



THE BLACK CARE EXPERIENCE NETWORK NEWSLETTER

Special Edition

WELCOME TO THE BLACK CARE EXPERIENCE NETWORK NEWSLETTER

If you've received this as part of being a member of our Network, or if you've taken the time to download it, we want to Thank You for being a part of our story and legacy.

As you read we hope that you will be inspired and challenged to help play your part in making sure that Black Children and Young People remain connected to their Culture, Identity and Heritage as they journey through the Care System.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Although Black History Month is coming to an end, in this Special Edition of our Newsletter, we'd like to share with you the History and Journey of the Black and Care Experienced from the 1980's to present day; with a focus on the efforts that have been made to improve their Care, Outcomes and Life Chances.

Once read, if you have any comments, thoughts or suggestions, please feel free to email us, at office@thetransformedyou.co.uk

Also feel free to let us know what is working well and where you may need some help, as together we join forces to continue to make a tangible and lasting difference in the lives of Black Children and Young People in Care.

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THE HISTORY
&
JOURNEY OF THE
BLACK CARE
EXPERIENCED

www.theblackcareexperience.co.uk

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NO LONGER HIDDEN

Before the 1980's, it is said that the experiences of Black Children in Care were hidden from History.

There was no official data collected by Local Authorities or Government, and no research into their experiences, with little recognition of their culture and heritage.

For context, Black Children and Young people are those whose ethnic origin is either African or Caribbean including Mixed Race with African or Caribbean Heritage.

This was raised as a concern by The Association of Black Social Workers and Allied Professionals (ABSWAP) and was noticed in parallel to the times they were living in.

From the 1970's – 1980's Black people were victims of racism from Far-Right groups, Black Footballers were subject to racist chanting by Football Fans, and riots were breaking out, because of the oppressive nature of policing of the Black Community.

In the light of these concerns, two separate surveys, one in London and one in Manchester, revealed for the first time that children and young people from African and Caribbean, and mixed parentage backgrounds, were significantly overrepresented in the care system.

Presenting this information to the House of Commons Select Committee for Children In Care, The Association of Black Social Workers and Allied Professionals, believed that the motive for this overrepresentation was based on *'internal colonialism' and a new form of the slave trade, with only black children being used'*.

They also viewed the practice of trans-racial placements as *'a microcosm of the oppression of black people in society'* and saw the failure to collect official data on ethnicity as a *'conspiracy to silence'*.

The Commission for Racial Equality also presented information to the House of Commons Select Committee, stating that *"Black families have imposed on them Eurocentric assumptions of good parenting and proper family life, which are used to justify separating parents from children"*.

The Commission highlighted that when Black Children are separated from their families, there is a failure of social services to recruit enough Black Foster Carers and Adoptive Parents, resulting in Black Children being overrepresented in children's homes.

The Commission for Racial Equality also expressed their concerns, that when Black Children are Fostered with white families, this could lead to identity problems, a poor self-image, lack of cultural knowledge, few Black friends and a stereotyped white view of young Black people.

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1984 TO HAVE A VOICE

We believe that the work of The Association of Black Social Workers and Allied Professionals, and the findings from the Commission for Racial Equality, empowered those who were Black and In Care to have a Voice.

And so in 1984 a Black and In Care Conference, was held in London, in order to hear about their experiences of the Care System.

This Conference was put together by a Black and In Care Steering Group, the National Association for Young People in Care and the Children's Legal Centre.

The Conference highlighted issues surrounding the Care of those who are Black. This was in relation to their:

- Culture, Health, Hair and Skin Care
- How they were matched and looked after in Foster Care and Residential Care
- How those from Mixed Parentage were identified
- The lack of support to help them transition on when Leaving Care,
- along with highlighting, Racism in the Care System

The Conference also shone a light on a 'white care system' that failed to recognise many of the needs of young people who were 'black and in care'.

At the Conference, recommendations on how to meet the needs of this demographic, were captured and published in a Black and In Care Conference Report.

In an attempt to change Policy and Practice, this Report was widely circulated to Local Authorities.

With the full Report not yet found, the recommendations and details about the Conference, have been documented in a book called [Care Less Lives](#), written by Professor Mike Stein.

During this time, the House of Commons, set up an Inquiry into Children In Care, because there were some serious concerns about how children came into Care and how they were being looked after. In response to this Inquiry, the National Association for Young People In Care, presented their evidence on all aspects of the Care Experience, to the Select Committee on Social Services.

The information presented, also included the Black and In Care Conference Report.

The information presented, influenced the Committees' response which led to the creation of the Children Act 1989, and for the first time, saw black children in care no longer hidden from legislation and no longer hidden from history.

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The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services outlined that Foster Carers “*should be informed, trained and confident about dealing with issues relating to gender, religion, ethnic origin, cultural background, linguistic background, nationality, disability or sexual orientation*”, involving external professional advice and support as necessary.

Thankful for this unique turning point, the question to now consider, is whether this legislation, is a vague, blended and diluted approach on how to make changes to the care of Black Children and Young People in the Care System?, as whilst there have been some good example of Care, IT IS fair and balanced to say that **40 years later**, we still see Black Children and Young people facing the same challenges experienced by the Black and In Care Group, leading to them having the poorest outcomes and life chances, in comparison to any other ethnic group, with the System not being held accountable.

In 2020, The Black Care Experience Team came together as a result of a shared concern about the ‘Care’ and ‘Outcomes’ of those who are Black and In Care.

We also came together, with a shared concern as to how the ‘Voices’ of those who are Black and in Care, were to be presented and represented at England’s Children’s Social Care Review, and we saw the need to be a ‘Voice’ to help shape the ‘Care’ of the next Black and In Care Generation.

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2020

It must be noted, that we came together at a time when societal and global conversations about race and racism, had been sparked because of the murder of **George Floyd**.

The uprising of the **Black Lives Matter Movement** across the World, saw Black people find the courage to break the silence and speak their truth, opening up to recount and relive the painful memories they had buried, about the racism they had experienced.

For the first time, Fathers and Mothers were sharing their stories with their children and giving them the **Talk**, about how to live and navigate their way through this world.

Inequalities and disparities, experienced by Black People were no longer hidden.

These include but are not limited to, the **Windrush Scandal**, the treatment of England’s Black Football Players, the backlash received by **Diversity** for their dance on BGT, the trolling received by **Alesha Dixon** for wearing a necklace with the letters BLM on BGT, the trolling on Social Media of the **All-Black Loose Women Panel**, along with the recent heart-breaking and horrific news of **Child Q’s** ordeal.

Information also emerged, about the exclusion rates of black Caribbean pupils from school, the rates at which black people are being stopped and searched, how black girls and women are perceived and treated in childbirth and in the criminal justice system, and so much more.

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RESEARCH & OUR SURVEY

With an understanding of the time we were living in, we engaged in research to find out whether the Black Care Experience Journey had improved.

Research told us, there continues to be an:

- Overrepresentation of Black Children and Young People in the Care System, in comparison to other ethnic communities.
- Shortage of Black Foster Carers: to meet this overrepresentation.

- Issues with Matching: As not every Black Child can be culturally matched, and so they may be placed in transracial or cross cultural placements, impacting on their identity.
- Research told us that Black Boys wait the longest to be adopted.

We also launched Our Survey, to hear the voices of the Black Care Experienced of ALL age groups, with a specific focus on the impact and outcomes of those who were Culturally matched, Cross Culturally matched or Transracially placed, with a Foster Family or in a Residential Children's Care Home.

Collating our findings, we saw that History had indeed repeated itself, with the same extra layer of challenges that must be overcome in order for us to achieve our potential.

For context, we understand that the Care Experience for ALL does come with its challenges, and we also understand that the Care Experience for those of us who are BLACK does come with an extra layer of challenges.

These extra layers we identified as

- Placements unable to promote our Culture and Identity impacting on how we see ourselves and our community.
- Placements that had a direct impact on how our Hair and Skin is cared for
- Issues relating to how our Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing was being cared for
- Concerns about who was our 'safe space' to hear and understand our voice about our Care.
- Who was there to be a role model and champion our aspirations, when some of us were told 'who you...you can't do that, you'd be better of doing this instead'.
- Placements that were not able to prepare us for the Racism and Discrimination we may face in the wider World, with some of us experiencing racism and discrimination by those who were supposed to be doing the caring.

This information, can be found in our [Black Care Experience Report 2021](#), which was submitted as evidence into England's Independent Children's Social Care Review.

To build on this information, throughout the time of the Review, we held Black Table Talks, to hear in real time, the voices of black care experienced and the children's social care workforce, which

confirmed that Black Children and Young People were being disconnected from their Culture, Identity and Heritage as they journeyed through the Care System.

Our discussions also highlighting the presence of systemic racial inequalities and discrimination within Children's Social Care, which had an impact on the care journey of those black and in Care.

Our First Conference held earlier this Year, provided another opportunity for the voices of the Workforce and the Black Care Experienced, to be heard and presented as evidence to the Review.

Now whilst information about the Black Care Experience seems to be hidden away in an Annex provided by the Review, the voices of those Black and In Care are still being heard, as the desire to change and do better, is steadily permeating throughout the Children's Social

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CONFERENCE 2023

Care Sector and Workforce, as they join Our Network, subscribe to Our Newsletter, call for Consultation and Training and prepare to attend Our Conference in 2023.

Now submitted within The Black Care Experience Report, you will find our recommendations for change.

There we have recommended:

- Mandatory Training with an element on Cultural Competency, for all who work within the Children's Social Care Sector
- Wholistic Care Packages for the Black and In Care
- an adaptation of the Fostering Application Process
- and a call for how Research Data of the Black Care Experience is to be collected and presented.

Implementing and regularly reviewing these recommendations will:

- make sure that the experiences of black children in care remain in plain sight and no longer hidden from History
- keep Children's Social Care up to date and relevant with what works and what does not work, to meet the needs and improve the outcomes and life chances of Black Children and Young People in their Care.
- keep Local Authorities and Government on hand and accountable to address the structural inequalities and racial disparities, that will surface as we journey towards doing better.
- keep us from going back around a mountain for another 40 years.

At The Black Care Experience our vision is help **be the change we want to see.**

We want to see that every Black Child and Young Person remains connected to their Culture, Identity and Heritage, as they journey through Children's Social Care System.

We want to see them have a positive sense of who they are, are prepared for the wider World, have their aspirations championed and go on to live good and successful lives, after being in Care.

To make this a reality, we have created The Black Care Experience Network, bringing together the diverse Children's Social Care Workforce and the Voluntary Sector Workforce within Children's Social Care, to learn from the Lived Black Care Experience and share best practice, in order to improve their systems and practice.

Learning takes place via:

- Our Bi Monthly Newsletters
- Our Workshop style Annual Conferences
- Training and Consultation

Bringing the Network together, gives us the opportunity to join hands and influence Legislation and Policy, that will change the course of events for Black Children and Young People in the Care System.

Join Us

If you work in any department or role within the Children's Social Care Sector (including the Voluntary Sector) and haven't yet joined our Network, please do so.

If you are a Black Care Experienced Care Leaver (age 18 and above) and Black Family Members who have had experience of Children's Social Care and want to have a Voice in a Safe and relatable space, please join us.

Support Us

- Share our posts on Social Media
- Share our Newsletters across your Network
- Donations are also welcome as they will help to keep this work going for as long as possible.

Joining us and Supporting us will help to make sure that the experiences of Black Children and Young People in Care remain in plain sight and are no longer hidden from History, because our lives and our care matters too.

GIVE AWAY

We have 3 Cocoa Girl Magazines to GIVE AWAY!!

Inspired by her daughter, founder Serlina launched the UK's first magazine to celebrate Black girls, Cocoa Girl. Giving Black children a voice whilst educating the community about the Black culture.

Cocoa magazine is filled with inspiring and empowering content for children aged 7-11 years old.

Cocoa is an educational tool that teaches children about black culture whilst profiling black role models.

These magazines help to build a strong community for young Black girls and boys who are often misrepresented by mainstream media.



Do you Foster or Support Black Girls aged 7 - 11 Years old?

If so, we'll send the Magazines to the **FIRST 3** people who email 'GIVE AWAY' to office@thetransformedyou.co.uk



THE BLACK CARE EXPERIENCE CONFERENCE 2023

Theme

The Culturally Competent Workforce

When?

Saturday 11th February 2023
10am – 3pm

Where?

ARC Forest Gate
66A Sebert Road, London, E7 0NJ

Who Can Attend?

Black Care Experienced Care Leavers (age 18 and above)
Black Family Members who have had experience of Children's Social Care
Children's Social Care Workforce (Directors, Managers, Social Workers, Foster Carers, Local Authority
Virtual School, Independent Reviewing Officers, Residential Children's Home Staff and Providers)
Voluntary Sector Children's Social Care Workforce
Researchers within the Children's Social Care Sector

Tickets NOW Available on [Eventbrite](#)

Conference Details soon to be Announced!



Donation

WE NEED
YOUR HELP

Your financial gift will help to make a big difference to the lives of
Black Children and Young People who enter the Care System.

Your financial support will help us:

- Continue to host of Annual Black Care Experience Network Conferences (our next conference is scheduled for February 2023)
- Continue to produce our Newsletters keeping Children's Social Care workforce up to date and relevant with what works and what does not work, to keep Black Children and Young People connected to their Culture, Identity and Heritage as they journey through the Care System.
- Engage in projects and initiatives within the Children's Social Care Sector to actively meet the needs and improve the outcomes and life chances of Black Children and Young People in their Care
- Continue our mission of proactively and creatively campaigning to make sure the experiences of those who are Black and In Care, are no longer hidden from History, Legislation and Policy

In essence, your donation will also help us not have to wait another 40 years to see a change in the Care, Outcomes and Life Chances of the current and next black and in care generation.

Thank you for standing with us.
Together we can make a difference.

[DONATE HERE](#)

OR

[CROWDFUNDER](#)



NOTICE BOARD

JOIN OUR NETWORK

As part of our [Network](#), you'll be a member of a Diverse Community, willing and ready to learn from the Lived Black Care Experience and share best practice, to improve your systems and practice, to ultimately make a difference in the lives of the current and next Black and in Care Generation.

Check out our [Black Care Directory](#). It's a Consortium of Black Owned Businesses with Products and Services to help us all care for the Black Children or Young People in our Care.

OUR DIRECTORY

TRAINING & CONSULTATION

We deliver [Training Courses](#) to Empower you with Knowledge & Insight into The Black Care Experience and provide [Bespoke Consultancy Packages](#) to help help your Service achieve its aims and objectives, of making a difference in the lives of black children and young people in your Care.