

## Info about inequalities for ethnically diverse communities

- **Gypsy and travellers.**

We saw a large increase in self-referrals from Gypsy and Travellers during the initial stages of COVID lockdown. Primary issues were the lack of suitable mobile pitches and access to clean drinking water. Temporary pitches had been set aside, but initially the information was not widely known.

Little or no thought had been given regarding access to fresh water. Families that were used to fetching water from public places found that they were either closed or they faced increasing levels of hostility and racist abuse from local people, preventing them from accessing water.

We eventually got most of the issues dealt with, but this was time consuming and difficult, particularly in Devon as it has several layers of governance, who e.g. parish, district and county councils, who all felt it was the others responsibility.

Another key issue for traveling families was the difficulty of registering with a local GP. Many people find it difficult as surgeries are reluctant to take them on, but during COVID and lockdown this is more difficult; people are unable to go into the doctor's surgery and complete the necessary paperwork. In addition to this not everyone has access to the internet and IT to access information online. There are also high levels of literacy in gypsy and travelling families as it is hard for them to access education, which exacerbates the difficulties in access online information.

- **Health inequalities**

There has been a lot of research that highlights the health inequalities for people from Black, Asian and ethnically diverse backgrounds.

I have included a couple of links about health in equalities:

<https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/press/press-releases/tackling-racial-inequalities-health-care>

<https://nutrition-rocks.co.uk/nutrition-blog/2020/6/10/health-inequalities-in-the-bame-population#:~:text=In%20the%20UK%2C%20evidence%20shows%20there%20are%20health,diversity%20in%20the%20population%20is%20on%20the%20rise.>

One of the key factors we have identified for the people we are working with is the difficulty in accessing GP and hospital appointments during COVID because of the language barrier. In the past many of our beneficiaries would come into the office to get help in making an appointment, have a friend who spoke English help them or going directly into the surgery. The same goes for the beneficiaries of our partner agencies in the City. People have not had access to these support networks during COVID, which means many people are simply not having the opportunity to get medical and mental health support.

Even people who are able to speak to the receptionist may not be able to get an appointment with the GP because they are unable to communicate their illness effectively. During COVID 5 of our beneficiaries attempted to take their own lives, and sadly, 2 were

successful, highlighting the additional difficulties facing Black, Asian and Ethnically Diverse people.

For those that do manage to get an appointment with a GP there are still major difficulties as over the telephone interpretation is not always successful.

In addition to all of these barriers, the majority of the people that access of services live areas that are in the top 1% of multiple deprivation in the country and are therefore living in poverty and poor housing and of course there is a correlation between poverty and poor physical health and mental health.

- **Racism**

PDREC saw an increase of 50% in referrals for people experiencing racism and discrimination during lockdown. The majority of the referrals related to racism at a neighbourhood level, where people were spending more time at home. The frustration of lockdown and the racist rhetoric from politicians, further polarised communities that were fragmented after Brexit. This resulted racist abuse and attacks on people who looked different, the other; laying the blame for the current situation on people from perceived different ethnicities for bring the disease into the country and spreading it around.

In correlation to this we have seen an increase in the number of people contacting us and asking for support around mental health issues. Although there was online support for people during lockdown the was inaccessible for many of our clients for the reasons stated above.

Many of the people we spoke to said they felt let down by the police because Interviews were taken over the phone, which was again problematic and left people with the feeling that no one cared.

- **Domestic Abuse**

We saw an increase in domestic abuse referrals from agencies during in lockdown, but less self-referrals because people were unable to access our services, or other services who generally refer their cases to us.

One of the themes that we came across during COVID was the perception by the victim, who are primarily women, that when the police had spoken to their husband, who generally had a greater understanding of the language, about the incident the police tended to believe the husbands version of the events and no further action was taken.

When this was raised with the police the response was that the women involved had said that they were ok and did want to take things further. This raised concerns about the training needs about domestic abuse, but also the additional needs for women from Black, Asian and Ethnically diverse backgrounds who do not know their rights, are told they will be deported if they report, or come from countries where domestic abuse is not recognised.

There is a lack of specialist domestic abuse for women from Black, Asian and Ethnically diverse backgrounds people, which resulted in health and mental health issues for the victim and their children.

There is also a lack of funding for people with no recourse to public funds, it is difficult to get local authorities to financial support families with these restrictions, but this has been extremely difficult during COVID when services are not open and getting access to the right person by phone.

These additional barriers have had a significant effect on one woman who has not seen her children for 6 months because of the delay in court action and services.

- **Stop and search**

The figures given by Devon and Cornwall Police regarding the disparity in stop and search reflect the feedback we receive from the ethnically diverse people we work with, both directly and through other organisations. This is the first time that the police have acknowledge this disparity have drilled down deeper into the statistics.

Our service users tell us that they worry every time their children, particularly sons, go out as they are often stop and searched, but with for no reason, other than they meet a specific racial profile. I attended on scrutiny panel around stop and search for young people and became clear that their white friends were not targeted in the same way. It also highlighted the perceptions of the public who contacted the police because they saw a Black person waiting on the street or talking to others and immediately assumed that he was dealing drugs.

Our beneficiaries tell us that have to tells their children how to behave if they are stopped and searched to avoid getting arrested.

Please see the information from the police stats re: the disparity people for people who of Black, Asian and Ethnically Diverse heritage.

- If you are Black, you are 3 times more likely to be a victim of crime than a White person
  - If you are Black, you are 12 times more likely to be stopped and searched than if you are a White person
  - If you are Black, you are 9.5 times more likely to be the subject of use of force
  - Covid Fixed Penalties: (FPNs)
  - We issued 900, 11 % ethnicity unknown, 22% people who didn't live in D & C,
  - If you are BAME you are 2.8 times more likely to receive a fixed penalty notice
  - If you live outside D & C and are BAME nearly 7 times more likely to receive a FPN.
  - If you are Black, you are 6 times more likely to be designated as a suspect
  - If you are Black, you are half as likely to receive a caution.
- We need better data. But negative and concerning picture.

I have also attached the article from the newspaper interview that I did in respect of these stats.

This also fits in with the figures that black people are more likely to be more violently arrested.

