

Black & Minority Ethnic Young People & Resettlement

Mark Blake

BTEG

Historic/philosophical context

"In respect of knife and gun gangs, the laws need to be significantly toughened. There needs to be an intensive police focus on these groups. The ringleaders need to be identified and taken out of circulation; if very young, as some are, put in secure accommodation.'

Tony Blair 2007

"The Hate U Give Little Infants F---s Everybody. T-H-U-G-L-I-F-E'. (Meaning what society gives us as youth, it bites them in the ass in later life.)

Tupac Shakur

Youth custody context

Overall, the number of young people, aged 10-17, held in custody has reduced substantially between the peak in 2007/08 and 2015/16, and falls have been seen across all ethnic groups. BAME group volumes have been falling at a slower rate, than the white group, and their share of the custodial population has increased over the past ten years.

- Approximately 9 in every 10,000 young black people in the general population were in youth custody in 2015/16, the highest proportion of any ethnic group. This compares to 1 in every 10,000 for young people from white ethnic backgrounds, 4 in 10,000 mixed ethnic young people, and 2 in 10,000 'Asian and other' young people; the difference between every ethnic group is statistically significant.
- The analysis in this report indicates that the high proportion of young black people in custody is likely to be driven by arrest rates (i.e. the gateway to the criminal justice system), custodial sentencing at the magistrates' court, and the fact that they have spent longer in the custodial estate on average than other groups in the past four years.'

Exploratory analysis of 10-17 year olds in the youth secure estate by black and other minority ethnic groups MOJ Sept 2017

BME young people – to address resettlement you have to address the drivers that lead to their over representation in the system

- Need to change the way our institutions and politicians think about race. Lack of prominence, explicit recognition, leadership, action and understanding as to how ethnic disproportionality intersects across the range of challenges we face (e.g. Serious Youth Violence – SYV) Linked to the fact that austerity is now increasing costs for the state
- BME young people are disproportionality represented in the categories highlighted in the three previous presentations and across most key indicators/ predictors of entry into the system (e.g. school exclusions)
- The context for BAME young people in/or at risk of the CJS
- The Lammy Review
- Pathways into the system- halting the conveyor belt to Feltham
- Pointers for the future if we make the system fairer it will be more likely to produce fairer outcomes for everybody

The context for BME young people: inequality; institutionalised discrimination; fear and a growing disconnect- Reality check

- Crucially if you want to address challenges like knife crime/SYV you have to work with those communities and young people who are most affected and build social capital and leadership. Peer and community led interventions co-produced with those most affected young people were a main stay of approaches in the aftermath of the 1980's riots.
- This has been decimated both financially and intellectually by a combination of: austerity (public sector cuts and the new harsher benefits regime making the poor pay for the crash 2008) and the neo liberal consensus (the market has the answer to everything); the aftermath of the 2011 riots where we have seen some of the best practice around youth and community engagement rolled back placing enforcement first; the sustained attack on poorer communities (exemplified by the kind of gentrification policies pursued by some public authorities in our cities;) and a new form of institutionalised discrimination (social cleansing) of the type that Grenfell typifies.

The context for BME young people: inequality; institutionalised discrimination; fear and a growing disconnect- Reality check

- The 2011 riots should have been a wake up call for more community and youth engagement and involvement. Instead in an era of austerity the response has been more enforcement. Exemplified recently by the assertion that knife crime can be addressed by more stop and search and locking up more kids (BME kids) even though there is no evidence base for this and we know our YOI's are not fit for purpose.
- We are now in the midst of a major upsurge in violent crime and a sense that a growing culture of violence is being embedded amongst groups of young people (disproportionality BME) that will/is permeating across the wider society in the context of the digital age. One aspect of this is the growing disconnect between authority/ mainstream and BME young people and communities and a growing hardened antipathy towards our institutions encapsulated by Grenfell

The Lammy Review

- 'The Youth Justice System is my biggest concern'
- Lammy identified a more than ten year improvement in outcomes for white young people and a simultaneous deterioration in outcomes for BME young people.
- However only two out of his 35 recommendations were specifically targeted at the youth justice system- recommendation 18 on youth offender panels and recommendation 33 on an evaluation of the YJB disproportionality tool kit (of course many others of his recommendations would impact on young people including recommendations 5 and 6 on the respective reviews of the gangs matrix and joint enterprise)
- In our view due to the restrictive nature of his terms of reference Lammy does not provide a satisfactory framework to address his biggest concern.

Pathways into the system- halting the conveyor belt to Feltham

- The pathways into the youth justice system- policing, schools, CAMHS and care
- All have challenges around ethnic disproportionality and access to services for BME young people. All fall under local multi-agency arrangements
- Need far more honed approach to early intervention and prevention and recognition of the intersections that prioritises BME YP
- Balance needs to swing away from enforcement to safeguarding children- treating all children as children and frankly pulling the Police back as it is clear this leads to the worst outcomes and reinforces a culture of adversarialism, conflict and violence
- VCS needs to be more vocal on this

Pointers for the future if we make the system fairer it will be more likely to produce fairer outcomes for everybody

- Move from tokenistic consultation to engaging and involving affected BME young people and communities as equal respected partners (this will be challenging)
- We need to end differential treatment for children and place safeguarding in its widest context ahead of enforcement for BME kids
- Our organisations need to reality check themselves in light of Grenfell – How representative are we? Do we engage and involve BME young people? Do we do enough to challenge ethnic disproportionality and injustice? Do we comment on rampant inequality or view that as too political a terrain for us to venture into?

Useful links

- <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2007/apr/12/akic-kintheteeth>
- https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/641481/Exploratory-analysis-of-10-17-year-olds-in-the-youth-secure-estate-by-bame-groups.pdf
- <https://www.bteg.co.uk/content/tackling-youth-justice-crisis-bame-children-must-involve-addressing-their-treatment-police>
- <http://www.beyondyouthcustody.net/resources/publications/ethnicity-faith-and-culture-in-resettlement-a-practitioners-guide/>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/oct/11/austerity-policy-blamed-record-numbers-children-taken-into-care>