

# RACE DISPARITY AUDIT

## Introduction

This month the government published the outcomes of its Race Disparity Audit that consisted of a substantial report relating to numerous services provided by local authorities. In addition it included a section on the public sector workforce.

## Background to the audit

The Prime Minister announced the Race Disparity Audit in August 2016, with a view to shining a light on how people of different ethnicities are treated across public services, drawn from records held in government departments. The data collected varied in quality and depth, spanning the Census, official statistics, numerous government surveys and departments' own administrative records. Due to the wealth of material available the Government had to prioritise the datasets based on quality, readiness, manageability and relevance to key users, including members of the public, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), public services and government departments themselves. The emphasis was on opening up data to the public where it was reasonably reliable, although with some caveats where necessary.

## The website

The Ethnicity Facts and Figures website will be a permanent resource. Data and analyses presented on the website will be updated as the data changes and more measures will be

added to it over time.

The website itself was developed in parallel with extensive research with different types of user, and with reference to the Government's Digital Service Standard and good practice in presenting UK official statistics. The Government says that its content represents an unprecedented release of data to describe — in one easily accessible place — the experiences and outcomes of people of all ethnicities across public services.

## Data presentation

The data is presented under themes adapted from the Equality Measurement Framework, developed by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). The Government is anxious to stress that:

- it is often the case that the audit is observing *differences* between ethnic groups, but that it would require further research to establish the full context in which any *disparities* should be interpreted
- it is not possible from the audit data alone to determine the causes of any differences observed between ethnic groups. Even where analysis shows differences between ethnic groups are associated with other relevant factors such as age, sex or socio-economic status, it is not possible to say whether those factors are the cause or the effect of

differences between those groups.

As trends are important, a critical question for the audit is whether differences in the experiences across ethnic groups are reducing or increasing. Thus, where it has been possible to do so on a comparable basis, departments have provided data going back in time.

The audit report is intended to provide an overview of the main findings. As well as a review of each topic, the report presents an overview of disparities that appear to have most impact across all aspects of people's lives. It seeks to identify those public services where disparities are diminishing and those where work is needed to develop effective strategies to reduce disparities between ethnic groups.

It is important to note that the report only considers the outcomes and experiences of people according to their ethnic group, rather than their nationality, country of birth or national identity.

### **Headline findings from the report**

The key findings of the report are detailed below.

- Disparities exist between ethnic groups in all areas of life affected by public organisations. Some are more pronounced than others or have a greater impact on people's life chances and quality of life. In some areas, disparities are reducing, while in others, they are static or increasing.
- The UK has become more ethnically diverse. The proportion of people identifying as White British in England and

Wales decreased from 87.4% in 2001 to 80.5% in 2011.

- The majority of the usual resident population of England and Wales in 2011 (87%) were born in the UK. Thirteen per cent (around 7.5 million people) were born outside the UK.
- The proportions within the different main groups who were born in the UK (as at 2011) are:

White British 98%

Mixed White/Black Carib 94%

Black Caribbean 60%

Pakistani 56%

Bangladeshi 52%

Indian 43%

- People who identified as Other White were the least likely to have been born in the UK — less than 15% were born here, probably reflecting immigration from the EU.
- Regardless of ability to speak English, around 1 in every 13 people in England and Wales aged three and over had a main language other than English. Polish was the most common language after English, with 1% of the population reporting it as their main language.
- Adults from a Bangladeshi and Pakistani background, primarily those in the older age groups, were the most likely not to speak English well or at all.
- Despite the variations between ethnic groups in their ability to speak English, a majority of adults in the White, Asian, Black and Mixed ethnic groups felt a sense of belonging to Britain

and a sense of belonging to their local neighbourhood.

- Asian and Black households (and those in the other ethnic group) were more likely to be poor and were the most likely to be in persistent poverty - around one in four children in households headed by people from an Asian background or those in the other ethnic group were in persistent poverty, as were one in five children in Black households, in contrast to 1 in 10 White British households.
- Pupils in several ethnic groups were achieving and progressing better than White British pupils. Pupils from Chinese and Indian backgrounds showed high attainment and progress throughout their school careers and high rates of entry to university. Although pupils in the Black ethnic group made more progress overall than the national average, Black Caribbean pupils fell behind. White British pupils and those from a Mixed background also made less progress than average.
- Of all regions in England, the most educational progress and best attainment in state primary and secondary schools was found in London, where more than half of pupils were from ethnic minority groups. Disadvantaged pupils in receipt of free school meals in London made more progress and had higher attainment than their counterparts elsewhere in England.
- Employment rates have increased for all ethnic groups, but substantial differences remain in their participation in the labour market; around 1 in 10 adults from a Black, Pakistani, Bangladeshi or Mixed background were unemployed compared with 1 in 25 White British people. While employment rates among people from Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds have been improving, these populations remain more likely to be in low skilled, low paying occupations than other ethnic groups.
- Home ownership is most common among households of White British, Indian, Pakistani, and Mixed White and Asian origin; it is substantially lower among African, Arab, and Mixed White and Black African households. The households most likely to rent social housing were headed by someone in the African, Caribbean, Other Black, Bangladeshi, Irish and Arab groups, or the Mixed groups (other than Mixed White and Asian). As a group, ethnic minority households are also much more likely to rent privately than White British households and to spend a higher proportion of their incomes on rent, regardless of whether they rent from a social or private landlord.
- There are lower levels of confidence in the police among Black people, and especially among younger Black adults. Black men are also almost three and a half times more likely to

be arrested than White men.

- There are differences between ethnic groups across a range of health-related behaviours and preventable poor outcomes, and each ethnic group exhibits both healthy and unhealthy behaviours. More than half of adults in all ethnic groups (other than the Chinese group) were overweight.
- In the general adult population, Black women were the most likely to have experienced a common mental disorder such as anxiety or depression in the last week, and Black men were the most likely to have experienced a psychotic disorder in the past year. However, White British adults were more likely to be receiving treatment for a mental or emotional problem than adults in other ethnic groups.
- The public sector workforce is a major employer, but ethnic minority employees are concentrated in the lower grades or ranks, and among younger employees. For example, in 2016, 18% of the non-medical NHS workforce (all staff excluding doctors and dentists) were from an ethnic minority group (excluding White minorities). Only 7% of very senior managers and 11% of senior managers were from an ethnic minority group.
- Some parts of the public sector workforce are more ethnically diverse than others. For example, the vast majority of police officers are from the

White group and this has not changed over the past decade.

### **Key findings relating to local government**

Summarised below are more detailed findings from the audit which relate to the responsibilities of local authorities.

#### Community — language

As noted above, 1 in every 13 people in England and Wales (4.2 million) aged three and over had a main language other than English; this increases to 1 in every 12 adults aged 16 or over. After Polish the most common main languages were Panjabi and Urdu.

With regard to the ability of those for whom English was not the main language to speak it, only 1.3% of the population in England aged three and over could not speak English well and just 0.3% could not speak English at all.

The ability to speak English is strongly related to age. Across all ethnic groups, those aged 65 and over are least likely to speak English and those aged 16 to 24 are most likely.

Women were more likely than men to have poor English proficiency, and this was most pronounced among Pakistani and Bangladeshi adults. However, while almost half of Bangladeshi women and a third of Pakistani women aged 65 and over could not speak English, only around 1% of those aged 16 to 24 could not speak English.

#### Regional differences - language

There were regional differences in the proportions of people who are able to speak English for the Asian ethnic groups, for Arabs and for the other ethnic group.

- Compared with many other UK regions, the West Midlands has a higher proportion of people in these ethnic groups who cannot speak English, and in this region the inability to speak English is most common among Bangladeshi and Pakistani people — around 4% and 3% respectively cannot speak English.
- Almost 3% of Indian people in the East Midlands, 3% of Bangladeshi people in the North West and nearly 3% of those who identify as Arab or in the other ethnic group in Yorkshire and the Humber cannot speak English.

#### Community engagement

Black adults were among the most likely to participate in some form of formal volunteering on a regular basis, which involves providing unpaid help through groups, clubs or organisations at least once a month. One in four Black adults and almost as many White adults regularly participated in formal volunteering in 2016/17, and they were more likely to do so than those of Asian or Mixed ethnicity of whom around one in six volunteered formally on a monthly basis.

There were marked differences between ethnic groups in the extent to which people felt able to influence local decisions, with Black adults feeling the most able to influence them and White adults, the least. In 2016/17, 44% of Black adults agreed they could influence decisions affecting their local area, compared with 25% of White adults. There was little difference between ethnic groups in their sense of belonging to their neighbourhood, with the majority of all ethnic groups feeling they belong to their neighbourhood very or fairly

strongly.

Asian adults were most likely to feel their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together with 85% agreeing. Black adults were least likely to feel their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together, with just 77% agreeing.

#### Education

Chinese pupils in England had the highest attainment throughout school, made the most progress and were the most likely to stay in education and go to university. In 2016, almost a quarter of Chinese Level 3 pupils attained 3 A grades or higher at A level and almost 60% went to university, meaning that they were twice as likely to have gone to university than White pupils.

Conversely, pupils from Gypsy or Roma backgrounds and those from a Traveller or Irish Heritage background had the lowest attainment of all ethnic groups. At age five, only around 25% of Gypsy and Roma pupils achieved good development, making them around three times less likely to do so than average, and just 58% of Irish Traveller pupils and 62% of Gypsy and Roma pupils stayed on in education after age 16 in 2014/15, compared with 90% of White British pupils and 97% of Chinese pupils. At the age of 16, nearly all Indian pupils stay in education, employment or training for at least two terms in the year after finishing compulsory schooling (97%). Pupils from a Mixed White and Black Caribbean background were less likely to stay in education, employment or training (91%).

There were notable differences *within* the Asian and Black ethnic groups. Indian pupils were much more likely to

meet expected standards and make progress than Pakistani pupils (for example, 65% of Indian pupils met the expected standards for reading, writing and maths at Key Stage 2 compared with 47% of Pakistani pupils), and Black African pupils showed higher achievement and progress than Black Caribbean pupils (54% of Black African pupils met the expected standards for reading, writing and maths compared with 43% of Black Caribbean pupils).

Low educational attainment and progress is closely associated with economic disadvantage. In 2016, Black pupils were over three times more likely to be eligible for free school meals (FSM) than Chinese pupils. Pupils from an Irish Traveller background were most likely to be eligible for FSM with 60% Key Stage 4 pupils eligible in 2016.

Children eligible for FSM have lower attainment than non-FSM pupils in all ethnic groups, but White British pupils and White Irish pupils had the biggest gap in attainment between those eligible and those not. For pupils in Key Stage 4 in 2016, the Attainment 8 score for White British pupils eligible for FSM was 16 points lower than for those not eligible.

Low educational attainment and progress is associated with poor attendance at school. The pupils most likely to be absent were Gypsy or Roma pupils and those of an Irish Traveller background, with overall absence rates of 13% and 18% respectively in 2016. This compares with 4.6% for White British pupils and 2.4% for Chinese pupils.

Black Caribbean pupils were around three times as likely to be permanently excluded than White British pupils

(0.29% compared with 0.10%) and around twice as likely to receive a fixed period exclusion (10.1% compared with 5.2%) as White British pupils.

In 2015/16, White people were disproportionately more likely to take up apprenticeships (88% of apprenticeships compared with 85% of the population), whereas ethnic minorities were disproportionately less likely to do so (10% compared to 15% of the population in England).

The entry rates to higher education for 18-year-olds from all ethnic groups increased in 2016, reaching the highest-ever recorded values for each group. Eighteen-year-olds from all ethnic groups were more likely to enter higher education than those from the White group. In 2016, Chinese former state school pupils had the highest higher education entry rate (58%) compared with 29% of White pupils.

### Housing

Around two in three White British householders owned their home either outright or with a mortgage in 2015/16, but only two out five householders from all other ethnic groups combined did so. Compared with all other households, White British householders were most likely to own their own home within every region of the country, every socio-economic group and income band, as well as all age groups.

There were marked differences between ethnic groups, with households of Indian, Pakistani, and Mixed White and Asian ethnicity having similar rates of home ownership to White British households, and households in all other groups less likely to be homeowners than White British households. Fewer than

one in four African, Arab, and Mixed White and Black African households were owner-occupiers.

White British households were correspondingly less likely to rent either privately or from a social landlord than all other households: 16% of them rented from a social landlord, compared with 22% of all other households, and a further 16% rented from a private landlord compared with 37% of others.

There were just over 3.9 million households living in the social rented sector, of which almost 3.1 million, or 79%, were White British; by comparison, White British households make up 83% of all households in England.

Ethnic minority households (including all those in White minority groups) were more than twice as likely to rent privately as White British households in all regions of England apart from London, Yorkshire and the Humber, and the North West; in the South East, they were more than three times as likely to rent from a private landlord as White British households.

Regardless of who they rented from ethnic minority households spent a higher proportion of their incomes on rent.

Overcrowding, which reflects both family sizes and the nature and affordability of the local housing stock, was generally more common among ethnic minority households.

Overcrowding affected 30% of Bangladeshi households in 2015/16, a far higher proportion than of White British households (2%). However, White British households made up

almost half of the 660,000 overcrowded households in England. People in the most deprived neighbourhoods tend to be disadvantaged across multiple aspects of life. Pakistani and Bangladeshi people were over-represented in the most deprived neighbourhoods in England: 31% of the Pakistani population and 28% of the Bangladeshi population lived in the most deprived 10% of neighbourhoods in England.

Non-White households were over-represented among statutory homelessness acceptances. Of all acceptances, 33% were of non-White households. Black and Asian households together made a quarter of all homelessness acceptances: 16% were of Black households and 9% were of Asian households.

In 2015/16, 79% of new social housing lettings were to households of White British background. This was the same as the percentage of all social housing that was rented by White British households. Asian ethnic groups were under-represented in new social housing lettings when compared to the population in England, and Black ethnicities were over-represented.

#### The public sector workforce

The report notes that one of the primary uses of ethnicity statistics collected about the public sector workforce is to identify which organisations are succeeding in recruiting a diverse range of employees. Statistics can also identify whether or not people from ethnic minority backgrounds are reaching senior levels within organisations.

At the same time, across the public sector workforce there is a high level of unknown or undisclosed information

on ethnicity, which can make it difficult to draw firm conclusions about differences between ethnic groups. Unfortunately, one of the elements of information undisclosed in the report appears to be the mainstream local government workforce. The report reviews data about the workforce in the police and criminal justice system, the NHS, state schools, armed forces and the Civil Service, and thus does not include local authority data, other than for schools.

Nonetheless, the findings will provide useful benchmarking data against which local authorities can measure their own positions and the progress they have made. But care will be needed to use appropriate benchmarks.

#### *Police and criminal justice*

The report documents the lack of progress in this sector.

- In 2016, 94% of prison officers in England and Wales who disclosed their ethnicity were White.
- Overall in 2016, around 1 police officer in every 17 was from a non-white ethnic minority group, and this proportion has been increasing very slowly over the past decade.
- Police officers from non-White ethnic minority groups were more concentrated in lower ranks, with a higher proportion of officers from non-White groups at the rank of constable: 85% were constables, 14% were in the sergeant or inspector ranks, and 1% were at the most senior ranks of chief inspector, superintendent, chief superintendent and chief officer.

This compared with 77% of White officers being constables, 20% being in the sergeant or inspector ranks, and 2% being at the most senior ranks.

- The proportion of people from non-White ethnic groups working as police officers was smaller than in other roles within the police workforce. The volunteer, part-time Special Constabulary was the most ethnically diverse part of this workforce with 12% being from a non-White ethnic minority group, followed by police community support officers (10%).
- In 2016, 6% of court judges who declared their ethnicity were from non-White ethnic groups. of court judges who declared their ethnicity were from non-White ethnic groups.

#### *The NHS*

This sector may offer more appropriate benchmarks against which local authorities can measure progress.

- Among non-medical staff in the NHS in England- that is apart from doctors or dentists- around 7% of very senior managers and 11% of senior managers in 2016 were from a non-White ethnic minority group. By comparison, 18% of the whole non-medical NHS workforce was from a non-White ethnic minority group.
- Of all applicants who were shortlisted for NHS jobs in England, White applicants (including those from White ethnic minority backgrounds) were more likely to be



appointed: 18% of White shortlisted applicants were appointed, compared with 11% of shortlisted applicants from non-White ethnic minority groups.

- NHS staffs from a non-White background were more likely to report having personally experienced discrimination at work from either a manager or colleague than White staff (including those from a White ethnic minority group): 14% of them did so compared with 6% of White staff in 2016.
- NHS staffs from a non-White background were also more likely to be entered into formal disciplinary procedures than White staffs were: 2% of non-White staff entered the disciplinary process while 1% of White staff did so.
- The executive boards of many Trusts do not reflect the diversity of the NHS workforce. Only 7% of trust board members in England in 2016 were from a non-White background while the remaining 93% of board members were White.

#### *Local government*

(The latest local government data, from the 2015/16 Workforce Survey, indicated that the average percentage of the top five of earners in councils who are from BAME backgrounds in English local authorities was 6.1% — 3.6% in Shire Districts and 8.2% in single/upper tier councils.)

#### *Teaching*

The figures for Education cover only teachers in state schools (which includes academies and free schools).

- The majority of teachers in England in 2016 were White British, with fewer than one in seven coming from an ethnic minority group, and 1 in 12 from a non-White ethnic minority group.
- After White British, teachers were most likely to be from other White, Indian or White Irish backgrounds whereas they were least likely to be from White and Black African, Chinese or Other Black backgrounds.
- More than 9 out of 10 head teachers were White British.
- Teachers from White Irish or other White backgrounds each comprise just under 2% of head teachers in England, and teachers from an Indian or Black Caribbean background comprise just under 1% each.
- Black Africans made up 1.2% of the male teaching workforce but only 0.6% of the female workforce.

#### *The Civil Service*

This sector has low diversity levels, with staff in ethnic minority groups are concentrated in lower grades.

- In 2016, around 1 of every 14 Senior Civil Servants was from an ethnic minority group, compared with one in eight executive officers.
- However, 16% of civil servants aged under 30 were from an ethnic minority background, so

this age group was nearly twice as likely to be from a minority background than those aged 50 to 59.

- There were more female staff than male staff from every ethnic group — around two-thirds of Black civil servants were female.
- The report notes that one in four civil servants did not report their ethnic group in 2016, so that these statistics may be masking.

### Conclusions

It is difficult to argue that the audit outcomes show 40 years of race equality legislation has been a resounding success - perhaps not even a marginal one.

The unknown quantity is whether this reflects shortcomings in the policy approach and/or resulting legislation, or whether it shows that there are societal and economic forces at work so powerful that they are beyond being readily susceptible to public policy initiatives, and cannot be overcome by legislation alone.

The Government has now shone a light on the lack of progress towards racial equality, but seems to have rejected the case for more or stronger legislation. The audit report says its analysis “helps to understand and assess differences between ethnic groups, and to identify those public services where disparities are diminishing and those where work is needed to develop effective strategies to reduce disparities between ethnic groups.”

This ties in with the approach that it is up to individual government

departments to either explain the disparities revealed by the audit or else initiate action to tackle them. Given their equality duties and the policies they already have in place, most local authorities will probably not want to wait for the communities department in central Government to organise the response to the audit. Its outcome should be the impetus for each of them to re-examine the nature and effectiveness of all their racial equality and diversity policies in terms of both employment and service delivery. The findings of the audit certainly provide a ready-made body of evidence of the urgent need to do so. There may be a case for cross-department and cross-sector initiatives and resources to be directed towards race equality issues by central Government, rather than the *laissez faire* approach of leaving the different constituent organisations in the public sector to respond individually.

### Reps action

Reps at company council level can press for information about the ethnic makeup of their organisations. Once the information is divulged they can seek to negotiate a range of policies to ensure their colleagues better reflect the communities they are drawn from – recruitment, training support, mentoring, etc.

### Acknowledgements and further information

More information on this and other employment law matters is available from:

- Val Stansfield, Employment Rights Adviser at [stansfieldv@tssa.org.uk](mailto:stansfieldv@tssa.org.uk) or 020 7529 8046
- TSSA members' helpdesk at [helpdesk@tssa.org.uk](mailto:helpdesk@tssa.org.uk) or 0800 3282673

The full audit details are available from  
**[www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk](http://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk)**

The information in this bulletin is drawn  
from Croner.