
Race and the Criminal Justice System

Facts and Figures

Police activity

Recent figures on the proportion of different ethnic groups at different stages of the criminal justice system show the following:

- **Stop and searches:** White 72.2% **BME 15.4%** and Asian 7.9%
 - **Arrests:** White 83.8%, **BME 9.1%** and Asian 7.9%
 - **Cautions:** White 83.5% **BME 6.3%** and Asian 4.5%
 - **Youth offences:** White 87.6% **BME 6%** and Asian 3.2%
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- BME groups were seven times more likely than their white counterparts to be stopped and searched. This rate indicates an increase in the number of stop and searches compared to 2004/5 when the ratio was six to one. However, if London is excluded from the figures, the ratio was 4.8 to one
 - Asian people were 2.1 times more likely to be stopped and searched than white people, compared to 1.8 times more likely in the previous year
 - In 2005/6, people in 'other' ethnic groups were 1.7 times more likely to be stopped than white people, compared with 1.6 times in 2004/5. (SRCJS, 2006)
 - In 2005/6, 12% of the total number of stop and searches resulted in an arrest, compared to 11% in the previous year. This increase was most noticeable in the black ethnic group, where the proportion of stop and searches resulting in arrest increased from 11% to 13%. (SRCJS, 2006)
 - BME groups were three-and-a-half times more likely to be arrested than white people, compared to 3.4 in 2004/5
 - In relation to the arrest rate, BME groups had a lower rate of cautioning (14%) than white people (20%) (SRCJS, 2006).

Prison

- BME groups were six times more likely to be in prison compared to the white population.
- BME groups made up 26% of the prison population in England and Wales in 2006.
- The main offences for which prisoners were sentenced differed among different ethnic groups.
 - For White prisoners it was theft and handling stolen goods (21%)
 - Mixed race and Asian prisoners, violence against the person (19% and 16% respectively)
 - Black prisoners, drug offences (17%)
 - Chinese/Others fraud and forgery (27%) (SRCJS, 2006).
- In terms of religious affiliation, Christianity was the most commonly stated religion for white prisoners (57%), while 52% of black prisoners and 43% of mixed race prisoners considered themselves Christians.
- Islam was the most commonly stated religion among Asian prisoners, with 71% per cent of Asian prisoners declaring themselves Muslim (SRCJS, 2006).
- Approximately 15% of the male prison population and 23% of the female prison population were foreign nationals in 2006.
- Foreign nationals accounted for 40% of the total BME prison population.

Young offenders

- The number of offences recorded during 2005/6 involving offenders aged 10 to 17 rose 5.2% from the previous year.
- In 2005/6, the ethnic breakdown of young offenders was as follows:
 - 85.2% white
 - 5.8% black
 - 3.1% Asian
 - 2.8% mixed race
 - 0.3% Chinese/other
 - Ethnicity was unknown/not recorded for 2.7% of offenders.
- Young black people were over-represented compared with white people for robbery offences. Young people from Asian and Mixed ethnic backgrounds also showed considerable over-representation for the same offence.
- The figures also show over-representation of black people for drug offences, which has been case since 2003.

BME representation as employees in the Criminal Justice System

- Black and Minority Ethnic groups accounted for 7.6% of the Prison Service employees in 2005/6.
- During this period, out of 4,856 employees who left the Prison Service, 7.1% were from BME groups.
- The representation of BME staff working in CJS varied according to the type of CSJ agency. For example:
 - The Serious Fraud Office and Youth Offending Teams had the highest BME representation at 22% and 17% respectively.
 - BME groups were least represented in the Judiciary, with 3% of employees. Those BME employees within the judiciary were mainly employed at the District Judge and Recorder levels, with no Lord Justices belonging to any ethnic minority group.
- In 2005/6, 26,880 people made complaints about the conduct of individuals serving with the police. The figures showed that more than half (58%) of these complainants were made by white people, 7% by black people, 5% by Asians and 1% by other minority ethnic groups. These ratios closely resembled the data recorded in 2004/5.

London

Overview

- Two-thirds of all black people in England and Wales live in London.
- The Metropolitan Police Service conducts more than 75% of all stop and searches of black people in England and Wales.
- In London, 52% of all prisoners are from BME groups.
- Black people are four and a half times more likely to be stopped and searched than their white counterparts in London. However, a parliamentary select committee report in 2007 highlighted that in some London boroughs with a relatively small black population, the figure can reach 15 times more likely.

London

Young people

- Young black people represent 15% of the total youth population in London, but account for:
 - 37% of all stop and searches of young people
 - 31% of all those accused of a crime by the police
 - 26% of all those given a police warning or reprimand
 - 49% of all those remanded in custody until trial
 - 43% of all those given a custodial sentence
 - 30% of all those dealt with by Youth Offending Teams.

- During the period April 2005-February 2006 for every one white youth 2.3 black youths were accused of crimes.

BME representation as employees in London's Criminal Justice Service

- Figures for January 2007 show that BME groups consisted 726 of the 31,012 Metropolitan police officer workforce (2.3%).

- In the Judiciary, 24 out of 2,208 employees are black, while black people comprise just over 2% of magistrates.

- Among solicitors, 1.5% are black, while 2.6% of barristers are black.

- No black person is a member of a London prison senior management team.

Sources

- 'Statistics on Race and the Criminal Justice System 2006' (published October 2007)
See: www.justice.gov.uk/docs/race-and-cjs-stats-2006.pdf

- www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2008/mar/31/minoritiesandthemayor