

Summary of findings from the  
Faith/BAME engagement events

Consultation on proposals to  
ensure access to the full  
curriculum for all learners

January 2020



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# 1. Background and introduction

## **Proposals to ensure access to the full curriculum for all learners**

Welsh Government, in their 'Ensuring access to full curriculum consultation', proposed that every child in a maintained school in Wales must have the right to access a broad and balanced curriculum; this includes access to Religious Education (RE) and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) and for these lessons to be made statutory for all learners to attend. In the existing curriculum parents have the right to withdraw their child from RE and RSE

## **A commitment to informing the public**

The Welsh Government is committed to undertaking a communication campaign to inform people living in Wales of their vision of a fully inclusive education system where all learners have the equity of access to education that meets their needs and enables them to participate in, benefit from, and enjoy learning.

Welsh Government identified a number of cohorts (Welsh Faith and black and minority ethnic BAME communities) where one-to-one engagement would be required to ensure Welsh Government had a full and accurate understanding of different communities' opinions regarding the proposals outlined above.

Fully engaging with the Welsh Faith and BAME communities is not only good practice but also a legal requirement under the Equality Act Public Sector Duties and the Human Rights Act. The identification of differential impact/s requires mitigation. Having knowledge of these proposals is a right enshrined in law and one that can be facilitated as the proposals could disproportionately affect certain protected characteristics as well as the general public.

The aim of this engagement work was therefore to 'deep dive' into the communities via community leaders, gatekeepers, and faith leaders to gather a detailed understanding of the reactions, impressions and reflections on this subject from the identified communities both from cultural and religious perspectives. Re: cognition also conducted secondary research to broaden topical discussions during engagement sessions.

In addition to the information gathered, we aimed to use this exercise to:

- Further develop trust in Re: cognition's knowledge, reliability and impartiality.
- Gain agreement from the organisations interviewed to assist in identifying a number of target cohorts for possible future engagement.
- Identify barriers and testing possible interventions to assist in engaging and informing key stakeholders, congregations and communities in any possible future engagement.

## 2. Engagement cohorts

To identify these possible interventions, and their best engagement methods, we interviewed representatives from the following identified bodies:

### Faith Groups

After careful consideration, the following faith groups were selected for interview. The list includes many members of the Welsh Government Race Forum.

- Roman Catholic
- Church in Wales
- Evangelical Alliance
- Cytun – Churches Together in Wales
- Jehovah Witnesses
- Muslim Council
- Jewish – Cardiff United Orthodox Synagogue
- Shereen Williams – Muslim Chaplain
- The gathering – LGBT+ Christian ecumenical group
- Free Church Council
- Hindu Council of Wales
- Baha faith community
- Interfaith Council
- Black African churches

A number of other faith groups were not interviewed because of capacity issues. However, we do recommend engaging with these groups in any future work to ensure that we get a clear understanding of the issues and impacts to these communities

### BAME Organisations

The Welsh Government were keen for Re:Cognition to engage with BAME organisations. Below is a list of the organisation we selected to engaged with:

- Riverside Community Development Centre Arabic Womens group
- BAWSO
- African Community Centre
- Henna Foundation
- Ethnic Youth Support Team
- Oasis
- The Onex Link Foundation
- Hyatt Trust
- Riverside Arabic Womens group
- Cardiff Bangladeshi Society
- Nigerians of Wales
- Congolese Development Project
- Chinese In Wales Association
- Race Council Cymru
- School Governors group / PTA / Head teacher group
- Glitter Cymru
- Community House – Newport

### 3. Methodology

#### Interview Questions and Structure

The interviews took the form of a semi structured conversation using the following shape and form:

1. Interviewer outlined the history and process proposal.
2. The interviewer then sought to discover the interviewee's knowledge of the proposals and any human rights considerations.

Following their response to the above question/s, the interviewer ensured that the interviewee fully understood the content, impact and human rights considerations of the proposals. This was essential as without full understanding, their following answers would have held little value.

3. Questions to enable Re:cognition to identify the *interviewees* personal position, knowledge and perspective including:
  - Religious perspectives and considerations
  - UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Human rights considerations
  - Cultural perspectives and considerations
  - Generational perspectives & considerations
  - Historical perspectives and influences
  - Personal perspectives of those interviewed
4. Questions to enable Re:cognition to identify the organisations, constituents / members and community position, knowledge and perspective including:
  - Knowledge of the proposals, UNCRC and Human rights considerations
  - Religious perspectives and considerations
  - Cultural perspectives and considerations
  - Generational perspectives and considerations
  - Other perspectives & considerations
  - Interviewees assessment of community response
5. Questions to enable Re:cognition to identify how we should engage with the interviewers organisations, constituents / members and community position, knowledge and perspective including:
  - Identify organisations sector role and influence
  - Ascertaining the effectiveness of any existing provision / plans of awareness raising information
  - An appraisal of whether future engagement is required;
  - Identify barriers to engagement
  - Gaining an initial understanding of how to engage and inform the organisations and their key stakeholders.

These questions were asked in a flexible way, contextual to the organisation and the knowledge and position of the interviewee.

## 4. Summary of Key Findings

This chapter summarises the overarching key findings of the faith and BAME group engagement events held in October / November 2019.

### A. Faith Groups

#### i. Christian based faith communities - summary

There are 227 Christian faith schools in Wales.

##### **Knowledge of the proposals**

With the exception of one Christian faith group, all those interviewed were very knowledgeable and fully engaged in regards to the proposals. However, they all reported mixed understanding amongst their congregations and lacked a definitive Christian position.

##### **Position on the proposals**

##### **Parental right to withdraw from RE**

While all Christian respondents wanted good quality RE education, there was no clear understanding on how this could be achieved with some respondents wanting to keep the parental right to withdraw while others were happy for it to be removed in the right circumstance.

A number of Christian leaders said the power relationship between school and a parent is very unequal for all those who cannot afford to pay for their children's education. Catholic and Evangelical Christian leaders thought that having the parental right to withdraw, in some way helps balance this power relationship, while the Church in Wales is in favour of removing the Parental right to withdraw for RE (once satisfied with the new curriculum) as it would help democratise and widen the different religions taught to young people, allowing a parity of learning across all of our communities, permitting a sense of who we are and an appreciation of diversity. It was reported that mixing religious education into humanities AoLE means that the Parental right to withdraw from RE will be impossible in practice to administer in secondary schools, therefore linking RE and SRE was a tactical mistake. It was reported that if they were treated separately, it would have facilitated a more simple and better supported removal of the parental right to withdraw from RE.

One Church education system uses the parental right to withdraw as a means of facilitating engagement with parents and they are proud to say that because of this engagement, no parent had used their parental right to withdraw. On a similar vein, another Christian leader sympathised with the plight of parents/guardians who may feel that the way RE was being taught at school may undermine their family and cultural values so the parental right to withdraw would offer a 'safety net' which would allow school family discussions to take place.

It was claimed that some religious groups are seeing the parental right to withdraw as a symbol of the right of the family and have developed a theology around the right of withdrawal.

While what is understood regarding the future RE syllabus does not cause any major religious concerns, one faith group said they “thought in centuries” and were concerned that future syllabus maybe against their teachings. Using this long-term approach, they also feared new Test Acts<sup>1</sup> (1567 – 1829). For these reasons, and others, they wanted the parental right to withdraw to always remain.

### **RE Name**

All the major Church groups think the name should remain Religious Education for primary schools and become Religious Studies (RS) for secondary education. ‘Religious Studies’ reflects the recognised higher education academic discipline. This view was shared by Muslim Council of Wales and Cardiff University’s Religious Studies faculty.

### **RE curriculum**

Amongst the different Christian groups, there was a fear that the change of name proposals pointed to curriculum changes that will further decrease religious literacy and the understanding of belief. The lack of trained RE/RS teachers (usually an add-on for teachers rather than specific subject), coupled with teaching ‘world views’, will further develop a sociological / phenomenological approach to this work.

The world views proposal was not well supported with contribution such as “what world views are coherent enough to teach?” and “there is no such academic subject as world views”. Churches are fearful that religion will become a minority subject, or at best 50/50 within Religion and World Views education. It was mentioned by several respondents that not only is there no clear understanding of what World Views actually means, RE teachers have never been trained to teach ‘world views’ leading one respondent saying “why not teach world views within history or economics where if it even exists it clearly belongs”.

The cross-cutting approach to teaching RE was supported and recognised as the way forward, but it was reported that this does not have to include the nebulous concept of World Views. “There is no academic subject called Religion and Word Views. No teacher has ever been trained to teach world views. So, what exactly is it?”

A number of Christian respondents were opposed to a religiously pluralistic approach to the curriculum, fearing it opened the door to conversion.

### **Alternative to ending the parental right to withdraw**

Currently, parents do not have to give a reason for removing children. One respondent suggested a compromise would have been to keep the parental right to

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/test-act>

withdraw, but require the parent speaks to the school and explain, thus allowing engagement where minds may be changed.

### **Parental right to withdraw from RSE**

Most Christian groups strongly opposed the ending of the parental right to withdraw, seeing it as State Overreach and/or an enforced encroachment of values/ethics between state and family. The family (their perspective) is the foundation unit of society and therefore should be what forms the values of society, not government.

Not all churches were opposed in principle to the removing of the parental right to withdraw, however, they could not make a firmer assertion because the content of the RSE curriculum was not yet available so could not be judged at this stage leaving its age appropriateness and potential challenge to church doctrine, unknown.

There were concerns that the values of the state would dominate and could change with the political mood leaving parents with no ability to prevent their child from being 'indoctrinated' in ways they do not approve unless they were rich enough to send their child to a fee paying non maintained school.

Many Christian respondents said issues of ethics and relationships should be taught by the family and that they are only delegated to schools which is why the right to withdraw should remain. However, there was an acknowledgement that many dysfunctional families exist and that it was for the state to step in via schools in such circumstances.

While happy to, and already teach RSE, some Christian schools fear that in the future they will be required to move from tolerance, acceptance and compassion, to agreement, promotion and support for relationships they do not agree with.

### **RSE curriculum**

All church groups (some individual Christians opposed) were in principal supportive of the teaching of RSE. However, concerns were voiced by all Christians that the new RSE curriculum has not been developed, resulting in them being asked to support something without fully knowing what it is, with the danger being they may support ending the parental right to withdraw to something that may turn out to be against church / Christian teaching. Another alarm voiced by two respondents was the concern that if the new curriculum offered flexibility regarding what / how RSE was taught then what may result is teaching that is far removed from the original intentions leading them to believe that the principle of local flexibility/interpretation should not be afforded to this subject area.

Some respondents feel that sex, sexuality, in the literal sense of education, goes to the core of who they believe they are. They do not feel that this is understood and is being minimised.



### **RSE Human Rights, UNCRC, Equality Act protected characteristics.**

Several respondents touched on the dynamic of religious belief, gender identity and sexuality. All are protected characteristics under the Equality Act but some feel that peoples strongly held scripture based religious convictions, would not be treated with the same gravity and respect as other protected characteristics, in the writing and delivery of the RSE curriculum. One respondent believes that Article 14 of the UNCRC<sup>2</sup> allows children to exclude themselves.

### **RSE – remove the word sexuality**

One area where there was just about universal agreement from all respondents was that it was a mistake to have the word Sex or Sexuality in the title because it distracts from the purpose and will overly worry parents about what is actually going to be discussed. They believe that ‘relationships’ covers sexuality, so in this context, sexuality/relationships is a tautology with unnecessary unintended consequences. Removing the word sexuality loses nothing and end some misplaced fears. Several respondents noted that teaching about the biology of reproduction is part of the Science and does not attract a right of withdrawal.

### **RE/RSE ending the parental right to withdraw from the existing curriculum**

One well informed respondent described what he saw as the potential folly of removing the parental right to withdraw from the existing curriculum, to parents who are already using that right to withdraw regarding this existing curriculum. That respondent believed that the school / community problems that could fall out of such a decision outweigh any possible gains. He said it would be a pointless own goal and “reeked of retrospective legislation”.

### **RE/RSE parental right to withdraw – unintended consequence and disproportionate risks**

One respondent considered that a number of parents may consider home schooling or moving their children into fee paying schools. A respondent said: “Welsh Government can remove the right of parents to remove their children from RE and RSE, but does not have the power to remove the right of parents to withdraw their children entirely from state provision.”

One respondent said that Welsh Government likes to work from an analytical pragmatic perspective, and as far as he knew were ideologically opposed to home schooling and non-state education. He went on to say that there was now a risk of a growth in home schooling, fee paying non maintained schools and unofficial schools, resulting in less control over what and how children get educated. He said “All this

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<sup>2</sup> Article 14 of the UNCRC says that children and young people are free to be of any or no religion. Their parents can help them make decisions around religion, but:

- a parent can't force a child or young person to adopt a religion
- a parent can't force a child or young person to stop following a religion.

risk for such a small number of children who are actually withdrawn... why risk more for what is now a very small issue?"

### **Age being the indicator of maturity**

One respondent reported there is a range of issues when you look at developmental readiness. The concerns he was hearing was the problematic nature of age being the indicator of maturity.

### **Timing of consultation**

Most respondents said it was a serious mistake to hold this consultation before publication of curriculum as it left people unsure of what they are supporting or rejecting. A number reported that the consultation and timings have only added to the confusion and created some resentment.

### **Community engagement and guidance**

A number of respondents reported the need for good quality community engagement to help inform parents in regards to any changes to the curriculum. This is seen as extremely important as there was an opinion that religious extremism is increasing as society appears to become more polarised. Three respondent groups stated that high quality accessible information needs to be created to help inform parents. In addition, much guidance needs to be provided to schools to help them fully understand the changes and to assist them to engage with parents and other key stakeholder.

It was felt by one respondent that schools will need professional help to deliver school / parent consultations as most schools are not equipped to do this.

It was also felt that the new curriculum was a great opportunity to engage, because the people who are most concerned are from the groups who are the most difficult to engage with on any topic or at any time.

### **Teacher development**

Respondents thought that the required teacher's skills development will not be easy or cheap and requires a large amount of allocated resources. One respondent noted that some teachers may object to teaching what they do not believe in, or teach it in a non-standardised way. A consistency of approach would be required to enable parents to be confident that the agreed syllabus would be taught the same way in every classroom.

One respondent said they believe that through the regional education consortia<sup>3</sup>, people should be employed to help staff with training and rolling out the new curriculum.

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[https://www.estyn.gov.wales/sites/www.estyn.gov.wales/files/documents/Improving\\_schools\\_through\\_regional\\_education\\_consortia\\_-\\_June\\_2015.pdf](https://www.estyn.gov.wales/sites/www.estyn.gov.wales/files/documents/Improving_schools_through_regional_education_consortia_-_June_2015.pdf)

### **Family status and RSE**

Several representatives said they supported the teaching of all family types has a utilitarian response to safeguarding and to help avoid bullying in schools. One respondent said: “Children should not suffer because of decisions of their parents.” He also highlighted his churches dichotomy: while supporting a utilitarian approach, his churches believed a family consists of a *married* man and woman.

### **Impact assessment**

The impact assessment was seen as very honest by one respondent, but he was concerned that it did not say how they are going to mitigate the differential impacts.

## **ii. Muslim faith community’s summary**

In Wales, there is around 60,000 Muslim people with the majority being Sunni. Most of Wales’ Sunni population descend from Africa and the Indian Sub-Continent. In addition, there are a number of Shia Muslim mosques, used mainly by people who descend from Iran, Iraq and other Middle Eastern countries. There is one Muslim independent fee-paying primary school.

### **Knowledge of the legislation**

Regarding the people we spoke to, knowledge ranged from text book answers to a lesser understanding.

### **Position on the proposals**

Like the community, it is diverse. It ranged from firm opposition to total support with others somewhere along that continuum.

### **Removal of the parental right to withdraw from RE**

Only one group of respondents were firmly against the principle of removing of the parental right to withdraw as they believe it affords them engagement leverage. Most supported its removal in the context of an agreed new curriculum. Two respondents wanted its immediate removal as they are opposed in principle to parental rights to withdraw their children from education in general.

However, one respondent highlighted the danger of the removal of the right of withdraw in regards to possible future changes to the curriculum. He supports a parental right to withdraw lock in mechanism in that the syllabus has a defined length of time. At the end of that length of time, if it is no longer fit for purpose and need rewriting, Welsh Government has to consult and reimpose the parental right to withdraw until communities are content with the new syllabus.

### **RE curriculum**

Strong support from almost all the respondents for all children to receive good quality pluralistic RE. There was an opinion that Christianity received more

curriculum time than others leaving the respondents wanting a more equitable time spent on each different religion.

### **RE and RSE name**

There was majority for the subject to remain Religions Education in Primary School and for it to be called Religious Studies in secondary school as a clear gateway to further study. There was also universal agreement for the word 'sexuality' to be removed from RSE.

### **World views**

Generally opposed to the concept as there is no agreed understanding of what it means, and there is a fear that religion would be diluted. However, there was support for world views from two Muslim respondent. One thought that it was generally a good idea while the other proposed a world view that would have universal support - Peace and Coexistence.

### **Prevent**

The Prevent agenda was brought up by 7 respondents. The situation with the Birmingham school has caused much concern fuelled by much misinformation. Some respondents repeated this misinformation regarding the RSE syllabus believing it to be true. This misinformation including the expressing of homophobic views being a trigger for a Prevent intervention.

### **Role and responsibility of the State**

Similar to many Christian groups, one Muslim educationalist said that state overreach and/or an enforced encroachment of values/ethics from the state onto the family was of deep concern. "The majority of the concerns have very little to do with the teaching of sexuality or the teaching of gender identity, it is much broader than that, it is around the role of the state, the responsibility of the state, and how they negotiate with parents."

### **Family-based RSE & sex education**

It was reported by several respondents that if this happens at all, it was poorly executed. Customs may generally be taught, but not biology. Again, abstinence is generally taught but not safe sex leading to many unwanted pregnancies.

### **Theology to back up bigotry**

Several Muslim respondents reported that some of the opposition to RSE was bigotry (homophobia) dressed up as theology.

### **Teaching LGBT+ within RE**

One group of respondents agreed that LGBT+ issues should be taught as part of RE, so therefore taught from a doctrinal position.

### **Teaching RSE neutrally**

Some respondents were clear that RSE should be taught in a neutral non-judgmental way, while other respondents struggled with how to teach RSE and not indoctrinate children into seeing LGBT+ as 'normal'. Recognising that teaching family type in a pluralistic manner was required for safeguarding, one group of respondents had decided that they would or could not teach neutrally, so alongside teaching the realities of family makeup, they would also teach what is an acceptable way of living from a non-neutral platform.

### **Develop & negotiate the curriculum.**

Most respondents wanted to be involved with the creation of the curriculum. Many respondents wanted the RSA curriculum to be flexible enough for there to be 'negotiation space' regarding its delivery.

### **World Views and LGBT+**

Several respondents equated world views to LGBT+.

### **Conflicting rights of identity**

A number of respondents believed that there were conflicts of rights seeing LGBT+ rights as having a stronger standing than their religious rights. They said they wanted a parity of rights and wanted to respect people but do not want to jeopardise or compromise their own identity. One respondent said that there was a feeling that the equality legislation is coming into conflict with itself when it needs to be a negotiation.

### **Some groups of parents will never support RSE of any kind**

One knowledgeable and well-respected respondent said that some parents have a complete mistrust of the secular education system. He said that many of these parents had already taken their children out of school preferring to home school in groups or sending their children to one of the very few Muslim schools available, because they just do not want to discuss sex, or sexuality of any kind.

### **Parental flight**

Several respondents reported RSE driven parental flight - parents removing their children from state education to fee paying schools and home schooling.

### **Engagement with parents**

There was universal support for this to happen quickly and in a meaningful way. Respondents saw this as the only way to get any buy-in, especially for RSE. Respondents said the parents must themselves be educated.

### **Islam and gender identity**

One knowledgeable Islamic scholar said that Islam has probably one of most open views of gender identity of all the religions. There is enough in history, and in the

Quran for the concept of transgender not to conflict with faith communities. He reported that the problem is that it seems to have been forgotten.

### **Community knowledge and perspectives**

All the relevant people we interviewed reported much discussion within their part of Wales' communities, but little accurate information. The rumour mill had already taken hold and dominates the narrative.

### **The growth of intolerance in schools**

Several school governors felt that many Muslim and Christian parents are becoming less tolerant of each other and non-traditional family makeups.

### **Teaching RSE in Mosques**

One well known and well networked respondent said that many people want to teach RSE in mosques. He believed it would never be taught in mosques as well or as comprehensively as it is in schools, and that LGBT+ issues would not be taught as a reality of modern life.

### **New settlers**

It was also noted by several respondents that newly settled Muslims and Christians would have the least knowledge about the proposal and were reflective of the religious education and educational cultural norms from their country of origin. A number of new and newish settlers reported that they did not want the other main religion to be taught to their children in case they converted. One respondent was clear that as she believed the UK was a Christian country, why should other non-Christian religions be taught in schools? She sighted Saudi Arabia as a Muslim example of that principle.

Oasis who support Refugees and Asylum Seekers, reported that RE / RSE had become a big issue and was leaving their clients feeling compromised and disempowered by these proposals. In some of their countries of origin, education is not pluralistic and that they fear their children are being taught about religions they do not support or even know that much about.

### **Age appropriateness**

This was an issue that came up time and time again. There seemed to be an underlying belief that Muslim children had different age appropriateness issues. While this was a concern intermated by many, one group of respondents made it clear that for RSE, the correct age to teach this was in in year six (age 10 or 11).

### **Separating boys from girls in RSE**

One large group of mainly mothers and grandmothers, believed that boys and girls should be separated for this lesson.

### **LGBT+ political lobby and the Muslim community**

There was one plea for support from the LGBT+ lobby “...need to understand we are in a very different situation. There is so much lack of development, so much work that needs to be done. The LGBT+ lobby, must understand this. We need much help to change those ideas.”

### **Community cohesion**

Community cohesion was a large concern for many respondents and while there were different positions expressed regarding the responsibility for the Birmingham situation, no one wanted it, and feared it happening in Wales. Most respondents were keen for the current narrative of misinterpretations to be challenged through professional community engagement.

### **iii. Hindu faith Community – Hindu Council**

There are 10,571 Hindu’s living in Wales with nearly half, 4,845, living in Cardiff and the next largest populations being 729 in Newport and 717 in Swansea.

#### **Knowledge of the legislation**

This issue has not yet been of much consequent to the Hindu community and levels of knowledge reflected this.

#### **Positions on the proposals**

- No member of the council has ever used their parental right to withdraw and did not indicate any interest to do so or know anyone who had.
- Some members of the council were encouraged by the widening of the curriculum to other religions but had reservations regarding the teaching of some subjects such as humanism within it.
- They wanted equality regarding how, and how much the different religions were taught.
- They saw good RE and RSE as a route map to a tolerant, accepting and understanding society filled with well-informed people.
- After much discussion, they all agreed that Faiths, values and ethics was the best label for RE. Background: they do not believe that Hinduism is a religion.
- The words sex or sexuality were not supported and seen as an unnecessary problem for parents to get over when relationships was fine.
- The words sex or sexuality were seen as just referring to LGBT+, however, they knew that was not accurate but were reflecting what others thought.

#### **iv. Jewish faith communities**

There are 2064 people of the Jewish faith living in Wales. 1219 live between Swansea and Newport, with 461 living in Mid and North Wales.

##### **Knowledge of the legislation**

Some knowledge - actively on a learning curve.

##### **Positions on the proposals**

- Opposed to the removal of the parental right to withdraw and keen for a pluralistic approach to RE. However, their opposition to the RE parental right to withdraw was softer.
- Regarding both RE and RSE, they believe it is essential that they teach tolerance and respect but it needs to be done with sensitivity and care for religious requirements and religious sensibilities.
- They recognise the need for religious / state coordination regarding the next steps. They do not want a repeat of Birmingham and can see community cohesion risks.
- It is important to note that within Judaism, there are many positions regarding these issues. In Wales, we do not yet have the type of Jewish community that would be most affected by the removal of the parental right to withdraw but that demographic could of course change.



## **B. BAME Organisations and the proposals**

### **Knowledge of the proposals**

Most of the BAME groups we interviewed are often the trusted first point of call for many people regarding issues such as these new proposals. They all understood the importance of their organisations being fully able to assist people regarding this issue, and would value assistance with this task. Most of these bodies do need assistance, as their levels of understanding are insufficient with a number repeating misinformation.

### **Barriers to information**

The barriers to information highlighted by the BAME organisations were many and included:

- Misinformation being provided through their religious organisations.
- Misinformation being provided at a grass roots level.
- Powerful peer pressure
- Homophobic leadership and beliefs blocking access to accurate information.
- A general lack of language skill and confidence.
- A requirement for face-to-face contact, for language and cultural reasons.
- As well as language barriers, in some communities there is a distrust of the State.
- Language, age and culture.
- Migrant workers are not well organised so will find it hard to find accurate information.
- Knowledge of written English can be very low, especially amongst first generation and migrant workers.
- Gender - Patriarchs blocking information going to the whole family.
- Many people come from homophobic culture which they view as normal.
- Many new settlers come from poor backgrounds – agrarian & illiterate, and so they bring culturally derived beliefs to the UK.
- Asylum seekers and Refugees are often fleeing religious conflicts which compounds this issue.
- There are the obvious language barriers, but for women there are other issues, such as lower levels of literacy, lack of access to information via the mosques and the reliance of wives on their husbands for information.
- For Gypsy and Travellers Illiteracy has a huge cultural impact, with rates of 90% for those over 20 years old.

## **5. Acknowledgements**

The Cognition Team would like to acknowledge the contributions made to this work by the faith and BAME communities and individuals who quickly made themselves available and were so generous with their time. Needless to say, without this high level of cooperation, this deep-dive consultation could not have taken place.

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.  
This document is also available in Welsh.