

6 Increasing Participation of Athletes from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Communities

The research work undertaken for this element of the development plan was conducted in 2015. Owing to the demands of merging City of Bristol, Bishopsworth and Bristol Central Swimming Clubs into a single club model, there has been insufficient capacity within the network to drive this work forwards. Increasing participation within black and ethnic minority communities across all aquatics disciplines however remains a development priority for both City of Bristol Aquatics and the network. Work will resume on this element of the plan during 2016/17.

The research remains relevant although needs to be updated in light of the new composition of the network.

6.1 Ethnic Distribution within the City of Bristol Catchment Area

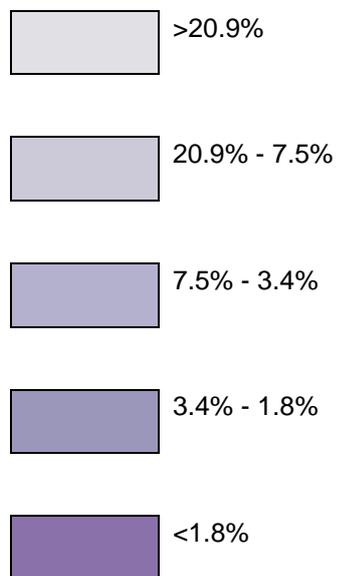
This section provides a brief overview of the ethnic distribution of the population within the West of England which sets the context of the discussion which follows.

The network swimming clubs that collectively form the City of Bristol network essentially draw on the four CUBA counties (Counties that Used to be Avon) for their membership, viz. Bristol, South Gloucestershire, Bath and North East Somerset and North Somerset. The latest estimates set the total population levels in these counties as shown in Table 8.1:

	mid-2003	mid-2013	Change	% Change
B&NES	170,400	180,100	9,700	5.7
Bristol	391,500	437,500	46,000	11.8
North Somerset	191,300	206,100	19,900	8.0
South Gloucestershire	249,200	269,100	19,900	8.0
West of England	1,002,300	1,092,800	90,500	9.0

Table 8.1 – Catchment Area Total Population

The ethnic distribution of the population varies considerably within and between these four counties as would be anticipated and is summarised on the map shown in Figure 1 on the next page where the following scale is used to highlight the proportion of residents from BME backgrounds. The data is displayed at ward level.



The source of the data used in the map is the 2011 Census information. Given the nature of recent population change it is acknowledged that the current position is likely to be somewhat different however the 2011 figures represent the best source of information across the West of England economic area and do not materially affect the discussions that follow.

Over the ten year period of the preceding census, the proportion of residents from BME groups residing within Bristol rose from 8.2% in 2001 to 16% in 2011.

Overlaid on Figure 8.1 are the traditional “catchment areas” of the five network clubs.

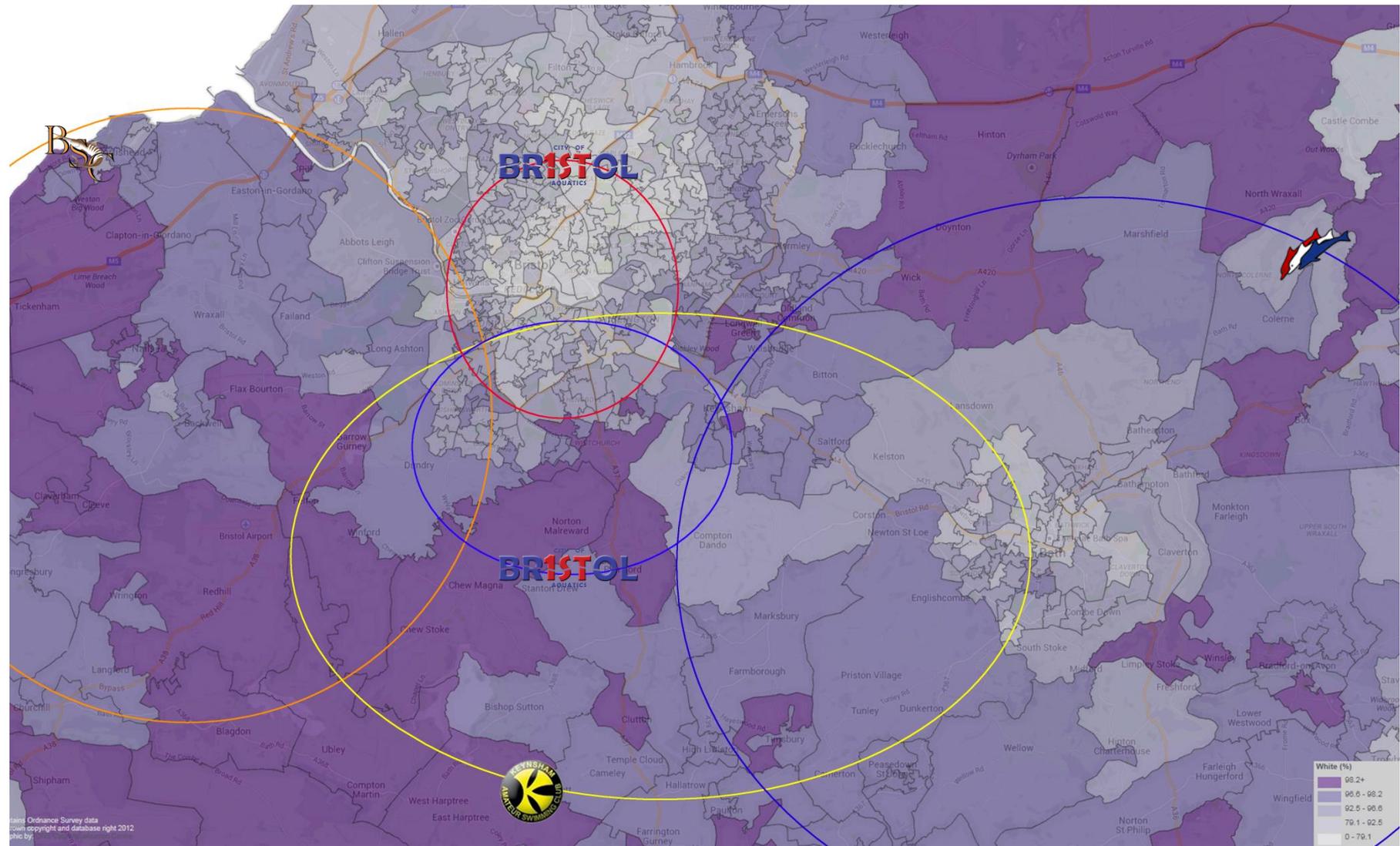


Figure 8.1 –Ethnic Distribution of BME Groups within the West of England (see scale on p.79)

6.1.1 Bristol City Council Administrative Area

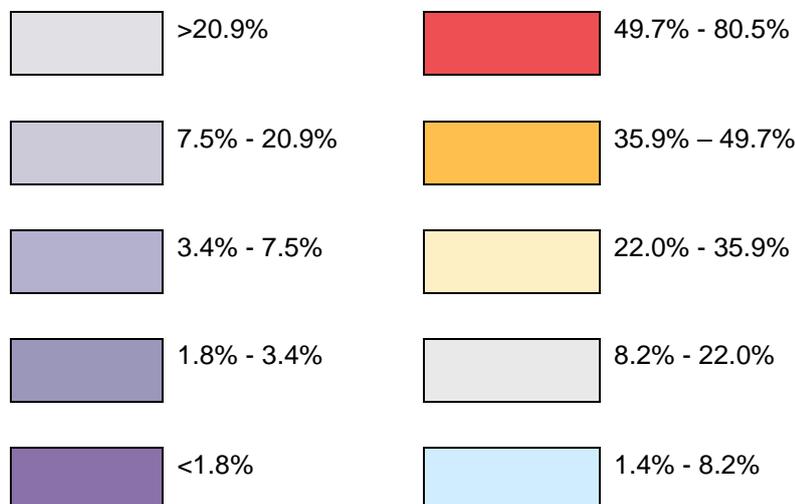
Figure 8.2 on the following page provides an additional level of detail for the administrative area of Bristol City Council where a finer level of granularity of data is currently available in terms of data being captured at a sub-ward level.

A sense of scale for the size of the various ethnic groups is shown in Table 8.2 below and the exploded pie chart in Figure 8.3:

Ethnic group	2001 Census		2011 Census	
	number	%	number	%
White British	335,085	88.0	333,432	77.9
White Irish	4,321	1.1	3,851	0.9
White Gypsy or Irish Traveler	n/a	n/a	359	0.1
White Other	10,124	2.7	21,950	5.1
Mixed ethnic group	7,934	2.1	15,438	3.6
Indian	4,595	1.2	6,547	1.5
Pakistani	4,050	1.1	6,863	1.6
Bangladeshi	1,230	0.3	2,104	0.5
Chinese	2,149	0.6	3,886	0.9
Other Asian	984	0.3	4,255	1.0
Black African	2,310	0.6	12,085	2.8
Black Caribbean	5,585	1.5	6,727	1.6
Black Other	936	0.2	6,922	1.6
Arab	n/a	n/a	1,272	0.3
Any other ethnic group	1,312	0.3	2,543	0.6
Total White	349,530	91.8	359,592	84.0
Total BME	31,085	8.2	68,642	16.0
All People	380,615	100.0	428,234	100.0

Table 8.2 – Relative Sizes of Ethnic Groups within Bristol

The scale used for Figure 8.2 is shown below:



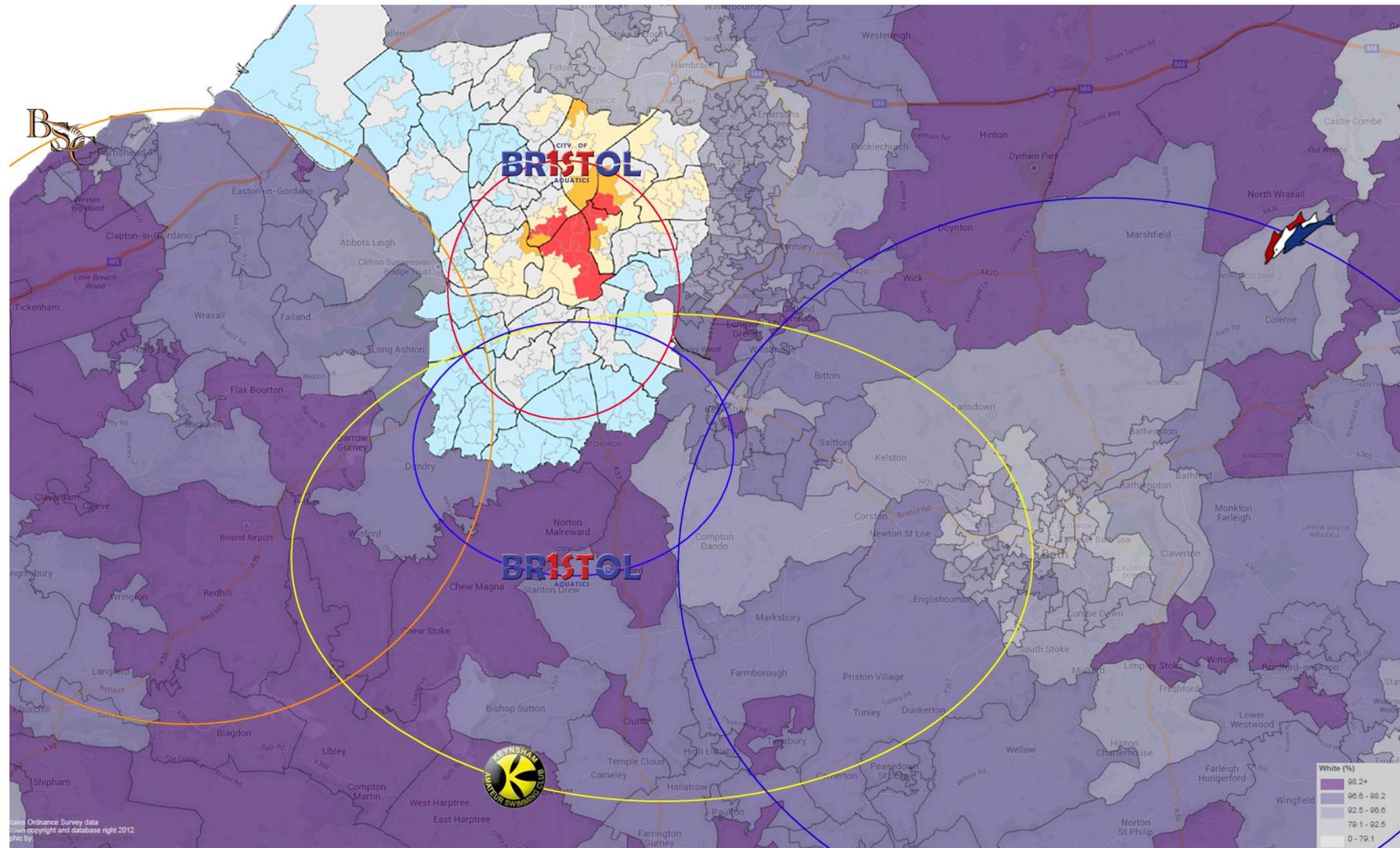


Figure 8.2 – Detailed Breakdown of Ethnic Distribution within Bristol City Council Area

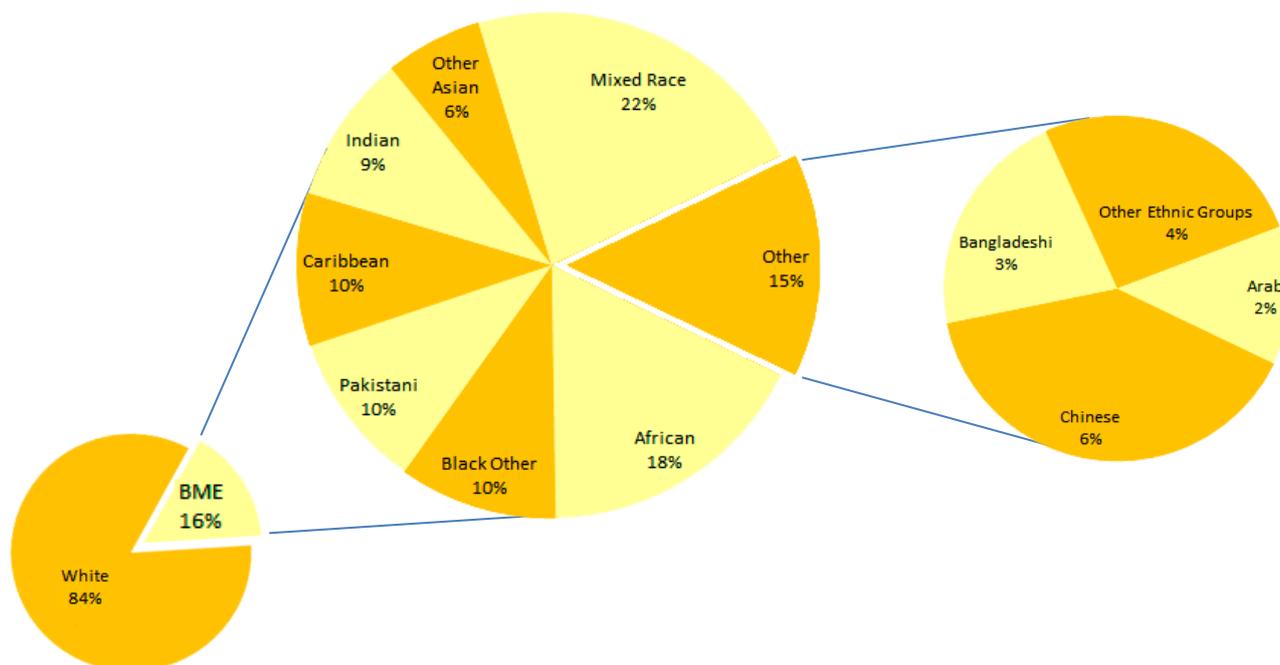


Figure 8.3 – Summary of Ethnic Diversity within Bristol

The breakdown of the ethnic groups is important to understand as the different groups provide different challenges to overcome in order to raise an interest in competitive swimming.

The information provided by the raw data is that within the administrative area of Bristol City Council there is a cohort of some 68,500 originating from a BME community which represents around 16% of the total population.

Figure 8.2 shows that the traditional catchment areas for Bristol Central and Bath Dolphin hold the largest proportion of potential swimmers from BME groups. This does not of course mean that there is no potential for increasing participation from these groups within the other network clubs.

6.1.2 North Somerset Council Administrative Area

Figure 4 on the following page provides an additional level of detail for the administrative area of North Somerset Council where a finer level of granularity of data is currently available in terms of data being captured at a sub-ward level.

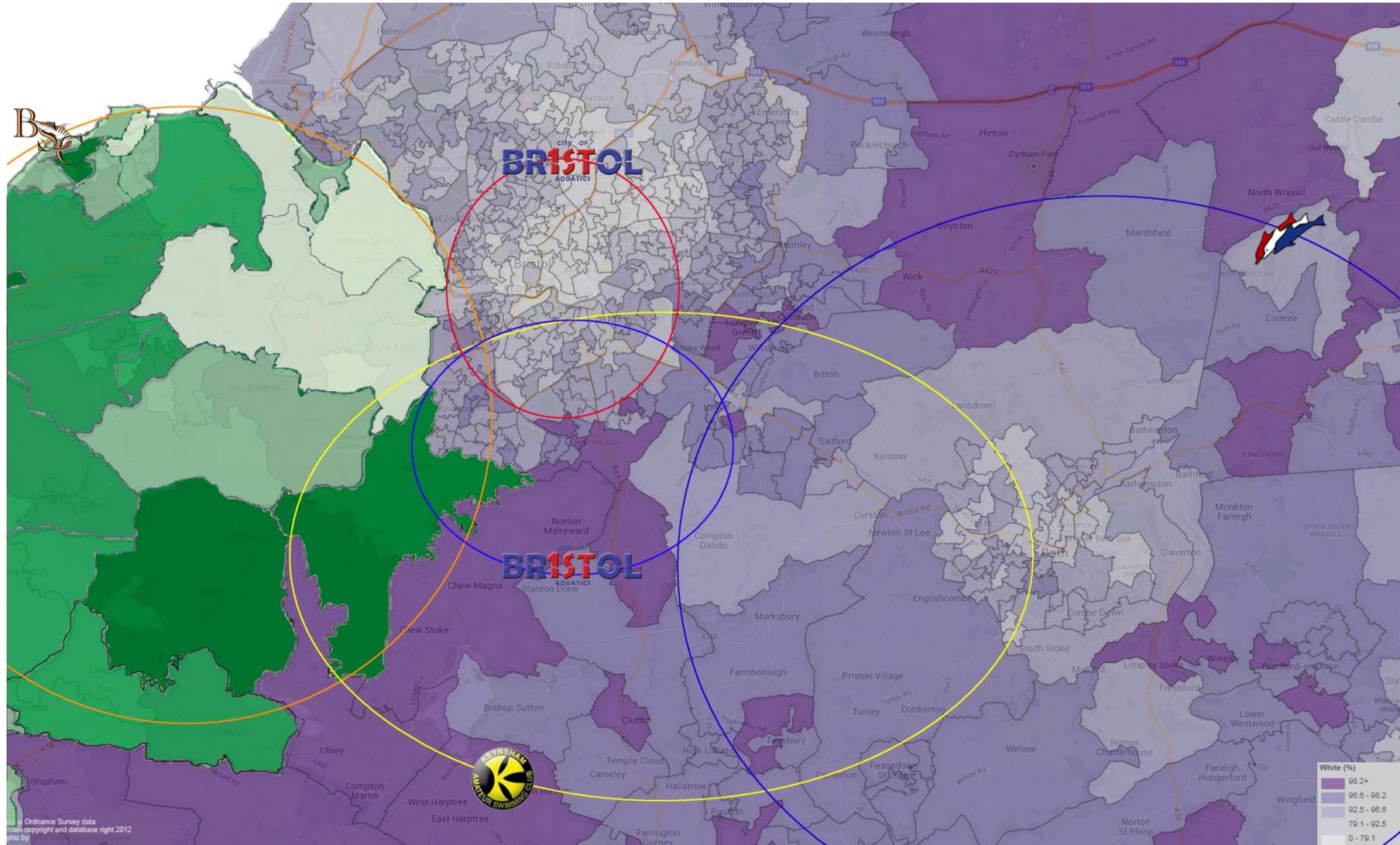
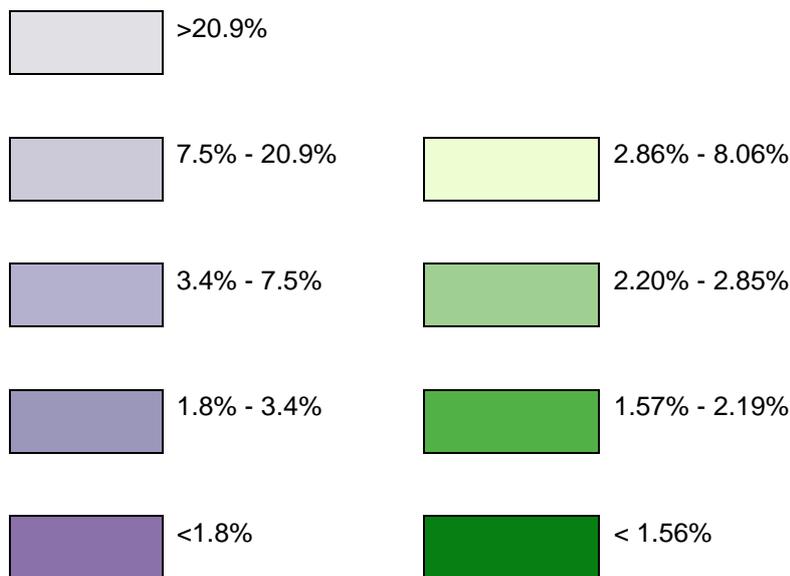


Figure 8.4 – Detailed Breakdown of Ethnic Distribution within North Somerset Council Administrative Area

The scale used for Figure 8.3 is shown below:



The dominance of the white ethnic groups in North Somerset is evident from Figure 8.4 and from Table 8.3 below.

Community	Number	%
White	197,076	97.3
Mixed	2,033	1.0
Asian	2,436	1.2
Black	632	0.3
Any other ethnic group	389	0.2
Total White	359,592	97.3
Total BME	68,642	2.7
All people	202,566	100.0

Table 8.3 – Relative Sizes of Ethnic Groups within North Somerset

6.1.3 South Gloucestershire Council Administrative Area

Figure 8.5 on the following page provides an additional level of detail for the administrative area of South Gloucestershire Council where a finer level of granularity of data is currently available in terms of data being captured at a sub-ward level.



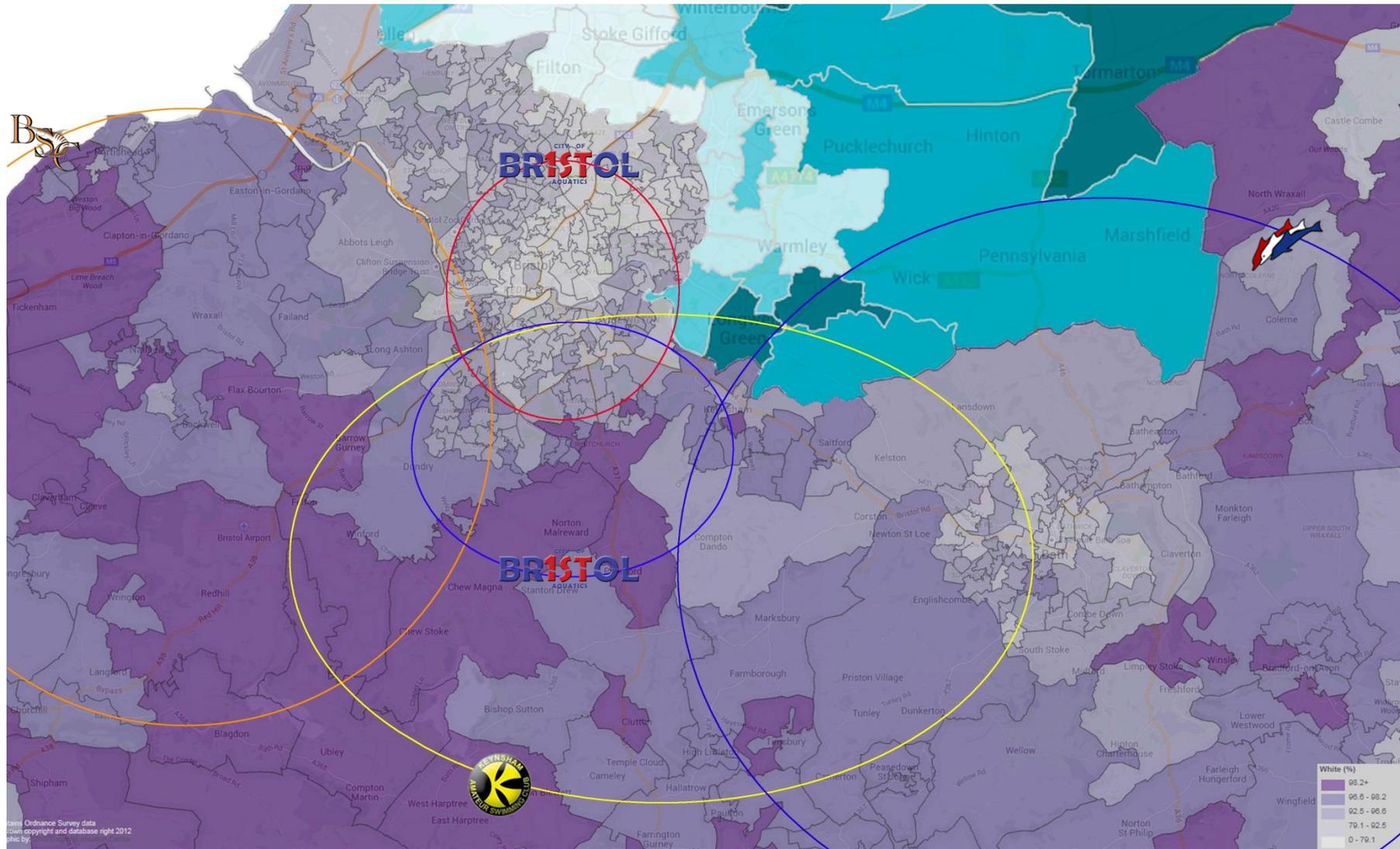
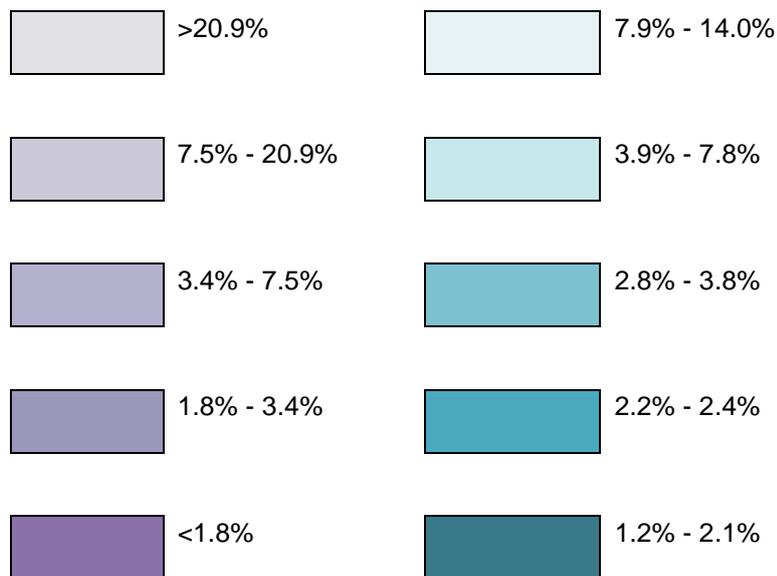


Figure 8.5 – Detailed Breakdown of Ethnic Distribution within South Gloucestershire Council Administrative Area

The scale used for Figure 3 is shown below:



The dominance of the white ethnic groups in South Gloucestershire is evident from Figure 8.5 and from Table 8.4 below.

Community	Number	%
White	249,574	95.0%
Mixed	3,667	1.4%
Asian	6,440	2.5%
Black	2,218	0.8%
Any other ethnic group	868	0.3%
Total White	249,574	95.0%
Total BME	13,193	5.0%
All people	262,767	100.0%

Table 8.4 – Relative Sizes of Ethnic Groups within South Gloucestershire

6.1.4 Bath and North East Somerset Council Administrative Area

Figure 8.6 on the following page provides an additional level of detail for the administrative area of South Gloucestershire Council where a finer level of granularity of data is currently available in terms of data being captured at a sub-ward level.

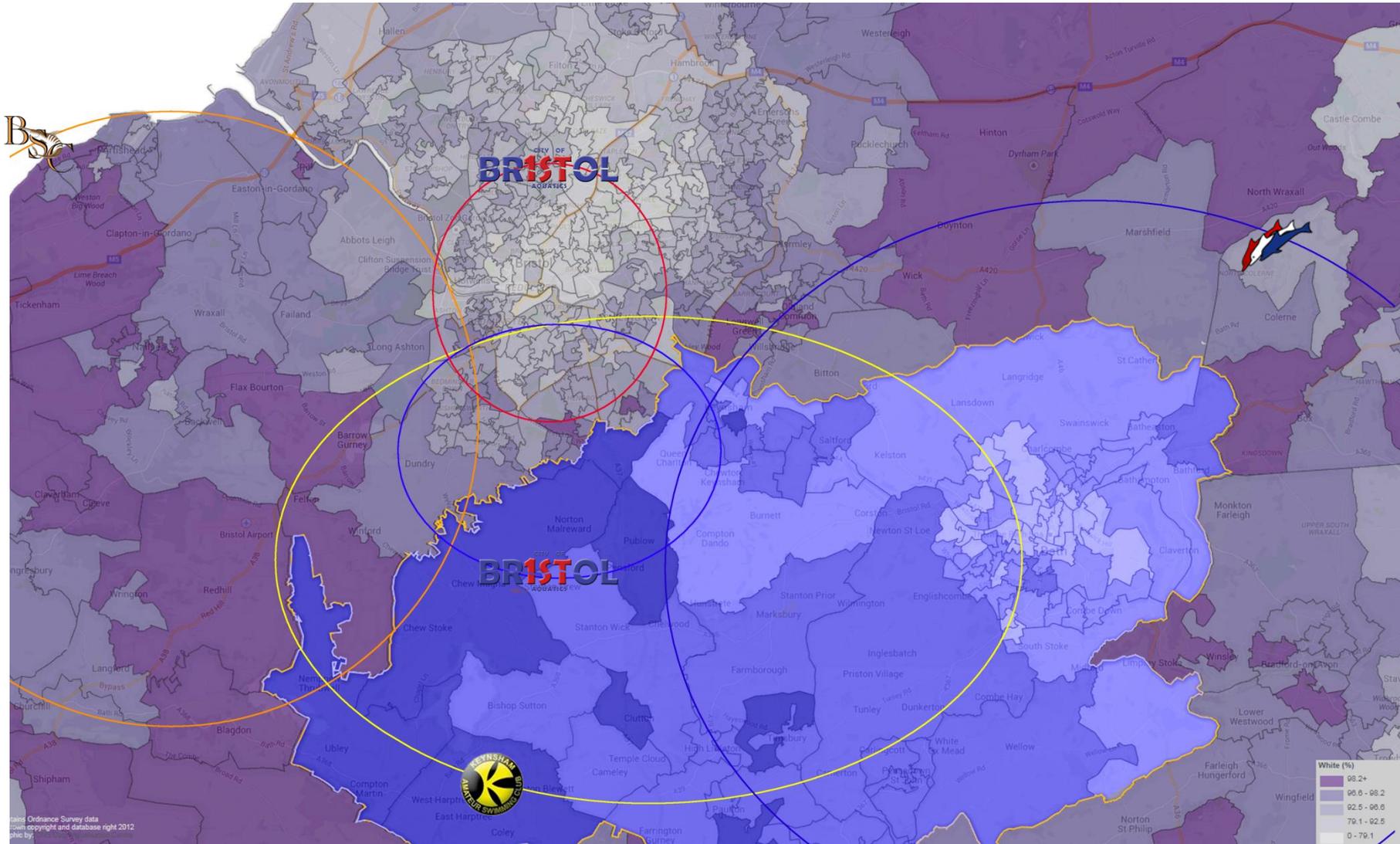
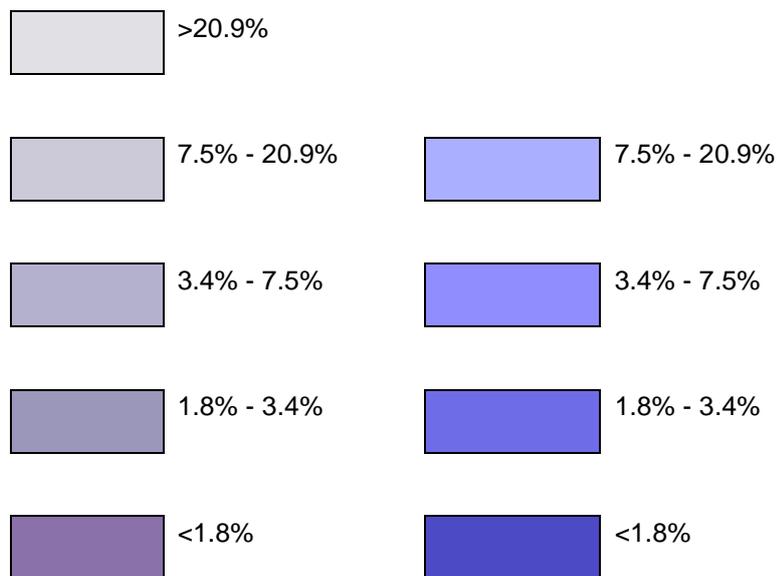


Figure 8.6 – Detailed Breakdown of Ethnic Distribution within Bath & North East Somerset Council Administrative Area

The scale used for Figure 6 is shown below:



The dominance of the white ethnic groups in B&NES is evident from Figure 5 and from Table 8.5 below.

Community	Number	%
White: English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern	158,640	90.1%
White: Irish	1,146	0.7%
White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller	58	0.0%
White: Other White	6,629	3.8%
Mixed/multiple ethnic group: White and	951	0.5%
Mixed/multiple ethnic group: White and	292	0.2%
Mixed/multiple ethnic group: White and	954	0.5%
Mixed/multiple ethnic group: Other Mixed	701	0.4%
Asian/Asian British: Indian	1,116	0.6%
Asian/Asian British: Pakistani	170	0.1%
Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi	219	0.1%
Asian/Asian British: Chinese	1,912	1.1%
Asian/Asian British: Other Asian	1,160	0.7%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British:	499	0.3%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British:	672	0.4%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British:	155	0.1%
Other ethnic group: Arab	375	0.2%
Other ethnic group: Any other ethnic group	367	0.2%
Total White	166,473	94.6%
Total BME	9,543	5.4%
All people	176,016	100.0%

Table 8.5 – Relative Sizes of Ethnic Groups within Bath and North East Somerset

6.2 Current Swimming Club Membership

A baseline position for the current level of participation is easily established through an analysis of the membership in each of the City of Bristol network clubs. Information regarding a swimmer's ethnic origin is captured on Swim England membership forms although there is no mandatory requirement to provide this information. A breakdown of the current membership of the network is shown in Table 8.6 below.

The most striking feature of the information in the table is the large number of members for which no ethnicity information is available. This ranges from a low of 8.2% of the total club membership at Bishopsworth up to 54.5% of the membership at Backwell.

Community		Backwell	Bath Dolphin	Bishopsworth	Bristol Central	Keynsham	City of Bristol
Non-BME	White Other	4	1	3	15	4	3
	White British	106	148	113	261	214	87
	White Irish	0	0	0	1	0	0
BME Communities	Mixed – Other	2	3	1	2	1	1
	Mixed White and Asian	0	2	2	7	1	1
	Mixed White and Black Caribbean	0	0	1	3	1	2
	Asian – Indian	0	0	1	0	0	0
	Asian – Other	0	4	2	0	0	0
	Black Caribbean	0	0	0	1	0	0
	Chinese	0	1	0	0	0	0
Other Ethnic Group	0	2	0	1	0	0	
	No Information Provided	134	86	11	56	39	10
	Total White	110	149	116	277	218	90
	Total BME	2	12	7	14	3	4
	Club Total	246	247	134	347	260	104
	Estimated Total BME (%)⁴	1.8%	7.5%	5.7%	4.8%	1.4%	4.3%

Table 8.6 – Club Membership Analysis, April 2015

⁴ Proportion of swimmers from BME communities as a percentage of those swimmers of known ethnic backgrounds.

The absence of the necessary information to this degree introduces a margin of error as a result of which any conclusions drawn from the ensuing analysis are open to challenge. In order to arrive at a position from which an analysis can be made however, an estimate of the proportion of swimmers from black and minority ethnic backgrounds participating within the clubs has therefore been calculated based only on the known information, i.e.

$$BME \text{ Participation} = \frac{\text{Swimmers from known BME Communities}}{\text{Swimmers from all known ethnic backgrounds}} \times 100\%$$

For Bath Dolphin for example, the proportion of swimmers from BME backgrounds is calculated to be:

$$\frac{3 + 2 + 4 + 1 + 2}{(247 - 86)} = \frac{12}{161} \times 100\% = 7.5\%$$

The margin of error for this assumption is such that the actual participation figures lies somewhere in the range of 4.8% to 39.7% depending upon whether none or all 86 of the swimmers for which no ethnic information is available originate from BME communities. Local knowledge of the make-up of the clubs' members however does indicate that the estimated percentage figures shown in Table 8.3 are perceived to be accurate.

Figure 8.2 would tend to suggest that, based on the distribution of the population and the traditional catchment areas for the clubs, the largest proportion of swimmers from BME communities would be found at Bristol Central and Bath Dolphin. Figure 8.2 however does not take into account the effect of other (non-City of Bristol) clubs in the area that are not shown on Figure 8.2. Bristol Penguins for example has a traditional catchment area centred



on the areas of Bristol which have the highest proportion of residents from BME communities and this catchment area largely overlaps with that of Bristol Central.

6.3 Participation in Public Learn to Swim Programmes

In order to gauge the effectiveness of clubs in attracting swimmers it is helpful to compare the ethnic breakdown of club membership against the ethnic breakdown of swimmers enrolled in public learn to swim programmes in the same catchment area. In the case of Bristol City Council, the ethnic breakdown of the swimmers enrolled in learn to swim activities in all stages of Swim England LTS framework in April 2015 is shown in Table 8.7 below:

	Hengrove		Jubilee		Bristol South		Easton		Henbury		Horfield	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
No Information Provided	271	23.5	116	40.3	69	21.2	344	24.2	166	22.2	453	21.3
White Other	224	25.4	42	24.4	13	5.1	32	3.0	24	4.1	51	3.1
White British	606	68.6	125	72.7	204	79.7	621	57.6	494	84.9	1037	62.1
White Irish	2	0.2	0	0.0	1	0.4	2	0.2	0	0.0	7	0.4
Mixed – Other	13	1.5	0	0.0	6	2.3	37	3.4	4	0.7	22	1.3
Mixed White and Asian	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	1.6	2	0.2	2	0.3	7	0.4
Mixed White and Black Caribbean	2	0.2	1	0.6	0	0.0	3	0.3	0	0.0	3	0.2
Asian – Indian	7	0.8	1	0.6	2	0.8	3	0.3	3	0.5	17	1.0
Asian – Other	12	1.4	0	0.0	2	0.8	37	3.4	4	0.7	43	2.6
Black Caribbean	1	0.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	10	0.9	2	0.3	4	0.2
Black - African	5	0.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	17	1.6	6	1.0	10	0.6
Chinese	4	0.5	0	0.0	1	0.4	3	0.3	1	0.2	14	0.8
Other Ethnic Group	3	0.3	1	0.6	21	8.2	178	16.5	36	6.2	424	25.4
Black Other	4	0.5	2	1.2	2	0.8	134	12.4	6	1.0	30	1.8
Participation from BME	51	5.8	5	2.9	38	14.8	424	39.3	64	11.0	574	34.4
Participation from non-BME	832	94.2	167	97.1	218	85.2	655	60.7	518	89.0	1095	65.6

Table 8.7 – Participation in Bristol Learn to Swim Programmes, April 2015

A graphical summary of the data in Table 8.7 is shown in Figure 8.7 overleaf.

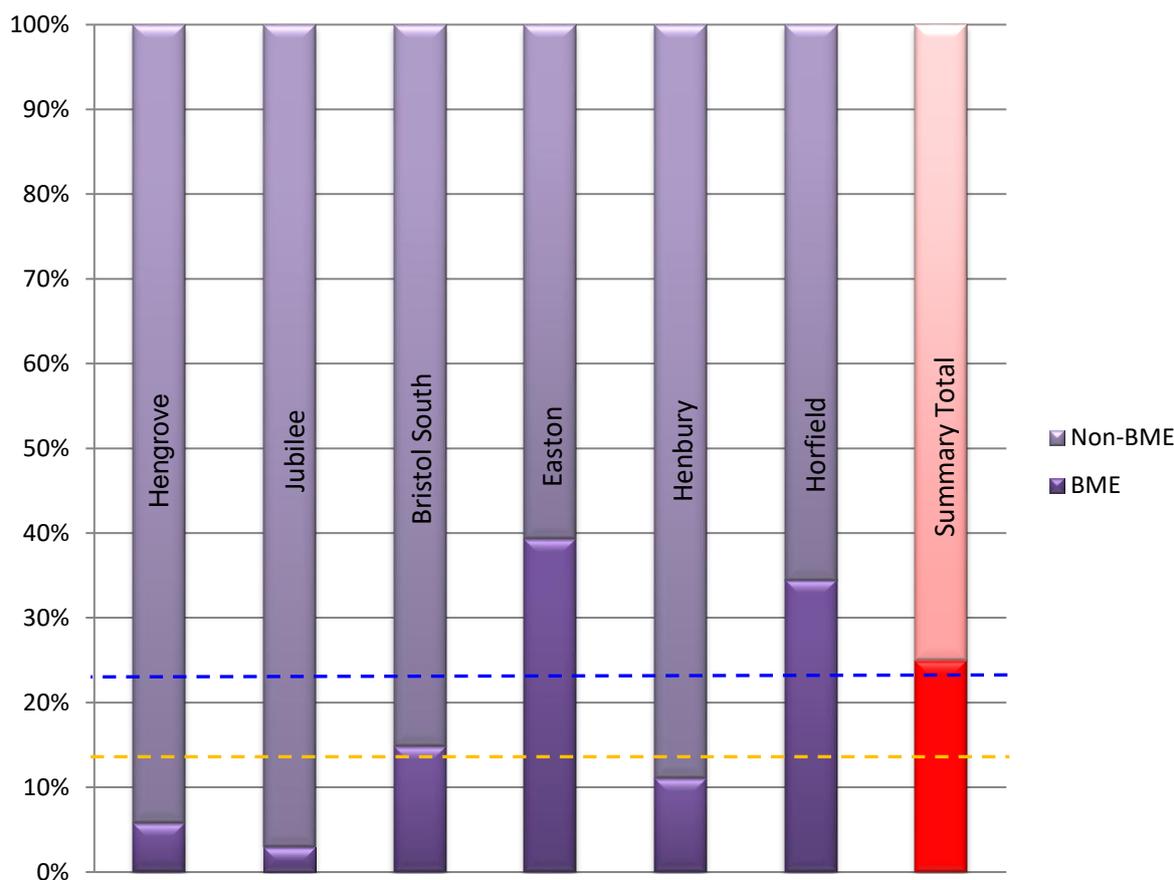


Figure 8.7 – Levels of Participation in Bristol Learn to Swim Programmes, April 2015

A total of 4641 swimmers are enrolled across the entire LTS programme of which 1156 originate from BME communities, i.e. 24.9% of the total cohort.

In relation to the relative ethnic composition of the population, the public LTS programmes attract more swimmers from BME communities than would be expected. This broad finding however is influenced by the following factors:

- Only public LTS programmes have been considered; there are many private swim schools operating at locations other than public leisure centres and the diversion of swimmers away from the public sessions towards these private schools may skew the results.
- Bristol City Council policy prevents private swimming clubs from offering Learn to Swim programmes at council-maintained leisure centres. This makes comparisons between different local authority areas difficult as similar policies do not apply for example in North Somerset.

As data has not been collected from the private swim schools in the city it is inevitable that there is a degree of inaccuracy in the conclusions drawn from the information in Figure 4 however what is not in dispute is that there is currently a cohort of 1156 swimmers from BME

communities currently enrolled in Learn to Swim programmes in the city that can be considered as potential future members of the network's clubs.

Assuming that the demand for LTS and club places has remained constant in recent years and ignoring club catchment areas for a moment, the network has managed, at best, to convert only 3.3% of the available cohort into members of the clubs. In reality this figure will be lower owing to the fact that swimmers enrolled in LTS programmes in leisure centres operated by Bristol City Council are unlikely to go on to become members at Backwell, Keynsham and Bath Dolphin. Applying the influence of the catchment areas reduces the conversion rate to around 1.8%. The comparative figure for swimmers from white backgrounds is around 11.3%

Conversion Rate from LTS to Club Member

Of the number of swimmers from non-BME communities enrolled in public Learn to Swim programmes, the network clubs convert around 11% into swimming members.

The conversion rate for swimmers from BME communities is around 1.3%

6.4 Coaching Resources

Along with the facilities, the coach is likely to figure as the most important factor in determining whether athletes remain within any sports programme. It is just as much the role of the coach to nurture the seeds of inspiration and the desire to compete as it is to teach the basics of technique or the importance of diet.

A high quality, appropriately trained and experienced coach can provide experiences that hook participants into sport by providing appropriate contexts, activities, encouragement and motivation. The coach is the role model which the athlete must respect and with which they must identify.

	Backwell	Bath Dolphin	Calne Alpha	City of Bristol	Keynsham	Soundwell
Coaches from BME Communities who are active in City of Bristol Network	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 8.8 – Coaches from BME Communities Coaching in the City of Bristol Network

It is unreasonable to expect to attract athletes from communities to a network when that network offers nothing to which the athlete can relate. The network must increase its number

of teachers and coaches from the BME community in order to be more identifiable and appealing to a wider cross-section of swimmers. As can be seen from Table 8, none of the City of Bristol network clubs is home to a coach from a black and minority ethnic background.

6.5 Barriers to Participation

In 2001, Sport Scotland published a research report looking at participation in sport by members of BME communities. Whilst this report is now 14 years old, the information presented is still very much relevant, particularly in the analysis of the stages of involvement in sport and the different barriers that affect the ability or desire to participate.

The framework used in the Sport Scotland study was actually based on a general behavioural model proposed in 1986 by Prochaska and DiClemente in their study *Towards a Comprehensive Model of Change*, and again by Andreasen in the 1995 paper, *Marketing Social Change: Changing Behaviour to Promote Health, Social Development and the Environment*. This model suggests that there are five stages of changing behaviour as summarised in Table 10.

Stage	Swimming Context	Challenge
Pre-contemplation <i>Consumers are not thinking about the behaviour as being appropriate for them at this stage in their lives</i>	Swimming in general and a swimming club in particular has nothing to offer me.	Creating awareness of the sport.
Contemplation <i>Consumers are actually thinking about and evaluating recommended behaviours</i>	I quite like swimming and being in the water; maybe I'll find out more. None of my friends swims though which puts me off.	Creating awareness of the benefits of the sport, the extent of participation, and tapping in to the fun memories of the family swim.
Preparation <i>Consumers have decided to act and are trying to put in place whatever is needed to carry out the behaviour</i>	I would like to join a club but I don't know if I'm good enough, or which club would suit me best. I'll find out.	Producing relevant, accessible literature and other marketing information that is meaningful and helpful to individuals. "Come and try it".
Action <i>Consumers are doing the behaviour for the first time or first few times</i>	I'm enjoying the swimming but it's hard work and I don't really know anybody.	Demonstrate progress in technique, stamina, speed and fitness. Provide an active social side.
Confirmation <i>Consumers are committed to the behaviour and have no desire or intention to return to earlier behaviour</i>	I want to get faster and compete in more events. I feel so much fitter. I really enjoy being with the squad.	Provide access to regular competition both internal, external and team events. Introduce helping, teaching and coaching opportunities.

Table 8.9 – Stages of Behavioural Change

The data in the Sports Scotland report is based on a survey of sample representatives from Black and Ethnic Minority Communities. All of the potential barriers to ongoing participation in sport originate from the survey responses. The barriers have been re-written here to place them in a swimming context. This section of the document is unashamedly based heavily on the Sports Scotland report. The purpose of this document is to establish a plan of action to

overcome the barriers to participation that have already been identified. A process of validating the barriers presented here with representatives from the ethnic communities should figure as part of the action plan and further reference is made to this in Section 8.4.

6.5.1 Pre-Contemplation Stage

At this stage the key barriers to participation are:

- The “Accepted Face” of swimming
- Cultural and religious beliefs and expectations
- No perceived value in swimming
- Lack of awareness of others “like me” involved in swimming
- Lack of awareness of swimming facilities and resources available

6.5.1.1 The “Perceived Face of Swimming”

The perceived face of swimming is the view of itself that swimming presents to the outside world. Many people will not see themselves fitting into this picture and the sport may therefore be immediately discounted as an activity on the grounds that it is inaccessible or irrelevant. The challenge here is that each individual and ethnic group will see a different face of swimming. As a member of a BME community, if your perception of swimming was described by Figure 8.8 would you be encouraged to take up the sport?



Figure 8.8 –The Perceived Face of Swimming?

6.5.1.2 Cultural & Religious Beliefs and Expectations

Some individuals will never leave the Pre-contemplation stage as a result of the cultural or religious values placed on sporting activity in general, or swimming in particular. For some, particularly women, these beliefs exclude the possibility of participation in sport at any level. This can be related both to the undertaking of sport per se (which in some cultures is regarded as the prerogative of males only) as well as to the specifics of swimming which will require wearing culturally or religiously-inappropriate clothing.

6.5.1.3 No Perceived Value in Swimming

Competitive swimming is not a sport that is easily enjoyed on a once-per-week basis. Achievement comes at a cost and the price is paid in the time that is devoted to training. Devoting several hours per week in the pool takes away several hours per week from other activities such as studying, family or community activities, prayer or earning an income. For many, swimming is regarded as a luxury item which cannot be contemplated at the present time and, in reality, is unlikely to be contemplated on anything but an ad hoc leisure basis.

6.5.1.4 Lack of Awareness of Others “Like Me” Involved in Swimming

Athletes from all cultures are more likely to “take a risk” to become involved if they can do so in the company of peers. If there is no awareness that individuals from peer groups do actually swim competitively then there is no exposure to the possibility of taking part. This reinforces the idea that, for certain communities, swimming is just not an appropriate activity to undertake and the spark of attraction to the sport will never be ignited. In this respect role models are a valuable and vital asset. The absence of such role models on television (whenever swimming is seen on television) does not help to dispel the face of swimming described in Figure 7 and is likely to nudge those athletes prepared to overcome the risk of participation in sport and direct them more towards the sports where the role models do exist. Everyone wants to be Usain Bolt, however how many people can name a black swimmer?

6.5.1.5 Lack of Awareness of Swimming Facilities and Resources Available

At this early pre-contemplation stage, individuals cannot even begin to consider competitive swimming if they are not aware that it is an option available to them. Whilst individuals may not be actively seeking information at this point, nor are they consciously rejecting the sport out of hand. Where people are unaware of the facilities or opportunities available, they are prevented from even considering taking part.

6.5.2 Contemplation Stage

At this stage in behavioural change, there is a raised awareness of the possibility of participating competitive swimming. Individuals may, for example, have come into contact with others who compete or may have been asked if they would like to go along too.

Consequently, they are now aware of possible benefits and start to consider the possibility. They have not yet, however, made the decision to take part and are in the process of evaluating potential benefits against the 'costs' of doing so: 'What am I risking if I take part?'

The key barriers at this stage are:

- Fear of racial discrimination
- Attitudes and expectations of 'significant others'
- Perceived lack of ability
- Lack of confidence

6.5.2.1 Fear of Racial Discrimination

A fear of racial discrimination can act as a key barrier at this stage. Some people will inevitably consider joining a swimming club however they will avoid doing so due to the concern that they would put themselves at risk of various forms of racial discrimination.

This fear can stem from a number of reasons. Firstly, many people experience discrimination in other aspects of their lives, including at school, at work or in the general public arena. They therefore have some justifiable expectation that it might also occur within a swimming club, particularly if the sport is seen to be under-represented with swimmers from BME communities.

Importantly, also, some people may have taken part in other sports (either actively or as a spectator) and the very reason they had stopped participating had been because of some form of racial discrimination. It is understandable that such people are reluctant to put themselves at risk of the experience being repeated.

Discrimination can take place on a number of levels, including:

- Overt racial abuse. This can be either physical or verbal and the individual is targeted purely as a result of their ethnic background.
- An underlying sense that ethnic minority groups are not welcome to participate. This is a barrier for those who are reluctant to visit sports centres that are seen to be catering for and used by the white population only. Whilst direct comments may not be made, there is the potential for a sense of discomfort in such an environment given the experience of being in the minority.
- Service providers' lack of understanding of, or sympathy with, specific cultural or religious needs. Some individuals feel that they may not be catered for at mainstream sporting venues such as leisure centres and expect that mainstream service providers would have little or no understanding of their needs.
- Being viewed as not having the ability to swim purely on the basis of ethnic background. A fear may exist that an athlete may be expected to have little or no desire or ability to swim competitively on account of their background. There is no shortage of material on this subject proclaiming that, "Black people don't swim".

6.5.2.2 Attitudes and Expectations of 'Significant Others'

Given that the target age group of introducing new athletes to the sport of swimming is between five and ten years, the label of "Significant Others" mainly incorporates:

- Parents
- Grandparents
- Other senior family members
- Teachers
- Religious leaders, and
- Community leaders.

The young swimmer in particular is likely only to be able to move to the next stage of participation with the appropriate influence of the significant others. This influence is more likely to be positive if the significant others are currently, or have been in the past, involved in the sport, or who can see the benefits of the young swimmer having further involvement in the sport. Negative influences from this group are likely to arise from a perception of there being no value associated with swimming as an activity as described in 6.5.1.3, or the cultural and/or religious beliefs and expectations outlined in 6.5.1.2

6.5.2.3 Perceived Lack of Ability

For some potential swimmers there is a reluctance to participate in a club on the basis of their own self-perception that they do not have the ability to do so. Whilst this can be a general issue relating to non-participation in sport across all sectors of society (regardless of ethnic origin) there are some issues specific to BME communities.

When thinking about participating in sport, for many people the immediate and predominant association is with mainstream sports, particularly team sports, such as football, rugby or hockey.

For most, competitive swimming is a sport that they have either had no experience of whatsoever, or with which they are generally not familiar. They may, for example originate from a country where competitive swimming is not practiced and as such they are deterred from participating, given their view that they would not have the necessary skills to take part.

Other potential barriers in relation to this include a perception that stature or physical make-up do not lend itself to swimming (too short/tall/fat/thin, feet too small/too big etc.). Of course this potential barrier applies equally across all ethnic groups.

The anticipated consequences of joining a swimming club given a perceived lack of ability are likely to include:

- Self-consciousness: looking 'stupid', feeling inadequate when swimming and thereby confirming their perception that they have a lack of ability.
- A risk of injury: given their perceived lack of ability, they may be hurt or injured whilst swimming

6.5.2.4 Lack of Confidence

Linked to the perceived lack of ability, an overall lack of confidence can also prevent people from BME communities from joining a swimming club. Again, this relates specifically to issues relevant to this target group rather than the general population as a whole. The lack of confidence is often experienced in relation to:

- **Appearance.** Looking different from the 'majority' when swimming, both in terms of physical attributes such as colour of skin, body shape as well as the skin-tight clothing which is worn.
- **Communication.** With those for whom English is not their first language, some lacked confidence in their ability to communicate with others whilst playing sport.
- **Ability.** Perceptions of a lack of overall ability, as discussed in the previous section.

Individuals who lack confidence and who feel that the potential for embarrassment or self-consciousness as a result of this is too great will be reluctant to join a swimming club. This barrier is an issue across all cultures, particularly for teenagers who are often at a fairly self-conscious stage in their personal development, although in competitive swimming in particular, the swimmer needs to have progressed beyond the contemplation stage well before entering the teenage years.

6.5.3 Preparation Stage

During the Preparation Stage the athlete is not yet swimming however they are beginning to recognise and value the benefits offered by the sport and are taking active steps to find out more information. A number of barriers can prevent the actual decision to participate from taking place, however. These include:

- Difficulty in accessing information
- Racial discrimination
- Lack of 'appropriate' facilities or activities
- Cost

6.5.3.1 Difficulty in Accessing Information

Whilst the Internet has made the task of distributing information relatively easy it has also engendered a typical behaviour of delivering quantity rather than quality. This is sometimes known as the "Trying to get a cup of water from Niagara Falls" analogy. Web sites are not always clear and even for those involved in swimming, some of the complexities of ASA membership, open meet arrangements and galas can be bewildering.

For those in BME communities who are already acutely aware of being in the minority in a leisure centre or swimming environment, there is likely to be a lack of confidence in asking for information. For many such people, English will not be their first language and this creates potential embarrassment of being misunderstood or not being able to understand fully the information provided.

The difficulties in accessing information are often due to the information not being supplied in an accessible format or being distributed through inappropriate channels. This may

include either information which is not provided in an individual's first language or is only disseminated in a limited range of locations, usually ones that are unlikely to reach ethnic minority communities.

6.5.3.2 Racial discrimination

A very real barrier at the Preparation Stage is the attitude and behaviour of everyone with whom the potential swimmer (or their "Significant other") comes into contact as part of this discovery phase. This includes general information and service providers, such as leisure centre staff, club officers, parents of club swimmers as well as the general public.

There are a number of situations relatively unique to the aquatic disciplines that are so embedded and accepted in the sport that they are not considered to be discriminatory, yet are very real racial discrimination barriers. Swimming is a mixed sport and it is normal for male and female swimmers to train in the same session. This arrangement, which would be considered perfectly normal in the majority of the country's swimming clubs, would act as a barrier to some Muslim women whose need for a segregated environment is not only not being met, but is also not understood or acknowledged.

Any experience of more overtly racist attitudes and behaviours so early on in the process can serve to reinforce what was originally feared might happen. As such it can easily prevent people from taking the step to join a swimming club.

6.5.3.3 Lack of 'appropriate' facilities or activities

At this Preparation stage, a lack of facilities or appropriate activities can prevent a potential swimmer from joining a club. Typically, situations which create the most significant barriers include:

- Clubs that do not offer the opportunity to participate with others from the same ethnic minority community; or
- An environment that does not cater for their cultural or religious needs, such as a segregated environment closed off from others.

Evidence indicates that a lack of facilities in the area in which a potential swimmer individual lived is also a barrier for some. This means that they will either be forced to travel longer distances (with cost implications) or potentially to an area where they do not feel comfortable, e.g. one where they feel there is too great a risk of racial abuse.

6.5.3.4 Cost

The likely cost of joining a swimming club is inevitably a factor that affects whether potential swimmers will actually take the next steps to go on and join a club. Given that residents in BME communities are statistically more likely to be on lower incomes, the potential cost of

equipping for, and participating in, swimming is likely to act disproportionately as a barrier for potential swimmers in the BME community.

6.5.4 Action Stage

In the Action Stage the athlete has taken the steps to research and join a swimming club, hopefully one in the City of Bristol network. Still being in the first few days of weeks of participation the new swimmer, and their “significant others”, are at a delicate stage in the process at which they may encounter barriers including:

- Racial discrimination
- Lack of confidence
- Inappropriate facilities or activities
- Cost

6.5.4.1 Racial discrimination

At the stage where new swimmers are participating for the first time or first few times, the attitude or behaviour of others can very easily prevent further participation. The behaviour in question may be of a direct or indirect form and may be intentional or unintentional. The effect on the individual however is likely to result in the same outcome, i.e. that the swimmer does not persevere in the sport beyond the first few sessions.

Types of negative behaviour may include:

A lack of understanding of or sympathy with cultural or religious needs. A specific example includes Muslim women being told they are not allowed to wear certain types of clothing in the swimming pool, however they are not offered alternatives or given advice on what is appropriate. The likely result is for the swimmer simply to be told they are not allowed to swim in the gear that they have brought along.

Overt racial abuse. This includes both verbal and physical abuse such as name-calling.

More covert racism. This includes making careless (as opposed to malicious) comments, staring and exhibiting unnecessarily rude behaviour.

For people who experience such behaviour when performing any sport for the first time or first few times, it reinforces that which they had originally feared. The impact of this is to make the athlete question the value of the activity. For some, it will simply not be seen to be worth the ‘hassle’.

However, an individual's reaction to covert or overt racial abuse is generally dependent on their own levels of confidence. For some it will inevitably result in an immediate withdrawal from the swimming club.

6.5.4.2 Lack of Confidence

Lack of confidence can also act as a barrier when first swimming with a club. In line with the previous stage, this can relate to:

- An individual's appearance
- Their ability to communicate
- Their swimming ability

However, at this stage, fears can become reality, with a potentially greater negative impact. The following types of incidents are all likely to undermine the confidence of a new swimmer.

- Not being able to understand directions from a coach because of a lack of familiarity with the English language.
- Being the only one in a swimming pool wearing covering garments.
- Being sniggered at for not being able to "keep up" or manage the sets.

Unlike the previous stage, as individuals are in the presence of others from different ethnic backgrounds, a lack of confidence at this stage can have a very negative impact.

6.5.4.3 Inappropriate Facilities or Activities

It may only be at this stage, when an individual begins swimming with a club, that they become aware that the facilities or activities do not meet their initial expectations. Any degree of research at the contemplation stage should minimise any nasty surprises when it comes to taking part, however, for some, such surprises will arise. Documented examples include when swimmers, or their 'significant others', did not realise that the training sessions were mixed sex, and that where a female-only session had been advertised, the attending lifeguards were male.

6.5.4.4 Cost

The research undertaken at the contemplation stage provides the visible costs of swimming with a club. This generally includes a one-off membership fee to cover ASA membership, insurance etc., as well as a recurring cost such as a pool fee, training fee, termly fee for lessons or some other regular charge.

The real costs are identified at the action stage where the invisible additional costs, usually not charged by the club, come to light. Such costs include:

- Kit bag items such as hand paddles, kick boards etc
- Replacements swimming hats and goggles which split and break with monotonous regularity
- Replacement swimming costumes
- Gala entry and spectator fees
- Post-swimming snacks
- Raffle tickets, sponsorships and other club fund raising activities
- Travel costs

In practice the real costs of swimming are only fully understood once the decision has been taken to join the club. With statistics showing that children in BME communities are far more

likely to be living in poverty than children from white communities,^{5,6} the real cost of swimming is a barrier that disproportionately affects BME communities.

6.5.5 Confirmation Stage

At the Confirmation Stage athletes will be actively participating on a regular basis; swimming has been integrated into their lifestyle. As such the value and benefits of the sport have been verified. However, whilst the majority of barriers have been overcome, even at this late stage in behavioural change there is the risk of dropping out. Key barriers at this stage include:

- Racial discrimination
- Cultural beliefs and expectations
- Loss of support and encouragement
- Lack of role models
- Lack of infrastructure to support development in sport

6.5.5.1 Racial Discrimination

Whilst athletes at this stage are swimming on a regular basis, the attitude or behaviour of others can still create a barrier. At this stage, it is more likely to be overt racial abuse that poses the greatest threat to continuing participation. As an individual's level of confidence with regard to taking part is likely to have increased over time, more covert negative attitudes or behaviour are less likely to have an impact.

Alternatively, however, it may be that the attitudes or behaviour have prevailed over a significant period of time. Whilst the individual may have been prepared to put up with it initially, or had hoped that it would stop in time, they may reach a point where they simply do not want to, or cannot, endure it any longer.

6.5.5.2 Cultural Beliefs and Expectations

Cultural beliefs or expectations, whilst important throughout, can also create an additional barrier at this final stage. Whilst individuals may be fully committed to swimming, in some cultures, an expectation exists that there is a 'shelf-life' to such activity. That is, once a certain age or life-stage is reached, it is expected that other priorities should take precedence, and it is no longer appropriate to continue participating in sport. Such life-stages often revolve around education and the need to remove any distraction from the possibility of academic achievement, or an expectation for women to marry and start a family.

6.5.5.3 Loss of Support and Encouragement

Support may be provided by a number of sources, including 'significant others' such as family and friends as well as those involved in swimming such as teachers, coaches and other swimmers.

⁵ *'Three in Four Pakistani and Bangladeshi children in UK living in poverty at age 7'*, Institute of Education (London, Institute of Education, 2010).

⁶ Mike Collins, Institute of Sport and Leisure Policy Loughborough University

This support may be provided both in terms of emotional support and practical support. If, for example, an individual does not receive regular confirmation from others that they are doing 'the right thing' they may start to question the appropriateness, or value, of their involvement in swimming.

Alternatively, if they are dependent on another to provide emotional support whilst taking part (such as someone with which to attend training) the loss of this may prevent their participation continuing. This is particularly relevant where individuals do not feel comfortable or confident participating alone.

6.5.5.4 Lack of Role Models

This particular barrier tends to affect athletes when they reach a stage when they are looking to move up to a higher level, in a more competitive environment. For swimmers from white backgrounds there is no shortage of role models both in terms of swimmers and coaches.

A lack of role models from BME communities can be a sub-conscious signal to the individual that swimming is either not appropriate or not achievable for an athlete from their community.

There are several research papers available that highlight the role that the coach has to play in encouraging and maintaining participation in sport in general. The coach is uniquely positioned to establish sporting environments that emphasise those factors that are conducive to sustained participation, viz. enjoyment, encouragement, goal setting and motivation. In particular the coach is well positioned to provide the individualised, responsive and dynamic environments that the research suggests are important to inducing and supporting participation. Whilst the BME community is under-represented in the pool, it is virtually non-existent in the coaching role. In this context it is therefore not surprising to find that there are no such coaches or teachers active within the City of Bristol network.

Equally there is very little involvement from people in BME communities in the organisation and governance of sport through the national governing bodies at national, regional and county level.

In short there is virtually a total absence of role models for the BME community in swimming.

6.5.5.5 Lack of Infrastructure to Support Development in Sport

The lack of infrastructure to support development is a barrier experienced by those looking to move to a higher level within swimming in an administrative or strategic role. *Although there have been many initiatives and organisations have made commitments to developing participation and signed up to initiatives such as Sporting Equals' Promoting Racial Equality Through Sport, there is some cynicism amongst stakeholders about the benefits of achieving this standard and in particular the practical impact at local level of a commitment by a*

*national governing body.*⁷ Equally there is a bottom-up criticism that *some national governing bodies do not recognise the needs of ethnic minority communities.*⁸

6.5.6 Implications

The Sport Scotland research clearly provided evidence to the effect that the most significant barrier preventing athletes from BME communities participating in sport is an experience or fear of racial discrimination. Racial discrimination is not just about physical or verbal abuse but also includes institutional racism, which by definition includes *unwitting or unintentional or thoughtless acts which disadvantage minority ethnic people*⁹. In terms of providing sport to this target group this encompasses a range of issues, including:

- The availability and dissemination of information in an accessible format.
- The attitudes and level of knowledge of service and information providers.
- The provision of appropriate facilities and activities in a welcoming environment.
- The acceptance that the needs of ethnic minority communities are legitimate, not 'special'.

6.6 Development Plan

The following sections provide the basis of the elements of the network development plan that will focus on increasing participation in the network by athletes from BME communities.

6.6.1 Membership Ambitions

Any targets set by the network for increasing participation in swimming by athletes from BME communities have to be realistic, set as they are within the context of an issue affecting the sport as a whole, and they must be quantifiable. The baseline position established in Section 2 however allows us (accepting a reasonable degree of inaccuracy in the figures produced) to assess individual club ambitions without resorting to a blanket target set across the entire network.

In ascertaining realistic figures for the cohort of the population that is likely to join a particular swimming club a number of assumptions and declarations have to be made:

- The majority of younger swimmers in particular will seek to join a swimming club close to home; there is therefore some justification for basing analysis on residency information received from local authorities;
- Clubs do not operate strict catchment areas as shown in Section 8.2, all they are able to say is that historically, the majority of a club's membership has been seen to reside within the marked area;
- Catchment areas do not align to local authority boundaries and hence analysis of the ethnic data that is produced by those authorities and assigned to the catchment areas is open to significant error;

⁷ *Increasing BME Participation in Sport & Physical Activity by Black and Minority Ethnic Communities*, Ploszajski & Lynch Consulting Ltd, January 2005

⁸ *Sport and Ethnic Minority Communities: Aiming at Social Inclusion, Research Report no. 78*, SportScotland, May 2001

⁹ Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, MacPherson, 1999, para 6.34

- The proportion of athletes attracted to swimming does not match the proportion of the resident population within an area. Closing this gap however has to remain a principle for the network to be able to demonstrate an equality of access to all communities.
- Swim England does not insist on ethnicity information being collected and therefore the ethnic distribution within each club may be incorrectly reported.
- The ethnicity data that has been used here is based on the 2011 census return and as such is already four years old. It does however represent the best data available on which to base the development plan

This is not an exact science and the resources and time available to the network do not allow for a more detailed study to be undertaken. Whilst the analysis would not stand up to detailed scrutiny such as that produced for public services, it does allow the network to formulate a plan that is based on evidence, albeit accepting that the evidence comes with a degree of error.

Table 8.10 presents an assessment of the resident BME population within the clubs' catchment areas in comparison to the breakdown of the clubs' current BME membership figures. Assuming that the network is aiming to satisfy the principle that the ethnic composition of the membership of the club matches the ethnic composition of the resident population within the catchment area, then a target improvement can be quantified.

Regardless of the actual numbers within the clubs membership or within its target cohort of the population, the following principle should apply:

Network Principle

The ethnic composition of the membership of a network club should at least reflect the ethnic composition of the resident population within that club's "catchment area".

Table 8.10 also translates this principle into relevant, quantifiable information that should represent a realistic target for the network to achieve as a starting point. Demographic information has yet to be captured and analysed for Calne Alpha and Soundwell swimming clubs which joined the network subsequent to the initial research being carried out.

	Backwell	Bath Dolphin	City of Bristol	Keynsham
Proportion of “Catchment Area” Residents from BME Communities	2.7%	8%	9.7%	2.4%
Proportion of Membership at April 2015 from BME Communities	1.8%	7.5%	4.9%	1.4%
Swimmers from BME Communities Required to Satisfy Principle	7	19	37	7
Membership Change Required	+5	+7	+12	+4

Table 8.10 –Increase in Participation by Athletes from BME Communities Required for the Network to Satisfy the Membership Principle

The challenge presented to Bristol Central is significant given the overlap in catchment areas with Bristol Penguins however the network must aspire to meet the challenge if it is to make a material difference to the under-representation of athletes from BME communities in the sport.

Table 8.10 provides merely a means of quantifying and evaluating the future success of the network’s action plan. It is not the intention to introduce a concept of maintaining quotas of different membership categories.

6.6.2 Positive Action

Positive action and positive discrimination are two distinctly separate terms with two distinctly separate meanings. This development plan advocates the use of positive action, but it does not advocate the illegal activity of positive discrimination. An example of positive action is deliberately to set a swimming awareness and publicity campaign in schools with year groups within which children from BME backgrounds have significant under-representation.

6.6.3 Changing the Perceived Face of Swimming in Bristol

As a network, and as a sport as a whole, we have to ensure that we present a view of swimming which is better described by Figure 8.8 rather than that shown in Figure 8.7.

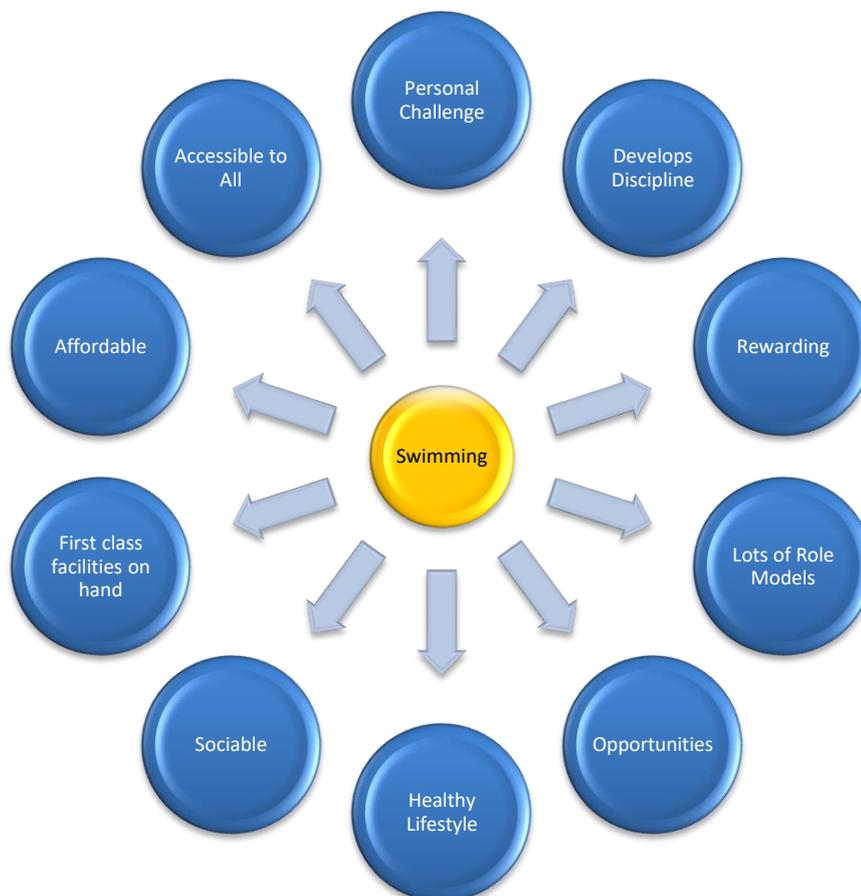


Figure 8.8 – A Better Face of Swimming?

It is not possible to control all of the factors that comprise how others see the sport and some will never be able to see beyond the image described in Figure 8.7. Some elements however are under our direct control and we need to shape the message accordingly.

It is within this context that the development plan shown in Table 8.11 is constructed

Stage	Barrier	Targets	Actions
Pre-contemplation	The “Perceived Face” of swimming	<p>Communicate the benefits of swimming</p> <p>Address concerns over perceived clash of sport with cultural and/or religious values</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the benefits of swimming through an awareness campaign that portrays people from BME groups as part of the wider swimming community. • Engagement with target schools in BME communities • Engagement with active community groups, clubs and associations in BME neighbourhoods • Develop the “Joining In” concept further with leaflets written in a style appropriate for minority ethnic communities • Target publicity strategically to ensure maximum BME coverage, making use of community noticeboards and appropriate magazines and publications. • Seek to understand genuine religious restrictions and concerns through meetings with religious representatives • Distribution of promotional material through leisure centre LTS programmes • Instigate a BME coaching programme
	Cultural and religious beliefs and expectations	<p>Raise awareness of success in swimming achieved by BME athletes</p> <p>Promote the City of Bristol network clubs within the relevant communities using appropriate and relevant material</p>	
	No perceived value in swimming		

	<p>Lack of awareness of others “like me” involved in swimming</p>		
	<p>Lack of awareness of swimming facilities and resources available</p>		
Contemplation	<p>Fear of racial discrimination</p>	<p>Create an environment where discrimination in swimming is recognised and addressed</p> <p>Create a document library containing material written for BME communities that addresses the concerns of athletes from those communities</p> <p>Targeted publicity campaign</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with existing swimmers to understand the specific barriers and difficulties experienced at this stage • Develop educational program for use within the network to instigate awareness of discrimination and racial stereotyping • Provide mandatory race discrimination awareness training for all teachers, coaches and officers in clubs • Develop guidelines on how to address specific enquiries raised by BME athletes • Produce a “Thinking about swimming?” publication that sets out the expectations around ability, commitment to training and other concerns that are common at this stage
	<p>Attitudes and expectations of 'significant others'</p>		

	Perceived lack of ability		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the demand for women-only training sessions that would provide safe training environments for those cultures that do not encourage or allow mixed participation Assess the possibility for establishing a new City of Bristol network club carefully located to attract new swimmers from target BME communities into swimming before directing them through to one of the base clubs
	Lack of confidence		
Preparation	Difficulty in accessing information	Provide readily accessible information on swimming activities in order to allow for informed choices, using:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide multi-lingual literature in a range of formats about swimming programmes and educational and training opportunities. Provide access through local, familiar channels and individuals. Produce materials with specific customer targets and information aims. Publicise central points of information access. Establish a programme of outreach work to provide information and arrange 'taster' sessions
	Racial discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a variety of channels and media; and centralised and local access points. 	
	Lack of 'appropriate' facilities or activities		
	Cost	Ensure information materials contain positive and appropriate images in relation to participation in swimming by ethnic minority communities.	

Action	Racial discrimination	Involve participants in the running of activities and clubs at local level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide scope for mentors and role models to influence perceptions of future participants and the wider community. • Ensure coaches have responsibility for 'scouting' in local ethnic minority communities.
	Lack of confidence		
	Inappropriate facilities or activities		
	Cost		
Confirmation	Racial discrimination	Create an environment where discrimination in swimming is recognised and addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop strong links between network clubs and communities to encourage integration into their coaching programmes. • Set up a system of scholarships for low income families to allow development in both elite and non-elite environments. • Set up a coaching programme specifically for future teachers and coaches within BME communities •
	Cultural beliefs and expectations		
	Loss of Support and Encouragement		
	Lack of Role Models		
	Lack of Infrastructure to Support Development in Sport		

Table 8.11 – Development Plan Opportunities

6.7 Summary of Actions

In order to increase the level of participation in the network by athletes from BME communities, the network will undertake to implement the actions described in Table 8.12 below:

Improve Training Opportunities within the Network for Swimmers with a Disability

Ensure that the ethnic composition of the membership of a network club should at least reflect the ethnic composition of the resident population within that club's "catchment area";

Instigate a coaching development programme for coaches and teachers from BME communities that will realise at least two qualified teachers and/or coaches within the network;

Engage with the local BME communities to validate that the barriers outlined in the Sport Scotland report remain relevant in the local communities;

Develop a document library that is written with ethnic communities in mind to address the likely concerns and fears surrounding swimming as a worthwhile and valuable activity;

Promote the club through contact with local community and sports groups;

Establish the appetite to add a swimming section to a local sport or youth group with a view to providing instruction at the FUNDamentals and learning to train stages. Once competency is developed, seek to feed athletes into the mainstream network clubs.

Provide consultancy and technical skills from within the network to enable local community or sports groups to establish their own swimming sections which would be integrated into the City of Bristol network.

Table 8.12 – Summary of Actions to Improve Participation Levels in the Network from Athletes from BME Communities