

ACTION PLAN
To Increase Employment Rates
For Young Black Men In London

2014



THE BLACK TRAINING AND ENTERPRISE GROUP

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Young black men have higher unemployment rates than all other groups of young people. The gap between unemployment rates for young black men and young white men has been persistent for many years and has grown wider in recent years. Young black men still experience higher rates of unemployment despite their strongly improved educational attainment and regardless of their qualification level: black university graduates are twice as likely to be unemployed as white university graduates.

When asked for their views on this issue, young black men see the problem of high unemployment as resulting from factors which are beyond their control; **racism, discrimination and negative stereotyping**. They can provide an articulate and well reasoned analysis of the historical reasons for the current situation. But they feel powerless to change things around them and concentrate on trying to 'do the right thing' for themselves. Doing the right thing, by looking for a job, is not perceived as an easy option and they feel largely unsupported in this by agencies such as Jobcentre Plus.

A majority of young black men experience discrimination or negative stereotyping which adversely affect their prospects of employment. Almost two hundred young black men contributed to this research and most of them, including all 25 of our discussion group participants, reported that they had been unsuccessful in job interviews because they believed that the employer would rather not employ a black man. No complaints were made or action taken about these instances.

There is little evidence of what works in increasing employment rates for young black men. There is a lack of targeted data which enables a close understanding of how young black men are faring on job support schemes or through other pathways into work. Along with the lack of data and other firm evidence, this research encountered reluctance from employers, some employment support providers and other stakeholders to engage in discussions about increasing employment rates for young black men. The overall result is a lack of knowledge about what works for this target group and a dearth of case studies or good practice examples from which other agencies can learn.

This research points to the need for actions to tackle young black male unemployment in four key areas:

- **Action is needed to establish and work towards a common goal.** The goal should be to increase employment rates for young black men so that there is no disparity between young black men and all other young men. A regional co-ordinating group is needed to drive achievement of this goal in London.
- **Action is needed to improve support for young black male job seekers.** Helping more young black men into work requires localised and personalised support delivered by advisers who understand the barriers and who care about getting young black men into work.
- **Action is needed to create more pathways into employment for young black men.** We need to create more networks and pathways through which young black men can meet employers, gain work experience, develop career aspirations, secure employment and set up their own businesses.
- **Action is needed to challenge the negative stereotypes which society attaches to young black men.** We need to help employers to recognise these stereotypes for what they are and to avoid making recruitment decisions which are influenced by these. We need to create more positive portrayals of young black men in the media and amongst employers.

SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

This is an action plan for increasing employment rates for young black men in London. The unemployment rate for young black men in the UK is more than double the rate for young white men and higher than for any other ethnic group. This fact alone should be cause for great concern among all those involved in educating, training, supporting and employing young people.

This action plan is the result of a six month action research project carried out by the Black Training and Enterprise Group (BTEG) between October 2013 and April 2014. We use the term 'action research' to reflect the participative, problem solving approach which we took to the research. The action research investigated the reasons why young black men experience far higher rates of unemployment than any other group of young people, and sought to identify ways of tackling this problem. By 'young' we mean people aged 16 to 24 and within the term 'black' we include people from black British, black African, black Caribbean, other black and mixed black ethnic groups. The research was supported by Trust for London and carried out in close cooperation with Jobcentre Plus.

This action plan provides a framework for all agencies that have a role to play in ending the inequalities experienced by young black men who are trying to find jobs. The agencies we hope will use this framework include Jobcentre Plus, Work Programme providers and other employment support agencies, colleges and universities, voluntary and community organisations, employers, funders and the London Enterprise Panel.

This action plan comes at a time of growing recognition of the problems facing young black male job seekers. The research to develop this action plan was conducted in parallel with an initiative by Jobcentre Plus to provide targeted support to young black men in four London boroughs; Haringey, Hackney, Lambeth and Brent. At an event to launch this Jobcentre Plus initiative the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Iain Duncan Smith MP, endorsed the need for targeted action to improve employment opportunities for young black men:

*"The real issue is this is a big problem, I recognise that. There should be absolutely no difference between people of different ethnic backgrounds finding work. It's quite illogical really when you think about it that too many black men and black women find that the proportion going into work is lower than for other groups, it's utterly illogical. And the real point is just how much talent and capability are businesses missing by not looking to employ people from black communities at the same rate as they might have done for anybody else. And that's the real challenge - to get across to people the idea that businesses need to rethink the way they look at everybody that comes to them for a job."*¹

During the course of this research we were frequently asked 'Why young black men?' To show why, Section Two of this document draws on official statistics and published research to show the disparities for young black men in employment and unemployment in London and across the UK. We believe that these findings demonstrate why there needs to be a concerted effort to tackle the higher level of unemployment experienced by young black men.

Findings from the six month action research project are presented in Section Three of this document. The action research engaged young black men, employment support providers, local authorities, Jobcentre Plus, further education

¹Iain Duncan Smith, speaking at a Department for Work and Pensions event to launch local action plans to tackle young black male unemployment in four London boroughs. The event took place at the Tottenham Hotspur Foundation, London, on 3 March 2014.

and higher education institutions, and other stakeholders in discussions about the reasons for high young black male unemployment and ways of improving this situation. Where we found examples of agencies that are already doing this successfully, we have included these in the action plan. However, we were disappointed that the action research was unable to uncover more examples, and that very few agencies appeared willing to promote the work that they do with young black men. We therefore intend to update this action plan on a regular basis, to include more examples of what works as we find them.

Section Four presents the conclusions from our action research. These conclusions are the basis for the suggested actions set out in Section Five. The Action Plan shows the actions which agencies should focus on to improve employment opportunities and reduce unemployment rates for young black men. The action plan is intended to be a 'live document' which will be updated to show new actions as we make progress towards the overall goal of ending the ethnic inequalities in unemployment rates for young black men.

SECTION TWO:

WHY YOUNG BLACK MEN?

2.1 HEADLINES

- At the time of the 2011 Census, 87,011 black men aged between 16 and 24 lived in London. That is around half of all the young black men in England and Wales.
- The unemployment rate for young black men in the UK is more than double the rate for young white men.
- Young black men have a higher unemployment rate than young men and young women in all other ethnic groups.
- The gap between the unemployment rate for young black men and young white men has grown wider each year since 2009.
- Over one third of the unemployed young black men in London are resident in just five London boroughs - Lambeth, Lewisham, Croydon, Southwark and Hackney - where almost 3,500 young black men were unemployed at the time of the 2011 Census.
- The unemployment rate for young black men has remained persistently high despite improvements in their educational attainment. Black boys now perform almost as well as white boys at Level 2 and young black people have performed better than young white people at Level 3 in each of the last six years.
- Young black men have higher rates of post-16 education than white young men. At the time of the 2011 Census, 44 per cent of the young black men in London were students, compared with 47 per cent of Asian

young men and 32 per cent of white young men. But spending longer in education is not leading to any reductions in the higher unemployment rates experienced by young black men.

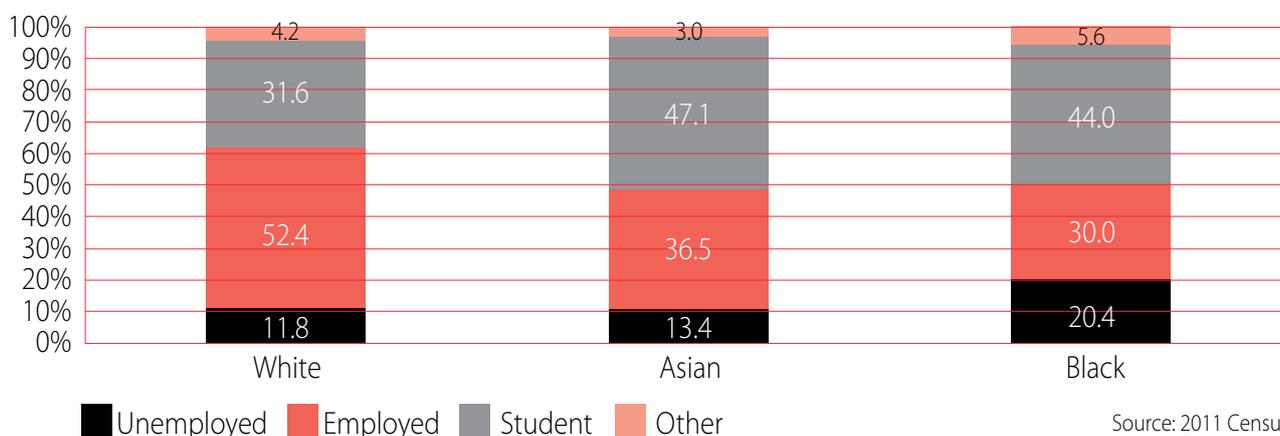
- Young black men in higher education are concentrated within a small number of universities. Six universities, all in London, accounted for almost one quarter of all the UK's black male undergraduates in 2012/13. These universities are in the bottom half of the university league table, have higher than average dropout rates and lower than average scores for future career prospects. In contrast, fewer than one per cent of the UK's black male undergraduates are studying at the six highest ranked universities.
- The unemployment rate for black graduates is more than double the unemployment rate for white graduates.

2.2 YOUNG BLACK MEN

At the time of the 2011 Census, 125,066 black men aged between 16 and 24 were living in England and Wales. Of these, 71,021 were in London, which is 58 per cent of all the young black men in England and Wales (excluding young men of mixed black/white ethnicity). In addition, 56,480 young men of mixed black/white ethnic origin were living in England and Wales, 15,990 of them in London, giving a total of 87,011 young black men in London, which is 48 per cent of all the young black men in England and Wales (including young men of mixed black/white ethnicity).

According to the Census data, of the 87,011 young black men in London, 43,210 (50%) were economically inactive (i.e. neither employed nor unemployed), 26,056 (30%) were in employment and 17,745 (20%) were unemployed. As shown in chart i, more young black men (44%) than young white men (32%) were students but unemployment was far higher for young black men than for young men from other ethnic groups; 20 per cent of all young black men in London were unemployed at the time of the 2011 Census, compared with 13 per cent of young Asian men and 12 per cent of young white men.

Chart i: Economic activity of young men in London



Young black male unemployment is high throughout London. But because some London boroughs have larger young black male populations, unemployment within this target group is a bigger problem in some areas of London than in others. Over one third of the unemployed young black men in London are resident in just five London boroughs; Lambeth, Lewisham, Croydon, Southwark and Hackney, where almost 3,500 young black men were unemployed at the time of the 2011 Census.

Table i: Unemployed young black men: highest London boroughs

Young black male population		Unemployed young black men	
Lambeth	6227	Lambeth	857
Southwark	5697	Lewisham	687
Croydon	5513	Croydon	664
Lewisham	5344	Southwark	628
Newham	4846	Hackney	609
Hackney	4614	Brent	593
Brent	4470	Newham	543
Enfield	4219	Waltham Forest	476
Haringey	4048	Haringey	469
Waltham Forest	3663	Enfield	459
Total in these boroughs	48,641	Total in these boroughs	5,985
Total in London	87,011	Total in London	10,262
56% of all young black men in London live in these ten boroughs		58% of all unemployed young black men in London live in these ten boroughs	

Source: 2011 Census

The government does not routinely publish statistics on unemployment rates by ethnicity, gender and age group, so it is not easy to track the unemployment rate for young black men. The figures in this section are drawn from ad hoc statistical reports published by the government and our own analysis of publicly available data.

There are two important points to note about the data presented in the remainder of this section:

- This research study includes young men of mixed black/white ethnicity within our definition of 'young black men'. However, not all data sources enable the figures for young black men and young men of mixed

black/white ethnicity to be combined. Therefore, for the remainder of this section, all figures for young black men are for those from black (African, Caribbean, Other) groups and do not include those from mixed black/white groups.

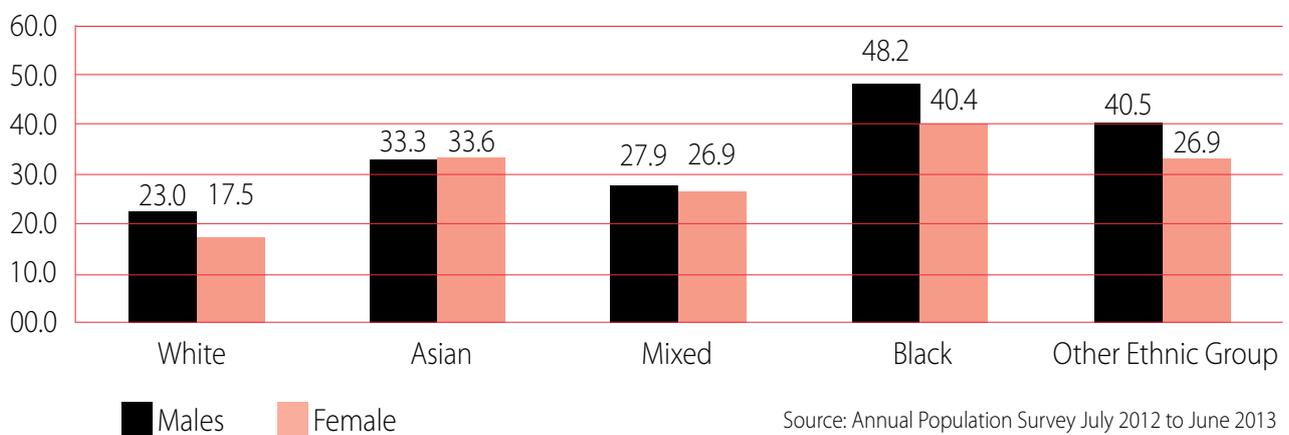
- In chart i unemployment is shown as a percentage of all young men in London, within each ethnic group. This differs from our preferred measure of unemployment which is the International Labour Organisation (ILO) unemployment rate. This is the internationally agreed definition of unemployment and the measure used by the Office for National Statistics to produce official UK unemployment rates. The ILO unemployment rate shows the proportion of the economically active population which is unemployed. The economically active population is made up of those in work (employed) and those who are not in work but are available for and actively seeking work (unemployed). The ILO unemployment rate is calculated as economically active/unemployed. The ILO unemployment rate is used throughout the remainder of this report, unless otherwise stated.

2.3 UNEMPLOYMENT

Young black men have the highest unemployment rate of any group of young people in the UK. For the 12 month period ending June 2013, the unemployment rate for young black men was over 48 per cent. That means that of all the young black men in the UK who were available for work, almost half were unemployed. This compares with just under a quarter of young white men and around one third of young Asian men.

Chart ii shows the ILO unemployment rates for young people in the UK from different ethnic groups in the 12 months to June 2013. The ILO unemployment rate for young black men is higher than for all other ethnic and gender groups.

Chart ii: ILO unemployment rates for males and females aged 16 to 24, UK, 2006 to 2012

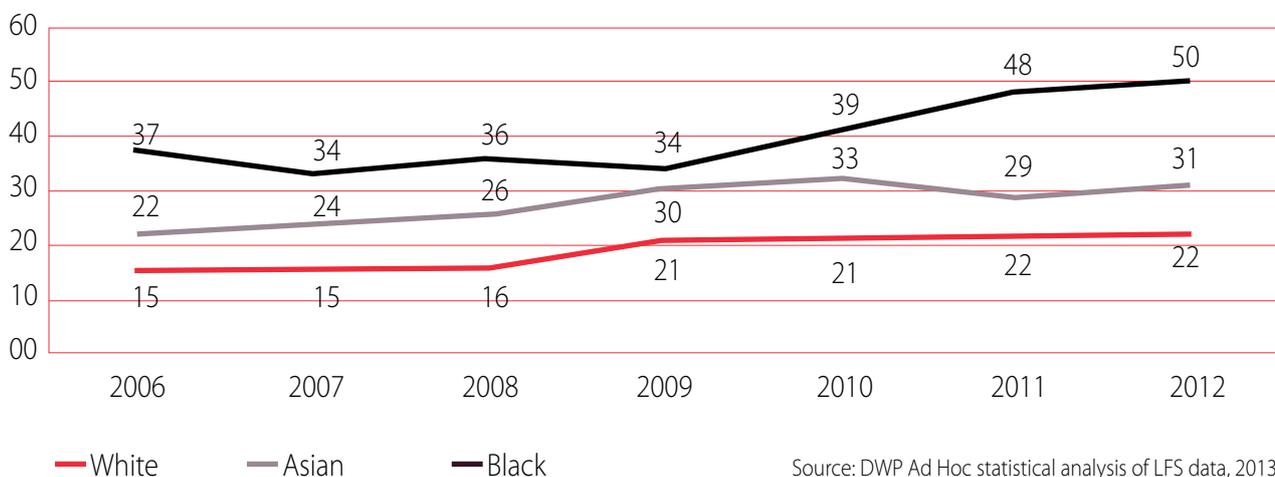


The higher rate of unemployment for young black men is not new. There has always been a significant gap between the unemployment rates for young black men and white young men. But this gap has been increasing since 2009.

Chart iii shows the average ILO unemployment rates for young men from black, white and Asian ethnic groups from 2006 to 2012. The unemployment rate for white young men has been lowest in every year and the rate for black young men has been the highest in every year. The gap between these two groups narrowed to 13 percentage points in 2009 but since then the unemployment rate for young black men has risen more steeply and the gap has grown wider each year. By 2012, the unemployment rate for young black men was 28 percentage points higher than the rate for white young men.

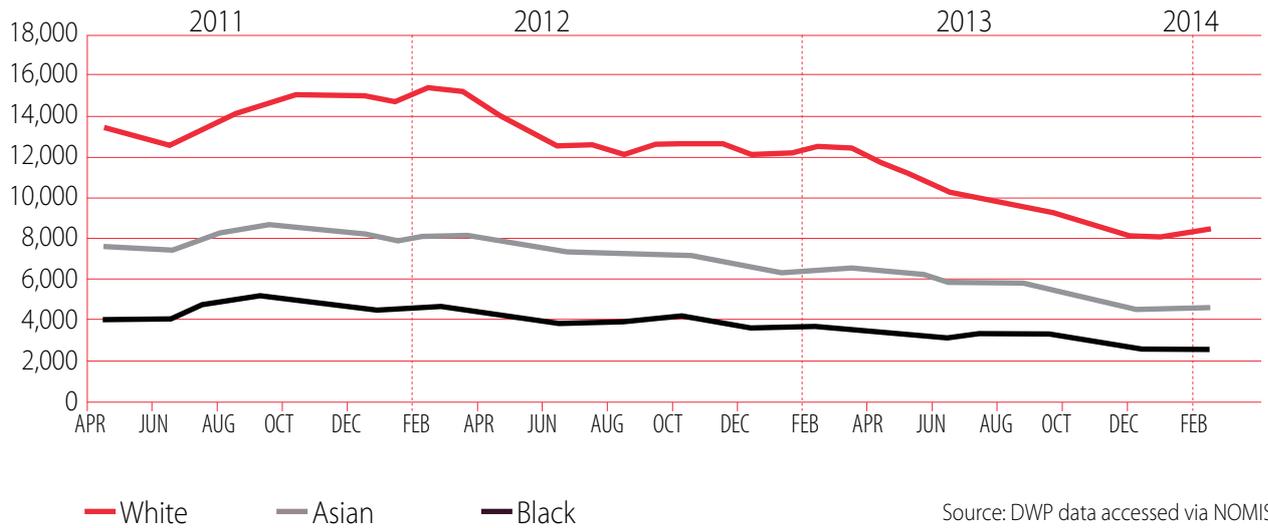
The number of people claiming and receiving Jobseekers Allowance has been declining steadily since 2012. The rates of decline have been sharper for white young men than for black young men, as illustrated in chart iv. The decrease in Jobseekers Allowance claimants has not altered the large disparity between the unemployment rates for white and black young men.

Chart iii: ILO unemployment rates for males aged 16 to 24, UK, 2006 to 2012



²The DWP notes for this analysis state that 'From Q1, 2011 there were changes in the recording of ethnicity in the LFS... This resulted in a discontinuity in the number of people reporting that they belonged to an ethnic minority group... Therefore the results presented here should be interpreted with caution.' The categories used to record black ethnic groups are consistent from 2006 to 2012 and should be unaffected by the 2011 changes in ethnicity recording.

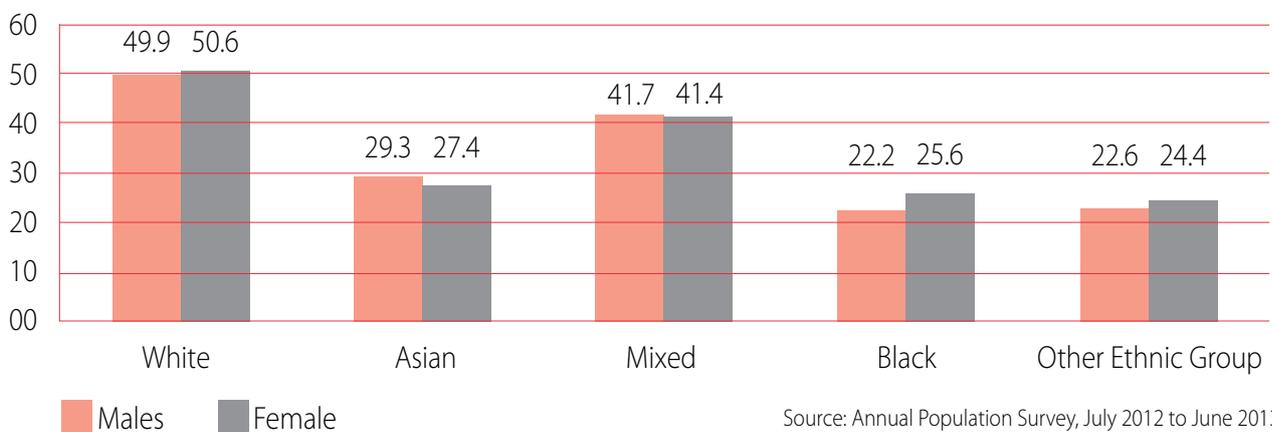
Chart iv: Young male JSA claimants in London, April 2011 to February 2014



2.4 EMPLOYMENT

Young black men have the lowest employment rate in the UK of all young people by ethnic and gender group. For the 12 month period to June 2013, only 22 per cent of young black men in the UK were in employment, compared with half of all young white men.

Chart v: Employment rates for males and females aged 16 to 24, UK, 2013



Black males make up nine per cent of all young males in London who are in employment; that is, around 1 in 11 of the young male workforce in London is black. This is lower than the proportion of young black males in the London population, where 14 per cent, or around 1 in 7 young males are black.

Chart vi: Males aged 16 to 24 in London

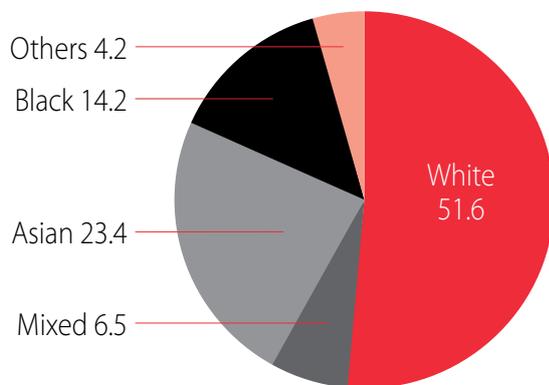
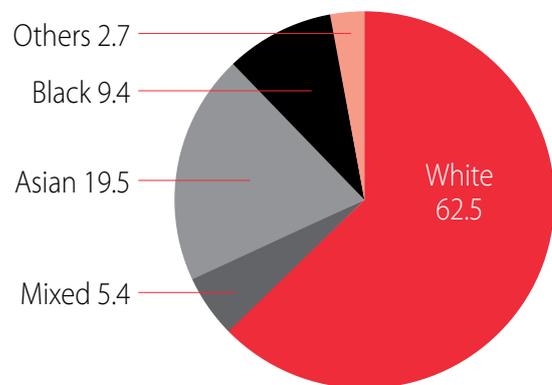


Chart vii: Employment rates for males and females aged 16 to 24, UK, 2013

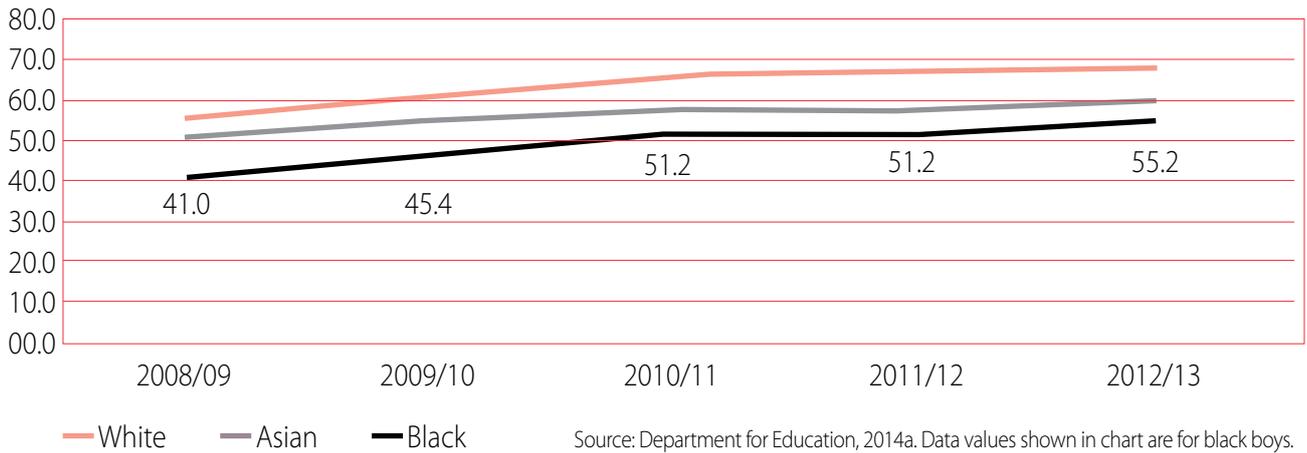


2.5 EDUCATION

One reason why relatively fewer young black men are in employment is because more are in education. Forty four per cent of young black men were students at the time of the 2011 Census, compared with 32 per cent of young white men. But spending longer in education is not leading to any reductions in the higher unemployment rates experienced by young black men. Unemployment rates have remained far higher for young black males than for all other groups of young people, despite their strong improvements in educational attainment.

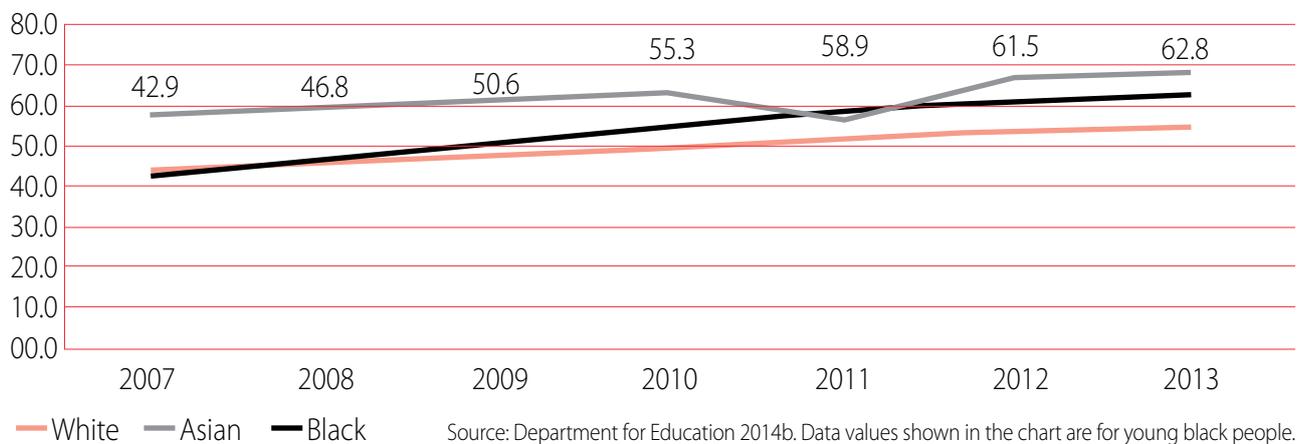
Level 2 attainment (5+ GCSEs at grades A* to C) has increased for all ethnic groups over the last five years but the increase has been sharper for black boys. Nationally, the gap between attainment for black boys and white boys had narrowed to just two percentage points in 2012/13. The attainment gap has narrowed in London, although not so closely; from a nine percentage point gap in 2008/09 to a five percentage point gap in 2012/13, all illustrated in chart viii.

Chart viii: Level 2 attainment for boys in London
 (% of eligible pupils attaining 5+GCSEs A*-C including English and Maths)



At Level 3 (2+ A Levels or equivalent) young black people have been outperforming young white people since 2008. In 2013, 63 per cent of young black people aged 19 attained Level 3 qualifications, compared with 55 per cent of young white people (no gender breakdown is available for this data). Level 3 attainment for young people by ethnic group is illustrated in chart ix.

Chart ix: Level 3 attainment for young people in England
 (% of 19 year olds attainment 2+ A levels or equivalent)



2.6 HIGHER EDUCATION

The gains which have been made by young black people at Levels 2 and 3 are not yet translating into improved achievements in higher education.

The percentage of young black people in higher education is increasing. In 20011/12, black students made up six per cent of all UK domiciled students in higher education, up from four per cent in 2003/04.

The percentage of young people aged 16 to 24 who were students at the time of the 2011 Census was far higher for young black people (44%) than for young white people (32%). However, higher level educational attainment is still lower for black young people than for young people from other ethnic groups. Figures from the 2011 Census show that of young people aged 16 to 24, 27 per cent of Asian young people had a Level 4 or higher qualification, 24 per cent of white young people, but only 16 per cent of black young people.

Young black men in higher education are concentrated within a small number of universities. Six universities, all in London, accounted for almost one quarter of all UK black male undergraduates in 2012/13³. These were the University of East London, London South Bank University, London Metropolitan University, Kingston University, Middlesex University and University of Greenwich. These six institutions accounted for four per cent of all UK undergraduates in 2012/13 but 23 per cent of the UK's black male undergraduates. Black males made up eight per cent of all undergraduates across these six universities. All of these universities are in the bottom half of the university league table and five of the six are in the bottom twenty of the 119 institutions ranked. The average career score for these six universities is 52 per cent (The Guardian, 2014).⁴

In contrast, the six UK universities which are ranked highest in the university league table (Cambridge, Oxford, London School of Economics, St Andrews, University College London and Durham) had a total of just 346 black male undergraduates in 2012/13. These six universities accounted for three per cent of all UK undergraduates in 2012/13 but just 0.9 per cent of the UK's black male undergraduates. Black males made up 0.7 per cent of the undergraduates across these six institutions. The average career score for these six universities is 79 per cent (The Guardian, 2014).

³These figures, and all others in this section, refer to UK domiciled undergraduates in UK higher education institutions.

⁴The average career score from The Guardian University League rankings for 2014 is defined as the percentage of graduates who find graduate level jobs or are studying full time within six months of graduation.

Table ii: UK universities with the largest numbers and highest proportions of black male undergraduates in 2012/13

Largest number of black male undergraduates		Highest proportion of black male undergraduates (%)	
University of East London	1,936	University of East London	14.6
London South Bank University	1,757	London South Bank University	12.4
London Metropolitan University	1,501	London Metropolitan University	12.3
Kingston University	1,453	University of West London	8.9
Middlesex University	1,314	Birkbeck, University of London	8.9
University of Greenwich	1,288	Kingston University	8.8
Total	9249	Average	11%

Source: Higher Education Statistical Agency

Non continuation rates

Non continuation rates measure the percentage of students who are no longer in higher education one year after entry. Black people have the highest non-continuation rate of all ethnic groups. Of higher education entrants in 2010/11, 11 per cent of black students were no longer in higher education one year later, compared with seven per cent of white students and eight per cent of Asian students (Equality Challenge Unit, 2013).

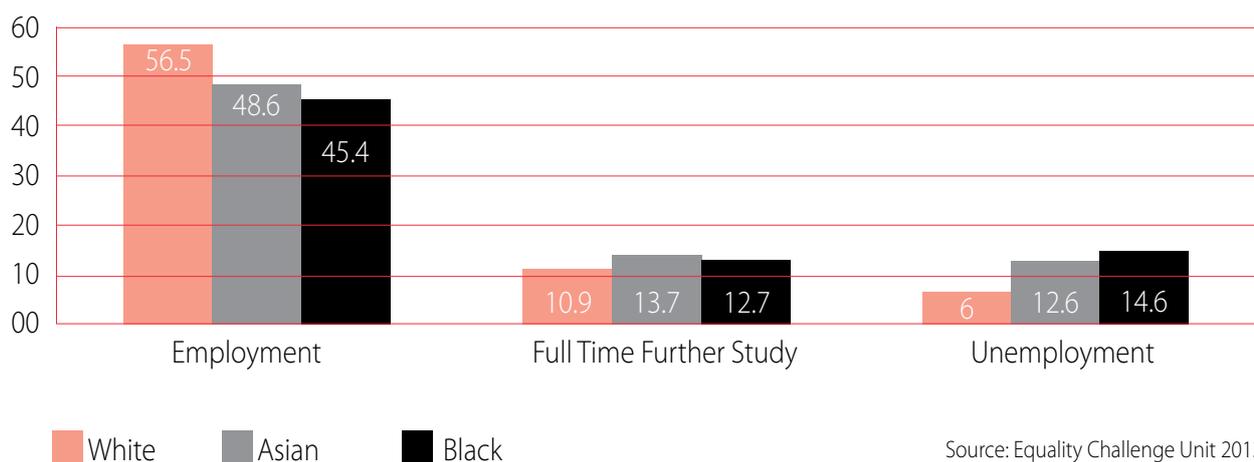
The average non continuation rate for all higher education institutions in England, for entrants in 2010/11, was seven per cent. The average non continuation rate for 2010/11 entrants in the six universities with the highest proportions of black male students was 11 per cent. In contrast, the average non continuation rate for the six highest ranked universities in the UK, where fewer than one per cent of black male graduates were students in 2012/13, was just two per cent (HESA, 2014).

Graduate unemployment

Black graduates are less likely to be employed and more likely to be unemployed than either white or Asian graduates, one year after graduating. Of those who graduated from university in 2011/12, 15 per cent of black graduates were unemployed one year later, compared with 13 per cent of Asian graduates and 6 per cent of white graduates.

2.7 APPRENTICESHIPS

It has not been possible for us to determine how many young black men are in apprenticeships. This data

Chart x: Destinations of 2011/12 UK university leavers

is collected but is not made publicly available by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Published data on apprenticeship participation by ethnic group (for all ages and genders) shows that black people are over-represented in apprenticeships in London. Nineteen per cent of all apprenticeship starts in London in 2012/13 were by people from black ethnic groups.

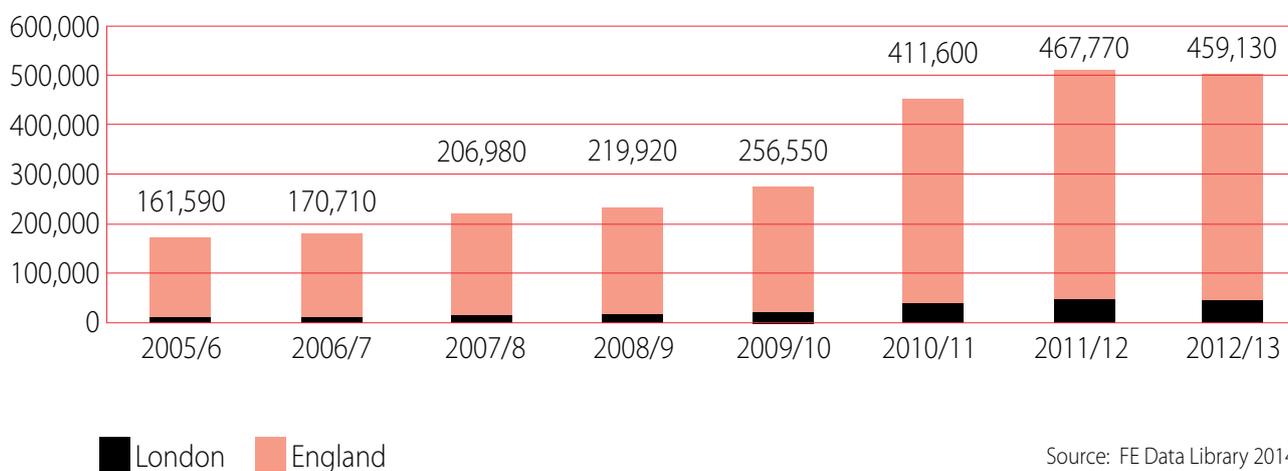
Table iii: All age apprenticeship starts by ethnicity, London, 2012/13

	London apprenticeship starts		London population (16-64)	
	Start Number	%	Number	%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	8,450	18.7	596,000	11.0
White	25,880	57.4	3,325,000	61.1
Asian/Asian British	5,790	12.9	1,035,000	19.0
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Group	2,850	6.3	119,000	2.2
Other Ethnic Group	1,140	2.5	356,000	6.6
Not known/Not provided	960	2.1	7,000	0.1
TOTAL	45,070	100	5,439,000	100

Source: National Apprenticeship Service

While people from black ethnic groups are well represented in the apprenticeship starts for London, it is worth noting that there are fewer apprenticeship places in London than in most other regions in England. London is home to over 16 per cent of England's working age population but had less than nine per cent of England's apprenticeship starts in 2012/13.

Chart xi: Apprenticeship programme starts in London and England



Around half of the young black men in England live in London, where there are relatively fewer apprenticeship places than in most other regions. Competition for apprenticeship places is tougher for black candidates than for white. Our analysis of the recorded apprenticeship applications in 2011/12 and the apprenticeship starts in the same year, in England, shows that while one white person started an apprenticeship for every two white people who applied, one black person started for every four black people who applied.

2.8 WORK PROGRAMME

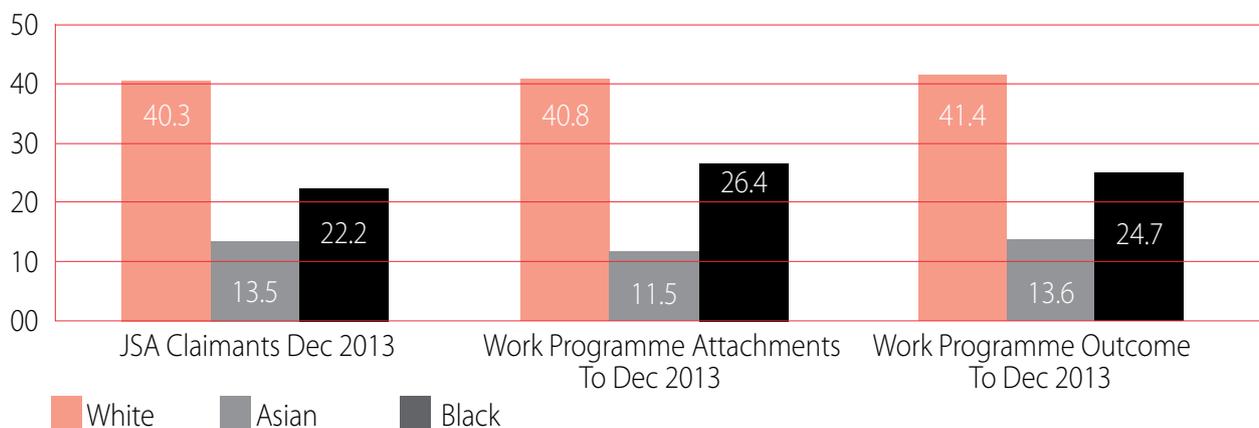
The Work Programme was launched in June 2011 and operates nationally. The cost of the programme to March 2013 was £736 million.

It is not clear what the outcomes are for young black men on the Work Programme in London. The Work Programme outcomes data published by Department for Work and Pensions allows only three fields of enquiry, and it is not possible to generate data for the four fields required to identify outcomes by contract + gender + ethnicity + age.

Our analysis of the Work Programme data by contract + age + ethnicity shows that young black people in London are over-represented in the Work Programme attachments (those who engage with a provider) when compared with the proportion of young black people in the London population and

with the proportion who are JSA claimants. Young black people in London are similarly over-represented in Work Programme job outcomes, when compared with the proportion of young black people who are JSA claimants. However, a comparison of attachments by ethnicity with job outcomes by ethnicity for the London Work Programme contracts shows that outcomes are higher than attachments for white and Asian young people, but lower for black young people. These comparisons are illustrated in chart xii.

Chart xii: % of JSA claimants, Work Programme attachments and outcomes for each ethnic group of young people in London



Source: DWP Work Programme tabulation tool. Data for JSA claimants is from DWP via NOMIS The chart shows percentage of ethnic group within each field i.e. of young JSA claimants in London in Dec 2013 percentage which is white, Asian, black.

2.9 EVIDENCE OF WHAT WORKS

There is no evidence of what works in improving employment rates specifically for young black men in the UK. A review of the evidence base on what works in tackling worklessness, carried out for the Greater London Authority in 2006, did not identify any evidence that was specific to young black people, or young people from ethnic minority groups. In terms of evidence of what works in tackling worklessness for young people, the review concluded that programmes aimed at young people are generally less effective than those aimed at adults. For people of black, Asian and other minority ethnic origin, the review concluded that the limited UK evidence indicates that employment support programmes were less effective than for white participants, and some evidence of possible employer discrimination may be a factor in this (Meadows, 2006).

2.10 EVIDENCE OF BARRIERS

Research evidence shows that some employers racially discriminate in job application processes,

based on likely ethnicity determined by the names of job applicants (Wood and others, 2009).

There is also evidence that the portrayal of young black men in the media is largely negative. Researchers at the University of Cardiff examined the media presentation of young black men and boys in the media and found that close to 7 in 10 stories of black young men and boys related in some form to crime, and that this figure was comparatively higher than in coverage of young men and boys more generally. The report concludes that it is 'reasonable to assume that the negative portrayal of black boys and young black men in news media may well impact on the wider readership and viewing public's perceptions of these groups' (Cushion et al 2011, p4).

There does not appear to be any research which has investigated possible links between negative media portrayal and decisions made by employers about young black male job candidates.

2.11 THE COST OF YOUNG BLACK MALE UNEMPLOYMENT

We have not identified any research which calculates the costs of the disproportionately high unemployment rate for young black men in London.

The ACEVO Commission on Youth Unemployment calculated the cost of youth unemployment in 2012. Based on the approximately 800,000 16 to 24 year olds in the UK who were NEET in 2012 (as indicated by the Work and Pensions Longitudinal Survey), this research calculated a cost to the exchequer of £4.8 billion plus £10.7 billion in lost economic output. Periods of youth unemployment cause 'scarring effects' for individuals in terms of a higher likelihood of future unemployment and reduced future earnings. The scarring effects for young people unemployed in 2012 were calculated at £2.9 billion (cost to the Exchequer) plus £6.3 billion (lost economic output) each year. The research concluded that youth unemployment in 2012 would cost £28 billion over the next ten years (ACEVO, 2012).

Research by the National Audit Office for the Department for Work and Pensions in 2008 calculated that the gap in the employment rate between the ethnic minority and the general population (at that time 14.2 percentage points) costs the economy some £8.6 billion annually (£1.3 billion cost to the Exchequer and £7.3 billion in lost output) (National Audit Office, 2008).

Further research would be required to calculate the economic cost of young black male unemployment in London. Based on the existing research, it is likely that the current cost of young black male unemployment in London amounts to tens of millions of pounds. The future costs are likely to be relatively higher than for young people on average, as the scarring effects of youth unemployment for males are higher than for females in terms of reduced earnings (ACEVO, 2012) and while the longer term penalties of youth unemployment for black people are unknown it would not be surprising to discover that they are higher than for other ethnic groups.

SECTION THREE:

ACTION RESEARCH FINDINGS

3.1 HEADLINES

- Young black men want to work. In our on-line survey, 88 per cent of NEET young black men say they are 'trying very hard or quite hard to find a job'.
- Young black men are finding it difficult in the job market. 100 per cent of survey respondents who are 'trying to find work' had applied for jobs in the last six months and 50 per cent had applied for 100 or more jobs in the last six months. Almost half (46%) said they had not been shortlisted for any jobs they had applied for in the last six months.
- Fewer than one third of survey respondents felt that they get all the help they need to help them to find jobs.
- A majority of young black men identify racism, discrimination and negative stereotyping as the main reasons why young black men experience such high unemployment rates.
- In a series of discussion groups with young black male job seekers, all of the 25 participants believed that a prospective employer had turned them down at interview stage because they would prefer not to employ a black man.
- The overall sense from these discussion groups was that these young men are trying hard to make their way in a society where they perceive that the odds are stacked against them. A few are doing this with a degree of optimism but others are more doubtful and some expressed utter despair.
- Young black men who are looking for work feel they are resisting peer pressure to follow this route rather than an alternative path into gangs and crime. They feel isolated from their peers and unsupported in their efforts to 'do the right thing'.
- Young black men have mixed but mainly poor experiences of support from Jobcentre Plus and Work Programme providers. They feel that advisers are not interested in them and that very few do anything to encourage, motivate or support them.
- Young black men consider that black communities have few resources to help them to find work. They have no contact with professional black men who can help them to access job opportunities. They feel that black communities are not good at working together.
- Agencies which support people to find work have mixed views about the reasons why unemployment is so high for young black men. Not all Work Programme prime contractors were aware of this fact.
- It is not possible to identify the number of young black men who have been helped into jobs through the Work Programme. The available data shows that young black people are well represented on the Work Programme but that job outcomes are slightly lower than for young white people.

- Some London local authorities have a long track record of targeted support for black communities and for young people, and are now beginning to prioritise support for young black men in order to tackle the disparities in unemployment rates for this group.
- There is little evidence of what works to increase employment rates for young black men. Some London boroughs are working on producing firmer evidence of this and others would welcome more information about good practice and effective approaches to support this group of young people.

3.2 INTRODUCTION

This section presents the main findings from the six month action research project carried out by BTEG from October 2013 to April 2014. The methodology for the research study is detailed in Annex One. The main components of the research were:

- An on-line survey of young black men, which attracted 160 responses;
- Four discussion groups with young black male job seekers, in which 25 young black men participated;
- Discussions with agencies which support job seekers to find work, including three prime contractors for the Work Programme in London and seven locally based, voluntary sector providers;
- Discussions with Jobcentre Plus, local authorities in the Jobcentre Plus target boroughs (Hackney, Haringey, Brent and Lambeth), the National Apprenticeship Service and the Greater London Authority;
- Attempts to collect the views of employability and careers advisers in FE and HE institutions in London, including through an on-line survey, discussion group and interviews, which resulted in contributions from only two institutions;
- Attempts to identify and talk to employers which have been active and successful in recruiting young black men, but which resulted in only one employer agreeing to contribute.

3.3 YOUNG BLACK MEN: SURVEY RESPONSES

We conducted an on-line survey in late 2013. The target group of survey respondents was black men aged between 16 and 24, living in London. There is no sampling frame for this population, so we used a network sampling approach by asking organisations working with young black men in London to pass on a web-link to the survey and encourage young black men to complete the survey questionnaire. Because of the sampling approach used, the survey findings cannot be considered representative of all young black men in London. However, the profile of survey respondents in terms of qualifications and employment status is not dissimilar from the profile for all young black men in London.

Young black men in employment

The survey asked respondents who are currently in employment about their experiences.

- Job satisfaction: 52 per cent said they were satisfied with their current job.
- Qualified for job: 50 per cent said they were in a job which matches their qualifications; 39 per cent said they were over-qualified for their current job and 11 per cent said they were under-qualified for their current job.
- Opportunities for career progression: 58 per cent said that they did **not** have good opportunities for progression in their current job

Young black men not in education, employment or training (NEET)

The survey asked respondents who are NEET about their experiences of looking for work.

- Registered unemployed: 61 per cent are registered as unemployed and 39 per cent are not registered as unemployed
- Looking for work: 77 per cent said they are 'trying very hard to find a job' and 88 per cent said they are 'trying very hard' or 'trying quite hard' to find a job'
- Plans for the future: 63 per cent said they will carry on looking for a job; 12 per cent said they will try to return to education, 17 per cent said they will try to find an apprenticeship or another training opportunity.
- Applying for jobs: 100 per cent said they had applied for 10 or more jobs in the last six months; 50 per cent said they had applied for 100 or more jobs in the last six months; 36 per cent said they had applied for 200 or more jobs in the last six months; 46 per cent said they had not been shortlisted for any jobs they had applied for in the last six months

Who has helped you to find work:

Table iv: Help with finding work (% of all NEET respondents)

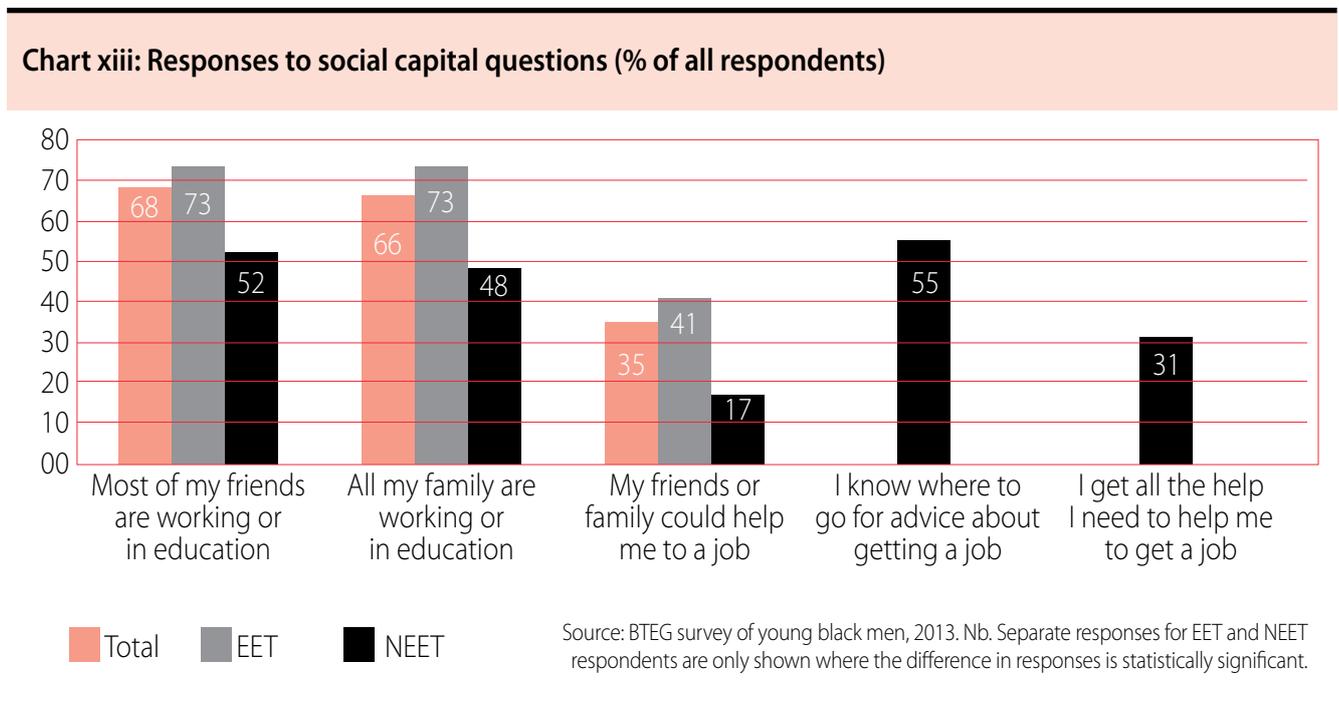
	Friends	Family	Jobcentre Plus	School or college	Charity or community centre
Writing a CV	23	23	39	15	8
Filling in application forms	50	30	20	20	10
Interview practice	46	18	18	9	9
Where to look for jobs	20	10	70	0	20

Source: BTEG survey of young black men

Young black men’s social networks

We asked all respondents about their social networks. These questions sought to identify whether young black men have social networks which might be helpful or influential in terms of education or employment. The responses are shown in chart viii below.

There are significant differences in the responses from EET (in employment, education or training) and NEET (not in employment, education or training) respondents to three of the questions. Respondents who are NEET are significantly less likely to say that most of the friends are in work or education, that most of their family are in work or education, or that their friends or family could help them to get a job.



Reasons for high unemployment rate for young black men

The survey asked: The official unemployment rate for young black men in England is 50% compared with 22% for young white men. What do you think are the reasons for this?

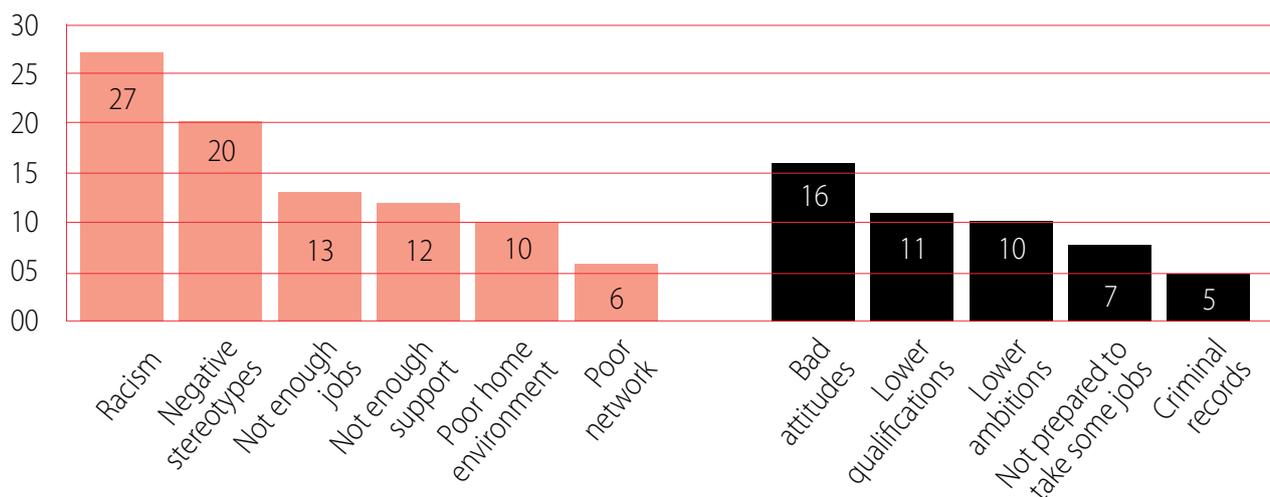
Just over half of all respondents (82 respondents) gave a response to this question. The responses provide an interesting and important insight into what young black men consider the factors affecting their employment opportunities. The responses ranged in length from 1 word ('racism') to 800 words. Several respondents wrote detailed and moving personal accounts of their own experiences of searching for jobs.

The reasons for high unemployment given by the survey respondents can be broadly grouped into 'intrinsic' and 'extrinsic' factors. The intrinsic factors are those which are within the control of young black men and over which they

could be seen to have some choice; these include 'having a bad attitude' and 'laziness'. The extrinsic factors are those which are beyond the control of individual young black men and where they cannot exercise any choice, such as 'some employers are racist' or 'negative media stereotypes of young black men'.

Chart xiv shows the extrinsic factors to the left and the intrinsic factors to the right. As the chart illustrates, the young black men who responded to this survey question identified almost equal numbers of intrinsic and extrinsic factors, with the extrinsic factors cited by many more respondents. There are 72 mentions for extrinsic factors (62% of all factors cited) and 44 mentions for intrinsic factors (38% of all factors cited).

Chart xiv: Young black men's reasons for higher unemployment rate (% of all respondents)



Source: BTEG survey of young black men, 2013

The following comments from survey respondents reflect the range of views expressed about why unemployment rates are so high for young black men:

- I honestly think it's a mix of young black men getting involved with gang life and having that gang mentality to get money through means of drug dealing violence and other illegal ways. The other reason for it is because of racism and I feel that the stereotype of black people follows them wherever they go. For example, I was on the bus the other day and a woman with a baby buggy was getting off the bus. She had dropped her bag and I picked it up for her and tried to hand it to her and she snatched it and just gave me a dirty look. Employers may also have a bad impression of black boys thinking that they have no work ethic or ambition, or that the boys are no good and will cause trouble.*

- *Because black males are not shown in the best way in the public eye. People stereotype them, in being in gangs and this effects black males chances of getting a job.*
- *From my observation I see some young black men feel disconnected with mainstream society and alienated from most other communities. We don't have a lot of realistic professional role models. A lot of young black men are socialised within the small bubble of their economic status and are thus culturally deprived of the necessary exposure that is needed in the modern professional work place. This is slowly improving over time but more can be done.*
- *A lot of the time job opportunities are more to do with who you know rather than are you best suited for the job. This means the easiest way to get a job is if a relative or someone who can give you a good reference works for the company. In this case this would put white people at an advantage as you usually find a lot of white people in high positions such as manager, etc. Also because there are not as many black people that own businesses, meaning not as many black people in a position of authority to help out younger black people such as myself. So we are at a disadvantage. I feel that black people can make it harder on themselves as well possibly due to laziness or lateness or a bad attitude. Also sometimes black people can become mixed up in the wrong crowd and end up with a criminal record which makes their job search that much harder. I don't believe it is all society's fault but there is a stigma around black male youth due to the portrayal of media and other things. For instance in the news they will document a black on black crime usually a few young black males, but won't show the good things black people are currently doing in this country. This is another reason why I feel employers maybe are more cautious when it comes to hiring black males. A very influential black man in my life told me for a black man to get a job they cannot be equals with a white man, they must be better than them (educationally and general life skills like communication, teamwork, etc) or the white man will get the job.*

3.4 YOUNG BLACK MEN: DISCUSSION GROUPS

Twenty five young black men took part in four discussion groups held in March and April 2014. The discussion groups took place in Jobcentre Plus offices in Hackney, Haringey, Lambeth and Brent and the participants were all active job seekers. All participants were aged between 18 and 24 and were from black African, black Caribbean, black British or mixed ethnic groups. They were invited to participate voluntarily in a 90 minute discussion about the experiences of young black men who are looking for work.

The participants had very mixed backgrounds. The majority had grown up in the local area but some were recent migrants to the UK. Some had left school with no qualifications but more were university graduates or current undergraduates. A few participants had criminal records or had experienced homelessness or family breakdown and others were from stable backgrounds. The groups included some young men with previous work experience, one had served in the armed forces for example, while other participants were still seeking a first job, for example one young man with a postgraduate qualification was seeking an opening in a legal practice. The diversity of the participants' backgrounds is important because their views and experiences of unemployment and job seeking were remarkably similar.

None of the participants had ever taken part in a discussion group before. Once they got started, the young men were eager to contribute their views and did this articulately and often at great length. Most of the discussions lasted far longer than the scheduled 90 minutes. Very few participants had previously met each other, but there was a strong sense in each discussion group that what they shared in terms of gender, age and ethnicity, gave them a shared understanding of each other's experiences and viewpoints. Several participants described the high unemployment rates for young black men in the UK as the historical legacy of slavery, but also considered that this was hardly worth focusing on as it did nothing to address the current issues. The overall sense from the four discussion groups was that these young men are trying hard to make their way in a society where they perceive that the odds are stacked against them. A few are doing this with a degree of optimism but others are more doubtful and some expressed utter despair.

The main points made by the discussion group participants were as follows:

Employers have negative views of young black men

The discussion group participants were unanimous on this point. They all considered that employers simply reflect the rest of society in the negative assumptions that they make about young black men. These negative views characterise young black men as criminals and gang members who don't want to work and cause trouble. The discussion group participants all felt they had been affected by these negative views, and many described their own experiences of arriving for a job interview, stepping into the interview room, and realising immediately from the reaction of the interviewer that they would not be getting this job. Many participants considered that getting an interview was relatively straightforward, but that the interview was a bigger hurdle.

'As soon as you get in the interview room you can see from their faces that you are not going to get the job,' [Focus group participant, Lambeth]

'It is an embedded stigma. If a white young man and a young black man with exactly the same background, finances and circumstances go for the same job-- who will they naturally pick?' [Focus group participant, Lambeth]

'Society need to change. People need to stop thinking that all black men are gang members' [Focus group participant, Haringey]

Young black men are trying to do the right thing

The discussion group participants all viewed themselves as young men who were 'trying to do the right thing' by looking for work. They wanted to work in order to earn money to help their families or to become independent. They described this as a choice they had made and saw themselves as a minority among their peers in choosing this route. The alternative route was seen as being 'on the street'. All the participants had friends and sometimes relatives who were on the street, some of them earning money through criminal activities. Most participants felt they were very isolated in 'trying to do the right thing' and that this was the more difficult route for them to take but that they received little support in this.

'Out of the black boys in my school about 75 per cent went on the street and about 25 per cent went to college or uni. They can make more money on the streets and they can't see the point of education because it won't get them a job.'

[Focus group participant, Brent]

'The money you get in a job isn't as good as what you would make on the street, but the job has more stress.'

[Focus group participant, Haringey]

'You have to be very strong mentally to withstand the peer pressure to do bad things and over the years it can be hard to resist, especially if they are offering you money.' [Focus group participant, Lambeth]

Poor experiences with support services

All the discussion group participants were active job seekers. Most were looking for entry level jobs in retail or security. Very few were actively seeking work in the field in which their career ambitions lay; one or two graduates were doing this along with some with vocational qualifications in mechanics or IT. Although almost all participants had greater ambitions, many of them in music or other creative directions, they considered that retail or security jobs were a more realistic option for them.

Participants recounted mixed experiences of the support they received to help them find work. They felt that the quality of support from Jobcentre Plus or from Work Programme providers depended on the individual adviser; some advisers were good and helpful but most were uninterested. Jobcentre Plus advisers were seen as more interested in finding reasons to sanction them than in helping them to find work. One participant had taken part in IT recruitment events organised by Jobcentre Plus and had found these helpful and believed that the contacts made with employers would eventually lead to a job. No other participants could think of any positive activities carried out by Jobcentre Plus or Work Programme providers to help them to find work. Participants felt that a more encouraging attitude and greater interest from advisers would make a big difference to them. It would help them to feel more motivated in their search for work and less isolated in feeling they are doing this alone.

Almost all participants considered that work experience was critical to finding a job, based on their own experiences of being turned down for jobs due to their lack of work experience. They felt that no support was available for them to get work experience and none reported that they had been offered or had undergone any work experience placements.

Some participants knew of black-led support services in their local area, but most did not. All were positive about the idea of using black-led services, believing that they would be better supported by people who *'know what the problems are'*.

'JobcentrePlus don't do much to help. They send you to places to get your CV done. But that doesn't help. We need help to get jobs not CVs.' [Focus group participant, Haringey]

'You need someone to take a personal interest and to be helpful and to put time and effort into helping you... someone with a genuine interest in helping you to achieve what you want to achieve.'

[Focus group participant, Hackney]

'The best support I had was in prison.' [Focus group participant, Haringey]

Lack of networks and role models

The discussion group participants believed that strong, supportive networks are lacking in black communities. They contrasted this with Turkish, Indian and other ethnic minority communities living in the same neighbourhoods. Lacking these networks disadvantages black men when looking for work as they recognised that these are a valuable means of identifying opportunities and gaining work experience. The participants felt they had few role models they could look to as examples of black men who were successful in their careers or businesses.

'You need positive support around you to be ambitious and to be motivated to succeed. This is lacking in black communities. If you are ambitious you get laughed at.' [Focus group participant, Hackney]

'Young black men look up to older black men but a lot of them are in crime or in prison.'

[Focus group participant, Hackney]

3.5 EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT AGENCIES

We interviewed representatives from three large companies which are prime contractors for the Work Programme in London and one large company delivering a range of Skills Funding Agency contracts for employment support services. We also heard from five smaller providers which responded to our on-line survey and two small providers which took part in a discussion group.

The main findings from this strand of the research are:

- There was a disappointing reluctance from many employment support providers to engage with or contribute to this research. There may be many explanations for this but it is difficult not to conclude that a key reason is an unwillingness to be associated with initiatives to increase employment rates for young black men.
- There remain a number of locally based voluntary and community groups across London which are focused on supporting young black men, either into employment or into other positive activities. These groups tend to be small, community based and struggling to secure funding. We are not aware that any of these organisations has been able to win Work Programme sub contracts or JobcentrePlus Flexible Support Fund to resource their work with young black men.

- We were unable to gain an accurate picture of the outcomes achieved for young black men who are receiving help to find jobs. Not all providers collect this data. Where providers are collecting the data, not all are happy to share this. Work Programme providers were unable or unwilling to provide more detailed data on outcomes than that available from DWP and it is not possible to determine from the DWP data what the Work Programme job outcomes are for young black men.
- There is no agreement among providers about the reasons why young black male unemployment is so high. In discussions, providers identified around 20 reasons. The importance which providers accord to these factors varies considerably. In general, mainstream providers (those supporting all groups of job seekers) are likely to cite 'poorly presented CVs', 'negative attitudes', 'lack of confidence or motivation' as the main reasons, while specialist providers (working particularly with black or ethnic minority communities) are likely to suggest 'lack of support', 'racism or discrimination from employers' and 'lack of contacts and social networks'. But we also heard from prime contractors who suggested that 'racism or discrimination from employers' was the main reason, and from small providers who thought that 'poorly presented CVs' was the main reason.
- Broadly, mainstream and specialist providers alike consider that young black men need the following support to help them to find work:
 - ▶ Services which are delivered locally. Young people are more likely to take up support which is available near to where they live. They are reluctant to travel far on their own as public transport is expensive and perceived as intimidating. Some providers also find that young black men have 'gangs/territorial' issues for not wanting to travel outside their local area.
 - ▶ Advisers who are committed and enthusiastic. The quality of the advisers was regarded as key. Several providers suggested that young advisers achieve better results for young job seekers, and that young black male advisers would do best with young black male job seekers.
 - ▶ Programmes where advisers have the flexibility and budget to tailor training and support to the needs of the individual. Several providers gave examples of programmes they had delivered where advisers had this flexibility and believed that this was an important factor in improving outcomes for young black people. The Work Programme was not seen as having this flexibility.

3.6 OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

We held a series of discussions with agencies which have a role or interest in supporting young black men into employment, including: Jobcentre Plus; the National Apprenticeship Service; Greater London Authority; local authorities in the four boroughs where Jobcentre Plus is providing targeted support for young black male job seekers; further and higher education providers in London; and a large employer in the strategic outsourcing sector which has been successful in recruiting young black men to its workforce.

Jobcentre Plus

In March 2014, Jobcentre Plus launched a set of action plans to tackle young black male unemployment in four London boroughs; Lambeth, Brent, Haringey and Hackney. The action plans have delivered some additional support for young black job seekers in each borough. In Lambeth, for example, Jobcentre Plus has worked in partnership with Lambeth Council to procure additional support for up to 45 young black job seekers from two specialist providers. The initiative is viewed as a pilot and will be evaluated to determine whether job outcomes are an improvement on what would otherwise be expected for this target group. Similar initiatives are taking place in the other target boroughs.

It is not yet clear whether the Jobcentre Plus action plans to tackle young black male unemployment represent a long term plan or, as is the current position, a set of pilot, project based interventions. An evaluation of the four pilot initiatives is due, although the timeframe for this is unclear.

Local authorities

The local authorities interviewed for this research offered a range of explanations for why unemployment is so high for young black men. Most interviewees considered that their Council had been tackling this issue for many years, although perhaps not through explicit targeting. Different local authorities placed different emphasis on the main reasons for high unemployment, and not all the following factors were mentioned by all interviewees. However, in general, the local authorities considered that higher young black male unemployment within their boroughs was due to the following:

- The links between ethnicity and poverty, with high concentrations of black families living in geographic areas where there is high unemployment and poverty, and possible 'postcode discrimination' from employers who are reluctant to recruit from such areas;
- Problems of family breakdown, lack of family stability, absent fathers, and 'troubled families';
- Young black men's involvement in gangs, criminal activities, and greater likelihood of being in the criminal justice system and acquiring a criminal record;
- Poor educational attainment, perhaps resulting from poor quality of education delivered in some schools, or from problems with the transition from primary to secondary school, or from lack of co-ordinated support in the transition period for 16 to 18 year olds;
- A lack of aspiration among young black men, or lack of confidence to develop aspirations, or lack of support to meet basic requirements of most employers (including having a presentable appearance, being on time, being personable);
- A lack of flexibility within DWP programmes to provide the tailored, individualised support required.

Local authorities in the target boroughs have begun to identify young black men as a priority group for their support.

Several are now working up plans for how to provide this support in an effective way but with limited resources. Examples of this include London Borough of Lambeth which has designated young black people as a priority group (along with older people and lone parents). Lambeth Council has been working closely with Jobcentre Plus on the targeted initiative to help young black men into jobs, and is also working with the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion to build evidence of what works in helping people into jobs. Another example is London Borough of Hackney where the Council is in the process of adopting a strategy to improve outcomes for young black men. The Council is seeking to develop a radically different approach to this by looking at all the factors which negatively affect outcomes for young black men and identifying where the Council and its partners can intervene to provide support. The Council's aim is that outcomes and opportunities should be the same for black boys and black men as the wider population.

It is not yet clear how the local authority prioritisation of young black men will translate into actions which make a practical difference, and what the local authority roles will be in steering, funding or monitoring any such actions.

Further and higher education

It is not possible to draw any general points from our discussions with further and higher education providers in London, as so few were willing to contribute to this research. This is particularly disappointing given the very high concentration of young black men in just a small number of London universities and the fact that unemployment rates for black graduates are more than double the rate for white graduates.

We believe that Hackney Community College offers an example of good practice in supporting young black men to develop their career ambitions and to pursue further and higher education courses to achieve their goals. The College uses achievements data to track the progress of its students, including by ethnicity and gender, and was therefore able to identify some years ago that black males were under-achieving. The College responded with a targeted programme of support which has succeeded in closing the performance gap for black male students. The College also works closely with Hackney's voluntary sector to strengthen the support available to young black men in the borough.

Greater London Authority

The Greater London Authority recognises the disparities in employment outcomes for ethnic minority people in London, including for young black men. The Mayor's Mentoring programme is targeted specifically at this group. The programme works with boys aged 10 to 16 years from black and mixed ethnic groups and aims to prevent 'at risk' young people from getting into serious trouble.

The need for interventions to support groups with the highest levels of worklessness is recognised in the 2014 to 2020 European Structural and Investment Fund Strategy. The Strategy sets out the London Enterprise Panel's vision for use of the £502 million European Social Fund and Youth Employment Initiative funds allocated to London. The Strategy was submitted to the government in January 2014 and it is not yet clear when the funding programmes will become operational. In the previous European Social Fund programme for London, which ran from 2007 to 2013,

57 per cent of all the participants on funded employment provision were from BAME groups. It is not clear, however, how many of these were young black men.

The London Enterprise Panel has been involved in commissioning the new National Careers Service contract which will commence delivery in October 2014. The London Enterprise Panel identified the need for the National Careers Service to have greater engagement with BAME groups to access information, advice and guidance.

The Mayor's Diversity Works for London programme has nearly 6,000 registered businesses. This may be a useful way of engaging with employers on practical work to tackle the barriers to recruitment which young black men experience, including work to challenge negative stereotyping.

SECTION FOUR: CONCLUSIONS

Young black men have higher unemployment rates than all other groups of young people. The gap between unemployment rates for young black men and young white men has been persistent for many years and has grown wider in recent years. Young black men still experience higher rates of unemployment despite their strongly improved educational attainment and regardless of their qualification level: black university graduates are twice as likely to be unemployed as white university graduates.

Young black men see the problem of high unemployment as largely resulting from factors which are beyond their control; racism, discrimination and negative stereotyping. They can provide an articulate and well reasoned analysis of the historical reasons for the current situation. But they feel powerless to change things around them and concentrate only on trying to 'do the right thing' for themselves. Doing the right thing, by looking for a job, is not perceived as an easy option and they feel largely unsupported in this by agencies such as Jobcentre Plus.

Almost two hundred young black men contributed to this research and a considerable number of them, including all 25 of our discussion group participants, reported that they had been unsuccessful in job interviews because they believed that the employer would rather not employ a black man. No complaints were made or action taken about these instances.

Agencies which support people to find jobs have very divergent views about the reasons why unemployment is so high for young black men. Some of the larger employment support providers were not aware that unemployment was so much higher for young black men than for other groups and had not considered this within their service planning or delivery. Employment support providers are more likely to view young black male unemployment as a result of factors which the young men can influence, such as CVs, attitudes and motivation. They are less likely than the young men themselves to view the higher unemployment rates as linked to racism, discrimination or negative stereotyping, although some of the interviewees were exceptions to this general trend.

There remain a number of community based agencies which are working closely and effectively to support young black men into work. These agencies are struggling to secure funding for their work.

There is no firm evidence of what works in improving employment rates for young black men. There is a lack of targeted data which enables a close understanding of how young black men are faring on job support schemes or through other pathways into work. This includes an absence of data to answer the following questions:

- How many young black men are on apprenticeships in London?
- How many young black men who complete an apprenticeship are taken on to permanent jobs?
- How many of the young black men who are no longer claiming Jobseekers Allowance have stopped claiming because they have started work?
- What are the Work Programme job outcomes for young black men in London?

- What are the employment and unemployment rates for young black male graduates?

Along with the lack of data and firm evidence, this research has found a reluctance from employers, some employment support providers and other stakeholders to engage in discussions about increasing employment rates for young black men. The overall result is a lack of knowledge about what works for this target group and a dearth of case studies or good practice examples from which other agencies can learn.

We consider that our research findings point to the need for actions to tackle young black male unemployment in four key areas:

1. We need to establish and work towards a common goal. The goal should be to increase employment rates for young black men so that there is no disparity in the gap between young black men and all other young men. To achieve this, agencies need to work together. We need to share ideas and information about what could work, what is working, and what has been achieved, and to invest in demonstration projects which would generate this information. We believe that the most effective means of establishing and working towards a common goal will be through establishing a London co-ordinating group to bring together the key agencies with responsibilities in this field. We think there are central roles for Jobcentre Plus, the Greater London Authority and the London Enterprise Panel within this group.
2. We need to improve support for young black male job seekers. A key lesson from our action research is that a majority of young black male job seekers feel that they are not getting much support. We also found that targeted support which recognises the particular needs and issues facing young black men is likely to produce better outcomes than more generic approaches. Helping more young black men into work requires localised and personalised support, delivered by advisers who understand the barriers and, most importantly, who care about getting young black men into work.
3. We need to create more pathways into employment for young black men. There are not enough routes for young black men into jobs. The reasons for this are historic; for every generation of black men which experiences higher than average unemployment, as has been the case in the UK for many generations, there are fewer successfully employed role models, fewer employer contacts and less knowledge of how and where to apply for jobs for the next generation. Black communities in the UK lack the networks which help many young people into internships and placements within companies that could become their future employers. Without concerted intervention, this cycle will continue into future generations and the ethnic inequalities in employment opportunities will continue. We need to create the networks and pathways through which young black men can meet employers, gain work experience, develop career aspirations, secure employment and set up their own businesses.
4. We need to challenge the negative stereotypes which society attaches to young black men and which, consciously or unconsciously, influence some employers when it comes to decisions about who to employ. We know that these stereotypes cannot be changed overnight, but more can be done to help employers to recognise that that is what they are, and that they are missing out on the talents of young black men.

SECTION FIVE: ACTION PLAN

ACTION AREA ONE:

Working to a common goal

Suggested actions:

1: Setting an agreed target for reducing the young black male unemployment rate. We believe that this target should be that 'By 2018, the unemployment rate for young black men in London will be reduced to the average for all men aged 16 to 24 in London'.

2: Establishing a regional co-ordinating group to monitor progress in achieving this target. This group should include senior level representation from Jobcentre Plus and from local authorities in boroughs with high young black male populations.

3: Encouraging all relevant agencies (including local authorities, further and higher education providers, employment support providers) to adopt this target (or a meaningful variant of it) and to monitor their own progress towards achieving this in their local area, institution or for their clients.

4: Working with the London Enterprise Panel and the Greater London Authority to ensure that the substantial funding resources available to tackle youth unemployment are used to increase employment rates for young black men.

5: Investing in demonstration projects to create good practice examples of what works in getting young black men into work. Monitoring the progress of these and sharing learning and good practice as widely as possible.

6: Maintaining this action plan as a 'live document' which shows progress in achieving the agreed goal and records new findings of effective practice as they are identified.

ACTION AREA TWO:

Improving support for young black male job seekers

Suggested actions:

7: Establishing a funding programme to test and evaluate new ways of improving support to young black male job seekers. This action is already underway, led by Trust for London.

8: Flexible and customised support from advisers who are able to address issues of racism and discrimination experienced by young black men.

9: Local support delivered in neighbourhoods where young black men live.

10: Improving employability support for black male undergraduates and graduates in partnership with the universities where most young black men study.

11: Engaging young black men in the design and testing of new approaches to helping this group into work, including through new delivery models, creating new resources, developing new partnerships between delivery agencies.

ACTION AREA THREE:**Creating more pathways into employment and enterprise for young black men.**

Suggested actions:

12: Establishing a funding programme to test and evaluate new ways of creating pathways into employment or enterprise for young black men. This action is already underway, led by Trust for London.

13: Initiating or expanding schemes which engage successful black men in mentoring and as role models for young black men.

14: Initiating or expanding schemes which bring more employers into direct contact with young black male job seekers.

15: Encouraging and supporting black-owned and black-managed businesses to create apprenticeships.

16: Engaging young black men in design and testing of new approaches to helping young black men to set up their own businesses.

ACTION AREA FOUR:**Challenging racism and negative stereotyping**

Suggested actions:

17: Generating press coverage for the positive achievements of young black men.

18: Supporting young black men to work together to find ways of challenging negative media stereotypes.

19: Developing a more responsive complaints system within Jobcentre Plus for clients to report cases where they have experienced racial discrimination in job interviews.

20: Supporting action research which engages employers in identifying and removing barriers which prevent young black men from getting jobs.

21: Developing resources to help employers to recognise negative stereotypes of young black men and to recognise how stereotyping can lead to bias or discrimination in recruitment decisions. This could build on the training materials developed through the 'Preventing Racist Violence' work funded by Trust for London.

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ANNEX ONE:

ACTION RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**ON-LINE SURVEY OF YOUNG BLACK MEN****Survey method**

BTEG carried out a survey to collect information from young black men in London about their experiences of employment, unemployment and looking for work. The survey was open for responses from early November 2013 to end of January 2014.

The target group of survey respondents was black men (African, Caribbean, Mixed) aged between 16 and 24, living in London. Because there is no sampling frame for this population, the survey used a network sampling approach. BTEG asked organisations working with young black men in London to pass on a web-link to the survey and encourage young black men to complete the survey questionnaire.

The survey was available for completion on-line. A printed version of the on-line survey was available for completion by respondents without on-line access; this version was used in one Job Centre and in two prisons.

Sampling approach

The survey used a network sampling as it was not possible to conduct random sampling for the target population of young black men in London. Because of the sampling approach used, the survey findings cannot be considered representative of all young black men in London. However, the profile of survey respondents in terms of qualifications and employment status is not dissimilar from the profile for all young black men in London.

Number of respondents

The survey questionnaire was completed by 160 young black men.

Survey respondents**Age**

- 83% of respondents are aged 16-24
- 15% are 25 or over
- 2% are under 16

Ethnic group

- 110 respondents gave information about their ethnic group. Of these, 48% are Black Caribbean, 42% are Black African and 9% are of Mixed ethnic origin.

Living in London

- 97% of respondents live in London

Employment status

- 72% of respondents are in education, employment or training (EET)
- 28% of respondents are not in education, employment or training (NEET)

For the respondents who are EET:

- 20% are in employment
- 44% are in full time education
- 8% are in an Apprenticeship or other full time training

In terms of employment status, the survey respondents were reasonably similar to the profile of all young black men in London, where 29% are in employment, 20% are unemployed and 46% are in full time education.

Qualifications

- 8% of respondents have no qualifications
- 29% of respondents have Level 1 or 2 qualifications (GCSEs or equivalent)
- 44% of respondents have Level 3 qualifications (A levels or equivalent)
- 15% of respondents have Level 4 qualifications (degree level)
- 4% of respondents have Level 5 qualifications or higher (Masters or Doctorate)

It is not possible to compare these results with the profile for all young black men in London, as 2011 Census data for highest level of education by age, ethnic group and sex is not yet available.

For all young black people in London, at the time of the 2011 Census, 9% had no qualifications, 48% had level 1 or 2 qualifications, 22% had level 3 qualifications and 16% had level 4 qualifications. The survey respondents therefore appear to be reasonably similar to all young black people in London in terms of qualifications, although with a higher proportion of Level 3 qualified young people in the survey sample than in the London population.

DISCUSSION GROUPS WITH YOUNG BLACK MEN

Four discussion groups were organised with help from Jobcentre Plus offices in Hackney, Lambeth, Haringey and Brent. Young black men who visited the Jobcentre Plus offices were invited by JobCentre Plus advisers to take part in the discussion group. The discussions were scheduled to last for 90 minutes. Participants were asked to give their views on the following questions:

1. Unemployment

The unemployment rate for young black men is much higher than for young white men. What do you think are the reasons for this?

2. Experiences of looking for work

How many of you are looking for a job? What sort of jobs are you looking for? How long have you been looking for? What have been your experiences of trying to find work?

3. Support to find work

What help have you had to find a job? Is there any help that would have been useful before now (e.g. from school or college)? Is there any other help that would be useful now (e.g. services specialising in helping young black men)?

4. Stereotypes

In our recent survey of young black men, many said that one of the main problems for them in finding jobs is that some employers have negative, stereotyped views of young black men. Do you have ideas for how we can change these negative stereotypes?

5. The future

How confident do you feel that you will find a job? What are your ambitions for the future?

The focus group discussions were recorded through written notes.

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT PROVIDERS

We worked in partnership with London Voluntary Service Council (LVSC) to invite employment and skills providers to take part in discussions about their experiences of working with young black men. A general invitation to take part in two discussion groups in February and March 2014 was sent by e-mail to over 760 providers. This was followed up by a more personalised invitation to 32 providers who we considered might have a particular interest in this issue. We also offered providers the opportunity to give their views through an on-line survey which was live from February to early April 2014. Five providers gave their feedback through the on-line survey and two providers took part in the discussion group. We contacted prime contractors directly, using our own contacts and with the help of LVSC.

EMPLOYERS

We attempted to identify potential employers to contact for discussions through a range of methods, including by asking JobcentrePlus and the local authorities in the four target boroughs for suggestions of employers who we could approach. We also contacted the Chambers of Commerce in each of the target boroughs to ask if they could suggest employers who might be willing to take part in discussions. But it was not possible to identify any employers through any of these channels.

HIGHER EDUCATION AND FURTHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

We wrote to the largest FE colleges in each of the target boroughs and to the five universities in London with the largest numbers of black male undergraduates, inviting them to take part in discussions about unemployment rates for black male graduates, or to contribute their views via an on-line survey. Only one university and one Further Education college responded.

OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

We wrote to other stakeholder agencies to ask for their input to the action research. All of these agencies responded positively and made time to contribute information and take part in discussions about this issue. These agencies were JobcentrePlus, the National Apprenticeship Service and the Greater London Authority.

ANNEX TWO: RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

FOCUS GROUPS

Haringey.....4 March 2014

Ben

Matthew

Nano

David

Darren

Iggy

Ian

Carl

Hackney.....12 March 2014

Shakar

Jase

Sadam

Frederick

Tishan

Bernard

Brent.....11 April 2014

Mohamed

Luke

Vaughan

Lambeth.....24 April 2014

Biniam

Leon

Michael

Tom

Michael

Joshua

Brendan

Hassan

LOCAL AUTHORITIES**Hackney**..... 16 December 2013

Ian Lewis Deputy CEO

Andrew Head of Ways into Work

Haringey..... 15 January 2014

Martin Tucker

Ambrose Quashie

Sukhy Johnson

Brent..... 19 February 2014

Shomshia Ali

John Galligan

Angela Chiswell

Tanuja Saujani

Lambeth..... 3 March 2014

Cllr Jackie Meldurm

Kamal Motalib Lead Commissioner Growth,

Employment and Skills

Adrian Smith Commissioning Director

Kay Boulden Business Support and

Information Manager

Farquar McKay 14-19 lead

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT PROVIDERS

Discussion group participants.....20 March

Philip Mathew	Motivate to Work
Hailu	WHEAT Mentor Support Trust
Steve Kerr	LVSC

On-line survey respondents

Dorothy Hodgson	INSPIRE
Shane Ryan	Working with Men
Bevin Currie	Work Ready People
Tim Brown	Raw Material Music and Media
Turly Humphreys	Circle Sports

Interviews

Louise Duncan	A4E.....	17 December 2013
Lizzi Holman	Reed in Partnership.....	28 March
Mark Sargent & Simone Williams	Prevista.....	9 April
Andy Emerson	SEETEC.....	25 April

HE & FE**On-line survey respondents**

Head of Careers & Employability	London Metropolitan University
Hackney Community College.....	28 April 2014
Ian Ashman	Principal
Sylvia Momoh	Employment Coordinator
Monica Marshall	Head of Tutorial Support
Karren McKenzie	Careers Adviser

OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

MITIE PLC.....25 April 2014

Karen Govier

Kate Clarke

Gary Zetter

National Apprenticeship Service.....30 April 2014

JonThorn

Negat Lodhi

Greater London Authority.....21 May 2014

Kit Malthouse

Alex Conway

Routes2Success National Steering Group.....12 February 2014

Ahmed Gelle

Ambrose Quashie

Annetta Bennett

Cllr Claudia Webbe

Claude Hendrickson

Henry Ngawoofah

Malik Smith-Henry

Nathan Pearson-Smith

Tola Lasisi

Wade Newell



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