

1 Overview

This bulletin presents an overview of the findings from recent research into disproportionality for people from ethnic minority backgrounds in some of the sectors in which Cordis Bright specialises, i.e. health and social care, children's services, and criminal justice. Across these sectors, Black people and people from ethnic minority backgrounds experience a multitude of disproportionate outcomes.¹ The evidence reviewed as part of this bulletin has been limited to research published in or after 2020.^a

We recognise that there is a wide range of evidence exploring disproportionality across health and social care, children's services, and criminal justice and that this bulletin only touches the surface. Nevertheless, we hope some of the evidence that we have pulled out is useful and interesting.

Key terms:

Ethnicity is a complex, multidimensional concept, defined by features such as a common history, origins, language, and cultural practices. Ethnicity is a social construct that is often used to describe distinct populations, but it is also a subjective identity based on how people define themselves (Raleigh and Homes, 2021).

Ethnic minority groups is the term we have used throughout to refer to all ethnic groups apart from White British.

Disproportionality occurs when the percentage of people from a certain ethnicity in an identified population differ from the percentage of people of another group in a reference population (Rolock, Cryer-Coupet, and Janczewski, 2020).

Disparity occurs when one ethnic group experiences different outcomes from another ethnic group (Rolock, Cryer-Coupet, and Janczewski, 2020).

¹ We have focussed on the experiences of Black people in particular, but where there is a lack of information, we have broadened the research to include other ethnic minority groups.

2 Health and social care

A wide range of research has been undertaken in relation to health disparities that exist in England between ethnic minority groups and White groups, and between different ethnic minority groups. Some of these differences in health outcomes are explored below. Interestingly, we identified little recent research focused on the experiences of BME people in social care.

- People from Black and minority ethnic groups experience inequalities in health outcomes, as well as inequalities in access to and experiences of health services compared to White individuals (Raleigh and Homes, 2021). As one study on satisfaction with primary care, GP surgeries with higher percentages of ethnic minorities have a lower overall satisfaction score which indicates that ethnic minorities in general report lower patient satisfaction (Magadi and Magadi, 2022).
- Individuals from ethnic minority groups tend to have lower health-related quality of life scores at older ages than the national average at 0.74. This is most prevalent among White Gypsy and Irish Traveller (0.51), Bangladeshi (0.56) and Pakistani (0.58) groups, although less prevalent among some others, including Black Caribbean (0.72), Black African (0.75) and Mixed groups (Raleigh and Homes, 2021).
- Individuals from ethnic minority groups experience inequalities in access to Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT), as ethnic minority groups are both less likely to refer themselves to IAPT and less likely to be referred by their GPs, compared with White individuals (Kapadia et al, 2022).
- Black patients disproportionately receive pharmacological interventions in response to mental health diagnoses rather than referrals for talking therapies; mandatory rather than voluntary treatment; and criminal justice responses rather than early intervention (Memon et al, 2016; Wessely et al, 2018).
- Black people (321.7 detentions per 100,000 population) were over four times more likely than White people (73.4 per 100,000 population) to be detained under the Mental Health Act between 2016/17 and 2019/20, and up to ten times more likely to receive a Community Treatment Order, 61.3 uses per 100,000 population for Black people compared to 6.0 uses per 100,000 population for the White group (NHS Digital, 2020).
- Black women are four times more likely to die in childbirth than White women. Stillbirth and infant mortality rates are highest among Black babies. They are 50% more likely than White babies to die during or shortly after birth (National Maternity Review, 2016; Hinton, 2021; Raleigh and Homes, 2021).
- Childhood obesity rates are highest among Black African children in both the 4 to 5 and 10 to 11 age groups, at 30.8% and 46% respectively, compared to the average of 22.4% and 34.3% (Raleigh and Homes, 2021).
- Of 78,443 patients with a positive COVID-19 test in the SGSS testing data, 92% had information on ethnicity and of this 16% were from a minority ethnic group. Black and other ethnic minority groups constitute a disproportionately large fraction of

hospitalizations (20.4%) and ICU admissions (31.3%), especially in younger age groups.

- A higher percentage of adults in adult social care in a community or prison setting were Asian (6.4%) and Black (5.3%) than in nursing (2.0% and 3.0%) or residential setting (1.8% and 2.2%). Whereas a higher percentage of adults in residential setting were White (90.7%) than a community or prison setting (80.6%) (Ethnicity Facts and Figures, 2022a).
- Analysis of the 2019 NHS staff survey showed that 18% of ethnic minority staff reported experiencing discrimination from patients or members of the public, compared with 4.6% of White staff, and 14.5% of ethnic minority staff reported experiencing discrimination from a manager or colleague, compared with 6% of White staff (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2022)
- Although there is limited comparable data on the experiences of ethnic minority workers in adult social care, a survey of UNISON's Black members working in social care found that almost half of respondents had experienced racism or discrimination in the last year (UNISON, 2021; Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2022).

3 Criminal justice

In her first speech as Prime Minister four years before the killing of George Floyd in 2020, Theresa May stated that *"if you're Black, you are treated more harshly by the criminal justice system than if you are White"* (May, 2016). The Ministry of Justice (2019) similarly found that Black people are more likely to be stopped by the police, arrested, remanded to custody and to receive a custodial sentence than individuals from any other ethnic group.

Below is more information on how Black people and people from other ethnic minority groups experience the criminal justice system:

- Approximately 16% of the population of England and Wales self-identified as being from an ethnic minority group in 2018, yet 23% of individuals prosecuted for indictable offences in 2019 were from ethnic minority backgrounds (Ministry of Justice, 2019).
- Black individuals represented 4% of the population in 2019 but were the defendants in 11% of prosecutions (Pyper, 2021). Around a third of prosecutions of Black and Asian defendants were for drug offences, whereas this offence category accounted for just 15% of prosecutions of White defendants (Ministry of Justice, 2019).
- Black people are 53%, Asian individuals 55%, and those from other ethnic minority groups 81% more likely than White people to be sent to prison for offences that can be tried only at the Crown Court (Colahan et al, 2016).
- Black men are 26% more likely than White men to be remanded in custody. They are also nearly 60% more likely to plead not guilty, which means that if found guilty they can face a harsher sentence (Colahan et al, 2016; Lammy, 2017; Revolving Doors, 2022).

- Black women are 29% more likely than White women to be remanded in custody at Crown Court and following conviction they are 25% more likely to receive a custodial sentence (Colahan et al, 2016; Revolving Doors, 2022).
- Despite making up just 4% of the population, Black or Black British people make up 12.5% of the prison population in England and Wales (Ministry of Justice and HM Prison and Probation Service, 2022).
- Racial disproportionality in the youth justice system is even more pronounced. Black, Asian and minority ethnic children make up more than half of all children in custody and are both more likely to be sent to prison to await trial and receive harsher sentences than White children (Lammy, 2017).
- In 2020/21, 43% of children in custody in England and Wales were of Black or Mixed heritage (Ministry of Justice and Youth Justice Board, 2022). The proportion of Black children in custody is up to 29% of all children in custody, which has increased from 18% ten years ago. The number of Black children entering custody for the first time has also increased from 10% to 18% of all children in custody during the last ten years. Use of force in custody is also highest for Black children (Ministry of Justice et al., 2022; Waddell et al., 2022).
- The Children's Commissioner conducted a review of all strip searches of children conducted as part of a stop and search by the Metropolitan Police between 2018 and 2020. During the period, 650 children were strip searched and 58% of boys who were strip searched were Black, as described by the officer. Over half (53%) of strip searches of children resulted in no further action taken by the Metropolitan Police (Children's Commissioner, 2022).

4 Children's services

Children from Black and other ethnic minority groups experience a range of different outcomes from children's services. Some of these are:

- Children from Black ethnic groups were most likely to have multiple periods as a looked-after child. Almost 1 in 5 Black children who became looked after in 2019-20 had previously been looked after at some point in the previous 8 years: 19% compared to 13% of all children entering care (Children's Commissioner, 2022).
- Children from White and Mixed ethnic groups have the highest rates of being placed on child protection plans and then becoming looked after within a year of being referred. Children of Mixed White and Black Caribbean ethnicity were around 30% more likely than White British children to be placed on a child protection plan following a referral (Ahmed et al, 2022).
- Black and Mixed ethnicity children are overrepresented among children with long-term Child in Need plans compared to the national average. This group also has the worst educational attainment outcomes and represent the highest proportion of children with a Special Educational Needs status (McAlister, 2022).

- There are significant differences among looked after children of different ethnicities in their experiences prior to entering care. For example, among White children 65% were on a child protection plan in the eight years before becoming looked after, compared to 39% of children from Black groups (Ahmed et al, 2022).
- Children and families from some ethnic groups may be less likely to receive support from children's social care. Research by the Early Intervention Foundation found that ethnic minority families were seeking help, but at times did not receive support until things had reached "breaking point", despite repeated attempts to access early help (Waddell et al., 2022).
- A BrightSpots survey found a difference by ethnicity in the percentage of care leavers who felt they had someone who supported them, with only 86% of Black and ethnicity minority young men reporting they felt they had someone who listened to them, dropping to 83% when they were asked if they had someone who "tells them they've done well". This compares to 94% and 88% for White young men (Briheim-Crookall et al, 2020).
- Ethnicity was known for 81% of children and family social workers in 2021. Of these, 23% were ethnic minorities (excluding white minorities), up from 20% in 2017. This change is mainly due to an increase in social workers from Black ethnic groups (Explore Education Statistics, 2022)

5 Looking at the wider picture

Disproportionality experienced across these sectors does not exist in isolation. These differences must be situated within the broader context of structural racism and the disadvantages that Black people and people from other ethnic minority groups experience in housing, employment and health (The Howard League, 2022). Some of the other socioeconomic inequalities experienced by Black and other ethnic minority groups include:

- **Income:** Black (25%), Asian (22%), and Mixed (22%) ethnic groups are more than twice as likely to live in households with persistent low income (after housing costs) than White individuals (12%) (Ethnicity Facts and Figures, 2022b).
- **Housing:** rates of overcrowding are lowest within White British households (2%), and highest in Bangladeshi (24%), Pakistani (18%) and Black African (16%) households. Black people also experience greater housing insecurity than White people. Only 30% of Black households own their own home, compared to 70% of White households (Ethnicity Facts and Figures, 2020a). Although Black people only make up around 3% of the population, 14% of homeless households are Black (Ethnicity Facts and Figures, 2018a).
- **Unemployment:** unemployment rates within Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities are approximately double the national average of 4% (Francis-Devine, 2020).

6 Next steps

There is strong evidence that deep disparities exist across all three sectors explored in this bulletin. The evidence we have drawn together here will not be surprising to many, but it remains stark and in some cases the disparities between ethnic minorities are increasing. The existence of these disparities and the reasons behind them are well explored within the literature, however, more work is needed to provide solutions.

At Cordis Bright, we are strongly placed to work closely with clients that are experiencing these issues to ensure that outcomes are improved, and disparity and inequality is reduced. We believe that comprehensive, good-quality research is essential for enabling policymakers, commissioners, and service designers to identify the specific needs of different ethnic minority communities and can then support the design of solutions and tailored strategies for addressing inequalities and to monitor their impact.

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