

Youth Endowment Fund

Race Equity Progress Report 2026

July 2026





Foreword

Black children are six times more likely to be murdered than their peers. If we are serious about reducing violence, we have to be serious about understanding and addressing the experiences of children from some minority ethnic backgrounds in relation to violence and criminal justice. Because of this disproportionality, it's fundamental that we understand and address the experiences of children from some minority ethnic backgrounds in relation to violence and criminal justice.

That's why we've worked on embedding race equity in every part of our internal systems, including aligning our race equity goals with our strategic organisational objectives. This is important work; weaving a race equity focus across every aspect of our operations improves our accountability.

Our three-year Race Equity Fund closed this year. Putting funding and capacity development support directly in the hands of 128 small, minority ethnic led organisations was one approach we took to tackling funding inequity, since it can be challenging for these organisations to participate in large impact trials. Though the Fund has ended, important learning was captured through the process, which laid strong foundations for our partner, The Phoenix Way, to carry on the work that the Race Equity Fund has started, for years to come.

We were pleased to see the Government draw on our research on Racial Disproportionality in its recently published Protecting lives, building hope: a plan to

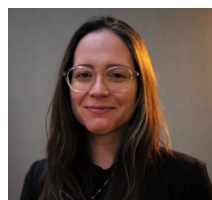
halve knife crime. In it, they reference our research throughout and cite our recommendation on addressing racial disparities in diversion.

We've continued to make strides towards our race equity goals since our last progress report: 27% of our funding portfolio are organisations with leaders from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds; 35% of children and young people reached through YEF-funded programmes are from minority ethnic backgrounds; and 46% of our team members are from minority ethnic backgrounds.

But we still have much to do.

Our mission at the YEF is to find what works to prevent violence and to build a movement to put this into practice. With black children six times more likely to be murdered, it is clear that we won't be able to deliver our mission unless we address racial disproportionality.

We're grateful to everyone who has so far played a part in this journey with us, and we're committed to the steps ahead.



Andrea Ramsay
COO
Youth Endowment Fund

Executive summary

Our [Racial Disproportionality](#) report sets 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 64% more likely to be arrested, 84% more likely to be convicted or cautioned and 300% more likely to be in custody relative to their share of the population.
- ♦ Black and Asian children are less likely to be referred to mental health support than their peers (a third less and half as likely respectively);
- ♦ Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller children face disproportionately high rates of school exclusions and suspensions.

As an organisation committed to race equity, we recognise the importance of tackling racism and injustice— not only because they affect young people's pathways to violence but also because they have profound and enduring impacts on their lives, opportunities, and wellbeing. Challenging these injustices is central to our values and our work.

That's why, over the past year, we've worked on embedding race equity in all components of our work in collaboration with our advisory groups. This has included aligning our race equity objectives with our YEF strategic objectives.

Following this work, we [published our new race equity goals](#) which sit across four areas of our work: our funding, our understanding and work to make change, our leadership and our team. Below is a summary of these and an update on the progress we've made against them this year:

Our funding

OBJECTIVE	SUB-GOAL	STATUS
We'll make sure our funding reaches organisations with Black, Asian or other Minority Ethnic leaders.	Our three-year £10 million Race Equity Fund is managed by The Phoenix Way. Through this partnership, we will continue to distribute our funding to small, minority ethnic led organisations.	MET
	Commission at least one multi-site trial (MST) in 2025/26 so we can fund smaller, minority ethnic led organisations, that are well-placed to support children from minority ethnic backgrounds.	SOME PROGRESS
	Aim for at least 25% of organisations we have funded being led by people of minority ethnic backgrounds (including partners in MSTs).	MET
We'll provide funding that reaches children from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds.	Ensure at least 30% of the children and young people who benefit from our funding are from Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic backgrounds.	MET
	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.	MET
We'll ensure that all evaluations address racial disparities at every stage.	Assess race equity in applications, incorporating Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA) in scoping for appropriate projects and assess race equity in applications.	MET
	Deploy Race Equity Associates (REAs) to support the design, delivery and reporting.	MET
	Ensure all evaluation reports include a dedicated section on race and incorporate intersectional analysis.	SOME PROGRESS

Our understanding and work to make change

OBJECTIVE	GOAL	STATUS
We'll ensure that every one of our future reports includes a section on race.	Ensure that each report details the racial demographics of the sample and discusses its limitations. We'll continue to work with REAs to ensure teams are considering the race equity implications of their research designs and content.	SOME PROGRESS
We'll ensure our data research produces findings on race.	Continue to build evidence on approaches that may exacerbate racial disproportionality.	MET
	Ensure this year's <i>Children, Violence and Vulnerability (CVV)</i> report asks racially sensitive questions, is statistically powered to produce subgroup results split by ethnicity and identifies questions that will promote race equity.	MET
We'll ensure our guidance is informed by and speaks on race.	Ensure REAs are consulted in production.	MET
	Ensure the Evidence to Decision frameworks assess the impact of each recommendation on race equity.	MET
	Ensure every guidance report features at least one recommendation that we would expect to further race equity.	MET
We'll be front-footed on race when we grow demand for evidence.	All Grow Demand events consider and speak to the drivers of racial disproportionality and speak to opportunities to improve equity within their given context.	MET
	At least one Virtual Learning Café (VLC) per sector will have an explicit focus on the relevant key drivers of racial disproportionality and include speaker(s) from Black and Minority Ethnic communities.	MET
We'll push for change on racial inequity.	Support five areas to better understand and adopt a racially equitable approach to Focused Deterrence. We will work to make Outcome 22 a positive police outcome and for increased use and understanding of this outcome across three police forces.	MET
	Identify the factors in the Education and Youth Sector systems that are driving racial disproportionality in our Systems Guidance and work to change them.	MET

Our leadership

OBJECTIVE	GOAL	STATUS
We'll monitor and hold ourselves accountable for our performance against our race equity goals.	Make sure that our goals on race equity feature in all our planning processes – at organisational, team and individual levels.	MET
	Maintain fit-for-purpose, internal structures to help us stay on track with our goals. Ensure REAG hold their teams to account in achieving targets and ensure coordination between teams.	MET
We'll communicate transparently and openly about race and our race equity work.	Continue to publish our progress against our race equity goals.	MET
	Review and monitor how race equity is communicated in our external communications.	MET
	Maintain, internally communicate and use our Crisis Comms Protocol in situations pertinent to race equity.	MET

Our team

OBJECTIVE	GOAL	STATUS
We'll ensure our team and governance bodies reflect the communities we serve.	Proactively recruit candidates from all backgrounds, measured by whether 40% of shortlisted applicants from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds.	MET
	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.	MET
	Ensure that all advisory bodies we establish and engage with represent the diversity of the communities we serve (30% minority ethnic).	SOME PROGRESS
	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.	MET
We'll assess and build the confidence of staff to discuss race, racism, and how these issues affect our work.	Develop a training plan that considers both our overall mission as well as the specific learning needs of teams. We'll iterate training based on feedback.	MET
	Deliver at least one race equity VLC per quarter.	MET



Our advisory groups

Our work on race equity has been shaped, informed and led by a range of internal and external groups bringing their passion, lived experience and strategic focus. We want to thank them all for their invaluable ongoing input and advice.

Race Equity Associates (REAs)

In 2023 we recruited a pool of consultants who each bring expertise in race equity and how this applies across our different sectors. Our REAs inform and drive race equity within our evaluations and research. They advise on the equity implications of both funding decisions and research designs.

REAs and their specialisms:

- ♦ **Alveena Malik** – Youth Sector
- ♦ **Annmarie Lewis OBE** – Policing and Youth Justice
- ♦ **Antonia Ogundayisi** – Children's Services
- ♦ **Bisi Akintoye** – Research and Evaluation
- ♦ **Christal Kihm** – Research and Evaluation
- ♦ **Fatima Husain** – Research and Evaluation
- ♦ **Prof. Geoff Thompson MBE FRSA DL** – Youth and Positive Activities
- ♦ **Jessica Davies** – Research and Evaluation
- ♦ **Laurelle Brown** – Youth Voice and Focussed Deterrence
- ♦ **Parise Carmichael-Murphy** – Research and Evaluation
- ♦ **Raggi Kotak** – Race Equity Learning and Development
- ♦ **Sabrina Paiwand** – Research and Evaluation
- ♦ **Dr Shivonne Gates** – Research and Evaluation
- ♦ **Dr Shola Apena Rogers** – Research and Evaluation
- ♦ **Thad Douglas** – Research and Evaluation
- ♦ **Victoria Araj** – Research and Evaluation

Race Equity Accountability Group (REAG)

REAG is responsible for ensuring decisions on race equity related work are appropriately made. They work with our pool of Race Equity Associates (REAs) to ensure teams can access and apply specialist input where it adds most value. They also strengthen how progress is communicated across the organisation, ensuring teams have greater visibility of race equity priorities, activity and expectations. This group is made up of YEF leadership team members responsible for a body of work within the organisation and so are well placed to ensure our race equity plans are carried out.

REAG members:

- ♦ **Andrea Ramsay** – Chief Operating Officer
- ♦ **Ciaran Thapar** – Director of External Affairs and Youth Understanding
- ♦ **Daniel Acquah** – Assistant Director of Evaluation
- ♦ **Emma Jenkins** – Director of Change
- ♦ **Jake Grout-Smith** – Assistant Director of Impact, Programmes and Partnerships
- ♦ **LaToya Charles** – Assistant Director, People and Race Equity
- ♦ **Peter Henderson** – Assistant Director of Research

Race Equality Diversity and Inclusion group (REDI)

This group is made up of internal staff to provide a safe space to support the wellbeing of our racialised staff members and to challenge if/when they believe REAG or our leadership team are falling short.

REDI members:

- ♦ **Fardawza Ahmed** – Programme Manager
- ♦ **Jessica Agyeman** – People and Operations Officer
- ♦ **Laks Mann** – Change Lead – Policing
- ♦ **Luba Musa-Eiggie** – Youth Voice and Project Officer
- ♦ **Kerri Newton** – Recruitment Manager
- ♦ **Chantelle Williams** – Senior Digital Marketing Manager
- ♦ **LaToya Charles** – Assistant Director, People and Race Equity
- ♦ **Daniel Acquah** – Assistant Director of Evaluation
- ♦ **Ciaran Thapar** – Director of External Affairs and Youth Understanding

Race Advisory Group (RAG)

Formally set up in 2021, the Advisory Board is made up of staff and leaders of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic led organisations. At regular, structured meetings chaired by our CEO and Assistant Director of People and Race Equity, we consult this group on various topics relating to our race equity work including our Change Strategy and ongoing funding focus.

RAG members:

- ♦ **Ben Lindsay OBE** is the Founder and CEO of Power The Fight, tackling violence affecting young people through community-led approaches and systems change.
- ♦ **Dez Brown** is the Founder and CEO of Spark2Life, a charity working to prevent crime and support young people and adults affected by the criminal justice system.
- ♦ **Kahiye Alim** is a lawyer and community leader with more than 20 years' experience working on access to justice, equality and community development.
- ♦ **Dr Zubaida Haque** is a leading social scientist specialising in race equity, inequality and social justice.

"What has impressed me most about YEF is that race equity is not treated as a separate initiative but is embedded across its research, funding, organisational culture and systems-change. As a member of the Race Advisory Group, I've seen an organisation that welcomes constructive challenge, is transparent about where it still needs to improve, and demonstrates what accountability to race equity principles looks like in practice – setting a strong example for foundations and others working with children and young people."

Dr Zubaida Haque





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.¹

What we've done well

- ♦ By March 2026 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 27%. This included United Borders – our first minority ethnic led organisation to have progressed through feasibility, pilot and now efficacy stages of evaluation.
- ♦ We continued using **multi-site trials (MSTs)** to improve access to our funding for minority ethnic led organisations. MSTs are a form of evaluation 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 grassroots organisations to take part in robust evaluations.

We now have two active MSTs:

1. Street Games' Towards Sport programme (commissioned in 2024/25, 55% of the individual delivery organisations have minority ethnic leadership).
2. England Boxing and Welsh Boxing's Moves Different programme (commissioned into delivery this year – 70% of individual delivery organisations involved in the initial stage of the evaluation have minority ethnic leadership).

Through these two MSTs, our funding and support has gone to 37 minority ethnic led organisations engaging young people in sport this year.

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

- ♦ **Our three-year Race Equity Fund in partnership with The Phoenix Way** concluded this year. Through it, £7.68m of YEF funding was distributed directly to 128 small minority ethnic led organisations to prevent young people becoming involved in violence. With the remainder of the £10m funding, YEF also supported the operations of The Phoenix Way and enabled them to provide capacity development support to these organisations.
- ♦ We have also continued our partnership with our trustee charity, Impetus, who have provided a year of **organisational and programmatic capacity development** support to two of the minority ethnic led organisations in our portfolio.

27% of our funding portfolio are organisations with leaders from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds.

Concluding the Race Equity Fund

In 2023 we partnered with The Phoenix Way to deliver £10million in YEF funding to support Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic led organisations in England and Wales.

The Phoenix Way is a national collaborative partnership to tackle racial inequities in funding. Through our partnership with them we have been able to put our funding into the hands of community leaders who have been working day-in-day-out to prevent young people becoming involved in violence. Organisations like the Manju Shahul-Hameed Foundation for Mental Health (MSHF).

Our funding has enabled The Phoenix Way to test, learn and refine what is required to catalyse long-term change for minority-ethnic led organisations in grant making practices and infrastructure. This includes the involvement of local and youth voice in the grant-making process, flexibility and length of funding, and collaboratively developing applications and follow-up support with organisations.

Alongside the grants, organisations also received funding and support to build their networks (for knowledge, support, solidarity) and capacity (in areas like digital storytelling, leadership, evaluation, strategy, finance). This helped funded organisations to strengthen their collective voice, develop peer learning and strengthen organisational and programmatic resilience to the intense structural pressures and inequities in funding in which they operate.

The learning accumulated across the three years of YEF's funding has laid strong regional and national foundations for The Phoenix Way that has enabled them to secure substantive future funding that can carry on the work that YEF's funding has started, for years to come.

What we can improve

- ◆ Despite meeting our target to commit at least one MST in 25/26 (England Boxing and Welsh Boxing which was started in the previous year), we have not been able to achieve our ambition of commissioning another *new* MST. Through our Open Call for proposals, we encouraged MST applications and supported a number of applicants through the process and into co-design to see where a new race equity focused MST might be possible. However, despite the best efforts of our teams and the applicants, challenges of matching geographical locations and numbers of delivery organisations with experience of particular interventions meant we were not successful.

GOAL 2

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

What we've done well

- ◆ To date, **35% of children and young people** reached through YEF-funded programmes were from minority ethnic backgrounds – against a target of 30%.
- ◆ The quality of demographic data from our funded projects continues to strengthen with data collected and monitored from both project and evaluation sides. This ensures we have an ongoing picture of the demographic makeup of those engaged (and those who drop out) in control and intervention groups in each trial, helping to identify any equity issues in the programme or evaluation.

We have missing demographic information for 10% of young people, largely from a small handful of historical projects, half of which we expect to be able to rectify with final evaluation data.

- ◆ This year also saw the conclusion of two years of race equity support provided to the five sites in our **Focused Deterrence trial** to help them check for racial disproportionality at every stage of the project delivery and ensure we had the systems in place to understand the experience of minoritised young people at every stage of their projects. These sites have been able to grapple meaningfully with race equity in the delivery, analysis, governance and strategy of their programmes to ensure racial equity for young people from minority ethnic backgrounds in referral to the project, access to support, experience of the programme and outcomes from it. You can read more [here](#).

What we can improve

- ◆ In the next year we aim to take learning from our experience with the longer-term Focused Deterrence support and seek to strengthen race equity support through the delivery phase for projects to improve equitable access, experience, support and outcomes for young people from minority ethnic backgrounds.

"Time remains the biggest constraint [to making meaningful changes to race equity in projects]. Many of the changes sparked by race-equity support will take root only as programmes mature beyond evaluation and funding cycles. Yet the value already lies in the process: the relationships built, the questions asked, the collaboration engaged, and the data strengthened."

Race Equity Associate Laurelle Brown

GOAL 3

We'll ensure that all evaluations address racial disparities at every stage.

What we've done well

- ♦ The majority of our published evaluation reports now include a dedicated section on race, ensuring consistent data collection leads to an accurate breakdown of children from different ethnic backgrounds. Where there were gaps, these have been rectified in follow on reports or resulted in data improvements.
- ♦ Where sample sizes allow, we have strengthened our use of subgroup analysis (looking at subsets of participants based on a shared characteristic) to explore variation in impact. Where this is not yet viable, we have ensured that race equity is meaningfully considered through Implementation and Process Evaluations (IPEs) – a complementary research approach that explains the process of how a programme was delivered and attempts to identify lessons for the future. This has led to more robust and consistent consideration of race equity across evaluations. For example, the Your Choice evaluation included subgroup analysis to explore how outcomes varied by ethnicity, alongside qualitative insights into young people's experiences.
- ♦ Building on last year's progress, we have embedded race equity more systematically into the early stages of funding and evaluation.
 - ♦ Our pool of Race Equity Associates (REAs) advised us on three research and 17 evaluation projects.
 - ♦ Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) were integrated into the scoping and co-design of 10 evaluation projects (77%), helping identify potential disparities and shape more equitable programme and evaluation design from the outset.

What we can improve

- ♦ Many existing evaluations and administrative datasets do not consistently report race or ethnicity in ways that enable robust analysis. Many trials still do not include large enough sample sizes to detect statistically significant differences between ethnic groups; meaning subgroup analysis is often exploratory. More broadly, intersectional analysis – such as how race interacts with gender, socio-economic status or other vulnerabilities – remains underdeveloped, often due to both data limitations and analytical complexity. As a result, we continue to rely heavily on IPEs or narrative discussion rather than quantitative evidence to understand differential experiences. Whilst this is still very valuable, it limits the strength of conclusions about impact. This is a recurring frustration throughout this report, and we aim to tackle it over the coming year. In relation to funding and evaluations, **we will focus on improving guidance, ensuring subgroup analysis is carried out wherever data allows, and exploring ways to design evaluations that better enable robust intersectional analysis.**
- ♦ While these structures are now embedded, challenges remain in ensuring consistent depth and impact across all projects:
 - ♦ While REAs are increasingly involved at the scoping and co-design stages, their **input is not always carried through consistently into later stages of delivery and evaluation.** This year we plan to integrate REA feedback more formally into the reporting process.
 - ♦ The quality of EQIAs can vary, and there is more to do to ensure they are used as a practical tool to shape the ongoing implementation of projects, rather than being a one-off procedural requirement.



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

- ◆ **Over 80% of our reports included insights or content related to race equity.** These sections typically included analysis of racial disparities where data was available, discussion of how findings might affect children from different ethnic backgrounds, and explicit acknowledgement of data limitations. Two main factors contributed to reports not including content related to race: 1) projects being in the early stages, with subsequent iterations intending to include data on racial disparities 2) projects with multiple reports where only the final report would have complete data on race and ethnicity.
- ◆ **Research teams also increasingly worked with REAs when developing projects,** helping ensure consistent language about race and racism and more systematic consideration of racial disparities in research design and interpretation. REAs have challenged us to dig into complex issues such as the need for culturally responsive mental health support that recognises experiences of racism as well as reflecting on how young people's involvement in evaluation design and delivery can promote race equity.

What we can improve

- ◆ **While the majority of reports included discussion of race, the depth and quality of analysis varied depending on the available data.** In several cases, underlying studies did not report outcomes by ethnicity or sample sizes were too small to support meaningful subgroup analysis. For example, the *Problem-Oriented Policing Toolkit* summary could not include a breakdown by ethnicity because the underlying evidence did not report outcomes by ethnicity. Although this limitation was acknowledged in the report, it constrained our ability to draw conclusions about racial disparities.

- ♦ We'll look at strengthening the mechanisms that connect **feedback from our REAs to wider strategic issues**, ensuring we learn broader lessons from their work. For example, two race equity associates have pushed for more consideration of the impact of structural racism on children from minority backgrounds and how adequately this is addressed in some of our projects. This raises a much wider reflection for YEF about how thoroughly this is being addressed across our portfolio of work and what else could be done to address it.
- ♦ Some important programme **evaluations that could have generated relevant insights** – including evaluations relating to deferred prosecution and stop and search – **were delayed or dropped**. The decision to delay or drop was made once we assessed and concluded we couldn't generate the quality of evidence we'd need within our available resources to make a meaningful contribution to knowledge of what works. This reduced the number of opportunities to generate new evidence on approaches that may exacerbate or reduce racial disproportionality.

GOAL 2

We'll ensure our data research produces findings on race.

We use data to explore the nature and drivers of violence. This includes drawing on existing data and carrying out new research.

What we've done well

- ♦ **89% of commissioned secondary data analysis (SDA) projects were designed to produce subgroup findings on race, exceeding our organisational target of 75%.** Several of these projects focus directly on areas where racial disproportionality is a major concern, including work examining patterns in stop and search.
- ♦ *The Children, Violence and Vulnerability (CVV) survey* incorporated race equity considerations in its design. REAs and the Youth Advisory Board were involved in shaping the survey questions, and we worked with technical partners to ensure the survey would be statistically powered to produce subgroup analysis by ethnicity.

Together, these developments mean we are building a stronger evidence base to understand how violence affects children from different ethnic backgrounds and how interventions may influence racial disproportionality.

What we can improve

- ♦ Our previously mentioned challenges in **ensuring sufficiently large and representative samples for subgroup analysis affected our data research too**. In the CVV survey, for example, additional recruitment was required to strengthen representation across racial and socioeconomic groups. Despite these efforts, recruitment challenges — particularly among poorer Black communities — limited the extent to which the survey can confidently analyse differences by ethnicity.

Over the coming year we will continue to prioritise commissioning studies that are statistically powered to examine racial disparities and ensure that research partners collect and report ethnicity data consistently.

GOAL 3

We'll ensure our guidance is informed by and speaks on race.

Our Practice Guidance sets out what operational leaders can do to keep children safe from violence. Our Systems Guidance sets out what system leaders should do to improve structural approaches.

What we've done well

- ♦ **Guidance reports increasingly include explicit discussion of racial disparities** and how practitioners can respond. For example, where evidence suggests certain policies or practices may contribute to racial disproportionality and encourage leaders to monitor outcomes by ethnicity.
- ♦ **REAs were involved earlier in the development process for the two Guidance Reports published this year**, helping teams consider how racial disproportionality might arise in the systems and practices the guidance addresses. This earlier engagement helped shape both the framing of the reports and the recommendations for practice.

What we can improve

- ♦ A repeating challenge is that **the evidence base on how to address racial disproportionality is weak**. Our guidance reports often have to make 'best bets' based on a combination of the best available evidence and professional judgement. We are trying to address these gaps elsewhere in our work, but this will take time.
- ♦ Next year we will reflect on whether there are more general lessons from our guidance and work with REAs about tackling racism and racial disproportionality. It might be that there are insights from one sector that are relevant to others, or by pooling evidence from across the sectors we might achieve more confident conclusions in guidance and the advice we provide in our different sectors.

GOAL 4

We'll be front-footed on race when we grow demand for evidence.

What we've done well

- ♦ This year, we made sure **race equity was front and centre across our Virtual Learning Cafés (VLCs)**, not just as a standalone topic, but woven into discussions across every sector we work in.

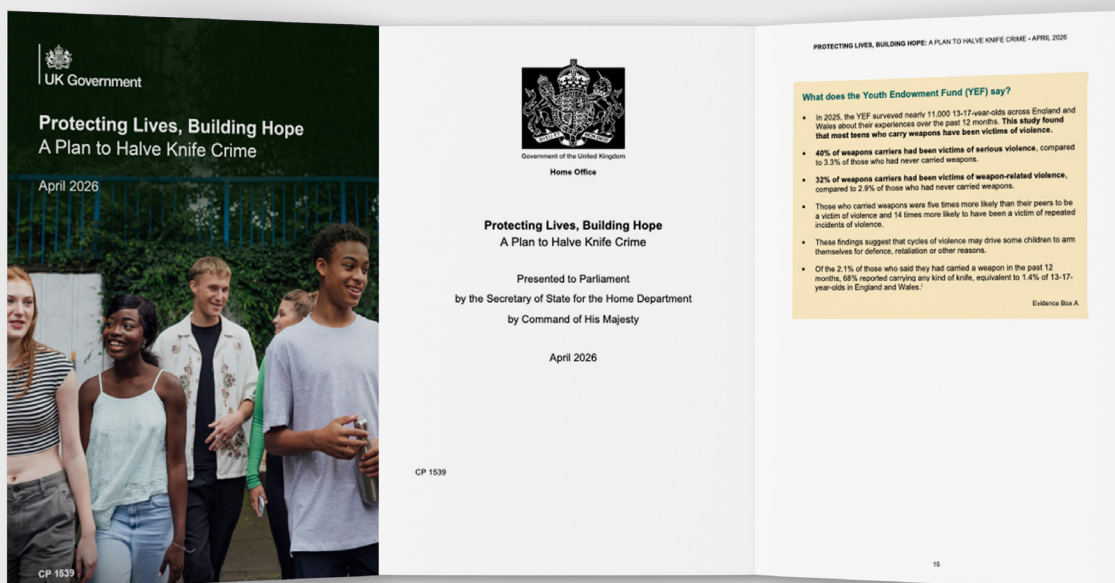
We ran 15 VLCs throughout the year across all sectors – reaching 1,499 leaders – that dug into the causes of racial disproportionality and what practitioners can do to address them. Some focused directly on the most pressing race equity issues within a specific sector. For example, we hosted an event on 'Racial Bias and Best Practice for Black and Minoritised Children', featuring Dr Nicholas Marsh, Sussana Clapcott and Debbie Ariyo OBE. The session explored adultification, overrepresentation in the justice system and culturally informed safeguarding approaches. Others tackled broader topics – from school exclusions to access to mental health support – where speakers questioned or shared learning about race, racism and racial disproportionality in the conversation.

What we can improve

- ♦ Webinars are only part of the picture. The team also presents at a wide range of other external events, which together account for around 60% of Grow Demand activity. **Yet we are less confident that race equity is being addressed as consistently or as deeply in these settings as it is in our VLCs.**

There are times we know it is covered well, for example, when presenting our full sector briefing or supporting practitioners to implement racially equitable approaches to complex interventions like focused deterrence.

Unlike VLCs, we do not monitor the frequency or depth of race equity content in YEF-led external presentations. Better tracking will help us identify where gaps exist and strengthen our approach in future years.



GOAL 5

We'll push for change on racial inequity.

What we've done well

- ◆ Our Racial Disproportionality report that we published last year has continued to play a crucial part in influencing how the Government reduces youth violence. This year, we were pleased to see the Government call upon our research in their recent release *Protecting lives, building hope: a plan to halve knife crime*. In it, they reference our research throughout and cite our recommendation on addressing racial disparities in diversion.
- ◆ Across our guidance, we push for changes that will improve racial equity.
 - ◆ This year, we've supported 60 settings across education, youth justice, policing and local authority partnerships, with a further 82 schools reached through funded partners through our 'Catalyst' programme. In practice, this has meant **helping settings understand disproportionality in their own context**, commissioning data specialists to work directly with sites and supporting settings to embed dedicated data resource to address fragmented and inconsistent data collection.
 - ◆ We've also **helped settings change the policies and practices most likely to improve racial equity**. For example, we've supported nine police forces and 24 youth justice services to develop or improve their use of Outcome 22 and deferred prosecution, a diversionary approach that doesn't require a child to admit guilt. This matters because Asian, Black and Minority Ethnic children are less likely to be diverted and more likely to be charged than their White peers.
 - ◆ On systems change, we've **helped influence new Ofsted guidance on support for suspended children**. This is important because suspension and exclusion are linked to violence and children from Gypsy, Roma, Irish Traveller and Black Caribbean backgrounds are disproportionately affected.

What we can improve

Our practice change programmes don't conclude until 2026–27, so we'll have a clearer picture of their impact and areas for development next year. But we've already identified consistent challenges we're working to address.

- ♦ In some areas – particularly those with less ethnically diverse populations – **building a shared understanding of why race equity matters** locally has been an important first step. Disproportionality can be a significant problem even where the absolute numbers of children from Minority Ethnic communities are smaller.
- ♦ Related to this, **practitioners’ confidence in talking about race and racism varies across areas and settings**. Where needed, we’ve focused on building the language and confidence to have these conversations before moving to action. We’re continuing to wrestle with how to do this better.
- ♦ In many settings, **the data needed to understand disproportionality simply hasn’t existed or hasn’t been used effectively**. We’ve had to help build that picture first so that areas can ask the right questions, do the right analysis and identify the right actions. We’re investing in specialist support to address this and hope to see the impact of that work reflected in next year’s report.

“Catalyst schools come together to share insights, explore emerging research, and discuss common challenges. These sessions also focus on addressing racial and social inequality, ensuring that change benefits every pupil. Early feedback has been positive. Schools are already identifying key priorities and building strategies to create safer environments. This collaborative approach is laying the foundation for meaningful, long-term impact across Sheffield.”

Sai Patel Project Lead and Learn Sheffield Improvement Partner





Our leadership

How we’ve done:

GOAL 1

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

What we’ve done well

- ◆ We have continued to strengthen our internal governance structures this year to ensure they remain effective in driving progress against our race equity goals.
- ◆ Accountability has been embedded at both organisational and individual levels. Our organisation-wide race equity goals are incorporated into annual planning, and all colleagues have individual race equity goals linked to these priorities, helping ensure responsibility for progress is shared across the organisation rather than sitting with a small number of individuals.
- ◆ Our Race Equity Accountability Group (REAG) continue to play a central role, providing oversight, coordination and accountability across the organisation alongside the Directors Team. Our Race Equity Associates (REAs) have contributed to race equity work across the organisation, highlighted earlier in this report.
- ◆ Our annual **Race Equity Survey** provides insight into how our goals, actions and commitments are understood and experienced across the organisation.

QUESTION	SCORE	
	2024	2025
I am aware of the race equity goals and what is expected to be delivered at YEF.	8.27	8.4
I understand how I contribute to the race equity goals through my own role at YEF.	8.56	8.7
I am satisfied with the work the leadership team is doing in relation to race equity.	8.23	8.4

QUESTION	SCORE	
	2024	2025
I am comfortable talking about race equity at work.	7.1	8.15
YEF lives up to its values when working with partners.	8.02	8.2
If I witnessed and reported a race-related incident at YEF, I am confident that appropriate action would be taken.	9	9.1
I believe I am treated equally at YEF, irrespective of my ethnicity or race.	9.26	9.1

- ♦ The results suggest a strong level of clarity and alignment across the organisation. Colleagues report a clear understanding of YEF's race equity goals and how their role contributes to them, indicating that earlier work to embed and cascade these priorities has been sustained.
- ♦ The findings also point to high levels of psychological safety, particularly among minority ethnic colleagues. Scores relating to equitable treatment, comfort discussing race equity, and confidence in raising concerns suggest that colleagues feel able to engage openly and constructively on issues relating to race.
- ♦ Overall, the findings indicate that the foundations for race equity at YEF are strong. Leadership accountability, clarity of purpose, and a supportive culture are enabling continued progress, with race equity increasingly embedded as part of how the organisation operates day-to-day.

Score 9.1

"I believe I am treated equally at YEF, irrespective of my ethnicity or race."

Score 9.1

"If I witnessed and reported a race-related incident at YEF, I am confident that appropriate action would be taken."

What we can improve

- ♦ Participation in our Race Equity Survey reduced this year, from 76% in 2024 to 47% in 2025. While the survey continues to provide valuable insight, the lower response rate means we should be cautious about assuming the findings fully reflect the experiences of all colleagues.

Several factors may have contributed to the reduction, including survey fatigue and a significant number of colleagues joining YEF shortly before the survey was issued. To improve participation and ensure race equity feedback is captured more consistently, we will incorporate race equity questions into our October staff survey going forward.

- ♦ Feedback from our Race Equity Survey suggests that colleagues are confident discussing race equity and understand organisational goals, but there is **less clarity on how this is reflected in day-to-day decision-making and delivery.**

This is indicated in two of the lowest-scoring areas:

- ◆ Perceptions of whether YEF's funding is accessible to organisations led by, and working for, people from minority ethnic backgrounds – 7.3
- ◆ Views on whether the organisation effectively translates learning into activities that drive meaningful change to reduce racial disproportionality – 7.5

While these scores reflect team perceptions rather than direct measures of impact, they highlight an important gap between intent, action and visibility.

In response, we will use our Race Equity Accountability Group (REAG) to explore these areas in more depth, both to increase clarity and shared understanding of current approaches, and to identify where further improvements can be made.

- ◆ REAG has strengthened coordination and execution across the organisation, but the **REAG should also play a central role in developing and bringing forward informed recommendations** to the Directors Team, particularly where there is no established organisational position. In practice, recommendations are more often developed within individual teams or led by topic-specific leads, rather than through REAG as a collective forum. We will strengthen this aspect of REAG's role, including creating clearer pathways for issues to be escalated, discussed collectively, and shaped into coherent recommendations for Directors.

GOAL 2

We'll communicate transparently and openly about race and our race equity work.

What we've done well

- ◆ A key aim for this year has been to think bigger, more strategically and more creatively in how we communicate YEF's commitment to race equity through press and digital channels. We prioritised producing **key pieces of media communications relating to evidence about racial disproportionality** and violence affecting young people, such as the Secondary Data Analysis report into rates of diversion in London.
- ◆ We reviewed our organisational Guide to Race and Ethnicity Terminology, which involved multiple consultations across YEF, as well as with REDI and REAG. This led to **important developments in the nuance of recommended language**, such as the use of the word 'minoritised' as an alternative to minority ethnic when describing a group of (young) people who are being demonstrably harmed or discriminated against.
- ◆ We planned and executed the launch of the Safe podcast, whose first season (10 x episodes) saw **70% of episodes address race, racism or racial disproportionality** with 60% of guests from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds and 30% episodes in which discussions about race were central to the theme (including with respected sector leaders like Justin Finlayson and Ben Lindsay).
- ◆ The **Crisis Comms Protocol** exists to make a decision about if and when we should comment externally as an organisation about a crisis taking place in British society. This was borne out of the race riots that followed the Southport attack in the summer of 2024. The Comms team and Directors continue to use and monitor this protocol.

What we can improve

- ♦ We would like to ensure that we are planning and producing engaging, solutions-focused communications about YEF work related to race equity at least every quarter, even outside of report publication. Q2 and Q3 did not contain a race equity-themed communications moment like this (whereas Q1 had the Secondary Data Analysis (SDA) on diversion and Q4 had the Safe podcast). We will ensure going forward that we are **leveraging the more regular flow of sector guidance reports (and CVV in Q3) to draw out race equity-focused messaging.**
- ♦ We are also conscious that our photography stock – and therefore the visual leaning of our external communications generally – is often limited to (non-diverse) images of young people. These images have been used for many different forms of comms over the last year which may narrow public impressions of our work and our youth voice activity. We are therefore **commissioning new photography from across our funded programmes to diversify our image stock.**
- ♦ The Crisis Comms Protocol is essential but arguably outdated. The summer of 2024 was uniquely explosive as a racism-driven crisis of mass societal scale. However, as trends of violence and intolerance against minority groups and inflammatory media discourse in British society continue to play out, the landscape, and therefore the capacity for us as an organisation to provide external comment on events, has changed. **There could be more appropriate ways of tracking and acting on this area.** We plan to review the protocol and its use in FY 26/27.

“The YEF’s commitment to race equity shapes who gets funded, what gets researched, and what guidance reaches government. Through our comms collaboration, the SAFE series with Ciaran Thapar helped me to explain our core values and purpose from a service provider perspective, whilst through the ITV London Tonight piece on racial disproportionality in diversion, the YEF team ensured that the voices of young people were a part of the national conversation.”

Justin Finlayson, CEO, United Borders



Our team

How we've done:

GOAL 1

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

What we've done well

- ◆ We have continued to focus on **ensuring our recruitment processes attract and progress candidates from a broad range of backgrounds**. Across the year, 49% of candidates interviewed were from Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic backgrounds.

Alongside recruitment, we have increased proactive outreach to potential candidates and strengthened capability across hiring managers and panel members through recruitment training and clearer expectations around equitable hiring practices.

These actions have contributed to the proportion of minority ethnic team members increasing from 40% to 46%.

While representation alone is not a measure of inclusion, these results suggest that efforts to broaden candidate pools and strengthen recruitment practices are contributing to a more diverse workforce.

What we can improve

- ◆ Representation at line manager and leadership levels remains an important area of focus. While representation has increased in both groups over the past year, it continues to be lower than across our overall workforce, meaning **there is further progress to make**.
- ◆ Our relatively flat structure and low levels of turnover, while positive for retention, naturally **limit opportunities for progression into senior roles**. As a result, improvements in leadership representation are likely to be gradual.

- ♦ We will continue to focus on equitable development and progression, including through fair access to stretch opportunities, visibility of work and decision-making forums. We will also continue to support line managers in developing and advocating for diverse talent, while maintaining transparency and consistency in progression decisions through clear and well-understood criteria.

54% of our team members are from minority ethnic backgrounds

GOAL 2

We'll develop a training plan that considers both our overall mission as well as the specific learning needs of teams. We'll iterate training based on feedback.

What we've done well

- ♦ We've shifted our race equity learning from primarily organisation-wide sessions to more **targeted, directorate-level training**. This created space for deeper, more honest conversations within teams, allowing colleagues to explore how race equity shows up in their work and build trust.

These training sessions were led by our Race Equity Associate Raggi Kotak and focused on building shared understanding — including exploring systemic, institutional and interpersonal dynamics of racism — and on creating the conditions for meaningful dialogue. Sessions were structured around principles such as curiosity over judgement, accountability, and “stretch not tear”, enabling colleagues to engage with challenging content in a constructive and supported way.

By creating safe spaces for reflection and discussion, these small, facilitated sessions have increased colleagues' confidence in having open and constructive conversations about race. This is reflected in survey feedback, with the statement “I feel like I have the development opportunities and training to achieve my race equity goals” scoring 8.1 (an increase on last year's 7.78).

What we can improve

- ♦ Survey feedback suggests that while colleagues generally understand how they personally contribute to race equity, there is less clarity on how this connects to team priorities and delivery. As a result, our focus next year will be on **helping teams translate race equity learning into collective action**, ensuring it is understood as a shared responsibility and embedded within day-to-day decision-making.

“The specialist race equity training has built real confidence across the team in engaging with race equity meaningfully — both in our work beyond evaluations. Personally, it has helped me reflect on my own diasporic identity and given me reassurance that colleagues are engaging honestly with the complexity of the communities the team comes from. It has also given me the confidence to begin conversations about how we can address the structural barriers related to race equity that persist across our sector, knowing this is being engaged with meaningfully by senior leadership and governance at YEF.”

Robert Sangwa, Programme Manager, YEF



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