



# The UK Chinese People : Diversity & Unmet Needs

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**February 2004**

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## **Chapter One**

### **Research Backgrounds & Methodology**

#### **The Caring Capacity of Chinese People**

Recently, the UK Chinese people have been portrayed as ‘**a successful ethnic minority**’ (Cheng, 1996). Such a prosperous image is related to several factors. Firstly, Chinese people are one of the top earning groups in the UK (Berthoud, 1997; Cheng, 1996). The mean weekly earnings for male Chinese employees were £336 compared to £287 for Indians, £227 for Pakistanis and £191 for Bangladeshis (Modood, 1997b). Also, a high percentage of Chinese people have ‘**higher qualifications**’, 29% of Chinese in contrast to 22% of all ethnic groups. In addition, the official unemployment rate for Chinese people was the lowest among minority groups: 8% of Chinese people compared with 13% of all ethnic minorities (Labour Market Trends, December 1999). The Observer (March 30, 1997) points out, “it is remarkable about the Chinese experience is the speed with which they have achieved economic success. This has happened over one generation – an achievement unparalleled in British social history”. As a result, Chinese people are no longer considered to be ‘**a disadvantaged group**’ (Modood, 1997c: 342). In other words, the UK Chinese families were thought to have adequate resources to tackle their own problems.

However, the actual needs of Chinese families might have been underestimated, and their capacities for meeting needs have not been sufficiently addressed. Since Chinese people are less likely to register as unemployed or actively seek help from the government, the official figures cannot reveal the actual problems of UK Chinese people (The Dragon Project, 2001). After analysing the provision of social security benefits for ethnic minorities, Law and his colleagues (1994) found that Chinese people had a very low take-up rate because of a negative perception of public benefits as well as criticisms from family members. The ‘hidden financial problems’ of Chinese people were further reflected in a small number of Chinese applicants, only 660, on the New Deal for Young People (Labour Market Trends, February 2000). Further, among the Chinese applicants on the New Deal for Young People, 22% left the scheme with ‘no known destination’ and only 39% took up options (Labour Market Trends, February 2000). In addition, a study of the Chinese community in Newcastle reported that 34% of respondents were unemployed, of whom 50% did not claim any form of benefit (The Dragon Project, 2001). As for health care, a study concludes that ‘There is considerable evidence of under-utilisation of health service facilities by members of the Chinese community’ (Prior et al., 1997: 2). Similarly, a regional study reported that one in five Chinese people had not registered with a GP (Chan, 1999). Parker (1998: 91) pointed out many Chinese people are suffering socially, which ‘must be documented, so as to initiate strategies for change’. In fact, a Chinese community worker already stressed two decades ago that “identifying needs” should be a top priority because “it is important to find out what and where the needs are” (Lim, 1979: 49). The above discussions reveal that ‘the successes’ of UK Chinese people might have been exaggerated, and their problems underestimated. Thus, it is essential to study the needs of

the UK Chinese people and the effectiveness of their help-seeking behaviours.

### **The Diversity of UK Chinese People**

The UK Chinese people are '**not a homogeneous group**' (Cheng, 1996: 178), they, actually, are a highly heterogeneous group (Yu S., 2000) with diverse origins and cultural backgrounds (Blackwell, 1997; Chan & Chan, 1997). The socio-economic diversity of the UK Chinese people has not been systematically examined; while the needs of Chinese people from different countries of origin (such as China, Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan, Vietnam, and other parts of the world) have not been adequately addressed. Very often, research studies on the UK Chinese community included respondents mainly coming from Hong Kong and working in the catering industry (Pang, 1993; Parker, 1995; Prior et al., 1997; Song, 1999; Yu, 2000). For example, a study examining the health needs of Chinese people in the UK only used Cantonese to conduct their focus groups (Prior et al., 1997). Other studies also included mainly Cantonese speaking respondents (Pang, 1996; Song, 1999; Yu, 2000). Since there is little study distinguishing the needs of different Chinese groups, the study of the UK Chinese community has become the study of UK Hong Kong Chinese people. The social and psychological behaviour of Hong Kong Chinese people has been generalised and applied to other UK Chinese groups. In fact, 'the restaurateur image is true for only 40 per cent of the working Chinese population and is mainly characteristic of Hong Kong-born Chinese (Cheng, 1996: 178). The assumption of the Chinese community as a homogeneous group has created 'the mistaken belief that so long as one understands some essentials of the culture, one will be proficient in handling problems manifested by Chinese clients' (Au & P'ng, 1997: 15). As Soojin Yu (2000: 23) stresses, those existing studies "failed to emphasise the fact that Chinese sub-groups, based on their countries of origin, showed extremely polarised patterns". Realising the limitations of their research design, the mentioned study proposes the investigation of "possible social class and/or country or origin differences in the health behaviour of Chinese people". Seeing the diversity within an ethnic group, Parekh emphasizes, "We need new methodological and conceptual tools to reach out to and uncover the differential achievements and failure of different clusters of individuals in different ethnic groups" (Platt, 2002: foreword). Therefore, there is an urgent need to differentiate Chinese people into various subgroups and assess their needs. That is crucial to the development of culturally competent services.

### **The Role and Functions of UK Chinese Voluntary Organisations**

The role and functions of Chinese organisations seem to have been underplayed in the current discussion of UK Chinese people. It is argued that Chinese people in the UK suffer from double detachment, being isolated from both the host community and the Chinese community (Yu, 2000; Chau and Yu, 2001). Traditionally, Chinese voluntary organisations performed various types of social and political functions, linking the government and the general public. In Hong Kong, traditional Chinese organisations played an important political and welfare role, especially before the Second World War (Chan, 1996). In the UK, there are many Chinese organisations providing health, education



and recreational activities for the Chinese community (National Children's Centre, 1982; Chinese Forum, 2001). A recent study of the UK Chinese organisations only included organisations in London, focused mainly on the organisational structures and training needs of these organisations (London Chinese Community Network & Lincoln University, 2002). Thus, the relationships between Chinese families and Chinese organisations have not been fully investigated. As a result, there is an impression that Chinese families are isolated from each other as well as from their own community without mutual help. By studying Chinese people's help-seeking behaviours, the role of Chinese organisations and their contributions to the welfare of Chinese families can be better understood.

### **Racism & Help-seeking Behaviours**

Many studies point out that language barrier and traditional welfare ideologies prevented Chinese people seeking help from government departments (Law et al., 1994; Parker, 1995; Lau, 1997; Prior et al., 1997; Yu, 2000). However, many Chinese people have been living in the UK for many years. Some of them were even born here or have received education from an early age. The impact of UK culture on Chinese people, especially on the second generation, may be greater than that of traditional Chinese culture. In addition, language as a barrier to public services varies among different age groups and generations. For example, only 50% of the 45-64 year old Chinese compared with 100% of 16-24 year old Chinese people speak English 'fluently or fairly well' (Modood, 1997a). Instead of language barrier, the help seeking behaviours of Chinese families may be adversely affected by institutional racism among welfare providers as well as limited resources available for ethnic minorities. For example, in the mental health setting, British professionals have been accused of failing to engage Chinese families in the helping process because of their limited understanding of Chinese family values so that Chinese parents 'feel their voices are not heard' (Lau, 1997: 26). At schools, British teachers are not aware of the problems faced by Chinese children (National Children Centre, 1982). The UK Chinese people, therefore, may be frustrated by the incompetence of service providers and turn to informal networks for assistance.

The above discussion reveals that help-seeking behaviours can be the result of a dynamic process in which some institutional factors shape ethnic groups' perceptions of statutory services and, more importantly, change their behavioural patterns and social relationships with the host community. As Parker (1995) points out, the self-identity of young Chinese people in the UK can only be understood through their interaction with racism and discrimination. Race is a social process and racial relations are built upon certain social contexts (Holdaway, 1996). Thus, this study examines the impact of racial discrimination on the help-seeking behaviours of the UK Chinese people.

## **Research Objectives**

This study has the following objectives:

- (1) To study the needs of the UK Chinese people.
- (2) To investigate the help-seeking behaviours of the UK Chinese people and the extent of their supportive networks.
- (3) To examine the patterns of help-seeking behaviours of the UK Chinese families from different origins.
- (4) To analyse the UK Chinese people's relationships with government organisations and non-government organisations.
- (5) To explore the relationship between racism and the UK Chinese peoples' help-seeking behaviours

## **Research Methodology**

Chinese people are considered to be 'a hard-to-reach' as well as 'a widely dispersed population' (Prior et al, 1997: 77). The main difficulty in researching the UK Chinese community is that it is 'without existing and easily accessible sampling frames' (Prior, et. al, 1997: 77; see also Boxter, 1988; Pang, 1993; Parker, 1995). Against this constraint, researchers used different data collection methods to gather the views of Chinese people. Very often, their sample size was too small or their respondents were not randomly drawn. For example, Prior and her colleagues used 'focus group discussion' to investigate the health needs of Chinese people in Northtown and Ferrytown. Their methodology suffers two weaknesses. Firstly, the respondents were not randomly selected so that they were not 'representative of the Chinese population in the statistical sense' (Prior et al., 1997: 79). More seriously, only one Chinese group were invited to express their views: "Hong Kong Chinese are the target of the research and non-Cantonese speaking Chinese – such as Chinese people from Malaysia or Singapore – are intentionally absent from the focus group sample" (Prior et. al., 1997: 79). Pang's study (1993) on the employment of Chinese young people was based on a 'snowballing' sample. Respondents of other studies were mainly recruited from the UK Chinese organisations such as Chinese schools and Chinese Christian churches (Furnham & Li, 1993; Yu, 2000; Raschka et al., 2002).

Another limitation on the existing literature is the inclusion of only a small number of Chinese people that makes accurate interpretation difficult. By examining Chinese people's utilization of GP and outpatient services, Prior and her colleagues (1997: 55) reminded us that 'figures for Chinese should be treated with caution' because the number of respondents is too small. Similarly, by studying mental illness among UK Chinese, "only a limited analysis could be carried out" because of a small sample size in the Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities (Nazroo, 1997: 85). Even official figures cannot provide us with details on Chinese population. For example, the sample size of Chinese people in the Labour Force Survey (LFS) was 'too small for reliable estimate' on unemployment rate (Labour Market Trends, 2001: 32). Thus, the actual problems faced by the UK Chinese people are still unclear.

The above discussion shows that previous studies on the UK Chinese people used a non-representative sample, and, in most cases, included a small sample size. Their conclusions, therefore, were mainly drawn from respondents who were living in a particular region or were familiar with Chinese community organisations, or came from a particular country. Thus, the existing image of the UK Chinese people mainly reflects the life experiences of a particular Chinese group, especially Hong Kong Chinese people who are working in the catering industry. As a result, we have little understanding of other Chinese groups, whose needs have long been neglected.

Against the mentioned limitations, the present study used two random samples for semi-structured interviews (SSIs) and for a postal survey (PS). The respondents were drawn from Chinese surnames in the BT Telephone Directory (BTTD). The research team was informed by BT that the BTTD included the telephone numbers of other telephone operators. Thus, the BTTD is a comprehensive data base of telephone users (but excludes the users of mobile phones). As there is no sample frame on all Chinese people in the UK, the use of Chinese surnames in the BTTD to construct a sample frame has two distinctive advantages:

- (1) A large number of Chinese people from various backgrounds will be included. The sample will be more comprehensive and objective compared to studies with their respondents mainly from Chinese organizations. In this way, a representative sample can be obtained. Also, findings of the study can be generalised to the wider UK Chinese community.
- (2) It is a more economical and efficient method compared to a sample frame composed by Chinese users of social services or members from Chinese community organisations. This is because it will be time consuming and labour intensive to get the consent of the members of voluntary organisations as required by the Data Protection Act.

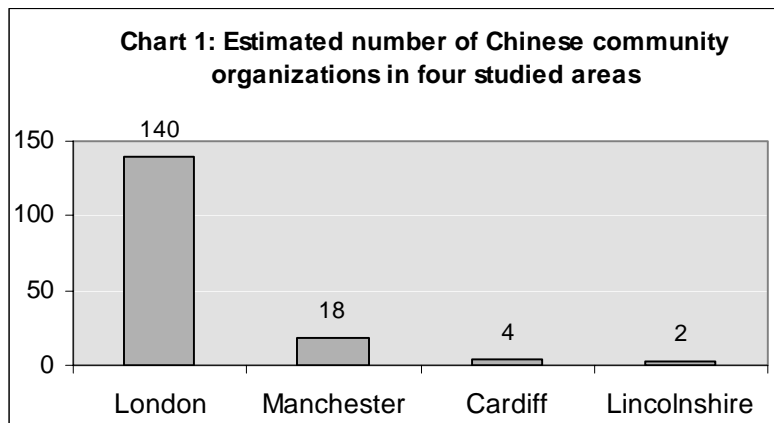
This study used SSI and a PS to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. The PS aimed at exploring the overall problems encountered by the UK Chinese people as well as the extent of their supportive networks. On the other hand, the objectives of SSIs were to collect detailed information about respondents' needs and their help-seeking experiences.

The sample of SSIs composed by two types of areas – 'Chinese people concentrated areas' and 'Chinese people dispersed areas' (table 1), as help-seeking behaviours of Chinese people of these two types of areas might vary due to differences on the availability and the accessibility of formal and informal welfare organizations. A large number of Chinese people (39%) in the UK are living in London and Manchester where there are a wide range of social and commercial organizations. A recent study reported that there were 140 Chinese organizations in London (London Chinese Community Networks & Lincoln University, 2002) compared to only 2 in Lincolnshire (chart 1). Thus, it is likely that Chinese people living in the two 'concentrated cities' can more easily gain access to social services than other two 'dispersed areas'. In other words, Chinese organizations may become an important supportive network to those living in London and Manchester. On the other hand, with a small number of Chinese people and organizations, those living in Cardiff and Lincolnshire may mainly seek help from informal networks such as family

members, relatives and friends. By including these two types of areas, the patterns of help-seeking behaviours of Chinese people who live in both urban area and countryside can be studied.

**Table 1: Chinese population in the four studied areas**

Area	No. of Chinese population	Percentage to total UK Chinese population
London	80,201	35.3
Manchester	11,858	5.2
Cardiff	1,888	0.8
Lincolnshire	1,353	0.1



### **Respondents of the Semi-structured Interviews (SSIs)**

The research team had to produce a sample frame based on Chinese surnames in the BTDD. First, we generated all Chinese surnames of the four studied areas from the BTDD. Then, respondents were randomly drawn from each area. Third, interviewers phoned the potential respondents, inviting them to participate in the SSIs. All interviews were conducted between April and June 2003 by interviewers who could command Cantonese, Mandarin, and English. The response rate of the SSIs was 44% (table 2).

**Table 2: The response rate of semi-structured interviews**

Area	Successful case	Unsuccessful case	Response rate ( % )
<b>London</b>	25	70	26
<b>Manchester</b>	25	25	50
<b>Lincoln</b>	25	24	51
<b>Cardiff</b>	25	10	71
<b>Overall</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>44</b>

### **Respondents of the Postal Survey (PS)**

Stratified random sampling method was used to produce a sample frame for the PS. As discussed above, the help-seeking behaviours of the Chinese people might be shaped by the availability and accessibility of social services in different areas, it is crucial to include respondents living in different types of areas. On the other hand, the UK Chinese people are living in 'concentrated' and 'dispersed' settlements. The use of stratified sampling based on the number of Chinese people in the UK is able to include respondents living in different types of communities. There were three types of areas in term of the size of Chinese population: big (over 5,000), medium (2,000 - 5,000), and small (under 2,000). Then, random sampling was applied to draw a total of 25 areas from these three groups of areas (table 3).

**Table 3: Total numbers of potential areas of the PS**

<b>Type of area</b>	<b>Number of area drawn</b>	<b>No. of questionnaire sent to each group of areas</b>
Big (over 5,000)	5	1,300
Medium (2,000-5,000)	5	600
Small (under 2,000)	15	600
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>2,500</b>

All addresses with Chinese surnames from the 25 drawn areas were generated from the BTTD. A total of 2,500 questionnaires were sent to the randomly drawn respondents from July to September 2003. The names of the 25 areas are as follow:

**Table 4: A list of three types of areas of the postal survey**

Type of area	Name
<b>Big</b>	<b>1 Birmingham</b>
	<b>2 Glasgow</b>
	<b>3 Liverpool</b>
	<b>4 London</b>
	<b>5 Manchester</b>
<b>Medium</b>	<b>1 Edinburgh</b>
	<b>2 Essex</b>
	<b>3 Herfordshire (Hertford)</b>
	<b>4 Leeds</b>
	<b>5 Oxford</b>
<b>Small</b>	<b>1 Cheshire</b>
	<b>2 Dundee</b>
	<b>3 East Dunbartonshire</b>
	<b>4 Fife</b>
	<b>5 Hull</b>
	<b>6 North Yorkshire</b>
	<b>7 Orkney Islands</b>
	<b>8 Perth &amp; Kincross</b>
	<b>9 Redcar &amp; Cleveland</b>
	<b>10 Shropshire</b>
	<b>11 Somerset</b>
	<b>12 South Gloucestershire</b>
	<b>13 Stoke-on-Trent</b>
	<b>14 Swansea</b>
	<b>15 Wiltshire</b>

Excluding the invalidated cases, there were a total of 316 returned questionnaires. The successful rate of the PS was 14.6% (table 5).

**Table 5: The response rate of the postal survey**

Type of area	Questionnaire sent	Valid addresses	Completed questionnaire	Response rate ( %)
<b>Big</b>	1,300	1,151	149	<b>12.9</b>
<b>Medium</b>	600	550	76	<b>13.8</b>
<b>Small</b>	600	461	91	<b>19.7</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,500</b>	<b>2,162</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>14.6</b>

## **Chapter Two**

### **The Characteristics of Respondents**

As mentioned previously, this study included respondents from two random samples: 316 from a PS and 100 from the SSIs. The following table (table 6) shows that respondents in the two samples shared similar socio-economic backgrounds. Firstly, about 40% of respondents were female and 60% were male from the two samples. Secondly, the respondents were mostly economic active with only 10% were over 66 years old. Thirdly, most respondents (over 60%) were married and there was a low rate of 'co-habitation' and 'divorce' (from 6% to 7%). Fourthly, over 40% of respondents were educated to the level of 'bachelor or above', with less than 20% not educated to primary school level. Concerning family income, over 50% of respondents had an average monthly income (after tax) below £1,500, only 15% had more than £3,000. Thus, most respondents of this study were married, economically active, and well-educated.



**Table 6: Socio-economic characteristics of the two samples**

	<b>PS</b>		<b>SSIs</b>	
	N	%	N	%
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	194	62	59	59
Female	120	38	41	41
<b>Total</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Age</b>				
18-25	37	12	10	10
26-35	69	22	22	22
36-45	70	22	30	30
46-55	67	21	20	20
56-65	40	13	7	7
66 or above	31	10	11	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Marriage status</b>				
Single	70	23	20	20
Living with partner	22	7	6	6
Married	189	60	66	66
Divorced/separated	22	7	6	6
Widowed	10	3	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Education level</b>				
Uneducated/nursery	9	3	3	3
Primary	45	15	17	17
Secondary	76	24	32	33
Certificate/Diploma	36	12	6	6
Bachelor	68	21	18	18
MA/PhD	77	25	23	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Monthly household income (after tax)</b>				
Less than £500	51	18	12	17
£501-£1,500	108	38	25	34
£1,501-£3,000	84	29	25	34
More than £3,000	43	15	11	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>100</b>

### **Countries of Origin of the Respondents**

Over a half of respondents from the two samples were Hong Kong Chinese people (table 7). Nearly 20% of respondents in the PS and 30% in the SSIs came from Mainland China

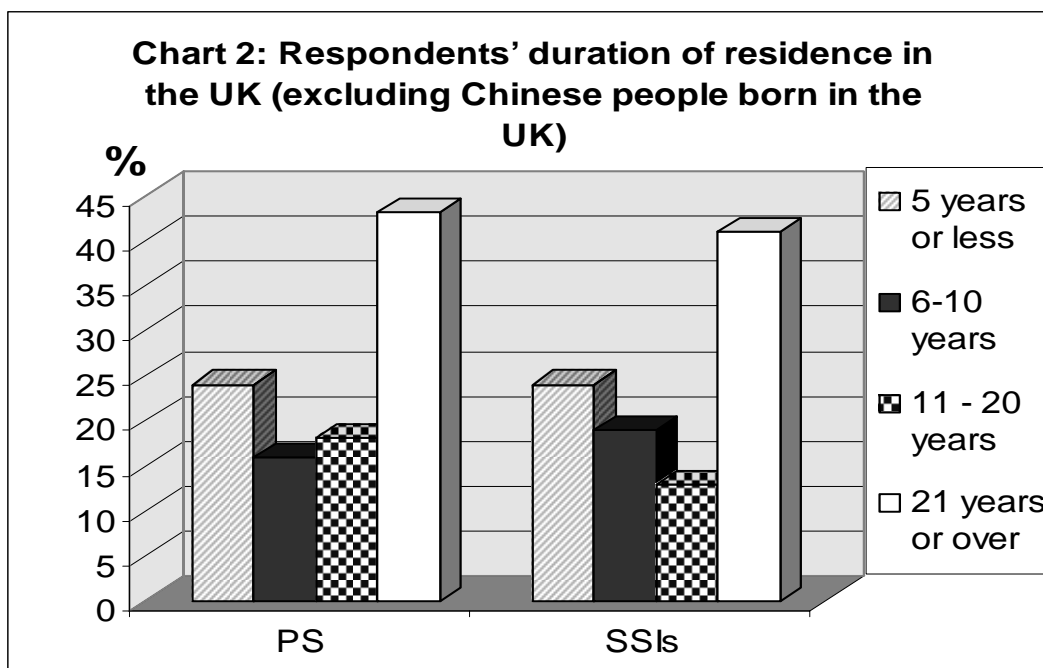
(table 7). 9% of respondents came from Singapore and Malaysia and 13% of respondents in the PS and 5% in the SSIs were born in the UK. These figures suggest that the UK Chinese people were mainly composed of people from Hong Kong and the Mainland China. The relationship between these two groups and their commitments to the welfare of their fellow people directly shape the well-being of most Chinese people in the UK.

For respondents who were born outside the UK, 43% of them in the PS had been living here for over 20 years; only 10% for less than two years (chart 2). Cantonese and Mandarin were the two most popular languages used by these respondents. Over 71% and 31% of respondents could understand Cantonese and Mandarin respectively (table 8). Two issues emerged from these phenomena are: (1) as a large number of Chinese people are permanent residents in the UK, do they get the same access to social services as other citizens? (2) a significant number of Chinese people are new arrivals, do government departments and voluntary organisations provide them with adequate services to help them integrate into society, especially as only about 30% of these respondents spoke English before coming the UK?

**Table 7: Countries of origin of the 1991 Census & the two samples**

Countries of origin	1991 Census		PS		SSIs	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Hong Kong	53,473	34	165	53	55	55
China (and Taiwan)	20,141	13	61	19	29	29
UK born	44,635	28	40	13	5	5
Malaysia/Singapore	20,001	13	27	9	7	7
Other parts of the world	18,688	18	23	7	4	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>156,938</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Cheng, Y. (1996). The Chinese: upwardly mobile. In P, Ceri (ed.), Ethnicity in the 1991 Census. London: HMSO.



**Table 8: Respondents' spoken languages before coming the UK (excluding the British born Chinese people)**

Spoken Language	PS		SSIs	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Cantonese	223	71	65	65
Mandarin	98	31	47	47
English	91	29	32	32
Hakka	50	16	25	25
Hokien	28	9	6	6
Chiuchow	11	4	2	2
Others	17	5	11	11

## **Chapter Three**

### **Needs & Helping-seeking Behaviours**

#### **Financial & Business Issues**

Respondents were asked what types of problems they encountered over the past 12 months. Surprisingly, 40% of respondents in the PS had financial difficulties. Similarly, 24 out of 100 respondents in the SSIs claimed that they faced financial problems last year (table 9). In fact, 27% of Chinese people in London were among the lowest fifth of earners in contrast to 13% of their White counterparts (London Health Observatory, 2003).

Several groups of respondents expressed worries about finances. The first group were older people. Older respondents found that their pensions were too low to provide them with a decent living. A respondent exclaimed, **“The amount of pension can’t feed me full, nor makes me hungry. It is just only enough to buy bread”**. Another older respondent in Cardiff was disappointed with his financial hardship:

**“My income is so small and I am very old now. All my children were not here. Besides, they have to take care of their families. Please tell me what can I do? Please tell me!”**

In Manchester, an older respondent was dissatisfied with high expenses on water rate and TV license. He did not believe the government would raise the amount of pension. As he stressed, **“If you ask me whether the pension is adequate, my answer is definitely not enough”**. However, **“Even though the pension is inadequate, the government will not listen to my voice regardless of what I say”**.

The above evidence shows that some older Chinese people in the UK have to rely on public pension as their main source of income. Their financial problems also reveal the limitations of the caring capacity of Chinese families, which are thought to be self-sufficient, supported by a strong filial piety.

The second group of respondents worried about finance were students. Over the past 10 years, more and more students from Mainland China study in the UK. Some of them found that tuition fees and living costs were too high to cope with. As one respondent student explained,

**“The main cause is the UK’s tuition fees are too high. I have to manage my budget carefully without wasting money. My family has to support my elder brothers and myself. To support three family members’ studies is very hard”**.

Chinese people running businesses also had financial concerns. The main reason was poor business environment so that they had less income.

## **Help-seeking Behaviours**

Respondents who encountered financial hardship were unwilling to seek help from the government. Instead, they tried to spend less on daily necessities, got financial assistance from family members and friends, or worked harder to earn more money. According to a respondent in London:

**“He (a Chinese lawyer) said that he could help me to apply for Income Support. However, I don’t want. I haven’t applied for Income Support since I came to the UK. Now, I am getting financial help from my friends to overcome my difficulties”.**

Most of the respondents who faced with financial difficulties would not also approach Chinese organisations. They used their own efforts to tackle them. A respondent from Manchester emphasised, **“Basically, I use my own efforts without getting help from any organisations”**. Financial support from children was a crucial financial source to some Chinese older people. An older respondent in the same city said, **“Sometimes, I dream of travelling, just something like a day trip. I can only get financial support from my son to realize it”**.

However, it should be stressed that one respondent sought help from banks to manage her business problems. Two other respondents planned to get jobs to increase their family incomes. These cases imply that commercial firms and the labour market were two problem-solving channels that might be considered by Chinese people.

Overall, most respondents of this study used personal efforts or sought assistance from informal networks, such as children and friends, to meet their financial needs. Seeking financial support from the government and Chinese organizations was still not a common practice.

**Table 9: Respondents' problems over the past 12 months (PS)**

<b>Problems encountered during the past 12 months</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Financial difficulties	127	40
Work pressures	102	32
Illness	100	32
Communication difficulties with health workers	91	29
Relationship problems with spouse/ partner	61	20
Housing problem	59	19
Racial discrimination	58	18
Children's study problems	55	17
Business problems	51	16
Problems on parenting	46	15
Pressures on caring for sick family members	45	14
Relationship problems with colleagues	43	14
Relationship problems with friends	43	14
Unemployment	42	13
Relationship problems with friends	43	14
Relationship problems with children	40	13
Friend/relative passed away	39	12
Racial harassment / attacks	39	12
Relationship problems with parents	35	11
Relationship problems with neighbours	34	11
Pregnancy	18	6

Total N = 316

### **Health and Communication Difficulties with Health Workers**

32% of respondents had health problems over the past 12 months. About the same number of respondents (29%) had communication difficulties with health workers. A respondent in Lincoln described the problem to be 'very worrying'. He explained:

**“You know there are a lot of medical terms that we don’t understand. We don’t know the meanings of these terms. Of course, we cannot clearly explain our needs. The doctor doesn’t understand our problems. Sometimes, they have to guess. As a result, some health problems cannot be treated by right medicines”.** Similar problems were mentioned by another respondent in Manchester:

**“I wanted to tell the doctor about my health. But I didn’t know how to explain to him. He wanted to say something to me. But I couldn’t understand. I wanted to understand something about 90%, but it is still OK to understand only 40-50%...Now, if we are sick, most of the time the doctor guesses the problem. We want to let him know the problem, but he can’t understand. If he wants to talk to us, we won’t understand”.**

Respondents in Cardiff also expressed similar experiences. One of them said,

**“Even university students from Mainland China have difficulties in consulting doctors. You don’t know how to describe your physical health. For example, which parts do you feel pain? Is it headache or other parts of your body. Another issue is the degree of this pain. Is the pain like a needle drilling you? Or is it like the expansion of muscles? Or any other descriptions that match your feelings. There are many ways to describe them. It is difficult to clearly explain your pains”.**

The above information shows that interpreting services were not available in some clinics. As a result, language barriers adversely affected the quality of health care. Very often, inappropriate medical decisions might have been made based on limited and unclear information.

### **Help-seeking Behaviours**

Parents would ask their children for help with translation. However, this was not always an effective means. According to a parent in Lincoln: **“it is no good to ask my son to leave his work and go with me to clinics every time. If there is a hospital interpreting service, I can seek help from them. In this way, I do not need my family members to take leave for assistance”.**

For minor health problems, some would buy medicines by themselves. Because of a long waiting time in the NHS, a respondent in Lincoln said that she would consult Chinese doctors in the China Town.

Respondents came from Mainland China even did not trust the quality of NHS. Instead, they consulted doctors in China. For example, a respondent in Cardiff said:

**“He [the GP] didn’t treat it. I had my treatment in China. We only can solve the problem in this way. This is a minor issue, we see doctors in China. Even detailed medical examinations...we also have them done in China. Over the past two years, we had our medical consultations in China, not here”.**

Similar views were expressed by another respondent in the same city. He was frustrated by the long waiting time in the NHS as well as the treatment methods of English doctors: **“My mother already prepares to go back to China. She wants her health examinations done in China”.**

Chinese Christian churches in the UK became an important supportive network to Chinese people. In Cardiff, a church member who had good command of English accompanied a respondent to a hospital. Another respondent in Manchester said: **“Many friends from the church offered help. Many of them visited me or talked to me on the phone”**.

Because of language barriers and lack of confidence in the English medical services, some respondents, especially those who came from Mainland China, had their treatments in China. Also, children and church members were two important sources of support for the UK Chinese people.

### **Racial Discrimination/Harassment/Attacks**

Findings of the PS showed that 18% of the respondents experienced racial discrimination and 12% were racially harassed or attacked. 29 out of 100 respondents in the SSIs also faced similar problems. Similarly, the Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities found that 16% of Chinese people encountered racial abuse and other insulting behaviours (Virdee, 1997).

The most common type of racial harassment towards Chinese people was language abuse by strangers on the streets. A respondent in Cardiff said, “People walking on the streets will say some rude words to you”. Another respondent in Manchester had eggs thrown at him by some young people. Similar incident also happened in Lincoln. The British Crime Survey (2000) reported that 54% of racist offenders were strangers (Clancy et al., 2001).

It should be noted that children and young people were key language abusers to Chinese people on the streets and also main attackers on Chinese takeaways. Children and young people were perpetrators in 12 out of 29 racial cases of the SSIs.

Another type of discrimination was poor public services to Chinese users. With little English, a respondent in London was poorly treated by staff of a clinic:

**“When I first came to London, I went to a GP’s surgery nearby. Perhaps I cannot express clearly. I found that their attitudes were very poor. I was looked down from the expression of their eyes. They handled my case not only slowly but also asked me to present my passport. I said my friend told me that no passport was required so that I didn’t take it with me. She asked me to take my passport and come back again. In fact, to see a GP does not need a passport. She discriminated me. She thought I was an illegal immigrant without any legal status”**.

Some respondents believed that their ethnic background became an obstacle to their career development. A respondent said, **“My husband is a chartered accountant, who does his work very well, excellent. But he still hasn’t been promoted to be a ‘partner’. They only promote their own people. My previous company also has similar practice...”**. Compared to his white colleagues, a respondent from Manchester said that he had to do more work but with a slower progression in his salary.



## Help-seeking Behaviours

Even though a lot of respondents of the study encountered rude behaviours because of race, some considered these 'not a big problem'. Most respondents took no actions to rectify problems but only accepted the loss of personal belongings and the psychological pressures. A respondent stressed,

**“This problem [race relation] has existed for a very long time. An incident happened today. My nephew’s car was scratched by some children. Children living in here know that we are Chinese people. They attacked the car while going to school and returning home. Seriously speaking, it is a criminal offence. We Chinese people are helpless but have to accept the loss”.**

Some respondents considered racial attacks in Chinese take-aways as a reality, a cost for running this type of business. A respondent in Lincoln said, “We do this business. Of course, we have to face this problem...It is unavoidable. But it is not too serious”. The respondents’ sense of helplessness might be caused by their negative experiences with the police. Interviewees in the SSIs were extremely disappointed with the police’s reaction to racial attacks and harassment. For example, another respondent from Lincoln angrily pointed out,

**“The UK police are absolutely rubbish. I think most of them are useless, failing to provide any help for me. I called the police. They, however, didn’t come or came only after a few hours. When they came, the perpetrators had already gone. Very often, when I called the police, they said that they were too busy to come. They cannot handle my case in this way”.**

A respondent from another city held similar views:

**“From my experiences, the UK’s police can’t handle these incidents efficiency. What can we do at that time? We only could claim for insurance. Then, tidied up the shop again. To take extra care next time”.**

Another respondent from the same city complained that the police were unfair:

**“Sometimes, some people caused troubles at my restaurant. I called the police. But some policemen were prejudice. Instead, they said we attacked the trouble-makers first. I have no confidence in seeking help from the government”.**

The experiences of the respondents show that the police had done little to protect Chinese people running take-away businesses. Due to their negative experiences, some respondents no longer trusted the police. They simply passively accepted the reality and used their own means to tackle racist incidents.

A respondent in Cardiff argued that better English helped to tackle the race problem:

**“I think if you were educated in Britain, people can’t bully you. If you can speak good English, you can talk to them nicely, isn’t it? If you can’t speak good English, you will face a lot of troubles. So language is the cause of discrimination”.**

However, another respondent in Lincoln believed that the underlying causes of race problems were colour and culture:

**“Those English people don’t see your passport. Even though you already got a British passport, like my husband who was born here, or like myself lives here for more than 10 years, or like my children who were born in here, they still think that all of us are new immigrants. No matter how good your English is, your hair is still black, your skin is still yellow. Racial incidents will still happen”.**

Leaving the UK might be one of the responses for some Chinese people. Because her husband was being discriminated against at his work, Mrs. Cheung in London said that she feared her children would face the similar problem. She further stressed, **“My daughter feels this problem now. Thus, she may go to work in China, Shanghai, or America in the future”.**

Another respondent in Cardiff was dissatisfied with the mass media’s negative images about Chinese people in China:

**“If you work here longer, you will deeply feel that they still treat you like people in developing countries...the UK’s media only reports the negative aspects of China. They will show the messy scenes at China’s rail stations and villages. Then, people here will think that you are no difference with them”.**

The poor images produced by the mass media might negatively affect the status of Chinese people in the UK. Also, the unresponsive and even prejudiced attitudes from public services providers might discourage Chinese people seeking help from the formal sector. In this case, language, to some respondents, was just an extra barrier rather than the fundamental cause denying Chinese people from accessing equal public services.

### **Caring for Children & Older People**

Findings of the study show that the UK Chinese families had to cope with various types of pressures. 15% of respondents in PS had difficulties in parenting and 17% in children’s education last year. Some parents were very concerned about their children’s studies. A mother in Lincoln said,

**“My children didn’t know how to do homework. I didn’t know how to help them. They cried and I got no idea on this problem. To me, my children’s homework is a very worrying issue”.**

A respondent in Manchester had to deal with the same problem: **“Caring for children is a worrying issue. This is because they don’t know how to do homework after school. However, I am unable to help them”**.

Parents running take-aways found that their working hours constrained their caring duties. A respondent stressed, **“Strictly speaking, I am a full-time mother, a full-time wife, and a full-time Shop Assistant... Thus, I don’t have sufficient time for my daughter. I am very sorry about this”**. Another parent from Cardiff faced the same problem: **“In daytime, I can be with her for a few hours. At night, I have to work so that I can’t take care of her”**.

The findings show that Chinese parents with little English had difficulties in supporting their children’s homework. Their unsocial working hours further caused disruptions to their family lives.

Some parents expressed frustrations over managing their children’s behaviours. According to one parent:

**“My son plays computer every night. He doesn’t want to go to bed even it is 2-3 am... We keep on asking him to change this habit many times. However, nothing has changed after one year. We give up now. We can do nothing on this matter. Nor did his grandparents”**.

With regard to children’s education, respondents were worried about their children’s standard of Chinese. They wanted their children to learn more Chinese. That was also an investment on her children’s future. A father in Cardiff explained,

**“In general, children are easily influenced by Western culture. Thus, our duty is to keep our children to have a balanced-life. That is, they will not forget their root while being integrated into a Western society. Also, from the perspective of their career development, learning Chinese culture and Chinese language is an investment, not a burden. This should not be a burden. We always think about this issue”**.

Another respondent from Manchester expressed the similar views:

**“It is about language problem. Our children forgot their Chinese language, almost already forgot everything. This issue is worrying. We ourselves may not consider here as our permanent home. Perhaps we may finally go back to China. Children’s education is a big problem. They can’t speak when they return to China”**.

Obviously, some Chinese parents expected their children to understand Chinese culture and language. Chinese education was related to their children’s identity and future careers.

Apart from children, some respondents in the SSIs had to take care of their older parents. They had to take ill parents to hospitals. However, a respondent stressed that this was not a problem because **‘this is my duty’**: **“My parents are now getting older. We should**

**provide financial assistance for them**". Another respondent in Manchester held similar attitudes: **"I wouldn't say it is a problem. My duty is to go with him to the hospital. I wouldn't say it is a problem"**.

### **Help-seeking Behaviours**

Although a significant number of respondents had difficulties in parenting, they had little knowledge of relevant social services. For example, a respondent said, **"Because we are in the UK, not in Hong Kong, we don't know any related services. We also do not know how to tell social workers about our problems"**. Another respondent, whose father had problems with gambling stressed that **'no professionals help him'**. Without any formal support, a mother having difficulties in teaching her children homework sought help from a staff member of her take-away.

As for Chinese education, respondents in Cardiff and Lincoln sent their children to Chinese schools. However, with limited resources, these schools suffered a shortage of teachers and poor teaching materials.

The above evidence indicates that the respondents had little information on the UK's social services. Thus, they tackled their problems without support from formal organisations. This might partly explain the low use of social services among the UK Chinese people.

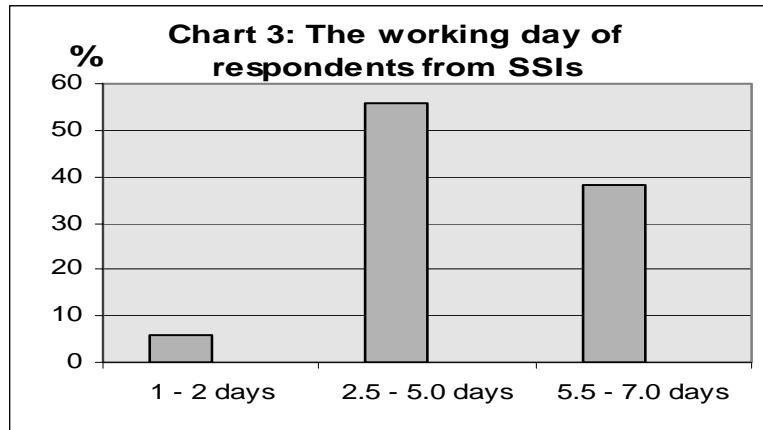
### **Work Pressures**

32% of respondents from PS who said that they had work pressures. Chinese respondents working in the catering industry had to deal with different types of pressures. Some found that **"Saturdays are very busy"**. They had to deal with the requests of their customers within several hours. Women working for takeaways had to fulfil demands from work and the family. A mother in Lincoln explained,

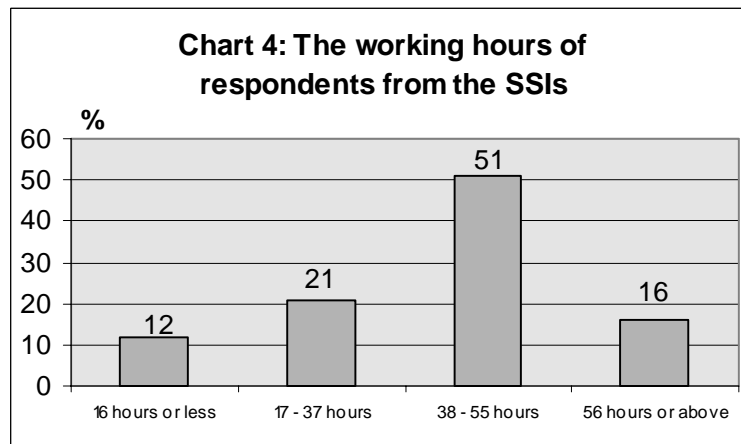
**"Like today I have to wash clothes, iron clothes. Then, I have to buy some necessary goods for the shop. After that, I have to go to my children's school. All things come together. I found that time is too little to handle so many things"**.

Self-employed respondents' pressure was about keen competition of the Chinese catering industry, especially a lot of new shops opened in recent years.

Respondents' work pressures were related to their working patterns. Chart 3 shows that 37% of respondents from the SSIs had to work more than 5 days a week. They also worked longer hours; 32% of respondents needed to work over 45 hours a week (chart 4).



N = 67



N = 67

Some respondents were dissatisfied with these working patterns. A respondent said his work pressure was so great that he had to work twelve to thirteen hours a day. Another respondent also had a similar work pattern. He worked about 10 hours a day and complained, “**Long working hours without personal time. Only for the job**”.

Some Chinese students had to work and study, their pressures were to meet the demands of these two tasks. A respondent from London said that language was his main source of work pressure.

The above findings show that long working hours and the demands from both the family and work were the main sources of work pressures to the UK Chinese people.

## Chapter Four Needs and Supportive Networks

If respondents needed assistance, substantial majority (69%) would approach their family members (table 10). Surprisingly, only 11% of respondents would seek assistance from Chinese organisations and a small number (6%) of them would get support from people from the same hometowns and villages. Similarly, only 14% of respondents would ask relatives for help. Interestingly, a majority of respondents (56%) would seek assistance from friends, and a significant number (16%) from neighbours.

The above figures show that the family was still the basis of support for Chinese people in the UK. However, traditional Chinese supportive networks such as extended families and families sharing the same ancestors or living in same towns/villages have become less important. On the contrary, UK Chinese people had re-established their supportive networks based on friendship and neighbourhood.

**Table 10: Respondents' supportive networks when needed**

Type of network	Frequency	%
Family members	217	69
Friends	178	56
Government organizations	56	18
Neighbours	51	16
Relatives	44	14
Chinese organizations	34	11
Non-Chinese voluntary/ government funded organisation	34	11
People from same hometown/village	19	6

Total N = 316

### Support from the Family

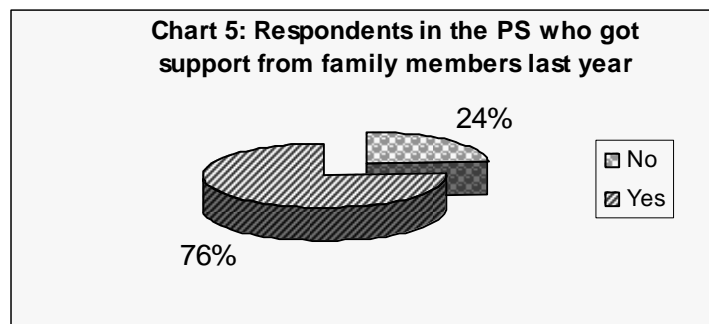
This section examines the caring capacity of the UK Chinese family. Over the last 12 months, 76% (240) of respondents from the postal-survey got at least one type of assistance from family members (chart 5). Concerning the types of assistance (table 11), 43% got emotional support; 27% were accompanied by family members to clinics/hospitals, and 24% got assistance on English translation. Data from the SSIs further show the content of family assistance. A respondent from Lincoln said that her elder daughter helped her to write a letter in English. Another respondent from the same city described how helpful her relative was:

**“A burglar broke into my take-away and took away our belongings. I was told by the police about this. My brother’s wife helped me to sort out this issue. Our family members tidied up everything and claimed for the loss from the insurance company. To us, family members are very important. If I need any help, I will approach them first’.**

More importantly, 28% of respondents got financial support from family members. These findings clearly show that the Chinese family is still an important caring unit which provides various types of services to meet its members’ needs.

However, it should be stressed that the number of family members of the UK Chinese people was not very big (chart 6). Among those who claimed they would seek help from family members, nearly a half of them (45%) only had 1 or 2 family members. Overall, 84% of respondents had 4 or less family members.

However, the small number of family members was compensated by a high concentration of them in the same villages, towns and cities (chart 7). 50% of family members in the SSI lived in the same towns/villages, 16% in the same cities. These findings reveal that respondents had a small but a highly accessible family supportive network. On the other hand, as 18% of the respondents had supportive family network which was outside the UK, this means that a significant number of them could not get immediate assistance when needed.



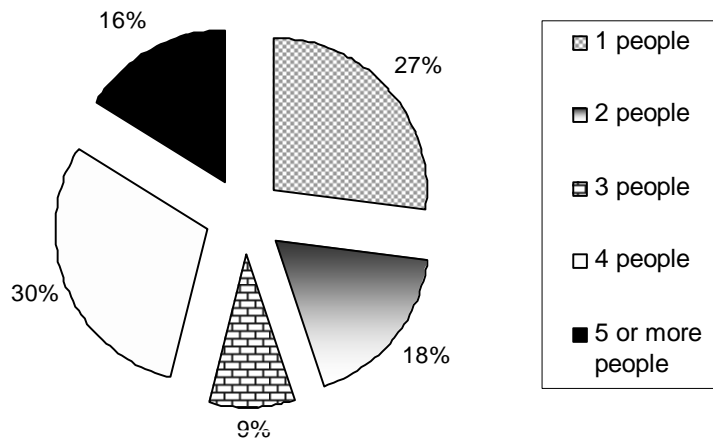
N = 316

**Table 11: Types of assistance provided by family members of respondents in the PS**

Types of assistance from family members	Frequency	%
Emotional support	135	43
Financial support	87	28
Going with you to clinic/hospital	85	27
English translation	75	24
Help on transportation	37	12
Going with you to welfare organization	32	10
provision of welfare/ taxation information	15	5

N = 240 (Total respondents who got at least one type of assistance from family members last year)

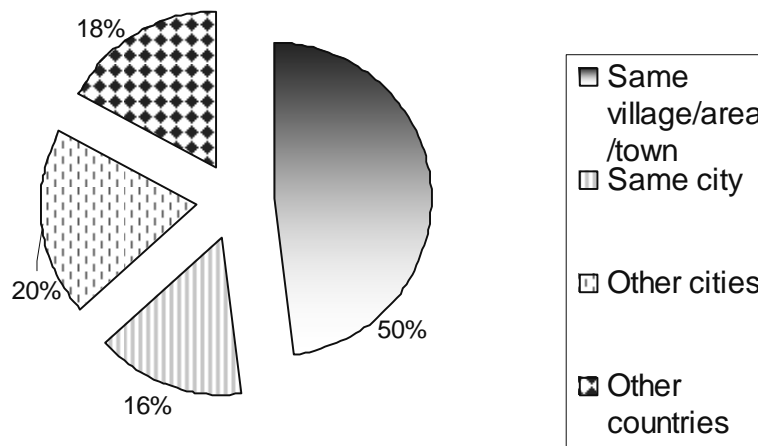
**Chart 6: The number of family members from whom respondents in the SSIs would seek help**



N = 44



**Chart 7: The location of the nearest family member(SSIs)**



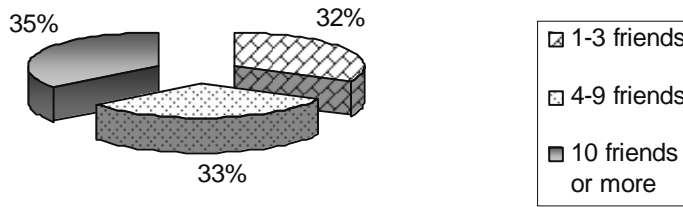
**N = 44**

### **Support from Friends & Neighbours**

Over a half of respondents from both the SSIs (61%) and PS (56%) would seek help from friends when needed. Further exploration shows that 68% of semi-structured interviewees had more than 4 friends (chart 8). Concerning the location of their nearest friends, 86% of respondents had friends who were living in the same towns or cities. Among them, 24% even lived in the same towns/villages (chart 9). These figures reveal that most respondents have established their social networks close to their homes. In this way, they could easily get access to assistance.

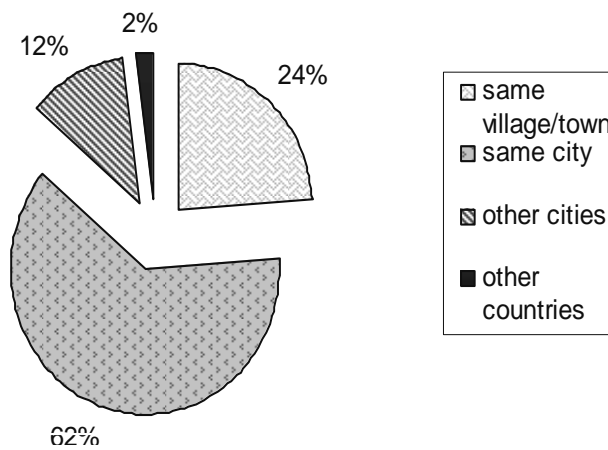
Colleagues were another important supportive network to the UK Chinese people. Nearly four-fifths (76%) of respondents from the PS had 'good/very good' relationship with their colleagues (chart 10). Similar number of respondents (79%) believed their colleagues would help them when in need (chart 11).

**Chart 8: Number of friends from whom respondents in the SSIs would seek help**



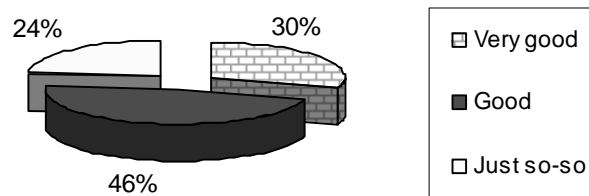
N = 52

**Chart 9: The address of the nearest friend of respondents in the SSIs**



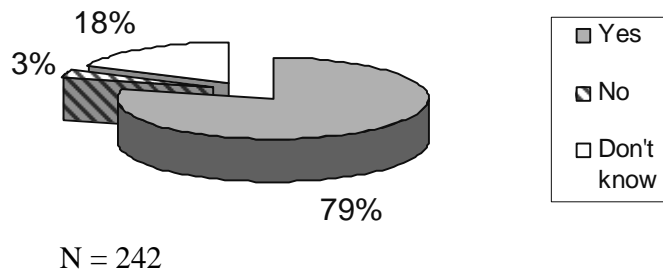
N = 58

**Chart 10: Respondents' relationship with colleagues (PS)**



N=242

**Chart 11: Help from colleagues when needed(PS)**

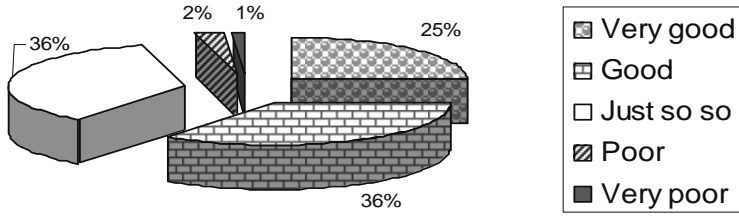


Findings of this study show that neighbours are another source of support for Chinese people in the UK. Most respondents (61%) had a 'good/very good relationship' with their neighbours in contrast to only 3% who had 'poor/very poor' relationship (chart 12). A similar number of respondents (60%) believed that their neighbours would help them when needed (chart 13). Data from the SSIs show that 50% of respondents could obtain support from more than three neighbours when needed (chart 14). The nature of the relationship between respondents and their neighbours were summarized as follows:

- (1) Social chat
- (2) Tea & coffee gathering
- (3) Shopping together
- (4) Went to holiday together
- (5) Children played together
- (6) Neighbours kept their keys and watered their plants while they were on holidays.
- (7) Exchange presents on some special occasions
- (8) Gave children a lift to schools
- (9) Helped on repairing household appliances

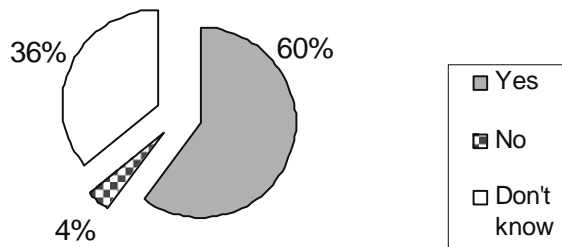
These findings reveal that most Chinese people in the UK had established a good relationship with neighbours, who were another source of support outside the family. However, it should be stressed that the nature of support from family members and neighbours was different. The former, as illustrated previously, provided financial and social support for respondents; while the support from the latter was for trivial and mundane daily convenience or leisure issues.

**Chart 12: Postal-surveyed respondents' relationship with neighbours**



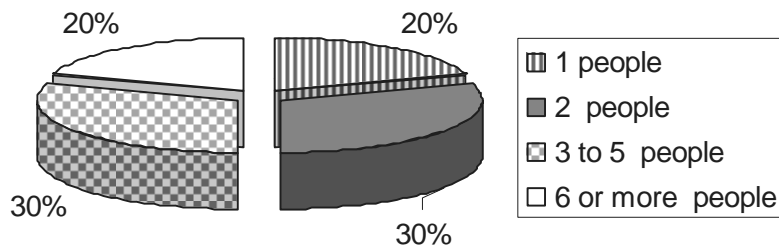
N=313

**Chart 13: Help from neighbour when needed**



N = 313

**Chart 14: Number of neighbour from whom Semi-structured interviewees would seek help**



N=20

### **Respondents' Relationship with Chinese Organisations**

25% (80) of respondents from the PS were service users of Chinese organizations last year (chart 15). They mainly used services such as religion activities (28%), leisure and cultural

activities (28%), Chinese class (25%), English class (20%) and welfare advocacy (20%). As one in four respondents used the services of Chinese organizations, these organizations still played an important welfare role in the UK Chinese community. This can be revealed from the experience of a respondent,

**“[Chinese organizations are] important to me. Sometimes, I don’t understand the contents of government’s letters. Workers from Chinese organizations would help me, explaining to me the time of payments, finding out my previous records, and talking to the concerned departments on behalf of me”.**

In particular, their services enriched the social and cultural life of the Chinese residents and also helped those with little English to integrate into or get services from the mainstream society. An interviewee said that the Chinese organization in Lincoln enhanced the relationships of Chinese people:

**“Basically, we have a place for Chinese people to gather together so that we know each other. After working for a week, you will not only sleep at home. The organisation provides us with an opportunity to know more what other people are doing. We learn something in the process of talking to each other. Humans are social beings, not isolated subjects”.**

Another interviewee from Cardiff held similar views:

**“We are Chinese people and have a very busy working life. I always participate in the activities of Chinese organisations. I have a sense of being one of the elements of the Chinese community and Chinese culture. I feel relaxing from my heart”.**

However, two issues need special attention: the limitations of existing Chinese organizations and the development of new organizations. As just one in eight (12%) of respondents from the PS (table 10) would seek help from Chinese organizations, the relationship between these organizations and the UK Chinese people needs to be strengthened, their services need improvements in order to meet the needs of different Chinese groups. A respondent from London suggested that more efforts would be needed to promote the services of the UK Chinese organizations:

**“We know Chinese organizations from friends. If a person who comes to the UK and doesn’t have any relatives and friends, who will help them? If there is no good promotion, how can he approach the concerned organizations? I think they should do more on promoting their services”.**

Another respondent from the same city said that more interpreters were needed to help older people to see doctors. A respondent in Lincoln also stressed that more services should be provided for older people. This was because there are not many older people in Lincoln so that they are isolated and their lives are **“very boring”**.

Among the UK Chinese organizations, Chinese Christian churches were an important

supportive network to a significant proportion of respondents. This was revealed in the fact that 28% of respondents in the PS who used religious services and 16% in the SSIs who would seek help from church friends (chart 16).

Most existing Chinese organizations could not effectively meet the changing needs of the UK Chinese population. As a result, new organizations which meet the needs of particular groups have emerged. The UK Chinese community is mainly composed of Hong Kong people. Most Chinese organizations in the UK were established by Chinese people from Hong Kong. As a result, their services are Hong Kong oriented and their spoken language is Cantonese. In this way, these organizations mainly serve the needs of Hong Kong Chinese people and are difficult to attractive Chinese people from other countries of origin. According to a respondent from Cardiff,

**“People from the Chinese Christian Church asked me to join their activities several times. Because they are Hong Kong people, we find it difficult to talk to them”.**

Another respondent from the same city further explained the problem of language difference. He was disappointed that his child could only learn Cantonese at a Chinese school:

**“[He] learns Cantonese so that nothing has been learnt. It will be good this year because we set up a Mandarin school so that my child will no longer goes there.**

Similar concern was expressed by another parent,

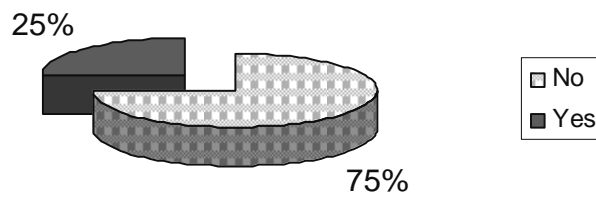
**“Unfortunately, Chinese people here are mainly from Guang Dong and Hong Kong. So, it is difficult for me to understand them. People from Chinese Church are mainly Hong Kong people. The church has set up a Chinese school where Cantonese is taught. Our children don’t go there because they can’t understand. More Chinese people from mainland China come to the UK in recent years. I think that the government and the community should pay more attention to their needs”.**

Against the needs of Chinese people from mainland China, an organization called ‘The Chinese Students and Scholars’ Association (CSSA)’ was set up. The CSSA, established by mainland Chinese students who studied in the UK in the 1980s mainly provides welfare services for mainland Chinese students and residents. A respondent from Cardiff detailed the assistance given him by the CSSA:

**“The first time I came to the UK, I approached the Chairman of the CSSA. He helped me to get accommodation. Then, I returned China for a while. For my second visit, I went to the Chinese Embassy and got the telephone number of the Chairman of the CSSA in Liverpool. I phoned the Chairman, seeking his assistance on accommodation. He arranged a temporary accommodation for me to live for a week before getting a permanent one. The Chairman of the CSSA in here (Cardiff) asked other people to help me on accommodation”.**

The CSSA is now widely recognized by students as an organization serving their needs. Further, it organized activities for local Chinese people. A respondent even said that it was an organization that they could trust; **“The most reliable one. It will not cheat you”**. It is clear that language barrier has weakened the solidarity of the UK Chinese community and creates some unmet needs. The CSSA has become a new organization that caters only for the needs of mainland Chinese people.

**Chart 15: Respondents’ use of Chinese organisation’s services last year (PS)**

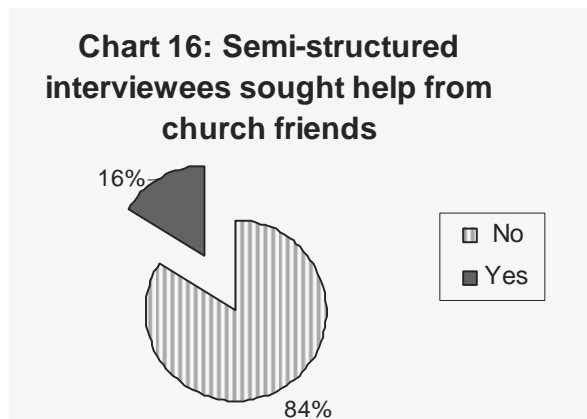


N=316

**Table 12: Types of services used by respondents (PS)**

Types of services	Frequency	%
Leisure and social activities	22	28
Religious activities	22	28
Chinese class	19	25
Welfare advocacy	16	20
English class	16	20
Health education	13	17
Interest class	8	10
Computer class	8	10
Support group	7	9

N = 80



N=100

### **Respondents' Relationship with Non-Chinese Organisations and Government**

Over a half (54%) of respondents in the PS used services of non-Chinese organizations (including the voluntary sector and government departments) (table 13). Most of them (59%) used medical services. Data from semi-structured interviews showed that 8 out of 100 respondents had difficulties in using public services. A respondent in Lincoln said that “because of language barrier, I can’t clearly explain to them my problems”. Another respondent from the same city also encountered the same problem:

**“I experienced the [language] problem. The staff member didn’t understand what I said. Then, my case was transferred to the Inland Revenue. However, the Inland Revenue transferred my case back to the original department. Finally, they realized what I had actually asked for”.**

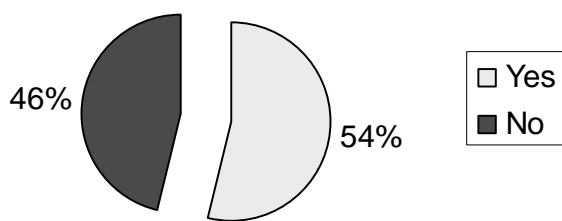
The above evidence revealed that some Chinese people are unable to get appropriate



departments to solve their problems. The language problem is likely to be the cause of fewer Chinese people using public services. As a respondent explained, “Because of language barrier, I seldom contact these [non-Chinese] organizations”.

However, only one in ten respondents participated in recreational, arts and cultural activities (table 13). This suggests that the respondents may find it difficult to integrate into the social and cultural life of the White society.

**Chart 17: Respondents in the PS used services of non-Chinese organizations last year**



N=316

**Table 13: Types of services used by respondents (PS)**

Types of services	Frequency	%
Health	98	59
Housing	29	18
Education	28	17
Social Security	27	16
Legal advice	27	16
Police	27	16
English class	22	13
Arts & cultural activities	20	12
Recreational activities	18	11
Religious activities	19	11
Employment services	18	11
Immigration advice	14	8
Taxation advice	9	5

N = 316

## Chapter Five

### The Diversity of the UK Chinese Community

The UK Chinese people are a diverse community in terms of their country of origins, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. This chapter will examine such differences.

#### Socio-Economic Diversity of the Five Groups

The five groups of Chinese people had obvious a difference in age distribution (table 14). Hong Kong Chinese people had a smaller portion of young adults (19%) but a bigger portion of older people (13%) compared to other groups. On the other hand, people who came from Mainland China were relatively young, 57% of them were under 36 years old. Also, only 3% of them were over 66 years old.

**Table 14: Age differences of five groups of Chinese people (PS)**

			Five groups of respondents					Total
			Hong Kong Chinese	Mainland China Chinese	UK Born Chinese	Singapore and Malaysia Chinese	Other Countries	
Three age groups	35 or under	Count	31	34	19	12	8	104
		% within Five group of respondents	18.9%	56.7%	47.5%	44.4%	38.1%	33.3%
	36 - 65	Count	111	24	18	14	11	178
		% within Five group of respondents	67.7%	40.0%	45.0%	51.9%	52.4%	57.1%
	66 or above	Count	22	2	3	1	2	30
		% within Five group of respondents	13.4%	3.3%	7.5%	3.7%	9.5%	9.6%
Total		Count	164	60	40	27	21	312
		% within Five group of respondents	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-square = 37.2, d.f. = 8,  $p < 0.001$

Regarding the levels of education, 73% of Singapore/Malaysia Chinese and 65% of UK born Chinese had 'Bachelor degree or above' qualifications (table 15). The results are similar to the findings' to S. Yu (2000: 15), who noticed that "Chinese born in Southeast Asia and Britain were the best educated of all ethnic groups in terms of any kind of degrees". However, only 32% of Hong Kong Chinese people had the same education level. Nearly the same number (30%) of Hong Kong Chinese people had been educated to no higher than primary level in contrast to less than 10% of other four groups.

**Table 15: Education levels of five groups of Chinese people (PS)**

**Three level of education \* Five groups of respondents Crosstabulation**

			Five groups of respondents					Total
			Hong Kong Chinese	Mainland China Chinese	UK Born Chinese	Singapore and Malaysia Chinese	Other Countries	
Three level of education	Primary or below	Count % within Five groups of respondents	48 29.6%	4 6.7%	1 2.5%	1 3.8%	1 4.8%	55 17.8%
	Secondary/post-secondary diploma	Count % within Five groups of respondents	63 38.9%	25 41.7%	13 32.5%	6 23.1%	5 23.8%	112 36.2%
	Bachelor degree or above	Count % within Five groups of respondents	51 31.5%	31 51.7%	26 65.0%	19 73.1%	15 71.4%	142 46.0%
Total		Count % within Five groups of respondents	162 100.0%	60 100.0%	40 100.0%	26 100.0%	21 100.0%	309 100.0%

Chi-square = 48.2, d.f. = 8,  $p < 0.001$

As shown in the table 16, most Chinese people from Hong Kong (75%), Singapore & Malaysia (100%) had lived in the UK for over 10 years. On the contrary, 54% of Chinese people from Mainland China had lived in the UK for less than 6 years. The above figures suggest that Mainland Chinese people are the largest group of new arrivals, most of who are under 36 and have a higher education qualification.

**Table 16: The duration of residence of four groups of Chinese people**

			Group residence for analysis * Four groups of respondents Crosstabulation				
			Four groups of respondents				
			Hong Kong Chinese	Mainland China Chinese	Singapore and Malaysia Chinese	Other Countries	Total
Group residence for analysis	5 years or under	Count	10	33	0	8	51
		% within Four groups of respondents	6.1%	54.1%	.0%	38.1%	18.6%
	6 - 10 years	Count	30	7	0	3	40
		% within Four groups of respondents	18.2%	11.5%	.0%	14.3%	14.6%
	11 years or over	Count	125	21	27	10	183
		% within Four groups of respondents	75.8%	34.4%	100.0%	47.6%	66.8%
Total		Count	165	61	27	21	274
		% within Four groups of respondents	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-square = 87.5, d.f. = 6, p < 0.001

There was clear variation among the UK Chinese people in spoken and written English (chi-square = 48.4; d.f.=6, p<0.001) (tables 17 & 18). While 88% of Chinese people from Singapore and Malaysia claimed their spoken and written English was ‘very good’, only 26% of Chinese people from Hong Kong and 31% from Mainland Chinese made the same claim. On the other hand, 36% of Chinese people from Hong Kong and 33% from China said that their spoken English was ‘poor/very poor’ (table 17). Similar patterns were also revealed from the level of written English (table 18). Findings of this study are similar to another study which stresses that “Chinese sub-group showed a highly polarised distribution” on English ability (Yu S., 2000: 14).

**Table 17: Respondents’ level of spoken English (PS)**

			Group 3 for analysis * Four groups of respondents Crosstabulation				
			Four groups of respondents				
			Hong Kong Chinese	Mainland China Chinese	Singapore and Malaysia Chinese	Other Countries	Total
Group 3 for analysis	Very good	Count	42	19	22	14	97
		% within Four groups of respondents	25.5%	31.1%	88.0%	70.0%	35.8%
	Fairly good	Count	64	22	2	4	92
		% within Four groups of respondents	38.8%	36.1%	8.0%	20.0%	33.9%
	Poor/very poor	Count	59	20	1	2	82
		% within Four groups of respondents	35.8%	32.8%	4.0%	10.0%	30.3%
Total		Count	165	61	25	20	271
		% within Four groups of respondents	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-square = 48.4, d.f.=6, p<0.001

**Table 18: Respondents' level of written English (PS)**

**Written English level \* Four groups of respondents Crosstabulation**

			Four groups of respondents				Total
			Hong Kong Chinese	Mainland China Chinese	Singapore and Malaysia Chinese	Other Countries	
Written English level	Very good	Count	38	16	20	13	87
		% within Four groups of respondents	23.2%	26.2%	80.0%	65.0%	32.2%
	Fairly good	Count	58	23	3	5	89
% within Four groups of respondents		35.4%	37.7%	12.0%	25.0%	33.0%	
Poor/very poor	Count	68	22	2	2	94	
	% within Four groups of respondents	41.5%	36.1%	8.0%	10.0%	34.8%	
Total	Count	164	61	25	20	270	
	% within Four groups of respondents	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-square = 44.5, d.f. = 6, p<0.001

The income of UK Chinese people can be divided into two groups: **Group A** - Hong Kong & Mainland China; **Group B** – Singapore, Malaysia, UK & others. Chinese people from Group A had a higher proportion with a monthly income lower than £1,000. Less than three-tenths of Group A Chinese people had this income level. On the other hand, about two-fifths of Group B Chinese people in contrast to about a quarter of Group A Chinese people had a monthly household income over £2,000.

**Table 19: Monthly household income (after tax) of five groups of Chinese people (PS)**

**Three income groups \* Five groups of respondents Crosstabulation**

			Five groups of respondents					Total
			Hong Kong Chinese	Mainland China Chinese	UK Born Chinese	Singapore and Malaysia Chinese	Other Countries	
Three income groups	1,000 or below	Count	56	27	9	7	2	101
		% within Five group of respondents	38.4%	48.2%	23.7%	28.0%	10.0%	35.4%
	1,001 - 2,000	Count	54	15	14	5	7	95
% within Five group of respondents		37.0%	26.8%	36.8%	20.0%	35.0%	33.3%	
2001 or over	Count	36	14	15	13	11	89	
	% within Five group of respondents	24.7%	25.0%	39.5%	52.0%	55.0%	31.2%	
Total	Count	146	56	38	25	20	285	
	% within Five group of respondents	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-square = 21.9, d.f. = 8, p < 0.005

The size of UK Chinese families was relatively small, it was about 3.2 persons per household. Hong Kong Chinese people had the biggest family size (mean = 3.39) in contrast to the smallest family size (mean = 2.52) of Singapore/Malaysia Chinese people (table 20).

**Table 20: The family size of five groups of Chinese people**

**Descriptive**

Total Number of People

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Hong Kong Chinese	158	3.39	1.980	.158	3.08	3.70	1	18
Mainland China	60	3.33	1.893	.244	2.84	3.82	1	14
UK Born Chinese	39	2.69	1.507	.241	2.20	3.18	1	7
Singapore and Malaysia	27	2.52	1.397	.269	1.97	3.07	1	6
Other Countries	21	2.95	1.802	3.93	2.13	3.77	1	8
Total	305	3.18	1.867	.107	2.97	3.39	1	18

**ANOVA**

Total number of people					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	30.713	4	7.678	2.239	.065
Within Groups	1029.005	300	3.430		
Total	1059.718	304			

**Key Problems of the Five Groups of Respondents**

The common problems that Chinese people in the UK encountered were financial problems (41% - 59%), relationship problems with partner/spouse (21% - 29%, except Chinese people from other countries), illness (24% - 43%), and work pressures (32% - 59%) (table 21). Chinese people from Hong Kong and Mainland China were more likely to faced communications problems with health workers (40% and 44%), and racial discrimination (24%). Business problems were common among Hong Kong Chinese people as well as those from Singapore and Malaysia (21% and 27%). Chinese people from Mainland China and other countries were more likely to encounter unemployment (25% and 29%). Chinese people from Singapore and other countries were more likely to have relationship problems with colleagues (29% and 35%). It should be stressed that Chinese people born in the UK had more problems with finance (61%), relationship with spouse/partner (29%), and pressures on caring for sick family members (26%).

**Table 21: Types of problems of five groups of Chinese people**

Type of Problem	N/%	Hong Kong Chinese	Mainland China Chinese	UK Born Chinese	Singapore and Malaysia Chinese	Other Countries
<b>Financial difficulties</b>	N %	62 46%	25 42%	19 61%	9 41%	10 59%
<b>Business problems</b>	N %	28 21%			6 27%	
<b>Relationship problems with spouse/ partner</b>	N %	29 21%	15 25%	9 29%	5 23%	
<b>Problems on parenting</b>	N %	34 25%				
<b>Relationship problems with children</b>	N %	29 21%				
<b>Children's study problems</b>	N %	39 29%				
<b>Illness</b>	N %	58 43%	19 32%	12 39%	7 32%	4 24%
<b>Communication difficulties with health workers</b>	N %	54 40%	26 44%			5 29%
<b>Pressures on caring for sick family members</b>	N %			8 26%		
<b>Racial discrimination</b>	N %	33 24%	14 24%			
<b>Racial harassment / attacks</b>	N %					4 24%
<b>Unemployment</b>	N %		15 25%			5 29%
<b>Relationship problems with colleagues</b>	N %			9 29%		6 35%
<b>Relationship problems with neighbours</b>	N %				5 23%	
<b>Work pressures</b>	N %	44 32%	25 42%	13 42%	10 45%	10 59%
<b>Friend/relative passed away</b>	N %				8 36%	

\* Only problems encountered by more than 20% of respondents in each group were shown.

## Supportive Networks of Five Groups of Chinese People

As mentioned previously, family and friends were the two most important networks for the UK Chinese people. More Chinese people from Singapore, Malaysia, and other countries would seek help from their family members (90.9% and 83.3%). Friends were an important network to Chinese people from China, Singapore and Malaysia, and other countries (66.7% - 72.7%) (table 22). Some Hong Kong Chinese people and Mainland Chinese people would seek assistance from the UK Chinese organisations.

**Table 22: Supportive networks of five groups of Chinese people**

Supportive network		Five groups of respondents				
		Hong Kong Chinese	Mainland China Chinese	UK Born Chinese	Singapore and Malaysia Chinese	Other Countries
<b>Family members</b>	N	112	39	29	20	15
	%	77.2	68.4	80.6	90.9	83.3
<b>Relatives</b>	N	26	8	3	5	1
	%	17.9	14.0	8.3	22.7	5.6
<b>Friends</b>	N	87	38	23	16	12
	%	60.0	66.7	63.9	72.7	66.7
<b>People from same hometown/village</b>	N	9	6	1	1	2
	%	6.2	10.5	2.8	4.5	11.1
<b>Neighbours</b>	N	27	8	6	4	5
	%	18.6	14.0	16.7	18.2	27.8
<b>Chinese organizations</b>	N	23	8		1	2
	%	15.9	14.0		4.5	11.1
<b>Government organizations</b>	N	34	8	7	3	4
	%	23.4	14.0	19.4	13.6	22.2
<b>Non-Chinese voluntary/government funded organisation</b>	N	21	4	2	3	4
	%	14.5	7.0	5.6	13.6	22.2

## Family, Chinese Organisations and Non-Chinese Organisations

With the exception of the UK Born Chinese people, over 84% of respondents from the other four groups sought assistance from their family members last year (table 23). This means that mutual help among family members was still widely practiced by the respondents. Hong Kong Chinese people more likely got help from their family members with translation (49%) and accompanying to clinics/hospitals (50%) (table 24). Mainland Chinese people got assistance in going to clinics/hospitals (32%) as well as emotional



(76%) and financial support (39%). The other three groups of Chinese people mainly got emotional (62%-84%) and financial support (36%-43%).

More Chinese people from Hong Kong and the Mainland China used services of Chinese organisations (25% - 38%) than other groups. On the other hand, over 78% of UK born Chinese people and those from Singapore and Malaysia used services of government and non-government organizations compared with less than 50% of Chinese people from Mainland China. It should be stressed that the UK born Chinese people as well as those from Singapore and Malaysia had a very low use of services from Chinese organisations. The present findings are similar to the observation of Yu (2000).

**Table 23: Helping networks of five groups of Chinese people in last year (PS)**

Helping networks in last year		Five groups of respondents				
		Hong Kong Chinese	Mainland China Chinese	UK Born Chinese	Singapore and Malaysia Chinese	Other Countries
Helped from family members	N	119	54	25	21	18
	%	84.4	91.5	78.1	87.5	94.7
Used services of Chinese organisations	N	53	15	6	1	4
	%	37.6	25.4	18.8	4.2	21.1
Used services of non-Chinese organisations	N	86	29	25	19	13
	%	61.0	49.2	78.1	79.2	68.4

**Table 24: Types of assistance provided by family members of five groups of Chinese people (PS)**

Type of assistance provided by family members last year		Five groups of respondents				
		Hong Kong Chinese	Mainland China Chinese	UK Born Chinese	Singapore and Malaysia Chinese	Other Countries
<b>English translation</b>	N	59	12	1	2	1
	%	48.8	22.2	4.0	9.5	5.6
<b>Going with you to clinic/hospital</b>	N	60	17	3	1	3
	%	49.6	31.5	12.0	4.8	16.7
<b>Going with you to welfare organization</b>	N	25	3	3	1	
	%	20.7	5.6	12.0	4.8	
<b>provision of welfare/taxation information</b>	N	9	2	1	2	1
	%	7.4	3.7	4.0	9.5	5.6
<b>Help with transportation</b>	N	19	9	4	2	2
	%	15.7	16.7	16.0	9.5	11.1
<b>Emotional support</b>	N	44	41	21	13	15
	%	36.4	75.9	84.0	61.9	83.3
<b>Financial support</b>	N	38	21	9	9	7
	%	31.4	38.9	36.0	42.9	38.9

## **Chapter Six**

### **Discussion & Recommendations**

#### **(1) Race Discrimination: Old Problems & New Challenges**

Some studies (Parker, 1995; Pang, 1996; Chau & Yu, 2001) reported the problems of race discrimination and attacks encountered by the UK Chinese people. S. Yu, however, criticizes these studies for being ‘not representative’, and failing to situate the racial incidences “in larger context by comparing them with other minority groups’ experience’. After analysing the findings of the Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities, Yu even concludes that “Chinese seem to be faced with far less prejudice and discrimination than other minority ethnic groups, and this may have contributed to their relative economic success in Britain” (Yu S., 2000).

The present study, based on two random samples with 100 interviews and 316 completed questionnaires, found that 18% of respondents in the PS encountered race discrimination and 12% experienced racial harassment/attacks (table 9). More seriously, 29 out of 100 respondents in the SSIs faced similar racial incidents last year. The evidence clearly reveals that racial problems are a common concern and common experiences among the UK Chinese people. Such problems, as shown in the previous sections, caused financial loss, disrupted businesses, and threatened psychological health of Chinese people.

As expressed by respondents of the SSIs, the police did little to protect them. In effect, a sense of helplessness and distrust of the UK’s criminal justice system was developing among the Chinese victims. Thus, the passive attitudes of Chinese people towards racial conflicts are related to the failure of the police. Similar findings were reported by another study. It revealed that under-reporting of racial harassment was still a major problem because victims did not believe the problems could be solved and had little confidence in the key agencies (Guardian, November 22, 2000).

In response to the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report, the Home Office introduced its Ministerial Priority for the police service: “**increase trust and confidence in policing amongst ethnic minority communities**” (Home Office, 2002b). The Home Office, in response to the suggestions of MacPherson Report, had asked the police to assess the degree of satisfaction of victims from ethnic minority backgrounds. However, as pointed out by the HM Inspector of Constabulary, the attitude surveys conducted by the police suffered low return rate so that an accurate picture was unable to be achieved. As the report concludes, “Overall there had been insufficient attention given to the gathering and recording and analysis of accurate customer satisfaction data from members of diverse communities” (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, 2001). Fundamentally, the use of the police to evaluate the attitudes of their customers involves a conflict of interest. Also, as reported by other studies, members from minority ethnic groups are suspicious of the police. In order to enhance the confidence of ethnic respondents and effectively assess the progress of police on race equality, we have following suggestions:

- (a) **Victim survey should be conducted by an independent body**  
Against the existing weaknesses in collecting the views of ethnic minorities, the research team believes that this type of study should be conducted by an independent body.
- (b) **Effective indicators of race equality work**  
The existing Best Value Indicators, such as the percentage of ethnic minority officers, the number of stop/searches of minority ethnic persons, and the percentage of reported racist incidents, are mainly quantitative data about the tendency of racist cases. They, however, failed to assess the quality of police services. Thus, qualitative research methods should be adopted to collect data about the experiences of minority ethnic victims in contacting the police. It is suggested that several indicators are crucial to assess the quality of police services:
- (i) **Speed of action**  
It is essential to act quickly in response to racial incidents. This is because ‘People may be feeling unsafe; immediate support may be needed; a repair to the home or an upgrade in security may be urgently required. The victims will always want reassurance that they are being backed up’ (Home Office, 2000).
- (ii) **Follow up actions**  
The effectiveness in combating racial incidents depends on whether the police actively deal with the racists and also inform the progress of actions to victims. As stated in the “Good Practice Guidelines”, accountability is needed to “ensure that cases are taken seriously and dealt with appropriately” (Home Office, 2000).
- (iii) **Effective support**  
Some Chinese people are not familiar with the UK’s criminal justice system. Effective legal advice should be provided for victims who have little understanding of their legal rights. In addition, social and psychological support is essential to victims to overcome their worries and uncertainties.
- (iv) **Effective training and practices on race equality**  
A well trained police force which emphasizes race equality is a key to the successful implementation of the above objectives. Unfortunately, the HMI reported that many officers and supportive staff considered “race and diversity issues to be on the periphery of their working practices” (Guardian, March 4, 2003). As the HMI concludes, "The absence of an overarching long-term strategy and the failure fully to implement previous vision and guidance means that, in the eyes of some communities, the service has not set out what it wants to achieve or how to get there. Worryingly, it appears that most of the efforts expended so far have had little real impact"(Guardian, March 4, 2003). Against these problems, indicators assessing the police’s work on race issues should include ‘the extent of race equality training for both front line and support staff’,

‘annual strategies to deal with racist crimes’, ‘the implementation of guidelines and practices in their work’ and ‘the involvement of ethnic groups in dealing with racist crimes’.

**(v) Race equality culture**

According to Gerard Lemons, the touchstone of success on tackling race issues is “whether incidents are properly investigated, whether victims are quickly made to feel reassured and safe and the culprits brought to book” (Guardian, February 16, 2000). This means that a positive culture on treating racial incidents and safeguarding the rights of ethnic minority victims should be created in the police force.

**(c) Education programmes on racial incidents**

Voluntary organizations can provide education programmes for minority ethnic groups, telling them the rights of victims and appropriate actions to deal with racial harassment and attacks.

**(d) Community involvement on race incidents**

Senior police officers need to regularly meet with leaders of ethnic groups, seeking their views on racist crimes, and involving them in crime prevention. The trust between ethnic minorities and the police can be better achieved through active communication, participation, and respect.

The present study further confirms the necessity of providing race education for young people as suggested in the MacPherson Report. Data from the SSIs shows that children and young people were the main attackers of strangers on the streets and Chinese take-aways. They were involved in 12 out of 29 racial cases in the SSIs. In fact, official figures also showed that 24% of cautioned or prosecuted racial offenders were aged under 18 years old (Home Office, 2002a). Further, the British Crime Survey reported that 58% of perpetrators of racial incidents were under 25 years old (Clancy et al., 2001). A question that the UK society needs to address is: “Why do the younger generation not respect the rights of ethnic minorities in a society which emphasises more on race equality recently?” As the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) stresses, “We need to find some way of engaging those people [White men aged 16 to 30] or at least finding out why they resort to this sort of behaviour, what makes them do it, and then we can find solutions” (Guardian, December 17, 2001). Our effectiveness in dealing with this issue directly affects the racial relationship and the successful integration of ethnic groups in the future.

Several steps should be taken to deal with the negative behaviours of young people:

**(a) The involvement of parents on race education**

Children and young people’s racist behaviours may be related to the mass media’s and parents’ attitudes towards ethnic minorities. Respondents in the SSIs were disappointed with some parents’ lenient attitudes towards their children’s racist behaviours. Also, the participants at our research dissemination on December 17, 2003 complained about mass media’s construction of negative images of Chinese people.

Thus, a culture of acceptance of and respect for minority ethnic groups is still too weak in the British society. This is revealed from the facts that racially aggravated offences increased by 20% from 2000/01 to 2001/02 (Home Office, 2002a). Against this background, we suggest that race equality education should start from the family. Effective strategies on race equality should involve both parents and children.

**(b) Evaluating race education at schools**

Research team notices that citizenship was made a statutory subject in secondary school in 2002 (Home Office, 2002b) and similar programmes will be introduced in primary schools. This is a right direction for providing more information about race equality to the young generation. To further this work, we believe that a national survey should be carried out in order to assess school children's attitudes towards race issues. Also, the effectiveness of race education in schools should be evaluated and good practices in this aspect can be shared.

**(c) Immediate actions on racist behaviours**

Immediate actions should be taken by both parents and the police on racial incidents caused by children and young people. The Code of Practices from the Home Office state that "People should be able to report racist incidents 24 hours a day" and staff who deal with these incidents should receive "good quality training specific to their continuing training and development needs" (Home Office, 2000). Immediate actions from schools, police and parents can send a clear message to young people that racial discrimination and attacks violate the law of society and suppress the equal rights of other ethnic groups. Well-trained school teachers also can provide appropriate guidance and support for young victims. In short, the police, schools, leaders of ethnic groups, and the family need to take a serious attitude on racial incidents. Also, we need the involvement of various parties to tackle the racist behaviours of young people.

Tackling racism should be the responsibility of both government and non-government organizations. The present study found that the UK Chinese people took a passive attitude towards racist behaviours. For example, a respondent detailed her responses to race harassment as follows:

**"They smashed our widows and attacked our door. We asked them to repair and they promised to do so. Later, her husband returned home and our daughter talked to him. But he just asked us to seek compensation from our insurance company. We took no action on this incident because we feared that it will get worse. Finally, we moved away from our home".**

Chinese organizations in the UK can play a key role in helping Chinese victims to deal with racist incidents:

**(a) Support and training for race victims**

About one-fifth of respondents experienced race discrimination, and one in ten encountered racial harassment/attacks. The British Crime Survey found that shock, fear, anger, and difficulty in sleeping were common emotional reactions of victims

(Clancy et al., 2001). Chinese organisations can provide social and psychological support for Chinese victims. Also, Chinese community organisations can develop some programmes explaining to their users about the operation of the UK's criminal justice system and the rights of victims.

**(b) Monitor the police's work on racial crimes**

Chinese organizations can represent Chinese communities in local councils, monitoring whether the police authority has acted according to the guidelines and objectives of the Home Office on race equality. More importantly, Chinese organisations need to take actions against the police which ignore the rights of Chinese victims.

As discussed above, **effective police work on racist crimes, the promotion of race equality among younger generation, and active support from Chinese organizations** are three key factors that can help achieve race equality in the UK society.

**(2) Communication Problems & Public Services**

Similar to the findings of other studies (Au & P'ng, 1997; Prior et al., 1997; Eaton, 1999; Song, 1999; Yu, 2000), this study found that language barriers created a lot of difficulties to a significant number of UK Chinese people in accessing public services. The most obvious problem mentioned by respondents was communication difficulties with health workers. A respondent in Lincoln emphasised, **“the most difficult problem is to see doctors. The problem of language barrier”**. For Chinese people with higher education, they also found that it is hard to use some English words that match the meanings of Chinese expressions. For those with little or no English, they were frustrated by being unable to explain their health problems clearly to GPs. As a result, Chinese patients could only tell part of their health problems, while their GPs guessed their problems based on unclear and incomplete information. Similar findings were reported by Prior and her colleagues (1997: 69), who noticed that communication problems between Chinese patients and GPs led to “misinterpretation and misdiagnosis” and the patients did not know “the nature of their illness, its prognosis, or even the drugs prescribed”. In short, the respondents' health needs were only partly understood and treated. In recent years, the government had put much emphasis on equality of health as revealed from the commissioning of ‘Language Line’, the publications of ‘NHS Plan’, and ‘Delivering Race Equality: A Framework for Action’. According to the NHS Plan, free interpretation services will be available from all premises via NHS Direct by 2003 (The Secretary of State for Health, 2000). The Department of Health stresses:

**“All services should be culturally appropriate, reflecting the diversity of the population that they serve, and ensuring that services are accessible for those who do not have English as their first language. The Department is committed to building upon these principles”** (quoted in Home Office, 2002b).

However, the present study reveals that over the past 12 months, nearly one in three Chinese people encountered communication problems with medical professionals (table 9).

Data from the SSIs also shows the frustration of patients over treatment. The Commission for Health Improvement (CHI, 2002) also reported that patients and staff of a hospital trust “felt that prompt and appropriate interpreting for patients is not always available”. The Royal College of Nursing (RCN on Line, December 26, 2003) even urges the government to provide a high standard of interpretation service:

“Nurses and others find it hard to assess people’s needs in the absence of interpreters. The NHS does not have a national standard for the provision of interpreter services. On many occasions relatives and friends of patients have to be relied upon to act as translators, a situation which guarantees neither accuracy nor confidentiality”.

In order to tackle ‘the language barrier’, the research team believes that the Department of Health has to tackle several areas in order to achieve health equality:

**(a) A good quality of interpretation service**

As illustrated in this report, even respondents with higher education also found it difficult to express their health problems to GPs. The ability to speak two languages “is not the same as having professional interpreting skills” (Commission for Racial Equality, 1992: 35). This suggests that interpreters for NHS should have relevant qualifications or receive sufficient training on translation skills, medical knowledge and ethics. As Chinese people put much emphasis on ‘face’ and privacy, it is important for interpreters to accurately explain the health problems of Chinese patients to medical professionals and also strictly follow the code of confidentiality.

**(b) Clear information and effective delivery of interpretation services**

In addition to the present study, another study also concludes that “Language is the single most important barrier to access” health services (Prior et al., 1997). Thus, it is important to provide detailed information for Chinese patients about how to use the interpretation services in their areas. At present, different local authorities and different health organisations have their own initiatives addressing the language problem of ethnic minorities. In some areas, patients and GPs have to pay for interpretation expenses. As interpretation service is fundamental to access health care, patients and GPs may be deterred from using this service. Therefore, it is suggested that the Department of Health needs to assess the effectiveness of existing interpretation services, especially from the experiences of patients and health professionals, and works out a more effective way of delivering interpretation services to different health settings.

**(c) Chinese pamphlet on health services**

A Chinese pamphlet about the general services of the NHS and specific health services in each local authority should be produced and distributed to Chinese new immigrants and students with the help of Chinese communities, universities, and different health settings.

**(d) Chinese people’s health problems booklet**

A booklet about common health problems of Chinese people and their Chinese terms



and English descriptions should be produced for health workers. The booklet may also help Chinese patients to explain their physical conditions.

(e) **Chinese health information for health professionals**

Workshops and seminars on health practices of Chinese people and current diseases in Chinese communities should be organized for health workers. Michael Chan (1999: 9), Chairperson of the Chinese in Britain Forum, noticed that “Most British professionals are ignorant about the Chinese and their culture”. Also, one in ten Chinese respondents in this study lived in the UK for less than two years and a large number of Chinese students come to study here. More up-to-date information can enhance the knowledge of medical professionals on the health needs of Chinese people.

Systematic planning and also the involvement of relevant Chinese organizations are essential to meet the health needs of Chinese people in the UK. As David Codner, senior manager at Sheffield Health Authority, points out, “Race equality requires a long-term, strategic and system approach and should be visible in every aspect of service delivery” (NHS Magazine, January 25, 2002).

(f) **Chinese information on key services**

Apart from the NHS, respondents of this study also encountered ‘language barrier’ in using other social services. As a respondent requested, “**they should allow customers to use Chinese language. They should be able to provide this language service**”. Also, Ms Chow from Manchester hoped that “**if some documents are for Chinese families, both Chinese and English versions will be better**”. Thus, the police, the Inland Revenue and the Department for Transport have to provide Chinese materials on key services such as law and order, taxation, and public transportation. Such information is especially useful to older people who received little education in the past. A study found that over 90% of older people with little or no knowledge of English (Au & AU, 1995: 20); and over 70% said that they needed professional workers to translate letters. The provision of Chinese information on public services will be a crucial step to integrate the Chinese people into the UK society.

(g) **After-school study support for Chinese children**

As illustrated in the earlier part of this report, some parents were frustrated by their difficulties in assisting children’s homework. This created a special disadvantage to Chinese students whose parents have lower education and with a little knowledge of English. To tackle this issue, school teachers need to be aware of the needs of their Chinese students, especially to have regular meetings with their parents in order to understand their needs. Also, schools and Local Education Authorities (LEAs) have to get appropriate resources to help this group of students, being criticized as serving best large concentrations of ethnic minority pupils and being insufficient funding for non-English-language-related projects (Cabinet Office, 2003), has to provide more financial aid for ‘after-school study support’.

### (3) Family Pressures and Social Services

The present study shows that the UK Chinese families had to tackle various types of problems. The first problem was children's education (17% of respondents; see table 9). Some parents expected their children to have a better understanding of Chinese language and culture, which not only helped establish their children's identities but also enhanced their future employment opportunities. However, the provision of Chinese education was limited by the lack of finance and human resources of the UK Chinese organisations. As mentioned previously, Chinese parents with little English were frustrated by being unable to help with their children's homework. The problem created a lot of psychological pressures to both parents and children.

Findings in the PS show that a significant number of respondents encountered marital problems (20%). These problems were partly caused by financial strains as revealed by respondents of the SSIs. Other sources of family tensions were relationship problems between respondents and their children (15%) as well as between respondents and their parents (11%).

The ideology of independence among the younger generation and the inadequacy of old age homes for older people create more pressures on the UK Chinese families. Further, 14% of respondents had pressures on caring for sick family members. All in all, the UK Chinese families have to meet demands on children education, parenting, marital problems and caring for old and sick members. Thus, the caring capacity of the UK Chinese families is being challenged. This study shows that respondents' family members were relatively small; nearly a half of them could only get support from less than 2 family members (chart 6). Also, 18% of respondents would seek help from family members who, in fact, were living in other countries (chart 7). These figures suggest that although mutual help spirit among the UK Chinese families is still very strong (see table 11 about the types of assistance), the actual caring capacity of Chinese families is limited by a small family network and, to some families, by geographical barrier. Against this background, social services badly needed to tackle the increasing pressures of the UK Chinese families.

The provision of services to the UK Chinese people has to take several factors into account. The first is language. Welfare providers should understand Chinese culture and be able to communicate effectively with their clients. A respondent of this study stressed,

**“It will be great if there are some Chinese organizations can help us. Most Chinese people living in the UK don't have sufficient English. If there are some persons or organizations in each city that can help Chinese people, it will be better”.**

The second factor is location. The settlement patterns of the UK Chinese people are 'concentrated in big cities' and 'dispersed in small areas'. In other words, services should meet the needs of Chinese people who are living in small cities and towns.

#### (a) The establishment of two types of Chinese Social Work Teams

It is suggested that social work teams which provide counselling services and welfare

advocacy for the UK Chinese families should be set up. There will be two types of teams due to the settlement features of the UK Chinese people. The first type is to provide services in an area where a large number of Chinese people are living (e.g. London). The second type is regional teams to provide services for Chinese people living in several small cities/towns. Due to the dispersed settlement, workers of regional teams need to adopt an outreach working approach by travelling to needy Chinese families. The Cabinet Office (2003: 132) also recognized the importance of this approach: “Communicating with ethnic minorities, particularly those living on deprived areas, often requires an active outreach effort”.

**(b) Family life education programmes**

Local authorities and relevant voluntary agencies can work with Chinese community associations by providing family education programmes for Chinese residents, especially in the areas of parenting and marital relations.

**(c) Services for older Chinese people**

Older people are another group who deserve a special attention. About one in ten Chinese respondents of this study was aged over 65 (table 6). Owing to the small family size and the deteriorating relationships between parents and children, caring for older people will be a demanding duty for the UK Chinese community. More old age homes are needed for older people who are unable to take care of themselves. Also, more social and cultural activities are essential to the well-being of Chinese old people. Thus, Chinese community organizations should take an active role in revealing the needs of older Chinese people to relevant local authorities and national voluntary organizations.

**(d) National advocacy group for older Chinese people**

Older Chinese people have to use collective power by forming their own national welfare group in order to monitor the welfare work of both central and local governments and reveal their needs to relevant bodies.

**(4) Chinese Community Organisations: New Challenges and Development**

About one in four respondents in this study used services of Chinese organizations last year (chart 15). This means that such organizations are still playing a crucial welfare role, especially on the provision of social and recreational activities as well as language classes (table 12).

However, the relationship between these organizations and the Chinese people in the UK was relatively weak and also limited to particular Chinese groups. It was evident that only 11% of respondents would seek assistance from Chinese organizations when needed. Moreover, these organizations suffer limited financial and human resources. In the UK, most Chinese organizations are run by volunteers with inadequate training. For example, according to a respondent in Lincoln, **“Our problem is without a permanent office. If someone needs help, he doesn’t know where he has to go to”**. A respondent in Manchester stressed, **“Chinese school isn’t very formal. Everything isn’t very good**

**such as the quality of teaching staff and textbooks. All of these can't satisfy the users and need improvements".** Another respondent in the same city added: **"The school has provided education for several years. However, it lacks resources so that its facilities are poor. In winter, the school is too cold for the students to study"**. A recent study (London Chinese Community Network & Lincoln University, 2002: 50) on the nature and services of Chinese voluntary organizations also points out:

**"It is crystal clear that the development of Chinese organizations has been severely hampered by financial strains and uncertainties, which adversely affect their long-term planning as well as the employment of qualified workers"**.

**(a) More financial support for Chinese organisation**

To tackle the service limitations of Chinese organisations, more financial support from central and local governments is badly needed in order to support their services.

**(b) Chinese organisations need to respond to the diversity of Chinese community**

More importantly, the existing services of the UK Chinese organizations have to respond to the needs of Chinese people with different backgrounds. Respondents in the SSIs, especially those coming from Mainland China, found that Chinese organizations in the UK were, in fact, 'Cantonese organisations'. Chinese people from Mainland China mainly speak Mandarin. Those from Singapore and Malaysia speak both English and Mandarin. On the other hand, Hong Kong people speak Cantonese. Because of language and socio-economic differences, non-Hong Kong Chinese people lack a sense of belonging, and were also being excluded from the welfare services of existing Chinese community organisations. This explains why only 4.2% of respondents from Singapore and Malaysia used services of Chinese organizations last year (table 22). In Cardiff, people from Mainland China even established their own school for teaching Mandarin to their children. This was because their children had difficulties in understanding Cantonese, which is also not the official language of China. Thus, the existing Chinese organisations need to change their management and services in order to meet the changing needs of the UK Chinese community:

- (i) Chinese organisations have to conduct detailed studies about the expectations and needs of Chinese people from various countries of origin. In this way, they are able to provide culturally sensitive services to different Chinese groups.
- (ii) They need more diverse workforce/volunteers in order to communicate effectively with their users.
- (iii) To enhance their credibility, Cantonese-oriented organisations need to co-opt leaders from different Chinese groups into their advisory bodies or even management committees.
- (iv) Faced with similar limitations on financial and human resources, Chinese organizations from various backgrounds need to strengthen their co-operation. As a respondent in Cardiff suggested, social organizations set up by Chinese people

from Hong Kong and Mainland China should strengthen their co-operation. In this way, more resources could be obtained as a result of ‘more participants and more money’.

- (v) The above mentioned study (London Chinese Community Network & Lincoln University, 2002) emphasizes that the UK Chinese organizations need to modernize themselves by learning new management skills and improving the qualifications of their staff members.

## **(5) Work Pressures and Social Services**

As a ‘successful ethnic minority’, the UK Chinese people have to tackle a lot of work pressures and family demands. Findings of this study show that Chinese people in the UK had to work for long and unsocial hours. The work pressures, as expressed by respondents in the SSIs, were partly related to Chinese people needing to perform better than their colleagues in order to receive equal treatment and get promotion opportunities. Also, their disadvantages in English language also impose on them an additional work pressure.

Chinese people running take-away businesses found that it was extremely difficult to balance work and the family. Their unsocial working hours constrained their communications with their children. This might partly explain why a significant number of respondents had difficulties in parenting and also had relationship problems with their children. Thus, it is suggested that:

- (a) Special services should be provided by voluntary organizations and Chinese associations in parenting and children’s education.
- (b) Support groups are also important to Chinese women, especially those who are living in dispersed areas and also have to fulfil work and caring duties.

## **(6) The Variation of Needs and Specific Services**

Findings of the present study clearly show that there are obvious differences among Chinese people from different countries of origin in terms of education, income, English abilities, and needs (tables 15-23). As for English language standard, over four-fifths of Chinese respondents from Malaysia and Singapore had proficient spoken and written English. On the other hand, nearly half of respondents from Hong Kong and Mainland China claimed themselves to have poor/very poor English. Previous studies already pointed out that language barrier had prevented Chinese people from fulfilling their welfare rights. Findings of this study suggest that:

- (a) Public welfare providers such as the Department for Education and Skills and Jobcentre Plus have to target the most disadvantaged Chinese groups by putting more resources to help Hong Kong and Mainland Chinese people to develop better language skills. Over four in ten respondents of these two groups had ‘communication difficulties with health workers’.

- (b) Local authorities and NHS hospitals need to have a sufficient number of interpreters who are able to master Cantonese, Mandarin and Hakka.

The study also reveals a significant number of Hong Kong Chinese people suffered lower education and poor income. Most of them were working in the catering industry with long and unsocial working hours. The evidence suggests that they were the most disadvantaged group in the UK Chinese community. Thus, suitable welfare services should be developed to tackle their problems such as work pressures, children's education and parenting.

Findings of the study further show that the family is still the most basic caring unit to the UK Chinese people. Nearly 70% of respondents would seek help from their family members when needed (table 10). More importantly, most respondents and their family members were living in the same villages/towns or cities (chart 7). Although this evidence suggests that respondents can get support from family members in a short distance, not every Chinese group has this type of benefit. It is suggest that:

(c) **Special attention to the needs of Mainland Chinese people**

This study found that 33% of Chinese people from Mainland China had been living in the UK for less than 5 years. As a result, they had few social ties compared with other Chinese groups (especially Hong Kong Chinese people) who had been living in the UK for more than 11 years. Thus, welfare organisations need to pay more attention to this group of Chinese people whose family support is relatively weak, and who need more time to adjust to a new environment.

(d) **Investigating the needs of Mainland Chinese students**

In recent years, more and more Mainland Chinese students come to study in the UK. Unlike Chinese students from Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia, who have some knowledge of UK and also have better English because of colonial history, Mainland Chinese students have to cope with language difficulties and adapt to a new social environment. Although some Mainland Chinese students in this study had expressed their worries on finance and study, a comprehensive study with a bigger sample size is required to enhance our understanding of their problems and work out appropriate arrangements to meet their needs.

## **Conclusion**

Findings of the present study reveal that the UK Chinese families face various types of difficulties, especially in finance, work pressures, race discrimination/harassment, and relationship problems with family members. Even though mutual help spirit among family members is still strong as evident from the types of assistance and the concentration of family members in the same towns/cities, the small family size, the increasing tension among family members on parenting and caring and, the lack of family support of a significant number of respondents (their family members were living overseas) means that external help is necessary in order to maintain the functions of Chinese families. Thus,

central and local governments need to set up regional social work teams to address the needs of Chinese families, especially those who are living in dispersed areas.

The New Labour Government's objectives on 'Delivering race equality and better community relations' (Guardian, 17 October 2003) are constrained by limited resources (e.g. inadequate financial support for interpretation services) and, fundamentally, a weak race equality culture and work practices among public service providers such as the Police, the NHS and local authorities. It was reported that at least half of the frontline staff from ethnic minorities were victims of racial harassment (Guardian, 25 June, 2001) and many council members resented race awareness and other diversity training (Guardian, October 16, 2003). This helps explain why 40% of councils only reached the first of five levels of the Commission for Racial Equality's good practice standard. The Audit Commission's report on equality and diversity stresses that "local authorities still have a long way to go to meet their legal duties on equality and cater for the needs of their communities" (Audit Commission, 2003). In short, public services providers are not ready or even unwilling to accept UK as a multi-cultural society. That will be a great barrier to race equality and to the integration of different ethnic groups into society. As revealed in this study, victims of racial abuse were angry with the reactions of the police and did not trust the criminal justice system. The present study shows that some respondents received medical treatment in China. Another research study reported that young people who encountered race discrimination planned to get jobs in Hong Kong (Pang, 1993). It seems that institutional racism rather than 'language barrier' is the most fundamental factor excluding UK Chinese people from accessing mainstream social services, and also weakening their sense of belonging.

The diversity of Chinese people in this study suggests that we need to have a better understanding of an ethnic group. In this way, their needs can be accurately assessed and appropriate services developed. As pointed out by Trevor Phillips, Chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality, "**Action is needed to ensure that services are accessible, adequate and appropriate to the needs of all the users and reflect their diverse needs**" (The Guardian, October 17, 2003).

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## **Acknowledgements**

This project could not have been completed without the financial support from the Economic & Social Research Council (ESRC) and the involvement of many individuals and organisations at different stages of the study.

We would like to express our warm thanks to members of our Research Advisory Group, who provide stimulating and valuable comments on questionnaire design and drafted reports. Members of the Advisory Committee are as follows:

Mr. Tom Cheung, Acting Co-ordinator of the London Chinese Community Network;  
Mr. Thomas Chan, Chairman of the Chinese Takeaway Association (UK) and Director of the TCA Consultancy;  
Mr. Jabez Lam, welfare worker of the Monitoring Group; and  
Dr. Ruby Chau, Lecturer at the Department of Sociological Studies, University of Sheffield.

We are grateful to Mrs Joan Yuqiong Chen for providing various types of assistance in the process of conducting this research project such as sampling, conducting interviews, and clerical and editorial assistance.

We thank the following interviewers for conducting semi-structured interviews in London, Manchester, Cardiff and Lincolnshire:

Mr. Gang Bi,  
Mr. Ruixiang Chen,  
Mr. Quan Shao,  
Mr. Jing Ma,  
Mr. Paul Wong and  
Miss Ying Chi.

Our gratitude also goes to Prof. Pat Higham and Mr. Nigel Horner for their support for this project.

Most gratitude should go to interviewees who took part in this study and expressed their concerns on the well-being of the UK Chinese people. That is also the most important objective of this research project through which we hope that the voices of Chinese people can be heard and their needs be met.

Chak Kwan Chan  
Graham Bowpitt  
Bankole Cole  
Peter Somerville  
Joan Yuqiong Chen  
February 2004

# Research Summary

## **Research Background, Objectives & Methodology**

### **Research Background**

#### The Caring Capacity of Chinese Families

- Recently, the UK Chinese people have been portrayed as being ‘**a successful ethnic minority**’ (Cheng, 1996) in terms of low unemployment rate, high income, and good education. As a result, they should no longer be described as ‘**a disadvantaged group**’ (Modood, 1997c: 342).
- However, the actual needs of Chinese families might have been underestimated because of their language and cultural barriers in seeking help from public service providers.
- It is essential to explore how the UK Chinese families cope with their problems and assess the effectiveness of their supportive networks.

#### The Diversity of UK Chinese People

- The UK Chinese people are ‘not a homogeneous group’, but ‘a highly heterogeneous group’ with diverse origins and cultural backgrounds.
- Previous research studies mainly explored the needs of Hong Kong Chinese people. In this way, the study of the UK Chinese community has become the study of UK Hong Kong Chinese people. The social and psychological behaviour of the Hong Kong Chinese has been generalised and applied to other UK Chinese groups.
- Thus, there is an urgent need to differentiate the Chinese people into various subgroups, which is crucial to the development of culturally appropriate services.

#### The Role and Functions of UK Chinese Voluntary Organizations

- In the UK, there are a significant number of Chinese organisations providing various types of services.
- However, the relationships between Chinese families and these organisations have not been fully explored.
- By studying Chinese people’s help-seeking behaviours, the role and contributions of UK Chinese organisations in relation to Chinese families can be better understood.

#### Racism & Help-seeking Behaviors

- Some studies pointed out that the language barrier and traditional welfare ideologies prevented Chinese people seeking help from government departments.
- Instead of the language barrier, the help seeking behaviours of Chinese families

might be adversely affected by institutional racism of public service providers and limited social services available for ethnic minorities.

- This study tried to explore the extent of racial discrimination among public services providers and examine the effectiveness of the existing social welfare for the Chinese community.

### **Research Objectives**

- (1) To investigate the needs of the UK Chinese people.
- (2) To examine the help-seeking behaviours of the UK Chinese people and their supportive networks.
- (3) To explore the needs and socio-economic differences between Chinese people from various origins.
- (4) To explore the impact of racism on UK Chinese families' help-seeking behaviours.

### **Methodology**

#### Postal Survey (PS)

- A postal survey was used to investigate the types of problems of the UK Chinese people and their supportive networks.
- 2,500 postal questionnaires were sent to Chinese households in 20 areas composed of three groups.
- Group A included 5 areas with a Chinese population over 5,000 each; Group B had 5 areas with 2,000 – 5,000 each; Group C had 15 areas, with less than 2,000 each.
- The Chinese households in these areas were randomly selected based on their surnames in the BT Telephone Directory which also included customers of other operators.
- A total of 316 out of 2,162 valid households returned their questionnaires between July and September 2003. The successful rate was 14.6%

#### Semi-Structured Interview (SSI)

- The SSI aimed to detail key issues such as the nature of respondents' problems, their processes of seeking help, and the effectiveness of their supportive networks.
- 100 face to face interviews were conducted in four regions with different degrees of concentration of Chinese people.
- Recent official figures showed that 40.5% of Chinese people were living in London and Manchester compared with less than 1% in Cardiff and Lincolnshire.
- Again, respondents of the SSI were randomly drawn from the BT Telephone Directory based on their Chinese surnames.
- A total of 100 out of 229 contacted cases were interviewed between April and June 2003. The successful rate was 44%.

## **The Characteristics of Respondents**

### **Age & Education**

- Data from both PS and SSI showed that most respondents were at an economically active age with just about 10% were over 66.
- The respondents from the two samples had a low rate of 'co-habitation' (6% - 7%) and 'divorce' (6% - 7%).
- 46% of respondents in the PS were graduates, and 18% were below the primary education level.
- Only 15% of respondents in the PS received a monthly household income (after tax) more than £3,000.

### **Countries of Origin**

- Hong Kong Chinese people made up over 50% of respondents in the two samples.
- 19% of respondents from the PS and 30% of respondents from the SSI were Mainland Chinese people.
- 9% of respondent in the PS were from Singapore and Malaysia.
- 13% of respondents from the PS and 5% from the SSI were born in the UK.

### **Duration of Residence & Spoken Languages**

- 43% of respondents in the PS had been living in the UK for more than 21 years. Only 10% of them lived in the UK for less than 2 years.
- Cantonese and Mandarin were the two most popular languages: 71% and 31% of respondents in the PS spoke Cantonese and Mandarin respectively.

## **Needs & Problem-Solving Strategies**

### **Financial & Business Issues**

- When asked what types of problems which they encountered last year, 40% of respondents in the PS had financial difficulties.
- 24 out of 100 respondents from the SSI also had concerns about finances.
- Data from the SSI showed that the first group of respondents who worried about finance was older people who found that their pensions were too low to lead a decent life.
- An older respondent from Cardiff expressed:

**“My income is so small. I am very old now. All my children were not in here. They also have to take care of their own families. Please tell me what could I do? Please tell me?”**

- The second group was students who found that tuition fees and living costs were too high to cope with.
- Self-employed respondents worried about their businesses.
- Respondents who encountered financial hardship were unwilling to seek help from the statutory sector. Instead, they spent less on daily necessities, got financial support from family members and friends, or worked harder to get more income.

### **Communication Difficulties with Health Professionals**

- 32% of respondents had health problems over the past 12 months.
- 29% of respondents had communication difficulties with medical professionals.
- A respondent in Lincoln described the problem to be ‘very worrying’:

**“You know there are a lot of medical terms that we don’t understand. We don’t know the meanings of these terms. Of course, we can’t clearly explain our needs. The doctor doesn’t understand our problems. Sometimes, they have to guess. As a result, some health problems can’t be treated by right medicines”.**

- Parents would ask their children for help on English translation.
- For minor health problems, some would buy medicines by themselves.
- Respondents who came from Mainland China did not have confidence in the quality of NHS services. Rather, they visited China to solve their health problems.
- A respondent from Cardiff said:

**“He [the GP] did not treat it; I had my treatment in China. We can only solve the problem in this way. If it is a minor issue, we see doctors in China. Even detailed medical examinations...we also have them done in China. Over the past two years, we had our medical consultations in China, not in here”.**

### **Racial Discrimination/Harassment/Attacks**

- 18% of respondent from the PS experienced racial discrimination and 12% were racially harassed or attacked.
- 29 out of 100 respondents from the SSI encountered racial problems over the past 12 months.
- Data from the SSI revealed that the common type of racial harassment towards Chinese people was language abuse by strangers on the streets.
- A respondent in Cardiff said, **“People walking on the streets will say some rude words to me”.**
- Children and young people were the main language abusers of Chinese people and also the main attackers at Chinese takeaways. 12 out of 29 racial incidences from the SSI involved children and young people.
- Despite a few respondents taking immediate actions on racial abuse, most respondents took no actions but reluctantly accepted the loss of personal belongings and suffered psychological pressures.



- As a respondent stressed,
 

**“This problem [racial incident)] has existed for a very long time. An incident happened today. Some children scratched my nephew’s car. Children living in here know that we are Chinese people. They attacked the car while going to school and returning home. Seriously speaking, it is a criminal offence. We Chinese people are helpless but have to accept the losses”.**
- The sense of helplessness among the respondents might be related to their negative experiences with the police. Most respondents were extremely disappointed with the police’s reactions to racial harassment.
- A respondent from Lincoln angrily pointed out,
 

**“The UK police are absolutely rubbish. I think most of them are useless, failing to provide any help for me. I called the police. They, however, didn’t come or came only after a few hours. When they came, the attackers had already gone. Very often, I called the police; they said that they were too busy to come to my shop. They can’t handle my case in this way”.**
- Leaving the UK might be one of the reactions of some Chinese people. Because her husband was being discriminated at work, Mrs. Cheung from London said that she feared her children would face the similar problem. She further stated, **“My daughter now feels this problem. Thus, she may go to work in China, Shanghai, or America in the future”.**

### **Caring for family members**

- 15% of respondents in the postal survey had difficulties in parenting and 17% in helping children with their studies.
- A mother from Lincoln stressed,
 

**“My children don’t know how to do their homework. Nor do I. I don’t know how to help them. They cried and I got no idea on this problem. To me, my children’s homework is a very worrying issue”.**
- Parents who run family businesses found that their working hours constrained their caring duties.
- Another mother stated,
 

**“Strictly speaking, I am a full-time mother, a full-time wife, and a full-time Shop Assistant...Thus, I don’t have sufficient time for my daughter. I am very sorry about this”.**
- As for children’s education, a lot of respondents worried about their children’s standard of the Chinese language. They wanted their children to learn more Chinese. That was also considered to be an investment for their children’s future.

- 14% of respondents had pressures on caring for sick family members.

### **Work Pressures**

- 32% of respondents in the PS had work pressures.
- 37% of respondents from the SSI worked more than 5 days a week; 32% worked over 45 hours a week.
- A respondent said, “**Long working hours without personal time. Only for the job**”.

## **Needs and Social Support Networks**

### **Sources of Support When Needed**

- If respondents needed assistance, 69% of them would approach family members.
- 11% of respondents would seek help from Chinese organizations; and only 6% would get assistance from people coming from the same hometowns or villages.
- Interestingly, 56% of respondents would get help from friends and 16% from neighbours.

### **Support from the Family**

- 76% (240) of respondents in the postal survey got assistance from family members last year.
- Concerning the types of assistance, 43% got emotional support; 27% were accompanied by family members to clinics/hospitals, and 24% got assistance on English translation.
- More importantly, 28% of them obtained financial support from family members.
- Data from the SSI revealed that the respondents’ families were not very big: 45% only had 1 or 2 family members. Overall, 84% of respondents had 4 or less family members.
- This small number of family members was compensated by a high degree of family members concentrated in the same towns, villages or cities: 50% of respondents from the SSI had family members lived in the same towns/villages; 16% lived in the same cities.

### **Support from Friends & Neighbours**

- 56% of respondents from the PS and 64% from the SSI claimed that they would seek help from friends when needed.
- Data from the SSI showed that 68% of respondents had more than 4 friends.
- 86% of respondents had friends living in the same villages/towns/cities.
- 61% of respondents had ‘good/very good’ relationship with their neighbours.
- 60% of them believed their neighbours would help them when needed.

### **Respondents' Relationship with Chinese Organizations**

- 25% (80) of respondents from the PS used services of the UK's Chinese organizations last year.
- They mainly used services such as religious activities (28%), leisure and cultural activities (28%), Chinese class (25%), English class (20%), and welfare advocacy (20%).
- Data from the SSI demonstrated that the UK Chinese organizations enrich the social and cultural life of the Chinese people and also helped those with little English to obtain services from the mainstream society.
- However, most Chinese organizations consisted of Hong Kong people; their services could not meet the needs of Chinese people from other countries, especially those from Mainland China.
- A respondent pointed out, **“Chinese people in here [Cardiff] are mainly from Guang Dong and Hong Kong. So it is difficult for me to understand them”**.
- In recent years, an organization called Chinese Scholars and Students' Association (CSSA) was set up to meet the needs of Mainland Chinese people.

### **Respondents' Relationship with the Statutory Sector/Non-Chinese Voluntary Organizations**

- 54% (173) of respondents from the PS used services of non-Chinese voluntary organizations and the statutory sector.
- 59% (98) of them used health related services.
- 41% (71) of them claimed that they encountered 'language barrier' in the process of using the services.
- A respondent in the SSI stressed that **“because of language barrier, I can't clearly explain to them my problems”**.
- Only 12% (20) of respondents in the PS used 'Arts & cultural activities'.

### **The Diversity of the UK Chinese People**

- Hong Kong Chinese people had a smaller proportion of young adults (19%) but a bigger proportion of older people (13%) compared to other Chinese groups.
- Chinese people from Mainland China were relatively young: 57% were under 36 years old; only 3% aged over 66.
- 73% of Singapore/Malaysia Chinese people and 65% of UK born Chinese people were educated to Bachelor degree level or above.
- However, 30% of Hong Kong Chinese people had only received education to primary level or below in contrast to less than 10% of other Chinese groups.
- Most respondents from Hong Kong (75%) and all respondents from Singapore & Malaysia (100%) had lived in the UK for over 10 years.
- On the contrary, most Chinese people from Mainland China (54%) had lived in the

- UK for less than 6 years.
- While 88% of Chinese people from Singapore and Malaysia claimed their spoken and written English was 'very good'; only 26% of Chinese people from Hong Kong and 30% from Mainland China made the same claim.
- Over 40% of Chinese people from Singapore, Malaysia, UK, and other countries had a monthly income (after tax) of over £2,000 in contrast to only 25% of those from Hong Kong and Mainland China.
- UK born Chinese people were most likely to encounter financial problems (61%), followed by work pressures (42%), and then relationship problems with partner/spouse (29%) and
- Chinese people from Hong Kong and Mainland China more likely faced communications problems with health workers (40% and 44%) and race discrimination (24%).
- Business problem was common among Hong Kong Chinese people as well as those from Singapore and Malaysia (21% and 27%).
- Chinese people from Mainland China and other countries more likely encountered unemployment (25% and 29%).
- Chinese people from Singapore and other countries more likely had relationship problems with colleagues (29% and 35%).
- More Chinese people from Singapore, Malaysia, and other countries would seek help from their family members (90.9% and 83.3%).
- Friends were an important network to Chinese people from China, Singapore and Malaysia, and other countries (66.7% - 72.7%).
- Some Hong Kong Chinese people (23%) and Mainland Chinese people (14%) would seek assistance from the UK Chinese organizations.

## **Discussion & Recommendations**

### **Race Discrimination**

More effective indicators are crucial to assess the quality of police services, including:

- (1) The speed of action in response to racial incidents.
- (2) Follow up actions on racial incidents.
- (3) Effective legal and psychological support.
- (4) Effective training and practices on race equality.

Several steps should be taken to tackle the racist behaviours of young people:

- (1) Race equality education at schools should involve both parents and children.
- (2) The effectiveness of race education in schools should be evaluated and good practices on this aspect can be shared.
- (3) Immediate actions should be taken by both parents and the police on racial incidents caused by children and young people.
- (4) Effective training for school teachers to provide guidance and support for young

victims.

Chinese organizations can play an active role in helping Chinese victims:

- (1) Providing social and psychological support for Chinese victims.
- (2) Monitoring the police's work on racial crimes.

### **Communication Problems & Public Services**

The Department of Health has to take several initiatives to help Chinese people to access public health services, and to enhance health workers' awareness of the needs of Chinese patients:

- (1) A good quality of interpretation service.
- (2) Clear information on using interpretation services and their effective delivery to various types of health settings.
- (3) The publication of Chinese pamphlets about the existing NHS services in general and specific health services in each local area.
- (4) The publication of a booklet about common health problems of Chinese people and their Chinese terms and English descriptions should be provided for health workers.
- (5) Workshops and seminars on the health practices of Chinese people and current diseases in Chinese communities should be organised for health professionals
- (6) Also, the police, the Inland Revenue and the Department for Transport have to provide Chinese users with Chinese information on law and order, taxation, and public transportation.

### **Family Pressures and Social Services**

- (1) Two types of social work teams which provide counselling services and welfare advocacy for the UK Chinese families should be set up. The first type is to provide services in an area where a large number of Chinese people are living. The second type is regional teams which provide services for Chinese people living in several small cities/towns.
- (2) Local authorities and relevant voluntary agencies can work with Chinese community associations by providing family education programmes.
- (3) Older Chinese people need to set up a national advocacy group to voice their needs to central and local governments, and non-government organisations.

### **Chinese Community Organisations**

- (1) More financial support from central and local governments is badly needed to support the work of Chinese organisations.
- (2) In response to the diversity of UK Chinese people, the existing Chinese organisations need to take several actions:
  - (a) Conduct detailed studies about the expectations and needs of Chinese people from

- various countries of origin.
- (b) Recruit more diverse workforce/volunteers to communicate effectively with their users.
  - (c) Co-opt Chinese people from different countries of origin into their management committees.
  - (d) Strengthen the co-operation among Chinese organizations from various backgrounds.
  - (e) Modernize themselves by learning new managing skills and improving the qualifications of their staff.

### **Work Pressures and Social Services**

- (1) Family life education programmes should be provided for Chinese people running take-away businesses, especially about parenting and children education.
- (2) Support groups are also important to Chinese women, especially those who are living in dispersed areas and have to fulfil both work and caring duties.

### **The Variation of Needs and Specific Services**

- (1) Public welfare providers such as the Department for Education and Skills and the Jobcentre Plus have to target the most disadvantaged Chinese groups by putting more resources to help Hong Kong and Mainland Chinese people to improve their English standard.
- (2) Local authorities and NHS hospitals need to have a sufficient number of interpreters who are able to master Cantonese, Mandarin and Hakka.
- (3) Chinese community organisations need to pay more attention to Mainland Chinese people whose family support is relatively weak, and who need more time to adapt to a new environment.
- (4) A comprehensive study with a bigger sample size is required to enhance our understanding of students from Mainland China.

# Sheffield Hallam University

*The UK Chinese people: diversity and unmet needs*

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