultural value differences.	Value of apprenticeships and the perception of peers and family members.	Cultural values and integrity are key to traditional BAME business development e.g. accessing finance.	Apprenticeships are not a priority for micro SME's - due to cost, time and running a business.	Understand the cultural and family values that are currently in place with regard to skills enterprise and employability.	Once understood, identify how barriers can be overcome, enabling positive perspectives and greater integration of opportunities that are available.	Instil a culture that supports family and cultural values, whilst benefiting from local support for skills enterprise and employability, enabling economic growth.

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## Appendix 1:

### Questions for BAME-Led SMEs

The following Questionnaire is designed to identify the level of awareness of business support within Ipswich. It is evident that with the removal of some business support organisation over the last few years businesses are currently not aware of the services that are available to guide and support them.

1. Do you ever feel you need help with your business?
2. Have you ever asked for help with your business (if yes from whom?)
3. Are you skilled in all aspects of running your business? Where do you think you need help?
4. Have you ever had training in your business (if yes on what?)
5. What is the biggest blockage in your business e.g. training, staff skills etc?
6. Have you ever received any formal business support?  
If yes where did you receive it from?
7. Do you know where to get business advice?  
If yes where did you receive it from?
8. Were you aware that some business advice is free?
9. Are you aware of the following business support organisations:
  - a) Chamber of Commerce,
  - b) Federation of Small Businesses
  - c) Ipswich and Suffolk Small Business Association (ISSBA)
  - d) Menta – The Suffolk Enterprise Agency
  - e) NEW Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership
10. Are you a member of or received any services from the following business support organisations:
  - a) Chamber of Commerce,
  - b) Federation of Small Businesses
  - c) Ipswich and Suffolk Small Business Association (ISSBA)
  - d) Menta – The Suffolk Enterprise Agency
  - e) NEW Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership
11. How long have you owned your business?
12. How many people do you employ?

13. What is the nature of your business?
14. What is your turnover per annum?
15. Would you like to have received support for your business?
16. Is it a family business?
17. On a scale of 1 to 10 is Ipswich good for business?
18. Who do you target your business at?
19. On a scale of 1 to 10 are you happy with your business?
20. Have you heard about Apprenticeships?
21. Do you think by taking on an Apprentice your business would develop and be more productive?
22. Would you be interested in finding out how young people can innovate your business?
23. Do you believe that diversity creates innovation?
24. As a member of the business community do you think that statutory local / regional and national business strategists are aware of your needs as a business owner?
25. Do you think the skills and growth agenda is relevant to your business?
26. Would you like your children to take over the business?
27. Do you think that the skills learnt in school equip young people for business skills / development?
28. Do you trust business support and development organisations?

**Appendix 2:**

**Questions for SMEs who offer (or have offered) apprenticeship opportunities:**

Nationally Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups are underrepresented on apprenticeships, compared to adult learning as a whole; the numbers in Ipswich mirror the national picture. This piece of research is looking to identify the reasons for this, from both a business and learner point of view – this includes access to information.

Your answers to this questionnaire will be held in the strictest of confidence, so please give your honest opinion.

- 1. Number of employees**
  
- 2. How many apprenticeship opportunities does your business offer and in what areas?**
  
- 3. Where do you advertise apprenticeship opportunities?**
  
- 4. How did you identify the business need for an apprentice?**
  
- 5. How many applications are you getting per apprenticeship opportunity?**  

1-15	15-29	30-44	45-60	61+
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- 6. What percentage of applicants are from:**  

White British	%	White Other	%	BAME	%
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- 7. Do you use local equality and diversity statistics and information to inform your recruitment policy/process?**
  
- 8. Do you feel you have enough information and awareness about cultural diversity in Ipswich and the benefits of this?**
  
- 9. What ideas do you have to encourage successful applications from BAME communities?**
  
- 10. Are there any particular skills you think would particularly help BAME candidates improve their chances of successfully securing an apprenticeship (e.g. language, interview skills)**

## Appendix 3:

### Learner Questions

1. Do you know about apprenticeships?
2. If yes, please let us know what you know about them...
3. Would you like to undertake an apprenticeship? If so which area?
4. Do you know who do you need to contact to/ provider/organisation where you can get information?  
  
If so which one?
5. Have you already enquired about undertaking an apprenticeship?
6. If so what was your experience?  
  
Please comment....
7. How confident are you to approach employers?
8. Which areas of work you would like to work in?
9. Are apprenticeship opportunities diverse enough in their offer?
10. Do you think you can bring innovation to businesses?  
  
If not why .....
- If yes what .....
11. Would you be interested in us signposting you/or giving you information regarding apprenticeships?
12. As BAME young people do you see barriers or opportunities with apprenticeships?