

# SEEN.

Believe in  
children  
 Barnardo's

Improving outcomes for children and young people of African, Asian and Caribbean heritage.

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## Working Towards Equity: What Does the Data Currently Tell Us?



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SEEN, a Barnardo's run service, is a Centre driven to build a core foundation of knowledge, a network of people and advocacy for those with authentic experience. The Centre's mission is to identify, understand and tackle the structural inequalities which limit the opportunities of children & young people of African, Asian and Caribbean heritage in the UK by achieving a system change in the provision of services to tackle the disproportionate outcomes they face. Our mission is to create a society where children and young people of African, Asian, and Caribbean heritage can thrive.

### **Our Mission**

is to create systemic change by challenging structural inequalities that impede opportunities for a fair and equitable future for children and young people of African, Asian and Caribbean heritage to fulfil their full potential

### **Our Vision**

is to ensure the UK's structures of power provide equitable care, opportunity and understanding for children and young people of African, Asian and Caribbean heritage. We will do this in partnership with others across all sectors, understanding that we cannot do this alone.

### **Our Goal**

is to create better outcomes for more African, Asian and Caribbean heritage children and young people. We are working to build stronger families safer childhoods and positive futures.

In this leaflet, you will find information on **4 key areas** of our work which we know are interconnected, which are: **education** and **employment, physical health** and **emotional wellbeing, social care** and **informal care** and **police** and **custody** - four areas evidence and insight tells us African, Asian and Caribbean children and young people are most impacted. To find out more, head to our Knowledge Bank, where we have collated a wide range of quality assured research and resources to further explore these topics.

This leaflet scratches the surface of the subject areas, and ultimately, we want to ensure the UK's structures of power provide equitable care, opportunity and understanding for all children and young people of African, Asian and Caribbean heritage affected by the issues. To understand more about our work and to get in touch, please head to our website: [www.weareseen.org.uk](http://www.weareseen.org.uk).

# Inequitable access to education

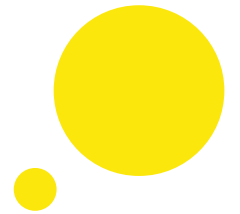
Racial inequality has been proven to be one of the biggest barriers to pupils attaining success in schools. According to article 28 of the UNCRC, all children, regardless of their background have the right to a good quality education, to be encouraged to go to school and achieve the best they can.

We know that this is right is not afforded to all children - in particular, children young people of and of African, Asian and Caribbean descent. Current school policies, such as uniform or hair policies, shaped by racialised judgements about what is 'acceptable', discriminate against children from African, Asian and Caribbean backgrounds.

**Black children** are most likely to be excluded from school (DfE 2015) and represent the most excluded group of pupils

**Black pupils** are often excluded for challenging what is perceived to be teacher racism (DfE 2015)

**Black Caribbean** children have rates of permanent exclusion about three times that of the pupil population as a whole (EHRC, 2016; DfE 2015)



**95% of young Black people in the UK have heard or witnessed racist language at school**  
**51% of males said they heard it “all the time”**



YMCA's Young and Black report

## Good practice in tackling racism in schools



**Listen to your students** – what are their experiences?

**Ensure your curriculum** is inclusive and representative





**Dig deep** – challenge your conscious and unconscious biases

**Is your progress measurable?** How can you see change?

Take an asset based approach by co-producing or involving students and parents who are African, Asian and Caribbean heritage

## "Minoritised" families are not interested in supporting their children education – and is why they do not engage in their schooling

There are many factors which may make engagement in a child or young persons schooling challenging for a parent, and viewing it within a narrow lens, void of any socio-economic variables can be damaging. For example, consider a parent or parents who do not regularly attend or who have never attended parents evening. Does this mean they are not interested in their child's education? Or could it mean a series of other factors, such as but not limited to:

-  **Their understanding** and navigation of systems and how they intersect, including how they can be of support to them as parents outside of how they can support their child(ren)
-  **Whether they speak English** as a second language and rely on their child(ren) to interpret and translate for them
-  **Their economic status** and the impact of poverty, income or employment
-  **Their immigration status** including whether they have no recourse to public funds

The disproportionate barriers that families of African, Asian and Caribbean heritage often experience therefore manifest into how they engage with the education system, and indeed it is not that a they are 'not interested', but rather may need greater support in equitable ways to access their child or children's education in ways that meet their needs.

- ➔ **Take a holistic approach remember**, there are many factors which make engagement a success - and taking a holistic approach to understanding the varying dynamics of this is key
- ➔ **Ensure your workforce** is diverse demonstrating that diversity is valued is the cornerstone to building trust. Taking this further, have a dedicated staff member who parents can turn to for support and advocacy.
- ➔ **Build upon parents** existing strengths while responding to their challenges - reach out and try to understand the context of the the child's family life - what makes it challenging for them to engage and how could this be addressed collaboratively
- ➔ **Use pastoral support** to increase outreach to parents. For example, evidence suggests that by fostering a strong home and community, Afro Caribbean children are more likely to be achieve higher in school. Think of innovative ways to increase outreach to support whole families.



# Experiences of Mental Health

Research shows that people from **African, Asian** and **Caribbean** backgrounds are at a greater risk of experiencing mental health problems. The risk is associated with experiences of prejudice and discrimination, but it can also arise from greater vulnerability to bullying, hate crime, and abuse – this is sometimes categorised under ‘racial trauma’. Inequalities and mental health can sometimes arise

from structural inequalities in society which place African, Asian and Caribbean people at disproportionate risk of social detriment associated with poor mental health, such as racism and poverty. The relationship between poverty and poor mental health is well evidenced and works in both directions as living in poverty can bring about mental health problems, but mental health problems can also lead people into poverty.

**African** and **Asian** people in particular face numerous barriers to accessing mental health support including for racism, and a lack of cultural awareness amongst professionals, stigma, inappropriate models of diagnoses, poor experiences of mental health services, and a lack of knowledge about mental health care often form part of their experiences.

These barriers and poor experiences of services, along with gaps in the provision of services which should meet cultural and linguistic needs, means African and Asian people are less likely to seek help at an early stage, such as through their GP, and consequently more likely to end up in crisis care and sometimes coming to the attention of mental health services through the criminal justice system.

## What can be done to break this cycle?



**Evidence shows** that mental health services based in the community, particularly those based in voluntary and community sectors, can develop relationships of trust to promote access to and awareness of mental health support



**Healthcare providers** need to receive training and support in delivering tailored and culturally sensitive care



**Commissioners and stakeholders** need to understand the experiences of their service users to shape their models of delivery, policies and strategies



### Experiences of Mental Health

Statistics indicate in the year to March 2021, black people were almost 5 times as likely as white people to be detained under the Mental Health Act – 344 detentions per 100,000 people, compared with 75 per 100,000 people.

## DISPELLING A MISCONCEPTION

# African, Asian, Caribbean and any other minority groups are 'hard to reach'

Service users often defined as 'hard to reach' are not only those who are minority ethnic, but can additionally identify as senior citizens, those with a disability, migrants, and those experiencing trauma, to name a few. The terminology '**hard to reach**' can be problematic as it can put the onus on the service user, or young person to be identified, when in reality the barriers they are experiencing are often outside of their control.

It suggests that the problem lies within their control, rather than within the design of our services, strategies and approach towards them. If trust is not developed, it may be harder to engage African, Asian and Caribbean communities, however taking the stance that they are 'hard to reach' creates an unfair power imbalance. Effective strategies to building trust are:



**To engage** with your local voluntary community sector partners, and grassroots organisations who have trusted relationships out in communities



**To create** safe spaces people feel welcome to access



**To be seen** in times outside of crisis



Challenge your internal biases that can place barriers in your services which limit the way African, Asian and Caribbean communities access them. Organisations are made of people, and people drive systems.

Every step you take, and that you encourage your colleagues to take, however small, to make your organisation inclusive, representative and responsive to the needs of all communities will make a difference.



# Systemic Inequalities in the Criminal Justice System

There is a considerable disparity of people from certain ethnic or racial groups being impacted by the inequality in the judiciary system, including the police forces, prosecuting agencies, magistrates, judges and QC's. Police as the face of the judicial system have specific responsibilities when interacting with children up until the age of 18, as a protected group in UK legislation and whose rights are protected by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). A recent report by Crest Advisory found that among children aged 10 to 18:

Only **36%** of **Black children** trust the police, compared to **75%** of **White** children.

Children who had been stopped and searched were less likely to trust the police than those who hadn't, **58%** to **74%**.

Among young people, Black people had the highest custody rate, at **13.7%**, compared with **9.9%** for White and **10.3%** for Asian young people

Children trusted the police more than adults, with **73%** of children trusting police, compared with **62%** among adults.

Trust in the police was lower among older children and girls, particularly **Black girls**, and was lowest in the **East Midlands** and **Greater London**.

There is a long history of pronounced and persistent ethnic disproportionalities in how people, including children, are policed in England and Wales. The disproportionate use of stop and search, which is significantly more likely to be used against **Black people**, is a particular cause of concern for how children, particularly Black children, interact with police.

Statistics indicate in the year to March 2021, there were **7.5** stop and searches for every **1,000** white people, compared with **52.6** for every white people





## Steps Cannot be Taken to Break the Systemic Inequalities in the Criminal Justice System

The criminal justice system has overwhelmingly been an area where racial injustices have been identified - as victims, survivors and witnesses of crime, in stop and searches and within the prison and probation population. Whilst it may take some time to break centuries of oppression, there are steps we can all take to start to break them down. This may involve engaging your colleagues in the conversation, taking active steps towards changing the policies and procedures of your organisations, or other practical steps to make a positive impact on systems as a whole.

Breaking systemic inequalities requires a multi-faceted approach that consists of trust building and transparency. Some of the steps that can be considered are:

### The use of jargon-free communication



Children and young people, or those with English as a second language may not understand the processes of courts and systems. To make processes fairer, jargon free, (and translated where necessary) communication is crucial. Do not assume that a service user understands the process through their representative.

### Cultural literacy training opportunities



Provide opportunities for all staff, including probation officers, magistrates, judges, police officers etc. to attend training on cultural literacy in order to better understand the context of children and young people from African, Asian and Caribbean backgrounds and their needs.

### The use of wrap around support



Use local and third sector organisations to provide additional aftercare around court or other systems for children or young people. Do not conclude that other statutory organisations involved may assume responsibility for this.



# The Impact of Serious Youth Violence on Girls

According to the Home Office Serious Violence Duty: draft guidance for responsible authorities, Serious Youth Violence can be described as:

**Violence against a person which may include both knife crime and gun crime, county lines drug dealing, domestic violence, alcohol related violence, sexual abuse, modern slavery or gender-based violence.**



[Home Office Serious Violence Duty](#)

Research and statistics have highlighted serious youth violence as being a gendered issue; largely that perpetrators/victims are male, seldom excluding the impact upon, and voices of girls and women – especially in the context of **African, Asian** and **Caribbean** girls and women. African, Asian and Caribbean girls face numerous barriers in accessing support for violence, which make them less likely to report or seek help. These barriers are largely systemic and sometimes linked to culture. Some of the barriers to disclosure and help-seeking are: ineffective and inaccessible services, mistrust of services, immigration status, racial stereotypes, ‘cultural’ normalisation of violence against women and girls and community pressure to avoid formal disclosure.



**Serious youth violence** is gendered because it is largely perpetrated by boys and men, and largely missing from this are the voices of girls and women often victimised by the crimes



**While boys and men** are more likely to be victims of knife crime, African, Asian and Caribbean girls experience sexual violence and exploitation routinely whether in a gang context or more broadly



**Serious youth violence** takes place in the wider context of institutionalised racism and aggression, in particular, sexual violence – which takes place in a wider context of misogyny and aggression against women



**Violence may become** a taken for granted part of African, Asian and Caribbean girls' lives which they have to negotiate on a daily basis



**Multiple oppressions intersect** to place black and brown girls at greater risk of experiencing violence and exploitation in a number of contexts



**Black girls routinely** experience racialised aggression and adultification in the context of education and other services

## All Young People Experience Youth Violence the Same - Especially Boys and Girls

Serious youth violence presents itself in many forms, and can impact a young person in many ways - for example, physically, mentally and emotionally. We also know that the experiences of violence differ between girls, boys and those who identify as LGBTQIA+ - and in particular, those who are of African, Asian or Caribbean Heritage.

For example, multiple oppressions intersect to place Black girls at greater risk of experiencing violence and exploitation in a number of contexts, including gender, religion, culture, racism, disability, economic instability including housing issues, immigration status and language.

In the child protection system, Black girls in particular are perceived as being more 'streetwise', more 'grown up', less innocent and less vulnerable than other children - this is known as Adultification. As such, Black girls are more likely to be perceived as "less innocent" and knowing more about sex than White girls which affects language, attitudes and protection towards them.

- ~~Black girls need less nurturing~~
- ~~Black girls need less protection~~
- ~~Black girls need to be supported less~~

- ~~Black girls need to be comforted less~~
- ~~Black girls are more independent~~
- ~~Black girls know more about adult topics~~
- ~~Black girls know more about sex"~~



Define children & young people by their experiences - remember oppression is multifaceted & operates within a system. We must break systems & generations of oppression to enable all children & young people to thrive.



Bernard, C., 2019. Using an intersectional lens to examine the child sexual exploitation of black adolescents. Child Sexual Exploitation: Why Theory Matters, p.193.  
Epstein, R., Blake, J. and González, T., 2017. Girlhood interrupted: the erasure of black girls' childhood. Available at SSRN 3000695

# Glossary of Terms

## **Race**

A social construct used to group people. At SEEN, one way we define people is as being of African, Asian or Caribbean heritage

## **Racism**

Racism is the process by which systems and policies, actions and attitudes create inequitable opportunities and outcomes for people based on the colour of their skin

## **Colour blindness**

A problematic term which describes that an individual's race or ethnicity should not influence how that individual is seen. This does not allow a person to see differences in individuals, and to examine their own bias.

## **Cultural appropriation**

Using the symbols, art, language, customs, traditions and more of a groups culture –for one's own use, or profit, without understanding, acknowledgement, or respect for the value it had in the original culture it came from

## **Discrimination**

The unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of race, age, or sex

## **Stereotype**

Preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience

## **Ethnicity**

A large group of people who have the same national, racial, or cultural origins, or the state of belonging to such a group

## **Diversity**

A mixture of races and religions that make up a group of people

## **Culture**

The ideas, experiences, customs, attitudes and social behaviour of a particular people or society

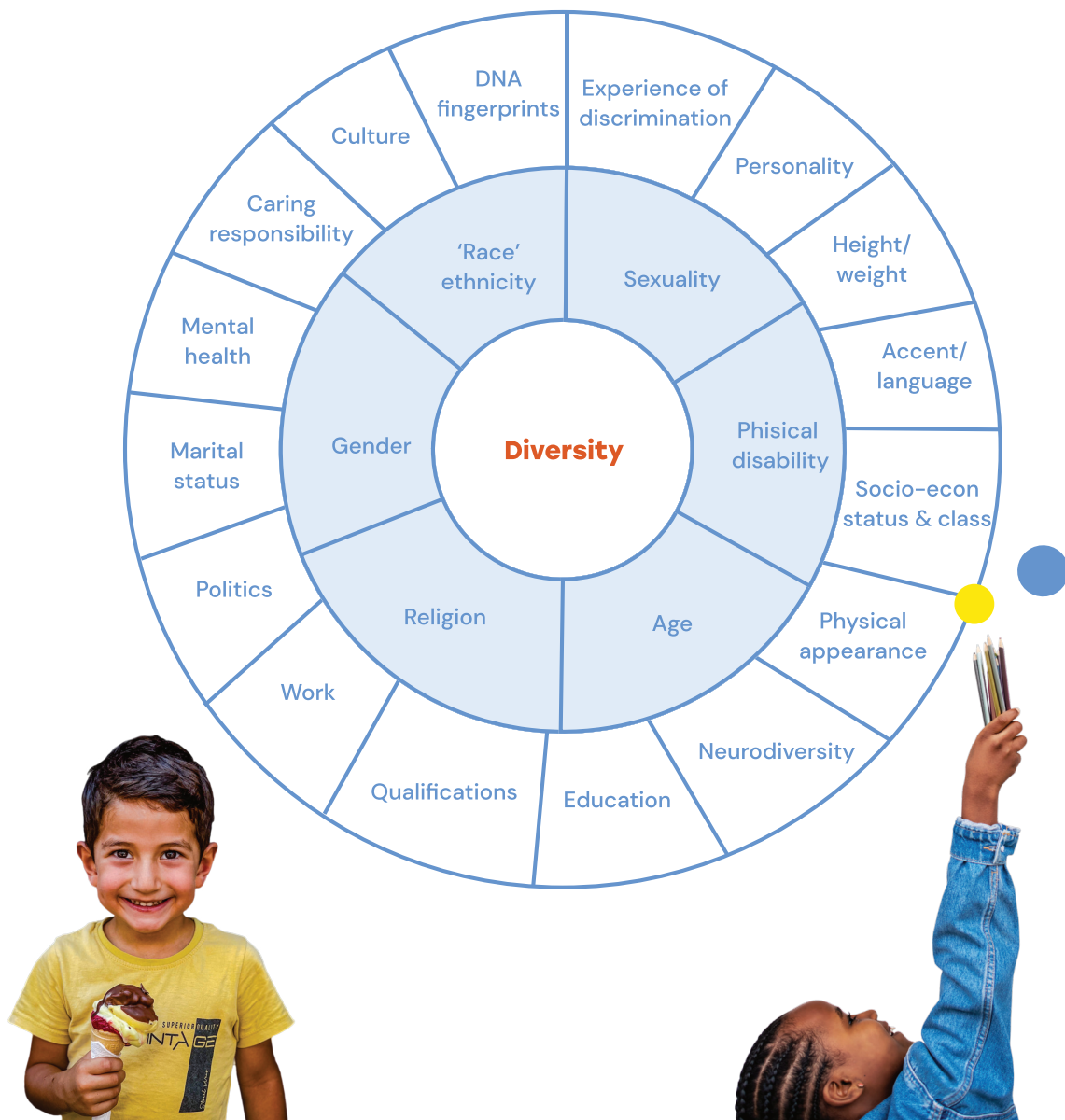
## **'BAME'**

A problematic acronym (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) used to imply these groups captured by it are homogeneous when in fact they hold distinct identities, cultures, history etc.



# What is Intersectionality?

Intersectionality, a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, is a Framework for understanding how intrinsic aspects of identity, such as gender, age and race shape the way a person experiences the world. Applying intersectionality in practice is to identify peoples unique experiences of discrimination and oppression and how this could marginalise them, including – gender, race, class, sexual orientation, disability and so on. Other experiences are highlighted on the diversity wheel below.



**Scan the QR code to watch the video to help you put this theory into practice**

# Glossary of Terms

## **Privilege**

Unearned social power given by the formal and informal institutions of a society to all members of a dominant group (e.g. male privilege, white privilege)

## **Adultification**

A form of racial prejudice where children of minority groups, particularly Black children, are treated by adults as being more mature than they actually are

## **Cultural literacy/competency**

Is the ability of an organisation to develop a set of congruent behaviours, attitudes and policies that come together in a system that enables staff to work effectively in cross cultural situations

## **Racial trauma**

Refers to the emotional and psychological impact of racism, racial discrimination, and other race-related incidents on an individual

## **Intergenerational trauma**

Describes the process of physical and psychological trauma incidents being passed down through generations within families

## **Restorative justice**

Repairing the harm caused by a particular harm or trauma. This type of approach is intended to take steps towards repairing the harm by healing broken relationships, and addressing the underlying reasons for the harms which took place. They create opportunities to build a sense of community and increase grassroots empowerment.

## **Critical race theory**

Argues that race is not a natural, biologically grounded feature in human beings, but rather socially constructed and used to oppress and exploit African, Asian and Caribbean people. It examines how laws, social and political movements, and the media shape, and are shaped by social conceptions of 'race' and ethnicity. The core idea of critical race theory is that race is a social construct.

## **Microaggression**

everyday verbal or behavioural actions, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative attitudes towards African, Asian and Caribbean heritage people

## **Oppression**

Institutional or hierarchical power that creates a system which regularly prejudices and discriminates against some groups, and benefits other groups, creating unequal societies.

# Equality vs Equity

## What's the Difference?

Whilst the two terms may sound similar, and sometime used interchangeably, they have two distinct meanings, and can have distinct outcomes for people of African, Asian and Caribbean heritage children and young people.

**Equality** – giving every individual or group of people the same resources or opportunities

**Equity** – recognising that each person or group of people have different circumstances and experiences, therefore allocating the exact resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome. At SEEN, we use the term equity to describe what children and young people of African, Asian and Caribbean heritage need and deserve to fulfil their full potential.



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hello@weareseen.org.uk  
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