

**OVER-REPRESENTATION
OF MINORITY ETHNIC
YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE
YOUTH JUSTICE SYSTEM**

healthwatch
Dudley

one love

Community, Music and Arts

Expressions

Coffee Shop





About our project

Healthwatch Dudley was concerned about the worrying over-representation of minority ethnic young boys in the Youth Justice System (YJS) in Dudley. We were asked by the Dudley Youth Justice Service Management Board to explore the issue further.

One Love Community Music and Arts was enlisted to discover the opinions of the young people involved in the Youth Justice System and those of the professionals who work with them.





Purpose of report

Healthwatch Dudley's core work is to listen to those whose voices are seldom heard. We were concerned by the over-representation of minority ethnic young people within the YJS. We wanted to know more about the challenges and the potential barriers to support, from the view of those who are affected.

Plan of action

There is a wealth of intelligence and reports on this complex and challenging issue; we wanted to look to the local community for ideas and potential solutions within the local context.

We primarily wanted to hear from the voices that count most, the minority ethnic boys involved in the YJS, to hear first-hand their experiences and opinions.

We knew that we would need to find a partner to work with, who had the right credentials and could build trusting relationships. We felt the conversations should be led by a member of the minority ethnic community so the young boys could be open and comfortable to discuss race and discrimination in a safe way.

We are grateful that Richard Clarke from One Love Community Music and Arts accepted this position.

One Love Community Music and Arts is a community interest company whose aims are to tackle social isolation and loneliness, anxiety, depression, and issues that lead to poor mental health.

Richard is the Director of One Love Community Music and Arts.

Richard is a qualified Community Researcher through Lancashire University, a qualified Youth and Community Worker.

Richard was a former Operations Manager for the National Association for the Care and Rehabilitation of Offenders and a former worker at the African Caribbean Community Centre in Wolverhampton. He was also a Practice Social Worker, a teacher with the University of Staffordshire, Derby, and Fieldwork Supervisor with Birmingham University.

It is essential to acknowledge the challenges faced in encouraging these young boys to share their personal experiences. However, the themes and challenges came out clear. A diverse group of Black and Mixed professionals and community leaders came together for a focused discussion to explore the interview findings and the broader challenges faced by minority ethnic young people involved in the YJS.

Currently, minority ethnic young people are being let down by several systems and institutions that cannot, or do not, flex to meet diverse cultural needs.

Many of these issues are well documented and further attempts must be made to proactively engage these young people earlier on, in an environment that gives time, space, and understanding.

When looking at the statistics provided by the YJS and the Census data, we found there was not an over-representation of minority ethnic girls within the YJS. Therefore we decided to focus on the experiences of boys.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed, not least the young people who engaged with Richard. Thank you also to the Youth Justice Board (YJB) for working to reduce inequality and seeking further ideas from the community.

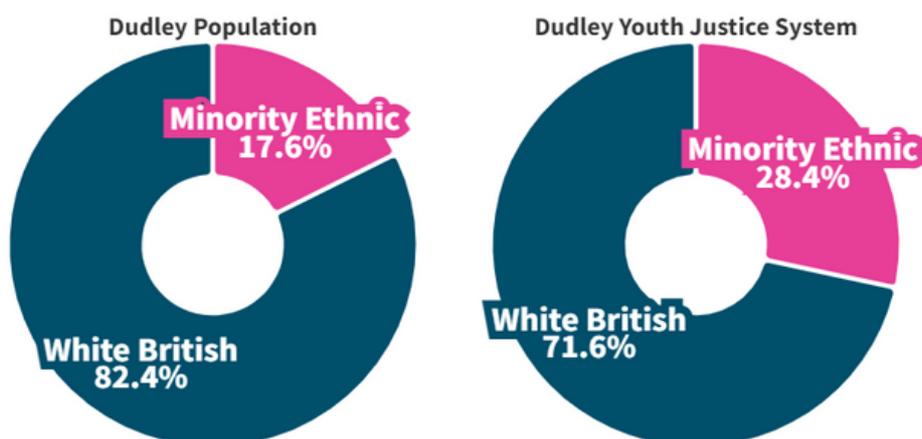
We hope that together we can explore diverse ways of working, to bring about greater equality and more positive outcomes for future generations.

THE NUMBERS TELL A STORY

The vast majority (99%) of children of all ethnicities are not involved in the YJS and the last decade has seen a significant reduction in the numbers of children entering that system. However, of that small number of children who are involved in the YJS, a disproportionate amount are from a minority ethnic group and this disproportionality continues to rise (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation, 2023).

The Dudley YJS sits within the Family Solutions Service, which leads the partnership on early help and prevention. Links with social care are improving and the early help offer is getting better as the services become more integrated. The Dudley YJS is overseen by the National Youth Justice Board.

Breaking down Dudley's demographics: 82.4% of the population identifies as White British, the rest being minority ethnicities. Despite minority ethnicities making up just 17.6% of the Dudley population, they make up 28.39% of young people in the YJS (Office for National Statistics, 2022).



A CHANGING POPULATION

The population of Dudley is becoming more diverse. Just 7.1% of men over 50 identify as being from a minority ethnicity. This percentage rises to 17.1% among men aged 31-49 and further increases to 19% for men aged 18-30. The highest proportion is observed among those under 18, with 25.1% identifying as part of a minority ethnicity.

Dudley's Male Ethnic Diversity by Age



Source: [Ethnic group by sex by age](https://ons.gov.uk) - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk) •

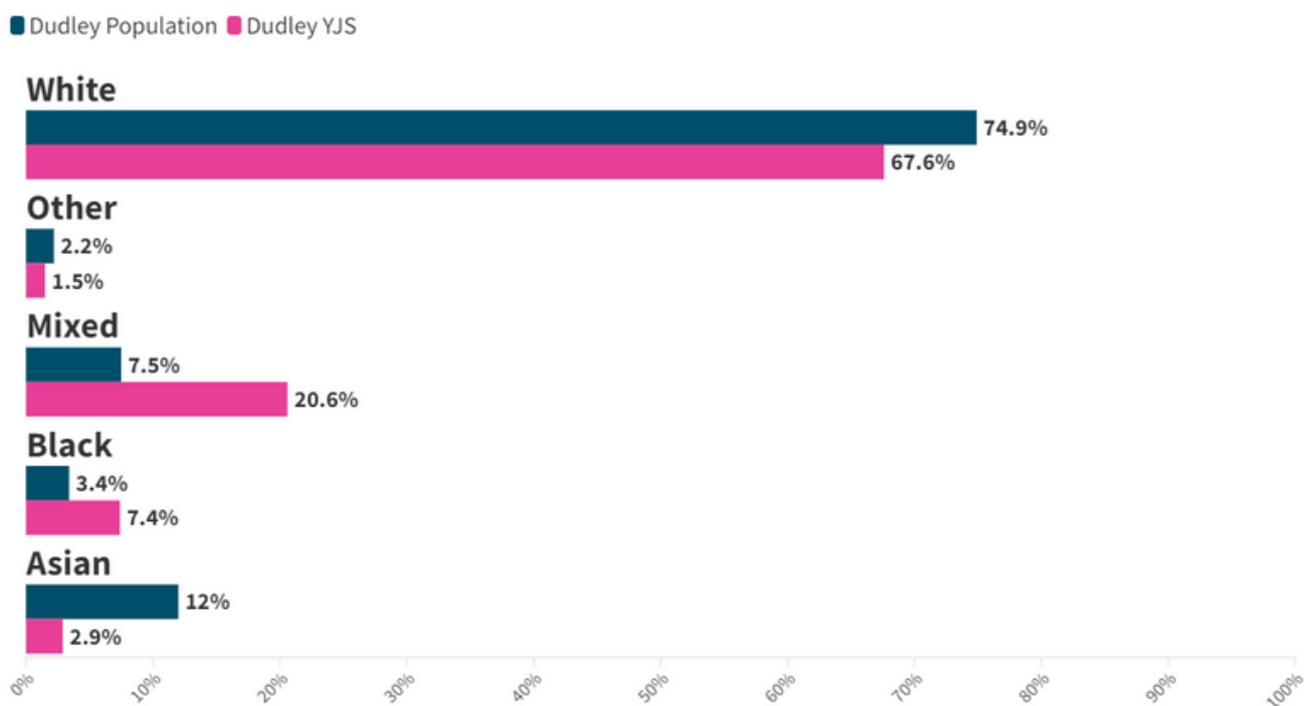
The population of the local community is changing and as diversity increases, services should evolve to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse Dudley Borough.



LOOKING DEEPER

When breaking down the numbers of the youth involved in the YJS in Dudley, we see that there is a striking over-representation of Black and Mixed boys.

Male Youth Population (Ages 0-17) in Dudley vs Youths in Dudley YJS by Ethnicity



Source: Youth Justice Statistics:2020-2021, Office for National Statistics Census 2021

3.4% of the male population in Dudley identify as Black. However, this group makes up 7.36% of the male YJS population. The largest over-representation is of Mixed boys, who make up just 7.5% of the Dudley population but 20.59% of the YJS.

We have broken down the population into the ethnic categories used by the YJS for comparison. We recognise that this data should be looked at more closely to identify trends in different ethnicities, including the minority White populations.

WHAT'S AVAILABLE?

The Health and Justice Service, within the Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, has delivered an integrated health and justice offer across the Black Country since April 2023.

Across the Black Country, there are four locality youth justice services, one being Dudley-based. The youth justice healthcare and support offer differs across each site. Some have dedicated embedded multi-disciplinary health teams, whilst others simply have developed pathways for external referrals.

In recent years, financial cuts, both locally and nationally, have led to a decrease in services offered to young people in the Dudley Borough. For example, there has been a notable decrease in council-run youth clubs from six in 2015/16 to just two in 2022/23. Youth clubs provide a safe space for young people and provide positive activities.

Public funding cuts, and the impact of the pandemic, have also affected the health system. Waiting lists for mental health treatment continue to rise, leaving vulnerable people without support. While some Youth Offending Services (YOS) boast dedicated multidisciplinary health teams, others rely on external referrals to other, overstretched services. This adds a further barrier to those who need support.



VOICES OF DUDLEY YOUTH

We initially contacted 11 participants. Eight males aged 13 – 25 were interviewed, two further boys were not interviewed but provided some information regarding their experiences. The boys came from different minority cultural and ethnic backgrounds. All the boys had some involvement in the YJS and were not detained in custody.

Interviews were performed in a semi-structured manner to allow the boys to speak freely about their experiences and potentially difficult concepts. The community researcher highlighted the need to work sensitively and non-judgmentally to allow them to answer openly and honestly.

Mental health

Whilst five of the participants had been referred to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) for assessment, two did not attend, and two were still waiting for an assessment at the time of writing.

Most concerning was one boy who saw a psychiatrist for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), after it was decided that medication would not be an appropriate course of treatment, he received no further help or signposting to alternative services.

One boy was referred to CAHMS but the referral “took a long time because [he] was excluded from school”, this suggests that every effort should be made to avoid excluding vulnerable boys from the institutions that are there to support them.

None of the boys we spoke to had yet received any interventions from the mental health team, despite problems being identified.

The Bradley Report (2009) recommends that Youth Offending Teams must include a qualified mental health worker. However, this intervention may come too late – early recognition and intervention for mental health issues can improve outcomes.

As minority ethnic people are 40% more likely than White people to access mental health services via the criminal justice system (CJS), this suggests that there is a lack of early identification and intervention in mental health issues for minority ethnic people before issues arise and they enter the YJS (Bradley, 2009).

Low-level intervention can have a significant impact on mental health. One participant explained how coping mechanisms made a significant impact.

“I went on placement at an SEN [Special Educational Needs] school when I was 17 and started recognising some of the behaviour issues with the children and learned from the teacher strategies, it was really good. I found myself and started to understand my own behaviours.”

Mental health problems often present differently in younger age groups than they do in adults and can be perceived as behavioural issues. Racial discrimination may contribute to these perceptions and prevent professionals from identifying mental health needs in minority youths (Downey & Pribesh, 2004).

One participant mentioned how he was labelled as a “troublemaker” during the assessment, and another felt that his problems “[weren’t] classed as mental health, more behaviour.”

People from minority ethnicities are less likely to receive early intervention for mental health problems (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation, 2021).

Most of the boys said they had discussed mental health at school. However, they were vague regarding the content of these lessons. The discussions in school did not appear to have a significant impact on the young boys' ability to seek help or take action to improve their mental health.

Participants varied in their willingness to discuss mental health with their support systems. Responses varied from finding a “supportive partner” who “helped [him] open up and discuss issues of mental health with everyone in the family”. Some of the boys said that they “deal with it [themselves]”.

Coping

Participants discussed how they cope with mental health, while some would discuss feelings with trusted people, others described unhealthy coping mechanisms.

Five participants admitted to smoking marijuana to “chill out”. The frequency of use varied from daily to monthly. Self-medication for mental health issues is common.

None of the participants suggested that they used other substances. For some, their family was aware of them using marijuana, but for others, they kept their substance use a secret from their family.

Overall, the participants were aware of the importance of mental health and the need to find coping strategies.

There was a lack of support from professional services such as CAHMS. Where professional support had been offered, the boys either did not engage, or their case was dismissed after medication was deemed inappropriate.

Racism

All participants experienced racism in some form. These experiences came mostly from school settings where they felt they were “stereotyped”. In one instance the young boy was “the only Black young person in school” and racism from teachers was “constant”.

The boys also experienced racism from the police; they felt they were stopped and searched because of the colour of their skin.

This reflects a concerning national over-representation of stop and search rates. Nationally, there are 27.2 stop and searches for every 1,000 black people, compared with 5.6 for every 1,000 white people (GOV.UK, 2023).

Stop and Search Rates

27.2

/1000 Black people

5.6

/1000 White people

Source: Stop and Search Rates (GOV.UK, 2023)

A feeling of “conflict” with the police was described due to being “stereotyped because of skin colour”.

Some of the boys felt that racist biases led to assumptions that they were “troublemaker[s]”. One of the boys told us:

“I was once wrongly accused of carrying out an incident in school by the teachers, which I knew was not me. I got punished for it with detention. I later found out it was another youth, but no one cared”

The prevalence of racism led to a worrying normalisation and acceptance of racism among the boys. One said, “I had too many issues going on to notice [racism]”.

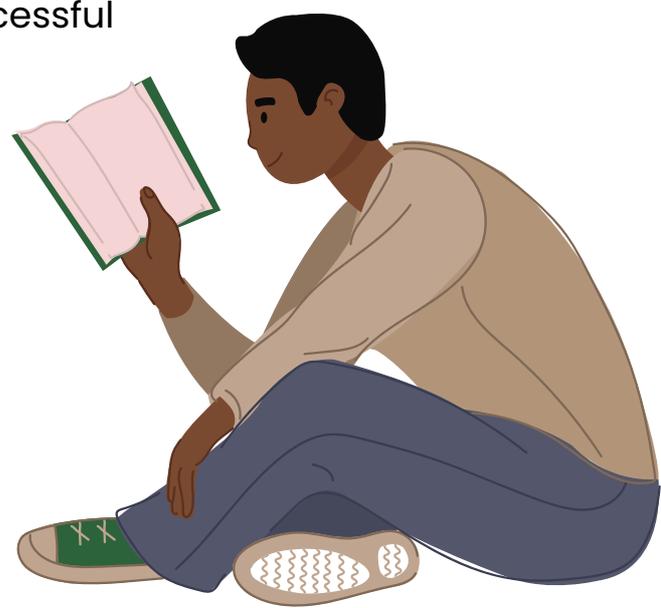
Five of the eight boys we spoke to had disengaged from education to some degree, from missing select lessons to truancy and exclusion. One boy doesn't attend school to avoid being "picked on" and the "racism" he experiences from teachers. This participant used an avoidance tactic when faced with institutional racism at school, demonstrating how support is needed within schools to recognise and address issues relating to education.

Ethnicity-based school suspensions in Dudley: A comparative analysis per student



Source: Summer term 2021/22 Permanent exclusions and suspensions in England

Disengagement from school may limit access to further education and opportunities. Without sufficient qualifications, boys may be excluded from further training and education, which can limit their opportunities to build a successful career away from crime.



Support workers

The boys generally had positive relationships with their social workers, despite the ethnicity and gender of the social workers not matching that of most of the boys we spoke to.

This mirrors findings from the HM Inspectorate of Probation (2021) where “almost all the boys described positive relationships with their workers, stating that they felt listened to and understood”.

This suggests that the skills, understanding and knowledge of social workers are important in developing positive relationships and engagement with boys from minority ethnicities.

However, the positive impact of a social worker who reflects the personal experiences of those they work with should not be disregarded.

We received anecdotal evidence from a mental health nurse in Staffordshire which supports the role of a relatable support worker. A young person became involved in the YJS after the death of his father. As a member of a Muslim household, he was told to “just pray” which made him “just feel worse”. A male Muslim navigator within the team was able to engage with the young boy and relate to him on a spiritual level.

One participant described a particularly useful relationship with his social worker. The social worker was also male and does “good things with him which are engaging”. These activities include going for food and bowling. This suggests that active engagement from social workers is important for young people to feel authentically cared for and build trust.



Survival

When asked why they participated in criminal activity, the boys stated “**survival**” and a wish to obtain money for material items.

Survival can refer to obtaining money and resources needed to survive financially. Survival can also refer to the need to survive socially within a dangerous community.

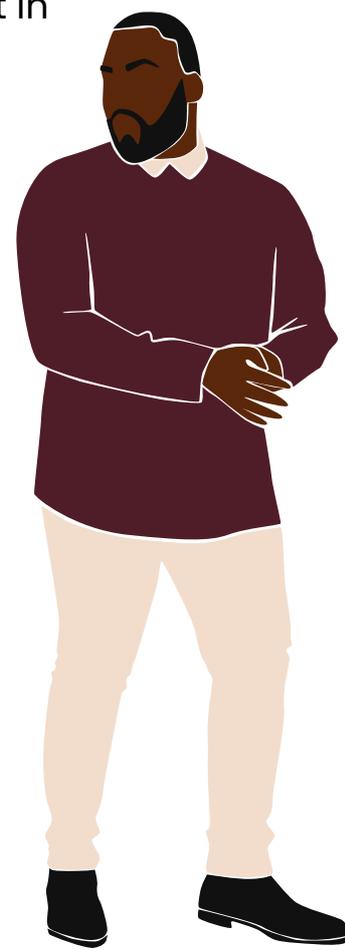
Social survival is linked to one’s social circle, “**it’s not what you know but who you know**”. Participating in illegal activities can improve a boy’s social standing within their community.

The need for “**survival**” should not be dismissed. Services should work together to address the root causes of young boys feeling like they have to resort to criminal activity to “**survive**”.

Opportunity

The participants shared the sentiment that there is a lack of “**things to do**”. This lack of constructive and engaging activities can lead to a feeling of boredom and increase the chances of taking part in antisocial activities.

Active Black Country found that the Black Country is the least active region of England, with people from a Black background being the least active. This may be explained by a lack of activities available that cater to the minority ethnic demographic.



Home life

A common theme for all participants was an untraditional home life, with only one biological parent present.

One participant had a troubled relationship with both biological parents and chose to live with an older brother.

The lack of a positive and present father figure was present in seven of the eight boys interviewed. Father figures can provide a positive male role model within the home, to provide guidance and help develop a boy's sense of identity.

The presence of both parents is important for a young person's identity, particularly with Mixed people, where a lack of a father figure can inhibit the development of part of their heritage (Hasley, 1997). One young boy interviewed had a lack, and almost denial, of his dual heritage. He questioned why he was even involved in the research.

Cool pose

It was noted that some of the participants displayed “cool pose”. Cool pose is a concept described by Richard Majors and Janet Mancini Billson, whereby a person attempts to give off the impression they are confident and cannot be damaged.

Adopting a “cool pose” is a strategy used by many Black males to hide deeper vulnerabilities. It develops from the emotional resilience needed to survive in a system that discriminates against minority ethnic people (Majors and Billson, 1993).



DIGGING DEEPER

A focus group of professionals held an unstructured discussion of the challenges faced by young boys from minority ethnic backgrounds and the opportunities for change. The key themes that emerged were: identity, survival, systemic issues, social exclusion, emotional regulation, and activity.



Survival

One of the reasons for young boys to participate in criminal activity is to earn money. Making money through illegal activity can lead to more money than they can achieve in a typical job available to a young person.

The pressure to appear as someone with means can lead boys to take part in criminal activity to “keep up” with friends. Poverty and small household incomes can put pressure on young people to find money through alternative methods to afford essentials for “survival” and to “keep up appearances”.

Role models

Role models were identified as an important aspect of shaping a young person's views of manhood and what is possible.

Role models can come from a young person's home, social circle, professionals (such as educators and coaches), and from the media.

Our focus group reflected on the positive role models they had, some grateful for the influence of present father figures. However, it was acknowledged that there is a "lack of positive role models" for young men from minority ethnicities. There is both a lack of father figures within the home and positive role models in professionals that represent them.

After attending university, one participant found "nobody there in positions of authority, look[ed]like [me]". He suggests that this lack of representation can deter other young people from minority ethnicities from attending university as there was a lack of relatable role models in positions of authority in academia.

Steps must be taken to recognise talent from minority ethnic groups and ensure they are included in positions of authority. The group suggested that "strong Black leaders" are needed.

People from privileged, white backgrounds cannot fully understand the experiences of an ethnic minority youth from a difficult background. Therefore, it is important to promote relatable role models to inspire young boys from minority ethnic backgrounds.

One participant felt if he had a mentor, he could have been encouraged to pursue athletic and academic talents.

"If we had mentors or positive role models - somebody could have explained to me, you know, stick at that."

Differences between the United States of America (USA) and the United Kingdom (UK) were highlighted through personal experiences.

The USA has a history of strong Black leaders e.g., Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X, and organisations promoting equality for members of the Black community e.g., the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

The visible profiles of these people and organisations highlight the issues faced by people of the Black community and validate feelings of injustice.

The participants explained how racism in the UK differs from the USA, it is more “subtle” and therefore hard to call out and address. This, along with a lack of a public profile highlighting racism in the UK, leads to feelings of invalidation and internalisation of justified anger.

Labelled

One participant said how he was charged with robbery at 14, after which he was identified as a “criminal” and had to fight this label. Fighting the negative perceptions added a barrier to turning his life around.

Emotional regulation

Our focus group suggests that cultural behavioural differences could account for disparities in assessment and treatment of black people in mental health. Stereotypical “Black mannerisms” and behaviours can be seen as “trouble” to white assessors through an implicit bias.

Identity

Masculine identity was referenced throughout the discussion. How a young person defines what it “means to be a man” can shape their aspirations and behaviour to fit their definition of manhood.

The definition of manhood can come from personal role models, public figures, the internet, and social circles. The focus group suggested “manhood training programmes” to provide a positive definition of manhood and training to develop the skills to reflect this positive definition.

Manhood training has been proposed as a form of group counselling previously. The training can be developed to respect and utilise the unique behaviours, culture, and values of individual ethnicities (Kimmel & Traver, 2005; Courtland, 1987).

Our focus group suggested that training should include “masculine identity, racial identity and cultural competence”.

Cultural competence is the ability to understand, communicate, and interact with people from different cultural backgrounds. It involves being aware of one’s worldview, developing positive attitudes towards cultural differences, gaining knowledge of different cultural practices and world views, and developing skills for communication and interaction across cultures.

Focusing on young people’s definitions of “what it means to be a man” provides an alternative explanation for offending by exploring the lived realities of boys.

Programmes to explore their self-identity in contrast to others labelling them as a “troublemaker” or “just naughty” can allow young boys to explore their identity away from these negative perceptions.

Social exclusion

Social exclusion was highlighted as one of the main concerns regarding minority ethnic young people in the YJS.

Social exclusion, especially within the education system, is significantly disproportionate. Young Black boys are at the highest risk of school suspension and exclusion than other ethnicities. The absence of teachers who represent them not only hinders understanding but also contributes to the disproportionate rates of exclusion faced by young men from minority ethnicities.

Exclusion is expanding in our modern society. Small interactions have become automated, e.g. buying train tickets from apps instead of stations, and ordering food from apps self-checkout machines.

This “robot society” prevents people from developing their social skills. It also leads to feelings of exclusion and isolation. This was compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic as social distancing was encouraged and automated processes become the norm.

System

Young men from underprivileged and minority ethnic backgrounds may find traditionally white-privileged institutions unfamiliar. “The corporate world is a different kind of cut-throat[...]on the streets people will tell you to your face if they have a problem” and if you do something unacceptable then the punishment is clear.

In the corporate world, things are more subtle, and the consequences are less defined. This difference may be unfamiliar to men from minority backgrounds. It may also be seen as “less honourable”.

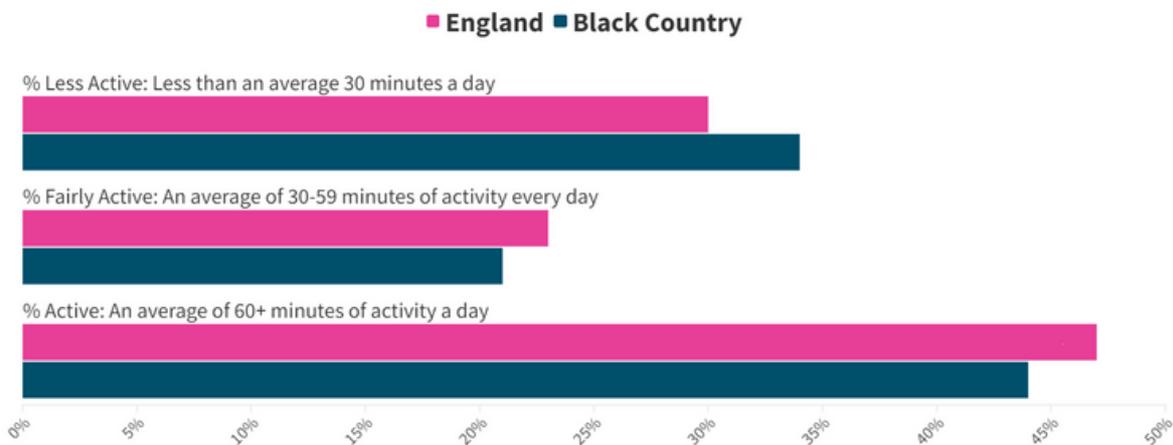
The unfamiliar rules make it particularly difficult for minority ethnic young men to thrive in a system that works against them.

Activity

The focus group reiterated the young boys feelings that there is a lack of things to do in Dudley for young people, particularly those who come from minority ethnic backgrounds.

This sentiment is supported by evidence that the Black Country is the most inactive part of England. The area has entrenched pockets of health inequalities and severe deprivation that result in low levels of disposable income that can be used for recreational activity.

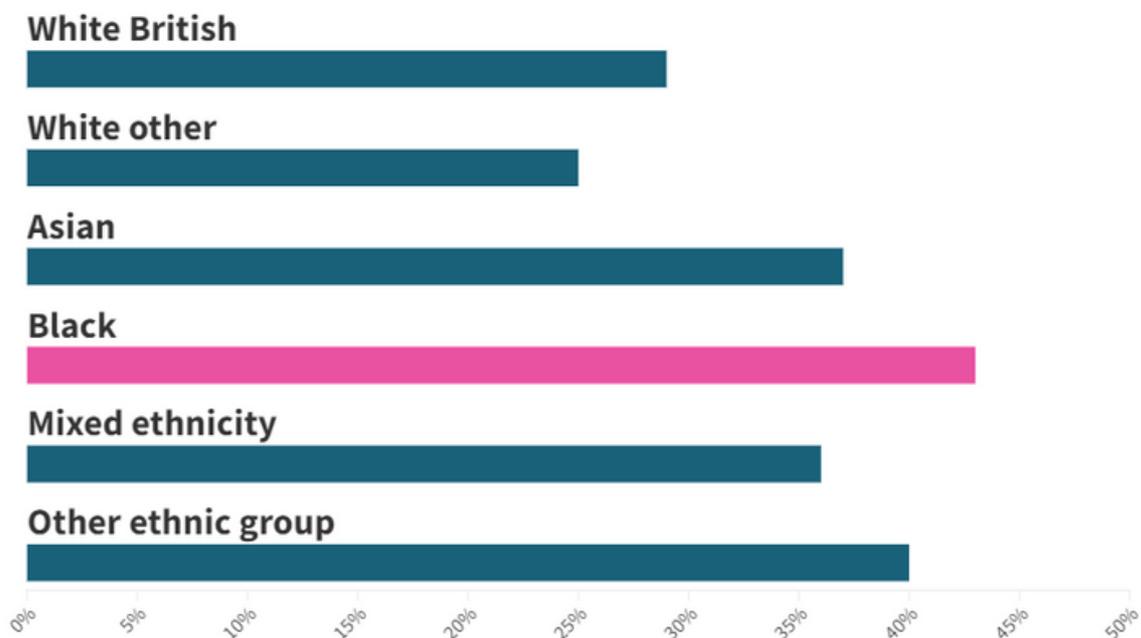
Levels of activity among children and young people



Source: Active Black Country

Analysis of the available data shows different activity levels amongst different ethnic groups in the Black Country, as demonstrated below.

Black Country less active 5-16 year olds



Source: Active Black Country

Amongst children and young people, the group most likely to be less active in the Black Country are those from a Black background, possibly because of a lack of suitable opportunities for sport and physical activity among minority ethnic communities.

There is support for the link between lack of activity and criminal behaviour. The West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership found there was a link between the level of community sport provision across the Black Country and the young people becoming affected by violence.

Sports-based interventions can improve lives and reduce offending. However, these interventions need to be used in conjunction with other support and systemic changes to improve youth offending rates (Chamberlain, 2013).

What is needed

The key to preventing offending in the long term is not just focusing on stopping a child from doing a certain behaviour. For example, to prevent a child from carrying a knife, we can't expect a knife awareness course to do the trick alone.

We need to address the needs of the child. Young people may participate in criminal activity through coercive control and/or in response to fear and the need to protect themselves.

Interventions, such as sporting activities, need to be brought directly to the community and be developed with the local and cultural context in mind.

Community researchers should be utilised to develop interventions that respond to the needs of the community.

We need to provide young people with alternative role models, career prospects and skills to build a path away from crime.

WHAT CAN BE DONE

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Youth Justice System initiatives

The YJS is aware of the over-representation of minority ethnic young people. The YJS plan states some of the steps they are taking to address this issue. A programme was devised to help address the issues that young people from minority ethnic backgrounds face in the YJS, called "Race Against Myself".

This programme includes education on topics such as Stop and Search, Serious Youth Violence, Role of an Appropriate Adult, How to Present in Court and No Comment Interviews. It is also a space for children to reflect on their experiences. It is open to children that are currently involved within the YJS, and a referral is required to access the programme.

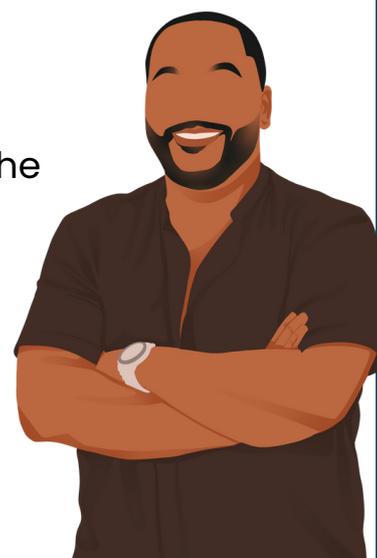
Cultural sensitivity

Staff at the YJS have undertaken implicit unconscious bias training in 2023. They've also had specific training on understanding the experience of mixed-race children.

We recognise the positive steps being made by the YJS to address the experiences of minority ethnic children in their service. Evidence into the impact of these training courses should be considered to ensure unconscious biases and cultural sensitivity is improving.

Breaking the cycle

Further interventions are needed to prevent high proportions of minority ethnic children from entering the YJS. From this report, we will recommend change in education, health and social care services.



POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

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WORKING TOGETHER

Services need to acknowledge and accept the issues faced by minority ethnic young people in Dudley that lead to an over-representation in the YJS. Services must not 'pass the buck' but work together.

Healthwatch Dudley recognises that the current financial climate, cuts to government and council funding, and the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic proves a challenging situation to change.

However, this increases the need to pool resources and work creatively between services.

We propose the formation of a steering group that includes:

- The Youth Justice System
- Relevant colleagues from the NHS, including mental health services
- Dudley Youth Service
- Dudley Safeguarding People Partnership
- Colleagues in the education system
- Voluntary/other organisations
 - Active Black Country
 - One Love Community
 - Other interested voluntary organisations

The steering group should work collectively to reduce the over-representation of Black and Mixed boys in the YJS.

This report focused on the experiences of minority ethnic boys; further research is needed to explore the experiences of minority ethnic girls.



POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

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Mentorship for positive change

The focus group emphasised how the absence of positive male role models can negatively impact the behaviour and identity of young men from minority ethnic backgrounds.

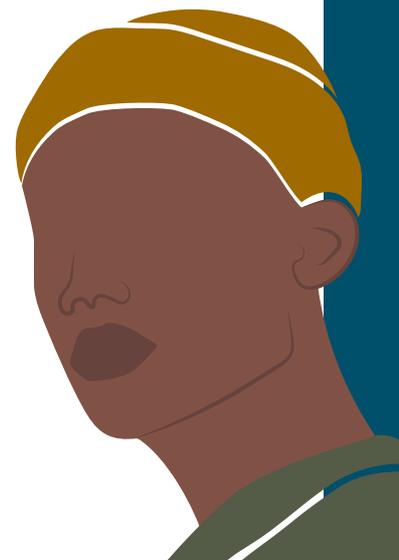
The lack of positive male role models results in the unexplored values and the guidance to grow as young men. These young boys often look to the street for guidance and affirmation of their identity.

There is a compelling case for the implementation of a mentor scheme that proactively engages with young ethnic minority children.

A minority ethnic led project to explore values and provide positive role models can help create a positive sense of identity.

Providing a hub for young minority ethnic people can create a tailored experience to address the complex needs of the community.

Successful mentoring, or manhood training, projects have been undertaken elsewhere and can serve as an inspiration for creating a programme tailored to the needs of the local community.



POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

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Active opportunities

Positive activities that cater to the diverse interests and needs of Black and Mixed children should be invested in.

Existing providers, such as Active Black Country, could be enlisted to support the provision of sport-based interventions.

Other providers should be involved with developing a range of activities including music, art, and professional training, based on the interests of the individual.



Inclusive education

Implicit bias training should be implemented within the education system to address the disproportionate number of minority ethnic children excluded from school. The impact of race on a teacher's perception falls across teachers of all ethnicities and speaks to a wider societal issue on the perception of Black and Mixed people.

Steps should be taken to address these issues in schools, as this was a location where the young people we spoke to experienced racism and avoided school as a result.



POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

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Equal care everywhere

A regional package of support should be made available to ensure consistent delivery across boundaries.

It is crucial to standardise interpretations, ensuring that every young person in the justice system receives the support they need, regardless of location.

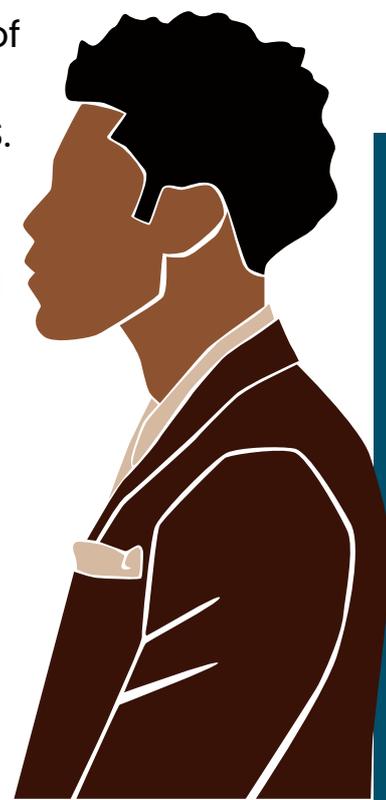


Adopting success

The introduction of services and support for young minority ethnic people needs to be supported by evidence to ensure it is effective. Case studies of successful projects in other areas can be studied and adapted for the local population.

Many young people are caught in a cycle of crime, something different needs to be done to stop the “revolving door” of the YJS.

This research has highlighted systemic issues in education and healthcare, as well as the YJS in Dudley. Targeted intervention needs to be included in all of these services to make a significant impact on the lives of minority ethnic young people.



FOCUS GROUP

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We would like to give special thanks to the community leaders who took part in the focus group. All members were forthcoming with their own lived experiences and their knowledge of the issues faced by minority ethnic young boys. Their insight was invaluable in building a full picture and developing recommendations.

Eric Mills

Eric is a qualified Accountant, Entrepreneur, Church Minister and Chair of several community organisations, with over 30 years frontline experience in delivering community-led projects and services. He sits on the Stop & Search and Use of Force Scrutiny Panel. Married with five adult children he represents a vital voice within the focus group.

Curtis Sanner

Curtis is a Senior Support Worker and qualified Personal Trainer. He is of Mixed descent from a single-parent household, he is one of four siblings, and as the second eldest he learnt responsibility early. Curtis went from pupil of the year, in the top sets of every subject, to failing classes and engaging in antisocial behaviour and substance abuse. This resulted in him being introduced to the CJS at the age of 14. Curtis is a mentor and advocate within his current roles and has the genuine lived experience to share and help prevent many youths from heading in the wrong direction.

Michael Bryan

Michael works in Family Solutions as part of the Youth Justice Team. He has been a Youth Worker for over 20 years, a trainer for the Police and Crime Commissioning Group (delivering youth Stop and Search awareness courses) and a Radio DJ. Michael has a great deal of lived experience of the difficulties faced by minority ethnic youths in addition to the multiple complex issues faced within society.

Anonymous

We would also like to recognise the contribution of those who prefer to remain anonymous. Their insight and knowledge were invaluable in furthering the conversation.



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THANK YOU

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