

5. RACIAL JUSTICE IN EDUCATION

SAHARA'S STORY

"My name is Sahara I live in temporary supported accommodation. I became homeless after I lost my job as a Recruitment Consultant, and I couldn't afford to pay my rent as a result. I started sofa surfing with friends but there's only so long you can stay with people before you start to take up space.

I contacted the council and they allocated a Support Worker to help get me into temporary accommodation. I waited for a call from my Support Worker for 3 weeks. During this time, I had nowhere else to go and I started to sleep in stairwells. I contacted an organisation that provides shelter for rough sleepers, and they told me I had to be on the actual street for 1-3 days in the middle of December and the temperatures were -1 degrees. I told them the weather is unbearable and streets is not safe for a young woman. However, they told me they couldn't help me unless I was living on the pavement.

Desperate for help, I contacted my GP as my mental health was deteriorating due to the situation. My GP then contacted my Support Worker who called me within 10 minutes to let me know I have a place in temporary accommodation. I don't what would have happened if my GP had not intervened. I have now been there for 1 year and 5 months with no clear direction of housing and how to move on."

SAHARA,
FROM LONDON

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE SOLUTIONS WE THINK MIGHT HELP?

1. **Temporary housing to mean temporary:** a statutory time limit on temporary accommodation.
2. **Building more affordable homes:** a genuine target for building social housing and supporting civil society landowners to build community-led affordable homes.
3. **Urgent repairs:** government to support and incentivise local authorities to complete immediate and urgent repairs to council homes causing poor health.
4. **Regulation:** higher standards and increased accountability, including a complaints mechanism, for decent homes in the private rental sector.



"The message I received at school about my place in the world was that black people were slaves and Africa was poor. Someone decided that these were the only things I and my peers needed to know. What a disservice. We all deserve an education system that endeavours to treat people with dignity and respect, regardless of racial classification or religion."

TINA SIMBO, NORTH EAST WELLBEING,
TYNE & WEAR CITIZENS

OUR TRACK RECORD

1. **Won increased spending on diverse books for Nottingham's city centre library, following on from the success of our 'Better Books' campaign, which provided all Nottingham primary schools with culturally diverse reading books.**
2. **Secured commitments from senior education leaders in Bradford and Leeds to work together to create measures that will lead to more equitable recruitment and retention of staff.**
3. **Working with schools in Tyne and Wear to create a whole school approach to anti-racism, implementing the National Education Union's Anti-Racism Charter¹¹ leading to changes impacting global majority pupils, families and staff and the wider community.**

Campaign overview

Citizens UK Chapters across the country are organising for racial justice in education and winning change. Young people have won greater religious freedoms, racist incidents are being taken more seriously, curricula are being improved and staff are having their voices heard by school leadership teams, who are listening and acting for racial justice.

Each day, so many educational leaders are working hard to create racial justice in their institutions, yet we know that there is only so much that can be done at a local level.

We want to work with the next Government to create an ambitious, inclusive, anti-racist education system that centres curricula, safeguarding, and workforce development, so that everyone can thrive.



How does a lack of racial justice in education affect our communities?

"I want to change the negative stigmas around people of colour and severe underrepresentation in the curriculum. As a black female, it's so important that I am educated on my race and ethnicity and to help combat racism and stereotypes we need to find the root which, in my opinion, is education. In the Racial Justice in Education meetings, we discussed problems with the curriculum and how we can challenge those things. In those meetings, I have discussed systemic and systematic racism and the impact that it has on younger people's education. Eventually, I would love to see an actual change to the curriculum, and to see it take place would be a dream come true. I just want younger people of colour to finally see themselves represented in the curriculum."

JOANNY, STUDENT, NOTTINGHAM GIRLS ACADEMY

"When meeting students of colour for the first time, teachers are often shocked and surprised by well-articulated thoughts and feelings. This unconscious bias limits the difficulty of work a teacher would set for a student of colour. Another impact racial injustice has, is the lack of support for incidents involving black or brown students. In a situation where a white student would get let off with a warning for their misdoings, a black or brown student could face a harsher punishment without being able to explain themselves. Teachers should be trained to understand and view students in a non-negative way regardless of their own personal stigmas or biases. They should also be trained to view students of colour as people and learn how to teach in an equal and fair way."

IBRAHIM, SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENT IN SOUTHWARK

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE SOLUTIONS WE THINK MIGHT HELP?

- 1. A review of the national curriculum to better represent the contributions of global majority people to our society.¹⁷**
- 2. Improvement in the diversity of the teacher workforce through recruitment and retention.**
- 3. For statutory teacher training to include racial justice.**
- 4. To consider racism as a safeguarding issue in schools.**

What are we trying to change?

Our listening tells us that young people, and staff experience racism perpetrated against them due to their skin colour, religion, nationality or culture. Too many incidents are inadequately dealt with. The presence and contributions of global majority people¹⁷ are not adequately reflected in curricula and there are significant disparities between the recruitment, retention, and progression of global majority staff, compared to their white counterparts.

A snapshot of the research reveals the scale of the problem. Black students are disproportionately subject to exclusions and sanctions in

educational settings.¹³ Young Muslims report that teachers often have stereotypical or low expectations of them, impacting their confidence and social mobility.¹⁴ There is a persistent gap between racial diversity within teaching staff and educational leadership and the general population.¹⁵ Likewise, between the presence of global majority people in school curricula and the reality of the richness of contributions made to our society.

With almost half of young black people saying that racism is the biggest barrier to educational success, things must improve.¹⁶

