

APPENDIX 6

Housing Needs of Minority Ethnic/ Gypsy Traveller Communities

**ASSESSING THE HOUSING NEEDS OF MINORITY ETHNIC
COMMUNITIES IN FALKIRK
SUMMARY OF ODS REPORT TO COMMUNITIES SCOTLAND**

1. Introduction

The three Forth Valley Local Authorities (Falkirk, Stirling and Clackmannanshire) acknowledged in their Local Housing Strategies 2004-9 that there were information gaps in relation to their understanding of minority ethnic communities living in their area. Therefore Communities Scotland proposed and mainly funded research to explore the housing circumstances, needs and preferences of minority ethnic communities, including Gypsies/Travellers, to inform future strategic planning and service provision.

2. Profile of minority ethnic communities in Falkirk

According to the census there were 3,540 people from a minority ethnic community in 2001 living in Falkirk Council area (2.4% of the population). Between 1991 and 2001 the minority ethnic community in Falkirk grew by almost 70%. The youthful age profile of the minority ethnic communities in Falkirk suggests a faster growth rate than the white UK communities. ODS attempted to establish the size of the minority ethnic community in 2006 by considering past trends and concluded that they are between 3,842 and 4,974 people from a minority ethnic background (2.6%-3.4% increase from 2001).

In the Falkirk area there is some geographical variation in the distribution of minority ethnic communities at ward level:

- The highest concentration of Pakistani people are in Hallglen, Denny and Borrowstoun
- The Indian community is concentrated in Woodlands
- The Chinese community are concentrated in the Reddingmuirhead, Brightons, Rumford, Grahamsford, Denny South and Kinnaird

The European Union expanded in 2004, 8 of the accession countries (A8) have some form of limitations on work. Information from the Department of Work and Pensions indicated that 330 A8 nationals registered to work in Falkirk between 2004/5-2005/6. Over half (170) came from Poland, 80 came from Lithuania. The remainder came from Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Latvia and Hungary. Generally A8 nationals are from younger age groups, 73% who registered to work in Falkirk are aged between 16 and 35. A survey by Forth Valley College indicated that A8 nationals are largely concentrated in unskilled/semi-skilled jobs such in catering, hotel work, waitressing, and in warehouses.

ODS had discussions with education staff who indicated that their support for English as an additional language has recently seen an increase in demand. Traditionally, language support would have been required for children who speak Urdu or Chinese languages, however there has been an increase in Eastern European in-migrants. In contrast with earlier in-migrants, Eastern European children speak very little English

and the level of support is greater, putting additional pressure on resources. There are 41 children receiving support.

The growing numbers of children from Eastern Europe requiring assistance with English suggest that families are also beginning to migrate to Falkirk.

3. Housing and minority ethnic communities

Tenure breakdown

There are clear differences in tenure patterns between minority ethnic communities in Falkirk. As indicated in the table below, the Indian and Chinese communities have higher levels of owner occupation than the White community.

Council tenants are more likely to be from the White and Pakistani communities.

Private rented tenancies are high in all minority ethnic communities except the Chinese community

Tenure by ethnic origin

	Indian	Pakistani	Chinese	Other	White	Total
Owned	64%	59%	72%	47%	60%	60%
Council	18%	24%	18%	33%	33%	32%
RSL	-	4%	3%	5%	4%	4%
Private rented	18%	12%	7%	15%	3%	3%
Other	-	-	-	-	0%	0.1%

Source: Census 2001

A survey carried out for Forth Valley College survey indicated that A8 in-migrants regarded accommodation as expensive and many were living in over crowded conditions, often in the private rented sector.

Council housing

Information is not available on the ethnic origin of Council tenants however information is available on the ethnic origin of those allocated housing, 46 in 2004/5-2005/6 (this excludes white other). 1.7% of allocations were to those from minority ethnic communities. Minority ethnic communities (excluding white other) make up 1.5 % of households.

In relation to waiting list numbers, those from Asian, Black and Mixed communities are broadly in line with the proportion of households.

Focus groups carried out by ODS provided an insight into minority ethnic communities' perceptions on social rented housing. There was a perception that housing information and advice in relation to social renting could be improved. Work is currently ongoing to develop an Advice and Information Strategy with the housing needs of ethnic minorities being one focus for development.

Owner occupation

Owner occupation appears to be the preferred tenure however it was felt that buying a home is becoming increasingly difficult due to issues of affordability.

Consultation with the Chinese community indicated a perception that there is a lack of support with repairs/upkeep especially for older people.

Homelessness

ODS indicates that, the majority of Council allocations (46%) to minority ethnic communities come from homeless allocations. They note that there are higher numbers of homeless applications from Asian communities in the Denny /Falkirk areas and there are higher levels of homeless applications from people of mixed backgrounds in Grangemouth.

Falkirk Council believes that the above is based on very small numbers (less than 5 in one year). There also appears to be some confusion by ODS over the use of the white other category. Therefore Falkirk Council plan to explore in more detail through the revised Homelessness Strategy.

Housing Support

Social Work staff indicated to ODS that only a small number of people from minority ethnic communities use their services. It was noted that monitoring information is patchy and staff believe that it is difficult to ascertain if low uptake of services is due to low level of need/demand, services not “reaching out” to communities or groups not wanting to access services.

Consultation with Social Work and other services indicated that there is a perception that minority ethnic communities are growing in size particularly Eastern Europeans, however no Council service except Education thought that there had been an increase in demand.

Anti-social behaviour

Central Scotland Race Equality Council (CSREC) monitors incidents of harassment on behalf of Racial Attacks and Harassment Multi-Agency Strategy. They provided ODS with their annual monitoring agency report which indicated that there were 279 racial incidents in Falkirk in 2005/6.

The most common form of racial incident was verbal abuse – 76% of all incidents where there was a 70% increase since 2004/5. The highest rate of increase was seen in the number of cases of vandalism - up 284% across Forth Valley. Minor assault was up 116%.

Figures show that the majority of reported incidents come from the Pakistani community (47%). This is an over representation compared to the population profile. Other communities over represented include those who see themselves as African,

Indian, other Asian, Black Caribbean and Black Other. Chinese and mixed communities are under-represented.

There were 10 reported incidents of victimisation against Gypsies/Travellers and of these, 8 were reported directly by the Central Scotland Race Equality Council rather than partner agencies. ODS believe that this suggests that more work needs to be done on this issue by partners.

Gypsies/travellers

There were 8 illegal encampments in 2006 by Gypsies/Travellers. Falkirk Council staff highlighted that some illegal encampments may be in an area for a specific reason such as hospital appointments. It was emphasised by Falkirk Council staff that detailed monitoring requires to be carried out over across Council areas.

The planning department indicated that there is no stated policy in relation to Gypsies/Travellers in the Falkirk Local Plan therefore planning applications are considered without a “policy basis”.

Response – It was agreed at a recent meeting of the three Forth Valley Councils and Communities Scotland (20 Sept 2007) that the relevant strategy staff would raise this issue with their Community Planning colleagues.

8. Awareness of grants Status: Medium Forth Valley: Falkirk only

The Council should work with RSLs operating in its area to develop a promotional strategy aimed at increasing the level of awareness of housing services within minority ethnic communities.

Response – as action 6

9. Monitor grant applications Status: Medium Forth Valley: Falkirk only

Falkirk Council should ensure ethnic monitoring is undertaken for private sector grant applications and awards and for care and repair.

Response – As outlined in action 5, impact assessments have been carried out on the Private Sector Strategy which will progress this issue.

10. Housing support Status: Ongoing Forth Valley: Falkirk only

The Council should review the support it provides to members of the minority ethnic communities and consider whether there is a need to consult on the provision of these services and to promote awareness of the services within minority ethnic communities. (This recommendation relates to the future ageing of the minority ethnic community and queries the extent to which the minority ethnic community is self-sufficient in this area)

Response –Housing and Social Work are planning to undertake a Community Care Housing Needs Assessment over the next year which will incorporate consideration of this recommendation.

11. Consultation procedures Status: Medium Forth Valley: Yes

The agencies involved in Falkirk should co-ordinate their consultation processes to reduce the pressure on community organisations. An annual consultation plan may be one way to achieve this.

Response – To be discussed with Community Planning. It is relevant to note this recommendation is Forth Valley wide. All Councils are preparing for the next full LHS and it may be easier for community groups if housing consultation is streamlined, rather than the same groups being consulted on similar issues by all three councils separately.

12 Links with Central Scotland Equality Race Council Status: High Forth Valley: Yes

(CSREC)

The agencies should discuss with CSREC ways of identifying a wider range of members of minority ethnic communities who would be involved in consultation, to reduce pressure on the CSREC.

Response –as above

13. Capacity building Status: Medium Forth Valley: Falkirk only

Falkirk Council should provide resources to develop the capacity of community organisations representing minority ethnic communities. This could be a combination of support from officers (such as community development officers) and modest ‘seedcorn’ funding.

Response –To be discussed with Community Planning.

14. Consistent monitoring Status: High Forth Valley: Yes

Falkirk Council and registered social landlords should use a consistent approach to the collection of housing data on the basis of ethnicity. This should (at the appropriate time) include adaptation of the recording systems to match the ethnic categories being used in the 2011 Census.

Response – as per action 4. Additionally Falkirk Council will seek to incorporate this recommendation into the review of its allocations policy and the introduction of an Integrated Housing Management System.

15. Annual reporting Status: Medium Forth Valley: Yes

Falkirk Council should report on an annual basis to the relevant council committee a series of key statistics relating to the housing position of minority ethnic communities in the area.

Response –To be discussed with Community Planning.

Gypsies/travellers

16. Residents association Status: Medium Forth Valley: Falkirk only

A community facility will be developed at the site next year. The Council should continue its efforts to establish a residents’ association at the site – this should be a key vehicle for consulting residents on continuous improvement at the site and future provision.

Response – this is an ongoing issue which the Traveller Peoples Co-ordinator is working towards through the development of the new facility.

17. Unauthorised encampments Status: High Forth Valley: Falkirk only

Given the trend for greater numbers of unauthorised encampments, Falkirk Council should seek a better understanding of demand for temporary stopping places in the area. This is an issue that should be considered by the Planning and Environment Unit – and clear policies on Gypsies/Travellers should feature in the Falkirk Local Plan.

Response – on reflection, it is unclear whether this refers to unauthorised encampments or developments. These issues are not Falkirk specific and in the first instance should be progressed through the Forth Valley Gypsies/ Travellers Forum. The Travelling Peoples Co-ordinator indicates that Scottish Government guidance is anticipated in this area.

18. Monitoring systems Status: Medium Forth Valley: Falkirk only

Falkirk Council should ensure that all ethnic monitoring systems integrate monitoring of Gypsies/Travellers.

Response - These issues are not Falkirk specific and in the first instance should be progressed through the Forth Valley Gypsies/ Travellers Forum and the Forth Valley LHS cross border liaison group.

19. Uptake of Council accommodation Status: Medium Forth Valley: Falkirk only

Falkirk Council Housing and Social Work Services in particular should monitor the uptake of Council accommodation and use of support services by Gypsies/Travellers to improve understanding of the needs of those moving into this tenure.

Response – as above, this would allow good practice examples to be drawn upon from elsewhere. It is also important to consider comments made by ODS around possible tensions faced by gypsies/travellers from the rest of the community.