



**LEADERS  
UNLOCKED**

# **THE STUDENT COMMISSION ON RACIAL JUSTICE**

**YOUNG PEOPLE'S VOICES**

**ON RACIAL JUSTICE**

**FINAL REPORT  
JUNE 2021**





# INTRODUCTION

The Student Commission on Racial Justice is a student-led initiative which aims to generate insights and solutions to challenge racial injustice in England. Leaders Unlocked collaborated with **10 leading colleges** from across the country. They are Barnsley College, Birmingham Metropolitan College, Kirklees College, Lambeth College, Leyton Sixth Form College, London South East Colleges, Long Road Sixth Form College, New City College, The Sheffield College and York College.

The project aimed to:

- Provide a platform for students to work collectively to tackle racial injustice through social action.
- Explore young people's experiences across four key areas: education, employment, health, policing and justice.
- Develop recommendations to challenge racial injustice and disseminate these in a final report and showcase event.
- Engage the wider college community in open conversations about racial justice and allyship.

The project has taken a youth-led approach at every stage. Student 'Commissioners' have co-designed the peer research, analysed the data, decided the project's findings and recommendations, and presented the results to stakeholders. They have also created an animation and education package to engage the wider student community.

The Student Commission on Racial Justice is delivered by social enterprise Leaders Unlocked. Leaders Unlocked enables young people to have a stronger voice on the issues that affect them. For more information, please see [www.leaders-unlocked.org](http://www.leaders-unlocked.org)

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report has been co-produced by Leaders Unlocked and Commissioners. It is based on evidence gathered from over **3000 young people aged 16-25** across England. Each section features key findings and verbatim quotes from young people. The final part of the report outlines the recommendations that Commissioners have identified for the education, employment, health, policing and justice sectors.

This report is intended to act as an unmediated record of what young people have told us through the Student Commission process. It is also intended to be the starting point for further thought and action on the part of decision-makers and professionals working in relevant sectors.

During this project, the UK government released its own findings on race and ethnic disparity. The report of the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities states, "we understand the idealism of those well-intentioned young people who have held on to, and amplified, this inter-generational mistrust. However, we also have to ask whether a narrative that claims nothing has changed for the better, and that the dominant feature of our society is institutional racism and White privilege, will achieve anything beyond alienating the decent centre ground – a centre ground which is occupied by people of all races and ethnicities."<sup>1</sup> The Commission challenges this assertion, and we urge the government and other agencies to hear the voices of the young people who have shared their experiences of racial injustice with us.

During the peer research we asked respondents to tell us if they identified as being **Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME)**. Therefore, for the purposes of this report we have used the term BAME. The Commission is discussing the usefulness of this term and in the next phase of the project, they will decide whether to use the term BAME or adopt different terminology.

# WHAT WE DID

## RECRUITING STUDENT COMMISSIONERS

We recruited over **40 students**, from the **10 leading colleges** via a two-stage process. Students completed an application form and telephone interview with Leaders Unlocked. **83% of the Commissioners are BAME**, the group includes young people in the care system, with disabilities, who are LGBTQ+ and with mental health conditions.

## CO-DESIGNING THE PEER RESEARCH

We held several co-design sessions to define the research questions and design the method. The group decided to develop an online survey and face-to-face interview questions. The online survey had **29 questions**, including a mix of quantitative and qualitative questions. The face-to-face interview had **15 questions** and aimed to achieve depth and openness in the conversations. Please see Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 for a copy of the questions. These methods were easily deployable during lockdown – the survey was quick and simple to complete on mobile devices and face-to-face interviews took place virtually or within isolation bubbles.

## SKILLS TRAINING

Leaders Unlocked provided Commissioners with skills training to enable them to be successful in their role and support them with their personal development. This training incorporated a range of skills including conducting interviews, active listening, presenting, public speaking and debating.

## CONDUCTING THE PEER RESEARCH

The online survey was launched on 8th February 2021 and was open for **7 weeks** until April 5th. Over this period, the survey generated **2474** valid responses from young people aged **16-25 years**. We had invaluable help from the **10 leading colleges** who shared the survey with their students. It was also promoted by a variety of local, regional, and national organisations who helped to distribute the survey through their social media channels and networks of young people. Respondents were 16-25 years and came from a diverse range of backgrounds and communities.

- 32% identified as Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic
- 10% identified as LGBTQ+
- 7% identified as having disabilities
- 2% said they had criminal justice experience

Commissioners conducted face-to-face interviews in February 2021 with friends and family members. They reached **184** other young people aged 16-25.



## EDUCATION PACKAGE AND ANIMATION

To engage the wider college community, the Commission produced an education package and delivered training to **130 staff members** in their colleges. Commissioners developed a student workshop, allyship guidance (please see appendix 3) and staff training. Commissioners worked with professionals to create an animation which illustrates the daily microaggressions experienced by BAME young people in England. To view the animation please go to: **It All Adds Up - The Student Commission on Racial Justice**

In May, trained staff in the colleges started to roll-out the workshop with students. As part of these workshops, we gathered the views of **392** students who told us their big ideas to challenge racial injustice in England.

## DEVELOPING OUR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In April, we held interim findings meetings with key stakeholders from education, employment, health, policing and justice. Commissioners had the opportunity to present their findings to an audience of approximately **45** representatives from stakeholder organisations in each of these sectors. The response was hugely positive and created engagement prior to the launch of this report.

In May, we held an analysis session with the Commissioners to look at the findings and big ideas gathered from the student workshops. Commissioners worked together to develop and agree the most important recommendations to put forward.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to everyone who has supported the Student Commission on Racial Justice.

We would like to thank the 10 colleges and the following organisations and groups who supported us with ideas, networks or resources for the project.



Angel of Youths  
 Association of Colleges  
 Birmingham Aspiring Youth Council  
 Birmingham City Council  
 British Youth Council  
 Business in the Community  
 Candidate X  
 ChilyPep  
 ClearView Research  
 Colourful Minds  
 Department for Education  
 EQUAL  
 Gendered Intelligence  
 GlaxoSmithKline  
 Grant Thornton  
 Independent Office for Police Conduct

London's Violence Reduction Unit  
 Mental Health Foundation  
 MESMAC  
 National Police Chiefs Council  
 NHS England,  
 Ofsted  
 SAYIT  
 The Network of Networks  
 The Youth Association (West Yorkshire)  
 Voyage Youth  
 Wakefield College  
 YorQueer  
 Young People's Health  
 Race Equality Foundation  
 Youth Justice Board

A very special thanks goes to the Commissioners and Peer Facilitators who have offered their time and talents into making this project a success.

Adrienne Dorsett  
 Alberta Sesay  
 Alina Hussain  
 Ana-Maria Lupu  
 Anthonia Minott  
 Aqueelah Abid  
 Arjola Alijaj  
 Atif Bashir  
 Ayesha Chowdhury  
 Byron Rollock-Toby  
 Carlos Moo  
 Clarkson Majomi  
 Collins Okechukwu  
 Ebubekir Cetinkaya  
 Ellison Dawson  
 Fatoumata Diba

Grace Kali  
 Gulcan Genc  
 Ibrahim Uddin  
 Jade Cross  
 Jade Fitt  
 Jadesola Oloko  
 Jazmine Greenwood  
 Jennifer Legband  
 Jessica Longshaw  
 Jordan Beach  
 Jordan Mubenga  
 Judith Appiah  
 Laiba Bibi  
 Larissa Tairo  
 Louis McIntosh  
 Lydia Banjo

Malak Saleh  
 Marika Bilska  
 Mohammed Ramzan  
 Monica Bugain  
 Olakunle Giwa  
 Olivia Gomes  
 Omari Henry  
 Princess Folawiyo  
 Romaine Murchison  
 Sarah Hack  
 Shanon Stoby  
 Tasha Cowperthwaite  
 Tosin Gbaja  
 Uzma Parveen  
 Yasmin Walker  
 Zara Arif



Images have been taken  
from - 'It All Adds Up'



# EDUCATION

## OUR FINDINGS

### **Staff can have expectations of students based on their ethnicity or race.**

Respondents told us that, throughout education, some staff members have expectations based on students' ethnicity or race. Many of these comments came from students who have had these experiences during secondary school.

Asian and Black students feel that there is an expectation for them to succeed academically or in sport. BAME young people told us that teaching staff have commented on likely outcomes of grades and assessment both positively and negatively depending on their ethnicity or race.

*"Middle East and South Asian peers in college, especially during online lessons, sometimes have low expectations from teachers. This could become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Compared to East Asian pupils, for example, who can have unreasonably high expectations from teachers or staff making them feel stressed."*

*"The teacher thought the girl wouldn't get into a top uni because of her ethnicity."*

*"I feel like often, teachers in my primary and secondary school would expect more from the Black children in PE class, especially on sports day."*

### **Black students are more likely to be perceived as aggressive and as being involved in criminality.**

BAME students, and in particular Black students, told us about experiences where the term 'aggressive' has been used by students and staff to describe their behaviour unfairly. Groups of BAME students have been asked to separate and Black students feel that this has happened to them disproportionately. Some

young people commented that Black students have been suspected of criminal activity in schools and colleges. White respondents commented that BAME students have been targeted in mixed groups of students.

*"When drugs are identified within the surroundings, I've noticed that teachers tend to search and investigate those of a different race."*

*"Back in secondary school, my group had to be split up because there was a 'gang' of us but other people who were not Black could all be together."*

*"One day my college were doing a check for knives, and I was walking through the scanners with my friends. All my friends went through without being searched and to note (none of them were Black) and me as a Black person was stopped and searched. What makes me more of a target than anyone else, the colour of my skin!"*

*"I've had moments where I'm just having a proper conversation or trying to defend myself and someone will tell me that I'm being aggressive. I hate when people say Black people are aggressive and loud and blame it on our skin colour. I know they still see us in the stereotypical way. I can't express my feelings like a normal human being without someone having to mention that I'm being aggressive and I KNOW they are saying it because I am Black."*

## **BAME young people feel that they can be assessed differently to their White peers.**

BAME respondents have experienced differential treatment from teachers, for example unfair assessment of their work and differing approaches to praise and support. They feel that they must work harder and produce higher quality work to achieve the same grades as their White peers. Some

respondents have experienced being overlooked for opportunities or underestimated because of their ethnicity or race. They mentioned this happening mainly in schools and particularly if English is spoken as a second language.

*"All my predicted grades were average despite constantly excelling in classwork, homework and mock exams. My final grades also reflected this and were higher than predicted. I believe my predicted grades were influenced by bias."*

*"I have had incidents happen in secondary school where I was treated differently because of my ethnicity. Teachers would come into my classroom and talk slow because it said I was from somewhere else in my file not knowing anything about me when I was in the top set in English."*

*"As a Black girl, being expected to be 'strong' or 'loud'. Teachers having the idea that I need support or that I may be having troubles at home."*

*"When I was doing my GCSE's, my teacher would always praise a select number of students over others, I thought it was weird that all the fair skin students got praise and the darker skin students were brushed over."*

## **There can be harsher consequences and punishments for BAME young people's behaviour.**

Many young people told us about experiences throughout education, and particularly in secondary school, where BAME young people's behaviour is targeted by staff. These experiences have related to behaviour in class, uniform regulation, non-attendance

and non-regulation hairstyles. For BAME young people punishments have been harsher, including leading to exclusion. White students have also noticed this differential treatment.

*"Me, a White person could easily dye my hair crazy colours but my classmate who had afro hair got in trouble when he dyed his hair blue. It happened to a few others and it seemed that only people with afro hair got told off for dyeing their hair."*

*"Differential treatment by teachers, where the only difference was the ethnicity of the other student (e.g. harsh punishment for myself and no punishment for other students where they had done the same thing as myself or worse). I have witnessed Black students being excluded for committing the same offence as a White student, where the latter may have only received a day's detention."*

*"In my previous school there was an incident where someone was writing threatening messages in the girls' bathroom. The school decided to take all of the Black girls out of their lessons and question them. None of the same methods were used with anybody else and I felt like they were really quick to try and blame someone."*

## Microaggressions are a daily reality for some BAME young people in education.

Many BAME students reported experiencing various microaggressions from staff and students – for some, this is a daily occurrence. These experiences include repeated mispronunciation of names, giving unwanted nicknames, mis-identifying students who have

the same (non-White) ethnicity, the touching of hair or religious clothing and asking ignorant questions about race or ethnicity.

*"Names not being pronounced correctly on purpose. Mixing up people of different ethnicities just because they weren't White."*

*"People have asked me if my parents used to live in slums and without water because I'm African. These ignorant comments aren't surprising because a lot of my friends grew up watching charity ads like Water Aid, that deliver this idea and schools don't teach anything about the continent."*

*"People would come up to me all the time and talk about my hair, they'd say it wasn't real, it's not my hair. They implied it doesn't grow, it's too short and it can't be pretty. They always wanted to touch my hair. It made me feel like a pet."*

## Racial slurs are still used in education settings.

There were many comments about students using racial slurs, both casually and as a direct form of abuse. There were a few comments which also state this about staff. Sometimes the abuse has been minimised as 'banter'.

Asian students told us they experienced Covid-related abuse during the global pandemic. Young people identified this happening throughout their education and in secondary school particularly.

*"Being one of the only Black people in my school, I had to deal with overt racist comments regularly. White students would sing songs with the N-word in around teachers, and the teachers would stay silent and not comment. I can't count on two hands how many times I experienced racism at school, I became very desensitised and isolated."*

*"When I was in secondary school a certain student racially abused me by calling me a terrorist and the SLT staff who was dealing with it said that I'm the reason Prevent is required."*

*"My friend was pestered by other students. People joked about him bringing Covid-19."*

*"A lot of the White English teachers would say the N-Word whilst reading to Kill a Mockingbird and their excuse was, it's only a word in a book and besides no one will be offended."*



## Young people feel there is a lack of consequence for racially-charged verbal and physical abuse.

Some young people told us that there is often little or no consequence for reported instances of physical or verbal abuse towards BAME students. Sometimes no action is taken, or the experience is minimised with the victim made responsible for rectifying the situation.

Young people commented on receiving little or no support after they reported a race-related incident. In some settings, there has been a denial of any race-related issues.

*"Another student called me a slur for Chinese people when I am obviously not of Asian descent. They also told me to go back to my own country during class and the teacher did nothing."*

*"The N-Word was constantly used by staff and pupils, and when reported it, I was told it's just a word and that it didn't mean anything even when they used it specifically to degrade me."*

*"I was racially bullied in school and no teacher acknowledged it, causing trauma in my later years."*

*"I have been called multiple racial slurs by all different races. Some made it out like it was a joke, and others truly meant it. These situations have never been dealt with properly and have left me in a place of injustice. It made me feel so defeated."*

**11% of BAME respondents believe that, if they reported a race-related incident to their school, college or university, appropriate action would not be taken.**

## There is lack of tolerance for religious clothing and culturally significant hairstyles.

BAME students commented on the intolerance towards culturally significant hairstyles and religious clothing items, shown by other students, staff and learning institutions. This includes being asked to remove or lower religious head scarves, being sent home

and being asked to change or remove certain cultural hairstyles. Young people feel this is an attempt to strip them of part of their identity.

*"A PE teacher at my old school refused to let a girl participate unless she removed her hijab. Because of this she was unable to participate in PE for 3 months, until we managed to resolve the issue."*

*"Being asked to take out braids because they were too colourful."*

*"My brother was expelled from school due to having ethnic hair which somehow violated the school uniform codes."*

<sup>1</sup>If I reported a race-related incident to my school, college or university I believe appropriate action would be taken

79% of all respondents agreed with this statement

8% of all respondents disagreed with this statement

13% of all respondents were neutral about this statement



#JUSTICENOW

#BLM

#SILENTNOMORE

## **BAME students take action and make allowances to fit in.**

Some BAME students commented that it is necessary to suppress aspects of their identity to fit in, particularly in primary and secondary school. These actions have helped to protect

them against the impact of abuse or injustice they have experienced. Other people have also expected them to change or suppress their identity to fit in.

*"When I was younger people made me feel ashamed of the clothes I'd wear, food I ate and traditions I had. It got to the point where I lied about literally everything just to fit in because I saw other South Asians being treated like shit for choosing to live their life differently to them. For example, one time in primary school I lied to a teacher that I was celebrating Christmas because she made it seem like I HAD to celebrate it and it was weird not to."*

*"Friends shortening their name so it can be perceived to be White passing, in order to receive the same privileges."*

*"In school I'd get left out or ignored because of the colour of my skin. It got to a point where people wouldn't want to talk to me because I didn't look like everyone else, my culture wasn't the same."*

*"At university, I passed as White to some degree, and found myself code switching and speaking with a posher accent to fit in even more. People around me praised me for fitting in like this."*

**17% of BAME respondents feel that they can't be themselves and must act differently in school, college or university because of their ethnicity or race.**

---

<sup>1</sup>I can be myself in school, college or university, without feeling I have to act differently because of my ethnicity or race

78% of all respondents agreed with this statement

13% of all respondents disagreed with this statement

9% of all respondents were neutral about this statement





## Positive examples of engagement

Throughout our research, young people across England told us about positive experiences they had in education and especially in colleges. They valued anti-racist learning institutions and shared the following examples of good practice:

**"The fact I'm doing this survey seems positive to me as the college is looking for opinions on the situation."**

**"Teachers having an open mind about the issues going on in the world and listening to other opinions."**

**"There was an incident in school where a younger student was being called racist names by older students. The staff took this very seriously. Their parents were informed, and the students were suspended. They also had to talk to student support about their behaviour."**

**"A group called A sip of equaliTEA was formed to discuss topics and situations based on racial injustice which I find extremely interesting. It also helps to spread awareness."**

**"No, there is no issue with race or ethnicity in my college. All of my teachers, staff, students treat us equally. We never felt that we are not part of the community."**

**"Myself and all my friends are people of colour and we have never been discriminated against by the staff in our school, from primary to college."**

**"They've all been positive experiences in college, it's a multicultural environment so the staff are highly respectful of that."**

**"Each student cooked food from their country and we all ate different types of food together. It was a great experience."**

# KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

## EDUCATION

Based on the evidence gathered through this research, Commissioners worked as a group to develop 6 key recommendations for the education sector. We believe that these recommendations, if implemented well, will make a real impact on young people's experience in education.

### **1 - Clear procedures and policies for dealing with race-related incidents.**

Young people and staff should know that no form of racism will be tolerated in education settings. Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policies should be adhered to and understood by all staff and students. BAME students and staff could co-create these to ensure their lived experience is considered. Data on race-related incidents should be monitored to encourage racial justice in the education system. It should include the outcome, consequence and resolution of all reported incidents.

### **2 - Increased help and support for young people when reporting race-related incidents.**

BAME young people should be involved in developing processes that encourage them to report race-related incidents and which help them feel supported. We believe a dedicated support group of trained student leaders should be formed with the guidance of a professional counsellor to work with young people who have reported an incident within an institution.

### **3 - Diversity training and continued professional development for all teaching professionals.**

Teachers should be knowledgeable about the rich racial and cultural diversity of the country. This should be addressed during initial teacher training and with continued professional development. We believe that diversity and unconscious bias training should be mandatory and yearly. This training should be designed and delivered in collaboration with BAME students to ensure it involves their ideas, opinions and experiences of what works and future improvements.

### **4 - More transparent assessment and behaviour management procedures.**

BAME young people can feel that they are underestimated and racially stereotyped by their teachers. A transparent system of assessment which is a mixture of students' moderated course work, exam assessments and performance in lessons would be beneficial. Clear behaviour policies must be in-place and ideally, these would be co-developed with students and consider the experiences of BAME students.

### **5 - Changes in the curriculum.**

The curriculum should be adapted to account for the cultural diversity of the country and BAME students should be involved in this adaptation. The study of BAME authors and artists could be embedded in the national curriculum and promoted from nursery to university. The celebration of Black history should not be reserved for one month and could focus on Black UK history. Anti-racist allyship should be prioritised and taught from primary school – prevention is better than cure!

### **6 - Greater flexibility on uniform codes and hairstyles.**

We live in a multi-racial society and the uniform code of educational institutions should reflect and celebrate this diversity. This means including the hijab and longer skirts on a school uniform list and not limiting the hairstyles of BAME young people. Tolerated hairstyles can no longer be based solely on White British hair.



Images have been taken  
from - 'It All Adds Up'





# EMPLOYMENT

## OUR FINDINGS

### **BAME young people can feel that their ethnicity or race is a barrier to gaining employment.**

Some young people told us about their own and others' experiences of trying to find employment. They feel that the process discriminates against them. Having an

obviously non-English name is one of the main reasons given for feeling rejected at the application stage.

*"Sometimes I feel like I am not chosen for interviews etc. because of my ethnicity. I have quite a lot of work experience for my age and have applied to basic jobs such as customer services assistant."*

*"My second name is ISLAM and I keep getting rejected from job offers, I haven't heard back from one and you just have that gut feeling, is it because of your race?"*

*"My sister and her friend applied to the same job position and store with very similar CVs – 9 GCSEs, no work experience and similar hobbies, with the only difference being their surnames (my sister has a foreign sounding surname, while her friend has a British sounding surname). She did not get an interview, but her friend did."*

*"I think that your name is a big factor for if you're chosen for an interview for a job. If you have a 'not typical' White British name, you're less likely to be chosen for an interview. Like I've heard about immigrants giving their children typical White British names so that they could have somewhat better chances and opportunities in the UK."*

### **Job interviews can be stressful for BAME young people.**

The interview process can be nerve-wracking, and we heard from some young people that this can be extremely stressful if you are non-White. Their experiences include interviewers being shocked by the interviewee's ethnicity,

the use of racial slurs, being the only BAME person interviewed and being turned down with no explanation given.

*"I had jobs that would take in my applications because of my name but when I come for an interview, I would get a judgeful look and get rejected."*

*"When I used to go to job interviews, I would have anxiety. Being Asian, I felt that people were looking at me. I often seem to be the only Asian being interviewed for the job. I felt uncomfortable, like I stuck out."*

*"I've been struggling a lot to find a simple job. Sometimes when I go for interviews, I don't feel comfortable at all because it looks like the interviewer doesn't like me from the beginning. I don't know why this happens but sometimes I think that it's because I'm Black."*

*"A family member was refused from a job due to race and suffered racial comments all the way through their interview."*

## **BAME young people can be treated differently to their White colleagues in the workplace.**

We heard about experiences of BAME young people feeling that they were treated differently by managers and colleagues in comparison to their White peers. Examples of this include harsher treatment, lack of respect, being assumed stupid (language related), not being trusted, being accused of criminality

and given few allowances. Customers have also behaved differently towards BAME young workers, particularly in the service industry. A few comments suggested this starts as early as work experience.

*"At work, people assumed I couldn't speak English, I was treated with less respect and underestimated. It made me realise they all saw me differently. In the end, I took on their assumptions about myself like not being as smart."*

*"A lady refused to have her ears pierced by another girl I work with because of her race. My work colleague was obviously sad and distressed and told a member of staff higher up and they told her to suck it up because it's just retail."*

*"My friend is Moroccan, and she got fired from her work because they thought she stole money from the register. Later on, they saw the cameras and saw she was innocent."*

*"During work experience in year 10, my manager treated me different to other students and often picked up on my faults and mistakes and ignored others' due to me looking/being different."*

*"Working in a predominantly White catering company, comments such as, 'Black people work harder' were made. Myself and other Black waiters were given more tasks to do than others."*

## **Microaggressions are common in the workplace.**

Many BAME young people experienced microaggressions in the workplace from both colleagues and customers. These include repeated or deliberate mispronunciation and misspelling of names, touching of religious garments, touching and/or commenting on hair and inappropriate use of language. Some

young people have experienced workplaces which are openly intolerant of culturally significant hair styles and/or the wearing of religious clothing.

*"Delivery drivers refused to call me by my name and chose to call me another employee's name because all Black women look the same."*

*"Customers asking me where I was from and being confused when I told them I was from Huddersfield."*

*"I used to work in a fast-food restaurant and I had big hair. Naturally we had to wear hair nets, however the hair nets provided were too small for my hair and my workplace refused to order different sizes to accommodate for everyone. They basically said that I needed to buy my own and if I was unable to do so I wouldn't be allowed to work."*

*"I worked at a hairdresser in Central London, and they made me feel as if my head scarf didn't match their aesthetic."*



## Some BAME young people experience racial abuse in the workplace.

Most commonly, BAME young people told us that they have experienced racial abuse from customers and service users in the places where they work. These include the use of racial slurs, being told to 'go back to their own country', abuse for speaking English as an additional language and stereotyping. A few BAME young

people have experienced the escalation of this abuse into physical attacks. Some young people told us that White colleagues and managers target BAME young people with racial abuse, including overt verbal abuse, the casual use of racial slurs and so called 'banter'.

*"Fans of two football clubs came to watch a football match at Wembley stadium. There was a drink spillage, and I was asked to clean it up. While I was cleaning it one guy said, 'that's all people like me are good for, being on the floor.' This made me feel lesser of a person."*

*"My aunty had her hijab ripped off her head at work once (she is a nurse)."*

*"I got called a "p\*\*\*\*" and punched in the face by a customer. My manager took me away because he knew I would get up and hit him, it was my second shift as well."*

*"There's one woman who makes indirect racist jokes, but we don't complain we just stick with our group at work who are also from ethnic minorities."*

*"I know they meant it as joke but when I started work, as I was Black, they asked me questions like, 'do you get beat up?' or 'have you ever been arrested?'"*

## Often, little or no action is taken when racial abuse is reported.

Some respondents told us that when complaints were made about racial abuse from colleagues or customers, often little or no action was taken. BAME young people who

have suffered racist abuse in the workplace have felt unsupported by colleagues, superiors or members of the public.

*"One of my family members reported abuse she received from one of her co-workers, but the management system put the blame on her."*

*"I was called "the coloured girl" when talked about by a customer in a malicious way. This was while working at Meadowhall in 2019 and staff members did not discuss it with me and no staff member stood up for me, other than my friend who also worked there but was then told by senior staff to take a break."*

*"My mother has been called names at her workplace before and when she reported it, they took a very long time to deal with the issue."*

*"My friend recently joined the Royal Navy, he told me of a fellow cadet who was Sikh. He told me about how other cadets would make jokes about his turban and called him a terrorist and despite numerous reports the people in charge never did anything."*

**17% of BAME respondents believe that, if they reported a race-related incident to their workplace appropriate action would not be taken.**

<sup>†</sup> If I reported a race-related incident to my workplace, I believe appropriate action would be taken

67% of all respondents agreed with this statement

12% of all respondents disagreed with this statement

21% of all respondents were neutral about this statement

## Some young people feel that certain jobs are not open to them due to their ethnicity or race.

Young people told us that the underrepresentation of BAME people in certain jobs has led to them feeling that not all pathways are open to them. Once in the

workplace, they can feel isolated – this has been particularly apparent when they have been in majority White working environments.

*"I was the only girl of colour within the last interview stage."*

*"In the modelling industry Black people, women in general, are seen as undesirable as the UK unfortunately follows European beauty standards. Our hair is not cared for and we are often asked to straighten. We are seen as below everyone else and our talent is often overlooked."*

*"Similar to school work experience, when I had a part-time, paid job, I felt as though I was alienated and treated differently again due to being the only obvious non-White person."*

*"I was always talked down upon because I was Arab and didn't participate in their activities due to religious reasons, so I was outcast."*

**51% of BAME respondents agreed that the types of jobs and industries that are open to them are affected by their ethnicity or race.**

## BAME employees feel that they can be overlooked for progression.

With regards to progression, young people reported BAME employees being overlooked for managerial positions and not being promoted more generally. Some BAME young people told us this has been particularly relevant to the experience of their parents, siblings and other family members. Some

young people told us that BAME employees needed to work harder than their White peers, received unfair hours, have been given the worst jobs and sometimes received less money.

*"My mother used to work in a hospital and was always given the most disgusting jobs and was paid less than her White co-workers. She was told many times that's the type of work people 'like you' deserve. She had to stay on the job because she had to provide for us."*

*"I worked in retail as a shop floor assistant and I was marginalised because of being Black. When it came to progressing to higher positions within the workforce, it was White workers that were promoted to manager positions. It was a White-dominated company."*

*"It's hard to stay positive in the workplace when there are one set of standards for you and some for others of a lighter complexion."*

*"My dad's friend went for an interview to become a manager. There was another candidate with him, and they had the same qualifications for the job. The company went for the White candidate. My dad's friend asked why he didn't get the job and they told him that it's because he was Black."*

<sup>1</sup>I believe the types of jobs and industries that are open to me are affected by my ethnicity or race

35% of all respondents agreed with this statement

38% of all respondents disagreed with this statement

27% of all respondents were neutral about this statement



## POSITIVE EXPERIENCES

During our research, young people across England told us about positive experiences they have had in the workplace. They value employers who are anti-racist and shared the following examples of good practice:

**"An argument about the use of a racial slur between two of my co-workers was very stringently dealt with in a way that both resolved the manner and seemed proportional to the incident."**

**"I work for a very inclusive and diverse company, where everyone is valued equally, and I am confident I would not experience or witness any racial discrimination there."**

**"Inclusive Equalities and Diversity training that includes information on racism and clearly outlines the policies in place to properly report and discipline racism."**

**"My current workplace is a small business and a lot of the employees are people of colour so there is a very accepting atmosphere there."**

**"I feel that everyone in my workplace understands that my clothing is part of my culture."**

**"I've only worked in an Arab restaurant, so no one acted differently because we were all the same race."**

**"Kind gestures, I always get treated equally."**



# KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the evidence gathered through this research, Commissioners worked as a group to develop 5 key recommendations for the employment sector. We believe that these recommendations, if implemented well, will make a real impact on young people's experience of the workplace, now and in the future.

## **1 - Workplaces must broaden policy around dress codes and uniforms.**

We live in a multi-racial society and the dress codes and uniforms of workplaces should reflect and celebrate this diversity. Workplaces could ensure that any dress code or uniform required of staff is sensitive towards religious clothing and culturally significant hairstyles. Employers should review their dress code and uniform policies with BAME employees to ensure that they consider their experiences when reviewing and updating their policies.

## **2 - Blind recruitment should be used where possible.**

Job applications should be anonymised where possible and demographic information not considered for employment. BAME young people often feel they are rejected from interview shortlists because of racial discrimination and anonymised applications could help. This could ensure that a candidate is assessed on their ability to fulfil a job description rather than their individual ethnic or racial identity.

## **3 - Ensure BAME representation at the most senior levels of organisations.**

Progression routes should be clear and transparent to all staff and there should be greater BAME representation at management levels. BAME young people should feel that all routes are open to them. Aspirations should not be limited by race or ethnicity. Employers should collaborate with youth experts to design experiences of work which are valuable and highlight the journeys of BAME staff within the organisation. These experiences could result in extra support e.g. mentors for BAME young people.


## **4 - Workplaces must have clear and concise equality and diversity policies.**

All employers should have clear and accessible EDI policies which cover racial inequality in the workplace. The induction of new employees should cover this policy in depth, and regular anti-bias training should be required. This will support all employees to understand the organisations anti-racist stance. This will also inform BAME young people on how and where they can receive support and/or complain about racial inequality or abuse in the workplace. BAME employees should be involved in reviewing and updating these policies, to ensure that their experiences are considered.

## **5 - Schools and colleges to prepare students adequately for the workplace.**

Students should be developing skills during education which prepare them for the workplace. As well as general workplace skills, this could also include anti-bias training and what to do if you experience racism in the workplace. Clear structures on how and where students should report racism during their work experience placements would be beneficial for BAME young people.





**BAME people twice  
as likely to be  
infected by COVID  
than white people**

# HEALTH

## OUR FINDINGS

### **Some healthcare professionals do not take BAME young people seriously.**

BAME young people made many comments which relate to healthcare professionals not taking them seriously. The experiences they

told us about include not being believed about pain, lack of and/or incorrect diagnosis and being dismissed.

*"I went to my GP complaining about pain in my chest and my migraine episodes. She told me that it was probably my period, and I should take paracetamol. I told her I had my period a week ago... She told me it can still have effects. She literally dismissed everything I said, and just gave me paracetamol. Weeks later I passed out and fell downstairs due to my dizziness, caused by migraine. When I went to emergency my 'chest pain' resulted in a problem in my heart and 'surprisingly' not just my period. I'm glad I haven't seen that GP again."*

*"Ambulance told me my stomach pains were not as bad as I made them, they believed me when I started vomiting blood."*

*"I was constantly ignored when I asked for therapy and counselling. A cousin of mine also complained about an infection she had, and they left it untreated for a whole YEAR and now the illness is worse."*

### **BAME young people feel that access to healthcare can be delayed because of their ethnicity or race.**

BAME young people told us about experiences when they or family members have had delays to accessing healthcare services. They feel that they have had to wait longer or been ignored

by professionals. This has resulted in anxiety and stress, extreme pain, complications during medical procedures and lack of support.

*"When my grandad was sick, the care provided for him was very poor in comparison to a care for the White individual."*

*"A member of my family is in a wheelchair and for years they ignored us when we asked for a bigger one while others were getting theirs."*

*"I was waiting to be called for an appointment and I was there for the longest time, even though White people had gone up for their appointment. My slot was given away – the woman went to check with the doctor and said they forgot about you."*

*"In a walk-in sexual health clinic I was turned away as the clinic was apparently at capacity. However, I noticed another lady being tended to even though she arrived after me."*



## Experiences with staff in healthcare settings can be negative.

Many BAME young people commented that some healthcare professionals and administrative staff have been unhelpful, dismissive (especially to those who speak English as a second language), patronizing

and that they rush appointments. These experiences have left BAME young people feeling disappointed that they and their families are not being treated equally.

*"The way they speak to you and treat you. More aggressive and rude if you come from an ethnic background."*

*"Rudeness by members of staff and they feel superior to us. Btw not all NHS are racially rude to members of other communities."*

*"It was a pharmacist, because every time I go to take my medicine, I feel afraid and ashamed because he does not work with me in the same way as the rest of the customers."*

*"The receptionists at the GP are extremely rude to my mum as she is not fluent in English. They would always give her a hard time but as soon as I'm on the phone and they can tell I understand and speak very well, they start acting right."*

## BAME young people can face barriers to diagnoses.

BAME young people feel they and family members have experienced barriers to receiving diagnoses, for example speaking English as a second language. Another key barrier is healthcare professionals' assumptions based on ethnicity or country of origin. A few

young people told us about experiences where healthcare professionals have shown they believed those of certain ethnicities have a higher pain threshold.

*"Struggled to find an autism diagnosis because they mainly diagnose White boys with it."*

*"Once I got hit by a car and my parents took me to the hospital. I had to act a bit more sick than I actually was just to get the attention of the healthcare professionals. Unfortunately, there is a stereotype that Black people do not feel pain like others as they are seen to be independent and strong - we do feel pain, we hurt, we are human!"*

*"My mother is treated differently when attending appointments as she is a non-English speaker. She is treated as if she is incapable and less important than other patients who are able to speak English and are White."*

*"I was refused a blood test and the doctor said I have vitamin D deficiency as it's common in South Asian communities- without a blood test. Later found out I have hypothyroidism after going to a doctor who was non-White."*

## Mental health can be stigmatised in BAME communities.

A few young people told us that there can be stigma within BAME communities around mental health, with views that it doesn't affect people of specific races or ethnicities - or

young people at all. Concerns include mental health not being taken seriously and reliance on medication.

*"Mental health in the Black community isn't taken as seriously as it should be"*

*"In my old school, when I would talk about my anxiety and depression, I wasn't given a proper diagnosis and still haven't got one. I feel like the older generation still believes that children are 'immune' to poor mental health."*

*"I find there's a stigma in the Black community around mental health issues. Black people don't reach out for help because they believe they'll become dependent on medication. I feel anxious a lot, but I feel like I can't reach out for help because I'll be prescribed medication and become dependent on it. I feel isolated a lot. I don't like telling people, so I don't get help."*

## Some professionals do not take BAME young people's mental health seriously.

Some BAME young people feel that their mental health and wellbeing have not been taken seriously or understood by professionals e.g. GPs and school/college staff. This has led to delays in support, particularly in education

settings. A few commented that White professionals have less understanding of the cultural background of their patients.

*"I have struggled with mental health problems since I was younger. In secondary school, a woman from the school, working with mental health, made a home visit. She made me show her my self-harm scars and told me I was immature (I was 12 years old). It was a bad experience, but I only realised it was most likely racially charged when I heard that White students had good experiences with her."*

*"I've been told that it's common for 'people like me' to not actually have mental health it's only due to financial situations."*

*"White therapists makes it hard to express myself because sometimes they don't understand."*

*"I go to Talking Therapies and I do feel like they don't understand the way my Asian household works."*

*"I have struggled a long time with my identity and my own mental health, but I never received any help because I was never considered a priority according to my teachers. I've seen fellow classmates' fake issues to get out of lessons but my real issues were never taken seriously."*

## Racism and discrimination have a negative effect on BAME young people's mental health.

Daily microaggressions, racist abuse and bullying have made many young people feel isolated and has directly impacted their mental health and wellbeing. In 2020/2021, the global

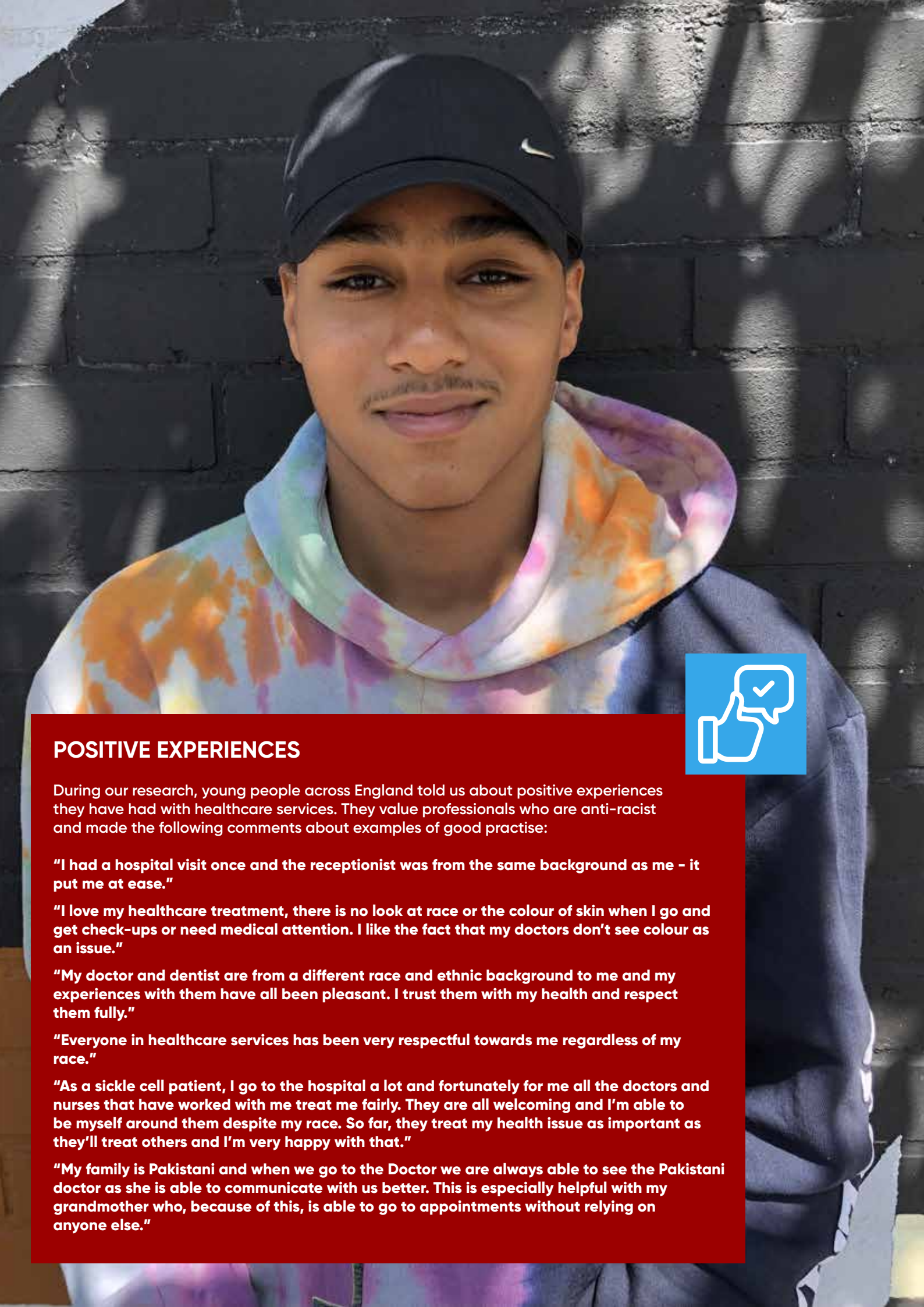
pandemic caused additional anxiety with 24% of BAME respondents feeling more at risk from Covid-19 because of their ethnicity or race.

*"When I was in secondary school, there was a racist incident against me. It's really affected me. It was traumatic. I was attacked for being different. Five guys targeted me with slurs and threatened me with violence and they ended up chasing me."*

*"I was depressed most of my young age, and it was mostly related to the colour of my skin."*

*"Racism made me feel neglected, invisible, stuck. It had a big impact on me. I became silent for the rest of the time being at that school, never spoke out and that was my attitude out of school also."*

**58% of BAME respondents agreed that they had struggled with their mental health in the last 12-months**



## POSITIVE EXPERIENCES

During our research, young people across England told us about positive experiences they have had with healthcare services. They value professionals who are anti-racist and made the following comments about examples of good practise:

**"I had a hospital visit once and the receptionist was from the same background as me - it put me at ease."**

**"I love my healthcare treatment, there is no look at race or the colour of skin when I go and get check-ups or need medical attention. I like the fact that my doctors don't see colour as an issue."**

**"My doctor and dentist are from a different race and ethnic background to me and my experiences with them have all been pleasant. I trust them with my health and respect them fully."**

**"Everyone in healthcare services has been very respectful towards me regardless of my race."**

**"As a sickle cell patient, I go to the hospital a lot and fortunately for me all the doctors and nurses that have worked with me treat me fairly. They are all welcoming and I'm able to be myself around them despite my race. So far, they treat my health issue as important as they'll treat others and I'm very happy with that."**

**"My family is Pakistani and when we go to the Doctor we are always able to see the Pakistani doctor as she is able to communicate with us better. This is especially helpful with my grandmother who, because of this, is able to go to appointments without relying on anyone else."**

# KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the evidence gathered through this research, Commissioners worked as a group to develop 5 key recommendations for the health sector. We believe that these recommendations, if implemented well, will have real impact on BAME young people's experiences of healthcare services.

## **1 - Review teaching materials for medical professionals.**

As we live in a racially diverse country it is vital that people of all ethnicities feel that medical professionals understand them. Initial training of medical professionals and their continued professional development should include the range of health conditions that exist for all groups in England. These materials should be regularly reviewed to ensure that they consider the changing population of the country.

## **2 - Ensure consistent access to interpreters for patients who speak English as a second language.**

BAME young people and children should never be expected to translate for family members. Ideally, there should be access to interpretation services for patients who speak English as a second language in all healthcare settings. Awareness of this service should be signposted to patients so that they are aware that they can access interpreters.

## **3 - Dedicated nurse visits and/or GP satellite clinics for colleges.**

Efforts should be made to increase healthcare access for BAME young people through their education institutions. Monthly satellite clinics in college settings could be organised to deliver drop-in appointments where students can discuss health issues– in particular mental and sexual health support. If these satellite clinics were staffed by BAME professionals, BAME students would feel more confident to discuss their health concerns.

## **4 - Trained individuals to provide mental health check-ins with students in need.**

Schools and colleges should ensure appropriate support for young people's mental health and wellbeing, with a particular focus on BAME young people. This could include recruiting dedicated staff members with professional training in identifying and supporting mental health needs of vulnerable BAME young people. BAME students could be involved in the recruitment of staff to ensure appropriate appointments.

## **5 - Increase BAME representation in the healthcare sector.**

There should be greater BAME representation across the whole of the healthcare sector which reflects the local communities being served. This is especially relevant to those working at senior levels and developing strategies on health. This would help BAME young people to feel there is empathy and understanding from those healthcare providers they engage with.





**THUGS**



# POLICING AND JUSTICE

## OUR FINDINGS

### Many BAME young people feel targeted and harassed by the police.

Young people told us about many experiences where they feel police have targeted them due to their ethnicity or race. This has sometimes progressed into harassment. BAME young people gave many examples, including when in large groups of the same race (non-

White), driving or being driven in expensive or new cars and because of how they dress. During the global pandemic BAME young people have felt disproportionately targeted by policing.

*"I was on the bus once and the police stopped this boy and accused him of having something on him and not having his zip card. In reality, he had his zip card and had nothing on him. Just because he was a person of colour, he was targeted."*

*"I was 7 years old when I got questioned by the police."*

*"My grandfather was pulled 13 times in one week for driving a Rolls Royce. I don't believe but know this was racially motivated as he is a Black man driving an expensive vehicle. It's quite obvious the police believed he was in a stolen vehicle or doing something illegal to get a car like that."*

*"One of my close family friends has been stopped by police because he was East Asian. This was because of the Corona Virus, rooted in Sinophobia. He was on an essential journey, but they acted like he was very suspicious, used microaggressive language, and it took a while for them to let him go."*

**62% of BAME respondents believe that they are more likely to be targeted by the police because of their ethnicity or race.**

## **White young people are aware that they are treated differently by the police.**

Many White respondents told us they were aware of preferential treatment that they receive from the police. They shared experiences where only BAME peers have been targeted in mixed groups. They told us that

their interactions with the police have been less severe, resulted in less consequence and that they have been treated more favorably than BAME young people.

*"I was stopped by police at night, for carrying a chair that was free. They asked what we were doing and when I said that the chair was free they swiftly left. I am a White male and I speculate that if I was of a different ethnicity, they would have been much more likely to question us further."*

*"Almost every time I go out with my Black friends in an area where there are police officers conducting stop and searches we always get stopped but I never get searched or questioned about anything."*

*"I was once hanging out after school with a few friends. there were 4 of us in total, 3 Asian kids and one White kid. A police officer saw us and approached the White boy and asked if he's in any kind of trouble and if anything is going on with us. The police officer then questioned us and how we knew the White boy. He then told us that we all have a warning and for the White boy to stay safe."*

## **BAME young people feel disproportionately targeted by stop and search.**

BAME young people highlighted that many of them have been stopped and searched by the police. A few commented on colourism and the likelihood of being stopped by the police increasing if you have a darker complexion.

Sometimes little or no reason has been given by police for why the stop and search has taken place. Young people shared many examples of only BAME young people being targeted for searches in mixed groups.

*"One time my friend got stopped and searched because the police believed that she was involved in gang activities when she was just trying to get home. She wasn't with anyone else at the time just by herself."*

*"I have been stopped and searched with my friend because of an incident that had happened near where we were. The police said that they were looking for 3 Black males and 1 White male which makes people angry because then that it is basically every Black male that is targeted if seen by police in a certain area at a certain time. People shouldn't be treated like that."*

*"My younger brother who is at secondary school was followed on the way to school by police who kept asking him questions about where he was going. His complexion is darker than mine and I've seen how he has been treated compared to me as I have a lighter complexion."*

*"Several of my friends who are young Black men have been stopped and searched when we've been out in a group together while the White boys were not."*

## Stop and search can have an emotional and practical impact.

BAME young people told us that being stopped, searched, or questioned by the police can emotionally and practically impact them. They can feel humiliated and have been late for school, college and work. Examples include

*"Due to my family being Asian they had always treated us differently. They have also done something similar outside of my secondary school where my brother was questioned and searched. They deliberately did this outside my school so other students could see."*

*"Been stopped and searched for no reason for having a matching description of a suspect. The description was he was Asian and literally I got stopped and got late to college."*

one young person having their trousers pulled down in the street, being outside their own school or with parents and/or younger siblings.

*"My brother has been stopped and searched on his way home from work. Bear in mind he is in full suit and tie attire. Police tend to carry negative stereotypes when it comes to Black men and women."*

*"I've been stopped and searched multiple times outside school and I was in my school uniform :/."*

*"They kept me in the station till dawn the next morning which led me to attend my exam in the worst state possible from exhaustion and hunger."*

## BAME young people feel that they are accused and suspected of criminality.

We heard from many young people who told us they are suspected or accused of criminality because of their ethnicity or race. Examples include being stopped at airports, being accused of particular crimes and increased police presence at mosques.

BAME young people are often accused falsely of criminality or stopped for 'looking like a suspect'. They told us about being followed, watched and stared at by police and security guards.

*"Me and my friends (all BAME) were out shopping and were followed around by a security guard who thought we were 'suspicious'. We were scared. The guard thought we wanted to steal. But when we called it out, WE got criticised by the guard for false accusations!"*

*"There have been many incidents when I walk past the police and they look at you suspiciously just for doing nothing. This also happens to my friends and family members that are Black but if I'm with a White person they would give them a smile and I would get a dirty look."*

*"I've been stopped while travelling because of my name. It feels silencing - you can't confront them. I've been stopped and searched by security, stopped by airport staff claiming I wasn't the person my passport said. My White partner and sister were able to go through security without these issues."*

*"I once was stopped and searched on my way to a date because I 'fit the description of an Arab male'. I am a queer boy who was wearing a cropped leather jacket and heeled boots, so I found it very bizarre that my primary feature they noticed was my race. Surely I'd be identifiable by the victim because of my standout attire?"*



## **There are instances where excessive force is used by some police officers on BAME young people.**

Young people stated that excessive force has been used by police on BAME young people during searches and arrests. We heard a few comments that suggested handcuffs are used excessively on BAME young people or that they

feel they have been detained unnecessarily. They feel they have been told to admit to crimes they did not commit and been detained for punitive reasons.

*"I can't count how many times I've been stopped by police just walking to the shop or chilling around my area and they always think I'm going to run so they handcuff me."*

*"I was standing at Turnpike Lane station and there was a group of boys, 3 of them were Black and the other one or two were White. The police cornered them all and only put one of the Black boys in handcuffs and two policemen pressed him to the wall. The boy tried to ask what he had done so the policemen told him to keep quiet and then one of them kicked him as the boy was standing still."*

*"I do know people who have been told by their own lawyers to plead guilty even though they weren't involved with the crime they have been accused of. Or mistaken identity-caught on camera just because they have the same skin colour. Even with evidence to back it up they were still convicted with minimal evidence."*

*"They took me to the station because they thought I was lying about who I was, a 15 year old boy, who they thought was a 25 year old man. They kept me in the station till dawn the next day."*

## **Negative experiences and viewing online content have led to a mistrust of the police.**

BAME young people told us about many negative interactions with the police that have led to a lack of trust. A few of them commented that engaging with content online has shown them examples of racist policing which influences their perception of the police. Well

known cases of institutional racism and police brutality e.g. Stephen Lawrence, George Floyd and Elijah McClain reinforce BAME and some White young people's negative perceptions of the police and the justice system.

*"Watching others being more likely targeted depending on the religion they are, race they are makes me scared as a young person and therefore I do not feel like I can't trust or be safe around police."*

*"A police officer told the men in my family that I drank alcohol and had sex after I told him that they will judge me. He knew that it's not permissible in Asian households, but he purposely told them."*

*"Witnessing the police system globally, it's clear that there have been many incidents where police have made wrongful (and immoral) actions that are motivated by someone's ethnicity and race. e.g. George Floyd."*

*"I have seen on social media lots of violence caused by police because of race when nothing was done to provoke it and wasn't necessary in the situation."*

## **Young people feel they aren't taken seriously when reporting crimes.**

Young people reported many examples of not being taken seriously when reporting crimes because of their ethnicity or race. When BAME

young people have made reports, they feel they have been minimalised, dismissed or no action has been taken.

*"I feel like when I tell them that I'm translating because my parents don't speak English, they don't take it as seriously because they just see me as a child. I don't have any specifically positive experiences, mostly neutral where they're just doing the job."*

*"Lack of protection from the police when I made complaints regarding my life."*

*"They didn't believe me because I was brown. They thought I was just a 'silly girl' wasting time. They left me when I needed them the most."*

*"My sexual assault case was made so hard for me that I just dropped it, it was caught on cameras but still had no strong evidence."*



## POSITIVE EXPERIENCES

During our research, young people across England told us about positive experiences they have with the police and justice services. They made the following comments about examples of good practise:

**"My sister got raped in the past and the police helped her talk about it. When someone is raped, they would feel suicidal, and a policewoman helped my sister find ways to control her emotions. Now my sister is better which makes me feel so happy, so I thank that policewoman who helped my sister get through that tough situation."**

**"I am a police cadet and during our sessions we discuss issues related to racial inequality etc. In terms of experiences, I can say that I knew someone who was being treated unfairly because of their skin colour and religion. Someone reported this unfair treatment and now, this issue has been dealt with, which is great!"**

**"I worked at a police station for 5-days for work experience in year 9 and enjoyed it. However, my brother was stopped and searched by police officers twice in one week because he matched the description of a drug dealer or gang member."**

**"I was followed by two sniffer dogs in Canary Wharf because they thought I had a bomb or some sort of explosive on me. But I don't think any hate should go to the police, they were doing their job. I did cooperate with them and was let go more quickly than if I had not cooperated."**

**"I am a poc and I have never been discriminated against on the basis of my race by police, the same is true for my family. We have been treated with nothing but fairness and respect as we show fairness and respect to all police officers."**

# KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the evidence gathered through this research, Commissioners worked as a group to develop 6 key recommendations for the policing and justice sector. We believe that these recommendations, if implemented well, will make a real impact on BAME young people's trust in the police and the effectiveness of policing.

## **1 - Review and change of policy on stop and search.**

Perceived racial profiling by police is still one of the biggest reasons why BAME young people do not trust the police. They feel they are unfairly targeted due to their race and ethnicity. A change in policy and practice is necessary to change this perception. Any reviews to policy around stop and search should have BAME young people involved. Bodycam footage should be available for all interactions between young people and the police and not only when searches occur.

## **2 - Peer to peer training on how to deal with being stopped.**

There are already excellent examples of peer-to-peer training in this area, for example Y-Stop. This should be expanded into colleges so that it reaches even greater numbers of young people. This would lead to greater understanding amongst more BAME young people of what to do if they feel they have been racially profiled by the police, their rights and reporting.

## **3 - Greater social interaction between police and young people.**

BAME young people feel that if there were more planned interactions between themselves and police, this would lead to greater trust. It could also help diminish negative stereotypes from both sides. For this reason, police officers linked to schools and colleges should be working on activities to increase their positive social interactions with young people outside of normal policing.

## **4 - Develop an advice service for reporting complaints which is actively promoted to young people.**

Work with young people to develop an advice service which builds on existing examples such as the IOPC helpline. The service would inform and support those wishing to complain about experiences with the police. The service could be actively promoted within schools and colleges and across online youth channels to increase awareness amongst BAME young people.

## **5 - Develop police training which challenges racial bias and stereotypes.**

Ensure that police training is adequate in addressing new recruits' understanding of racial bias and stereotypes. Comprehensive training and regular continued professional development are necessary to challenge racial bias which exists within the police. The training should be developed and delivered by young people and BAME communities so that it can draw on their lived experiences of policing.

## **6- Working with young people.**

There is a need to create more opportunities for the police to understand the experiences, views and opinions of BAME young people. A collaborative approach to engagement, where all parties actively listen and work together to formulate action plans to identify policing priorities. This could help improve relations between the police and the wider community. The creation of peer-led 'safe spaces' could encourage BAME young people to discuss their experiences of policing.









Images have been taken  
from - 'It All Adds Up'

# CONCLUSION

We are enormously grateful to all the young people across England who shared their experiences and views with us. We also extend thanks to the dedicated Commissioners who have driven the project forward and to the ten colleges who made the Student Commission on Racial Justice possible.

In June, an audience of professionals from education, employment, health, policing and justice came together to hear Commissioners present the key findings and recommendations you have read in this report. At this event, professionals posed questions to the Commissioners about their work and experiences of racial justice. We hope this leads to further collaboration between the professionals and Commissioners to solve some of the issues identified in this report.

In the next phase, we will grow the initiative and collaborate with more colleges and students. The Commission will move forward and ensure that these recommendations are acted upon as widely as possible. We will work with colleges on action plans and continue to support them as anti-racist institutions. At the national level, we will collaborate with national stakeholders who can champion the recommendations across the four sectors.

We are excited to continue working with system leaders, policy-makers and other professionals to act upon what young people have told us.

# APPENDIX 1:

# ONLINE SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. How old are you?
2. What is your local area?
3. If you are currently in education, please tell us which of the below you attend.
4. Please tell us the name of the school, college or university that you attend.
5. If you're not currently in education, please tell us your current employment status

The following questions ask about your experiences in 4 different areas. Please use the star rating scale to tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following statements. If you cannot answer because the statement doesn't relate to you please choose the N/A option.

## Policing and Justice

6. I believe that I am more likely to be targeted by the police because of my ethnicity or race.
7. I would make a complaint about the police, if I felt I had been treated unfairly by them because of my ethnicity or race.
8. I would take action if I witnessed the police treating someone unfairly because of their ethnicity or race.
9. Can you tell us about any direct or indirect experiences with the police, that you believe were caused by ethnicity or race? Tip: We'd like to hear about any positive and negative experiences that may have happened to you, a friend or family member.

## Education

10. I can be myself in school, college or university, without feeling I have to act differently because of my ethnicity or race.
11. Teachers and staff in my school, college or university, have high expectations and aspirations for all students, irrespective of their ethnicity or race.
12. The assessment of my work in my school, college or university, is fair and transparent and is not affected by my ethnicity or race.
13. If I reported a race-related incident to my school, college or university: I believe appropriate action would be taken.
14. Can you tell us about any direct or indirect experiences in education, that you believe were caused by ethnicity or race? Tip: We'd like to hear about any positive and negative experiences that may have happened to you, a friend or family member.

## Employment

15. I believe the types of jobs and industries that are open to me are affected by my ethnicity or race.
16. I can be myself in the workplace, without feeling I have to act differently because of my ethnicity or race.
17. If I reported a race related incident to my work place, I believe appropriate action would be taken.
18. Can you tell us about any direct or indirect experiences in the workplace, that you believe were caused by ethnicity or race? Tip: We'd like to hear about any positive and negative experiences that may have happened to you, a friend or family member.

## Health

19. I feel more at risk from Covid-19 because of my ethnicity or race.
20. I am treated equally by healthcare services irrespective of my ethnicity or race.
21. In the last 12 months I have struggled with my mental health.
22. Can you tell us about any direct or indirect experiences with healthcare services, which you believe were caused by ethnicity or race? Tip: We'd like to hear about any positive and negative experiences that may have happened to you, a friend or family member.

# APPENDIX 2: FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How old are you?
2. What is your local area?
3. Do you attend a school, college or university?
4. What is the name of your school, college or university?
5. If you don't attend a school, college or university please tell me what you do? e.g. working full time, self-employed, not working.
6. Please tell us about any direct experiences you have had, in any of the following areas which you believe to be because of your ethnicity or race:
  - Education
  - Employment and enterprise
  - Health and Wellbeing
  - Policing and Crime

Tip: We are looking for positive and negative experiences. Please tell us what happened, how this made you feel and what impact it had on you.

7. If you haven't had a direct experience, can you tell me about any indirect experiences, in any of the following areas which you believe to be because of ethnicity or race:
  - Education
  - Employment and enterprise
  - Health and Wellbeing
  - Policing and Crime

Tip: We are looking for positive and negative experiences. This could have happened to a friend, family member or someone in your local area..

8. Can you give me an example of when you feel that a white ally has been useful to you OR when you feel you have been useful as a white ally?
9. Can you give me an example of when you feel like you have been failed by a white ally OR when you feel like you have failed as a white ally?
10. How confident do you feel in challenging racism? For example, this could be in the classroom, workplace or in a social environment. Please explain how you would stop/defuse a racially led incident.
11. In what ways does your current school/college/university make sure, that students of all ethnic backgrounds feel included? Can you give us some examples?
12. In what ways does your employer/workplace make sure that employees of all ethnic backgrounds feel included?
13. What more could they do?
14. Is there anything else that you would like to tell us about?



# APPENDIX 3:

# ALLYSHIP 101

## ALLYSHIP 101:

## TAKING ACTION AGAINST RACISM



## WHAT IS AN ALLY?

Allyship is about:

- Building relationships of diversity.
- Promoting inclusion of all identities: regardless of race, religion, gender identity and sexual orientation.

**Being an anti-racist ally means actively fighting against racism not just with words but with connected actions.**

Sometimes allyship can be portrayed negatively in the media.



## WHY DON'T PEOPLE STAND UP TO RACIAL INJUSTICE?

Being an anti-racist ally may feel uncomfortable and challenging; however, ask yourself this one simple question..... do you want to live in a fair and equal society? If the answer is yes, standing up and speaking up about racial injustices becomes an extremely important duty for all.

• Being judged by others is one of the most common reasons that people don't speak out and act against racism.

• Sometimes people are afraid of making silly mistakes or looking like they lack intelligence and therefore being laughed at.

• You might also be afraid of your points being disputed or not being able to please everybody - and being criticised.

• Lack of empathy can also affect your motivation to stand up for others, this can affect your ability to relate to other people's struggles and experiences.

**It is our responsibility to speak out and commit to action for our generation and the many to come. If we don't, who will?**



## WHAT IS WHITE PRIVILEGE?

Privilege can be described as a special right – only available to a particular group of people. When applying this to race, there has always been a silent factor in UK society which puts BAME people at a disadvantage.

Having white privilege does not make you racist; it does not mean that life can't be tough; it does not mean that white people have not earned what they have BUT it does mean that there is a silent factor which puts white people at an advantage in the UK because of the colour of their skin.



When you have recognised the privilege you hold, being an anti-racist ally becomes easier because you can use your advantaged platform to challenge and address racial disparity and inequality when you see it.

## I WANT TO BE AN ANTI-RACIST ALLY. ANY TIPS?

**1) Listen.** It's not just about having a voice. It's about being listened to and understood. Listen without inserting your own thoughts or opinions. Use empathy to imagine how it would feel if someone treated you differently because of your skin colour or ethnicity. When you listen to the experiences of racially marginalised people you may be surprised by what you hear.

**2) Educate yourself.** Read books and articles, watch relevant history programmes and documentaries, listen to podcasts from prominent BAME commentators to learn about why things are this way and what can be done.

**3) Stand up, speak up** when you witness instances of explicit racism, microaggressions, bias, racial stereotypes or any other form of racial prejudice. Silence is compliance!

**4) Practice what you preach.**

Posting on social media is a start but is not enough on its own. The next step is to find ways of taking real life action.

**5) Take part in real social action.** Emails, phone calls, conversations, letters, donations, joining demonstrations and protests, signing petitions, lobbying MPs, genuine offers of support and understanding are all examples of actions anti-racist allies can take.

**6) Support BAME businesses.** It's time to start supporting each other. Investigate your local businesses to find out which ones are BAME owned. Then put your money where your mouth is, show your support and buy their products or services.



## CONTACT US

Contact us at [rose@leaders-unlocked.org](mailto:rose@leaders-unlocked.org)

[@LeadersUnlocked](#)

[www.leaders-unlocked.org](http://www.leaders-unlocked.org)

**LEADERS  
UNLOCKED**