

# 'No Problem in Cornwall'

## Report of the Anti Racism Project

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# Foreword

This report is based on the work of the project from 2002 until the present. There remains a great deal to do, but during this period some steps have been taken on the long road ahead. In particular, many agencies have signalled willingness not only to support the work of the project, but also to accept the main findings of this first report, and to consider how they can seek to address them. There will be an update upon this in the press release accompanying the publication of the report.

The reader should be clear that the report addresses the day to day experience of young people from visible ethnic minorities living in Cornwall. There are other important issues related to ethnicity in Cornwall, including that of the Cornish identity itself, but these are beyond the scope of this Project.

It is also important to understand that the work in schools was intended to give a voice to young people. The research methodology is not rigorous and was never intended to be, the power lies in the eloquence of the responses to the questions posed; responses which cannot be ignored.

This has always been a collaborative Project. From day one, we sought, with advice from the youth service, to involve some key agencies in our work with young people. The representatives who have attended the meetings from the early days in November 2002 to date, have been unstinting in their commitment, even though at times what they heard did not make for comfortable listening. That, I think, is a measure of the importance in which they held this piece of work.

The findings of the research we have conducted are simple: racism exists in Cornwall, and it has a very negative impact on the lives of young people from black and ethnic minorities (BME). That anyone should find this surprising is at the heart of the problem we face. If, after reading, you are still unconvinced of what the report is saying, read it again. Only this time, just read the quotes. That way, you will begin to enter directly into the reality of the lives of these young people and their families.

I hope you will agree that the next step is also obvious. We need to move from denial to action. The action that my organisation is planning to take, as an independent registered charity supporting young people aged 11 – 25, is equally straight-forward. We plan to expand our Project, again working with key partners from the statutory and voluntary sector, most notably Cornwall Rural Community Council, Connexions and Cornwall Local Education Authority. We want to move the focus from research to support, to constructing the building blocks of an independent self help network that young people and their parents, guardians and carers can call on in times of need.

Come and join us.

Mark Richardson  
Chief Executive, Young People Cornwall  
On behalf of the Anti-Racism Project Steering Group.

Steering Group members include representation from the following agencies:  
Connexions Cornwall and Devon, Cornwall Local Education Authority (LEA),  
Cornwall Youth Service, Cornwall Youth Work Partnership, Cornwall Rural  
Community Council, Cornwall Community Safety Partnerships, Devon and Cornwall  
Constabulary.

## Executive summary

The Anti Racism Project is a project hosted by Young People Cornwall, a registered charity which works throughout Cornwall through a variety of different projects. The Anti Racism Project also works with a variety of different organisations within Cornwall, including: Connexions Cornwall and Devon, Cornwall Local Education Authority, Cornwall Rural Community Council, Cornwall Youth Service, Devon & Cornwall Constabulary, Victim Support, Cornwall County Council and the Community Safety Strategy Partnerships.

The Project worker post is currently funded by Connexions Cornwall and Devon and the Local Network Fund. By being part of the voluntary sector the Project can maintain its independence and ensure that the aims and objectives are set by the needs of black and minority ethnic (BME) children and young people. Also by working within a multi-agency setting the project is ensuring that it is creating opportunities and support networks for BME individuals.

The purpose of the Project is to challenge all forms of racism on behalf of or with BME children, young people and adults. The Project aims to provide a safe, personal, confidential and needs-led service in order to create a more equal and safer environment for children and young people. The Project aims to challenge, engage, educate and effect change on the issues of racism within all agencies.

The '*No Problem In Cornwall*' report focuses on racism and the effects on young people, their families and responses from organisations. The key issues that emerged from the research and case studies are:

### **Racism is a day to day reality for BME young people and their families –**

Racism does exist within Cornwall and cannot be ignored or disregarded by agencies. The research carried out within secondary schools clearly shows the prejudice and barriers that affect BME young people. The research also showed how some young people lacked awareness in recognising racist incidents. The effects of racism on young people are, at present, largely ignored by many organisations, and at times the blame is put back onto BME groups by agencies stating that racism is not an issue in Cornwall as '**there are too few BME people**'. This type of attitude blames members of BME communities for racism.

### **Visible minorities who are invisible –**

This applies specifically to the way in which statutory and voluntary agencies are failing to meet the needs of BME individuals within Cornwall. The comment '**we don't have any black people in the county**' has been heard too often. During the past year the project has heard this attitude expressed by many professionals ranging from the teaching profession, civil service employees, training providers, employers, youth workers and health providers. BME groups within Cornwall are at times labelled 'the hard to reach group,' in fact they are the 'hard to hear' group. Organisations need to ensure that they meet the needs of BME groups and not simply dismiss them.

### **Poor networks of support –**

The Project found that there were no active support networks for BME children, young people or adults. There are some groups set up by agencies but some cases these appear to deliver no effective support or work with the BME groups within Cornwall. In other cases BME employees felt that their agencies approach to race issues was one of ‘ticking the boxes’.

### **Unchallenged racism –**

The Project found that racism was rarely being challenged within agencies and was often ignored or side-stepped. The research showed this was happening within schools, police, youth provision, employment, training providers and further education. BME young people reported that when they had experienced racism, teachers often did not challenge the perpetrator or told the victim to ignore it. The Project also found this type of attitude within employment. Some BME workers had been openly racially victimised but told by their managers to ignore it, and in some cases managers themselves had taken part in the racist abuse. The Project found that when racism is left unchallenged it has a seriously detrimental effect on the individuals. Many felt isolated and felt it was an inevitable part of living in Cornwall; others suffered anxiety and stress. The issue of personal and institutional racism needs to be challenged by every agency that is providing a service, otherwise agencies fail in providing an equal service.

### **Training –**

There is a lack of effective race equality training within agencies across Cornwall in all sectors. The Project has found that many professionals do not have a basic understanding or awareness of race equality issues. Some professionals are unable to recognise racism in its basic form, others openly adhere to stereotypical images of BME individuals, and language that is offensive is still being openly used by some professionals and left unchallenged. There is a need for agencies to place a higher priority on race equality training. The attitude which has been expressed by some professionals of ***‘we live in Cornwall, so why should we bother with race equality’*** needs to be actively challenged by all employers and agencies, and mandatory training provided.

### **Ineffective reporting systems –**

The report clearly showed that systems for reporting racist incidents in secondary schools were failing. However, reporting systems were also failing within other agencies. Many agencies do not have a separate race equality policy; neither do they have a system for reporting racist incidents. When the Project asked agencies for race equality policies, some agencies responded by saying that race equality was covered by their equal opportunities policy. Racist incidents are more frequent in rural areas, and the reality in Cornwall is that racist incidents are more frequent than the national average. Due to the lack of effective reporting systems and trained staff, many racist incidents go unreported.

The research and consultation with young people has reinforced that there is a definite need for the Anti Racism Project to continue providing a needs-led service and for the Project to continue to work in breaking down barriers in engaging agencies in anti racism work. The research shows that agencies are failing the BME community in Cornwall and therefore the Project is aiming to continue its work with agencies, in enabling more independent reporting systems which will help provide a safe and effective service for BME children, young people and adults within Cornwall.

# Introduction

The Anti Racism Project which began in November 2002, was commissioned by Young People Cornwall. It was funded initially through a Transforming Youth Work Development Fund (Innovations Fund) from Cornwall Youth Service. The funding was used to provide for one day of worker time per week. The initial objectives were to research past documentation on south west rural racism and to research into current issues of rural racism for black and minority ethnic (BME) young people, through questionnaires.

From April 2003 to March 2004 funding was obtained from Connexions Cornwall and Devon for the continuation of the Project worker's post. This paid for a full-time post and enabled a partnership model for the Project to be further developed. Project objectives included the research of racism within Cornwall, the effects it has on BME young people and non BME young people, and providing support and advocacy for a variety of BME young people and their families.

The Cornwall Traveller Education Support Service, works with traveller and associated groups, but there were no other projects within Cornwall for BME young people or adults. The Anti- Racism Project's support work is focused on providing a needs-led service, and the initial research has shown what support/action BME young people need.

The latest census results show that almost 1% of the Cornish population is BME. However the Project believes that there is good evidence that the true numbers are higher. Many of the young people and their families that the Project has worked with have not completed a census form. A survey carried out in 2000 by The Observer newspaper, based on official Home Office figures, revealed that race attacks were almost 10 times more likely to be perpetrated in rural areas than urban areas. It found that in rural areas such as Devon and Cornwall race attacks affected around 1 in 15 of the ethnic minority population, whereas in urban areas such as Greater London or West Midlands it affects 1 in 200 of the ethnic minority population. (Rayner, Jay 'Risk of race attacks highest outside Britain's big cities, survey reveals' The Observer Sunday February 18 2001). These statistics reflect only those incidents that have been reported to the police, not all racist incidents.

Due to these statistics it was felt that it was a priority to provide a service for BME young people who are suffering from racism on a day-to-day basis. The Project aims to include all young people in anti racism work, which enables and prepares young people to live in a multi-cultural society. Although at present the majority of the work is targeted at BME young people and their families, the Project is involved in setting up programmes of anti racism work with non BME young people.

The Project now works with a number of BME young people across Cornwall, providing support to them and, sometimes, their families. This number continues to grow and shows that the project is much needed. At the beginning of the Project there was a perception that were support structures for BME people within Cornwall, and that statutory services would see race equality as a priority. The research showed, however, that this was not the case. BME communities have had little

recognition of their existence by these agencies, and there has been no provision of support or other services.

The overwhelming attitude encountered is ***'there aren't that many in Cornwall'***, or ***'racism is not a problem, as there aren't that many coloured people in Cornwall'***. These comments are from senior decision makers in Cornwall. The other types of attitudes encountered were that the Project was "***stirring things up***"; that racism was the individual project worker's issue not anyone else's. The Project worker is one of the very few black youth and community workers in the area and this attitude was difficult to challenge at the beginning of the Project. The report shows clearly the incidence of racism, proving that the issue is one for all people in Cornwall.

At times the scale of the task has been overwhelming. There are so many BME young people and families who are subjected to racist abuse daily. By working within the BME communities, it is clear how strong some young people and their families have had to be in dealing with the abuse they receive, and how desperately there needs to be more support. This evidence alone justifies the work the Project delivers. This work is now done with the full support of many BME young people and their families, and together support links are being built, which enables better support for families experiencing racism. This has been productive in helping young people to become more confident as their families are more visible and active in challenging racism. By being needs-led the Project can continue to offer a relevant and responsive service that works, and can continue to grow and be an essential expert tool for the BME communities in Cornwall.

The Project has always worked within a multi-agency setting. There are very close links with Cornwall LEA, who from the very beginning have been supportive and active in their involvement. They have been open and honest in identifying gaps within their service provision, and are fully committed in working together to fill those gaps. The Project has a steering group of which the Cornwall LEA, Connexions Cornwall and Devon, Young People Cornwall, Carrick Community Safety Strategy Partnership, Cornwall Police Diversity Manager and Cornwall Rural Community Council are members.

The Project intends to widen the steering group and to invite other agencies and individuals to join and be committed in working to the principles of the Project. This will enable us to look at breaking down barriers that currently exist within agencies that have a reluctance to identify or engage on race equality issues.

At present the Project is aiming to find further funding so that it can expand the services it offers and to develop it to be more far reaching in its delivery. The aim is for the Project to provide a community worker, a peer educator and two school workers who will both work within the primary and secondary sectors.

This report is written in the hope that, when reading the experiences of BME young people and their families, agencies and individuals will recognise the need to engage with race equality work. The Project is called "Anti Racism" because of the need to be a multi-agency Project that is not only proactive in its work and delivery



in raising awareness and dealing with issues of racism, but also active in searching, identifying and challenging racism within organisations and individuals.

The Project is grateful to all the agencies in the current steering group for their continued involvement and support of the Anti Racism Project. Thanks are also due to individuals who have supported the Project.

Mandeep Sandhu  
Anti Racism Project Worker  
May 2004

# Methodology

## Phase 1 – Questionnaires and research

The Project wanted to know what the experiences of BME young people were in relation to racism. Specifically, we wanted answers to the following questions:

- Is racism an issue for them?
- Have they reported racist incidents to teachers or the police?
- What current provision is available to meet the needs of BME young people?
- Where do BME young people access support on a day-to-day basis?
- Where do BME young people experience racism the most?
- What support do BME young people require and need?
- Are BME young people aware of what racism is?
- Where do they think racist attitudes come from?
- What would stop them reporting a racist incident?
- How does living in a predominately white rural area affect them?
- How do they cope with racism in or out of school?
- How does racism affect their family life?
- How does racism affect their academic performance within education?

We wanted to look at the different types of racism, direct and indirect. We also wanted to examine the issues of identity for young people both culturally and ethnically.

As well as researching into the experiences of BME young people regarding racism, we felt it was integral to the Project that we engage with non BME young people in ascertaining where attitudes of racism were derived from. The Project felt it was important to find out:

- If they know what racism is?
- Can they recognise a racist incident?
- How strongly do they feel about racism?
- Is racism an issue in their lives?
- What is their opinion on asylum seekers?
- Is the issue of asylum linked to racism?
- We wanted young people to self examine their attitudes and experiences of racism.
- We wanted them to compare their experiences of their personal attitudes with other people, whether they were friends, family, people within their local community etc.
- Would they report a racist incident?
- Where would they report a racist incident?

The Project felt that the most effective way of obtaining the information was to develop two different questionnaires, one aimed at BME young people and the other aimed at non BME young people. The questionnaires had to be quantitative and qualitative to ensure that we received the answers to our questions.

When the questionnaires were developed with the aid of young people, we looked at the best way to disseminate them. We decided to approach Cornwall LEA in the hope of gaining their support with the work we were trying to develop. Cornwall LEA were immediately supportive and very interested in the project and what we were trying to achieve. They sent out the questionnaires to every secondary school within Cornwall via their intranet, and we also sent out letters and hard copies of the questionnaires to every secondary school.

We also needed to access young people who were either excluded from mainstream education, who were no longer in the educational system or who had gone onto further education. We sent letters and questionnaires to Education Out of School, youth offending teams, youth clubs (statutory and voluntary) and further education colleges.

We offered personal support in disseminating the questionnaires to groups of young people with teachers, youth workers and community workers. In schools we worked with two different groups as we wanted to ensure that young people felt safe and able to talk confidentially. One group would be BME young people, who had the choice of being seen alone or as part of a group. The other group was made up of non BME young people. Both of these groups were a mixture of ages and abilities.

Within these groups we first asked young people to fill in a questionnaire and afterwards had a discussion on racism and anti racism. Through this method we were further able to find out how young people really felt about these issues, as this type of workshop approach gave all the young people a further chance in discussion to express their views. This also enabled us to obtain further material for the research. We also explained to young people that no names would be passed on to any other organisation, and that their views would be kept confidential from teachers within the school. We fully explained how we would collate the information and what it would be used for.

### **Questionnaire 1**

The sample was made up of:

47 BME young people, aged between 12 – 18.

There were 23 young women and 24 young men from various locations across Cornwall.

### **Questionnaire 2**

The sample was made up of:

384 non BME young people, aged between 11 - 19.

There were 199 young women and 185 young men from various locations across Cornwall.

The questionnaires were sent out in April 2003 with a deadline for completion by the end of August 2003. The information received at the workshops was recorded at the time of each discussion and then collated in September 2003. The graphs and pie charts (appendix 2) reveal all of the quantitative data we received from the questionnaires. The qualitative information is shown in the rest of the report.

## **Phase 2 – Outreach work and support**

The second half of the report concentrates on the outreach work that the Project has carried out. There are examples of racist incidents outside of the school arena and the impact they have on BME young people and their families. We have not advertised the Project, all the phone calls and contacts we received were through word of mouth. We were approached by numerous families and young people to provide support on issues of racism.

We have included some examples of racist incidents that have arisen in Cornwall; these case studies are typical of the type of work the Project is currently involved in. We are continuing to provide support to those BME young people and their families, and we are contacted continually by different young people and their families.

The Project carried out some outreach work with BME restaurants and street work with individuals, to gain an insight into how racism affects different parts of the BME community.

We have included some recommendations for statutory and voluntary organisations, the majority of which come from young people and others reflect the gaps that the Project feels currently exist.

## Phase 1 – Questionnaire and research

The two questionnaires were developed to look at young people's experiences of racism and their attitudes. Young people were involved in the design and delivery of the questionnaire, and the idea was to ensure that it would be easy to understand, provided quantitative and qualitative data, took a limited amount of time to answer and yet enabled young people to express their views in more than a closed questionnaire.

The Project wanted to guarantee anonymity for young people, therefore no names were taken. This ensured that individual young people could be honest in their opinions without fear of being identified. The questionnaires, aimed at young people aged 12 – 19, they were disseminated through youth forums, schools, colleges, Connexions, youth clubs, youth offending teams and other agencies that had a remit in working with young people.

We approached Cornwall LEA with our research proposal. They were extremely supportive and agreed the need for this type of work to be carried out within schools in Cornwall. The Cornwall LEA distributed copies of the questionnaires to all secondary schools in Cornwall through their Intranet. A letter was also forwarded to schools explaining the reasons for the questionnaires. The letter also explained the terminology around black and minority ethnicity and stated that the school would receive support from the Project in delivering these questionnaires to young people.

We then contacted every secondary school in Cornwall to organise times to facilitate delivery of the questionnaires to their young people. We asked to meet young people from BME groups separately to ensure that they could talk to us in confidence and safety. The schools that took part supported this approach, and could appreciate the need for BME young people to be given a safe, confidential space away from other young people in order to express their views and experiences. There were no teachers present at these times.

However, some schools felt that we were **'making young people from BME groups different from the others'**, and even when we explained again the reasons they did not agree to the proposal. Some schools said that they were **"not sure how to identify young people from BME groups"** and did not want to cause offence to parents. We organised a letter to be sent to parents/carers to gain their permission for their son/daughter to answer the questionnaire and to talk to us. We also offered further support in talking to pupils in schools and explaining the reason for the two questionnaires.

Some schools continued to deny the issues. Head teachers and senior management made comments such as:

***'Everybody gets on in this school, no matter what colour they are, blue, pink or purple.'***

***'We treat everyone the same, we do not have any differences in this school.'***

***'We really don't have that many coloured kids in this school.'***

***'We don't see racism as an issue.'***

***'I feel that you are making it an issue by singling young people out.'***

***'The majority of young people in school are white, so it is not necessary to be involved.'***

***'They fit in with everyone else.'***

The schools that took the above attitudes did not participate in the research or workshops, so not all secondary schools in Cornwall have been involved.

The time frame for the questionnaire work was February 2003 – July 2003, we also contacted all the further education colleges within Cornwall. Only one responded positively. Some schools contacted us in July to say they had not received any information regarding the work we were carrying out and they did not have enough time to be involved.

The schools that did respond were openly interested in exploring the issues of racism, and the effects it can have on the everyday lives of young people, in and out of school and the community. All schools were told that they would not receive any personal information regarding any pupil's individual experiences or attitudes.

When we worked with young people in schools we did so in two groups, BME young people of mixed age in one group and non BME young people in the other group. The school made the decision about what age groups in non BME workshops should be involved, some schools had mixed age groups while others had tutor groups from the same year. In each group we asked for them to firstly fill in the questionnaires and then we continued with a discussion workshop.

There were obvious differences with regard to the experiences and attitudes that BME young people had regarding racism compared to non BME young people. In non BME groups young people felt that racism was not an important issue to them as it did not directly affect them, whereas BME young people felt that racism is an issue that they have to live with on a day-to-day basis.

***'Racism is always gonna be there, you have to just put up with it.'***

***'When I think that it's okay and no-one will say anything racist to me, they do. You always know that it's there.'***

We also wanted to see the response of non BME young people when a teacher was present at a workshop. This would enable the Project to view the attitudes or opinions expressed when an authority figure was present. In contrast to our previous experience the answers that we received were mostly "yes" and "no"; many young people did not respond openly or fully in conversation. In two instances when the teacher left, we asked what difference it made discussing issues of racism with a teacher present and the responses from young people were mostly the same. They felt that they could not be open or honest with their opinions and that the teacher

would ***'tell them off'*** or ***'have a right go'***. Interestingly, when a teacher was present, young people within that group were seen to be saying that racism is wrong, however, once the teacher had left, comments were made that showed they felt that some levels of racism were acceptable, especially when joking or discussing asylum seekers.

Debate and discussion thus seemed more open and honest without the presence of a teacher. We also explained to young people who participated that no names would be taken and that their participation would be fed back into the research anonymously. This enabled young people to be open in their reasons and explanations for their opinions. Although we did not divulge any young person's individual experience or attitude to the school we did report back an overview to the Cornwall LEA, without naming any individual school. We hoped that this would help develop initiatives to tackle racism and develop cultural awareness within Cornish schools.

The names of the schools involved were passed on to the Single Issue OFSTED panel within the Cornwall LEA, so that these schools could be commended on their willingness to be initially involved with race equality, and questions be asked as to why other schools did not feel that race equality was a priority to them. Every school was made aware of this prior to their involvement.

When delivering work around an issue such as racism, some schools seem to be defensive and concerned that they will be seen as having a 'problem' with racism if the Project works with them. Below are some comments from senior management within schools;

***'We don't have a problem with racism here.'***

***'If there are any racist incidents we can deal with them internally, we don't see the need for involving external agencies.'***

***'Pupils in our school do not show any racism.'***

There needs to be a change in this type of attitude if schools are to develop a better awareness and to be seen by pupils, parents and their local community to be tackling the issues of racism. Only by doing so can they hope to provide a safe environment for young people from BME groups, and promote change in attitudes within their own staff and young people.

Through the findings of this research, Cornwall LEA have, to their immense credit, openly acknowledged the need for improvement and change within schools, particularly in reporting systems for racist incidents, which are not currently effective, and staff training on dealing with racist incidents.

The culture of avoiding recognition of ethnic differences needs to be addressed. All schools, regardless of their number of BME students, should be preparing all their pupils to live within a multi-cultural society. Some BME young people have said that some teachers almost seem to be embarrassed when discussing cultural differences in front of them:

***'My teacher was talking about Muslims and their faith, I am the only Muslim in my class and not once was I asked by the teacher in class or after class, anything about my faith. It was as if the teacher was really embarrassed to have me around.'***

***'When my teacher starts talking about other cultures he always says "them" and the differences between "us" and "them"; even when my culture is being talked about he treats me as if I was part of the majority.'***

Further training is essential for staff to be able to feel more prepared and confident within their role, and in enabling them to recognise and meet the needs of BME pupils within their schools.

Some teachers have expressed their frustration with regard to parents who condone their child's racist behaviour, and feel they can do nothing else to challenge behaviour. Below are some comments from teachers who express this type of frustration:

***'The problem comes from the parents who condone their child's behaviour.'***

***'What can you do when a parent sees nothing wrong in their child's racist behaviour?'***

***'As a school we do not accept racism in any form, but our hands are tied when it comes to parents who are openly racist.'***

Schools have different ways of dealing with racist incidents, some more effective than others. Why is it that some schools are more competent at dealing with racist incidents than others? Although we have already stated and recognised the need for further training, we believe there needs to be a comprehensive policy for schools in challenging racism from pupils, parents, governors or staff. In turn this policy must be integrated and understood fully within the school. This requires commitment from head teachers, senior management staff and school governors in ensuring that it is delivered to all pupils, parents and staff.

In one school, young people were openly using the racist term 'paki' in front of a teacher. We asked the teacher if he would challenge or explain why the term was offensive, he replied that he didn't know what to say and it would be better for one of the workers (Indian female) to talk about it. Although we did explain to the young people in the class why the term was offensive, it does bring into question what the teacher would have done if we had not been there, and also the working practices around challenging racism in schools.

Other teachers have expressed that, in their opinion, there is no malice when a young person calls another a 'paki', that they are doing so in ignorance and therefore it is not racist. However a racist incident is defined within the Macpherson Report as *'Any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person'*. It is clear from this that no worker or teacher should tell a young person



who is reporting a racist incident that it is not meant to be racist. There is a clear duty to take appropriate action.

## **Questionnaire 1 – Aimed at BME young people**

### **Question 1 – Please describe your ethnicity**

We purposefully did not provide a tick box of different ethnic descriptions or titles, we felt that it was up to the young person to describe and have ownership of their own ethnicity. Many of the young people we worked with were from a mixed parentage background, and the issue of ethnicity was a subject they felt quite strongly about. Some young people said they had been described as half-caste by other young people and felt offended by the term, but did not feel confident to challenge them.

***‘Even my friends call me half-caste; I am made to feel that I am half a person.’***

***‘I didn’t even know what half-caste meant until my mum told me.’***

The question of ethnicity brought about a discussion of issues of identity and culture, this type of discussion was felt by young people to be very positive, as for some it gave them an opportunity to talk openly and honestly about the way they feel they are perceived by their peers.

***‘I describe myself as white British because my dad thinks it would be better that way, even though he is Indian. My friends think that it would help me get a job if I say that I am white British.’***

***‘I am black even though my dad is white, my friends think that because my dad is white I should just say I am white, but I am not.’***

***‘Some of my mates say that they don’t like black people, but they think I am alright.’***

For others it was an opportunity for them to decide how they wanted to be identified. There was also discussion with regard to the words ‘coloured’ and ‘black’, and their meaning. All the young people from BME groups we worked with stated that the word ‘coloured’ was offensive yet it is still widely used by their friends and teachers.

***‘My friends call me coloured and I don’t like it but I don’t know what to say to them.’***

***‘Some of my friends think that ‘black’ is an insult and that the word ‘coloured’ is better.’***

***‘No-one has ever asked me to describe myself before, you usually just get a tick box.’***

***‘I didn’t start thinking about my identity until I was older and now it seems to be more of an issue to me.’***

***'I am black British.'***

We have continued working with young people on issues of identity and culture using poetry, music, media, history and discussion groups. In an area with a low proportion of BME families it is vital that work is done with BME young people with regard to their identity. They are frequently isolated and whilst it is difficult for them to explore their identity on their own, the issue is largely ignored by agencies so they often have no help in doing this.

## **Question 2 – What do you think is a racist incident?**

The reason for asking this question was to see how young people from BME groups identify or define a racist incident. Discussions took place about direct and indirect racist incidents. Some young people felt that only if someone verbally used particular overtly racist language or physically abused you, could you then call it a racist incident.

***'When I get called paki and get pushed around.'***

***'Verbally abusing someone because of their race.'***

Within the groups we also discussed less overt types of racism and how difficult it can be to prove this type of racism to someone else. The majority of BME young people felt that they knew when they were being treated in an inferior racist way but that they had no power in challenging this type of racism:

***'When I go into this one shop, the woman there is always friendly to white customers, but never looks me in the eye and never smiles.'***

***'In school, the classroom assistant never talks to me but she's fine with the white kids but she just ignores me when I try and talk to her.'***

***'When I go shopping with my dad we always get followed by security, I think this is because my dad is a Muslim and looks different.'***

In the various groups we worked with, we felt it was relevant to discuss the issue of perception and racist incidents. Some young people gave examples of when they had tried to report what they felt was a racist incident but teachers replied that they were not:

***'Boys in my class were calling me an afro bitch, but when I told the teacher, he said that it wasn't racist as they were just talking about my hair.'***

***'A boy in my class called a black footballer a nigger, the teacher said it was not racist because he was talking about football.'***

***'Everyone in my class was teasing me about my name because it was so different to everyone else's and I felt that this was racist, when I told the teacher what I thought the teacher said that I was just being too sensitive.'***

Through discussion and the types of statements we received it is evident there is a real lack of support in enabling reporting, advising and support for BME young people in relation to racist incidents.

### **Question 3 – Can you describe a racist incident that you have experienced?**

There were numerous racist incidents that had not been reported to teachers or to police, in fact some young people admitted that they had not discussed these incidents with anyone, not even parents because they did not want to worry them. There was also a fear of reprisals, and some felt that there was no point in reporting them as nothing would be done.

Comments from young people ranged from just ignoring it to hitting back. It was mostly young men who felt they had to fight back physically to stop racism happening again.

***‘No-one messes with me now, they know that I’ll sort them out.’***

***‘You’ve got to be able to look after yourself.’***

However, some young men felt that they could not physically fight back and tended to use other approaches. One young man felt that when he became the class joker the ***‘racism was not as bad’***. Another young man who constantly misbehaved in school, felt that his behaviour helped deflect the racism that was previously targeted at him. In many of these types of cases the young men were underachieving academically, and others were near to exclusion. So, although the strategies adopted by these young men reduced the level of racism they received, the consequence of their actions was that they were seen by their schools to be failing in their behaviour and academically.

The majority of BME young women did not hit back, they were more likely to try and obtain help or if this failed, they just ignored it, feeling that they could not do anything about it:

***‘What can you do?’***

***‘You just have to put up with it.’***

***‘What’s the point in reporting it, no-one takes it seriously.’***

***‘It’ll get worse if the teachers find out.’***

However, some BME young women did adopt similar strategies of misbehaving in class to lessen the racism they were being exposed to. One young woman felt that she was viewed differently but with more respect by class mates since she changed her behaviour within class. The racist comments had nearly stopped, but again she was seen to be failing in her behaviour and academic achievements by the school.

All of the BME young people we worked with had suffered a racist attack either verbally or physically and sometimes both. The type of incidents related back were:

***'I get paki jokes from the older kids at school, and when I was younger I got lots of racism from kids in primary school. I didn't tell anyone 'cos the teachers don't listen. Once when I was coming home from school the bus driver said that the black one was to get to the back of the queue, I had to walk home that day.'***

***'My mum is Polynesian and my dad is white, the kids at school call my mother names like, skivvies, slave bride, and spoon face. Sometimes I wish that my mum wouldn't come into school.'***

***'I had an Islamic name, but the teachers always made such a big deal about pronouncing it that everyone would laugh. In my village where I live all the kids would pick on me about my name so my dad changed it into a western one.'***

The issue of terrorism and racism were mentioned numerous times by BME young people who had South Asian or Arabic heritage. They felt that they were experiencing increased racism since the attacks in America and the war in Iraq (Also refer to the United Kingdom Parliament website – Select Committee on Religious Offences in England and Wales – Islamophobic Attacks In The Wake of September 11<sup>th</sup>). All of these young people felt that many pupils within their school were using terrorism as a way of excusing their racism to teachers:

***'When the teacher talks about terrorism at school, the kids in my class start giggling and looking at me, the teacher never tells them off.'***

***'After September 11<sup>th</sup> loads of kids at my school started asking me if I knew any terrorists because my dad is a Muslim and when teachers talk about terrorism everyone always turns around to look at me.'***

***'I get told that I am a terrorist paki and that I should go back to where I came from.'***

If teachers wish to discuss the issue of terrorism it would be appropriate to do so in an informed and safe way. National figures show that attacks on people of South Asian and Arabic heritage have increased, and that Islamophobia is on the increase as more mosques have been vandalised since the attack in America and the war in Iraq. This highlights the need for sensitivity in dealing with BME pupils when discussing terrorism.

Other racist incidents included verbal and physical abuse:

***'This boy in my class is always saying that I am too black, but when I tell the teacher they say it is because he likes me, but I don't like what he says and he does not stop.'***

***'Being called a 'paki', friends saying that I should only go out with a black person.'***

***'I was slapped in the face and called 'paki.'***

***'I was standing with my boyfriend and we were both spat at because we were a mixed race couple.'***

***'People making fun of the Chinese people and our language and about my eyes'***

***'I have been spat at and called a black bitch, also I have been called a 'paki' and have had racist jokes aimed at me.'***

***'In my school people call me 'nigger.'"***

***'A boy in my class called me a 'nigger' in front of everyone, the teacher told him to go to the next classroom, but he did not get into any trouble.'***

***'I was walking down the corridor and this boy was laughing with his friends, he started calling me a fat nigger, I've never told anyone this, I feel really ashamed.'***

Racist incidents that had been reported to schools were dealt with in different ways. Both young people and their parents reported schools that were not supportive when dealing with racist incidents. We contacted and were contacted by parents of BME young people who felt dissatisfied with the way their school had dealt with racist incidents. One parent felt that they were left out of any decision making processes with regard to their son's racist incident and that they were given no feedback. The lack of feedback from schools was echoed by the majority of parents we spoke to:

***'The head teacher just patronised me when I asked what would be done to the young person who called my daughter racist names, he said that it had nothing to do with me because it would be the school's decision. I just wanted to know what would be done.'***

There are differing approaches in schools. There is good practice; for example, it was reported to us that in one school a young man who was being called a racist name hit the young man who was being racist. Both of them were taken to the head teacher who did admonish the young man for using violence, but in turn made clear that the school took any racist incident very seriously and would deal with it very severely. He suspended the young man who had been racist for a day. When asked how he felt about the way the incident was dealt with, the young man replied that he was happy at what the school had done, and that it made him feel more confident, as the head teacher had made it clear that racism would not be acceptable. The young man was told to report future incidents to the head teacher and that he did not have to deal with racism on his own.

In other schools young people have not been so fortunate in the way in which racist incidents have been dealt with. Sometimes young men who have used violence as a way of protecting themselves from racism have in turn been suspended. This does not make a difference in the way these young people continue to deal with racism as they feel that violence is the only way to 'shut people up'. This attitude unfortunately leads to young men from BME groups becoming disengaged from school. In these cases it seems the schools feel that even if you have been racially provoked, there is a zero tolerance on any form of violence, yet in turn they are unable to recognise that racism is also a form of violence which, if not tackled, will just lead to a cycle of more violence.

***'If anyone says anything racist to me, I just hit them. They don't do it again, if you don't they'll think that they can pick on you every time.'***

***'There's no point in telling a teacher, they just tell you to ignore it.'***

***'Even, when a teacher tells someone off for being racist, they'll still carry on being racist behind the teacher's back.'***

There is no feedback as to how the schools deal with individuals who have openly used racism against BME young people. There is no current consistent strategy employed by schools in addressing and effecting change in racist attitudes amongst young people. Schools need to involve pupils, the local community and external agencies in developing these strategies to invoke changes in attitudes.

All the parents we have spoken to, whose children have been victims of racist incidents, feel that the school system is failing them and not taking racism seriously. One young woman explains:

***'This boy said he was from the KKK and that he was going to stab me with a knife. He had already called me racist names before, but this time I was really scared. I told my mum and she came to school to sort it out for me.'***

The mother made an appointment with the head teacher, she took her eldest son with her:

***'I told the head teacher about the racist abuse and how upset I was that a boy had threatened to stab my daughter. His response was just to smirk and say 'we don't take this kind of threat seriously and it's not really racist'. He just waved this threat to my daughter away. When I repeated that I felt it was racist and that threatening to stab someone is serious, he just said 'as I said the school does not take this threat seriously'. At this my elder son became angry and said 'if anything happens to my little sister, I'll burn your school down'. At this point the head teacher took my son's threat seriously and reported his comment to the police. There is no justice if you are black, when a white person makes a threat it is not serious but when a black person makes a threat it is serious. Where is the sense in that?'***

In this instance, the relationship between the parent and the school has completely broken down. Another parent said they could no longer go back into school to

complain about the racism their daughter was experiencing because **'nothing changes, they don't take me seriously'**. This leaves the daughter alone in tackling racism at school.

A mother who was at a meeting regarding her son's behavioural issues, felt that some of his behaviour was directly linked to the racism he was being subjected to. The response she received was:

**'We are not interested in any racist issues, we are just interested in your son's education.'**

The mother felt horrified that the school would not recognise racism or deal with it:

**'How am I supposed to help my son now? I hoped that the school would take the racism seriously.'**

Some white mothers of mixed parentage children have openly said that when they have tried to complain about racism their children are undergoing, they are met with the attitude of **'What did you expect?'**. They feel they are being discriminated against due to having had a relationship with someone not white. One mother was openly told **'the problem is, people like you just don't think about the effect it has on children, when they come from different parents.'**

Another mother reports she witnessed her child being shouted at by a primary school teacher in front of the class and being called an **'animal'**, who then went onto say to the mother **'I don't want any of your ethnic kids in my class'** This particular woman and her husband are white and had adopted children who are black. Her son also told her that this teacher would not let him refer to his own mother as mum, she would say to him **'no that is Mrs .....**'. When the parents complained to the school nothing was done, in fact they were informed through a letter that their son would be suspended for a week.

The Anti Racism Project would never advocate using violence in tackling issues of racism. We do understand that some young people feel that this is the only way they have to tackle racism and try to make it stop. Schools and the education system are failing BME young people and their parents, by failing to tackle racism in an effective or meaningful way. There appear to be members of staff who are not competent in dealing with racism as they are not able to recognise racist behaviour, even in obvious forms. They are dealing with racism by using further racism either wittingly or unwittingly. The system needs to change and it reflects an obvious need for more competencies in staff to deal with racism, and more power for BME young people and their parents to challenge racism within schools so their voices are heard more fully.

**Question 4 – Have you ever witnessed or ever experienced racism in any of the following environments?**

**Workplace**

**School/college**

**At home**

**With friends**

**Shop**

**Pub/club**

**Public transport**

**Other (please specify)**

We wanted to know where BME young people faced the majority of racism, and school came out as the highest place. Although this questionnaire was also given to young people who were not in school, they also felt that in their experience school is where racism began to be a major issue for them. They felt that it often begins at primary school and then follows on to secondary school. The majority of the young people we consulted were currently within the school system.

***'In my primary school the teachers never helped me when someone called me names, they told me to ignore it. The racism carried on and I never told the teachers, sometimes I would get into fights and get into trouble.'***

***'I got called yellow face all the time in primary school, no-one ever helped me.'***

***'My teacher at primary school always used to say that I was not like the rest of the children in the class so sometimes I couldn't join in with everyone.'***

***'I started to get called names at primary school and the teachers would never say anything and I don't bother to tell a teacher now.'***

***'If young people who make racist comments are not challenged by teachers other young people think that that it is okay to make those types of comments.'***

***'When someone makes a racist comment in my class the teacher just tells them to be quiet, she never explains why it is wrong to be racist and she never talks to me afterward to ask if the comment had upset me.'***

Interestingly, quite a few young people explained how their friends would make racist comments.

***'They call me "paki man" and then laugh. They think it's a joke because I laugh too, but it's still racist.'***

***'I don't say anything to my friends when they start telling racist jokes, I just want to fit in.'***

***'When my friends are racist to other people it's really hard to tell them to stop, it took a long time to make friends.'***

***'My friends say that they don't think of me as black anymore like other black people, they say I am more normal.'***

Employment was ticked by seven of the young people who had either received racism from their employer or customers. Two young people were waiting staff and were told by a customer that he did not want them to wait upon him. Their manager made no objection to this. Other young people had received racist remarks from their colleagues which were left unchallenged. When one young person went to their supervisor, he was told ***'It's because there are not that many of you down here, just ignore it they'll get tired of it eventually.'***



The other situations in which the respondents stated they had experienced racism included those related to the police. Six young people stated that the way some police officers had spoken to them was racist.

***'This policeman started to ask me where I came from, I said ..... he then said that my kind are not welcome.'***

***'I have been called racist names by a policeman.'***

Five young people stated that they had experienced racism at home, either with neighbours or other family members that are white.

***'Our neighbour is always making racist comments, she said that we smell.'***

***'We get rubbish thrown into our garden by neighbours.'***

In fact two young people said that they had experienced racist comments from their own mothers and step fathers. One young person felt totally alienated from her family as she was the only black child, and was often taunted racially by her siblings.

Pubs and clubs were identified as places where young people had very negative experiences. This included youth clubs and family pubs, and a number of young people felt that youth clubs were not accessible to them. In fact only one young person was currently involved in accessing a youth group. The other young people that had been into youth clubs felt threatened and were subjected to racist taunts. These ranged from racist name calling, such as, ***'chinky', 'black bastard', 'paki'***, to being physically threatened and told to ***'go back and stay in your restaurant'***. Staff response was ineffective and at times poor.

***'When I told the youth worker, they said that they would talk to them. They still carried on calling me names, sometimes in front of the worker who would say 'come on stop that', but they didn't take any notice. I just stopped going.'***

Racism is illegal and youth groups/clubs and all youth provision need to understand and respond to it. The Anti Racism Project recommends that there should be a review of race equality policies, staff training, and an assessment of youth services in how accessible they are to young people from BME groups. For this to happen there needs to be a culture shift towards prioritising race equality within all youth service and provision. All voluntary and statutory youth services need to internally examine why young people from BME groups are not accessing their services.

Transport and shops were where some young people felt that it was more difficult to challenge racism as it was less overt. They felt that although they were not being subjected to verbal racist abuse they were being treated less favourably than other 'white' customers. We asked groups of BME young people how often they encountered this type of racism, they answered that it was day-to-day.

For instance on trains and buses, young people said that it was the way in which they were addressed by staff, e.g:

***'I asked the bus driver how much it was to get to ....., he just kept saying 'what did you say I can't understand you' I had to repeat myself three times, he managed to understand everyone else who got on the bus.'***

***'The train conductor gave me a hard time about paying for my ticket on the train, and kept saying that he would not be able to give me a return, I explained that I did not get time to buy a ticket at the station, but he just kept having a go. I then saw him issuing tickets to other passengers on the train without saying anything to them.'***

In shops and cafés young people felt that the service they received openly showed racism:

***'My mum and I went into a café and were told there were no seats, we said we would wait even though we could see several free places to sit. They just ignored us and carried on giving other people seats. We left, I was really angry and embarrassed and had to explain to my mum what had happened, she doesn't speak English.'***

***'When I go out shopping with my dad, we always get followed by security, I think it's because they think my dad is a terrorist since he has a turban.'***

One young man explained how he had witnessed a racist incident in a Turkish kebab restaurant:

***'This man and woman were in front of me and they just kept swearing at the guy behind the counter, telling him what they wanted in their kebab and calling him 'paki' and 'wog.'''***

#### **Question 5 – If you experienced racism at school would you tell a teacher?**

Some of the 49% of young people who stated they would tell a teacher would only do so if the incident was serious. Some felt there was no point if it was just name calling. However, at least half of this group felt that teachers should be informed because they should take action. When we asked them if they felt comfortable reporting a racist incident to any teacher, all of them said no, they would only go to a teacher if they had a good relationship with them. Others said that they knew nothing of the reporting system for racist incidents within school.

The 51% that said no, did so mainly because of previous negative experiences of reporting racist incidents, either personally or witnessing others who did so. The comments from young people showed a concerned lack of trust in reporting racist incidents to teachers.

***'No, because they don't do anything anyway.'***

***'What's the point?'***

***'They just say that it wasn't racist.'***

***'I told a teacher once and they kept on singling me out in class in front of everyone and asking me if I was okay.'***

***'They wouldn't understand.'***

***'I don't get on with my teachers.'***

***'I'm better off handling it on my own.'***

This question shows a worrying lack of trust in teachers by BME young people within schools. There needs to be more ways in which young people can report racist incidents in confidence and safety. It is obvious that reporting systems are failing in schools partly due to the lack of knowledge of their existence by teachers and pupils. Cornwall LEA received no reports of racist incidents from May 2003 from any schools, showing a complete breakdown in the reporting of racist incidents. This identifies the need for more training for teachers and learning assistants on how to deal with racist incidents. There also needs to be more involvement of parents and pupils in developing systems of reporting, thus ensuring that BME groups are involved in its evaluation.

**Question 6 – In your experience do you think that there is enough support for people who encounter racism?**

75% of young people felt that there is not enough support for victims of racism, 21% stated they didn't know and only 4% felt there was enough support for victims of racism. Of those young people who felt there was enough support 2% identified their ethnicity as white Cornish. Their comments showed that they did not have an understanding of racism in terms of its impact upon visible minorities, however, they felt that as white Cornish young people they were not discriminated against, and felt that racism was not relevant to them. The comments we received from them were:

***'There is enough support for coloured people.'***

***'Coloured people get lots of support.'***

There was one young person from a European background who felt that their family gave them all the support they needed, but they didn't know if there was enough support for other young people.

However, the majority (79%) felt isolated, and as for family support, many young people did not want to worry their parents, or said when families were involved they received no support. The issue of racism has an effect on the whole family, hence more support is needed for these families to be able to challenge racism in all arenas.

The 'Challenging Racism in The Rural Idyll' report by Mohammed Dhalech showed quite clearly, the isolation BME communities face in rural areas in reporting or

receiving support in reporting racism. There is the issue of visibility for BME people within Cornwall, yet the response of agencies is to dismiss the needs of BME people by the assumption that there are not many in Cornwall, so they are made to be invisible. Since Mohammed Dhalech's report in 1998 many of the attitudes of agencies within Cornwall have not changed.

The BME young people we spoke to felt they had to protect their families from racism, as there was no-one there to help or support them.

***'My mother has tried to talk to the school lots of times about other kids picking on me and calling me racist names, but nothing changes and she gets upset and cries at home. Now I just don't tell anyone.'***

***'If I tell my dad he gets upset for me, and he's not happy with what the school have done and then the teachers get funny with me.'***

Many of the young people had similar experiences and felt powerless to challenge racism, feeling they were often put in the middle between their family and the school. This is an intolerable position for any young person to be put in, and we recommend that there is an urgent need for schools to ensure that parents and young people are involved in agreeing any course of action taken with regard to any racist incident.

#### **Question 7 – Where do you think racist attitudes come from?**

<b>Friends Music</b>	<b>School Cultural</b>	<b>Family Global</b>	<b>Media Other (please state)</b>
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The previous evidence highlights that young people feel attitudes of racism flourish within schools, due to young people not actively being challenged on incidents of racism. 80% of young people also felt that there was not enough awareness or accurate knowledge on cultural issues within schools, and that due to the small numbers of BME pupils' cultural awareness and race equality is not seen to be important by their schools.

This type of negative attitude toward cultural awareness and race equality is fairly prevalent. When we spoke to various secondary schools they showed quite openly that race or cultural awareness is an issue that did not warrant them being involved with this research. At a meeting of trainee teachers a worker, who was delivering a workshop on race equality, was told that issues of race equality are not something they need to concern themselves with as they will only be teaching in Cornwall.

The levels of reported racist incidents to the police per ethnic population in Cornwall is relatively high, this does not include the many racist incidents that are not reported. In fact many of the young people the Project spoke to had not reported any racist incidents they were subjected to. The attitude of race equality not being an issue that needs to be addressed, especially since the numbers of BME young people are below the majority of non-BME young people, will have little or no exposure to different cultures. The research we have conducted shows this quite clearly and is discussed further on in the report. The only exposure to differing races

or culture is likely to be through what has been read or watched in the media. If these types of attitudes are being displayed by teaching staff, how can they hope to improve the attitudes of young people.

There is evidence that at present, anti racism is being taught within some school curriculum programmes by a majority of teachers who have not got sufficient skills or experience in either teaching about racism or understanding it. There are teachers who have taken this subject seriously by consulting and researching with agencies, but they are too few. We are aware of only two teachers who have approached external agencies to provide additional support or information. Young people from BME groups have given negative feedback regarding these lessons.

***'The teacher just put a video on for us to watch, there was no real discussion or debate, what is the point in that? There are young people in my class who have racist views and beliefs, but there was nothing within the video to challenge this.'***

***'Our teacher just told us that racism was wrong and tried to explain the different types of racism, but hardly anyone in the class knew what she was talking about.'***

It is unfair on teachers to expect them to teach a subject that they have little experience in, and also unfair on non-BME pupils who should have an opportunity to learn, debate and discuss issues of racism. It is especially unfair on young people from BME groups as this should be an opportunity to tackle and motivate change in attitudes on racism. If anti racism is to be included in the curriculum then it needs to be comprehensive in looking at where young people feel that racist attitudes come from, and look at changing attitudes. It should not be used in a tokenistic manner to please OFSTED or to be seen to be doing the right thing.

Media, cultural influences and music were referred to by young people as being highly influential on racist attitudes. BME young people felt that because of the misunderstanding of rap music, which does use words such as 'nigga', other young people felt that it was okay for them to use these terms. There is no understanding of claiming back racist and offensive words and taking ownership of them. We explained this concept to non-BME young people by using the idea of shared meaning, and thus showing how inappropriate and offensive it would be for them to use such terms to describe anyone.

***'The white kids in my class think they look cool when they use racist words, they say that it is okay because black people call each other nigger, they don't know what they're talking about.'***

The media was chosen by BME young people due to the negative and inflammatory reporting of asylum seekers.

***'They are constantly abusing asylum seekers, calling them terrorists and scroungers, so even though some people have never met an asylum seeker they think that its okay to insult them.'***

***'So many newspapers and T.V. news always slate asylum seekers, no wonder the public think its okay to have a go and be racist.'***

It was felt by young people that through the media portrayal of asylum seekers it legitimises racism, thus enabling people to openly show their racist attitudes and spread them. Young people also expressed their concern of the Islamophobia that is being spread through the media.

***'Kids in my class constantly think that if you are a Muslim it makes you a terrorist, this is just crap they have read.'***

Although cultural attitudes are tied in with media and music, some BME young people feel that there is a different cultural attitude to racism within Cornwall compared with urban areas, which affects the attitudes of non-BME families.

***'No-one seems to be that shocked when you get called racist names in Cornwall, in London my cousins say that people wouldn't get away with it so easily.'***

***'Because you don't see that many black people in Cornwall, I don't think that some people know how to talk to us.'***

***'My friend's dad didn't like him being my friend, so he told him to keep away from me because I was black.'***

**Question 8 – Why do you think some young people don't report racist incidents?**

BME young people felt that the lack of reporting was due to a number of reasons:

**Fear of reprisals** – from the perpetrator or their friends, and not having a safe place to report a racist incident were key themes. There was also the issue that a young person felt isolated if they were either the only or one of the few BME young people within a school. They therefore feared being targeted for further racist attacks.

***'I reported a racist incident once to a teacher who had a real go at the boy, but when the teacher had gone him and his friends just started to call me names again, and then threatened to beat me up if I told a teacher again.'***

**No-one to talk to** – there is an issue of the lack of actual support specifically for BME young people that have been victims of racism. The evidence already highlights the lack of trained or knowledgeable people on issues of race equality. This Project is the only specialist service of its type within Cornwall that can provide young people with a safe, knowledgeable and confidential service.

**Distrust of teachers** – was also an issue which has already been highlighted in question 5.

**Distrust of the police** – all of the BME young people involved in this research felt that they distrusted the police in dealing with racist incidents. Some of this distrust

has grown from actual negative experiences of reporting incidents themselves, by friends reporting, and some had experienced racist attitudes displayed by some police officers. There seemed to be a general consensus that the police **'would not be that interested'**.

**That it would make no difference to their situation** – at least 25% of BME young people felt that things would not change and that racism was a reality they could not escape. Reporting an incident would make no difference to their situation.

***'You still have to live where you live, and you still have to go to the same school.'***

We asked the 25% whether, although they can never escape racism altogether, would it not be better to challenge rather than ignore it? Many replied that it would depend on who was challenging the racism, and that as young people they were less empowered to do so.

**Not wanting to worry their family** – this was also a real concern as highlighted in question 6. Again, we asked how this concern could be lessened and young people replied that if their parents had more support in being able to address the issues of racism and were **'not on their own'** this would enable them to be more confident in talking with their parents.

**Feeling ashamed and humiliated** – these are feelings that can be associated with victims of most crimes, but at least 80% of the BME young people explained that these are the types of emotions they felt.

***'When you get called names all the time you feel like dirt.'***

***'You begin to feel that it's your own fault.'***

***'A boy in my school always calls me a fat black bitch in front of everyone and other kids just laugh. I feel ashamed and try to keep out of the way.'***

We asked whether there was a lack of confidence in agencies or a lack of confidence within young people, the answer was both. Young people gave examples of previous racist incidents that they had reported which resulted in no action being taken, or where the situation had worsened. There are many examples already highlighted within the findings of this research, which clearly show the difficulties BME young people have experienced when reporting racist incidents. Many of these incidents show that young people had little or no control in the decision making processes when reporting these racist incidents. Young people need to be involved in the whole process of reporting, and should have a voice in deciding how they would like the incident to be resolved. At present there is a power imbalance in tackling or reporting racist incidents where young people have little or no power in any decisions that are made.

We are currently endeavouring to continue working and supporting as many of the BME young people involved in the research.

## Question 9 – What would help you to deal with racism in your everyday life?

The comments made below are representative of all but two of the BME young people that were involved in this research:

***‘Having someone to talk to’*** – young people felt that they wanted to talk to someone who knew what they were talking about, who would still allow them to be in control and not take over.

***‘Totally open minded people, teachers, shopkeepers, etc’*** – this was discussed as hope for a cultural change of attitudes within Cornwall towards racism, and how people react towards people that are visibly different.

***‘Being able to just ignore it’*** – this was suggested as a coping mechanism, some young people felt that you should ignore racism or get used to it as a way of life. However, others responded to this as not being a choice, they disagreed with the idea of having to accept racism as a part of everyday life, ***‘why should they’***.

***‘Having more ethnic minority teachers to relate to’*** – role models were felt to be very important for young people from BME groups to relate to as well as being able to actively challenge stereotypes. In fact one young woman explained how her mother had made a decision to send her to a school because there was a black teacher.

***‘If there were more black teachers, other kids in school would be more used to seeing black people.’***

This view was expressed by a number of young people who wanted to see more visible minority teachers. They also wanted to see a growth of BME workers within youth groups, as teaching assistants, Connexions PAs, fire officers, police officers and various other public services.

***‘A machine gun’*** – this was initially said as a joke, but there is anger amongst young people about the way they are being treated. This research has shown that this type of joking is a coping mechanism as is anger and violence, when they feel that the ‘system’ has failed them and their families. When their needs are not addressed or recognised within main-stream services. Often they are labelled as a ***‘hard to reach’*** group by many services, but in reality they are the ***‘hard to hear’*** group, due to the lack of awareness or priorities within services. Due to their needs being ignored, our research shows that young men, in particular are forced into being physical as a coping mechanism to deflect racism.

***‘Education and counselling on how to deal with racism, and how it affects people’*** – this suggestion was seen as crucial for all the BME young people we spoke to, not only to address their needs for support, but also to educate all young people on the issue of racism. The term ‘quality’ needs to be added on to this type of service in order to avoid tokenism, and ensure that the needs of young people from BME groups are being met and addressed. The research highlights that at present, the curriculum is not addressing this need effectively.



***'More support in schools and teachers to be more understanding'*** – this statement speaks for itself. We recommend that schools will need to engage in more multi-agency work to help in assessing needs, training and endeavour to actively change the belief system of staff. It is not enough to have a race equality policy or talk of taking racism seriously. Schools need to accept that there are racist attitudes, behaviour and language in every school portrayed by pupils and some staff, either knowingly or unknowingly, and a policy alone does not protect or support young people experiencing racism. Evaluation would show that there needs to be a shift in culture and belief systems.

***'Being able to fight back'*** – this comment was not about using violence, but more about regaining power so that young people can feel more confident, supported, informed and aware of what their rights are when challenging racism whether it be in a school, shops/cafés, police, youth groups or other services.

***'We need to know what our rights are.'***

***'It's not about hitting anyone, but it is about knowing more stuff on dealing with racism.'***

Young people need advocacy and a chance to develop their knowledge in tackling racist incidents, peer support programs were also mentioned as a way of supporting other young people. In fact Youth Action (based in London) promotes this type of peer education.

***'Having more support through the media'*** – it was felt that the media could play a supportive role in addressing racism and ensuring that people are more aware. When reporting on subjects such as racist incidents or information on asylum seekers, there is a need to be more sensitive rather than sensationalist.

***'When the Islamic Centre opened, the local newspaper made it out to be something quite dodgy and people were reported as saying that Muslims are a sect.'***

***'Larger punishments for racist individuals'*** – there was felt to be little in the way of consequences for individuals who racially abuse young people within school. We recommend that there is a need for a much more consistent approach in relation to the type of consequences young people will face when racially abusing another young person. Based on the evidence gathered this will aid BME young people to report racist incidents as they will know what the school response will be. At present there is no cohesive response from schools, some are more active while others are inactive in their approach. This research suggests that young people are very hesitant about reporting racism when they are surrounded by a system that is so confused.

***'For people to accept you for who you are'*** – by introducing more cultural diversity into schools young people felt that it would enable others to be more accepting of differences.

***'If we learnt more about other cultures then other kids wouldn't be so scared about Muslims being terrorists.'***

***'Even though we come from different backgrounds people are still people.'***

***'We should have more parties with music about different countries every month.'***

However, others felt that acceptance from some people would never happen. Some young people have been told to ***'move back to where you come from if you don't like it here'***, ***'there is no racism in Cornwall, you just want to think there is'***.

#### **Question 10 – Did you know that racism is illegal?**

The reason for this question was to enable discussion and raise awareness that racism is illegal. 66% had no knowledge that racism is illegal. The 34% that stated yes to the question still felt that they would not report it, or would be hesitant in reporting as ***'nothing would happen anyway'***. Many asked why they had not been told by schools that racism is illegal, others felt reporting to organisations such as the police would be too difficult as they would not feel comfortable in entering a police station.

#### **Questionnaire 2 – Aimed at non-BME young people**

##### **Question 1 – Male/female**

##### **Question 2 – What do you think racism is?**

This question concentrated on obtaining information of what understanding non BME young people had of the word racism. Below are the answers we received from the questionnaires, which are representative of the type of answers from non BME young people.

***'Coloured people that don't like coloured people.'***

***'Taking the ..... out of someone's religion or colour.'***

***'Racism is when two or more people dislike each other on the outside and not for what's inside.'***

***'Being treated different because you are different.'***

***'An individual's negative thoughts and words regarding persons from other cultures, religions and beliefs.'***

***'Racism is believing a person is less equal than another.'***

***'It could be verbal or physical.'***

***'Black people don't like white people because the black people think the white people are different but they are not.'***

***'When someone says really horrible things about people from a different country (black and white.)'***

***'Making a pre-judgement about someone according to their skin colour, cultural background.'***

***'When people abuse blacks.'***

***'Racism is a form of prejudice inflicted on people who are considered different from narrow minded people who fear someone who isn't like them. It stems from ignorance, when people look at colour as opposed to the person.'***

***'I'm really not that bothered with it.'***

In discussion groups at least two thirds of non BME young people felt that ***'coloured'*** people invited racism by dressing differently and talking in a different language. Certain beliefs seemed common in many of the groups we worked with, such as, ***'If you live next door to a black person they'll accuse you of racism.'***

***'Coloured people should learn to be more like white people, then there would not be a problem.'***

When we challenged some of these statements, we found no-one in fact had experienced living next door to anyone who was black, let alone be accused by a black person of racism. An illustration of this was one young man who made this type of statement who had no personal experience to back up his belief. He stated that he wasn't racist because he had a black uncle. We asked if his black uncle had accused him of ***'being racist'*** when they had a disagreement, to which he replied ***'no, my uncle is not like that'***, but he did insist that ***'lots'*** of people thought this way. We finally found out that it was something his father believed and in turn so did he.

The interesting part of some of the discussion was in examining issues of peer pressure, for example, in one group a young man insisted that ***if 'coloured people dressed more normally and didn't speak funny'*** there would be less racism and others quickly agreed. Many of the other young people in the group started to express their concern of terrorism. One young man stated that ***'Muslim women only wear those long clothes so they can hide bombs'***, and other young people laughed and agreed.

Statements quickly followed ***'I'd be scared to live next door to a coloured person, because if someone threw a brick at their window, they might accidentally hit our house!'***

***'We have these people from Portugal living next door to us, and they keep talking in their own language and my mum says that they are ignorant and shouldn't be allowed to stay in our country.'***

It seemed that more non BME young people seemed to agree, but when we started to break down what they were saying, again, we found that many of these attitudes came from families or the media. When one young man stood and asked the group ***‘what difference does it make what people wear, we don’t like our parents telling us what to wear, so why should you think that its okay to tell other people what to wear. People should be allowed to be safe no matter where they are from’***, we noticed that others began to change their earlier opinions and the group became more equally divided.

The issue of peer pressure came up several times within different discussion groups which were made up of different year groups. The above illustration demonstrates the influence peer pressure has on non BME young people, especially in relation to issues and attitudes of racism.

### **Question 3 – Do you know what it means to seek asylum?**

The answers to the question of asylum were varied, 59% said they knew what asylum meant. We asked them to explain what they thought it meant:

***‘It’s when people hide under a train.’***

***‘People that are trying to get into our country illegally.’***

***‘To be illegal.’***

***‘To sneak into our country.’***

***‘People who are trying to get help.’***

***‘People that are trying to get benefits.’***

***‘Terrorists coming into our country illegally.’***

***‘It’s when you hide in a car or a boat.’***

***‘Wanting to be safe.’***

***‘Running away from your country because you are in danger.’***

The above comments were representative of what young people thought asylum was. These statements clearly show that many young people do not know what asylum means; in fact their views on asylum seem to be formed mainly through tabloid headlines.

Within the discussion groups we asked non BME young people where they found information on asylum, the majority replied that they were aware of the issues of asylum mainly through T.V. and newspapers, which was their main source of information.

***'You hear about asylum seekers on the telly.'***

***'My dad reads the newspapers and tells me what asylum seekers are.'***

***'The papers tell you that they are just here illegally.'***

We asked different groups of non BME young people what they would do if their family's life was in danger. They all replied that they would call the police. We then said that what if they could not trust the police, that in fact they were the very people threatening their family's life, what would they do? All the non BME young people said that they would run away and try to find a place where their family would be safe. We explained that asylum was about finding safety for yourself or your family.

**Question 4 – Do you believe that people have a right to seek asylum in this country?**

Over half of the non BME young people questioned said yes to people being given asylum in this country. However there were conditions attached to asylum being given:

***'Yes, only people who need it, not the time wasting immigrants who are a waste of taxpayer's money.'***

***'As long as it does not impinge on my income.'***

***'I do think that they should have the right, as we should look globally. These are our neighbours and therefore our obligation to help them, we must also concentrate more highly on the people who need help in this country i.e. homeless.'***

***'Only if they will work and be good citizens.'***

***'I think people have the basic right to live safe lives away from persecution and we should assist, but not all cases.'***

***'Yes, as long as it is not detrimental to the indigenous population.'***

***'Yes, if someone wants to kill them but not for people who want a job or home.'***

***'Yes, if they get a visa.'***

***'Yes, as long as they are legal.'***

***'Yes, if we were in there position it would seem like a great idea to us.'***

Some of the above statements clearly show the lack of knowledge of what rights asylum seekers have in this country. The majority of non BME young people did not know that it is illegal for asylum seekers to work. The issue of coming into the country illegally was discussed. We explained that people who were running away

from their country due to their lives being threatened, were not likely to obtain a visa from their own government.

The non BME young people that stated 'no' for not allowing any asylum seekers into this country made the following types of statements which are representative:

***'I think they shouldn't because when they come here they go on benefits that we have to pay for.'***

***'No because riots may start between different races.'***

***'They should stay where they are – there are enough already. It's not fair on us, it's our country not theirs.'***

***'No because it costs the Government billions.'***

***'No, because they should be tackling their problems not running away.'***

***'They do not belong here.'***

***'No, people in this country are struggling to find houses and this country gives asylum seekers houses and money.'***

***'They are costing us money and taking our jobs and we don't know who they are.'***

***'No, because some people could be terrorists and could take advantage of our country. Money is being wasted.'***

***'No, they are getting 'special' benefits that we should be getting.'***

We again asked non BME young people where they received their information on asylum seekers, and they replied they gained information from the media and their parents.

***'My dad says that the Government are trying to stop all asylum seekers because there are too many here already, and that is why there aren't that many jobs.'***

We discussed some of these comments, for instance we asked 'what are the jobs that asylum seekers are taking away from 'us'. Many of the non BME young people replied that there were many asylum seekers working on bulb farms within Cornwall. We explained that these workers were not asylum seekers but other workers from abroad. We again explained that asylum seekers are not legally allowed to work. We asked about the 'special benefits' and were told that asylum seekers were given hundreds of pounds every week. We explained to the different groups how much money is actually given to asylum seekers.

We asked non BME young people if they had ever met any asylum seekers in Cornwall. Some replied that they thought they might have seen some in the town.

We asked what made you think they were asylum seekers? ***'Because they had brown skin and were talking in another language'***. This shows the obvious link between asylum and racism, in fact the majority of young people thought that all BME groups were probably here initially as asylum seekers.

#### **Question 5 – If you were a witness to a racist incident would you report it?**

Although the majority of non BME young people said that they would report a racist incident, when we asked what a racist incident was, some replied that if people were just joking with a BME person it would not be a racist incident, others stated it would depend on the severity of the incident. So although many young people said that they would report a racist incident, it was dependent on their perception of how bad it was. Many felt that name calling wasn't that hurtful as people tend to just be joking.

This non-reporting is similar to BME young people in question 5, where only 49% said that they would inform a teacher about a racist incident, depending on the severity of the incident.

The non BME young people who said they would not report racist incidents did so for fear of reprisals on them. Again this draws a comparison with reasons for non reporting by BME young people in question 8. Some clearly stated that they just wouldn't as it was up to the individual concerned to sort things out. A few pointed out that maybe ***'the coloured person was asking for it'***. Below are some of the yes and no statements:

***'Yes, but it would depend on how bad it was.'***

***'Yes, because it's wrong.'***

***'Yes, because I would not like to see it happen again.'***

***'I don't know, people should be arrested but they get away with it.'***

***'I don't agree with racism.'***

***'Yes, if it was a violent incident.'***

The above comments were reiterated by many of the non BME young people within the questionnaires. The issue of the severity of a racist incident was discussed further within different groups. The majority of non BME young people felt that only if there was violence involved would they report the incident.

The reasons for not reporting were:

***'No, because it's nothing to do with me.'***

***'No, I might get beaten up if they find out.'***

***'No, it's up to the victim.'***

***'No, there are too many reports of racism.'***

***'No, I'm only 13.'***

***'No, I wouldn't know all the reasons.'***

Although on the surface some non BME young people will say that they are opposed to racism, when we questioned them further about what makes an incident racist and reportable they were not too sure. They were able to recognise that if violence is used this would be a serious racist incident, but they were unable to recognise the impact of racist language on BME young people.

#### **Question 6 – Do you think there is a problem with racism where you live?**

Due to the 'no problem' with racism attitude that exists within Cornwall's institutions and organisations (as highlighted in both the Eric Jay report 'Keep them in Birmingham', and Mohammed Dhalech's 'Challenging Racism In The Rural Idyll'), we felt it would be relevant to obtain feedback from non BME young people in relation to this issue. An overwhelming 84% felt that racism did not exist where they lived. The statements given below are representative of what non BME young people said;

***'No, because there are no pakis or coloured people here.'***

***'No, because there are no coloured people.'***

***'No there are no blacks.'***

***'No, because everyone is the same.'***

The above comments show quite clearly that some non BME young people are not aware that the very language they use is racist. The other aspect of these types of comments show that BME people are being blamed for racism. By stating that there are no '**blacks**' or '**coloureds**' and hence no racism, it suggests that non BME young people feel if there were BME people in the community there would be racism. The implication is that BME people are responsible for racism.

The minority that felt there was racism and made comments such as:

***'Yes, people make stupid jokes out of people that are different.'***

***'Yes, I have heard racist jokes in the pub.'***

The above answers were a fairly typical response to question 6. There seemed to be a general consensus from the majority of non BME young people that since numbers of BME people within Cornwall were small, racism was not an issue. Although many non BME young people acknowledged that they had heard racist comments from people, they felt that they weren't really racist since they were not said in front of '**black or coloured people**'.



### Question 7 – Have you ever been racist?

The majority of non BME young people felt that they had never been racist, only 22% replied that they had. Many expressed that **'racism is wrong'** or **'No, it's not fair'**. Some of the types of comments from the 22% of young people were:

***'I'm sure that in one way or another I have been.'***

***'Yes, but they were asking for it.'***

***'Yes, but it was a joke.'***

***'Yes, but they started it.'***

***'I didn't really mean it.'***

In some discussion groups, young people that had stated no to question 7 unknowingly displayed racist attitudes in language and behaviour. Some young people seemed to have no idea as to why terms, such as, **'paki'** or **'wog'** were offensive, others felt that **'coloured people'** were **'taking all the jobs'** and **'blacks get more help than white people'**. This clearly shows the urgent need for more educational work that can lead to a better awareness of anti racism work, and in raising awareness of the issues of racism within the local community.

### Question 8 – Have your friends or someone you know been racist?

Interestingly, 65% of non BME young people answered yes even though in questions 6 and 7 the majority felt that racism was not an issue where they lived, and that they themselves had never been racist. Within the discussion groups many young people recounted racist incidents and attitudes they had witnessed. They were able to identify other people's racist attitudes more easily than their own. Below are a range of statements:

***'My auntie thinks that black people smell.'***

***'My dad thinks that coloured people aren't very intelligent.'***

***'Yes, when we did history in the class about slavery, some boys started to say nigger.'***

***'Yes, sometimes they tell racist jokes but I don't think that's racist.'***

***'Yes, they have called people pakis and niggers.'***

***'I have heard people say to black kids that they should not be in our country.'***

***'My friend gets called 'a paki' a lot.'***

***'My granddad thinks that black people are not very clever and cannot understand us.'***

***'Yes, my friends think paki jokes are funny.'***

***'Yes, my mum doesn't like Chinese people.'***

There seemed to be some confusion again with regard to racist jokes, although some young people ticked yes to the question they then went on to excuse the racism by explaining that there was no harm in jokes, and that they did constitute what they felt to be racist, but they did not change their original answers feeling that others might feel that they could be racist. By encouraging self-examination on issues of racism, we were able to engage young people in looking at how these 'jokes' would be perceived by other young people as being racist.

However, other comments from young people showed quite clearly that 'jokes' were not considered to be racist:

***'No, only jokes so it's not harming anyone.'***

***'No, only jokes and coloured people tell jokes about white people.'***

***'No, only jokes and I have a black friend who doesn't mind.'***

In one class a number of young men explained that they had a '**coloured**' friend who didn't mind when they called him '**paki man**' as it was said jokingly, and no harm was meant. When asked how they could be sure he didn't mind they replied that he never '**complained about it**'. Other young people felt that if you move into an all white area you should expect and accept these types of jokes, as no real harm is meant by them. The other type of thinking that manifested itself was that if you tell a racist joke to another white person it would not be racist as no '**coloured**' person would be present, hence no offence. So in fact they felt that you had to be '**black**' or '**coloured**' to feel offended by any racist jokes.

### **Question 9 – Would you know where to report a racist incident?**

Only 54% of non BME young people stated that they knew where to report a racist incident. Very few stated they would report it to a teacher, and others stated that they would report it to the police depending on the severity of the situation; others mentioned parents. The reasons for not reporting to a teacher seem to relate to the lack of knowledge regarding reporting systems, and also a lack of confidence in the matter being handled sensitively or seriously. These reasons were also extended to the police; again there is a comparison with feedback from BME young people to question 5 regarding the reasons for not reporting to a teacher and in question 8 relating to the police.

Below are a series of comments that are representative:

***'Yes, a teacher.'***

***'The police, but I don't think I would go into a police station.'***

***'The police, but they won't take it seriously.'***

***'The police don't take it seriously.'***

***'The police if it was bad.'***

***'If it was serious, the police.'***

***'A teacher, but I don't think I would.'***

***'A teacher, but there is only one in my school who would do anything.'***

The questionnaires show clearly what improvements need to be implemented within schools. Reporting systems need to be changed as they are currently not working, and training is required for all staff to ensure that they fully reflect and meet the needs of BME young people who are dealing with racism on a day-to-day basis, as well as enabling staff to challenge racism effectively. There is a need for multi-agency working in schools in tackling racism and implementing cultural awareness programs, which are interesting and challenging for all pupils. We recommend the need for additional support (as stated in questionnaire 1) for young people from BME groups within schools which is confidential, safe and appropriate to their needs.

The Macpherson report which came out of the Stephen Lawrence inquiry has specific recommendations for education:

***'That consideration be given to amendment of the National Curriculum aimed at valuing cultural diversity and preventing racism, in order better to reflect the needs of a diverse society.'***

***'That Local Education Authorities and school governors have the duty to create and implement strategies in their schools to prevent and address racism. Such strategies to include:***

***'That schools record all racist incidents; that all recorded incidents are reported to the pupils' parents/guardians, school governors and LEAs. That the number of racist incidents are published annually, on a school by school basis:***

***That the numbers and self defined ethnic identity of excluded pupils are published annually on a school by school basis.'***

***'That OFSTED inspections include examination of the implementation of such strategies.'***

***'That in creating strategies under the provision of the Crime & Disorder Act, relevant agencies (including schools and LEAs) should specifically consider implementing community and local initiatives aimed at promoting cultural diversity and addressing racism and the need for focused, consistent support for such initiatives.'***

We need to ensure that a change in culture and beliefs occur, even more so in a rural area such as Cornwall, where BME young people and their families are isolated and are more likely to be victims of racist attacks (Home Office statistics). It is not acceptable for any school to feel that racism is **'not an issue for them,'** they have a legal and statutory duty to ensure that race equality is promoted centrally within the school.

All youth services and schools urgently need to consider these recommendations, and implement them within their policies and practices. There is a need for more openness and transparency in relation to their policies and services in regard to tackling racism. There is a need for more accurate recording of BME young people within a school, and their attainment levels need to be monitored more closely.

Rural racism differs from urban racism in the isolation BME young people and families face. They are more likely to be a victim of racism in a rural area than an urban area, and there is a lack of support and access to support due to isolation. So it is essential that schools ensure that they provide access to support for BME young people. The comments, experiences and attitudes by all the young people clearly show the need for an urgent review of policy, practice and provision.

Education has an important role in effecting change through prevention and awareness; both The Macpherson report and Race Amendment Act 2000 show this. Although this puts extra statutory/legal responsibilities on to schools these responsibilities are there to develop a change in society on issues of racism.

The **'no problem'** approach adopted by some schools needs to be challenged further by Cornwall LEA. Further work in developing anti-racist strategies and developing cultural awareness is required in secondary and primary schools. There needs to be a comprehensive approach to all policy, practice, training and reporting. Strategies that can be monitored need to be implemented into schools to ensure that they are effectively challenging racism and raising cultural awareness; thus endeavouring to ensure that all young people are preparing to live within a diverse and multi-cultural society.

The Anti Racism Project is committed to working with BME young people and non-BME young people within schools and outside, to help provide support and challenge all forms of racism. This can only be achieved by more members of staff and extra resources within the Project; we are currently in the process of finding further funding to achieve this aim.

The Project also submitted a bid to the LEA to help deliver race equality work within primary and secondary schools in Cornwall. This proposal will provide support for schools in their delivery. This joint work will concentrate on effecting change and improving education on cultural awareness and race equality, providing additional support for young people from BME groups on issues of identity, culture, racism and reporting. We hope to establish a partnership with Cornwall LEA, which will effect change for all young people by providing a committed resource to schools for young people; by involving young people in developing workshops, and by providing support in challenging racism.

## Phase 2 – Outreach work and support

The Anti-Racism Project has also worked with BME young people and their families independently of the school system. This has involved supporting and advocating on their behalf in relation to racist incidents involving individuals and agencies. We have been recording and monitoring the services that people from BME communities receive from local agencies including the police, social services, local government, health services and employers, and also their experience in the community.

Whilst we have been told of instances of extremely good practice, we have also been told of many incidents which suggest that the experiences of young BME people in the education system extend across other services and the broader community. It seems that many organisations have issues to address in terms of: attitudes, understanding and behaviour of individual members of staff; systems that can discourage and impede the reporting of racist incidents; lack of fully effective complaints procedures.

### **The police**

When this Project began we immediately became aware of a lack of trust in the police from BME groups in Cornwall. We wanted to look at why this was so. As part of this, we requested a copy of the Association of Chief Police Officers' (ACPO) Hate Crimes Manual from Devon and Cornwall Constabulary, but we were told that it was a '**classified document**' and it would '**contravene the Data Protection Act**' to supply us with a copy. When we rang other constabularies around the country they told us that we could obtain access to this document, as it was not classified; we were also told of the website for the Association of Chief Police Officers where we could easily download the manual, and other related information.

Throughout the Project we have met many police officers who wish to engage positively within the work of the Project, however, we have seen evidence that some police officers display racist attitudes. Other professionals have come forward to the Project and described racism that has been exhibited by individual police officers. Comments made to us include:

***'I was shocked by their (police officers) attitudes; they were openly telling racist jokes and felt that because I was white I wouldn't mind.'***

***'When I was trying to explain to the officer about the way we would like to see them approach race equality work, he just dismissed me and said 'we are only trying to help you people', he then continued and I felt shocked at his attitude of labelling me and other BME people in this way.'***

***'I couldn't believe what I was hearing, they seemed to think that it was okay to talk in such a racist way, I still can't believe the language and attitudes they displayed.'***

Officers have been quoted as saying things such as:

***'The problem with Pakis is that they give nothing back.'***

***'They can't behave the same way as they do in Birmingham.'***

Regarding the reporting of racist incidents, the Project has worked closely with the police diversity manager and other officers to improve the position. On occasions when we have tried to support people in reporting racist incidents to the police we have encountered continuing problems in attitudes, behaviour and in actually being able to report these incidents as racist. In some cases, persons seeking to report blatantly racist incidents have been met with responses such as ***'you can't be sure it is meant to be racist'*** and ***'remember, it is just your word against theirs'***. In other cases they have met with difficulty in making the report at all, being told for example that ***'no-one is available'*** or that ***'a diversity officer would have responsibility for dealing with racist incidents'***.

The Project has had reports of direct racism from police officers where people have been called ***'black bastard'***, or ***'nigger'***, and incidents where officers have openly ignored or blamed BME individuals who have been racially attacked. When some individuals tried to complain about racism from police officers they were met with responses such as, ***'Are you sure you know what you are saying'***, and ***'I am sure that none of my officers would ever say such a thing, you can report it but I am sure that they wouldn't have said it'***.

In some cases formal complaints have been made against the police, and we continue to support individuals and families who are pursuing these.

One family states that they feel they have received little or no response to their reports to the police of racist graffiti or to the physical and verbal abuse they have received from the public. Another individual states that it took a number of days before police were able to record her statement of racial abuse ***"I am a confident person but if it had been someone else who was not as confident as me they would have given up"***. Another individual was supported by the Project to report a racist incident because without that support he admitted he ***"wouldn't have bothered"***.

A quote by a senior black church leader, David Muir, ***'We are over policed and to a larger extent under protected'***, shows at present the reality of BME people in Cornwall.

Not everyone's experience of the police is negative. A woman who has lived in Cornwall for over 10 years reported that she lived with racism on a day-to day-basis for years, receiving no support from the police, but when a new inspector arrived at her local police station she found him to be professional, caring, supportive and active about the racism she has received. Another woman who had been subjected to racist taunts from a young man felt that the officer who dealt with the incident had really listened to her and kept her informed.

We wish to continue supporting BME people in reporting racist incidents to the police, and also work with the police to support change on the issue of racism and how it is prioritised and investigated within the police service. This will include ensuring that front line staff and police officers are all trained in dealing with racist

incidents, and that the role of the diversity officer is clear to all staff. There is also a need for a more effective strategy in dealing with complaints about racism regarding police officers. All police staff should have a copy and have knowledge of the ACPO Hate Crimes Manual. There is a need for more multi-agency work by the police with agencies that work with BME groups. In recognising the failures that exist within the system and tackling them, it becomes possible to begin to address and meet the needs of BME people within Cornwall.

## **Social services**

A white couple moved down to Cornwall with their children who had been adopted and are black. All the adoptions had been arranged through social services in another authority where the family had lived previously. When the mother made a complaint regarding a racist comment aimed at her son, the school concerned contacted social services and informed them that the Jones family had another child who was being taught at home, and that they '**had concerns because of the Victoria Climbié case**'.

Social services came to the family home and, according to the family, were very open about their personal opinions on overseas adoptions in front of all the children. Comments were openly made, such as, '**We disagree with these types of adoptions**' and '**only 40% of adoption works, if this family works my job would be a waste of time**'. When the father challenged him and said that he felt that the social worker was trying to break up the family, the social worker replied, in front of the children, '**Yes, I am**'. The family also said that on another visit the social worker made all the children, aged between 3 and 14, line up, and gave them a number, as the social worker '**couldn't tell the difference between them**'

The family subsequently passed another assessment when they were described positively as an '**exceptional family**'.

The family complained about the way they had been treated. They felt that the two Cornwall County Council employees, who visited them, were not independent and that their attitudes were prejudiced, stating that at the start they made comments such as, '**Racism does not exist in Cornwall**' and '**You are lucky to be sat there with all your children**'. As they were leaving, the family said that they asked, '**are you always this miserable?**' and remarked '**I would like to say that it has been a pleasure meeting you but it hasn't**'.

The family again complained about this treatment. They have since received information on their complaint, but the persons that have been chosen to investigate their complaint are the same persons that the initial complaint was about. It appears they are to investigate themselves. Understandably the family feel that no-one is listening to them.

Other cases we have encountered include one where a social worker actually stated that it is within a black person's culture to beat their children. We know of no culture or religion where it is acceptable to beat or harm your child, and it is worrying that individuals within an organisation such as social services should display this level of ignorance.

## Employers

We have received many complaints of racism within employment. Although the Project primarily works with young people, we have also worked with parents, carers and other adults within the BME communities.

There are people who have complained of isolation within the workforce, with incidents of being ignored or excluded by other staff members: **'At break times I just stand on my own, no-one ever talks to me'**; **'I bought in a black forest gateaux for a staff party, no-one touched it and at the end \*\*\*\*\* said to me why don't you take it home for you and the kids, it is a black cake'**.

In some care homes we have complaints of **'white only'** staff meetings, with staff who have been hired from abroad being treated on an apartheid system. We received information from past and present employees of an employer who would not authorise loans if people had Asian names. When an employee questioned this, he was told **'you don't know how many live in a house'**. A young woman had started a training placement when a group of young men began to call her **'Paki'**, she reported it to her supervisor who replied **'Boys will be boys'**.

## The community

We have received evidence of racist attitudes throughout the broader community.

A Tanzanian group came to Cornwall with Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO), making up part of a larger group of volunteers from the UK. On a night out at a nightclub, the security staff gave access to all the white members of the group but refused all of the Tanzanian group. When one of the group asked why they were not allowing the Tanzanians inside they were told it's because **'they don't have any identification'**.

When an Islamic centre was opened in Truro some local residents were openly supportive but there was also suspicion and prejudice towards it. Local press reported that **'some of the Muslims were British (i.e. the ones that are born here)**. The comments from the public included calling Islam **'a sect'**, and suggested that had they had not observed planning permission in **'their own country they would have their hands chopped off.'** After the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks in the USA, the Imam of the Islamic centre was the victim of a racial attack in the street, and some neighbours accused the centre of **'making bombs'** and being terrorists. The centre has since had to move because of planning restrictions but the County Council have found temporary accommodation for it until a permanent location can be arranged.

The Anti Racism Project has also been involved in outreach work with restaurants and BME people in the street. Many people within Indian, Chinese and Turkish restaurants and takeaways have experienced racism, some verbal and some physical. There have been incidents of people refusing to pay and hurling chairs at staff, racist comments while staff have been serving, damage to property and physical threats of violence. There are families who are isolated, and are not



welcomed in the local community and told to '**stay in your place**'. Their children are targeted by racist abuse from adults and young people within the community.

The isolation that BME people face in Cornwall in obtaining any support is extreme; there are no agencies that work with BME groups within Cornwall other than the Cornwall Traveller Education Service, which provides a comprehensive service throughout Cornwall. As for support for visible minorities, there has been nothing available either in the statutory or voluntary sector. Unfortunately in many quarters the attitude still exists that we don't have any BME people in Cornwall, and from this ensues the almost complete lack of provision or support.

We hope the evidence and the individual experiences and comments reported here will effect change within organisations. It is unacceptable in the 21<sup>st</sup> century for racism to be left unchallenged and ignored. It is unacceptable that racism should be a daily experience for BME young people and their families.

There is no doubt that life is difficult for BME young people, families and individuals who live in a rural environment, but it does not mean that they should have to accept racism as being a part of everyday life within Cornwall. Racism is a social poison that needs to be rooted out and challenged by the whole community, services and agencies, it is not the responsibility of BME people alone. Every service aimed at young people and their families should be asking questions of itself in relation to race equality and its priority within their own organisation, and also examining accessibility, service, provision, training needs, policies, recruitment and why they are failing in enabling access and failing in meeting the needs of BME young people and communities in Cornwall.

It is intended that there will be further reports in the next few years which will examine and research attitudes and experiences of racism, which services are being delivered by statutory and voluntary organisations in relation to meeting the needs of BME people within Cornwall, how these agencies are combating racism within its services, and how they actively promote race equality. We are confident that these will show that Cornwall is delivering on these issues.

# Conclusions and recommendations

Racism is a day to day reality for BME young people and their families.

Visible minorities are treated as invisible by some agencies who do not recognise or do not meet the needs of BME individuals.

There are poor networks of support for BME individuals, in fact many visible minorities receive no support service relating to their needs.

Racism is being left unchallenged across many agencies and services in Cornwall. It is often ignored or covered up, leaving those who have been racially attacked more isolated and vulnerable.

There is a lack of effective race equality training within agencies across Cornwall in all sectors, resulting in a lack of understanding or awareness on race equality and the issues of racism.

Reporting systems are at present ineffective across many sectors in Cornwall, resulting in under reporting and at times secondary victimisation.

## **The Anti Racism Report recommends that:**

1. The Anti Racism Project should seek the endorsement of the Cornwall Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) and other multi-agency partnerships, including the Cornwall Diversity Forum, to develop and drive a multi-agency anti racism action plan that is agreed and signed by agencies across Cornwall. The multi-agency action plan should include a commitment from each statutory, voluntary and community agency to:
  - internally examine their policy, procedures, reporting and complaints systems in dealing with racist incidents within schools, colleges, training providers, employment, youth services and police for both young people and adults, and make changes within 12 months
  - examine what level of their service is taken up by BME groups, research barriers to use and make changes to increase use
  - review the existence and quality of race equality training and monitor the effectiveness of training for all their staff. This should include introducing mandatory race equality training for all police officers and front line staff within the police service
  - ensure that race equality has a higher priority in the delivery of service provision including setting up support networks for BME people across Cornwall
  - widen opportunities, through positive action, for BME people to apply for job vacancies within services especially; education, police, youth service, Connexions, voluntary youth services, youth offending team, drug action teams etc
  - increase and promote positive role models for young people at all policy and decision making levels

- continue to involve all young people in delivering anti-racism work, especially BME young people.
2. The Anti Racism Project should:
    - be part of the multi-agency partnership that will develop and drive an anti racism action plan
    - seek funding to continue to challenge, engage, educate and effect change on the issues of racism within all areas of society, with or on behalf of young people in order to create a more equal and safer environment
    - should continue to carry out independent research in partnership with other agencies
    - aim to provide workers who will work with all BME individuals (adults, children and young people)
    - further research on the issue of racism within Cornwall with a further report published
    - continue to involve BME communities in influencing the direction and development of the Project
    - continue to support, empower and advocate for BME individuals who suffer from racial harassment
    - continue to actively challenge racism in any form within any organisation or agency
    - seek funding for a specific service to provide support and advocacy for BME young people
    - seek funding to set up a resource centre for all agencies to provide advice, guidance and practical tools in challenging racism
    - provide more training and support packages for BME people within Cornwall.
  3. Nursery, primary and secondary schools and further education colleges should challenge racism and celebrate and teach cultural diversity with students, through curriculum programmes led by the LEA.
  4. Regional, national and international links are made with organisations that promote race equality and challenge racism. Thus creating further resources and opportunities for BME communities within Cornwall.

# Appendix 1

## Questionnaire One (BME) For Anti Racism Project

This questionnaire is completely confidential and has been compiled by workers from the Anti-Racism Project, whose umbrella organisation is Young People Cornwall. We are interested in knowing the views and opinions of young people in relation to racism. By completing this questionnaire, it will enable us to identify the various types of racism and also to assess the support needed for young people who are experiencing racism in Cornwall. We do not need your name but if you feel that you would like to talk to somebody confidentially, please ask for our phone number from your teacher or Connexions Personal Adviser.

Please answer all the questions as honestly as you can.

1. Please describe your Ethnicity.....

Age.....

Sex.....

2. What do you think is a racist incident?

.....  
.....  
.....

3. Can you describe a racist incident that you have experienced

.....  
.....  
.....

4. Have you ever witnessed or ever experienced racism in any of the following environments?

- In the workplace       At school/college       At home  
 With friends             In a shop                     In a pub or club  
 On public Transport     Other (please specify)

.....  
.....  
.....

5. If you experienced racism at school would you tell a teacher  Yes  No

Please explain why .....

.....  
.....

6. In your experience, do you think that there is enough support for people who encounter racism?  Yes  No

Please explain why? .....

.....  
.....

7. Where do you think that racist attitudes come from? Please tick appropriate box/es

- Friends     School     Family
  - Media     Music     Cultural
  - Global     Other (please state).....
- Please explain answer .....
- .....
- .....

8. Why do you think some young people don't report racist incidents?.....

.....

9. What would help you to deal with racism in your everyday life?.....

.....

10. Did you know that racism e.g. name calling etc, is illegal? Please tick yes/no

Any further comments.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire

## Questionnaire Two For Anti Racism Project

This questionnaire is completely confidential and has been compiled by workers from The Anti-Racism Project. The umbrella organisation is Young People Cornwall, which is a charity which works with young people. We are interested in knowing the views and opinions of young people in relation to racism. By completing this questionnaire, it will enable us to know what young people feel about racism and people from other cultures. Please remember that this questionnaire is confidential so we are asking for your honest opinions, we will not need to know your name. Please fill the questionnaire in fully.

1. Age .....  
Male/Female .....
2. What do you think racism is?  
Please explain .....  
.....  
.....
3. Do you know what it means to seek 'Asylum'? No [ ] Yes [ ]  
If yes please explain .....  
.....  
.....
4. Do you believe that people have a right to seek asylum in this country? No [ ] Yes [ ]  
Please explain your answer .....  
.....  
.....
5. If you were a witness to a racist incident, would you report it? No [ ] Yes [ ]  
Please state why .....  
.....  
.....
6. Do you think there is a problem with racism where you live? No [ ] Yes [ ]  
Please explain your answer .....  
.....  
.....
7. Have you ever been racist? No [ ] Yes [ ]  
Please state .....  
.....  
.....
8. Have your friends, or someone you know been racist? No [ ] Yes [ ]  
Please explain .....  
.....
9. Would you know where to report a racist incident? No [ ] Yes [ ]  
Please specify .....  
.....

Any Further comments.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

# The Anti-Racism Project Questionnaire 1

Mandeep Sandhu

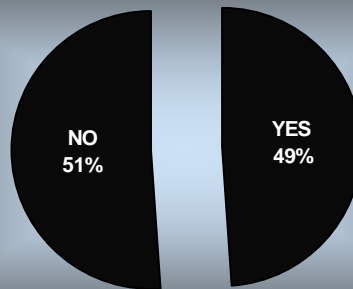
## The Sample:

- 47 Students from ethnic minority groups were asked their opinions on issues regarding racism
- The students were aged between 12 and 18.
- 23 Girls and 24 Boys were sampled
- The students were from various locations across Cornwall.

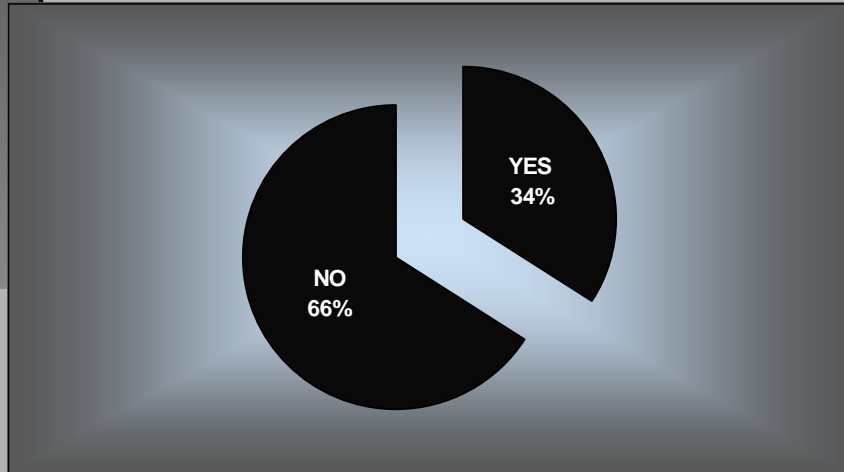


## The Results:

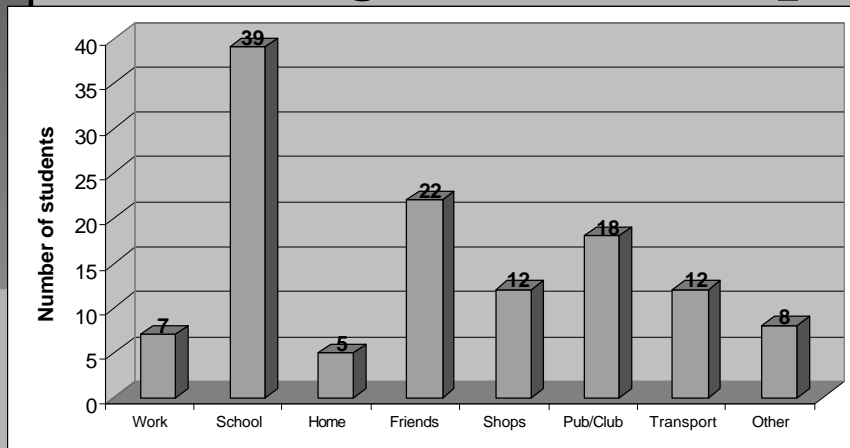
If you experienced racism at school would you tell a teacher?



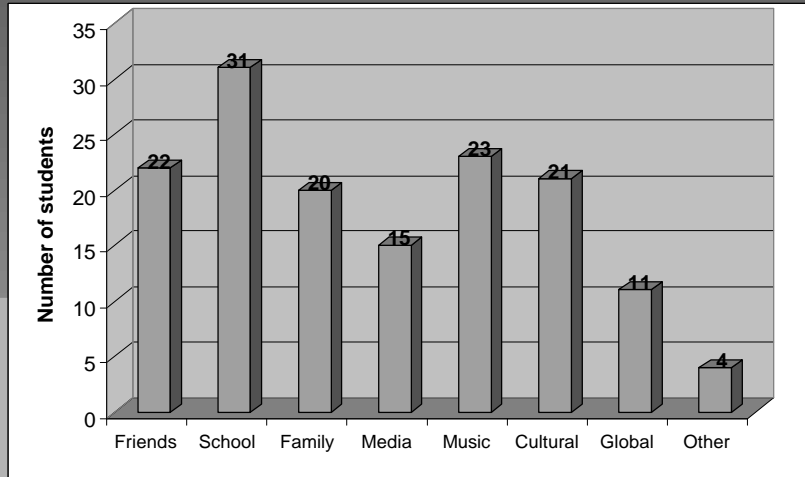
Do you know that racism e.g. name calling etc is illegal ?



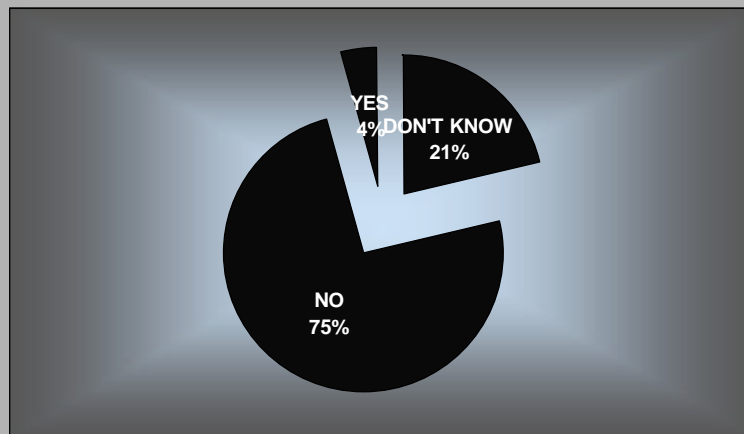
Have you ever witnessed or experienced racism in any of the following environments ?



## Where do you think racist attitudes come from ?



## In your experience, do you think there is enough support for people who experience racism?



# The Anti-Racism Project Questionnaire 2

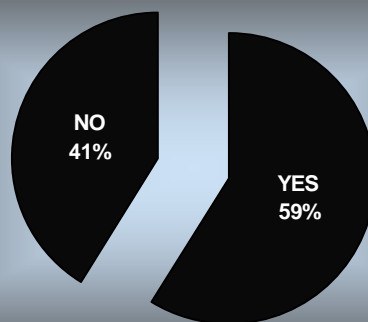
Mandeep Sandhu

## The Sample:

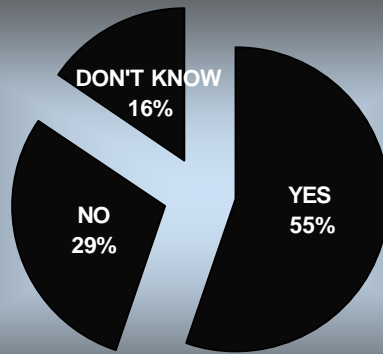
- 384 Students were asked their opinions on issues regarding racism
- The students were aged between 11 and 19.
- 199 Girls and 185 Boys were sampled
- All the students were from white, non ethnic minorities.

## The Results:

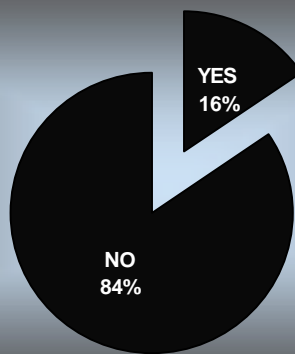
Do you know what it means to seek 'Asylum' ?



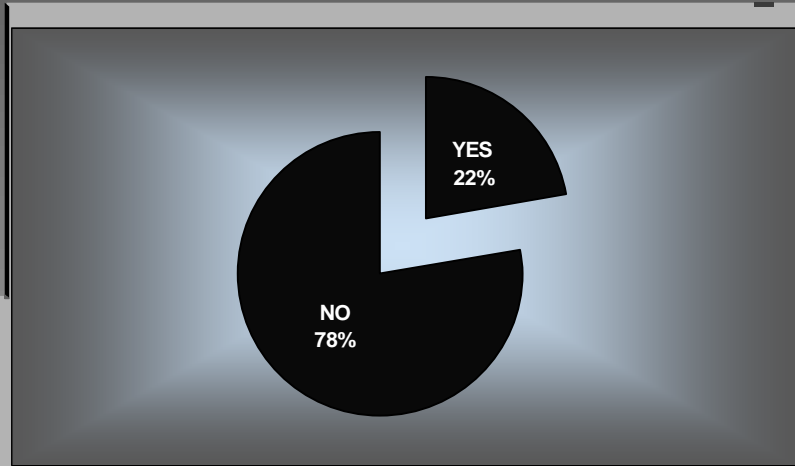
**Do you believe that people have the right to seek asylum in this country?**



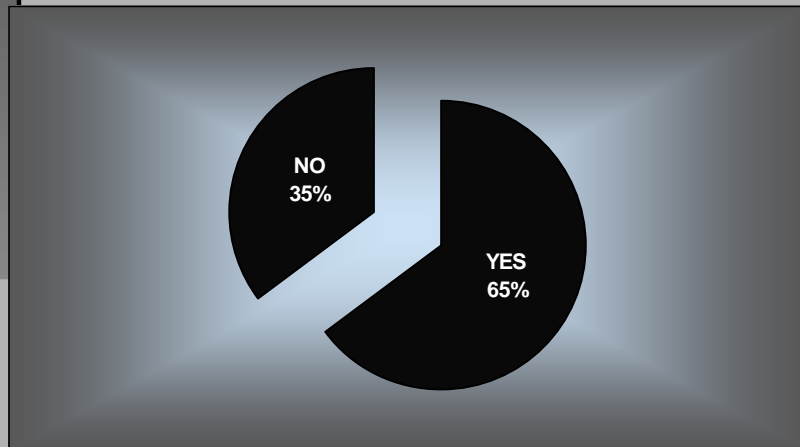
**Do you think there is a problem with racism where you live?**



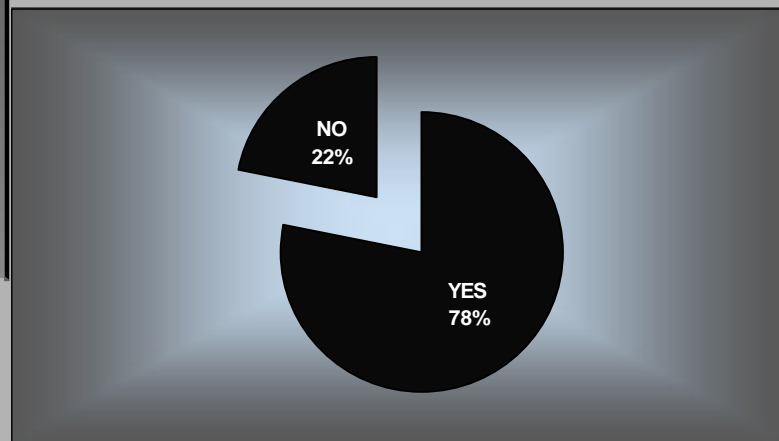
# Have you ever been racist?



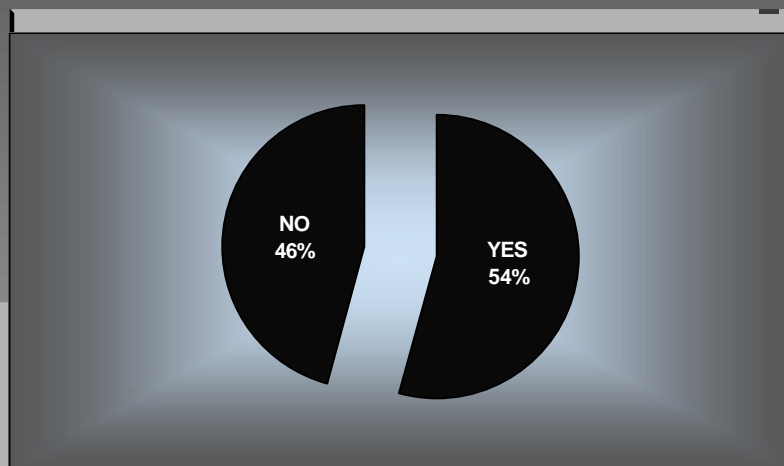
# Have your friends or someone you know been racist?



**If you were a witness to a racist incident would you report it?**



**Would you know where to report a racist incident?**





## Useful contacts

The Anti Racism Project (Cornwall)  
Young People Cornwall  
01872 222447

TRIBE  
Over 16's Lesbian, & Bisexual Project  
01872 222447

Traveller Education Support  
Service (Cornwall)  
01726 77113

Domestic Violence Forum (Cornwall)  
01872 262918

Child Protection Team  
Joint Consultancy Team  
01872 254549

Victim Support (Cornwall)  
01872 263464

Anti Bullying in Cornwall (ABC)  
Initiative  
Free helpline: 0800 587 5991

Citizens Advice South West  
01392 425517

Devon & Cornwall Constabulary  
Diversity Unit  
01392 452197 (Devon)  
Cornwall Diversity Unit  
01209 611243

The Intercom Trust  
Lesbian Gay BiSexual & Transgender  
Community Resource  
Helpline: 01392 201018

Hear Our Voice  
Young People's Mental Health  
Project  
01872 261989

Connexions Cornwall and Devon  
Customer freephone: 0800 9755111

Cornwall Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual  
And Transgender Switchboard  
Helpline: 01872 262929

Refugee Action (Devon & Cornwall)  
01752 519862  
Out of hours: 0870 241 2942