



THE
Black
CARE
EXPERIENCE
CULTURE · IDENTITY · HERITAGE

The Black Care Experience Conference Report 2023



THE CULTURALLY COMPETENT WORKFORCE

On Saturday 11th February 2023, we hosted our second Black Care Experience Conference.

Attended by 125 delegates from Children's Social Care Workforce, the Voluntary Sector within Children's Social Care sector and the Black Care Experienced from England, Scotland and Wales, we gathered together to explore what it really means to be 'culturally competent' and whether being 'culturally competent' can help to improve the Care, Outcomes and Life Chances of Black Children and Young People in Care and keep them connected to their Culture, Identity and Heritage whilst in the Care System.

WE DEFINE BLACK AS A CHILD AND YOUNG PERSON WHOSE ETHNIC ORIGIN IS EITHER AFRICAN, CARIBBEAN INCLUDING MIXED RACE WITH AFRICAN OR CARIBBEAN HERITAGE.

Whilst the footage of our Conference is available to watch [here](#), within this Report you'll find key points that came from our small group break sessions discussions (which could not be filmed), where our Delegates focused on sharing their thoughts to answer 'What must Cultural Competency include?' and "What is important to know when raising a black child or young person in Children's Social Care?".

WHAT MUST CULTURAL COMPETENCY INCLUDE?

An article written in [Preemptive Love](#) describes cultural competence as ‘the ability to understand and interact effectively with people from other cultures’. They go on to state that ‘to have multicultural competence, you need:

- A basic understanding of your own culture. (It is difficult to understand another’s culture if you are not familiar with your own).
- A willingness to learn about the cultural practices and worldview of others.
- A positive attitude toward cultural differences and a readiness to accept and respect those differences.

Preemptive Love go on to highlight that cultural competence is important, because without it our opportunity to build (those) relationships is impossible. Instead, we will co-exist with people we don’t understand, thereby creating a higher risk for misunderstandings, hurt feelings, and bias—things that can all be avoided.

CULTURAL COMPETENCE IS THE ABILITY TO UNDERSTAND AND INTERACT EFFECTIVELY WITH PEOPLE FROM OTHER CULTURES.



With this definition and perspective in mind we were able to agree that cultural competence within Children's Social Care should include:

1. The need for the Workforce to learn and understand the different cultures within the Black Community.
2. The need to have a diverse Workforce that reflects and represents the race and ethnicity of the Children and Young People that come into Children's Social Care.
3. The need for the Workforce to learn and understand the individual cultural needs of the Black Child and Young Person in their Care.
4. The need for the Workforce to demonstrate cultural curiosity, by asking questions about the culture, identity and heritage of the Black Child and Young Person in their Care.
5. The need for the Workforce to build a basic profile of each Black Child and Young Person with a specific focus on their cultural background and ethnic origin, to help meet their needs as they journey through Children's Social Care.
6. Where possible, the need for Children's Social Care to build closer relationships with the family of the Black Child or Young Person as this will/may help to answer any questions that relate to their culture, identity and heritage.
7. The need to recruit more Black Foster Carers and Black Staff to work in Children's Residential Homes. (We see them as part of the Workforce)
8. The need for the Black Child or Young Person to be given information on the ethnicity and culture of the families or staff of the residential homes they are placed in.
9. The need for the whole foster family to be culturally competent not just the primary foster carer.
10. The need for the Workforce to utilise reflective spaces, to help them to become self-aware of their own conscious or unconscious biases.
11. The need for the Workforce to engage in Mandatory Training to build their knowledge and confidence around what to say, when to say and how to say.

12. The need for the Workforces to engage in Mandatory Training on how to care for and raise Black Children and Young People in Children's Social Care.
13. The need for the Workforces to engage in Mandatory Anti - Racist Learning.
14. The need for the Workforces to be trained on how to support and advocate for Black Children and Young People in their care, who experience racial bullying, racial stereotyping, racial trauma, racism and micro aggressions.
15. The need for there to be consistent accountability on all levels within Children's Social Care, to evidence the practice of cultural competency and to take responsibility when things go wrong.
16. The need for Mandatory learning in this area to be a part of the Workforces Continual Professional Development, a Tool Kit.
17. The need to create a Professional Network of support across all boroughs and across all areas outside of London.
18. The Workforces to relinquish their need to be right and instead be open to listening and learning from those with Lived Experience.



WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO KNOW WHEN RAISING A BLACK CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON IN CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE?

1. "Hear our voices. Try and understand our perspective."
2. Listen, listen and listen again...please don't make assumptions.
3. "Ask us what we'd like, please don't assume."
4. Not to be seen as just 'Black', there are a number of cultures and ethnicities.
5. "Understand our personal narrative, we are not the same, one size does not fit all."
6. Recognise the differences...respect them!
7. See the person, as well as their colour.
8. Do not overestimate their resilience.
9. Adultification is real.
10. Treat each child according to their individual need.
11. Seek to know their likes and dislikes.
12. Find out their music preferences.
13. Understand the language they may use.
14. Understand their health history.
15. How does the child/young person identify themselves? Ask them?



16. "Trace our backgrounds (our race and ethnic origin) as this will help us to know where we are from."
17. "Help us to know our journey."
18. "Keep better records about our Family Tree."
19. Understand who is important to the Black Child or Young Person.
20. "We may not be able to bond with or attach to our Birth Families. Please understand that."
21. Safely facilitate connections with their Birth Families and extended family.
22. "Professionally and accurately record our care journey. We may read our files and see what you've said about us (and our families)."
23. "For the Workforces to be trained and equipped to understand the trauma we have experienced prior to entering the Care System and be trained and equipped to understand the traumatic racial barriers we face as Black Children and Young People."
24. "How can you work with someone (us) and not try to learn their (our) story?"
25. "Teach us how to deal with bullying, microaggressions, unconscious bias, conscious bias and racism."
26. Teach and support them on how to navigate their Black racial identity and racial trauma.
27. Be aware of and understand their social racial barriers, in relation to education, health and housing.
28. Are the Foster Carers/Staff at Residential Children's Home a suitable match, with the experience of caring for and raising Black Children and Young People?
29. Don't make snap judgements that Black children will automatically benefit from being with Black Carers.
30. Research how Black children fair in White families.
31. Be aware of the Child's gift (talents) and champion them to develop.

32. Understand their educational ability and learning style.
33. Find out what's happening at school.
34. Resource them with cultural books, literature, and films. Representation matters.
35. Be aware that racism will be encountered, and you will need to support the child to navigate this.
36. Know that you may be affected by institutional racism.
37. Know that you will need to continually educate yourself. Check your privilege.
38. You need to know that you may find it more of a challenge to get the services (within and outside of Children's Social Care) to help you care for Black children.
39. Ask yourself the question, what would you do for your child? (Corporate parenting principles)
40. Find amenities within the Black Community to help you with their hair care, skin care and the food they may like.
41. "Provide us with therapists that look like us. Representation is important for connection and engagement."
42. Identify a range of culturally competent organisations that the Black Child and Young Person can relate and comfortably connected to.
43. Be mindful that they will see and hear what you say about people who look like them.
44. Love is fundamental. What is their love language?





BRINGING TO LIFE THE KEY POINTS AND RESPONSES

In readiness and in anticipation of these key points and responses, we were able to launch The Black Care Experience Charter, a declaration of support and a set of commitments from The Workforces, to improve the Care, Outcomes and Life Chances of the Black Child or Young Person and keep them connected to their Culture, Identity and Heritage as they journey through the Care System.

Information about how to sign up to The Black Care Experience Charter can be found [here](#).

Cultural Competency Training is also available at The Black Care Experience, with a specific focus on how to raise and care for a Black Child or Young Person

in Children's Social Care.

Information about our Cultural Competency Training can be found [here](#).

THE BLACK CARE EXPERIENCE CHARTER, A DECLARATION OF SUPPORT AND A SET OF COMMITMENTS FROM THE WORKFORCES, TO IMPROVE THE CARE, OUTCOMES AND LIFE CHANCES OF THE BLACK CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON AND KEEP THEM CONNECTED TO THEIR CULTURE, IDENTITY AND HERITAGE AS THEY JOURNEY THROUGH THE CARE SYSTEM.



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