



**ETHNIC DISPARITIES AND
INEQUALITIES IN THE UK:
CALL FOR EVIDENCE FROM
THE COMMISSION ON RACE
AND ETHNIC DISPARITIES**

Muslim engagement
& development

mend

Ethnic disparities and inequalities in the UK: call for evidence from the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities

A Submission from Muslim Engagement and Development (MEND)

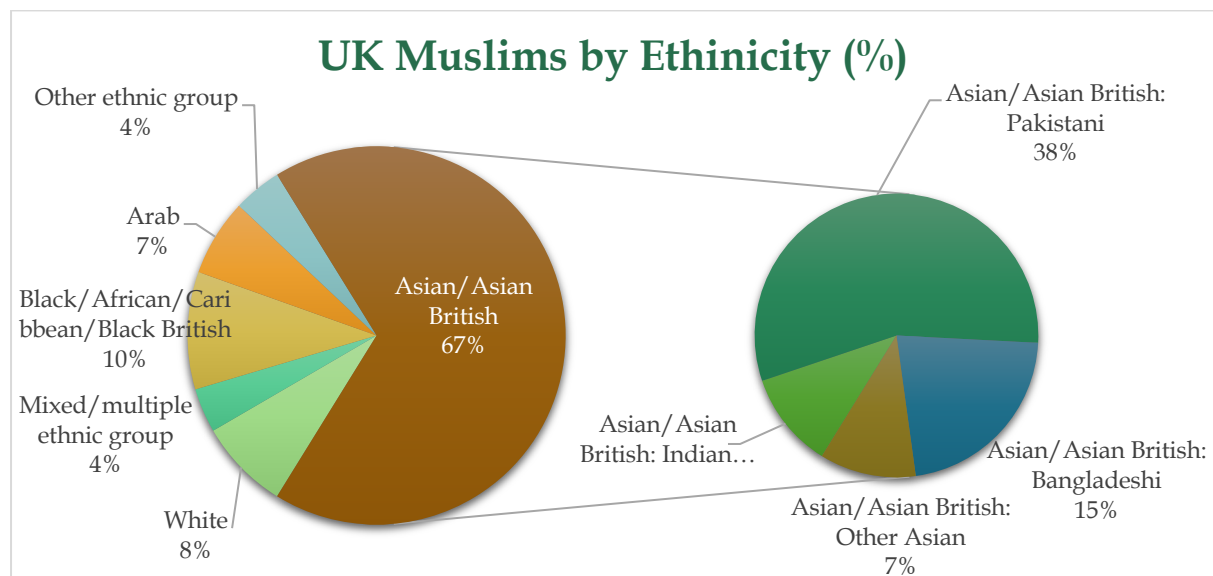
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MEND's contribution to the consultation

This submission from Muslim Engagement and Development (MEND) seeks to assist the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities (the Commission) in its review of ethnic disparities and inequalities in the UK in relation to education, employment and enterprise, health, and crime and policing.

MEND is a community-funded organisation that seeks to encourage political, civic, and social engagement within British Muslim communities through empowering British Muslims to interact with political and media institutions effectively. Our approach to achieving this involves a combination of community engagement (through education, community events, local campaigns to encourage voting etc.) and advocacy work (involving victim support, submissions to parliamentary inquiries, media analysis, election resources, briefings etc.). As MEND's primary aim is to represent issues that affect British Muslim communities, this submission ultimately concerns disparities in terms of religion and ethnicity.

While MEND's work focusses on British Muslims in terms of their religious identity, this identity frequently intersects with other categories, such as cultural, linguistic, gender, age, and, not least of all, ethnic identity. Indeed, according to the 2011 Census (the most recently available comprehensive data), around 90% of British Muslims are people of colour, with roughly 68% of British Muslims identifying as Asian or Asian British, and 56% of Muslims in this category recognising as British Pakistani.¹



¹ "Muslim population in the UK", Office for National Statistics, Accessed: 26th November 2020. https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1fZjzOyBdwg_Ki9xZoyLQw4zskMjn6QeSatQWaRePvbc/edit#gid=2

Therefore, while the evidence presented throughout this submission ostensibly relates to British Muslims, within these observations also lie the realities of ethnic experiences across the UK. Therefore, considering MEND's expertise in structural and institutional inequalities and their impact on minority communities, we have focused on critical questions within the Commission's investigation and hope that our contribution will provide valuable insights and thus assist the Commission in the development and implementation of evidence-driven policies that reflect the needs and experiences of such communities.

Executive Summary

- **Question 1. What do you consider to be the main causes of racial and ethnic disparities in the UK and why?:** For British Muslim, perhaps the primary source of inequality lies in Islamophobia. Despite not forming a racial or ethnic group, Muslims have become racialised within political, social, and media discourse. At the same time, manifestations of Islamophobia intersect with other exclusionary processes predicated upon ethnicity and race, culminating in widespread conscious and unconscious biases as well as structural and institutional exclusions that impact the ability of British Muslims to enjoy their socio-political and economic rights, freedoms, and opportunities on an equal footing with their non-Muslim counterparts. Consequently, the ethnic and racial disparities, inequalities, and discrimination faced by Muslims from ethnic minority backgrounds in the UK cannot be separated from processes of Islamophobia.
- **Question 2. What could be done to improve representation, retention and progression opportunities for people of different ethnic backgrounds in public sector workforces (for example, in education, healthcare or policing)?:** The challenges facing different sectors in relation to diversity differ across sector, specialisms, roles, and geographic locations. Therefore, in addressing this area, each sector must be subjected to independent investigations to examine recruitment practices and policies, workplace culture, promotion practices, inclusion initiatives, mentorship programs, and existing intervention strategies.
- **Question 3. How could the educational performance of school children across different socio-economic status groups be improved?:** There are a variety of critical areas that must be addressed to advance the educational performance of Muslim children. In particular, attention must be paid to building the capacity of schools to address bullying based on race, religion, disability, sexuality, and other protected characteristics. Additionally, there needs to be work to decolonise education and place emphasis on the promotion of shared histories and the recognition of the contributions of minority communities to our society. Muslim children further require role models and targeted mentoring programs aimed at building confidence and resilience. However, underpinning many of these challenges is the need to tackle the damage currently being done by how the PREVENT strategy acts as a vehicle for suspicion to enter into the student-teacher relationship, often destroying students' trust and willingness to engage with critical discussions on an equal footing with their non-Muslim peers.
- **Question 4. How should the school curriculum adapt in response to the ethnic diversity of the country?:** In the UK context, recognising the legacy of colonialism and empire alongside the contributions of the UK's minority communities is a necessary means of nurturing an understanding of shared history and overcoming the impacts of media, political, and public discourses that are too often built upon the foundations of xenophobia, racism and lingering orientalist ideologies. These decolonising efforts must also include an expansion of the traditional ethnocentric focus upon the writings and achievements of predominantly white Western men to encompass a broad spectrum of perspectives and voices that represents the diversity upon which our history and society are founded.
- **Question 6. Which inequalities in health outcomes of people in different racial and ethnic groups are not (wholly) explained by inequalities in underlying determinants of health (for example, education, occupation or income)?:** The ongoing pandemic has acutely highlighted the vulnerabilities of minority communities to disparities in health outcomes due to underlying socio-economic inequalities. In particular, attention must be paid to the impacts of factors such as

overcrowding and deprivation, concentration in precarious and low skilled frontline service roles, disparities in the treatment of frontline NHS staff, caring responsibilities, language barriers, and a lack of cultural awareness amongst NHS staff. These conditions all serve to increase the likelihood of ill health, decrease recovery rates, and detrimentally impact access to appropriate healthcare.

- **Question 8. What could be done to enhance community relations and perceptions of the police?:** As previously mentioned, there are serious issues embedded within the Criminal Justice System as a whole that impact how minority communities and Muslims specifically view and engage with their local police forces. These issues necessitate a full and independent investigation into structural Islamophobia within the Criminal Justice system. Beyond this, there is also immediate action that must be taken to encourage positive engagement between communities and the police. In particular, attention must be paid to increasing diversity at every level of seniority throughout police forces and addressing disproportionate applications of police powers, such as stop and search.
- **Question 10. Can you suggest other ways in which racial and ethnic disparities in the UK could be addressed? In particular, is there evidence of where specific initiatives or interventions have resulted in positive outcomes? Are there any measures which have been counterproductive and why?:** To solve a society-wide problem, a combination of legislative change, Government and industry initiatives, Muslim community empowerment, and broader community engagement is required. Central to these aims is addressing hatred within the press and online spaces, as well as developing programs to empower communities to engage in the democratic process fully.

Question 1. What do you consider to be the main causes of racial and ethnic disparities in the UK and why?

For Muslim communities in the UK, perhaps the primary source of inequality lies in Islamophobia – a phenomenon that cannot be separated from its racialised manifestation. Indeed, despite not forming a racial or ethnic group, Muslims have become racialised within political, social, and media discourse over recent decades to the point where Islamophobia itself functions as racism and should be seen through this lens. Moreover, manifestations of Islamophobia often intersect with other exclusionary processes predicated upon ethnicity and race. As a consequence, the ethnic and racial disparities, inequalities, and discrimination faced by Muslims from ethnic minority backgrounds in the UK cannot be separated from processes of Islamophobia. They thus should not be viewed independently of the simultaneous impacts of Islamophobia on these disparities.

Whilst perhaps the most overt manifestation of Islamophobia can be found in open and public abuse and hate crime, there must also be recognition for the role of political, public, and media discourses that culminate in widespread conscious and unconscious biases as well as structural and institutional Islamophobias impacting the ability for British Muslims to enjoy their socio-political and economic rights, freedoms, and opportunities on an equal footing with their non-Muslim counterparts. In particular, attention must be paid to processes of moral panic, in which political and media discourse surrounding Muslims has been fuelled by misconceptions and stereotyping, resulting in public misunderstandings and calls for restrictions, punitive laws, and the curtailment of their civil liberties and freedoms.² On this basis, structural Islamophobias have infiltrated UK policymaking on a variety of levels (particularly in strategies relating to security, counter-terrorism, and integration). At the same time, a legacy of orientalist approaches to the UK's ethnic and religious minority communities and a history of policymaking that has not always included meaningful engagement with communities has often resulted in policy implementation that has neglected the lived experiences of these groups. Consequently, British Muslims as a group (and in the case of this submission, BAME British Muslims specifically) experience exclusions, barriers, and inequalities at every level of socio-political and economic engagement.

In understanding the overarching infiltration of Islamophobia into the experiences of BAME British Muslims, it is perhaps useful to examine specific ways in which Islamophobia manifests itself across the policy areas currently of interest to the Commission.

Education

Muslims have the youngest age profile of all religious groups in the UK,³ with 33% aged fifteen or under and 48% below the age of twenty-five.⁴ Meanwhile, Muslims account for 9% of babies and toddlers aged 0-4 years old.⁵ The Census 2011 indicates that the overall Muslim population in England and Wales is 4.8%, while the Muslim youth population between 18-24 constitutes 6.2% of the general youth population within that age category. As such, Muslim youth have a huge potential to contribute positively to Britain's socio-economic life in the coming decades, particularly considering the creativity, innovation, and dynamism that is traditionally associated with younger generations. However, at the same time, policies and issues surrounding youth and schools will necessarily have a disproportionate impact upon Muslim communities due to their overrepresentation within young age demographics. Therefore, policy development and implementation must be sensitive to the needs of Muslim

² Richardson, "Islamophobia or anti-Muslim racism..." PARLIAMENT.UK, accessed 17.11.2020, <http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/home-affairs-committee/hate-crime-and-its-violent-consequences/oral/78630.pdf>

³ "Ethnicity and religion by age," Office for National Statistics, accessed June 07, 2017, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/aboutus/transparencyandgovernance/freedomofinformationfoi/ethnicityandreligionbyage>

⁴ "British Muslims in Numbers A Demographic, Socio-economic and Health profile of Muslims in Britain drawing on the 2011 Census," Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), accessed June 07, 2017, <http://www.mcb.org.uk/muslimstatistics/>

⁵ Ami Sedghi, "Is it true there is a startling rise in the birthrate of British Muslims?", The Guardian, January 10, 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2014/jan/10/rise-british-muslim-birthrate-the-times-census>

families.⁶ In particular, issues surrounding barriers to young Muslims' development must take into account religio-cultural factors. As but one example, university tuition fees are a concern for many young people across the UK. However, this barrier has an added layer of nuance when taking into account the desire of young Muslims to adhere to their religious beliefs in not paying interest, which is inherent in Government Student Loans. A solution in terms of offering Shariah-compliant finance, also known as alternative student finance (ASF), has been developed by the Government but has hitherto not been implemented.⁷ We believe that the offering of Shariah-compliant student loans would encourage Muslim students from who would otherwise be deterred from applying to university.

At the same time, manifestations of Islamophobia within the education system is a severe problem that impacts Muslim children and their development in a wide variety of ways. From being bullied explicitly for their faith to being stigmatised and reported to the PREVENT strategy for views they may hold, and to being interminably questioned on their apparent divergence from (thus far ill-defined) "British Values", Muslim children are struggling to navigate this complex maze. Meanwhile, controversies such as the alleged "Trojan Horse" affair and Amanda Spielman's recent proposals to question schoolgirls who wear the hijab highlight the obsessive scrutiny and problematisation of Muslims within the sphere of education. The impacts of these experiences can be long-term, damaging their ability to achieve success in the employment sphere and inhibiting their participation in wider civic society and the political arena.

MEND urges policymakers to:

- **Commit to prioritising PSRE and PSHE within the national curriculum and ensure grassroots Muslim organisations are enlisted to assist in developing teaching materials to educate young people on the dangers of Islamophobia.**
- **Commit to supporting academic freedoms and initiatives to decolonise education, whilst giving greater emphasis within the national curriculum to shared histories and the contributions of minority communities in building our society.**
- **Commit to developing training programmes for teachers focussed on tackling and addressing bullying based on race, religion, disability, or sexuality.**
- **Commit to supporting faith school provisions in the state sector for Muslim pupils and parents.**
- **Commit to implementing Shariah-compliant student loans to encourage more British Muslim students to attend university.**

The labour market

Numerous studies in recent years have demonstrated the failure of Muslims to progress and reach levels of success in the workplace which their non-Muslim counterparts enjoy. These studies have pointed to a combination of Islamophobia, racism, and discrimination as reasons for Muslims to be less likely to be in work; less likely to be in skilled and professional occupations; and less likely to break through the glass ceiling to access top-level executive positions. Indeed, only 6% of Muslims in the workplace are in higher managerial, administrative, and professional occupations, compared to 10% of the overall population.⁸ Studies have also shown that Muslims have been disproportionately confined to unskilled

⁶ Open Society Institute, "Muslims in the UK: Policies for Engaged Citizens," Open Society Foundations, 2005, <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/reports/muslims-uk-policies-engaged-citizens>.

⁷ "Sharia-Compliant Student Finance," Hansard, accessed July 6, 2019, <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2019-07-25/debates/EE789E3A-C4D8-4731-9FC4-B4DF2A6CE523/Sharia-CompliantStudentFinance>.

⁸ "Young Muslims in the UK Face Enormous Social Mobility Barriers," GOV.UK, accessed June 20, 2018, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/young-muslims-in-the-uk-face-enormous-social-mobility-barriers>.

professions or jobs with limited progression opportunities.⁹ Census data shows that, while a fifth of people is employed in the highest category of socio-economic classifications, such as higher managerial and higher professional occupations, this proportion falls to just 1 in 8 for Muslims. Additionally, while only 4% of the general adult population had never worked, this figure was five times higher for Muslims, with 21.3% of Muslim adults having never worked.

The Government's Social Mobility Commission, chaired by former Labour minister, Alan Milburn, cited several barriers to success for Muslims in the employment sphere. These included ethnic minority sounding names being less likely to be offered interviews and Muslims feeling forced to work "10 times as hard" as their white counterparts to achieve equivalent levels of success.¹⁰ Employer attitudes have also been given as a reason for failure to progress in the workplace in research by BBC's "Inside Out", which found that CVs submitted under a non-Muslim name were three times more likely to be offered an interview than those with a Muslim name.¹¹ Meanwhile, the National Equality Panel previously found that Muslims receive, on average, 13-21% less pay than their white Christian counterparts with equivalent qualifications.¹² MEND surveyed over 1000 British Muslims in 2016 and found that 29% felt that they had been discriminated against when turned down for a job, and over a third felt that they had been discriminated against in seeking a promotion.¹³ The above findings as a whole are particularly disappointing given that academics found a strong work ethic and high resilience among Muslims, which "resulted in impressive results in education".¹⁴

In 2016, the House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee stated that Muslim women face a *triple penalty* in the employment sphere due to being women, being from an ethnic minority background, and for being Muslim. This finding is echoed by research, with the Social Mobility Commission noting how amplified adversity was for Muslim women wearing the hijab. Researchers found that women were confronted with situations ranging from "assumptions they were forced to wear the headscarf to jokes and casual comments in the workplace about Muslims". Muslim workers also faced "a feeling of a need to apologise and explain" every time a terror attack occurred.¹⁵ Another study found that 1 in 4 employers admitted to being reluctant to hire Muslim women, due to concerns they would prioritise their family commitments above professional duties.¹⁶ One of the more disturbing revelations from research into the difficulties ethnic minority women face in entering employment was that 1 in 8 Pakistani women were illegally asked about marriage and family aspirations in job interviews, compared to 1 in 30 white women. Thus, demonstrating the levels of preconceived bias and racially and religiously shaped assumptions that Muslim women face.¹⁷

MEND urges policymakers to:

- **Commit to tackling religious, racial and gendered discrimination in the workplace through targeted interventions at all stages of recruitment, retention and promotion.**
- **Commit to the use of name-blind applications and targeted interventions within employment aimed at tackling the triple penalty and improving access to employment for British Muslim women specifically.**

⁹ Roger Dobson, "British Muslims face worst job discrimination of any minority group, according to research", Independent, November 30, 2014, accessed June 12, 2018, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/british-muslims-face-worst-job-discrimination-of-any-minority-group-9893211.html>.

¹⁰ Anushka Asthana, "Islamophobia Holding Back UK Muslims in Workplace, Study Finds", The Guardian, September 07, 2017, accessed May 10, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/sep/07/islamophobia-holding-back-uk-muslims-in-workplace-study-finds>.

¹¹ Zack Adesina and Oana Marocico, "Is It Easier to Get a Job If You're Adam or Mohamed?" BBC News, February 06, 2017, accessed May 10, 2018, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-38751307>.

¹² John Hills et al, *An Anatomy of Economic Inequality in the UK*, report, National Equality Panel, January 2010, accessed May 10, 2018, <https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/28344/1/CASEreport60.pdf>.

¹³ MEND (2016) Tackling racism and employment discrimination in the UK

¹⁴ Anushka Asthana, "Islamophobia holding back UK Muslims in workplace, study finds", The Guardian, September 2017. Accessed: 16th October 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/sep/07/islamophobia-holding-back-uk-muslims-in-workplace-study-finds>.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Siobhan Fenton, "6 Charts Which Show the Employment Barriers Faced by British Muslims", The Independent, August 11, 2016, accessed May 10, 2018, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/muslims-more-likely-to-be-unemployed-than-any-other-social-group-in-the-uk-mps-warn-a7185451.html>.

¹⁷ Ibid.

- **Commit to supporting employers to recognise and accommodate religious festivals and religious observance within the workplace, including the provision of halal meat, prayer rooms, and flexible work hours during Ramadan.**

Healthcare

As is the case in schools and all other areas in which the PREVENT strategy operates, the structural Islamophobia engrained within the strategy compounds existing barriers to healthcare that Muslims on the grounds of ethnicity. Amongst the vast array of critical failings within the PREVENT strategy is a lack of viable definitions. At present, the Government has no clear working definition of 'extremism', 'non-violent extremism', 'British Values', nor 'radicalisation'. With hundreds of thousands of staff having already been trained through the Workshop to Raise Awareness of PREVENT (WRAP-training), these practitioners are attempting to identify 'radicalisation' to tackle 'extremism' without appropriate guidance as to what it is that they are identifying. This lack of definitions leaves public sector workers in a position to determine risk based on personal understandings, stereotypes, and biases. This is further exacerbated by an inherent inadequacy in training that has been noted by the Home Affairs Committee¹⁸. PREVENT trained public sector workers may often receive only 45-60mins of online training to identify signs of radicalisation, which leaves practitioners drawing their understandings from popular culture rather than official training or evidence-based research.¹⁹ This has led to a situation where every day normative practices of the Islamic faith (for example, wearing the hijab or going on Hajj), cultural practices (watching an Arabic news channel),²⁰ or taking an interest in politics (criticising foreign policy) can be seen as a sign of being drawn to political violence. Indeed, looking at the NHS specifically, research conducted by Warwick University has found that 70% of the respondents "were 'likely', or 'very likely'" to refer someone for the "possession of Islamic/Anarchist philosophy books". This is important as the PREVENT training programme does not indicate this as a factor indicative of radicalisation. Still, it is reflective of the structurally Islamophobic nature of the current PREVENT strategy. The authors of the research, in line with the overarching concerns surrounding the PREVENT duty, conclude that "respondents are drawing their attitude from popular culture rather than official training or academic research".²¹

Moreover, PREVENT being embedded within safeguarding creates grey areas. Ordinarily within safeguarding, it is the welfare of the person in question that is of concern because you're trying to protect that person. However, within the duties of PREVENT, the aim is to protect the state from that person. This creates confusion in how to approach safeguarding needs. As concluded by the civil rights campaigners, Liberty, "while everyone in society has moral and ethical obligations to report suspected criminality, requiring teachers and others in sensitive positions of trust to report those with dissenting views risks undermining professional obligations of confidentiality, sowing mistrust and pushing those with grievances further underground."²² Research has also shown that less than half of NHS staff agree that PREVENT is a genuine safeguarding procedure, with safeguarding professionals alerting researchers of the significant differences between PREVENT safeguarding and established safeguarding practice.²³

MEND urges policymakers to:

¹⁸ House of Commons, "Radicalisation: the counter-narrative and identifying the tipping point – Eighth report of Session 2016-17", August 25, 2016, accessed June 20, 2018, <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmhaff/135/135.pdf>

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ Charlotte Heath-Kelly and Erzsébet Strausz "Counter-terrorism in the NHS: EVALUATING PREVENT DUTY SAFEGUARDING IN THE NHS", accessed 29.05.2018, https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/pais/research/researchcentres/irs/counterterrorisminthens/project_report_draft_60pp.pdf

²¹ Ibid

²² Libertyhumanrights.org.uk (2018). Available at: <https://www.libertyhumanrights.org.uk/sites/default/files/Liberty%27s%20Second%20Reading%20Briefing%20on%20the%20Counter-Terrorism%20Bill%20FINAL.pdf> accessed 17 Jun. 2019.

²³ Charlotte Heath-Kelly and Erzsébet Strausz "Counter-terrorism in the NHS: EVALUATING PREVENT DUTY SAFEGUARDING IN THE NHS", accessed 29.05.2018, https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/pais/research/researchcentres/irs/counterterrorisminthens/project_report_draft_60pp.pdf

²³ Ibid

- **Commit to independently reviewing all counter-terrorism legislation enacted since 2000 to curb the encroachment of counter-terrorism policies on civil liberties.**

Crime and policing

Institutional Islamophobia and discriminatory practices ingrained within the Criminal Justice System require examination because of both their disruption to the lives of many Muslims and for their long-term consequences to their future social engagement as equal members of society. In 2016, the Lammy Review exposed a high level of discrimination and a disproportionate representation of British Muslims in the Criminal Justice System. Indeed, despite making up just 14% of the population, BAME individuals constitute 25% of prisoners, while over 40% of young people in custody are from BAME backgrounds. Meanwhile, over the past decade, the number of Muslims in prison increased by over 48%, from 8,900 to 13,200. As such, Muslims make up 15% of the total prison population, while amounting to less than 5% of the general population.²⁴ Interestingly, as Lammy pointed out, this dramatic rise in the number of prisoners is not linked to terrorism offences, as only 175 Muslims were convicted of terrorism-related crimes between 2001 and 2012.²⁵

Over the last few decades, political discourse has led to a climate wherein Muslim identities have become increasingly securitised and viewed through the lens of counter-terror, violence, and threat. This has led to the public perception of a community 'at risk', which exacerbates existing problematic applications of policies such as stop and search that have been shown to disproportionately impact BAME communities. However, in reality, several structural issues contribute towards creating the conditions for Muslims, and the BAME population more generally, to suffer from disproportionate representation in the Criminal Justice System. These factors include:

- **Cultural Stereotypes:** Dr Zubaida Haque explains that the increase in the representation of Muslims in the Criminal Justice System can only be explained as a result of "cultural stereotypes" and poverty. She suggests that the widespread Islamophobia that has developed throughout the 21st Century has had an impact on the Criminal Justice System and the unconscious bias against Muslims across the whole spectrum of the justice system. Over the past decade, the public discourse on Muslims has been almost exclusively associated with crime, terrorism, and issues of integration. This creates the impression that young Muslims are less integrated, have less in common with their non-Muslim peers and possess ambivalent loyalties.
- **Socio-Economic Challenges:** Considering the severe economic deprivation experienced by many Muslims (with nearly half living in the 10% of the most deprived areas in England and Wales)²⁶, the increase of Muslim inmates should be seen not only as a result of discrimination but as a result of this socio-economic realities. Indeed, the Race Disparity Audit showed that 31% (or around 343,000) of the Pakistani population and 28% (or roughly 113,000) of the Bangladeshi population lived in the most deprived 10% of neighbourhoods in England. All Black ethnic groups were also disproportionately more likely to live in the most deprived areas.²⁷ Research has further demonstrated that living in deprived neighbours has a negative spill-over effect on multiple aspects of life, including general well-being, education, employment, and crime.²⁸ The socio-economic issues faced by BAME individuals, and Muslims particularly, are critical to understanding and tackling criminality through meaningful policy development.

²⁴ "The Lammy Review: final report", Gov.uk, September 8, 2017, p. 3, accessed 23.10.2017 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/lammy-review-final-report>

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Muslim Council of Britain, 2015, accessed 05.09.2019 http://www.mcb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/MCBCensusReport_2015.pdf

²⁷ "Race Disparity Audit Summary Findings from the Ethnicity Facts and Figures website", Cabinet Office, October 2017 (revised February 2018), accessed June 21, 2018, <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/static/race-disparity-audit-summary-findings.pdf>

²⁸ "Communities in recession: the impact on deprived neighbourhoods", Joseph Rowntree Foundation, October 2009, accessed 05.03.2018, <https://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/default/files/jrf/migrated/files/communities-recession-impact-neighbourhoods.pdf>

- **Homogeneity in the Criminal Justice System:** There is also a potential lack of understanding of the experiences of minority communities due to homogeneity and a lack of diversity within the Criminal Justice System itself. According to the Government's recent Race Disparity Audit, in 2016, 6% of court judges who declared their ethnicity were from non-white ethnic groups. As pointed out by the research conducted by T2A Alliance, a senior probation officer emphasised the importance of a lack of diversity amongst magistrates: "I would argue whether you could even say a magistrate has been through any type of formal training. They are people from a particular background who won't understand the needs of ethnic minority communities."²⁹
- **Lack of Understanding of British Muslim Diversity:** Muslims are often perceived as having a homogenous identity. Due to the aforementioned lack of diversity and accompanying cultural awareness, many working within the Criminal Justice System lack the understanding of the different Muslim communities. This is essential if holistic understandings of contributing factors to criminality are to be achieved and if meaningful rehabilitation strategies are to be devised.

The issue of the Criminal Justice System's perceived homogeneity of British Muslims is particularly significant because it frames Muslims within the war on terror narrative, thus making the simplistic distinction between "bad" and "good". The Runnymede Trust points out that, "Muslim communities are constructed as 'suspect' through the frequent implicit and explicit juxtaposition of the terms 'law-abiding majority' and 'extremist minority' when discussing both sets of communities".³⁰ In the Criminal Justice System, this can result in discrimination occurring on the simple basis of prejudice deriving from the mainstream interpretation of what constitutes an acceptable interpretation of Islam.³¹ Moreover, such a simplistic characterisation disregards other vital factors that can lead to more equitable understandings and treatment within the Criminal Justice System, such as ethnicity, education, class, place, gender and political outlook. The failure to acknowledge the inherent difference among the many Muslim communities thus results in the inability to understand the proclivities and aspirations of young Muslims living in the UK. This not only results in a broad-brush application of the law but also in difficulties in addressing the root cause for criminality within these communities.³² In short, "to ensure that everyone receives fair and equal treatment, it is critical to understand the needs of equality and minority groups and identify what separate provision may be required. *This is likely to be different not just across different protected characteristics but within them.* Indeed, one of the key things highlighted was the importance of not assuming homogeneity amongst the needs of all individuals from a particular group."³³

- **Mistrust:** The issues mentioned above combined with broader issues concerning ethnic and religious minorities' interactions and relationships with the state create a mutual feeling of distrust that has a profound impact on the lives of Muslims,³⁴ and has unavoidable repercussions in the relations between Muslims and the Criminal Justice System. For example, the justice system provides incentives for those who have committed crimes to admit guilt, such as potential reductions of sentences or access to interventions that keep them out of prison altogether. However, pleading "guilty" implies a level of trust between the accuser and the accused that many BAME

²⁹ "Young Muslims on Trial", *Maslahah*, March 2016, accessed May 29, 2018, https://www.t2a.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Young_Muslims_on_Trial.pdf

³⁰ Kjartan Páll Sveinsson, "Criminal Justice v. Racial Justice: Minority ethnic overrepresentation in the criminal justice system", *Runnymede*, accessed 15.02.2018 <https://www.runnymedetrust.org/uploads/publications/pdfs/CriminalJusticeVRacialJustice-2012.pdf>

³¹ Scott Poynting and Victoria Mason, "Tolerance, Freedom, Justice and Peace?": Britain, Australia and Anti-Muslim Racism since 11 September 2001", *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, Volume 27, 2006 - Issue 4.

³² Gabe Mythen and Fatima Khan, "Futurity, Governance and the Terrorist Risk: Exploring the Impacts of Pre-emptive Modes of Regulation on Young Muslims in the UK", accessed 20.02.2018 <https://www.kent.ac.uk/scarr/events/beijingpapers/Mythenppr.pdf>

³³ "Tackling inequality in the Criminal Justice System", *Clinks*, May 2015, accessed 20.02.2018, http://www.recoop.org.uk/dbfiles/news/246/Tackling_Inequality_within_CJS_Clinks_Report.pdf

³⁴ "Young, Muslim and British: Between rhetoric and realities", *LSE Blog*, accessed 24.10.2017, <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/religionpublicsphere/2017/04/young-muslim-and-british-between-rhetoric-and-realities/>

individuals may not have due to a real or perceived disparity in the way they experience state institutions. The issue of trust in the Criminal Justice System is important because people can accept decisions and outcomes from the justice system more willingly when they believe that the authorities are using fair procedures based on trustworthy motivations.³⁵

MEND urges policymakers to:

- **Commit to investigating structural Islamophobia within the Criminal Justice System.**

³⁵ Estefanía Estévez, Marina Rachitskiy, and Carla Rodríguez, "Is perception of the mainstream legal system homogeneous across ethnic groups?", *The European Journal of Psychology Applied to Legal Context*, 5 (2013), pp. 155-161, accessed June 21, 2018, https://ac.els-cdn.com/S1889186113700052/1-s2.0-S1889186113700052-main.pdf?_tid=spdf-03747654-b1a3-4bcd-9374-3ace337938bd&acdnat=1518710571_1338a41fbbd1369ef42ab7f9d421fa57

Question 2. What could be done to improve representation, retention and progression opportunities for people of different ethnic backgrounds in public sector workforces (for example, in education, healthcare or policing)?

The challenges facing different sectors in relation to diversity differ across sector, specialisms, roles, and geographic locations. For example, as mentioned previously, issues of a lack of trust amongst minority communities concerning policing and the criminal justice system may create an unwillingness for minority individuals to consider a career in policing. Meanwhile, the NHS has already implemented policies surrounding name-blind application processes and has been shown to have less of a problem regarding representation generally compared to other sectors. However, research has shown that there is a problem within the sector concerning representation at senior levels, indicating a need to focus on retention and progression. Indeed, recent revelations seem to confirm that BAME workers in the NHS face significant disadvantages in the workplace, including a lack of representation in senior positions and evidence of substantial salary disparities between BAME workers and their white colleagues. In 2018, an analysis of 750,000 staff salaries in the NHS in England revealed that Black doctors in the NHS are paid on average, almost £10,000 a year less than their white counterparts, while Black nurses received £2,700 less.³⁶ The disparity in salaries between white and BAME workers within the NHS is underlined by a lack of BAME representation in senior positions. BAME staff make up around 20% of the overall NHS workforce³⁷ and 58.6% of senior doctors. However, they constitute just 6.5% of senior managers.³⁸ Moreover, evidence suggests that BAME individuals are more likely to face disciplinary proceedings than their white counterparts due to "closed culture and climate; subjective attitudes and behaviour; inconclusive disciplinary data; unfair decision making; poor disciplinary support; and disciplinary policy misapplication."³⁹

Therefore, in addressing this area, each sector must be subjected to independent investigations to examine recruitment practices and policies, workplace culture, promotion practices, inclusion initiatives, mentorship programs, and existing intervention strategies. It is only through these holistic, independent investigations that a proper understanding of the underlying structural and institutional barriers to inclusion and progression can be gleaned.

However, as a brief (and by no means exhaustive) list of potentially fruitful initiatives that may broadly assist in the mission of improving representation, retention, and progression opportunities across public sector workforces:

- Name blind application processes.
- Critical analysis of how and where roles are advertised so that they are accessible to a broad audience.
- Community engagement during recruitment drives.
- Positive action, including the use of quotas with regards to highlighted protected characteristics.
- Mentorship programs and role models to support the development of junior staff.

³⁶ "Black Medics In NHS Paid Thousands Less Than White Medics". 2018. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/sep/27/black-medics-in-nhs-paid-thousands-less-than-white-medics>.

³⁷ "NHS Workforce". 2020. *Ethnicity-Facts-Figures.Service.Gov.Uk*. <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/workforce-and-business/workforce-diversity/nhs-workforce/latest#data-sources>.

³⁸ NHS Choices (NHS, February 13, 2020), <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/workforce-race-equality-standard-data-reporting-2019/>

³⁹ Uduak Archibong et al., "Disproportionality in NHS Disciplinary Proceedings," *British Journal of Healthcare Management*, April 15, 2019, <https://www.magonlinelibrary.com/doi/full/10.12968/bjhc.2018.0062>

- Recognising and accommodating religious and cultural observances and festivals (for example, the provision of halal meat, prayer rooms, and flexible work hours during Ramadan).
- Engaging in diversity and awareness training with the guidance and assistance of grassroots organisations.
- Listening exercises with current and prospective staff.
- The development of robust and comprehensive complaints systems to deal with all forms of bullying, harassment, and discrimination.

MEND urges policymakers to:

- **Commit to conducting independent reviews into representation, retention, and progression opportunities for people with protected characteristics across public sector workforces.**
- **Commit to tackling religious, racial and gendered discrimination in the workplace through targeted interventions at all stages of recruitment, retention and promotion.**
- **Commit to the use of name-blind applications and targeted interventions within employment aimed at tackling the triple penalty and improving access to employment for British Muslim women specifically.**
- **Commit to supporting employers to recognise and accommodate religious festivals and religious observance within the workplace, including the provision of halal meat, prayer rooms, and flexible work hours during Ramadan.**

Question 3. How could the educational performance of school children across different socio-economic status groups be improved?

In its examination of underlying barriers to Muslims in terms of obstacles to economic progression, the Social Mobility Commission highlighted experiences within education and educational settings as a critical factor in determining the social mobility of Muslims in the UK.⁴⁰ In particular, they highlighted the following areas as in need of address:

*"Perceptions that they will be targets for overt bullying/harassment based on their appearance, beliefs and their overall 'difference' means that young Muslims may avoid asking for help in classes at school which can affect their academic attainment."*⁴¹

Muslim pupils frequently encounter high levels of religiously and racially motivated bullying. This is often particularly acute following episodes of violence and incidents such as the attack on Manchester Arena in May 2017. Childline has reported that it held over 2,500 counselling sessions for children concerned about race and faith-based bullying over the past three years. However, they noted a sharp increase in calls following attacks in London and Manchester in 2017. Children as young as nine reported being called terrorists and enduring abuse and threats of violence. Meanwhile, the charity also noted that girls who wear the hijab had frequently been victimised for their religious dress, with some expressing a desire to self-harm as a result of the cruel treatment they had received.⁴²

Likewise, a report compiled by Show Racism the Red Card on bullying in schools found that 83% of 48 teachers who completed a survey questionnaire said they had witnessed racist attitudes or behaviour amongst students, including name-calling and stereotyping. Also, 31% of respondents admitted to seeing racist attitudes or behaviour among teachers.⁴³

Meanwhile, a study from the NSPCC has found that children are attempting to whiten their skin to avoid being victims of abuse.⁴⁴ According to the NSPCC, this comes as racial abuse and bullying recorded by police of under-18s in the UK rose by 22% in three years, from 8,683 in 2015/16 to 9,752 in 2016/17, and finally to 10,571 in 2017/18.⁴⁵ This suggests that expressions of hate, such as Islamophobia, know no boundaries, and unless they are tackled in a targeted manner, they risk becoming embedded in all corners of society.

Incidents of identity-based bullying are likely to stifle the attainment potential of students and subsequently affect their future life chances. The capacity of teachers to deal with bullying incidents is, therefore, of vital importance so that schools are environments in which children may flourish and prosper, not ones that they fear or avoid. The Government should thus dedicate resources in building the capacity of teachers to tackle such issues, including through developing teaching materials to educate young people on the dangers of Islamophobia, racism, anti-Semitism, homophobia, and other forms of hatred, as well as supporting community and school-led programmes that encourage cultural exchange between pupils of different racial, religious, ethnic, and other backgrounds. Moreover, attention must be paid to developing training programmes for teachers focussed on tackling and addressing bullying based on race, religion, disability, or sexuality. Such training must include increasing the confidence and willingness of teachers to enforce policies and procedures and to report incidences to the appropriate authorities when dealing with such cases.

⁴⁰ "The Social Mobility Challenges Faced By Young Muslims". 2017. *Assets.Publishing.Service.Gov.Uk*. accessed 19.11.2020 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/642220/Young_Muslims_SMC.pdf

⁴¹ "The Social Mobility Challenges Faced By Young Muslims". 2017. *Assets.Publishing.Service.Gov.Uk*. accessed 19.11.2020 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/642220/Young_Muslims_SMC.pdf

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ The Barriers to Challenging Racism and Promoting Race Equality in England's Schools, report, Show Racism the Red Card, June 21, 2011, <https://www.teachers.org.uk/files/srtrc-barriers-final.PDF>

⁴⁴ "Race hate crimes against children reach 3 year high", NSPCC, May 28, 2019, accessed 05.09.2019, <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-we-do/news-opinion/race-hate-crimes-against-children-reach-3-year-high/>

⁴⁵ "Children whitening skin to avoid racial hate crime, NSPCC finds", BBC, May 30, 2019, accessed 05.09.2019, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-48458850>

At the same time, PSRE and PSHE must be prioritised within the national curriculum (as must PSE within the curriculum for excellence in Scotland). Emphasis must be placed upon decolonising education and promoting a shared national history and identity that recognises the contributions of minority communities to our society. This decolonisation process must also include tackling the production and reinforcement of unconscious bias through educational syllabi by investigating the presentation of minority groups in teaching materials across all subjects and implementing awareness training for all teachers in conjunction with representative grassroots organisations.

MEND urges policymakers to:

- **Commit to developing training programmes for teachers focussed on tackling and addressing bullying based on race, religion, disability, or sexuality. Such training must include increasing the confidence and willingness of teachers to enforce policies and procedures and to report incidences to the appropriate authorities when dealing with such cases.**
- **Commit to prioritising PSRE and PSHE within the national curriculum and ensure grassroots Muslim organisations are enlisted to assist in developing teaching materials to educate young people on the dangers of Islamophobia.**
- **Commit to supporting academic freedoms and initiatives to decolonise education, whilst giving greater emphasis within the national curriculum to shared histories and the contributions of minority communities in building our society.**
- **Commit to tackling the production and reinforcement of unconscious bias through educational syllabi by investigating the presentation of minority groups in teaching materials across all subjects and implementing awareness training for all teachers in conjunction with representative grassroots organisations.**

"Low expectations by some teachers, including placing Muslims students in lower or middle sets, and a lack of encouragement to take challenging subjects, have a negative impact on the confidence of young Muslims which in turn limits their educational aspirations and attainment.";⁴⁶

The underestimation of students from minority backgrounds is well documented and, in the case of Muslim children, often follows the same logic as previously mentioned with regards to the continual framing of Muslim communities within the lens of criminality, the "War on Terror", and the "good vs bad Muslim" dichotomy. This is compounded by the infiltration of the PREVENT strategy and the statutory requirement it places on the teacher to have due regard for signs of radicalisation. Due to the aforementioned flaws regarding the definitions and training within the strategy and the subsequent reliance of those tasked to carry out the duty on their own understandings and popular culture, Muslims have become a suspect community. As a consequence, Muslim students are subject to suspicion from their teachers, which not only influences how teachers interact with students but also impacts how students interact with their teachers.

Children require encouragement and nurturing to flourish and achieve their potential. However, the pre-criminal space that is created by PREVENT stigmatises students, thereby potentially damaging their self-confidence and their confidence in societal structures and institutions. Moreover, the classroom environment is predicated upon trust. If students feel that they are being spied upon by their teachers, this destroys the relationship of trust that is so important. Aside from the apparent damage that this has upon the student's ability to learn,

⁴⁶ "The Social Mobility Challenges Faced By Young Muslims". 2017. *Assets.Publishing.Service.Gov.Uk*. accessed 19.11.2020
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/642220/Young_Muslims_SMC.pdf

if students do not feel that they can ask questions to their teachers, there is a danger that they may resort to finding answers online, where a wide range of false information can be found.

Ultimately, schools should be environments where students feel safe, confident and supported. Therefore, the aforementioned concerns regarding the PREVENT duty have a high potential to impact how children perceive and interact with their education severely; whether that be through asking questions and participating in debates, engaging in extra-curricular activities and responsibilities, involving themselves in activism and critical thinking, having the confidence to engage in public speaking, or having the motivation to achieve their potential. Since the largest proportion of referrals to PREVENT emerge from the education sector (32% of all referrals in 2016/17 ⁴⁷and 33% of all referrals in 2017/18),⁴⁸ the impact of PREVENT on the learning and development of young people is of primary concern.

MEND urges policymakers to:

- **Commit to independently reviewing all counter-terrorism legislation enacted since 2000 to curb the encroachment of counter-terrorism policies on civil liberties.**

"The lack of Muslim role models in school, including Muslim teachers, further compounds the poor experiences of many young Muslims and can contribute to their low aspirations or under-attainment. In contrast, where Muslim teachers are present in schools, this is perceived to have a direct impact on young Muslims' confidence, self-esteem, aspiration and educational and post-educational attainment." ⁴⁹

All children require nurturing and encouragement throughout their school careers. They also need to see themselves within the theories, histories, role models, and futures that are being presented to them. As previously mentioned, one component of achieving this is decolonising educational syllabi and including the full diverse range of voices and experiences that have built our society today. However, an equally important component is ensuring that Muslim children have role models that they can relate to and rely upon for advice and guidance that includes recognition of the nuances of their religio-cultural identity and experiences. For this to be achieved, it is essential to support initiatives targeted at encouraging Muslim talent into teaching, whilst also addressing retention and promotion opportunities for Muslim staff.

MEND urges policymakers to:

- **Commit to increasing the diversity within teaching, particularly at senior leadership levels, and through mentorship programs for junior BAME staff.**

⁴⁷ "Individuals referred to and supported through the Prevent Programme, April 2016 to March 2017", *Home Office*, Statistical Bulletin 06/18, March 27, 2018, accessed 11.06.2018, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/694002/individuals-referred-supported-prevent-programme-apr2016-mar2017.pdf

⁴⁸ "Individuals referred to and supported through the Prevent Programme, April 2017 to March 2018", *Home Office*, Statistical Bulletin 06/18, December 13, 2018, accessed 05.09.2019, <https://homeofficemedia.blog.gov.uk/2018/12/13/factsheet-prevent-and-channel-statistics-2017-2018/>

⁴⁹ "The Social Mobility Challenges Faced By Young Muslims". 2017. *Assets.Publishing.Service.Gov.Uk*. accessed 19.11.2020 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/642220/Young_Muslims_SMC.pdf

Question 4. How should the school curriculum adapt in response to the ethnic diversity of the country?

As previously mentioned, decolonising education is central to tackling religiously and racially motivated bullying and assuring that the place of students from minority communities within the shared national identity. In the UK context, recognising the legacy of colonialism and empire alongside the contributions of the UK's minority communities is a necessary means of nurturing an understanding of shared history and overcoming the impacts of media, political, and public discourses that are too often built upon the foundations of xenophobia, racism, and lingering orientalist ideologies. These decolonising efforts must also include an expansion of the traditional ethnocentric focus upon the writings and achievements of predominantly white Western men to encompass a broad spectrum of perspectives and voices that represents the diversity upon which our history and society are founded.

MEND urges policymakers to:

- **Commit to supporting academic freedoms and initiatives to decolonise education, whilst giving greater emphasis within the national curriculum to shared histories and the contributions of minority communities in building our society.**

Question 6. Which inequalities in health outcomes of people in different racial and ethnic groups are not (wholly) explained by inequalities in underlying determinants of health (for example, education, occupation or income)?

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has illustrated the plethora of problems faced by BAME communities in the UK, which have had the unfortunate result of inequalities in health outcomes. Whilst this section will use the pandemic as a case study, the findings should highlight areas in general need of being addressed to mitigate the inequalities in health outcomes.

As stated by Lynn Dobbs of *the Guardian*, "Coronavirus might not discriminate, but our society does. Whether it's the fact that the workers propping up our lockdown lives tend to be poorer, or the higher numbers of black, Asian and minority ethnic people dying from coronavirus, this crisis is shedding light on the fault lines in our society."⁵⁰ Understanding why specific communities are disproportionately affected by COVID-19 requires an examination of the underlying structural and institutional inequalities. The reality is that Muslim and ethnic minority communities are faced with a variety of socio-economic challenges that makes them more susceptible to catching the virus and more likely to face barriers to their physical recovery, as well as meaning that they will likely to feel the lasting economic impacts more acutely.⁵¹

Representation within frontline services

BAME and Muslim communities have had a long and significant history of valuable contributions within frontline services which translates into their being proportionally more exposed to COVID-19. As explained by Dr Zubaida Haque, ethnic minority communities are "more likely to be in low-paid jobs or key workers – crucial transport and delivery staff, health care assistants, hospital cleaners, adult social care workers as well as in the NHS."⁵² Indeed, Muslims are highly concentrated in occupations that require customer contact and more likely to be concentrated in the three lowest-skilled occupation groups, with more than 2 in 5 Pakistani and Bangladeshi workers in these lower-skilled occupations.⁵³ As the Public Health England report observed, "Some occupations require close or frequent contact with other individuals, which leads to an increased risk of COVID-19 infection. Early reports suggest that occupational exposure accounts for some infections (26), with healthcare workers (HCW) being particularly at risk of infection, but also individuals working in other people-facing occupations such as retail, hospitality, transport and security".⁵⁴

From its very conception, the NHS has relied on the continuous contribution and services of BAME nurses, doctors, and auxiliary staff.⁵⁵ Amidst the current COVID-19 crisis, the frontline of the NHS has been indebted to the 44.3% of the NHS medical staff who are foreign-born or from a BAME background, and BAME doctors represent 41% of the medical workforce.⁵⁶ Meanwhile, BAME staff make up around 20% of the overall NHS workforce,⁵⁷ and 58.6% of all senior doctors,⁵⁸ with Asians constituting the majority at 40.6%.⁵⁹

Data from 2018 reveals that the NHS is supported by health professionals drawn from countries with large Muslim populations, with Government statistics showing that 28.8% of

⁵⁰ Dobbs, Lynn. 2020. "Universities Must Create Opportunities For The People Coronavirus Will Harm Most | Lynn Dobbs". *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2020/apr/16/universities-must-create-opportunities-for-the-people-coronavirus-will-harm-most>.

⁵¹ "Ethnic Minorities 'A Third' Of Covid-19 Patients". 2020. *BBC News*. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-52255863>.

⁵² Ibid

⁵³ "Work, pay and benefits", *Ethnicity Facts and Figures*, accessed 21.05.2018, <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/work-pay-and-benefits>

⁵⁴ Public Health England. 2020. "Disparities In The Risk And Outcomes Of COVID-19". PHE Publications. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/889195/disparities_review.pdf.

⁵⁵ Butler, Patrick. 2008. "How Migrant Workers Helped Make The NHS". *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2008/jun/18/nhs60.nhs2>.

⁵⁶ "NHS Workforce". 2020. *Ethnicity-Facts-Figures.Service.Gov.Uk*. <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/workforce-and-business/workforce-diversity/nhs-workforce/latest#data-sources>.

⁵⁷ "NHS Workforce Statistics - September 2019 - NHS Digital". 2019. *NHS Digital*. <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/nhs-workforce-statistics/september-2019>.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid

all doctors working in the NHS were Asian or Asian British (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, or of Middle Eastern origin).⁶⁰ As such, Asian and Asian British individuals are the largest minority group in medical roles. Data from NHS trusts and Clinical Commissioning Groups in England shows that, as of September 2019, 124,715 doctors were employed in the NHS, of which nearly 13,000 were Muslim, comprising approximately 10% of the total medical workforce, and about 17% of doctors who declared a religion.⁶¹ For a community that makes up 5% of the national population, Muslims are over-represented in the medical workforce.

This general overrepresentation within the NHS is a factor in understanding the disproportionate exposure of BAME communities to the coronavirus. However, it is essential also to consider structural inequalities within the NHS itself that may place these individuals at a further heightened risk of exposure. Indeed, Carol Cooper, head of equality, diversity and human rights at Birmingham Community Hospital, recently reported that BAME healthcare workers feel they are being made to work on COVID-19 wards more than their white counterparts.⁶² The NHS has since issued updated guidelines to hospital trusts, providers of mental health care, ambulance services, and organisations providing community-based healthcare suggesting that BAME personnel should be "risk-assessed" and reassigned to duties away from the frontlines due to the higher risk they face.⁶³

As previously mentioned, there is evidence that BAME workers in the NHS face significant disadvantages in the workplace, including a lack of representation in senior positions and evidence of considerable salary disparities. Insecurities regarding pay, seniority, and leadership may influence the confidence of individuals to raise grievances, particularly in terms of controversial issues such as shortages of PPE or perceptions of discriminatory processes for assigning duties in high-risk wards.

MEND urges policymakers to:

- **Commit to undertaking a holistic examination into all potential disparities between BAME and white staff in the NHS, including how differences in pay and seniority may place BAME staff in positions requiring them to undertake duties that may involve a higher risk of exposure during outbreaks such as the one we currently face.**

Barriers to healthcare

Studies indicate that ethnic minority communities face disproportionate barriers in accessing adequate and effective healthcare as a result of significant inequalities. There are a variety of underlying forces that contribute towards these inequalities, ranging from a lack of diversity in senior levels of the NHS, language barriers, and a loss of confidence due to negative experiences. These issues are not limited to the NHS but are often found across public services. As the NHS itself has noted, "Experience of discrimination from both public services and society can cause some people to avoid actively seeking help, especially if this is coupled with a lack of a personal support network. Hate crimes on the grounds of race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability and transgender status can seriously affect how people interact with public services."⁶⁴

Cultural awareness amongst senior leadership is a vital asset in understanding these barriers. However, as previously stated, BAME staff make up around 20% of the overall NHS

⁶⁰ "NHS Workforce", 2020. *Ethnicity-Facts-Figures.Service.Gov.Uk*. <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/workforce-and-business/workforce-diversity/nhs-workforce/latest#data-sources>.

⁶¹ "NHS Workforce Statistics - September 2019 - NHS Digital". 2019. *NHS Digital*. <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/nhs-workforce-statistics/september-2019>.

⁶² "NHS 'Puts More Pressure On Ethnic Minority Staff To Work On Coronavirus Wards' | Metro News". 2020. *Metro.Co.Uk*. https://metro.co.uk/2020/04/21/nhs-puts-pressure-ethnic-minority-staff-work-coronavirus-wards-12589058/?ito=article_desktop_share_top_facebook.

⁶³ Denis Campbell, "NHS Looks into Taking BAME Staff off Frontline for Their Safety," *The Guardian* (Guardian News and Media, April 29, 2020), <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/30/nhs-bosses-say-bame-staff-should-be-risk-assessed-to-cut-covid-19>.

⁶⁴ "Improving Access For All: Reducing Inequalities In Access To General Practice Services". 2018. *England.Nhs.Uk*. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/inequalities-resource-sep-2018.pdf>.

workforce,⁶⁵ but just 6.5% of senior managers.⁶⁶ Optimum healthcare provision demands an understanding of the specific needs of patients, which thus necessitates senior levels of the NHS to reflect the diversity of its population to provide holistic healthcare and improve overall levels of care and satisfaction. Consequently, a lack of diversity within NHS leadership ultimately hinders the ability of healthcare systems to reflect or support the population it serves.

Improving the representation of BAME communities within senior ranks of any profession involves a review of every level of recruitment, retention, and progression. The NHS has already committed to eliminating the ethnicity pay gap and ensuring proportionate BAME representation in senior leadership by 2028⁶⁷ and has made promising progress in a variety of areas (for example, the use of name-blind applications during recruitment). However, it must consider what more it can do to provide sufficient support and mentorship to junior staff to empower them to progress and thrive.

Meanwhile, a study from the Race Equality Foundation found that "inequalities in prehospital care for ethnic minority groups are underpinned by problems of cultural awareness in professionals' language and communication difficulties; and a limited understanding of how the healthcare system operates for some minority groups."⁶⁸ Indeed, Dr Chidera Ota, a junior doctor working in intensive care, reported to the BBC that; "language barriers for people who can't speak English, especially when you can't say if you're in pain or short of breath, can have a huge impact." She further emphasised the problems encountered with current restrictions of hospital visitors, "particularly when you can't bring a family member with you to hospital now to help translate because of the virus."⁶⁹ As one example, GP patient surveys have highlighted the difficulty that female Pakistani and Bangladeshi responders have faced in communication, particularly when it comes to explaining tests and decisions making.⁷⁰

Issues of communication and understanding how the healthcare system operates are compounded if users have had previous negative experiences in engaging with healthcare providers. According to NHS studies, Asian/Asian British patients have reported the lowest level of satisfaction of all ethnic groups, with only 63% reporting a good experience of making an appointment.⁷¹ Furthermore, only 45% of Black and Asian patients reported receiving a received continuity of care, compared to 60% of White patients.⁷² Negative experiences of engagement with the NHS may cause people to become disillusioned and either avoid seeking help in the future (thus, negatively affecting their health), or resort to other services, such as A&E, which are more expensive and which quickly become overwhelmed, thereby impacting the whole local healthcare system.

MEND urges policymakers to:

- **Commit to the development and implementation of enhanced strategies to promote cultural awareness and increased diversity amongst NHS staff at every level of governance and management, including through mentorship and support programs for junior staff.**

⁶⁵ "NHS Workforce". 2020. *Ethnicity-Facts-Figures.Service.Gov.Uk*. <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/workforce-and-business/workforce-diversity/nhs-workforce/latest#data-sources>.

⁶⁶ NHS Choices (NHS, February 13, 2020), <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/workforce-race-equality-standard-data-reporting-2019/>

⁶⁷ "NHS Pledges Action To Eliminate Ethnicity Pay Gap". 2018. *GOV.UK*. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/nhs-pledges-action-to-eliminate-ethnicity-pay-gap>.

⁶⁸ "Ethnicity And Prehospital Emergency Care Provided By Ambulance Services". 2015. *Eprints.Lincoln.Ac.Uk*. <http://eprints.lincoln.ac.uk/id/eprint/17521/1/Health%20Briefing%2037.pdf>.

⁶⁹ "Ethnic Minorities 'A Third' Of Covid-19 Patients". 2020. *BBC News*. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-52255863>.

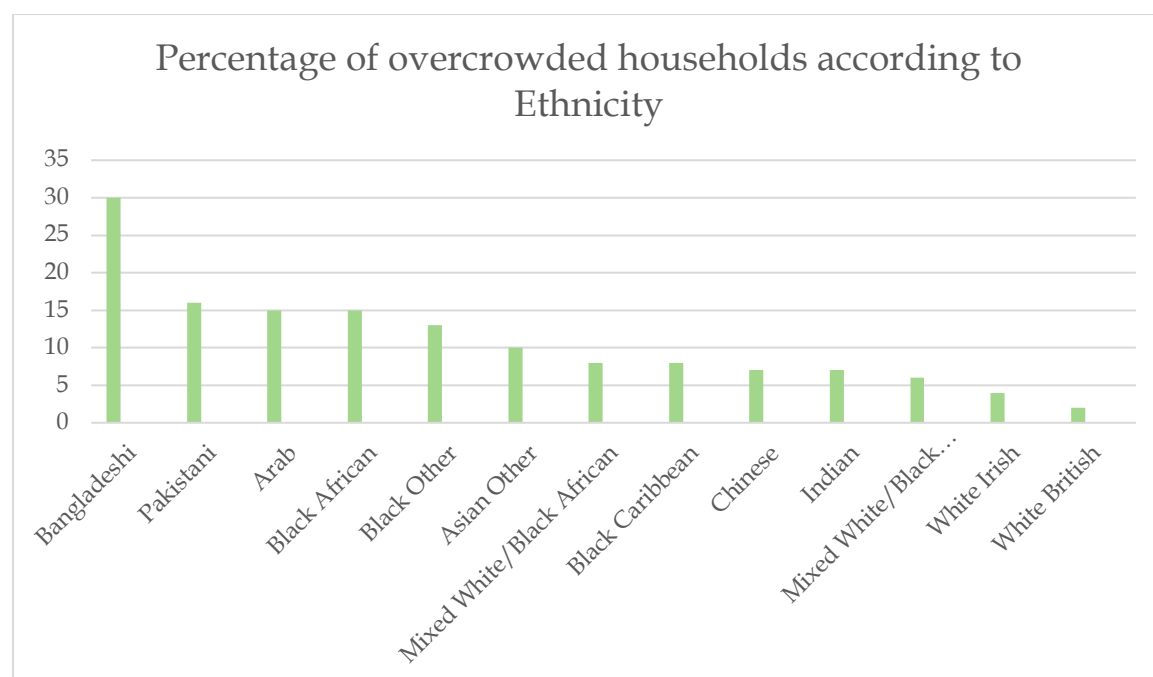
⁷⁰ "Improving Access For All: Reducing Inequalities In Access To General Practice Services". 2018. *England.Nhs.Uk*. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/inequalities-resource-sep-2018.pdf>.

⁷¹ *Ibid*

⁷² *Ibid*.

Deprivation and overcrowding

Muslims have been shown to suffer from the highest levels of overcrowding⁷³. They remain concentrated in some of the most deprived local authorities, with 46% of Muslims living in the 10% most deprived districts in England and Wales.⁷⁴ Overcrowding is a significant consideration during the pandemic we currently face, as isolation becomes impractical. According to Government statistics, Bangladeshi and Pakistani households are the most likely to suffer overcrowding, with 30% and 16% of households being overcrowded respectively, in comparison to just 2% of White British families.⁷⁵



"Overcrowded Households". 2019. *Ethnicity-Facts-Figures.Service.Gov.Uk*. <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/housing/housing-conditions/overcrowded-households/latest>.

The link between the overrepresentation of BAME communities in deprived areas and vulnerability to increased health risks cannot be overlooked. Indeed, deprivation is a crucial indicator in an individual's level of health. As pointed out by Dr Mohammed Ali, OBE, "unable to afford the luxury of a healthy lifestyle, some ethnic minority groups are prone to conditions like high blood pressure and heart disease. South Asians are six times as likely to develop type 2 diabetes as people of European descent."⁷⁶

According to a report by Public Health England:

"The mortality rates from COVID-19 in the most deprived areas were more than double the least deprived areas, for both males and females. This is greater than the ratio for all-cause mortality between 2014 to 2018, indicating greater inequality in death rates from COVID-19 than all causes. Survival among confirmed cases, after adjusting for sex, age group, ethnicity and region was lower in the most deprived areas, particularly among those of working age where the risk of death was almost double the least deprived areas. In summary, people in deprived areas are more likely to be diagnosed and to have poor outcomes following diagnosis than those in less deprived areas. High diagnosis rates may be due to geographic proximity to infections or a high proportion of workers in occupations that are more likely to

⁷³ "Race Disparity Audit Summary Findings from the Ethnicity Facts and Figures website", Cabinet Office, October 2017 (revised March 2018), accessed 15.05.2018, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/686071/Revised_RDA_report_March_2018.pdf

⁷⁴ "2011 Census Data On Nomis", 2011 Census - Nomis - Official Labour Market Statistics, accessed May 12, 2017, <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011>.

⁷⁵ "Overcrowded Households". 2019. *Ethnicity-Facts-Figures.Service.Gov.Uk*. <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/housing/housing-conditions/overcrowded-households/latest>.

⁷⁶ "How Virus Discriminates Against Our BAME Communities - Dr Mohammed Ali". 2020. *Yorkshireeveningpost.Co.Uk*. <https://www.yorkshireeveningpost.co.uk/news/opinion/columnists/how-virus-discriminates-against-our-bame-communities-dr-mohammed-ali-2552816>.

be exposed. Poor outcomes remain after adjusting for ethnicity, but the role of underlying health conditions requires further investigation."⁷⁷

This deprivation is often further compounded by Government policies. Research published in 2016 by the Runnymede Trust and Women's Budget Group (WBG) has shown that BAME groups have suffered disproportionately from the policies of fiscal austerity pushed forward by the Government since 2010.⁷⁸ As Omar Khan, former director of Runnymede Trust, noted, "changes to tax credits and other welfare payments will hit minority ethnic Britons harder than their white compatriots".⁷⁹ The Government's current approaches further heighten these challenges to integration. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's *Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper*⁸⁰ is notable for its absence of introspection and self-criticism, resulting in a minimal understanding of some of the primary barriers to integration between minorities and broader society. For example, there is no mention of the impact of the Government's policy of austerity and how cuts to public services affect minorities' access to health services.

MEND urges policymakers to:

- **Commit to recognising the impacts of previous austerity measures and ensure that any proposed measures do not exacerbate existing inequalities when developing economic recovery strategies in the wake of the pandemic.**

BAME and caring roles

The current crisis places additional pressures on those with caring responsibilities for people who are isolating and at higher risk. As observed by the Race Equality Foundation in 2018, unpaid carers "save the economy an enormous amount of money but often at a high cost to themselves both to their well-being and in financial terms. As a result, carers themselves often need support."⁸¹ However, they also note the different experiences of BAME carers compared to their white counterparts and the need to recognise the additional challenges they may face. Meanwhile, in meeting these challenges, there is evidence to suggest that BAME carers are less likely to access services and more likely to find services less satisfactory than white carers.⁸² Numerous studies show that carers frequently suffer harmful consequences to their financial situation as a result of a reduction in paid working hours, as well as detrimental impacts to their mental and physical health, particularly in terms of increased tiredness and social isolation.⁸³ This has a significant effect on BAME carers as they are more likely to be in financial difficulty, and are more likely to have care responsibilities for 20 or more hours a week (56% of BAME carers compared to 47% of white carers).⁸⁴ The Race Equality Foundation give the example of British Pakistani and Bangladeshi carers who are more likely to experience high levels of social exclusion. In contrast, British Indian carers suffer heightened levels of anxiety and depression.⁸⁵

With the COVID crisis, these challenges have been compounded by concerns over access to PPE and supporting the needs of those for whom carers have responsibilities whilst potentially having to isolate or experiencing coronavirus symptoms themselves. At the same time, existing financial difficulties may be exacerbated by the wider economic impacts of the

⁷⁷ Public Health England. 2020. "Disparities In The Risk And Outcomes Of COVID-19". PHE Publications. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/889195/disparities_review.pdf.

⁷⁸ "New research shows that poverty, ethnicity and gender magnify the impact of austerity on BME women", *Women's Budget Group*, accessed 17.05.2018, <http://wbg.org.uk/news/new-research-shows-poverty-ethnicity-gender-magnify-impact-austerity-bme-women/>.

⁷⁹ "Black & Asian Women Pay Highest Price for Austerity", *Runnymede Trust*, December 16, 2016, accessed 17.05.2018, <https://www.runnymedetrust.org/blog/black-asian-women-pay-highest-price-for-austerity>.

⁸⁰ "Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper". 2019. GOV.UK. <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/integrated-communities-strategy-green-paper>.

⁸¹ "Supporting Black And Minority Ethnic Carers". 2018. *Raceequalityfoundation.Org.Uk*. <http://raceequalityfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/REF-Better-Health-484.pdf>

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ NHS Information Centre for Health and Social Care (2010). Survey of carers in households 2009/10

⁸⁵ Supporting Black And Minority Ethnic Carers". 2018. *Raceequalityfoundation.Org.Uk*. <http://raceequalityfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/REF-Better-Health-484.pdf>

lockdown, with carers' existing paid work being vulnerable to furlough and redundancy, much as the rest of the population.

MEND urges policymakers to:

- **Commit to recognising the intersectional experiences of carers and the variety of specific challenges they face, particularly in terms of impacts on paid work and the consequences to their mental and physical health.**

Question 8. What could be done to enhance community relations and perceptions of the police?

As previously mentioned, there are serious issues embedded within the Criminal Justice System as a whole that impact the ways in which minority communities and Muslims specifically view and engage with their local police forces. These issues necessitate a full and independent investigation into structural Islamophobia within the Criminal Justice system. Beyond this, there is also immediate action that must be taken to encourage positive engagement between communities and the police. In particular, attention must be paid to:

- Increasing diversity at every level of seniority throughout police forces.
- Addressing disproportionate applications of police powers, such as stop and search.

Increasing diversity within the police

In the daily lives of most people, the police are perhaps the most visible representation of the state. As such, the relationship between minority communities and their local police is reflective of the relationship between communities and the state. Therefore, trust and understanding are critical in building healthy communities. Consequently, the adequate representation of minorities within the police force becomes a fundamental asset in nurturing understanding, trust, and a feeling of representation. Indeed, increasing the diversity within local forces has the benefit of allowing communities to feel represented, whilst also providing police forces with nuanced understandings of the issues and experiences of such communities, as well as helping them to respond to their needs and concerns meaningfully and with greater sensitivity.

The "Police Diversity" report prepared by the House of Commons found that there has been a steady increase in the overall proportion of officers and staff who are of a BAME background, mainly since this issue was brought to the attention of the Government in 2013. However, progress remains somewhat slow, with a wide variation in the demographic composition of local forces and BAME police officers remaining overwhelmingly amongst junior ranks. Even allowing for appropriate career progression, the number of BAME officers above the rank of inspector remains very low. These results were thus deemed "unacceptable" by the committee.⁸⁶ The issue of BAME representation at senior levels is particularly problematic. Indeed, the lack of BAME representation at senior levels within the police service affects its leadership, culture, and understanding of the community it serves. Meanwhile, people of a BAME background wishing to develop their careers within the police service often lack role models, encounter barriers when trying to access necessary training, and face selection panels which are frequently lacking in diversity.⁸⁷

Steps must be taken to ensure that police forces are representative of the many segments of British society and the communities they serve. This need is evidenced by the Race Disparity Audit, published by the Government in late 2017, which found a significant disparity in the representation of minorities in both the police force and employed within the wider Criminal Justice System. In 2016, 94% of prison officers in England and Wales who disclosed their ethnicity were white. The same year, around one police officer in every 17 was from a non-white ethnic minority group. While this ratio differed significantly according to rank, type of work, and geography, there has been a slight increase in the proportion of officers from a non-white background over the last ten years, indicating promise.

However, the responsibility for greater representation within police forces lies not only with the police service but also with communities themselves. Perhaps due to a long history of negative interactions between the police and BAME communities, there is a notorious lack of

⁸⁶ "Police diversity First Report of Session 2016-17", House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, accessed 20.02.2018, <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmhaaff/27/27.pdf>

⁸⁷ Ibid.

trust, which creates barriers for communities to engage with their local police meaningfully. This is a relationship that requires considerable effort from both sides if it is to be rectified. MEND's own work in this area includes hosting roundtables and forums designed to create a platform for communities to interact and build constructive relationships with their local police, which should in time promote greater trust and improved recruitment of Muslims into the police force. Until trusting relationships are achieved, recruitment from within these communities will remain a significant challenge.

As a result, MEND would encourage local police forces to thoroughly examine their current policies and procedures at all levels of recruitment, retention, and progression, to develop a clear strategy for improving diversity across every level of seniority within the force. MEND would also encourage local forces to build relationships with representative grassroots organisations, such as MEND, who may assist them in a variety of ways, including:

- Facilitating engagement and platforms for discussion with local Muslim communities,
- Providing training and expertise in the issues experienced by Muslim communities,
- Serving as third-party reporting centres, which can both encourage reporting and also act as a liaison between police and local victims.

Addressing disproportionate applications of police powers

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, a recent report from *Liberty Investigates* has highlighted how the emergency powers that were bestowed upon police at the beginning of lockdown may be being used to disproportionately target BAME communities, with 22% of fines being issued to 15.5% of the population, resulting in BAME individuals being 54% more likely to be fined under coronavirus rules than their white counterparts.⁸⁸

This discovery did not arise without prior concerns being raised. The 1999 Macpherson Inquiry, which was established to scrutinise the Metropolitan Police Service's investigation into Stephen Lawrence's murder, produced a critical report accusing the Metropolitan Police Service of "institutional racism" and advanced 49 recommendations to improve policing and its impact on racial minorities. The Macpherson report found that ethnic minorities were "over policed... and under protected"⁸⁹ with interactions and trust between race groups and the police influenced by a high incidence of stop and search. The Macpherson report proposed priority measures to "increase trust and confidence in policing among minority ethnic communities" through policy directives regulating the use of stop and search procedures and improvements in the recruitment and retention of ethnic minority officers in the police force.⁹⁰ While noteworthy and commendable steps have been made to improve equalities in the Criminal Justice System since the publication of the Macpherson report, Muslims and ethnic minorities remain over-represented.

The most recent Government data on stop and search between April 2018 and March 2019 shows little sign of improvement. The data suggests that the current stop and search rate for people of Asian and mixed ethnicity is 11 in every 1,000 people; for Black people it is 38 in every 1,000; while for white people it is just 4 in every 1,000.⁹¹ According to StopWatch, in 2018/19 in London, Asians and people from mixed ethnic backgrounds were searched at approximately 1.5 times the rate of their white counterparts.⁹²

⁸⁸ "Metropolitan Police Stop And Search Statistics | Your Area". 2020. *Stopwatch*. <http://www.stop-watch.org/your-area/area/metropolitan>.

⁸⁹ William MacPherson, The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, report, February 24, 1999, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/277111/4262.pdf

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ "Stop And Search". 2020. *Ethnicity-Facts-Figures.Service.Gov.Uk*. <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/crime-justice-and-the-law/policing/stop-and-search/latest#by-ethnicity>.

⁹² "Metropolitan Police Stop And Search Statistics | Your Area". 2020. *Stopwatch*. <http://www.stop-watch.org/your-area/area/metropolitan>.

The detrimental impact of the stop and search powers can be observed in their effect on Muslim males. As the EHRC noted in a report in 2011, "For many young Muslim men on the streets, stop and search under Section 44 of the Terrorism Act (s44) has become their most frequent and regular contact with the police... Such measures were seen to add to perceptions of racial and religious profiling and discrimination."⁹³ Indeed, an analysis by Julian Hargreaves representing "the first known study to model large-scale police stop and search data from British Muslim communities" which was performed in 2018, uncovered how once having been stopped, being Muslim increases the probability of being searched on foot by a factor of eight. This is more than any other religious or ethnic group evaluated in the study.⁹⁴

What these observations suggest is that, even under ordinary circumstances, minority communities are disproportionately subject to policing measures. This accepted reality led a cross-party group of MPs to write to the Home Secretary, Priti Patel, warning that ethnic minorities must not be unfairly targeted by police forces in the exercise of their powers to enforce the Coronavirus lockdown.⁹⁵

Being subjected to stop and search procedures has been shown to have a detrimental impact on a person's sense of identity and belonging. The College of Policing has observed that: "There are substantial risks associated with stop and search being used incorrectly or inappropriately...disproportionate use of stop and search against particular social groups—most notably black and minority ethnic groups and young people—may increase their perception that they are being targeted unfairly."⁹⁶ It further noted that: "Perceptions of the police making unfair decisions and being disrespectful are linked with lower levels of police legitimacy...this in turn reduces the public's willingness to not break the law and cooperate with the police, e.g., by not reporting crime, suspicious activity or providing information...likely to make the police's job harder in the long run."⁹⁷

As noted above, considering the status of police forces as a physical embodiment of the state, trust and understanding are critical in building healthy communities. This is especially pertinent at times such as these when people look to the police and the state to ensure their safety and protection. As the global rise of the Black Lives Matter movement attests, governments must commit to investigating institutional and structural racisms that permeate every level of society, including throughout our criminal justice system, but especially in how police powers are disproportionately used against minority communities.

MEND urges policymakers to:

- **Commit to investigating structural Islamophobia within the Criminal Justice System.**
- **Commit to increasing diversity at all levels of seniority across police forces and at all levels of the criminal justice system, including through positive intervention and mentorship programs for BAME members.**
- **Commit to a transparent and continuous program of monitoring of the use of emergency powers by police during the pandemic, as well as to the development of long-term strategies to address disproportionate applications of stop and search**

⁹³ Tufyal Choudhury and Helen Fenwick, The impact of counter-terrorism measures on Muslim communities, report, Equality and Human Rights Commission, May 12, 2011, <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/research-report-72-the-impact-of-counter-terrorismmeasures-on-muslim-communities.pdf>.

⁹⁴ Julian Hargreaves, "Police Stop and Search Within British Muslim Communities: Evidence From the Crime Survey 2006–11," OUP Academic (Oxford University Press, May 22, 2018), <https://academic.oup.com/bjc/article/58/6/1281/4999978>

⁹⁵ Simons, Ned. 2020. "Police Must Not Unfairly Target Ethnic Minorities During Lockdown, Mps Warn". *Huffingtonpost.Co.Uk*. https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/coronavirus-lockdown-police-emergency-powers_uk_5ea00785c5b6a486d0819a21?ncid=APPLENEWS00001&guccounter=1.

⁹⁶ "Stop And Search". 2020. *College Of Policing*. <https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/stop-and-search/>.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

powers through both training and increased diversity within police forces themselves.

Question 10. Can you suggest other ways in which racial and ethnic disparities in the UK could be addressed? In particular, is there evidence of where specific initiatives or interventions have resulted in positive outcomes? Are there any measures which have been counterproductive and why?

To solve a society-wide problem, a combination of legislative change, Government and industry initiatives, Muslim community empowerment, and wider community engagement is required. As such, beyond the recommendations already made throughout this submission, MEND humbly proposes the following initiatives and policy changes to tackle the causes, driving forces, and impacts of Islamophobia.

Legislative changes:

- ***Press regulation:*** Studies have shown that, with 21 negative references to Muslims within the British press for every single neutral or positive reference,⁹⁸ the media plays an integral role in spreading prejudice, stereotypes, and xenophobic views of British Muslims. This, in turn, directly contributes to hate crime, discrimination, and marginalisation of Muslim communities. Meanwhile, the failures of the current regulator, IPSO, and the Government's continued failure to fully implement the Royal Charter on Press Regulation leaves little recourse for tackling Islamophobia in the mainstream press. As such, MEND calls upon policymakers to commit to the full implementation of the Royal Charter on press regulation and the commencement of the second part of the Leveson Inquiry, including an investigation into the prevalence of Islamophobia within the media.
- ***Primary legislation to deal with social media offences and online hate speech:*** Currently, due to the sheer scale of social media sites, abusive posts are largely brought to the attention of social media companies only if users themselves report them. However, not all instances of online hate are reported for their racist or Islamophobic content online. Meanwhile, Demos have noted that, between March 2016-March 2017, 143,920 Tweets were sent from the UK that were considered to be derogatory and anti-Islamic – this amounts to almost 400 per day.⁹⁹ The Government must, therefore, consider primary legislation to deal with social media offences and work with social media companies to protect free speech while developing an efficient strategy to tackle online hate speech.

Read more about the issues surrounding media regulation and online harms in MEND's evidence to the Home Affairs committee [here](#).

Government and industry initiatives:

- ***Racial and religious equality:*** In the context of current Brexit negotiations, attention needs to be given to supporting the principles of the EU Equal Treatment Directive to advance protection against discrimination on the grounds of religion to education, healthcare, housing, access to goods and services and social security, within UK law post-Brexit. Meanwhile, especially considering the unclear status of Human Rights commitments within Brexit negotiations, we must ensure that the tenants of the European Convention on Human Rights and the Human Rights Act are preserved within UK law post-Brexit.
- ***Media and broadcasting:*** There needs to be an emphasis on promoting positive and normalised images of Muslims within media and broadcasting. It is also essential that

⁹⁸ See Baker, Paul, Costas Gabrielatos, and Tony McNenry. *Discourse analysis and media attitudes: the representation of Islam in the British Press*. Cambridge: University Press, 2013.

⁹⁹ Carl Miller and Josh Smith, "Anti-Islamic content on Twitter", Demos, April 2017. Accessed: 29th May 2018. <https://demos.co.uk/project/anti-islamic-content-on-twitter/>.

support is given to educative and industry initiatives designed to attract Muslim and BAME individuals into the spheres of journalism and broadcasting.

- **Public exclusion:** Public figures must show greater maturity and responsibility when discussing integration debates and take care not to mobilise xenophobic, racist, and Islamophobic rhetoric to cause hysteria for the sake of political popularity and agendas.

Muslim Community Empowerment:

Rather than engaging with a broad spectrum of Muslim organisations and voices, the Government has traditionally insisted in dealing with a handpicked minority who already support their policy positions, particularly on issues such as counter-terror, media regulation and Palestine. Consequently, think-tanks and NGOs which do not possess the confidence of British Muslims have exercised considerable influence in shaping public policies, thus resulting in widespread feelings of alienation and frustration amongst Muslim communities. As recommended by the 2017 Citizens UK report entitled "Missing Muslims",¹⁰⁰ it is of pressing urgency that the Government reassesses its engagement with Muslim communities and seeks to mend the "broken relationship" by taking steps to end this impasse. The Government must, therefore, urgently reconsider its policy of disengagement with credible mainstream Muslim organisations that have the trust and support of British Muslim communities, including MEND and MCB. Engagement does not mean agreement on every issue but facilitating the exchange of ideas and perspectives is an integral component of a democratic society.

Muslims themselves also have a responsibility to ensure that they are engaging with processes of democracy to overcome the challenges they face. As such, there are several ways in which British Muslim communities may be empowered to play their full role as civic actors. Strategies to achieve this include:

- Supporting educative and industry initiatives designed to attract Muslims and BAME individuals into the spheres of politics, civil service, media, and broadcasting.
- Placing greater emphasis on educational programs aimed at empowering minority communities to be actively engaged within politics and media.
- Encouraging grassroots and community-led movements to overcome barriers to reporting hate crime and encourage maximum reporting of Islamophobic incidents to the police.

Wider Community Engagement:

Islamophobia, like all forms of hatred, is an issue of social justice, and therefore, it is inherent upon every member of society to contribute towards ending it. The overwhelming majority of these efforts must be taken in an educative capacity along the lines already mentioned throughout this submission regarding the decolonising of education and promoting PSRE/PSHE/PSE within school curriculums. However, beyond schools, public efforts must be made to encourage greater inter-community engagement, awareness of Islam and Islamophobia, and emphasising diversity and inclusion programs across workplaces in both the public and private sectors.

¹⁰⁰ *The Missing Muslims: Unlocking British Muslim Potential For The Benefit Of All*, p46.

Recommendations

MEND urges policymakers to:

- Commit to prioritising PSRE and PSHE within the national curriculum and ensure grassroots Muslim organisations are enlisted to assist in developing teaching materials to educate young people on the dangers of Islamophobia.
- Commit to supporting academic freedoms and initiatives to decolonise education, whilst giving greater emphasis within the national curriculum to shared histories and the contributions of minority communities in building our society.
- Commit to developing training programmes for teachers focussed on tackling and addressing bullying based on race, religion, disability, or sexuality. Such training must include increasing the confidence and willingness of teachers to enforce policies and procedures and to report incidences to the appropriate authorities when dealing with such cases.
- Commit to supporting faith school provisions in the state sector for Muslim pupils and parents.
- Commit to implementing Shariah-compliant student loans to encourage more British Muslim students to attend university.
- Commit to increasing the diversity within teaching, particularly at senior leadership levels, and through mentorship programs for junior BAME staff.
- Commit to tackling religious, racial and gendered discrimination in the workplace through targeted interventions at all stages of recruitment, retention and promotion.
- Commit to the use of name-blind applications and targeted interventions within employment aimed at tackling the triple penalty and improving access to employment for British Muslim women specifically.
- Commit to supporting employers to recognise and accommodate religious festivals and religious observance within the workplace, including the provision of halal meat, prayer rooms, and flexible work hours during Ramadan.
- Commit to conducting independent reviews into representation, retention, and progression opportunities for people with protected characteristics across public sector workforces.
- Commit to tackling religious, racial and gendered discrimination in the workplace through targeted interventions at all stages of recruitment, retention and promotion.
- Commit to the use of name-blind applications and targeted interventions within employment aimed at tackling the triple penalty and improving access to employment for British Muslim women specifically.
- Commit to supporting employers to recognise and accommodate religious festivals and religious observance within the workplace, including the provision of halal meat, prayer rooms, and flexible work hours during Ramadan.
- Commit to independently reviewing all counter-terrorism legislation enacted since 2000 to curb the encroachment of counter-terrorism policies on civil liberties.
- Commit to investigating structural Islamophobia within the Criminal Justice System.

- Commit to increasing diversity at all levels of seniority across police forces and at all levels of the criminal justice system, including through positive intervention and mentorship programs for BAME members.
- Commit to a transparent and continuous program of monitoring of the use of emergency powers by police during the pandemic, as well as to the development of long-term strategies to address disproportionate applications of stop and search powers through both training and increased diversity within police forces themselves.
- Commit to the development and implementation of enhanced strategies to promote cultural awareness and increased diversity amongst NHS staff at every level of governance and management, including through mentorship and support programs for junior staff.
- Commit to undertaking a holistic examination into all potential disparities between BAME and white staff in the NHS, including how differences in pay and seniority may place BAME staff in positions requiring them to undertake duties that may involve a higher risk of exposure during outbreaks such as the one we currently face.
- Commit to recognising the impacts of previous austerity measures and ensure that any proposed measures do not exacerbate existing inequalities when developing economic recovery strategies in the wake of the pandemic.
- Commit to recognising the intersectional experiences of carers and the variety of specific challenges they face, particularly in terms of impacts on paid work and the consequences to their mental and physical health.
- Implement primary legislation to deal with social media offences and hate speech online and commit to working with social media companies to protect free speech while developing an efficient strategy to tackle hate speech online in consultation with Muslim grassroots organisations.
- Commit to the full implementation of the Royal Charter on press regulation.
- Commit to the commencement of the second part of the Leveson Inquiry, including an investigation into the prevalence of Islamophobia within the media.
- Support initiatives by the broadcasting industry to promote positive portrayals of Muslims in the media.
- Commit to proactively engaging and consulting with representative and grassroots organisations within British Muslim communities, including but not limited to Muslim Engagement and Development.
- Commit to preserving human rights and the protection of minority rights, including, but not limited to, the rights to religious slaughter, male circumcision and the wearing of religious dress or symbols as currently enshrined within UK legislation.
- Commit to supporting the protections afforded by the EU Equal Treatment Directive to advance protection against discrimination on the grounds of religion to education, healthcare, housing, access to goods and services and social protection, within UK law post-Brexit.
- Commit to supporting educative and industry initiatives designed to empower minority communities to be actively engaged within politics and media and attract

Muslims and BAME individuals into the spheres of politics, civil service, media, and broadcasting.

How MEND can assist parliamentarians, policymakers, and community stakeholders

- Providing briefings, information, analysis, and expertise on issues impacting Muslim communities.
- Arranging opportunities for parliamentarians, policymakers, and community stakeholders to engage with their local Muslim communities.
- Conducting research within Muslim communities.
- Connecting parliamentarians, policymakers, and community stakeholders to other local stakeholders.

If MEND can be of any assistance to your work, please feel free to contact info@mend.org.uk