

A photograph of a dining table with four chairs, set with a vase of flowers. The image is faded and serves as a background for the text.

**The Black Care Experience Report
On The Black Table Talks
that took place during the period of
July 2021 - September 2021**

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Introduction

In 2020 during Lockdown The Black Care Experience came together with a concern about the Care, Outcomes and Life Chances of the Black Care Experienced, along with concerns about how the VOICE of the Black Care Experienced will be presented and represented at England's Independent Children's Social Care Review.

The Review began in March 2021 and we submitted Our Report in March 2021.

With a focus on hearing the voices of Black Children and Young People who have and had experience of the Care System, Our Report contains evidence of the Consistent and Emerging Themes of how they were/were not supported to remain connected to their Culture, Identity and Heritage as they journeyed through the System.

The Consistent and Emerging Themes date back from the 1950s to present day.

Our Report contains Solutions for the way forward for much needed change to Systems, Practice and Policy, to see that the Care, Outcomes and Life Chances of Black Children and Young People are improved.

For context, when referring to The Black Care Experience, we are identifying Black children and young people in Care, whose ethnic origin is either African or Caribbean including Mixed Race with African or Caribbean Heritage.

Also for context, we understand that the Care Experience for ALL does come with its challenges as research by The Department of Education states that *"Children in Care are likely to have complex and challenging needs, and must overcome challenges to achieve their potential"*.

However, we also know that the Care Experience for those of us who are BLACK does come with an extra layer of challenges.

In June 2021, the Independent Children's Social Care Review published their Case for Change, that fell short of the voices of The Black Care Experienced.

In view of this and to further shine a light on the disparities and inequalities experienced by those black and in care, we proceeded to host a series of Black Table Talks. This gave the Independent Children's Social Care Review Core Team the opportunity to attend and take note of the voices of the lived experiences in real time.

The Black Table Talks also provided us with the opportunity to see how we can continue to be the change we want to see.

To bring this to life, an open invitation to participate was sent out across Social Media Platforms and via our email contacts to those who are:

- ✓ **Black and In Care and Black Care Leavers**
- ✓ **Black Social Workers, Supervising Social Workers, Independent Reviewing Officers, Foster Carers, Residential Children's Home Staff and Secure Residential Children's Home Staff**
- ✓ **Non-Black Foster Carers, Residential Children's Home Staff and Secure Residential Children's Home Staff who Foster or support Black Children and Young People in Care**
- ✓ **Non-Black Social Workers, Supervising Social Workers and Independent Reviewing Officers who support Black Children and Young People in Care**
- ✓ **Directors of Children's Social Care and their Senior Leadership Teams**

We were also able to host a Black Table Talk with the London Borough of Haringeys' Foster Carers Association.

At each Black Table Talk taking place from July 2021 – September 2021, the Participants were presented with the findings in our Report and asked:

- Where do we go from here?**
- Is LOVE enough?**
- How do we PROMOTE and AFFIRM the IDENTITY and CULTURE in the next Black and in Care Generation?**
- How do we EMPOWER a POSITIVE SENSE of SELF in the next Black and in Care Generation?**
- What do you SEE?**
- What can be done BETTER?**

Please Note: The Black Table Talks were not Recorded, however the Participants understood that a Core Team Member from the Independent Children’s Social Care Review was presented and taking notes.

With that in mind, their responses, can be found in this Report.

Haringey Foster Carers Association 15 Participants

“A lot of people come into the care system because of being referred to other agencies, staff in school etc. who make the referrals need to be better trained in cultural differences. Referrals that come through that are culture not a risk. Cultural awareness training is needed. Concerns that would be diagnosed for White middle class are behaviour for Black ethnic minorities. Educating people in schools and parents in schools to challenge discrimination, and to challenge discrimination for children in care who are also discriminated against for being in care. Sometimes made to feel different by your surroundings for example being at a predominately White school or having White relatives for adopted children”.

“Why do more Black and ethnic minority young people arrive at foster care? We need to question this before it reaches foster care. Need to look outside of the foster care system to ask why the children are coming to foster care”.

“It comes down to compassion for me, for the children I have in my care. My children have experienced being labelled at school, and because of my compassion I’ve had to go to school and help them understand. Had to give them strategies to help with the children. I’ve had to have children removed from a school, because it is about fighting many teachers in that school and the infrastructure because it wasn’t helping the children. Needed a school that understood diversity and had a more diverse population. New school has things like world food days which are great. Its about the infrastructure and training, there is much training to be done all round not just education but all agencies, court system, police, health visits, doctors. It’s the whole infrastructure and how children’s social care can work to bring it out. Like every child matters, we need to move and bring forward other things that matter and change how our children are looked at”.

“I feel proud to go to LAC reviews and proud that my foster children are not part of those statistics”.

“Want foster carers to be looked after like the children are looked after”.

“One of the first children I looked after, looked White, and I found everything about that placement was easier, it felt strange, I was Black, and she was White. What would happen if you had a Caucasian child in a Black family with afro hair and you back combed their hair. Can you imagine relaxing a child’s hair to make it easier for the foster carer. If you send the child without their hair done it can be seen as abuse. They

don't have a clue how hard it is as a Black parent in this country. They should try and support parents before intervention".

"White foster carer - I was unprepared to look after a Black child, I was surprised how difficult it was to learn those skills, like hair care. Didn't have any understand how difficult it can be to do things. You have to learn on your feet. There is not enough training for White foster carers looking after Black children. I wouldn't know how to explain to an older Black child about their experiences. The training should be more robust for them to learn. The core training is good but there needs to be more".

"White foster carers need to feel comfortable enough to feel they can ask questions and that is about relationships".

Black and In Care Experienced and Black Care Leavers 7 Participants

A young person who came into care at 6 years old, and although was not placed with a white family, was not placed with anyone from Angola which meant it was difficult to understand her culture.

A young person who arrived in the UK from Chad in Sept 2020 and came into care as an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child. The young person was placed in semi-independent accommodation.

When asked how they would describe being black and in care in three words, the young people said:

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- *You learn to be adaptable because you are placed in different families who have different cultures and religious beliefs.*
 - *The system and the carers do not show love or that they care for young people, we often feel that we are not noticed.*
 - *Black young people are often treated differently to others in care.*
 - *Young people will keep the fact they are in care as a secret and may not disclose that they are care experienced until they feel comfortable. This can affect the ability to build relationships with their peers at home.*
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When asked what the care system could do to support young people to help them understand their cultural heritage they said:

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- *I wished that I had someone from Angola, who was able to talk to me about my culture, it is really important to have the extra support to encourage me to understand my heritage better.*
 - *Feeling sometimes that I am lost in translation, we need more support to have their own independence.*
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It is very important that young people know who you are and are supported to understand their identity, and not just be expected to take on the identity of their carers or the western society.

Local authorities only support young people with their cultural identity if they are going into education. Those that are not progressing rarely get the support they need to understand their identity and are often forgotten about.

Young people will often integrate into the culture of the carers, and sometimes become more westernised. Young people learn more about the culture of carers than their own. The system is not very good at proactively trying to understand the culture of young people and ensuring this is reflected in the care they receive.

There is a lack of understanding of the culture of young people, as a result are placed with different families which can have life-long impacts.

There should be more support to encourage black families to get into fostering, there is a reluctance of families to get involved because of the limiting views of professionals and how this is approached with them.

When asked if there was one thing about care they would change:

- *Social workers are not available and do not provide support*
- *Post care support is non-existent, once you leave care the PAs are not interested in providing on-going support to young people. Once you have your flat, they just leave you to it.*

One young person reflected on how limiting his life is because every decision (day-to-day) must be discussed with a social worker. “I cannot do anything without the social worker, every decision about care is controlled by them and they have a responsibility for my life.

The system and professionals do not fully understand that they are responsible for children and young people once they come into care, and they should take this responsibility more seriously.

Black Care Experienced Age 25+

“When I went into care at 14, I had no idea how to look after and wash my hair. I would use the wrong products, and this would ruin my hair. There wasn’t anyone in my placement that could support me with this”

“There needs to be more training for professionals (residential care, semi-independent) so they know how to support young people with their identity, and the practical help.”

“Sometimes we can only focus on the little things, they do not comb the young person’s hair, so we need to change the placement. It is more important to provide care and love and not only focus on the little things.”

“Young people who are going to the hairdressers feel stressed about the length of the time, their white foster carers need to stay in the hairdressers.”

“Every child and those supporting young people need to understand how to support young people with their personal care.”

“Out of all my placements (infant through to secondary) where I was placed with Caucasian foster carers, and this meant that I during this whole time I did not understand how to look after myself.”

“There needs to be more culture training which is delivered by black professionals for social workers, and foster carers so that they recognise and are able to support children and young people with their culture and identity.”

“The local authorities need to ensure that children and young people do not lose their mother tongue, this made it very difficult when I was reunified with my parents.”

“Although young people from different cultural backgrounds may lose their identity during care. Sometimes young people are not living with their birth parents, wider family before they come into care – as a result there is no recognition that young people may have lost their identity before they come into care.”

“Young people are being moved from foster placements, and into hostels to save money for local authorities. These young people arrived with motivation, in college and after several weeks they just wanted to stay indoors, and smoke weed.”

“There needs to be a lot of support for black care experienced young people, to ensure they understand their identity, love themselves and go into adulthood without the statistics that are so often seen with black young people.”

“Professionals have a real lack of understanding about domestic abuse, and trauma responses. Women are perceived as being aggressive and not engaging, and this will lead to formal proceedings.”

“The behaviour of black women is used against them, if they get passionate and challenge professionals, sometimes they are perceived as aggressive. Once they are labelled in this way, they do not get the support from professionals.”

“There isn’t any data to encapsulates the outcomes of black experienced young people e.g. those that go to higher education”

“Spiritual and honour-based abuse and other harmful behaviours are not understood. Professionals across system do not understand that these harmful behaviours occur, and there needs to be more education about the cultural differences in some black families.”

“It is not just about placing a child with a black foster carer; it is about matching the culture of the young person. If a cultural match can not be provided, their needs to be a package and community of support to ensure the young people’s needs are met.”

“There is a problem in how the system reach out to the different black communities to help them recruit foster carers. This is something that could be done nationally, to ensure that this is looked at holistically.”

“Social care could be nationalised to better provide consistency for care experienced young people. It needs to be easier for the young people who leave care to easily be placed in a area where they want to live.”

“There needs to be more cross-working across borough and cities, local authorities should be working together to support children and young people.”

“The needs of the black care experience should be enshrined in law to prevent different political parties from moving away from their responsibilities.”

Black Social Workers, Supervising Social Workers and Non-Black Social Workers, Supervising Social Workers who support Black Children and Young People in Care

15 Participants

- *To enable children to have a better care experience we know it's better for them to be raised in their own cultural communities.*
 - *Key thing is the recruitment process, or lack of. There aren't many Black foster carers or adopters. Need to raise profile of fostering in those communities and taking onto the next stage. Until we increase foster carers, children will continue to be placed in placements which don't cater for their needs. Need to start with recruitment. It takes time, money and resources. Not a lot has changed from 1950s, not enough emphasis on recruitment of placements for these children.*
 - *Need to promote fostering as credible form of employment.*
 - *A lot of Black families are suspicious of LAs and positions of authorities. and it takes time to chip away at those old ideas.*
 - *Is love enough? It's not, where I've worked there is a lot of transracial placements. Those foster carers might be lovely and caring, but there are issues about skin care and other care.*
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- *Where I work we have a lot of Black carers, a lot more Black children in care, but we need to do something with recruitment, as long as we keep doing the training, the recruitment and the conversations we will be going, although it is slow.*
 - *Need quarterly quality assessments with foster carers to understand feedback from Black children in care.*
 - *Difficult getting White social workers in the main to look at Black children differently. Clear in the Children's Act, its legislation about matching language and religious needs. We have these critical race theory incidents and it kicks off but then it quietens down again. It often gives it air time but there's no action done about it.*
 - *We have had this issue about recruitment for years, and the simplest way to manage it is to get cultural appropriate social worker in every local authority, every LAC team, to work with foster carers and educate on what children need, have you got the right cream, do you understand the right food etc. someone to guide them, this is what should be done, this is what the child may need. If you have one*

person who solely focused on that it will give children the chance to understand their identity. We know there isn't enough foster carers in general not just cultural appropriate carers.

- *There was a multi-disciplinary team called Black resources services. We found that things need to be imbedded at the leadership level. Ownership by central government and implemented by local government.*
- *Black children are often an afterthought and their needs are often an afterthought. When I have placed Asian children, I will always ask types of questions around do you have access to a Quran, access to your place of worship etc. I think religion is something people tick off in their head, but culture is ignored. How can they not be asked these questions? It is easy for that to be part of your checklist, but it doesn't seem to cross over when it comes to Black children. I can't believe we still are having conversations about hair and skin care. In previous role, was asked to go and help with hair care for children that I wasn't involved with, that is not my responsibility. The manager should have a conversation about why the child's hair is matted. We take them from their homes because of safety, but we aren't achieving it if their needs aren't being met. It astounds me.*
 - *Especially children of dual heritage, we aren't proactively engaging children's needs and seeking their views in terms of families and moving forward if they can't stay with their families.*
 - *What is their cultural competency, are they meeting those cultural needs? Producing cultural competency for children, social workers will say they have an identified a need, and sometimes can help them or go through forum. It's my specific role to support with those asks. And then imparting that advice as training or forums or advice. You don't want that to be a role so that nobody else (other practitioners) takes a lead on, they are responsible for their own learning. Should be used alongside other learning.*
- *Having someone in post specifically there to work with foster carers, used to have cultural advisor that visited foster carers and visited children during their time as a LAC. But that worker left and they haven't been replaced. The importance of that role is not recognised. It should be a mandatory role. More time needs to be spent with children throughout their time in care, need to prioritise that move and make sure their views are shared.*
 - *This role of cultural competency in LAs – isn't technically that the role of the social work supervisor? We shouldn't take away from that role and do we as professionals have the confidence to ask those questions.*
 - *In reality, the supervising social workers should be doing it, maybe they don't have the insight into children's backgrounds, so they have*
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to learn. Social workers are not being aware of culture, need somebody who is culturally aware and can advise on that. E.g., there is difference between a child have braids or extensions compared to wearing a blonde or red weave at 5 years old. I might not know the cultural backgrounds of other ethnicities and I might research, but you need someone who is aware of those cultures. I think there should be a role could be someone who knows, can represent them and champion – perhaps attend first LAC review and make sure needs are being met.

- *When Black children first come into care we can work with the parents by asking about their hair, who does it, what cream do they use etc. why do we have to start afresh? The parents are the most informed telling us what resources they've used.*
 - *My second point is recruitment, its one thing recruiting Black carers but the assessors need to be open minded and respect Black cultures. Sometimes assessors are already prejudice so will rule out potential Black carers. I see this a lot, they don't understand the culture, especially religion, e.g., if a family is talking about the devil, it might not be a concern, it might be culturally appropriate.*
 - *There is an elephant in the room. How confident are Black social workers within their own identity?*
 - *Since the Black Lives Matter movement we are able to have these free conversations. We are in a better state than we were 5 years ago, but conversations need to continue.*
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- *It's almost been a taboo conversation, do not have the safe space in offices to have those conversations and that is still prevalent. So, we might not have the confidence or supported to have the confidence to have those conversations.*
 - *For 20 years there has been a lot of discussions, checklists, you name it.*
 - *I've been observing adoption panel, and the way they talk about children you would think they don't have experience in this sector. You have some that are better at that role, but we don't know who will be allocated that child. We can't have that one culturally intelligent being allocated all those cases. It is about training everyone.*
 - *Need to enable White social workers to have these conversations as well to be culturally competent, shouldn't have those conversations just in the presence of someone who is Black. Need to have those conversations. There are lots of different cultures, need to be culturally competent about all of those.*
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- *Curiosity is crucial. No assumptions.*
 - *You don't know what you don't know.*
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- *It's disheartening that from 1950 to 2021 nothing has changed. There is something that isn't filtered down in how we talk to Black foster carers, there is no training. No management leadership no policy in place that puts the emphasis on any of this. We have a talk about it and then it dies off, and we go working around and around in circles and no progress is being made. It's just been ongoing, will we ever be able to support carers in understanding, will we ever listen to Black children in care and will we ever have enough social workers.*
 - *The discussion has been great and very much needed.*
 - *Training is key for all social workers and foster carers, ongoing and relevant training. And in supervision you should be talking about the child's needs and if they are being met. There should always be consultation with other agencies. There is also something about Ofsted looking at whether Black children are having their needs met. Ofsted are key.*
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More Reflections from Non-Black Social Workers

This Social Worker attended because of a specific family they are working with. 3 black siblings who are placed with a white foster carer, the siblings and carer are happy with the match and seem to all be doing well together. The issues are external factors. They are placed in Hampshire which is a predominantly white area, they are facing many issues in education and are all having different responses, this SW would like to better understand those issues to try and support them.

The 3 children are all very different and are reacting to the racism they are experiencing in different ways, the oldest is very confident and will challenge unacceptable comments and behaviour, the middle child has expressed a desire to be white and the youngest child is having outbursts. Being in the position of trying to support them the SW feels has taught her a lot already.

However what she has found is while the school were initially supportive they now appear to want to minimise and not address the issues, the children and her as the SW continue to raise the issues and they continue to deny there is any racism happening. There was a discussion about the responsibility/roles of other partners such as the virtual school. There are some people who are going above and beyond for

these children, there is a black teacher at the school who has been to the foster carers house.

This Social Worker had a positive experience where she had been working with a dual heritage 15 year old girl who had been in care for 7 years, she had been with a white carer for several years and never raised that as a problem but started saying she wanted to move.

Initially this was resisted because didn't give any real reasons and they wanted to support stability however when a new home became available that they thought might be a good match they moved her.

The change they have seen in the young person has been significant, they are having conversations about ethnicity and identity that they have never spoken about before, the SW has been able to support her to attend family events and has a much better understanding of her experience. Can see how vital it is to create that space and opportunity to have those conversations with young people.

Both thought it would be positive to have a youth service that focuses on identity for young people, where they could access mentoring or drop in sessions with any questions.

We discussed the importance of life story work being broader than simply describing events and talking about heritage, culture and wider identity.

The Social Workers shared that their Local Authorities have done some work since BLM to get social workers to discuss racism and broader practice.

In Brighton they did a review into services and found that social care is institutionally racist, they now have weekly anti racist practice discussions they have invited different guests to these sessions including black fathers. They have an anti-racist lead practitioner in Brighton who is driving this agenda.

Both enjoyed the conversation but noted they were surprised and disappointed more white social workers hadn't attended and there was some discussion about why that might be.

Black Foster Carers and Non-Black Foster Carers who Foster Black Children and Young People 9 Participants

- *Adopted two mixed race children and fostered but have not fostered white children. No difference in culture and the colour of skin did not matter. The children never felt different from anyone or if they were in a white family. If they get asked why their parent is a different colour, they just laugh and it doesn't matter to them.*
 - *There are not many foster carers and the colour of skin does not matter. They just need love and consistency. But we need teaching e.g. if you are getting a muslim child, I should be taught about their culture so I can support them*
 - *New to fostering but I would like to know about their culture e.g. eating and we should be taught this. I would like to welcome children of race. We do training but it was virtual so we could not chat about it as much. The different cultures are not covered enough in training for foster carers*
 - *Children of race are not always prepared for the wider world and racism they may face*
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- *Surrey do train on different cultural backgrounds but when cultures come into reality we often don't feel prepared. There are a lot of cultural needs and it is not as straightforward as the training. We should speak to different foster carers so we can learn more.*
 - *We cant assume black is one cultural but it is massive and we should recognise the variation e.g. a child born in England and a child born in Africa. It is important to recognise the origin of the child but there is so much to cover. We need to equip the child with how to deal with racism in the wider world and I feel I could do that better than a white person who has no experience in it*
 - *A black child will feel more at home when they are placed with black carers who understand them. A child may have already gone through trauma and care could make this worse depending on if their cultural needs are met as they may feel misunderstood. You have to continue to build trust but because they identify with the carer they are placed with.*
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- *Sometimes a child may be black but have an English culture, we can't make assumptions*
 - *Putting a black child with a black carer does not always solve the problem*

- *There is currently a national problem as there are not enough black carers*
- *black carers find it challenging and struggle to take on fostering*
- *It all starts because you want to help children, you don't look for a specific child (black or white) you just want to help a child*

- *My children are mixed race, they have just grown up British but if they asked about the black cultural I would tell them. e.g. I speak about my upbringing in Africa and there is nothing they are not prepared for. I have taken my children to Africa to teach them. we all want to know where we came from no matter what*
- *People are not educated on foster carer and this may impact why there are limited black carers. E.g. you don't know the options or opportunities to get involved in foster care. They should promote it and target black carers. There may also be a language barrier so people don't know they can do it.*
- *Not all black children need to go to a black carer but all carers should be taught how to promote the black culture and understand it*
- *I had black and white foster carers but when I went to a black carer, I automatically felt relief. It is little things like wearing a stocking cap or washing underwear - these are Caribbean things and I know when I went to Caribbean carers it wasn't odd for me to do certain things. My white foster carers were great but I really did feel the cultural differences*

- *It always comes back to training and education. A white person could take a black child to a black hairdresser so they can have their hair done*
- *There could be a psychological effects to these cultural differences in your care placements*
- *Every child is care by case and it also depends on the child's preferences*
- *Whoever is caring for the child must be prepared to answer their questions and it comes down to their training*
- *Location and age matters. e.g. if you live in an area with small black numbers you should make an effort to connect them to their culture e.g. a black festival*
- *We also need to look at black adoptive parents as well as fostering it goes hand in hand. Foster carers should know they have the option to adopt because this could shorten the length of time a black child is waiting to be adopted.*

More Reflections from Non-Black Foster Carers

- *We looked after a couple of young girls who were mixed race, aged about five. Although we only looked-after them during a fortnight - it was clear that their carers hadn't considered their personal needs e.g. hair and skin.*
- *There isn't many foster carers who are from Black or African backgrounds.*
- *We had a couple of girls who lived with us, and we didn't understand that we needed to moisturise their hair and skin. As the young people were placed with us for an emergency placement, there wasn't any planning for the placement, and we assumed that they were white. However, at the placement planning meeting we then realised they were white Caribbean.*
- *Foster carers are having to learn as they go along, rather than having the support before a child is placed with them.*
- *We've had many supervising social workers over the years, many of these have been agency and haven't provided a lot of support. This has made it difficult, and as a result been reflected in the support we've received.*

- *Social workers are often quite good at working with you to make sure you understand how to support young people who are black.*
 - *We had a young person who was Pakistani, and the service had little knowledge about the child before he was placed with us. However, we were able to talk with the young persons grandparent about how best to support him and his dietary requirements.*
 - *It would be helpful to have a pack of information alongside training to help foster carers understand how they can best support children and young people from Black and Caribbean backgrounds - included in the skills to fostering.*
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Directors of Children's Services and members of their Senior Leadership Teams

Wandsworth

- *There remains a disproportionate number of black children in care in Wandsworth, compared to the community.*
- *Fresh leadership has led to a greater focus and there's renewed will to do something about this.*

Bristol

- *28% of children are BAME in Bristol. Less than 28% of children in care are BAME – so a different issue to Wandsworth.*
- *Keen to focus on the intersection between the way the regulatory framework nudges local authorities to act, and the customs and cultures of the people in the local area. Some have different backgrounds and language needs. E.g. Somali families tend to live in larger family groups and care for siblings, nieces and nephews, but don't want to go through the formal foster care process.*
- *There are some structural issues that require Local Authorities to be brave. There's a challenge around the visibility of black carers - need more black carers on carer groups and to be visible in leadership roles.*
- *It's vital that social workers understand the cultural identity of children they work with. Social work needs to consider the people, celebrations, food (etc.) that are important to young people.*
- *Bristol have created a starter pack to teach foster carers to better understand the needs of the children in their care if placed cross-culturally. Placement planning form contains specific section about child's culture.*
- *Bristol has recently launched a 'diaspora education' programme led by a young person in the local area - helping other young people better understand their culture. Bristol made an offer made to share learning from this with other Local Authorities after the pilot*

programme concludes.

Reading

- *The experience in Reading is that placing children with carers that don't have similar cultural identity means the children have to hide / deny their identity.*
- *If there isn't a cultural match - what's good enough? Could LA provide more support for children to ensure their cultural needs are met regardless of family they live with? Foster carers, social workers and IROs need to properly try and understand children's culture.*

Surrey

- *The review needs to consider the role of Virtual School Heads. Are we upskilling key staff in schools to understand issues of race, racism and cultural identity?*

Wiltshire

- *Large Polish community in Wiltshire. The local authority knows families really well, but the 'model family' in the eyes of many social workers tends to have white and middle class values. Doesn't work with people that have different cultural norms*
 - *Some very difficult cases in the local area including one where the local MP was involved in speaking out about the LA's decision to place a Polish child with a white British foster carer.*
 - *Where progress is made, it's through 'connected persons' programme.*
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- *Issues and biases are often replicated covertly and go under the radar. For example there can be discrimination at foster panels because of cultural differences. Systems need to be more flexible to allow matches between children and families that have positive impact on the child.*
 - *Government could also do more - provide statutory guidance on this issue.*

Barking and Dagenham

- *Equipping foster carers and upskilling them is vital. Children need good quality life story work to have been done before entering care so that the foster carer can understand their culture and identity.*
- *Placing of young men far from home is a challenge. Can't form community links. Care providers need to be challenged about how children's needs are being met through out of area placements.*

Nottinghamshire

- *The County benefits significantly from having a diverse population and set of services to meet the needs of different communities in Nottingham city.*
- *Children from smaller towns in north of county (e.g. Mansfield) tend to be overrepresented in care within the county - these are mainly 'Red Wall' and deprived areas.*
- *Black colleagues working for the LA are more likely to be working in residential care, temporary contracts and in agency roles than white colleagues.*
- *Nottingham recognise that this is an issue, but don't have enough understanding about why that's the case, and what pathways need putting in place to change this.*

Haringey

- *Large BAME and Turkish community in the local area.*
- *The LA have spent a lot of time focussing on the quality of care and permanency children from BAME backgrounds receive. E.g. levelling the playing field around waiting times for foster care placements and adoption – which generally take much longer for BAME children.*
- *They are innovative ways to empower BAME children - e.g. chairing their own reviews.*
- *63% of workforce (and foster carers) from BAME communities.*
- *Major challenge around 'racial literacy' and understanding how to communicate with children from backgrounds not similar to their own.*

A BIG Thank You
to everyone who took part in
The Black Table Talks

Report written and designed by Judith AM Denton
Further information about The Black Care Experience can be found at
<https://www.theblackcareexperience.co.uk/>