

Black Children and Young People

The Purpose

The Black Children and Young Peoples manifesto aims to tackle the deeply entrenched systemic inequalities and widespread challenges faced by Black children and young people in Britain. This manifesto is the result of a comprehensive and inclusive process, involving direct input from the children and young people through focus group discussions and surveys. These discussions were very vital in capturing the authentic voices, experiences, and aspirations of Black children and young people, ensuring that the manifesto accurately reflects their needs and perspectives.

In the words of Martin Luther King Jr.:

"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin, but by the content of their character."

The Vision

- Our vision is to build a Britain where Black children and young people are celebrated, valued, and provided with the resources and opportunities to realise their full potential.
- We envision a society where they thrive in education, enjoy robust physical and mental health, experience safety and justice, and have abundant economic opportunities.
- This future empowers Black Children and young people to become leaders and change-makers, contributing positively to their communities and the broader society.

Core Values and Principles

- **Equity and Inclusion:** Commitment to fair treatment and full inclusion in all aspects of society for all regardless of background and status.
- **Empowerment:** Empowering young people to reach their full potential.
- **Community and Solidarity:** Building strong, supportive communities.

Background

- The historical context of Black Britain is marked by a long struggle against systemic racism and inequality.
- Despite significant contributions to British society, Black communities have faced persistent challenges in achieving equal opportunities.
- Through the process of "adultification" Black children are overpoliced and treated more harshly.

Key Issues

- Today, Black children and young people in Britain continue to face disparities in education, health, economic opportunities, environment, policing and criminal justice system.
- These challenges are compounded by a lack of representation and systemic biases that hinder their progress. According to Barnardo's, systemic racism in major institutions discriminates against Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) children, affecting their education, health, and justice outcomes (Barnardo's, 2023).
- The "YMCA Young and Black" report highlights that 95% of young Black people in the UK have witnessed racist language at school, highlighting the prevalence of racial discrimination in educational settings (World Economic Forum, 2023).

RECOMMENDATIONS

1

Co-produce nationally managed interventions that break the intergenerational cycle of poorer physical and mental health and well-being outcomes.

2

Address disparities that prevent access to achieving equitable outcomes across all levels of education.

3

Create new Board roles and ensure Black young people are represented within decision making in health, education and policing boards.

4

Appoint a Crime and Justice Minister to build trust with communities and create a place of safety and equitable justice.

5

Develop strategies and initiatives that create a pipeline of proportional economic opportunities to enable better access and fair treatment in employment.

6

Provide education and training across sectors and reduce the risk of under reporting cyber bullying in Black communities due to stereotyping and discrimination.

7

Establish, invest and sustain accessible community-based children and young adult activities in safe spaces.

8

Develop community-based programmes to educate Black children and young people about the importance of their involvement in research and clinical trials.

Health and Wellbeing

Co-produce nationally managed interventions that break the intergenerational cycle of poorer physical and mental health and well-being outcomes

- Improve mental and physical health outcomes for Black Children and Young People.
- Enhance access to culturally competent healthcare services that understand and address the specific needs of Black children and young people.
- Provide forums where voices of children and young peoples experiences can be heard to shape health and wellbeing activities especially around prevention.
- Promote mental health awareness and provide support services to tackle issues like anxiety, depression, and trauma.

Education & Equity in Attainment

Address disparities in preventing access to achieving equitable outcomes across all levels of education

- In the 1960s and 70s Black children were labelled as "educationally subnormal" and were sent to special schools. This is now more covert placing Black children in lower ability classes. This continues to create an intergenerational cycle of disadvantage from an economic, education, social, physical and mental perspective.
- Address disparities in access, achievement, and representation in education.
- Ensure inclusive curricula that reflect the diverse histories and contributions of Black communities.
- Increase the representation of Black educators and role models in schools.
- Combating racism and discrimination within educational institutions.

Health, Education and Policing Board

Create new Board roles and ensure Black young people are represented within decision making in health, education and policing boards

- Develop a forum where young voices can be heard acted upon and commissioned to influence health, education and policing.
- Ensure that there is representation across the intersections of young people LGBT, disabilities etc.
- Use the advisory group to feed directly into the boards of these agencies creating policies and solutions.

Safety and Equitable Justice

Appoint a Crime and Justice Minister to build trust with communities and create a place of safety and equitable justice

- Ensure fair treatment within the justice system and address racial disparities in policing and sentencing.
- Promote community safety by improving relationships between Black communities and law enforcement.
- Address the over-representation of Black youth in the criminal justice system and ensure access to rehabilitative services.
- Create safe and supportive environments in schools to combat bullying and discrimination, including cyberbullying.

Economic Opportunities

Develop strategies and initiatives that create a pipeline of proportional economic opportunities to enable better access and fair treatment in employment

- Promote employment, entrepreneurship, and economic empowerment through targeted programs and initiatives.
- Provide financial literacy, education and resources to help Black young people navigate economic challenges.
- Encourage the development of skills and talents through vocational training and mentorship programs.

Safety & Cyberbullying

Provide education and training across sectors of the risk of under reporting cyber bullying in Black communities due to stereotyping and discrimination

- Develop and enforce policies to protect Black children and young people from online harassment and abuse.
- Provide resources and support for those affected by cyberbullying.
- Educate young people on safe internet practices and how to report cyberbullying incidents effectively.

Race and Discrimination

Provide anti-racism policies in schools, colleges and workplaces and create monitoring and management of anti-racist action into practices

- Implement robust anti-racism policies in schools and workplaces.
- Create awareness campaigns to educate about the impacts of racism and promote inclusive practices.
- Establish support systems for victims of racism and discrimination, ensuring they have access to justice and reparative measures.

Community based investment

Establish, invest and sustain accessible community - based youth activities in safe spaces

- Develop and provide within community sector organisations a proper funded resource to support advocacy for children and young people.
- Create awareness campaigns to educate about the impacts of racism and promote inclusive practices.
- Establish support systems for victims of racism and discrimination, ensuring they have access to justice and reparative measures.

CALL TO ACTION

Invitation to Join

We invite every individual, organisation, and institution to join us in this critical mission to transform the lives of Black children and young people in Britain. This manifesto is not merely a document; it is a call to collective action, requiring the commitment and cooperation of all sectors of society. Here's how you can contribute:

INDIVIDUALS

Advocate: Speak up about the issues facing Black youth in your communities. Use your voice to raise awareness and drive change.

Mentor: Volunteer your time and expertise to mentor Black children and young people, providing guidance, support, and opportunities for growth.

Support: Participate in local initiatives and support programs that aim to improve the lives of Black youth. Your involvement can make a significant difference.

ORGANISATIONS

Collaborate: Partner with us to develop and implement programs that address the specific needs of Black children and young people. Whether you are a business, non-profit, or educational institution, your collaboration is vital.

Invest: Allocate resources, both financial and in-kind, to support the initiatives outlined in this manifesto. Investments in education, healthcare, and economic opportunities are investments in the future of Black Britain.

Innovate: Participate in local initiatives and support programs that aim to improve the lives of Black youth. Your involvement can make a significant difference.

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Legislate: Enact policies that address educational disparities, health inequities, and systemic racism in the justice system. Ensure these policies are enforced and that their impact is regularly evaluated.

Fund: Provide adequate funding for programs and services that support Black children and young people. Ensure that resources are equitably distributed to areas of greatest need.

Engage: Work with communities to understand their needs and co-create solutions. Engage Black youth in decision-making processes to ensure their voices are heard and respected.

Celebrate: Recognise and invest in a National Day for Children and Young People commencing in 2025

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Educate: Incorporate inclusive curricula that reflect the histories and contributions of Black communities. Train educators to recognise and combat biases in the classroom.

Support: Create supportive environments where Black students feel safe and valued. Provide access to mental health services and extracurricular opportunities that foster personal and academic growth.

Inspire: Highlight the achievements of Black role models and create pathways for Black students to pursue a wide range of careers. Host career days and mentorship programs that connect students with professionals from diverse backgrounds.

HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

Involve: Do not do for us but do with us, provide opportunities to involve us in shaping health and wellbeing services especially around our mental health.

Care: Offer culturally competent healthcare services that address the unique needs of Black children and young people. Ensure that mental health services are accessible and responsive to their experiences.

Research: Conduct research to understand the health disparities affecting Black youth and develop targeted interventions to address these issues.

Innovate: Advocate for policies and practices that promote health equity and dismantle systemic barriers to care.

CONCLUSION

Our unwavering commitment to building a brighter, more inclusive future for Black children and young people is at the heart of this manifesto.

It calls for the mobilisation of resources, the fostering of partnerships, and the implementation of strategic actions that will not only address current disparities but also ensure that future generations inherit a society that values and supports their contributions.

Through collective effort and sustained advocacy, we aim to empower Black youth to thrive, lead, and positively impact their communities and the broader society.

This manifesto is more than a document; it is a movement towards a just and equitable Britain where every young person has the opportunity to realise their full potential.

This manifesto aspires to make that dream a reality for all Black children and young people in Britain.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the Black children and young people's collective for the time they gave to us to hear their views and perspectives across a number of different workshops. This manifesto brought together several children and young people from our grassroots communities, across different age groups, religious affiliations, gender assignments, socio-economic backgrounds and across professions.

CAHN is looking forward to continuing our work with you over the coming months and years and we look forward to campaigning for action across the recommendations within the manifesto.

Facilitated and supported by

