

Living through change

Investigations
Work in progress

Start date: Spring 2010

What policies and strategies might help Bradford address the longer-term implications of global economic downturn?

Bradford is already experiencing the local impacts of global and national economic downturn. There are concerns about how the different groups and communities living there will experience the next few years. It is a city which:

- is still living with the impact of past recessions;
- has high levels of poverty and disadvantage;
- has a history of established and recent immigration; and
- has seen low levels of trust between some individuals, groups and stakeholders.

This programme will:

- Explore the effect of the economic downturn on people, businesses and communities in Bradford and possible ways to deal with it.

We aim to:

- commission projects which will generate robust, practical evidence;
- support development activities to produce policy and practice recommendations which build on this evidence; and
- engage with stakeholders throughout the programme to identify emerging issues or solutions.

Four projects are being funded, on the following key themes:

- Poverty, debt and welfare.
- Community relationships and cohesion.
- Mental health and well-being.
- Local business and enterprise.

Contact

Bana Gora
Bana.Gora@jrf.org.uk

For the latest information, visit:
www.jrf.org.uk/bradford

At a glance

Programme title: Living through change

Aim: This programme aims to explore the effect of the economic downturn on people, businesses and communities in Bradford and possible ways to deal with it.

Timescale: 2010–2014

Budget: £415,000

Contact: Bana Gora (Programme manager)

From 2010 to 2014, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation will explore the effect of the economic downturn on people in Bradford. This paper outlines what we are doing, why, and what we hope to achieve through this work.

This information is correct at the start of the programme. However, our programmes of work develop throughout their course. For the most up-to-date information, visit: www.jrf.org.uk/bradford

What is the issue?

Bradford is already experiencing the local impacts of global and national economic downturn. In the city and district, people of different ethnicities, religions and cultures face common challenges of poverty, disempowerment, social and economic division, as well as the impact of recession.

There are concerns about how the different groups and communities living there will experience the next few years. It is a city which:

- is still living with the impact of past recessions;
- has high levels of poverty and disadvantage;
- has a history of established and recent immigration; and
- has seen low levels of trust between some individuals, groups and stakeholders.

These are all issues that are important to people, businesses and communities in Bradford. They also match the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's key themes of Poverty, Place and Empowerment. In this way, we hope to build evidence that is useful and practical in Bradford and also across the UK.

What do we want to achieve?

We aim to provide practical support to help the city and people of Bradford, and will:

- commission projects which will generate robust, practical evidence;
- support development activities to produce policy and practice recommendations which build on this evidence; and
- engage with stakeholders throughout the programme to identify emerging issues or solutions.

Four projects are being funded, on the following key themes:

- Poverty, debt and welfare.
- Community relationships and cohesion.
- Mental health and well-being.
- Local business and enterprise.

It is expected that these projects will report their findings in early 2011.

This programme will be relevant to:

- Statutory and voluntary organisations working with disadvantaged communities in Bradford.
- Local businesses.
- Local employers and entrepreneurs.
- Service providers (public and voluntary sector).
- Community-based organisations and groups.

What are we doing?

JRF is funding work on the following themes:

Poverty, debt and welfare

Recession, poverty and sustainable livelihoods in Bradford

Oxfam, Bradford Resource Centre & Community Statistics Project and the International Centre for Participation Studies (ICPS) at Bradford University.

This project aims to:

- Document the impact of recession on the lives of people living in poverty in Bradford District.
- Explore how these impacts differ, depending on gender, ethnicity and household composition.
- Identify local actions that could improve people's lives and make communities more resilient.
- Identify policy changes, locally and nationally, to mitigate the worst effects of recession and to prioritise poverty issues.
- Increase understanding of the dynamics of poverty and the vulnerabilities that lead to persistent or recurrent poverty.

The project plans to:

- recruit and train community researchers;
- carry out qualitative interviews with 40 people living in poverty, and with local policy-makers and service providers; and
- use participatory processes to verify findings with wider communities, and with key local stakeholders.

Community relationships and cohesion

Cohesion in Bradford: disadvantage, solidarity and recession

The Policy Studies Institute, in partnership with the black and minority ethnic (BME) voluntary sector organisation Voice4Change England.

This project explores the links between material disadvantage and the quality of community relationships. Recession and growing disadvantage potentially worsens community relationships, for example due to a lack of resources fuelling racial resentment.

The study seeks to improve understanding of the implications of recession for community relationships in Bradford:

- How is the economic downturn
 - bringing communities together to find collective solutions; or
 - exacerbating tensions across ethnic, religious, generational or other boundaries?

- What are the views of local people and agencies on the likely longer-term social implications of recession for community relationships in Bradford?
- What initiatives and policies are in place to support community relationships through recession?
- How is the voluntary sector involved in supporting community relationships and is it being adequately supported?
- What practical actions and policies could be developed to tackle the longer-term implications of recession in relation to community relationships?

The research will use qualitative research with an emphasis on bringing people and institutions together to talk, including interviews with the community and voluntary sector and Bradford Council.

Mental health and well-being

Mental health, resilience and recession in Bradford

Leeds Metropolitan University.

This project aims to identify practice and policy changes that could strengthen services in Bradford which promote people's resilience and mental health, in a time of economic downturn. It emphasises the importance of protective factors that can moderate or 'buffer' risk factors of mental health and mental well-being problems, both at the individual and at the community level.

It focuses on people in a 'transition phase' in the job market: young people (aged 16–25) and older workers who are closer to retirement age. Research has shown that these groups are particularly at risk of job losses and so at higher risk of reduced mental well-being.

This project will collect both qualitative and quantitative data and will recruit study participants from those areas within Bradford that present the highest Job Seeker's Allowance claimant rates during the recession. Methods will include:

- face-to-face interviews with key stakeholders of mental health and other support services in Bradford;
- focus group interviews with separate groups of men and women from different ethnic backgrounds in a 'transition phase' in the job market; and
- secondary data analysis to investigate any characteristics of resilience in Bradford compared with similar districts.

Local business and enterprise

Weathering recession and surviving the upturn:

What are the prospects for Bradford businesses as the economy comes out of recession?

A Bradford consortium: Better For Everyone, Bradford Metropolitan District Council, Glendale Research and Oracle Research.

This project focuses on the impact of the recession on Bradford's businesses. There is some evidence to suggest that the Bradford economy has proved relatively resilient but a lack of data means that it is not clear how different elements of the Bradford business community are coping with the economic downturn.

This project will use qualitative and quantitative research to:

- gather detailed evidence to establish the impact of the recession on businesses across the district;
- assess the effectiveness of business support initiatives and policies during the recession and identify significant gaps in support; and
- understand how Bradford businesses are positioned to make the most of an economic upturn.

It will also involve significant stakeholder engagement and feedback to identify key actions and policies needed to support Bradford businesses in future.

Why is this topic a priority for JRF?

In 2004, JRF made a ten-year commitment to working in Bradford. This work is part of that programme. It expresses JRF's long-standing commitment to addressing poverty and disadvantage, and its unique relationship with the city and people of Bradford.

What has informed our thinking?

This programme stems from consultations with a number of stakeholders in Bradford as well as previous work (by ourselves and others) on the impact of recession on people, communities and businesses across the UK. It also ties in with JRF's aim to keep poverty and inequality at the top of the policy and media agenda at a time of significant reductions in public spending.

About the Joseph Rowntree Foundation

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust are two independent charities that work together to understand the root causes of social problems, identify ways of overcoming them, and show how social needs can be met in practice.

Our purpose is to influence policy and practice by searching for evidence and demonstrating solutions to improve:

- the circumstances of people experiencing poverty and disadvantages;
- the quality of their homes and communities;
- the nature of the services and support that foster their well-being and citizenship.

Most of our work centres on the interconnected themes of poverty, place and empowerment.

Published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, The Homestead,
40 Water End, York YO30 6WP.

Other formats available.

Tel: 01904 615905 email: info@jrf.org.uk