

Reflection: NCVS's Work with Nottingham City BME Voluntary and Community Groups

Introduction

We have put this report together as part of NCVS's commitment to continuous review and improvement. In providing some oversight of our reach to Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) voluntary and community groups this helps us to reflect on our work and as a means for inviting feedback to help further target what we do.

For the purpose of this report, BME voluntary and community groups are defined as organisations primarily led by and / or primarily serving Nottingham's BME communities. BME means all ethnic groups such as African Caribbean, Asian and Eastern European.

We understand that there is not unified agreement on the use of the above definition and there are a number of differing ways to define 'BME organisations'.

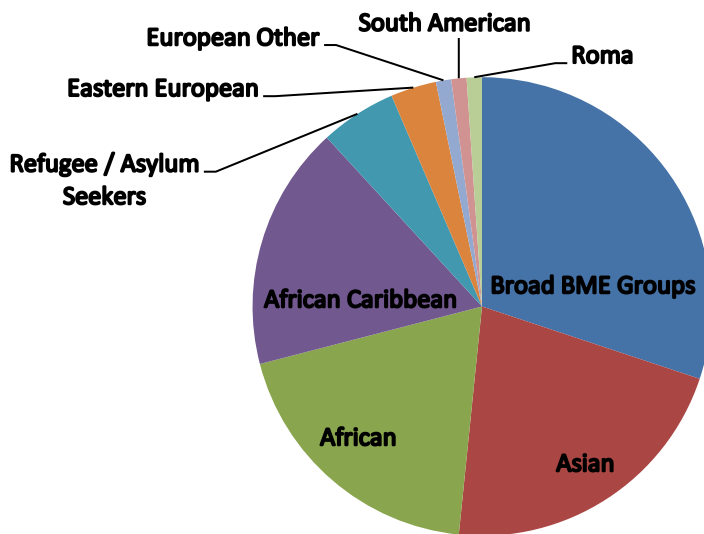
Who are the BME voluntary and community groups NCVS works with?

In 2013-2014 we worked directly with 420 different Nottingham City voluntary and community groups across a range of interventions. This represents a third of the voluntary and community groups on our data base. The number of BME groups we worked with over this year was 93. This represents 22% of the total groups we worked with.

It is not possible to compare the number of voluntary and community groups with Nottingham's demographics. Whilst 35% of Nottingham City's population are citizens from Black and Minority Ethnic groups, the majority of the City's voluntary sector provides services and activities across the population. We would therefore not expect 35% of Nottingham's voluntary and community groups to be BME.

The following diagram and explanatory text gives a profile of the BME voluntary and community groups we worked with in 2013-2014.

BME voluntary and community groups supported and the communities they work with 2013-14



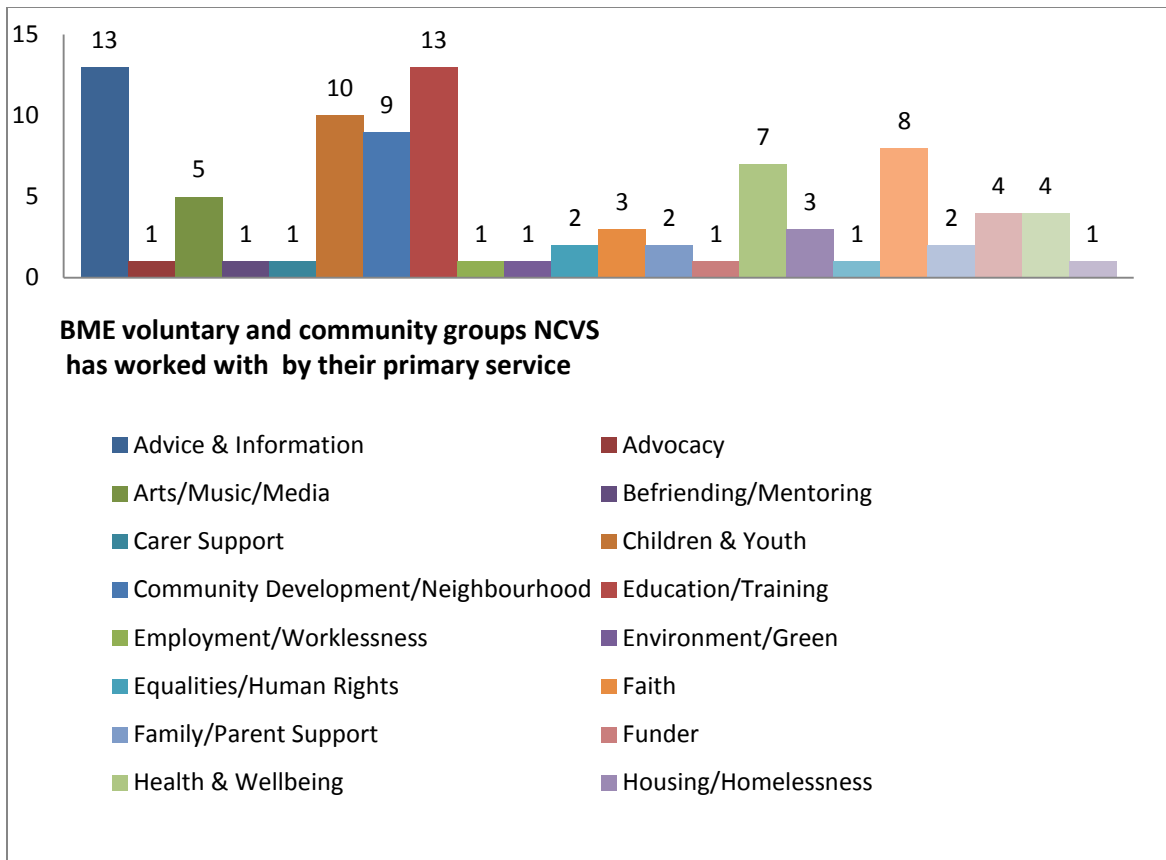
Further explanation:

- **Broad BME Groups:** These refer to groups working across different BME communities e.g. Muslim groups and groups working with both African and Asian communities.
- **African:** Most of the groups we work with are pan-African, mainly serving people originating from Sub-Saharan African countries. Some are national groups who work with people who originate from a specific African country e.g. Eritrea, Gambia, Rwanda, and Zimbabwe.
- **Asian:** We predominately work with South Asian groups but those we work with include Mongolian, Kurdish and Chinese national groups.
- **Eastern European:** These groups work mainly with Eastern European new arrivals or more specifically with Polish and Russian communities.
- **Other:** We have also worked with a Spanish group (European Other), Brazilian (South American).

In addition to the above, 7 of the groups work specifically with women.

The main services / activities of the BME groups we have supported

The following diagram gives an overview of the 'primary' service or activity of the groups supported as defined by the groups themselves. It shows that most say they are providing advice and information services and education and training followed by children and youth targeted work, community development, other and health and wellbeing. The 'other' category appears to have been chosen by a number of groups because they see their work covering a broad range with no specific category.



The work of NCVS

NCVS is here to improve the quality of people’s lives in Nottingham by strengthening the local voluntary and community sector and wider civil society sector. Our vision is Nottingham is a city where people can make a difference in their local community.

Our unique contribution to supporting a thriving voluntary and community sector and to growing volunteering in Nottingham is embodied in 3 strategic outcomes. These are outlined below along with our main objectives or activities that sit under them.

1. An energised voluntary and community sector:

- **Information services** (e.g. e-bulletin, policy digests, briefings, website, sector data base, annual event)
- **Development services** (e.g. Helpdesk, training programme, casework/1-2-1 development support on start up, business development and organisational growth and development, consortia and partnership development activity, funding and commissioning/procurement support)
- **Support Services** (e.g. HR consultancy, IT consultancy, payroll services)
- **Facilitating a sector hub** (e.g. office accommodation, meeting rooms and space)

2. Enhanced volunteering and improved capacity for social action giving:

- **Delivering a volunteer brokerage service** (e.g. information, advice and guidance – brokerage sessions)
 - **Volunteer management support service** (e.g. best practice volunteer management training, 1-2-1 advice sessions, volunteer manager/co-ordinators network)
 - **Development of volunteering opportunities** e.g. volunteering awareness sessions and 1-2-1 advice)
- 3. Greater strategic influence and enhanced partnership working**
- **Co-ordinating the advocates system** (advocates meetings, blog, peer networks, support to advocates/representatives)
 - **Facilitating consultation and engagement** (e.g. elected members surgeries, campaigns, conferences, topic based consultation sessions, forums)

What follows are some of the above mentioned main areas of our work over the past year where we highlight our work with BME voluntary and community groups.

What support do BME voluntary and community groups receive from NCVS?

We have looked at those core NCVS services where we have the most contact with individual voluntary and community groups to see what proportion of them have been accessed by BME voluntary and community groups over the past year. The results are shown below. We have also included some more detailed examples to further highlight our work with specific BME groups. Although we give examples under specific service areas, some of our examples show that groups we work with will access more than one service.

- **Intensive group development support (casework)**

Our 1-2-1 casework provides intensive support to voluntary and community groups at all stages of development from setting up to bidding for public service contracts. We continue to support BME voluntary and community groups, particularly emerging communities, as many are under resourced compared to the rest of the sector or may represent marginalised communities within the city. Our casework support often lasts over a long period of time so that we can work with groups to achieve agreed outcomes. This may range from putting a new governance and legal structures in place, developing long term business and strategic plans through to a whole host of practical solutions.

In 2013-14 we helped 63 groups through casework. 35% (22) of these were BME voluntary and community groups

Examples of our work using the words of the beneficiary BME group:

Kurdistanian Community Association

Who are we? We aim to integrate Kurdish people into UK society. We estimate there are 2,000 Kurdish people in the City and county and had collected signatures from people who wanted a representative group.

Challenges: The group wanted support from NCVS to help set up a group. They were unfamiliar regarding running a voluntary sector organisation and faced significant language barriers. They are a marginalised community representing a homeland that does not exist and instead come from different countries within the Middle East with different language and cultural barriers. Tensions arising from their country of origin were being echoed in neighbourhoods of Nottingham.

Support from NCVS: We supported the group to become established including advice on legal structures, support with governing documents and with managing meetings. We worked with them to draft an agenda for their first committee meeting and with the process of nominating and electing officers. We attended the first meeting to help facilitate the process. We have also helped them put in place all their policy and procedures and to find funding to run ESOL classes and other social activities to reduce isolation within their community. The group regularly attend training courses at NCVS and continue to receive support.

Results: The group now have some funding to run classes and to pay for venue costs. The funding was from the Equalities Fund at Nottingham City Council. The group now have premises and are more confident in running their organisation. We are continuing to help them look for further funding to run sports activities and health and wellbeing services for the Kurdish community. With our ongoing support the group will be looking to register as a charity within the next 6 – 8 months. NCVS staff have worked with NCC Equalities Officers to ensure that they were aware of the needs of the Kurdish Community in Nottingham.

Many of the beneficiaries have improved their language through ESOL classes and community social activities with a space to meet to reduce isolation in the community. We received the following feedback from the group:

“on my behalf and on behalf of the committee members I would like to thank you for all effort you did in order to establish this community and we found you keen and enthusiastic towards that”

Dominion House Church

Who are we? A church with a mainly black African congregation. As a registered charity we also provide community services.

Challenges: The church initially contacted NCVS to ask for support with charity registration. The Church had started 8 months earlier and had community aims wanting to help homeless people in need and promote Christian values. The church was unfamiliar with processes and compliance systems in the UK that had resulted in legal difficulties.

Support from NCVS: We worked with them to develop a fit for purpose constitution and helped them to register to become a charity. Charities qualify for an automatic 80% reduction in business rates but places of worship qualify for 100%. We therefore helped them to register as a place of worship (with the Identity & Passport Service) and then apply for the business rate exemption. This exemption was subsequently back dated to cover the whole of the period the church had occupied the premises (almost 2 years).

Results: After securing their own base, the group were able to expand their operations. Their congregation has since grown significantly and so successfully they have had to increase the size of their rented accommodation to accommodate more people and are currently looking for bigger premises.

“NCVS Group Development initially met us to provide advice regarding becoming a charity. However, the advisor identified other needs and solutions we had and provided support and advice, that has helped the Dominion House Church overcome some significant issues. He supported us to register our premises as a Place of Worship, then go on to develop our governance and register as a charity. NCVS has not only given us support and advice when requested, but has also become our friend who listen and care for and ready to help at any time”.

Black Achieving Men Awards (BAM Awards) 2013

Who are we? An annual awards ceremony to celebrate the achievements of Black Males in Nottingham.

Challenges: The group had approached a number of funders but were facing a shortfall over several thousand pounds. The venue was offered to them free of charge.

Support from NCVS: 3 months prior to the event NCVS were approached for help to attract sponsorship. NCVS helped the group to develop an outline business plan which could be used to approach proposed sponsors for the event. We publicised and worked with the planning team. NCVS sponsored the volunteering award. We also found sponsorship from a number of key organisations to help with the shortfall in funding of the event.

Results: A successful ceremony took place. The group are now planning this year's event and NCVS are helping to find volunteers to help them to find more sponsorship. NCVS have offered some dedicated office space to volunteers so they have a base to work from. Once again, NCVS will be sponsoring the volunteering category of the awards. The business plan can be used as a template or future years planning of the event and having involvement from local volunteers will help the event be successful.

AWAAZ

Who are we? AWAAZ are a registered charity providing services and support to South Asian Communities with mental health problems

Challenges: The group had recently changed their objects in order to deliver a mental health service to the BME and new emerging communities, and now had the opportunity to also change their organisation structure to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

Support from NCVS: NCVS helped to draft the new governing documents and advise on its adoption by the trustees. NCVS completed the online registration form and are currently helping the group to deal with the questions asked by the charity commission.

Results: AWAAZ need to hold a members meeting and a further management committee to approve the new objects and structure for the organisation. NCVS have provided guidance on the meetings needed to accept the new objects and will be helping to ensure that the organisation is a registered charity.

AWAAZ received excellent guidance and support through this process. We are on our final stages of completing all the relevant paperwork which is required. Once we receive the approval, AWAAZ will be in a greater position to deliver culturally specific services to all the BME communities who have either physical, mental health and other issues which are included in the objects.

- **Business Support**

Our Charities Enterprise Project funded by the European Regional Development Fund, focusses on moving groups to a more sustainable footing. The project supports groups to move away from grant aid and develop independent income streams through trading. It also supports individuals to establish new value led businesses that tackle social or environmental challenges in the city. Beneficiary organisations have been spread across a range of service areas but we have identified concentrations of groups active in specific sectoral clusters, particularly health and social care, community development, skills and learning, creative industries and services to seniors or young people.

Support provided has included pre start enterprise training, company formation, business planning, leadership development, building market understanding and accessing investment. The focus of our support is trading. This includes equipping groups and individuals with an understanding of commissioned public services and the opportunities that the new commissioning landscape may present to them.

The project has provided a significant volume of support to individuals and groups from BME communities in the city. To date:

67 individual beneficiaries have been supported. 39% (26) are drawn from BME communities

43 small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) /groups have been supported. 44% (19) have been BME owned or led

An example of our work:

Nottingham News Centre CIC

Who are we? A newly formed community interest company set up to provide: training and employment opportunities in print and on-line media for people from disadvantaged communities who are under-represented in the media industry; a community publication service as an outlet for community writers and publications; a regular community magazine in print and on-line formats targeted at BME communities particularly as a source of information for the city's growing number of new and emerging communities; an on-line archive of information and research into BME communities in Nottingham and surrounding areas.

Support from NCVS:

"With guidance and support from NCVS, through an allocated enthusiastic mentor and adviser, I was able to develop and write a sound application to register my community interest company (CIC), Nottingham News Centre (NNC) in June 2013.

Over months, I have attended valuable training at NCVS to prepare myself to manage a successful community media organisation in Nottingham.

It has been a tough but very fulfilling experience as I have met great people within the third sector all with similar aims of developing the community for the better.

A recent successful award from the Big Lottery Fund of £9,710 has also help to support our employment

and training provision. Without the knowledge gained through training at the NCVS in writing grant applications, the process might have been slower and more challenging. The Nottingham News Centre CIC is now able to train individuals to find employment in journalism and the media industry.

I would definitely recommend running a CIC as you have the best of both worlds being able to run a business but still help other people in the community achieve their dreams. Thank you NCVS!"

- **Helpdesk (one-off development support)**

Our Helpdesk is a specialist advice service open to Nottingham's voluntary and community groups 5 days a week between 10am and 1pm. It offers one-off information, advice and development support. There is a broad breadth of queries and questions raised but many concern funding application support, governance and legal structures queries and policy and compliance advice. Helpdesk also provides a triage role. Where more specialist or on-going support is required, groups may be referred internally to other NCVS support services, such as the above mentioned business support and casework, or to external providers.

In 2013- 14 there were 257 Helpdesk contacts from 140 different groups. 32% (45) of these were BME voluntary and community groups

Examples of our work:

Mums and Tots Wollaton

Who are we? Mums and Tots offer a safe and friendly environment for mums/carers in Nottingham. Mums/carers can enjoy a friendly chat over a cup of tea/coffee whilst the tots play and develop their social skills. Our Wollaton venue is attached to a mosque, so our main service users are Muslim women.

Support: Mums and Tots Wollaton was set up in 2012 and grew significantly in 2013. This meant more support was required to running the group and a professional structure to get volunteers involved.

Support from NCVS: We worked with Mums and Tots Wollaton to develop a constitution and policies to govern the group. The volunteering team assisted Mums and tots in drafting an advert for volunteers and advertised through our databases.

Result: We have a more professional and organised set up, this has enabled the Wollaton group to run without the founder being there and she has now been able to free up time to set up another Mums and Tots group in Bobbersmill.

"NCVS supported mums and tots in getting a professional and organised structure in place to work more efficiently. This has meant that we have more time to set up another mums and tots group at another location. We will no doubt be coming back to NCVS for their sound advice on bringing all our mums and tots projects together"

Nottinghamshire Chinese Welfare Association

Who are we? A registered charity working to improve the quality of life of Chinese people with language and integration issues as well as providing a range of support services, including housing assistance,

home visits, translation, counselling services and help with bureaucracy and other support.

Challenges: To continue to develop and provide services to the Chinese community through successful funding applications. The association was under pressure after unsuccessful applications for future funding.

Support from NCVS: NCVS Group Development provided advice and support to NCWA to improve their funding applications. This included one to one support, as well as training and other advice. With our support the association has been successful with a 5 year grant of £187,999 to the Big Lottery Reaching Community Fund. In March 2014 NCVS provided further support and advice regarding additional funding applications totalling £24,250.

Results: The 5 year grant will support elderly Chinese people in poor health who are isolated from society. It will provide for staff and trained volunteers to make home visits to elderly and infirm people, making them aware of statutory services, assisting them with shopping and tidying the home. Home visits also provide an opportunity to check they are living in acceptable conditions. An Officer of the Association recently said about the help received from NCVS:

"NCWA is very appreciative of your help over the years. As an ethnic minority group, being able to talk through our needs with experienced people and to find the right expressions to accurately describe our plans has proved invaluable. Thank you for your time, help and patience."

- **Training**

NCVS offers an annual training programme. Our formal training sessions and briefings cover a broad range of areas, for example, marketing, volunteer management, social media, meet the funder events, social enterprise and business planning.

In 2013-14 there were 137 different City groups attending training delivered through our annual training programme. 26% (36) of these were BME voluntary and community groups

Examples of our work highlighted in this report are of groups who have accessed other service areas. Many groups access more than one service. As the examples show, this includes training.

- **Volunteering**

NCVS provides the City's only accredited Volunteer Centre. Each year over 2,000 people receive 1-2-1 advice from a volunteer advisor and help with finding volunteering work with a City voluntary and community group. We advertise over 1,500 volunteer roles each year and provide additional support to groups who want to develop volunteering opportunities.

At the end of March 2014, we carried out a snap shot of the number of groups we worked with to promote their volunteering opportunities. There were 181 City voluntary and community groups advertising 425 volunteering opportunities. 15% (28) of these were BME voluntary and community groups.

Examples of our work:

Belong

Belong aims to promote the use of social and economic integration of African migrants within UK society.

Belong Nottingham have advertised for voluntary roles through both the Volunteer Centre and Skillsbank at NCVS. Roles involve researching a history project on George Africanus, a West African man who came to England as a slave and went on to become a successful entrepreneur and Nottingham's first black business man. Volunteers have supported with research and writing copy for publicity materials and the website. They have been offered skills in archiving techniques and web development. Belong are developing educational tools with Nottingham City Council based around the project.

Rosanna from the service says she recruited many of her volunteers from NCVS,

'I have been pleased with the response. [The NCVS Volunteer Centre] has been a fantastic resource'.

Rosanna reports that of the volunteers recruited for the George Africanus project so far, 30 of them have come from the Volunteer Centre at NCVS. She has also found that she has had a great response from the local BME community, with two thirds of volunteers self-classifying as BME.

Nottingham Armimathea Trust (NAT)

Who are we? The Nottingham Armimathea Trust (NAT) provides temporary housing and support for destitute asylum seeking people and families. We house people who cannot return to their home country, but who are not allowed to work or claim any benefits.

Challenges: NAT needed volunteers to support their work, including Arabic interpreters, community fundraisers, destitution ambassadors, interpreters, mentors, minibus drivers, a social media officer and treasurers. This allows the organisation to continue its valuable work supporting vulnerable individuals and their families.

Support from NCVS: NAT advertised their roles through NCVS's Volunteer Centre, and added two of their roles to the NCVS Skillsbank. Their Arabic interpreter role was promoted through the NCVS website and e-bulletin, and details were sent to local partners, including Jobcentre Plus and Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Futures. We also promoted the Destitution Ambassador role through the e-bulletin and website.

Results: Since December, six of NAT's volunteers recruited came via the Volunteer Centre and Skillsbank at NCVS.

"Nottingham Arimathea Trust has always found advertising for volunteering opportunities very effective through NCVS. We have advertised a number of different opportunities and have also accessed training through NCVS".

NAT have also received support from NCVS in other ways. We helped them with a Big Lottery Reaching Communities funding bid by assigning a 'critical partner' who could look over the bid and advise on what to change or add to the proposal. NCVS also carried out a skills audit for their trustees and have advised on different organisational policies.

- **Policy & Communications**

NCVS's Policy and Communications team helps connect the local voluntary sector to those in the city making the decisions through coordinating and advocates system and facilitating dialogue with elected members. We also keep an eye on changes to government policy or procedure, keeping the local voluntary sector informed about what reforms might mean and how they might affect the way the sector does its work in Nottingham. We communicate this to the sector through news items on our website and in our e-bulletin, and in the case of a major change we publish Policy Briefings with advice about how the reforms will affect local groups. Our e-bulletin and other communications also provide general news for the sector including training, funding, resources and spotlights activities of City voluntary sector groups.

Examples of our work:

Communities of Identity

An example of our work in 2013-2014 with implications for BME voluntary and community groups were impending changes to the way the City Council funded Communities of Identity (COI). Rather than separately funding a number of groups, it was proposed to have one contract for established communities of identity and one for new and emerging communities of identity including refugees and asylum seekers. Inherent in this proposal was an expectation that BME voluntary and community groups would establish consortia to deliver a range of outcomes meeting the needs of their communities. NCVS, in line with its role in giving the sector a voice, arranged both pre-budget and actual budget consultations specifically for groups who would fall under the category of Communities of Identity. We also attended early steering group meetings at the City Council as changes to the funding for Communities of Identity were established. We went on to provide COI updates and targeted mailings to COI groups and facilitated the linking of groups to potential lead organisations who went on to bid for funding as COI consortia.

'Spotlight on' is a weekly feature on the NCVS website, in which each week we throw the spotlight on a different organisation or project from the voluntary sector in Nottingham. Here we give an example of one of the City's BME voluntary and community groups spotlighted in the year.

Spotlight on... Muslim Community Organisation Nottingham

The Muslim Community Organisation Nottingham (MCON) was established in December 2002 and seeks to provide a range of activities and access to services for the community. All activities provided are accessible to anyone, and they are designed to tackle issues affecting peoples' lives and to improve their quality of life. MCON are based in Sneinton on Beaumont Street. Activities that they provide are:

- English and maths classes for 12-15 year olds
- Holiday play schemes for 5-11 year olds
- Men's fitness sessions for all ages
- Women's sports taster sessions for all ages
- After-school homework and fitness clubs for 5-11 year olds
- Boys' evenings for 12-19 year olds
- 'Girls United' group sessions for 8-12 year olds
- Under 13s Kwik Cricket sessions
- Five-a-side football tournaments
- A quarterly newsletter
- Eid celebrations
- International Women's Day celebrations

As well as offering activities, MCON also offers rooms for hire. There is an excellent sports hall as well as a large room with kitchen facilities suitable for all functions. All facilities offer disabled access. We offer special rates to organisations who affiliate with us.



NCVS's Commitment

Across the range of our work with groups there are different factors involved in determining which groups we work with, those we consider to be low priority and those we don't work with. Although some of this is driven by what our funders require and leaves little room to manoeuvre, there is scope within what we do to decide what our priorities should be. Where work is prioritised, this is generally linked to our strategic plan, equality strands, what's happening in the world outside, who else is providing support and who we think it's important to work with.

Within this context NCVS is committed to:

- Recognising that particular types of groups may have particular needs, including BME voluntary and community groups, and ensuring that our staff are able to respond appropriately to those different needs.
- Continuing to support emerging BME groups that serve more isolated communities whose needs are not already met by existing groups
- Continuing to attract funding to support more BME voluntary and community groups
- Continuously reviewing and improving what we do by taking stock of our reach to BME voluntary and community groups as a means of inviting feedback on how we can do things better.