

**Summary of findings:
Life stories research - Boys of
Black Caribbean Heritage
permanently excluded from
Education 2018-19 and 2019-20**

Sarah Douglass

- National news highlighted the racial disparities in the Education system highlighting disproportionality in the numbers of Black Caribbean Boys excluded from mainstream education.
- Harrow statistics reflect the national picture surrounding disproportionality.
- The Director of Education and the Harrow Schools Forum commissions research into the life stories of all Boys of Black Caribbean Heritage who were excluded from High School in 2018-19 and 2019-20.

Methodology

- 10 boys were identified as being excluded from High School between 2018-19 and 2019-20 (1 boy had the exclusion rescinded and was therefore removed from the study)
- The approach sought to take a holistic view of the journey taken by all the Boys of Black Caribbean Heritage excluded from education in 2018-19 and 2019-20 speaking to the professionals involved in the young persons lives and using file notes from Social Services and Youth Offending Team.
- Follow the life stories if the BBCH to establish key themes and recommendations
- Second phase of the project to interview the young people who were excluded and their families to establish key concerns and learning from the lived experiences.

Overarching summary conclusion...

Key Themes within the life story's:

- 7 of the 9 children had experienced trauma (Domestic Violence, Mental Health, close family in prison)
- 7 of the 9 lived in single parent households
- 5 of the 9 were known to received Free School Meals
- 4 of the 9 children had Special Educational Needs
- 5 of the 9 schooled and resided on different Boroughs
- 6 of the 9 children had received 4 or more fixed term exclusions.
- 2 of the 9 children had already received permanent exclusions. 3 attended a respite placement, 1 managed move and 1 parent transfer showing a high level of mobility between schools.

Key themes from interviewing professionals

- **Information Sharing**
- **Policies**
 - Equalities policies to cover disproportionality
 - Become actively anti racist
- **Contextualising behaviour**
- **Support and intervention**
 - Inconsistency of approach
 - Speed of referrals
- **Educational Health Care Plans**
 - Focus on schools to complete
 - Primary school transition
- **Race**
 - Acknowledging equity
- **Mental health**
- **Transition between schools**
- **Proactive Multi agency working**
- **Misconceptions**
 - Respite
 - PRU

- Recommendation 1

Schools to proactively review policies with the view of becoming anti-racist through the removal of terms that can cause indirect discrimination. This work should be completed with input from staff, governors, children and parents to ensure that the work represents the community it is serving.

- Recommendation 2

Equalities Policies to be reviewed to cover disproportionality.
Some Harrow School are already doing this.

- Recommendation 3

Within the legal framework services share major incidents (such as a sibling going into prison, a parent getting arrested) to allow schools to offer support and care based on this.

This could be improved with a stronger presence of social services and police in schools. Whilst this is happening in some schools, not all are engaged in the same way.

- Recommendation 4

Proactive work to bridge the gaps to ensure that children living off Borough are getting the same level of support and care as those that live and school in Harrow.

- Recommendation 5

Schools to consider the lines of communication with parents to ensure that parents feel safe and supported to share information which may impact the child's welfare and behaviour in school.

- Recommendation 6

Schools and social services to support families (rather than just the child) with referrals to Mental Health Services, Early Support, Keeping Families Together or Supporting Families Together Coach's when a child is at risk of exclusion

- Recommendation 7

The creation of an advocacy service (Black Voices) to support Black Caribbean families within Harrow with concerns about Education, housing, and employment. The service will inform and empower families and inform them of their rights and support at meetings.

- Recommendation 8

A programme of training and development for teachers to understand and identify racism, create an understanding of the lived experiences of the black Caribbean community and to implement anti-racist practices. Training to cover stereotyping and institutional racism, macro-aggressions and micro-interventions and the impact of this on children and parents.

- Recommendation 9

Preventative work in primary schools.

To work with Primary Schools to raise an awareness of children who may require extra support with the transition into High School due to known 'risk' factors (educational need/socio-economic/lifestyle etc). Encourage Primary Schools to act on concerns at an early stage.

- Recommendation 10

Review of the EHCP process transferring between education establishments to encourage primary schools to start the process. Concern over the length and complexity of the process putting primary establishments off and resulting in High Schools starting on the back foot when they are building relationships and knowledge of the child.

- Recommendation 11

Schools to employ the support of Educational Psychologist at an earlier stage for children showing behavioural challenges to give an independent assessment of the child's and recommended support strategies for learning and behaviour.

- Recommendation 12

An investment in support for Mental Health Services and build upon information sharing between services