

how to...

...monitor race and disability

It is important that a coherent approach to monitoring race and disability is adopted across Aimhigher Greater Merseyside. This is the only way we will be able to usefully gauge the impact of our targeted activities, and will help us ensure that all of our programmes are inclusive.

For more information on the AHGTM approach to inclusion, please refer to the separate guidelines on working with BME and Disabled learners.

Setting targets

From the 2006/7 period, all AHGTM programmes must have targets for the numbers of BME and Disabled people they work with, and the number of looked-after children. The purpose of the targets is two-fold; firstly they help identify targeted programmes, and secondly they help ensure that programmes not targeted specifically at these groups remain inclusive.

Targets for BME and Disabled learners and looked-after children must be agreed with the relevant member of AHGTM Directorate staff. You will find their names and contact details on the guidance notes for completing Forms 1 and 2. Discussion of the targets will also identify areas where the AHGTM Directorate can support individual programmes and programme staff.

When the targets have been set, you will need to collect monitoring data to see whether they have been met.

How can I monitor?

There are two ways in which you can collect monitoring data, such as that related to race and disability. These include:

- **Ask every individual.** This works well with small groups, and colleagues that have worked on ESF-funded projects will be familiar with this approach.
- **Use alternative (proxy) data sources.** AHGTM school or college co-ordinators may have access to information on the demographics of students involved in a programme, meaning it is not necessary to ask individuals. If such data is used it is important to be clear about data protection requirements – these should be discussed with the institution providing the data.

Monitoring race

Use the DfES extended categories that are listed in this section of the toolkit and included in the generic questionnaire. It's important to use the extended categories to give a true picture of the involvement and experiences of different groups of learners. Using the condensed categories can disguise differences: over-representation of one group within a category can counteract under-representation from another group in the same category.

Please note that learners may need some support to identify the appropriate category from the list, you should allow time and resource for this support during your evaluation.

The relevant coding for each of the ethnic groups included in the extended categories is given in this section of the toolkit. You can use these codes to code responses to questionnaires in your spreadsheet. See the *How to... deal with data* guide for more information on coding and managing data.

Monitoring disability

The *Disability Discrimination Act* (DDA) defines a Disabled person as someone who has a physical, sensory or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Remember: **Disability** refers to how 'society' treats people who have various impairments
Impairment refers to the medical condition of the individual

The problem with the legal definition of disability is that it doesn't always match up with people's own perception of whether they are 'Disabled.' Many impairments that are covered by the law (for example, diabetes, dyslexia or mental health conditions) are 'invisible'. Many people who are classed as Disabled people by the law will have been living their lives without thinking of themselves in this way. Many will consider their impairment something deeply personal, and see no reason for people to know about it. Others will know from experience that to reveal their impairment - especially where it involves something like mental health - is to invite discrimination, and there will be great reluctance to answer monitoring questions about disability. That is why it is so important that monitoring is confidential. For all these reasons, unless Disabled people are convinced that the purpose of collecting data about disability is to improve the position of Disabled people within the organisation, many will choose not to answer such questions. AHGTM works under the ethos of the *Social Model of Disability*.

In recent years Disabled people have created a different way of looking at disability called the *Social Model of Disability*. During the sixties and seventies, newly-formed groups of Disabled people started to challenge the way they were treated by society. They believed that all Disabled people have the right to be part of their local community. However they found that the education, employment, housing, information and public transport systems were planned and delivered without taking their needs into account. They stated:

"In our view it is society which disables... impaired people. Disability is something imposed on top of our impairments by the way we are unnecessarily isolated and excluded from full participation in society."

The AHGTM generic questionnaire monitors disability by asking individuals two questions:

- Whether the individual considers him/herself to be a Disabled person
- If so, the nature of the impairment

In addition, the *Access Requirement Form* included in this section is a tool which can be used across the partnership to ensure that all our activities are inclusive. It can be amended to suit individual projects or audiences.

Further information and support

AHGTM are committed to inclusiveness, and as such have a BME Development Officer and Young Disabled Persons Development Officer in post in the AHGTM Directorate. Please don't hesitate to contact them for further information and/or support on any issues related to BME or Disabled learners.