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Recruiting Black, Asian and Mixed Heritage Foster Carers (BME)

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Strengths of BME families

- ***'Minority ethnic' carers chose fostering not only as a career but also as an opportunity to make a difference to the lives of 'minority ethnic' children in the care system; 75-80% of long-term foster carers held positive views about the experience; 'Minority ethnic' carers expressed a sense of achievement in enabling 'minority ethnic' children to overcome negative views about their racial and cultural identities'.*** (Thoburn, 2005, p129).

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Publicity Strategies

- BME respond to publicity aimed at them
- Show BME communities they are needed and valued
- Make direct connections
- Initial contacts are positive
- Being culturally aware and sensitive

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Barriers

- NCH found BME adopters feared lack of financial support , discrimination, wanted same ethnicity worker, and found it difficult to get information (2004)

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Critical Recruitment Questions

- Recruitment strategies address the needs of BME children
- Diverse recruitment materials
- % enquirers / applicants to foster are BME?
- % same or better than for white enquirers
- Outcomes evaluated
- % of BME foster carers approved

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Critical Recruitment Questions

- Financial and housing incentives for BME applicants, given their disadvantaged economic position
- Engagement with the BME community locally
- Your agency in comparison to the national average

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Critical Recruitment Questions

- Preparation, training and support for BME applicants – including in different languages
- Understanding and engagement with BME fostering agencies (eg Fostercare Link;)

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Critical Recruitment Questions

- Targeted recruitment campaigns
- BME media (TV, Radio, Newspapers, Magazines, websites)
- Ambassadors – links with people/ celebrities from the BME community
- BME community events (e.g. Notting Hill Carnival, Mega Mela, Black Film Festival, Black History Month)

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Critical Recruitment Questions

- Translations into relevant BME community languages
- Award scheme for BME individuals
- What works? - Perceptions of BME communities
- Identify barriers to BME foster carers in your locality/agency

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Messages from BAAF's work

- Applicants prefer workers with a similar cultural or ethnic background
- Overcome language and literacy barriers
- Approved BME carers in recruitment campaigns
- Targeting specific communities & using culturally knowledgeable staff, eg. Asian workers focussing on Asian foster carer recruitment

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Messages from BAAF's work

- Word of mouth and working through existing BME networks
- Remove financial barriers
- BME staff skilled in marketing or PR within the family placement service.

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