



15th October 2010

Local agencies listen to black and ethnic minority needs

Local communities and statutory agencies including Safer North Devon, met at the civic centre in Barnstaple this week to share the results of the recently completed Community Safety Mapping Project (CSMP) - a survey to determine the needs and concerns of 'harder-to-reach' Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) people across Devon and Torbay, undertaken between November 2009 and May 2010.

Over 60 people from local BME communities and statutory agencies gathered together to hear more about the project and to find out what local issues have been identified. Attendees had the opportunity to meet people from Devon's diverse communities and different organisations, to ask questions and give advice; and to share problems and possible solutions.

Key learnings from a report of the survey findings show:

- 60% of respondents reported that they trust the police and there were many positive comments about friendly and helpful police officers
- 81% of those interviewed said "yes" when asked if they feel safe living in Devon.
- 55% responded positively when asked if they feel part of the local community and 65% reported that they know their neighbours
- However, there is still a view among community groups that the police don't care about BME populations
- 36% of respondents also reported that they had experienced racial abuse or discrimination within the past year, pointing to a clearly unacceptable level of racism in Devon that requires a strong response from local authorities and their partners.

"This event was a celebration of the diverse communities of Devon and gave an important voice to local individuals and groups who are working hard to embrace living in Devon" said Rehab Farag, CSMP administrator. "It provided a platform for people to share their customs and any concerns they have linked with their own heritage."

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She added: "North Devon has a really vibrant BME community with lots of BME run community support groups being established, providing self help and a forum for statutory agencies to work together. This event in Barnstaple certainly demonstrated how much is going on locally."

Recommendations including increasing 3rd Party reporting of incidents, proactive promotion of images of diversity in Devon, and increased commitment to make outreach initiatives part of their mainstream work, from the report are already being championed by statutory agencies and existing partnerships across the area.

Safer North Devon Manager Amanda Palmer said: "This event gave us an opportunity to listen first hand to our local BME community and their needs and concerns. Police, councils and other partners, as Safer North Devon (All partner agencies) are committed to continuing our work with local BME communities, to assessing and where appropriate, acting on the outcomes of this report, to develop stronger links within the BME community and to increasing our understanding of local BME issues."

Further CSMP events are planned 11th October 2010 in Exeter and 18th October in Paignton.

The full CSMP report as well as a directory of support services for the BME communities of Devon can be found at: www.safernorthdevon.co.uk or on www.devongrapevine.ning.com

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Notes to Editors

- The CSMP survey was conducted in North Devon and Torbay between November 2009 and May 2010
- The CSMP team made up of Madina Eken, Rehab Farag, Sam Yakoob, Hamid Dowlatabady, Hulya Tinaslar and Anna Korula visited 44 towns across Devon and Torbay and held personal interviews with 265 BME individuals.
- 72 additional short questionnaires were also completed by 72 ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) under the supervision of their teachers
- 54% of respondents were originally from Turkish, Chinese, Bangladeshi and Philippine communities, now living in Devon and Torbay. The remaining were from a wide range of other EU and non EU countries including the Middle East, Russia and India.

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