

# FACING THE FACTS: ETHNICITY AND DISADVANTAGE IN BRITAIN

Disparities in education, work, and family

November 2020



Facing the facts: ethnicity and disadvantage in Britain  
Disparities in education, work, and family  
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Published by the Centre for Social Justice,  
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# About the Centre for Social Justice

Established in 2004, the Centre for Social Justice is an independent think-tank that studies the root causes of Britain's social problems and addresses them by recommending practical, workable policy interventions. The CSJ's vision is to give people in the UK who are experiencing the worst multiple disadvantages and injustice every possible opportunity to reach their full potential.

The majority of the CSJ's work is organised around five 'pathways to poverty', first identified in our ground-breaking 2007 report *Breakthrough Britain*. These are: educational failure; family breakdown; economic dependency and worklessness; addiction to drugs and alcohol; and severe personal debt.

Since its inception, the CSJ has changed the landscape of our political discourse by putting social justice at the heart of British politics. This has led to a transformation in government thinking and policy. For instance, in March 2013, the CSJ report *It Happens Here* shone a light on the horrific reality of human trafficking and modern slavery in the UK. As a direct result of this report, the Government passed the Modern Slavery Act 2015, one of the first pieces of legislation in the world to address slavery and trafficking in the 21st century.

Our research is informed by experts including prominent academics, practitioners and policy-makers. We also draw upon our CSJ Alliance, a unique group of charities, social enterprises and other grass-roots organisations that have a proven track-record of reversing social breakdown across the UK.

The social challenges facing Britain remain serious. In 2019 and beyond, we will continue to advance the cause of social justice so that more people can continue to fulfil their potential.



# Foreword

Britain is arguably the most successful multi-ethnic democracy in the world. There are many things to celebrate about the progress of Britain's ethnic minority groups.

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, employment rates were at historic highs for virtually every ethnic minority group; children from some minority groups are performing better than the national average; and the proportion of Black and Asian students securing a higher education place has risen massively over the last decade.

These trends are highly encouraging. However, it is undeniable that there remains some unjustifiable disparities between some of Britain's ethnic groups. It is also undeniable that collectively as a society, we have not done enough to understand the nuances and complexities of social and economic outcomes for different ethnic groups.

Too often, we have viewed ethnic minorities through the narrow lens of the 'BAME' category, grouping their experiences as if there are no meaningful differences between them. This CSJ report provides a compelling reason for why it is time to move past this 'BAME vs. White' approach and investigate ethnic disparities in a more sophisticated, granular way.

One of the findings which strike us as particularly concerning is that while many ethnic minority groups, such as African and Indian communities, are doing better than the national average – and the White British population – in key areas such as GCSE attainment, other groups are getting left behind. This is the case for Caribbeans, who have some of the poorest outcomes and, unlike virtually any other ethnic group, have a higher proportion of single parent than married parent households.

Britain's approach to race and ethnicity is changing. The 'Black Lives Matter' movement, reportedly the largest in US History, has been a catalyst for re-examining how ethnicity affects life chances. We welcome the government's establishment of the Race and Ethnic Disparities Commission (July 2020) to look into this issue. But more ambitious action is needed.

This report sets out some recommendations that the government can take forward to not only improve the way we *understand* ethnic disparities, but how we *deal* with the problems that exist in employment, education, and family stability. They range from establishing ethnicity attainment gap hub schools, refocusing the remit of the Race Disparity Unit to include policy evaluation, and establishing a pathway to increase fatherhood engagement across groups with high levels of family breakdown.

The Covid-19 pandemic and the current recession are likely to exacerbate pre-existing inequalities. If we are to create a fairer society for people of all ethnicities in Britain, it is incumbent upon us to act now to properly understand and address ethnic disparities.

**Helen Grant MP and Danny Kruger MP**



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# Executive summary

The term 'BAME' (Black and Minority Ethnic) has been commonly used as a collective term to describe Britain's non-White population. When understanding relative socioeconomic outcomes between Britain's ethnic groups, 'BAME' outcomes at the broad level are often compared to White outcomes. However, it is time to acknowledge that the 'BAME' category has lost virtually all analytical value. Put simple: a 'BAME' person simply does not exist.

Britain's ethnic minority groups (who made up around 14% of England and Wales' population at the last Census) have considerably varying socioeconomic outcomes. It is increasingly the case that some ethnic minority groups are outperforming White British individuals in some areas, while others fall woefully behind. There are also often larger socioeconomic disparities *between* Britain's ethnic minority groups (e.g. between Asian and Black groups) and *within* them (e.g. between Black African and Black Caribbean) than there are between the 'BAME' and White population.

It is time for us to have a grounded debate about socioeconomic disparities that fully appreciates not just the ethnic diversity of Britain, but the diversity of outcomes faced by its ethnic minority groups. This includes understanding the success stories. Whilst we are getting better at collecting and analysing this data, we need to get better at understanding the ways in which outcomes manifest differently for individuals of different ethnicities in Britain in order to more effectively address disparities.

This report outlines the case for taking a more granular approach to socioeconomic outcomes between six ethnic groups – White British, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Black African, and Black Caribbean – and offers recommendations that can make real headway in better understanding and addressing ethnic disparities.

## Key findings

### Education

1. Indian, Bangladeshi and African students, on average, currently have higher attainment at GCSE level than White British students. Pakistani students have now also closed the attainment gap between themselves and White British pupils. Caribbean children, on average, see considerably poorer attainment than pupils from other ethnic groups.
2. White British students on free school meals (FSM) have poorer attainment at GCSE level than all ethnic minority students analysed. White British children on FSM experience a bigger GCSE attainment gap with their comparative non-FSM peers than any other ethnic group.

3. Despite pupils from virtually every ethnic minority group performing better than White British pupils up to GCSE level (even once compositional factors are accounted for) White British children go on to have higher performance at A level than Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Black African, and Black Caribbean students. Indian pupils achieve higher grades than their White British peers at this stage.
4. There is strong evidence to suggest ethnic minority students are less likely to graduate university with the highest classification of degree awards even when their entry qualifications are controlled for.

### Employment

5. Rates of employment for ethnic minority individuals, prior to the pandemic, were at their highest. As of 2018, Pakistani/Bangladeshi people of working age had the lowest employment rates; Black people had the highest unemployment rate at of 2018.
6. There remains an unexplained disparity between the median hourly pay of ethnic minority workers and White British workers. This disparity is higher for ethnic minorities born outside of the UK but is nonetheless significant for ethnic minorities born in the UK.
7. Indian graduates have higher median earnings than White graduates; Pakistani graduates have the lowest out of all ethnic groups analysed. The earnings gap between White graduates on one hand, and Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Black Caribbean and Black African graduates on the other widens over time. Evidence shows this earnings gap remains even once other factors are accounted for.

### Family

8. Nearly half of all Black Caribbean households with dependent children are lone parent households, as well as over a third of Black African households. This is compared to around a quarter of White British households. For Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi households with dependent children, this figure is around 1 in 10.
9. Over half of all White British, Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi dependent children households comprise of married parents. The comparative figure for Black Caribbean households is much lower at 28%, and for Black African households is 38%.
10. Caribbean households with dependent children have a higher rate of lone than married parenthood. This is a trend not seen with any other ethnic group analysed.

## Summary of recommendations

1. The government should commit to reporting ethnicity data at the ethnic subgroup level – based on the 18 ethnic group classification – in all cases where it is possible to reliably do so, rather than using the broad BAME category.

### Education

2. The Department for Education should create ethnicity attainment gap hub schools to enable schools with exemplary outcomes to share best practice.



3. The Department for Education should encourage and support higher education open data organisations to publish data on university access and outcomes at the ethnic subgroup level.
4. The Department for Education should urge the Office for Students and the Centre for Transforming Access and Student Outcomes to lead on establishing, as standard practice, a more granular approach to ethnic disparities in higher education.

### Employment

5. The government should establish a COVID-19 labour market inequality commission to review the relative economic impact of the pandemic on groups which are traditionally disadvantaged in the labour market.
6. The government should expand the remit of the Race Disparity Unit, moving it beyond data collection and analysis, to include the evaluation of ways in which policies and government bodies can maximise their capability to level-up ethnic inequalities, with a focus on the labour market.

### Family

7. The Government Equalities Office should include in future strategic plans a commitment to look into disparities in family breakdown across social and ethnic groups, and establish a package of measures to support families at higher risk of family breakdown.
8. The government should develop a pathway that increases fatherhood engagement in the perinatal period, with a focus on groups more likely to experience family breakdown.

# Introduction

On May 25th 2020 in Minneapolis, Minnesota (USA), 46 year-old George Floyd – an African American man – was arrested outside a shop on suspicion of having used a counterfeit \$20 bill moments earlier. In the twenty minutes that followed, Floyd was handcuffed, restrained by four officers on the ground, and his neck knelt on for seven minutes and 46 seconds. He would fall unconscious during this encounter and be pronounced dead an hour later.<sup>1</sup> These tragic events – caught on camera and shared widely – triggered the largest movement in American history and global protests for racial equality on an unprecedented scale.

The effects of this movement have been felt acutely in Britain. A wave of protests demanding racial justice, led by the *Black Lives Matter* organisation, ensued nationwide in the weeks and months that followed. Protestors descended on Downing Street, statues accused of celebrating Britain's colonial past were toppled.

The speed with which policymakers have reacted to these events is testament to the impact that this movement has had. Within 15 days of Floyd's death, the Mayor of London established the Commission for Diversity in the Public Realm to review the ethnic (as well as gender and disability) diversity of London's public landmarks, citing the *Black Lives Matter* protests as a motivating factor.<sup>2</sup> On the same day, Labour Leader Kier Starmer and Deputy Leader Angela Rayner released a picture 'taking a knee' – the global gesture of solidarity with the *Black Lives Matter* movement – in parliament.<sup>3</sup>

The most significant policy shift on the part of central government came on the 14th June, when Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced that he would set up a cross-government Commission to look into racial disparities. This was officially established on the 16th July 2020, with a remit to examine the "evidenced-based, persistent disparities between ethnic groups" in a range of policy areas.<sup>4</sup>

This is not the first time that a British government has taken on the issue of racial inequalities. In August 2016, then Prime Minister Theresa May launched an unprecedented audit of public services to look into racial disparities, setting up the Race Disparity Unit in the Cabinet Office to collect, analyse, and publish data on ethnic disparities across a range of policy areas. In 2017, May said institutions must "explain or change" ethnic disparities revealed by the audit.<sup>5</sup>

But, so many of the problems around ethnic disparities are yet to be properly explained. For instance, evidence suggests that significant wage gaps persist between many of Britain's ethnic groups, even after controlling for compositional factors.<sup>6</sup> It is also the case that, despite students from ethnic minority backgrounds (on average) having higher

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educational attainment by age 16, and getting into university at higher proportions, this has tended not to translate into higher educational achievement and more equitable job market prospects.

With the recent social events putting the issue of race and ethnic disparities on the governmental agenda like never before, now is the perfect time to get the microscope out on persisting inequalities. The UK is perfectly poised to be a torchbearer in both understanding and tackling persisting and unexplained ethnic disparities – and it is already one of the most successful multi-ethnic societies in the world.

You only have to look at the changing demographic make-up of Britain to appreciate this. In the intervening period between the last two Census, the mixed-ethnicity population of England and Wales almost doubled from 1.2% to 2.2%.<sup>7</sup> People of mixed ethnicity have been the fastest growing ethnic group in Britain, an indication of the direction of travel for race relations.

The Equality Act 2010 is also one of the most comprehensive anti-discrimination frameworks anywhere in the world and massive improvements in data collection and publication on ethnicity allows us to monitor disparities closely. Ethnicity data in Britain is an invaluable resource that we should not take for granted – in France, for instance, it remains illegal to collect data based on race, ethnicity or religion, making it impossible to properly investigate the existence of inequalities.

However, there is still so much more work to be done. A lot of research has been done into the underlying reasons behind ethnicity outcome gaps, and it has often been found that differences are considerably reduced once compositional factors are taken into account. For instance, the raw pay gap between Indian male graduates and white male graduates becomes statistically insignificant when other factors are controlled for.<sup>8</sup> However, one running theme has been the persistence of the *unexplained* disparities that often remain even when other factors are accounted for.

One possible cause of unexplained inequalities is discrimination, although this is virtually impossible to measure. Some studies have tried to estimate this effect: Health and Li (2007) for example, estimated that 25% of the gap that remained in unemployment rates between white and some ethnic minority groups once other factors had been taken into account were as a result of discrimination.<sup>9</sup>

Policymakers must work to both better understand and tackle these disparities more effectively. They can only begin to do so with a more sophisticated conversation that acknowledges that socioeconomic disadvantage – and advantage – manifests very differently across Britain's ethnic groups.

7 ONS. 2001; 2011 Census

8 Henehan, H. and Rose, H. 2018. 'Opportunities Knocked? Exploring pay penalties among the UK's ethnic minorities'. Resolution Foundation

9 Heath, A. and Li, Y. (2007). 'Measuring the size of the employer contribution to the ethnic minority employment gap'. National Employment Panel

The Centre for Social Justice has long committed itself to investigating the key pathways that lead to poverty – family breakdown, educational failure, worklessness and dependency, addiction, and serious personal debt. It is inescapable that within many (if not all) of these pathways lies ethnic disparities.

What is clear is that we need more sophisticated terms on which to understand and address ethnic inequalities, fit for Britain in 2020. The changing dynamics of ethnic disparities in Britain present new challenges. In response, we must ask new questions. If one thing is apparent in the story of ethnicity and socioeconomic outcomes, it is that things are more complex than they ever have been before.

On top of this, more detailed breakdowns of outcomes (i.e. by ethnic subgroups such as Black African, Indian, and so on) have shown us that disparities *within* broad ethnic groupings – such as those between Black Africans and Black Caribbeans, and those between Indian and other south Asian groups – are often as large if not larger than differences *across* ethnic group. To talk of ‘Asian’ or ‘Black’ outcomes is increasingly analytically redundant, let alone to talk of ‘BAME’ outcomes. Terms such as ‘BAME’ therefore no longer hold much, if any, analytical value.

There has been a lag in dealing with the intricacies of ethnic disparities for a number of reasons. Firstly, the discussion of race and ethnic inequalities touches on some taboo topics which policymakers have been afraid to tackle – the role of cultural norms and levels of family breakdown amongst some ethnic groups are some examples. The emergence of the ‘white working-class boy’ as one of the most (educationally) disadvantaged groups in society can also be seen as fitting awkwardly in a space that has been almost entirely focused on disadvantages experienced by ethnic minorities.

There is also a palpable discomfort amongst – mostly white – politicians about raising issues around race and ethnic disparities. This has been partly driven by a well-intentioned desire not to offend or misspeak, and an unfamiliarity with the full reality of disparities. But, the conversation on persistent unjustified disparities is a matter of social justice that people of all ethnicities should participate in.

This report lays out the many dynamics of ethnic disparities through the lens of three key pathways to poverty identified in the Centre for Social Justice’s major report *Breakthrough Britain* – educational failure, worklessness, and family breakdown. It goes beyond merely looking at disparities *across* broad ethnicity categories – i.e. White vs ‘BAME’ – and takes a look at disparities *within* them.

It has become clear that many people continue to feel that a lack of racial progress has been made. A recent survey found that around 1 in 4 individuals who identify as an ethnic minority believe there is a ‘great deal’ of racism in the UK, and that 1 in 3 feel that levels of racism in Britain have increased during their lifetime. Perhaps surprisingly, 27% of white people also think this is the case.<sup>10</sup>

This belief does not exist in a vacuum. It is partly a product of persisting disparities which are often unexplained and poorly understood. If we are to tackle the root causes of existing disparities, we must take a policy approach that fulfils the following objectives:

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10 Asthana, A. 2020. ‘Racism in the UK still rife, say majority of Britons’. Guardian. 16 Jul. [accessed 3 Aug 2020]

1. Understand the ways in which socioeconomic outcomes manifest across different ethnic groups (e.g. Indian, Bangladeshi, African, Caribbean, and so on), rather than just focusing on white versus 'BAME' outcomes.
2. Investigate the underlying causes for these variances, with a focus not just on the mechanisms behind negative outcomes, but also behind positive outcomes.
3. Identify practicable solutions to better address the unexplained differences in outcomes individuals from different ethnic groups experience.

This report lays out the data relating to socioeconomic outcomes across Black, Asian, and White British individuals in Britain; touches on what we do know about some of the underlying causes; and identifies lines of action policymakers should take to better address disparities.

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### **Recommendation 1**

The government should commit to reporting ethnicity data at the ethnic subgroup level – based on the 18 ethnic group classification – in all cases where it is possible to reliably do so, rather than using the broad BAME category.

# Scope of paper

Making sense of ethnic disparities is an infinitely complicated task. Firstly, there are officially 18 ethnic groups collected in the National Census. Secondly, the question of how far disparities are a reflection of compositional factors and how far they can be explained by immeasurable cultural differences, personal choices, or discrimination makes understanding disparities even more difficult.

However, one thing is for certain: what we call the 'BAME' population is actually an immensely heterogeneous group who often experience vastly different socioeconomic outcomes. For example, the widest (gross median hourly) pay gap is not found between white British workers and ethnic minority workers, but *within* the Asian group: Chinese workers have a higher median hourly pay than any other ethnic group while Bangladeshi workers have the lowest.<sup>11</sup>

Focusing on 'BAME' outcomes at the broad level therefore hides crucial information that is necessary for properly tackling ethnic disparities. To accurately get to grips with its changing dynamics, we must get the microscope out and look at the disparities at a more granular level.

The argument can be made that disaggregating ethnicities is a slippery slope that can result in breaking down the data so much that it becomes ultimately unhelpful. For instance, the 'Black African' ethnic subgroup alone can be broken down further into 54 nations. Notwithstanding, the evidence is compelling: breaking down the BAME category into smaller groups reveals trends too important for policymakers to ignore.

Comparing the outcomes of Black African, Black Caribbean, Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi groups is an obvious place to start because of the prevalence of these groups within the general population and because the volume of data on these groups allows us to make reliable assertions about their relative outcomes.

This paper does just that by taking a focused look at a number of key outcomes six ethnic subgroups – White British, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Black African, and Black Caribbean. These five ethnic minority groups alone made up around 58% of all of Britain's ethnic minority population in England and Wales at the last Census; these six subgroups in total make up around 89% of the population of England and Wales.

This approach inevitably excludes the nine other smaller ethnic minority groups recorded by the Census, such as the various Mixed, Arab, and Chinese groups. There is also a lack of understanding of non-British White groups. In particular, the small *White Gypsy/Traveller* population, which numbered 57,680 at the 2011 Census, is one of (if not *the*) most

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socioeconomically disadvantaged group of all yet is under-researched. Much can also be said about these smaller groups, and there is certainly scope for deeper research into their relative outcomes.

This paper combines existing data from secondary sources and the CSJs analysis of primary data to delve into these complex and changing dynamics.





# chapter one

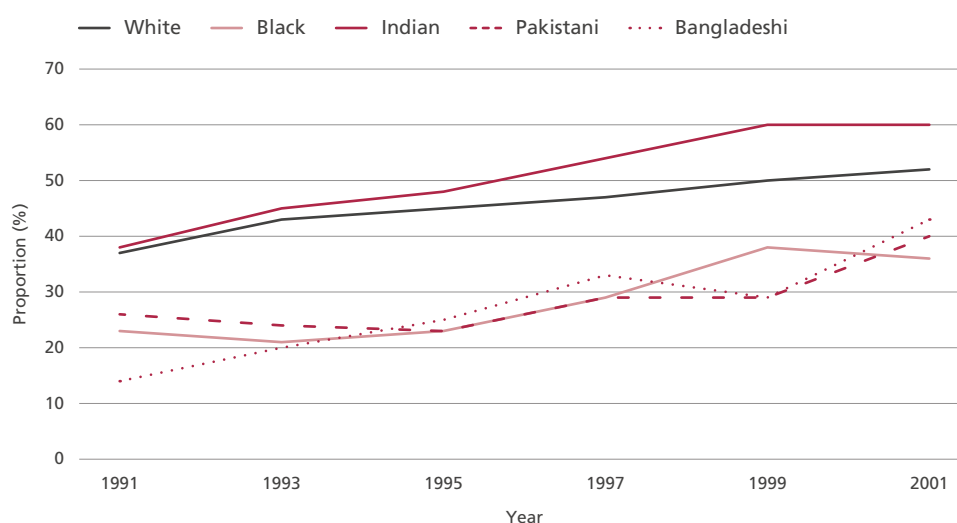
## Education

### GCSE attainment

The proportion of pupils of minority ethnicity has been rising over time and is at its highest ever level. As of the 2019/20 academic year, 34% of pupils in primary school, and 32% in secondary schools were of minority ethnicity.<sup>12</sup>

Achievement gaps between pupils from ethnic minority groups and the White ethnic group have reduced substantially over time. Figure 1 shows the estimated proportion of pupils achieving five or more GCSE grades at A\*–C level (5AC), by ethnicity between 1991 and 2001. The trends reveal the huge progress made by Britain's ethnic minority students.

Figure 1: Estimated percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more A\*–C GCSEs (5AC) by ethnicity, 1991–2001



Source: CSJ analysis of DCSF: Youth Cohort Study and Longitudinal Study of Young People in England: The Activities and Experiences of 16 Year Olds: England 2007<sup>13</sup>

In 1991 37% of White students were achieving 5AC. Even at this point, however, Indian children were still slightly outperforming this group, with 38% achieving 5AC. This was in stark contrast to their Pakistani and Bangladeshi counterparts, 26% and 14% of

<sup>12</sup> Department for Education. 2020. 'Schools, pupils and their characteristics'. 1 Sep. [accessed 15 Sep 2020]

<sup>13</sup> [webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130321145433/https://www.education.gov.uk/researchandstatistics/statistics/allstatistics/a00195808/survey-responses-to-yqs-and-lsype](https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130321145433/https://www.education.gov.uk/researchandstatistics/statistics/allstatistics/a00195808/survey-responses-to-yqs-and-lsype). Note: 1991 to 1997 includes England and Wales; 1999 to 2001 is England only

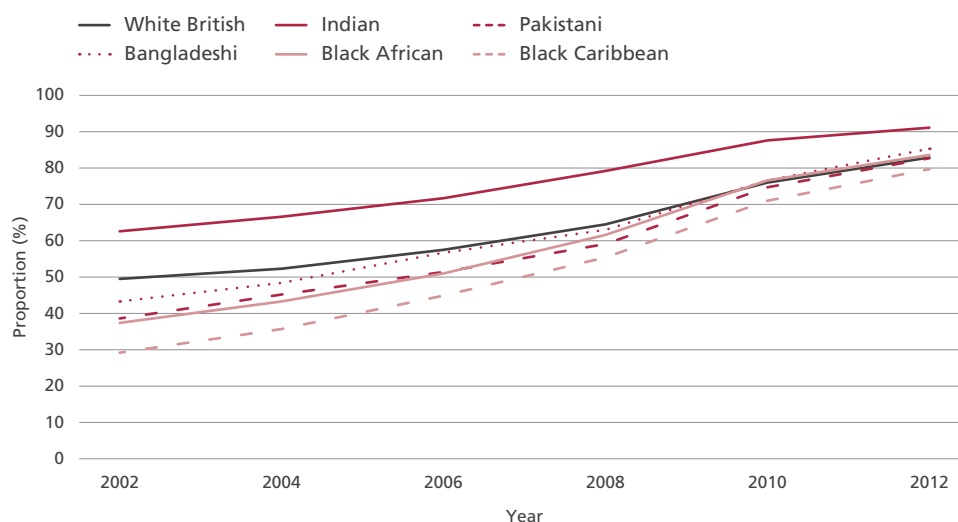
whom were achieving 5AC, respectively. However, a decade later, it is estimated that the proportion of Pakistani pupils achieving 5AC had increased by over 50%, with the proportion of Bangladeshi pupils achieving this benchmark increasing threefold.

Unfortunately, the data for this period does not break down the 'Black' category by African and Caribbean but it is estimated that in 1991 23% of all Black GCSE students were achieving 5AC – 14 points lower than their White peers, and only higher than their Bangladeshi peers. By 2001, the proportion had increased by 13 points, although the gap with White students had not decreased.

These historic estimates provide an indication of the dynamic outcomes of some of the subgroups which form the 'BAME' group. On one hand, Indian students have consistently outperformed not only their Black, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi peers, but also their White peers. The achievement trajectory of Bangladeshi children is also notable: in the space of a decade, they went from being the worst performing group to one of the best performing.

The trends that emerged over the course of the 1990s have continued into the present time. Figure 2 shows attainment of 5AC for children of different ethnicities over the course of the following decade, with Figure 3 showing the most recent attainment trends. Between 2002–2012, a higher proportion of Indian children achieved 5AC than any other group analysed. It had for long been the case that White children saw the next highest proportion of 5AC achievement. However, by 2010, the proportion of Bangladeshi and African children achieving this benchmark had surpassed that of their White British counterparts.

Figure 2: Percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more A\*–C GCSEs (5AC) by ethnicity, 2002–2012



Source: CSJ analysis of Department for Education data<sup>14</sup>

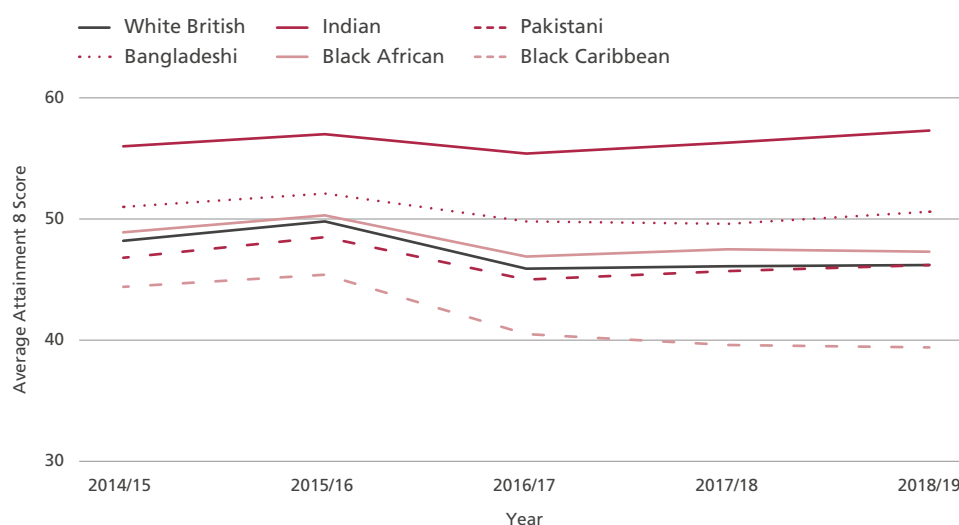
14 Department for Education: SFR37/2010 for 2006–08 final data. SFR06/2015 for 2010–12 final data. Coverage: England, maintained schools (including Academies and CTCs)

Pakistani children also closed the gap by 2012. However, the proportion of Black Caribbean children achieving 5AC, by 2012, was 4 points behind that of their Black African and White British peers. That being said, it is undeniable that even Caribbean children have made enormous progress – the proportion achieving 5AC increased by around 51 points over the course of the decade.

In 2016, the 5AC measure was replaced by 'Attainment 8' as the standard measure of educational attainment at GCSE level. Attainment 8 measures how students perform in 8 GCSE-level qualifications (on a scale of 1 to 9, where 1 represents the lowest score and 9 represents the highest). English and Maths are double-weighted in this metric. Because this measure was introduced in 2016, making a like-for-like comparison with data from years before this is not possible. Nevertheless, the trends in Attainment 8 achievement show that White British students continue to be outperformed academically by Indian, Bangladeshi and Black African pupils, with Pakistani pupils closing the gap while Black Caribbean pupils lag furthest behind.

Figure 3 shows the variance in outcomes for the six ethnic groups in this analysis. Year to year comparisons should be done with caution, as the methodology for calculating scores has changed during this period.<sup>15</sup> However, this does not affect an analysis of the relative outcomes between ethnic groups in any given year.

Figure 3: Average 'Attainment 8' score by ethnicity, 2014/15–2018/19



CSJ analysis of Department for Education data. Year by year data are not directly comparable due to changing methodologies. Figures from 2018/19 are based on revised data for, all other years are final data.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> This has happened in order to facilitate the transition period from using the old-style to new-style GCSE points system.

<sup>16</sup> Department for Education. 2020. 'Statistics: GCSEs (key stage 4): Key stage 4 performance 2019 (revised)'. [accessed 9 Sep 2020]. In 2017, Attainment 8 scores were calculated using slightly different point score scales in comparison to 2016, and thus caution should be used when comparing scores between 2016 and 2017. Comparison of scores between 2016 and 2019 should also be done with caution as the points system is in a transition period to allow for the combination of unreformed and reformed GCSEs.

Black Caribbean students have consistently experienced the worst Attainment 8 scores out of the 6 ethnic groups analysed.<sup>17</sup> The data reveals something even more noteworthy: the gap between Black Caribbean and Black African students has consistently been *larger* than that between Black Caribbean and White British children. In other words, if you're a Black Caribbean pupil, your attainment at school is more likely to be closer to that of your White British than your Black African peers.

Just as was the case with historic trends (Figure 1 and 2), Indian pupils continue to outperform pupils of virtually all other ethnic groups.<sup>18</sup> Of the other two Asian groups analysed, Pakistani pupils also continue to perform worse than pupils from Bangladeshi, although the former group has now closed the gap with their White British peers when it comes to average Attainment 8 scores. Bangladeshi pupils on the other hand, are now performing better than White British pupils, and higher than average for children of all ethnicities.

### Why are subgroup outcomes important?

As of 2018/19, the broad 'Black' average Attainment 8 score is 45, not far from the national average of 47 and the White British average of 46. However, this conceals both that, on one hand, African children are performing better on both counts; and, on the other, that Caribbean children are several points behind, and have one of the worst scores of any of the 18 worst scores of any ethnic group. Similarly, exceptionally high Indian Attainment 8 scores skew the overall Asian figure upwards – but this disguises that Pakistani children are somewhat of an outlier in the Asian group. On average, they are performing at least 11 points lower than their Indian peers.

This analysis reveals the importance of distinguishing between ethnic sub-groups, rather than taking outcome data for broad ethnic groups at face value. Were outcomes between Asian and Black subgroups similar, then presenting 'BAME' averages would not be so problematic. However, the gaps between subgroups are simply too large to ignore. The same can reasonably be said for presenting 'Asian', and particularly, 'Black' educational outcomes, given that Black African students have higher-than-average scores whilst their Caribbean peers fall so worryingly behind. Failure to recognise that students from different ethnic minority backgrounds consistently see distinctly different outcomes risks taking a simplistic approach to 'closing the gap'. Similarly, failure to disentangle the 'success stories' from the cases that require much more improvement, by homogenising ethnicity outcomes, risks missing learning opportunities.

## Outcomes by FSM

Raw attainment data tells us how all children of different ethnicities perform at the aggregate level in relation to each other. However, it is well known that economically disadvantaged children tend to have lower academic achievements than their more

<sup>17</sup> Out of all 18 ethnic groups in the DfE data, perform better than only two: Irish Traveller (21.9) and Gypsy/Roma (18.2).

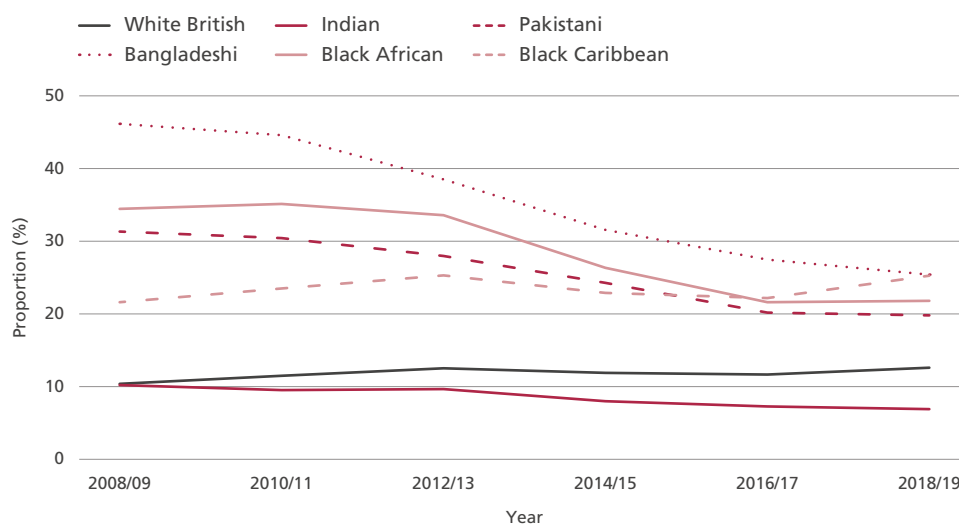
<sup>18</sup> With the exception of Chinese children who had an average Attainment 8 score of 64.2 in 2017/18.

advantaged peers. On top of this, ethnic minority groups tend to experience economic disadvantage at higher levels than their White British counterparts. A look at how these economic dimensions affects educational achievement reveals some crucial dynamics.

Eligibility for free school meals (FSM) is commonly used as an indicator of deprivation by the Department for Education. Although it is a crude measure, it acts as proxy for low income because parents who are eligible to claim FSM are in receipt of qualifying benefits for low income, such as income-based Jobseeker's Allowance and Universal Credit where household income is below a given threshold. The standard FSM indicator includes all pupils who are eligible to receive FSM, not only those who actually received FSM.

Figure 4 shows the proportion of children known to be eligible for FSM, from 2008/09 to 2018/19 by ethnicity subgroup. It shows that, with the exception of Black Caribbean and White British pupils, the proportion of pupils eligible for FSM has reduced over the last decade. Bangladeshi students have seen the biggest drop – from 46% eligibility for FSM, to 25%. That being said, this group of pupils still has the highest proportion of FSM eligibility. Although the proportion of White British pupils eligible for FSM has slowly risen over the last decade, from 10% to just under 13%, they remain one of the groups least likely to be eligible, with only Indian students seeing lower proportions (7%) out of all ethnic groups analysed, here. Caribbean pupils have seen a similar increase of 3% over that period. They now (along with Bangladeshi pupils) have one of the highest FSM eligibility rates.

Figure 4: Proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals by ethnicity, 2008/09–2018/19 (England)



CSJ analysis of DfE data<sup>19</sup>

Figure 5 shows the proportion of children achieving 5AC, by ethnicity and FSM eligibility<sup>20</sup> from 2006 to 2012, years in which data was directly comparable. Beginning with attainment of 5AC by FSM eligibility, we see a number of interesting trends. Firstly, the proportion

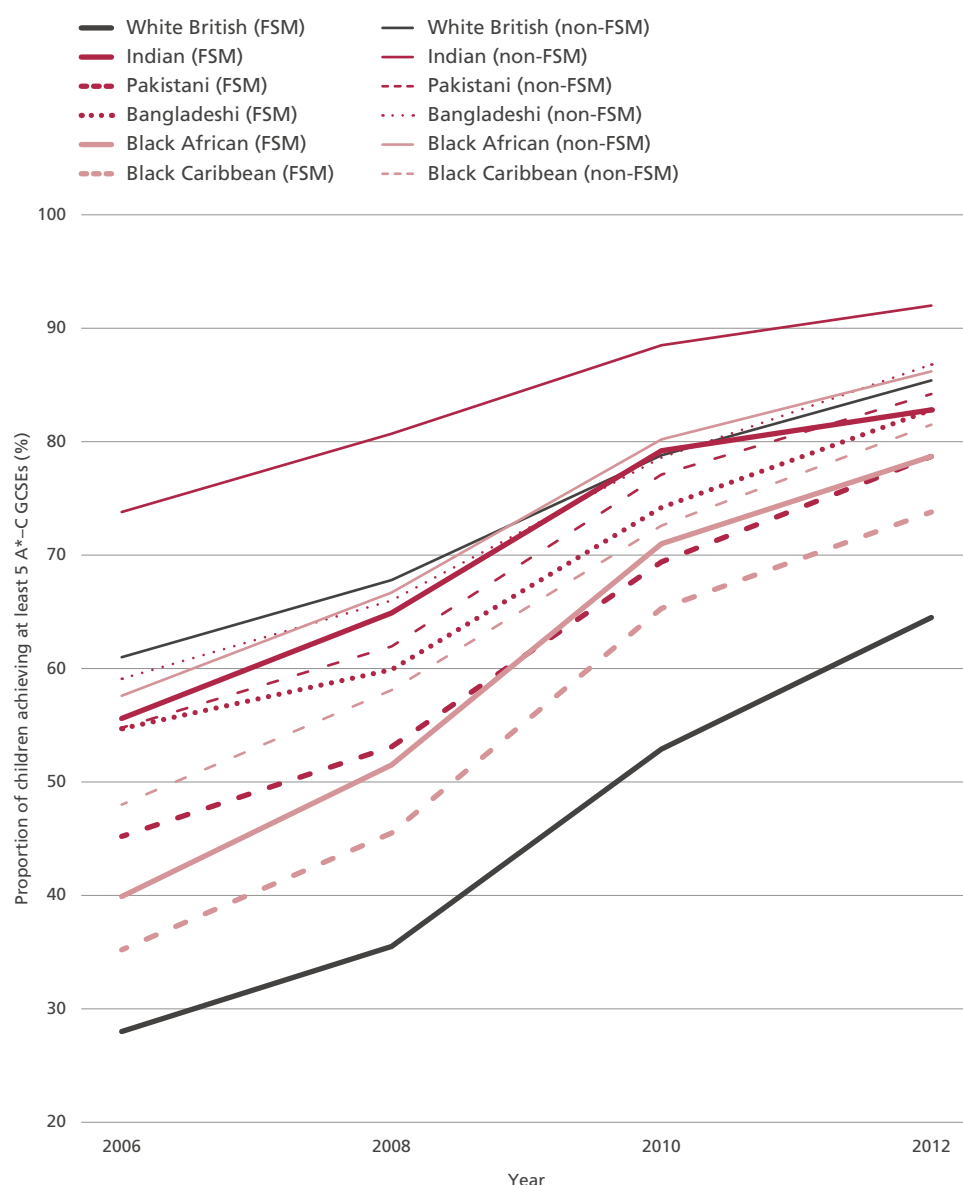
<sup>19</sup> Department for Education. 2020. 'Statistics: GCSEs (key stage 4)'. [accessed 16 Sep 2020]. Data relates to maintained schools, including academies and city technology colleges (CTCs)

<sup>20</sup> Non-FSM data includes pupils not eligible for FSM and for whom FSM eligibility was unclassified or could not be determined.

of pupils of all ethnicities, both FSM and non-FSM, achieving 5AC increased considerably over this time. Pupils of all ethnic groups also closed the gap between themselves and their White British non-FSM peers during this time. From 2010 onwards, Black African and Bangladeshi non-FSM 5AC attainment exceeded that of White British pupils.

However, White British children on FSM have persistently performed worse than all other FSM ethnic groups in this analysis. By 2012, only around 65% of White British were achieving 5AC – considerably lower than the second lowest groups, Caribbean students (74%). Meanwhile, Indian children performed best. In fact, Indian children on FSM performed so well during this period, that by 2012 the proportion achieving the 5AC benchmark was nearly on par with the proportion of White British children *not* eligible for FSM meeting 5AC – 83% and 85%, respectively.

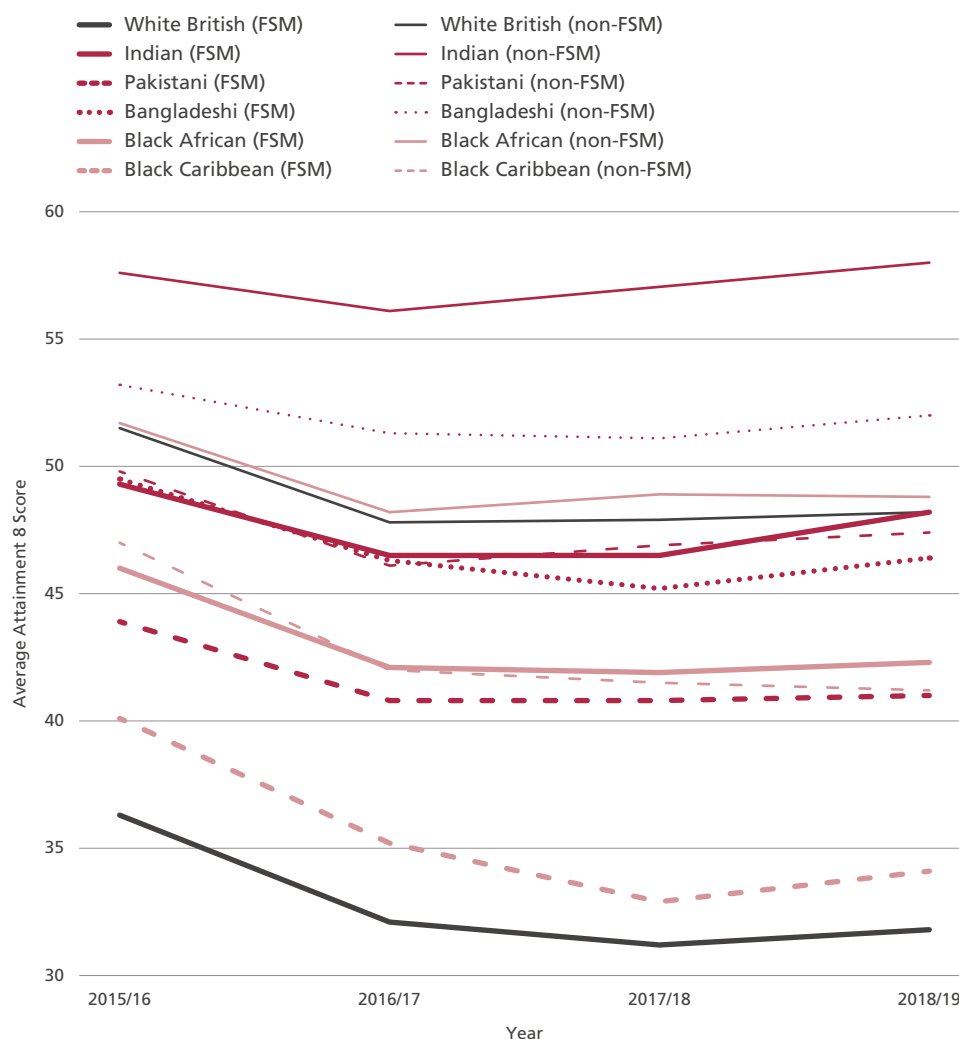
Figure 5: Proportion of children achieving at least 5 A\*–C GCSEs by ethnicity and free school meal eligibility, 2006–2012



Source: CSJ analysis of Department for Education data

The most up-to-date figures – based on average Attainment 8 scores – reveal similar trends. Figure 6 shows that the highest performing children eligible for FSM<sup>21</sup> continue to be Indian children, followed by Bangladeshi, and then Black African. However, Black Caribbean and White British FSM pupils continue to see extremely poor Attainment 8 scores, at an average of 34 and 32 points per pupil, respectively. For comparison, Indian children eligible for FSM score an average of 48 points, exactly the same average score as White British students who are not on FSM.

Figure 6: Average Attainment 8 scores per pupil by ethnicity, 2015/16–2018/19 (England)



CSJ analysis of Department for Education data. Year by year data are not directly comparable due to changing methodologies. All figures are based on revised data<sup>22</sup>

21 Non-FSM data includes pupils not eligible for FSM and for whom FSM eligibility was unclassified or could not be determined.

22 Department for Education. 2020. 'Statistics: GCSEs (key stage 4)'. [accessed 9 Sep 2020]. In 2017, Attainment 8 scores were calculated using slightly different point score scales in comparison to 2016, and thus caution should be used when comparing scores between 2016 and 2017. Comparison of scores between 2016 and 2019 should also be done with caution as the points system is in a transition period to allow for the combination of unreformed and reformed GCSEs.

The relative scores of Black African and Black Caribbean students also reveal a number of interesting trends. Firstly, Black African and Black Caribbean average scores are notably divergent – an 8-point gap for both FSM and non-FSM pupils. A particularly concerning element of these findings is that relatively advantaged Black Caribbean pupils are now performing worse than their disadvantaged Black African counterparts. A similar pattern can be observed amongst Indian and Pakistani students – disadvantaged Indian students are outperforming their relatively advantaged Pakistani counterparts. These are new trends, and ones that highlight that disadvantage simply does not affect different ethnic minority groups in a linear way.

Perhaps the most notable gap is that between White British students eligible for FSM, and those not. White British non-FSM students have Attainment 8 scores 1.5 times higher than their FSM peers. This is a within-ethnicity ratio not seen with any other ethnic group in this analysis and a direct reflection of the underperformance of disadvantaged White British children, rather than exceptionally high performance of their more advantaged counterparts.

## Underlying causes of secondary school attainment disparities

Raw gaps only tell us so much. It is only when controlling for other characteristics that we get a true picture of the factors which may be driving ethnic disparities in educational outcomes. Past studies have sought to do just this.

Strand (2014),<sup>23</sup> for instance, analysed the educational achievement of over 15,000 students from England, controlling for a range of contextual factors, and found that at age 16, low socioeconomic status (SES) students from *all* ethnic minority groups achieved significantly better than White British students (with the exception of Black Caribbean boys who did not differ from White British boys significantly). However, for high-SES students, only Indian students outperformed their White British peers. Strand found that while low-SES impacted negatively on attainment within all ethnic groups, it seemed to be associated with disproportionately low attainment among White British students.

Similar trends have been found for *progress* through school for children from different ethnic backgrounds. Wilson *et al.*'s (2011)<sup>24</sup> study found that after controlling for a range of characteristics, (including gender, poverty, SEND status, and neighbourhood factors), *all* ethnic minority groups made better average progress in attainment through secondary school, when compared to their white British peers – a trend that can be observed in almost all schools and regions. Similarly, when differential achievement across ethnic groups at Key Stage 2 (year 3 to 6) is accounted for by controlling for prior attainment, it has been found that ethnic minority pupils make more progress during secondary school than White British pupils, effectively reducing the ethnic differences in attainment by the end of secondary school.<sup>25</sup>

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23 Strand, S. 2014. 'Ethnicity, gender, social class and achievement gaps at age 16: intersectionality and 'getting it' for the white working class'. *Research Papers in Education*. 29:2, 131–171

24 Wilson, D., Burgess, S., and Briggs, A. 2011. 'The dynamics of school attainment of England's ethnic minorities.' *Journal of Population Economics*. 24:2, 681–700

25 Sutherland, A., Ilie, S., and Vignoles, A. 2015. Factors associated with achievement: key stage 4. Research report. Department for Education



Indeed, the Department for Education's own 'Progress 8' measure (a performance measure introduced in 2016 which captures the progress pupils makes between age 11 and 16) indicates that in 2017/18, White British students on average made poorer educational progress than Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, and Black African students.<sup>26</sup> Out of all five ethnic minority groups in this analysis, Black Caribbean students were the only ethnic group that made poorer progress than White British children.<sup>27</sup>

Most of the research on ethnic disparities in education has focused on instances of underperformance for ethnic minority pupils, rather than white pupils. It is certainly the case that one of the worst performing groups academically is Black Caribbean pupils, particularly boys, and research has been done into why this might be the case.<sup>28</sup> Having said this, the underperformance of ethnic minority groups throughout compulsory schooling may be less pertinent than it was in the past given the progress in attainment highlighted in this chapter. Nevertheless, two underlying causes that have been identified in past research as potential drivers for the underperformance of particular ethnic groups are the diversity of the teacher workforce and (low) teacher and familial expectations.

## 1. Diversity of teacher workforce

Ethnic minority teachers are underrepresented in schools. While 21.5% of the workforce in Britain is of minority ethnicity, this group only makes up 14.1% of the teaching workforce. 2.2% of the teaching workforce is black compared to 3.6 % of the working age population. Similarly, despite 6.5% of the working age population being Asian, only 4.4% of the teaching workforce is. Ethnic minority educators are particularly underrepresented at managerial level – black headteachers make up 1% of the headteacher workforce, and Asian headteachers represent around 1.4%, while 92.9% of headteachers are white.<sup>29</sup>

Research has shown that ethnic minority teachers are more likely to experience problems at work than white teachers. A 2016 survey found that twice the proportion of ethnic minority teachers reported experiencing discrimination in the workplace in the last 12 months (31%) compared to white teachers. Ethnic minority teachers were also more likely to feel that they were not viewed as professionals by management, and that their opinions were not valued.<sup>30</sup>

American research has suggested that, when ethnic minority teachers are not represented in classrooms, this can have detrimental impact on the achievement of ethnic minority students. Studies have shown, for instance, that low-income black children, particularly boys, are more likely to achieve higher grades and report a higher intent to pursue higher education when they are exposed to at least one black teacher in the early years of schooling.<sup>31,32</sup>

26 Department for Education. 2019. 'Pupil progress between 11 and 16 years old ('Progress 8'). [accessed 17 Sep 2020]

27 Of all 18 ethnic groups for which data is available, the following had lower Progress 8 scored than Black Caribbean students: Mixed White/Black Caribbean; Gypsy/Roma; Irish Traveller.

28 Demie, F. and McLean, C. 2017. Black Caribbean Underachievement in Schools in England. (London: Lambeth Council)

29 Gov.uk: Ethnicity facts and figures. 2020. 'School teacher workforce'. [accessed 3 Sep 2020]

30 Runnymede; NASUWT. Visible Minorities, Invisible Teachers: BME Teachers in the Education System in England

31 Gershenson et al. (2017) The Long-Run Impacts of Same-Race Teachers. IZA Institute of Labor Economics. Discussion Paper Series. No. 10630

32 Dee, S.T. 2004. Teachers, race, and student achievement in a randomized experiment. Review of economics and statistics. 86:1, 195–210

Very little is known about the mechanisms driving this phenomenon but Egalite and Kisida (2018) summarise 3 central ideas:

1. Ethnic minority teachers can serve as role models, making students who look like them more academically motivated and aspirational.
2. Because teachers' perceptions about student ability, aptitude, and behaviour can be influenced by student race, minority teachers may be less likely to have negative perceptions about ethnic minority students that negatively impact their treatment of them.
3. Ethnic minority teachers are better positioned to have the cultural sensitivity and understanding that can improve teacher-student relations and reduce instances of extreme disciplinary action for student behaviour.

With low-SES White British students being the poorest performing, when compared with their comparable ethnic minority peers, the effect of same-race teachers as a *means to increasing achievement* arguably has very limited relevance to the British context in the way that it may in the American context. However, this is not to say that underrepresentation of ethnic minority teachers isn't a problem worth addressing in its own right – it is. The *mechanisms* that may drive the positive effects of same-race teachers (such as higher expectations and better cultural understanding) are also likely to be relevant to increasing the performance of low-SES White British pupils and are characteristics that ought to be encouraged in teachers of *all* ethnicities.

## 2. Teacher expectations

The role of teacher expectations has also been implicated as an underlying reason for the underperformance of not just some ethnic minority groups but White working-class boys. When it comes to Black pupils, for instance, some studies suggest that one of the reasons they tend to do better when they have a Black teacher is because Black teachers are likely to have higher expectations for them than White teachers.<sup>33</sup> Papageorge *et al.* (2016),<sup>34</sup> for instance, show that teacher expectations can indeed have a measurable impact on students' achievement.

Demie *et al.* (2010)<sup>35,36</sup> look at the poor achievement prospects of white working-class pupils in London. They identify low teacher aspirations as a key factor. They also identify feelings of marginalisation within the community and a perception that White working-class identities are not affirmed through school and community life as factors.

The role of teacher and parental expectations is highly important for the outcomes of pupils. For instance, teacher expectations can have a direct impact on whether pupils are entered into higher or lower tier examination papers, thus limiting their chances. Indeed, Strand (2012)<sup>37</sup> found that Black Caribbean students were systematically under-represented

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33 Gershenson, S. *et al.* 2018. The long-run impacts of same-race teachers (No. w25254). National Bureau of Economic Research

34 Papageorge, N.W., Gershenson, S., and Kang, K. 2016. Teacher expectations matter. IZA Discussion Paper No. 10165

35 Demie, F. and Lewis, K. 2010a. White Working Class Achievement: A study of barriers to learning in schools. (London: Lambeth Council)

36 Demie, F. and Lewis, K. 2010b. Raising the Achievement of White Working Class Pupils: Barriers and school strategies. (London: Lambeth Council)

37 Strand, S. 2012. The White British–Black Caribbean Achievement Gap: Tests, Tiers and Teacher Expectations. *British Educational Research Journal*. 38:1, 75–101

in higher-tier examinations even after controlling for prior attainment and a range of other factors, an indicator that may serve as a window into general teacher expectations for this group.

In 2019, Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said: “There can be such a poverty of ambition for what we can achieve for children... We have got to constantly ask for more... especially for children from the most deprived backgrounds.”<sup>38</sup> Higher teacher expectations, more aspirational pupils and parents, combined with a sense of cultural understanding and unity can have a positive impact not just on children from ethnic minority background but all pupils.

## A Levels

Table 1: Proportion of children achieving 3 A Levels at least CCC, BBB, AAA (as a percentage of all passes) by ethnicity, 2017–2019

	CCC or better			BBB or better			AAA or better		
	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019
White British	67	67	65	37	37	36	13	14	13
Indian	68	67	65	41	41	39	18	18	17
Pakistani	57	57	54	29	27	25	9	9	9
Bangladeshi	59	57	56	29	28	29	9	10	9
Caribbean	51	52	50	21	21	20	5	5	4
African	57	55	53	27	25	25	7	7	7

CSJ analysis of Department for Education data. As a percentage of all passes<sup>39</sup>

Table 1 shows the proportion of pupils achieving A Level grades at CCC, BBB, and AAA or better in each case (as a proportion of those who passed three A Levels<sup>40</sup>) broken down by ethnicity from 2017 to 2019. While White British pupils at the aggregate level generally fare poorly relative to their ethnic minority peers up to GCSE level, this trend is not reflected in attainment at A Level. In fact, White British students, along with Indian students, as of 2019, have the joint highest proportion of A Level attainment at CCC (65%). The comparative proportion of Caribbean pupils achieving this is lowest at 50%. That half of Black Caribbean students who pass 3 A Levels do not achieve at least three C grades is alarming, but unfortunately not surprising given that their relative outcomes throughout schooling are poorer. However, this is not much better for Black African, Pakistani, or Bangladeshi students – 53%, 54%, and 56% of those cohorts, respectively.

38 Cecil, N. 2019. ‘Gavin Williamson: Britain needs to tackle a “poverty of ambition” hampering prospects of thousands of pupils’. Guardian. 18 Sep. [accessed 28 Aug 2020]

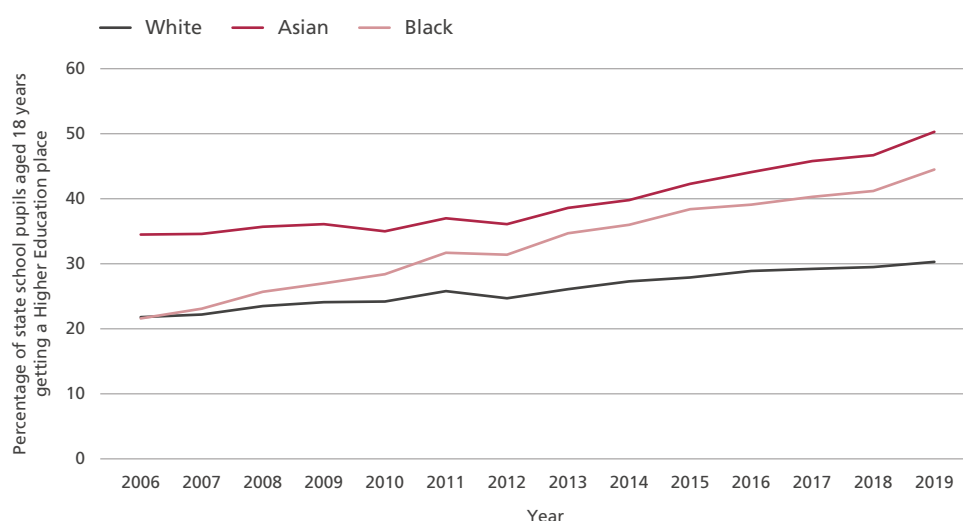
39 Department for Education. 2019. ‘Underlying data: 2019 revised 16 to 18 results’. [accessed 27 Aug 2020]. Data for 2019 are revised data

40 A levels at grade E and above are officially considered a pass. Anything below this is considered a fail.

The same pattern is reflected in those achieving at least three Bs, and at those achieving at least three As. Indian A Level students who pass at least 3 A Levels are most likely to achieve AAA or better, with 17% doing so, followed by 13% of White British students. However, the other ethnic minority subgroups analysed do not fare nearly as well. The proportion of Pakistani and Bangladeshi students achieving this benchmark is around half that of Indian students, for instance. There's also a large disparity between Black African and Black Caribbean students. Black Caribbean students have the lowest attainment of AAA grades of any ethnic group at 4%. For comparison, the proportion of Black African students achieving AAA is nearly double this; the figure for White British students is more than three times larger.

## Higher Education

Figure 7: Percentage of state school pupils aged 18 years getting a Higher Education place, by ethnicity over time (England)



Source: CSJ analysis of UCAS data<sup>41</sup>

Figure 7 gives an ethnic breakdown of university admission between 2006 and 2019. Unfortunately, UCAS data does not disaggregate by ethnic subgroup for this indicator,<sup>42</sup> so we are only able to analyse White, Black, and Asian university admissions at the broad level. The data shows that the gap between White students on the one hand, and Black and Asian students on the other, has widened over time. White students are now the least likely to go to university at age 18.

While there has been a considerable and persistent gap between White admissions and Asian admissions, the Black-White admissions gap is a more recent phenomenon. In 2006,

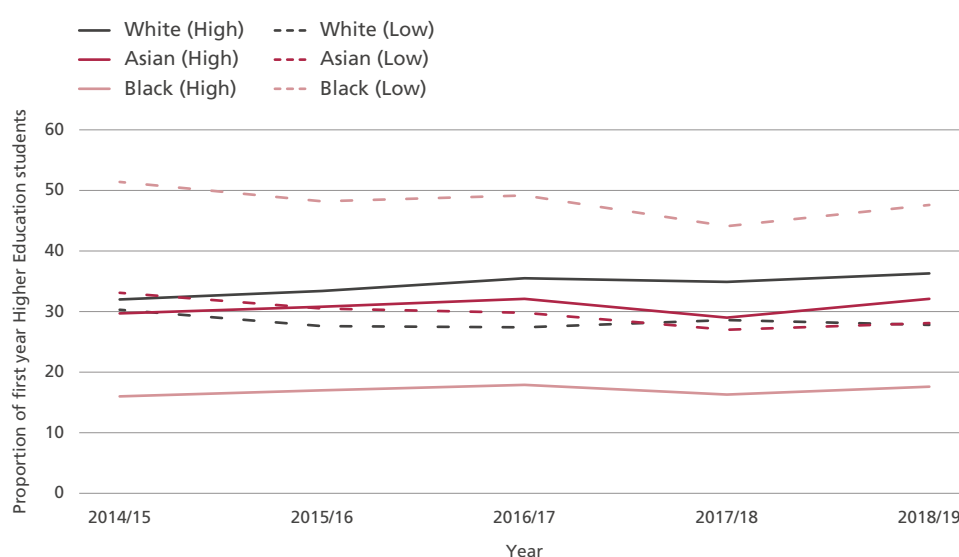
<sup>41</sup> UCAS. 2019 End of Cycle Report: 'Equality in England data'. [accessed 25 Aug 2020]

<sup>42</sup> Data on the percentage of state school pupils accepted into university by ethnic subgroup are not published by UCAS as they rely on population estimates produced by the ONS, which does not. However, UCAS publishes ethnic subgroup data on applications and acceptances, and subjects.

a slightly higher proportion of White students at age 18 entered Higher Education (HE) than Black students. By 2007, this trend had reversed and as of 2019, there was a 14 point gap in this respect.

What's more, a 2016 study showed that controlling for background, Key Stage 2 attainment and secondary school characteristics *increases* the size of the gap, although factoring in Key Stage 4 attainment explains some difference in participation. This study found that Black African, Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi students in particular, once these factors are taken into account, participated at even higher rates than raw gaps (between these groups and White British students) would indicate.<sup>43</sup>

Figure 8: Proportion of first year Higher Education students at high and low tariff institutions by ethnicity, 2014/15–2018/19



CSJ analysis of HESA data<sup>44</sup>

It has long been known that, whilst ethnic minority students are more likely to access university in general, they are often less likely to end up at higher tariff universities, as shown in Figure 8. They are also less likely to achieve the highest degree classifications, shown in Figure 9. Research by UCAS conducted in 2013 showed that, even after controlling for predicted A Level grades, GCSE performance, specific A Level subjects studied, and specific degree programme applied to, a small but still significant ethnic bias in admissions to Russell Group University remained.<sup>45</sup> A subsequent study by the Runnymede Trust in 2015 confirmed these findings, with White British students being most likely to be offered a place at a Russell Group university, and Black African students being least likely, even after controlling for grades and subjects at A level. Having said this, 2015 research by the Department for Business Innovation & Skills<sup>46</sup> found that, after accounting for socio-economic background, prior attainment, and school characteristics amongst the

<sup>43</sup> Shaw, B. *et al.* 2016. *Ethnicity, Gender and Social Mobility*. (London: Social Mobility Commission)

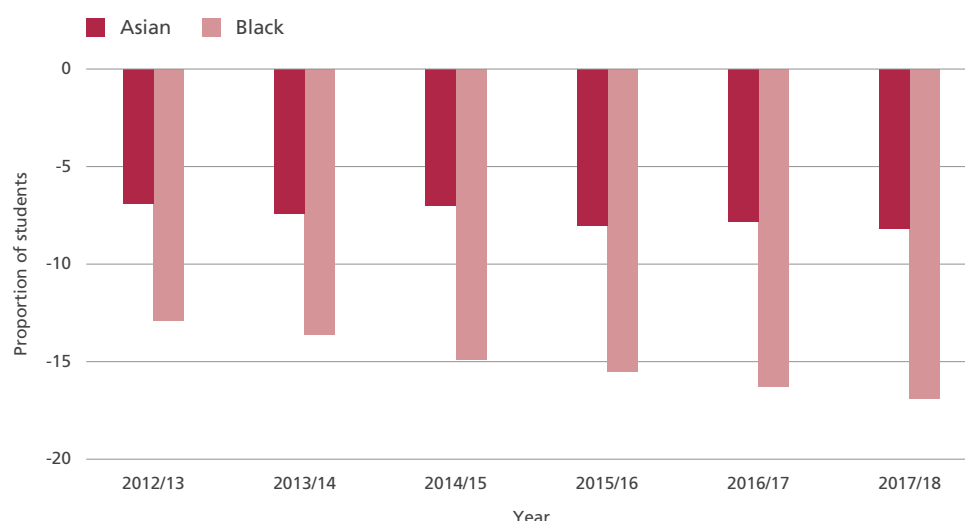
<sup>44</sup> HESA. 2020. 'Table 27 – UK domiciled first year students at higher education providers with low, medium and high entry tariffs by ethnicity 2013/14 to 2018/19'. [accessed 8 Sep 2020]

<sup>45</sup> Grove, J. 2013. "'Small' Russell Group racial bias in admissions: UCAS'. *Times Higher Education*. 2 May

<sup>46</sup> Crawford, C. and Greaves, E. 2015. *Socio-economic, ethnic and gender differences in HE participation*. (London: Department for Business Innovation & Skills)

cohort who sat their GCSEs in 2008, all ethnic minority groups were significantly *more* likely to attend the most selective institutions than their otherwise-identical White British counterparts. The tension in the research suggests there needs to be a fresh look at the relative prospects of access to high tariff universities.

Figure 9: Relative proportion of Asian and Black students achieving a first class degree classification (relative to White students)



When it comes to achievement at university, Asian and Black students continue to see disparities with White students – and these are growing. Figure 10 shows the relative gap between the proportion of Asian and Black university graduates achieving a first-class degree classification relative to the proportion of White students doing so. On one hand, it is good news that the proportion of ethnic minority students achieving the highest degree classification has increased between 2012/13 and 2017/18: the Black figure has almost doubled from 7.5% to 14%, the Asian figure has increased from 13.5 to 20.8. However, because the proportion of White students achieving the highest classification has increased at a higher rate, the relative gap has widened.

This remains the case even when you control for prior attainment: White students still outperform students of all other ethnicities.<sup>47</sup> Data from the OfS on English universities found that even once other factors such as prior attainment, gender, and age are accounted for, there remains an unexplained difference between White and Black students graduating with a first- or upper-second class degree of 17%, and of 10% between White and Asian students. A Black or Asian student who begins university with the same entry qualifications as his White peer remains less likely to graduate with the top classifications of degree – and this is the same across virtually every entry qualification level.<sup>48</sup>

This suggests that the differences are reflective of something *within* the university experience, rather than the relative abilities of students. Richardson's (2013)<sup>49</sup> review of

47 Universities UK. 2019. Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Student Attainment at UK Universities: ClosingTheGap. London

48 Universities UK. 2019. Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Student Attainment at UK Universities: ClosingTheGap. London

49 Richardson, J.T.E. 'The under-attainment of ethnic minority students in UK higher education: what we know and what we don't know'. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*. 39:2, 278–291

what we do and don't know about this phenomenon of ethnic minority under-attainment in UK higher education suggests that teaching and assessment practices that are adopted in different institutions and in different academic subjects might be partially responsible. If this is the case, universities may not be doing enough to ensure that they facilitate the achievement of students in a way that appreciates socioeconomic and cultural barriers students from different ethnic groups may face.

While reasons behind this disproportionality are unclear, what is clear is that universities are not doing enough to monitor and address the ethnicity attainment gaps in their own institutions. Analysis of 2017–18 *access agreements* (institutional strategies for underrepresented and disadvantaged students' access, success and progression) showed that around half of universities still did not have outcome targets relating to ethnic minority students; and only around 16 universities had set specific targets to remove the attainment gap between ethnic minority groups and their White peers.<sup>50</sup> What's more, not one university had a target relating to specific-sub groups within the broader 'BAME' category, indicating an inclination towards viewing the various ethnic minority student groups as a homogeneous group.

### Why are subgroup outcomes important?

There is an inclination amongst universities to look at 'BAME' outcomes at the aggregate level, rather than at the sub-group level. However, access initiatives targeted as 'BAME' students neglect the stark differences between subgroups within this category. In principle, 'BAME' initiatives treat a student of Chinese ethnicity and a student of Black Caribbean ethnicity the same. In reality, these two groups often represent the best performing, and one of the worst performing groups of all ethnic groups. By the time a Chinese student is doing their GCSEs, they are almost twice as likely to achieve a strong pass (grade 5 or above) in English and Maths than their Black Caribbean peers. By the time they are doing their A levels, a Chinese student is 7.5 times more likely to achieve three A grades at A level. A Black Caribbean student, on average, has double the absence rate at school as their Chinese peer. The differences in HE participation are also stark, with Chinese students having the highest participation rate and Black Caribbean having one of the lowest rates. To fail to recognise the nuances within the 'BAME' category risks failing to allocate resources most effectively in fair access and achievement efforts.

## Summary

The data outlined in this section shows, firstly, that children of Black and Asian ethnicity have made huge progress in educational attainment – particularly in relation to their White British peers, but that there is still much more progress to make. A number of key observations can be made:

1. Indian, Bangladeshi, and African students, on average, have higher attainment at GCSE level than White British students. Meanwhile, Caribbean and Pakistani students have lower performance than White British students – with Caribbean children seeing particularly low relative performance.

50 Office for Students. 2018. Topic briefing: Black and minority ethnic (BME) students

2. Disadvantaged White British children (as measured by Free School Meal eligibility) have poorer attainment than disadvantaged children from all other ethnic minority groups, even once other factors are accounted for.
3. On the other hand, although Indian, Bangladeshi and African students who are not eligible for FSM have higher raw attainment at GCSE level than White British students, high-SES White British students perform better than all ethnic minority groups analysed, with the exception of Indian students, once background factors are taken into account.
4. Indian and White British children have higher average performance at A level than Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Black African, and Black Caribbean students.
5. Students from ethnic minority groups are significantly more likely to attend university than White students – after other factors relating to background and prior attainment are accounted for, this disproportionality becomes even more stark.
6. Despite this, there is strong evidence to suggest that ethnic minority students are *less* likely to gain entrance into higher tariff universities than White British students from comparable backgrounds and with similar prior attainment. Ethnic minority students are also *less* likely to graduate with the highest classification of degree awards even when their entry qualifications are controlled for.

Ethnic minority children have seen huge educational progress over the course of the last three decades, both in their own right as well as relative to their White British peers. Bangladeshi students have gone from being one of the worst performing to one of the best performing ethnic groups. There is also something positive to be said of the relatively high performance of disadvantaged children of Indian, Pakistani, and Black African ethnicity. The high levels of HE participation for ethnic minority students also speaks to the aspirations and ability of these groups.

However, the same levels of progress have not been seen across the board. Black Caribbean students, whether they are disadvantaged or not, continue to perform much poorer than virtually every other ethnic group at school. Evidence also suggests that they have some of the lowest HE progression of any ethnic group.

These findings are a clear indication, firstly that 'BAME' outcomes are incredibly varied and manifest in persistently different ways. Indian children, for instance, have some of the best educational outcomes consistently throughout schooling and HE, whilst Caribbean children see the opposite trend. It is also particularly interesting that the educational outcomes of ethnic minority children generally seem to be less affected by disadvantage than is the case for comparable White British pupils. Low-income seems to affect the educational outcomes of students of different ethnicities in noticeably different ways, suggesting other factors beyond low income, such as cultural norms, play a strong role.

Race in and of itself, and racial discrimination are also not sufficient explanations for what drives differential outcomes (though may play some role) given the considerable disparities in outcomes *within* races. The Black Caribbean versus Black African, and Asian Indian versus Asian Pakistani disparities are such examples. The existence of these nuances make



for a compelling case for approaching ethnicity and education in a more granular way. One that seeks to learn from the significant successes of some ethnic subgroups, whilst more effectively identifying which groups need the most support.

## Recommendations

### Recommendation 2

The Department for Education should create ethnicity attainment gap hub schools to enable schools with exemplary outcomes to share best practice.

The government should create ethnic attainment gap hubs that enable schools with exemplary levels of progress and attainment for ethnic groups which are underachieving nationally to work in partnership with those that want to improve their ethnicity attainment gaps. In particular, there should be a focus on learning from schools which have high levels of disadvantaged students yet relatively high progress and attainment amongst Black Caribbean and disadvantaged White British students. Schools which are performing worst in terms of their ethnicity attainment gap, particularly for children on free school meals, should be prioritised. The scheme would use as its model the existing Behaviour Hubs programme.<sup>51</sup>

### Recommendation 3

The Department for Education should encourage and support higher education open data organisations to publish data on university access and outcomes at the ethnic subgroup level.

Currently, organisations like UCAS and HESA have a wealth of data around access and achievement for different ethnic minority groupings. However, there is not consistency around the publication of HE data at the ethnic subgroup level, with much of the data only published at the broad ethnic group level. This, in some cases, relates to data and resource limitations, rather than motivations. The Department for Education should encourage and support HE open data institutions to publish data at the subgroup level.

### Recommendation 4

The Department for Education should urge the Office for Students and the Centre for Transforming Access and Student Outcomes to lead on establishing as standard practice a more granular approach to addressing ethnic disparities in higher education.

<sup>51</sup> Department for Education. 2020. 'Guidance: Behaviour hubs'. [accessed 21 Sep 2020]

Many universities have already begun approaching access and attainment disparities at the ethnic subgroup level within their *access and participation plans*. However, others continue to focus on 'BAME' student data at the aggregate level in these plans. HE institutions – including FE colleges that offer HE qualifications, and alternative providers – should be urged to analyse and address ethnicity gaps at the subgroup level as standard practice in order to more effectively target support.

The Centre for Transforming Access and Student Outcomes (TASO), set up in 2019 with a vision to 'eliminate equality gaps in higher education within 20 years',<sup>52</sup> should be central to driving this approach and facilitating the sharing of best practice for approaching access and attainment from an ethnic subgroup perspective.

As part of this work, TASO should commission an up-to-date study into the higher educational achievement for students of different ethnic subgroups, controlling for prior attainment. This is with the aim of establishing how ethnic penalties in HE achievement – identified in past research at the broad ethnic group level – currently manifests at the subgroup level. The research should also seek to identify the driving factors of any 'ethnic penalties' in HE attainment.

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52 TASO. 'About us'. [accessed 21 Sep 2020]

## chapter two

# Work

It is well established that people in work are much less likely to experience poverty, and that young people from poor families are less likely to be socially mobile.<sup>53</sup> Even temporary work significantly decreases a family's chances of being in poverty – a poor two-parent family where one parent is temporarily employed is less likely to experience persistent poverty than a poor family where both parents are persistently out of work.<sup>54</sup>

We also know that labour market prospects vary considerably between ethnic minority groups. Even after controlling for other factors, many ethnic minority groups continue to see relatively poor earnings prospects compared to White individuals.<sup>55</sup> Given the wide range of negative outcomes that are associated with worklessness, the unexplained differences between the employment prospects of many ethnic minority groups and their White British counterparts is a pressing social justice issue.

On top of having poorer labour market outcomes, generally speaking, it has been found that many ethnic minority individuals continue to feel that their race in and of itself is a barrier to better employment prospects. 29% of black Caribbean employees, for example, report feeling that they have been overlooked for promotion *because* of their ethnicity, as do 35% of Pakistani and 33% of Indian men, according to the McGregor-Smith review.<sup>56</sup>

The review also found that ethnic minority groups identified racial discrimination and stereotypes, lack of role models and mentors in senior roles at board level, and a lack of understanding of cultural differences as some key barriers in the workplace. Discrimination and stereotypes have also been cited as key reasons for why some ethnic minority female groups experience particularly high levels of unemployment.<sup>57</sup> The perceptions that some ethnic minorities have around unfair treatment in the labour market is likely partly a reflection of actually existing disparities in the labour market prospects of different ethnicity groups.

We already know that discrimination plays some role in determining the labour market experience of many ethnic minority individuals. For example, experiments have demonstrated that all the major ethnic minority groups in Britain experience discrimination

53 Social Mobility & Child Poverty Commission. 2015. *State of the Nation 2015: Social Mobility and Child Poverty in Great Britain*. London

54 Barnes, M., Lyon, N. and Millar, J. 2008. *Employment transitions and the changes in economic circumstances of families with children: Evidence from the Families and Children Study (FACS)*. Department for Work and Pensions

55 ONS. 2019. 'Ethnicity pay gaps in Great Britain: 2018'

56 McGregor-Smith, R. 2017. *Race in the workplace: The McGregor-Smith review*. (London: Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy)

57 Runnymede. 2012. *APPG on Race and Community: Ethnic Minority Female Unemployment: Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi Heritage Women*

at the initial stage of the job search process, needing to make almost twice as many applications in order to obtain a positive call-back (such as a job interview) as White British peers with identical CVs.<sup>58,59</sup> This suggests that 'non-British' sounding names are unfairly discriminated against in the general marketplace, though cannot account for disparities experienced by Black Caribbean individuals, who generally have 'British sounding' names.

Tackling labour market ethnic inequalities does not just improve the lives of individuals and their families, it improves the health of the economy. The potential benefit to the UK economy from full representation of ethnic minority individuals across the labour market, through improved participation and progression, was estimated to be £24 billion a year in 2017, a figure representing 1.3% of GDP at the time.

The economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic could very well disproportionately impact ethnic minorities. For instance, a recent survey found that a higher proportion of ethnic minority women expected to be in more debt as a result of the pandemic than White women.<sup>60</sup> The impact of COVID-19 is also likely to disproportionately hit the young, and the already financially unstable, which in turn could disproportionately affect ethnic minorities who are more likely to be in these groups. One report, for example, found that ethnic minority millennials are 47% more likely to be on zero-hours contracts than their White peers.<sup>61</sup>

In August 2020, it was revealed that the UK is officially in a recession for the first time in eleven years.<sup>62</sup> We already know that the last recession disproportionately affected ethnic minority individuals.<sup>63</sup> Given all these facts, there has not been a more important time in recent years to properly address the uneven labour market prospects of Britain's ethnic minority populations.

## Summary of employment rates

- Economically active White British individuals have consistently had above average employment rates (only the 'White Other' group, has consistently had higher rates).
- Employment rates amongst the Indian population have been steadily climbing over time. By 2018, Indian workers had closed the employment gap between themselves and the White British population.
- Pakistani and Bangladeshi employment rates have steadily risen by 13 percentage points between 2004 and 2018. Nonetheless, the Pakistani/Bangladeshi group (aggregated) continue to have the poorest employment rates of all ethnic groups analysed. The stark differences between the Pakistani/Bangladeshi and Indian figures highlight the variations

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58 Wood, M. *et al.* 2009. A test for racial discrimination in recruitment practice in British cities. (London: Department for Work and Pensions)

59 Centre for Social Investigation. 2019. Are employers in Britain discriminating against ethnic minorities?. Oxford: CSI, Nuffield College)

60 Fawcett Society. 2020. BAME women and Covid-19 – Research evidence

61 Bowyer, G. and Henderson, M. 2020. Race Inequality in the Workforce: Exploring connections between work, ethnicity and mental health. (Dunfermline: Carnegie UK Trust)

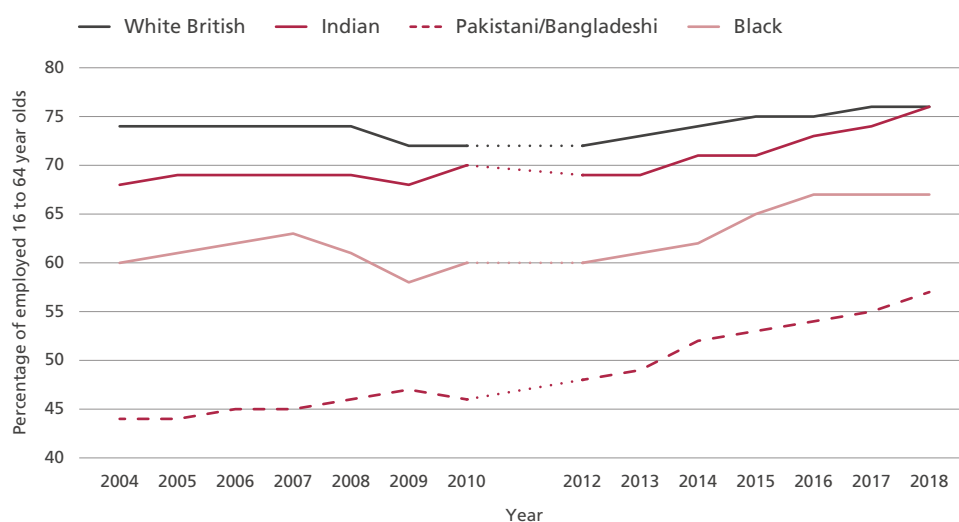
62 Chan, P.S. and Plummer, R. 2020. 'UK officially in recession for first time in 11 years'. BBC News. 12 Aug. [accessed 27 Aug 2020]

63 Li, Y. and Heath, A. 2020. Persisting disadvantages: a study of labour market dynamics of ethnic unemployment and earnings in the UK (2009–2015). *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. 46:5, 857–878

that can exist *within* a broad ethnic group. As of 2018, the Pakistani/Bangladeshi employment rate was 10 points behind that of black individuals.

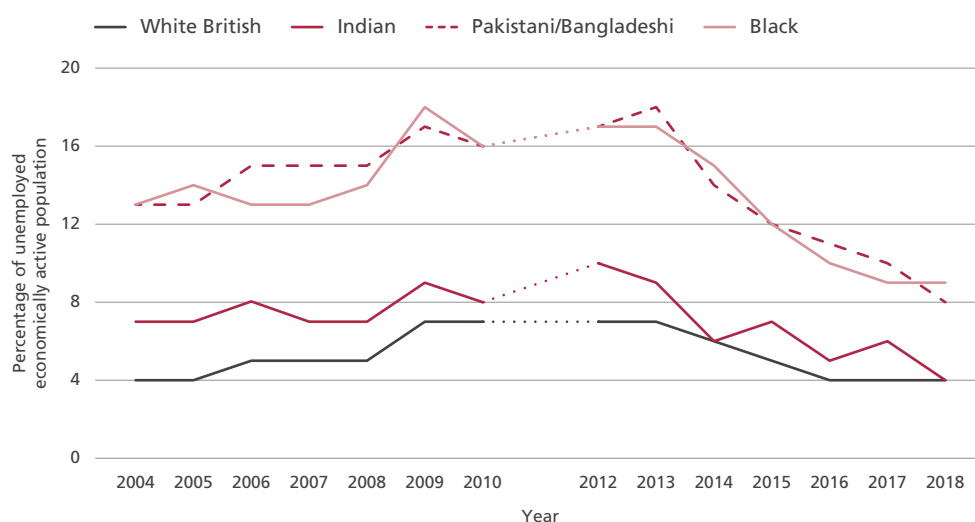
- The Black employment figure does not distinguish between African and Caribbean, unfortunately. However, employment for this broad group has risen by 7 percentage points between 2004–2018. This has narrowed the employment gap between this group and White British workers from 14 points to 9 points.

Figure 10: Percentage of 16 to 64 year olds who were employed, by ethnicity over time (UK)



Source, CSJ analysis of Annual Population Survey data published by government<sup>64</sup>

Figure 11: Percentage of the economically active population who were unemployed, by ethnicity over time (UK)



Note: CSJ analysis of Annual Population Survey data published by the government.

<sup>64</sup> The primary data does not disaggregate between Black African and Black Caribbean, and aggregates the Pakistani and Bangladeshi figures. The Annual Population Survey updated its ethnicity questions in 2011. As a result, estimates from before and after 2011 may not be consistent, and data for individual ethnic groups in 2011 is not available.

White British individuals have had the lowest levels of unemployment of any of the groups analysed (with the occasional exception of Indian individuals).

- The Indian unemployment rate has been steadily decreasing over the course of this century. In 2018 (as with employment rate figures) there was no gap between the Indian and white British unemployment rates.
- Pakistani/Bangladeshi unemployment has remained relatively high – although, it has decreased by 5 points between 2004 and 2018 – compared to White and Indian unemployment. In fact, the former group’s unemployment rate is double that of their Indian counterparts.
- Black unemployment has decreased by 4 points over the period, and the gap between Black and White British unemployment has narrowed from 9 to 5 points. However, Black individuals continue to have the highest unemployment rate of all the groups analysed.

## Underlying causes

Raw unemployment rates only give us a limited picture in light of the fact that factors such as geography, educational attainment, and social class play a fundamental role in determining labour market prospects. A recent study<sup>65</sup> analysed the labour market dynamics of ethnicity and unemployment in the UK between 2009–2015 using the Household Longitudinal Study to follow individuals throughout the life course. It found that, even after controlling for factors such as region, health, number of dependent children, education, and full or part-time work, huge gaps in unemployment rates persisted between comparable individuals of different ethnicities. Black African, Black Caribbean, Bangladeshi and Pakistani men’s unemployment rates were found to be around 12, 12, 11, and 4 percentage points higher than those for White British men. Black African, Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women saw relative gaps (compared to White women) of about 7, 6, 17, and 16, respectively. These differences were statistically significant.

It is noteworthy that there were considerable gender differences in exposure to relative unemployment risk. While African, Caribbean, and Bangladeshi men fared particularly badly; this was the case for Pakistani and Bangladeshi women, with black women seeing much smaller unexplained unemployment gaps.

These intricate dynamics are important because they give an indication that different ethnic minority subgroups – particularly when the gender aspect is brought into the analysis – have divergent experiences of unemployment. In particular, some groups have much larger ‘unexplained’ gaps (sometimes expressed as an ‘ethnic penalties’) than others. Discrimination is one possible factor that could be driving at least some of these gaps. However, racial discrimination does not adequately explain why, for example, Bangladeshi

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65 Li, Y. and Heath, A. 2020. Persisting disadvantages: a study of labour market dynamics of ethnic unemployment and earnings in the UK (2009–2015). *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. 46:5, 857–878

men saw an 'ethnic penalty' that was more than double that of their Pakistani counterparts; and why, while Pakistani and Bangladeshi women see large 'ethnic penalties' compared to White British women, Indian women see little difference.

Very little is known about these highly important dynamics. Cultural, language, and attitudinal factors inevitably play some role. Until we face the challenge of investigating these more difficult-to-grasp dynamics and move away from simplistic understandings of ethnic disparities, which are based on using 'BAME' or broad ethnic groupings as units of analysis, we are unlikely to find the right answers.

## The potential impact of COVID-19 on employment

Table 2 show the most recent quarterly unemployment figures by ethnicity at the time of writing. The good news is that all ethnic groups in the analysis saw lower levels of unemployment compared to the five-year average; and Indian and Black individuals see lower levels than in the same quarter the previous year.

Table 2: Quarter 2 (Apr–June) unemployment rates by ethnicity (UK)

	Q2 2020	Q2 2019	Change Q2 5-year average (2015–2019)
White	3.5	+0.2	-0.5
Indian	3.7	-2.2	-1.7
Pakistani	8.2	+0.1	-1.9
Bangladeshi	7.9	0	-1.2
Black	7.9	-1.8	-2.6

CSJ analysis of ONS data. Not seasonally adjusted. Data does not disaggregate White and Black groups.<sup>66</sup>

Q2 2020 figures show that Black, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi economically active individuals were still seeing much higher rates of unemployment compared to their White and Indian counterparts. Q2 of 2020 represented the period of the COVID-19 pandemic during which the UK underwent a lockdown, leading the economy to shrink by 20.4% in April.<sup>67</sup> However, the government furlough scheme (as well as the business loan and grant schemes) allowed companies to keep their staff on their payrolls, even if doors were shut. This contributed to Q2 unemployment figures remaining steady.

However, in August 2020, it was revealed that the UK was officially in recession for this first time in eleven years. This is particularly concerning given what we know about the disproportionate effects of recessions on certain ethnic minority groups. Li and Heath (2020)<sup>68</sup> have shown that during previous recessions, Black and Pakistani/Bangladeshi

<sup>66</sup> ONS. 2020. Dataset A09: Labour market status by ethnic group

<sup>67</sup> BBC News. 2020. 'Bank of England "ready to act" as economy shrinks record 20%'. 12 Jun. [accessed 22 Aug 2020]

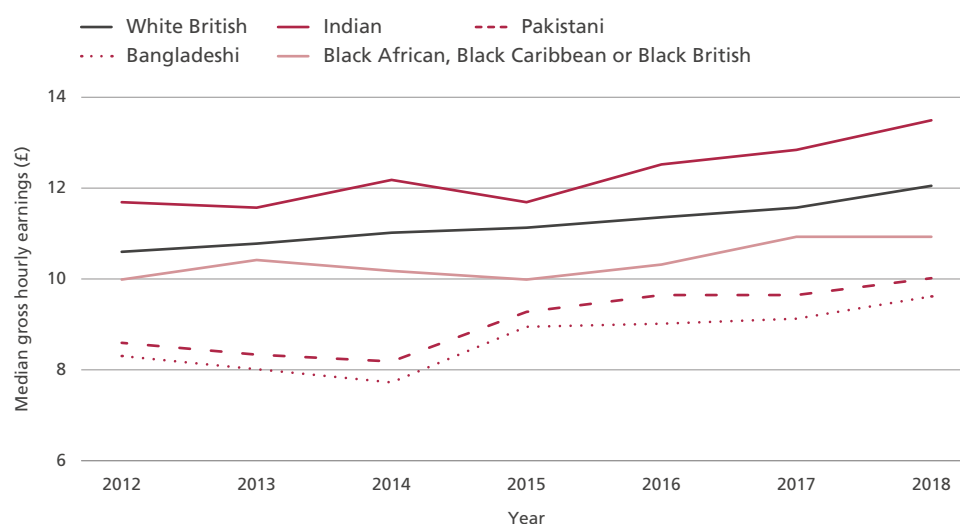
<sup>68</sup> Li, Y. and Heath, A. 2020. Persisting disadvantages: a study of labour market dynamics of ethnic unemployment and earnings in the UK (2009–2015). *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. 46:5, 857–878

groups in Britain bore the brunt, being the first to face job cuts and the last to find re-employment. In the immediate aftermath of the last recession, in 2007/2008, 26% of Black Caribbean and 21% of Black African men were unemployed, 2.5 and 2 times higher than for White British men, respectively. Pakistani and Bangladeshi women's unemployment rates were over three times as high as for White British women; and Black African and Caribbean women's rates over twice as high. Even worse, while White British individuals' unemployment rates began to fall when the situation began to improve, some ethnic minority groups found their unemployment rates unchanging or even rising.

The Q3 and Q4 labour market figures will more accurately reflect the initial effects of the economic disturbances caused by COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown, including the current recession. There is a real danger that the recession will undo years of progress for particular ethnic minority groups in the labour market, causing them to fall even further behind, unless urgent action is taken.

## Earnings

Figure 12: Median gross hourly earnings by ethnicity over time, Great Britain (2012–2018)



CSJ analysis of ONS data<sup>69</sup>

Figure 12 shows the median hourly pay for White British, Indian, combined Pakistani and Bangladeshi, and Black employees between 2013 to 2018. The data shows that Indian employees had the highest median hourly pay of all ethnic groups in the analysis,<sup>70</sup> and the gap between themselves and White British employees has actually widened from £0.95 per hour in 2013, to £1.56 in 2018. Pakistani and Bangladeshi employees, on the other hand, continue to see the lowest levels of median hourly pay of any ethnic group, at £9.62 per hour in 2018.<sup>71</sup> This means that the biggest pay gap analysed here

<sup>69</sup> ONS. 2019. 'Ethnicity pay gaps in Great Britain: 2018'.

<sup>70</sup> Chinese workers had the highest median hourly pay of any ethnic group in 2018, at £15.75

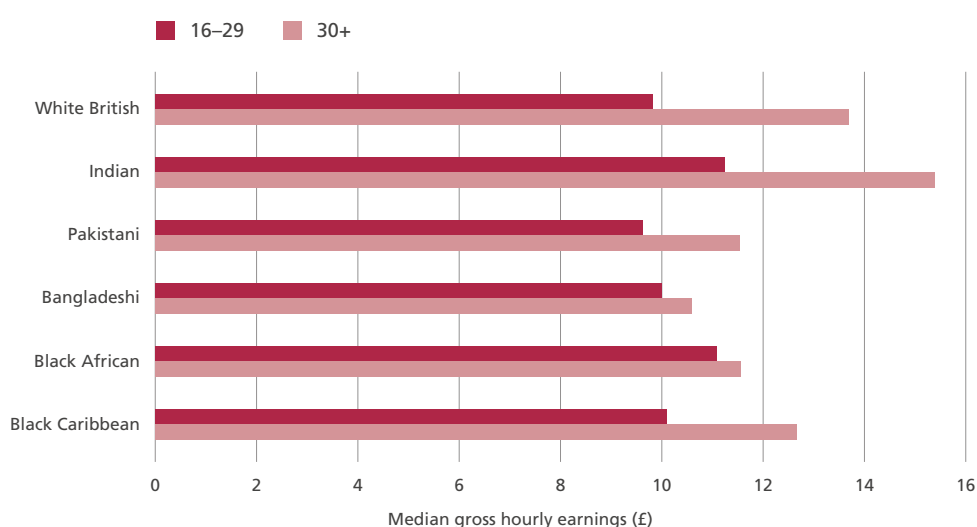
<sup>71</sup> Having said this, the data does not disaggregate between black Caribbean and black African, and therefore it is not possible to say whether Pakistani/Bangladeshi workers are truly paid lower than these subgroups



is not between workers from ethnic minority groups and White British workers, but *within* the Asian category – between Indians on the one hand, and Pakistani/Bangladeshi employees on the other.

Unfortunately, the data does not disaggregate between Black African and Caribbean workers. Nevertheless, we see that the overall median hourly pay for Black workers sits roughly between that of white British workers and workers of Pakistani and Bangladeshi ethnicity. However, it is the case that the gap between Black and White British median hourly pay has increased over time, thanks to a relatively slow rate of earnings increase amongst the Black group. While Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, and White British employees have seen their gross earnings increase by 15%, 17%, 16%, and 14% respectively, Black workers have seen a more modest growth of 10%.

Figure 13: Median hourly pay by ethnicity and age group, England and Wales, 2019



ONS, Annual Population Survey<sup>72</sup>

Having said this, it is now the case that whilst most ethnic minority groups aged 30 and over tend to earn less than their White British counterparts, many ethnic minority groups aged between 16 and 29 have a higher median hourly pay. Figure 13 shows that, as of 2019, ONS survey data indicates that younger Indian, Bangladeshi, Black African, and Black Caribbean individuals aged had a higher median hourly pay than White British individuals. Of the five ethnic minority groups in this analysis, only young Pakistani individuals had lower median earnings. In contrast, of those over 30 years old, only the Indian group had higher median earnings than White British workers.

As we know, compositional factors play a strong role in determining wage gaps. For instance, research covering a 20-year period found that ethnic minority groups tend to be in occupations where there is lower pay. Pakistani and Bangladeshi workers were more likely to be in routine occupations than all other ethnic groups. Similarly, Bangladeshis were the most likely out of any ethnic group to be in semi-routine work, followed by

72 ONS. 2020. Ethnicity pay gaps: 2019

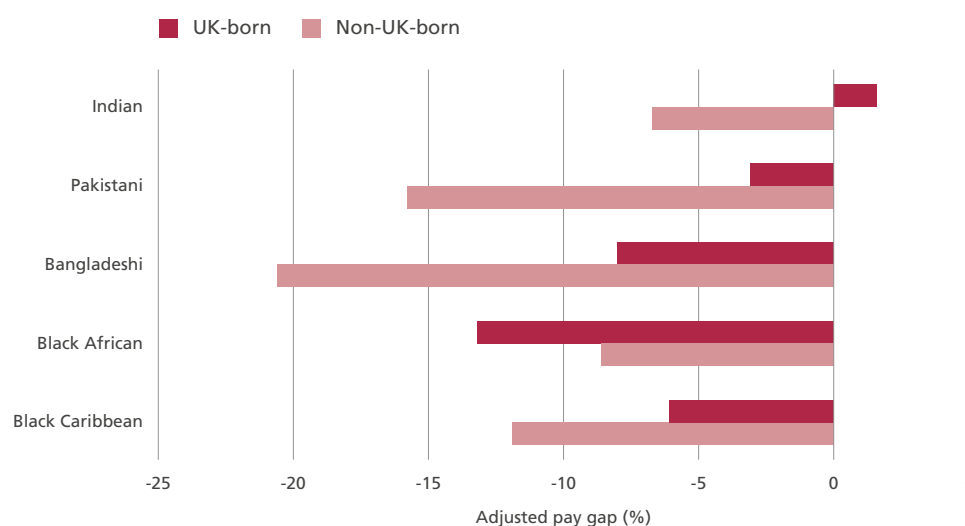
Pakistanis and Africans.<sup>73</sup> We can expect these kinds of dynamics to play into earnings differentials. However, the evidence shows that earnings gaps persist even after controlling for other factors.

For example, recent research looked into how ethnic minority earnings fare relative to White British earnings when compositional factors are taken into account. It was found that, on average, white British men still earned twice as much as ethnic minority men over the life course, with the earnings differentials increasing sharply from around age 30 to age 55. The ethnic penalties were also there for women, although these were less pronounced. Overall, it was Black Caribbean, Black Africans, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi workers who faced the most considerable earnings disadvantages.

ONS data confirms these findings, as shown in Figure 14. Even after accounting for a range of variables, including region, occupation, highest qualification, marital status and whether an individual has children, and country of birth, there largely remains pay gaps between ethnic minority workers and White British workers. These gaps are particularly high for ethnic minorities born outside of the UK (a considerable proportion of the ethnic minority population as shown in Annex B). In all cases analysed, except Black African, non-UK born workers of minority ethnicity saw larger gaps than their UK-born counterparts.

However, even those ethnic minority groups born in the UK continue to experience lower hourly pay, with the exception of Indian workers, than White British workers once compositional factors are taken into account.

Figure 14: Adjusted pay gap between ethnic minority workers and White British workers after controlling for other factors, by country of birth, 2019



Source: ONS, Annual Population Survey. Figures represent the difference between all ethnic groups and White British hourly earnings as a percentage of White British earnings<sup>74</sup>

73 Brynin, M. and Longhi, S. 2015. The effect of occupation on poverty among ethnic minority groups. (London: Joseph Rowntree Foundation)

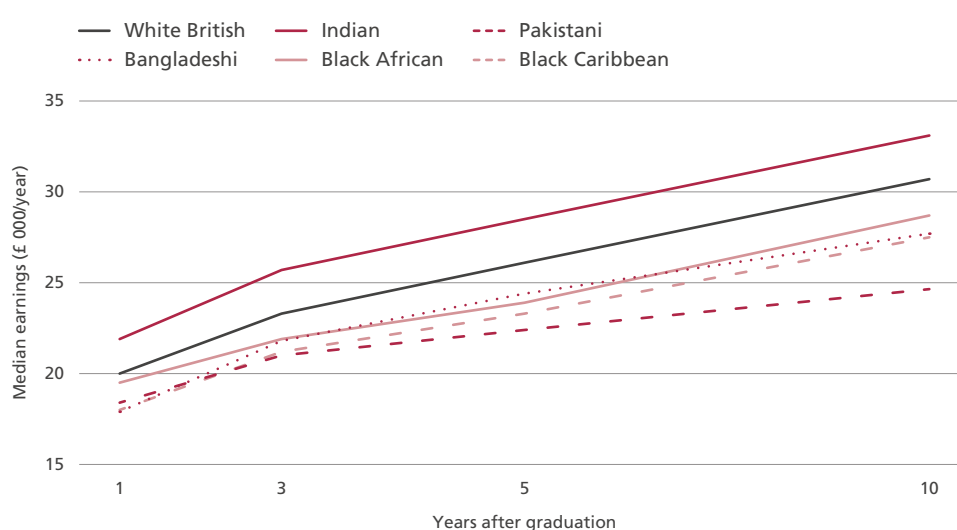
74 ONS. 2020. Ethnicity pay gaps: 2019

## Graduates

One of the 'new' ethnic disparities that have emerged over the recent past relates to higher education participation. As shown in the previous chapter, if you're a student from any ethnic minority group, you are now more likely to go to university than your White British peers. However, just as this does not necessarily translate to better achievement prospects when it comes to degree award, it also does not translate to better labour market prospects.

## Earnings

Figure 15: Median earnings of graduates in sustained employment only, 1, 3, 5 and 10 years after graduation, by ethnicity



CSJ analysis of Department for Education data<sup>75</sup>

Figure 14 reports median earnings of graduates of different ethnicities in sustained employment 1, 3, 5, and 10 years after graduation. The increases between year 1 and 10 for each ethnic group, as well as the relative gap with White graduates, is reported in Table 3. The results show the striking differences that exist both between ethnic groups, and within them – particularly the Asian ethnic group.

Indian graduates are the highest earning ethnic group 1, 3, 5, and 10 years after graduation, and by year 10 are earning on average £2,400 more than their White counterparts. On the other hand, Pakistani groups are the lowest earning graduates at 3, 5, and 10 years, and have only seen a 34% increase in their median earnings by the tenth year. For comparison, their Indian and Bangladeshi counterparts see their income increase by at least 50%. Bangladeshi students see the highest percentage increase of any group, at 55%. As a result, while the raw gap between Bangladeshi and White graduates after 10 years is £3,000, Pakistani graduates see a relative gap double this size, at £6,000.

<sup>75</sup> Department for Education. 2019. Graduate outcomes (LEO): outcomes in 2016 to 2017

Table 3: Median earnings (£) 1 and 10 years after graduation, % increase, and relative comparison with White earnings, by ethnic group.

	1 year after graduation	10 years after graduation	% increase	Gap after 10 years (vs White) (£)
White	20,000	30,700	54%	–
Indian	21,900	33,100	51%	+2,400
Pakistani	18,400	24,700	34%	-6,000
Bangladeshi	17,900	27,700	55%	-3,000
Black Caribbean	18,000	27,500	52%	-3,200
Black African	19,500	28,700	47%	-2,000

CSJ analysis of Department for Education data<sup>76</sup>

Black African and Caribbeans, in year 1, have an earnings gap between them of £1,500; by year 10, this gap is not much smaller, at £1,200. Relative to their White British peers after 10 years, they are earning £2,000 and £3,200 less, respectively. In fact, the relatively higher median salary of White graduates one year after graduation, combined with relatively high rate of wage increases mean that the gap between their earnings and the earnings of other ethnic minority groups (with the exception of Indian), widens over time.

Again, we can look at whether these earnings differentials are actually a reflection of background factors, which inevitably differ across different ethnic groups. Research by the Resolution Foundation<sup>77</sup> gives us some indication of factors influencing these wage gaps. The research compared the earnings of male and female graduates and non-graduates for Black, Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi, and White ethnic groups. It controlled for a wide range of compositional factors such as age, qualifications, occupation, region, experience, being born in the UK, full- and part-time work. It found that, while accounting for these factors substantially reduced raw pay gaps, unexplained gaps persisted. Furthermore, while pay penalties amongst some ethnic minority non-graduate groups (like Pakistani/Bangladeshi men and Indian women) reduced substantially; these penalties grew slightly worse for other groups, like Black women.

They found that Indian male graduates had no statistically significant pay penalties when compositional factors were taken into account – this was not the case for any other ethnic minority group analysed. Black male graduates saw the largest pay penalty, at 17%; and Pakistani/Bangladeshi graduates a penalty of 12%. Men across all three groups who were not graduates, however, saw penalties at varying levels: 4% for Indian men; 14% for Pakistani/Bangladeshi men; and 9% for Black men.

Female pay penalties had a different pattern. Unlike their male counterparts, Indian female graduates did see an ethnic pay penalty, albeit a relatively small one of 3%, compared to their male counterparts. In comparison Pakistani/Bangladeshi female graduates saw an ethnic pay penalty of 5%, and Black female graduates of 9%. Non-graduates across all

<sup>76</sup> Department for Education. 2019. Graduate outcomes (LEO): outcomes in 2016 to 2017

<sup>77</sup> Henehan, H. and Rose, H. 2018. 'Opportunities Knocked? Exploring pay penalties among the UK's ethnic minorities'. Resolution Foundation

three groups also saw penalties of between 4–6%. All in all, females of minority ethnicity saw lower penalties compared to their White counterparts than male ethnic minorities did.

On top of having lower earnings on average than their White counterparts, it is also the case that ethnic minority graduates are more likely to be overqualified for their jobs. One study<sup>78</sup> investigated ‘overqualification’<sup>79</sup> amongst different ethnic groups. The results showed that while White graduates had the lowest proportion of overqualified individuals, at 25%. This number went up to 41% for Black African graduates; 39% for Bangladeshi graduates; 36% for Pakistani graduates; and 31.7% for Indian graduates.

## Summary

The data outlined in this section shows that all ethnic groups analysed, with the general exception of Indian, fare worse than White British individuals in the labour market. A number of key observations can be made:

- All ethnic minority groups have seen their employment rates increase over time, and ethnic minority unemployment was at a historic low prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, even after controlling for compositional factors, individuals from ethnic minority groups are still more likely to experience poorer employment prospects than comparable White individuals.
- Pakistani/Bangladeshi individuals of working age saw particularly high increases in employment – 13 points between 2004 and 2018. However, they also experience the lowest employment rates. In contrast, their Indian counterparts have virtually equal levels of employment and unemployment as White individuals of working age.
- Black individuals of working age have seen their employment rates increase by 7 points between 2004 and 2018. However, as of 2018, they had the highest levels of unemployment, followed closely by Pakistani/Bangladeshi individuals.
- White British workers over 30 have a higher median hourly pay on average than Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Black African, and Black Caribbean workers. In contrast, amongst 16 to 29 year olds, White British workers had a lower median hourly pay than all groups analysed, with the exception of Pakistani.
- All ethnic minority groups analysed, except Indian, earned less on average relative to comparative White British workers. After controlling for a wide range of factors that can contribute to earnings differentials, both UK-born and overseas-born workers from ethnic minority groups experience lower earnings – again, with the exception of UK-born Indian individuals.
- White graduates earn, on average, more than African, Caribbean, Bangladeshi, and Pakistani graduates a decade after graduating. The gap between Pakistani and White graduate earnings is particularly stark. When controlling for factors which may affect earnings, evidence suggests that Black male graduates face the harshest pay disparity compared to their White British peers.

<sup>78</sup> Brynin, M. and Longhi, S. 2015. The effect of occupation on poverty among ethnic minority groups. (London: Joseph Rowntree Foundation)

<sup>79</sup> Overqualified was defined as cases where individuals had qualifications above the maximum qualification required for an occupation according to information provided by employers.

It is important to remember it is not all doom and gloom for ethnic minorities in the British labour market. For instance, ethnic minority employees fare better than their White counterparts in some sectors. One study found that there were many occupations in which ethnic minority groups were paid relatively more than White employees, but were not as well represented in these occupations. There were also sectors in which they were paid relatively better and were relatively well represented.<sup>80</sup>

However, it is the case that many ethnic minority groups continue to experience unexplained disparities and prospects in the labour market. The ONS has, as of 2020, started providing the most comprehensive break down of ethnicity pay gap data (for instance, disaggregating the 'Black' and 'Mixed' category unlike in previous publications). This allows for a much more detailed examination of how disparities manifest across ethnicities. This approach is a welcome development but unfortunately one that is not yet standard practice.

As the UK economy experiences recession for the first time in eleven years, pre-existing ethnic disparities in the labour market are likely to be exacerbated. Ethnic minority employment, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, was at record levels, with some groups seeing a closing of the gap relative to their White British counterparts. Policymakers should make all the necessary efforts to ensure that this progress is not undone and, better yet, that economic recovery builds on it.

## Recommendations

### Recommendation 5

The government should establish a COVID-19 labour market inequality commission to review the relative economic impact of the pandemic on groups which are traditionally disadvantaged.

The economic effects of COVID-19 are likely to disproportionately affect already disadvantaged groups and those concentrated in sectors most affected by lockdown measures. Previous recessions have also disproportionately impacted workers from ethnic minority groups, with Black and Pakistani/Bangladeshi workers in particular being 'the first to face job cuts and the last to find re-employment'.<sup>81</sup>

The government should launch a COVID-19 labour market inequality commission to increase the evidence base for how the pandemic is likely to affect economically vulnerable and traditionally disadvantaged groups in the labour market. It should advise Government on how to protect these groups from being disproportionately impacted and how to effectively prepare them for the post-COVID economy.

80 Brynin, M. and Longhi, S. 2015. The effect of occupation on poverty among ethnic minority groups. (London: Joseph Rowntree Foundation)

81 Li, Y., and A. Heath. 2008. Ethnic Minority Men in British Labour Market (1972–2005). *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*. 28 (5/6): 231–244

## Recommendation 6

The government should expand the remit of the Race Disparity Unit, moving it beyond data collection and analysis, to include the evaluation of ways in which policies and government bodies can maximise their capability to level-up ethnic inequalities, with a focus on the labour market.

The Race Disparity Unit's (RDU) remit should be enhanced in order to allow it to play a more active role in advising government on how to better address ethnic inequalities. This should include the powers to evaluate ways in which new and existing skills and employment policies, such as the Lifetime Skills Guarantee<sup>82</sup> and Kickstart Scheme,<sup>83</sup> can act as effective vehicles for redressing labour market gaps between ethnic groups.

This should also involve the RDU taking a more active role in identifying and researching the impact of emerging issues pertinent to ethnicity and the labour market, such as digitisation and automation.

82 GOV.UK. 2020. 'Major expansion of post-18 education and training to level up and prepare workers for post-COVID economy'. [accessed 3 Oct 2020]

83 GOV.UK. 2020. 'Kickstart Scheme'. [accessed 3 Oct 2020]





## chapter three

# The family

The importance of a stable family unit to the life chances of an individual is compelling. The Centre for Social Justice has published research<sup>84</sup> demonstrating that experiencing family breakdown as a child puts individuals at an increased risk for a wide range of negative outcomes, not least educational failure, crime, and financial instability. It doubles your chances of failing at school, doubles your chances of getting into trouble with the police, and doubles your chances of becoming homeless.

Put simply: family breakdown is one of the quickest routes into poverty and an issue that disproportionately affects poorer communities, entrenching the poverty they already face. But we also know that the likelihood of family breakdown is not equal amongst different ethnic groups – far from it. Despite this, family breakdown remains one of the least tackled areas of social policy in Britain.

In a Father's Day speech in 2008, President Obama remarked of the African-American community:

Too many fathers... [are] missing – missing from too many lives and too many homes. They have abandoned their responsibilities, acting like boys instead of men. And the foundations of our families are weaker because of it... We know that more than half of all black children live in single-parent households, a number that has doubled – doubled[!] – since we were children. We know the statistics – that children who grow up without a father are five times more likely to live in poverty and commit crime; nine times more likely to drop out of schools and twenty times more likely to end up in prison.<sup>85</sup>

In the UK, there has been scant public recognition by politicians of the role family structures has to play in differential social and economic outcomes amongst Britain's ethnic groups. In 2012, David Lammy MP highlighted that absent fathers are a key cause of knife crime.<sup>86</sup> However, beyond this, politicians have been unwilling to touch the subject.

This is partly a result of perceptions of family breakdown and family structures as a social and political taboo, and because policymakers are wary about been seen to stigmatise or demonise single parents or specific ethnic minority groups. The family unit has also often been seen as a distinctly 'right-wing' preoccupation. However, given the damaging effects of family breakdown, the huge disparities in family stability that exist amongst some groups is not a matter of politics or ideology, it is a matter of social justice.

84 The Centre for Social Justice. 2019. *Why Family Matters: A comprehensive analysis of the consequences of family breakdown*. London

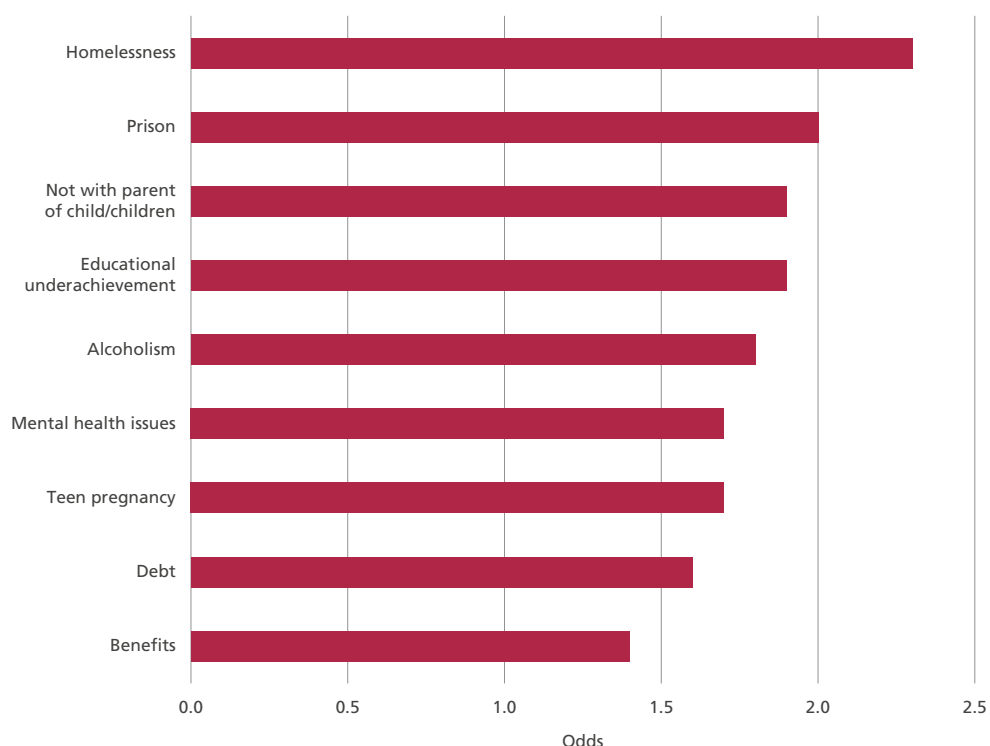
85 The New York Times. 2008. 'Transcript: Obama's Father's Day Remarks'. 15 Jun. [accessed 3 Aug 2020]

86 Cecil, N. and Bryant, M. 2012. 'Absent fathers are key cause of knife crime, says David Lammy'. *Evening Standard*. 2 Oct. [accessed 3 Aug 2020]

## The effects of family breakdown

In 2019, the Centre for Social justice commissioned ComRes, a leading market research agency, to conduct logistic regression to demonstrate the impact that experiencing family breakdown in childhood has on the likelihood of experiencing a number of social issues. The findings, which can be found in full in the report *Why Family Matters*,<sup>87</sup> are summarised below:

Figure 16: Odds ratio of experiencing social issues for those who have experienced family breakdown compared to those who have not.



### Social attitudes

There is a misconception that emphasising the importance of strong two-parent married households alienates those who are single parents or those who grew up in single parent households. However, evidence shows that even those who were raised by single parents, or have been single parents themselves, feel, in large majorities, that stronger families and two parent households are important. There is also a misconception that the idea of a strong nuclear family is an outdated concept. This is not the case. Evidence shows that the vast majority of young people also believe that family breakdown is a problem.

<sup>87</sup> The Centre for Social Justice. 2019. *Why Family Matters: A comprehensive analysis of the consequences of family breakdown*. London.

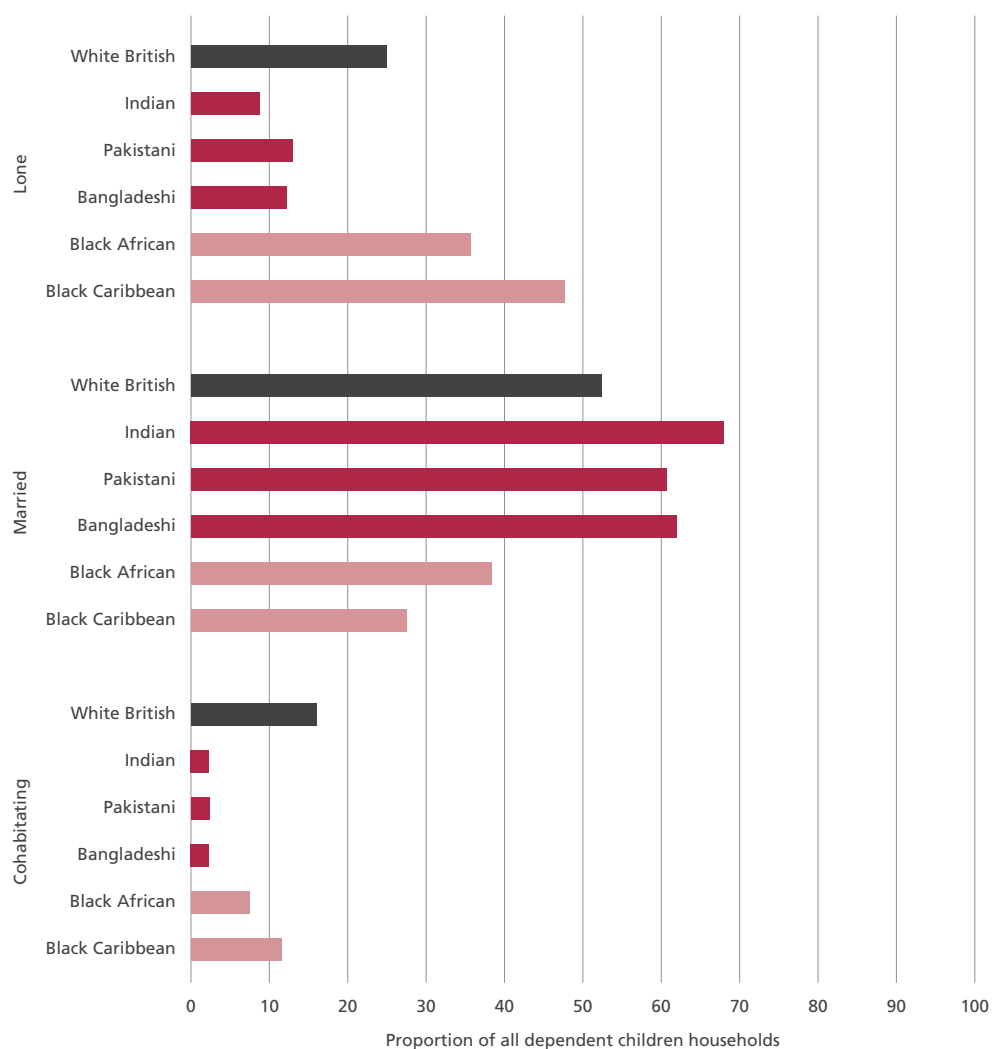
- 83% of British adults say stronger families are important to addressing Britain's social problems. **This includes 82% of divorcees, and 77% of those who were brought up by a single parents.**
- 66% of British adults say relationship tips should be part of the advice you get when you have a baby. **This includes 66% of those who experienced family breakdown as a child.**
- 84% of British adults say the government is right to say the stability of a family matters for children. **This includes 82% of those who experienced family breakdown as a child.**
- 75% of British adults agree that family breakdown is a serious problem in Britain and more should be done to prevent families breaking up. **This includes 74% of those who experienced family breakdown as a child, and 67% of those who are divorced.**
- 82% of British adults say it is important for children to grow up with both parents. **This includes 75% of adults who were brought up by one biological parent.**
- 71% of British adults agree that marriage is important and the government should support couples who get married. **This includes 69% of those who experienced family breakdown as a child.**
- 53% of people believe public money should be spent on strengthening families. **This includes 57% of those aged 25–34.**
- 89% of British adults say that improved parenting is important to addressing Britain's social problems – **including 85% of 18–24 year olds.**

This evidence shows that marriage and strong families are not outdated issues of little importance, but that there is often little difference in perceptions on the importance of family between those who have experienced family breakdown and those who have not. Family stability is not a fringe preoccupation but an issue of widespread societal concern.

Although the data was broken down by ethnicity, small sample sizes mean we cannot report reliable differences between the perceptions of different minority groups. In fact, beyond the data reported below, there is very little research into the relative experience of family stability across different ethnic and socioeconomic groups in Britain.

## Family structures across ethnicities

Figure 17: Lone, Married and Cohabiting dependent children households as a proportion of all dependent children households, by ethnicity, 2011



Source: CSJ analysis of 2011 Census data

Figure 3 presents data showing the proportion of lone parent, married, and cohabiting households as a proportion of all households with dependent children,<sup>88</sup> for six ethnic groups. Unfortunately, as the data are derived from the 2011 Census – which provides the most accurate figures but was last conducted nine years ago – the data are somewhat outdated. The upcoming Census in 2021 will provide the most up-to-date picture on the current state of family structures across Britain.

<sup>88</sup> All households with dependent children is comprised of lone, married, cohabiting, and 'other' households with dependent children. The relevant figures for each category are calculated as a proportion of this number for each ethnic group.

## Lone parent households

*Lone parent, dependent children* (LPDC) households make up about 25% of White British households with dependent children. In other words, a quarter of White British households in which there are dependent children are headed up by single parents. In comparison, Asian households see relatively low levels of LPDC households, between 8–13%, with Indian being the lowest figure.

The figures for Black households are startling. Over a third of African dependent children households are made up of lone parents; as are nearly half of Caribbean households. 9 in 10 single parents are mothers,<sup>89</sup> and therefore a significant proportion of these families do not have a father living in the household.

One study used the Millennium Cohort Study to look into the dynamics of non-residential fatherhood (fathers who were 'not in a co-residential union' with the mother of their child at birth) across different ethnicities. Sample sizes were small for ethnic minority groups so the findings should be taken with caution, but they are nevertheless remarkable. The study found that when Black Caribbean and Black African mothers had children, the father of their child was highly unlikely to end up living with them by the time the child was 9 months old – 15% and 11%, respectively. In comparison, this figure was 24% for White mothers, 61% for Indian mothers, 31% for Pakistani, and 35% for Bangladeshi.<sup>90</sup> This suggests that there is a particularly concerning level of early family breakdown amongst children with Black mothers.

## Marriage and cohabitation

When it comes to married and cohabitating households with dependent children, we see some stark disparities between the six ethnic groups. Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi *married, dependent children* (MDC) households make up a large proportion of all *dependent children* households for that group, at 68%, 61%, and 62%, respectively. This is coupled with small *cohabiting, dependent children* households (CDC) – each group sees around 2% of this households type as a proportion of all *dependent children* households.

A majority (52%) of *dependent children* households are also made up of married parents amongst the White British group, although this group sees the highest proportion of CDC households at 16%.

On the other hand, the Black groups saw relatively lower levels of MDC households – 38% within the African group and 28% within the Caribbean. However, of all six ethnic groups analysed, Caribbean households were the only group to see higher levels of *lone parent* than *married* households amongst its *dependent children* households.

<sup>89</sup> ONS. 2019. Dataset: Families and households.

<sup>90</sup> Kiernan, K. 2005. Non-residential fatherhood and child involvement: evidence from the Millennium Cohort Study. *LSE STICERD Research Paper No. CASE100*

These figures are staggering. The level of lone parenthood amongst Britain's Caribbean population is particularly high.<sup>91</sup> Furthermore, if it is indeed the case that African and Caribbean children born into lone parent households are more likely to experience extended periods of living in a lone parent household – this has profound implications for child and family.

## Why does this matter?

Family structures matter because family breakdown is directly linked to poverty and a range of socioeconomic outcomes, highlighted at the beginning of this chapter.<sup>92</sup> Differences in family structures therefore matter because they may, at least in part, explain some of the differential outcomes between ethnic groups.

Little is still known about the reasons underpinning the differences in family structures we see between the ethnic groups, but there is likely strong cultural and financial factors at play. Finances can be a key driver to family breakdown; and family breakdown can also increase financial instability.

While this analysis does not distinguish between different socioeconomic classes, it is known that marriage is more prevalent amongst people with higher incomes. For families with children in the bottom quintile, 45% are married compared to 84% in the top quintile.<sup>93</sup> If we were to break down ethnic groups further by socioeconomic status, we would therefore find further differences reflecting this. For instance, it is possible that we would see lower levels of lone parenthood amongst middle class Africans and Caribbeans; and higher levels amongst white working-class families.

However, it is not just lone parenthood that is linked to poorer socioeconomic outcomes when compared to married households. Evidence in a recent CSJ report, *Family Structure Still Matters*<sup>94</sup> laid out why marriage secures stability in a way cohabitation does not for both children and parents. The evidence is clear: married families see better outcomes than not just single parent families, but cohabiting families. There is a valid question to be asked about the causal nature of this relationship: does marriage produce stability, or does stability produce marriage. In reality, the two likely reinforce each other. However, that should not stop us from further investigating the dynamics of family structures and how they feed into socioeconomic outcomes across different ethnic groups.

We already know that ethnic minority women are more likely to find maternal care inadequate. Although not broken down by detailed ethnic groups, research into maternal care shows that ethnic minority women are 25% less likely to be satisfied with postnatal care and 25% less likely to believe they were given enough information to help decide about maternal care compared with white women.<sup>95</sup> We also know that black mothers

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91 It must be noted that the only other ethnic group for whom lone parent households make up a substantial proportion of all household types is the 'White Gypsy/Traveller' ethnic group. Lone parent, dependent children households form 20.4% of all household types for this group, according to the 2011 Census.

92 HM Government. 2014. An evidence review of the drivers of child poverty for families in poverty now and for poor children growing up to be poor adults.

93 Department for Work and Pensions. 2019. Family Resources Survey 2017–2018

94 The Centre for Social Justice. 2020. Family Structure Still Matters. London

95 Redshaw, M. and Henderson, J. 2014. *Safely delivered: a national survey of women's experience of maternity care 2014*. (National Perinatal Epidemiology Unit; Policy Research Unit: Maternal Health & Care)

are five times more likely to die in childbirth<sup>96</sup> for reasons that are yet to be properly understood. The family breakdown disproportionately experienced by black families is another piece of the puzzle that contributes to what is a poorly understood and poorly served area.

By ignoring this issue, policymakers are risking failing to effectively address what is an issue of profound importance to the wellbeing and success of individuals.

## Recommendations

### Recommendation 7

The Government Equalities Office should include in future strategic plans a commitment to look into disparities in family breakdown across social and ethnic groups, and establish a package of measures to support families at higher risk of family breakdown.

The enormous benefits of a stable family life are unequally spread between different ethnic and socioeconomic groups. Future Government Equalities Office (GEO) Equality Plans for 2020/21 should reflect this pressing inequality. Under objective 1 (To put equalities at the heart of government) of the 2019/20 GEO Strategic Plan, the government committed to “Working across Government on specific projects... to tackle inequalities and disparities”. The 2020/21 Plan should commit to setting up a taskforce to understand the causes and consequences of disparities in family stability, with a focus on engaging groups who are more likely to experience family breakdown.

Under Objective 2 (Empowering all women to reach their full potential), the 2019/20 GEO Strategic Plan committed to “[helping] parents and carers to make informed choices” by providing better and more joined-up information... [on] family friendly policies”. The 2020/21 Plan should commit to a package of measures to support single mothers and children at risk from the adverse effects of family breakdown.

### Recommendation 8

The government should develop a pathway that increases fatherhood engagement in the perinatal period, with a focus on groups more likely to experience family breakdown.

Building on recommendations in *Testing Times: Supporting fathers during the perinatal period and early parenthood*,<sup>97</sup> we recommend that the government develop a pathway that increases fatherhood engagement during the perinatal period. This should be focused on groups, such as those from Black African and Caribbean backgrounds, who are more likely to experience family breakdown. The pathway should provide a framework for

<sup>96</sup> BBC News. 2019. ‘Black women “five times more likely to die in childbirth”’. 6 Sep. [accessed 7 Aug 2020]

<sup>97</sup> CSJ. 2018. *Testing Times: Supporting father during the perinatal period and early parenthood*

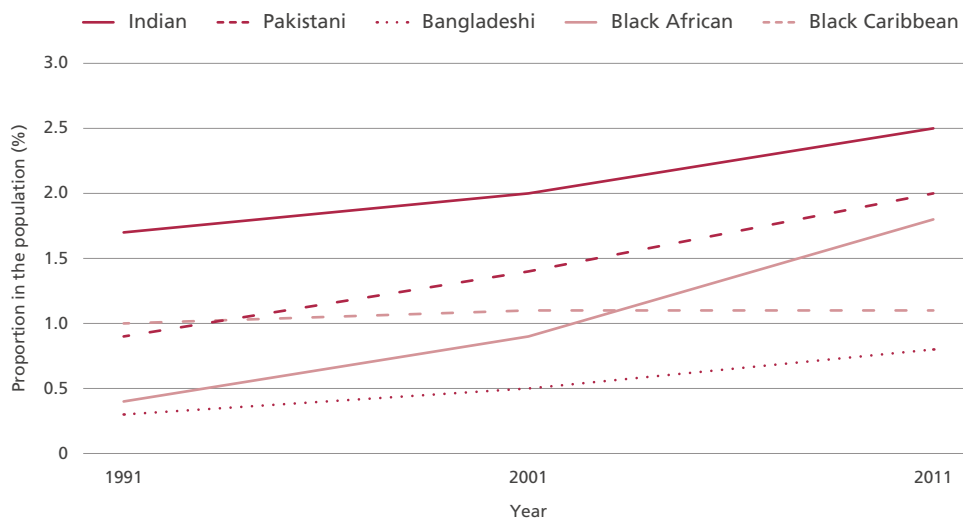
maternity services to actively involve fathers – where appropriate permission is given from the mother – in key moments during the perinatal period. Services operating in areas with relatively high Black African and Black Caribbean populations should be prioritised.

This should entail working with stakeholders to develop training on how professionals can provide more effective support which allows them to engage confidently with the sensitivities, cultural issues and disadvantages that disproportionately characterise some groups' circumstances.



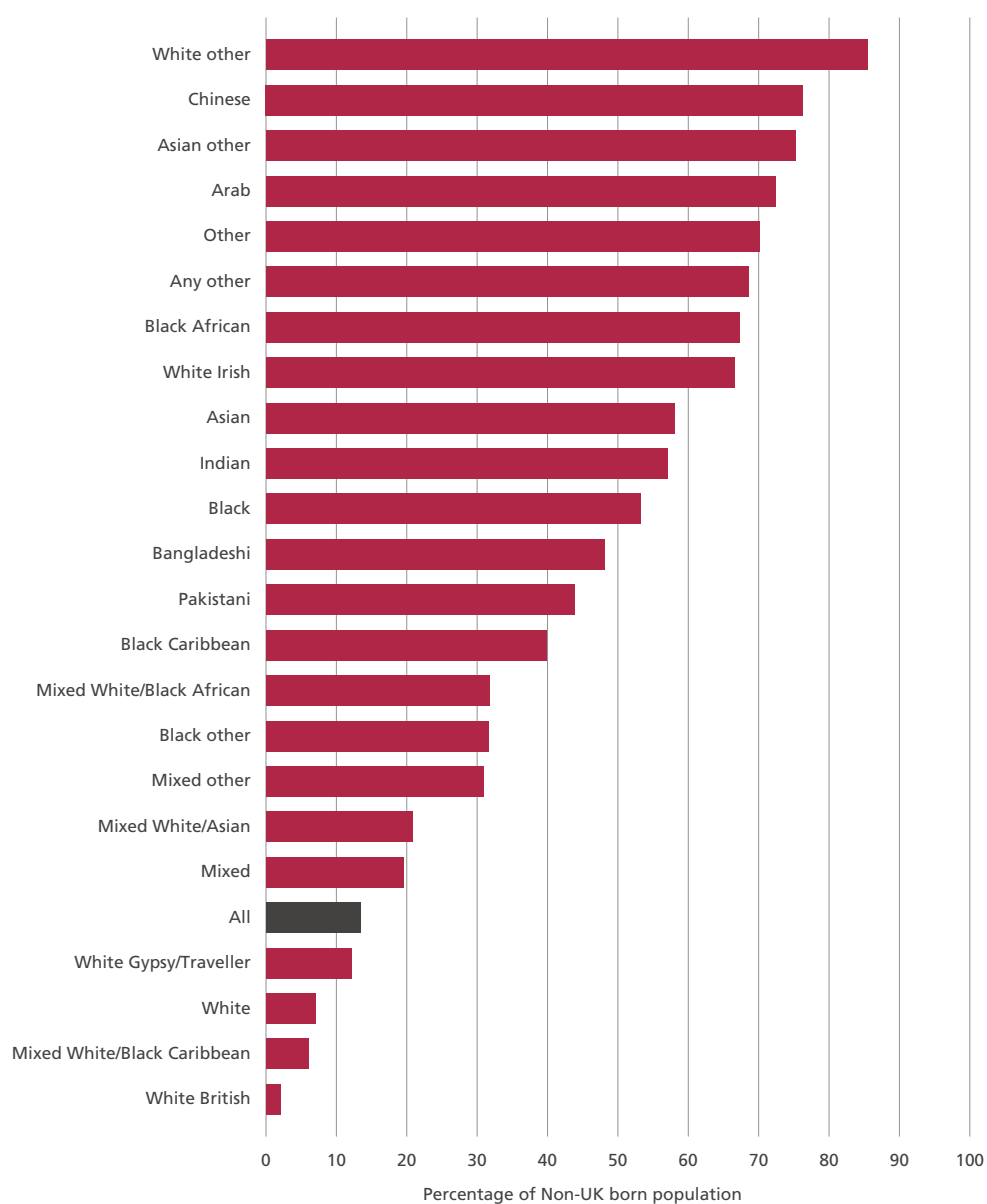
# Annex

Annex A: Proportion of (selected) Black and Asian groups in the population of England and Wales population: 1991, 2001, and 2011



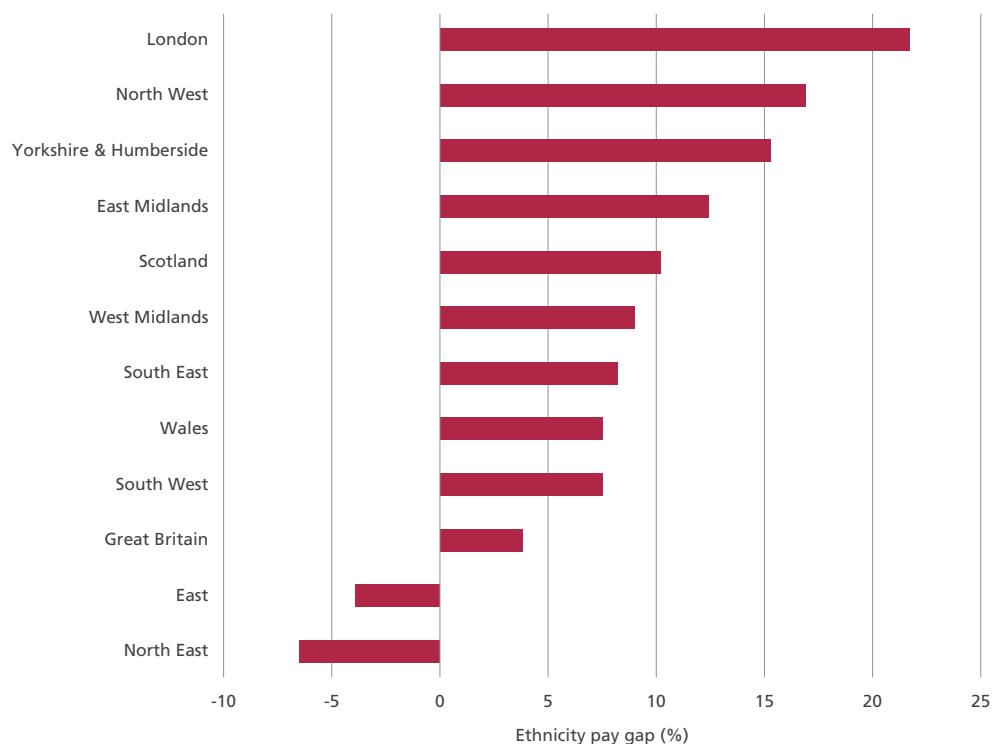
Source: ONS; Nomis

## Annex B: Percentage of Non-UK born population, by ethnic group, 2011



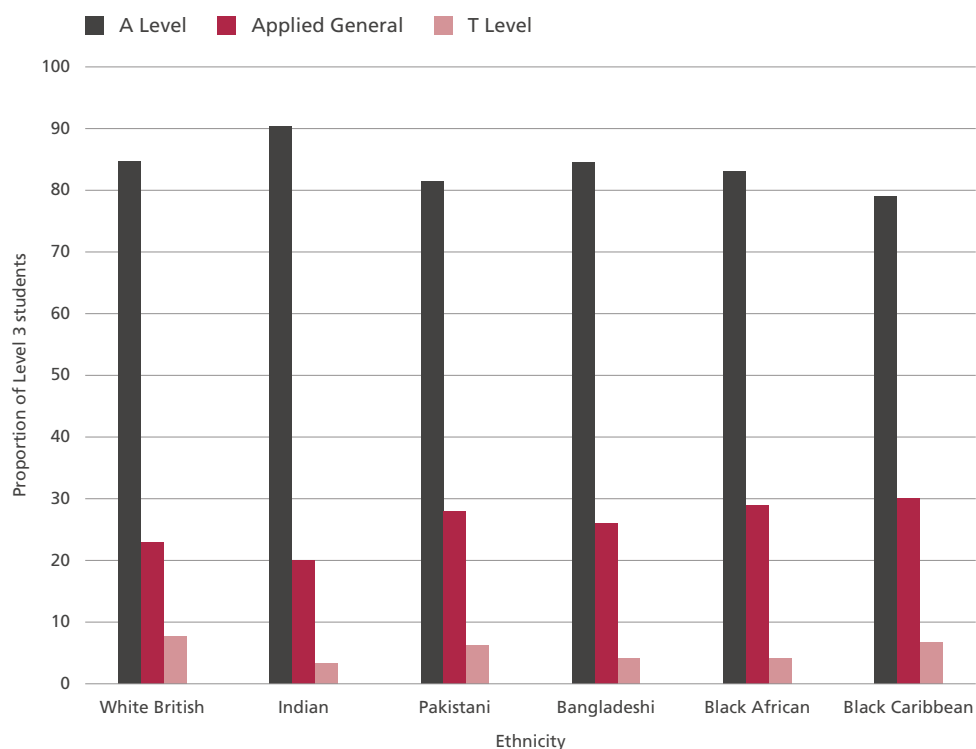
Source: ONS, 2011 Census; Nomis

## Annex C: Regional ethnicity pay gap for median gross hourly earnings between White and ethnic minority groups, Great Britain, 2018



Source: ONS. Note: Pay gap figures represent the difference between White and Ethnic minority groups hourly earnings as a percentage of White earnings.

## Annex D: Proportion of Level 3 students taking A Levels, Applied General, and T Levels by ethnicity, 2018/2019



Source: CSJ analysis of Department for Education data



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