CVR | CLEARVIEW RESEARCH   BE: Black Equity Organisation

"Brick Wall After Brick Wall"

The lived realities and concerns of Black communities in the UK

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About Us

ClearView Research (ClearView/CVR) is an audience insight and strategy agency. We are specialists in research, evaluation and engagement projects with young people, minority ethnic groups, culturally diverse communities, people with protected characteristics, and those who often go unheard. We are committed to ensuring that our work is inclusive and equitable. We strive to ensure that our participants enjoy the research process and find it accessible, engaging, and empowering. We ensure that their voices are central in the materials (e.g., reports and frameworks) that we produce.

We work best with organisations who give a damn and want to make a genuine impact.

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About BEO

The Black Equity Organisation (BEO) is the national civil rights organisation for Black people in the UK. We exist to promote economic, legal, social and political equality for Black communities in Britain in order to ensure equal opportunity for progress and prosperity. Our efforts will endorse and amplify Black talent, Black enterprises, and Black greatness in Britain. Our vision is to realise the empowerment, self-determination, and welfare of Black people in the UK, and to be a credible and effective catalyst for dismantling structural racism within British society.

BEO commissioned Clearview to conduct this research to inform BEO's approach and to ground their work in the diverse lived experience of Black people at this early stage of their existence as a new charity in the race equity sector. Insights from this research will directly shape aspects of BEO's work going forward.

Executive Summary

In order to capture the diverse voices within the Black communities in the UK, the ClearView Research team decided to take a co-creation centred approach and use research methods involving community research and discussion groups based on participatory methods. Firstly, we conducted a rapid literature review to gather insights and shape our research questions. For the community research element, we trained a diverse group of six participants in our Peer Research education programme that focuses on research and engagement in the community. The community researchers then designed their research questions and research method with the support of the ClearView Research team. The community researchers designed methods based on online discussions and semi-structured interviews, as well as creative methods, such as drawing in responses to questions around what race or racism means to individuals. In addition to this, the ClearView Research team conducted four online exploration labs (i.e., participatory group discussions), engaging 40 people from the Black community across the UK exploring education, criminal justice, health, housing, cultural awareness, and equality of opportunity in the workplace. We conducted thematic analysis on the findings from both the community research and exploration labs. We then worked with the community researchers to validate our findings and to ensure we had correctly understood the key messages by appropriately contextualising and delivering them in a sensitive way.

Our key findings and reflections from our research have been summarised below:

1. **Findings from the community research demonstrated participants' tendency to downplay their experiences of racism.**

Some voiced this was for fear of white defensiveness. Some people that we spoke to referred to an ingrained habit of "keeping your head down". This was mainly in relation to not challenging white people on questionable remarks, particularly if they were in positions of power. People spoke about how they regularly found themselves policing their tone in front of white people to prevent causing offence, whilst always second-guessing whether behaviours and attitudes towards them were racially motivated.

2. **On hearing other participants' stories and having identified a common narrative, research participants reflected considerably on the role of institutional racism in sustaining racial inequality.** Across demographics, participants shared how they had felt attacked and dismissed by the report published in March 2021 by the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities.[1] They agreed that often, big organisations refused to engage with the concept of systemic racism as it would involve them admitting to discrimination against marginalised groups, acknowledging that meritocracy was a myth and, ultimately, would require them to release power and influence.

3. **Participants regularly referred to experiencing microaggressions, in both social and informal settings and from people in positions of power.** Participants of all ages shared very similar stories of microaggressions in informal settings. They pointed out these served as constant reminders that some people did not think they belonged in the UK and reconfirmed an 'us' and 'them' narrative. On experiencing microaggressions from people in power, such as teachers and healthcare professionals, participants

voiced fear that these prejudices were determining very real and important life outcomes. Participants voiced concerns about how difficult it is to identify the attitudes that underpin these microaggressions and deliberated over how it was best to address these with white professionals.

4. **Participants showed frustration at the continued lack of authentic and multi-dimensional representations of Black people and Black culture in the media.** This was particularly the case for Black queer folk and people living with a disability in the Black community, who felt their identities were regularly missed out in media. Participants noted how limited and stereotypical representations of Black people in the media tended to be, from negative images of violence and crime to sexualised or angry images of Black women and tokenistic and minimised examples of character development. Participants also shared how they often felt white people were heavily influenced by these images and they impacted how they interacted with Black people on a day-to-day basis.

5. **Gaining representation of Black people in institutions and senior positions of leadership was also raised as crucial in order to shift towards greater racial parity.** Participants agreed that the lack of Black people in positions of power meant that organisations lacked the knowledge and understanding of the Black lived experience. In the workplace, people felt that after the Black Lives Matter protests of 2020, organisations had only paid lip service to committing to anti-racist causes and that Black people still face a lack of support when raising cases of racial discrimination. In the education system, participants spoke at length about the impact of few Black teachers in the workforce, and how this created a predominantly white curriculum and teaching practices. In healthcare, participants spoke about the lack of medical and cultural knowledge about Black communities seen in healthcare professionals in more senior positions, as well as the discrimination that occurs when self-advocating – the latter was particularly the case for LGBTQIA+ participants.

6. **Throughout the research, participants were keen to stress the emotional fallout of ongoing racism and discussions around racism with white people.** People, particularly queer, trans, disabled, and female participants, voiced concerns over mental wellbeing and how they did not feel protected or supported by the UK system. Many participants spoke about lacking a sense of belonging to the UK. For those that did feel a sense of belonging, they voiced how people tried to threaten this regularly, by being told they should "go home", or more formally through changes in policies around citizenship.

7. **Overall, there was a split between how positive people felt about the future.** Younger participants tended to be more positive and dynamic about how they saw racial equity coming about in the UK, whilst older participants tended to voice fatigue and frustration that the same conversations were still going on. Some younger participants doubted that change would occur on a systemic level anytime soon but believed by engaging in alternative spaces and modelling an alternative, equitable and compassionate way of living in their daily lives, they could build equity on a micro level that would slowly chip away at the status quo. Other participants shared many stories of overcoming hardship and challenging authority and pointed to a change in the tone of conversations around race. Although we heard stories of the fatigue that this causes, we also heard the resilience of the participants and their push for change.

Introduction

BEO, a national organisation exclusively focused on dismantling systemic racism across a range of issues affecting Black communities in the UK, will be building on a strong history in the UK of resistance and anti-racism campaigning. It seeks to address systemic racism across health, criminal justice, education, housing, cultural awareness, and economic empowerment. The purpose of this project was to support the launch of the organisation and to share the authentic and diverse voices of Black people across the UK, their experiences of racism in recent years, and what they are most concerned about going forward, as well as the role they wish BEO to play.

Racism in the UK, although a longstanding and daily reality for Black communities and other ethnic minority groups, has been brought into focus in recent years. The global Black Lives Matter protests in the summer of 2020 following the brutal murder of George Floyd, the recent Sewell Report claiming that systemic racism does not exist in the UK,[2] and the prevention of teaching Critical Race Theory in schools,[3] all have added to the current conversation on race and racism in the UK. All this public debate has shown that there are clear conflicting views in society. In light of this, through this research, BEO wanted to outline that Black people, in all their diversity, have a strong sense of aspiration and a voice going forward. The research will contribute to an understanding of the priorities and concerns of different Black communities across the UK and how these may vary with different intersecting identities, including gender, sexuality, dis/ability, socio-economic status, as well as heritage. It also explores Black people's views on the more explicit manifestations of systemic injustices such as disproportionate numbers of Black people who are stopped and searched, in prisons, or excluded from school. The research also looks to the impact of more hidden microaggressions in people's daily lives and the impact of this on their sense of belonging.

The research will be used to tell the story of what it is like to be Black in the UK, to demonstrate why BEO is needed, and how racism is still in fact a very real problem. It will additionally be used to inform BEO's priorities and how they should support different groups or communities in the UK. We acknowledge that this research does not capture the entire experience of people from the Black community and that many Black people are thriving in society, in spite of these barriers. However, these barriers still remain and these need addressing systematically to enable Black people to be fully recognised and valued in society.

Scope and language

This report is focused on Black people. It concentrates on those from Black African heritage, Black Caribbean heritage and mixed heritages, such as Black African–Black Caribbean as well as white and Black African/Caribbean or Black and Asian. We fully acknowledge that Asians and other ethnic minority groups also experience the effects of racism. By focusing here on the particular experiences of Black people, we do not seek to diminish the experiences of those from other ethnic minority groups in any way.

Methodology/Approach

Rapid Literature Review

We conducted a rapid literature review for the internal project team's benefit to better understand the experiences of Black communities in the UK. As part of this, we reviewed academic literature, grey literature, charitable campaign materials, thought pieces, and commentary pieces. We also reviewed our previous research studies that are publicly available, as well as those not in the public domain. This ensured we covered a range of experiences of diverse Black communities that may not get coverage in more official or commonly available literature, such as Black people who identify as LGBTQIA+ and disabled. The rapid literature review informed our research and determined the key lines of enquiry for the team. Throughout this report, we acknowledge how our own research findings confirm, add to, or counter findings from the literature review and our own research studies.

Community Researchers

We trained up six community researchers in our Peer Research education programme that focuses on research and engagement in the community. This included modules on research design, research methods, fieldwork approaches, community engagement, analysis, and reporting. Following the training, we supported the community researchers through our own research expertise as well as our knowledge base from the literature review. We worked closely to assist them in designing their research questions and methods, recruiting participants, and engaging with their own communities locally.

To ensure comparable outputs, each community researcher was tasked with asking a general, introductory question about people's experiences of racism in the UK and their hope for future change. Based on the participants that each community researcher chose – for example, work colleagues, children, or support groups – they then asked more in-depth questions on certain topics. The specific topics explored were maternity healthcare, workplace discrimination,discrimination in higher education, and belonging and identity.

The community research fieldwork was carried out over the period of a month, with regular check-ins with the CVR team to ensure they felt supported throughout the process. This approach gave control of the research back to people in the communities themselves to decide what the focus of the conversations should be, as well as creating the opportunity to engage and gather insights from communities who normally may not participate in research or share their opinions. We also worked closely with the community researchers to inform the discussions in the exploration labs, as well as working with the group to validate the research findings at the end of the process. This enabled us to properly contextualise the findings, represent them correctly, and frame them in sensitive and appropriate ways.

The sampling approach to identify community researchers was driven by convenience sampling. This is where participants are selected based on key characteristics, their availability, and willingness to participate. The main disadvantage of this approach is that there are often already underlying differences between those who volunteer to participate in research and those who do not, so this could lead to the views or experiences of certain groups not being represented in the research. The links that the community researchers have to their own communities

will have helped to overcome some of these limitations, as they can encourage a broader reach and engagement with the research. However, there will always be a risk that certain groups are under-represented when using this sampling method.

To further overcome this sampling bias, we adapted the convenience sampling method to include a quota driven sampling approach, where participants from specific groups of certain characteristics were targeted. In our final sample, we ensured coverage across demographics, including people from a spread of geographic regions with a variety of genders, sexuality, ethnic backgrounds, and dis/abilities (see Appendix 2 for breakdown of demographics).

Exploration Labs

In addition to the participant-led community research, we also held four online exploration labs. These were to complement the findings from the community research and to ensure we had a broad representation of Black voices from across the UK involved in the research. Where the community research achieved depth of engagement and insight, the exploration lab insights brought breadth of experience. For the purposes of this report, the findings will be presented together – any differences in findings will be highlighted throughout.

Exploration labs are similar to focus groups. They allow participants to share their experiences, views, and ideas and incorporate engaging visual and graphic methods where participants can draw and map counter-responses. From our experience and evidence from the literature (Bagnioli, 2009), participatory methods work well, as they break down barriers to engagement in the research process. They work well with young people, seldom heard groups, those for whom English is an additional language, and those who may have special educational needs and/or come from neurodiverse backgrounds.

We were particularly interested in including people in our research across different social-economic backgrounds, a variety of Black ethnic backgrounds, specifically Black African, Black Caribbean and mixed-Black heritage, and a range of ages, genders, dis/ability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, and geographical location. Similar to the community research, participants were recruited through convenience sampling. We also adapted the convenience sample to include quota driven sampling to ensure we had a variety of experiences represented. Questions and discussions remained broad; people were asked to share experiences of racism across a series of topics – education, criminal justice, housing, health and wellbeing, cultural awareness, and economic empowerment – as well as provide a final reflection on how positive they felt about the future, and where they saw change coming from.

Before we conducted the exploration labs, we carried out **'thinking out loud' sessions.** As part of these we worked with a small sample of people from the Black community to ensure the discussion guides were received as we wanted them to be and were delivered in a culturally sensitive manner. These sessions also gave us a final opportunity to test the effects of the messaging that relayed why we were doing this research.

In total, **199** people from a diverse range of lived experiences signed up to take part in the exploration labs. From these, we selected **40** to take part. When combined with the **20** research participants that the **6** community researchers engaged, we reached a total sample of **66** (see Appendix 1 for demographic breakdown). All participants' real names have been replaced with pseudonyms throughout the report. For quotes shared by community research, we have not included age or location.

Project Limitations

Though the insights in this report reflect the lived experiences and reality of the people we spoke to, our findings cannot be generalised to represent the wider population of all diverse Black communities in the United Kingdom. We see this project as a helpful way to sufficiently contribute to and complement the broader quantitative analysis conducted on behalf of BEO, by asking and building an understanding of why people feel as they do.

Key Findings

Throughout the research process, both in the community research and exploration labs, discussions were kept broad allowing participants to take the conversations where they wanted. We worked with participants in the exploration labs and the community researchers to understand the cross-cutting themes that underpinned people's experiences across education, criminal justice, housing, health and wellbeing, cultural awareness, and economic empowerment. These emerged as follows: institutions, structures and policy, microaggressions, representation, identity, wellbeing, and belonging. Discussions on institutions, structures, and policy were particularly present in the exploration labs, whilst all the other themes were common across both aspects of the research process.

Institutions, Structures and Policy

Despite no explicit questions on systemic racism, there was strong conviction and consensus amongst participants in the exploration labs that the key cause of ongoing racism in the UK was in-built within institutions, structures, and policies. This confirmed findings from the literature review that systemic racism is at the heart of the issue in UK society.[4] While many participants reflected on the gains that had been made towards racial equality within these institutions, there was, however, also the recognition that fundamental problems still remained. This section focuses on participants' views of systemic racism and their experiences of how institutions, structures and policies have promoted and facilitated discrimination.

Interestingly, the community researchers found their participants tended not to link their own experiences to institutional racism and, in fact, would often downplay their experiences of racism. The community researchers found this was particularly the case in one-to-one interviews. They agreed people may have lacked the same sense of shared experience that exploration lab participants developed and, therefore, the sense that these experiences are connected or 'systemic'. Some of the community researchers explored these omissions or downplaying of emotions with their participants. Participants shared how they felt this came from a place of habit or an in-built coping mechanism, to minimise their pain or suffering to be acceptable to white people around them.

In contrast, in the exploration labs, people

repeatedly spoke about how they felt failed, unprotected and even targeted by the government and other institutions. Most participants reached the conclusion of facing racism and discrimination at an institutional level based on their individual repeated experiences of racism. These were further confirmed by the commonalities in experiences raised in the Exploration Lab discussions. The 1999 MacPherson Report, commissioned after the murder of Stephen Lawrence, defined institutional racism as, "The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racial stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people".[5] This concept of institutional racism was clearly referred to in multiple discussions.

 "...this is such a normative patriarchal system of oppression that it doesn't actually care who you are. It's oppressing all of us the same way". – Joe, 58 from Scotland

Jill shared, *"because they (the West) colonised 80% of the planet and possibly more in vicarious forms of colonisation. So how do you create change when people are being oppressed and subjugated by these same systems?"*

Participants in the exploration labs were keen to discuss why they think systemic racism remains unquestioned. People tended to speak about this in two ways. Firstly, participants felt strongly that many of the decisions that disproportionately and negatively impact Black people occur because of ignorance. People in positions of power make decisions based on how they and those around them live their lives and do not consider other ways of being.

Diana, 30, in West Midlands, echoed this point: *"It is ignorance – they get to pretend not to understand why that treatment exists and why we feel a certain way."* Likewise, George in Yorkshire and Humber said*, "It is not in British culture to ask the hard question or to have an awkward conversation, and that is what needs to happen."*

Other participants considered the cause of systemic racism to be more disingenuous. They agreed it was not just the absence of knowledge of people in power that meant racism continued, but that institutions were actively ignoring or refusing to engage with the idea of inclusion as it presented a threat to their power and the status quo.

Shonda, 34, from Bristol, noted, "*Indeed, people have different backgrounds which means some people do not learn or understand things; however when the knowledge is freely available and people choose not to engage, that is where the real problem lies."*

Sheila, 43, in West Midlands argued a similar point: *"For it to change, the people with the power have to be willing to release the power. They are not willing to release the power. Not at all...If they have all the power, the authority, the money, and everything else and influence, why would they give that up so we can get a chance?"*

When discussing systemic racism, participants frequently referred to the March 2021 report by the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities that claimed that the UK should be seen as "a model for other White-majority countries" with regards to racial equality.[6] They expressed anger at the report's conclusions which claimed there was no evidence of institutional racism. Participants would often only raise systemic racism when discussions had covered a variety of topics and experiences that pointed to repeated maltreatment at the hands of institutions, including education, welfare, and healthcare. It was in these discussions that people would voice disbelief that the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities refused to consider these repeated experiences at an institutional or connected level. In the report itself, it outlines, the term 'institutional racism' should "be applied only when deep-seated racism can be proven on a systemic level and not be used as a general catch-all phrase for any microaggression, witting or unwitting."[7] Participants agreed that what made institutional racism powerful was its *"subtlety"* and that it is difficult to 'prove'. However, the repeated unequal treatment of Black people at the hands of institutions should be enough to understand these experiences are connected and systemic.

Participants voiced particular frustration and apprehension at how 'colour-blind' stances often also interacted with other factors beyond race such as gender, class, sexuality, and age. Many felt at a loss as to how they were meant to progress or feel protected in this country, given how the system is shaped so heavily by views of straight, white men. Many spoke about this in relation to hiring patterns of organisations, promotions, and access to support services.

"The thing that they did is to divide us so that we feel like we're not all being oppressed, and so that when you encounter multiple oppressions, you can't necessarily tell where it's coming from...It is just now compounded." John, from Scotland.

Microaggressions ('subtle' racism)

When asking broad questions on people's experiences of racism in the UK, participants across exploration labs and the community research regularly referred to their experiences as "subtle" racism. These are also known as microaggressions – the indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of marginalised groups. As mentioned by the community researchers, it is unclear whether the racist experiences themselves were subtle or that the participants were hesitant to label them as racist out of a habit of downplaying their experiences. This section will outline the examples of subtle racism that participants shared and how they can occur in informal settings, as well as by people in positions of power.

Participants across exploration labs and the community research referred to subtle racism as the kind of comments, behaviours, and treatment where you find yourself *"second-guessing"* a racially motivated intention. People gave countless examples of these experiences, including other people moving away from them on the bus, not receiving a promotion despite fulfilling the criteria, being stopped and searched by police, or receiving bad customer service. Participants, of all ages and backgrounds, had examples of such experiences and agreed that having a government who refused to address systemic racism in many ways encouraged this type of behaviour. Many felt that these behaviours are learnt and sanctioned by social institutions so that they become commonplace and normal.

On hearing different accounts of subtle racism across different aspects of people's lives, it emerged that there were two types of scenarios in which it occurred; some microaggressions occurred in informal,

"I FINISHED MY NURSING DEGREE THIS YEAR. SO, WELL, DURING MY PRACTICES IN THE HOSPITAL, I WOULD GO ON DUTY, AND THEN I WOULD JUST MEET A NUMBER OF PATIENTS WHO WOULD TELL ME TO MY FACE, "YOU CANNOT ATTEND TO ME," JUST BECAUSE I'M BLACK. YEAH, IT'S REALLY TRAUMATISING."

*JULIE, AGED 23,
FROM THE EAST OF ENGLAND*

social spaces and others came from people in positions of power.

There were numerous accounts across the exploration labs and community research of people of all ages, backgrounds, and regions in the UK who faced microaggressions in informal, social spaces. The community researchers were shocked to hear strikingly similar accounts across their participants from a variety of backgrounds and regions. Similarly, older participants in exploration labs voiced surprise that the racist comments and behaviours they had faced when they were growing up were an ongoing issue. Participants agreed that microaggressions in informal spaces acted as a constant reminder that there was an 'us' and 'them' mentality, and that they did not feel welcome.

Rachel, 31, a mixed race, Black Arab woman, who lives in London, describes her experience in the airport, *"I sat next to a white lady in her seat, and she had a few people sitting next to her on her left side. When I sat down, she looked at me multiple times. I could tell she*

wasn't happy that I sat there, and I didn't want to move because I knew what that look meant...When I didn't get up, she huffed, so she folded her newspaper back together and she went and sat directly behind me where there were more white people...It's things like that that didn't really have verbal communication as much as it was body language... And so... you're even more hyper-aware of somebody saying something to you and also more about preconceptions of being black."

As noted by Julie, 23, from the East of England *"I finished my nursing degree this year. So, well, during my practices in the hospital, I would go on duty, and then I would just meet a number of patients who would tell me to my face, "You cannot attend to me," just because I'm Black. Yeah, it's really traumatising."*

Joseph, 33, a full-time nanny in London, explained, *"I've been stopped four times especially when the baby cries and that is not okay. I have said to them [the police], "If I was white man with a Black child, I would not have been stopped." I've complained but then it happens again and again and again."*

People also described experiencing microaggressions from individuals in positions of power, such as teachers, police officers, nurses, doctors, and work colleagues. Undoubtedly, participants voiced how this was particularly concerning or frustrating as these people were there to support them and take control of the environment. For example, people mentioned teachers not supporting them as they were deemed a troublemaker or police officers stopping and searching individuals with no grounds for suspicion.

Participants with children often spoke about the injustices they saw their children face at school, but found it very difficult to find recourse to support. Many of these incidents revolved around teachers accusing children of misbehaving or labelling certain children

as challenging, seemingly singling Black children out over others. Participants who remembered their own time at school spoke about how these microaggressions occurred not only around supposed misbehaviour, but on an ongoing basis where comments would be made about ability, hair, clothing, and attitude or they would be incorrectly placed in lower sets. In fact, over 60% of participants in exploration labs reported discrimination in schools.

"I'VE BEEN EXPOSED TO A LOT OF RACISM IN MY WORK ENVIRONMENT. WHEN I USED TO WORK AS A DELIVERY DRIVER, I WOULD BE WITH CAUCASIAN PEOPLE AND THEY WOULD PUT ON A JAMAICAN ACCENT, OR THEY WOULD IMPERSONATE MY CULTURE WITHOUT HAVING ANY UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT THEY'RE DOING."

MICHAEL, FROM LEEDS

Monica, aged 57, from South-West England, shared, *"When teachers get you to read, and when I would read and my English teacher was looking at me, "No, that's not how Black people speak." And I say, "What do you mean?"*

John, aged 34, from London, reflected on his unequal treatment at school, *"So when I was in secondary school, basically most of the youth of colour were put in the lower classes. And that was tough, because basically, our parents thought that we were just rubbish."*

Research has shown that Black pupils, especially those of Caribbean heritage, consistently perform under the average achievement of their peers and this has been the case for over four decades. In 2018, for

example, Black Caribbean boys' attainment in London was 17 percentage points behind the London average for expected standards in reading, writing, and maths by the end of primary school.[8]

Equality of opportunity in the workplace was mentioned most by 30- to 40-year-olds within the research. Some people spoke about feeling their organisations lacked accountability structures for reporting workplace microaggressions. They typically felt like more senior people also did not respond openly to reports of workplace discrimination. Other people spoke about being passed over for promotions despite fulfilling the criteria and when challenging decisions, being described as "angry".

Michael, from Leeds, stated, *"I've been exposed to a lot of racism in my work environment. When I used to work as a delivery driver, I would be with Caucasian people and they would put on a Jamaican accent, or they would impersonate my culture without having any understanding of what they're doing."*

In the same vein, Lisa, from the West Midlands, shared how her white boss called her *"angry"* and *"outspoken"* when she complained about racist remarks in the workplace.

Typically, male participants of all ages raised experiences of maltreatment and microaggressions from the police. This was often around regular stop and searches or the police not taking their concerns seriously.

Hannah, 45, from Bristol, noted, *"My daughter had been driving my car when it was new and she was stopped several times...saying she shouldn't be driving the car, asking whom it belongs to."*

Joseph, aged 35, from London described the relationship Black men have with the police: *"The relationship with Black men, with the law,*

isn't the healthiest because we seem to get judged and punished before justice."

This negative relationship between Black people and the police has been long-lasting in the UK. The experiences of participants reflect broader reports that show Black people are nine times more likely to be stopped and searched by police than white people.[9] Home Office figures show that in 2017/18, Black individuals were 40 times more likely to be stopped and searched under Section 60 than white individuals, where police officers require no evidence to do so.[10] Research that ClearView conducted for the Joint Committee on Human Rights found that almost 9 in 10 of the Black people that we polled stated they were not confident at all they would be treated the same as white people by the police. This was overwhelmingly the area where most Black people found they were treated unequally, out of the areas explored in the research project. Additionally, interestingly, we also found that Black women, in comparison to Black men, were less likely to believe they will be treated the same as white people by the police.[11]

Participants of all ages, genders and backgrounds regularly mentioned being the subject of microaggressions in healthcare. This also mirrors findings from our research for the Joint Committee on Human Rights where we found that the majority of Black people (over 60%) in the UK do not believe their health is as equally protected by the NHS compared to white people. Additionally, as with the police, this was more pronounced for women, as Black women are more likely than Black men to not believe their health is equally protected by the NHS.[12]

Older participants agreed that they had learnt to educate themselves extensively on their conditions before seeking medical support, largely because they had regular experiences of being dismissed and in

some cases, diagnosed incorrectly. This was particularly distressing because they had to fight to be taken seriously in what was already a difficult time. Particular recurring examples of this were around maternity care for Black women and Special Educational Need (SEND) diagnosis. Experiences of participants around maternity care reflect broader research and campaigns that highlight how Black women are four times more likely to die in pregnancy and childbirth than white counterparts.[13] Similarly, experiences around SEND diagnoses also speak to research that outlines the prejudices involved in the diagnostics process. Specifically, the research outlines this through the disproportionate number of Black Caribbean boys over-diagnosed with social, emotional, and mental health needs,[14] and an under diagnosis of Black children with autism.[15]

Lilian, aged 49, from Yorkshire & Humber, shared, *"I was hospitalised and my treatment in the hospital was absolutely disgusting. This man came in and I feel like he had this idea of what Black women and our community were like. He said, "You are very selfish. You will probably infect a lot of people up there." I had not yet been vaccinated and he went on to say it's the Black community that's stopping the country from recovering from COVID."*

Similarly, Jenny, aged 25, from North-West England, noted, *"I found out this year that I need an ADHD/autism assessment and they've just been dragging it out for so long. There's this misconception that if you have ADHD, you can't have a successful career, you don't have a good education. Um, and I- and I guess it was just not taken seriously when you're a Black woman."*

The emotional fallout of these experiences was self-evident in our conversations with participants. As subtle forms of racism are difficult to detect and can be perceived and interpreted differently, participants regularly spoke about finding themselves questioning whether comments or behaviours were racially motivated. One participant referred to this as having to walk a tightrope between being constantly *"hyper-vigilant"* whilst also not letting it affect or exhaust you.

As Michael, 48, in South-East England expresses, *"I could be offended by what they're doing but, it's something I've got used to over the years because it's quite common in Britain in general."*

This sense of constantly questioning people's motivations around you is linked to the notion of 'microinvalidations',[16] which is when comments or behaviours from white counterparts seek to invalidate or deny the lived experience of people of colour. Participants explained they often found themselves fearful to question comments or behaviours because of past experiences where white people responded aggressively or highly sensitively. They described this *"second-guessing"* and the inability to be heard as *"exhausting"* and *"another layer"* of oppression.

Jessica, from Scotland, explained, *"It gets to the point where you don't even want to talk about your experiences because they don't even recognise how their actions really affect you, you just accept it."*

Nina, aged 33, in South-West England expressed, *"It is just annoying because how many more times are we gonna get treated like we're not good enough?...Our experiences don't count. You just keep hearing so much of people's experiences and they just keep making excuses."*

Participants agreed that subtle racism and microaggressions were the most common forms of racism they experienced in formal and informal spaces. Participants, across all ages, genders, and backgrounds, felt microaggressions were a constant way of *"keeping us in our place"*. They agreed the *"double layer"* of having to emotionally deal with the microaggression whilst policing their tone so as not to offend white people in the process was altogether a draining task.

Representation

When pushed to consider why subtle racism, microaggressions, and institutional racism occur, participants in exploration labs and the community research reflected on the lack of representation of Black people in senior positions, political spaces, and the media. Participants thought that this is important for two reasons. Firstly, as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie argues, by presenting one-dimensional representations of Black communities, "the single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete".[17] Secondly, it means those in senior positions are making decisions on behalf of Black communities without the knowledge of their lived experience. This section will outline the impact of the lack of representation and participants' views on how to build a more representative society to create sustainable change.

Media

Participants noted the problematic lack of people of colour on radio, the news, television shows, and films in the UK, especially when compared to countries like the United States. Participants shared that not only is there a lack of representation, but when you do see people of colour, their characters are minimal, tokenistic, or harmful portrayals of Black people. Participants agreed that is problematic on multiple levels, but largely because you cannot be what you do not see represented. Further, the way in which stereotypes are created then determine how white people see and interact with Black people in their day to day lives

Similarly, as noted by Sue, 63, South-West England, *"I grew up watching things like Fawlty Towers, Keeping up Appearances, Dads' Army and things like that, there was no*

"LOOKING ON TV, THERE WAS ONLY KIND OF LIKE QUEER OR TRANS REPRESENTATION OF WHITE PEOPLE. AND I NEVER THOUGHT IT WAS VALID TO BE TRANS, YOU KNOW"

ASHLEY AGED 23, FROM LONDON

Black person in sight. To be honest, it is not much different now. The only difference is the one odd Black person sprinkled in."

As stated by Janet, 36, in South-West England, *"The way we're portrayed in the media – it's Black history and that's it."*

Participants also recognised that when Black people are portrayed in the media, it is usually negatively or in relation to crime, gangs, or drugs. As Peter in South-West England stated, *"You only see Black people especially Black men in the news when they are either in handcuffs, smoking or being hunted down. Like that is the only thing we represent".*

Sherry, 43, in London was *"fed up"* by the portrayal of Black women in the media: *"Of the two roles which you predominantly see, the angry Black woman or the over-sexualized Jezebel Black woman…. In other communities, you got people who are sexually liberal, you got people who are reserved, you got a combination of all types of women. But why is it that we can only hold these, you*

know, two certain roles? And it doesn't matter what you do, it doesn't matter how much you elevate, that is always attached to you."

Ashley, aged 23 from London, spoke about the lack of representation of Black queer folk in the media and how this had a knock-on impact on how they/he viewed themselves/himself as well as how they/he was accepted in the Black community: *"Looking on TV, there was only kind of like queer or trans representation of white people. And I never thought it was valid to be trans, you know. But looking back and reflecting on things, not much has really changed in terms of representation of Black queer & trans people. And actually, within the Black community as well, it is also something that's quite weird. But I think that does come from the dominant culture, in terms of the lack of representation for Black queer & trans people."*

This reflection from Ashley reflects broader calls from the Black queer community, who often feel they have to sanitise their identities and pick a cause to support: either their Black identities or their sexuality/gender. This is echoed by the performer and writer, Travis Alabanza, who states, *"I used to get feedback that I didn't represent the 'true' trans experience – with white LGBT people loving certain parts of the show, and then being challenging to the parts that were about race."[18]*

Representation in the Workplace

In workplaces, older participants felt they regularly faced a glass ceiling when reporting issues of workplace discrimination and escalating it to people in more senior positions. Likewise, participants felt they were often held to a much higher standard than colleagues around them. Many felt this was because those in senior positions were predominantly white and, therefore, a desire to incorporate best practice around Equality, Diversity and Inclusion was low on the agenda.

As noted by Vivian, 46, in West Midlands, *"In my present role, I have tried repeatedly to get the job at the same level, at the same pay grade level, as other employees who are doing the exact same work as me. And it's been a fight. I have repeatedly, repeatedly, repeatedly, repeatedly had to jump through the hoops, only to go and find a brick wall after brick wall after brick wall after brick wall...I'm still at the bottom of the ladder and yet my skills, my intellects, my lived experiences are harvested to benefit the organisation. And I am forever, forever being told that my contribution is invaluable to the organisation, and I influence the CEO to trustees, all the way down to senior management."*

Vivian's point around being repeatedly overlooked speaks to findings from the 2017 McGregor-Smith review: Race in the Workplace. It was found that Black people are much more likely to be overqualified for their jobs than their white counterparts, who often advance up the ladder of promotion with ease. In other words, Black talent is not necessarily lacking in abundance, but it is seriously lacking in recognition and support.[19]

Appendix 3: Additional materials sourced to inform the research

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Authors: Beth Swords and Dr. Ramya Sheni

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