

Councillor Victoria Olisa  
Chair, Health and Social Care Scrutiny Commission

Councillor Jasmine Ali Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Adult Care

15 September 2020

Dear Councillor Jasmine Ali,

The 2019/20 Health & Social Care Scrutiny Commission undertook a review into the delivery of mental health services for children & young people, however the impact of the pandemic on Commission time led to a more limited review. The Commission, therefore, resolved to write to you with our initial findings, rather than issue a formal report.

The Commission set out to look at how the council and partners were setting about meeting the ambitious 100% access target, as well as addressing two cross cutting issues: BAME access to mental health services and boys' & men's mental health. These were chosen as the Commission were aware of evidence of unequal access and poorer outcomes for BAME communities and concerns about higher suicide rates amongst men.

Commission heard evidence from officers, NHS colleagues, Healthwatch and Black Thrive, which was set up through community organising in Lambeth to particularly address the systemic causes of mental health, and shift away from a focus solely on treatment of symptoms.

The Commission's initial findings confirmed concerns that young black people are more at risk of poorer mental health but frequently receive worst services.

### **Black young people and mental health: findings**

- **Black and minority ethnic communities are at comparatively higher risk of mental ill health because of the wider socio- economic detriments associated with mental ill health, including deprivation and racism.**

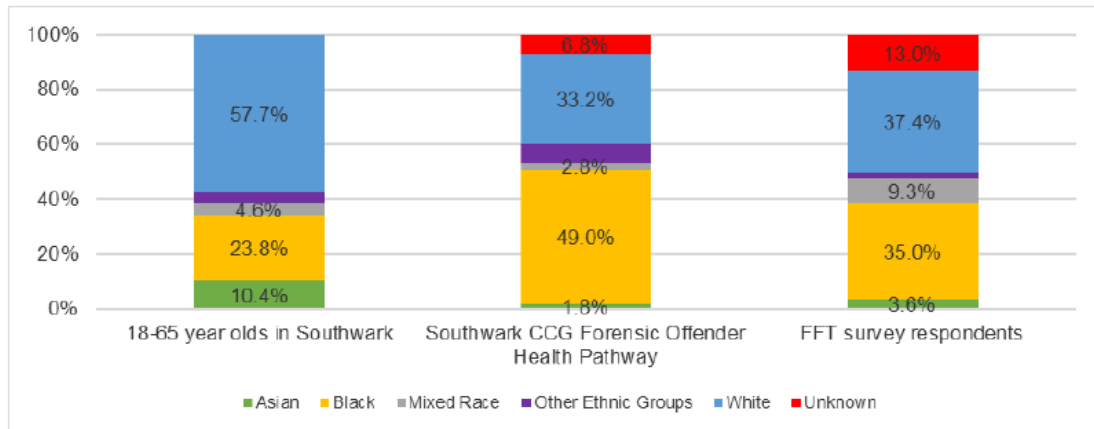
Nationally 1 in 10 children and young people are estimated to have a clinically diagnosed mental health disorder. Almost one in five adults in Southwark are experiencing a common mental disorder, equating to approximately 47,000 individuals. The prevalence of severe mental illness in Southwark is 1.4% (approximately 3,800 patients) and severe mental illness disproportionately affects male, older and black ethnic population groups.

- **Black and minority ethnic communities are more likely to end up in crisis and forensic care.** Nationally black and minority ethnic people are 40 percent more likely to access mental health services via the criminal justice system than white people<sup>1</sup>: The same is true locally. The chart below shows the ethnicity profile of Southwark NHS Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) service users in forensic offender mental health services (between April 2018 and March 2019) compared to the

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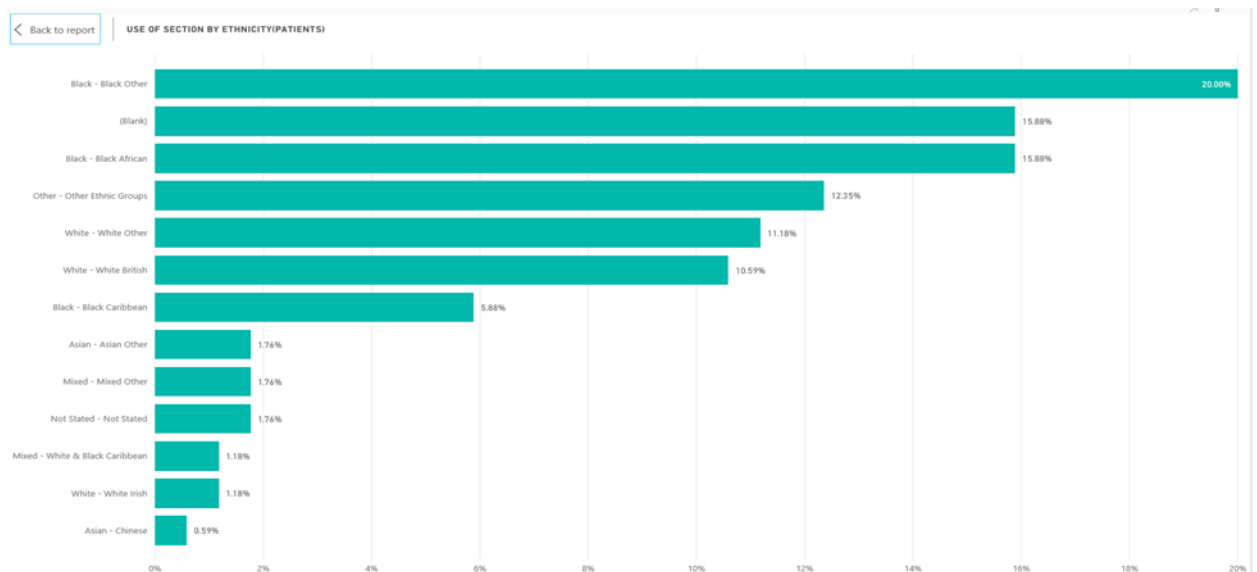
<sup>1</sup> Racial disparities in mental health: Literature and evidence review , Race Equality Foundation 2019

ethnicity profile of 18-65 year olds in Southwark and the ethnicity of Friend and Family Test respondents to these services (between April 2016 and March 2019). This shows the disproportionate proportion of black people using these services:



Locally black people are also disproportionately sectioned:

Briefing to the Commission, 21 January 2020, appendix A,



- **Nationally black and minority ethnic people are less likely to be referred to talking therapies and more likely to be medicated for ill mental health<sup>2</sup>.** Locally there is an under representation of the BAME population in SLam CAMHS provision. This group makes up 59% of Southwark's population, but only 42.4% of patients (under the age of 18)<sup>3</sup>.
- **National and local evidence indicates that black and minority ethnic people want the impact of racism and wider inequalities on their mental health to be addressed in the treatment for their mental illness and in preventative work.** National research suggests that matching the cultural, linguistic religious and/or racial identity between service users and practitioners can improve

<sup>2</sup> Racial disparities in mental health: Literature and evidence review , Race Equality Foundation 2019

<sup>3</sup> Briefing note to the Commission 21 January 2020.

treatment duration and outcomes<sup>4</sup>. Black Thrive, working with a similar community in Lambeth, identified institutional racism as one of the reasons that black people have poorer outcomes from services. The local friends and family data provided on SLaM CAMHS service is more positive with that black people frequently more satisfied with service, although this data shows lower satisfaction from other 'other ethnic' groups.

Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic access to mental health services indicative review, provided to the Commission September 2020, paragraph 4.5

How likely are you to recommend Southwark Assessment and Liaison and Integrated Psychological Therapy services to friends and family if they needed similar care or treatment?						
Ethnicity	Number of responses in 16/17	Positive responses in 16/17	Number of responses in 17/18	Positive responses in 17/18	No. of responses in 18/19	Positive responses in 18/19
Asian	10	90.0%	20	90.0%	12	91.7%
Black	33	93.9%	46	91.3%	35	94.3%
Mixed Race	24	95.8%	29	93.1%	13	92.3%
Other ethnic group	Under 10	100.0%	Under 10	100.0%	Under 10	66.7%
White	177	94.4%	184	88.6%	146	85.6%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>93.1%</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>88.1%</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>88.1%</b>

How likely are you to recommend Southwark CAMHS community services to friends and family if they needed similar care or treatment?						
Ethnicity	Number of responses in 16/17	Positive responses in 16/17	Number of responses in 17/18	Positive responses in 17/18	No. of responses in 18/19	Positive responses in 18/19
Asian	18	83.3%	Under 10	100.0%	Under 10	80.0%
Black	81	92.6%	65	87.7%	37	89.2%
Mixed Race	32	93.8%	19	89.5%	23	95.7%
Other ethnic group	Under 10	75.0%	Under 10	71.4%	Under 10	50.0%
White	149	87.9%	129	90.7%	97	84.5%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>86.1%</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>89.7%</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>85.1%</b>

- **Nationally people from African Caribbean communities are three times more likely to be diagnosed and admitted to hospital for schizophrenia than any other group.** Locally black people are disproportionately diagnosed with schizophrenia and psychosis, though the picture is complex<sup>5</sup>. Black Thrive, and national research, has raised concerns that racism impacts on the over diagnosis of psychosis and schizophrenia, which can negatively impact on treatment trajectory<sup>6</sup>.
- **Educational achievement is a protective factor however Black Thrive told us young black people are more likely to experience institutional racism in school** with children less likely to receive a

<sup>4</sup> Racial disparities in mental health: Literature and evidence review , Race Equality Foundation 2019

<sup>5</sup> See Briefing to the Commission, 21 January 2020, appendix A, slide 10, Top Diagnosis by Ethnicity.

<sup>6</sup> <https://diversityhealthcare.imedpub.com/schizophrenia-and-psychosis-the-magical-and-troubling-disappearance-of-race-from-the-debate.php?aid=3730>

positive response to distress and more likely to experience punitive behaviour managing techniques such a detention and exclusion.

## Recommendations

The final meeting of the Commission received a helpful and extensively researched paper from council officers and the CCG, conducting an indicative review of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic access to mental health services. The Commission's first two recommendations reflect this report's conclusions, which recommended mandating the collection of comprehensive ethnicity data and to improve access, experiences and outcomes of NHS, local government and integrated care systems commissioned services by BAME communities.

The Commissions first two recommendations are:

- 1 Take action on better collation of data on sex and different black and minority ethnic groups' usage of mental health services, including CAMHS, the work that Southwark will fund in schools and The NEST open access service, to enable specific research and actions to address barriers to accessing services by the BAME community and ensure equitable access by sex and gender.**
- 2 Provide better access to talking therapies according to local need. Conduct engagement with black and minority ethnic communities to ensure the therapies are culturally appropriate and geographically accessible.**

The third recommendation is informed by the work of Black Thrive, which works strategically with partners to co-design services with the BAME community to tackle the causes of mental distress, including racism and the wider determinants of mental health.

The Commission's third and last recommendation is:

- 3 Adopt a Race Equality Framework in the delivery of Southwark 100 % universal reach target.**

The Commission would like to take this opportunity to thank you, council officers and the CCG for their input into the review.

We hope that the above summary of the reviews findings and our recommendations are informative and will be helpful in shaping the delivery of Southwark's programme to provide appropriate and timely support to a 100% of Southwark's children and young people in need of Mental Health provision.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Victoria Olisa

Chair, Health and Social Care Scrutiny Commission

Cc

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