

BAME communities in the UK face a number of structural and systematic disadvantages, including socio-economic deprivation, poor housing conditions and barriers to accessing services. These disadvantages result a higher prevalence of a number of long-term conditions and poorer health outcomes for ethnic minority populations. The economic, social and health inequalities have contributed to an increased risk of COVID-19 related death in these communities, which has highlighted the need to tackle these issues to improve health of BAME populations and reduce inequalities.

The Southwark Stands Together survey results suggest that 70% of those from an ethnic minority in Southwark have experienced racial discrimination in the last 12 months¹. There is strong evidence to show that discrimination is associated with mental health issues such as depression, anxiety. It is also associated with poorer physical health, research shows that people who report discrimination experiences are more likely to have the outcomes and risk factors of Cardiovascular Disease².

The SST engagement has highlighted the inequalities that Southwark BAME communities face in the areas of communities, culture, employment, education, health and the criminal justice system. All of these areas have impacts on health and wellbeing.

- **Communities:** Evidence shows that people from BAME communities in the UK are more likely to suffer from social isolation which is associated with poorer mental health³.
- **Culture:** Arts and culture have a positive impact on health and wellbeing but national evidence suggests that those from an ethnic minority are less likely to have access to arts growing up and that these industries do not represent the diversity of the UK population⁴.
- **Employment:** BAME communities are more likely to be in low-paid or insecure employment⁵. Nationally, employees in low income households are more likely to have lost work compared to high income households. There is a strong association between income and health; in the UK the poorest 40% are twice as likely to report poor health than the richest 20%⁶.
- **Education:** Marginalisation in education was a frequent theme in SST and nationally those from a BAME background are more likely to be excluded than their white counterparts. Exclusion is a risk factor for a number of major health issues including poor mental health⁷ and youth violence⁸.
- **Health:** COVID-19 has exposed and exacerbated longstanding inequalities affecting BAME groups which have arisen as a result of economic, health and social disadvantage. Other factors which have impacted health inequalities include lack of accessible and effective

¹ Southwark Stands Together- Preliminary Quantitative Results. Southwark Council: London. 2020.

² Williams, DR, Lawrence, JA, Davis, BA, Vu, C. Understanding how discrimination can affect health. Health Serv Res. 2019; 54: 1374–1388. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6773.13222>

³ GLA, Survey for Londoners, 2019

⁴ The Arts Council, Every child: equality and diversity in arts and culture with, by and for children and young people, 2016

⁵ TUC, insecure work and ethnicity, 2017

⁶ <https://www.health.org.uk/news-and-comment/news/low-income-workers-at-greater-risk-of-unemployment-and-mounting-illhealth>

⁷ <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/alspac/news/2020/mental-health-school.html#:~:text=Children%20in%20the%20current%20study,the%20mental%20health%20of%20children>.

⁸ The Southwark public health approach to serious youth violence prevention. Southwark's JSNA. Southwark Council: London. 2019.

healthcare and health promotion programmes and racism and stigma leading to stress and impacting health-seeking behaviours⁹.

- **Criminal Justice System:** Nationally, Black people are stopped-and-searched at a rate four times higher than the population average¹⁰ and BAME individuals are over-represented in youth and adult criminal justice. There is evidence to suggest that police contact is associated with higher risk of trauma, anxiety¹¹ and that criminal justice discrimination may contribute to the increased prevalence of Mental Health issues in BAME communities¹².

The pledges of the Southwark Stands Together programme to work to address tackle discrimination racial inequalities and the recommendations in each work stream to achieve this are anticipated to have a positive impact on the mental and physical health of Southwark's BAME population.

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⁹ Public Health England, 2020. Beyond the data: Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on BAME groups

¹⁰ <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/crime-justice-and-the-law/policing/stop-and-search/latest>

¹¹ Geller A, Fagan J, Tyler T, Link BG. Aggressive policing and the mental health of young urban men. Am J Public Health. 2014

¹² <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/a-to-z/b/black-asian-and-minority-ethnic-bame-communities>