Sure Start for all

Guidance on involving minority ethnic children and families
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Sure Start
Section 1

Introduction

1 Sure Start aims to transform the life chances of young children, particularly those living in areas of disadvantage.

2 Research shows that minority ethnic families suffer disproportionately high rates of poverty. They are more likely to live in poor housing, more likely to be unemployed or work for very low wages, and suffer additional burdens of discrimination. Sure Start, because it is an area based initiative concerned with children living in poverty, is likely to have significant numbers of families from minority ethnic groups within its catchment areas.

3 The Public Service Agreement (PSA) for Sure Start sets out twelve challenging targets. Three of them are specifically concerned with reaching all families within the catchment area. To achieve these targets, efforts must be made to ensure that traditionally hard to reach families are made aware of, and encouraged to use, Sure Start services. Services need to be designed to meet the particular needs of individual families, minority ethnic families, mixed race/heritage families, faith groups, and any other kind of family for whom the use of mainstream services may be problematic.

4 Sure Start operates to a set of core principles including the requirement that services be non-stigmatising and culturally appropriate and sensitive to particular families’ needs. Working to the core principles as well as the PSA targets is vital to the overall success of Sure Start.

5 In working to ensure that your Sure Start programme is inclusive, you need to be aware of three other crucial issues:

   ■ there is as much diversity within minority ethnic groups as between them. Individuals make their own choices about which aspects of their culture that they adhere to.

   ■ community consultation rarely leads to consensus. There needs to be delicate negotiation to agree priorities. Not everyone’s wishes can be met.

   ■ there is significant diversity within ‘white’ communities. Strong religious and cultural differences need to be handled with sensitivity.

Purpose of this guidance

6 The purpose of this specific guidance is to:

   ■ help you to ensure that all families including those from minority ethnic groups have access to and get a good quality service from Sure Start programmes

   ■ help you ensure that all the partners in Sure Start programmes include access and quality issues in designing Sure Start programmes.
All programmes must use the guidance as a basis for ensuring involvement of minority ethnic groups in Sure Start programmes. It can of course be adapted or tailored to suit the needs of your individual programmes. It gives some suggestions to help you to provide services that are culturally appropriate and sensitive to the needs of each family. We have set out below key issues you should address.

**Key issues to be addressed in involving minority ethnic communities**

All Sure Start programmes should address key issues in involving minority ethnic communities as part of their delivery plans. This should include:

- demographic information on catchment area and ethnic mix
- an explicit objective that addresses the needs of families from minority ethnic groups (or minority cultures)
- evidence of consultation with families from the minority ethnic groups
- plans for a strategy to create an atmosphere which encourages social cohesion appropriate to the Sure Start programme and the locality
- identification of people from minority ethnic groups as members of the partnerships
- evidence of how services are designed to meet the needs of minority ethnic communities.
Each step requires consultation with service providers, users and community groups. To ensure that equality is embedded in your delivery plans you may find it helpful to consider the following step-by-step guide.

**Step 1: you should understand existing good practice and identify needs of minority ethnic families**

The development of delivery plans should be supported by an understanding of existing good practice and ongoing consultation. It is important for you to take an explicit look at the ethnic mix of your community in your catchment area. In looking into the ethnic mix of your community you should ask yourself:

- **do you have reliable demographic data with an ethnic and language breakdown?**
- **are there more members of minority ethnic communities than first appears?**
- **if there are small numbers of minority ethnic families; in what ways are their needs similar and in what ways are their needs different from other families in the area?**
are there significant numbers of mixed race children even in predominantly white areas? In what ways are their needs similar and in what ways are their needs different from other families in the area?
do minority ethnic families feel isolated?
how will minority ethnic families hear about and access appropriate Sure Start services?
how will their particular needs be met especially if there is a disabled child in the family?

Example

Sure Start Camden Trailblazer
Camden’s trailblazer programme has been developed by a partnership with representatives from the local authority, Coram Family, the Coram Early Excellence Centre, Asian (Hopscotch) and Somali groups, midwifery and health services, Homestart, Family Service Unit, NSPCC, Pre-school Learning Alliance, and Single Regeneration Budget areas.

The proposal is targeted on three wards where more than 1400 children under four live with 40 plus per cent of them from minority ethnic and refugee backgrounds. A key element of this programme is making provision for the diverse needs of the particular groups within the area, for example, the Bangladeshi, Somali, other minority ethnic and refugee communities.

- **Ante-natal care** – many minority ethnic women have difficulty in accessing ante-natal services and preparation for birth and parenting. A Sure Start midwife will build up a network of local mothers from minority ethnic families who can support others within the community.

- **Supporting parents** – all parents in the area will be screened for post-natal depression. Recent research will be used with the Bangladeshi community to ensure that it is culturally sensitive to the needs of women from that and other communities.

- **Young parents and teenage pregnancy** – many of the Bangladeshi parents are very young and living at some distance from their extended families. The whole community’s child-rearing experience and practical support will be used to benefit these families.

- **Capacity building and minority ethnic communities** – work with Bangladeshi women has already enabled them to take up new opportunities in further training and work. Local people become involved as visitors and volunteers for Sure Start.

- **Community safety and mobility** – local racial violence and crime is high. Ideas will be worked up with local police and community groups to make the area safer and a place where young families want to stay.
By doing this, your plans and services are more likely to meet the needs of minority ethnic families. Research evidence and experience shows that good practice with minority ethnic families includes workers with skills in community development, relevant knowledge of specific services and community language skills.

You may find it helpful to build on existing expertise and to draw on other evidence of what works. In developing your plan you should consider involving or consulting:

- members of minority ethnic community organisations
- minority ethnic families in the catchment area especially faith community leaders/elders and women
- different networks used by minority ethnic parents
- front-line staff particularly minority ethnic staff
- school governors
- management and committee members
- nursery schools/playgroups/primary schools
- Saturday schools
- faith communities

Example

Stand Tall: Anti racism strategy – Crabtree Children’s Centre, Bulwell, Nottingham

This group was set up as part of a wider objective to raise awareness and empower Caribbean communities in Bulwell to develop and promote strategies that protect children from violence. The aim of Stand Tall was to form an anti-racism strategy by:

- providing a support group for children and their families
- encouraging inter-agency working
- developing individual and family work, especially advocacy
- encouraging user led services
- putting together an exhibition which would inform local schools of this strategy.

The group allows children to share their experience of racial harassment and discuss ways of dealing with this, whilst adults gain an increased understanding, confidence and an ability to challenge systems.

A significant amount of monitoring and evaluation has taken place in terms of referrals, racial harassment statistics and action taken. Inter-agency reviews also take place involving housing and the police and Stand Tall group members.
local businesses
local councillors
any local Early Excellence Centres
local Race Equality Centres

By tapping into different networks and identifying needs you are more likely to develop and provide adequate services for all communities. In identifying needs you should ask yourself:

- **how have you identified needs?**
- **how have you done this for minority ethnic communities?**
- **what have been your conclusions?**
- **have the conclusions been tested out with the communities surveyed?**

To help you to identify needs for minority ethnic communities, you should consider using:

- community based surveys or consultations
- user based surveys of family support
- secondary analysis of the 1991 Census as well as local data.

**Networking with minority ethnic communities**

Networking with minority ethnic communities at local level can also help in identifying needs. This is because it provides an opportunity of making early contact and may encourage potential minority ethnic users. There may be groups and individuals who understand the issues and are familiar with the local community. They may be able to advise on the most appropriate ways of communicating with minority ethnic families. A list of possible contact points include:

- Saturday schools
- religious institutions
- Traveller Education Services
Once you have identified needs, it is crucial to consult all partners. This should include families with young children from all local minority ethnic groups and communities. Some groups because of their situation may be difficult to reach, for example: Travellers, refugees and temporary residents.

Some of the ways you could consider consulting partners is at community fairs, parent focus group meetings or by using questionnaires. This will require attention and care at every stage of the consultation process especially as some parents may not be literate, or not literate in English. Specific strategies for reaching them could be developed with the local community education service or the Basic Skills Agency, which will advise on ways to communicate. It may also be necessary to conduct consultations in different ways with different groups of parents in your local area especially if the group of parents is defined by culture or language, faith or religion. You will need to take a pro-active approach in getting them fully involved right the way through, from identifying needs, to coming up with ways of meeting them, to the actual implementation of the programme.

For more advice and information on understanding existing good practice and identifying needs of minority ethnic families, please refer to the resource material and specialist organisations in Annex A. You may also find it helpful to refer to Evidence-based practice issued with the Sure Start delivery planning guidance.

Example

**Traveller Education Services**

Traveller Education Services operate in about 130 Local Education Authorities in England and are making significant progress in improving access to education for Gypsy and other Traveller children who are particularly at risk of educational failure.

In Norfolk, the Traveller Education Service have developed good practice in provision at pre-school level, working with parents to demonstrate the importance of pre-school activity including “play” as a medium of learning. Traveller parents, who may themselves have had only minimal education, are consulted and involved in the provision. Teachers will visit sites or homes on a regular basis and use a video to explain the provision.

Many Travellers may move regularly and it can be difficult to find pre-school places. The local Early Years Development and Childcare Plan recommends that places should be reserved in nursery education settings as a matter of course for the children of mobile families. The Service supports parents in finding a nursery place for the child.

The Traveller Education Service develops and provides materials and resources which are available for loan to pre-school and nursery providers. These reflect the home culture of the Traveller child and both help the Traveller child to feel involved and also extend the knowledge of other children of Traveller culture.
Step 2: you should prioritise and plan inclusive services for all minority ethnic families

Once you have identified needs and consulted all partners you should prioritise your services. You will then need to make a decision to convert your needs and priorities into services. This should lead to service development and services which are accessible, appropriate and flexible.

It would be helpful to consider situations where needs can be met by amending current service delivery in small ways to make them inclusive. In other areas, significant development of particular services, which may involve reorganisation, new projects or new/redirected finance may be needed.

Example

Asian Women’s support group - Reading Family Centres
Reading family centres cover three different sites in Reading in order to be close to local communities and therefore more accessible. One such site is the Coventry Road site which is located within an area of a large Asian community. At this site the centre offers several services to Asian women and children, including drop ins and an ante-natal group. Twice weekly, they provide a mother and toddler day at the centre where mothers have the opportunity to meet, socialise and share problems, whilst the children play with the toys that are provided. In addition, lunch is provided and the women and children eat together. The staff speak Asian languages and support the women with any problems they may experience. This includes providing practical advice about how to access services.

The Asian women enjoyed attending the centre because:

- the space was for women and children only
- it was safe for their children
- they had access to a wide range of toys and activities
- they had the opportunity to share their experiences with other women in similar situations.
You may find that it is worth planning and developing specific services for minority ethnic families designed to meet their needs. You can only achieve this by reaching out to these communities and getting them involved. REU’s (formerly known as the Race Equality Unit) research into use of family centres by black families suggests that those family centres that had specific services were more likely to have minority ethnic users. The presence of minority ethnic workers in family centres was also found to attract more minority ethnic users. However workers who generally demonstrate knowledge and confidence of specific services are more likely to attract minority ethnic families too.

Open access

Open access is another way of planning inclusive services, however it is not sufficient on its own. Existing service providers who have accompanied open access with outreach work have proved to be more successful in attracting minority ethnic families. Health visitors have a key role to play in outreach work. They have often been identified as an important source of information and maybe the only source of contact for newly arrived communities. Outreach services are important in reaching families who are reluctant to come forward.

Geographical location

Geographical location is important in planning inclusive services because it ensures participation from minority ethnic communities particularly if the main site is easy to reach and within walking distance. This is often problematic in rural areas where low numbers and scattered population cause considerable isolation.

Links with other relevant government programmes

In planning your services you should consider linking them with other relevant programmes. Sure Start is one of a range of initiatives that the Government is introducing to tackle social exclusion. The list of initiatives linked to Sure Start was included in Sure Start delivery planning guidance. Two closely linked initiatives that you need to think carefully about in terms of race and ethnicity issues are the Youth Offending Teams and the Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership. For example, recent evidence shows that safe play areas are of particular concern for minority ethnic parents. While parents are content to play with their young children on weekdays in family centres, they have been reluctant to use local play areas at weekends because they are sometimes used by racist, abusive and violent teenagers. There seems to be scope here for re-assuring local people by building good links between Sure Start and the Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership and the Youth Offending Teams.
Step 3: you should implement culturally appropriate services

A workforce which is representative of the local community is more likely to be successful in delivering culturally appropriate services. The workforce should have a commitment to implementing equality of opportunity and the understanding, knowledge and skills to put it into practice. Relevant training of working with minority ethnic families should be provided. They should also have access to culturally appropriate materials.

Example

Radford Shared Care Project - Garden Street Family Centre/NCH Action for Children

This project is run from a local authority family centre by NCH Action for Children. It offers intensive assistance to families where children are at risk of being accommodated by the local authority and to families experiencing stress. The aim is to enable parents to acquire skills and fulfil their parenting role. Project workers with awareness and relevant training, visit parents in their own homes to advise, guide, teach, suggest and prompt parents on a range of skills including baby care and handling difficult behaviour. In addition, there is a team of group workers who work with women to develop self esteem and confidence. They encourage women to seek greater control of their lives and develop their self esteem through supporting one another.

The project has a clear value base centred on relationships which demonstrate respect. The values include:

- a commitment to equality of opportunity
- anti-discriminatory practice
- working in partnership with and being accountable to parents.

The project and group workers are from a range of ethnic groups. One of the specific objectives of the project is to match minority ethnic children with minority ethnic workers as far as possible.

The project is continually evaluated internally, and has also been the subject of an independent evaluation carried out by the Centre for Social Action at De Montfort University, Leicester.
Sure Start programmes with considerable numbers of minority ethnic groups in their catchment will have little difficulty incorporating diversity into their work with parents and children. Play equipment, decorations and materials should reflect the nature of the catchment and should be welcoming for all.

It is significantly more difficult to celebrate diversity in areas that seem to be mono-cultural. It is still vitally important. Children growing up without access to non-British cultures or other races miss the opportunity when they are very young to learn to respect difference. Parents themselves may have stereotyped views that they communicate to their children. It is important that services in mainly ‘white’ areas do not unintentionally reinforce these attitudes. Multi-cultural play equipment and stories can be a starting point for discussing these issues with parents. Staff and volunteers need training and support to sensitively address these difficult areas.

Example

The Bi-Lingual Co-Workers Model in Speech & Language Therapy

In Newham, East London the Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) department employs 4 bi-lingual co-workers who are partners with therapists to deliver SLT service to dominant minority groups in Newham. The bilingual co-workers are members of the local community and are fluent in English and their home language. They are important members of the SLT department in that they interpret for clients and staff, train monolingual Speech and Language Therapists on issues related to culture and language and use and lead on first language assessments. Following user survey information, the co-workers now also run programmes in home language for parents facilitating discussions on:

- early communication skills
- role of play
- importance of parental participation.

The co-workers are often the first point of contact for many minority ethnic families. This has led to the co-working model to become a powerful partnership and allowed the department to adapt the services to meet the needs of minority ethnic clients. This model has evolved over the last eight years and is now being looked at by other health organisations.

The co-working parent programme is being considered for evaluation in conjunction with City University and Association For All Speech Impaired Children (AFASIC).
User involvement and user-led initiatives

In implementing services you should also consider user involvement and user-led initiatives. Existing research has shown that user involvement and user-led initiatives are important because minority ethnic users are more likely to participate in services that:

- originate from user ideas
- have them playing a role in the management and in the delivery of the service.

Step 4: you need to monitor and review

You will need to monitor and review your local services on a regular basis. To help you to develop your own effective monitoring systems including monitoring by ethnic groups, you need to consider:

- consultation and feedback from all client groups
- confidentiality
- self-classification and
- effectiveness
- review of monitoring and evaluation systems and updating and changes where appropriate and necessary.

You will need to discuss monitoring with all service users, potential service users, staff and volunteers as they will need to know:

- why ethnic records are being introduced
- what purpose they will serve
- what ethnic classification system will be used (see paragraphs 33 to 35 below)
- what opportunities service users and potential service users will have to check the accuracy of data recorded about them.

There needs to be a clear, sensitive rationale for collecting ethnic data and everyone involved needs to understand and accept the reasoning behind it. Service users must have the option of refusing to provide information.
Confidentiality

31 As with all personnel and user records you must ensure confidentiality of ethnic records and data is maintained. You will also need to make this widely known. In any monitoring exercise you undertake, it should not be possible to identify individuals from the data analysis and monitoring reports.

Self-classification

32 Information about ethnic origins should be collected through self-classification. Individual service users are best placed to complete the ethnic question themselves and decide which of the various ethnic categories suits them best. Ideally the ethnic question should be treated like any other question. It should not be presented as either more or less essential than any other information requested in the registration form. The categories on the form are those being used for the 2001 census. Programmes may want to collect additional data for themselves, for example on religious and cultural groups, to help them address the particular needs of their area.

Effectiveness

33 To ensure your ethnic monitoring systems are effective you will need to fulfil some key requirements. You should:

- clearly define the system and ensure the responsibility for its operation is held at a senior level in your organisation
- train all staff to use the system
- set targets and
- monitor response rates.
Once you have collected ethnic records you must monitor them. Monitoring should take place at all levels from the front line delivery of specific services to strategic planning across the programme.

You should regularly review how your services work in practice. You should be aware that members of minority ethnic communities are often reluctant to complain. Monitoring complaints may identify low numbers complaining in relative terms compared to other communities. It is important to get behind this to establish whether services are actually meeting needs, or whether communities have too low expectations of both services and/or whether anything will be done if they complain. The review should lead to action to address any problems that arise. Action might include:

- assessing the scope to address unmet needs
- talking things through with frontline staff, or
- trying out new approaches.

**Monthly progress check**

Our Sure Start delivery planning guidance requires you to provide information as a monthly progress check (on the monitoring form provided in the guidance), at the beginning of each month covering the previous month’s activities. The information to be supplied is at Annex B.

The ethnic classification at Annex B replaces the one in the previous Sure Start delivery planning guidance. This is to ensure that such data is collected on a basis consistent with the 2001 census categories. Department of Health, in co-operation with Office of National Statistics are actively promoting the whole of the Government to move to the new census categories to maintain consistency across service provision.

We understand that the setting up of such a system may be difficult in the beginning but this information on ethnic data will help you as well as us to ensure:

- that Sure Start serves all families in each of its catchment areas and
- that it reaches families who often have difficulty in accessing appropriate services.

**Evaluation**

As we said in Sure Start: a Guide for trailblazers, there will be a large-scale, national evaluation of Sure Start. This national evaluation will begin around April 2000. A development project that will research and recommend options for the shape of this evaluation is currently underway. How to monitor and evaluate whether Sure Start is effective in meeting the needs of all children, their families and carers in the Sure Start area will be a key design issue that the development project will consider. This will include methodology which covers minority ethnic groups. Guidance on how your own evaluations can dovetail with the national evaluation will be available later in the year.
Reaching minority ethnic children and or parents with disabilities

40 It may be doubly difficult to reach those families within the minority ethnic community where the child or parent has disabilities. As we said in the Sure Start delivery planning guidance we are considering the need for special guidance on disability issues.

Encouraging inclusiveness

41 Perhaps the most difficult task of all in ensuring services are welcoming and appropriate for all, is to ensure that all staff, volunteers and service users are aware of expected standards while using Sure Start services. Equal Opportunities policies should make clear that racism will not be tolerated.

42 Strategies need to be in place to support victims of harassment and to deal with racist behaviour. This can be very difficult when the service users themselves, or indeed young children display racism, but it must be tackled. For further help in this area you may want to consult one of the specialist organisations listed in Annex A.
Useful Resource Material

Action for racial equality in the early years: understanding the past, thinking about the present, planning for the future
Jane Lane, National Early Years Network Tel: 0171 607 9573

Family Centred, a study of the use of family centres by black families
Race Equality Unit Tel: 0171 278 2331

Quality in diversity in early learning
Early Childhood Education Forum (National Children's Bureau) Tel: 0171 843 6000

Ethnic Minorities in Britain, Diversity and Disadvantage
Policy Studies Institute Tel: 0171 468 0468

Consulting With Parents, guidelines for good practice
Mog Ball (National Early Years Network) Tel: 0171 607 9573

From Cradle to School, a practical guide to racial equality in early childhood, education and care
Commission for Racial Equality’s Tel: 0181 986 5488

Involving Communities in Urban and Rural Regeneration, a guide for practitioners
Department for Environment, Transport and Regions Tel: 01709 891318

On the Edge: minority Ethnic families caring for a severely disabled child
University of Bradford Ethnic Minority Studies Unit Tel:

Unlearning Discrimination in the early years (1998)
Babbette Brown, Trentham Books

All our Children
Babette Brown, Early Years Trainers Anti-Racist Network Tel: 0151 639 6136
Specialist Organisations

Race Equality Councils – local addresses available for the Commission for Racial Equality (see below)

REU (formerly the Race Equality Unit), Unit 27/28 Angel Gate, City Road, London EC1V 2PT, Tel: 0171 278 2331

Rural Race Equality Project, c/o National Association of Citizen’s Advice Bureaux, NACAB West region, 2nd Floor, Quintana Gate, Bartholomew street East, Exeter, EX4 3BH Tel 01392 425517

Early Years Trainers Anti-Racist Network (EYTARN), PO Box 28, Wallasey, Liverpool, CH45 9NP, Tel: 0151 639 6136

Black Childcare Network, c/o Hearsay, 17 Brownhill Road, Catford, London SE6 2EG

Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), Elliot House, 10/12 Allington Street, London SW1E 5EH, Tel: 0171 828 7022

Equality Learning Centre, 356 Holloway Road, London N7 6PA, Tel: 0171 700 8127

Local Authorities Race Relations Information Exchange (LARRIE), Layden House, 76/86 Turnmill Street, London EC1M 5QU, Tel: 0171 296 6779

Working Group Against Racism in Children’s Resources (WGARCR), 460 Wandsworth Road, London SW8 3LX, Tel: 0171 627 4594

African Caribbean Evangelical Alliance, 38-40 Kennington Park Road, London SE11 4RF, Tel: 0171 582 0228

The Advisory Council for the Education of Romany and other Travellers (ACERT), Moot House, The Stow, Harlow, Essex, CM20 3AG, Tel: 01279 418666

The Refugee Council, 3 Bondway, London SW8 1SJ, Tel: 0171 820 3000
Ethnic Breakdown (2001 census breakdown). Required for all children and new children seen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(a) White</th>
<th>(b) Mixed</th>
<th>(c) Asian or Asian British</th>
<th>(d) Black or Black British</th>
<th>(e) Other ethnic groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>British</td>
<td>White/Black Caribbean</td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>White/Black African</td>
<td>Pakistani</td>
<td>African</td>
<td>Any other ethnic group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other White</td>
<td>White/Asian</td>
<td>Bangladeshi</td>
<td>Any other black background within d</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Any other mixed background</td>
<td>Any other Asian background within c</td>
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