

Scrutiny Commission Report

Relationship Between Black Boys and the Borough -
Phase II Report - December 2025



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**Section 1:
Background,
Introduction and
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Chair's Foreword

Councillor McAlmont

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee via its Relationship Between Black Boys and the Borough Scrutiny Commission has investigated the experience of Black boys and young men within the London Borough of Newham. Sadly, since I arrived in the UK from Guyana in 1983, I have seen little progress in the outcomes for our young Black boys and young men. This is a source of considerable personal dismay and disquiet, not least because of my own current professional context, working in education. However, in addition, in this intervening time of some forty years, there have also been several key legislative measures, inquiries and reports that have addressed race and the experiences of our Black young men, particularly in areas like education, employment, justice and policing, with varying success. Despite these efforts, outcomes have largely remained unchanged.

Hence, my Commission has sought to challenge this status quo. It has identified key areas in need of intervention, heard from community stakeholders and conducted research to recommend avenues for meaningful change with the hope of diminishing the disproportionately negative outcomes for Black boys in Newham. As we saw evidenced in our first report, our Black children and young men face many persistent obstacles to their positive achievement and attainment of wellbeing, through the combination of intersecting factors class, environment and structural poverty.

We see in the second phase of our investigations that education remains key, in order to ensure that



there is no pipeline that leads to a life in and out of the margins. How we address these systemic inequalities is critical in a borough like ours, where the future of the community is deeply tied to the outcomes of its youth. For Newham's Black boys and young men to thrive, local policy and services must engage with their realities, amplify their voices, and invest in long-term, community-rooted change.

It is not enough for our schools and other institutions not to be racist: we need to be anti-racist. This is not as easy nor as obvious as it may sound, especially when we see the retrograde measures in the U.S., for example, against embracing diversity, and the strength which comes

from embracing and harnessing diversity. This shaped our recommendations, particularly a key recommendation to explore targeted and holistic wrap-around support that acknowledges the complexity of the issues faced.

Given the key role of educational contexts in influencing life outcomes, I remain particularly troubled by the lack of full engagement from secondary school leadership and governing bodies in this scrutiny inquiry. Most troubling of all is that the cohort which engaged the least with us is the cohort upon whose care and responsibility these very boys depend, who shape the life chances of our young Black children by their decisions and actions. If we are not all prepared to come to the table, to discuss the issues openly, and to confront uncomfortable truths and arrive at solutions, then we risk repeating the same patterns and reproducing the same failures. Our young people deserve better. Collaboration across Newham is essential if this work is to leave a lasting legacy; together we can and must create the conditions for our young Black boys not just to survive but to thrive.

It is important to recognise too that the extent of disparities are not just statistical but real, lived struggles for many young Black males in Newham. Issues such as racial profiling, low school expectations and permanent exclusion, housing instability, stigma surrounding mental health, SEND and missed diagnoses of neurodivergence form a complex web of disadvantage. The consequences can be lifelong and inter-generational, affecting not only educational and career prospects, but also identity, belonging, and wellbeing.



Councillor Anthony McAlmont

Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (May 2014 - May 2025)

Chair of the Relationship Between Black Boys and the Borough Scrutiny Commission

My Commission colleagues and I were concerned with the slow pace of progress and the difficulties experienced in engaging some of the key stakeholders whose involvement is essential to real change. We nevertheless did find hope in initiatives such as the work by Superintendent Lucky Singh ('Policing with Compassion') and LB Newham Turnaround team's 'SMILE-ing Boys' project, seeing these initiatives as seeds of change that could germinate and grow.

As with our Phase I Report earlier last year, the Relationship Between Black Boys and the Borough Scrutiny Commission has been aided in its work by many contributors. My thanks go to all my Commission colleagues and scrutiny officers, as well as those Executive Members, Council Officers and external stakeholders who fully participated in and contributed to our evidence-gathering sessions with honesty, committed passion and transparency, as we attempt collaboratively and meaningfully to improve outcomes for our young Black Newham residents.

Executive Summary

This Phase II report follows the first report of the Relationship Between Black Boys and the Borough Scrutiny Commission in June 2024.

When mentioning Black Boys in this report, the Commission acknowledged that whether someone identifies with the term Black is not predictable and can be affected by many factors. 'Blackness' in this report thus encapsulates a mosaic, heterogeneous term and concerns the self-identification of oneself as Black. The Commission acknowledges the varying experiences of Black boys in the Borough and notes that historical and cultural context, experiences and outcomes highlighted in this report should not lead to negative stereotyping or be assumed as given. There is a need to recognise that different Black boys have different experiences and influences, while understanding that though they face common challenges and prejudices there is also a nuance to this. Throughout the report, data from LB Newham services and central government utilise the government's ethnic group and background categories that are used for data collection.[1]

The Commission also acknowledged the importance of recognising that the term anti-racism concerns taking action to actively avoid repeating systemic bias and discrimination that are deeply embedded in societal structures.

The Commission saw longer-term solutions in collaborative partnership working with the third

sector, and a necessity for changed mindsets at the local level, both within the organisation and beyond, as we bring our residents, services and external partner stakeholders with us on this difficult but necessary journey. However, it was clear from educational data that educational settings and structures remain key: suspension and exclusions have profound impact and are linked to later life outcomes.

This Phase II report investigates the experiences and outcomes of Black boys and young men within the London Borough of Newham. A central and dismaying finding is that little progress has been made in improving outcomes for young Black boys and men over several decades. Despite LB Newham's significant diversity, stark and disproportionately negative outcomes persist for this group across various areas of life.

The report identifies a complex nexus of disadvantage stemming from systemic and structural inequalities. Black boys in LB Newham are more likely to face challenges such as racial profiling, low school expectations, permanent exclusion, housing instability, and mental health stigma. These issues reflect broader systemic problems, but their impact is particularly urgent due to the Borough's large Black youth population. Systemic and structural racism means Black boys fare less well than their white peers across a range of issues.

[1]See UK GOV, (2025) [Annex C: Government Statistical Service harmonised categories for ethnicity - GOV.UK](#) (Accessed 31 October 2025).

Key findings across specific areas include:

•**Education and School Experience:** Across London and in LB Newham, there exists a persistent attainment gap whereby boys of Black Caribbean backgrounds have achieved lower attainment at GCSE level[2]. In LB Newham average attainment was at 56.4%, compared to 30% for pupils of White and Black Caribbean heritage and 37% for pupils of Caribbean background.

This is in part rooted in historic experiences, current systemic inequalities, biases, and resource disparities. Disproportionate school exclusions, particularly for Black Caribbean students, are a persistent issue with significant long-term negative outcomes, including lower academic achievement, limited employment opportunities, and increased vulnerability to crime, as well as broader impact on the family. Concerns exist regarding curriculum inclusivity, SEND diagnosis and support, and the need for greater teacher diversity and understanding of Racial Equity. Outcomes for Black boys tend to decline sharply between Year 6 and Years 7-11. Careers advice often starts too late (around age 15) when engagement may have already been lost; it needs to begin much earlier, such as in Year 7 (ages 11/12). Wrap-around support in schools, targeted interventions and greater support for families is recommended.

•**Criminal Justice and Youth Offending:** People of Black and global majority backgrounds are over-represented nationally at many stages throughout the Criminal Justice System, especially at the point of stop and search, custodial remands, and in the prison population. This over-representation holds

true within LB Newham. Specifically, children from a Black heritage background who constitute a significantly higher percentage of Newham's Youth Justice Service[3] caseload (45.4%) compared to their representation in the Borough's youth population (23%), and there is a higher rate of re-offending amongst this group. There is a link between school exclusions and increased vulnerability to exploitation by criminal networks, higher rates of anti-social behaviour, violence, and offending. Police interactions, including stop-and-search, require high standards of fairness, respect, and proportionality. Many young people involved with the criminal justice system are neuro-divergent, and their behaviours can be misinterpreted, leading to unnecessary escalations. Initiatives like the "Policing With Compassion" Newham pilot aim to improve interactions and understanding, particularly regarding neuro-divergence, but questions remain, including whether this pilot will be enabled to embed and become an addition to everyday policing under the public sector equality duty. The criminal justice system can perpetuate disadvantage for Black communities as one element in an interconnected web of structural and systematic racism.

•**Employment and Socio-economics:** Poverty acts as a driver of disadvantage both during and after school. Young Black men cumulatively face lower educational and employer expectations, biased recruitment, and unequal pay/progression. Young Black men face some of the highest unemployment rates in London, in 2020 this was at around 33%, compared to 15% for young White men.[4] Challenges and barriers are complex but can also include young people's work readiness -

[2] See Millard, W et al (2018). 'Boys on Track: Improving Support for Black Caribbean and Free School Meal Eligible White Boys in London'. [Online] Available at: [lkmco_boys_on_track_report.pdf](#) (Accessed 31 October 2025).

[3] Please see Paragraph 4.1 in LB Newham Relationship Between Black Boys and the Borough Scrutiny Commission Meeting 14 November 2024. Agenda Item 7: Youth empowerment, youth justice, targeted and universal youth provision. [Online] Available at: [Appendix C](#) (Accessed 28 October 2025).

[4] Greater London Authority, (2020). Voices of the Underrepresented. [Online] Available at: https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/voices_of_the_underrepresented_fa.pdf. (Accessed 21 October 2025). At page 12.

and awareness of opportunities. There is a need for greater awareness of job opportunities and how to access them, as traditional communication methods have diminished reach for young people, and personal networks are crucial for such information. Unpaid work experience is a significant barrier for disadvantaged youth who cannot afford to work without pay. Mentorship and role models are needed to counter perceptions of “easy (or easier) money” and to highlight pathways to success, requiring resilience, persistence, and hard work.

•Data and Understanding: A crucial finding is the gaps in granular data across various organisations. This lack of detailed, disaggregated data, specifically addressing the experiences and outcomes of such a varied cohort (Black boys), compounds their lack of visibility and hinders tailoring support effectively. The Commission highlights that “Black boys” is a mosaic term, not a homogenous grouping, encompassing varied experiences based on specific variables such as heritage, migration history, and class. A “one size fits all” approach is deemed not fit for purpose, emphasising the need for disaggregated data and tailored approaches that understand and address intersectionality.

Pathways and Solutions: Longer-term solutions require (continuing) collaborative partnership working, especially with the third sector, and changed mindsets within institutions and the community. Systems change must be founded on hearing the lived experience of Black children and young people and meaningful co-production combined with partnership working. The Commission found cause for optimism in the creative and innovative approaches of local organisations and institutions, noting pockets of passion and activity affecting meaningful change and partnership working. Key areas for intervention include strengthening partnerships between schools, voluntary organisations, and local government to build equity.

Leveraging corporate social responsibility from large employers and proactively engaging them is suggested. Building on existing avenues for partnership working and holistic programmes that have proven positive impact are highlighted as crucial to ensuring sustainable and lasting change. The report includes strategic recommendations, set out in the table below.

The report concludes with a Call to Action for all stakeholders – including LB Newham services, schools, parents, NHS, the Metropolitan Police Service, and government at all levels – to work together to implement changes and improve outcomes. It underscores that addressing the barriers faced by Black boys benefits the wider community, stating, “when Black boys rise, we all rise. When the barriers they face are torn down, all our children walk through.” The Commission acknowledges that stakeholders face funding constraints but emphasises that concerted collaboration focused on classrooms, careers and communities, combined with a pooling of resources, can make an impact, asking, “can we afford not to take action?” A rhetorical question and we know the answer: we can no longer afford not to take action for our Black boys and our communities.

A table of strategic recommendations is included here for ease of reference. These recommendations are addressed to internal and external stakeholders, with additional potential for forming the basis of lobbying at regional and national levels. Please see recommendations in section 2 for narrative relating to the recommendations and Appendix 1 for any additional underlying documentation.

Table of Recommendations

Rec. No	It is Recommended that the Mayor and Cabinet:
1	<p>Disaggregated Data Ensure that by March 2026, all data captured by Newham Council's educational systems (SIMS) and services (e.g. Children's Service, Youth Justice Service) is disaggregated for Black boys in LB Newham aged 11 to 18, using Free School Meals and CAMHS data to capture and understand key points of intersectionality.</p>
2	<p>Understanding the Transition Between Primary School and Secondary School for Black boys Undertake a comparative review of Black boys' experience of transition from Primary to Secondary School to identify differences and emerging patterns that contribute to disproportionate outcomes. Building upon existing work of the transitions team and the Newham Children's Safeguarding Partnership is encouraged to facilitate this work.</p>
3	<p>Wrap-around Support in Schools Implement a five-year statistically rigorous pilot programme by September 2026 with a cohort of Black boys in years 7 –11 across two or more selected LB Newham maintained schools to provide pastoral care and behavioural mentoring (e.g. SMILE-ing boys intervention), with support to improve attendance, retention and academic attainment and to reduce exclusion rates, contact with the youth justice system, criminal justice system, and re-offending rates - in line with averages for all LB Newham pupils. This support will require collaboration across council services, schools, NHS services (including CAMHS), the Metropolitan Police Service, criminal justice system and the Voluntary Community and Faith Sector.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is recommended that LB Newham seek a partner to conduct a research review of this groups' outcomes to assess and demonstrate the impact and effectiveness of the wrap-around model. • It is also recommended that this pilot occur alongside broader wrap-around support improvements for all Black boys in the Borough within the next nine months. To include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) Conducting a review of how the pupil premium grant and school pastoral systems are currently utilised to support Black boys in the Borough, monitoring the outcomes of this existing pastoral support, and identifying areas for improvement. ii) Collaborating with Maintained School leaders, the Youth Justice Service and the Newham Safety Partnership to develop existing programmes to better support Black boys in the Borough and increase awareness of support on offer. ii) Ensuring timely diagnosis and SEND support provision, where needed for Black boys in the Borough.

4	<p>School Exclusions</p> <p>To ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that preventative measures and interventions be implemented by Newham Council's Education Service at the stage preceding exclusion and that parents/carers are consistently informed at the earliest stage of any exclusion process including when the school begins considering exclusion procedures. • Establish a process for parents and carers to be made aware of their rights including the right to appeal and the recourse available to them. Understanding of these rights must be checked with parents during the process. • Identify referral pathways, in line with the existing Youth Safety Strategy, to mentorship and advocacy support both for the young people and their families during the process of school exclusion and ensure information on accessing this support is widely dispersed across schools and family hubs in LB Newham. • Ensure that Newham Council service representatives attend or provide a detailed report for all pupil permanent exclusion panels involving Black boys to support transparency, consistency, and accountability in decision-making.
5	<p>Governors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that within nine months of this report, Newham Council's Education Service captures data on the demographics of chairs of governors and that within two years a database is compiled to include the demographics of all maintained school governors. It is recommended that this be monitored and reported annually to the relevant scrutiny committee. • Ensure that parents / carers of Black boys are supported by Newham Council's Education Service to access school governor opportunities across primary and secondary schools in the Borough. • Ensure that Newham Council's Education Service use existing resources and collaborate with Education4Change to improve resources for Governors, referring to and guided by the work of Lewisham Council's Governor's Toolkit and Haringey Education Partnership's Racial Equity Pledge as examples of good practice.
6	<p>Youth Justice Service Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use results and data derived from the inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) of the LB Newham Youth Justice Service to identify areas for improvement and to continue the journey to reduce the contact of young Black boys with the Criminal Justice System within LB Newham. • Provide an annual, detailed review on the effectiveness of all early intervention and prevention projects to guide their continuation and further development, including submission of the report of the 'SMILE-ing boys' project at the project's culmination, to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
7	<p>Building Equity Through Partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that Newham Council explores grant funding and provide support to the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector, schools and governors in order to offer targeted support to Black boys in the Borough, with an annual report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (e.g. in June). • Ensure that Newham Council's Inclusive Economy directorate explores and develops targeted collaborations with local employers and schools to support the enhanced development of routes to work experience, employability support and employment opportunities for Black boys and young men post-16.
8	<p>Progress on Phase I Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the Executive Response to the Phase II Report includes a summary detailing progress made on the implementation of the Phase I recommendations of the Relationship Between Black Boys and the Borough Scrutiny Commission.

Introduction

The London Borough of Newham has one of the most diverse resident populations in the United Kingdom, with some 200 languages and dialects spoken in the borough. As of the 2021 Census, LB Newham had a population of over 350,000 residents, with more than 70% identifying as Black, Asian, or Minoritised ethnic. Amongst these, people of Black heritage, who are primarily of African and Caribbean descent, make up approximately 17% of the Borough's population, with a concentration of Black Caribbean and Nigerian communities. As a borough, we have a large cohort of young residents: 120,738 of our residents are under 25 years of age. Of these, 23,878 are male and of African, Black, Caribbean or mixed heritage.

LB Newham's diversity is both its strength and its challenge. Despite the Borough's vibrancy and cultural richness, stark inequalities persist — especially for young Black boys and men. Data across education, policing, health, housing and socio-economics consistently shows that Black boys in our Borough face disproportionately negative outcomes. They are more likely to be excluded from school, over-policed, underdiagnosed in mental health services, and live with the impacts of poverty and overcrowded housing. These challenges are not isolated - they reflect broader systemic, structural inequalities, but their local impact in LB Newham is particularly urgent due to the Borough's large and growing Black youth population.

Understanding and addressing these disparities is crucial. The life chances of Black boys in our Borough should not be determined by race,

postcode, or socio-economic status. Yet, the current data points to an entrenched, chronic pattern of disadvantage, which demands targeted, culturally competent/sensitive, and community-rooted solutions. Since 1980, there have been several key legislative measures, inquiries, and reports in the UK that have addressed race and the experiences of Black young men, particularly in areas like policing, education, employment, and justice.

“Growing up in Newham has played a big part in moulding me into who I am today. I have been exposed to many bad things that I use as lessons in life, but I have also seen and experienced fantastic things in this Borough. I see Newham as a home, a home for the courageous and the curious. Both of which is an equation for success”

T, Newham Resident

Since 1980, there have been several key legislative measures, inquiries, and reports in the UK that have addressed race and the experiences of Black young men, particularly in areas like policing, education, employment, and justice. Major legislation considered by Commission Members included:

- **the Race Relations Act 1976** (Amendment in 2000) and the subsequent Race Relations (Amendment) Act (RRAA) 2000, which strengthened this earlier legislation. The RRAA 2000 placed a duty on public bodies to promote race equality following the findings of the Macpherson Report (1999).
- **the Crime and Disorder Act 1998**. This legislation introduced the category of racially aggravated offences, making hate crimes subject to harsher penalties;
- **the Equality Act 2010**. This legislation consolidated anti-discrimination laws and introduced the Public Sector Equality Duty, requiring public bodies, including local government, to consider how their policies affect different racial groups; and
- **the Policing and Crime Act 2017**. This Act introduced new frameworks for policing and accountability, partially in response to concerns about the disproportionate use of stop and search powers against Black communities.

In addition to legislative frameworks, since the early 1980s, there have also been various inquiries, reports and reviews which provided important context to the work of the Relationship Between Black Boys and the Borough Scrutiny Commission. These included:

- **the Scarman Report (1981)** – Examined the causes of the 1981 Brixton Riots, highlighting issues of racial disadvantage, poverty, and police-community relations.

- **Stop and Search Controversies** – The Police and Criminal Evidence Act (1984) allowed stop and search, which has been disproportionately used against Black youth. The Lammy Review (2017) and [HMICFRS reports](#) have highlighted its racial disparities.
- **the Macpherson Report (1999)** – Investigated the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence and found the Metropolitan Police to be institutionally racist, leading to reforms in policing and racial equality policies.
- **the Lammy Review (2017)** – A government-commissioned review by David Lammy MP into racial disparities in the criminal justice system, which found that Black people were disproportionately represented in prisons and courts.
- **the Windrush Lessons Learned Review (2020)** – Led by Wendy Williams, this report exposed the systemic failings of the Home Office in the Windrush Scandal, showing how Black Britons were wrongly detained and deported.
- **the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities Report (2021)** – Also known as the Sewell Report, this controversial government report was criticised for downplaying the impact of institutional racism in the UK.
- **The Joint Enterprise Doctrine & Black Youth (2016 and 2020 reviews)** – Joint enterprise laws have disproportionately criminalised Black young men in gang-related cases. The [Supreme Court ruled in 2016](#) that it had been wrongly applied in many cases.^[5]
- **The Education System and Exclusions** – Reports by organisations like the Runnymede Trust and Institute for Race Relations (IRR) have repeatedly shown that Black boys face disproportionate school exclusions, and how these have an impact on their long-term opportunities.

[5] R v Jogee [2016] UKSC 8. See also: Just for Kids Law, “Joint Enterprise”. [Online] Available at: [Joint enterprise | Just For Kids Law](#). (Accessed 16 November 2025).

Methodology



The Relationship Between Black Boys and the Borough (R4B) Scrutiny Commission (the Commission) was established in 2021 by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) to consider the challenges and structural racism faced by Black boys and young men within the Borough.

Following consolidation, the contextual Phase I report and its recommendations were submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for approval on 4 June 2024, ahead of submission to Cabinet for its meeting on 3 September 2024.

Work on Phase II was already in progress by summer 2024, with Commission Members conducting a series of site visits over the course of July and August 2024. Commission Members visited and heard evidence from participants at the following organisations:

- Elevate
- Fathers United^[6]
- Fight for Peace
- Future Light Leadership (Newham Youth Partnership)
- Rights and Equalities in Newham (REIN)
- Youth Justice Services (YJS)
- The Exit Foundation

[6] For more information about Fathers United, see "It's about getting that stress out of your system": Mental health football club launched in Croydon – Eastlondonlines

The Commission held four focus group sessions with community and faith Leaders (22 October 2024), employers/Our Newham (13 November 2024), Governors (20 November 2024) and Headteachers (21 November 2024). The Commission noted with disappointment a lack of engagement with these sessions by two groups with great potential and power to make an impact on the life outcomes of our young Black residents. The Commission recognises that many governors have other jobs and commitments, whilst headteachers are the frontline, occupying pivotal points between families, society, institutions and the futures of our youngest residents. Efforts are still in progress to engage.

Commission Discussion: Employers

The focus group meeting with employers was attended by representatives from a range of local employers facilitated through the work of the 'Our Newham' team who coordinated employer engagement for the session. Discussions highlighted how for aspiring young Black people, who will be going on to good colleges and achieving good grades at A-Level, the opportunities exist; however, more support is needed for other young Black people whose path to academic success is littered with obstacles. Participants also discussed the challenges of geography and postcodes within the Borough, describing "postcode wars" (Canning Town and Stratford) as well as the physical and spatial disconnection between location of the large organisational employers and institutions (e.g. around the Olympic Park) and where the young Black boys live in the Borough.

Participants explored what could be done to ameliorate or alleviate these issues, including leveraging corporate social responsibilities and the goals of larger employers. Discussion also centred on the development and regeneration within the Borough whilst unequal employment outcomes persisted and participants suggested that when large employers moved into the Borough,

Newham Council needed to be proactive about asking them, "What will you do to address issue X in the Borough?" – and this could include improving employment rates for Black boys. One large employer described corporate responsibility as a "huge enabler" of more positive outcomes and how their organisation nationally was working towards having a workforce that reflected and represented the population of the location of its particular offices, which included the setting of local targets so that proportions employed meet certain characteristics. HR processes across other employers could do something similar, or at least be intentional about examining the characteristics of their recruits.

Participants also discussed at the 18+ age, highlighting challenges of poorly prepared, not work-ready young people. This lack of work-readiness included a lack of know-how in terms of CV preparation (how to distil what they have done in the last three years, and how to sell some of the skills they may have developed such as entrepreneurship, money management, negotiation), how to dress, and how to behave in workplaces and professional environments. Participants mentioned punctuality, noting instances of some young people needing considerable support so that they would be on time. There was consensus that this can be due to a lack of social capital, with one skills developer describing young people needing advice about what to wear and where to obtain affordable work/professional wear. It emerged that some organisations can only help those who are work-ready: "Bring me people who are 18+ and work ready", with the promise of opportunities and dedicated support. However, there were some practical challenges to the range of employees that certain organisations could employ. These could range from Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) requirements for any staff employed, and the sensitivity of work environment, which made offering work experience or opportunities for Black Boys under the age of 18 challenging for this large employer.

There was also consensus in recognising that outcomes for Black Boys tended to decline sharply between Years 7 and 11, prompting a discussion about careers advice. Participants noted that careers advice in schools tends to start at 15 years, which was acknowledged as “too late, we have already lost them.” A solution would be for targeted careers advice starting in Year 7 (ages 11 /12) so that young Black boys could see from an early age what opportunities were open to them, the steps involved and how to get there. An example highlighted in the discussion related to the regeneration of the Borough: careers in Construction, some of which can be very lucrative – yet these are traditionally spoken about professional careers such as doctors, lawyers, engineers.

Socio-economic background is not a protected characteristic under the UK Equality Act 2010, but arguably social and cultural capital play a huge role in helping our young people to find ways into employment. Participants discussed the importance of “connections” and being able to connect, and described systems no longer in place, including the value of the historic New Deal for Communities (NDC) programme, NDC Elites, which had provided access to a variety of different opportunities available, in a way that young Black boys had identified with. There was also acknowledgement that in state sector education, teaching staff in Years 7 to 9 did not have time or space in the teaching timetable nor the requisite specialist knowledge to offer careers guidance. There was an identification of a gap and a need for specialist people with expertise to go into schools and provide specialist advice.

Participants also discussed how preparation for the “world of work” and “hard work” required holistic approaches, combatting low aspirations and providing wrap-around, early support for the whole family. Commission Members had queried what could be (and what was being) done to -

address low aspiration amongst Black boys. One participant highlighted the importance of mentorship and role models, explaining the real need to counter the perception of ‘easy money’ and young people generally “wanting the money now. They want the CEO job now.” They also explained the importance of explaining the steps to success, the need for literacy, numeracy, resilience, persistence and hard work. A few participants raised how socio-economic background and family situations – especially single parenthood – often led to wider challenges, including within the family and queried the lack of resources for families to go to for help. Entourage of peers and relations can be an obstacle too, as some Black young people do not have the support system around them to persist in trying or to encourage them. One participant suggested that a way to address low aspiration might be to take young Black Boys to HMP Belmarsh to see for themselves “how bad life is on the other side”. In response, another participant challenged that alternative solutions needed to be offered, including a form of a pathway.

Commission Members heard about Places for London’s commitment to being an inclusive and sustainable landlord, offering support to tenants, including business skills training. A current Places for London initiative includes working with 15 schools at the 14 to 16 years age range, offering a week’s work experience in different departments and mentoring opportunities. The aim is to enable young people to understand how the construction industry works as well as demonstrating pathways into employment. Places for London also has an offer aimed at the 18+ cohort, which includes a skills bootcamp and two weeks of work experience. The wider group of participants also raised current challenges, including navigating transitions from being in receipt of benefits to the world of work. Offering longer periods of work experience, though potentially meaningful for the young person doing the work experience,

presented challenges such as not being paid for that time and impact on benefits, which may prevent that young person from taking up the offer. Individual mindset could also be an obstacle, articulated as, “I’m doing a role and not being paid for it, why do it?” This could be in contrast with young people from different socio-economic backgrounds who can afford to take unpaid work experience and internships. Participants identified a need to address negative mindsets, explaining that this might be up to four weeks out of an entire professional life as well as building connections and contacts that could lead to different and greater opportunities. It was also identified that employers needed mindset guidance and re-framing too, which might include making explicit some of the barriers a young person from certain socio-economic or cultural backgrounds might face in being able to take up unpaid work.

Following on from the barriers faced by certain groups, including young Black boys, participants also discussed awareness of “what is out there” and what various roles entail, highlighting that better, wider communication is needed. Some participants observed that schools are now not mandated to offer work experience and, depending on resources, will hire external agencies to provide this. Themes covered included the contributory impact of the coronavirus pandemic and a lack of social skills (e.g. a reticence from young people around making phone calls). Communicating what is already on offer was perceived as a general challenge – both between services and youth-facing / public-facing communications. For example, a reliance on newsletters as a way to get information about training opportunities would not reach where young people are – instead there needs to be greater focus on social media, Instagram, and Snapchat as ways to reach young people. Some described encountering young people who did not know what apprenticeships are or how to find out

about them. There was also a feeling that Youth Clubs are insufficiently advertised and under-utilised as a resource by services and organisations. Participants articulated not having previously known about other attendees at the Scrutiny Focus Group session and stating intent to link their young people to the organisations represented in the room. One approach discussed by one participant was linking opportunities to where young Black Boys are – such as Skills Centres working directly with Football Clubs.

The inter-connectedness of themes recurred: role models and representation are critical to successful outcomes: young Black Boys need to be able to hear and see people who sound and look like them and this is important for meaningful engagement. There were different perceptions of how this can be important. This might be in terms of providing encouragement and connecting young Black boys to opportunities. An example was given of the recent launch of 250 entry-level jobs at an organisation, and who knew about that launch – Job Centre Plus. Participants queried whether the staff in Job Centre Plus can relate to this cohort. Participants also discussed the need for passion, persistence and encouragement from those supporting young Black boys into work. But it was felt that this needed to extend further as another way to enable and encourage aspiration, by promoting role models that are operating in the spaces that our young Black boys want to be, as a way to encourage this cohort towards their aspirations, raising ambition and moving them away from “just doing what they know”. This is essential to counter the alternative “role models”: ‘I can be a county lines drug dealer, get locked up for five years and come back out and be a youth worker’ versus a senior civil servant as a role model who can point to fifty people at a range of levels, including director level. Commission Members raised the question of how to encourage aspiration from an early age for this cohort, but participants found this more difficult to answer

and resolve. There was recognition of the need to work more synergistically across organisations, a statement of appetite to establish ongoing connections between representatives in the Focus Group attendees who had not until now had working relations, and support for a group that could grow within the Borough, looking at issues together, providing support, reaching out, building trust and engaging with this (and other) cohorts. However, there was also acknowledgement that many wraparound support services had recently been cut (such as support for new mothers) or at risk of being cut (youth services and careers support). This informed a Commission recommendation about the need for more wraparound support.

Commission Meetings: Education, Policing and Mental Health

The Commission also held two meetings in public in November 2024, where evidence concerning educational attainment, policing and mental health/wellbeing was received.

At the meeting on 14 November 2024,^[7] the Commission received reports on inequality, inequity and disproportionality; Youth Empowerment, Youth Justice, and Youth Provision; and the Young People's Charter. Commission Members observed that the data presented was generalised and not specific to the cohort of Black boys and young men, compounding a lack of visibility relating to Newham Council's actions in this area. Officers also referred to the establishment of the Commission on the Future of Inclusion and Belonging in Multi-Ethnic Newham in March 2023 and budgetary challenges subsequently. Members queried this, given that the cost of the the Commission was £100,000 when compared to the

budget of Newham Council. Without granular data relating to the cohort and multi-ethnic structural inequalities, it would be difficult to change outcomes or tailor offer towards a cohort in evident need.

At the meeting on 21 November 2024,^[8] the Commission heard evidence from LB Newham Services (including Community Safeguarding, and Children and Young People Services) in addition to external stakeholders (CAMHS, NHS and the Metropolitan Police Service). Commission Members were encouraged by the commitment and passion of the meeting's participants for improved outcomes for the children and young people of the Borough. However, it emerged from the meeting that there are gaps in the data. Commission Members noted that, at a meeting focused specifically on Black boys and young men, there were data gaps for this cohort for various organisations. A data gap can translate into a crack through which a cohort can fall.

Mental Health Support

The Commission heard of the many barriers to accessing Mental Health Services and of the impact that this can have for this cohort of boys on their education, support for SEND needs and over representation in Youth Justice Services. The report submitted by the CAMHS team noted criminalization and risk of adultification in situations where a focus on behavioural issues can lead to oversight of trauma presentations or mental health needs. However, LB Newham CAMHS services outlined promising quality improvement efforts, including work to support those currently awaiting assessments and a 'New Way' project that is seeking to offer holistic wellbeing support to support marginalised young people.^[9]

[7] Please see LB Newham Relationship Between Black Boys and the Borough Scrutiny Commission. Meeting of 14 November 2024. [Online] Available at: [Agenda for Relationship Between Black Boys and the Borough Scrutiny Commission on Thursday 14th November 2024, 7.00 p.m. – Newham Council](#) (Accessed 28 October 2025).

[8] Please see LB Newham Relationship Between Black Boys and the Borough Scrutiny Commission. Meeting of 21 November 2024. [Online] Available at: [Agenda for Relationship Between Black Boys and the Borough Scrutiny Commission on Thursday 21st November 2024, 7.00 p.m. – Newham Council](#) (Accessed 28 October 2025).

[9] Please see LB Newham Relationship Between Black Boys and the Borough Scrutiny Commission, Meeting, 21 November 2024. Agenda item 6: The experience and impact of interventions for young Black boys with special educational needs and mental health issues. [Online] Available at: [R4B 211124 NELCAMHSELFT - Report Final.pdf](#) (Accessed 28 October 2025).

Changes in Policing and ‘Policing with Compassion in LB Newham

Representatives from the MPS explained how the ultimate goal would be for every encounter to result in a positive and justified outcome. It was important to recognise that all police interactions with young people must be approached with the same high standards, so that every encounter, from stop-and-search to safeguarding, was underpinned by a single, consistent approach that prioritises fairness, respect, and proportionality. The MPS highlighted an exploratory pilot programme in Newham Police which was underway to support this shift, aiming to ensure improved experiences during all police interactions – ‘Policing with Compassion’. Participants noted that disproportionality persists throughout the criminal justice system: Black young people are statistically more likely to receive custodial sentences and are more likely to be remanded than their White peers.

As part of the response to this, Newham Council’s Youth Justice Service Court Users Group regularly meets with magistrates to discuss issues such as unconscious bias and systemic disproportionality. In addition, pre-sentence reports now include a dedicated paragraph that reminds magistrates of national and local disproportionality data. Although these efforts are ongoing, Black children and young people continue to be overrepresented in the criminal justice system, although some early signs suggest movement in the right direction.

Commission Members heard the specific focus of the pilot on neurodivergence amongst young people, and the importance of meeting every child with care. Often, behaviours stemming from

frustration, misunderstanding, or a sense of injustice can be misinterpreted or exaggerated to be described as aggression by police or court officials.[10] Given that approximately 50% of the prison population is neurodivergent,[11] there is a strong emphasis on improving police officers’ emotional intelligence and understanding of neurodivergence and different ways it may present. The approach within the Borough by the MPS includes efforts to better equip officers to handle such encounters sensitively and appropriately and finding ways to support the families of our Black young people. Safeguarding principles and protocols guide the initiative and a proactive approach is taken to ensure safeguarding is meaningful and risks are mitigated. Importantly, the Youth Justice Service recognises the role of family involvement as an integral part of its interventions — aiming to support young people and their families holistically both immediately and in the long-term.

The fundamental reality remains for many young Black boys, disadvantage starts from birth, and the criminal justice system often perpetuates that disadvantage. These reforms aim not just to respond to the symptoms but to tackle the systemic issues at their roots. Discussions focused on MPS initiatives to increase awareness and sensitivity when dealing with children and young people with neurodivergence, including the pilot programme, “Policing With Compassion”[12] This programme is being piloted in the Borough and is focused on adopting an inclusive, proactive, and preventative approach to policing through partnerships.

[10] Hood et al, (2025). History on Loop. See page 22.

[11] Ministry of Justice, (2024). Greater support for neurodivergent offenders in bid to cut crime.

[12] Please see LB Newham Relationship Between Black Boys and the Borough Scrutiny Commission Meeting 21 November 2024. Agenda item 5: Community Safety Partnership and the Metropolitan Police Service. Appendix B Policing with Compassion Business Case. [Online] Available at: [Business Case](#) (Accessed 28 October 2025).

Key aspects of the programme include:

- **Vision:** prioritising understanding and sensitivity in police interactions with children and young people. Following training, police officers will acknowledge and respect the unique needs, behaviours, and challenges of individuals with neurodiversity during their encounters.
- **Mission:** addressing the societal challenge of improving interactions between law enforcement and young people with neurodiverse conditions. This is to be achieved by identifying key challenges faced by these individuals, their families, and law enforcement, gathering insights from surveys, interviews, and focus groups, and using this information to develop targeted police training resources. The goal is to equip MPS officers with skills to support neurodiverse youth effectively and ensure their safety, contributing to a socially just and safe environment.
- **Problem Statement:** engaging effectively with young people who have neurodiverse conditions, as this presents a significant challenge in community policing. Diagnosed, undiagnosed, or in denial, these young people are at higher risk for antisocial behaviour, violence, and involvement in crimes. Law enforcement and support staff often lack the necessary training and resources to handle these situations appropriately, leading to their neurodiverse needs being unrecognised and unsupported, as well as contributing to unnecessary escalations in sensitive situations. This can result in neurodiverse young people being unfairly targeted in police interactions like stop-and-search procedures, increasing their feelings of exclusion and injustice. Society's tendency towards

exclusion and punitive measures (rather than supportive intervention) can deepen alienation and vulnerability, leading to negative reactions to perceived unjust treatment, perpetuating vicious cycles. Misinterpretations during police interactions further strain trust.

Objectives: The exploratory project has three defined objectives:

1. **Enhancing Training for Law Enforcement:** to develop a comprehensive training programme for community officers and support staff focused on understanding and effectively engaging with neurodiverse youth, emphasizing sensitive communication and appropriate handling of interactions.
2. **Empowering Parents and Guardians:** Establish a list of support services and resources for parents and guardians of neurodiverse youth to help them navigate behavioural challenges and advocate effectively for their children's needs.
3. **Advocating for Inclusive Policies:** Promoting the adoption of inclusive policies and practices within the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) (especially within the Borough) and the broader community that prioritise support over punitive measures, aiming to foster trust and reduce exclusion among neurodiverse youth.

Commission Members heard that the key stakeholders for the "Policing With Compassion" initiative include the University of East London (UEL), Newham Police, the Police Foundation, London's Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) and the Mayor's Office for Policing And Crime (MOPAC).

Members noted how lived experience had informed this initiative, both praising and welcoming the training proposed but queried the longevity of the pilot programme and its ability to embed in daily policing practice if key advocates were to leave the MPS. While it was outlined that the pilot has been exploratory, the Commission was advised that measures were being taken towards ensuring legacy (beyond the passionate, committed individual driving it) by getting additional buy-in from other partners, such as the London Fire Brigade, the VRU, local authorities and even from getting international recognition. Further, the production of an easy-to-read overview of the project, a video outlining the project and a practical guide all assist the legacy, longevity and practical embedding of this important work.

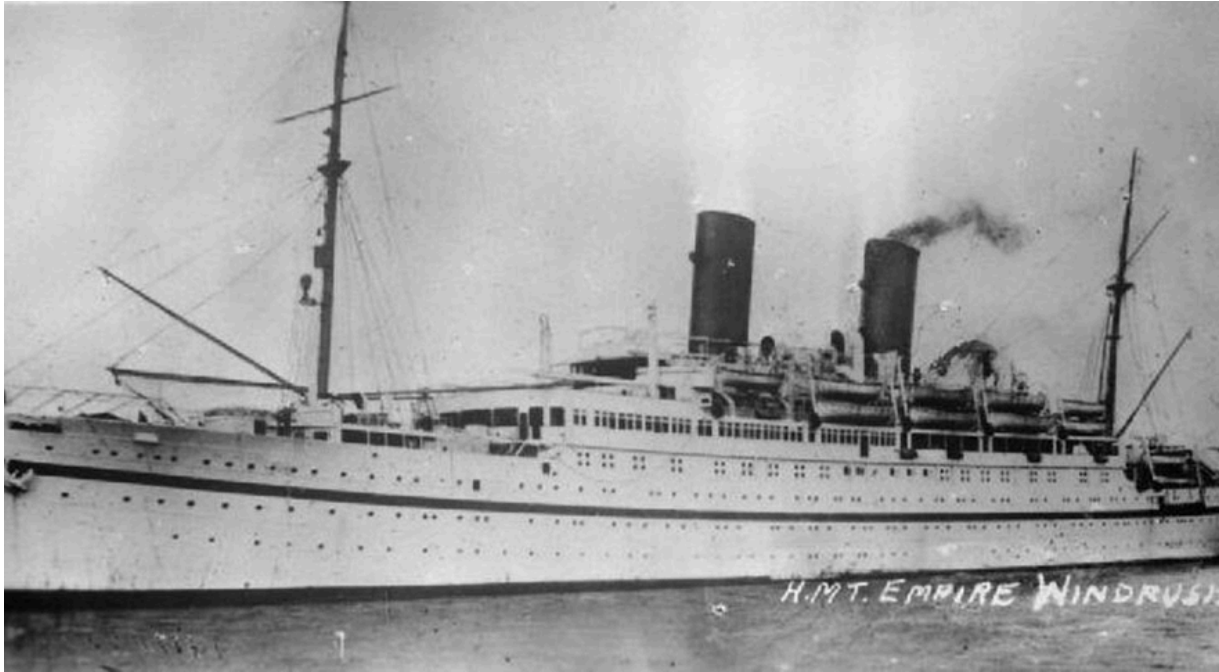
The importance of robust, anonymised or pseudonymised data has also been recognised by the MPS. University of East London (UEL) are leading on the secure storage of data under GDPR regulations — helping to address gaps and improve the effectiveness of policy and procedural reviews.

Members praised the focus on neurodivergence but mentioned the culture of the Metropolitan Police Service, including institutional approaches towards young Black boys, including overuse of handcuffs and CS. Members observed that the aim would be for Black boys to be getting the same outcomes as White boys in their interactions with the MPS and the wider Criminal Justice System. Given clear statistics about overrepresentation of Black boys in the Criminal Justice System and reports to the Independent Office for Police Conduct ([IOPC](#)), Commission Members asked about the improved outcomes and difference this would make to young Black boys in the Borough.

Members also highlighted the public sector equality duty, which imposes duty to consider all the protected characteristics, and queried whether what was being described should already be part of everyday policing. Members observed that it seemed that there was still an ask of Black children to adapt and change because they did not know what they would encounter and queried whether conversations would be different if discussions involved other cohorts. Members saw wider application for the programme, recommending its extension across Newham Council, and wished the MPS every success with this programme. Commission Members also expressed how impressed they were with the initiative and wished for its wider application across the UK.

On 13 November 2025, Members received an update on the progress of the initiative, including the production of various materials to support Metropolitan Police Service officers. Members were advised that these resources would be in the public domain shortly for wider circulation.

LB Newham Context: Windrush Council Motion



“Newham has a long cherished history of being a destination for new arrivals in the UK, making it the special place it is today”

“Newham’s migrant communities contribute a huge amount to the Borough and are the heart of the Borough’s cultural identity. About 4.9% of the Borough’s population is of Afro-Caribbean ethnicity and, though the Council does not have precise figures, it is believed the Borough is home to hundreds, if not thousands, of the Windrush generation, and many more come from other Commonwealth countries across the globe. Newham Council expresses dismay at the ‘hostile environment’ initiated by Theresa May when she was Home Secretary and at the financial and emotional impact this has had on the Windrush generation and their families, including children and grandchildren.”

Newham Council made a number of resolutions, including to:

- continue actively campaigning for an end to all ‘hostile environment’ policy measures and to continue to call on the Government to enable the Windrush generation to acquire British citizenship at no cost and with proactive assistance throughout the process.
- lead the way, by celebrating an annual Windrush Day and by welcoming the Government’s announcement to make 22 June each year an annual celebration to recognise and honour the enormous contribution of those who arrived between 1948 and 1971.
- review our own policies and procedures to ensure we support those affected.

[13] please see LBN Full Council meeting, 26 November 2018. Windrush Council Motion. [Online] Available at: https://mgov.newham.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=295&Mid=12174#x__edn1 (Accessed 04 December 2025).

[Photo Credit] H.M.T. Empire Windrush © IWM (FL 9448) and © Crown copyright reproduced under delegated authority from The Keeper of Public Records. Royal Navy photographer (1945-1954). Available online at: <http://media.iwm.org.uk/iwm/mediaLib//19/media-19146/large.jpg> from the collections of the Imperial War Museums.

02

**Section 2:
Key Themes
Uncovered**

Education and School Experience

The Achievement Gap and disproportional outcomes for Black boys in the London Borough of Newham are issues rooted in the historic educational experience of Black children, current systemic inequalities, biases and resource disparities. Addressing this requires comprehensive, collaborative strategies that include culturally responsive teaching, curriculum reform, equitable resource distribution, and policies aimed at reducing disciplinary disparities. Nationally, children of Black or mixed heritage backgrounds are significantly overrepresented in secure settings: whilst accounting for 12% of the broader educational system, these children make up 33% of the children receiving education in secure settings.[14]

The Achievement Gap

The need for targeted interventions to support the educational attainment of Black boys and young men, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, has been highlighted previously. For example, the Sutton Trust has conducted research highlighting disparities in educational outcomes among disadvantaged students from Black, Asian and Minoritised Ethnic backgrounds, including Black boys and young men in the UK. Their 2016 report, “Class Differences: Ethnicity and Disadvantage”, [15] found that disadvantaged Black Caribbean pupils had notably lower GCSE attainment nationally compared to other groups. Specifically, nearly 17 percentage points more girls than boys in this group achieved five A*-C grades at GCSE, indicating a significant gender gap.

Data relating to school attainment was provided in April 2025 for an Education, Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission meeting. LB Newham provisional data concerning secondary school attainment in 2024 reflected similar trends and demonstrated that there were higher levels of attainment for girls than boys and that White and Black Caribbean pupils achieved the second lowest levels of attainment, followed by Caribbean pupils. [16] The average percentage of attainment of English and Maths GCSEs at grades 9-5 for all pupils was at 56.4%, compared to 30% for White and Black Caribbean pupils and 37% for Caribbean pupils; meanwhile attainment for African and White and Black African pupils was at 52%. Hence, reflecting vast differences within the identity category of ‘Black Boys’. The Commission was pleased to see that by April 2025 progress had been made in presentation of data on Black boys in the Borough and that work to investigate data on disproportionality was being shared with the Education, Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission.

Complex factors contribute to these results, as demonstrated in the 2023 Sutton Trust report, “Social Mobility: The Next Generation – Lost Potential at Age 16” [17] which revealed that disadvantaged high-attaining pupils, including Black Caribbean students, were more likely to fall behind their more advantaged peers by the time they took their GCSEs. This suggests that socio-economic disadvantage continues to hinder the academic progress of Black boys and young men.

[14] Children’s Commissioner (2025), at page 19.

[15] Kirby, P, Cullinane, C, (2016), at page 1.

[16] Please see LB Newham Education, Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission. Meeting of 17 April 2025, Agenda Item 8: School Attainment. Available online at: [ECYP 170325 Report Education Attainment CYPs Feb 2025.pdf](#) (Accessed 28 October 2025).

[17] Holt-White, E, Cullinane, C (2023), at page 25.

Challenges in Schools and Educational Environments:

The Runnymede Trust, a leading race equality think tank in the UK, has extensively researched the educational experiences of Black communities, highlighting several key challenges across various reports:

Disproportionate Exclusions: Nationally Black Caribbean students have historically faced higher exclusion rates compared to their White peers. Over the past two decades, they have been more than three times as likely to be excluded, contributing to negative long-term outcomes such as lower academic achievement, limited employment opportunities and increased vulnerability to crime. This is further supported by the LB Newham data referenced in section 3.2 below.

Curriculum Inclusivity: The Runnymede Trust advocates for a more inclusive curriculum that reflects diverse histories and contributions. The “Visualise” report revealed that only 2.3% of artists referenced in GCSE Art exam papers are from Black or South Asian backgrounds, underscoring the need for broader representation in educational materials.[18] The Runnymede Trust has collaborated with the Stephen Lawrence Day Foundation to produce the joint report, “Dear Stephen: Race and Belonging 30 Years On”[19] which reflected on societal changes since Stephen's murder, highlighting ongoing challenges in achieving racial equity and bringing focus to the importance of “classrooms, careers and communities”.

Building upon the recommendations within
Department for Education's 2025 Curriculum and

and Assessment Review,[20] subject areas for particular focus may include History, Art and English. However, changes may be made across the curriculum to better reflect the contributions from a more diverse list of thinkers and creators in each subject, providing a richer understanding of the world for all students. An example of this work in practice is reflected in the work of [Global Learning London](#) and their project “Towards an Anti-Racist Curriculum”[21] which has worked with 25 schools across Tower Hamlets to support teachers, facilitate curriculum change and encourage a culture shift. Similarly, existing work in the Borough facilitated by the [Education 4 Change](#) organisation aims to equip educators to explore diversity and racial issues in a meaningful way.

Policing: Concerns were raised by the Commission about the presence of police officers in schools (Safer Schools Officers), which were criticised as disproportionately affecting Black, Asian and Minoritised Ethnic students. In 2023, the Runnymede Trust briefing, “Over-policed and under-protected: the road to Safer Schools”, [22] highlighted that between 2018-2020, 58% of strip searches conducted by the Metropolitan Police Service across London were conducted on Black boys and raised concerns regarding elevated police presence in schools across London. Such practices were criticised as leading to an environment where these students feel over-policed and under-protected, potentially hindering their educational experience and trust in institutions. It is noted that in May 2025, the role of the Safer Schools Officers was dissolved by the Metropolitan Police Service,[23] however concerns still exist around policing of young people in the community and the impact of trust in institutions

[18] Begum, S et al (2024). Visualise: Race & Inclusion in Secondary School Art Education, at page 51.

[19] Begum, S and Williams, M (2023). Dear Stephen: Race and Belonging 30 Years On.

[20] UK GOV, (2025). Curriculum and Assessment Review: Building a World-Class Curriculum For All. [Online] Available at: [Curriculum and Assessment Review final report: Building a world-class curriculum for all](#) (Accessed 5 November 2025).

[21] Global Learning London, (2024). Towards an Anti-Racist Tower Hamlets. [Online] Available at: [Towards an Anti-Racist Tower Hamlets | Global Learning London](#). (Accessed 27 October 2025).

[22] Runnymede Trust, (2023), at page 2.

[23] See: Youth Justice Legal Centre, (2025). MET Police dissolve the role of the Safer School Officer. [Online] Available at: [MET Police dissolve the role of Safer School Officer: 371 police officers stationed in London schools have been removed](#). (Accessed 31 October 2025).

Teacher Diversity and Training: The Runnymede Trust emphasises the importance of increasing the proportion of teachers from Black, Asian and Minoritised Ethnic backgrounds and enhancing racial literacy among all educators. This approach aims to create a more supportive and understanding environment. In 2021-22, Newham had the highest proportion of Black, Asian and Minoritised Ethnic teachers at 56.9%, compared to the City of London which represented the lowest proportion at 15%.[24] There are initiatives to further improve this diversity such as a drive to increase the number of Black teachers in STEM driven by University of East London and the Hamilton Commission.[25] In the Phase I report of this Scrutiny Commission, reflections from Black boys in the Borough noted a perception of the lack of Black male members of staff in leadership positions of schools. This is reflected nationally and across London, where there is growing commitment to improving diversity in school leadership and hence the presence of positive role-models in Schools.[26] Importantly, it was noted that having a diverse teaching workforce does not guarantee cultural competency or understanding of complex, intersectional systemic issues facing these communities in the Borough. Hence, further development of existing efforts to train teaching staff is required.

Systemic Challenges: Whilst acknowledging improvements in educational attainment among some Asian and Minoritised Ethnic groups, the Runnymede Trust notes that Black young men remain underrepresented in prestigious universities and overrepresented in unemployment and the criminal justice system.

This suggests that academic success does not always translate into equitable opportunities, pointing to broader systemic issues that need to be addressed. These insights underscore the need for systemic reforms to create a more equitable educational landscape for Black boys and young men in the UK.

School Exclusions and Parental Engagement

The data for England from the 2023/2024 academic year shows that Mixed White and Black Caribbean and Black Caribbean pupils experience the third and fourth highest rate of permanent exclusions at 0.24 and 0.18 respectively. Whilst Gypsy/Roma pupils and Irish Traveller pupils continued to have the highest exclusion rates, at 0.43 and 0.35 respectively.[27] An Education Policy Institute report from 2017 found that Special Educational Needs (SEN) is a predictor of the likelihood of exclusions; whereby children with milder needs were seven times more likely to be excluded, those with severe needs were four times more likely and those with social, emotional and mental health needs were nineteen times more likely to be excluded than children without special needs.[28] Data for LB Newham in 2024 supported these overall trends. A report to the Education, Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission on 17 April 2025[29] revealed similar disproportionate rates of exclusions for Black pupils in the Borough. The highest rates of exclusions were seen for Black Caribbean pupils (3.6), Other Black Background pupils (3.5), White and Black Caribbean pupils (2.5) and Black African pupils (1.6).

[24] Demie, Feyisa & Hau, Andrew. (2022). Diversity in the Teaching Workforce in London. [Online] Available at: [Diversity in the Teaching Workforce in London](#). (Accessed 22 October 2025). See page 15.

[25] University of East London (2021). Lewis Hamilton launches Black teacher recruitment drive. [Online] Available at: [Black alumni teachers reflect on UEL training | University of East London](#) (Accessed 22 October 2025).

[26] Ofori, M. (2023). Black headteachers in UK say pupils crying out for 'people who look like them', 18 October 2023. The Guardian. [Online] Available at: [Black headteachers in UK say pupils crying out for 'people who look like them' | Teaching | The Guardian](#) (Accessed 31 October 2025).

[27] GOV.UK, (2024). Ethnicity Facts and Figures: Permanent Exclusions. [Online] Available at [Permanent exclusions - GOV.UK Ethnicity facts and figures](#). (Accessed 22 October 2025).

[28] Education Policy Institute, (2017). Why are so many vulnerable children excluded from school?, (14 May 2017). [Online] Available at [Why are so many vulnerable children excluded from school? - The Education Policy Institute](#) (Accessed 22 October 2025).

[29] Please see LB Newham Education, Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission. Meeting of 17 April 2024, Agenda Item 7: Educational Inequality and Disproportionality. Available online at: [ECYP 170425 Education Inequality Disproportionality CYPs Feb 2025.pdf](#) (Accessed 28 October 2025).

Relationship Between Black Boys and the Borough Scrutiny Commission Phase II Report

The Runnymede Trust' 2025 report, "History on Loop: the sustained impact of school exclusions on Black communities",^[31] collaborated with the Communities Empowerment Network – a charity that provide advocacy support to families – to provide an in-depth review of the impact of school exclusions on Black communities. The Commission noted how this report emphasised the disproportionate exclusion of Black boys and how figures have remained consistent over decades. The History on Loop report highlighted how this is compounded by both identified and undiagnosed SEND needs and neurodivergence, where pupils are often falsely perceived as being disruptive rather than as requiring additional support. Disproportionate school exclusions were presented as constituting a structural injustice and the lasting impact on families and the young

person's future were revealed to be stark in all case studies. In the History on Loop report, the Communities Empowerment Network detail the **"WHY"** approach that they utilise within advocacy work to prompt reflection on **What** other factors may have contributed to the child's behaviour, **How** exclusion may impact the child / their family's life and any unintended consequences and **Yet** to be explored alternative options to exclusion.

The Commission also noted the work being done by the London Borough of Lewisham to develop a toolkit for its school governors.^[32] This was seen as a useful tool to guide the ongoing governance and scrutiny of Schools towards facilitating racial equity for all students.

Newham Exclusions / Suspensions Data as Submitted to the Education, Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission Meeting held on 15 April 2025.^[30]

Ethnic group	All pupils	Proportion of all exclusions/suspensions		Disp ratio	
		Exclusions	Suspensions	Exclusions	Suspensions
Any other Asian background	3.9%	2.8%	2.3%	0.7	0.6
Any other black background	3.0%	10.6%	4.9%	3.5	1.6
Any Other Ethnic Group	5.2%	5.7%	5.0%	1.1	0.9
Any other Mixed background	4.3%	5.0%	4.0%	1.2	0.9
Any other white background	12.4%	5.7%	8.7%	0.5	0.7
Bangladeshi	23.0%	16.3%	13.0%	0.7	0.6
Black African	12.3%	19.9%	19.8%	1.6	1.6
Black Caribbean	2.8%	9.9%	8.2%	3.6	3.0
Chinese	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Gypsy Roma	0.3%	0.0%	0.4%	0.0	1.5
Indian	10.5%	1.4%	2.4%	0.1	0.2
Irish	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0	0.5
Pakistani	11.4%	7.1%	7.9%	0.6	0.7
Traveller of Irish heritage	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0	5.1
White and Asian	1.1%	1.4%	1.2%	1.3	1.1
White and Black African	1.2%	1.4%	1.9%	1.2	1.6
White and Black Caribbean	1.4%	3.5%	5.1%	2.5	3.5
White British	5.2%	7.1%	12.7%	1.4	2.4
Unclassified	1.3%	2.1%	2.3%	1.7	1.9

[30] Please see Page 7 of the above-mentioned report. Please see LB Newham Education, Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission. Meeting of 17 April 2024, Agenda Item 7: Educational Inequality and Disproportionality. Available online at: [ECYP 170425 Education Inequality Disproportionality CYPs Feb 2025.pdf](#) (Accessed 28 October 2025).

[31] Hood, S. et al. (2025). History on Loop. See in particular pages 8-11.

[32] Lewisham Council, (2024). See bibliography.

In addition, at a meeting on 13 November 2025,[33] the Commission heard from Marva Rollins OBE about the Racial Equity Pledge and resources for schools produced by the Haringey Education Partnership[34] as part of their anti-racist governance work. These resources[35] include guidance for Schools, a 'Racial Equity Self-Evaluation Tool', and a checklist to support identification of pupils who are 'Vulnerable to Underachievement', amongst many other resources. The Commission also noted similar work in this regard within LB Newham delivered by [Education4Change](#) and in LB Tower Hamlets under [Global Learning London](#).

Schools play a pivotal point in the development of our children and young people, with potential to improve outcomes (across the life-course) for our Black boys as well as educating all our young residents. The Commission considered the data gaps, the need for disaggregated data, how best inclusive practices can be embedded, and the crucial roles of head teachers and governors. Commission Members heard evidence about the challenges facing certain families in the Borough around the exclusions process, which is not consistently applied. Whilst this inconsistent application of exclusions results from the autonomy of many schools in the Borough, Commission Members felt that more could be done to guide students and their families/carers through the process, with a view to longer-term improved outcomes. The 2025 Runnymede report, 'History on Loop'[36] demonstrated the toll that exclusion processes take on family members and the difficulties that many parents face in advocating for their children in these scenarios.

Through improved consistency in the exclusion process, family support and coordinated advocacy efforts, this is something that can be made more equitable.

Recommendation: Ensure that preventative measures and interventions be implemented at the stage preceding exclusion and that parents/carers are consistently informed at the earliest stage of any exclusion process including when the school begins considering exclusion procedures.

Recommendation: Establish a process for parents and carers to be made aware of their rights including the right to appeal and the recourse available to them. Understanding of these rights must be checked with parents during the process. Recommendation: Identify referral pathways, in line with the existing Youth Safety Strategy, to mentorship and advocacy support both for the young people and their families during the process of school exclusion and ensure information on accessing this support is widely dispersed across schools and family hubs in Newham.

Recommendation: Ensure that Newham Council service representatives attend or provide a detailed report for all pupil permanent exclusion panels involving Black boys to support transparency, consistency, and accountability in decision-making.

[33] Please see LB Newham Relationship Between Black Boys and the Borough Scrutiny Commission. Meeting of 13 November 2025. [Online] Available at: [Agenda for Relationship Between Black Boys and the Borough Scrutiny Commission on Thursday 13th November 2025, 7.00 p.m. – Newham Council](#) (Accessed 17 November 2025).

[34] Haringey Education Partnership, (2025). Racial Equity Pledge 2025-2027. [Online] Available at: [Racial Equity - Haringey Education Partnership](#). (Accessed 21 October 2025).

[35] See resources on page 'How we can support you', Haringey Education Partnership. [Online] Available at: [Racial Equity - Haringey Education Partnership](#). (Accessed 31 October 2025).

[36] Hood et al, (2025). History on Loop. See bibliography.

Pastoral Support and Wrap-Around Care

In the 22 October 2024 scrutiny focus group with faith and community leaders, Members heard that the issues outlined in this report often begin early on in a young person's life. Mental health issues, stereotyping and a sense of hopelessness when trying to change the narrative were outlined as prominent reflections.

A report by Dr Ronald Kessler in 2005 showed that half of all lifetime cases of psychiatric disorders start by age 14 and three-quarters start by age 24. [37] According to Professor Lord Layard of the London School of Economics and Political Science, the biggest single cause in Britain of low wellbeing is mental illness.[38] Disproportionality in prevalence of mental health support and mental health support received for Black men is well-researched and demonstrated in National statistics:

- **Psychosis Prevalence:** Black men are more likely to experience symptoms of psychosis than other ethnic groups, with 3.2% affected compared to 0.3% of White men and 1.3% of Asian men.[39]
- **Detentions Under the Mental Health Act:** In the year ending March 2023, Black individuals were 3.5 times more likely to be detained under the Mental Health Act than White individuals, with 228 detentions per 100,000 people compared to 64 per 100,000 for White individuals.[40]

- **Length of Hospital Stays:** in the UK, the Black male population generally is also over-represented in Hospital Stays. For every 100,000 men receiving mental health care in hospitals, 100 Black men had stays longer than 60 days, compared to 25 White men. A 2025 consultation response by the Runnymede trust highlighted that these statistics continue to persist and worsen and that people of Black, Asian and Minoritised Ethnic background are more likely to encounter the police or criminal justice system as a pathway to care.[41] Greater mental health and wrap-around support might serve to be preventative and improve the outcomes of support provision.

A report submitted by CAMHS in LB Newham to the Relationship Between Black Boys and the Borough Scrutiny Commission for a meeting on 21 November 2024,[42] did not have specific data but revealed that Black boys have lower rates of access to mental health support in Newham. The report noted that the cohort also typically experience longer waiting times for support, in part due to the nature of support requests with a high percentage being for specialist Neurodevelopmental assessments. The report acknowledged the impact of underdiagnosed SEND needs on exclusion rates for Black boys in the Borough. The Commission noted gaps in granular data specific to the cohort which made it difficult to draw conclusions.

[37] Kessler RC, Berglund P, Demler O, Jin R, Merikangas KR, Walters EE, Lifetime prevalence and age-of-onset distributions of DSM-IV disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication. *Arch Gen Psychiatry*. 2005 Jun;62(6):593-602. Dr Kessler is the McNeil Family Professor of Health Care Policy at Harvard Medical School.
[38] Professor Lord Richard Layard of the CEPR at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), "Let's Make Mental Health a Priority". [Online] Available at: <http://voxeu.org/article/origins-happiness>. (Accessed 12 March 2025).
[39] GOV.UK. (2017). Ethnicity Facts and Figures: Psychotic Disorders. [Online] Available at [Psychotic disorders - GOV.UK Ethnicity facts and figures](#). (Accessed 22 October 2025).
[40] GOV.UK. (2024). Detentions under the Mental Health Act. [Online] Available at: [Detentions under the Mental Health Act - GOV.UK Ethnicity facts and figures](#).
[41] Runnymede Trust, (2025). Mental Health Act: Consultation Response. [Online] Available at: <https://www.runnymedetrust.org/publications/mental-health-act> (Accessed 21 October 2025)
[42] Please see LB Newham Relationship Between Black Boys and the Borough Scrutiny Commission. Agenda item 6: The experience and impact of interventions for young Black boys with special educational needs and mental health issues. [Online] Available at: [R4B 211124 NELCAMHSELF - Report Final.pdf](#) (Accessed 28 October 2025).

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Community engagement has driven a project by Newham Talking Therapies at the East London NHS Foundation Trust (ELFT) to support young Black men in the Borough. This work involved a large billboard (pictured above) at Westfield Stratford City and collaboration with University of East London to raise awareness with students. The campaign aimed to highlight the help available to young Black men to make the first step towards seeking support.[43]

There are myriad contributing factors to these statistics including barriers to accessing support. Barriers can include Language barriers, stigma and shame, different ways of understanding mental health across cultures and communities, distrust in healthcare providers, cultural misunderstanding and bias, and a lack of understanding of how racism impacts mental health.[44] Hence, Institutional and structural Racism again play a part in compounding these barriers.

Black men report experiences of institutionalised racism within mental health services, leading to mistrust and reluctance to seek help. A 2020 Race Equality Foundation Report highlighted how negative stereotyping led to unnecessary use of force and mental health issues being missed in police custody.[45] These experiences are further compounded by socioeconomic challenges where structural racism contributes to higher rates of poverty and unemployment amongst Black youth in London,[46] which are linked to poorer mental health outcomes.

The Commission considered that improved support could be facilitated through improved data and understanding of our Black male population, leading to culturally sensitive services: mental health services that are culturally aware and tailored to the specific needs of Black boys and young men.



[43] (And Photo Credit) East London Foundation Trust. (2024). Mental Health Campaign Launched to Support Young Black Men. [Online] Available at: [Mental Health Campaign Launched to Support Young Black Men | East London NHS Foundation Trust](#) (Accessed: 17 November 2025).

[44] See for example: Rethink, Ethnic Minorities and Mental Health, [Online] Available at: [Ethnic minorities and mental health](#) (Accessed 3 November 2025).

[45] Bignall .T et al. (2020). Racial Disparities in mental health: Literature and Evidence Review, at pages 37-38.

[46] See, for example, Trust For London 'Poverty rates by demographic characteristics in London (2019/20, 2022/23, and 2023/24). [Online] Available at: [Poverty by demographics | Trust for London](#) (Accessed 3 November 2025).

This also has a community aspect, as change and improved outcomes will only result through engagement with and the involvement of community leaders and organisations in creating supportive environments that encourage open discussions about mental health. As with many things, prevention is better than cure: Members considered that early intervention is needed, through the implementation of programmes in schools and communities to identify and address mental health issues early, reducing the need for hospitalisation and detention.

The Commission also considered that it is important to understand how intersectionality, particularly at the point of mental health, SEND and neurodivergence and being from a lower income household, compound existing issues faced by young Black boys in Newham. Addressing these disparities requires a collaborative effort from healthcare providers, educators, policymakers, and community members to create an equitable mental health landscape for Black boys and young men in London.

What is happening that is causing the change between Year 6 (primary school) and Years 7-11?

Data on exclusions and suspensions across England, demonstrate that secondary schools accounted for the majority (85%) of exclusions in the year 2023-24.[47] The Commission had conducted several site visits and evidence-gathering sessions which led to a conclusion that crucial turning points occur between Years 6 and 11 that lead to poorer outcomes for Black boys. Adolescence is a difficult transition, but Commission Members considered that the turning point is more complex than attributing difficulties and changes to the challenges of adolescence. In order to identify this turning point

(or sequence of turning points), greater disaggregation of data is needed to build a fuller, more nuanced picture of what is happening. Only this way can solutions be developed. Members considered ways in which support could be provided and considered a pilot scheme, led by Newham Council to understand this transition as well as greater wrap-around support to provide additional pastoral care, attendance monitoring and academic progress tracking. This would also allow for more tailored approaches to solutions that acknowledge that “one size does not fit all” within the cohort of “Black boys”.

Amidst overall trends towards limiting the number of exclusions, there has been growing research into the effectiveness of interventions that are aimed at preventing the need for an exclusion and preventing youth violence. Interventions could include counselling, activities aimed at the development of social-emotional skills and self-regulation, therapeutic techniques, pastoral or academic support mentoring or academic tutoring. Alternatively, a whole-school approach can be taken with a specific focus on restorative practices aimed at reducing conflict. The Youth Endowment Fund[48] has outlined that there is limited UK-based research at present and impact is complex to capture but stresses confidence in the overall and broad impact. The Commission heard from an Assistant Headteacher of a primary school located in the Borough. Ms Ivie Okwuegbuna highlighted the importance of interventions that improve support during school holidays and the role of mentoring and role models as being crucial at this age.

[47] GOV. UK. (2025). Suspensions and Permanent exclusions in England. [Online] Available at: [Suspensions and permanent exclusions in England. Academic year 2023/24 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#) (Accessed 22 October 2025).

[48] See for example: Youth Endowment Fund. (2021). 'Interventions to Prevent School Exclusion'. [Online] Available at: [Interventions to prevent school exclusion | Youth Endowment Fund](#). (Accessed 03 November 2025).

Recommendation: Implement a five-year statistically rigorous pilot programme by September 2026 with a cohort of Black boys in years 7 –11 across two or more selected LB maintained Newham schools to provide pastoral care and behavioural mentoring (e.g. SMILE-ing boys intervention), with support to improve attendance, retention and academic attainment and to reduce exclusion rates, contact with the youth justice system, criminal justice system, and re-offending rates - in line with averages for all LB Newham pupils. This support will require collaboration across council services, schools, NHS services (including CAMHS), the Metropolitan Police Service, criminal justice system and the Voluntary Community and Faith Sector.

It is recommended that LB Newham seek a partner to conduct a research review of this groups' outcomes to assess and demonstrate the impact and effectiveness of the wrap-around model.

It is also recommended that this pilot occur alongside broader wrap-around support improvements for all Black boys in the Borough within the next nine months. To include:

1. Conducting a review of how the pupil premium grant and school pastoral systems are currently utilised to support Black boys in the Borough, monitoring the outcomes of this existing pastoral support, and identifying areas for improvement.
2. Collaborating with School leaders, the Youth Justice Service and the Newham Safety Partnership to develop existing programmes to better support Black boys in the Borough and increase awareness of support on offer.
3. Ensuring timely diagnosis and SEND support provision, where needed for Black boys in the Borough.



Criminal Justice and Youth Offending

In England and Wales, the Youth Justice System deals with children and young people (CYP) aged 10-17 who may have committed a crime, with 10 being the age of criminal responsibility. During the pandemic, a number of crime-related measures for CYP, including offending rates, numbers of arrests, and numbers of children held in custody had fallen, but, even three years on from the pandemic, the Youth Justice System figures had returned to pre-pandemic levels.[49] Government figures show that nationally, arrests of children increased for the second consecutive year in 2022/23 to around 59,000, 9% higher than for the previous year, 2021/2022. First-time entrants to the Youth Justice System increased for the first time in ten years, with 13,743 children and young people cautioned or sentenced in England and Wales. The biggest category (34%) of proven offences by this cohort were violent offences, followed by 12% for motoring offences, and 8% each involving theft/handling, drugs or criminal damage.

In 2022, as part of its work on youth offending, the UK Government had committed to a £300 million funding package to reduce youth crime, and a £5 million fund for crime-cutting sports schemes. The Ministry of Justice had also introduced a youth early intervention programme, providing £56.5 million grant funding over a three-year period to Youth Offending Teams across England and Wales until March 2025. In May 2024, the government launched the first secure school for serious offenders, part of a new approach to youth justice, to prioritise education and healthcare in the rehabilitation of serious young offenders.

As the Commission was closing the meetings of its Phase II work in November 2024, Members noted and welcomed the opening of an inquiry by a Commons Select Committee, the Justice Committee, into ending the cycle of reoffending, with a focus on rehabilitation and resettlement. [50] With incarceration resulting in financial costs to the public purse, as well as the human and societal costs of the trajectory that has led to that point, Commission Members focused on the local Criminal Justice and Youth Offending Services. At the national level, those of Black, Asian and Minoritised Ethnic background (excluding those of white minorities) appear to be over-represented at many stages throughout the Criminal Justice System (CJS), compared with the white ethnic group. The greatest disparity appears at the point of stop and search, custodial remands and prison population. In 2023, across London it was found that there were 32.8 ‘stop and searches’ for every 1,000 Black people and 11.4 for every 1,000-white people.[51] Another aspect also highlighted in the research was the overlap in children and young people between risks of harmful behaviour and victimisation.

Also in 2022, the College of Policing published a “Police Race Action Plan” for improving policing for Black communities.[52] This plan emphasised: a ‘zero-tolerance’ approach to racism; an ‘explain or reform’ approach to disparity, ensuring an understanding of the history policing Black people, trauma and disproportionality; and the importance of a representative workforce and involvement of Black communities in its work and improving

[49] The accredited Youth Justice Statistics for England and Wales for 2023 to 2024 (published 30 January 2025) are available via the Youth Justice Board website. [Online] Available at: [Youth Justice Statistics: 2023 to 2024 - GOV.UK](#). (Accessed 20 March 2025).

[50] See the evidence submitted to the Justice Committee. Parliament. [Justice Committee](#) (2025). Rehabilitation and resettlement: ending the cycle of reoffending. [Online] Available at: [Rehabilitation and resettlement: ending the cycle of reoffending - Committees - UK Parliament](#). (Accessed 15 March 2025). See in particular, the evidence of the AYJ.

[51] Please see UK GOV (2024). ‘Stop and Search’. [Online] Available at: [Stop and search - GOV.UK Ethnicity facts and figures](#) (Accessed 31 October 2025).

[52] College of Policing. (2022). ‘Police Race Action Plan: Improving Policing for Black People’. [Online] Available at: [Police Race Action Plan: Improving policing for Black people](#) (Accessed 17 November 2025).

support to victims. This has translated into four key areas of work surrounding representation in the Police force; addressing over-policing; ensuring involvement and ensuring adequate protection as well as proper support to victims of crime. The Metropolitan Police Service in LB Newham has adopted this strategy and ensured alignment.

Youth Justice Service Review

Analysis of current youth justice interventions

Members received a report containing evidence about the LB Newham Youth Empowerment Service and Youth Justice Service concerning Black boys and young men. The report detailed the Youth Empowerment Service's focus on providing safe, enriching environments with culturally competent staff to foster trust and belonging, alongside initiatives promoting youth voice and addressing racial disparities. Regarding Youth Justice, the report highlighted the overrepresentation of Black youth in the system and described a "Child First", relational approach to interventions, including community partnerships and efforts to tackle systemic disproportionality. Ultimately, the report outlined the Service's aim to understand and improve outcomes for this specific demographic through targeted support and proactive engagement.

Assessment of re-offending rates amongst Black boys in Newham.

Members heard analysis about re-offending rates amongst Black boys in the Borough as well as several key strategies to address the overrepresentation of Black boys in the youth justice system: Acknowledging and Understanding the Overrepresentation: The London Borough of Newham Youth Justice Service recognised that children from a Black heritage background constituted a significantly higher percentage of their caseload

(45.4%) compared to their representation in LB Newham's youth population (23%).^[53] They also noted a higher rate of re-offending amongst this group. This awareness had formed the basis for targeted interventions.

Members have since also received data relating to the LB Newham Youth Empowerment Service LB Newham data that was presented to the Education, Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission on 15 September 2025.^[54] It revealed that 97% of children open to the Youth Justice Service were male and 39% of the boys were of Black African heritage.

Adopting a "Child First" Approach: This approach prioritises seeing young people in contact with Youth Justice Services as "children first; and offenders second". It focuses on understanding and addressing the underlying causes of offending through a child-focused lens.

Implementing a "Relational Approach": The Youth Justice Service delivers a "relational approach" to help young people understand the role of relationships in shaping their experiences and patterns in their thoughts and feelings, and how this has an impact on their behaviour. This approach is based on the idea that strong relationships are fundamental to positive change.

Targeted Funding and Initiatives: LB Newham has benefitted from initiatives providing funding to increase intervention and support models for families, aiming to respond to needs early on. Specifically, the implementation of a Disproportionality in Youth Justice Challenge Fund is a key strategy to tackle systemic issues contributing to this overrepresentation at a local level.

[53] Please see Paragraph 4.1 in LB Newham Relationship Between Black Boys and the Borough Scrutiny Commission Meeting 14 November 2024. Agenda Item 7: Youth empowerment, youth justice, targeted and universal youth provision. [Online] Available at: [Appendix C](#) (Accessed 28 October 2025).

[54] Please see agenda item 8 in LB Newham Education, Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission Meeting 15 September 2025. [Online] Available at: [Youth Safety Update_ECYP Scrutiny_Final.pdf](#). (Accessed 31 October 2025).

Partnerships and Collaborative Projects:

Members heard how the Youth Justice Service (YJS) is involved in collaborative initiatives like the one funded by the Mayor's Office for Police And Crime (MOPAC) to tackle disproportionality, which builds on existing agency actions. The YJS is also working on a project with [REIN](#), [Fight For Peace](#), [Exit Foundation](#), and [Get Real Youth Services](#) to enhance holistic support for children from the Global Majority who have experienced trauma, aiming to prevent their entry into the Youth Justice Service.

Focus on Trusted Adults and Relationships:

Members heard that the Service aimed to address overrepresentation by ensuring tailored interventions and contact with trusted adults who can build strong relationships through the "relational approach".

Cultural Humility and Sensitivity Training:

The Youth Justice Service has focused action on cultural humility/sensitivity training to increase partnership understanding in this area, enabling staff to apply this learning to their frontline practice.

Community Engagement: The Commission heard how the Youth Justice Service has a dedicated Community Champion programme made up of voluntary panel members who engage with the wider community using a Relational Approach. This engagement involved reparation activities, which were helping children to understand the broader impact of their actions and reinforce the positive influence of community representatives. Members noted the Youth Empowerment Service's focus on preventative measures and building positive relationships with young Black boys. This work, less easy to quantify, may indirectly contribute to

reducing overrepresentation in the Youth Justice System, alongside the direct strategies for addressing this overrepresentation.

Members also heard how the work undertaken with young Black boys was directed towards understanding the cultural background and the influence that upbringing and identity have upon them. Members received evidence demonstrating the impact of how society views Black boys and how this has a direct link to their safety and vulnerability. Further, this has been statistically proven to show that Black boys are targeted on many levels, including stereotyping, violence, county lines, policing, exclusion and adultification. An example of such work was illustrated by a project currently at the Stratford Youth Zone, which involved fostering a safe environment that allows Black boys to feel physically and emotionally safe to express a range of feelings.

Commission Members considered benchmarking against other London Boroughs to determine the effectiveness and Value for Money of the Youth Justice Services. However, beyond England and Wales, the Commission considered contemporary youth justice systems and profound philosophical divergences in addressing juvenile delinquency, ranging from punitive incarceration models to innovative rehabilitative frameworks. There are dramatic disparities between nations employing evidence-based interventions and those reliant on custodial approaches. Northern European exemplars like Finland^[55] and Norway^[56] report youth incarceration rates well below 5% through systemic investments in early intervention.^[57] Conversely, jurisdictions that prioritise punishment continue to grapple with recidivism rates exceeding 50%, underscoring the human and economic costs of failed interventions.

[55] Impact Justice, (2019). Building Justice Project: Reflections on the Finish Justice System. [Online] Available at: [Building Justice Project: Reflections on the Finnish justice system - Impact Justice](#). (Accessed 21 October 2025).

[56] Austevik, T. J and Schwarz, L. (2023). Punishment or Rehabilitation? Comparing Two Countries – Is Norway Succeeding where the UK is Failing? [Online] Available at: [Punishment or Rehabilitation? Comparing Two Countries – Is Norway Succeeding where the UK is Failing?](#) (Accessed 21 October 2025).

[57] Restorative Justice 101, (2025). Reducing youth crime and child incarceration around the World. [Online] Available at: [Reducing youth crime and child incarceration around the world – Restorative Justice 101](#) (Accessed 22 October 2025).

Members particularly noted a shift towards decarceration within the UK, accelerated in 2024 with Scotland's landmark prohibition on under-18 incarcerations under the Children Act and a redirection of funds towards secure care homes and mental health services.[58] This bears monitoring as we benchmark against other authorities.

Recommendation: Use results and data derived from the HMIP inspection of Youth Justice Services to identify areas for improvement and to continue the journey to reduce the contact of young Black boys with the Criminal Justice system within LB Newham.

Recommendation: Provide an annual, detailed review on the effectiveness of all early intervention and prevention projects to guide their continuation and further development, including the report of the 'SMILE-ing boys' project at the projects' culmination, to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Pathways to Criminalisation

The link between school exclusions and youth offending

In the United Kingdom, a child can be suspended or permanently excluded from a school on disciplinary grounds for behaviour in and outside of their school settings. This step is usually taken in response to repeated disruptive behaviour or breaches of school rules or it may be taken in order to safeguard other children or staff. All suspensions and exclusions must be legal, take into account the school's duty of care to the child and must be recorded formally.[59]

Nevertheless, across the United Kingdom, exclusion practices vary considerably. Whilst Scotland has in practice (if not officially) abolished permanent exclusion, around 11 in every 10,000 students were permanently excluded in England in 2022/23[60] whereas there was a single permanent exclusion in Scotland amongst almost 700,000 students in the same period.[61] In Northern Ireland and Wales, around 1 in 15,000[62] and 0.9 in 1,000 students[63] were excluded (respectively). Furthermore, there are additional variations at the local level because local authorities and schools can set their own exclusion policies and practices, adding further variations in exclusion practice.

When children are excluded (in a suspension or permanently), they lose crucial learning time, which has an impact in other areas of their lives. Any exclusion isolates a child from positive school environments, structure and role models, and increases the likelihood of falling behind academically, which can fuel frustration, low self-esteem and disengagement from mainstream

[58] Scottish Government. (2024). No under 18s in Young Offenders Institutions. (02 September).[Online] Available at: [No under 18s in Young Offenders Institutions - gov.scot](#) (Accessed 21 October 2025).

[59] [1] GOV.UK, (2024). Statutory Guidance: School Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions. [Online] Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion>. (Accessed 21 October 2025).

[60] GOV.UK, (2025). Suspensions and Permanent exclusions in England. [Online] Available at: [Suspensions and permanent exclusions in England. Academic year 2022/23 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#) (Accessed 21 October 2025).

[61] ADR UK, (2024). Data Insight: Understanding exclusions in Scottish secondary schools. [Online] Available at [Data Insight: Understanding exclusions in Scottish secondary schools - ADR.UK](#). (Accessed 21 October 2025).

[62] Northern Ireland Department of Education, (2024). Pupil Suspensions and expulsions in Northern Ireland 2022/23. [Online] Available at [Pupil Suspensions and Expulsions in Northern Ireland 2022 23 Official Statistics in Development.pdf](#). (Accessed 21 October 2025). At page 15.

[63] Welsh Government, (2024). Permanent and fixed-term exclusions from schools: September 2022 to August 2023. [Online] Available at [Permanent and fixed-term exclusions from schools: September 2022 to August 2023 \[HTML\].| GOV.WALES](#) (Accessed 21 October 2025).

systems. Excluded children are usually sent to alternative provision educational settings, which are often under-resourced. Nationally, only 4% of young people in alternative provision schools achieve a Grade 4 (pass) in English and Maths GCSEs.[64]

Exclusions have a demonstrable long-term impact on the young person affected, their family or carer and their wider support network. As a consequence of exclusions, excluded children may spend more time unsupervised in their communities and with limited contact with 'trusted adults'[65] which may increase vulnerability to exploitation, especially by gangs and criminal networks. Further, exclusion has been associated with a significant increase in the risk of involvement in serious violence and other forms of offending.[66] Given that Black children aged 10-17 made up 15% of stop and searches in 2023/24, [67] excluded Black boys are highly likely to encounter law enforcement while out of school, which can reinforce feelings of exclusion, injustice and distrust.

Changes in expectations and stereotypes by others, coupled with a shift in self-perception following exclusion were highlighted in case studies across the History on Loop report by the Runnymede Trust, as contributing to a repeating cycle. The effects can be chronic and extend to periods out of employment, poor mental and physical health, and homelessness. The report also highlighted the complexity of the impact of exclusions on the child's family and support network through various case studies that highlight the impact on employment, stress and mental health and the toll of being the advocate for their child in these scenarios.[68]

In February 2025, the UK DfE issued updated guidance on arranging alternative provision (AP) for children who cannot access mainstream education due to exclusion, illness, or other reasons. This updated guidance outlines statutory responsibilities, best practices, and funding for local authorities and schools when placing children in Alternative Provision.

As a consequence, local authorities must ensure suitable, full-time education for children who cannot attend school (Education Act 1996, Section 19). Schools must arrange education from the sixth day of a suspension. The AP must be safe, high-quality, and tailored to each child's needs, whether academic, behavioural, or emotional. Providers should meet educational standards and have safeguarding measures in place. Schools should work with AP providers to prevent exclusions, support behaviour management, and help children transition back to mainstream education or into post-16 pathways.

Local authorities are required to fund Alternative Provision via its high-needs budgets, top-up funding, and school contributions. Schools and councils must monitor placements and ensure that the AP is both sustainable and effective.

These AP settings can include pupil referral units (PRUs), Further Education (FE) colleges, vocational training, remote education, and unregistered providers (which must meet local standards). Full-time education is expected, but part-time arrangements can be made where necessary. The objective is to ensure the best outcomes for children and young people, so collaboration between schools, local authorities, health services,

[64] Benyon. K. (2022). Long-term outcomes of pupils who experience alternative provision, [Online] Available at [Long-term outcomes of pupils who experience alternative provision - FFT Education Datalab](#). (Accessed 21 October 2025).

[65] Youth Justice Resource Hub, (2025). Ending the exclusion pipeline to youth justice, [Online] Available at <https://yjresourcehub.uk/ending-the-exclusion-pipeline-to-youth-justice/>. (Accessed 21 October 2025).

[66] Cornish. R and Brennan. I, (2025). Exclusion from School and Risk of Serious Violence: A Target Trial Emulation Study. [Online] Available at <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azaf015>. (Accessed 21 October 2025).

[67] Youth Endowment Fund, (2025). Racial Disproportionality in violence affecting children and young people. [Online] Available at: [YEF_Racial_Disproportionality_FINAL.pdf](#) (Accessed 21 October 2025). At page 5.

[68] Hood et al, (2025). History on Loop.

and social care teams is key, especially when the children concerned have Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs) or additional needs. The emphasis is on early intervention, safeguarding and re-integrations. It is too early to determine the impact of this updated guidance as a framework for ensuring that every child receives a suitable education, regardless of their circumstances.

Influence of socio-economic factors

The Commission found that poverty acted as a driver at key points, during school years and after, including as a driver towards vulnerability. Members considered research which indicates that, due to systemic and structural racism, boys from Black and Global Majority backgrounds fare less well than their white peers and this was evident across a range of issues, including their levels of employment. Young Black men cumulatively bear the impact of lower educational expectations which often lead into lower employer expectations about their potential, biased recruitment processes, as well as unequal pay and prospects for progression. Commission Members heard lived experience of boys describing vulnerability to grooming and gang-culture as a result of socio-economic factors and peer pressure. Hence the Commission saw that the issues experienced by Black boys in the Borough do not exist in isolation of one another but are interconnected.

A study of homelessness experiences in London demonstrated stark disproportionality experienced by young Black people in London and the broader impact this has on mental health, education and employment prospects. New Horizons Youth Centre Charity, reported that in 2023,[69] 55 percent of those approaching the

charity for support were from Black communities and noted the institutional racism that people they support have faced when dealing with councils, landlords, social care services, education services and employers. Instability in housing was also reflected in research by the GLA which demonstrated that between 2009 and 2019, people of Black heritage had consistently experienced higher rates of social renting; lower likelihood of moving to ownership; a higher proportion of households living in homes below the official Decent Homes Standard; and a higher proportion of overcrowding and higher levels of dissatisfaction with housing situation.[70] These patterns have been demonstrated to still hold true in 2025 with the Resolution Foundation also highlighting that Black communities spend roughly double the percentage of income spent on housing than White British Adults.[71] The trends across London and experienced in Newham inevitably compound the interconnected issues highlighted throughout the Commission's report.

Young Black people have been found to have the highest Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) rate in the UK in 2024, at 15.2%.[72] As they age beyond the NEET category, young Black men face some of the highest unemployment rates in London – in 2020 33% of young Black men were unemployed, as compared to 15% of young White men.[73]

[69] Ajai-Thomas. C. (2024). Young Black People's Experiences of Homelessness in London: Homelessness and Black and Minoritised Ethnic Communications in the UK: a Knowledge and Capacity Building Programme. Heriot-Watt University. [Online] Available at: [Young_Black_People_s_experiences_of_homelessness_in_London_April_2024_for_publication.pdf](#) (Accessed 17 November 2025).

[70] New Horizon Youth Centre. (2024). Black Homelessness in London Has Surged in Past Year, Figures Indicate. [Online] Available at: [Black homelessness in London has surged - New Horizon Youth Centre](#) (Accessed 17 November 2025).

[71] Gleeson. J. (2022). 'Housing Research Note 8: Housing and race equality in London: An analysis of secondary data'. Greater London Authority: Housing and Land. [Online] Available at: [Housing and race equality in London: An analysis of secondary data](#) (Accessed 17 November 2025).

[72] Resolution Foundation. (2025). Heritage and Home: Investigating Ethnic Inequalities in Housing affordability. [Online] Available at: [Heritage and home • Resolution Foundation](#) (Accessed 17 November 2025).

[73] Youth Futures Foundation. (2025). Trends in young people not in education, employment or training. [Online] Available at: [NEETS-TRENDS-ANALYSIS-Q2-2025.pdf](#) (Accessed 21 October 2025). At page 3.

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As they age beyond the NEET category, young Black men face some of the highest unemployment rates in London – in 2020 33% of young Black men were unemployed, as compared to 15% of young White men.[74]

Across London, it has been found that Young Black men are between two and four times more likely to be unemployed than young White men. A report by Trust for London reviewed the ‘Moving-on-up’ project in Newham and Brent – a collaborative project with local employers and organisations to improve employment outcomes for young Black men between ages 16 and 24.

In Brent it was found that 286 men participated and 136 gained employment, meanwhile in Newham 193 men participated and 41 gained employment. While Newham received less funding than Brent for the project, the report could not identify the reason for the lower proportion of young Black men in Newham getting jobs.[75] In the year 2023-2024, Trust for London also found that Newham has the highest overall unemployment rate in London at 7.9%.



[74] Greater London Authority, (2020). Voices of the Underrepresented. [Online] Available at:

https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/voices_of_the_underrepresented_fa.pdf. (Accessed 21 October 2025). At page 12.

[75] Culpitt, S et al. (2024). Final Evaluation Report: Moving on Up Collective Impact Partnerships. [Online] Available at: [Trust for London - Moving on Up Report](#). (Accessed 3 November 2025).

Building Equity Through Partnerships

The Commission found cause for optimism in the intent and ambition to do better for this cohort of Newham residents. The key is in connection and ensuring that pockets of activity are not siloes but rather nodes in a connected web of activity across the Borough. Our site visits demonstrated the importance of humility, listening and connectedness in building new or maintaining pre-existing partnerships that have equity at their centre.

Ensuring shared values and ambitions in action is a way to achieve this, through intentional activities at the micro/hyper-local level. Systems change will not happen overnight but needs to be founded on hearing the voices of our Black children and young people combined with partnership working in order to scaffold that change. This starts in the short-term through community-centred listening and meaningful measures in order to result in long-term change.

Newham Council has made commitments and steps toward long-term change in the [Building a fairer Newham](#) plan, previous work of the [Tackling Racism, Inequality and Disproportionality \(TRID\)](#), and in establishing the [Newham Race Equality Alliance](#). The commission heard of creative approaches towards holistic support provision, such as the SMILE-ing boys project and the 'Lift as we Climb' workshops outlined below in this section, that represent examples of how such partnerships can positively impact the lives of young Black boys in the Borough.

Role of the Voluntary Sector and Community Engagement

The Commission acknowledged the role and work of the third sector in supporting Black boys in the Borough.

Commission Members met local organisations across the Borough to gain better understanding current support provision and collaboration. Members heard of the positive work of local organisations in supporting young people across the Borough. [Rights and Equalities in Newham \(REIN\)](#) delivers casework, youth programmes and are committed to developing partnerships; [Fight for Peace](#) delivers programmes for young people, promote peace through this work and develop partnerships; [Exit Foundation](#) supports young people to leave gang involvement and violence.

Across these meetings and site visits, the Commission explored the broader impacts of living in poverty, including the social visibility of disparities in income that is felt and seen by many of the young Black boys with whom these organisations work. These organisations also provided insight, through testimony and lived experience, into how home dynamics and family expectations have an impact on relationships between young people involved in violence and their families.

Thus, the provision of an alternative place to turn, for young people who are seeking to make a change was shown as crucial. The Commission heard from the Exit Foundation about the lived experience of the organisation's director and how this informs their work with young people.

The Commission conducted an Inquiry Focus Group with faith and community leaders on 22 October 2024 where they heard of the key importance of safe spaces for young people to turn to and challenges faced by the sector. Discussion explored how competitive funding environments and a need to focus on problems, rather than solutions, were key challenges faced by the sector. The Commission heard that the necessity and urgency of organisations' work in this context alongside broader resource difficulties, has made partnership work difficult. The Commission heard how these organisations have established relationships with these communities. There was a consensus that synergy and partnerships between community organisations within LB Newham would be beneficial to services, especially in terms of developing solutions to address underlying problems.

The Commission also heard how partnerships are already a key priority for organisations such as REIN, Fight for Peace and the Exit Foundation. From 2021 to 2024, the "Act-as-1 Partnership" funded by the Mayor of London's Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) supported the development of grassroots organisations who support Young People in Newham and facilitated greater knowledge sharing and capacity building.[76]

This partnership was able to support around 7,000 young people across three years. Recently, a collaborative project 'Newham Youth Partnership' led by LB Newham Youth Services has begun.

The partnership involves 47 local organisations, charities alongside LB Newham services, and aims to facilitate meaningful collaboration.

- **The 'Lift as we Climb'** workshops running from October 2025 to February 2026 are an example of how the partnership can work in practice. The Exit Foundation and LB Newham Youth Empowerment Service will be delivering a workshop series covering employability, exploitation awareness, safety in the community, and identity and self-esteem.

Commission Members identified opportunities for greater synergy and collaboration between local organisations, educational institutions, governance bodies and local employers to strengthen the support available and to learn collectively and continuously from the lived experience of Black boys in the Borough. Positive examples of collaboration exist widely across mental health support for young Black men, where innovative and creative approaches to collaboration have provided holistic support.

Examples of Partnership Working in Other London Boroughs:

- **LB Harrow Mental Health Services**[77] has been working in collaboration with Finding Rhythms, a music creation charity, to re-write ways of engagement with young Black men. Led by Dr Shona Herron, Clinical Psychologist, three 12-week projects were completed, with a total of 27 men taking part to create albums of original music.
- **LB Islington Council's Young Black Men and Mental Health four-pillar programme**,[78] in collaboration with the NHS, which was designed to improve mental health wellbeing for young Black men. Investment funding of

[76] See more on page 20: Fight for Peace (2024). Trustees Annual Report 2024. [Online] Available at: [Annual-Report-2025-1.pdf](#) (Accessed 3 November 2025).

[77] Harrow Council (2024). 'Collaborative Project Wraps Up in Harrow'. [Online] Available at: [Collaborative project wraps up in Harrow, creating new opportunities for young black men](#). [Accessed 9 October 2025].

[78] Islington Council (2022). 'Young Black Men and Mental Health Programme'. [Online] Available at: [Young Black Men and Mental Health Programme | Islington Council](#). [Accessed 9 October 2025]. See in particular pillar 3: the Barbers Round Chair Project.

- £1.6 million was obtained to help create a better future for young Black men and boys and support the council and NHS efforts to tackle inequality. The three-year programme takes a ‘full picture’, holistic look at mental health issues among young Black men in Islington, with the aims of improving personal mental health and wellbeing, aspirations, and life opportunities while reducing exclusions. In particular, the Barber Round Chair project is an innovative example of engaging the local community to collectively support a broader goal of creating safe spaces for young Black men.

Employer partnerships in LB Newham

The Commission received information from LB Newham Youth Empowerment Service regarding paid work experience opportunities in the report to the Commission for the meeting of 14 November 2025. Projects with West Silvertown Foundation and Shipman Youth Zone were highlighted. There exist many models of employment support for targeted groups through corporate partnerships. The LB Newham team, ‘Our Newham’ led on the delivery of the [Moving on Up](#) project and facilitated employer engagement across the Borough to increase employability support and opportunities available to young Black men. This project involved partnership working with the [East London Business Alliance](#), [Create Jobs](#), [West Ham United](#), [Eagles London](#) and is sponsored by [Trust for London](#), City Bridge Trust – Demonstrating successful engagement of local businesses and employers both for funding and opportunities. Similarly, the Fight for Peace organisation held various industry insight events partnership with employers.[79] LB Newham has shown ongoing commitment to such initiatives through the work of the Inclusive Economy and ‘Our Newham’ teams which have laid the foundations for ongoing meaningful engagement of employers.

Recommendation:

Ensure that Newham Council explores grant funding and provides support to the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector, schools and governors in order to offer targeted support to Black boys in the Borough, with an annual report to the overview and Scrutiny Committee (e.g. in June).

Recommendation:

Ensure that Newham Council’s Inclusive Economy directorate explores and develops targeted collaborations with local employers to support the development of routes to work experience, employability support and employment opportunities for Black boys in the Borough.

Governance and Policy Implementation

How schools and local government can collaborate on systemic change
The Commission considered the unique positions of schools and local government to effect systemic change. Development and implementation of Borough-wide equity strategies setting clear targets for reducing exclusions and raising attainment are possible at this micro-hyper local level. This would also improve wellbeing for Black boys. The Commission also found that the unique position of our schools, primary and secondary, to monitor progress was being insufficiently harnessed. Additionally, local authorities have a wealth of information about residents, which in a data-driven, algorithmic age is a resource to be developed and harnessed too. The Commission at several junctures during its inquiries noted the lack of nuances in the datasets being gathered and/or presented to the Commission. This included data from which our Black boys were absent, allowing insufficient interrogation of the data as well as an inability to conclude from or rely on the data.

Recommendations for systemic change have been highlighted in the 2025 Runnymede Trust report, 'History on Loop',^[80] which found that disproportionate exclusions and mis-characterisations of young Black boys have hindered access to much-needed SEND support needs. Hence, proactive approaches that centre culturally appropriate, early interventions are highlighted as integral to facilitating change. The Runnymede Trust outlines that this requires coordinated efforts from schools, Local Authorities, community groups and the various services that a child may be interacting with. The Commission has heard of the important work of existing projects delivered by the likes of the Exit Foundation, REIN, Fight for Peace and the work of the Turnaround project in Youth Justice services.

Going forward, strategies and policies that build on these efforts, learn from those with lived experience, and encourage collaboration will be essential to preventing exclusions and ensuring accessible SEND support.

Complexity of 'Black Boys' as a category

The Commission also concluded that the grouping, "Black boys" has limitations for policy development and implementation in its lack of reflection of the nuances within that grouping. In a scrutiny focus group meeting with community and faith leaders on 22 October 2024, the Commission heard of the need for disaggregated data for this cohort. It was highlighted that this data would support both council services and community organisations to deliver targeted and focused support, tailored to the needs of the young people in the Borough. Outcomes vary, based on country of origin, migration history, class, income, religion and languages spoken at home. "Black boys" as a cohort denotes Black Caribbean, Black African, Mixed/Dual Heritage and Black Other or misclassified groups. "Black boys" is therefore a mosaic term, not a homogenous grouping, as the following will demonstrate:

- Black Caribbean: this grouping may include people of multi-generational British background (and Windrush legacy), with origins from Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Grenada and Saint Lucia. This grouping of people often faces high exclusion, is over-represented in our Youth Justice System and disproportional educational outcomes.
- Black African: this grouping of people is composed of recent migrants to the UK as well as those born in the UK. Africa as a continent is composed of 54 countries and a sample of those countries includes Egypt, Nigeria, Ghana, Morocco, Somalia, Eritrea, Democratic Republic of Congo, Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone and Sudan. Using 'African' as a grouping has limitations. For example, West African countries, like Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone, vary in cultures, languages, religions and immigration to the UK. All these contribute to greatly varied experiences and outcomes.
- Mixed Heritage: this is a fast-growing group of people, with unique identity and inclusion challenges. It encompasses people of mixed backgrounds such as Black African and White British, and Black Caribbean and White British backgrounds although heritage and identity can often be more complex than these examples.
- Black Other or misclassified groups: this could include North African (Moroccan, Algerian, Egyptian), Arab-African boys (Sudanese, Somali) who can experience anti-Blackness and Islamophobia, with a variety of migration statuses. Some of this group may identify as or be categorised in data as "Black", others are not.

The Commission considered therefore that a "one size fits all" approach is not fit for purpose. We can ask our young people how they identify. Unless we can see these boys at our local level, we cannot tailor our approaches and thus make the

[80] Hood et al, (2025), at pp. 83-84.

changes necessary to improve their outcomes. Schools are uniquely placed to collate the information AND target the individual boy. As a local authority, Newham Council is also uniquely placed to ensure consistency across the Borough and collate a disaggregated, transparent data system which would assist with monitoring progress by ethnicity and gender. This would also enable greater understanding of intersectionality, which has been identified as important in understanding educational outcomes.[81] Combined, this can assist in setting clear targets for reducing exclusions, raising attainment and improving wellbeing and outcomes for Black boys.

Policies that support inclusivity and reduce barriers to success

The Commission considered the importance of data sensitive to the multitudes contained within the term, “Black boys”. Commission Members also examined a study on the longitudinal data from the United States, which tracked nearly the entire population between 1989 and 2015, and offered compelling insight into the intergenerational experiences of different racial groups, with parallels for the U.K.[82] It reinforced what we discovered in our evidence-gathering from the Black boys themselves who shared their lived experiences with us: that race continues to shape life chances in profound ways. The U.S. data showed that, Black Americans faced (and still face) persistent structural barriers that limit their mobility. Black men, in particular, are significantly more likely to experience downward mobility and are less likely to rise in income compared to their white counterparts. Strikingly, these disparities remained even when accounting for parental income. This research indicated that typical explanations, such as family structure, education level, or even innate ability, did not account for

the income gap between Black and white men; this was borne out by our own findings in the UK some eight years later. Instead, it seemed clear that differences in employment rates, wages, and broader societal conditions were at the root.

Allowing for different cultural and societal structures when comparing the U.S. and the U.K., the Commission was nevertheless struck by one of this paper’s most concerning findings - that these disparities existed even for Black boys raised in the same neighbourhoods as white boys. In 99% of neighbourhoods, Black boys had lower incomes in adulthood than white boys from similar family backgrounds. And although outcomes improved for all children in low-poverty areas, the gap between Black and white boys was often even wider in such places.

The few neighbourhoods where Black and white boys achieved more equal outcomes tended to share certain features: low poverty, low levels of racial bias, and notably, higher presence of Black fathers. Boys who moved into these areas earlier in life did better, economically and socially. For the Commission, these U.S. findings underscored for us the importance of policies and actions that did more than focus narrowly on class or locality. To make real change, interventions must address race explicitly, target the unique challenges facing Black boys and men, and build the conditions that enable true intergenerational mobility, across all neighbourhoods, not just a select few. As a campaigning council, there are lessons to be learnt.

[81] Andrews, J, et al. (2017), Closing the Gap, Education Policy Institute. At page 38.

[82] Chetty et al (2018). This paper was the result of a collaboration between scholars at Stanford University, Harvard University and the U.S. Census Bureau.

LB Newham 'SMILE-ing Boys' Project



Photo Credit: Photography by Kay Rufai as part of the LB Newham commissioned SMILE-ing Boys Project.
With Permission from participants and LB Newham Turnaround service officers

At a meeting on 13 November 2025, the Commission heard of positive outcomes from a project delivered by the Turnaround team within the Youth Justice Service at LB Newham in partnership with the artist and facilitator [Kay Rufai](#). Kay Rufai's SMILE-ING BOYS immersive creative project was initially created as a direct response to the rise in violence, criminalisation and stop and search practices affecting global majority communities; it aims to provide tailored mental health and well-being support through various workshops. After positive results across London and in the United States, LB Newham's Turnaround project, as part of Early intervention services,

invited Kay Rufai to facilitate the project with two cohorts of young Black boys in Newham.

The project involved an eight-week programme designed to support boys from a Black heritage to challenge perceptions and stereotypes through a series of photography, poetry and discussion-based art workshops. In Newham, the first two cohorts took place at EKO Pathways School and Tunmarsh Pupil Referral Unit, with a third cohort planned for 2026.

Impact of the Project

The programme supported 12 children from various backgrounds who were being educated in Pupil Referral Units or Alternative Provision in LB Newham at the time. The outcomes of the programme demonstrated success in reducing NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) rates following the project and Officers showcased tangible examples of positive engagement with work experience and children progressing on to post-16 education, including Sixth Form.

- **Trust in Services and Newham Council:** The feedback from parents has been overwhelmingly positive. Feedback from the boys demonstrates a shift in their trust of LB Newham and the Youth Justice Service.
- **Improved Educational Outcomes:** One of the boys is now studying in a sixth form setting, something that would have been difficult to achieve from the starting point of being in Alternative Provision/Pupil Referral Unit. Another participant completed work experience with the Reset Team at LB Newham.
- **Involvement in LB Newham Community:** Two of the boys attended LB Newham's Full Council meeting on 28 April 2025. They met Mayor Rokhsana Fiaz, supported the smooth running of the event, and expressed interest in attending future Council meetings.

Participatory Art Exhibition:

Crucially the project involved discussing how to celebrate Blackness, in all its nuance. As part of the project, this culminated in Kay Rufai's photography of the boys smiling, the aim of which is to visually counter the often-criminalised presentation of Black boys in the media. Over 40 people attended a joint exhibition at the Shipman Youth Zone, where family, friends, and professionals were invited to celebrate the achievements of the participants.

“It felt like people cared about us having a good time and learning something too’ ”

(Photos and Quotes reproduced with permission from the LB Newham Turnaround Service Newsletter)



Learning from the Project

- **The importance of the journey:** Officers involved in the delivery of the project highlighted the importance of viewing the ‘outcomes’ of this project as the journey of the project itself and the impact of this journey on the young Black boys, as well as the learning and reflections derived from it.
- **Understanding the Nuance of Blackness:** Officers spoke about the hesitancy and reluctance of some boys to engage in the project as boys expressed not feeling ‘Black enough’ or their self-identification differed from their expectations of who constituted the intervention’s ‘target group’. Respecting and acknowledging the complexities of these young boys’ identity was recognised as crucial. However, officers highlighted how effective facilitation of workshops on expression and celebrating identity were able to encourage the young boys’ authentic expression.
- **Positive Affirmations and Role Models:** Reflecting on the project, officers shared a video of an interaction between Kay Rufai and one of the participants to demonstrate the use of positive affirmations to disrupt negative narratives that the boys may hear elsewhere. Officers particularly highlighted the importance of Kay Rufai in presenting as an alternative role model for the boys and demonstrating the joy of expression of one’s individuality.

“I never realised there was a service like this”

“It doesn’t feel like Youth Justice, it was just fun”

(Photos and Quotes reproduced with permission from LB Newham Turnaround Service)



03

**Section 3:
Recommendations
and Conclusions**

Recommendations

All stakeholders in the Borough must work together. This is consistent with our “whole council, one borough” approach, so that all areas in Newham Council and beyond play their part in ensuring that outcomes for our Black boys and young men improve. This builds on the recommendations from our Phase I Report and recognises the strength and diversity of collaborative working beyond our council services with organisations and institutions which also have a vested interest in seeing our Black boys truly thrive. The Phase II Report also aligns with Newham Council’s corporate priorities, as contained within ‘Building a Fairer Newham’, including that we are a council committed to campaigning on behalf of our residents.

Whilst sadly much remains to be done, the Commission found cause for optimism in the intent and ambition to do better for this cohort of Newham residents, that conversations might transform into action and results.

Summary of findings

A central finding is that little progress has been made in improving outcomes for Black boys and men over several decades.[83] Despite LB Newham’s significant diversity, stark and disproportionately negative outcomes persist for young Black boys and men across various areas of life.

- **Systemic and Structural Inequalities:** Data consistently shows these young men are more likely to face issues like racial profiling, low school expectations, permanent exclusion, housing instability, and mental health stigma, forming a complex web of disadvantage. These challenges reflect broader systemic issues, but their local impact in the London Borough of Newham is urgent due to the Borough’s significant Black youth population. Systemic and structural racism means Black boys fare less well than their white peers across a range of issues.
- **Education:** The Achievement Gap for Black boys is rooted in historic experiences, current systemic inequalities, biases, and resource disparities.[84] Targeted interventions are needed, particularly for those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Disproportionate school exclusions for Black Caribbean students are a persistent issue, linked to negative long-term outcomes like lower academic achievement, limited employment, and increased vulnerability to crime. Concerns exist regarding curriculum inclusivity, the presence of policing in schools,[85] and the need for greater teacher diversity and racial literacy. Concerns around the levels of undiagnosed neurodivergence and SEND for this cohort are also a persistent issue. The time between Year 6 (primary) and Years 7-11 is critical, with outcomes declining sharply. Careers advice often starts too late (age 15),

[83] See Andrews, J. et al. (2017), and Hood, Et al. (2025).

[84] BBC (2021). Subnormal: A British Scandal. (20 May 2021). [Online] Available via IPlayer: [BBC One - Subnormal: A British Scandal](#) (Accessed 26 April 2025). With thanks to Petra Stephenson for highlighting this programme.

[85] Hood et al. (2025), at page 28.

when young people may already be disengaged; it needs to begin much earlier (Year 7). Wrap-around support and early interventions in schools is needed.

- **Criminal Justice and Policing:** Black, Asian and Minoritised Ethnic groups are over-represented at many stages throughout the Criminal Justice System nationally, especially at the point of stop and search, custodial remands, and prison population. This over-representation holds true within LB Newham. Within Newham's Youth Justice Service caseload, **children from a Black heritage background constitute a significantly higher percentage (45.4%)** compared to their representation in the Borough's youth population (23%),^[86] and there is a higher rate of re-offending amongst this group. There is a **clear link between school exclusions and increased vulnerability** to exploitation by criminal networks, higher rates of anti-social behaviour, violence, and offending. Though there has been impressive work by Superintendent Lucky Singh and his team, police interactions with young people, including stop-and-search, are particularly sensitive areas requiring high standards of fairness, respect, and proportionality. Many young people involved with the criminal justice system are neurodivergent, and their behaviours can be misinterpreted, leading to unnecessary escalations. Whilst initiatives like Superintendent Singh's "Policing With Compassion" pilot ^[87] aim to improve interactions and understanding, particularly regarding neurodivergence, questions remain about the broader culture of the Metropolitan Police Service and whether these efforts merely address issues that should already be part of everyday policing under the public sector equality duty.

The fundamental reality is that disadvantage often starts from birth, and the criminal justice system can perpetuate it.

- **Employment and Socio-economics:** Poverty acts as a driver of disadvantage both during school and after. Young Black men cumulatively bear the impact of lower educational and employer expectations, biased recruitment processes, and unequal pay/progression. Young Black men face some of the highest unemployment rates in London. Challenges exist regarding young people's work readiness (CVs, timeliness, behaviour). There is a need for greater awareness of job opportunities and how to access them, as traditional communication methods like newsletters do not reach young people, and personal networks (social capital) are crucial for obtaining information. Unpaid work experience poses significant challenges for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds who cannot afford to work without pay, potentially impacting their benefits.
- **Mental Health and Wellbeing:** Mental health issues are significant, with research indicating that many lifetime cases begin in adolescence. Under-diagnosis and lower rates of access to mental health services are highlighted as particular issues for Black boys. Supporting families of young people, especially those involved in the justice system, is recognised as important, and Family involvement has been highlighted as important to interventions. However, many wrap-around support services have been cut or are at risk.
- **Data and Understanding:** A crucial finding is the **significant gaps in data** across various organisations, particularly data granular enough to specifically address the experiences and outcomes within the cohort of "Black boys" as a broad heterogenous category.

[86] Please see paragraph 4.1 in LB Newham Relationship Between Black Boys and the Borough Scrutiny Commission, Meeting, 14 November 2024. Agenda Item 7: Youth empowerment, youth justice, targeted and universal youth provision. [Online] Available at: [Youth Empowerment](#) (Accessed 28 October 2025).

[87] Please see LB Newham Relationship Between Black Boys and the Borough Scrutiny Commission, Meeting, 21 November 2024. Agenda Item 5: Community Safety Partnership and the Metropolitan Police Service Appendix B. [Online] Available at: [Business Case](#) (Accessed 31 October 2025).

- **Pathways and Solutions:** Longer-term solutions require collaborative partnership working, especially with the third sector, and changed mindsets within institutions and the community. Systems change must be founded on hearing the voices of Black children and young people, combined with partnership working. Whilst significant challenges remain, the Commission found cause for optimism in the intent and ambition to do better amongst the Borough's local organisations and institutions, highlighting pockets of passion and activity. Key areas for intervention identified include strengthening partnerships between schools, voluntary organisations, and local government to build equity. With a key area of focus being on facilitating advocacy support throughout the exclusion process for young people and families, as well as building on existing mentorship and holistic support projects such as the SMILE-ing boys' programme. Leveraging corporate social responsibility from large employers and proactively asking them how they will address local issues is strongly suggested and, where it is already happening, firmly encouraged. The importance of mentorship, role models, and counteracting the perception of "easy money" (usually via criminality) by highlighting pathways to success is noted.

Our report concludes with a call to action for all stakeholders – including council services, schools, parents, NHS, Metropolitan Police Service, local employers, voluntary and community sector organisations and government at all levels – to work together to implement changes and improve outcomes. Finally, our report and its findings underscore that addressing the barriers faced by our Black boys benefits the wider community. Where recommendations concern schools and educational institution, recommendations are primarily targeted at Newham's maintained schools, and where appropriate Newham Council is recommended to use its influence and authority with the family of schools operated by education trusts.

Recommendations to the Mayor and Cabinet:

1. Disaggregated data:

Throughout this report it has been noted that gaps in data concerning Black boys in the Borough have hindered analysis specific to experiences in Newham and hence are limiting production of meaningful and targeted intervention strategies that take into account intersectionality.

- Ensure that by March 2026, all data captured by Newham Council's educational systems (SIMS) and services (e.g. Children's Service, Youth Justice Service) is disaggregated for Black boys in LB Newham aged 11 to 18, using free school meals and CAMHS data to capture and understand key points of intersectionality

2. Understanding the transition between primary school and secondary school for Black boys

- Undertake a comparative review of Black boys' experience of transition from Primary to Secondary School to identify differences and emerging patterns that contribute to disproportionate outcomes.
- Building upon existing work of the transitions team and the Newham Children's Safeguarding Partnership is encouraged to facilitate this work and the study should take a long-term approach.

3. Wrap-Around Support in Schools

- Implement a five-year statistically rigorous pilot programme by September 2026 with a cohort of Black boys in years 7 –11 across two or more selected LB Newham schools to provide pastoral care and behavioural mentoring (e.g. SMILE-ing Boys Intervention)

- The aim of this support would be to improve attendance, retention and academic attainment and to reduce exclusion rates, contact with the youth justice system, criminal justice system, and re-offending rates - in line with averages for all LB Newham pupils. This support will require collaboration across council services, schools, NHS services (including CAMHS), the Metropolitan Police Service, criminal justice system and the Voluntary Community and Faith Sector.
- It is recommended that LB Newham seek a partner to conduct a research review of this group's outcomes to assess and demonstrate the impact and effectiveness of the wrap-around model.

It is also recommended that this pilot occur alongside broader wrap-around support improvements for all Black boys in the Borough within the next nine months. To include:

- a) Conducting a review of how the pupil premium grant and school pastoral systems are currently utilised to support Black boys in the Borough, monitoring the outcomes of this existing pastoral support, and identifying areas for improvement.
- b) Collaborating with School leaders, the Youth Justice Service and the Newham Safety Partnership to develop existing programmes to better support Black boys in the Borough and increase awareness of support on offer.
- c) Ensuring timely diagnosis and SEND support provision, where needed for Black boys in the Borough.

4. School exclusions

Given the disproportionate rates of exclusion for Black boys, especially Black Caribbean boys, within the LB Newham, it is recommended that the Mayor and Cabinet:

- a) Ensure that preventative measures and interventions be implemented by Newham Council's Education Service at the stage preceding exclusion and that parents/carers are consistently informed at the earliest stage of any exclusion process including when the school begins considering exclusion procedures.
- b) Establish a process for parents and carers to be made aware of their rights including the right to appeal and the recourse available to them. Understanding of these rights must be checked with parents during the process.
- c) Identify referral pathways, in line with the existing Youth Safety Strategy, to mentorship and advocacy support both for the young people and their families during the process of school exclusion and ensure information on accessing this support is widely dispersed across schools and family hubs in LB Newham.
- d) Ensure that Newham Council service representatives attend or provide a detailed report for all pupil permanent exclusion panels involving Black boys to support transparency, consistency, and accountability in decision-making.

5. Governors

Given the importance of good governance and accountability to the ongoing embedding changes in education settings, it is recommended that the Mayor and Cabinet:

- a) Ensure that within nine months of this report, Newham Council's Education Service captures data on the demographics of chairs of governors and that within two years a database is compiled to include the demographics of all maintained school governors. It is recommended that this be monitored and reported annually to the relevant scrutiny committee.

- b) Ensure that parents / carers of Black boys are supported by Newham Council's Education Service to access school governor opportunities across primary and secondary schools in the Borough.
- c) Ensure that Newham Council's Education Service use existing resources and collaborate with [Education4Change](#) to improve resources for Governors, referring to and guided by the work of Lewisham Council's Governor's Toolkit and Haringey Education Partnership's [Racial Equity Pledge](#) as examples of good practice.

6. Youth Justice Service Review

- a) Use results and data derived from the HMIP inspection of the Youth Justice Service to identify areas for improvement and to continue the journey to reduce the contact of young Black boys with the Criminal Justice system within LB Newham.
- b) Provide an annual, detailed review on the effectiveness of all early intervention and prevention projects to guide their continuation and further development, including the report of the '[SMILE-ing boys](#)' project at the projects' culmination, to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

7. Building Equity Through Partnerships

This report has demonstrated projects that have drawn on work of community partners and taken creative and innovative approaches to support Black boys in the Borough. Hence, the Commission recommends building upon existing partnership efforts and collaborating with the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector, schools, governors and employers to create equitable opportunities and support systems for Black boys. Notably it is recommended that:

- a) Ensure that Newham Council explores grant funding and provide support to the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector, schools and governors in order to offer targeted support to Black boys in the Borough, with an annual report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (e.g. in June).

- b) Ensure that Newham Council's Inclusive Economy directorate explores and develops targeted collaborations with local employers and schools to support the enhanced development of routes to work experience, employability support and employment opportunities for Black boys and young men post-16.

Call to Action

- Our Phase I and Phase II Reports are Calls to Action for all stakeholders (LB Newham services, schools, parents, NHS, the Metropolitan Police Service, and government at local, regional and national levels). We can do better for our Black boys and young men. Together, we can enact change and improved outcomes for the good of this cohort but also for the wider good.

Accountability

To ensure ongoing accountability on this topic, the Commission has also recommended that:

- a) the Report be formally shared with all political parties and respective Mayoral candidates in LB Newham to ensure the legacy of the work of the Commission; and
- b) the Chair of the Education, Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission note the report and consider the issues raised in future work programming.

The Commission further requested that the Executive response delivered by LB Newham Cabinet to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee include an update on the progress to date of the recommendations proposed in June 2024 within the Phase I Report of the Relationship Between Black Boys and the Borough Scrutiny Commission.

8. Progress on Phase I Recommendations

At a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16 December 2025, Members agreed that it was pertinent that the Executive Response to the Phase II Report include a summary detailing progress made on the implementation of the Phase I recommendations [88] of the Relationship Between Black Boys and the Borough Scrutiny Commission.

Conclusions

The Commission remains deeply concerned about chronic, systemic inequalities affecting Black boys and young men in Newham and beyond. These challenges are longstanding and well evidenced through data and lived experience. The problems have been identified; the data has been examined; the voices of those affected have been heard. The Commission has considered projects across the Borough seeking to address key issues and seen the powerful impact of community driven, creative and innovative approaches. The imperative now is to act, to implement, to deliver, and to sustain change.

What are the key issues?

Evidence shows that structural inequities, institutional biases and adverse social determinants combine with adverse social determinants to produce disproportionately negative outcomes for Black boys across education, employment, health, housing, and criminal justice. Experiences are not uniform across the cohort; nonetheless, disparities are sustained by systemic racism and often compounded by intersectionality. These disparities are both symptomatic of, and sustained by, systemic and structural racism, requiring a coordinated, long-term, and intersectional policy response. Our response, from Newham Council services and key stakeholders, must be coordinated, proactive and long-term.

Young people reported low levels of trust in the police, sometimes even when victimised, citing disproportionate and discriminatory treatment. In education, disproportionate exclusions and suspensions underpin a belief among many Black boys that they are treated less favourably. Such perceptions, often supported by exclusion and suspension data, reinforce feelings of alienation and injustice within school environments.

Undiagnosed neurodivergence and unmet SEND needs can compound misunderstandings in both policing and schooling, further reinforcing social injustices. Poverty, limited access to opportunity and systemic bias intersect to perpetuate disadvantage. This requires urgent, coordinated and equitable policy interventions.

What Needs to Change?

Supporting Black boys to thrive requires a bold, multi-layered, and enduring commitment—not only from education or police services, but from families, communities, local authorities, regional and national government, and society at large. The Commission's objective was not solely to make recommendations to close existing gaps but to help build systems that actively empower Black boys and young men. This Commission has seen avenues for radical change in this space through harnessing the power of partnerships and building upon existing work by the Council and within the community in Newham. Across the Borough, there are organisations working tirelessly to improve support, advocacy and safe spaces in creative ways. Building upon this dedication, innovation, and partnership-working is now an imperative to continue to impact the lives of young Black boys and to sustain this change.

To tackle the complex and nuanced issues, often intersectional by nature, experienced by this group – there must be improved availability of data. The research undertaken for this report identifies a critical gap in the availability and utilisation of data to inform both policy development and operational practice at this local level. Progress is constrained: by lack of disaggregated data at council and school levels. Without robust, granular data as an evidence-base, targeted interventions that truly meet the needs of Black boys are harder to design, deliver and -

evaluate. Understanding the diversity and complexity within the category 'Black boys' is essential to equitable policy and practice. Meaningful and lasting change cannot occur without a clear, evidence-based understanding of what must change and why.

Whilst our report commends the collaboration amongst local partners, through the 'Policing with Compassion' initiative, Newham Youth Partnership, 'Moving-on-Up' facilitated by Our Newham and the SMILE-ing Boys project for example, lasting change will depend on embedding partnership approaches that centre the voices and lived experiences of Black boys and their families in system redesign. Public services, schools, employers, the voluntary and community sector and the police must coordinate coherent interventions across classrooms, careers and communities. Responses and interventions must start early and continue through to employment and the community whilst prioritising fairness, proportionality and cultural competence. Addressing these inequities demands collective and sustained action that extends beyond individual services or short-term initiatives.

The Commission's Call to Action

This Commission's Call to Action is therefore unequivocal: asking all stakeholders to commit to sustained, transparent and accountable collaboration to remove barriers and improve outcomes. Investing in equity is a moral, legal and economic necessity. The evidence presented to us affirms that improving outcomes for Black boys will yield benefits that extend to the wider community, strengthening inclusion, opportunity, and shared prosperity. Delivering the recommendations in this report, alongside those of our Phase I report, provides a clear pathway for collective progress.

Newham Council faces real and significant financial challenges, and the wider context of the rising cost-of-living and urgent housing needs across London and the Borough make this a difficult time for all Council services. However, as councillors, Scrutiny Members, and Executive Members, we hold collective responsibility as corporate parents for the Borough's Looked After Children. That duty extends to every child and young person in Newham. We must therefore do better - individually and institutionally. Hence, the costs of inaction, social, economic, and moral, are far greater.

By lifting up this cohort and addressing the barriers they face, we improve the life chances of all children. We do this not for one group, nor for one borough, but because when Black boys rise, we all rise. When the barriers they face are dismantled, every child in Newham walks through the open door of opportunity. Let this moment mark the point where we stop asking whether change is possible, and start demonstrating that it is.

Appendices

1. Bibliography and Resources
2. Relationship Between Black Boys and the Borough Scrutiny Commission Membership
3. List of Witnesses
4. Relationship Between Black Boys and the Borough Scrutiny Commission (2023/24): Phase I Report, Recommendations and Executive Response
5. Mayor and Cabinet Portfolios

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Appendix 2 - Commission Membership

Until May 2024	As at 6 August 2024	As at 15 December 2024	As at 22 May 2025
Councillors	Councillors	Councillors	Councillors
Anthony McAlmont (Chair)	Anthony McAlmont (Chair)	Anthony McAlmont (Chair)	Anthony McAlmont (Chair)
Lewis Godfrey	Joshua Garfield	Joshua Garfield	Joshua Garfield
Belgica Guaña	Lewis Godfrey	Lewis Godfrey	Belgica Guaña
Lester Hudson	Belgica Guaña	Belgica Guaña	Lester Hudson
Danny Keeling (Green)	Lester Hudson	Lester Hudson	Carleene Lee-Phakoe
Susan Masters	Danny Keeling (Green)	Danny Keeling (Green)	Susan Masters
Terence Paul	Carleene Lee-Phakoe	Carleene Lee-Phakoe	Terence Paul
Lakmini Shah	Susan Masters	Susan Masters	Lakmini Shah
Harvinder Singh Virdee	Terence Paul	Terence Paul	
	Lakmini Shah	Lakmini Shah	
	Harvinder Singh Virdee	Harvinder Singh Virdee	

Until May 2024	As at 6 August 2024	As at 15 December 2024	As at 22 May 2025
Co-opted Members	Co-opted Members	Co-opted Members	Co-opted Members
Paul Leslie	Paul Leslie	Paul Leslie	Paul Leslie
	Substitute Member	Substitute Member	
	Melanie Onovo	Melanie Onovo	

Declarations of Interest

All Members' interests are held in the Register of Interests and all Members' gifts and hospitality are listed in the Register of Gifts and Hospitality. For transparency, the Relationship Between the Black Boys and the Borough Scrutiny Commission Members have highlighted and declared the following interests during their work:

Councillor / Co-opted Member	Interest
Anthony McAlmont	Curriculum Lead, New City College London
Carleene Lee-Phakoe	Operations Manager, Rights and Equalities in Newham
Terence Paul	Trustee / Board Member, Fight for Peace
Paul Leslie	CEO, Rights and Equalities in Newham

Appendix 3 -List of Witnesses

Name	Organisation	Name	Organisation
Mayor Rokhsana Fiaz OBE	Portfolio Lead for Inclusive Economy, Strategic Housing, Culture & Youth Power, LB Newham	Abdi-Karim Ibrahim	East London NHS Foundation Trust – Newham CAMHS
Cllr Sarah Ruiz	Cabinet Member for Environment, Sustainable Transport, Children Services and Education, LB Newham	James Kaguima	LB Newham and Skate Cabal
Cllr Amar Virdee	Cabinet Member for Housing Needs, Homelessness and Private Rented Sector and Community Safety and Crime, LB Newham	Mahfuzul Khan	LB Newham
Cllr Rohit Dasgupta [90]	Deputy Cabinet Member, Equalities, Social Justice and Culture, LB Newham[90]	Sean McDermid	LB Newham
Laura Eden	Corporate Director, LB Newham	Grace OgbuOgoli	LB Newham
Annabel Bates	Formerly LB Newham	Ivie Okwuegbuna	Assistant Head Teacher, Hallsville Primary School
Cassandra Beckford	Strategic Programme Manager - Youth Safety, LB Newham	Ali Omar	LB Newham
Bernard Bruce	Formerly TRID, LB Newham	Inspector Richard Oldfield	Metropolitan Police Service
Sophie Bulmer	UCL Partners	Kamran Qureshi	Metropolitan Police Service
Lynne Crank	LB Newham	Nirandeep Rehill	UCL Partners
Michelle Edwards	LB Newham	Marva Rollins OBE	Director of Rollins Education Consultancy
Omowunmi Fagbemi	LB Newham	Lisa Rosier	LB Newham
Carly Fry	LB Newham	Richard Simmonds	East London NHS Foundation Trust
Rachel Henry	Fight for Peace	Supt Lucky Singh	Metropolitan Police Service
Renea Henry-Kemp	Elevate	Alan Strachan	East London NHS Foundation Trust – Newham CAMHS
Nicholas Isaacs	East London NHS Foundation Trust – Newham CAMHS	Josh Thomas	Fight for Peace
Sarah Jackson	Metropolitan Police Service	Burhan Uddin	LB Newham
Kirsty Jones	NHS North East London ICB	Beth Wagstaff	LB Newham

The Commission would also like to thank the following LB Newham Scrutiny officers: Kirk Dede, Artemis Kassi, Eloise Collis, Kevin Odongo and Aaron Sangian who have assisted at different stages and in different ways in supporting Phase II of our work.

Appendix 4 - Phase I Report (2023/24)

In June 2024, the Relationship Between Black Boys and the Borough Scrutiny Commission (the Commission) produced its [Phase I Report](#). At its meeting on 4 June 2024, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee approved and ratified the recommendations, which were transmitted to Cabinet.

The Phase I Report recommendations are included in a table below. Of those recommendations, all recommendations except one recommendation were accepted, with only one instance where a recommendation was queried because Newham Council is required to work with nationally recognised support arrangements in place. All other recommendations were accepted.

The report was submitted to Cabinet and considered at its meeting on 16 July 2024. Cabinet agreed to note the Phase I Report and agreed to prepare an Executive Response to the scrutiny recommendations for consideration and agreement by the Cabinet.

A copy of the Phase I Report can be accessed via the LB Newham website [here](#). Cabinet considered its response to the Phase I Report at its meeting on 3 September 2024, noting the scrutiny work of the past three years. Cabinet noted that the Executive had accepted almost all the recommendations in the original report. The only recommendation not accepted was for a separate helpline, as it was felt that would cause confusion. It was also felt that the recommendation for trauma training for all staff would incur a significant cost and was not entirely necessary for all service areas; however, it was available to staff who wanted to complete such training and mandatory for all children and adult social care staff and voluntary sector workers.

A copy of the Executive's response to the Commission's Phase I Report and recommendations can be accessed [here](#).

Phase I Report

Recommendations (2023/24)

Rec. Number	It Is Recommended that:
1	<p>A Plan for Action</p> <p>An action plan be developed on how Newham Council will address systemic and structural inequality across the organisation and community to include the status of current interventions across the Council and identification of areas for improvement. This should include the people and departments accountable for implementation, clear milestones, resources and quantifiable outputs and outcomes and impact assessment, including mechanisms for external assessment and accountability.</p>
2	<p>Targeting Progress Towards Equality</p> <p>The Council review its Equality Monitoring processes, including the process, approvals and sign off, training quality assurance and timescales. This should include an action plan addressing any areas for completion, training, risks and mitigations.</p>
3	<p>Using Lived Experience to Inform Policy</p> <p>The Council use information on lived experience to inform policy across council's services, referenced against protected characteristics and linkages to Council policies and decisions to inform the decision-making processes and shared with key stakeholders to help influence and encourage collective change.</p>
4	<p>Newham Safeguarding Children's Partnership</p> <p>The Newham Safeguarding Children's Partnership produce measurable actions with outcome metrics, to reduce the disproportionality and disparity of Black boys in educational exclusion, child protection planning, care and the criminal justice system</p>

5	<p>Preventing School Exclusions</p> <p>To review and build on existing support provided by the Council's education service to identify further areas of information awareness raising and options for intervention. The review should consider areas such as the timing of support, accessibility of support, measures to educate parents, language barriers and accessing system wide support.</p>
6	<p>School Behaviour Policies</p> <p>To review School Behaviour policies and their implementation in Newham. This should include the implementation approach, quality of the training and measures and responses of the schools where these are challenged.</p>
7	<p>Engaging on Community Safety Strategies</p> <p>A review of community safety strategies be carried out, building an approach which engages directly with young Black boys and men. The review should work to understand structural and systemic inequality and build trust and confidence with young people and organisations seeking to support them. This should include Newham taking part in the London wide Stop and Search project with the police as part of early intervention and prevention.</p>
8	<p>Stretch Collaboration</p> <p>Stretch Collaboration workshops be carried out through Transformative Facilitation and the building of Transformative Scenarios to facilitate collaboration between young Black boys and men and senior leaders of key institutions including the Council and leaders from across nearly every area of society, such as police, health, education, employment and business.</p>
9	<p>Mapping Opportunities</p> <p>Opportunities for engagement with Black young men and boys be mapped and publicised, inviting participation from residents and communities to be involved in external scrutiny including internal and external partnerships or forums.</p>
10	<p>Trauma Responsive Training</p> <p>Identify and deliver trauma responsive training for staff. This will enable a people focused approach and leadership at all levels in tackling structural and systemic inequality. This could include extending the existing training delivered by Public Health or making it available as a requirement.</p>

11	<p>Black Youth Voices</p> <p>We endorse the Rights and Equalities in Newham Survey recommendation: Collate Black youth voices and experiences into one coherent strategy, embedded into the Council's work plan each year, with external scrutiny to evaluate effectiveness and success, and identify gaps and areas for improvement.</p>
12	<p>Black Boys and Young Men Working Group</p> <p>A working group be established of young Black boys and men, community leaders, business leaders and Council colleagues to help inform Council and community policy and service delivery, including young people with care experience, education, youth justice and community safety, to work alongside experts to develop opportunities outside of current and traditional pathways.</p>

Appendix 5 - Mayor and Cabinet Portfolios

Cabinet Member	Portfolio(s)	Supported By
Mayor Rokhsana Fiaz OBE	Strategic Housing Delivery; Culture; Climate Emergency; Youth Empowerment; Youth Safety; Early Help; Children's Health; Performance and Transformation (until 30 May 2024). Inclusive Economy and Strategic Housing Delivery; Culture; Climate Emergency; Youth Empowerment; Youth Safety; Early Help; Children's Health; Performance and Transformation (21 Oct 2024 – 16 Dec 2024) Inclusive Economy, Strategic Housing Delivery, and Culture (17 Dec 2024 – 29 Jan 2025). Inclusive Economy, Strategic Housing, Culture & Youth Power (from July 2025)	Cllrs John Whitworth (until 16 Dec 2024), Caroline Adaja (until 29 Jan 2025), Rohit Dasgupta (until 29 Jan 2025), Steve Brayshaw (until 29 Jan 2025)
Cllr James Asser	Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Environment and Sustainable Transport (until 30 May 2024)	Cllrs Miraj Patel (until 30 May 2024), John Morris (until 30 May 2024)
Cllr Sarah Ruiz	Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Education (until 16 Dec 2024). Statutory Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Environment and Sustainable Transport, and Children's Services and Education (21 Oct 2024 – 29 Jan 2025). Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education & Sustainable Transport (from July 2025)	Cllrs Miraj Patel (21 Oct – 29 Jan 2025), John Morris (21 Oct – Present), Madeleine Sarley Pontin (21 Oct – 29 Jan 2025)
Cllr Zulfiqar Ali	Cabinet Member for Finance and Resourced (until 16 Dec 2024). Statutory Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resourced (From 17 Dec 2024)	

[89] See LB Newham website for current details of the Cabinet. Available at: [Online] [Cabinet – Newham Council](#). (Accessed 31 October 2025).

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Cllr Neil Wilson[90]	Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care (Until 30 July 2025)	Cllr Mumtaz Khan
Cllr Rita Chadha	Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care and Transforming Newham for the Future (from September 2025)	Cllr Mumtaz Khan
Cllr Charlene Mclean	Cabinet Member for Resident Engagement and Resident Experience (May 2024 – Present)	Canon Ann Easter (May 2024 – May 2025)
Cllr Shaban Mohammed	Cabinet Member for Housing Management and Modernisation; Housing Needs; Homelessness; and Private Rented Sector (until 30 May 2024)	Cllr Sabia Kamali (until 30 May 2024)
Cllr Amar Virdee	Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Crime (until 16 Dec 2024). Cabinet Member for Housing Needs, Homelessness and Private Rented Sector, and Community Safety and Crime (21 Oct 2024 – 29 Jan 2025). Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Housing Need, Homelessness & Private Rented Sector (from July 2025)	-
Cllr Blossom Young	Cabinet Member for Housing Landlord and Tenant Experience Improvement (21 Oct 2024 – June 2025) Cabinet Member for Council Housing Improvements (from July 2025)	-
Cllr Melanie Onovo [91]	Cabinet Member for Youth Power (17 Dec 2024 – 29 Jan 2025)	-
Cllr John Whitworth	Deputy Cabinet Member for Planning and Development, Air Quality and Climate Emergency (until 16 Dec 2024) Cabinet Member for Planning and Development, Air Quality and Climate Emergency (17 Dec 2024 – 29 Jan 2025) Cabinet Member for Air Quality, Climate Emergency & Environment (from July 2025)	-

[90] Councillor Neil Wilson sadly passed away in July 2025. Cllr Wilson served as a Councillor for Plaistow for over 30 years and held various Cabinet and Chair roles as a devoted public servant.

[91]Cllr Melanie Onovo resigned from her Cabinet position on 29 January 2025.

