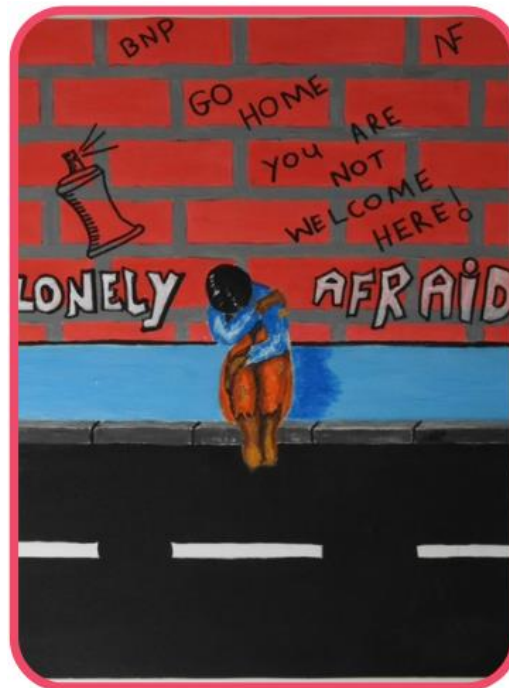




Racial Justice in Sutton

Executive Summary



HOME, by Neil Tindling (a Sutton resident)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT!

Black People, Racism and Human Rights, 2020

“Baroness Lawrence summed up the frustration felt by many when she told us:

“We have had so many reports, and every time we have a report, they go back to the beginning again and keep repeating the same thing. I am not sure how many more lessons Government(s) need to learn....

How many more lessons do we all need to learn?

The lessons are there already for us to implement. Until we start doing that, we will keep coming back in a year or two years repeating the same thing over and over again.”

Note 1:

The Fairness Commission recognises that Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) is currently a contested term. The #BLM Sutton Group is currently in the process of researching and investigating appropriate terminology and whilst this report uses the term BAME, the Fairness Commission will work within any new and emerging terminology.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Context

The Sutton Fairness Commission was established in 2017 as the vehicle for scrutinising equalities issues in Sutton. In January 2020 the Commission agreed to investigate the experiences of the BAME community in Sutton, following on from the Runnymede Trust Race Equality Scorecard for Sutton that was produced in 2017 along with a more general awareness of inequalities emerging from a range of other sources.

The Commission was clear that secondary data collection, whilst important, was not to be the focus of their investigation. Instead, what they wanted to hear was the lived experience of BAME community members in Sutton.

The investigation used storytelling to get an understanding of what it feels like for BAME community members to live in Sutton - to hear from them about their whole life experiences and not just to break down data according to employment, education, health, housing, etc - but to hear from BAME community members how potential discrimination and exclusions impact on their lives and opportunities. Following the murder of George Floyd in the summer of 2020, these stories were then supplemented by hearing from BAME Community members in weekly conversations.

The themes that emerged from these conversations, and previously understood and highlighted from the secondary data were:

Inequality & Discrimination

- A sense of not belonging - cultural & religious expectations
- Living & being housed in the community
- Being at work
- Being at school and in education
- Experiencing the Criminal Justice System
- Hate crime & intolerance

The intersection of each of these themes and the cumulative effect of discrimination and lack of access and opportunity felt by BAME community members requires a holistic approach. The Commission has therefore agreed that it wants Sutton to be a place where there is **Racial Justice**...

'The systematic fair treatment of people of all races that results in equitable opportunities and outcomes for everyone. All people are able to achieve their full potential in life, regardless of race, ethnicity or the community in which they live.'

This is opposed to a narrower, more institutional vision of **Racial Equality**...

'Institutions give equal opportunity to people of all races. In other words, institutions ignore persons' racial physical traits or skin colour (sic), and give everyone legally, morally, and politically equal opportunity'.

Achieving racial justice however requires a new way of thinking, a thinking that requires both within organisations and outside to communities. In developing the action required to achieve racial justice in Sutton, the Commission has recognised the importance of **POWER**.

Therefore, the Commission has located its recommendations within a framework of power¹. This enables us, the Commission, to support and lead on change at 4 levels:

1. **Societal Power** - Structural (laws, policies) & cultural (norms, narratives)
2. **Social Power** - Civil Society, working together to drive change
3. **Collective Power** - Organisations, communities, social movements ('power with')
4. **Individual Power** - Personal Power (self-belief, 'power within') & Positional Power (role, status or identity)

¹ The SMK/Gender At Work Framework.

Recommendations

CONSCIOUSNESS & CAPABILITIES - Individual & Power: (self-belief, 'power within') & Positional Power (role, status or identity)

Recommendation	Issue Responding to	Outcome
Continue to develop opportunities for storytelling and the collection and sharing of community members experience as a tool for change	The absence of peoples lived experience in decision making and a reliance on secondary data sources leading to a lack of rich information and a community feeling undervalued and not heard	The power of the lived experience of BAME Community Members is heard and influences the Racial Justice narrative and decision making in Sutton
Build the knowledge, experience and strength of active BAME Community members, with appropriate support mechanisms, to enable them to continue to be Community Leaders	Lack of both 'collective voice' and 'safe spaces for BAME Community Members in Sutton to share their experiences, to heal and get support and to develop a positive narrative of them as individuals and as a community	A dedicated & accessible 'safe space' BAME Community Leaders (& Allies)
Produce and disseminate 'rights-based guidance' targeted at BAME community members e.g., rights around stop and search, housing, educational concerns, etc	Limited understanding of people's rights and in particular those from BAME communities	Community members, and in particular those from the BAME Community, are more empowered to deal with and respond to adversarial and discriminatory situations

CULTURE & CONNECTIONS - Collective Power: Organisations, communities, social movements ('power with')

Recommendation	Issue Responding to	Outcome
Host community events to promote community cohesion	Lack of community understanding of 'difference'	Communities of Geography are better connected & there is less 'fear' of different ways of life
To work with the Gypsy Traveller community, Gypsy/Traveller Board, and partners to support a Gypsy Traveller voice in Sutton	Absence of Gypsy/Traveller voice in decision making	An effective, community led Gypsy/Traveller Voice in Sutton
Create a Sutton Racial Justice social media presence	Lack of a strong anti racism narrative	Sutton is a place where racism and discrimination will not be tolerated
To hear the suggestions from the Race Equality Taskforce/#BLM Language group and to agree a common use of language in Sutton -	The use of the term BAME is contested and does not reflect the experiences, profile and experiences of BAME Community members in Sutton and presents the community as a homogenous group. This can have a negative impact when trying to understand the experiences of community members and groups within the BAME catch all	Consistent and agreed use of language when talking about the BAME Community in Sutton & Data collection and analysis is capable to disaggregating the BAME Community
To change the narrative from victimhood to community contributor by creating a range of communications/promotional tools e.g. Diversity Mural; Cultural Trail, etc	The BAME Community is more often than not seen from a deficit perspective - they have issues or are a problem rather than the contribution they make to the community	BAME Community Members lives and experiences are celebrated in Sutton

RESOURCES - Social Power: Civil Society, working together to drive change

Recommendation	Issue Responding to	Outcome
<p>Community Action Sutton, with partners, to create (building on existing infrastructure) a community led framework of BAME influence and participation including: Sutton BAME Strategic Network (cross sector) Strong BAME Organisations (cross sector) A network of BAME Organisers supported by 'Allies' (#BLM) Community Action Sutton convene a BAME Voluntary and Community Sector Workers Network and Issue & identity-based forums e.g. Hate Crime, Young BAME People</p>	<p>Limited and lack of joined up civil society BAME infrastructure supporting BAME communities and community members</p>	<p>A BAME Community Led Civil Society infrastructure</p>
<p>All Sutton public sector organisations commit to engaging with the Community led framework of BAME influence and participation in service development and delivery;</p>	<p>Lack of consistent engagement & participation of BAME Community members and groups in decision making</p>	<p>A public and voluntary and community sector that welcomes the voices and views of the BAME Community as an asset and a valuable resource in shaping services and activities</p>

FORMAL RULES & POLICIES - Societal Power: Structural (laws, policies) & cultural (norms, narratives)

Recommendation	Issue Responding to	Outcome
That a review of funding to BAME voluntary and community organisations/or organisations proven to support BAME community members is undertaken to ensure proportionality/equity in funding	Lack of knowledge as to the investment to BAME Civil Society in Sutton	BAME Civil Society receives an equitable share of investment and resources
The Fairness Commission produce and release a statement on behalf of all partners that acknowledges racism and structural inequality in Sutton and agree to the actions and recommendations in the report;	No public joined commitment from partners in Sutton to anti racism	Visible commitment in Sutton to equality by eradicating racism
The Fairness Commission to host an annual event to share learning of work that promotes racial justice and to review ethnic monitoring data & information (informed by conversations with people with lived experience) and from that produces an annual list of priorities;	The need for an ongoing review of change and the need for an acknowledgement that strategies, policies, procedures and regulations can contain assumptions and bias	Progress to Racial Justice is documented and celebrated
Consider promoting the Rights Respecting Schools award to support positive change in education and the curriculum	Lack of racial justice perspective in the school curriculum	Learning reflects the contribution and lived experience of the BAME Community
Community Action Sutton to host an annual event with voluntary sector organisations to review EDI strategic and service development and delivery.	Lack of understanding of the status of voluntary and community sector racial justice and equalities practice	A voluntary and community sector in Sutton that has effective EDI strategies and practice



TURNING AWAY, by Neil Tindling

I am of mixed-race heritage and this painting explores how I empathise with the feeling of rejection felt by people due to their outward appearance.

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