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Empowerment Through Research: Bridging Academia and Society

Disproportionality in youth justice; service users views.

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Research question: a Home Office Inspection in 2021 concluded that criminal justice agencies were not addressing racial disproportionality in youth justice well enough.



Buckinghamshire Youth Justice commissioned a project to examine their work with this group - what could they do better?

Methodology: interviews with a sample of children and young people aged 12-19 who were either black or mixed heritage from the youth justice caseload.

Limitations: recruiting a workable sample size was a challenge as the potential pool was only 37. To get the consent of potential participants and their parents (most were under 18) was a challenge. We learned that a £15 Justeat voucher did not generate enough interest, but a £40 voucher just about did.

Findings: young people rated their youth justice workers highly - they felt supported and thought their workers understood them as people of black or of mixed heritage. **BUT** they did not believe they had any influence over their experiences with the police.

Recommendations: strategies to maximise practical change for the young people on their caseload included using local data on stop and search and making opportunities to discuss decisions around prosecution and court disposals.