

# Youth Endowment Fund

## Race Equity Progress Report 2025

July 2025





## Foreword

At the Youth Endowment Fund, our vision is for every child to live a life free from violence. Yet for children from certain ethnic backgrounds, that vision is further from reach.

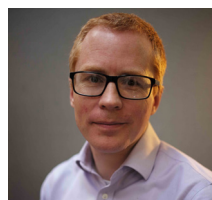
Earlier this year, we published our report, *Racial disproportionality in violence affecting children and young people*. It set out some stark findings. Black children are six times more likely to be victims of homicide than their peers. While the majority of those arrested, stopped and searched and committing offences are White children, Black children are disproportionately arrested, stopped and searched and placed in the secure estate.

If we are serious about our mission – to find what works to prevent children committing violence and to build a movement to put this into practice – we must be serious about these inequalities. That starts with us. That's why we set Race Equity Objectives. It's why we publish a report every year laying out our progress against those objectives. Transparency is key to success.

We will also advise and call on government to do what works. That's why our *Racial Disproportionality in violence* report outlined five concrete steps the government should take to address racial disproportionality and keep our children safe; from ensuring stop and search is fair and intelligence-led to improving access to mental health services.

Since our last progress report, I'm pleased that we have made meaningful strides toward our race equity goals. Over a quarter of our funding portfolio are organisations with leaders from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds; we've increased our proportion of team members from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds from 29% to 40%; and we've published our major report on racial disproportionality in youth violence. But we know there's still more to do in ensuring equitable access to our funding and better representation across our team. We're committed to doing more.

In all we do we must never lose focus on our mission: to find what works and build a movement to put it into practice. Racial equity is fundamental to achieving that mission. This report summarises the progress we made last year in delivering on our commitments to racial equity. Thank you to everyone who is part of our journey in delivering on those commitments. Together – we can build a world where our children are safer.



**Jon Yates**  
CEO  
Youth Endowment Fund

# Executive summary

When we started this work, we set out actionable race equity commitments across four areas of our work: our funding, our research and change, our leadership and our team.

Below is a summary of our goals and an update on the progress we've made against them:

## Our funding

OBJECTIVE	GOAL	STATUS
<b>We'll make sure our funding reaches organisations with Black, Asian or other Minority Ethnic leaders</b>	Publish data on the proportion of organisations led by individuals from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds that receive funding through our grant rounds.	<b>MET</b>
	Assess the accuracy of demographic data gathered from funded organisations and identify any essential information that may be missing and needs to be sourced	<b>MET</b>
	Commission at least one multi-site trial in 2024/25 so we can fund smaller, minority led organisations, that are well-placed to support children from minority ethnic backgrounds.	<b>MET</b>
	Explore new communication and dissemination channels to broaden the reach of our funding rounds and ensure equitable access for a diverse range of potential applicants.	<b>MET</b>
	Aim for at least 25% of our total committed programme spend to be awarded to organisations led by individuals from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds.	<b>MET</b>
<b>We'll provide funding that reaches children from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds.</b>	Our £10 million Race Equity Fund is managed by <u>The Phoenix Way</u> . Through this partnership, we will continue to distribute our funding and expand our support into Wales.	<b>MET</b>
	Apply the learning from The Phoenix Way to make our funding systems, processes and practices more equitable and accessible.	<b>SOME PROGRESS</b>
	Ensure at least 30% of the children and young people who benefit from our funding are from Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic backgrounds.	<b>MET</b>
	Make sure all impact evaluations include subgroup analysis, where possible, to detect variations in results based on demographic characteristics, including ethnicity.	<b>MET</b>
	Continually strive to improve the accuracy of data we collect regarding the proportion of children from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds who benefit from our funding.	<b>MET</b>
	Commit to continue publishing this data.	<b>MET</b>
<b>When scoping new rounds and projects, we'll assess their impact on racial disparities in outcomes, along with other forms of disadvantage</b>	Commit to ensuring that intersectionality (i.e. how race overlaps with other protective factors) is considered in the set-up phase of programmes and evaluations, including trialling the use of more formal processes in our commissioning decisions.	<b>MET</b>
<b>We'll live up to our values of being questioning, brave and empathetic when working with other people and organisations. This means that when we believe that approaches or plans have not considered people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, we'll use our influence to understand, question and challenge.</b>	Only fund organisations that have considered race equity when developing their plans and enforce our Code of Conduct if things go wrong.	<b>MET</b>

## Our understanding and work to make change

OBJECTIVE	GOAL	STATUS
<b>We'll invest to improve the cultural competency of the researchers we work with.</b>	We will update our pool of Race Equity Associates to ensure we have a diverse range of expertise available to advise on all research projects.	<b>MET</b>
	We'll continue to work with our Race Equity Associates to ensure our teams consider the race equity implications of their research designs.	<b>SOME PROGRESS</b>
	We'll identify research teams who specialise in working with children from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds and leverage their expertise in our research and evaluation work.	<b>MET</b>
	We'll develop resources to facilitate the comprehensive scoping and assessment of projects. These tools will identify strengths and areas for improvement, focusing on race equity and its intersections with other protected characteristics.	<b>MET</b>
<b>We'll commission specific research about racial disproportionality and racism and will include relevant questions in research and evaluation projects.</b>	Publish a report on the extent of racial disproportionality among children at risk of involvement in violence. The findings from this review will inform our grant-making, research funding, policy and advocacy work.	<b>MET</b>
	Ensure that at least 50% of Secondary Data Analysis projects commissioned this year are designed to produce subgroup findings on racial disproportionality.	<b>MET</b>
	Continue to build evidence on approaches that may exacerbate racial disproportionality.	<b>MET</b>
	Ensure that this year's Children, Violence and Vulnerability report asks racially sensitive questions, provides robust subgroup results categorised by ethnicity, and incorporates questions to promote race equity.	<b>MET</b>
	Ensure that the evaluation of the Peer Action Collective (a peer action project part-funded by YEF) examines any possible barriers to participation.	<b>MET</b>
<b>We'll make sure that all our work is clear on racism and disproportionality.</b>	Ensure that all reports include a dedicated section on race. For example, tracking differences in the change that our programmes make for White children who participate, as well as those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds. Or including specific details in our guidance on promoting race equity.	<b>MET</b>
	Use consistent language when talking about race and racism in all research reports.	<b>MET</b>
	Ensure that each report details the racial demographics of the sample and discusses its limitations.	<b>MET</b>
<b>We'll translate learnings into activity to change practice to reduce racial disproportionality.</b>	Engage our Race Equity Associates from the outset when developing our Guidance reports.	<b>MET</b>
	Pursue new research on stop and search.	<b>MET</b>
	Develop and share practical tools, resources and workshops to promote racially equitable practices.	<b>MET</b>
<b>We'll work to reform systems that drive racial disproportionality.</b>	Include one or more recommendations in all Systems Guidance Reports that explicitly seek to reduce racial disproportionality.	<b>MET</b>
	Support system leaders to deliver on the recommendations set out in the Systems Guidance Report to make the system more racially equitable.	<b>MET</b>

## Our leadership

OBJECTIVE	GOAL	STATUS
<b>We'll monitor and hold ourselves accountable for our performance against our race equity goals.</b>	Make sure that our goals on race equity feature in all our planning processes – at organisational, team and individual levels.	<b>MET</b>
	Continue to publish our progress against our race equity goals.	<b>MET</b>
<b>Maintain our internal structures to ensure they remain fit for purpose and help us stay on track with our goals.</b>	Refresh and expand the membership of our internal Race Equity Accountability Group (REAG). This group consists of staff members responsible for advancing race equity within their teams. An annual agenda will be set to ensure that the topics discussed align with the group's remit.	<b>MET</b>
	Ensure we have a pool of race equity experts available to support our team across our seven priority sectors. Meaningful engagement with these experts will inform the development and execution of our funding and operational priorities.	<b>SOME PROGRESS</b>

## Our team

OBJECTIVE	GOAL	STATUS
<b>We'll ensure our team and governance bodies reflect the communities we serve.</b>	Proactively recruit candidates from diverse backgrounds, with the target of having 40% of shortlisted applicants from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds.	<b>MET</b>
	Ensure that any new internal policy or policy review takes into account the impact on and challenges faced by Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic team members.	<b>MET</b>
	Ensure that all advisory bodies we establish and engage with represent the diversity of the communities we serve (30% Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic).	<b>MET</b>
	Continue to report internally and externally on the background of our team and how it reflects the communities we serve. Where issues are spotted at any level in the organisation, we'll develop a plan to address them.	<b>MET</b>
<b>We'll train our staff to confidently and sensitively talk about race and racism and understand how these issues impact our work.</b>	Create a robust training plan that ensures all YEF team members have a strong knowledge and understanding of equity and inclusion.	<b>SOME PROGRESS</b>





## Our funding

How we've done:

### GOAL 1

We'll make sure that our funding reaches organisations with Black, Asian or other Minority Ethnic leaders<sup>1</sup>.

#### What we've done well

- ◆ This year, over a **quarter of organisations in our funding portfolio** were led by Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic leaders. Our target was 25% and we achieved 26%.
- ◆ We continued using **multi-site trials (MSTs)** to improve access to our funding for minority ethnic led organisations. MSTs are an evaluation approach that test the impact of a particular approach which is delivered by multiple organisations. This reduces the number of children each individual delivery organisation needs to reach, enabling smaller organisations to take part in randomised trials.
  - ◆ **We funded one new race equity-focused MST** (in which at least 60% of the individual delivery organisations were led by minority ethnic leaders) – StreetGames' Towards Sport programme. It involves 50 locally-trusted youth organisations engaging almost 3,000 young people in doorstep sport over two years. We also committed another – England Boxing – to the co-design stage for potential funding next year.
- ◆ Through our **Race Equity Fund in partnership with The Phoenix Way**, we continued our £10 million commitment to support smaller Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic led organisations that are working to prevent children and young people becoming involved in violence.
  - ◆ Over the past year we committed £4.3m over 131 grants to 88 organisations and we reallocated nearly £200,000 to existing Race Equity Fund grantees to support recovery and healing following the racist riots in summer 2024.

<sup>1</sup> We define an organisation as being Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic led if at least 50% of the leadership are from these racialised backgrounds

We think we can do more to learn from this valuable partnership about ensuring our funding is equitable. We're committed to deepening our learning in the year ahead.

- ♦ We also **invested in organisational capacity building**. Two minority ethnic led organisations in our portfolio received tailored support from our sister charity, Impetus, to strengthen their sustainability and readiness for participating in randomised trials.

#### What we can improve

- ♦ In our themed grant round on Therapies, we hoped to fund at least one minority ethnic led organisation. Despite our efforts to ensure a diversity of organisations would apply, unfortunately none of those that were minority ethnic led offered an eligible evaluable intervention. We're now reflecting on how to address any barriers there are to **ensuring more equitable access to our funding** in future.

**26% of our funding portfolio are organisations with leaders from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds.**

## GOAL 2

**We'll provide funding that reaches children from Black, Asian and other Minority Ethnic backgrounds.**

#### What we've done well

- ♦ To date, **34% of children and young people** reached through YEF-funded programmes were from minority ethnic backgrounds – slightly exceeding our 2024/25 target.
- ♦ Crucially, we've made significant **improvements to how we collect and monitor this data**. For example, we've introduced a new requirement for evaluators to report quarterly on the demographic makeup of both treatment and control groups, helping us to ensure equitable access to support across our trials. These and other efforts have led to a marked improvement in our data quality. Last year, over half of young people taking part in our funded programmes had missing demographic information, this figure has now dropped to just 11% – giving us much greater confidence in our reporting.

#### What we can improve

- ♦ This year, every YEF-funded evaluation included plans for subgroup analysis where possible, comparing estimated programme impact across different ethnic groups. But two key challenges remain:
  - ♦ Most trials still don't include enough young people from minority ethnic backgrounds to detect statistically significant differences – so this work remains largely exploratory.
  - ♦ To date, we've only been able to analyse outcomes by broad ethnic categories, rather than by more specifically defined ethnic groups.

All implementation and process evaluations (IPE) commissioned in 2024/25 will explore how young people from different ethnic backgrounds experience YEF-funded programmes, contributing valuable insights in addition to exploratory subgroup analysis.

### GOAL 3

**We'll ensure that when scoping new rounds and projects, we'll assess their impact on addressing racial disparities in outcomes, along with other forms of disadvantage.**

#### **What we've done well**

- ♦ In 2023 we recruited a pool of consultants – called **Race Equity Associates (REAs)** – who have practical experience informing and driving race equity within our evaluations and research. We now have 11 Race Equity Associates in our pool, who each bring expertise in race equity and how this applies across our different sectors.

Our REAs advise on the equity implications of both funding decisions and research designs. In 2024/25, we built on this in several ways:

- ♦ We now routinely **involve REAs during the scoping and setup of funding rounds** and projects. For our Therapies grant round, we were particularly mindful of the underrepresentation of minority ethnic led providers in this space, as well as longstanding barriers to access for young people from minority ethnic backgrounds. Dr Chanelle Myrie – a REA and clinical psychologist with deep expertise in therapeutic services – supported us through scoping and assessment. This support allowed us to carefully consider the barriers for minority ethnic young people and their families in accessing therapies – for example, stigma and shame surrounding mental health, and a lack of cultural and religious sensitivity amongst referring organisations and therapists.

#### **What we can improve**

- ♦ We recognise the complexity of **fully exploring intersectionality** (how race interacts with other demographic factors like gender and disability) in our evaluations. Quantitative analyses that examine how multiple characteristics intersect often require sample sizes beyond what our trials can support. However, we are committed to improving this:
  - ♦ We will review the usefulness of the equality impact assessment framework and decide whether to introduce it more formally into our processes.
  - ♦ Through our Implementation and Process Evaluations, we will continue to examine how young people's experiences of our programmes differ at the intersections of race and other demographic factors, where this analysis can add meaningful insight.

### GOAL 4

**When working with other people and organisations, if we believe their approaches have not adequately considered people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, we will use our influence to understand, question and challenge.**

#### **What we've done well**

- ♦ All funding applications and interviews with grantees and evaluators include **focused questions on race equity**. During interviews, we actively probe responses and challenge delivery organisations and evaluators to reflect on how they can strengthen their approach. Every stage of assessment and governance – both internal and external – includes dedicated space to scrutinise race equity considerations, ensuring they are not inadvertently overlooked.
- ♦ In December 2024, we ran an Evaluator Conference focused on race equity. This brought together expert evaluation teams from across the country to share knowledge and experience. Evaluators and REAs discussed race equity challenges, opportunities and considerations for current and future evaluations, as well as good practice and next steps on embedding race equity in evaluations.



Our Evaluation Team has since compiled learnings and examples that will soon be published as a resource for evaluators.

### What we can improve

- Despite this progress, challenges remain. For example, in one of our projects based in a predominantly white area of Wales, the grantee struggled to meet demographic recruitment targets for minority ethnic young people. We facilitated a grantee learning exchange to support finding transferrable learnings, and the project team vastly expanded their range of referrers to include youth clubs, schools and voluntary sector organisations which it is hoped will bring a greater number of referrals among young people from minority ethnic backgrounds. But these mitigations don't offer an easy fix, and this raised ongoing questions about **how to ensure our programmes remain inclusive in areas with less diverse populations**. We are continuing to reflect on our approach in response to such challenges.

*"Having worked with YEF on scoping and assessments for their Therapies grant round, I can see that the team genuinely care about doing well when it comes to race equity. But YEF has a difficult challenge in finding ways to ensure its funding reaches organisations with global majority leaders, since it is so heavily focused on commissioning large trials which require organisations to be delivering at scale. I'd encourage YEF to be really transparent about this and what it means for smaller, global majority led organisations' likelihood of being able to access funding. I'd also suggest that YEF considers ways in which it can support the upskilling of smaller, global majority led organisations to enable them to deliver at scale, hopefully leading to more equitable access to funding for more global majority led charities doing great work with young people."*

Dr Chanelle Myrie, YEF Race Equity Associate





## Our understanding and work to make change

How we've done:

### GOAL 1

We'll invest to improve the cultural competency of the researchers we work with.

#### What we've done well

- ◆ Our **Race Equity Associates** have worked on a wide range of YEF research this year; they have:
  - ◆ Reviewed evaluation protocols and provided feedback on how race equity can be strengthened.
  - ◆ Advised on a research project about factors associated with young people's involvement in violence.
  - ◆ Provided advice and guidance on the key messages of YEF's Children, Violence and Vulnerability report.

Their support and challenge have made them an integral part of our research work, and they will continue to be in the years ahead.

- ◆ We also continued to **improve the diversity of our evaluation teams** by identifying organisations with a strong track record of research with children from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic led organisations. This year, five organisations applied, but we did not make appointments by the end of the financial year covered by this report. We have since appointed four organisations.
- ◆ This year, we **developed new resources** to support the scoping and assessment of our and others' research projects:
  1. We adapted an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) to support research teams to understand how their research study might affect young people differently.
  2. We developed a checklist to help us assess projects once they are completed and identify areas for development for future projects.

## GOAL 2

**We'll commission specific research about racial disproportionality and racism whilst embedding relevant research questions into research and evaluation projects.**

### What we've done well

- ♦ **We published a major new report**, Racial disproportionality in violence affecting children and young people, which summarised findings from across our work on racial disproportionality. It brings together new data analysis with insights from our research and conversations with experts. It laid out the state of disproportionality in the youth justice system, explored the complex drivers of this disproportionality and set five priority actions
- ♦ We now ensure that all our **newly commissioned research** includes questions on race equity, and we assess applicants for research funding on their experience of conducting racially equitable research. For example, we funded four projects seeking to understand current practice in the youth sector. All four projects included research questions about race equity, investigating: racial disparities in access to A&E navigator programmes, youth clubs, safeguarding in the youth sector and funding of the youth sector.

## GOAL 3

**We'll make sure that all our work is clear on racism and disproportionality.**

### What we've done well

- ♦ Our reports provide **insights on race equity**.
  - ♦ This year we published Key Facts About Violence. In it, we look at the research on the nature of violence and how, why and where it happens. We provide eight simple descriptive facts about violence, one of which explores the significant racial and ethnic inequities in the youth justice system and exposure to violence.
  - ♦ Our annual Children, Violence and Vulnerability survey is a survey of 10,000 children between ages 13 and 17. This year we published five reports from the survey focused on who is affected by violence, social media, gender, views of the police and access to youth clubs and positive activities. Each report provided extensive findings broken down by ethnicity.
- ♦ **Embedding consistent language** in our reports is crucial. We recognise that existing classifications of race and ethnicity are ambiguous and raise important questions, especially the context for use of terms such as 'person of colour' and 'racially minoritised'. This year, we brought together our efforts across the organisation into a language guide to avoid conflicting messages – this guide is nearing completion.

### What we can improve

- ♦ A challenge has been ensuring that we provide consistent data on the **demographics of the samples in our evaluations**. We have not always been able to accurately describe the ethnic diversity of samples, especially when projects were set up before our race equity commitments were in place. However, the evaluation team have produced guidance for evaluators on this, and we expect this to improve in future reports.

## GOAL 4

**We'll translate learnings into activity to change practice to reduce racial disproportionality.**

### **What we've done well**

- ♦ We've made good progress on ensuring **race equity is a priority in our efforts to change practice**, publishing new resources.
- ♦ This year, we published our Focused Deterrence Delivery Guidance. Focused Deterrence (FD) is an approach to violence reduction whereby police forces attempt to identify the people most likely to be involved in violence and support them to desist. Our guidance report offers practical information to help organisations deliver effective and equitable FD in England and Wales. Race equity is a crucial element that should be embedded in the delivery of FD programmes. Without careful planning and design, FD can exacerbate the effects of racism, disproportionately affecting children from Black, Asian and other Minority Ethnic communities.
- ♦ In support of the guidance report, we also published Insights on how to embed race equity when implementing focused deterrence – a resource focused on strengthening race equity in FD programme design, planning and delivery. This was produced by Laurelle Brown and draws from her expertise in race equity, experience of supporting racially equitable implementation of FD, and understanding of the evidence base. It gives clear recommendations across programme preparation, identification of children, monitoring, and implementation.

## GOAL 5

**We'll work to reform systems that drive racial disproportionality.**

### **What we've done well**

- ♦ Last year we published Diversion Practice Guidance – a report calling for changes to the system for supporting children when they are arrested. We've been working to implement these recommendations over the course of this year. A key recommendation was that the Government make Outcome 22 a positive outcome, so that the police feel able to use it to divert children from formal outcomes. An important feature of this outcome is that an admission of guilt is not required for it to be used. There is some evidence that requiring an admission of guilt to access diversion options is contributing to racial disproportionality in the youth justice system. We have had a number of conversations with Ministers in Home Office and the Ministry of Justice on the value of updating the police crime outcomes framework to make Outcome 22 a positive outcome. We welcome that this is now being considered.
- ♦ We also published Education Systems Guidance – a similar report on reforming the education system. It included eight recommendations, two of which seek to promote race equity. One recommendation addresses the clear racial inequity in school attendance. The other focuses on the quality of education in Youth Offending Institutions, where Black children are highly over-represented. We'll continue to work with Ministers to implement these recommendations in the year ahead.

*"Working as a Race Equity Associate (REA) this year has been very meaningful. Thanks to the YEF team, I was able to grasp the impact of my work. I felt validated and motivated knowing my views were valued and considered at all times. Compared to two years ago, I can see that YEF grantees have already improved their race equity lens. This shows the importance of REAs."*

**Christal Kihm, YEF Race Equity Associate, Policy Researcher & Campaigner**





## Our leadership

How we've done:

### GOAL 1

**We'll monitor and hold ourselves accountable for our performance against our race equity goals.**

Our commitment to accountability is reflected in how we monitor progress — both through this public report and by listening to our team. In 2024, 76% of staff participated in our annual race equity survey, where staff were asked to give a rating out of 10 against 14 statements about our race equity work. Their answers have provided valuable insight into how we are doing and where we need to go further.

#### **What we've done well**

Staff assessments of our race equity work have improved over the past year. Ten out of fourteen scores now meet or exceed our organisational target of 8, including strong results on inclusion, fairness, and ownership of our race equity goals. Staff increasingly understand how their roles contribute to our wider equity ambitions, and there is confidence in leadership's intent and tone when addressing race equity.

The highest-rated response was to the statement:

**"I believe I am treated equally at YEF, irrespective of my ethnicity or race" – 9.26**

This reflects the overall strength of our inclusive culture and the impact of clear goal-setting, values-led leadership, and regular communication.

A key area of progress is **individual ownership of our race equity goals**. With a score of 8.56, most team members agree they understand how their role contributes to advancing equity. This reflects the work done to cascade race equity goals across the organisation and embed them within individual objectives.



QUESTION	SCORE	
	2023 (63%)	2024 (76%)
I am aware of the race equity goals and what is expected to be delivered at YEF.	7.81	8.27
I understand how I contribute to the race equity goals through my own role at YEF.	8.15	8.56
YEF's funding is accessible to organisations led by – and working for – people from Minority Ethnic backgrounds.	6.9	7.15
YEF strives to ensure that the grants it makes reaches an appropriate number of children and young people from Minority Ethnic backgrounds	7.1	8.15
YEF lives up to its values when working with partners.	7.85	8.18
From what I have seen, YEF undertakes recruitment and selection in an equitable way.	8.63	8.61
I believe I am treated equally at YEF, irrespective of my ethnicity or race.	8.94	9.26
I am comfortable talking about race equity at work.	7.94	8.02
I feel like I have the development opportunities and training to achieve my race equity goals.	7.24	7.78
I am satisfied with the work the leadership team is doing in relation to race equity.	8	8.23
I feel comfortable expressing myself via my own social and cultural norms at work.	7.9	8.12
If I witnessed and reported a race-related incident at YEF, I am confident that appropriate action would be taken.	8.6	9
As a research organisation, we make sure that we fund projects that build evidence on how we can reduce racial disproportionality across public services.	6.6	7.44
Our organisation effectively translates learnings into activities that drive meaningful changes in practice to reduce racial disproportionality.	N/A	7.03

### What we can improve

While survey results are broadly positive, staff also shared useful feedback about areas for growth. This section focuses on strategic leadership issues, with other areas such as training access and funding equity covered in separate parts of the report.

Confidence in leadership remains high (8.23), particularly in relation to role modelling inclusive behaviours and creating opportunities to learn. However, some staff shared a desire for greater transparency—particularly around the specific actions taken by leadership and how those actions are communicated.

## GOAL 2

We'll maintain our internal structures ensuring they continue to be fit for purpose to help us stay on track with our goals.

### What we've done well

We've continued to work hard on **creating a culture** at YEF where colleagues feel confident and safe to have difficult conversations about race equity in our workplace.

- ♦ We reviewed the **roles and responsibilities** of team members in relation to this project. Resulting in some shifts to the way we progress this work:
  - ♦ The development of our race equity goals is now led by the full Directors Team, which is an important shift in ownership, affirming that race equity is a leadership responsibility. Our Race Equity Accountability Group (REAG) Leads and Race Equity Diversity Inclusion (REDI) were consulted during the process, helping to ensure that our goals reflected both lived experience and operational realities. While Directors now set the direction, REAG Leads remain responsible for working with teams to ensure delivery.
  - ♦ REAG was refreshed with updated roles and responsibilities, and its purpose has evolved to better support the delivery of our race equity goals. Previously, a primary focus of REAG meetings was to review progress against these goals. This function has now been embedded into our weekly all-staff meetings, which provide regular, organisation-wide updates and greater visibility of our progress. With this shift, REAG meetings have become a dedicated space for deeper discussion, strategic thinking, and cross-team collaboration.
- ♦ With our Race Equity Associates, we developed our **Race Equity Assessment Framework** to help review and shape internal policies through a race equity lens. The framework is directly linked to this year's race equity goals and will be used to support accountability and consistent decision-making as part of our next round of policy reviews.

### What we can improve

- ♦ A key challenge this year has been fulfilling our commitment to **appoint Race Equity Associates across all YEF sectors**. With workstreams progressing at different paces, the decision was made to pause some appointments to ensure Associates are brought in at the right time, where they can contribute meaningfully rather than simply meet representation targets.

Sector Associates have been appointed for Youth, Health, Education, Policing and Youth Justice, Children's Services, and to support our Peer Action Collective. An appointment has not yet been made for Neighbourhoods.

*"It's really difficult to get the right balance when monitoring our performance on race equity. On the one hand, we don't want to be 'marking our own homework' as a senior leadership team – on the other, we know we cannot simply ask our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues to take responsibility for telling us whether we're doing a good enough job. We've thought hard about the best way to remain transparent whilst driving progress. I think our internal Race Equity Advisory Group meetings really help us to have honest conversations about progress and to hear the feedback we need."*

Andrew Berwick, Chief Operating Officer, YEF



## Our team

How we've done:

### GOAL 1

**We'll ensure our team and governance bodies reflect the communities we serve.**

We aim to reflect the communities we serve — nationally, 21% of under-18s in the UK are from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, yet children from these backgrounds are disproportionately cautioned, arrested or sentenced (at 30%).

It's therefore essential that our team, at all levels, brings insight, lived experience and representative perspectives to the work we do. Achieving this begins with recruitment.

#### **What we've done well**

- ◆ We've embedded an average **40% minority ethnic shortlisting target** to help ensure fair representation at the earliest stage of hiring. Over the past year, we met our 40% target for 22 out of 23 of the roles we recruited for. Of the 22 roles, 54% of shortlisted candidates identified as minority ethnic.
- ◆ We also continue to apply several **equitable recruitment practices** beyond shortlisting, including ensuring racially diverse representation on interview panels.
- ◆ As a result of this work, we've seen a positive shift in overall team composition. The **proportion of team members from minority ethnic backgrounds increased** from 35% since the first publication of this report in 2023 to 40% in March 2025. At the Director level, representation remained strong, decreasing slightly from 50% to 45%.

#### **What we can improve**

- ◆ A continuing challenge has been **increasing representation at the middle-leadership and line manager levels**, where proportions have remained static or declined. Minority ethnic representation at the middle-leadership level remained at 29%, while it dropped from 29% to 20% at the line

manager level. This points to an area where further attention and focus are needed to ensure progress is sustained at every level of the organisation.

**54% of shortlisted candidates identified as minority ethnic across 22 roles**

**40% of our team members are from minority ethnic backgrounds**

## **GOAL 2**

**We'll train our staff to be confident to sensitively talk about race and racism and how it impacts our work.**

This year, our focus has been on building confidence through structured, reflective conversations – creating spaces where staff can learn from others and each other.

### **What we've done well**

- ♦ We held a **panel session for our team** – How to Be an Equitable Organisation – featuring leaders from minority ethnic led charities. Panellists shared reflections on leading or supporting their organisations' anti-racist journeys, offering practical insight into what it takes to foster equity at every level.

The discussion surfaced important themes: the value of open dialogue as a learning tool; the critical role of leadership in championing change; the importance of lived experience and representation in shaping inclusive practices; and the need for accountability in external partnerships. There was a strong emphasis on creating 'brave spaces' for learning, where discomfort is acknowledged as a necessary part of progress.

- ♦ Formal training remained limited due to challenges in securing timely Race Equity Associate support, so we focused on facilitating opportunities to **learn through conversation**. In our staff survey, some colleagues had mentioned still feeling nervous about saying the wrong thing or using incorrect language, but the shift toward more open, curious conversations is helping to build confidence across the organisation.

As we continue to grow in this area, we recognise the importance of embedding equity discussions into everyday practice, supported by structured training, ongoing dialogue, and a commitment to learning as a team.

*"I am really proud of all the work we are doing within Recruitment in regard to race equity. At YEF, we are not just talking about race equity and EDI within Recruitment, we are really taking the necessary steps to attract, select and retain top talent by making the process fair and inclusive at stage. Paying key focus to 'how and where we advertise, to really ensuring that hiring managers network and reach out proactively to attract a diverse pool of candidates, to make sure that we are building teams that reflect the young people we support. It has been a journey to get here with a lot of reflecting, gaining feedback and looking at what could we be doing better. We haven't completely cracked the code, but we are much closer than we were 6 months ago. "*

**Kerri Newton, Recruitment Manager, YEF**



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