

Working with Ethnic Minority Groups

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The ETTA is working towards making table tennis open and accessible to all. Currently there are national programmes in place and being developed to encourage disabled people and women and girls into our sport. However, there are no national programmes that specifically relate to ethnic minority groups as each community is individual and should be treated as such, so there are a number of strategies in place across England.

1. each community is individual, even within the same culture or religion as other areas of the country, and this should always be respected.

2. look at your local community and identify any groups that are not currently represented, or are under represented, in your club and develop an action plan to encourage their membership.

3. look at the reasons why table tennis is not being taken up in your area by ethnic groups:

- In some religions women may not play in shorts, but jogging bottoms may be acceptable – are your club coaches, team captains and local leagues aware?
- Could some of your club session times fit in with religious services?
- Schools are a good first point of contact – does your club have coaches available to run after school or lunch time sessions?
- In some cultures women and girls may not mix with or be coached by men – can your club accommodate this concept?

4. in some areas coaching sessions take place in mosques and temples – could your club build links – offer coach training courses?

The ETTA has targeted a number of areas to establish table tennis in communities with high ethnic populations e.g. Bradford, Leicester, Birmingham, Bristol and London.

In conclusion, these examples are all different, and all targeting different ethnic groups. However, the one thing they all have in common is that it has taken some time to build the links and gain the confidence of the local communities to accept table tennis, in the case of Bradford over 3 years has been spent. So look at your club's local community and ask yourself the questions – does your club reflect the make up of the community. Include equity as part of the club action plan with realistic targets. Identify and get to know all the local community leaders and work with them to establish table tennis. Look at running sessions within the local schools, mosques or wherever community groups get together and then build from that base.

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