

# GOING TO COLLEGE

Ethnic minority learner and community views on post-16 education  
Research project conducted by New College and Swindon College 2010



## Going to College

Views on post-16 education from Black and Asian minority ethnic learners and community members

### Background

This research project was conducted by New College, Swindon and Swindon College with support from the Learning and Skills Information Service (LSIS). The aim of the project was to enable the colleges to improve learner experience and success at college. From the outset this project was designed to elicit opinion from the BME community, particularly the largest Asian groups, in order to inform local provision. The project ran from May to November 2010 and the report was published in March 2011.

### Summary

#### Are young people from Black and Asian minority ethnic (BME) groups likely to attend college in Swindon?

- Young people (16-18) of BME background are well represented in both colleges (11% and 14% in 08 09) as against 11% in the whole Swindon secondary school population.

#### How do they choose? How are the colleges perceived?

- Young people make their own post 16 educational choices based upon interest in subjects, courses and career aspirations.
- Parents encourage post 16 education and influence the choice of college and type of course.
- Ethnic minority learners hear good news about both colleges from friends and relatives, good experience and good results.
- Parents and prospective learners have positive views about both colleges and the information and events provided by the schools and colleges are perceived to be helpful.
- Learners notice and value the ethnic diversity, visible in the colleges, portrayed in marketing literature and in college activities.
- Asian community leaders have high expectations of young people and the colleges, recognising the many social influences impacting on learner progress.
- Academic qualifications are valued, with two thirds of interviewees aspiring to A levels and a route to university for themselves or members of their family/community.
- Location of the college was perceived as important by a third of respondents.

#### What do Swindon BME learners think of their college experience?

- The college experience, atmosphere and learning environment at each college were positively described by learners past and present for their college.

- Personal experience of racist bullying or harassment at either college was much less than at school (3% of interviewees). The adult environment was identified as the main reason.
- Opinions on methods of teaching and learning identified no obvious barriers. Suggestions such as better access to computers were similar to those recorded on whole college populations.
- Requests for additional on course support were made for subject specific topics and for English language for immigrants whose first language is not English.
- Comments on college facilities were in line with other students, although cultural adaptations such as prayer room provision or food observances were mentioned.
- College learner opinion surveys confirm that ethnic minority learners agree that they are treated fairly and equally and that they feel safe at college.

### How successful are Swindon BME learners at college?

- Detailed analysis of results for college courses in Swindon generally follow national course trends for achievement at 16 -18 for the whole population with aggregated BME groups achieving 77% and 83% success rates at the colleges in 09 10.

### What can Swindon colleges do to improve the experience and attainment of BME learners?

- Maintain dialogue with BME learner and community groups.
- Increase awareness amongst school students and families of options other than A levels.
- Review on course support.

### Who was involved?

The project coordinators were the Equality and Diversity Advisers at New College, Swindon and Swindon College. They conducted the interviews and produced the report. The Learning and Skills Information Service (LSIS) supported the work. Interviews were conducted at each college, three youth groups and community associations based at places of worship.

Local bodies who contributed to the research included:

Asian Girls Group, Drove Centre  
 Broad Street Mosque (Thamesdown Islamic Association)  
 Muslim Youth Development Programme, Drove Centre  
 Ridgeway School in Wroughton  
 Sikh Temple (Sri Guru Nanak Gurdwara)  
 SKEETZ Youth Club at Broadgreen Community Centre  
 Swindon Borough Council: Community Development, Connexions, Children's Services  
 Wiltshire College

## Interviewee Description

Total	<b>90</b>	Aged 11-15	<b>20</b>	School student	<b>25</b>
Female	<b>40</b>	Aged 16-19	<b>47</b>	College Student	<b>41</b>
Male	<b>50</b>	Aged 20-49	<b>13</b>	Community Leader/Member	<b>16</b>
Disabled	<b>1</b>	Aged 50+	<b>10</b>	Other	<b>8</b>

## Self Declared Ethnic Group

Any Other	<b>1</b>	Black British	<b>1</b>	Pakistani	<b>14</b>
Afghan	<b>3</b>	Bangladeshi	<b>10</b>	Other Asian Includes Nepalese	<b>19</b>
Black African	<b>8</b>	Chinese	<b>1</b>	Mixed White & Black Caribbean	<b>1</b>
Black Caribbean	<b>4</b>	Indian	<b>27</b>	Mixed White & Asian	<b>1</b>

## Self Declared Religion

Atheist	<b>1</b>	Hindu	<b>3</b>	Other	<b>2</b>
Buddhist	<b>7</b>	Jewish	<b>1</b>	Sikh	<b>22</b>
Catholic	<b>6</b>	Muslim	<b>29</b>	Unknown	<b>5</b>
Christian	<b>5</b>	None	<b>9</b>		

Further information:

<http://www.lsis.org.uk/Services/Publications/Documents/LSIS-ED-Project-Report2009-10.pdf> or from

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