



30 November 2020

**No More Exclusions Submission to the
Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities -
'Ethnic Disparities and Inequalities in the UK:
call for evidence'**

No More Exclusions

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About No More Exclusions

No More Exclusions (NME) is an abolitionist grassroots coalition movement committed to racial justice and free quality inclusive education for all children, with a particular focus on children racialized as Black, who have been historically and consistently excluded and marginalised in and by the British education system.

Introduction

No More Exclusions (NME) takes the stance that **no new evidence needs to be submitted to this call**, given that there are decades of documents and reports from which the government can draw evidence and recommendations. Both the data and recommendations have been repackaged across several reports, spanning across around 35 years and have been supported and endorsed by a wide variety of organisations. You can find attached a bibliography of reports which offer insight into the questions asked by this call for evidence.

NME continues to work to resist the discriminatory school exclusions experienced by Black children and young people. We have collated what we identify to be the key recommendations that we support moving forwards, which are largely focused on schools, schooling, and school exclusions. NME adopts an intersectional and humanistic approach. We focus on one question, but seek to highlight that transformation is required at multiple levels:

Q3. How could the educational performance of school children across different ethnic and socio-economic status groups be improved?

Child or Young Person: Active and continuous involvement of pupils in shaping the school rules and disciplinary process, allowing them to have input on fairness and appropriateness to different ethnic groups of pupils. Measures such as pastoral mentors, counsellors and advocates to ensure that individual pupils have a voice in the disciplinary procedures.

Teachers: Teachers need access to resources which support them to increase their racial literacy levels. White teachers should engage with concepts of white privilege, white power, white complicity and white supremacy, to reflect on their own racialised positions. Teachers should have access to training which supports them to have uncomfortable conversations around colonialism and racism.

Curriculum: There should be an overhaul of the curriculum which increases racial diversity and centres anti-racism. The National Curriculum must be diversified to ensure that young people from racially minoritised backgrounds have access to culturally responsive materials.

Parents: Guidance for parents and carers is clear, consistent, coherent and accessible; legal support and services are signposted for parents and guardians. Ensure the involvement of Black parents and communities in shaping the school community and policy; effective communication with parents about standards for behaviour, and early involvement of parents as partners in any disciplinary processes.

School: Ensure schools are sufficiently resourced to meet the diverse needs of their pupils, including access to specialist support for children and young people. Schools should be supported to have an inclusive ethos and to move away from a punitive approach to behavioural issues, where they are related to unmet needs. Schools should have strong and clear anti-racism policies that provide guidance on how to respond to interpersonal student racisms. This should set out how the school plans to centre an institutional commitment to anti-racism. Schools should have access to a range of external providers who can cast a 'critical eye' over the curriculum and offer recommendations to diversify the focus. Schools should involve themselves with grassroots organisations that promote anti-racism perspectives and engage honestly in dialogue about racial inequities.

Summary

NME urges the government to embrace solutions beyond the current system and to move past seeing the likes of Pupil Referral Units, Alternative Provision, and exclusions as a given and necessity. The government must avoid solutions that overly individualise the problem and place the responsibility solely with parents, teachers, and/or pupils. For this we stress the following:

- The voice of Children and Young People must be centred at all times; it is essential the government centres lived experience and builds up from this.
- The government and institutions must think more critically and broadly to adopt policy and recommendations outside existing frameworks.
- The issues raised should not be taken as indicative of problems at the pupils level for failing to assimilate, but a problem at the institutional level failing to accommodate.
- There is abundant evidence, particularly in relation to the historical rates of race disparities in school exclusions in England, to suggest the problems in education are rooted in institutional and structural racism that have remained largely unaddressed.

Conclusion

Decades of ignored evidence and recommendations highlight governments' institutional amnesia regarding racial disparities and their historic failure to act upon what has been told to them time and time again. The education system must move towards a humanistic approach to ensure children and young peoples' voices are centred at all times during the transformative process. It should be noted that recent government policy regarding PHSE regulations and cuts to diversity funding indicates a commitment to suppressing anti-racism work and avoiding earnestly addressing the problems this inquiry seeks to address. The government must cease its repetitive paper-exercises and disingenuous engagement with issues of racism and act. It must instate as a matter of sincere urgency key historical recommendations that work towards creating education environments in which Black children and young people flourish, free from institutional and structural racism.

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