

# **Case Study on Intercultural Policies and Intergroup Relations Wolverhampton, UK**

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## Foreword

This report is part of the Eurofound project *Cities for Local Integration Policy* (CLIP), which commenced in 2006. Wolverhampton is one of the 30 European cities that cooperate in exchanging information on their policies for integration.

The project aims at collecting and analysing innovative policies and their successful implementation at the local level, supporting the exchange of experience between cities and encouraging a learning process within the network of cities. It aims to address the role of social partners, NGOs, companies and voluntary associations in supporting successful integration policies in providing objective assessment of current practice and initiatives, discussing their transferability, communicating good practices to other cities in Europe and developing guidelines to help cities to cope more effectively with the challenge of integrating migrants. It further aims at supporting the further development of a European integration policy by communicating the policy relevant experiences and outputs of the network to European organisations of cities and local regional authorities, the European and national organisations of social partners, the Council of Europe and the various institutions of the European Union.

The CLIP network requires cooperation between cities and research institutes. Six research institutes in Bamberg, Amsterdam, Vienna, Liege, Wroclaw and Swansea are responsible for the outputs of CLIP. The researchers of the Centre for Migration Policy Research (CMPR) of Swansea University are responsible for this report on Wolverhampton. Together with the contact persons of the city's Office of the Chief Executive, a significant effort has been made to find all necessary and relevant data on Wolverhampton for this report.

Between 21<sup>st</sup> and the 24<sup>th</sup> April 2009 the researcher met with officials of the city council, public sector organisations including the police, various representatives from council departments, including the Community Initiative Team, Equalities and Diversity Service, Youth Operations, and Scrutiny and Democratic Support, together with representatives from a range of non-governmental and voluntary organisations. A full list of research participants is included at the end of this report. Research participants have provided numerous reports, statistics and comments of relevance to the issues addressed in this report.

We would like to offer our sincere thanks to everyone who cooperated in providing information for this report and particularly to Angela Spence and Claudette Kanagalingam for coordinating the search of data and for providing a wide range of contacts for the field visit.

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## **1 Introduction**

The third module of the CLIP project focuses on intercultural policies and intergroup relations.

These include minority cultures, ethnic heritage and intercultural dialogue on the local level, faith based communities with a specific focus on the Sikh communities and related local policies and finally; intergroup relationships, radicalisation and local policy responses.

Generally, the aim of the study is to provide a shared learning process between the participating cities. This shared learning process is also extended between the cities and the researchers, and between both the representatives on the local and European level. Additionally, this module also aims to improve inter-group relationships by providing a systematic overview of areas of local policy intervention on intergroup relations and intercultural dialogue, and presenting findings on relationships with Sikh communities at the local level, as well as related policy initiatives.

Initially, this process is carried out by the city council's completion of a Common Report Scheme (CRS) document which is returned to the research team. On receipt of the CRS document, the research team organises a four day field visit, consisting of meetings, interviews, focus groups and presentations with city officials, academics, media representatives, NGOs and other community and faith organisations and welfare associations. The purpose of the field visit is to attempt to corroborate and elaborate on the responses provided by the city council on the CRS document.

Finally, using the research evidence provided through the CRS document and the field visit, the research team produce their report on the city in question. From these case studies, the CLIP research team in cooperation with the participating cities produce an overview report which advises future policy development at the local, national and European level.

## **2 Background information on the country**

### **2.1 History of migration and composition of the migrant populations**

The history of immigration in the United Kingdom dates back beyond the 18th century. In the immediate post-war years, displaced people and refugees from Germany and Eastern Europe settled in the country, followed by significant primary immigration from the UK's former colonies to meet a demand for labour in the post-war economic boom, followed by migration for family reunion, and a further phase of significant asylum migration in the 1990s (Borkert 2007). Most recently the UK has allowed migrants from the EU accession states to enter the labour market and has introduced a complex system of work permits to enable the entry of skilled labour to meet shortages in some sectors. The first European points-based system for labour migration was introduced in 2008.

The UK's colonial past and its persisting links with nations now in the Commonwealth have remained a determining influence on patterns of migration to and settlement in the country, the majority of people with a migration background in the UK coming from countries with a historical and economic link to the UK. Nevertheless, from the early 1990s in particular, refugees, labour migrants and international students from across the world have shifted the pattern of entrants to the UK and of those who have made it their home (Borkert 2007).

These patterns of migration to the UK are reflected in different 'waves' on inward migration from different regions of the world and, in turn, the highly diverse ethnic composition of today's population. While the majority of immigrants from the Caribbean arrived in the period between 1955 and 1964, the main time of arrival of Black African, Indian and Pakistani first generation groups was between 1965 and 1974. Bangladeshi arrivals peaked in the period 1980-1984. The largest first generation immigrant group is of Indian origin. Bangladeshis form the smallest group and make up only 2.6% of the first generation - which is explained by their relatively late arrival in Britain. British-born Black Caribbeans account for about 36% of the total British born ethnic minority group and form the largest group. British-born Indians make up the second largest group and British-born Bangladeshis the smallest.

One of the impacts of the increased immigration to the UK has been to increase the proportion of the population born overseas (Rendell and Salt 2005; IPPR 2007). It is important however to understand that a foreign-born population is defined by birthplace and not nationality or ethnicity. Birthplace, nationality and ethnicity are related, but to varying degrees. The UK's foreign-born population will include people who have been British citizens since birth and others who have become British citizens since their arrival in the UK. Because other countries also have multi-ethnic populations, as a result of their own international migration histories, country of birth correlates with, but does not equate to, ethnic group.

The 2001 census data shows that the non-UK born population ('foreign-born') has steadily risen from 2.1 million in 1951 to 4.9 million in 2001. As a proportion of the total UK population, too, the foreign-born population almost doubled over this period, from 4.2% in 1951 to 8.3% in 2001. This puts the UK slightly above the OECD average of 7.8% foreign-born, though still substantially below that of major immigration countries such as the USA (12.3%), Canada (19.3%) and Australia (23.0%) (Rendell and Salt 2005). The increase in non-UK born in the decade 1991-2001 was greater than in any post-war period: almost 1.1 million people migrated to the UK during that period. Amongst the non-UK born, those from Europe ranked first, while the Republic of Ireland

was the largest single country of birth (National Statistics Online 2005). This increased level of inward migration is reflected in increasing levels of ethnic diversity (Table 1).

**Table 1: Population of the UK by ethnic group, April 2001**

	Total population		Non-white population %
	Number	%	
<b>White</b>	<b>54,153,898</b>	<b>92.1</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Mixed</b>	<b>677,117</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>14.6</b>
Indian	1,053,411	1.8	22.7
Pakistani	747,285	1.3	16.1
Bangladeshi	283,063	0.5	6.1
Other Asian	247,664	0.4	5.3
<b>All Asian / Asian British</b>	<b>2,331,423</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>50.3</b>
Black Caribbean	565,876	1.0	12.2
Black African	485,227	0.8	10.5
Black Other	97,585	0.2	2.1
<b>All Black / Black British</b>	<b>1,148,738</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>24.8</b>
<b>Chinese</b>	<b>247,403</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>5.3</b>
<b>Other ethnic groups</b>	<b>238,615</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>5.0</b>
<b>All minority ethnic groups</b>	<b>4,635,296</b>	<b>7.9</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>All population</b>	<b>58,789,194</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: Rendell and Salt (2005)

Not captured in the census are the Eastern and Central European migrants who came to work in the UK following enlargement of the European Union on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2004. Over 600,000 have registered to work in the UK, which is an underestimate of the total arrivals as those who are self-employed are not required to register. Additionally, the figure does not identify those who have subsequently left the UK. Many are working in low wage sectors of the labour market where there were significant vacancies, such as construction, agriculture and hospitality. As a result, the pattern of residence is very different from earlier migrant settlement in Britain's industrial heartlands and many towns and rural areas are experiencing significant numbers of Eastern and Central European migrant workers living in the area for the first time (Anderson et al 2006; Home Office 2006).

In the post-war period, legislation from the 1960s imposed increasing restrictions on immigration for work and family reunion. Since the early 1990s, a succession of punitive legislation have restricted

access to welfare support for asylum seekers, and provided for the dispersal of those requiring accommodation and support to designated areas across the UK, including Newport. From the late 1990s skill and labour shortages in sections of the labour market led the government to allow employers greater access to labour migrants and to a shift, from 2000, to a 'managed migration' policy intended to maximise the economic benefit to the UK from labour migration. Opening up the UK's labour market to the countries which joined the EU in 2004 was part of that strategy aiming to reduce the UK's need for migrant workers from beyond the EU (Spencer 2007).

Recent immigration trends have led some authors, most notably Vertovec (2006), to describe the situation in the UK as one that exhibits 'super-diversity'. Of course, extensive diversity itself is nothing new in the UK. But Vertovec (2006) describes the emergence of a new 'super-diversity' unlike anything previously experienced. He argues that over the past ten years, immigration – and consequently the nature of diversity – in the UK has changed dramatically. In particular there has been a diversification of countries of origin since the early 1990s, many of which are places which have no specific historical – particularly, colonial – links with Britain unlike the countries of earlier waves of post-war migrants. This description of the UK as a nation of 'super-diversity' is reflected in figures published by the IPPR (2007) which show that at the end of 2006, there were no fewer than 33 country-of-birth groups with more than 60,000 members in the UK.

## **2.2 National policy context**

The national policy context relating to intergroup relations is dominated by three main strands: race relations legislation, policies to promote community cohesion and efforts to prevent radicalisation and extremism.

Since the establishment of the UK's Race Relations Act (1976), all racial discrimination in employment, training, housing, education and the provision of goods facilities and services is illegal. Furthermore with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000), all public authorities have a statutory general duty to promote race equality. The aim of the general duty is to make promoting race equality central to the way public authorities work. The general duty says that the body must have 'due regard' to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination; and
- Promote equality of opportunity and good relations between people of different racial groups.

In addition the Act places specific duties on schools to help them meet the general duty. These are intended as a means to an end, in other words, that they should result in improvements in educational experiences and outcomes for all children, in particular those belonging to minority ethnic groups. It should not become a bureaucratic exercise. These specific duties are:

- To prepare a written statement of the school's policy for promoting race equality, and to act upon it;
- To assess the impact of school policies on pupils, staff and parents of different racial groups, including, in particular, the impact of attainment levels of these pupils;
- To monitor the operation of all the school's policies, including, in particular their impact on the attainment levels of pupils from different racial groups; and
- To take reasonable steps to make available the results of its monitoring.

The UK national policy context relating to intercultural relations and intergroup dialogue is dominated by an agenda focused on the concept of community cohesion. This agenda was

developed following the disturbances in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham in the summer of 2001. The most influential idea at the time – and one that continues today – is that people from different communities are leading ‘parallel lives’ with little interaction at home, school or work. This is widely viewed as contributing to divisions between people from different backgrounds. This view was set out in the report by the Independent Review Team and detailed guidelines were subsequently issued to local authorities on how to take forward community cohesion in all policy areas. Since then there has been considerable debate about different approaches to community cohesion (Communities and Local Government 2007a).

Much of the focus has continued to be on minority ethnic communities, in particular, the extent to which residential segregation of different ethnic communities has been seen as a barrier to community cohesion. This association between residential segregation, cultural identity, and a lack of community cohesion has been challenged by some policy analysts, however, on the grounds that ethnic communities may be internally cohesive, and that the roots of conflict between communities cannot be explained by segregation per se (Communities and Local Government 2007a).

In October 2006 the UK government published a policy paper entitled *Strong and Prosperous Communities* (Communities and Local Government 2006). This paper addresses a wide range of other matters around issues of local government and governance, and also sets out the government’s proposed strategy for the delivery of community cohesion. The focus is on issues relating to communities from ethnic minority groups, radicalised Muslims and new migrants. It addresses issues relating to tackling religious extremism, public disturbances and disorder, far right myths and the underlying drivers of tensions between different groups. The document sets out eight guiding principles that define the UK governments work in this area:

- Strong leadership and engagement;
- Developing shared values;
- Preventing the problems of tomorrow;
- Good information;
- Visible work to tackle inequalities;
- Involving young people;
- Interfaith work; and
- Working with partners such as third sector organisations.

In 2006 the Government appointed a Commission on Integration and Cohesion, which reported in 2007 on its proposals for the development of cohesion and integration policies, recommending that an agency be set up to manage integration of new migrants (Commission on Integration and Cohesion 2007). The Commission’s report, *Our Shared Future*, was published in June 2007 and sets out practical proposals for building cohesion and integration at a local level. The report contains a number of specific recommendations and practical proposals for local cohesion work. Since the publication of the Commission’s report, the following has occurred:-

- A Migration Impacts Forum has been established;
- The Green Paper, ‘Governance of Britain’ which opened a debate about the relationship between government and the citizen aimed at enhancing the rights and responsibilities of the citizen was published;
- *Aiming High for Young People: a ten year strategy for positive activities* was published.
- A publication on guidance for schools on the *Duty to Promote Cohesion*;

- Communities and Local Governments published guidance on *Negotiating New Local Area Agreements*;
- Publication of *Review of Policing in England and Wales* emphasising the role that community policing has to play in building cohesive communities;
- Communities and Local Government launched the *Community Empowerment Action Plan*
- A new *School Linking Programme* has been established;
- Local Government announced a £50m investment over three years to promote community cohesion and support local authorities in preventing and managing community tensions;
- Communities and Local Government published *Guidance on Translation* for local authorities;
- Communities and Local Government opened consultation on an *Inter Faith Strategy*;
- Communities and Local Government and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills held two *Citizen's Juries* to examine how targeted provision of teaching English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) can help build cohesion; and
- The Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills published the consultation document *Focusing English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) on Community Cohesion*, which sets out the Government's aim that ESOL funding should be more specifically targeted to foster community cohesion in communities.

Public authorities are required not only to publish information about their services, but to ensure that different groups are accessing that information. They are required to investigate differences in access to services between ethnic groups and the barriers inhibiting equal access for some groups (e.g. through consultation with ethnic minority groups and organisations, and with service providers); and to develop measures to address those barriers.

In February 2008, the Department of Communities and Local Government published research findings which suggested that there are a number of underlying factors that affect community cohesion (Communities and Local Government 2008b). The key findings were as follows:

- That both individual and community-level factors influence cohesion;
- That ethnic diversity drives cohesion;
- That disadvantage erodes community cohesion;
- That crime and fear of crime strongly undermine cohesion;
- That empowerment is an important factor in the process of developing cohesive communities;
- That volunteering is a positive predictor of cohesion;
- That vulnerable groups have more negative perceptions of cohesion; and
- That the predictors of cohesion vary across ethnic groups.

Various strategies have been developed to address the underlying factors that are regarded as undermining community cohesion at the local level. These include the government's *Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy* (Communities and Local Government 2005), which was first launched in 2001, and aims to tackle inequalities and disadvantage in the most deprived neighbourhoods in England (based on indices of deprivation). It is intended that area-based neighbourhood renewal plans are developed and implemented at the local level through Local Strategic Partnerships, bringing together the local authority and other local agencies from across the public, private, voluntary and community sectors. These plans are expected to take into account diversity issues, although the diversity of local communities in this context is considered not simply in terms of ethnicity or migrant background, but across different communities of identity, also including faith communities, gender, disability, older people etc. A key focus is on the

engagement of local communities in the development and implementation of Neighbourhood Renewal Initiatives (Government Offices for the English Regions 2009).

In addition to this wide community cohesion agenda, it is important to note that the terrorist events in both New York in 2001 and London in 2005 have strongly influenced the current approach to intergroup relations in the UK leading to a strengthened emphasis not only on the integration of minorities and migrants but on the effort to combat extremism, particularly those forms of extremism associated with the Muslim communities. Over recent years the focus of counter-terrorist policing work in the UK has been on investigating and disrupting the terrorist networks that threaten the UK and its interests. The UK government aims to prevent people becoming terrorists or supporting violent extremism through the *Prevent* component of the UK counter-terrorism strategy (Communities and Local Government 2007b).

The *Prevent Strategy* is based on the assumption that challenging and preventing violent extremism requires local public services to understand and empower all their communities. Reducing inequalities and tension, addressing all forms of extremism and building cohesive and resilient communities all contribute to the successful delivery of local *Prevent* approaches. Councils, police, youth offending teams, schools, further and higher education, local health services, probation, prison services and fire and rescue services are all key players in delivering *Prevent* locally. This is a new and evolving demand on local public service partners (Communities and Local Government 2007b).

In October 2006, 70 councils in England received a share of a total of £6 million from the *Preventing Violent Extremism Pathfinder Fund* (PVEPF) for partnership work with the police and other local services. A further £45 million will be provided to councils by the government between 2008 and 2011. Most councils position the *Prevent* approach within their community cohesion strategy. This tends to focus on building resilience within communities rather than explicitly addressing the vulnerability of those who may become engaged in violent extremism (Communities and Local Government 2008a).

Wolverhampton city council did not receive a share from the PVEPF and is not considered a 'high risk' area for extremist activity. However, in April 2008, the city was allocated funding by central government, to assist them in building resilience against violent extremism through the *Building Resistance Fund* (discussed later in this report).

### 3 Background information on the city

#### 3.1 Brief description of the city

Wolverhampton is situated to the west of Birmingham, and together with Dudley, Sandwell and Walsall makes up the English Black Country (Figures 1 and 2). The name of this area derives from 19<sup>th</sup> century descriptions of the industrial landscape, dominated by black smoking chimneystacks (Upton 1998). Historically a part of Staffordshire, the city of Wolverhampton became part of the West Midlands Metropolitan County in 1974 and on the dissolution of the county in 1986 became a Metropolitan Borough.

Figure 1: The location of Wolverhampton, UK



Source: Microsoft Virtual Earth 2009

Wolverhampton is a vibrant, multi-cultural city with a documented history that stretches back to 985AD when King Aethelred granted the title of land known as Heantune to Lady Wulfruna. The city is the seat of the University of Wolverhampton (1992, formerly a Wolverhampton polytechnic college) and a 16<sup>th</sup> century grammar school. Wolverhampton grew around the Church of Saint Peter, established in 994. In 1258 the town was granted a Wednesday market, which is still held, and an annual fair (Upton 1998). During the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, Wolverhampton was a centre of the woollen trade and then grew rapidly during the industrial revolution, based on expanding coal, steel and manufacturing industries (Upton 1998).

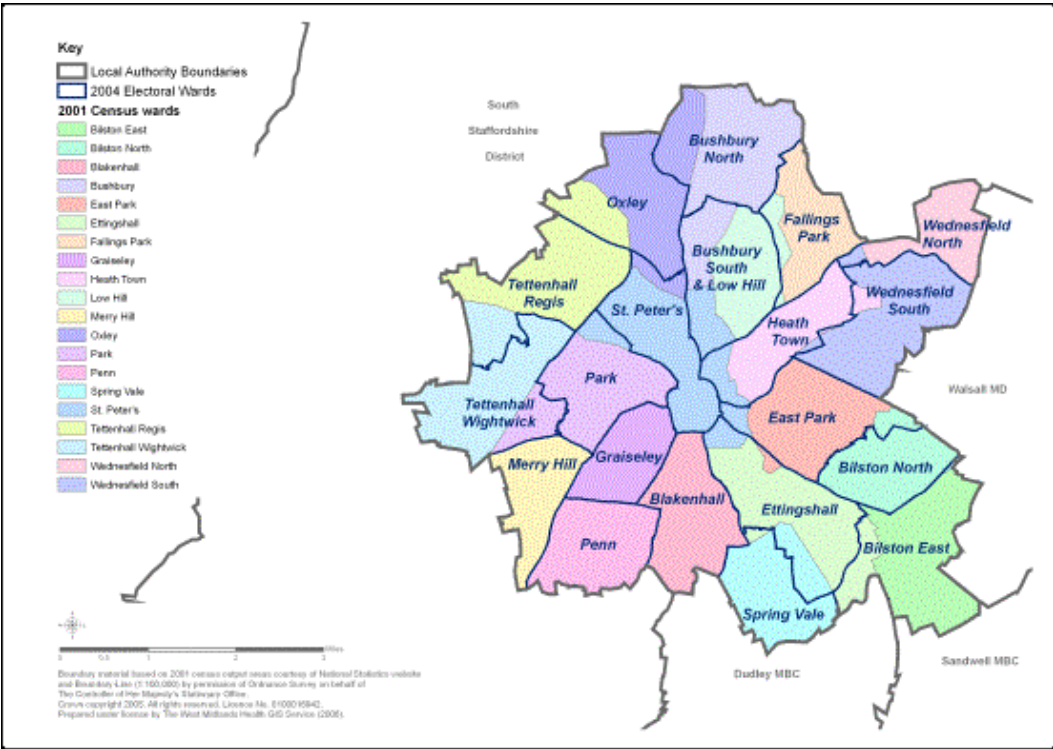


The majority of employment in Wolverhampton has historically been in manufacturing, but there has recently been a significant increase in service sector jobs. During the past 40 years, Wolverhampton’s manufacturing base has declined dramatically and much of the city’s heavy industry has disappeared (Upton 1998). In 2009 the local economy of Wolverhampton is dominated by the service sector, with 74.9% of the city’s employment being in this area. The major subcomponents of this sector are in public administration, education and health (32.8% of the total employment), while distribution, hotels and restaurants take up 21.1%, and finance and IT makes up a further 12.7%. The largest non-service industry is that of manufacturing (12.9%), whilst 5.2% of the total employment is related to the tourism industry. The largest single employer within the city is Wolverhampton City Council which has over 12,000 staff (Office for National Statistics 2008).

The current global recession is reflected in a significant downturn in the UK economy and an increase in rates of unemployment. The West Midlands has been particularly badly hit, with the rate of unemployment rising to 9.2% compared to the national average of 7.2%. The unemployment rate in Wolverhampton has risen from 5.1% in June 2007 to the current 7.9 % (Office for National Statistics 2009).

In addition to representatives at the UK and European Parliaments, areas within cities are represented at the local level by city councillors. These councillors are elected to wards. Electoral wards are the key building block of UK’s administrative geography, being the spatial units used to elect local government councillors in metropolitan and non-metropolitan districts, unitary authorities and the London boroughs in England; unitary authorities in Wales; council areas in Scotland; and district council areas in Northern Ireland. The city of Wolverhampton is divided into 20 wards (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Wolverhampton city by wards**



Source: Wolverhampton City Council 2009

No political party currently has a majority on the city council, which is currently controlled by a coalition between the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats (Figure 4).

**Figure 4: Party political make-up of Wolverhampton city council**

Party political make-up of Wolverhampton City Council			
Party	Seats 50		Current Council (2008–09)
	2007	2008	
Labour	36	28	
Conservative	21	27	
Lib Dems	4	5	
Independent	1	0	

Source: Wolverhampton City Council 2009

It is worth noting here that Wolverhampton is the city in which the famous ‘rivers of blood’ speech was given by Enoch Powell, the MP for Wolverhampton South, and conservative right-winger in response to increase immigration and associated diversity in the UK. The speech, made in April 1968, comparing the policy of allowing families to join immigrants who had moved to the UK with watching a nation busily engaged in heaping up its own funeral pyre. Powell called for an immediate reduction in immigration and the implementation of a conservative policy of ‘urgent encouragement’ of those already in the UK to return home to avoid the streets of Britain from seeing ‘rivers of blood’ resulting from conflict between the indigenous and immigrant populations.

**3.2 The city’s migrant population and its characteristics/main groups**

According to the city, Wolverhampton has experienced successive waves of migration, first from Ireland and Wales in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, then from the Indian sub-continent and Caribbean in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These waves of migration have been associated with the economic growth and development of the city.

In 1991, minority ethnic groups in the city made up 18.6% of the city’s population. According to the 2001 census, this has increased to 22.2%, which is a higher proportion of the local population than for the West Midlands region (20%) and considerably higher than for the UK population as a whole (8.3%) (National Statistics Online 2006).

The ethnicity of the population of Wolverhampton, based on the ethnic categories in the 2001 census, comprises: white, 184,044 residents (77.8%); mixed race, 6,441 residents (2.7%); Asian/Asian British, 33,870 residents (14.3%); Black/Black British, 10,874 residents (4.6%); and Chinese/Other, 1,353 residents (0.6%). The Indian population (12.3%) makes up the largest minority ethnic group in the city (National Statistics Online 2006).

The city states that according to the 2001 census, amongst the city's ethnic minority groups, different age patterns exist, with larger proportions of younger people amongst the minority ethnic population compared with the white population. 2.7% of the Wolverhampton population are of mixed ethnic origin, but when looking at under fifteen's this equates to 8% of the population (birth data indicate that this group is expanding and is expected to continue to do so). With regard specifically to the immigrant population (non UK-born), the population of Wolverhampton includes 3,574 residents (1.5% of the total population) born elsewhere in the EU (including Ireland), and 23,021 residents born outside the EU (9.7% of the total population). Its local population has the second highest proportion of non-UK born residents of the 34 local authorities in the West Midlands region (Office for National Statistics 2006).

As is the case elsewhere in the UK, new communities and groups have developed in Wolverhampton over recent years. The development of these communities reflects increased inward migration of economic migrants from European accession countries (particularly Poland), and asylum seekers and refugees from the Middle East and Africa. The number of Eastern European migrants is difficult to estimate, since a large part of this migration took place following the last census in 2001. However, applications for national insurance numbers show that, between January 2002 and April 2008, there were 733,000 registrations for the UK as a whole, of which 40% of applications were from Asia and the Middle East, whilst 30% were from the European Union Accession states (Department of Work and Pensions 2009).

According to the city, data from the UK Border and Immigration Agency (2006-2007) estimates that there are approximately 900 asylum seekers resident in Wolverhampton, representing some 49 nationalities; the largest groups being from Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Somalia and Afghanistan. These figures only related to asylum seekers who are being supported by the National Asylum Support Service (NASS). Data on the total refugee population of Wolverhampton cannot be drawn from the 2001 census, which does not record immigration status. It seems likely that there are a significant number of asylum seekers who have been refused leave to remain live in the area, along with others who have no legal status but whose presence is not known to the authorities.

Wolverhampton is a diverse city in terms of religion, comprising residents who are Christian (157,300); Buddhist (737, the highest proportion in the West Midlands region); Hindu (9,198, highest proportion in the West Midlands region); Jewish (104) and Muslim (4,060). The Sikh population is 17,944, the highest proportion in the West Midlands region and the fourth highest proportion of local authority populations in England and Wales (Office for National Statistics 2006).

In addition to general information on the size of the ethnic minority population, the city has access to detailed data on the composition of ethnic minority groups and the differences and similarities that exist between them. Wolverhampton's ethnic minority households tend to be larger on average than those of the white population. Approaching one in four ethnic minority households (23.6%) have at least five household members and 9.9% have at least six. This is particularly so for Asian households: 43.4% of Pakistani households have five or more members and 20.3% have six or more members; 25.7% of Indian households have six or more members. In addition single parent households tend to be more prevalent amongst African, Caribbean households and those of mixed race (MEL Research and Service Development 2006).

As noted above, ethnic minority households tend to comprise of more younger members: 61.4% of those living in households of mixed race are under 16 years of age, and for Asian households the proportion of under 16 year olds ranges from 23.9% for Indian households to 33.6% for Pakistani households. Ethnic minority groups are also more likely to have members in the 16 to 24 year age

group, which is the group more likely to be forming 11 of 36 Wolverhampton new households (MEL Research and Service Development 2006). There is also evidence that people from ethnic minority backgrounds, especially those of Bangladeshi, Pakistani or African origin, are far more likely to live in low income households in Wolverhampton than white people (MEL Research and Service Development 2006).

Unemployment rates for ethnic minority groups tend to be higher than the rate for the white population in Wolverhampton (5%) and the overall rate (5%). For those of mixed race, the unemployment rate stood at 13% at the time of the 2001 census. The rate was 9% for the black population and 6.6% for the Asian population (Office for National Statistics 2006). Of the Wolverhampton population employed in managerial/professional and technical occupations, the white and Asian populations contribute the largest proportions. Just under one third of both the white and the Asian working population (31%) are employed in these areas. By contrast, only 14% of the black working population is employed in these occupations. Just under a quarter of the Asian population in Wolverhampton is employed as plant and machine operatives. This figure is much higher than that of any other ethnic group (Office for National Statistics 2006).

National Statistics Population Projections (2006) predicts between 2006 and 2026, two significant trends for the population of Wolverhampton which are of particular relevance for this report. First, there is expected to be an increase in the minority ethnic population, both in absolute numbers and as a proportion of the population. A research report on ethnic minority housing in the city, commissioned by Wolverhampton City Council, emphasised that while the percentage of the white population has decreased by 2.5%, other populations, such as the Asian and black populations have increased by almost 2% (according to the 2001 census and the 2004 Annual Population Survey) (MEL Research and Service Development 2006). Secondly, there is expected to be a significant increase in the number of over 85s, caused by increasing life expectancy, and, in particular, a significant increase in the number of ethnic minority older people over the next 30 years.

### **3.3 The city's Sikh population and its characteristics**

According to the 2001 census, the Sikh community in Wolverhampton represents the largest minority group within the city. Wolverhampton has the fourth largest Sikh population in the UK. The Sikh population consists of 7.6% of Wolverhampton's residents which equates to 17,944 residents.

According to the city, 43% of Wolverhampton's Sikh communities were born outside of the United Kingdom. The gender division within the communities is approximately 50% male and 50% female. According to the city council, this is a 'young' community, with 40.75% of its members being under 25 years of age and only 19.67% being over 50 years of age.

Of the Sikh population in Wolverhampton, the majority, 94.06% consider themselves to be ethnically Indian, followed by other Asian (4.08%) and then white British (1.13%).

The city states that over 53% of Wolverhampton's Sikh population are employed within the manufacturing and wholesale/retail trade. 22% of Wolverhampton's Sikh population (aged 16-74), are classified as being within the top three socio-economic groups, in contrast with 27% of the general population across Wolverhampton, although they have slightly lower representation in the upper groups. 26% of Wolverhampton's Sikh population aged 16 plus are qualified to level three (higher education level).

## **4 Local Intercultural policies in general**

### **4.1 General approach and responsibility for relations to ethnic and religious organisations in the city.**

Before outlining the approach of Wolverhampton towards ethnic and religious organisations, it is important to outline the political and policy context within which the general approach of the city is framed and within which these relations take place. As noted above, there has been an emphasis on community cohesion at the UK level since the disturbances in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham in the summer of 2001. In addition Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) have been established throughout England co-ordinated by local authorities, to improve the quality of life for local people and ensure that public services work together to create improved outcomes for the public. Wolverhampton has established its own Local Strategic Partnership, namely the Wolverhampton Partnership which consists of senior representatives from Wolverhampton's key public, private, community and voluntary organisations. Its overall aim is to bring together the resources, energy and skills within organisations, groups, communities and people in the city to work to improve the quality of life for local people. The Partnership also aims to put into operation and further develop Wolverhampton's Community Plan, *Moving On, 2002-2012* and its successor, the *Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2026*, which was agreed in February 2009.

The Wolverhampton Partnership states that it is developing work to improve community cohesion and social inclusion across the city. A community cohesion forum has been established in the city and meets on a bi-monthly basis. The forum is chaired by the Chief Executive of the city council with membership drawn from 39 statutory, community, faith and voluntary sector organisations. The city and Wolverhampton Partnership believe it is an inclusive forum which encourages and engages with individuals and organisations for collaborative working to promote cohesion and integration across Wolverhampton as well as the impact of international events on the local scene, the *Prevent* agenda and the city's action plan for preventing violent extremism. The forum also provides an arena for discussing issues relating to security and intelligence across the city (discussed below).

In addition to the Wolverhampton Partnership, Local Area and Neighbourhood Arrangements (LANA) have been established through 15 Local Neighbourhood Partnerships (LNPs) across the city. These partnerships bring together a range of interests and groups including local people, local community groups, councillors, voluntary and community sector partners and public sector organisations. Each LNP has produced a *Neighbourhood Action Plan* which aims to bring together key priorities and actions for each area. It is believed by the city that these plans will build on existing plans for local areas and will take account of the views of all groups within the local area. One of the key priorities and actions in each area is to improve community cohesion across neighbourhoods through LANAs. The city believes that LANAs provide the means for local communities throughout Wolverhampton to work with service providers and commissioners in shaping the design, planning and delivery of public services

Additionally, in 2005, Wolverhampton Compact was launched to develop a commitment between the statutory sector and voluntary and community sector groups in Wolverhampton and aims to ensure they work better together which is believed to be important in the development of good quality services for local communities. According to the city, the city council states that it is keen to see projects that build upon work already underway, rather than repeating learning or development which has already taken place. It is also keen to see projects that seek to deliver through

partnership working, share expertise and best practice and are able to rely on other sources of funding.

The city considers its approach towards ethnic and religious minority organisations in Wolverhampton to be positive. The Regeneration and Environment Department and the Office of the Chief Executive are the primary departments considered to have significantly contributed to the engagement and working relations with ethnic and religious minority organisations. Additionally, the city states that all other departments that have contact with ethnic and religious minority organisations will have some responsibility for maintaining, building and nurturing relationships with these organisations.

By contrast a number of ethnic and religious organisations that participated in this research do not consider the city's approach to be positive. On the contrary, they expressed a number of significant concerns about the approach of the city towards them. These concerns are discussed in detail later in this report.

According to the city, the council's Chief Executive takes an active interest in relations to ethnic and religious organisations. As noted above, the community cohesion forum, is chaired by the Chief Executive with membership drawn from 39 statutory, community, faith communities and voluntary sector organisations. This is described by the city as an inclusive forum which encourages and engages with individuals and organisations for collaborative working to promote cohesion and integration across Wolverhampton as well as providing an arena for discussing issues relating to security and intelligence across the city.

The city also state that across various council departments, service areas take account of the views of ethnic and religious organisations and communities in planning their services. They believe this is particularly evident in housing services, children's and social services provisions. Where consultation is undertaken, it is compliant with the Wolverhampton Compact (discussed above). For example, concurrent with the Compact agreement, a minimum period of three months must be provided for service and policy development issues.

Additionally, the Race Equality Partnership of Wolverhampton (REPW) was charged with the responsibility for supporting work on community cohesion and integration and to this end was expected to work closely with the city's Chief Executive. The Race Equality Partnership was also used from time to time for its intelligence and to monitor local tension and any political threats of extremist activities that may become a barrier in the work of the community cohesion forum. Unfortunately the Race Equality Partnership of Wolverhampton no longer exists. At the time of the field visit in April 2009, Race Equality West Midlands has established a Wolverhampton Race Equality Steering Group which is actively trying to establish a replacement organisation.

According to the city there are elected representatives in the city council stemming from local religious and ethnic minority communities. These include the Vice Chair of Performance Governance and Support Services Scrutiny Panel, Vice Chair of Adult and Communities Scrutiny Panel, Vice Chair of Safer Communities Panel and the Shadow Chair of Licensing Committee. During the field visit, it was reported by one interviewee that of the 59 elected councillors, seven councillors currently originate from an ethnic minority heritage.

It is perhaps not surprising given the ethnic and religious diversity of Wolverhampton that there are numerous ethnic and religious groups which are considered by the city as providing important links to the communities of Wolverhampton. According to the city, these groups are also regarded as

important in the context of integration and intergroup relations in Wolverhampton. The activities of a number of specific by ethnic and religious organisations are identified by the city as providing support for the welfare of local migrant communities. These include:

- **African Caribbean Community Initiative (ACCI)**, which was established in 1987 in response to the disproportionate numbers of young African Caribbean people suffering or at risk from mental ill health. This organisation provides mental health services and supported accommodation to the African and African Caribbean population in the city and receives core funding from the city;
- **Asian Women's Adhikar Association (AWAZZ)**, was established as the first voluntary group for South Asian women in Wolverhampton. It is an independent charitable organisation that was set up in 1984 by a group of Asian women who were concerned about the lack of awareness around issues affecting Asian women. AWAZZ provides a range of culturally sensitive services to meet the diverse needs of Asian women and receives ad hoc funding from the city council;
- **All Saints Haque Centre**, provides specialist advice on welfare benefits and immigration matters as well as general information and signposting on any area of civil law. It also provides training in professional IT skills. It should be noted that during the field visit, several representatives interviewed suggested that the city has recently ceased core funding for this organisation and it is expected to close imminently; and
- **TLC College** is a modern educational and community resource centre formed in 1997 to assist local people by working with them to provide training programmes that meet their needs. TLC College provides impartial information, advice and guidance for career development, learning, and education. It offers a selection of courses specifically for women as well as English language and information technology (IT) training. It also offers housing support services and works with young people to relieve tensions within the community caused by cultural ignorance through the medium of sport. This organisation does not receive funding from the city.

The city considers that the most important religious Sikh organisation in Wolverhampton is the Council of Sikh Gurdwaras. The city council considers this organisation important as it acts as the umbrella body for liaison between the Sikh communities and the Local Strategic bodies discussed previously.

#### **4.2 Issues, demands and interests**

According to the city, social needs such as housing, employment, health and education, including host country language learning, are the key issues for migrant communities living in Wolverhampton.

A number of issues have been identified by the city in relation to housing. These include the fair and accessible allocation of housing which is sensitive to differences in culture and the implications of such an approach for housing provision. In addition the city is concerned with ensuring that housing and housing services are appropriately communicated to religious and ethnic minority groups, making the building of larger family housing a priority, targeting religious and ethnic minority groups to ensure they are accessing affordable housing, dealing with ill-health issues among groups surrounding poor housing conditions and providing information concerning energy efficient, warm housing.

In relation to housing issues, the city has produced a *Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Housing Action Plan 2007-2010*. The Action Plan was derived from the needs identified in the *BME Housing Strategy Research Report* which was published in 2006. The objective is to ensure that the future development and delivery of housing and housing services meets the needs of the city's growing and diverse ethnic and religious minority communities.

A number of issues were also identified by Wolverhampton city council in relation to education. These issues include concerns about differences in attainment in national tests and examinations for specific ethnic groups and new patterns of admission to schools for migrants from Eastern Europe. More specifically, there are some concerns about the education provision arising from the fact that schools which may lack the resources and expertise to meet the needs of early stage learners of English, most often children who have recently arrived as part of migrant families.

Evidence collected from interviews undertaken during the field visit with other relevant individuals and groups based in Wolverhampton suggest a range of other demands and interests among ethnic and religious groups in the city. These include:

- Inadequate funding by the city for all community organisations to capacity build and for the development and sustainability of community events and projects, as well as concerns that whilst the city is willing to use successful community organisations to promote Wolverhampton it is not prepared to provide appropriate funding and support. Concerns were also expressed about perceived inequalities in the allocation of funding provided by the city;
- Concerns that community cohesion and integration work undertaken by the city needs to be more collaborative and reflective of community needs, flexible and generally better informed. This concern was accompanied by requests that a more visible, strategic and accountable approach should be taken by the city in relation to community cohesion and integration, and that there should be an open and transparent process of monitoring and evaluation. A number of these criticisms were directed specifically towards the work carried out by the Communities Initiatives Team;
- A perception that the city's approach towards religious and ethnic minority groups suggests that the city does not believe that there is anything to be learnt or gained from this process of engagement. A number of examples were provided as demonstrative of a less than positive attitude on the part of the city including a failure to attend events or the cancellation of meetings with no explanation provided, a failure to return telephone calls and information concerning funding opportunities and deadlines not being relayed;
- A perception that the work of the Communities Initiative Team is uncoordinated and inconsistent, with projects and events happening in isolation thus resulting work being duplicated;
- The lack of ethnic representation (particularly at the higher levels) within the civil and public services and the lack of cultural awareness with which this is associated;
- A need for greater engagement by the local health boards in providing services reflective of their communities;
- The insufficient availability of English as a second language (ESOL) classes;
- Concerns about the educational attainment of ethnic minority and migrant children living in Wolverhampton and the disproportionate level of school exclusions amongst black children;

- Issues of housing provision including overcrowding of properties inhabited by Eastern European migrants;
- A perception that the interests and concerns of some communities – particularly Kurdish and Polish – are not sufficiently represented on the Inter Faith Council, details of which are provided later in this report;
- Concerns that the Muslim communities in Wolverhampton are being alienated and a belief that they feel they are not being appropriately represented in mainstream organisations;
- Concerns relating to conflict between established migrant communities and new migrant communities surrounding economic protectionism, especially within the Polish communities.
- Confusion among ethnic minority and religious groups generally about the remit and responsibilities of different council departments, including in relation to hate crime; and
- A strong belief that significant levels of institutional racism and racial prejudice exist in Wolverhampton and concern about the lack of a race equalities body to deal with issues relating to race equality within the city.

According to the city there are specific policies taken towards some of these issues and demands. These include the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, *Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Housing Action Plan 2007-2010*, an educational dress code policy relating to statutory requirements, the *Sustainable Community Strategy*, and the *Corporate Plan 2005-2008*. This Plan sets out the way in which the city intends to develop and improve its services over the next three years. However, it should be noted that the plan expired in 2008 and its replacement is in the process of being developed. It should also be noted that many of the concerns and issues raised by ethnic and religious organisations that participated in this research were directed at the attitude and approach of the city itself as opposed to specific issues and concerns to which the city might respond.

### **4.3 Forms of relations and dialogue**

The city of Wolverhampton does not have an explicit policy aimed at improving intercultural relations. Nonetheless, there are specific and general duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000) which are incorporated into the *Sustainable Community Strategy* and aim to create the conditions that improve interaction and relations between people from different backgrounds. Some of the city's intercultural work is specifically aimed at bringing the majority or settled populations together with people from different backgrounds and breaking down these barriers. For example, the Wolverhampton India Project has brought together a number of partner organisations from Wolverhampton undertaking activities in India under three key strands: trade, education and sport. The project was officially launched at the House of Commons in 2007, followed by a local event in Wolverhampton hosted by the Mayor. A two-day event was also held in the Punjab in May 2008 to raise the profile of the project in India and meet key Indian partners.

According to the city, there is formal and informal regular and institutionalised contact with ethnic and religious organisations. The city also provides funding to a range of organisations both through its own revenue support and through external funding for which the city council is accountable. For example, in 2007 the level of funding provided for the benefit of ethnic minority residents and projects was 28.49% of grants made. According to the city, attempts are being made to increase the level of support for ethnic minority organisations to better reflect the make-up of the local population. In 2009/10 the city's third sector development fund has been refocused on ethnic minority communities and equalities issues.

There are a number of projects which specifically aimed at reducing or preventing exclusion of ethnic and minority groups. The AWAZZ have developed an information technology project which enables mothers concerned about their children accessing inappropriate material on the internet to acquire basic skills on how to use the internet in order that they are able to monitor their children's internet usage. The Refugee and Migrant Centre provides free and impartial advice, guidance and support and operate a drop in and appointment service and a dedicated women's surgery to assist asylum seekers, refugees, new migrants but also people from more established ethnic minority communities. The city does not provide core funding for either the Refugee Migrant Centre or AWAZZ.

The city further states that it maintains important channels of communication with ethnic minority communities through its Local Strategic Partnership where one of the city's networks is BME Citywide Council. BME Citywide Council is a network of ethnic minority voluntary and community groups and organisations across the city of Wolverhampton. It helps influence policy strategy and how mainstream services are delivered throughout the city. The network aims to expand opportunities, choices and horizons as well as challenge inequality and discrimination in all areas of public life. According to the city, these networks encourage the active participation of ethnic minority communities and are supported by and capacity built by the networks. Ethnic minority citizens, communities and businesses are supported to engage in an inclusive partnership with mainstream organisations with the aim of delivering a vibrant community.

Funding is not available from the city for wholly religious activities and events. However, a number of religious groups lead the way in provision of quality community services. These include day care for older people, domiciliary care services, youth work, mental health services and interventions with vulnerable and homeless people, for example the African Caribbean Community Initiative (ACCI) (discussed earlier). In addition the community cohesion forum discussed earlier in this report provides a platform and an institutionalised structure for maintaining and improving relations between ethnic and religious organisations, and between these organisations and the city. For example, recently the forum was used to discuss issues relating to the carrying of the Kirpan, a ceremonial sword worn by followers of the Sikh religion, the carrying of which sometimes raises concerns among people who are unfamiliar with the religion. The Kirpan is an ingrained part of the Sikh religion and in many ways its religious symbolism is considered to be similar to the Cross in Christianity: just as a Cross is worn by devout Christians, baptized Sikhs are required to wear the Kirpan.

There are a number of events, days and symbols which celebrate the ethnic or religious heritage of certain immigrant groups in Wolverhampton. The Vaisakhi Festival is an annual Sikh event for which the city has, in the past, provided some financial and practical support. It should be noted that during the research, interviewees reported that the council had withdrawn the limited funding previously provided for the festival and its future is uncertain. Annually, the city council also support the Black History Month and Holocaust Memorial Day. The city council publish an annual multifaith calendar which contains information on the twelve world faiths and largest non-religious movement that have followers in Wolverhampton.

Additionally, schools across Wolverhampton celebrate key religious events for a range of religious and ethnic groups such as Diwali and Eid. The city council host an annual multifaith festival involving pupils from schools across the city. There are three specialist language schools which celebrate and study a range of languages including those of particular ethnic groups in the city.

Such activities are actively supported by the city council and national education policy emphasises the importance of pupils understanding and appreciating the diversity of the UK.

According to the city, one of the most important channels for dialogue between migrant and minority organisations and the city is the Wolverhampton Inter Faith Council. The Inter Faith Council was formally set up in 1974 to establish on-going contacts between different faith communities in a non-threatening situation so that they could talk and share information about their beliefs and practices in order to eradicate ignorance, misinformation and prejudice. The purpose of the group was to offer a common ground for different individuals and community groups to get together through meetings and visiting one another's homes and places of worship to find out what it meant to belong to a particular faith. The group became known as the Wolverhampton Inter Faith Council in 2006. Today it has over 200 members and more than 50 voluntary and faith organisations affiliated to it. Since its inception, the WIFC has taken on the challenges of diversity and inclusion, which sometimes means standing up against discrimination. The basic concept of dialogue and ongoing commitment to bringing communities together, however, is still there driving most of its activities.

The Council has religious representation from Hindu, Sikh, Muslim, Jain, Buddhist, Jewish and Christian faiths. It aims to maintain and extend the existing network of positive relationships between leaders and people of different faith communities in the city. It has participated in many projects which include educational visits to different faith centres, the development of an education pack on different faith communities, the development of *Faith Week*, lunchtime seminars on various subjects, the production of a regular newsletter and the establishment of *Faith Footprints* where a walk is organised leaving from a particular neighbourhood and visiting different faith centres on the way. Sometimes members from one faith centre will join the walk onto the next faith centre.

Below are four cases of dialogue and relations which the city of Wolverhampton regards as particularly successful and good for intercultural and interfaith relations.

**Case 1:** One of the three specialist language schools located in Wolverhampton has organised a course of basic Punjabi lessons for police officers which has been positively received and viewed as a means of supporting good community relations. There is the potential for course participants to achieve accreditation. The conditions for success include this being recognised as a need by the police, partnership with other agencies such as schools, and where there is expertise to deliver, commitment of partner organisations to do so.

**Case 2:** A school that admitted a number of pupils of Polish origin was able to establish and host a support group for Polish parents. The school's openness in being a resource for the community was crucial in this and enabled more effective support for their children.

**Case 3:** Welcome packs for new arrivals were produced by the city to ensure smooth transition to life in Wolverhampton. According to the city, knowledge of newcomers as well as settled communities ensures better understanding between parties.

**Case 4:** During 2006 and 2007, the city council organised a series of events called *One City, Many People* to raise awareness about a range of diversity issues and aimed at city council staff, elected members and colleagues from its partner agencies. The events run across the lunchtime period and involve speakers from guest organisations/partner organisations/the city council, who have knowledge or experience of the topic under discussion. For example, Wolverhampton's Asylum Seeker and Refugee Services (WARS) was invited to speak on 'EU enlargement – some personal experiences.'

With regard to less successful initiatives, Wolverhampton city council state they are unable to secure any evidence that detail any less successful initiatives.

#### **4.4 Relationship between different ethnic groups in the city**

Wolverhampton is a dispersal area for asylum seekers under the National Asylum Support Service (NASS). This has attracted the local newspaper (Express and Star) to report very negatively towards asylum seekers which in turn has stirred up some negative reactions from the public towards asylum seekers, and ethnic groups more generally. According to the city, they have responded to these negative attitudes by publishing their own newspaper, *One City News* in an attempt to redress the balance of local negative reporting. *One City News* is Wolverhampton Partnership's free quarterly newspaper for all residents of the city. It gives important news and relevant information about services, developments and initiatives from the private, voluntary and public sector including the Police and Fire Services, local NHS Trusts, City Council and voluntary groups throughout Wolverhampton. *One City News* is delivered to households in Wolverhampton and can be picked up from most public buildings across the city.

According to the city, whilst the level of conflict between groups varies from area to area, there are no relationships between ethnic groups in Wolverhampton that are perceived as particularly problematic. There is however, anecdotal evidence of relatively new areas of conflict between newer and more established migrant groups. This has manifested itself in various ways including reports of tensions between children of new migrant groups where there is less experience and exposure to ethnic diversity. Reports have also been received from established migrant communities concerning anti-social behaviour from new migrants from Eastern Europe, such as the drinking of alcohol in the street.

Several representatives interviewed during the field visit suggested there are tensions between Kurdish and Muslim groups relating to alleged incidents of anti-social behaviour by Kurdish groups. Some comments related to Kurdish men not wearing shirts or tops and standing outside shops drinking alcohol. Whilst some interviewees perceived this to be anti-social behaviour, others believe that the concerns reflect a lack of cultural understanding between the two parties involved. Other commentators suggested that there are tensions between Kurdish and Pakistani groups with some Pakistani groups expressing concern for their sisters and daughters safety where groups of Kurdish men are said to be congregating on the street and trying to talk to women as they pass.

Furthermore, according to interviews undertaken during the field visit, in areas such as Grays Inn, Heath Town, Whitmore Reans and Blaten Hall, newly arrived migrants are renting properties from landlords who are established migrants. Some of the newer migrants are younger, and there have been tensions between the established migrant landlords and the newer migrant tenants, concerning the younger migrants adopting anti-social behaviour, such as the public consumption of alcohol and the gathering of groups on the street.

The city consider that organisations of different ethnic or religious groups co-operate to progress the issues of ethnic minority communities and faith communities. They believe this is being achieved through BME Citywide Council and the Wolverhampton Inter Faith Council (discussed above). For example, through the Inter Faith Council, an Asian and Christian fellowship group has been established that meets on a weekly basis. However, during the field visit, some interviewees suggested that BME Citywide Council was not representative of ethnic minorities across Wolverhampton and did not represent a 'common organisation' of this kind.

#### **4.5 Public communication**

The city does not have a strategy for public communication relating to ethnic and religious groups living in the city, other than providing free translation of communications materials on request. There is a preference for using 'third sector' cultural and religious groups (already mentioned above), as formal and informal communication channels. According to the city, the practices of local media vary. For instance, as a result of negative local press coverage concerning the dispersal of asylum seekers in Wolverhampton, the city decided to produce *One City News* (discussed above). The city has tried to encourage the press to report responsibly by inviting journalists to become standing members on the community cohesion forum. The city is not aware of any members of the minority groups being involved in the local press as journalists although the Wolverhampton Community Radio (WRCT) has approximately thirty volunteers from across all communities. The WRCT has no paid members of staff and 35% of their volunteers are from ethnic minority origin. The organisation issues guidelines on diversity, which form part of the volunteer induction and are enforced at the editorial stage.

There is local ethnic media in Wolverhampton. There is an illegal community radio station called *Skyline* (94.2FM) which temporarily broadcasts from a Gurdwara during religious festivals. There is also a national weekly Punjabi and English newspaper called *Manjit* which is available locally.

#### **4.6 Summary and lessons learnt**

The city of Wolverhampton considers the overall state-of-affairs in relation to ethnic and religious groups and organisations to be good. Additionally, it is felt that ethnic and religious organisations play an important role in the integration of ethnic and religious migrants and minorities in Wolverhampton. The city believes that in order to ensure that interfaith and intercultural dialogue continues in a positive way in Wolverhampton, the channels of communication need to be kept open. They believe that the relationships already forged between themselves and ethnic minority communities have ensured that Wolverhampton have not experienced disturbances similar to those in the north of England during the summer of 2001.

The evidence gathered from community organisations and groups representing ethnic and religious minorities in Wolverhampton does not entirely support this view. There appears to be some significant differences of view between these groups and the city about what issues and demands are considered most important. It is clear from the information collected during the field visit that interviewees from ethnic minority and religious groups consider that there is much work that needs to be done to improve relations between the city and communities. This is reflected in the fact that many of the issues and demands expressed by religious and ethnic groups were related to the process of engagement with the city itself. Funding is an important issue but more important still is the nature of the relationship. Many respondents expressed the view that there is a lack of genuine engagement and grass roots activity and a perceived lack of commitment to the community cohesion agenda. Although there are initiatives and projects underway these are considered by some as a 'tick box' activity that is not intended to promote meaningful relations or dialogue. A clear, central, strategic and signposted community cohesion strategy is perceived to be lacking.

Notwithstanding these criticisms, individual projects such as the Wolverhampton India Project, the ACCI mental health project and work undertaken at the Inter Faith Council and the publication of the multifaith alendar are all considered by many organisations and groups in Wolverhampton to be positive and successful attempts at responding to community needs and encouraging intercultural dialogue and relations..

#### **5 Local intercultural policies towards Sikh communities**

## 5.1 Major issues, demands and interests

The major issues in the city's life in relation to Sikh organisations or resulting from reactions of local populations include education. More specifically there are concerns about improving the attainment of specific ethnic groups in national tests and examinations, diminishing resources to meet the range of needs of particular ethnic groups, and ensuring that teaching staff in schools have the capacity and skills to meet the needs of early stage learners of English.

Interviews with a range of Sikh representatives in Wolverhampton confirmed these concerns. In addition a number of other issues and demands were highlighted. These include:

- Frustration about a perceived lack of cultural awareness across all communities and organisations in Wolverhampton, including reports that members of the public who see a Sikh wearing a turban, regularly assume they are Muslim;
- Concerns that public services in Wolverhampton do not adequately reflect and respond to the needs of all communities in the city, including the needs of well established Sikh communities. This is reflected in demands for a Sikh school to be established in the city, and for funding to be provided by the city for this;
- The removal of funding for Punjabi language lessons;
- A perceived lack of cultural awareness from the local health boards. For example, a majority of the Sikh communities in Wolverhampton suffer with high levels of diabetes, (across eleven temples, 70-80% of Asian people are believed to be suffering from diabetes). The local health board sent letters out to communities concerning diabetes, but all the letters were sent out in English. Many of those receiving those letters are unable to speak or write English. In the neighbouring city of Birmingham, it was reported that trusts sent health practitioners to temples to connect with patients who are deemed to be at risk of becoming diabetic in an attempt to educate them on prevention.
- Concerns about the failure of the police to connect with the Sikh communities. No police clinics are held at any of the temples across the city despite attempts and invitations by the Sikh community to engage with the police service. Over 15,000 people attend various temples on a Sunday in Wolverhampton. The Sikh communities have invited the police to attend, but received no response. Cultural awareness of policing is believed to be dependent on where in the city individuals live;
- Frustration and disappointment about the lack of funding from the city for events organised by the Sikh community;
- Concerns surrounding the lack of representation of Sikh communities at the statutory level; and
- Concerns regarding cast based discrimination within the Sikh communities themselves.

The city of Wolverhampton states that there is an equal opportunities policy which aims to ensure that an open and honest debate continues across the Sikh communities and also with the majority population concerning issues and demands.

The city states that the attitude of the majority population towards some of these demands is demonstrated in the 2006 Best Value Survey. The results of this survey indicated that four fifths of respondents (82%) agreed to an extent that people from different backgrounds living in their local area get on well together, while less than one fifth (18%) disagreed. In 2007, the Annual Survey of 2007 was carried out in Wolverhampton. The survey found that 88% of all residents agree that their neighbourhood is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together. 80% of residents expressed the view that attacks due to skin colour, ethnic origin or religion are not a

problem in their area. Unfortunately, there is an embargo on the 2008 Annual Survey due to methodological issues relating to the newly devised postal responses option. To date, no research has specifically been carried out concerning the local population's attitude to Sikh communities in Wolverhampton.

## **5.2 General approaches and policies improving the relations with Sikh groups**

The city of Wolverhampton does not have an explicit policy directed towards the majority population and/or directed towards the Sikh communities for improving intergroup relations. However, it does have an equal opportunities policy and as one of the largest employers and providers of a wide range of services for local people, considers itself to be committed to challenging inequality, discrimination and disadvantage. The city also states that it supports the development of all communities and assists them in challenging discrimination, harassment and violence and promotes tolerance and respect between diverse groups in the community.

There is formal regular and institutionalised contact between Sikh organisations and the city council. Formal contact takes place through both the community cohesion forum and the Standard Advisory Council for Religious Education, (SACRE). SACRE is a local statutory body which advises on religious education and collective worship across Wolverhampton. Within the city itself, the Department for Regeneration and Environment have contact with some Sikh communities which is based on a funding relationship. Additionally, the Office of the Chief Executive has contact with some Sikh communities based on the relationships formed through the community cohesion forum (as discussed earlier in this report). There are some Sikh organisations that the city does not have contact with. There are organisations from the Sikh communities that are represented in the Local Strategic Partnership and also the Primary Care Trust. Additionally, there is an elected member in the council from the Sikh communities. Wolverhampton city council have provided free use of the city park for the annual Sikh Vaisakhi festival. These are primarily groups that operate from the local Gurdwaras, and aim to teach young people the Punjabi language and Sikh religion. As a result the activities of these groups is focused on activities in and around the Gurdwaras i.e. they are not outward-facing.

Examples of concrete measures by the city of Wolverhampton for improving relations between Sikhs and the majority population include the publication of the multifaith calendar (discussed above), which it considered to be a tangible demonstration of Wolverhampton's commitment to promote and celebrate its diversity. Additionally, at the national UK level, schools are judged through school inspections on their contribution to community cohesion by the National Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted). This judgement is reported in a school's inspection report. Similarly Ofsted will comment on the quality of racial harmony in a school and how far the curriculum promotes understanding of diversity within the UK. Data on racist incidents in schools is also collected by the city council. The city also states that it undertakes an analysis of the performance of different ethnic groups in national tests and examinations.

The city does not have responsibility for the police in Wolverhampton During the field visit, interviewees representing the police service stated that whilst there is no dedicated diversity unit, all policing is carried out at a neighbourhood level with neighbourhood police officers responding to the needs of residents regardless of their cultural or religious heritage. Several Sikh organisations interviewed during the field visit, expressed their concern over the lack of cultural awareness displayed by the police. There is also a perception that senior officers such as inspectors move around frequently and are not located in Wolverhampton for a sufficiently long period to understand the needs of the community (many are promoted and move to the neighbouring cities of

Birmingham or Dudley). It is believed that this situation is problematic for gaining an understanding of the different communities in Wolverhampton and establishing a coherent, community reflective, strategic response to issues and demands.

### **5.3 Good practice examples of concrete activities and measures improving the relations with Sikh groups**

As stated above, city policies in Wolverhampton which aim to improve relations between communities and groups are outlined in the equal opportunities policy and reflected in measures and policies designed to improve community cohesion.

Good practice examples of concrete activities and measures improving the relations with Sikh groups include the production of the multifaith calendar, school inspections monitoring racial harmony, school data collection on racist incidents in schools and an analysis of the performance of different ethnic groups in national tests and examinations.

The Vaisakhi festival is a highly successful group activity by Sikh communities to improve intergroup relations in Wolverhampton, which the city strongly promotes. The city believes the Vaisakhi festival is predominantly aimed at English speaking communities, in an attempt to raise their awareness to the Sikh religion and culture.

### **5.4 Public communication**

The city of Wolverhampton does not have a specific strategy for public communication on issues relating to Sikh communities in the media. According to the city, the local media (Express and Star) generally report negatively on issues related to ethnic and religious minority communities living in the city. Following the field visit, several interviewees commented on the difficult relationships between the city and the local media. As noted earlier in this report, the city have attempted to engage with the local media by inviting them to attend and participate in the community cohesion forum in an attempt to build relations that will it is hoped, encourage more balanced reporting on migrant issues. The city council have also published their own free city newspaper to try and redress the balance of negative reporting. However, relations appear to remain 'a work in progress'. During the field visit, numerous attempts were made to set up a meeting between the researcher and a representative from the Express and Star to discuss these issues further. Unfortunately these were not successful.

With the exception of the temporary Sikh illegal radio station, previously mentioned in this report, the city are not aware of any other local Sikh media available across Wolverhampton. This was corroborated by representatives taking part in the field research.

### **5.5 Summary and lessons learnt**

The city of Wolverhampton considers there to be a strong relationship between the city and the Sikh communities. They believe that the view of the Sikh communities is that the city should encourage more multifaith and multicultural activities. This is reflected in production of the multifaith calendar, and the holding of the *One City Many City* events, where city staff, elected members and colleagues from partner agencies are invited to celebrate the city's diversity, the production of various leaflets in different languages, holding classes to make public sector employees culturally aware and ensuring there are sufficient English language classes available.

The city has not commented on the conditions they regard as necessary for positive relations with Sikh organisations but recognises that the Sikh communities have concerns about being inadequately represented in the public sector workforce and that this can lead to problems in relations.

By contrast, there is evidence from the field visit that the Sikh communities believe the relationship between the two bodies could be significantly improved if the city engaged with the communities more directly and provided adequate funding and support for various projects and events. It was also felt by representatives of Sikh communities interviewed that public services should reflect the needs of all communities including those of the Sikh communities and further that the Sikh communities should be better reflected in the workforce of the city council. It is believed that this would relay a strong positive message promoting intercultural relations in Wolverhampton more generally.

## **6 Intergroup relations and radicalisation**

### **6.1 Radicalisation within the majority population**

According to the city of Wolverhampton, there are certain political groups that resent some ethnic minorities and some religious groups and which operate at the national UK level. It is accepted by the city that some of this resentment can also be seen at the local level and is demonstrated through support for the British National Party (BNP). During the field visit, it was suggested by several interviewees that within Wolverhampton, there are members of the local population that support the British National Party (BNP). It was claimed that there are particular residential roads amidst ethnic communities that are known to be occupied by BNP sympathisers and supporters. During the field visit, representatives identified these areas which included Ashmore Park, Wednesfield, Heath Park, and Bilston.

The electoral results for the BNP have been in steady decline in Wolverhampton over the last three elections. For example, the proportion of the vote for the BNP in Wednesfield North ward (the ward where traditionally they have obtained the most votes) by 44% from 1016 in 2006 to 578 in 2008. Additionally the BNP has seen a reduction in the number of candidates and wards where they have previously operated from, declining from six candidates in 2007 – when they obtained 3122 votes to two candidates in 2008 – when they obtained 1158 votes between them.

Radicalisation within the majority population appears to be a mixture of attitudinal, informal networks, formal networks and political parties such as Combat 18 and Great White Records. The city accepts that this support can lead to hate crime and can also be a barrier to integration as knowledge and support for the BNP will, and does, cause anxiety for local people who are visibly different to the majority white population. The city also believes that support for the BNP creates a general unease amongst Wolverhampton's communities which pride themselves on welcoming newcomers.

Although there is a plethora of research at the national UK level relating to the BNP, there is no local research available in Wolverhampton concerning the extent and operation of radicalisation in the city. The city did, however, undertake some research, albeit limited, on support for the BNP in preparation of the European Elections in June 2009. According to the city, there is anecdotal evidence that the BNP are actively trying to recruit members in the Merryhill Ward in Wolverhampton.

### **6.1.2. General approach, policies and measures towards these groups**

There is no policy within the city against radical or extreme groups operating within the majority population. More specifically, the city recognises the BNP to be a legitimate political party which is legally and democratically entitled to express its views provided that there is no incitement to any form of racial hatred.

Although the city was unable to provide any information regarding which part of the local authority might be responsible for policies and measures towards these groups, evidence from the field visit suggests that the city employs a full time Racial Harassment Officer who monitors and responds to racial issues such as abuse and discrimination across the city. It was reported by interviewees participating in the research that the funding for this post is due to end at the end of June 2009. In addition hate crime is also directed, managed and/or reported through the Wolverhampton Racial Harassment Partnership, a multi-agency committed to working in partnership to tackle racial harassment across the city, local neighbourhood safety projects, the neighbourhood policing units, various community organisations across the city such as AWAAZ and the national policing provision of an online reporting option.

### **6.1.3. Relations between groups**

There are organisations and groups in the resident civil society within Wolverhampton that are active against anti-immigrant and/or anti-minority groups and these include the Inter Faith Council, and community cohesion forum. As noted above, the city also employs a full-time racial harassment co-ordinator.

According to the city, the methods used by these groups to address these issues include dialogue, the development and issuing of joint statements to the public and legislation where appropriate and necessary. The city cooperates with the groups that address issues raised by xenophobic, Islamophobic or anti-Semitic groups by funding a full-time racial harassment officer and by also providing some funding to other local organisations that address these issues such as the BME Citywide Council. Groups among the migrants and minorities that are active against these issues are represented on the Inter Faith Council, BME Citywide Council and the community cohesion forum.

In addition, the police take action in relation to xenophobic, Islamophobic or anti-Semitic groups. For example, an evolving partnership, Preventing Violent Extremism Action Group, is led by Wolverhampton's city council Assistant Chief Executive. The police are actively involved in this group as a key partner.

## **6.2 Radicalisation within the migrant and/or minority population**

### **6.2.1 Radicalisation tendencies: who and what**

The city is not aware of any radical or extremist tendencies among the migrant and/or minority populations in Wolverhampton. It is acknowledged that around three years ago some mosques and the University were believed to have had some individuals preaching radical views to young people. However, the city does not consider this to be an issue at the present time and believe that there is now no evidence of radicalisation in the city. It is recognised that any evidence of radicalisation could have an impact on the local integration of migrants and minorities.

During the field visit, interviewees taking part in the research suggested that in the past (primarily during the 1980s) a radical Sikh organisation called the Khalistani movement were operating in Wolverhampton. The Khalistani movement campaign for an independent Sikh state. It is believed that the movement generally attempts to target younger Sikhs. However it was clearly stated by interviewees that presently no radicalised Sikh groups were operating in Wolverhampton and whilst there were perhaps Sikhs with more orthodox beliefs, these Sikhs did not separate themselves from the mainstream groups.

The characteristics of potential members of radicalised groups are not known locally. The main issues of agitation and main activities could vary through covert radicalisation through temples, schools and family. It is not known whether there are any supporters, sympathisers and leaders for such groups. Potential groups do not demonstrate their influence locally. For example, there are no results in local elections, demonstrations or influences in media, harassment or intimidation.

The University of Wolverhampton has recently been commissioned to undertake a piece of research looking at community's perceptions of racism, Islamophobia and radicalisation in an attempt to try and obtain some understanding of the issues, investigate the range of grievances and levels of sympathy with extremist ideology and explore the reasons why such ideologies exist. It is not known when the findings of this research will be available.

### **6.2.2 General approach, policies and measures towards these groups**

As the city does not believe there to be any radicalised groups operating in Wolverhampton they have not provided details of their general perception of, or and attitude towards, such groups.

There are however policies in place in the city for preventing violent extremism, most notably through *Preventing Violent Extremism Action*, for which the police are the lead organisation. Furthermore, the city council states that it recognises the important role local partners and communities can play in tackling violent extremist influences. In 2008 the city of Wolverhampton a share of the central government's *Building Resilience Fund* (BRF). The purpose of this funding is to ensure that Wolverhampton as a whole is resilient to the messages of hate, intolerance and violent extremism. The desired outcomes are to support the ongoing development of cohesive communities in Wolverhampton, in which all citizens value one another and play an engaging and active role in the community. These objectives are in line with the core objectives of the *Prevent Strategy* (published May 2008) which consists of the following key strands:

- Undermining extremist ideology and support mainstream voices;
- Disrupting those who promote violent extremism and strengthen vulnerable institutions;
- Supporting vulnerable individuals who are being targeted and recruited to the cause of violent extremism;
- Increasing the capacity of organisations/communities to build resilience to violent extremism; and
- Addressing the grievances that ideologies are exploiting.

The Office of the Chief Executive is leading the work on preventing violent extremism in Wolverhampton.

### **6.2.3 Relations between groups**

The city of Wolverhampton cooperates with the Inter Faith Council and local faith groups who represent groups among the migrants and minorities that actively mobilise against radicalisation among migrants or minorities.

The city has not provided details of the methods these organisations use to actively mobilise against radicalisation among migrants or minorities. The city states that it does co-operate with these groups, although no further information is available on the mechanisms through which this co-operation takes place. Neither is there any information about whether there are groups among the migrants and minorities that actively mobilise against radicalisation among migrants or minorities.

### **6.3 Communication strategy**

The city does not have a specific public relations strategy regarding the media and reporting on the xenophobic, Islamophobic or anti-Semitic groups, nor is there a joint strategy between the media and the council for dealing with these groups. The city council state that, regrettably, it is unlikely that any joint strategy could be formed between the city and local media. The city believes that a joint strategy is unlikely because the broadcast media is regionalised and too remote, and because Wolverhampton's local newspaper, the Express and Star, prefers to take an adversarial stance towards the city council, irrespective of the wider public good. The city further believes that the activities of xenophobic, Islamophobic and anti-Semitic groups operating in the UK are well known to both the authorities and media, and therefore consider it unnecessary to have a specific strategy for reporting them.

Whilst the city has a strategy for combating violent extremism, this does not extend to media relations. According to the city, empirical evidence suggests that the media have no specific strategy for reporting on these groups, other than to place them in the context of the present conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. There is no joint strategy between the city and the media and there is unlikely to be so, for the reasons referred to above.

### **6.4 Radicalisation: Summary and lessons learnt**

Radicalisation within the local population appears to be a mixture of attitudinal, informal and formal networks and political parties. Whilst there is known to be some support for the BNP in Wolverhampton, their electoral success has steadily over the course of the last three elections.

Whilst the city council does not have a specific policy against these groups, it is believed that successful measures and methods against anti-immigrant and/or anti-minority groups include the issuing of a collective statement by the city council that in the face of adversity it would demonstrate unity against such groups.

Additionally there are organisations and groups in the resident civil society that are active against anti-immigrant and/or anti-minority groups and these include the Inter Faith Council and community cohesion forum. The city council also employ a full-time racial harassment officer although at the time of the research, there was concern regarding the future funding of this post. There are also groups among the migrant and minority populations that are active against these groups and they are represented on the Inter Faith Council, BME Citywide council and the community cohesion forum.

According to the city council, and concurrent with the research undertaken during the field visit, there are no radical or extremist tendencies amongst the migrant or minority populations in

Wolverhampton. Should radicalisation of this nature become apparent, the city recognises that it could potentially have an impact on the local integration of migrants and minorities.

## **7 Conclusion: Key challenges, lessons and learning for CLIP**

Wolverhampton is a vibrant, multi-cultural city situated to the west of Birmingham in the West Midlands. As a result of economic growth, Wolverhampton has experienced successive waves of migration, first from Ireland and Wales in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, then from the Indian sub-continent and Caribbean in the second half of the century. At the time of the 2001 census, minority ethnic groups in the city made up 22.2% of the population. It is expected that this number will have increased since 2001 as a result of significant inward migration to the UK since that time. Sikh communities in Wolverhampton represent the largest minority group within the city and Wolverhampton has the fourth largest Sikh population in the UK.

Community cohesion work in the city is primarily undertaken at the neighbourhood level through Neighbourhood Partnerships. Although this is a highly democratic process of monitoring and responding to individual neighbour needs, many of those participating in this research suggested that this approach can also lead to difficulties in promoting intergroup relations and dialogue across the city. This is reflected in considerable criticism of the city for a perceived lack of strategic leadership and the duplication of cohesion work across the city. There also appears to be a lack of available funding for community groups and projects that promote and develop intergroup relations and intercultural dialogue, with further fears being expressed by communities, that as a result of the economic downturn, there will be further cuts to funding.

In addition many communities in Wolverhampton consider that the good work they are undertaking independently of the city is being incorrectly portrayed by the city as its own work. This is creating a level of resentment from the communities towards the city. This resentment is compounded by the recent closure of both the Race Equality Partnership and the All Saints Haque centre which is viewed by communities as signalling a lack of commitment on the part of the city to develop cohesive communities and encourage positive intercultural dialogue.

Additionally, much criticism was directed at the current processes adopted by the city for engagement with communities. These are perceived as limited. A significant proportion of those who participated in the research called for more direct engagement by the city with grass roots activities and for all activities to be processed through a transparent, strategic approach which is openly monitored and evaluated. This reflects, in part at least, concerns that procedures for the allocation of funding are not equitable.

Major concerns were also expressed by community organisations concerning the attitude of city representatives which are generally considered to be arrogant and authoritative. The culture of the relationship between the community organisations and the city is not considered to be based on a partnership of equals. It was further stated that for joint working relationships to improve, a significant change in attitude by city representatives will be required. Amongst community organisations and representatives, it was also generally felt that there was a lack of cultural awareness across all public services and that minority groups were not being appropriately represented in all public services, but particularly the civil service.

On a more positive note, the city council is participating in some good work, albeit perceived by community organisations as occurring in isolated pockets. The Wolverhampton newspaper, *One City News* which was established in response to poor local media reporting, appears to be well

received across the city. The Wolverhampton India Project is also an excellent example of integrating diverse communities and encouraging intercultural dialogue. Additionally, work carried out by the ACCI is reflective of Wolverhampton's commitment to providing services that are reflective of their communities. Work carried out by the Inter Faith Council, particularly the establishment of the *Faith Walk* and the educational visits to different faith centres, also provides important links to encourage integration.

Communities in Wolverhampton are tolerant and resourceful in establishing themselves and clearly with the decline in support for the British National Party and the absence of any major disturbances or significant levels of radicalisation, it would not be unreasonable to assume that all is working well in Wolverhampton. However, perhaps it is precisely for these reasons that the city does not appear to be as pro-active as communities would like them to be in the promotion of good community relations. Whilst on the surface of life in Wolverhampton, all appears well, according to organisations and communities in the city there needs to be a greater commitment to achieving and maintaining cohesive communities, including through providing adequate funding for capacity building, engaging with communities, and more actively promoting intergroup relations and meaningful intercultural dialogue.

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## 9 Interview partners

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- Adults and Community, Wolverhampton City Council
- African Caribbean Community Initiative
- Asian Women's Adhikar Association
- Asylum Seeker Homeless Services, Wolverhampton City Council
- Bilston Hindu Association
- BME Citywide Council
- Community Initiative Team, Wolverhampton City Council
- Councillor, Wolverhampton City Council
- Equalities and Diversity Department, Wolverhampton City Council
- External Funding Department, Wolverhampton City Council
- Mander Street Sikh Temple
- Policy and Equality Department, Wolverhampton City Council
- Quality and Improvement Department, Wolverhampton City Council
- Special Needs, Wolverhampton City Council
- The Methodist Centre
- The Refugee and Migrant Centre
- TLC College
- Wednesday Police Station
- Wolverhampton Citizens Advice Bureau
- Wolverhampton Homes
- Wolverhampton Interfaith Council
- Wolverhampton Mosque
- Wolverhampton Primary Care Trust
- Wolverhampton Safety Partnership
- Wolverhampton University
- Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council
- Youth Operations, Wolverhampton City Council