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CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

NORTHUMBRIA CRIMINAL JUSTICE BOARD

"Criminal justice services and `customer satisfaction' within black and minority ethnic communities"

Report on Participant Action Research in the North East of England

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Abbreviations

BCS	British Crime Survey
BECON	Black and Ethnic Minorities Community Organisations Network
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
CJS	Criminal Justice System
CJSRU	Criminal Justice System Race Unit
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service
CREST	Compact for Race Equality in South Tyneside
DCA	Department of Constitutional Affairs
LCJB	Local Criminal Justice Board
NCJB	Northumbria Criminal Justice Board
OCJR	Office for Criminal Justice Reform
PAR	Participant Action Research
PFA	Police Force Area
VODA	Voluntary Organisations Development Agency
VONNE	Voluntary Organisations' Network North East
YOT	Youth Offending Team

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Executive summary

This report sets out the findings of an exploratory, qualitative study of criminal justice services and `customer satisfaction' within BME communities in the north east of England. The study focused especially on the lived experiences of BME communities and the relationship between different kinds of experience, encounters and interactions, and expressions of satisfaction with service provision. The research was informed and guided by Participant Action Research (PAR) principles, and based on a focus group methodology. In addition, the study has considered the potential transferability to the Northumbria Criminal Justice Board (NCJB) of a PAR model of co-inquiry, and makes suggestions concerning its value and utility to improving and developing NCJB consultative mechanisms and methods of public engagement with BME (and other) communities.

Summary of Findings

1. Most discussants were able to name at least 3 or 4 criminal justice services, and all focus groups mentioned the police service as one of their first responses. However, the roles of each of the criminal justice services was less well understood.
2. Some discussants also believed that `Parliament', `Immigration', `Social Services', `Victim Support', the `Army', the `European Court', `MI5' and `MI6' were part of the statutory criminal justice system.
3. Experiences and opinions of policing dominated focus group discussions with the effect that the police service is seen as the `face' of the CJS. This places a high priority on the need for good experiences and encounters with the police.
4. Discussants were generally positive about the police service, but geographical differences in policing styles and approaches – in terms of `friendliness' and `approachability' – were mentioned across the focus groups.
5. Discussants reported some reluctance to call the police because of low expectations of anything being done. This had the effect of pushing people further away from criminal justice services and looking for solutions from inside their communities.
6. Many discussants talked of the absence and elusiveness of `justice', often based on personal, past experiences or those of friends, family and neighbours.
7. Research discussants reported a variety of experiences of criminal justice services ranging from a police raid to vandalism of private property. Across this diversity of lived experiences, research participants struggled to recall a wholly positive experience of criminal justice service delivery.
8. Negative perceptions are often associated with response times, which in turn, impact on levels of confidence in the police service. Some discussants believed that poor response times were related to ethnicity, believing that non-English accents were identified (for different treatment) when reporting an incident.
9. Discussants recognised the value of reporting incidents but were reluctant to do so because the police often treated them with suspicion, or failed to resolve the incident for which they had been called. Consequently, reportage was widely used to obtain a crime reference number for insurance purposes.
10. A few discussants suggested that policing was over-burdened with bureaucracy and paperwork and were relatively sympathetic to the demands made on the police.
11. Racism, prejudice and discrimination in criminal justice service delivery was mostly `sensed' or `felt', although some discussants reported direct, personal experience of racism. Black African males described being frequently stopped and searched by the police, to the point in one instance where a discussant had stopped going out at weekends so as to avoid being arrested.

12. Discussants considered racism to be the outcome of either an endemically, racist society, or of the individual prejudices of frontline officers and civilian staff. Asian discussants tended to view racism as the product of low numbers of BME criminal justice personnel.
13. While much of the focus group discussion centred on local events, personal experiences and current concerns, participants positioned these within a broader frame of reference which took account of watershed events, such as 9/11 and the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry.
14. Across the focus groups there was an underlying feeling of anger and frustration at the extent of bad or prejudicial press coverage of ethnic minorities.
15. Many discussants articulated recognisable narratives which circulate largely as cultural mythologies of criminal justice services; they spoke, for example, of `prison luxury', `leniency in sentencing', a `(crime-free) golden age'.
16. Over the research period, 86 different people collectively spent 1100 minutes discussing the criminal justice system and its services. Despite this extensive dialogue, no reference was made by any of the discussants to being `satisfied' with service provision.
17. Participants drew on an extensive emotional vocabulary to describe their lived experience of criminal justice services. Emotional dispositions ranged from feeling scared, to being constantly worried, to being very, very disappointed.
18. Discussants contextualised their feelings about criminal justice services by positioning their emotions within broader socio-political and cultural conditions – a prevailing climate of counter-terrorism and the personal experience of fleeing an oppressive regime as an asylum seeker/refugee, for example.
19. Different feelings emerged depending on whether experiences were self-initiated by discussants (disappointment and frustration, for example), or were police-initiated (anger, upset and worry, for example).
20. Discussants held very firm ideas about what constitutes `good service' and what makes for the `good service provider'. These ideas included i) the qualities or attributes of good/poor service; ii) the principles which should guide the provision/delivery of criminal justice services; iii) the roles and responsibilities that criminal justice services are expected to, or do fulfil; iv) the results/products of criminal justice action and inaction.
21. Many discussants suggested that there were limits to the concept of `customer service' when applied to questions of criminal justice. This was regarded as especially pertinent in relation to complaints procedures.
22. Discussants raised a number of ideas for policy and practice solutions. These skills are valuable and should be encouraged in as far they make significant contributions to the resolution of experienced problems.
23. Many discussants talked of being `over-consulted', and suffering from `consultation-fatigue'. This had created a widespread scepticism that any action would follow from their participation in the research.

Summary of recommendations

1. The need to continue to work towards increasing and enhancing diversity within the criminal justice system workforce.
2. To regularly review *and* update diversity training, and to consider measures which hold practitioners to account for poor performance on this score.
3. Greater involvement *with* and *by* the community is suggested, including having more regular meetings and discussions about community needs, and more importantly, having a greater willingness to act on these things.
4. Great value is placed on `liaison workers' and their capacity to act as a resource for developing community liaison with the services and service-providers of the criminal justice system.

Transferability of PAR to the Northumbria CJB

1 Participants and participation

- The NCJB are well-placed to identify a sampling frame of participants for the purposes of PAR; these include but are not limited to:
  - Existing networks and contacts
  - Building links with gateway organisations
  - Using focused and targeted identification of participants using NCJB databases
  - Use of snowball techniques
- The key criteria for participation is to ensure that participants are eligible and have the specialist, `insider-knowledge' relevant to the project.
- Adequate funding and resources are essential to cover the costs which support participation.

2 Research and other collaborative endeavours

- Research-based models of co-inquiry are fraught with difficulties and can flounder for a number of reasons. NCJB would need to ensure:
  - Adequate commitment, time and resources sufficient to forge and nurture collaborative relationships
  - That the research is not compromised by the presence of `ineligible' participants
  - That the PAR project does not duplicate or overlap with existing collaborative activities
- Other models of PAR-informed work can be considered; these include:
  - Citizens juries
  - Scenario workshops
  - Experiential workshops
  - Networking action research
  - Chinese traditions

3 `Action': knowledge and transformation

- Given PAR's philosophical commitment to the `advancement of knowledge', the NCJB should be prepared to act on the output of PAR. However, it is important to establish at outset *whose* knowledge, and *which* knowledge is to be advanced.
- The NCJB should be prepared to use the knowledge and insights yielded by PAR to initiate change in policy and practice.

1 Overview of research

1.1 This study sets out to explore the conditions of emergence regarding satisfaction with criminal justice services in respect of black and minority ethnic (BME) communities in the Northumbria Criminal Justice Board (NCJB) area (incorporating the jurisdictional areas of Northumbria Police, the Crown Prosecution Service Northumbria, the National Probation Service Northumbria, regional areas of Her Majesty's Courts Service, HM Prison Service, regional Youth Offending Teams and the Legal Services Commission). Given the range of services within which satisfaction will be explored and the range of black and minority ethnic (BME) communities living in the region this study cannot offer a complete analysis. Instead it hopes to provide valuable knowledge of the diversity of lived experiences of criminal justice services within BME communities in the region, with the aim of exploring the relationship between these experiences and expressions of satisfaction with the services delivered by the many different facets of the NCJB. The over-use of the term 'satisfaction' will also be examined with the intention of unpacking cultural conceptions of the term within BME communities, situating this emotion alongside other possible feelings of confidence, trust, frustration, even anger with criminal justice services. Further aims of this project include providing the NCJB with recommendations to address the 'satisfaction gap' and to improve engagement with BME communities. The study will be developed primarily through the use of action research methodology; the use of this method provides a collaborative resource (Winter, 1989) whereby the participants in the research are also recruited as co-researchers. This can be of benefit to communities, especially minority communities, due to the ability of action research methods "to empower and to foster social change" (Johnson, 1996: 536). To summarise, the research aims and objectives are as follows:

1.2 Research aims and objectives

1. To identify the diversity of lived experiences of criminal justice services within BME communities in the Northumbria PFA.
2. To explore the relationship between different kinds of experience, encounters and interactions, and expressions of satisfaction with service delivery.
3. To position the concept of satisfaction within an emotional repertoire of service quality and use, and to use this positioning to critically explore the relationship of satisfaction with other feelings such as trust, confidence, anger and frustration.
4. To make use of an action research methodology to produce a grounded, qualitative understanding of satisfaction (and related emotions) with criminal justice services within BME communities.
5. To develop recommendations for NCJB use regarding the remedial work necessary to address the `satisfaction gap'.
6. To improve engagement with BME communities by exploring the potential transferability and applicability of the methodology for NCJB use: for example, to consider its potential as an embryonic `citizens' jury' approach to fostering community links and civic participation.

2 Literature review

2.1 This study seeks to explore the relationship between different kinds of lived experiences of black and minority ethnic (BME) communities, including encounters and interactions as well as expressions of `satisfaction' with the services provided by the agencies of the Northumbria Local Criminal Justice Board. In discussing experiences and expressive accounts of criminal justice services, it is unavoidable that encounters with the police service dominate the literature available on this topic, including both qualitative studies and large scale, quantitative `consumer attitude' surveys currently used to measure satisfaction. In examining community dynamics with the criminal justice system (CJS) as a whole, the seven services that make up the CJS would ideally, at least, each require a chapter to explore how their respective services are described and viewed by BME communities. Unfortunately, the constraints placed on this study with regards to time and space means that to go into detail of minorities' engagement with all these services can only provide the briefest of overviews. In order to explore the rich detail provided by the participants in greater depth it will therefore predominantly concentrate on interactions with the police service although noting experiences of other criminal justice agencies where appropriate and relevant. Indeed, Bowling and Phillips assert that relationships with the police help to *explain* ethnic minority attitudes towards the CJS as a whole (2002:128); it is, after all, this service that is seen as the 'face' of the CJS, where experiences, interactions and encounters are typically the most frequent.

2.2 The literature review will cover four key areas relating to the relationship between BME communities and the CJS and the way in which this relationship is understood. Firstly, the relationship between BME communities and the CJS will be examined, in particular noting the significant changes that have been brought about following the Macpherson Report (1999). Second, a brief 'statistical snapshot' of current BME experience with the CJS will be sketched out before moving on to thirdly, set out some of the broad problems associated with this form of statistical analysis. Fourthly, and relatedly, the literature review considers the significant difficulties associated with the measurement of encounters and experiences specific to minority ethnic groups. To summarise, the literature review will explore the following key areas:

1. BME Communities and the CJS (Section 3)
2. A `statistical snapshot' of BME `experience (Section 4)
3. Re-thinking the over-used term `satisfaction' (Section 5)
4. Measuring BME encounters with the CJS (Section 6)

3 BME communities and the criminal justice system

3.1 The inquiry into the death of Stephen Lawrence, which was followed by the Macpherson Report (1999), served to highlight the extent of institutional racism embedded in the Metropolitan and other police services. The process of criminalization of black people from the point of arrest, through to the courts and prisons has long been documented (Gordon, 1983; Hall, 1978; Dholakia and Sumner, 1993). However, the idea of an organically experienced, *institutional* racism had previously been rejected by successive governments in favour of individualistic explanations, such as the `few bad apples' theory proposed by Scarman (Scarman, 1981)[1]. Despite being `greeted with a wave of adulation' (Kettle and Hodges, 1982: 208) in some quarters, most notably within the political establishment, Scarman had a mixed reception elsewhere with Gilroy (1987) suggesting that the report was `fundamentally flawed' and reproduced racist pathologies. Bridges (1982) noted that Scarman had not addressed the anger of black communities towards the police, and had failed to consider how such anger was rooted in a perception of oppressive police practices. Similarly, Howe (1988) argued that Scarman had failed to `grasp the nettle' in key areas of service provision most notably the application of police powers, the investigation of complaints against the police, and police accountability.

3.2 Despite proposals put forward in the early 1980's intending to `ensure that the police operate not only within in the law but with the support of the community as a whole' (Scarman, 1981:para. 4.60 cited in Bowling & Philips, 2002:17) further loss of confidence and trust in the police by ethnic minority communities has continued to occur (Cross and Smith, 1987; Campbell, 1993; Solomos, 1993; Bradford Commission, 1996; Panayi, 1996; Bowling, 1999). The Macpherson Report, therefore, was highly significant in its intention to bring about change in the service and to increase public trust and confidence in the police. Not only were the police services brought into the ambit of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, with its aim to eliminate unlawful discrimination, but the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry was also the impetus for the development of policing diversity policies whereby an anti-racism theme became central to the police position (Rowe, 2004:140-1).

3.3 It is not for this study to debate the extent and effectiveness of police reform policies, or make any assessment of service provision in the post-Macpherson era. However, the Macpherson report did create a watershed for the importance placed on building trust and confidence in the police within BME communities and, as this literature review will go on to argue in more detail, satisfaction with the service received from police is inextricably linked to affective attachments to, and levels of engagement with the criminal\ justice process as a whole.

[1] A public inquiry, chaired by Lord Scarman, was set up in 1981 to investigate a series of riots and disorder which occurred in Bristol, Brixton, Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham and other towns and cities between 1980 and 1981.

4 A 'statistical snapshot' of BME experience

4.1 Satisfaction with the services of the CJS is typically measured both generally and specifically by the British Crime Survey (BCS) in its annual sweep of people aged 16 and over and living in England and Wales. This large scale survey of victims' experiences of, and attitudes towards, crime and justice seeks not only to collect information on crimes committed against an individual or their property, but is also used to measure fear of crime, confidence in the criminal justice process, and attitudes towards the police and other criminal justice agencies (Home Office, 2001:vii). Problems with this form of statistical analysis will be discussed later in sections 5 and 6 – see also, Turner *et al*, 2006 and 2007. However, despite the epistemological and conceptual limitations of BCS findings, it is *this* statistical information that is typically used to describe BME experience with the CJS. The findings from the latest BCS, along with a range of other relevant official statistics, are briefly presented here so as to at least provide a 'statistical snapshot' of the 'experience' of people from BME groups as users of the CJS.

4.2 At the time of writing the latest Criminal Justice System Race Unit (CJSRU) findings covered the year 2004-2005; these statistics continue to show that BME communities are over-represented in the criminal justice process although they remain under-represented as practitioners and professionals within the police service and the other agencies of the criminal justice system. Minority groups are less likely than White people to be confident that they will receive fair treatment from the CJS (CJSRU, 2006: iii). Compared to members of the White population, minority groups are significantly more likely to worry about being a victim of burglary, car crime or violent crime (CJSRU, 2006: 4), this is perhaps unsurprising as there is a higher risk of being a victim of crime for mixed ethnic groups compared to the White population (CJSRU, 2006:iv). Similarly BME groups are more likely to be the victim of a racially-motivated attack (CJSRU, 2006: 5). However, people from Asian and 'Other' ethnic groups are most likely to describe the criminal justice services as doing an 'excellent' or 'good' job, especially with regards to the service they receive from the police (CJSRU, 2006: 26). This creates a complex and somewhat contradictory picture, since (and despite perceptions of `good service'), findings from the Home Office Citizenship Survey 2005[2] report higher levels of perceived discrimination amongst BME groups - 33% of the Black population, 29% of the Mixed and 21% of the Asian population, compared to just 5% of the White population.

4.3 Similarly, despite perceptions of discrimination, research commissioned by the Office for Criminal Justice Reform (OCJR) and the Department of Constitutional Affairs (DCA)[3], whilst being small-scale and unrepresentative,

[2] The Home Office Citizenship Survey is a biennial survey asking a representative sample of 10,000 respondents in England and Wales for their views and experiences in relation to a range of issues, including racial prejudice. There is a minority ethnic booster sample of 5,000 to ensure that BME views are robustly represented – see Home Office, 2005b.

[3] Department of Constitutional Affairs, 2005; Murphy *et al*, 2005); Jansson, 2006.

has found that Black people were more willing than both Asian and White groups to show a strong interest in criminal justice system activities, and were also more willing to get involved. At the same time, the study found that Asian groups were more willing than White people and Black minority groups to get involved with victim and witness support schemes (CJSRU, 2006: 28). In Table 1, a comprehensive series of statistics and key points in relation to BME experiences and perceptions of the criminal justice system are presented.

4.4 It is acknowledged that Local Criminal justice Boards (LCJBs) `need to understand BME groups' experiences of the CJS in their area' in order to deliver a fair and effective system to these BME communities (CJSRU, 2006:30). This study asserts that in order to effectively achieve this there needs to be a greater qualitative understanding of the 'lived experiences' of these communities, whereby the concept of 'satisfaction' is positioned within a broader emotional repertoire of service quality and use, and is contextualised in relation to interactions with and knowledge of criminal justice services.

Table 1: BME experiences and perceptions of the CJS

The experiences of people from BME groups as users (victims and witnesses) of the CJS	**Source**
There are variations in the risks of victimisation across ethnic groups, with those from `Mixed' ethnic groupings facing significantly higher risks than White people: 29% of `Mixed' ethnicities reported being victimised once or more, compared to 24% Whie; 26% Asian/Asian british; 24% Black/Black British; 23% Chinese and other	Nicholas *et al*, 2005; CJSRU, 2006
When age is controlled for, the difference in risk of victimisation between BME and White groups disappears	Salisbury & Upson, 2004
BME groups are at greater risk of personal crime compared with White people, but not of household crime	Salisbury & Upson, 2004
Ethnicity is not independently associated with risk of victimisation for either personal or all violent incidents. Other factors such as age, sex, frequency of visiting pubs and bars, living in areas with (perceived) high-levels of anti-social behaviour and maritial status, were the stronger predictors of risk of victimisation	Jansson, 2006
People from BME groups are significantly more likely than White people and `Mixed' ethnic groups to be worried about burglary, car crime and violent crime	CJSRU, 2006; Jansson, 2006
BCS estimates of racially motivated crime for 2004/5 suggest 179,000 incidents (including those on White people); this is lower than the number of incidents estimated for BCS 2002/3 ie 206,000	Nicholas *et al*, 2005
Police statistics suggest a different pattern, with recorded racist incidents increasing from just over 10,000 in 1996/7, to nearly 50,000 recorded incidents in 1999/00, and continuing to rise steadily to 58,000 incidents recorded in 2004/5. The rise in recorded incidents is considered to be the outcome of encouragement by all agencies and community groups for better reporting by victims, and improved police recording practices, rather than an actual rise in the number of incidents.	Salisbury & Upson, 2004; CJSRU, 2006
Of the 37,028 incidents recorded by the police as racially-motivated, 61% were harassment; 24% were crimes against the person, such as wounding and assault; and 15% were criminal damage offences.	Salisbury & Upson, 2004; CJSRU, 2006
In 2002, just over a third (36%) of racially-aggravated offences were cleared up by the police, a better clear-up rate than for non-racially aggravated offences (30%).	Burnley and Rose, 2002

In 2002, only a small number (4,409) offenders were cautioned or convicted by the courts for racially-aggravated offences. This finding may reflect the difficulty of proving racial aggravation in court	Burnley and Rose, 2002
Excluding the 172 homicides of White people killed by Harold Shipman, and the 20 Chinese people killed at Morecambe Bay, in the three years 2002-2005, Black people were 5.5 times more likely, and Asian people 1.8 times as likely than White people, to be victims of homicide	CJSRU, 2006
While the risk of homicide for White people was similar for males and females and all age groups, Black victims were predominantly young men, and a third (32%) were victims of firearms compared with 5% of White homicide victims.	Bullock & Tilley, 2002
The experiences of people from BME groups as suspects, defendants and prisoners	**Source**
People from BME groups are over-represented at each stage of the criminal justice process from initial contact to sentencing. Additional evidence suggests that over-representation is not because people from BME groups are more likely to offend.	Sharp & Budd, 2005; Aust & Smith, 2003; CJSRU, 2006
BME groups' over-representation is not unique to England and Wales, but is evidenced consistently in international reviews of criminal justice systems	Junger-Tas & Marshall, 1999
Self-report studies suggest that the levels of offending reported by Black respondents were either similar or lower than those reported by White respondents	Sharp & Budd, 2005
In relation to self-reported offending in the previous year, Black male respondents were significantly less likely than White respondents to have committed an offence.	Sharp & Budd, 2005
In relation to self-reported offending, the lifetime offending rate for Black respondents was significantly lower compared to White respondents.	Sharp & Budd, 2005
In 2004/5, 839,977 stops and searches (under s1 PACE, 1984 and other legislation) were recorded by the police; this represents an increase on the previous year of 14%. However, the increase was experienced differentially across all ethnic groups – White people (+15%); Black people (+9%); Asian people (+11%); `Other ethnic group' (+25%)	CJSRU, 2006
Expressed as a rate per 1,000 population, Black people are 6 times more likely to be searched than White people, and Asians are twice as likely than White people to be searched. The pattern and level of disproportionality has remained relatively constant over time, even though the number of searches recorded by the police has varied.	CJSRU, 2006
In 2004/5, in the Northumbria Police Force Area, persons stopped and searched under s1 PACE, 1984, and other legislation, per 1,000 population were recorded as 12 (Asian); 18 (Black); 20 (White). This suggests far less disproportionality than evidenced in the national picture, with Asian groups being stopped and searched far less often than both Black and White people.	CJSRU, 2006; Hearnden & Hough, 2004
237,337 people were cautioned in 2004. Relative to the number of persons arrested, Black people were less likely to be cautioned (13%) than both White (17%) and Asian people (16%). There are a number of reasons for this, not least that a caution or reprimand can only be given where an offender admits the offence. Research suggests that Black people are less likely to admit to an offence for which they have been arrested.	CJSRU, 2006; Phillips & Brown, 1998
Statutory charging was implemented on a phased basis, and completed across all 42 CPS areas in April 2006. An initial race and gender impact assessment of charging decisions was undertaken in two areas of London, and no ethnic differential was found. The CPS recently completed an Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment, and the report was published in May 2006	CJSRU, 2006

There are no comprehensive data on proceedings at either magistrates' courts or the Crown Court. Where statistics are available, the level of missing data is high (more than 20%) making findings unreliable. For those police force areas where missing data is 15% or less, data suggests that in 2004 BME groups were more likely than White people to be committed at magistrates' court to be tried by a jury at the crown Court (20% for Black people; 30% for Asians; and 15% for White people); this finding is consistent over time. Earlier research suggests, however, that this reflects the wishes of BME defendants.	Fitzgerald, 1993; Barclay and Mhlanga, 2000; John, 2003; HM Crown Prosecution Inspectorate, 2002;
In 2004, at Crown Court, BME defendants were substantially more likely to be acquitted than White defendants; 29% for Black people; 30% for Asians; and 22% for White people. Research by the CPS suggests a tendency for the police to bring charges against Black and Asian defendants with a weaker threshold of evidence.	John, 2003
A major study in the early 1990s (Hood, 1992), into the impact of ethnicity on sentencing, found that adult male Black defendants were slightly more likely to be sentenced to custody than White defendants, and Asian defendants slightly less likely. A more recent study of young offenders (aged 12 to 17 years) showed no evidence of significant differences in the likelihood of Black, Mixed race or White male youths receiving a custodial sentence. Asian males, however, were more likely to receive a custodial sentence; and Black males, if sentenced to custody, were more likely to get a longer sentence than their White counterparts.	Hood, 1992; Feilzer and Hood, 2004
Asian offenders were most likely of all offenders found guilty at court, to be fined	CJSRU, 2006
Research on the experiences of BME young people dealt with by Youth offending Teams (YOTs) shows that there were higher proportions of young Black people committing some offences and receiving certain disposals than in the general population.	Feilzer and Hood, 2004
In Probation, there is an over-representation of Black offenders. 6% of persons starting court order supervision in the last quarter of 2004 were Black, compared to 4% for Asians, 2% for Mixed and 1% for Chinese and Other ethnic groups.	CJSRU, 2006
On 30 June, 2005, there were 76,190 people in prison establishments, of which 18,753 (25%) were from BME groups. Nearly two-fifths (36%) of BME prisoners were foreign nationals – these are included in the total number of 18,753 from BME groups.	CJSRU, 2006
For British nationals, the proportion of Black prisoners on 30 June 2005, relative to the population, was five times higher than for White people. Similarly, people from Mixed ethnic backgrounds were more than twice as likely to be in prison than their White counterparts. In contrast, people from Chinese and Other ethnic backgrounds were least likely to be in prison. 0.5 compared to 1.4 and 1.5 per 1,000 population for White and Asian groups respectively.	CJSRU, 2006
No evidence has been found for differential treatment of people from BME groups on release from prison.. The rate at which prisoners have been released on Home Detention Curfew in 2002 has been found to be similar across ethnic groupings; research on the decisions of the Parole Board likewise found no evidence of differential treatment	Home Office, 2003; Moorthy, Cahalin and Howard, 2004
A study of prisoners released in 2002 showed a lower reconviction rate (over 2 years post-release) for BME offenders. For example, in 2001, 62% of White prisoners were reconvicted within 2 years of release; for Black, South Asian and Other ethnic groups, the proportions were 56%, 46% and 46% respectively.	Home Office, 2005a
There has been a slight increase in deaths in police custody over the period 2003 to 2005 – 100 to 106 deaths. For BME groups overall, the number of deaths remain constant; however, for Black people, the number of deaths in custody has fallen from 16 (2002/3), to 7 (2003/4) to 4 (2004/5).	CJSRU, 2006

Confidence in the Criminal Justice System among people from BME groups	Source
In general, Asian people and those from `Other' ethnic groups were the most likely to rate the criminal justice agencies as doing a good or excellent job.	Nicholas *et al*, 2005; Jansson, 2006
For all ethnic groups, levels of satisfaction were considerably higher for the police services, and comparatively lower for Youth Courts	
BME groups have much higher levels of perceived discrimination than the White population. In 2005, 33% of the Black population, 29%of the `Mixed' ethnic population, and 21% of the Asian population felt that the police would discriminate against them, compared to just 5% of the White population	Home Office, 2005b
Similar views were held of the Prison Service, the Courts, CPS, Probation Service, although to a slightly lesser extent.	Home Office, 2005b
Based on a composite measure of discrimination across all criminal justice agencies, 31% of people from BME groups felt that they would be treated worse than people of other races by one or more of the five criminal justice organisations. However, this percentage has decreased from 31% (2003) to 28% (2005)	CJSRU, 2006; Page, Wake and Hill (2004)
Knowledge and awareness of criminal justice activities is generally lower among ethnic minorities, especially Asian people. However, other research suggests that Black people are more likely than White and Asian groups to show a strong interest in CJS activities and are also more willing to get involved.	DCA, 2005
Asians are more willing than White people to get involved with victims and witness support schemes.	CJSRU, 2006
In general, BME groups are less likely to have reported a crime to the police, and less likely to have any experience of court.	CJSRU, 2006

5 Re-thinking the over-used term 'satisfaction'

5.1 General and specific measures of `customer satisfaction' and the quality of criminal justice services are routinely reported in annual sweeps of the British Crime Survey (BCS). Despite its significance as the primary tool for measuring levels of satisfaction, the BCS is a relatively blunt and limited instrument for understanding the complexity of `satisfaction' and how it is qualitatively experienced and expressed within and across different socio-cultural constituencies. For example, key questions relating to satisfaction ask `how well the criminal justice system performs in relation to …', and include the following variants: effort, response time, provision of information, level of interest shown, fair treatment (Home Office, 2000: 46). Such markers of `satisfaction' assume a series of shared expectations of what counts as effective service delivery, and they provide an unreflexive frame of reference within which assessments of satisfaction can be made. Yet these aspects may not be the most relevant to measuring levels of `customer satisfaction', and may be at odds with the kinds of experiences and interactions which actually initiate feelings of `satisfaction'. In addition, the multiple indicators of `satisfaction' represented in BCS data may only measure the effectiveness and performance of different criminal justice services rather than how a heterogeneous public *feel* about them. In other words, `satisfaction' is not the only possible emotional response to engagement with the criminal justice system - nor is it necessarily the most significant.

5.2 The problems involved with recording and measuring crime have been well documented (Maguire, 2002; Shah & Pease, 1992; Walker, 1983), and these are only exacerbated when the focus is placed on assessments of affective and subjective experiences and concerns. Moreover, the Home Office Research Unit has also been subjected to sustained critique for its `fact factory' delivery of statistics which `produce an overdetermined descriptive criminology, deprived of any social/human dimension' (Presdee, 2004:276). In addition to arguments that cast doubt on the ability of closed, survey-based questions to elicit meaningful answers and subjective perspectives (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2001), Sherman (2003) makes the further argument that citizens' emotional responses to criminal justice is not always what is *expected.* An example of this comes from Jones' (2002) study whereby a victim of violence explains how the criminal process had not resulted in satisfaction: `I mean you go to court, you're getting them locked up – you know what I'm saying – for what they did to you, but like that ain't no satisfaction' (in Sherman, 2003:9).

5.3 Emotions such as trust, fear, pleasure, remorse, resentment, confidence, shame and satisfaction are, therefore, deeply implicated in all fields of criminological enquiry, and all aspects of criminal justice processes and practices (de Hann & Loader, 2002). It is due to the complexity of, and relationship between states of emotional arousal, that quantitative methods of 'measuring' emotions, such as fear of crime, 'leaves much to be desired' (Farrall and Ditton, 1999: 56). Survey data does not provide a good measurement of the *feelings* and sentiments held by individuals towards crime

or the criminal justice services. Furthermore, Ferraro and LeGrange argue that surveys do not provide for or account for '*variation* in emotional reaction' (1987:75 *Emphasis added*): there are other possible emotional responses, apart from satisfaction and confidence, such as anger, disgust, disappointment and frustration. Such feelings remain undetected by limited and narrowly predicated tools of survey measurement. Similarly, in the same way that the term 'fear of crime' may have different meanings both for researchers and respondents (Pain, 2000:367), so 'satisfaction' can be assumed to take on different meanings depending on an individual's expectations (which in turn would be dependent on age, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status etc).

5.4 The Northumbria Local Criminal Justice Board is currently working with Newcastle University to critically (re-)examine the ways in which an affective state of confidence is conceptualised within the `general confidence measure' and other survey indicators (Turner *et al* 2006, 2007). The early findings from this important deconstructive work suggests the need to develop an alternative epistemological framework capable of capturing the complexity of affective attachments to criminal justice services. Though these insights are generated in relation to the notion of public confidence in criminal justice, the epistemological standpoint is equally applicable to questions of satisfaction (or any emotional disposition). Thus, in eschewing the widespread use of the term `drivers', Turner *et al* suggest:

> A key limitation of thinking in terms of drivers is that this approach is not subtle enough to distinguish between the components and attributes of CJS activity in which the public seek to have confidence (which can be thought of as the 'objects' of confidence) and the conditions shaping how the public make judgements about these (which can be thought of as the 'conditions' for confidence). Much of the literature on public confidence tends to merge together objects and conditions under the catch-all label of driver ….. By distinguishing between important objects on the one hand, and the conditions under which confidence is gained or damaged on the other, it should be possible to obtain a more nuanced understanding of what underpins public confidence….. Thinking in this way shifts the emphasis of the research away from a cause and effect-oriented idea of 'drivers' and towards a recognition in research of the complexity of confidence (2007: 15).

6 Measuring BME encounters with the criminal justice system

6.1 The over-use of simplistic measures of 'satisfaction' with aspects of the criminal justice system encounters further problems when applied to quantifying the experiences of members of black and minority ethnic communities. Tyler and Huo argue that due to the different emotional contexts and previous legal treatment of minority groups throughout history, BME groups are likely to have different reactions to contacts with the criminal justice system compared to majority citizens (2002: Part IV in Sherman, 2003:9-10). As previously mentioned, the Lawrence Inquiry created a significant impact on the 'race/crime debate' which involved a 'shifting of terms' from focusing on comparisons between ethnic minorities and white people – and in particular *which* ethnic minority communities are more/less likely to offend - towards an exploration of the *experiences* of ethnic minorities who have been a victim of crime.

6.2 It has been suggested that this shift in the discourse represents an attempt to consolidate the 'linkages between crime, criminal justice process, and its broader historical and social contexts' (Philips and Bowling, 2002:579). Indeed, since 2001, the BCS has included an ethnic minority 'booster sample' intended to enable the "comparison of their experience and attitudes with those of the white majority" (Home Office, 2001: vii). This highlights the further problem that demographically based groupings tend to dominate the analysis of data; the experiences of black and minority ethnic participants are compared against white experiences and attitudes, and these are uncritically assumed as the norm, or the yardstick against which all other encounters are to be assessed. At the same time, very little attention has been paid to `within-group' diversity which could potentially yield new or different insights on the nuanced and multi-faceted nature of the `lived experiences' of BME groups. Shallice and Gordon argue that it is these 'lived experiences' which highlight a disjuncture between empirical research[4] and the `large numbers of people who readily assert the opposite, largely (though not unimportantly) on the basis of anecdotal, personal and collective experience' (1990:31).

6.3 In the light of the foregoing, this exploratory research suggests the need for a qualitative framework of inquiry capable of capturing the complex relationship between `lived experiences' of and interactions with criminal justice service(s), and the articulation of an emotional vocabulary of satisfaction.

[4] Shallice and Gordon are here referring to findings emerging from empirical research of sentencing practices.

7 Capturing diversity: epistemological and methodological frameworks

7.1 Participant action research

7.1.1 This study seeks to explore the lived experiences and conditions of emergence of BME communities' `satisfaction' with (and other affective dispositions towards) local criminal justice services. This section will outline the epistemological and methodological frameworks of inquiry which inform the design and implementation of the research, and in particular will discuss the importance of adopting an `inclusive' approach based on Participant Action Research (PAR) principles. The utility, value and limitations of epistemological and methodological choices are critically examined, along with a consideration of the politico-ethical issues raised by the use of PAR. In addition, the section outlines the sampling methodology and considers questions of access and representativeness in relation to the qualitative research process. The section concludes with an outline of the use of focus groups as the principal means of data collection.

7.1.2 `Action research' is invariably used as an umbrella term for participatory and action-oriented approaches to research practice (Dick, 2006: 44). Moreover, there is no single paradigm of action research, and it would be more accurate to suggest the existence of a *family* of approaches and practices which share a common concern to undertake research *with* rather than *on* people (Bradbury and Reason, 2003; Brydon-Miller *et al*, 2004; Cooke and Cox, 2005; McNiff and Whitehead, 2006; O'Leary, 2006; Whitehead and McNiff, 2006). `Action research' also denotes a political orientation to the research process, and has been defined most recently as:

> A participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes, grounded in a participatory world-view. It seeks to reconnect action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people. More generally it grows out of a concern for the flourishing of individual persons and their communities (Reason and Bradbury, 2001: 1).

7.1.3 Furthermore, advocates of `action research' tend to emphasise the presence of a number of core, and essential elements – that is, to count as `action research', research practice should be that which is `grounded in lived experience, developed in partnership, addresses significant problems, works with (rather than simply studies) people, develops new ways of seeing/interpreting the world (ie. theory), and leaves infrastructure in its wake' (Bradbury and Reason, 2003: 156). This kind of normativity is helpful, but it also promotes an idealistic view of `action research', in terms of what is regarded as achievable in both political and theoretical terms. This is not to argue `against idealism', but to caution against the view that `action research' serves as an epistemological panacea for all seasons.

7.1.4 All this said, given the aims and objectives of the current research, an action research orientation fulfils the needs of a study which first, seeks to capture the *diversity* and *emotionality* of lived experiences within BME communities in the Northumbria CJB area; and second, expects to do so through a deliberative engagement with the communities themselves. In addition, as discussed above in Section 5, there is an assumed meaning of what counts as 'satisfaction'; and this is compounded when examining the 'satisfaction' experienced by specific communities – BME communities in this instance -where the assumed nature of those communities is taken as self-evident. As highlighted by Chui and Knight, the meaning of 'ethnicity' can often go unexamined with the effect that `many researchers recruit, group and comment on their 'ethnic subjects' uncritically' (1999:100). As a report by the Quest (2004) notes, people often do not like to be classed as a 'BME group', and argue instead that they all have different cultural or language needs, as well as each ethnic group facing different forms of disadvantage (Brah,1992). The use of a qualitative approach, grounded in participant's lived experiences of criminal justice services, and guided by PAR principles, can provide insights into the nature of 'satisfaction' from a more nuanced perspective. Moreover, PAR's insistence on the involvement of `community' members as co-researchers facilitates research 'with' BME groups as opposed to 'on' them (Jackson, 2002).

7.2 Sampling and the issue of representativeness

7.2.1 Due to the small-scale, exploratory nature of this research, this study cannot provide a complete analysis or, and importantly, achieve representativeness. However, it can aim to capture the *diversity* of experiences within and across BME communities through a combination of purposive and theoretical sampling techniques. This relies on the use of a reconceptualised 'sampling unit', in the form of alternative 'dynamic units' (Gobo, 2004) which create a more fluid and adaptable unit of analysis. Gobo argues against the 'representative' sampling of individual or easily identifiable collective units arguing that, `the consistency of these units is not very real' (2004: 413). He further suggests that the focus on dynamic units provides the researcher with more easily observable and detectable social processes as well as allowing `a more direct and deeper analysis of the observed characteristics' (*ibid*: 414), thus enabling the study to capture a greater diversity of experience.

7.2.2 As previously mentioned this study seeks to explore 'within-group' diversity across and between different BME communities residing in the Northumbria CJB area. Emphasis should perhaps be placed on divergent experiences instead of ethnic groupings; the social construction of identity cannot be based on race alone and instead should be understood in combination with the intersecting dynamics of class, age and gender (Bradley, 1996; Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1993). This study will, therefore, borrow from Philips and Bowling to propose the idea of 'unities within diversity'; this proposition captures the need to move beyond black-white dualisms, without obscuring other subjectivities, and providing instead a greater understanding of the diverse social, historical, cultural and socio-economic experiences amongst minorities in Britain (2003:271-272).

7.2.3 However, just as 'race' and `ethnicity' cannot be divided into 'white' and 'black' groups, so the concept of 'British' and 'non–British' ethnicities also becomes problematised. This study is specifically looking at the experiences of '*visible* ethnic minority groups' but it should be noted that 'non – British' ethnicities, such as Irish or more currently Polish migrants, are still subject to social disadvantage. These ethnic groups, Gillborn (2006) argues, are not easily identifiable as 'other'; although they are 'white', and in a 'white world' they still face discrimination in that they are 'non – British'. This highlights the fluid nature of ethnic identity. At the same time, it can be argued that an individual's awareness of their ethnicity is not constant throughout their lifetime and `emerges only in specific contexts in which … it assumes significance as an aspect of individual experience' (Allen, 1994 in Bradley, 1996: 137). For a white person this is indeed likely to be the case; as Gillborn goes on to assert, since a white person is often not aware of their cultural or racial identity due to its mundane nature:

> they see only the 'world', its white-ness is invisible to them because the racialized nature of politics, policing, education and every other sphere of public life is so deeply ingrained that it has become normalized – un-remarked and taken for granted (2006:319).

7.2.4 In contrast, however, black and ethnic minority experiences of living in 'whiteworld' are likely to be completely different due to the significance their ethnicity plays on their everyday experience. Using Gilborn's example of the racial profiling on the London underground system, this series of events may be insignificant to a white person who walks through unchecked, but is likely to be deeply significant to the young Asian man who gets stopped and searched every morning on his way to work.

7.3 Focus group methodology

7.3.1 Focus groups are increasingly used in social science research as a means of eliciting the views, opinions and experiences of a target population regarding a specific set of issues (Barbour and Kitzinger, 1999). One of the advantages of using focus groups is to explore the 'dynamics' of these views and opinions as participants interact with each other, as opposed to the more static way these attitudes are often presented in questionnaire studies (Morgan, 1988). Further to examining the dynamics of expression, this study seeks to question and explore the very concept of 'satisfaction', the basic epistemological questions of which are invariably assumed in survey research.

7.3.2 Focus groups provide a means to challenge these assumptions, allowing participants to bring the issues that they deem to be important and significant into the discussion (Culley *et al*, 2007:102.), which in turn provides a chance to gain a wider understanding of community perceptions (Waterson and Wynne,1999). Due to the interactive nature of this method, other group members are able to comment on these issues, raise questions, challenge opinion, mediate disagreements and share experiences (Barbour and Kitzinger, 1999). However, a focus group is a contrived form of research; unlike other data collection methods, such as participant observation, focus

groups take place in an artificial setting in which the speech elicited, and therefore data collected, cannot be assumed to be naturally occurring (Hollander, 2004, Kitzinger, 1994).

7.3.3 Hollander, however, argues that *all* research situations are subject to social influences and that 'naturally occurring' speech is `subject to the same kinds of interactional and contextual constraints as the 'contrived' speech that takes place in focus groups' (2004:605). Furthermore, it has also been argued that the `contrived' aspect of focus group speech enables the discussion of topics that would otherwise be difficult to obtain (Fallon and Brown, 2002). Although the problems of group contexts are well documented - for example conformity pressures (Asch, 1956), and social desirability pressures (Goffman, 1959) - this is mostly seen as being problematic when trying to measure individual attitudes or beliefs (Hollander, 2004), not when used for accessing 'community' insights into social norms and values (Waterton and Wynne, 1999).

7.3.4 That the 'community' to be accessed refers solely to `visible' BME communities provides a further rationale for the use of focus group methodology. Focus groups can provide a platform for people from a shared culture to discuss their opinions and experiences which may otherwise be 'muted' in 'general population' groups (Fallon and Brown, 2002: 198). Furthermore, focus groups can enable a potential shift in power from researcher to participants (Wilkinson, 1998). It is this empowerment of participants that lends itself to the PAR principles which guide and organise this study. Members from BME communities will not only be invited to participate in this research, but to engage with the research process and to work collaboratively as co-researchers, co-facilitators and co-analysts. This 'inclusive approach' is crucial, especially when discussing sensitive topics such as experiences with the CJS.

7.3.5 It can be the case that participants are more likely to feel inhibited with a white researcher (Yelland & Gifford, 1995), whereas trust and rapport is more likely to be established if 'ethnically-matched' facilitators are used; this, in turn, can lead to a willingness to talk more freely and openly, to disclose opinions and to share experiences (Phillips & Bowling, 2003; Bhopal, 2001). Caution needs to be taken, however, to ensure that co-researchers are not used solely for the 'insider status' they are able to provide and the data they can gather as a result (Rhodes, 1994). However, using the 'inclusive approach' suggested by Phillips and Bowling, whereby co-researchers are included in the entire research process can lessen any potential exploitation (2003:275) and ensure that accurate and valid expressions of BME experiences are garnered.

7.4 Issues of representation and problems of access

7.4.1 The idea of producing a 'true' reflection of BME experiences with criminal justice services brings into view issues of representation. A potential problem in any research are the social and ethnic identities of the research team *vis-a-vis* the researched population. In this context, researchers who are describable as white and mixed heritage female academics, are likely to

have everyday experiences which are very different from those from BME communities, and which render invisible the racialized nature of public life (Gillborn, 2006: 319).

7.4.2 However, by adopting a conscious stance and following the guiding principles of minority perspectives, Phillips and Bowling argue for the inclusion of white academics (2003:273); although further problems relating to ethnic identities must also be acknowledged, such as accessing communities from a position of being a `cultural' outsider' (Culley *et al*, 2007:107). In order to overcome these problems and to incorporate minority ethnic perspectives throughout the research process, this study involves the recruitment of ten co-researchers, from a mix of ethnic backgrounds, genders and ages. In the next section, how this recruitment proceeds from the initial, exploratory stage of the research process is discussed in greater detail.

8 Implementing the research design

8.1 Stage 1: networks and contacts

8.1.1 As previously outlined, this research cannot achieve representativeness. However, it can aim to capture the *diversity* of experiences within and across BME communities through a combination of purposive and theoretical sampling techniques. Key to this sampling methodology is the reconceptualisation of the 'sampling unit'; and the identification of alternative 'dynamic units' forms the preliminary stage of the study. The shift to `dynamic units' allows for a greater range of demographic categories to be covered; for example, the research might have focused on the four largest BME groups in the North-East region (Pakistani, Indian, Bangladeshi and Chinese)[5], but this would omit the experiences of a wide range of BME communities also living in the area but whose numbers render them demographically `insignificant'. In other words, richness and diversity is preferred over representativeness and proportionality. Gobo (2004) argues against a 'representative' sampling of individual or easily identifiable collective units, arguing that `the consistency of these units is not very real' (Gobo, 2004: 413).

8.1.2 The alternative approach towards the use of 'dynamic units' is one that this study will follow; as Gobo asseverates, focusing on dynamic units provides the researcher with more easily observable and detectable social processes as well as allowing `a more direct and deeper analysis of the observed characteristics' (Gobo, 2004: 414). As a first step, the research team collected and collated information on over 177 organisations in the North-East of England, and from this dataset, a four-fold typology of groups was identified - 'support groups', 'social groups', 'cultural groups' and 'political groups'. In addition to this, `faith groups' were also identified, and regarded as both independent of and co-extensive with support, social, cultural and political groupings. While this typologising was only ever intended as a broad sketch of the range of activities which centre on BME involvement, it did suggest the existence of a wide spectrum of engagement, and a rich variety of modes of collective life in the area. The typology of groups formed the cornerstone of the sampling approach. This is visualised in Figure 1.

8.1.3 Four key 'gateway organisations' were identified through which access to the geographical and demographical diversity of BME communities, as captured within the typology of groups and associations, could be facilitated. Contact was made with each of these four organisations and introductory information about the study was disseminated to them. Although there was a lack of response from one of these organisations, the response from the other three was good. BECON (Black Ethnic Minority Community Organisations Network) is one of the largest 'gateway' organisations in the North-East and its support and encouragement of the research needs to be acknowledged. A

[5] Census (2001, cited in Penn and Shewell, 2005) records a regional BME population of N=89,850, representing 2.4% of the regional population. Nationally, BME populations constitute 8.7% of the national population. Concentrations of the regional BME population vary – Newcastle = 6.9%; Middlesborough = 6.3%; Stockton = 2.8%; South Tyneside = 2.7% iconsists of Pakistani = 16.1%. The lowest concentrations of BME communities are found in Alnwick = 0.4%; Berwick on Tweed = 0.4%; Derwentside = 0.6%; and Tynedale = 0.7%.

Figure 1: Dynamic sampling units

publicity flyer for the research was produced (see Appendix A), and BECON was happy to display the flyer on notice boards and leave it at various, strategic locations for collection by interested persons. BECON also produces regular newsletters, and invited the research team to publicise the research through the newsletter medium. An item on the research study was drafted, thereafter published in the BECON newsletter, and circulated both via email and post to a wide readership of 177 BME groups and/or associations and their members (see Appendix B).

8.1.4 Problems associated with using BECON as the primary (if not sole) gateway to BME communities in the North East were considered. BECON is regularly approached to facilitate access to BME communities for research purposes. While this experience is invaluable, it can result in the (over-)use of particular groups and associations, with the correlative effect that certain people participate extensively in social research. However, given the short time-frame and the prohibitive budgetary resources of this study, it would have been impossible (outwith BECON), to disseminate information to such a wide range of groups. Although it could be argued that it is the same people/the same 'representatives of the community' who respond and therefore take part in research each time[6], we did not ask BECON to recruit a group of people to take part in the focus group for us. Instead they assisted us in sending out the

[6] See Bankowski & Mungham (1981) for further debate on individuals/organisations representing the 'community'

information to all 177 organisations that they are in contact with, thereby inviting all voices to be heard.

8.1.5 It is important to note that identical information was sent to all 177 BME groups and associations within the sampling frame, and that the research team worked closely with BECON in the drafting of this information. Ethical issues can arise especially in relation to informed consent, and researchers are reliant on `gateway' organisations or agencies to pass on background information about the nature of the research (Barbour & Kitzinger, 1999, Culley *et al*, 2007). However, any potential ethical problems have to be weighed against the help that 'gateway' organisations can provide; translation services, for example, would have been beyond the resources available for this study. Thus, and since English is not the first language of many of the participants who have taken part in this research, the assistance from gateway organisations in this area has been invaluable. This help has been both in relation to the wording of written information and flyers that were distributed to 'community members', and also in the form of an 'information session' which one gateway organisation (Voluntary Organisations Development Agency - VODA) helped to arrange and facilitate. This enabled the research team to ensure not only that accurate information was given out about the nature of the research, but also that this information was made available to, and understood by a diverse range of community members.

8.1.6 In addition, the knowledge held by 'gateway' organisations concerning the cultural nuances of the communities they work with, enabled participation from a wide-range of different community members who might not otherwise have been able to take part. For example, childcare is a significant issue in some minority ethnic communities due to the gendered nature of this role; women would not necessarily be able to leave their children with their husband to attend a focus group session. First Step, an organisation that responded through the BECON newsletter helped to set up a women's only (exploratory) focus group session where childcare was provided thus enabling a large number (eleven) women to take part in this study who would not otherwise have had the chance to.

8.2 Stage 2: Exploratory focus groups

8.2.1 Based on responses to the circulated newsletter and publicity material, participants for three exploratory focus groups were recruited. Two of the exploratory focus groups were held at the University; the third (female only) focus group was held at the premises of First Step where childcare was available. No payment was offered for attending these focus groups, although refreshments were provided.

8.2.2 The aim of the exploratory focus groups was to explore the varied ways in which different BME communities talk about and reflect upon their experiences of criminal justice services. The exploratory focus group schedule (Appendix C) was therefore deliberately left very broad to garner a feel for service use in general, including the key attributes of good customer service. The schedule was adjusted after each focus group to reflect how issues were framed and articulated by participants, rather than the research

team. Importantly, the exploratory focus groups were also used as an occasion to identify and recruit potential co-researchers and to engage their further involvement in the research.

8.2.3 The use of three exploratory focus groups also provided an occasion to test the utility of the sampling frame to capture the diversity of a heterogeneous BME population. 32 persons participated in the three exploratory focus groups, with interviews lasting from 65 to 100 minutes. The demographic profiles of the exploratory focus groups are of particular interest, and these are discussed in Section 9.

8.3 Stage 3: recruitiment and training of co-researchers

8.3.1 Co-researchers were recruited from the participants who attended the first three exploratory focus groups. Recruits were volunteers and were not in any sense selected participants; this is worth mentioning as it was more by good fortune than design that the membership of the co-researcher team captured the diversity of BME communities in terms of age, gender, ethnicities and group affiliations (support, cultural, political and social) - see Section 9. Ten co-researchers were recruited and all attended two half-day training sessions in focus group methodology at the University. During these sessions the co-researchers were consulted to help with the identification of key themes for the focus group schedule and to assist with the wording of the schedule questions to ensure that they would be easily understood (See Appendix D).

8.3.2 As an exercise within the training sessions, co-researchers teamed up in pairs to provide assistance with note-taking and to manage the logistics of holding a focus group discussion. These pairings were maintained for the duration of the research period. Each co-researcher was paid £150 for the successful delivery of one focus group, and for providing assistance at one further focus group. Participants for each focus group were to be drawn from each co-researcher's network of colleagues, friends, neighbours or acquaintances, and in particular should include persons who attended a community group (social, support, cultural or political) with which the co-researcher was affiliated. Given the diversity of the co-researcher team, and the diversity of their community group affiliations, there was every expectation that this would result in a heterogeneous focus group participation which would capture very well a wide range of different demographic characteristics, and underwrite the anticipated dynamism of the sampling unit. See Section 9 for an overview of the demographic profile of focus group participants.

8.3.3 It should be noted that the level of trust established between the research team, the gateway organisations, the co-researchers and participants in the focus group discussions, has been a fundamental aspect of this research. This has already been highlighted as being especially important when gaining access and working with black and minority ethnic communities as `there is increasingly a sense that although such communities have participated extensively in social research, they have seen very little benefit from this involvement' (Culley *et al*, 2007: 107). As well as the involvement of the co-researchers in the analysis of the data, and with feedback about the

methodological aspects of the study, dissemination of the research findings to both participants *and* to the broader community is key. This dissemination is planned in the form of a write-up in the BECON newsletter - where this study was originally advertised - which will be available to all BME associations and groups in the region. An event is also planned whereby the major findings of this study will be presented by the research team, the co-researchers, research participants, representatives from the Northumbria Local Criminal Justice Board and the Criminal Justice System Race Unit, and members of the public. This will not only allow for a wide and inclusive dissemination but will also provide a platform for discussion about the methodology employed as well as the research findings.

8.4 Stage 4: data collection

8.4.1 Co-researchers were assisted and supported throughout the entire process by the research team, and were each given detailed instructions relating to all aspects of running a successful focus group (Appendices E and F). Once the data-collection was complete, all co-researchers were invited to return to the University to discuss their experiences of the research process and to critically reflect on the methodology. See Section 17 for further details.

8.4.2 10 focus groups were undertaken by the co-researcher team. The duration of these focus groups ranged from 55 minutes to 150 minutes, and they involved a total of 54 participants with focus group size ranging from 2 to 8 persons. Further details are provided below in Section 9.

9 Demographic overview of research participants

9.1 Capturing diversity

The importance of capturing diversity has already been emphasised, and in view of the research's use of non-probability sampling, the demographic characteristics of research participants is of particular interest. At each stage of the research process, short, demographic questionnaires were distributed to focus group participants at the outset of each focus group, enabling a demographic profile of the research population to be compiled (Appendix F). In this section, a descriptive overview of the demography of participation across the research study as a whole is presented.

9.2 Age and sex of participants

86 people participated in this study and they ranged in age from 16 to 68 years old, with a mode of 33 years and a median of 34 years of age. Sex was divided into 44 male and 42 female participants. The following table shows a breakdown of age cross-tabulated by sex. Age categories were based on the following age ranges - young adults (16 to 25 years); adults (26 to 40 years); mature adults (41 to 55 years); senior adults (56 years and above).

Table 2: Research participants: age by sex N=81

	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
Young adult 16 to 25 years	6	7	13	15%
Adult 26 to 40 years	24	19	43	50%
Mature adult 41 to 55 years	6	11	17	20%
Senior adult 56 years and above	6	2	8	9%
Missing data on age	2	3	5	6%
Total	44	42	86*	100
Percentage	51	49	100	

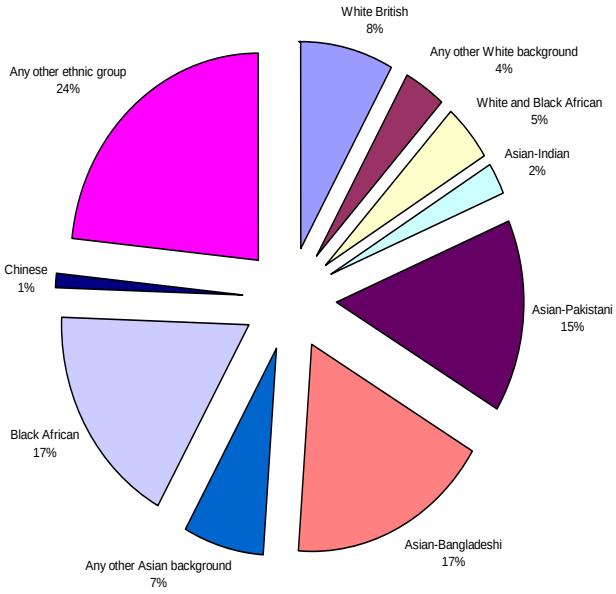
* data on age was missing for 5 participants

9.3. Ethnicity

Responses to 'ethnicity' revealed a diverse range of participants. As discussed in the methodology chapter 'ethnicity' was left as an open-ended question where respondents could fill in their ethnicity as they considered it to be, this provided a heterogeneous range of responses including reference to nationality as well as ethnic classification: for example, self-reported responses included Persian, British Indonesian, Malaysian, Latin American, Azeri, Palestinian, Sri Lankan, Bolivian, White–Ukranian, Chinese (British born), English Black, mixed Latin American and Jamaican, Morrumbene – Mozambique, Kurd, Middle Eastern; and one family from Zimbabwe who stated their ethnicity as 'coloured'. This information was then classified in terms of 16 categories of ethnicity as recommended and used by National Statistics (2003). As Figure 2 shows the majority of participants, nearly 42%, were of Asian or Asian British background. Interestingly, despite clearly stating on all the publicity information that was sent out to recruit participants (see Appendices A and B), that the research wanted to hear from members of

visible Black and Minority Ethnic communities, nearly 12% of respondents were White: the potential effect of this will be discussed further in Section 17.

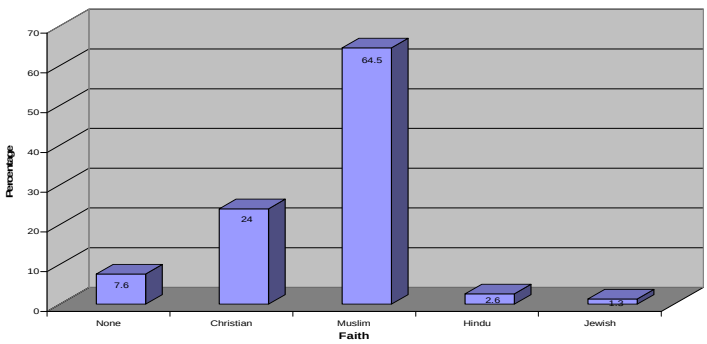
Figure 2: Ethnicity of research participants N=86



9.4 Faith

Participants' faith was used as another indicator that a cross-section of respondents had been achieved. As you can see in Figure 2 the majority of the participants in this study were Muslim, 51%. However, reducing the answers given by participants to fit into distinct categories meant that some nuances were lost; for example some respondents recorded their faith as 'Seven Day Adventist' which (along with 'Catholic') has been condensed into 'Christian'. Similarly no distinction was made between different types of Muslim; one participant distinguished themselves as 'Muslim – Sunni' for example.

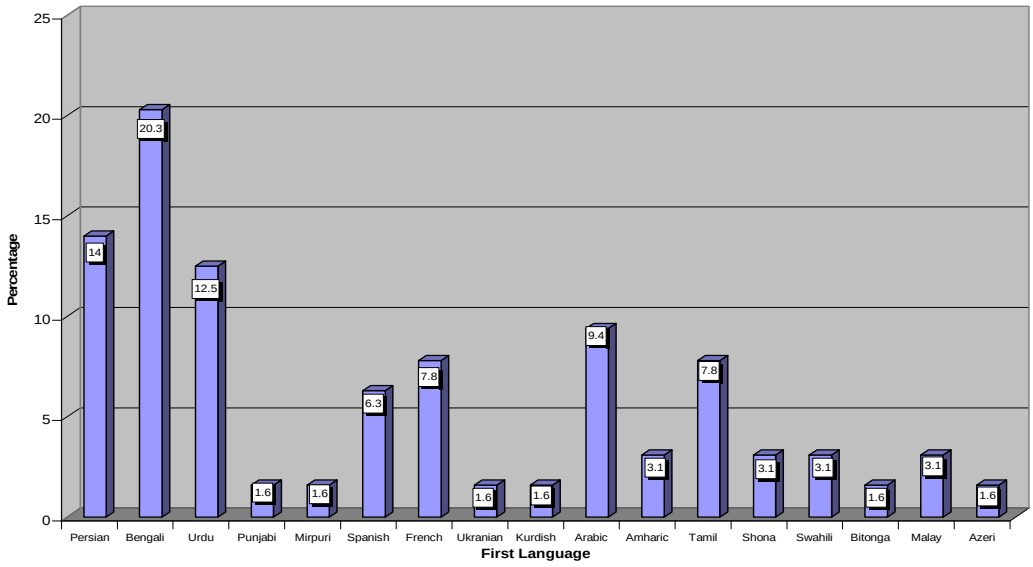
Figure 3: Faith of research participants N=79



9.5 Language

The first language spoken by participants further highlights the diversity of BME communities whose experiences with the criminal justice services are discussed in this study. Of the 85 participants 25.9% spoke English as a first language; of the other 74.1% a total of 17 different languages were represented (see Figure 4). Again because this question was left open the information given was then categorised and classified into official language sub-groups, for example: 'Farsi' was given as an alternative name for the sub-group 'Persian'. It would have been possible to then group these languages together according to their family, for example: Shona and Swahili both belong to the 'Niger-Congo' family; however, it was felt that important nuances would be lost by regrouping the languages so they have been left in full.

Figure 4: First language of research participants N=64



9.6 Areas of residence

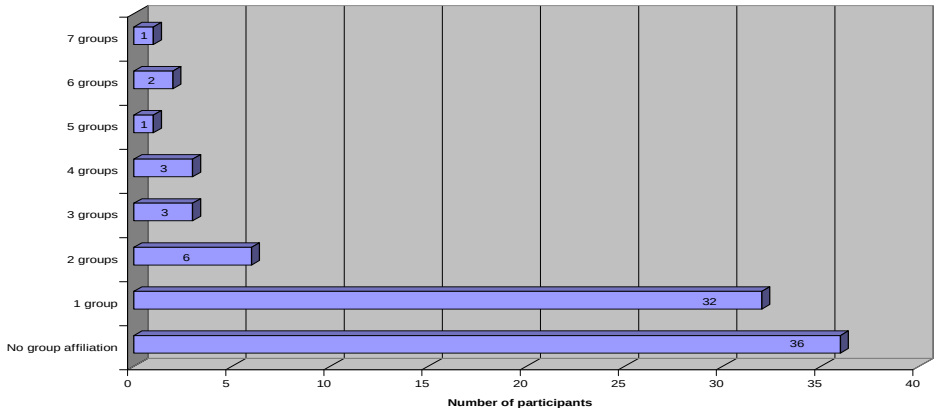
80 participants responded to the question on the demographic questionnaire which asked about areas of residence. The question was open and the information given was then combined and categorised according to the ward that the area was located in. The majority of participants, 26.25%, classed their area of residence as being in a north east urban area. Although some did indicate that they lived within a city centre area, it was clear throughout the course of the focus groups that the majority of participants were likely to live in wards which have the highest concentration of BME residents in north east urban areas (Ethnicity in the North East, 2003).

9.7 Community group affiliations

The final piece of information asked of participants in the demographic questions referred to the number of community/support groups they attended/were affiliated with. As discussed in Section 8.1.2 (above) this information was asked to provide an idea of the range of community associations held by participants and also proved an invaluable resource

when recruiting co-researchers for the study. As Figure 5 shows 56.4% of the participants in this study were affiliated with one or more groups of this sort.

Figure 5: Number of `community groups' research participants were affiliated with



10 Knowledge of criminal justice services

10.1 Criminal justice services?

10.1.1 When asked to name services that make up the CJS most groups were able to name at least three or four services, and all groups gave the police service as one of their first few answers. The Courts, Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) the Probation Service and the Prison Service were also recognised and named although their exact role was less well understood. For example, in an exchange about the Probation Service, one participant suggested that `*the Probation Service try to look after youths and keep them on the right track*' (CR4/05)[7]; while a co-participant challenged this by asserting that `*no, the Probation Service is a service for people who have been released from prison*' (CR4/01). In a different focus group, one participant claimed to have

> `*learned something new today, which is to do with the National Probation Service. I just thought, you know, when people were having probation officers and all the rest of it, I didn't necessarily realise that their role was to rehabilitate offenders in the community and supervise them to protect the public, I didn't realise this'* (CR6/03 [female, 37, Black-African]).

10.1.2 In this sense, the research served a valuable information-sharing function and enabled participants to clarify and discuss with each other their existing knowledgeability of criminal justice services. However, the Legal Services Commission (LSC) was not freely mentioned by any group, and even when prompted by a show-card (see Appendix H), this service was the least known to the participants. As one focus group member put it, `*this is the first time I've heard about this one*' (CR4/01 [male, 34, Asian-Bangladeshi]), and in the absence of any specific knowledge of the service, participants were happy to proffer their own suggestions that it was `*solicitors and things like that*' (CR1/03 [female, 21, Ukrainian]); `*solicitors… er the Citizens Advice Bureau*' (CR4/04 [male, 68, Asian-Bangladeshi); `*the Legal Service Commission … that's er related to legal aid*' (CR03/01 [male, 30, Asian-Bangladeshi).

10.1.3 It is difficult to get an idea about how well known these CJ services are to the different communities as it was often the case that one or two members of each focus group named the services, while others either agreed with the point of view being expressed, or remained quiet. However, during the initial exploratory focus groups where questions were deliberately broad, and no prompting was given, the services that participants believed made up the CJS were written on a board and approved by the group. What is interesting about this approach is we were able to record all the services that participants *believe* to form part of the CJS: these included `Parliament', `Government', `Home Office', `Detention Centre', `Immigration', `Social Services', `Victim Support' and also the `Army'. Even in the second stage focus groups, and

[7] Due to not knowing participants real identities we were unable to use pseudo-names in case they proved to be the same as participants' actual names. To ensure ethicality and maintain the confidentiality of participation, where data is referenced, the numbers refer to the co-researcher or the exploratory focus group number, and the following number is the participant number; this is supplemented by the sex, age and ethnicity of the discussant.

notwithstanding the display of a showcard, an inclusive frame of reference prevailed, wherein the `European Court' , `MI5' and `MI6' were all mentioned as services provided by the CJS. These points are important as it is often assumed that people understand what the CJS is and which services are provided by it. Survey questions which attempt to elicit attitudes and opinions of the CJS without also problematising how respondents understand the term, are likely, therefore, to produce highly flawed and partial data. As several participants describe: `*police, then, becomes a face for the criminal justice system, since not many people know what the criminal justice system is*' (CR3/07 [male, 60, Asian-Pakistani]);

10.2 Knowledge and opinion of the Police Service

10.2.1 Given the idea of the police discursively (if not actually) positioned as the 'gatekeepers' to the CJS, both opinions on and experiences of the police service tended to dominate the focus groups' discussions. Police are described as being: '*the first step in the whole system*' (CR4/02 [male, 33, Asian-Bangladeshi]) and the '*link with the public*' (CR4/04 [male, 68, Asian-Bangladeshi]). The idea that the police are seen as the 'face of' or the 'gatekeepers' to the CJS is an important one as it places a higher priority on the need for good experiences and encounters with the police: as one participant suggests, `*the gatekeeper is the police and it is very crucial the experience what people have of the police*' (CR3/07 [male, 60, Asian-Pakistani]). When asked to think about the kinds of service that the police provide, the descriptions given were on the whole very positive: `*police are doing a good job generally, a very good job*' (CR3/04 [male, 68, Asian-Bangladeshi); `*they protect people*' (CR5/01 [male, 18, Black African]); and

> `*keeps the streets safes (sic) as well, I mean if you see like loads of you know er people arguing on the street I certainly see a police van, I think 'oh, you know, everything's going to be ok now' because they are there, and they'll sort everything out, to me that's what they are*' (CR8/01 [male, 17, Asian-Pakistani]).

10.2.2 Participants in the `north urban' focus group were positive about the police service in general: `*my honest opinions are this, police are looking after the people, keep you on the right track*' (CR4/06 [male, 35, Asian-Indian), and especially positive about the police in their local area with many participants throughout the discussion describing them as `good' or `friendly'. Explaining this, one participant believed there to be a difference in policing strategy that accounted for this:

> `*they're alright the [North Urban police] because they are more community orientated…their policing strategy is different compared to city police'* (CR4/01 [male, 34, Asian-Bangladeshi]).

10.2.3 This 'friendliness' and approachability accounts for this group describing a willingness to call the police if they needed them - `*I think I could talk to the police they are friendly every time*' (CR4/03 [male, 23, Asian-Bangladeshi]); `*if you've got any problem you can call them and they'll provide their service*' (CR4/04 [male, 68, Asian-Bangladeshi]). However, across all of the focus groups, there was an identification of geographical difference in

policing styles and approaches. These kinds of comparative assessments not only applied to local diversity in policing arrangements, but also extended to comparisons between the north-east and elsewhere in the UK, and between the UK and a range of international jurisdictions. For example, in addition to a north urban/city centre distinction, other participants commented that `*in [South Urban], you still find ignorant police*' (CR2/05 [male, 33, Black African]); or that, `*if you live in a better area and you call the police, then you get a better response, it is not fair*' (CR10/01 [female, 52, other Asian background]). This was echoed in a completely separate focus group where it was argued that `postcode' policing was something that had become apparent in recent years, and had not been a feature of policing 25 years ago; it was suggested that:

> `*Trelawney, Drake and Raleigh areas, the police do not respond, er on a high priority is the word, to the crime because it is a very mixed ethnic community. If the area happens to be around possibly Penlee or .... Manormead, or somewhere like that in the north-east, then they probably respond in a different way….. I have seen it's changed in the last 20-25 years because 25 years ago if I had called the police on that basis it would have been a different thing'* (CR3/05 [male, 47, Asian-Bangladeshi])

10.2.4 As compared to other regions, there was general agreement that the north-east fared better than elsewhere, and one participant suggested that,

> `*Compared to other cities and towns, I think we are really in a good town, it's a good area to live in with the local community, local policing and all that'* (CR4/02 [male, 33, Asian-Bangladeshi]).

10.2.5 However, one participant felt that `*[West Urban] is now in the worst ten cities for crime*' (CR9/04 [male, 37, Other Asian background]); while another asserted that when compared to other policing systems, the UK police were `disappointing' – in relation to the outcome of a burglary, he pointed out that:

> `*I was disappointed that they didn't make any arrests and then we didn't get anything back. I'm from India and if this would have been happening there, you know, then I would have got, you know, my stuff back'* (CR3/04 [male, 39, Asian-Indian]).

10.2.6 Other groups however, described a reluctance to call the police, either because they did not have the time; `*I am busy … I don't have bothered to this to the police*' (CR3/01 [male, 50, Asian-Pakistani]); but mostly because of low expectations of anything being done:

> `*I think people generally feel…when they have to call the police as a last resort, but I think expectations is so bad that they see nothing that happens that, sometimes they make a judgement; is it worth wasting our time?'* (CR3/07 [male, 60, Asian-Pakistani]).

10.2.7 This has the effect of pushing people further away from the police and the CJS and instead looking for solutions from inside their community:

> *`there's no point in even calling the police anymore you might as well just call somebody else within the community and get things sorted out rather than calling the police…today personally I would never call the police again'* (CR3/05 [male, 47, Asian-Bangladeshi]).

10.2.8 More from exasperation than meaningful intention, another participant speculated that the:

> *`more the justice system degrades the more increase of vigilante, people who take policing action into their own hands …. I'm not going to bother going to the police, I'll go and beat him up myself, I'll go and get revenge'* (CR7/03 [male, 29, Asian-Pakistani]).

10.2.9 Others also described how people from their community do not report crime because of fear, not fear of the police but of the implications for them afterwards from their neighbours/community:

> *`with the Asian community…even if there is a crime committed they will not report it you know…okay you can complain to the police but what happens afterwards…they're scared to complain, make an issue of something like racism…harassment, bad neighbours, they will just leave it, okay, but not go to the police…not because they fear the police, they fear what will happen afterward…implications'* (CR4/01 [male, 34, Asian-Bangladeshi]).

10.2.10 Knowledge about the police service and opinions of it are therefore mixed and there are different reasons why people are either prepared or, conversely, reluctant to make contact with the police. These opinions are invariably based on the confidence they have in the police and the CJS to protect them when they report a crime, and also the extent to which the CJS can deliver a sense of `justice'. Many participants reported the absence and elusiveness of `justice' suggesting, amongst other things, that `*criminal justice … should be named criminal injustice, er because I think it's a system that is progressively failing in this country, getting worse and worse*' (CR7/03 [male, 29, Asian-Pakistani]). In the same focus group discussion, `justice' was mooted by the same participant as either something you could buy - `*well, surely if you want real justice you have to pay for it*'; or alternatively, `justice' was something which accrued to criminals rather than victims - `*I don't feel that people do get justice, I feel that criminal justice is there to give the criminal … the most lenient sentence and… make sure he doesn't go to prison … but the victims, don't think it does any justice to them*' (CR7/04 [male, 33, other Asian background]). These kinds of views were often based on participants' personal past experiences, as well as those of their friends, family and neighbours. However, the point was reiterated across the focus group discussions that experience of policing informs opinion not just of the police service, but of the CJS as a whole:

> *`they are the first people that you kind of encounter if anything…happens, so they are the main people that really carry on things; if they just dropped the case that's it, there's no none of this other system would even come into place'* (CR7/01 [male, 30, Asian-Bangladeshi]).

11 Experiences of criminal justice services

11.1 A range of experiences

1.1.1 Given the relatively small number of persons who participated in this study, a remarkably varied and rich portfolio of experiences was reported even when limited to the 54 discussants who participated in the co-researcher focus groups. These were either personal experiences, or those of relatives, friends, colleagues and neighbours, and for the most part they were recounted spontaneously in illustration of the `reality' of criminal justice service provision for members of BME communities. These experiences are represented below in tabular form (Table 3) in a way which suggests a relationship between *kinds* of experience and an accumulating awareness or consciousness of the nature of the criminal justice response. This does not imply a simple linear movement from experience to perception; rather, it suggests that such accounts tend to be highly localised and personalised, thus establishing a context of familiarity wherein experiences and the responses which they engender, are relived as shared narratives of common realities[8].

Table 3: Experiences of criminal justice services

Experience of ….	Criminal justice response
Police raid: White gatecrashers looking for a fight at a birthday party; neighbour called the police (CR1/02 [female, 16, Any other ethnic group]) Personal experience	Police investigated party-goers, searched the house, checked party-goers details; did not attempt to look for the white gatecrashers who had fled the scene
Stop and search: young male was stopped on the street and asked about his movements and whereabouts for the previous hour; (CR1/02 [female, 16, Any other ethnic group]) Friend's experience	Arrested and driven off in a police car; later released without charge
Anti-social behaviour: reported to the police (CR1/01 [male, 18, Any other Asian group]) Personal experience	Police `were quite weak and ineffective, just asked me lots of questions'
Assault: arrested by mistake at a bus stop on a Saturday morning, for an assault occurring on the Friday night (CR2/05 [male, 33, Black African]) Personal experience	The discussant does not know whether he was cautioned, charged or if no further action was taken.
Noisy children next door: police called (CR2/02 [female, age nk, any other Asian background]) Personal experience	Positive experience of police response - `really very nice' - but no complaint about neighbour's children was made
Burglary: valuables and bank cards stolen; burglars caught on CCTV attempting to take money from cashpoint, but no arrests made (CR3/04 [male, 39, Asian-Indian]) Personal experience	Evidence ignored, and investigation not pursued vigorously enough; `I was just really disappointed with that, that was a bad experience'

[8] Importantly, the research has no means of validating or refuting experiences as recounted during focus group discussions. In keeping with the philosophy and principles of naturalistic research, the detailing of experiences in Table 3 respects the integrity of each narrator's account of events, and simply re-presents the experience as told (Rogers, 1983)

Experience of ….	Criminal justice response
Victim of a racist assault: police escorted victim to hospital; statements taken; offender apprehended (CR3/07 [male, 60, Asian-Pakistani]) Personal experience	The witness was never contacted and no witness statement was taken; case centred on one word against another; resulted in £50 fine
Brawl: Asian neighbour had a `bit of a brawl' with his white neighbours who chased him into his house. He called the police from inside his house where he had barricaded himself in. (CR3/06 [male, 53, Asian-Pakistani]) Neighbour's experience	Police spoke with the white neighbours on arrival; on opening the door, the Asian neighbour was arrested and later charged with affray and threatening behaviour.
Racist abuse: white meter reader made a racist remark to householder (in the presence of his daughter) while reading the meter. Led to an altercation in the house. Matter reported to the police by each party independently. (CR4/02 [male, 33, Asian-Bangladeshi]) Neighbour's experience	Asian victim was advised to report the incident to the Commission for Racial Equality, not the police; a few days later, the Asian victim was put in a cell having voluntarily attended the station to respond to the meter reader's complaint. No further action taken in the light of a complaint being made by friends and neighbours to CRE about the police handling of the case.
Criminal damage: front door broken down during a police chase of a suspect who had run into the property. Wife and children, at home at he time, were extremely alarmed and frightened (CR4/02 [male, 33, Asian-Bangladeshi]) Personal experience	Police made no apology, and did not offer compensation; they returned the next day to take statements and the female police officer `started shouting at me'. No acknowledgement of how the event impacted on family's well-being and sense of security in their own home
Assault: five boys attacked (kicked) the discussant on a night out, but they ran away when the police came. `I was the last man standing (and) I was the one who got arrested' (CR4/01 [male, 34, Asian-Bangladeshi]) Personal experience	`I got arrested … stuck in the cell and got a caution for public disorder … and the officer asked me do you want to be charged or ….. to be cautioned; but I took a caution, I could have took it to courts but it's just too much hassle'
Injuries sustained by a friend outside The Bar - `he was bleeding everywhere': police arrived and told everyone to stand back and leave the injured man alone, but they `just left him and he landed straight on the ground on his head'. (CR5/01 [male, 18, Black African]) Personal experience	The discussant `was quite upset and walked away'; friends who remained `ended up getting arrested'
Domestic violence: discussant called the police when neighbour was being beaten up by her husband (CR5/02 [female, 35, Black African]) Personal experience	Police arrived within 5 minutes and took the man to the police station; returned an hour later to take statements; `(the response) was good …. well, it was OK'
Stop and search: discussant stopped on the main road on way back from garage to home - `I was just like dressed normal, no cap or hat or anything' (CR5/01 [male, 18, Black African]). Personal experience	Nothing found; asked questions about where the discussant lived and what he had been doing. Allowed to continue home.
Deportation: early morning raid to deport a woman and her 3 year old daughter (CR5/02 [female, 35, Black African]) Friend's experience	Police gave the woman 15 minutes to pack her things and did not allow a few extra minutes to enable the child to go to the toilet.
`Trouble and stuff': discussant reported incidents on a few occasions with a view to police just `talking to the offender, or just like give them a warning' (CR6/03 [female, 27, Black African]) Personal experience	Police have responded to each report and `they've been OK'.

Experience of ….	Criminal justice response
Taxi dispute: taxi driver ejected 3 passengers (2 male/1 female) outside the discussant's house, and was heard requesting money to cover costs of cleaning vomit from the cab. A fight ensued and the discussant called 999 (CR7/03 [male, 29, Asian-Pakistani]). Personal experience	10 minutes after the 999 call, police drove past the incident without stopping; a further 10 minutes later, the police stopped at the discussant's house, but the taxi driver had since driven off, and the 3 passengers had left the scene. `So even though the police station is just around the corner, it doesn't mean they respond at all'
Asking for directions: when in London the discussant was lost and called into a police station to ask directions (CR7/01 [male, 30, Asian-Bangladeshi]) Personal experience	Police claimed not to know where the street was; on leaving the police station, the discussant discovered that the street he was seeking was only 2 streets away from the police station. `Imagine that, so what happens if someone calls the police from that street?'
Going to court: following a car accident, discussant still waiting for a court date 2 years after the event (CR7/03 [male, 29, Asian-Pakistani]) Personal experience	Unresolved, ongoing
Child crime: local youngster, big for his age, causing trouble in the neighbourhood; vandalism, throwing stones, swearing, other children `follow him around' (CR7/03 [male, 29, Asian-Pakistani]) Personal experience	`The police said … he's er 9 years old, we can't do anything to him, he's under the legal age of criminal responsibility, he's just a kid what can I do?'
Boy-racer: persistently bad driving in the neighbourhood emanating from one uninsured, disqualified `total idiot'. Reported to police who needed to see him driving the car before anything could be done. (CR7/03 [male, 29, Asian-Pakistani]) Personal experience	Police promised to respond quickly in the light of any future reports. On the next occasion, the police arrived within two and half minutes, arrested the driver, and had the car crushed.
Abuse of power: discussant's colleague was leaving his employment late on a Saturday night; was being followed by an unknown car and speeded up on the drive home because `he got really scared'. (CR7/01 [male, 30, Asian-Bangladeshi]) Colleague's experience	Was stopped by uniformed (traffic) police on an arterial road; only at this point, did he discover that the car giving chase was an unmarked (CID) police car. Discussant's friend attempted to sue the police, but he was disqualified from driving and charged with road traffic offences.
Car theft: car thieves apprehended following theft of vehicle; 6 offenders in total (CR9/03 [male, 27, other Asian background]) Personal experience	Offenders released without charge within 24 hours `because they were 16' ; police kept car for 7 days for forensic evidence.
Reporting anti-social behaviour: consistent reporting of problems associated with residents of a `hostel' - of day-time drug-taking and drinking alcohol in the back lanes of a residential area (CR9/05 [female, age nk, Asian-Pakistani]) Personal experience	No clarification from the police of the number of reports required before any action will be taken; `how many loggings they need … I haven't got now any faith ringing because I don't know what is their target'
Vandalism: persistent damage to and theft from discussant's property; incidents have been reported to the police at least twice, and the matter has been given a `police number'. (CR9/06 [female, 33, Asian-Bangladeshi]) Personal experience	No police action taken. However, since reporting the incidents, and naming the offenders, the vandalism has escalated, along with personal physical attacks (egg-throwing); discussant (and her children) have been offered no protection and has been advised by the police to contact the housing office and ask to be moved

11.1.2 Participants struggled to recall a wholly positive experience of criminal justice service delivery. While some discussants did mention positive experiences these were more often that a service was not especially poor, rather than it being particularly good - `*I've yet to have a negative (experience)…with any police officer so I wouldn't say anything negative about the police from personal experience*' (CR7/04 [male, 33, other Asian background]). Nonetheless, these several experiential narratives tabulated above, form an important evaluative frame of reference and underwrite participants' perceptions of criminal justice services.

12 Perceptions of criminal justice services

12.1 Police responsiveness

12.1.1 Negative perceptions of the police are often associated with response times which in turn are linked to levels of confidence in the service:

> *`if you call the police they just don't turn up, it takes them about an hour or the minimum forty minutes so by then anything can happen to you and the next time that something happens you just feel like no-one's going to be there for you so you just feel afraid for the next time…you feel insecure'* (CR6/02 [female, 34, Black African]).

12.1.2 Response time is mentioned by many participants and is often accompanied by a lack of understanding and even puzzlement as to why the police cannot come out sooner, especially if the police station is close to their houses. Although some participants put this down to workload and prioritising of cases, others genuinely believed that the slow response time was because of their ethnicity; `*if you call the police they never come…they just give more attention to their own people, English people*' (CR5/01 [male, 18 Black African]). Some discussants suggested that they are singled out because of their accents when they call to report a crime -`*maybe just the way you speak on the phone, they get the impression, the way you speak kind of thing and then they respond in that way?*' (CR6/02 [female, 34, Black African]); or that poor response times was down to frontline staff prejudices - `*the workers a lot of their prejudices come into play and that determines how you know they are going to respond to your inquiry or your report of crime or something like that'*" (CR6/03 [female, 27, Black African]).

12.2 Reporting incidents

12.2.1 Participants recognised the value of reporting incidents, and acknowledged that `*people should have more confidence in the police and should report incidents more often*' (CR3/07 [male, 60, Asian-Pakistani]); but they also appreciated why `*people would be really reluctant to report to the police*' (CR7/03 [male, 60, Asian-Pakistani]). For example, one of the Black African participants suggested that:

> *`when they do turn up they always seem to be very suspicious of you like …. If someone's attacked you they seem to want to take the person who's attacked you's side rather than yours, just really because of the colour of your skin'* (CR6/03 [female, 27, Black African]).

12.2.2 Others were more resigned to the fact that `*the police can't do anything, they come and they take the forensic evidence …. but they can't do anything*' (CR9/03 [male, 27, other Asian background]; and this view was especially articulated in relation to young offenders. A few discussants were concerned that the police failed to see the wider context of incidents and their aftermath, particularly with regard to the restoration of feelings of safety and the absence of threat following an incident. For example, one participant commented that:

> *`they don't look at what the psychological impact that would bring to your life because once somebody tries to hit you … I would not be feeling comfortable anymore, but they don't look into that side of it, they only look at some type of evidence something which they can see'* (CR6/03 [female, 27, Black African])

12.2.3 Consequently, there was considerable agreement that if reportage was needed it was only to serve the very pragmatic purpose of obtaining a crime reference number for insurance claims; one discussant went so far as to suggest that the issuing of a reference number was the most that could be expected of a police service `these days' – `*I think most of the time they're there to give you a reference number, go and claim on insurance, that's what help police are these days*' (CR(/03 [male, 27, other Asian background]).

12.3 Bureaucracy and paperwork

12.3.1 A few participants recognised that continually changing legislation and the introduction of different policing strategies could compromise the continuity of service provision. For example, in relation to policing, a number of discussants were relatively sympathetic to the demands made on the police and one participant made the point that:

> *`Personally, I think that the police service …. there is a lot of bureaucracy so it can get drowned in paperwork especially with the change in legislation ….. there's all these new initiatives being launched and the police are always trying to adapt to it all and the amount of paperwork that can be required just for small, you know, misdemeanours, you know, can have an impact on their service. So that definitely has to be taken into consideration'* (CR07/02 [male, 28, Asian-Pakistani]).

12.3.2 The key question which remains outstanding, however, is the extent to which participants perceived the shortcomings of service delivery as the outcome of racism, prejudice and/or discrimination. One discussant expressed this rather cryptically by suggesting that `*we know we'll be short-changed somewhere in the process of getting appropriate justice*' (CR3/07 [male, 60, Asian-Pakistani]); another was more circumspect and proposed that `*I wouldn't like to say it's racist because perhaps they do it to white people as well, but it is unfair*' (CR5/01 [male, 18, Black African]). Similarly, one of the discussants in the other Black African focus group, neatly summarised the perceptions of most of the research participants on the matter of racism and service provision; she commented:

> *`I don't know whether it's for everyone for the whole nation in the UK, or whether it's just for Black people, when you have something happens to you if you call the police they just don't turn up'* (CR6/02 [female, 34, Black African]).

13 Racism, prejudice and discrimination

13.1 A `sense' of racism

Though reports of racism, prejudice and discrimination feature strongly throughout the focus group discussions, participants tended to describe such experiences and encounters as either 'sensed' or 'felt' in their dealings with the CJS:

> *`they look down on us, especially when we are BME, because we are ethnic minority and they make us feel inferior and they feel superior - we can sense it anyway, they don't have to say anything, yeah. We can sense it from the body er language or the tone of their voice, you know what I mean? There was supposed to be equal opportunity and they look down on us because we not come from here, uncle or an auntie born in this country, you know what I mean?'* (CR8/02 [female, 45, other Asian background])

13.2 Direct racism

13.2.1 On the other hand, some discussants reported that their friends, family or neighbours had had a *direct* experience of racism:

> *`two cases…nearly two, three years ago and the person…was a young refugee and they had a problem with their neighbours and they were subject to harassment by their neighbours so when they called the police the police came and say "look why are you not going back to your country'* (CR2/02 [female, age nk, other Asian background]).

13.2.2 This is particularly the case for Black African males, the majority of whom described being frequently stopped and searched by police. As this participant describes, this constant stopping and searching (and goading) by police who look for any reason to arrest him and his friends, has seriously impacted on his life to a point where he has given up trying to go out at weekends so as to avoid being arrested:

> *`[the law is] not fairly applied to all people, certain people certain races are perceived to be the ones that are supposed to commit certain crimes, these ones are the blue-eyed eyed these are the revered these are the holy and the holiest…an African guy like me [and my friend] maybe during the night…driving in town, for unknown reasons the traffic police are bound to stop us. Just because we are black…we are suspected of either committing a crime somewhere or maybe we are on our way to commit a crime, either thieving or robbery that's the first impression that they have. The first thing do upon us questioning us is whether we have got our drivers licence whether the car is insured…the next thing they start searching our car looking for something to incriminate us…to have evidence you know to book us and surely if they somehow find us to be clean you could you see that the guys are really frustrated, they are angry. Either they start provoking you, talking to you in derogatory terms such that you might…answer back in a way that they will say 'he was hostile'. So you really just think you know why are we always treated*

in suspicion for anything, or for wherever we go? We are not treated like equal citizens in this county we might have a passport saying that we are British citizens but it means nothing…if you are black you are always on the wrong side of the law

Facilitator: *Do you find that happens quite often, being stopped?*

Quite often, quite often. Such that these days you know we have tend to desist from going to certain clubs or certain night places during the night lest me and my friend we find ourselves behind the cells…so it's best we spend ourselves you know confined to our room and at the weekends even if we try to throw a party at my place more often than not then they are coming over telling us to keep it low or switch off or if there are a number of…South Africans there then they start questioning everybody on their status, 'what's your immigration status?'. So really it's like they've got a vendetta against us you know. Maybe they don't want foreigners we don't know or maybe it's a government policy?' (EFG3/01 [male, 37, Black African])

13.3 Sources of racism

However, when discussing the 'source', as it were, of the racism, many of the participants described it as being either the product of an endemically racist society, or the outcome of individual police officers or criminal justice practioners who would not or did not put their own prejudices aside. For example, participants talked of:

`lots of discrimination everywhere, lots of things… It happens a lot that's why they have to have this policy to deal with the discrimination or something …. There are a lot of discrimination in every aspect of life here' (CR1/02 [female, 16, other ethnic background])

`I think it's only a matter of staff because I've had mixed experience of the police, some of them were brilliant and some of them were not but I don't think this is about actually the person themselves, maybe it's to do with the training or their own personal criteria character' (EFG1/10 [male, 35, other Asian background])

13.4 Grassroots racism

Of further interest is the idea that racism is more in evidence at the grassroots level:

`from the police department for example…generally what you find is that on the higher levels, as it were…they are generally very good in the sense that they are trying to implement certain policies, trying to include BME…but when it comes down to front line staff it doesn't necessarily filter all the way down so some people including myself have experienced, have had bad experiences with police officers from the lower levels in the past.' (EFG1/02 [male, 28, Asian-Pakistani])

While some saw the positive benefits of diversity training, others felt that this would not/had not overcome `ingrained prejudices'; as one Black African discussant noted:

> *`a lot of them seem to be carrying round a lot of prejudices even though they go through a lot of training and … are well-versed in equal opportunities policies and diversity and all tha. They seem to, you know, act on a lot of prejudices that they have, ingrained prejudices'* (CR6/03 [female, 27, Black African]).

13.5 Representation and absolute Othering

Others perceived racism as a matter of disproportionate representation, suggesting that the composition of BME criminal justice personnel should mirror the proportion of BME in the wider population; as the discussant argued, `*we should perhaps … be able to see more judges, more police officers, more probation officers, people want them in their communities, they're not there. Unless they are there they can feel the system from inside and could make better judgement of how the system treats this community, you can't see this from outside*' (CR3/07 [male, 60, Asian-Pakistani]). The articulation of a sense of being inside/outside the `system' was reinforced by an assertion of absolute Othering and exclusion from mainstream (white) society; as one discussant argued: `*it feels like you're an outsider, you definitely are an outsider, it doesn't matter how you integrate, doesn't matter what you do to get integrated to that society, you will never be part of that society as soon as you say you are a Muslim*' (CR4/02 [male, 33, Asian-Bangladeshi]).

14 Media, mythologies and British tax-payers

14.1 Watershed events

14.1.1 While much of the focus group discussion centred on local events, personal experiences and current concerns, participants also positioned these within a broader frame of reference which took account of a number of `watershed events', especially those which placed BME experiences of criminal justice services into sharp relief. Amongst these, certain high profile cases dominated discussion and crystallised concerns about, for example, `institutional racism', security and terrorism, and media representation of BME groups more generally. Importantly, many of the participants acknowledged that media coverage was often sensationalistic, that it was not always `truthful' and that the criminal justice system was an `over-mediated', `news-saturated' institution. Nonetheless, there is little doubt that the media coverage of significant events and people provides important narrative capital and a plethora of cultural scripts for making sense of BME encounters with the CJS. The highly mediated inquiry into the Stephen Lawrence case, and the subsequent publication of the Macpherson Report (1999) was an important reference point for Black African discussants. As one participant noted, `*Stephen Lawrence …kind of like…set the benchhold (sic) for me, the sort of threshold, and ever since I saw the way the whole case was handled by the police I've had a very er dim view of the whole legal system*' (CR6/03 [female, 27, Black African]).

14.1.2 The reference here to `the whole legal system' is significant given the dearth of personal narratives of the criminal justice process beyond the frontline services provided by policing. For example, this same discussant, having no personal experience or knowledge of the work of the Crown Prosecution Service, was still prepared to cite the Stephen Lawrence case and the role of the CPS, and use it as a prism for evaluating criminal justice as a whole; she commented:

> `*I remember a lady from the Crown Prosecution Service was saying …. we can't invent evidence and all the rest of it, when it was really blatantly clear from interviews …. that they'd had with the people that killed Stephen Lawrence. You know, most of the nation knew that these were the people that killed Stephen Lawrence because …. they were being interviewed on TV and stuff….. that's why I'm saying that …. the whole legal system to me I just don't really trust*' (CR6/03 [female, 27, Black African]).

14.1.3 Similarly, media coverage of the supra-phenomenal event of the 9/11 attacks, engendered an awareness of the criminal justice process in a climate of heightened security and counter-terrorist activities. Many Muslim discussants made the point very forcefully and succinctly, and argued that `*the media clearly has branded all Muslims terrorist*.' (CR4/04 [male, 68, Asian-Bangladeshi]). Another participant talked of a shift in public perceptions of the Muslim population, and how this has intensified Muslims' feelings of exposure and vulnerability to racism/religious intolerance at the same time as it has undermined Muslims' confidence and trust in the capacity of criminal justice to protect them.

> *`They used to call you on the streets like, er, `black', `paki' and all that, you know. Since September the 11th, it's like it's not `black' or `pakis' or whatever, but what religion you are. So maybe you say that Muslims (take) one step back … when September the 11th happened you were definitely going to get beat up, or you were involved in a fight'* (CR4/02 [male, 33, Asian-Bangladeshi]).

14.1.4 Similarly, some discussants extrapolated from media coverage of significant events to assess the potential for service delivery at the local level. For example, citing the various raids and arrests undertaken in the name of counter-terrorism, and the media campaigns which sought justice for those caught up in them, one discussant ruminated (somewhat philosophically) on the possibility of (ever) realising `justice' in North Urban:

> *`I don't know if it's true or false but it's something to illustrate by, you know …. the two boys in London, they got shot for terrorism …. and when they done the search and everything, there was nothing they found on them. National media experience they are still fighting for justice, the like of us, just a small community in North Urban, what hope do we have?'* (CR4/02 [male, 33, Asian-Bangladeshi])

14.2 Bad press

14.2.1 There is also an underlying feeling of anger, and of frustration at the extent of `bad' or prejudicial press coverage of ethnic minorities; as one discussant pointed out `*one guy from Algeria .. and (he) kill one policeman, it was in the news for almost three weeks ….. There was a woman from the Congo as well, around the television that she's fleecing this country and the money we are giving her is too much*' (CR5/02 [female, 25, Black African]). It is little wonder that some considered that the media was especially negative toward black and minority ethnic groups:

> *`as minorities feels (sic) that we are victim of prejudice here, you know - don't have much respect… and every time when the media or people in general they speak about Black people they just about the ethnicity about the bad side, how they are to encourage people when minority behave good or do good thing?"* (CR6/01 [male, 30, Black African])

14.2.2 Another participant drew a direct comparison in coverage of two similarly newsworthy cases, one involving a white child, the other a black child:

> *`I really empathise and feel sad for the little girl that's been missing in Portugal … and I've noticed there's been a lot of talk about her and everyone's running this campaign and support for her …. But at the same time …. a little, black girl in Manchester was shot in the head by her 16 year old brother, just like a week or two before this 3 year old girl went missing in Portugal. And the way I've looked at it is, like, look at the amount of coverage this 3 year old has had because of the colour of her skin'* (CR6/03 [female, 27, Black African]).

14.3 Cultural scripts, narratives and mythologies

14.3.1 It is difficult to say whether the media coverage of a range of reported events provides the (exclusive) source material for the generation of shared cultural scripts and mythologies of the criminal justice system. So, while this research does not posit a causal relationship of any kind, the highly mediated nature of criminal justice does suggest that media discourse is instrumental to the dissemination and propagation of particularly recognisable narratives of criminal justice services. For example, the narrative of `prison luxury' figured prominently within all focus group discussions; moreover, such a viewpoint was easily sustained given a prevailing mythology of leniency in sentencing; consider the following comments:

> `*They get everything, food, TVs, everything, so I think prison is not prison for them – prison is luxurious place so maybe that's what they are doing in order to get more luxury life'* (CR9/05 [female, age nk, Asian-Pakistani]).

> `*I think everyone you speak to who has been a victim of crime they always say they never got justice, the sentence was never enough'* (CR7/04 [male, 33, other Asian background]).

> `*The system's not harsh … they're restricted, their hands are literally tied behind their backs'* (CR7/02 [male, 28, Asian-Pakistani]).

> `*Most life-sentence people are out within two to five years … a life-sentence, that's a mockery in itself'* (CR3/05 [male, 47, Asian-Bangladeshi]).

14.3.2 At the same time, and again articulating a mythology which appears to transcend racial and ethnic groupings, many of the discussants talked of a `golden age' of Dixonesque proportions; consider this discussant's reminiscences of a Utopian past:

> `*We don't know the names of the police officer in our local area. I bet you there was a time though fifty years ago when you would know the name of the guy who was walking around. Some people used to know the names of their postman or milkman right, everybody that walked around their street they would know their names, now how many people know the name of their postman? Do you even know what your postman looks like?'* (CR7/03 [male, 29, Asian-Pakistani]).

14.3.3 Linked to this was the articulation of a mythology of a `golden space', a cultural narrative of a `crime-free zone'. Some discussants, for example, suggested that rural areas still enjoy the kind of community life described above, such that it was a positive idyll of crimelessness - `*you go to rural areas and everyone knows he's a police officer …. that's the postmaster ….. he's the bank manager* (CR7/03 [male, 29, Asian-Pakistani]) … (and) … `*there's no crime there*' (CR7/01 [male, 30, Asian-Bangladeshi]). Indeed, there was really no shortage of shared narratives which circulated all of the

focus group discussions, again suggesting their transcendence over ethnic, age and other socio-cultural differences; for example, this discussant told a story of the loss of `common sense' in criminal justice decision-making, a narrative which struck a familiar chord with the other members of the focus group, and caused a good deal of laughter:

> *I heard a story a week and a half ago about the CPS, it was about a guy that walked into this building, put on a maintenance outfit and he saw a plasma TV in the building, and he said I'm going to have that. So he walks straight into the building, CCTV everywhere, got a pair of garden shears, cut all the cables and took the TV home….. so the police saw him on the tapes, arrested him, said right we're going to send you to jail for stealing this in broad daylight. And the CPS said because there wasn't a sign on the wall saying `CCTV', they couldn't use the tape as evidence [laughter]. The CPS said there wasn't enough evidence to prosecute, but he was on the tape and like smiling at the camera, but cos there wasn't a sign saying 'CCTV' so it was inadmissible as evidence, so they couldn't use it – even though the evidence was there and the police had seen it and the company said we witnessed it; and he goes, you haven't because there's no signs so it doesn't exist [everybody laughs]* (CR7/03 [male, 29, Asian-Pakistani]).

14.4 A commonwealth of tax-payers

One particular cultural script dominated discussants' accounts of criminal justice services, and it served the dual function of legitimating and authorising participants' status as `fully paid up' customers as well as transcending ethnic, racial and other perceived differences between BME communities and the white population. The invocation of membership of a commonwealth of tax-payers was both frequently and emphatically asserted across the focus groups, and was pursued in response to particular criminal justice issues. For example, in relation to the question of building more prisons, it was argued that `*that means more tax-payers' money*' (CR1/04 [male, 19, other ethnic background]). On the question of whether or not to invest in rehabilitative work in prisons, it was suggested that `*so much tax … there should be some positive thing for them (prisoners) to do because they come out and don't have any skill for living in society*' (CR3/02 [male, 55, Asian-Pakistani]). In the light of a heated debate on whether a prolific, child offender should be `taken away', it was suggested that `*it's going to come out of tax money to look after him because nobody wants him because he's that bad kid, even though his mother does*' (CR7/03 [male, 29, Asian-Pakistani]). On the matter of police response and demeanour, it was argued that `*some police officers are not even polite …. their job is paid for by people who pay tax. Everybody they meet, even if they're unemployed is paying tax …. everybody is paying their wages , they have a responsibility to be polite*' (CR7/03 [male, 29, Asian-Pakistani]). The prevalence of a `tax-payers' discourse reinforces the notion of criminal justice as a contractual relationship between the state and the citizenry, and it underscores how service provision and delivery needs to take account of the different concerns of a heterogeneity of (tax-paying) communities. In the words of one participant:

`*You see the way we look at the things, we say we are equally taxed and everything, we pay our tax. It's not like we came from the other countries and we are not contributing, so I feel that we are contributing with everything, and so we should get the same service from the service provider and er in so many ways I feel that we don't, we don't get the same treatment from them, that's my personal opinion'* (CR9/03 [male, 27, other Asian background]).

15 Emotional vocabularies and the `good service provider'

15.1 Affective registers of experience

15.1.1 Over the research period, 86 different people collectively spent 1100 minutes - or 18.3 hours - discussing the criminal justice system and its services. Despite this `extensive dialogue', no reference was made by any of the discussants to being `satisfied' with service provision. This does not suggest that discussants were `dissatisfied', so much as lead us to question whether `satisfaction' – or rather, degrees of satisfaction - should feature so prominently in survey measurements of the effectiveness of criminal justice service delivery. Encounters and engagements with criminal justice evoke and incite a range of emotional dispositions which are played out on several affective registers of experience, none of which appear to involve `being satisfied' – although a handful of discussants did describe the police in their area as `*alright*', `*OK really*' and `*white, tall and gorgeous*'. More often, though, participants across the focus groups talked of feeling:

> *scared… really scares me …. scares the living daylights out of me… mistrust….. distrust ….. no trust …. can't trust .... not confident … felt let down ….. felt insecure … feel angry …. feel ashamed …. sense of shame … sense of betrayal … feel very wary …. humiliated … dehumanising … constantly worried … fear … too fearful … frightened …. quite frightened … paranoid …. constantly worried … frustrating … frustrated … upset … very, very upsetting … disappointed … really disappointed … very, very disappointed …. shocked …very, very stressful … people feel they are being ignored …. I've got feelings, I need to be happy … I've got mixed feelings.*

15.1.2 However, there is a danger in taking such an emotional vocabulary at face value. People clearly do feel angry, frustrated, humiliated and disappointed, but such sentiments are always-already contextualised and rendered meaningful within specific experiences and encounters. The point can be made more persuasively by exploring in greater detail the contingency and emotional dynamics of `lived experiences' as recounted by discussants. For example, `feeling scared' does not occur in a vacuum, and within the focus group where such emotions were shared and articulated, reference was made to the cultural conditions of being `scared'; as one discussant commented:

> *`As refugees …. actually the culture that they have got and the attitude they have got, they are scared of police, any kind of legal person, and they think that because, you know, of the background and the experience … from their culture, they … have not that much kind of trust in police and local authorities, they won't trust, they don't trust easily, and they are not confident enough to get help from police and services'* (CR1/01 [male, 18, other Asian background]).

15.1.3 Similarly, the rather worrisome suggestion that people are `*fearful*', `*quite frightened*' and `*paranoid*' needs to be contextualised within a prevailing

climate of counter-terrorism and its emphasis on intensified surveillance, intelligence-led policing and `emergency legislation'; for example, one discussant noted that:

> `*Muslims are too fearful …. like police can catch them and, you know, for no reason and they would be put in jail for 28 days without being charged or anything because …. They are suspected, you know, that … he or she might be involved in a terrorist attack or something'* (CR7/03 [male, 29, Asian-Pakistani]).

15.1.4 Equally, one of the most common themes from all the focus groups was the injunction to be treated as a `human being'; this was cited as, perhaps, the most fundamental requirement of any engagement with criminal justice services. Thus, experiences of criminal justice service provision which were described as `dehumanising', or as leaving people feeling `humiliated', are positioned within a normative framework of expectations about service delivery which, at a minimum, should be premised on respect, dignity and fair treatment; as one discussant argued:

> `*fair treatment, no matter your race, religion, the colour of your skin and er just to be treated as a human coz sometimes they just arrest you for the sake of it like depending on your race the way they kind of treat you'* (CR1/03 [female, 19, other ethnic background]).

15.1.5 Importantly, different feelings emerged depending on whether experiences were self-initiated by discussants, or were police-initiated. For example, where the police had been called to respond to particular incidents, feelings of `disappointment' tended to prevail; while those which were the outcome of police proactivity tended to induce feelings of `anger', `worry' and being `upset`. For example, in the context of the police response to a burglary, the discussant reported that the CCTV evidence was ignored, and that the investigation was not pursued with any real vigour or robustness; he lamented that `*I was just really disappointed with that, that was a bad experience*' (CR3/04 [male, 60, Asian-Indian]). Alternatively, in the aftermath of a high visibility police pursuit of a suspect who had run into the private residence of one of the discussants, he recalls that `*I nearly burst into tears because my kids were so frightened and there was nothing I could do*'. He went onto to say that the whole incident had left him feeling `*angry … it did affect my family life …. when I go to work I am constantly worried about my kids and my wife in the house, you know every minute they used to wake up screaming you know*' (CR4/02 [male, 33, Asian-Bangladeshi]).

15.2 The `good service provider'

15.2.1 By exploring the contingency of the emotional dynamics of `customer service' – that is, the conditions under which a particular affective relationship to criminal justice emerges – it also becomes clear that members of the public have very firm ideas about what constitutes `good service' and what makes for the `good service provider'. There were many occasions when discussants talked of the key qualities of service provision, the kinds of things they expected criminal justice services to provide, the principles which should guide it, the functions it should perform and the outputs it should deliver. As

long as these qualities were enacted and demonstrated, then this was likely to inspire positive feelings of confidence and trust in criminal justice. However, any slippage from this `idealised' model of customer service was more likely to produce feelings of `dissatisfaction' – or, in discussants' terms, lead to feelings of `shock', `frustration' and `disappointment', amongst other things. The `ideal-type' service provision/service provider is worthy of further examination, if only to render more explicit the impossibility of locating a(n entirely) `satisfied' criminal justice customer. The range of attributes which the research discussants expected of criminal justice services are set out in Table 4 (below).

Table 4: Key qualities of `good service' and the `good service' provider

Qualities: *attributes of good/poor service*	
♦ `when they do turn up they always seem to be suspicious' ♦ `they probably have a priority-type system' ♦ `the police can't do anything' ♦ `they're not bothered to look at it (CCTV)' ♦ `the system is not accountable' ♦ `they don't treat you with the respect and dignity' ♦ `there should be access to interpreters'	♦ `they don't understand the African culture' ♦ `they're meant to be well-versed in equal opportunity policies and diversity' ♦ `fair treatment no matter what your race, religion, the colour of your skin' ♦ `as a customer I expect respect' ♦ `the first need would be just to be taken seriously, then not to be seen as being a liar' ♦ `they (police) just don't turn up'
Principles: *principles which should guide the provision/delivery of cj services*	
♦ `make the punishments equal to the crime' ♦ `British justice based on same law for everybody' ♦ `everybody should be treated all the same way' ♦ `those people who are part of the administrating the justice should reflect the composition of society' ♦ `make the sentence an actual life sentence'	♦ `do something with them (offenders) apart from the punishment … involve them in some sort of activities and contribute to the society somehow' ♦ `people who have committed murder, they should be killed for that' ♦ `they (criminals) only do it because it's inbred in them'
Functions: *roles and responsibilities that cj services are expected to, or do fulfil*	
♦ `I wanted to know what happened after … I had given that (witness) statement' ♦ `I want to know where the money goes from the fines' ♦ `It feels like they are just taking money for no reason' ♦ `they ought to take action there and then' ♦ `they have to do something' ♦ `it's all political correctness as well, calling it the police service rather than the police force' ♦ `they're (CPS) there to make sure nobody goes to prison, that's the reputation they have'	♦ `respond to calls for help' ♦ `they don't look at what the psychological impact is' ♦ `you only ring the police in a 100% emergency' ♦ `they (police) keep everything in check, keep everything in hand, keep streets peaceful' ♦ `they'll (police) sort everything' ♦ `they (police) come and take forensic evidence' ♦ `a system (the cjs) to keep criminals off the street' ♦ `there's no sharing of information'

Outputs: *the results/products of cj action and/or inaction*	
♦ `without proof, they can't do anything' ♦ `it takes them about an hour to turn up' ♦ `the criminal is laughing at them' ♦ `no-one wants to report it (crime) because of the lengthy process' ♦ `there's a lot of bureaucracy' ♦ `it (the police service' can get drowned in paperwork' ♦ `domestic violence, that's one of the biggest fillers of courts' ♦ `there's just so much stuff they have to deal with now' ♦ `a hostel … will spread the crime' ♦ `they (police) consult you but you don't get anything' ♦ `I have seen the community wardens a few times, but not on our streets, on the main roads' ♦ `they (young offenders) can get away with it easily' ♦ `you always hear about a lot of police brutality …. Young black youths being killed in police cells'	♦ `they just arrest you for the sake of it' ♦ `everyone is complaining because they are not receiving the customer service' ♦ `they can't control crime' ♦ `most people, it's a fact, they re-offend over and over and over again' ♦ `speed cameras aren't there to slow people down, it's money-making' ♦ `they're restricted, their hands are literally tied behind their back' ♦ `there's more physical attacks and no-one hardly reports it because the police don't do anything without evidence' ♦ `this is what the legal system has become, a hassle for most decent people who want a decent life' ♦ I know somebody had fudged the statistics …. saying crime has actually gone down …. that's exactly what they do with the school exams results'

15.2.2 Despite, or maybe *because* of the implicit idealism of this `wish list' of expectations of service provision, some discussants preferred to accept that there were limits to the concept of `customer service' when applied to questions of criminal justice. For example, one discussant commented that:

> `*If I went into Marks and Spencers, they're serving me …. providing a service, service means to provide something, yeah, be it free or be it with money. They're (the criminal justice system) not, I don't think it's a service, it's nothing like a service because where do you complain?'* (CR7/01 [male, 30, Asian-Bangladeshi]).

15.2.3 The criterion of `making a complaint' as something which was important to realising an acceptable level of service quality, was reiterated elsewhere; another discussant, in a different focus group, was highly critical of the complaints process in relation to criminal justice and other statutory sector `services'; he argued:

> `*To complain about the police you've got to go through a lot of process … and it wouldn't go nowhere because I've complained with other issues with government departments…… Yes, I know (there are) lawyers, solicitors, er police complaints commission, but basically these commissions are lip service. That's what they are, they make a lot of noise you can get somewhere, but otherwise it's just lip service….. I feel I can't do anything, I can do something but it's a hard thing to do, make noise, complain, because when, you know, when you complain you won't get a reply'* (CR4/01 [male, 34, Asian-Bangladeshi]).

15.2.4 Later in the discussion, this same discussant put forward some useful suggestions for improvement, and this underlines how far the BME discussants who took part in this research were prepared to think through potential solutions to the various difficulties they faced as `criminal justice customers'. These are further elaborated below, but in relation to the perceived limitations of the complaints process, the discussant offered the following solution:

> `*(I)t's how you portray yourself to them, and how if you have a complaint, it's I think when it goes all wrong you are not expressing what you want to say properly. That's where the problem is, lack of communication. They are not understanding our Asian people or they are not mixed with folk er, the police. They don't understand this community, I know for a fact because we do not open up'* (CR4/01 [male, 34, Asian-Bangladeshi]).

15.3 Solutions and recommendations

15.3.1 One of the core suggestions put forward by participants was to see greater diversity amongst the CJS workforce. As one Black-African discussant argued:

> `*if they could possibly diversify their workforce as well a bit more, so…people from different minorities and backgrounds, which I know are quite under-represented at the moment in a lot of these services, erm if they could…increase the amount of ethnic minorities…that actually work for them…I think that would have a huge impact because like we could, once we're in working for them, we can try and change things from the inside as well'* (CR6/03 [female, 27, Black African])

15.3.2 As well as the feeling that this would bring about significant change in the service delivery of the CJS, it was also posited that diversity would impact on the confidence of BME communities with the criminal justice system, and their willingness to engage with its services and service-providers. An emphasis on diversity would certainly go some way to overcoming assumptions about the racist potential of some practitioners. One participant, for example, describes his vision of a police officer as being a White man who, before joining the police force, probably held racist views `*just like all the other kids growing up in the area*'; he comments:

> `*when I look at the police officer and I see them as white…I see him as being, when I think about him I think that he was a charver himself when he was younger, he was racist and so too, that's the experience I have got of them when they (are) dealing with a case because they don't deal with it properly'* (CR8/04 [male, 26, other ethnic background]).

15.3.3 Other ways to improve the 'satisfaction gap' are suggested in the form of involving the community, including having more meetings and discussions about their needs, but perhaps even more importantly, to act on these things. As one discussant put it, quite forcefully:

> `*We've had so many discussions with community leaders, and we've put our points of view across as of what we expect of the police and what the police expect from us. And yet they are still going round and round in circles having discussions about what we need, or what they need, and how we can help better community relations. It's not a time for talking, it's time for action, and it's about time they acted'* (CR3/06 [male, 53, Asian-Pakistani]).

15.3.4 The feeling of being `over-consulted' without any subsequent change in policy or practice was a constant theme and the source of a discernible sense of `consultation-fatigue'. The current research was not exempt from this; as one discussant noted `*when they don't see any change they will see this exercise as academic*' (CR3/07 [male, 60 Asian-Pakistani]). There was also a request for more information from the CJS, especially for new immigrants introducing them to the law and what services they have access to, and the level of service they should expect. Interestingly, requests for more information were often framed by a concern to nurture a sense of civic responsibility by encouraging wider engagement with criminal justice services as victims, witnesses and jurors. Consider this discussant's comments:

> `*I think they need quite a bit of awareness ….. I think that little bit more awareness which might help erm them to understand the importance of standing witness … or taking complaints against the police if they are wrong'* (CR3/07 [male, 60, Asian-Pakistani]).

15.3.5 There was also some discussion on the merits of `community beat workers' and their introduction into several areas in the north east – South Urban, Middle Urban and West Urban were all mentioned. It was suggested that they fulfilled an important role as `*messenger(s) to actually do some awareness-raising kind of sessions with the community*' (CR2/03 [female, 46, other ethnic background]). Similarly, another discussant put forward the idea to include BME people on the `boards of management' of some of the criminal justice agencies; he explained it thus:

> `*I'm sure there is voluntary input … many of these institutions, the boards of management if you like, and people from the community are invited to be on the board … so they request for some input at the board level'* (CR3/07 [male, 60, Asian-Pakistani]).

15.3.6 A further recommendation was the need for the police to undergo regular review; as one participant suggested, `*they should be always reviewed, always reviewed … therefore, it's like any other job – are you up to scratch? If you're not you need to go*' (CR7/01 [male, 30, Asian-Bangladeshi]). The view that police officers held their jobs `for life' even in the face of `poor performance' was a prevalent one, and the source of some concern especially in terms of how it compared to poor performing schools – the argument was framed as follows:

> `*If your teaching is bad, you'll get sacked, the whole school will get closed down. So, if a police station isn't performing, right get them out, get new police officers in. But no, they won't do that' (CR7/01 [male, 30, Asian-Bangladeshi])*

16 Discussion and recommendations

16.1 Engagement with BME communities

16.1.1 The findings from this study show that police are considered to be the 'face' of the CJS and as such highlights the importance of their role in engaging with BME communities. One of the most vivid themes that arise from the focus groups was the wish to be treated as a 'human being'. Many of the people we spoke to for this study feel as though they are treated as 'other', which is closely linked to Cook's (1993) argument of black people being treated as 'non-citizens'. Racism and exclusion are manifested in the lack of full citizen status in both their social and political life; and it was this cry for 'fair treatment' that resounded across all focus groups. The research participants talk persuasively of the way they are treated by the police and other CJS services compared to the white population. Both the direct and the vicarious experiences of stop and search on young Black African men and those with a visible Muslim identity play a big part in undermining the trust and confidence of BME communities. Reiner (2000) talks of the `common experience' of discrimination across most areas of social life such that `respectable' adults within the BME population share an identification and common cause with BME youths in their struggles with the criminal justice system – see also Cashmore and McLaughlin, 1991.

16.1.2 However, it is not just physical acts such as stop and search but also the attitude of CJS staff towards them which manifests itself in body language, tone of voice and the language that is used towards them[9]. There is some doubt and confusion over whether slow response time by the police is based on their ethnicity; either due to prejudices from staff who recognise an accent when taking the call or because of the area in which they live (which is known as having a high BME population). Whilst there was some understanding about police prioritising cases there was the underlying feeling that these prejudices contributed to their needs being classed as low priority. Given that the NCJB are interested in the potential to expand the methodology to foster community links and encourage civic participation, this is a very interesting revelation. Previous schemes, such as the Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS), which is based on principles of deliberative democracy and uses `deep citizen involvement' (Fung, 2001), have proved successful in allowing citizens to be able to deliberate on the best use of police resources to improve public safety in their area (Fung, 2003). The use of deliberative democracy techniques would enable BME community members to acquire a greater knowledge of police response policies (this being just one example) and resources in their area, as well as provide the NCJB with further insights into the needs of their community – see also Section 17.3.

16.1.3 It was clear in numerous focus group discussions that participants were well aware of the crime-problems in their area and whereas some group members expressed a wariness, or possibly even weariness, towards reporting crimes to the police, others expressed willingness to work with police to use their community knowledge to help tackle crime in their area. This

[9] See Cohen et al., 1992:62 for further commentary and qualitative evidence relating to how minority ethnics experience attitudes from officials

difference in willingness could be attributed to the idea of working *with* the police: i.e. by creating a "participatory problem-solving collaboration" (Fung, 2003:341). This creates an acknowledgement of the interdependent and mutually beneficial relationship between citizens and the police. Of further benefit to this normative partnership between citizens and the state is the presupposition that state action is held to public account; citizens are in a position whereby they can examine the actions and the current policies of police officers and monitor the outcomes – an approach to accountability which was described some years ago as `explanatory and co-operative' (Marshall, 1978).

16.2 Keeping communities informed

16.2.1 The need for more information, or more easily accessible information was also a dominant theme throughout the focus groups. Although all groups acknowledged that the language barrier is a problem this was more so when it came to being able to express oneself adequately during encounters with the CJS. Although some asked for more leaflets and other information to be available in different languages others stated that it was often easier to read the English version as many of the terms and phrases do not translate easily. However, although the need for documents in *different languages* was contested, the need for *information* was not. Since the focus groups were conducted, Cambridgeshire Constabulary have produced a booklet of the very type that participants described as needing. What is most interesting to note is the media response to this booklet; the idea that people coming to this country need advice on general UK law and where to go if they have been a victim of crime, was described as immigrants having different `cultural' ideas about acceptable behaviour, and was immediately seized upon by the media.

16.2.2 Smith (2007) in *The Independent* writes: `the comments by the Chief Constable provided ammunition to hardline opponents of immigration who are bound to seize on her remarks about migrant workers and knife-crime' (20 September, 2007). It could be argued, then, that this media onslaught encapsulates the deep-rooted problem of racial inequality in contemporary Britain; despite there appearing to be, on some levels, greater equality between races, the status afforded to black and minority ethnic groups is 'always conditional upon the approval of whites' (Gillborn, 2006: 320). Consequently, providing BME groups with the information they are asking for needs to not only be produced in conjunction with the communities it is intended for but also must be handled with care so as not to perpetuate ideas of intellectual and moral difference in relation to the white population (see Herrnstein and Murray, 1994).

16.3 Institutional racism or a return to 'a few bad apples' theory?

16.3.1 Despite providing more in-depth knowledge as to the nature of opinions on criminal justice-community relations, the findings still present as a complex picture. As it is the focus group itself that is the unit of analysis, and not the individual participants, the findings from most focus groups showed diverging opinions. Despite highlighting negative experiences or encounters with the police most groups went on to argue that this was not about the system but down to the individual police officer and their prejudices or lack of

training. Further echoes of Scarman's report (1981:4.63) were also evidenced with the idea that police managerment is 'very good' and aim to include BME communities, but that progressive strategies and policies do not 'filter down' to police officers on the ground. The more recent Home Office report which assessed the impact of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry (Foster *et al*, 2005) has implicated higher ranking officers, yet participants in this study (with a notable exception of the Black African males who describe being frequently stopped and searched) have described racist or negative experiences with *frontline* police and other members of the CJS services. These, in turn, have been regarded as the outcome of individual prejudices with the effect that discussants proposed more training be given to this level of officers to enable them to be more understanding towards the needs of their communities.

16.3.2 However, the exception to these opinions does need to be discussed in further detail. Direct and vicarious experiences of being stopped and searched by the police was a prevalent theme amongst Black African participants and is viewed as being deliberate and systematic racist behaviour by the police. Whether these stop and searches can be justified as being related to patterns of crime (Brown, 1997; Bucke, 1997; Fitzgerald, 1999; MVA & Miller, 2000) is not for this study to argue; however, the impact on trust and confidence these stop and searches have on BME communities is crucial. As Waddington (1999: 52) argues; the experience of being stopped and searched is not contained in isolation but is given significance and meaning when considered against the number of times that person may have been stopped previously and the knowledge of similar treatment of their friends and neighbours within the wider Black African community. In addition, and intrinsic participants' feelings towards stop and search was the attitude of the police officers who carried out the search, again prompting a sense of unfairness that they are being treated differently to the white population (Home Office, 2001).

16.4 `Customer satisfaction' and an emotional repertoire of service use

16.4.1 If asked to summarise in one word, the affective quality of BME communities' lived experiences of criminal justice service provision, this research would suggest `unfairness' – at least, this is the key characteristic of criminal justice services which was articulated across the focus group discussions. As Karstedt (2002) argues, the social and moral values of justice and fairness are collective and therefore linked not only to individual experiences but experiences of others as well. This can help explain discussants' articulation of affective assessments of criminal justice services often despite having had no personal encounters with or experiences of them. In addition, the prevalent perception that the white population enjoy preferential service provision adds to a sense of `injustice' and creates the conditions for the emergence of other emotional dispositions such as anger and frustration. The range of emotions described by participants in their encounters and interactions with criminal justice services was vast and included trust, fear, anger, confidence, unhappiness, disappointment, sadness and betrayal. It is clear that further work needs to be done in this area to open up the concept of 'satisfaction' and position it on a continuum of affectivities, acknowledging its place within a broader spectrum of emotional vocabularies.

It may be advantageous, for example, to map the emotional dynamics of service delivery, perhaps adapting Frijda's (1996) component-process-model to understand the emotional relations of service use, specifically from a `customer' perspective.

16.4.2 Equally, the research provides some evidence for questioning whether the concept of the `customer' is appropriate to describe the contractual relations of criminal justice service use. The notion of `customer' sits well in an economic model of service delivery where consumer choice and preference based on a *homo economicus* species of service-user, is meaningful (Johnson, 2000). However, the discussants in this study have been quick to point out the flaws in the `customer-based' model of criminal justice service consumption. Stressing their status as `British tax-payers', discussants, in effect, were reasserting the terms and conditions of their service use – that is, they were articulating a contractual relationship to the criminal justice system embedded in classical social contract theory, providing the necessary philosophical grounds for conceptualising service provision as a *political obligation* rather than an economic or market transaction.

16.5 Bridging the `satisfaction gap'

16.5.1 Making recommendations under this heading does seem to be a moot point in the light of this study's key finding that levels of satisfaction do not feature in affective assessments of criminal justice service use, nor in accounts of lived experiences criminal justice. Nonetheless, discussants did put forward a number of suggestions to improve their experiences of criminal justice service, and generate a more informed and constructive relationship with the criminal justice system. Many of the recommendations put forward relate to policing; as the `face' of criminal justice service, it is perhaps inevitable that recommendations for change centre on the police service. Equally, many of the suggestions made by discussants resonate with the findings of two recent government inquiries into the racial and ethnic relations of the criminal justice system (Foster *et al*, 2005; Home Affairs Committee, 2007). The recommendations set out below are, therefore, linked to these key documents so that the wider strategic context of suggested changes to policy and practice can be outlined.

16.5.2 Diversity: one of the most oft-cited suggestions put forward by the discussants was the need for diversity within the criminal justice system workforce. This single feature was considered as pivotal to bringing about significant change in service delivery and provision and to impacting on levels of confidence with the criminal justice system.

16.5.3 Training: linked to this is the recommendation to regularly review *and* update diversity training**,** with an added suggestion to hold practitioners to account for poor performance on this score. This sits well with the recent recommendations of the Home Affairs Committee; it stated: `*We recommend that all forces should provide as standard, training relating to local ethnic minority communities, both for probationers and on an ongoing basis as the ethnic composition of an area changes. Fairness and objectivity should be key performance measures against which individual officers should be*

assessed when it comes to appraisal, and the police should prioritise these attributes when recruiting' (HAC, 2007: para 64, pp 88).

16.5.4 Community involvement: greater involvement *with* and *by* the community is suggested, including having more regular meetings and discussions about community needs, and more importantly a greater willingness to act on these things. Again , this suggestion is echoed by the Home Affairs Committee which recommends: `*We recommend that more police forces should create local forums in which police and young people can come together to talk about issues affecting the community. These panels could identify local flashpoints or areas of tension and find solutions and may also prove useful for gathering intelligence about local needs and priorities'* (HAC, 2007: para 65: pp 88). In addition to this, it is important to stress that involvement or liaison with local communities is most effective where there is potential for `critical impact' and where there is a clear purpose in terms of community needs and concerns, rather than a criminal justice-led agenda - see Foster et al, 2005: xii-xiii.

16.5.5 Over-consultation: the need to act in the light of community consultation is absolutely imperative. One of the abiding complaints of the research discussants was a sense of being `over-consulted' without any subsequent change in policy or practice. The absence of any perceptible `follow-through' of various (otherwise laudable) consultation and liaison exercises contributes to growing dissatisfaction and generates a climate of consultation-fatigue.

16.5.6 Liaison workers: the discussants saw merit in `community beat workers' and placed great value in their capacity to act as a resource for developing community liaison with the services and service-providers of the criminal justice system. Whether discussants were referring here to Police Community Support Officers, or regular police officers with a community relations brief, is of less importance than their identification of the importance of a locally-based point of contact. In the report, *Assessing the Impact of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry* (2005), the authors reflect very positively on the development of posts in many force areas, dedicated to liaison with local minority communities. However, they caution that: `*the roles of liaison and beat officers (are) generally not integrated into mainstream policing. As a result, officers were generally not integrated into mainstream policing. As a result, officers in these roles often felt marginalised and were subject to other pressures (such as frequent abstraction) which undermined their ability to sustain community contacts'* (Foster et al, 2005: xiii).

17 Methodological transferability

17.1 Introduction

The aim of this section is to reflect critically on the use of Participant Action Research (PAR) as the primary model of social inquiry. While a persuasive epistemological and methodological case for the use of PAR in this research has already been made in Section 7, it is not without its limitations and difficulties. These are further examined here as a means of assessing the potential transferability to the Northumbria Criminal Justice Board (NCJB) of a PAR-informed approach to the development of criminal justice service provision at the local level. This does not constitute a methodological critique so much as provide a critical commentary on the transferability of PAR and its methodology of co-inquiry, and thereby gauge its utility and value to processes of consultation and methods of public engagement. This section looks at the three constituent elements of PAR, in the mixed order of i) participants and participation; ii) research and other collaborative endeavours; and iii) `action': knowledge and transformation. In each sub-section, the scope for the transferability of PAR principles to NCJB's portfolio of consultative methodologies is discussed.

17.2 Participants and participation

17.2.1 To access participants for the study, one of the first steps the research team took was to consult with the NCJB about its existing networks and contacts with BME communities in the region. It was expected that such networks may have been in place through the routine `community-focused' work of the Board's constituent agencies; or had been established through NCJB liaison with the 11 Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRP) in the NCJB area, given their work with `communities' at the local rather than the regional level. If such networks were already established this would provide an important resource for the identification of a sampling frame, and the development of a recruitment strategy for research participants. At an initial meeting, however, the research team were informed that i) the CDRPs were unlikely to be in a position to facilitate research contact with different communities within the regional BME population; and ii) the NCJB had no existing network of contacts, or easy access to particular BME communities within the region. This suggests, at the very least, that the NCJB could explore its existing networks and contacts to identify accessible populations of potential participants relevant and appropriate to a range of different consultation topics .

17.2.2 To identify a sampling frame, the research team undertook a number of Google searches and through this produced an inventory of information relating to BME communities in the North East. This included important demographic studies and census/statistical information, local research studies, a variety of resources for ethnic minority use, service directories and the profiles and activities of a range of associations/groups/projects explicitly serving the BME population in the region. These latter numbered 177 different groups which were further typologised by the research team into support, social, cultural, political and faith-based groups, but could just as easily have been typologised in other ways – by geographical area, age group served by

the association, gender composition or whether run by volunteers or professional service-providers, for example. However, and importantly, each of these groups was affiliated to, or had an association with one of 4 gateway organisations serving the region – VONNE, VODA, BECON and CREST. There are clearly limits to how far research can rely on the use of gateways and intermediaries, and the methodological drawbacks of doing so have been considered in Section 8.1.4. However, the key point here is to recognise that in the development of methodologies for consultation and public engagement, the potential benefits to the NCJB of networking with gateway organisations outweighs the possible disadvantages, and are not constrained by social scientific protocols. There is certainly less need to adhere strictly to methodological principles in relation to the development of community consultation mechanisms. Moreover, the gateway organisations have vast experience of, and are very knowledgeable about the communities they serve (Culley *et al*, 2007). By working with the gateway organisations to recruit for public engagement events, the NCJB could likewise benefit from their `insider-knowledge' of, for example, language needs, child care arrangements for particular ethnic communities, dissemination to faith groups, interpreter costs, and a range of cultural nuances across and within BME groups[10].

17.2.3 An alternative to the use of the gateway organisations was to identify a framework of sampling sites and attend these in the hope of recruiting a sufficient number and diversity of BME participants. For example, the inventory of regional groups and associations also showed that they tended to operate out of a limited number of premises. It was perfectly feasible for the research team to have attended these locations, at particular times/days and personally approached individuals about the research. This was attempted at two locations, but proved ineffective as there was simply too much movement and distraction to engage people meaningfully with the research idea. However, it is still a viable sampling technique for the Board if it was undertaken at particular locations/venues, or in conjunction with specific events, such as *Inside Justice* week, which could be used as an occasion to canvass for participation in a variety of public engagement activities. The drawback here is that target participants may not necessarily be those in attendance at such venues/events.

17.2.4 Given that the focus of this research was `customer satisfaction', it may have been desirable, even if it was not necessary, to have included within the sampling frame specific BME individuals accessible primarily, if not exclusively, through NCJB services and databases. These may have included those who have been particular `customers' of criminal justice services such as victims of crime; those who have acted as witnesses; those who have served as jurors, for example. This more focused approach to the recruitment of participants is certainly available to the NCJB as a matter of routine and is certainly worth developing in relation to consultation on matters which are highly specific to particular constituencies of interest and with respect to narrowly-defined issues.

[10] Though the focus of this research has been BME communities, `gateway organisations' exist for a wide range of different communities and constituencies of interest.

17.2.5 A further route to recruitment is achievable through snowballing techniques. Within research methodology, such techniques feature at the non-probability end of a spectrum of sampling approaches. Despite this, the use of snowballing in relation to particularly hard-to-reach groups is an acceptable sampling method, and the parameters and preferred demographics of the sample can be built into the snowball as it expands to include more participants[11]. In relation to NCJB recruitment, snowballing offers an important alternative mechanism to locate appropriate participants for public engagement purposes and needs only the initiating recruitment of one or two individuals.

17.2.6 Whatever approach to recruitment is taken, the key criterion is that participants should be eligible to participate in the research. Given that the brief for this research was to explore the lived experiences of *visible* black and minority ethnic communities, non-visible (white) ethnicities, such as Polish, Ukrainian and Romanian people, were excluded from the sampling frame[12]. However, despite publicising the research as specifically relating to and interested only in the views from visible black and ethnic minority communities, a number of white people turned up at both the exploratory and co-researcher focus group stages. The varied effects of this are discussed more fully below in Section 17.3.3, but it is mentioned here to underline the importance of policing recruitment to ensure that those who participate are eligible in terms of the relevant specialist `insider-knowledge' that they can bring to the project.

17.2.7 The purpose of participation also needs to be considered in relation to recruitment approaches. In this research-initiated study, participants were recruited as co-researchers. However, it may be that participants are needed to act in a co-facilitator capacity, as in practitioner-initiated events; or as co-designers in what have been termed, `democratic inquiry approaches' to collaboration (Whyte, 1991; Stringer, 1996; Brydon-Miller, 1997; Kemmis and McTaggart, 2000). Each purpose proposes a different relationship between participant and `expert'/practitioner, ranging from relationships based on facilitation and consultation, to those based on education, co-investigation and/or partnership (Whyte, 1989; Eldon and Chisholm, 1993; Brydon-Miller *et al*, 2003; Detardo-Bora, 2004). Whatever the purpose, or the nature of the relationship, it is important to remember that its development and maintenance relies on an investment of time, resources, effort and commitment.

17.2.8 It is also important to take full account of participants' everyday realities, and the material circumstances within which they choose to participate in projects of co-inquiry. Involvement in this study for the co-

[11] Snowball sampling (also known as network, chain referral, or reputational sampling) is a method for identifying a research population. It is based on the analogy of a snowball which begins small but becomes larger as it is rolled downhill and picks up additional snow. Snowball sampling is a multistage technique, beginning with a few people who `fit' the criteria for inclusion, and using these initial contacts to locate others who conform to the required research demographics.

[12] It may well be the case that white minority ethnic groups share certain experiences, such as language barriers as noted in Section 12.1.2. However, it is a moot point as to whether or not this is sufficient to be comparable to the variegated (discriminatory) experiences of visibly black and minority ethnic persons.

researcher team often meant taking time off work, negotiating flexible hours with employers, arranging childcare, postponing (or even cancelling) other commitments, planning travel and allowing for travel time, responding to e-mail and telephone queries, and a host of other imponderables which were certainly not compensated by the small bursary offered. In other words, the co-researchers' involvement in the study was driven more by a strong sense of civic duty than the prospect of financial or other reward. This certainly also applied to the members of BME communities who attended both the exploratory and/or co-researcher focus groups, and for whom there was no recompense in terms of expenses incurred in attending the focus group. The rhetoric of democratisation which infuses discussions of PAR tends to obscure these somewhat prosaic issues and relies too heavily on a romanticist view of altruistic citizenship. If PAR values the goal of `giving voice' to the silenced and marginalised, it needs to ensure sufficient funds and resources to cover the social and financial costs of participation.

17.3 Research and other collaborative endeavours

17.3.1 Focus groups are portrayed as a medium of democratic participation which is achieved through a number of routes. First, they serve as the `authentic' representation of lay perspectives which, in turn, serve to challenge expert opinion; second, they constitute a forum for the active formation of collective viewpoints; third, they serve as a starting point for transformative action; fourth, they are the primary vehicle for facilitating lay participation in social science research (Bloor *et al*, 1993: 93). These perspectives certainly fuel the counter-cultural claim that focus groups give voice to the silenced, the marginalised and the invisible; but Silverman (1989) is sceptical of this kind of idealism and cautions against what he describes as`the impossible dream of reformism and romanticism'. However, this should not be taken as a cue to abandon co-inquiry (via focus group methodology) on the basis that it is impossible, but to recognise that there may be difficulties in achieving its `perfect execution'.

17.3.2 For example, the process of forging and nurturing collaborative relationships is time-consuming and resource-intensive, and requires a major commitment of time, energy and funding. At times, this research struggled to stay on schedule, but the value of investing research time and effort in establishing and maintaining good co-researcher relationships was absolutely essential to the success of the study. While there was prior acknowledgement of the costs (in terms of time and money) in relation to the organisation and implementation of the exploratory focus groups, co-researcher methodological training, the execution of the co-researcher focus groups and the completion of a methodological feedback session, the time and resources needed for transcription of the focus group discussions was under-estimated. Focus group transcription is known for being time-consuming (Barbour and Kitzinger, 1999), but in studies such as this there are often hidden problems and added complications such as the large mix of different accents, and participants' levels of understanding and speaking English. In addition, the lack of support from the project for childcare costs meant that some participants brought their children along to the focus groups which created a degree of noise on the

tape: unfortunately, these problems often meant that parts of conversations were lost as they were impossible to transcribe.

17.3.3 As discussed above in Section 17.2.6, a number of white participants attended either the exploratory focus groups or the co-researcher focus groups. The effects of this varied, and ranged from having a negligible impact on the research to that of having a catastrophic effect. For example, a young white woman attended one of the exploratory focus groups but quickly realised her incongruence and her ineligibility to discuss the issues at hand. She remained silent throughout the focus group discussion and in this sense made no impact on it. However, in those situations where white participants were explicitly invited along as friends or associates of the co-researcher (or of focus group discussants), there was already an assumption that they *should* contribute to the discussion. In one case, a white male raised a number of points but certainly did not dominate the conversation; his presence, then, did not seem to alter the dynamics of the group discussion or redirect the way that an issue was being framed. Similarly, a young, white woman was invited by her boyfriend to attend with him one of the co-researcher focus groups. Though she made a number of different comments, her contributions and presence did not effect the dynamics of the group nor did it intrude on the flow and direction of the discussion.

17.3.4 This contrasts sharply with the catastrophic impact of the presence of a white, male, Catholic police officer who `invited himself' along to an all-women, BME, Muslim co-researcher focus group. Despite the publicity information, and its emphasis on *visible* black and minority ethnicities, and notwithstanding the co-researcher's opening announcement concerning the purpose and independence of the research study, and its ethical principles of confidentiality and anonymity (see Appendices E and F), the police officer immediately re-stated the event as a question and answer session, a kind of problem-solving surgery in which he positioned himself as the `expert' on criminal justice matters. He opened:

> *I would like to thank you for inviting me…. my role is to find out what problems you have in accessing the police and to alleviate those kinds of problems …. I hope everybody feels free to let me know if you have any problems.*

17.3.5 The co-researcher certainly attempted to reclaim her role by moving through the focus group schedule, but the terms and conditions of the group discussion had been wrested from her control and hi-jacked at outset, and an important opportunity to elicit the specialist, insider-knowledge of a particularly hard-to-reach group of women had already been lost. The generous view is that the police officer was acting out of the best possible intentions and was merely fulfilling his responsibility to nurture `community relations'. Less generously, this episode further highlights how BME communities can experience processes of marginalisation and exclusion in obsequious and `everyday' ways, and not necessarily from direct acts of wilful racism. That is, in this example, the presence of the well-meaning officer was far from benign and ultimately had the malign effect of silencing and disempowering an

already silenced and disempowered group of women by estranging them from their own discussion.

17.3.6 From the perspective of transferability, the presence of `ineligible participants' throws up two key issues for models of practice based on collaborative principles of co-inquiry. First, in order to maximise available funding and resources, there needs to be a clear procedure for selecting out those who cannot provide the requisite specialist knowledge, or who do not possess the appropriate expertise in relation to the topic of interest. Second, where projects of co-inquiry may overlap or run parallel to existing practices, it may be advisable to inform practitioners at the local level of any collaborative activities that are in place[13].

17.3.7 While there are clearly a range of methodological difficulties associated with the use of focus groups as the primary vehicle of co-inquiry, the range and scope of collaborative work is certainly not restricted to research-based endeavours. This, then, allows a consideration of other forms of collaboration and co-participation which all have potential in the context of developing the NCJB's programme for consultation and public engagement. Consider, for example, the following mechanisms, each of which offer ways of engaging with the public in a variety of educative, deliberative, consultative, facilitative and collaborative ways – these are citizens juries; scenario workshops; experiential workshops; networking action research; and various Taoist and Confuscian approaches as practised in the People's Republic of China. These are considered in turn.

17.3.8 Citizens juries: Wakeford (2002) points out that citizens juries draw on the historical tradition of representation enshrined in the *Magna Carta*, 1215; he describes citizens juries as involving `a panel of non-specialists (who meet) for a total of thirty to fifty hours to examine carefully an issue of public significance. The jury made up of between twelve and twenty people, serves as a microcosm of the public ' (*ibid*: 2; see also Pimbert and Wakeford, 2003; Wakeford and Pimbert, 2004).

17.3.9 Scenario workshops: here a group of twelve to twenty participants are presented with varied scenarios representing different perspectives on an issue. The presentation of the scenario can be accompanied by an `expert witness' who `champions' a particular perspective and is open to cross-examination by the workshop group. Scenario workshops have been compared to the Indian process of *Jan Sunwai* (people's hearings) or *goti*, which are practised in the Eastern Ghats region of Andhra Pradesh, India – see Pimbert and Wakeford, 2003: 190.

17.3.10 Experiential workshops: these are very much in keeping with the issues explored in this research study, and centre on facilitating participants to access the deepest emotions which anchor their thinking. It is an approach

[13] In the example discussed here, there did not seem to be much requirement to have informed the local police, as the publicity material for the co-researcher's focus group was very clear in terms of its organisation, purpose, independent status and eligible participants – see Appendix A; the co-researcher adapted this flyer (adding her own contact details) and used it to publicise the focus group amongst Muslim women in this particular area of the north-east.

which has been developed by Joanna Macy and includes elements of ritual, creative art, dialogue, systems thinking and connection to the natural world. The emotions released in these workshops are said to be `difficult to forget … and therefore form a strong basis for a more traditional, intellectual treatment of the issues' (Bradbury, 2003: 210). See also www.joannamacy.net for further details.

17.3.11 Networking action research: this approach uses technology to network with participants and stakeholders, and takes into account the shifting quality of `community as networks'. This latter concept draws on Castells' notions of the `space of flows' and `portfolios of sociability' (2001: 132) which people create and maintain through the use of technology – mobile phones, SMS, e-mail, blogs. The use of such communication devices enable networks of place-to-place and role-to-role relationships, rather than those based on face-to-face, person-to-person interactions. Network action research is an emergent model of collaborative and is relatively untried in the family of co-inquiry approaches – see Foth, 2006.

17.3.12 Chinese traditions: there is a growing western interest in Confuscian and Taoist forms of citizen participation which are practised in the People's Republic of China. Hughes and Yuan (2005) present an excellent overview of these traditions which include `democracy dialogues' introduced to Wen Ling city in 1999, public meetings with up to 600 participants held four times a year and broadcast locally and regionally. Other strategies for engaging local people in critical dialogue on the work of leaders, and which provide an opportunity to offer suggestions on city administration include `online dialogues', `telephone hotlines', `public forums', `speech competitions', `evaluation meetings' and `oral defence competitions'.

17.4 `Action': knowledge and transformation

17.4.1 PAR aspires to a somewhat Utopian paradigm of research practice in which a range of political and socio-cultural orientations feature as prominently as those concerning the production of `good quality' knowledge (Cain, 1990). It is certainly a common expectation that PAR has a `dual purpose' which combines `practical transformation and the advancement of knowledge' (Huxham and Vangen, 2003: 384). This is a relatively ambitious aspiration, and it is doubtful whether it can be transferred or imported wholesale into an NCJB context of collaborative work and co-facilitative approaches to public engagement. This sub-section looks at the potential for transferability by examining each of the two strands of `dual action' in turn – the advancement of knowledge; and practical transformation.

17.4.2 Checkland and Howell (1998) anticipate the recoverability of the research for application in other contexts; while Yin (1994) puts forward an argument for the output of research from single, case studies to become a theoretical vehicle for the examination of other cases. As steps or processes for the advancement of knowledge, these kinds of suggestions are commonplace and conform to Detardo-Bora's description of knowledge development as always tentative, evolving and cyclical in nature (2004: 242). All of this sits easily within an ethical framework which anticipates the

inclusion of voices from the `margins' (hooks, 1984) and the `bottom' (Matsuda, 1995); and which works to achieve the *democratisation of knowledge* shattering what Arendt describes as the `lying world of consistency' (1951: 352). However, it has to be asked, given the different concerns of empowerment, facilitation, education, participation and collaboration, just *whose* knowledge and *which* knowledge is being advanced in the name of co-inquiry.

17.4.3 For example, the present research has been exploratory and has been a primarily empirical undertaking rather than a project geared to the advancement of knowledge. However, suppose the findings were pressed into the service of theory-construction; which theoretical framework would be the preferred choice? Arguably, the perspectives articulated by the discussants within both the exploratory and co-researcher focus groups resonate with any one of a number of perspectives, from social constructionism, critical race theory, postcolonial theory, ethnicity as cognition, through to post-race perspectives (Taylor, 1976; Amos and Parmar, 1984; Bhabha, 1994; Crenshaw *et al*, 1995; Back, 1996; Gilroy, 1998, 2001; Ali, 2003, 2004; Gunaratnam, 2003; Brubaker *et al*, 2004; Murji and Solomos, 2005; Nayak, 2006). Equally, given the topic rather than the focus, it may have been preferable to have read the data through the lens of one of a number of management and marketing approaches such as stakeholder theory (Polonsky, 1995), corporate responsiveness theory (Drumwright and Murphy, 2000) or sustainable management theory (Daub and Ergenzinger, 2005). These are difficult epistemological issues concerning who knows what about whom, and how this knowledge is legitimated. The `advancement of knowledge', then, is not some neutral action which unproblematically `follows on' from the use of PAR; *whose* knowledge and *which* knowledge is advanced are difficult and disputed political and ethical questions.

17.4.4 The same kind of argument can be raised in respect of action aimed at `practical transformation'. It is an approach to research which is marked by a particular politico-ethical standpoint which sees PAR as having the potential to be `a tool of social justice' and an important means for `legitimating non-specialist knowledge' (Wakeford, 2002: 1-2). The democratising potential of PAR is certainly reiterated by others, such that Gergen (2003) proposes the contribution of action research to a `first order of democracy' bringing people together into concerted action. However, Wakeford cautions that `focus group and participatory appraisal techniques do not in themselves change the passive status of the people being studied' (*ibid*: 2).

17.4.5 The dynamics of PAR as a catalyst for social change are often seen in development studies. Swantz, for example, wrote about a Tanzanian project in which `ministries and the district offices were not ready to make use of the benefits of the study'; she went on, `it became clear to me that there *must* be institutional preparedness to act on the basis of the results gained at the community level' (cited in Brydon-Miller, 2003: 19). As a question of transferability, the NCJB should be prepared to act on the findings and deliberative outputs of collaborative initiatives, otherwise claims to be adopting a PAR approach to consultation would appear to be hollow and a cosmetic

exercise in window-dressing, rather than a serious attempt to engage meaningfully with the public in a process of democratisation.

17.4.6 On the other hand, the `social justice' model seems to be more at home in PAR with `oppressed groups'[14]. However, PAR is also practiced with `elites' and is relatively common most especially in the business and organisational world (Scholl, 2004; Kakabadse *et al*, 2007). Consequently, the pursuit of the principled aims of `social justice', empowerment and/or the democratisation of knowledge may have less resonance with and relevance to `elite groups'. For the NCJB, however, *who* or *which* groups constitute `elites' may be a moot point, especially if PAR is being undertaken in collaboration with local government departments, education authorities, or Primary Care Trusts, for example; simply abandoning a commitment to work for democratically deliberated change on the basis of perceived `elite status' may be counterproductive and ill-advised.

[14] See, for example, Lykes' (2001) PAR in collaboration with the Maya Ixil women of the New Dawn Project, Chajul, Guatamala; Wakeford and Pimbert's (2004) work with farming communities in Andhra Pradesh, India – see also Pimbert and Wakeford, 2003; Swantz *et al's* (2001) work with Tanzanian women.

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Appendix A
Research Publicity Flyer

YOUR Community

EXPECTATIONS
INTERACTIONS
CONFIDENCE
TRUST
DIVERSITY

EXPERIENCES
ATTITUDES
MAKING A DIFFERENCE
VICTIMS OF CRIME
SATISFACTION

NEEDS YOU

We need a group of motivated members of Black and Ethnic Minority Communities in the Northumbria area.

We would love to hear your views about different aspects of the Criminal Justice System, including your own experiences.

Please help us to provide A BETTER SERVICE by having your say.

Here's how you can get involved:

- Take part in focus groups and tell us your opinions
- Become a Co-researcher. Receive training & expenses and conduct your own focus group within your community

CONTACT: Kelly Stockdale on **07854 875092** or email **k.j.stockdale1@ncl.ac.uk** to get involved or for further information.

Newcastle University

Dr. Elaine Campbell
Principal Investigator
Email: Elaine.Campbell@ncl.ac.uk
Tel: 0191 222 5030

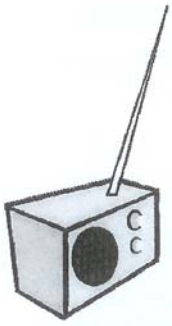
Kelly Stockdale
Research Assistant
Email: k.j.stockdale1@ncl.ac.uk
Tel: 07854 875092

Appendix B
BECON Newsletter Article

Give your organisation a voice - come to our FREE media training workshop!

The Media Trust, together with BECON, will be running a FREE media workshop in March!

The workshop is designed to help you develop your media skills, and will include information on the best ways to reach your target audience, how to write press releases, and how to develop media contacts.



The workshop will run on Wednesday 14th March at 12.30pm – 4.30pm, with the aim of enabling voluntary and community sector organisations in the North East to gain positive media coverage, which could help raise your company profile and even influence the public, other funders and organisations to support you.

The Media Trust is a registered charity providing communications skills and resources to the voluntary and community sector. They work to raise the visibility of the sector and its services, and to involve and inspire the public to take part in voluntary and community activity.

They currently work with the Media and Communications industry, and some of their members include BBC, Channel 4, Five, Guardian, MTV and News International.

For further details on the workshop or to book your place please call BECON on 0191 2094747 (there are limited places so make sure your quick! - lunch is also provided.)

Share your experiences...

Newcastle University are working on a study looking at the 'lived' experiences of Black and Minority Ethnic communities with Government services – in particular those experiences with the Criminal Justice System.

To do this the University will be holding focus group sessions on Friday 9th March at 10.30am at the University.

We'd really like to hear about your experiences and opinions of the services, so whether good or bad please share them with us!

You can find out more information by emailing Kelly Stockdale k.j.stockdale1@ncl.ac.uk or Justine King on justine@becon.org.uk.

Refreshments will be provided on the day and we will also contribute towards your travel expenses.

There is also an opportunity for some members of these focus groups to receive training and be recruited as co-researchers for the study.

DO YOU WORK WITH ASYLUM SEEKERS & REFUGEES?

If so, two downloadable guides at: www.advice-resources.co.uk can help you advise and guide your clients by providing information about education, training and employment. One guide is for you; the other is for your clients and is translated into nine refugee languages. Both guides, including translated versions are on the site.

Exploratory Focus Group Schedule

1, Tell us your name, where you live and something you enjoy doing in your free time.

2, When you hear the words 'government services' what comes to mind?

3, Think back to a time when you experienced good service from a government agency, what happened to make you describe your service as particularly good service

4, Think about a recent experience when you've experienced poor service. What happened that makes you describe that service as poor?

5, When you hear about the words 'Criminal Justice System' what comes to mind?

6, Can you name some of the services that make up the CJS and describe how they are similar or different to each other

7, Who are the customers of the CJS? (* put into categories, what would you call these categories? Which category is most important to you and for what reason)

8, Write down/tell us three things that are important ingredients of customer service in relation to the CJS.
- What is the most important to you personally?

9, Think about the customer service you receive from your local CJS in your community, how does this customer service compare with other public sector/government agencies?

10, What are the needs within your community in relation to CJS services?
- Which of these is the most important?

11, Our job is to find out what the drivers of satisfaction with CJS services are within BME communities. Is there anything we should have talked about that we didn't?

12, This is the first in a series of focus groups that we are doing. Do you have any advice on how we can improve?

Appendix D
Focus Group Schedule

CO-RESEARCHER FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. **Welcome all participants and ask them to complete info sheet**

2. **Introductions – please tell us your name, where you live and something you enjoy doing in your free time.**

3. **When you hear the term 'Criminal Justice System' what comes to mind?**

4. **Can you name some of the services that make up the CJS?**

FOLLOW THIS BY DISTRIBUTING SHOWCARD OF CJ SERVICES
ENCOURAGE INTERVIEWEES TO INITIALLY DISCUSS THE SHOWCARD IN PAIRS

5. **Which of these services do you recognise?**
   Prompt: **what do they do?**

6. **What kinds of experiences have you had with criminal justice services?**
   Prompt for:
   - **Personal experiences?**
   - **How did this make you feel?**

   Prompt for:
   - **And what about people you know - family, friends, neighbours.**
   - **How did this make them/you feel?**

   Prompt for:
   - **And what about things you have heard or read about.**
   - **How did this make you feel?**

7. **What are the needs within your community in relation to CJS services?**
   Prompt: **Which of these is the most important?**

8. **Thinking about being a customer of the criminal justice system could you describe the important ingredients of the kind of customer service you would expect.**

9. **Our job is to find out what it is that `keeps the customer satisfied' with criminal justice. Is there anything we should have talked about that we didn't?**

Appendix E
Guidelines for co-researcher team

GUIDELINES FOR CO-RESEARCHER TEAM

Payment for co-researchers and co-researcher assistants:

Co-researchers will be paid £150 expenses for the successful delivery of 2 focus groups (£75 per focus group). Co-researcher assistants will be paid £25 for each focus group that they attend.

Focus groups must be completed and the tapes returned to us by **Monday 11th June 2007**.

All co-researchers and co-researcher assistants will be invited to help with the analysis of the results and will be acknowledged in the report of the study.

How to recruit participants to the study:

Between 6 and 8 participants (no more than 8) need to be recruited for each focus group.

These participants can be recruited from your local networks (friends/ family/ neighbours etc), and also from contacts within any social/support organisations you are involved with.

As far as possible each focus group should include a mix of ages, gender, experiences, ethnicity and faiths. Please ensure that only members of **visible** ethnic minority communities participate in the focus groups.

If you need a supply of leaflets/flyers about the study to help recruit participants please do contact Kelly – k.j.stockdale1@ncl.ac.uk; Mob: 07854875092

Practicalities:

Short demographic questionnaires that are to be distributed at the beginning of each focus group, need to be coded with your co-researcher number, the number focus group (i.e. 1 or 2), and the number you allocate to each participant. (See wallet A)

Please also fill out a summary of your focus group, stating the date and venue where the focus group was held, the length of the session, the number of participants and the name of the co-assistant. The sheet for this is provided in your information pack. (See wallet B)

Please familiarise yourself with how to use the Dictaphone and microphone before each focus group, we have produced an easy to use sheet for reference. (See wallet C)

A separate introduction sheet providing a guideline of how to start each focus group is provided in this pack (See wallet D), as is a focus group interview schedule and a show card naming the agencies that make up the criminal justice system – if you need more copies of these or any other material please contact Kelly.

Returning the tapes:

Please return the tape, demographic questionnaires and summary of your focus group in the stamped addressed envelope provided as soon as possible. There is one envelope for each focus group.

Appendix F
Guidelines on how to run a successful focus group

INTRODUCTION SHEET

Welcome:

- Welcome and thank you all for coming today.
- My name is …… and my colleague ……. will be assisting me.
- We are here today to hear about your thoughts, opinions and experiences of the criminal justice system in this area. The study is being carried out by Newcastle University and has been commissioned by the Northumbria Criminal Justice Board. It is important to understand that this is an independent study, and is being carried out by researchers working for Newcastle University; they are not 'working for' the criminal justice board or any of the services provided by it.
- The discussion will be tape-recorded just to make sure we don't miss anything you say. I would like to assure you that all information you give will be held in the strictest confidence. Your comments will be written up afterwards and everything you say will be completely anonomised– your names will be changed along with any personal information that you give.
- I would like to ask everyone in this room to respect this confidentiality so we are all agreed what is said here today stays in the room.

Housekeeping:

- Session will last about 1 and ½ hours
- Refreshments
- Fire Alarms
- Toilets
- Mobile phones turned off?

Start:

- Basic structure: begin by introducing ourselves, and then look at the services that make up the criminal justice system and your experiences with these different services.
- I would like you to discuss these issues amongst yourselves
- There are no right or wrong answers; we just want to know your opinions.
- Any questions before we start?

After the discussion:

- Remind confidentiality

- If they have any further questions at any point contact you or Kelly Stockdale:

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5th Floor Claremont Bridge Building
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Tel: 07854875092
Fax: +44-(0)191-222-7497
E-mail: k.j.stockdale1@newcastle.ac.uk

- Research will be written up and available to read mid-September. If anyone is interested in coming to a dissemination event at Newcastle University to hear the results of the study please contact Kelly Stockdale and she will give you details of this closer to the time.

Appendix G
Demographic questionnaire

Would you fill in this quick questionnaire to aid us in our research, all answers will be kept anonymous and confidential and will only be used for the purpose of analysis. Thank you.

Gender (please delete as appropriate):	Male / Female
Year you were born:	
Ethnicity:	
Faith:	
Is English your first language?	
If English is not your first language, what is your first language?	
Area of residence:	
Community/Support groups with which you are affiliated and/or attend:	1
	2
	3
	4
	5
	6
	7

Appendix H
Showcard

The Police Service

Her Majesty's Courts Service

Crown Prosecution Service

Her Majesty's Prison Service

National Probation Service

Youth Offending Teams

Legal Services Commission