

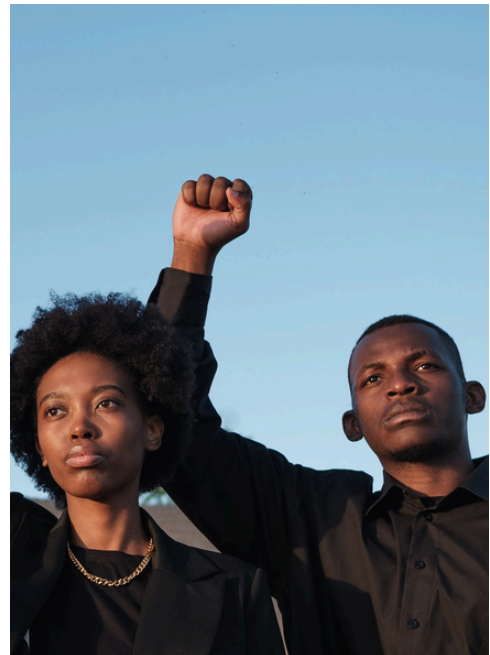
# CULTURE, AWARENESS, REPRESENTATION AND RESPECT

*Briefing May 2024*

## BRIEFING SCOPE

**The problem of housing in black communities is a long-standing issue that has deep historical roots. It is beyond the scope of this short briefing to pay due comprehensive attention to these issues. However, it is important to refer to this briefly before discussing the problems black communities face today in Britain with housing. This short briefing will focus on four primary issues, namely:**

01. Media representation
02. Black people in the music industry
03. Local political representation
04. Black professional leadership



## 01. MEDIA REPRESENTATION

Black communities are misrepresented in the media. To evidence this Cherish Oteka's report, Black in Fact showed that when programmes centred black people, they often perpetuated well established stereotypes and racial tropes<sup>1</sup>. It showed that:

- Race and racism were the leading subject matters when a programme featured a Black person.
- Crime was the second most popular subject matter that centres black people
- Music was the third leading subject matter of programmes that centre a Black person.

Qualitative data was also captured from eight black professionals working within the documentary genre supporting the findings of the quantitative work. It also demonstrated a clear concern among practitioners that the commissioning of 'Black programming' is still predominantly seen through the interests of white commissioners, a situation compounded by a lack of career progression among black media workers to positions of editorial control with commissioning power and final sign off. The report concluded the following:

The representation of black people is not varied or nuanced enough.

- Black documentary filmmakers are often having to push back at stereotypical representations of black people on the projects they are working on.
- While many of the filmmakers enjoy working on programmes that centre black voices, they do feel they are being pigeon-holed and not offered roles that are outside of race.
- Black documentary filmmakers are facing challenges with progressing in their careers.
- Black production company owners are not being given the same opportunities as non-black production company owners.
- Interviewees would like to see more black representation at senior levels of the industry, including commissioners, channel controllers, executives, and production company owners.

The number of black journalists in British newsrooms is also significantly low. According to data of the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism Black journalists represent only 0.2% of the journalistic workforce (while they constitute 3% of the British population)<sup>2</sup>. Clearly, black stories are too often commissioned and controlled without their influence. Given these factors it is no surprise that research conducted by BEO, showed that two thirds of Black people say the media portrays them unfairly.

## **02. BLACK PEOPLE IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY**


Research from Black Lives in Music has shown the challenges in black music creators and professionals with presenting their authentic selves in the industry. 35% of all black music creators have felt the need to change their appearance because of their race/ethnicity, rising to 43% of black women. 86% of all black music creators agree that there are barriers to progression. This number rises to 89% for black women and 91% for black creators who are disabled. Further 88% of all black music professionals agree that there are barriers to progression<sup>3</sup>.

## **03. LOCAL POLITICAL REPRESENTATION**

Research has shown that 7% of councillors are from an ethnic minority, however this falls to just 1% when we disaggregate consider black people<sup>4</sup>. Within this figure there are significantly more black female councillors compared to male councillors of black background. The lack of representation at the local level, does not inspire the engagement of black communities in local political structures.<sup>5</sup>

## **04. BLACK PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP**

In terms of black professional leadership, research reveals that just 52 out of the 1099 most powerful roles in the country are filled by non-white individuals<sup>6</sup>. The research also revealed that black individuals are particularly under-represented with just 17 of the 1099 roles held by black men and women – amounting to 1.5% compared to the national population figure of 3.6%.



Research has also previously showed that black people held just 1.5% of 3.7 million leadership positions across the UK's public and private sectors, however the black population in England and Wales is currently 4.2%<sup>7</sup>. There has been even less progress on black representation in the public sector, where the number of black employees in leadership roles remained static at 1 per cent.

In the finance and professional services sector, less than 1% of senior leadership-level employees are black<sup>8</sup>. This is particularly stark when looking at investment bankers and equity partners of non-law firms, where average black representation at senior levels is just 0.5% and 0.4%, respectively. When looking at the largest UK law firms, mid-range black lawyers are four times more likely to leave than their white and other minority-ethnic peers.

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## REFERENCES

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2. Reuters Media Institute, Journalists in the UK, 2023
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8. Black Talent Charter and Bains & Company: Why we need to pick up the pace of Black representation in finance and professional services in the UK

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