

DfES/HM Treasury Joint Policy Review on Children and Young People

CRE Submission

29 September 2006

**COMMISSION FOR
RACIAL EQUALITY**



Summary

The CRE welcomes the opportunity to make a written submission to the DfES/HM Treasury joint policy review on children and young people. Our submission aims to highlight those issues that are of particular relevance to ethnic minority children and young people.

Key points

Ethnic minority children and young people

- It is well documented that people from ethnic minority communities are at disproportionate risk of social exclusion. This is due to their increased likelihood of living in poverty and in disadvantaged neighbourhoods as well as the effects of racial discrimination
- There are important differences in experiences and outcomes both between and within children and young people of different ethnic groups in the nature and scale of disadvantage. However, there can be no doubt that ethnic minority children and young people are disproportionately disadvantaged across all sectors and at all ages. For example:
 - data on attainment of ethnic minority children against the early learning goals set out in the Foundation Stage Profile shows that Irish Travellers and Gypsy/Roma children are the lowest performing ethnic groups
 - Gypsy/Roma pupils, Irish Travellers, Black Caribbean and White/Black Caribbean pupils are amongst the lower achieving pupils at Key Stage 4
 - a higher proportion of young people from ethnic minority groups suffer from mental health problems
 - rates of teenage mothers are significantly higher for White/Caribbean, Black Other and Black Caribbean
 - children of a Black or Mixed ethnic identity are over-represented within the children in need population
 - drug abuse and smoking are shown to have a significantly higher prevalence amongst Muslim youth between the ages of 16-25 years, despite the fact that an estimated 45% of Muslim youth have never used illicit drugs, smoked tobacco or drunk alcohol
 - ethnic minority households are around three times more likely to become statutorily homeless than are the majority White population
 - there is a slightly greater use of custody for Asian males
 - Black children are significantly over-represented in children in custody
- The CRE believes that there are a number of key areas that provide both opportunities and challenges for improving the life chances of ethnic minority young people: **Black boys; early years; looked after children; and Mixed heritage young people.**

- In order to deliver public services that meet the needs of ethnic minority children and young people, there must be:
 - improved knowledge at national and local levels about ethnic minority children and young people, through meeting the requirements of the Race Relations Act, as amended
 - involvement of ethnic minority children and young people in the design, delivery and evaluation of services
 - an evaluation of existing funding streams to ensure that the most disadvantaged groups are benefiting

‘Prevention’ strand

- The CRE fully supports the need for early intervention to improve the life chances of children and young people
- However, we have two primary concerns: (1) that programmes aimed at supporting parents are not always appropriate for ethnic minority families; and (2) the use of statutory powers to secure parents’ engagement in such programmes

Review of disabled children

- The CRE strongly supports the review’s aim to improve outcomes and life chances of disabled children, particularly as many ethnic minority disabled young people experience ‘double discrimination’
- The rights and requirements of ethnic minority disabled people are not currently being well met by the majority of information and service providers with whom they come into contact. Gaps in knowledge must be addressed in order to ensure that barriers to access to services for ethnic minority families are reduced and that services become more culturally competent

Strategy for Youth Services

- The CRE broadly supports the reforms proposed in Youth Matters which offer an opportunity to develop youth services and positive activities that promote integration. They should enable young people of all communities to interact with each other and participate in making decisions about the type of services and facilities they want

Review of High Cost, High Harm Families

- Given that many ethnic minority children and young people suffer disadvantage and poorer outcomes compared to the general population, it is vital that this review considers how early intervention can help to break the cycle of low attainment, high cost and high harm experienced by many ethnic minority families

Introduction

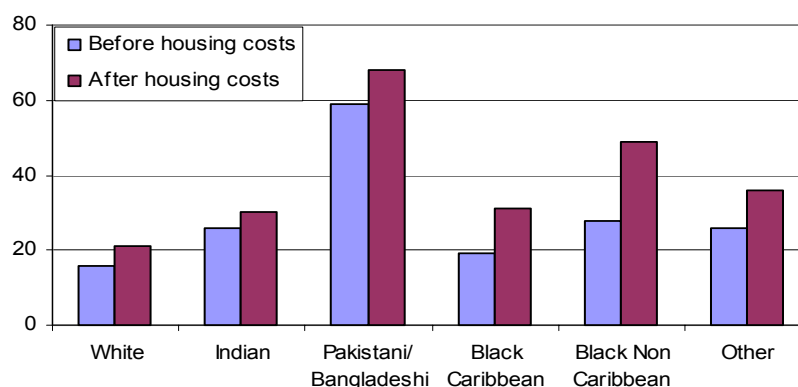
1. The Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) was established by the Race Relations Act 1976 to:
 - work towards the elimination of racial discrimination;
 - promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups; and
 - keep the working of the Act under review.
2. Public bodies have a duty to eliminate discrimination in the way they work and to promote equality of opportunity and good race relations. The Commission is working to help them deliver this duty.
3. The Race Relations 1976 as amended came into force on 2nd April 2001 and imposes a general statutory duty on most public authorities to promote race equality.
4. The CRE's primary goal is to create an integrated society. We have defined an integrated society as being based on three inter-related principles:
 - **equality** for all sections of the community – where everyone is treated equally and has a right to fair outcomes
 - **participation** by all sections of the community – where all groups in society should expect to share in decision-making and carry the responsibility of making society work
 - **interaction** between all sections of the community – where no-one should be trapped within their own community in the people they work with or the friendships they make
5. The CRE is grateful for the opportunity to make a written submission to the DfES/HM Treasury joint policy review on children and young people. Our submission is divided into two sections:
 - (a) general comments on the experiences of ethnic minority children and young people across the public sector and the impact on outcomes; and
 - (b) specific comments on the areas the review seeks to address, where it is relevant to race equality or integration.
6. Our submission aims to highlight those issues that are of particular relevance to ethnic minority children and young people so that these may inform the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review.

A. General Comments

Ethnic minority children and young people

7. The CRE welcomes the review of policy on children and young people with its emphasis on improving life chances. It is, however, disappointing that there is no specific focus in the review on improving outcomes for children and young people from ethnic minority communities.
8. It is well documented that people from ethnic minority communities are at disproportionate risk of social exclusion. This is due to their increased likelihood of living in poverty and in disadvantaged neighbourhoods as well as the effects of racial discrimination. Services often fail to reach them or meet their needs and language and cultural barriers can make access to information and services very difficult.
9. Although, there is much variation within and between ethnic groups, overall, ethnic minorities are more likely to live in deprived areas and in overcrowded housing; and are more likely to be unemployed and poor.

Households on low-income: by ethnic group of head of household, 2000/01



Source: Office for National Statistics (2002) Social Focus in Brief: Ethnicity 2002

10. For ethnic minority young people, this is compounded by the fact that, in poor neighbourhoods, young people experience poor education and poor opportunities with higher rates of infant mortality and child poverty as well as truancy, teenage pregnancy and drug problems.
11. The CRE has recently developed a comprehensive position paper on the experiences of ethnic minority children and young people from birth to 25 years old across the public sector. The paper focuses on where ethnic minority children and young people 'fall out of the system' — that is,

where their experiences differ from the White group and have a negative impact on outcomes. It also considers how policies and initiatives are seeking to tackle this.

12. The evidence presented in the paper points to important differences in experiences and outcomes both between and within children and young people of different ethnic groups in the nature and scale of disadvantage. However, there can be no doubt that ethnic minority children and young people are disproportionately disadvantaged across all sectors and at all ages. For example:

- data on attainment of ethnic minority children against the early learning goals set out in the Foundation Stage Profile shows that Irish Travellers and Gypsy/Roma children are the lowest performing ethnic groups¹
- Gypsy/Roma pupils, Irish Travellers, Black Caribbean and White/Black Caribbean pupils are amongst the lower achieving pupils at Key Stage 4²
- a higher proportion of young people from ethnic minority groups suffer from mental health problems³
- rates of teenage mothers are significantly higher for White/Caribbean, Black Other and Black Caribbean⁴
- children of a Black or Mixed ethnic identity are over-represented within the children in need population⁵
- drug abuse and smoking are shown to have a significantly higher prevalence amongst Muslim youth between the ages of 16-25 years, despite the fact that an estimated 45% of Muslim youth have never used illicit drugs, smoked tobacco or drunk alcohol⁶
- ethnic minority households are around three times more likely to become statutorily homeless than are the majority White population⁷
- there is a slightly greater use of custody for Asian males⁸
- Black children are significantly over-represented in children in custody⁹

¹ Department for Education and Skills (2006) *Ethnicity and Education: The Evidence on Minority Ethnic Pupils aged 5-16*. Department for Education and Skills. Research Topic Paper: 2006 edition.

² Department for Education and Skills, *Ethnicity and Education: The Evidence on Minority Ethnic Pupils*, Research Topic Paper: January 2005

³ Healthcare Commission (2005) *Count me in. Results of a national census of inpatients in mental health hospitals and facilities in England and Wales. November 2005*. Healthcare Commission.

⁴ ONS, 2001 Census

⁵ Department for Education and Skills (2006) *Children in Need in England: Results of a survey of activity and expenditure as reported by Local Authority Social Services' Children and Families for a survey week in February 2005: Local Authority tables and further national analysis* (Internet only). Department for Education and Skills.

⁶ Muslim Youth Helpline <http://www.myh.org.uk/faithbased.htm>

⁷ ODPM (2005) *Causes of Homelessness in Ethnic Minority Communities*

⁸ Feilzer and Hood (2004) *Differences or Discrimination? Minority Ethnic Young People in the Youth Justice System*

⁹ The Social Exclusion Unit (2002), *Reducing re-offending by ex-prisoners*, Annex D

13. The evidence shows a range of areas where ethnic minority children and young people do indeed 'fall out of the system'. In light of this, it is vital that the joint policy review specifically considers how services can be developed to improve outcomes and life chances of ethnic minority children and young people.

Key challenges and opportunities

14. The CRE's policy work on children and young people has highlighted a number of key areas that provide both challenges and opportunities for improving the life chances of ethnic minority young people. For the purposes of this submission, we focus on four areas:

- Black boys
- early years
- looked after children
- Mixed heritage young people

15. In the following paragraphs, we discuss each of these areas in turn.

Black boys

16. Over recent years, there has been mounting evidence of the under-achievement of Black boys in education, starting from early years through to secondary education.
17. In early years, Black African and Black Caribbean children perform less well against the early learning goals set out in the Foundation Stage Profile. Whereas the national average for communication, language and literacy is 50%, this is as low as 40% for Black African and Other Black pupils, and only 45% for Black Caribbean pupils.
18. All the ethnic minority groups within the Black category are also consistently below the national average across all Key Stages, at GCSE and equivalent and Post-16. Some 77% of all pupils who achieve 5+A*-C at GCSE and equivalent also achieve an A*-C in English and Maths. However, only around two thirds of Black Caribbean and Black Other pupils who achieve 5+A*-C at GCSE and equivalent achieve A*-C in English and Maths, compared to over 80% of Irish, Indian, White & Asian and Chinese pupils¹⁰.
19. The picture is complex. The latest attainment data shows a number of patterns emerging:
 - the attainment gap between Black Caribbean pupils and the average for all pupils has narrowed in every subject at Key Stage 1 and Key

¹⁰ Department for Education and Skills (2006c) *Ethnicity and Education: The Evidence on Minority Ethnic Pupils aged 5-16*. Department for Education and Skills. Research Topic Paper: 2006 edition.

Stage 3 and at GCSE between 2003-2005. At Key Stage 2 the gap has widened in English and Maths but narrowed in Science

- for Black African and Black Other pupils the attainment gap has narrowed at Key Stage 3 and at GCSE from 2003-2005 (with the exception of Key Stage 3 Science). However, at Key Stages 1 and 2 the gap has widened for Black African pupils in Key Stage 1 Writing and Maths and in Key Stage 2 English and Maths. For Black Other pupils the gap has widened at Key Stage 1 Maths and across every subject at Key Stage 2¹¹
20. These are issues that must be addressed if the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) is to meet its Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets — to raise standards in English and maths¹² and attainment at GCSE¹³ — amongst all groups.
 21. Data also shows that the exclusion rate for Black pupils was around twice that for White pupils and almost 8 in every 100 Black pupils were excluded for a fixed period in 2004/05 compared with almost 6 in every 100 pupils of White ethnic origin and around 2 in every 100 Asian pupils¹⁴. This is fuelled by a common perception that Black boys display more challenging behaviour than girls, with schools' response resulting in increased conflict rather than working towards a solution.
 22. The lack of male role models and black male presence in their upbringing has been frequently cited as a reason for Black boys' 'challenging' behaviour. Evidence does suggest that there is an especially high rate of single parents among black families, and in particular among Black Caribbean and Mixed Heritage families¹⁵.
 23. Black boys are also just as vulnerable to negative peer pressure as other groups and research has shown that there is often pressure on boys to act 'hard' which involves an overt dislike to learning¹⁶. This anti-school

¹¹ Department for Education and Skills (2006d) *National Curriculum Assessment, GCSE and Equivalent Attainment and Post-16 Attainment by Pupil Characteristics in England 2005*. Department for Education and Skills.

¹² Department for Education and Skills PSA 7: raise standards in English, maths, ICT and science in secondary education so that: by 2007, 85% of 14 year olds achieve level 5 or above in English, maths and ICT (80% in science) nationally, with this level of performance sustained to 2008; and by 2008, in all schools at least 50% of pupils achieve level 5 or above in each of English, maths and science.

¹³ Department for Education and Skills PSA 10: by 2008, 60% of those aged 16 to achieve the equivalent of 5 GCSEs at grades A* to C; and in all schools at least 20% of pupils to achieve this standard by 2004, rising to 25% by 2006 and 30% by 2008.

¹⁴ Department for Education and Skills (2006) *Permanent and Fixed Period Exclusions from Schools and Exclusions Appeals in England, 2004/05*. Department for Education and Skills: London.

¹⁵ Sewell, T. (2005) *Thinking Outside of the Box: Radical Paedagogy, Rites of Passage and Generating Genius*. Paper presented at the Black Boys Education Seminar, 1 June 2005 at the Commission for Racial Equality.

¹⁶ Archer, L., Halsall, A., Hollingworth, S. and Mendick, H. (2005) *'Dropping out and drifting away': An investigation of factors affecting inner-city pupils' identities, aspirations and post-16 routes*. Institute for Policy Studies in Education.

culture and the negative peer pressure on black boys are being fed by a low status in schools and a negative image.

24. The majority of researchers that have looked at the underachievement of ethnic minorities in education, in particular Black pupils, tend to stress a process of institutionalised discrimination or, at the very least, institutional disadvantage. Recent reports have highlighted the systematic lower teacher expectations based on assumptions about their motivation and ability¹⁷.
25. Whereas some factors such as the lack of male role models or negative peer pressure, and a highly commercialised street culture, may explain a lot about the more challenging behaviour among Black boys, schools have been particularly unsuccessful and even counter-productive in dealing with such behaviour.
26. Research and monitoring data over many years has consistently shown institutional disadvantage for Black boys at school, with consequent relatively low educational attainment. Recently, policies have started to recognise this problem, but they have so far failed to close the gap in performance and methods of behaviour management appear to be failing to address the problems of challenging attitudes.
27. This lack of management has resulted in the systemic inequality of treatment — Black boys have fewer chances, stuck at the bottom of a tiered education system, and far more exclusions from school, leaving many outside the system altogether.
28. In light of this, this CRE strongly believes that any review of policy relating to children and young people should focus specifically on the issue of Black boys' experiences in education.

Early years

29. The early years of life offer the most important opportunity to intervene to prevent inequalities developing later in life, particularly given that young people's early experiences greatly shape their future. Early years interventions have been shown to lead to improved health, early development and readiness for school, better relationships between parents and children and improved social and emotional development. Children who access nursery education demonstrate better attainment at school at the age of seven.
30. There is powerful evidence to suggest that the early years of life are the most effective time to intervene to improve the chances of the most disadvantaged groups. The Social Exclusion Unit's Breaking the Cycle report argues that '[t]he importance of early years development in

¹⁷ Tikly, L. Caballero, C. and Haynes, J. (2004) *Understanding the educational needs of Mixed Heritage Pupils*. Department for Education and Skills.

influencing life chances provides a vital lever for future policy aimed at promoting equality of opportunity¹⁸.

31. Research shows that disadvantaged children, in particular, can benefit from good quality pre-school settings and the earlier children attend pre-school education, the more significant the gains to their intellectual development, independence, concentration and sociability. Children's Centres can also help to reduce social exclusion through enhanced social, emotional and cognitive development, early remediation in rates of child protection orders and 'looked after' children, and improved physical well-being¹⁹.
32. However, data and research shows that ethnic minority parents are less likely to use early years services, are less likely to be aware of Government initiatives or to have information about providers. A smaller proportion of Bangladeshi and Black African households, in particular, attend childcare and nursery education compared to the population as a whole²⁰. This raises questions about the extent to which this impacts on their children's development and life chances as well as their ability to interact at an early stage with
33. Sure Start centres are expected to provide services that are responsive to the needs of ethnic minority children. However, there was no race equality impact assessment of the Childcare Act 2006 and only a brief mention of ethnic minority families in the ten-year childcare strategy.
34. The CRE strongly believes that much more work is needed to increase the uptake of nursery and childcare services by ethnic minority families and to ensure that the developing early years services really do meet the differing needs of all groups and allow children of all ethnic backgrounds to learn and play together from the outset.
35. Currently, ethnic monitoring of the use of services is poor and considerable work is required to address the gaps that exist so that there is robust data on who is, and is not, making use of services and the reasons for this.
36. The Government's plan to deliver a Sure Start Children's Centre for every community by 2010 represents a key opportunity to ensure that lessons are learned and that every effort is made to provide culturally sensitive and competent services that are flexible enough to accommodate and understand different needs, with the aim of encouraging and enabling more ethnic minority families to access

¹⁸ Social Exclusion Unit (2004) *Breaking the Cycle: Taking stock of progress and priorities for the future. A report by the Social Exclusion Unit*. Office for the Deputy Prime Minister: London.

¹⁹ Social Exclusion Unit (2004) *Tackling Social Exclusion: Taking stock and looking to the future Emerging Findings*. Office for the Deputy Prime Minister: London

²⁰ Home Office (2005a) *Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society: The Government's strategy to increase race equality and community cohesion*. Home Office.

services. Without this, it is likely to prove difficult for the DfES to meet its PSA target to reduce inequalities between children's communication, social and emotional development in the 20% most disadvantaged areas and the rest of England²¹.

37. The development of the Early Years Foundation Stage also provides a key opportunity to ensure that services act as agents of integration, encouraging participation and interaction from the earliest opportunity between children of different ethnic groups.
38. By intervening at this early stage of the life cycle, this may contribute in some way to reducing social inequalities in later life.

Looked after children

39. The Social Exclusion Unit argues that young people who are or have been looked after by a local authority are at the extreme end of the spectrum of family disadvantage. Fifty-one per cent of young people in a survey of 13,000 in leaving care projects were unemployed. Seventy-five per cent of care leavers have no academic qualifications of any kind, as against just over 6 per cent of the general population. Only between 12 per cent and 19 per cent go on to full-time education after leaving school. Looked after young people also face particular obstacles to participation. Lack of family support, unsettled educational background with high risk of underachievement, and psychological and emotional problems being the main background factors²².
40. In addition, approximately £110,000 a year is spent on a child in residential care and spending on all children in care has risen by almost 50 per cent in the last four years. However, only 11 per cent of children in care get grades A* - C at GCSE compared with 56 per cent of all children²³. This does not represent the efficient and effective use of public funds. It would also appear from these statistics that the PSA target to narrow the gap in educational achievement between looked after children and that of their peers²⁴ has had little impact.

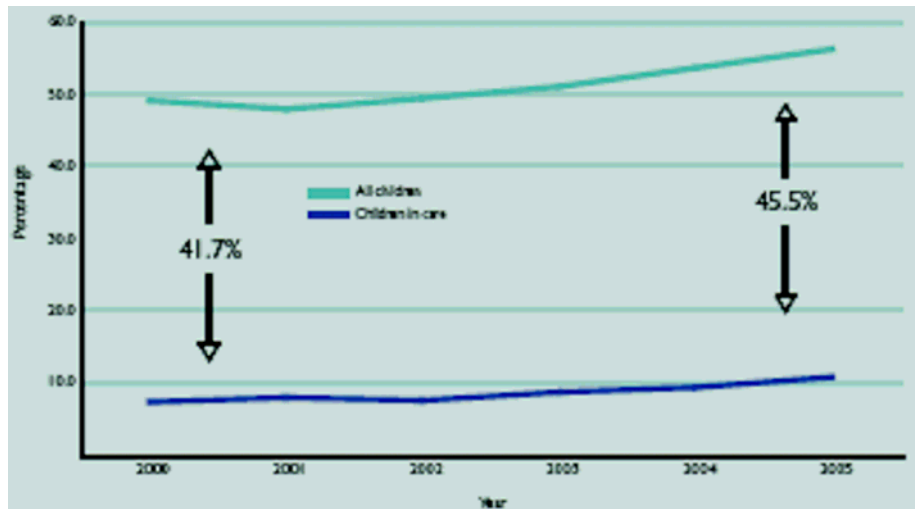
²¹ Department for Education and Skills PSA 1: improve children's communication, social and emotional development so that by 2008 50% of children reach a good level of development at the end of the Foundation Stage and reduce inequalities between the level of development achieved by children in the 20% most disadvantaged areas and the rest of England (Sure Start target, joint with Department for Work and Pensions).

²² Social Exclusion Unit (1999) *Bridging the Gap: New Opportunities for 16-18 year olds not in Education, Employment or Training*.

²³ HM Government (2006) *Reaching Out: An Action Plan on Social Exclusion*.

²⁴ Department for Education and Skills PSA 5: narrow the gap in educational achievement between looked after children and that of their peers, and improve their educational support and the stability of their lives so that by 2008, 80% of children under 16 who have been looked after for 2.5 or more years will have been living in the same placement for at least 2 years, or are placed for adoption.

Percentage in year 11 who achieved at least five A*–C GCSEs or GNVQs



Source: HM Government (2006) *Reaching Out: An Action Plan on Social Exclusion*.

41. The disproportionate representation of ethnic minority children and young people in public care and among children in need means that these young people frequently suffer double disadvantage.

Children looked after at 31 March by ethnic origin, 2002–2005

	numbers				percentages			
	2002 ²	2003 ¹	2004 ¹	2005 ¹	2002 ²	2003 ²	2004 ¹	2005 ¹
All Children ¹	59,700	60,800	61,100	60,900	100	100	100	100
White	49,100	49,500	48,800	48,100	82	81	80	79
Mixed	4,700	5,000	5,000	5,000	8	8	8	8
Asian or Asian British	1,200	1,300	1,500	1,800	2	2	2	3
Black or Black British	4,000	4,200	4,900	4,900	7	7	8	8
Other ethnic groups	800	870	990	1,100	1	1	2	2

Source: Department for Education and Skills (2006b) *Children looked after by Local Authorities Year Ending 31 March 2005 Volume 1: National Tables*. Department for Education and Skills.

42. Some ethnic groups are more likely to stay in care longer and experience severe placement disruption. These issues, along with the acute shortage of ethnic minority foster carers and adopters, mean that the life chances of those ethnic minority young people in the care system are severely hampered with often lower levels of educational attainment and higher rates of offending.
43. The recent Ofsted and Commission for Social Care Inspection report on outcomes from the 2005 assessments of local authority children's

services²⁵ highlighted the need for more to be done to improve the life chances of looked after children and to support ethnic minority groups. In 18% of authorities, there was a lack of clarity about social care arrangements for ethnic minority young people and, 'in some cases, antiracism strategies, assessment procedures that take account of racial diversity, or securing placements to match the needs of ethnic minorities require improvement'.

44. Public sector services, including local authorities, social services' departments and adoption and fostering agencies need to do much more to improve the experiences of looked after children and those leaving care. Services must meet their whole needs and have trained and appropriate staff capable of dealing with a diversity of young people with complex needs. Close co-operation between different agencies is also crucial to prevent young people feeling they are being passed from one agency to another or falling through the gap.
45. Youth Matters proposes that every young person who needs support in a number of overlapping areas should have a nominated lead professional who acts as a single point of contact and makes sure support is provided in a co-ordinated, convenient and integrated way. To perform their roles effectively, lead professionals should undertake appropriate race and diversity training and have a clear understanding of the particular difficulties facing ethnic minority youngsters.
46. Greater efforts must also be made to increase the number of ethnic minority adopters and foster carers and to break down barriers resulting in their reluctance to come forward.

Mixed heritage young people

47. Given increases in the numbers of mixed-ethnicity marriages, the number of children of mixed heritage has also risen, most of whom were born in the UK. The White and Black Caribbean ethnic group has the youngest age profile with over half the population comprising children under 16 and four fifths under 24. Mixed heritage, particularly White/Black Caribbean, young people suffer disadvantage and poorer outcomes across almost every sector. They do less well at school; have higher rates of admission to hospital for mental illness; are most likely to have taken drugs; have higher incidence of teenage pregnancy; are over-represented within the children in need population; and have higher rates of prosecution and conviction. They are also more likely to experience racism.
48. Evidence does suggest that services find it difficult to meet the needs of Mixed heritage young people as they do not neatly fit into a particular box. In terms of social care, this often results in Mixed parentage young

²⁵ Office for Standards in Education and Commission for Social Care Inspection (2006) *Annual performance assessment (APA): Local authority children's services 2005. Report on outcomes*. Ofsted: London

people experiencing either ‘identity stripping’ or ‘passing for white’ as many are not exposed to a racial or cultural background which would help them develop their identity.

49. Similarly, in the context of youth justice, research shows problems with the identification of young people of Mixed parentage as well as evidence that this group is more likely than any other group to exhibit a variety of social problems. This may well lead to the higher rate of prosecution and conviction of Mixed-parentage young males and clearly needs to be addressed in order to improve the life chances and outcomes for this group.
50. Whilst little is known about why young people of Mixed parentage experience such disadvantage or about how they formulate their identity, Mixed parentage young people will continue to fall through a gap in public services. A great deal of work is needed to increase our knowledge and understanding of this fast-growing group of young people and to ensure that services meet their needs.

Delivering public services for ethnic minority children and young people

Improving knowledge base at national and local levels

51. As well as identifying key areas for intervention to improve the life chances of ethnic minority children and young people, the CRE’s position paper also highlighted widespread evidence of the lack of participation of ethnic minority young people in the design of services. This results in either the provision of inappropriate services or, in some cases, no service at all.
52. Delivering public services that meet the needs of ethnic minority children and young people is vital to improving life chances and outcomes. To do this, public services should be carrying out comprehensive ethnic monitoring — as required by the Race Relations Act, as amended — and using this information to address any gaps in services.
53. However, evidence suggests that there are areas where ethnic monitoring data and information relating to young people is still not being collected. For example, there is no ethnic monitoring of anti-social behaviour orders; conceptions, live births and abortions; behaviour in schools; and bullying.
54. In addition, data on ethnic minority young people and early years services, housing, employment, mental health and other key areas of public policy is almost non-existent.
55. The guidance for public sector agencies on key Government initiatives and policies often only contains very simplistic information on meeting the needs of ethnic minority children and young people. Similarly,

evaluations of initiatives frequently fail to explore the impact on ethnic minorities.

56. Given that it is well known that ethnic minority groups consistently report lower levels of satisfaction across a range of services²⁶, there is little evidence to suggest that local agencies and Government departments are making any real attempt to improve this. In fact, they appear to have extremely limited knowledge of the communities they are serving, particularly in relation to ethnic minority children and young people who are rarely consulted on policies or able to voice their opinions.
57. At the same time, there appears to be an overload of Government initiatives focusing on young people. There is a whole stream of initiatives across the public sector, at a national and local level, aimed at improving the life chances of young people. One of the key challenges is to reach a greater coherence at a national and local level of existing initiatives rather than continuously inventing new ones. It is equally concerning that these initiatives are often developed without any real identification of the local needs of young people.
58. Whilst ethnic monitoring is patchy, policy is being developed in an information vacuum. Government initiatives and evaluations are also failing to take account of the needs and experiences of ethnic minority young people. As long as this situation persists, ethnic minority youngsters will continue to face disadvantage and poorer outcomes and life chances compared with young people as a whole.
59. Given the increasing diversity of the population in the UK today, policy development must be based on a more complex and sensitive understanding of ethnic minority young people, particularly with regard to their identities, aspirations and the difficulties they encounter across the public sector.
60. It is not enough to argue that policies must 'meet the needs of ethnic minority communities' — this assumes that ethnic minorities form a homogenous group with the same needs and experiences. Information must be detailed enough to pick up the distinctions between and within groups, and between young men and young women and to develop services accordingly.
61. Policy development has to become more sophisticated and this can only be achieved by national and local organisations improving their systems for ethnic monitoring and actively engaging with, and seeking the views of, ethnic minority young people. They must establish where current services do not meet their needs effectively and ensure that steps are then taken to address this.

²⁶ Social Exclusion Unit (2005a) *Improving Services, Improving Lives: Evidence and Key Themes. A Social Exclusion Unit Interim Report*. Office of the Deputy Prime Minister: London.

Involving young people

62. Evidence suggests that young people are 'invisible' in policy development and decision-making processes. The Social Exclusion Unit's report on young adults with complex needs identified five key principles of service delivery for young adults, one of which is 'involving young adults (and their families and carers) in designing and delivering services'²⁷. The report highlights that the most interesting examples of young people's involvement in service design goes beyond consultation events and consultative committees and involves young people running things themselves and making spending decisions.
63. Similarly, an Ofsted report on good practice in youth services²⁸ found that young people achieved high standards when, amongst other things, they were involved in planning and evaluating work. A study carried out by the Institute for Public Policy Research²⁹ also highlighted that there was genuine enthusiasm amongst young people for playing a part in certain aspects of decision-making processes, particularly at the local level.
64. This enthusiasm, however, was not evident in the 2001 general election with the lowest turnout among Black African and Black Caribbean communities, in part due to their younger age profiles³⁰. Improving voter turn-out amongst ethnic minority young people is vital if the Government is to achieve its aims of empowering people to become active citizens.
65. Citizenship education provides one way in which ethnic minority young people can learn the skills necessary for exercising citizenship. Ideas of active citizenship should be embedded in all aspects of the curriculum and allow active involvement and participation.
66. The CRE also welcomes the Government's commitment in *Youth Matters* to encouraging young people to get involved in making decisions about activities for young people in their areas and to participate actively in their local community. This provides a prime opportunity to ensure that there is participation by all ethnic groups, with effective mechanisms in place to support young people in this process.
67. Young people should be at the heart of the decision-making that affects their lives and they must be offered the chance to make their voices heard through formal youth-led structures. Consultation and

²⁷ Social Exclusion Unit (2005b) *Transitions: Young Adults with Complex Needs*. A Social Exclusion Unit Final Report. Office of the Deputy Prime Minister: London.

²⁸ Office for Standards in Education (2005b) *Effective youth services: Good practice*. Ofsted: London

²⁹ Institute for Public Policy Research (2002) *Involving young people in local authority decision-making*. Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

³⁰ The Electoral Commission (2002) *Voter engagement among black and minority ethnic communities*. Research report July 2002.

engagement with ethnic minority young people should be built into the way policies and services are developed and delivered to ensure that the aspirations and needs of ethnic minority groups are understood and acted on. Involving young people in this way will contribute to the development of services that are applicable to them, meet their needs and encourage usage.

Grant programmes and funding

68. Since 2003, the CRE has been working with HM Treasury to ensure that race equality outcomes are factored into departmental PSAs. We also worked with the Home Office's Race Equality Unit (REU), now located in the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), to improve the Government-wide PSA target on tackling race inequalities and building community cohesion (PSA 10).
69. As a result of our work with the Treasury and Home Office, and targeted engagement with other relevant departments, race equality now forms a more integral part of the PSA regime.
70. Our successful work with the Treasury to date means that we are very keen to ensure that race equality continues to be integral to the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) 2007 and revised PSA targets. We are currently working with the REU and the Treasury to develop an approach to equality within the CSR 07 process. As part of this work the CRE will be producing a race equality technical note to underpin the development of the new PSAs. The CRE is also working on producing some guiding principles to CSR 07 which include the following:
 - responsibility for race inequality and community cohesion has to remain with those departments that can affect change
 - need to prioritise on those areas where race inequality is a greater issue
71. The CRE has also recently undertaken a mapping exercise of some of the main funding streams relating to children and young people. These include:
 - core funding of services by Government, e.g through the PSAs
 - additional funding by Government, e.g. Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant; Excellence in Cities; Gifted and Talented; Youth Opportunity Fund
 - funding by government to the voluntary and community sector to assist in the delivery of public services
72. It is evident that a great amount of financial resource has been targeted towards improving services for children and young people; however, it is not clear how effective these funding streams have been in reaching ethnic minority young people and improving outcomes for them.

73. Before further grant programmes are devised, it is vital that existing programmes are evaluated with a view to determining just how effective they have been in reaching those groups who are most likely to suffer disadvantage and poor outcomes.
74. Criteria for the funding of services or projects should require organisations to work towards an integrated society. This means ensuring equality for all young people; enabling young people of different backgrounds to participate; and promoting interaction between young people of diverse racial groups. The CRE is currently working on a proposal for criteria to sustain funding streams in focusing on an integrated society (see paragraph 106).
75. Funding criteria should also promote awareness of health, economic well-being and achievement among disadvantaged young people, encourage services for disadvantaged groups and promote their involvement in decision-making.

B. Specific Comments

‘Prevention’ strand

76. The CRE fully supports the need for early intervention to improve the life chances of children and young people. We support the development of a proactive approach which seeks to prevent poor outcomes from developing in the first place.
77. Research and data shows that social class, parents and immediate family have a huge impact on the outcomes and life chances of young people. Research into young people’s aspirations consistently shows that parents remain the main source of influence on young people throughout their key development stages³¹. Parents’ attitudes to issues such as education, work, sex, smoking and drinking as well as poor parental control and perceived lack of discipline all influence the behaviour of, and ultimately the outcomes for, children and young people.
78. In addition, the social class a child is born into, the socio-economic position of their parents, parental involvement in crime and parental levels of education and health are major determinants of a child’s life chances³².

³¹ Home Office Research, Development & Statistics Directorate (2004) *The Role of Education in Enhancing Life Chances and Preventing Offending*. Development and Practice Report 19

³² Office for National Statistics (2005e) *Population Trends 121 — Autumn 2005*. News Release.

79. Research has also shown that intergenerational mobility in Britain is much lower than in other advanced countries and has declined³³. Given the potential for inter-generational transmission of disadvantage and discrimination amongst many ethnic minority families, it is vital that early interventions are made to break this cycle and ensure improved outcomes for ethnic minority children and young people.
80. The Government's approach to improving parenting encompasses both law enforcement and support — such as parenting orders and parenting contracts; and initiatives like Sure Start, New Deal for Communities and the National Parenting Academy.
81. Whilst the CRE agrees that parents need to be supported to enable them to meet their responsibilities towards their children, we have a number of concerns.
82. Firstly, we are concerned that programmes aimed at supporting parents are not always appropriate for ethnic minority families. An evaluation of the Youth Justice Board's Parenting Programme found that the percentage of ethnic minority parents on parenting programmes was close to the percentage of ethnic minority parents in the overall population. However, relatively few services were targeted specifically at ethnic minority parents³⁴.
83. In addition, new services such as *Parents Direct* must meet the needs of parents of all ethnic groups. This may include providing advice on culturally specific issues or translation and interpretation services. It is vital to ensure that there are no barriers to accessing services.
84. Secondly, whilst increasing the availability of parenting support programmes is certainly welcome, we have strong concerns about the use of statutory powers to secure parents' engagement in such programmes. Given that ethnic minority families are more likely to live in deprived areas where opportunities to improve life chances are scarce, we are concerned that statutory powers may be used disproportionately against ethnic minority communities. It is therefore crucial that robust ethnic monitoring of the use of such powers is undertaken to ensure that there is no adverse impact on particular groups.
85. Moreover, there is evidence to suggest that using statutory powers may well be counter-productive. The national evaluation of the Positive Parenting programme concluded that, whilst there did seem to be a place for Parenting Orders, "a system which privileged a genuinely voluntary route, but with Parenting Orders held in reserve where voluntary engagement had failed might prove more acceptable to family

³³ Blandon, J., Gregg, P. and Machin, S. (2005) *Intergenerational Mobility in Europe and North America*. The Sutton Trust.

³⁴ Home Office/Youth Justice Board/Department for Constitutional Affairs (2004) *Parenting Contracts and Orders Guidance*.

support providers, opinion formers and parents themselves. This would help to reduce the initial barriers to engagement with a service arising out of parents' distress at receiving a Court Order, and help minimise the number of parents being drawn into the criminal justice system"³⁵.

86. Whilst poor parenting can be a cause of problematic behaviour in children and young people, it is certainly not the only cause, and a holistic assessment of a young person and their family circumstances is needed to determine whether parenting measures are the appropriate response.

Review of disabled children

87. The CRE strongly supports the review's aim to improve outcomes and life chances of disabled children through the development of effective and accessible services.

88. Around 10 per cent of disabled people are from ethnic minority groups. The prevalence of impairment differs across ethnic groups. Ethnic minority groups are less likely to report impairments than the White population but are more likely to experience poor outcomes if they are disabled³⁶.

89. Data shows that people of Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Chinese origin remain less likely to report that they are disabled. Even though ethnic minorities are less likely to report impairments, disabled people of ethnic minority origin are more likely to experience disadvantage. Ethnic minority families with disabled children have a lower take-up of services and often feel less informed or able to access the system.

90. A 2004 report by the Disability Rights Commission (Disability Rights Commission 2004) also found that:

- many ethnic minority disabled people experience difficulty in obtaining information about services, including information about rights which can lead to some individuals experiencing isolation and exclusion
- ethnic minority disabled people and their families often do not know where to go to obtain information about rights. They are often unclear about what to expect by way of provision and are unclear about what is fair or unfair in the way they are treated
- some disability services and organisations have yet to develop an understanding of, or are unable to meet ethnic minority people's

³⁵ Youth Justice Board (2002b) *Positive Parenting: The National Evaluation of the Youth Justice Board's Parenting Programme*. London: Youth Justice Board.

³⁶ Prime Minister's Strategy Unit (2005) *Improving the life chances of disabled people. Final Report. January 2005. A joint report with: Department for Work and Pensions, Department of Health, Department for Education and Skills and Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.*

needs whilst some services for ethnic minority people have yet to fully understand people's disability or impairment related needs

91. Whilst this research did not specifically focus on ethnic minority young disabled people, it is highly likely that their experiences would be similar.
92. A number of research reports published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation identify some of the issues facing ethnic minority young disabled people, including:
 - ethnic minority deaf people and parents of deaf children were concerned that deaf people found it difficult to learn about their ethnicity and religion — it was felt that schools for deaf children could play a stronger role in the development of a positive ethnic identity
 - access to information and services was hampered by poor provision of both community language and sign language interpreters
 - mainly hearing ethnic minority workers in the statutory sector felt unsupported, often faced racial hostility from White colleagues and users and had limited prospects of career progression³⁷
 - families from ethnic minority groups caring for a severely disabled child were even more disadvantaged than White families in similar situations
 - Indian and Black African/Caribbean families reported least support from their extended family, with levels of support lower than that found among White families
 - reported levels of unmet need — both for children and their parents — were greater than those found in the study of White families³⁸
 - young people and their families felt discriminated against on the grounds of both ethnicity and disability³⁹
93. The 'double discrimination' experienced by many ethnic minority disabled people means that all public services must be sensitive to the very particular needs of this group both in terms of ethnicity and disability.
94. Studies of 'short break' (or respite care) for disabled children from ethnic minority groups found that disabled children's services do not cater adequately for ethnic minority children and that services for ethnic

³⁷ Ahmad, W., Darr, A., Jones, L., and Nisar, G. (1998) *Deaf people from minority ethnic groups: initiatives and services*. Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

³⁸ Chamba, R., Ahmad, W., Hirst, M., Lawton, D. and Beresford, B. (1999) *Minority ethnic families caring for a severely disabled child*. Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

³⁹ Hussain, Y., Atkin, K., and Ahmad, W. (2002) *South Asian young disabled people and their families*. Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

minority children do not adequately cater for disabled children, resulting in ethnic minority disabled children ‘falling through the net’⁴⁰.

95. The key message is that the rights and requirements of ethnic minority disabled people are not currently being well met by the majority of information and service providers with whom they come into contact. The majority of current services are still not well equipped to take on board the complex needs of disabled ethnic minority people.
96. These gaps in knowledge must be addressed in order to ensure that barriers to access to services for ethnic minority families are reduced and that services become more culturally competent.

Strategy for Youth Services

97. The CRE provided a comprehensive response to the consultation on the *Youth Matters* Green Paper. A copy of our full response is attached and can also be accessed at: <http://www.cre.gov.uk/Default.aspx?LocID-0hgnew08s.RefLocID-0hg00900f006.Lang-EN.htm>
98. We argued, in our response, that the reforms proposed in *Youth Matters* offer the opportunity to develop youth services and positive activities that promote integration by enabling young people of all communities to interact with each other and participate in making decisions about the type of services and facilities they want.
99. This is particularly important since 7/7 and the increased hostility towards young people of particular ethnic and religious backgrounds. In this context, inclusive positive activities may provide a useful means of bringing young people together and encouraging a greater understanding and awareness of different religious and cultural traditions, thereby contributing to improving faith and race relations.
100. Taking pro-active steps to enhance interaction should however not be limited to young people. To be credible and inspire, organisations working for — and hopefully increasingly with — young people need to adapt to an ethnically diverse society, not simply by providing culturally-specific services, but by developing intercultural competence that transcends difference, deals with diversity creatively and enhances good race relations.
101. In addition, organisations should not only involve young people from a wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds in their decision-making processes, but should strive to achieve an ethnically-diverse and representative workforce on whose knowledge and expertise they can draw in developing services for ethnic minority young people.

⁴⁰Department for Education and Skills (2002) *The Children Act Report 2002*. Department for Education and Skills.

102. The CRE wants to see current and future funding resources directed towards developing youth services that promote integration, focusing particularly on those communities that are at the highest risk of segregation. The CRE is currently developing a set of indicators that can be used to measure the move towards an integrated society and this will be a useful tool to enable performance in this area to be assessed and monitored.

Review of High Cost, High Harm Families

103. Given that many ethnic minority children and young people suffer disadvantage and poorer outcomes compared to the general population, it is vital that this review considers how early intervention can help to break the cycle of low attainment, high cost and high harm experienced by many ethnic minority families.

104. It can be argued that this is the result of the increased likelihood of ethnic minority families living in deprived areas where opportunities to improve life chances are scarce. But discrimination and racism — both within institutions and communities — cannot be ruled out as a factor in preventing ethnic minority children and young people from achieving positive outcomes. Much more work is needed to reduce, and ultimately eliminate, discrimination and racism if we are to stop ethnic minority families cycling in and out of the high cost, high harm category.

105. Earlier intervention and preventive work with families who are in need is vital to avoiding further dysfunction and separation. Many of these families are already socially excluded and living in poverty. Rather than directing funding to the care of children by social services, where the costs are high and the outcomes for those children very poor, resources should be deployed to helping children to remain in the care of their own families.

Conclusion

106. In this submission, we have highlighted those issues that are of particular relevance to ethnic minority children and young people. In the CRE's view, these are issues which must be addressed if Government is to achieve its aim of improving the life chances and outcomes for all children and young people.

107. I do hope these comments are helpful. The CRE is keen to be involved in any further discussions about how race equality can be factored into policies for children and young people and the forthcoming Comprehensive Spending Review and development of new PSAs.