

YOUNG WOMEN LEAD

2019/2020

REPORT

PRODUCED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

The Young
WOMENS
Movement

ABOUT

The Young Women Lead (YWL) Committee is a leadership programme for young women aged 30 and under who live in Scotland. It is delivered in partnership with the Scottish Parliament and YWCA Scotland - The Young Women's Movement. The programme was first launched in 2017 and was created from a need to address the lack of representation of young women in politics. In 2019-20 the programme was revised with the intention to increase young BAME women's political participation and to hear their voices and experiences. Currently out of **1421** elected officials in Scotland there are only **422 women** and only **4** from minority ethnic backgrounds making up only **0.28%**. BAME women are under-represented in all sectors of the labour market. **We want this to change to better reflect Scottish society.**

Over several months beginning in February 2020, participants from a range of ethnic minority backgrounds came together in the Scottish Parliament to run their own committee inquiry, focusing on a topic of their choice.

The Young Women Lead Committee would like to acknowledge the problematic nature of the use of the term "BAME". This features extensively in this report in order to represent the demographic of the Committee and its inquiry focus, for lack of a better word in the current landscape.

FOREWORD

For the past three years, it has been a **real joy** and **highlight** of my role as Deputy Presiding Officer to convene the Young Women Lead Committee. Each new cohort has brought a unique perspective and enthusiasm towards their chosen inquiry, and this year's participants have been no exception. The **dedication** they have shown, and **determination** to make a difference to the lives of other young women living in Scotland, has been **inspirational**. In the face of a global pandemic, these young women rose to the challenge and worked even harder to find new ways to keep their inquiry going and make change happen.

Their chosen topic of inquiry this year, the transition from education to employment for young women from ethnic minorities, is one of real personal importance to this year's participants. For the first time, young women from ethnic minority backgrounds have made up the whole committee membership. This reflects the fact that there has never been a woman from an ethnic minority elected to the Scottish Parliament, and **we firmly believe that this must change**.

I am delighted to present this report, the result of the impressive work of this year's committee. We heard over the course of our inquiry that the challenges and barriers faced by young women from ethnic minorities are well known and have been for some time. We heard loud and clear that what we need to do now is focus on **finding solutions, sharing best practice** and **creating real change** so that we can make improvements for future generations. The recommendations contained in this report are a step towards that change.

During this time, at the height of the Black Lives Matter movement and amidst so much uncertainty, it is more important than ever that we listen to our young people. This report is the voice of the young women on this year's committee, and **now is the time for that voice to be heard.**

LINDA FABIANI

Deputy Presiding Officer



TOPIC

This year the YWL Committee chose as our remit: **“To investigate what measures are being taken to increase employment opportunities for women from ethnic minorities including recruitment, retention and development policies and practices”**. We chose to focus on this topic because there is a lack of Scotland-specific data regarding BAME women’s experiences moving from education into employment.

BACKGROUND AND CURRENT POLICY

Previous work undertaken by Scottish Parliament committees has highlighted that

- Despite a number of policy initiatives and recognition of the problems, outcomes for minority ethnic communities have not improved over the past two decades
- The issues affecting BAME communities are already known and focus needs to be on action
- A lack of institutional memory is impacting on progress. Public bodies must learn from existing best practice and not waste resources reinventing policies
- Governance structure should ensure accountability for progress within organisations

The Scottish Government has a number of current policy initiatives in place including **The Race Equality Action Plan (REAP)**, **Developing the Young Workforce (DYW)**, **Careers Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG)**, **Fair Start Scotland**, the **Apprenticeship’s Equality Action Plan**, and **Ethnic Intersectionality Incentive (EII)** - all of which have ambitious aims to tackle the barriers that young BAME women encounter. We know that despite these ongoing commitments BAME women continue to face significant challenges.

RECOMMENDATIONS

EDUCATION

In response to the evidence we heard to address barriers experienced by BAME young women in school, the Committee make the following recommendations to the Scottish Government:

- Ensure that local authorities recruit BAME identifying individuals as career advisors
- Ensure that local authorities invest in training and development for all career advisors to ensure provision reflects the needs of young BAME women
- Ensure that local authorities promote BAME identifying individuals to senior positions in primary and secondary schools. Representation at the top of organisations and as early as possible is key to improve the systems in place
- Create a sufficient career development programme which links BAME women to resources where they can build a career pathway. Increase the use of appropriate online resources to explore different career pathways to supplement in person advice. These should be enhanced to improve their accessibility and tailored resources should be created for young BAME women
- Acknowledge the importance of role models and create mentorship schemes for young BAME women particularly in fields which are less likely to be pursued by this demographic

- Local authority career events and school fairs should be made more frequent and accessible, and diverse panels should be brought into schools, with a range of opportunities showcased for the benefit of BAME identifying students. Evidence gathered indicated that typical routes that were encouraged included medicine/healthcare, STEM, and law which align with stereotypes for BAME communities but it is essential to make other routes, such as the arts and humanities, equally accessible
- Acknowledge the additional barrier of poverty which affects all students but can disproportionately affect BAME communities' experiences. Scottish Government should fund BAME - lead organisations that deliver employability support

EMPLOYMENT

In response to the evidence we heard to address barriers experienced by BAME young women in the workplace, the Committee make the following recommendations to the Scottish Government:

- Scottish Government should ensure employers collect and use workforce data to benchmark current levels of BAME women within their workplace to identify underrepresented populations
- Support including proactive recruitment strategies to be available such as scholarship programmes, internships and apprenticeships. Employers should be encouraged to create work experience opportunities for underrepresented populations

- Employers should set targets for recruitment including implementation plans
- Employers should be held accountable by Scottish Government to create and participate in mentoring schemes which improve opportunities for young BAME women
- Employers should develop strong relationships with third sector organisations and local community groups that have existing links with BAME communities
- Employers should attend career fairs in secondary schools particularly those with a higher percentage of BAME students
- Employers should have a dedicated Diversity and Inclusion officer with sufficient expertise and understanding of the lived experience of diverse groups. Scottish Government should develop a guide for HR professionals to ensure young women reach their full potential in the workplace including an intersectional lens on young BAME women
- Scottish Government should evaluate the effectiveness of the existing toolkit surrounding recruitment practices. This should be expanded to include a guide to delivering race and ethnicity induction and training at work and fostering inclusive workplace cultures, not limited to just the recruitment process

- Scottish Government should support creation of BAME networks in different industries to aid mentorship and recruitment
- Scottish Government should create a stakeholder group of people with lived experience to develop an online portal of best practice for employers
- Scottish Government should seek out ways to highlight and celebrate employers based in Scotland with best practice policies in place to support and develop young BAME women
- Funding allocated to third sector organisations who already provide recruitment services and allowing them to specialise in this area



APPROACH

The Committee held two formal evidence sessions where witnesses were selected to represent education and third sector/community providers of advice as well as employability programmes designed to support young women from ethnic minorities into employment.

At our meeting in February we took evidence from:

Surbjit Dhillon, Confidence and Wellbeing Officer, Council of Ethnic Minority Voluntary Sector Organisations (CEMVO)

Dilraj Sokhi-Watson, Interim Co-CEO Amina, the Muslim Women's Resource Centre

Trishna Singh OBE, Director, Sikh Sanjog

Fergus McMillan, Senior Equalities and Diversity Advocate, Skills Development Scotland (SDS)

Viana Maya, pRESPECT, Project Lead, AAI Employability

At our meeting in September we took evidence from:

Christina McKelvie MSP, Minister for Older People and Equalities, Scottish Government

The Committee also undertook focused engagement using online surveys and semi-structured interviews with (1) **employers**, (2) **employees**, (3) **teachers** and (4) **students**. We used social media platforms Facebook, Instagram and Twitter to distribute our surveys and engage in conversations. We conducted four surveys; one directed at secondary school teachers and another on the lived experiences of young BAME women who are currently in or have been through the education system in Scotland. The third survey was aimed at local employers and the fourth focused on BAME women currently in employment in Scotland.

INQUIRY

At the outset of the inquiry it was supposed that there are “gaps” in policy and practice in relation to young BAME women moving into sustained employment. We wanted to explore why this is, and whether these gaps are the result of what is happening in schools, society generally through assumptions and/or lack of understanding, skills development organisations or in the formulation of work and work practices.

The purpose of the inquiry was to discover:

- What can be done to increase opportunities and employer accountability in relation to the employment, training and development of women from ethnic minorities
- What can be done to share best practice between organisations
- What can be done to strengthen links between education services, employability support and employers

The Committee focused on three key areas

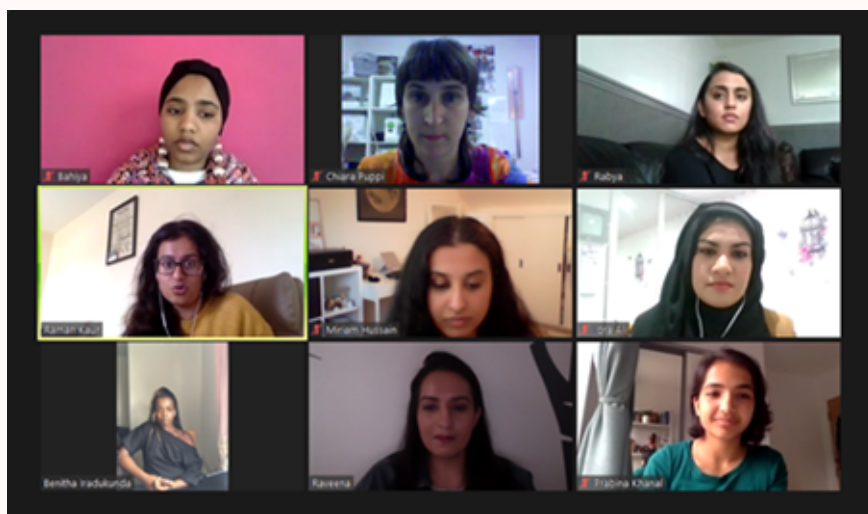
1. **Routes into employment**, including education and third sector and how they support women from ethnic minorities and how they link with and to employers
2. **Best practice examples** to encourage recruitment, retention and development of minority ethnic young women such as mentoring schemes and leadership programmes
3. **Addressing racism and discrimination**, including unconscious bias, in the workplace such as diversity networks, raising cultural awareness, flexible working and harassment policies

We received 22 responses from employers, 102 responses from employees, 25 responses from teachers and 96 responses from students.

We identified three key themes from our engagement work:

1. A **lack of effectiveness, expertise and thorough knowledge** of BAME employment issues within careers advice services
2. **Influences** on employment (societal and personal)
3. **Education and systemic barriers** (such as unconscious bias, lack of knowledge and specific cultural awareness of Black and Ethnic minority lives, lack of representation, role models and visibility of BAME women)

Detailed reports of the findings from our engagement work are available on the Scottish Parliament and YWCA Scotland - The Young Women's Movement websites.



THE TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO THE WORKPLACE

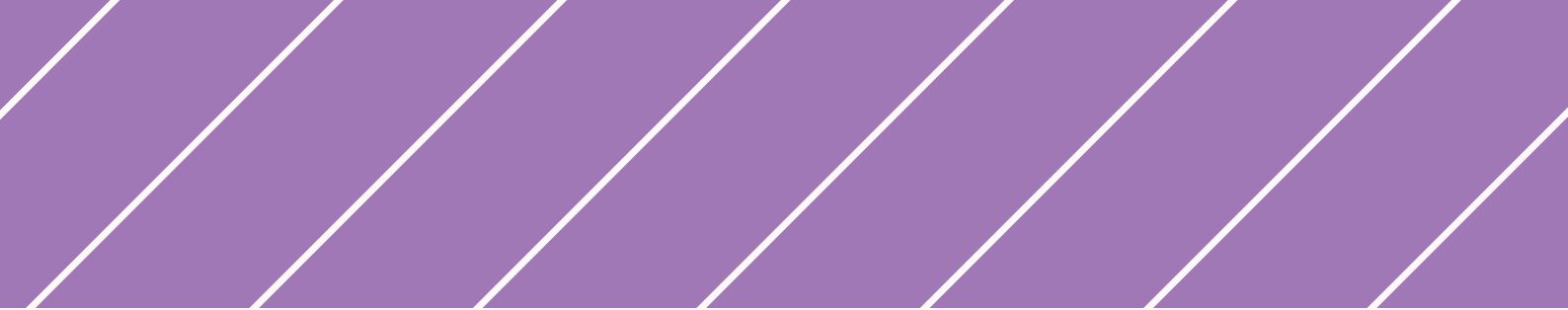
GENERAL

The Committee explored with witnesses what they considered were the main challenges for young BAME women in transitioning from school to the workplace.

Surbjit Dhillon of CEMVO identified significant systemic barriers including racism, unconscious bias, employers not being receptive to BAME employees, parental lack of knowledge of opportunities and cultural and personal barriers. She said it was important not to stereotype BAME women and also raised the issue of “hidden” figures. These women who are not visible in the system as they are being supported within families but are not reaching their potential and are not being included in published statistics.

Trishna Singh of Sikh Sanjog told us that career guidance in school is not working effectively. She said *“Young women have been told by guidance teachers, why do you need this - you are going to have an arranged marriage. They are not taken seriously.”* She said there was a lot of policy on paper but that it was not effectively implemented.


All of the witnesses agreed that the impact of being labelled as BAME was hugely negative and young women don’t want to be “put in a box”. *“They don’t want to be known for being BAME, they want to be known for the person they are and for the skills that they bring”* Surbjit Dhillon told us.



Dilraj Sokhi-Watson of Amina told us *“there is a loss of significant talent between the ages of 14 and 22 but what we see in the industries they express an interest in does not get worked on”*. This lack of support and negative feedback from career advisors on what options to consider has a negative impact on confidence and course choices. She highlighted the intersectional issue of gender as a barrier and described how many BAME women end up in caring roles which are not highly paid. Dilraj Sokhi-Watson considered that *“targeted intervention”* is needed.

Viana Maya of AAI Employability highlighted a lack of representation in senior positions and a lack of information about other routes into work.

Fergus McMillan of Skills Development Scotland told us he recognised the issues that were highlighted particularly in relation to other routes being available. He described the Equality Action Plan (EAP) which is provided for both modern apprenticeships and for careers advice. He said *“we are absolutely not there yet but have made some progress”* reporting that in 2019, 2.3% of apprenticeships were now taken up by BAME people up from 1.5% the previous year. He spoke about two other programmes - Foundation Apprenticeships (6.1%) and Graduate Apprenticeships which both have greater uptake. He told us the ambition is for these apprenticeships to act as a pathway to better outcomes for BAME women.



BAME WOMEN IN EDUCATION

As part of our education survey, we heard from teachers and young women to better understand their perspective on resources at school to support their professional development and transition. We learned that all students are provided with pastoral care teachers and access to career counsellor meetings. We heard however that the “one size fits all” approach used was ineffective as it does not take into account the specific cultural context which influences the choices of BAME identifying women.

While **most BAME women between the ages of 18 and 24 were aware of careers services, respondents aged 25-30 were less or unaware of resources available.** We learned that individual biases of career counsellors also had a significant impact on the advice they provide and the expectations they have of their student’s abilities and preferences. **65%** of respondents between the ages of 25 and 30 said they were actively discouraged by school counsellors from pursuing specific paths. This fell to **28%** for those in the 18-24 age bracket.

Young women also reported that there was **little acknowledgement of the additional barriers they face as a result of their race and gender and these were not effectively explored.** Respondents said it would have been beneficial to have conversations around these barriers and how they could be navigated.

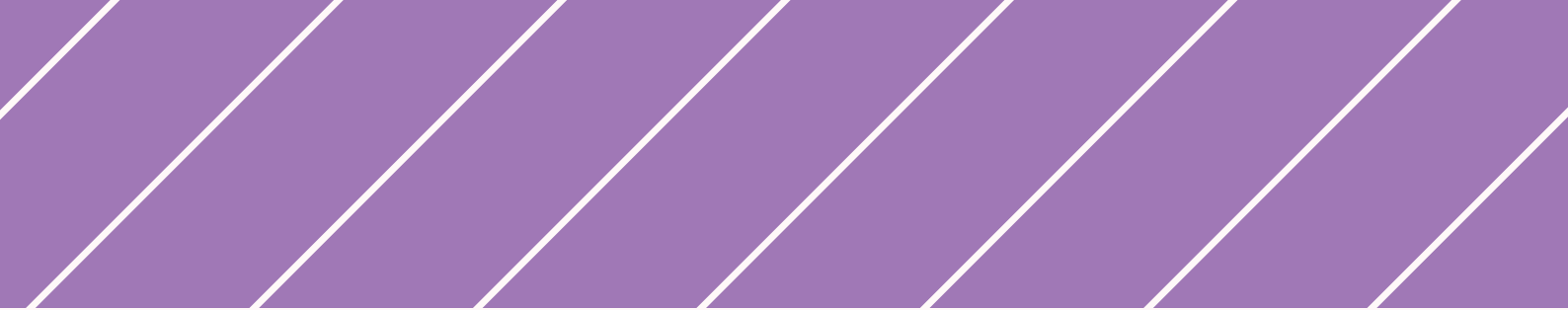
Racism remains an issue in Scotland. Trishna Singh of Sikh Sanjog said that leadership is important in tackling racism in schools and this was dependent on the head teacher. She pointed out that training was inconsistently delivered and said *“The training needs to be built into the schools. If the person at the top doesn’t like it, it won’t be implemented”*.

We asked the Minister for Older People and Equalities, Christina McKelvie what was being done to address racism and heard about the **Respectme** programme which provides direct support to local authorities, youth groups and those working with children to directly address bullying. She also said that funding has also been made available to **Respectme** and the **Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights** (CRER) to produce guidance for schools on tackling racism. We welcome these additional initiatives in schools, however our evidence suggests that leadership is key in tackling racism in schools and we would welcome more training in this area.

SOCIETAL INFLUENCES

There was significant acknowledgment from our survey respondents and interviewees that societal influences played a decisive part in BAME women's transition from education to employment. In particular, one of these influences is the visibility of BAME women in different career pathways.


One respondent replied that *"more in-depth conversations and exposure to different careers"* would have been helpful to remedy this issue. This illustrates a broader need that the "one-size-fits-all" guidance approach does not work for young BAME women. **65.2%** of respondents stated they felt discouraged at some point by a career adviser or guidance teacher. One individual said *"It was hard to relate to the career advisors at school because they didn't take into account or weren't educated enough on how being a minority will affect my career aspects. They didn't know or weren't aware of any resources that could be of help to me as a minority"*. Our evidence suggests therefore that if BAME women are going to tackle visibility in the workplace, they must be equipped to do so from an early age, starting with education.

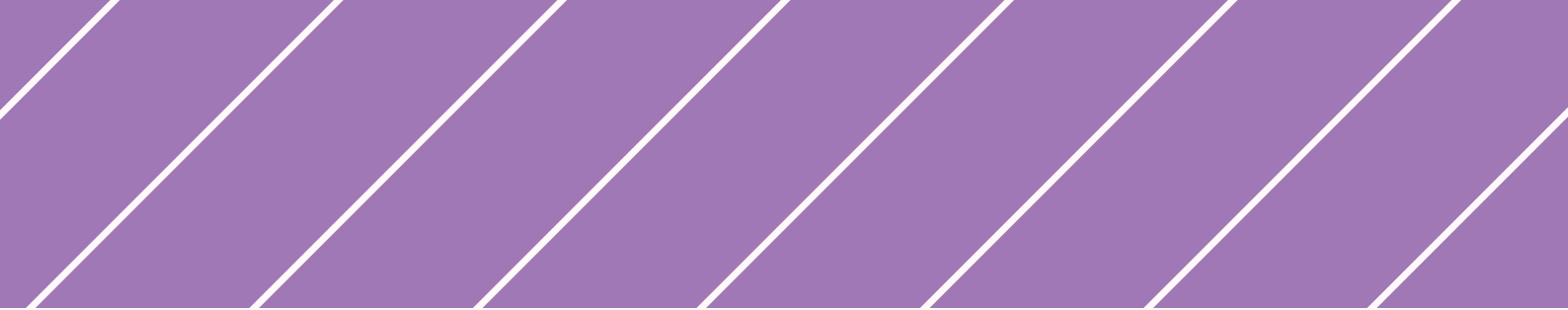


The importance of having BAME career advisors or tailored advice was echoed by Viana Maya of AAI Employability who considered it would be helpful to be invited into schools and workplaces with projects that they were running. She said *“Seeing representation empowers young BAME women and means they are more likely to ask for advice.”* Surbjit Dhillon of CEMVO agreed. She described successful projects run by CEMVO such as the “Empowering Women” project and the “Confidence and Wellbeing Project”. She told us *“the confidence aspect is paramount”* and that women are supported in their job search.

We learned that although career guidance is available, this can often be infrequent and inconsistent with **31.1%** of our respondents receiving guidance only once a month and **28.4%** receiving no guidance. Our evidence suggests that put simply - **the world of work is different for BAME women**. Respondents felt that the career advice they received did not prepare them as minority women entering the workforce. One respondent noted *“my careers service wasn't strong in high school, so I fear that some people could miss out on knowing what is the right path for them, what subjects they should take, which might be a barrier, preventing them from going to university and could delay their career options”*. It is vital that young BAME women have career advisors who can provide them with the opportunities that best support BAME women and consider issues specific to them and their culture.

Fergus McMillan described a range of programmes that are available to assist women's transition into the workplace. He said *“What works is where all of the partners are involved in programmes from the beginning so community organisations, Developing the Young Workforce and Employers are involved in the design and delivery of programmes”*.






Our evidence also highlighted the benefits of hearing from those with “lived experience” and we explored whether the Scottish Government considered this in developing policy. Ms McKelvie told us that the Scottish Government include the views of those with lived experience to develop policy in race equality in a number of ways including working with race equality organisations such as CRER and the Scottish Association for Minority Ethnic Educators (SAMEE) and Professor Rowena Arshad at the Centre for Education and Racial Equality in Scotland (CERES) to promote the Teacher Leadership Programme (TLP).

Dilraj Sokhi-Watson of Amina said that employers need to be encouraged to take on BAME employees as young BAME women often chose careers on the basis of representation. She said *“BAME women need to know that there are opportunities for them across the employment spectrum”*. Viana Maya of AAI Employability told us that BAME women also often look to authority to make decisions so empowering these women to make their own decisions is important.

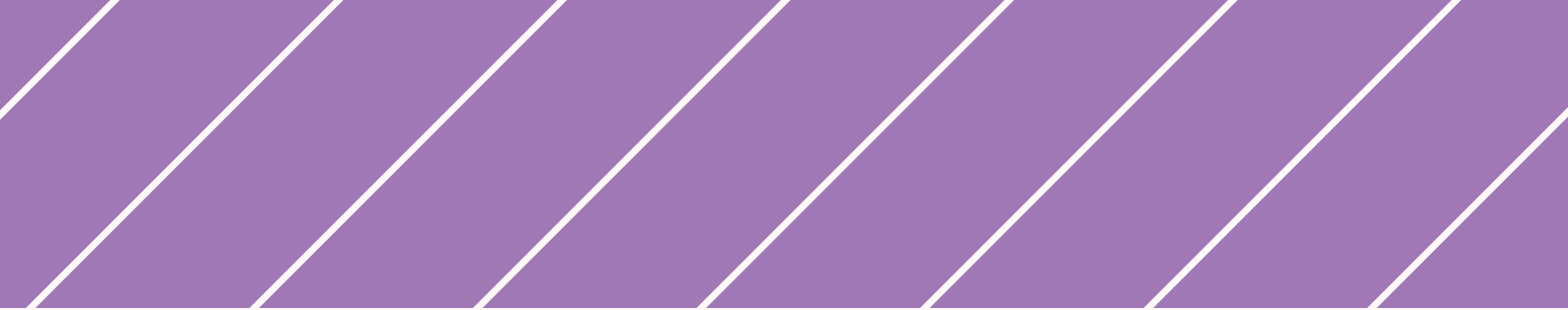
BAME women are under-represented in Scotland’s schools. We asked the Minister how this was being addressed and we heard that the current Programme for Government pledged “to ensure that the diversity of our society is recognised and represented in the education workforce at all levels in line with the ambition of the Race Equality Framework”. This will include “exploring alternative pathways into teaching for minority ethnic and other under-represented groups”. Ms McKelvie said that the aim is to increase the number of BAME teachers in Scotland’s schools by 2030. **Our evidence suggests that more BAME teachers and other employees would have a positive impact on young BAME women.**



Another societal influence that was prominent in the survey responses were role models. **26.1%** of students said they had no role models, with one respondent noting that *"most people who spoke to us were white men"*. Teachers also acknowledged the importance of role models with **68%** of our respondents recognising that there were not enough role models for BAME women. **44%** thought it was the most significant impact on BAME women's employment. One teacher wrote *"I think there is a severe under-representation of female role models in the more popular professions, even less BAME female role models."*

The societal influences surrounding race were clear from our evidence. One respondent said she *"felt the pressure to whitewash herself to fit in at work"*. Another referred to imposter syndrome. She said *"We have to fight to have our voices heard, and a lot of them [women] just stay quiet because they do not want to cause a fuss"*.

Another individual said *"Even now in a decent job which I enjoy, I do feel the constant internal monologue of imposter syndrome as a side effect of the microaggressions and treatment within the workplace"*. This showcases the need for BAME role models, allowing young women to see themselves in positions they aspire to. Mentorship was also highlighted as key by teachers and young BAME women. Many of our respondents (**34.8%**) reported challenges in finding work. A lack of cultural knowledge, followed by securing a job interview and interviewing for the position were key concerns. Unconscious bias in the hiring process and a lack of cultural knowledge in the workplace present significant barriers. **43.3%** of respondents were already dreading the hiring process.




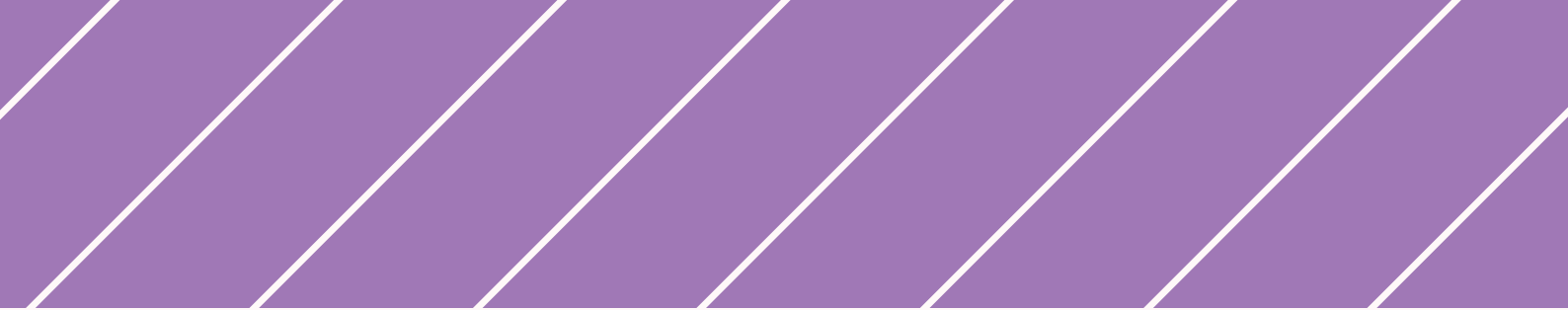
One participant noted that *"I am white-passing which serves as a high advantage"*. Another interviewee noted *"I would observe the way that they discredit, maybe completely subconsciously, people because they assume that their written English would not be good"*.

Fergus McMillan of SDS told us that all their staff undertake mandatory equality training which includes unconscious bias and cultural awareness. Careers Advisors also have this training. It is clear from our evidence however that more needs to be done in this area with advisors and directly with employers.

We asked our witnesses what they felt was not working in the transition between school and work. Fergus McMillan of SDS considered that we need to dig beneath the statistics and get more behind programmes. He said we may need to go further than unconscious bias training and implement anonymised applications and look at the make up of panels on job interview boards. He described the high take up of the ethnic intersectionality project and that this could be developed. *"What we are trying to do is evaluate what is wrong and what isn't"* he said.


The Minister for Older People and Equalities Christina McKelvie recognised this. She said that work on diversity and hate crime was ongoing to address unconscious bias and pointed to a piece of work being undertaken by the Education Secretary to implement cultural awareness in schools.





The Scottish Government's written submission also states that “in Scottish schools all young people will learn about the history, heritage and culture of Scotland including gaining a knowledge and understanding of groups who have experienced inequality, the reasons for inequality and measures required to address inequality across society”. It said “We will talk to stakeholders and partners to determine where there are further opportunities to help our children and young people understand Scotland’s minority ethnic history and how that history impacts our society today. We will seek discussions with both race equality and education stakeholders including BEMIS led Ethnic Minorities Resilience Network to take this important issue forward”. We welcome these initiatives.

Finally, there were societal influences that intersected with race that played a part in the experiences of BAME women. Notably, one was gender. **30.4%** of the students said that gender had a role to play in career choices, and **24.4%** of teachers said that gender had the most significant impact on student’s career choices. From these responses, it suggests that the societal influences perhaps brought from preconceptions of gender played an intersectional role in BAME women. Additionally, in the teacher survey, there was also an assertion that socioeconomic background and, in particular, poverty had a part to play in the career choices and journeys of students.



PERSONAL INFLUENCES

Our evidence suggests that personal influences also play a vital role. Young women (**56.5%**) and teachers (**72%**) agreed that the advice of parents and families predominantly impacts their children's career choices. Our research demonstrates that these were primarily in the following fields: health sciences (**56%**); STEM (**44%**); business management and administration (**36%**); and Public Services, Law, Public Safety, Corrections, and Security (**32%**).

Family influence was also highlighted by our witnesses with BAME particularly in relation to their preference for certain routes for their children. Our findings suggest that it would benefit young BAME women if their families had a greater awareness and understanding of the spectrum of different career paths and opportunities available to their children.

SYSTEMIC BARRIERS

From our research therefore we identified a number of systemic barriers which BAME women encounter.

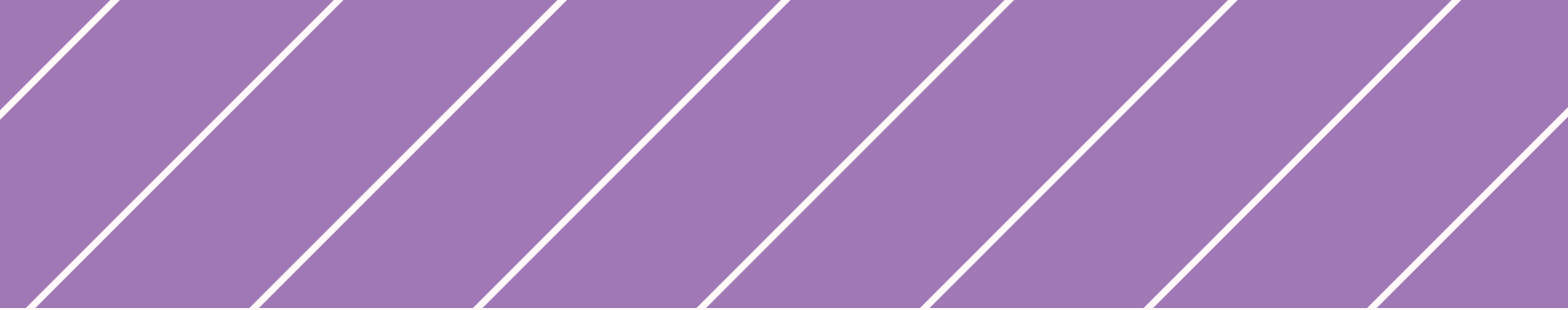
- **Lack of knowledge and resources** for BAME women in career guidance
- **Family aspiration** (i.e to undertake certain career pathways)
- A **lack of representation** in the labour market
- **Unconscious bias** in the hiring process and a lack of cultural knowledge in the workplace

POLICY, SHORT-TERM 'PILOTS' AND FUNDING

Young BAME women often excel in school but this does not translate into the workplace. It is important that this gap that young BAME women experience between education and the workplace is addressed and it is the job of good policy to do this. Young BAME women have to navigate this transition with the added burdens of unconscious bias, stereotyping, gender and cultural ignorance.


We heard from Fergus McMillan about the CIAG Equality Action Plan which is now in place which sets out SDS's commitment to an inclusive service. The plan outlines challenges for identified equality groups including ethnic minority groups and actions that SDS has committed to taking to address them. Actions in the plan are focused on promoting services to ethnic minority communities so they can understand their rights and enter education, employment and training. Mr McMillan also spoke about the Apprenticeships Equality Action Plan which sets out the SDS's commitment to ensuring that individuals from a diverse range of backgrounds can access apprenticeships.

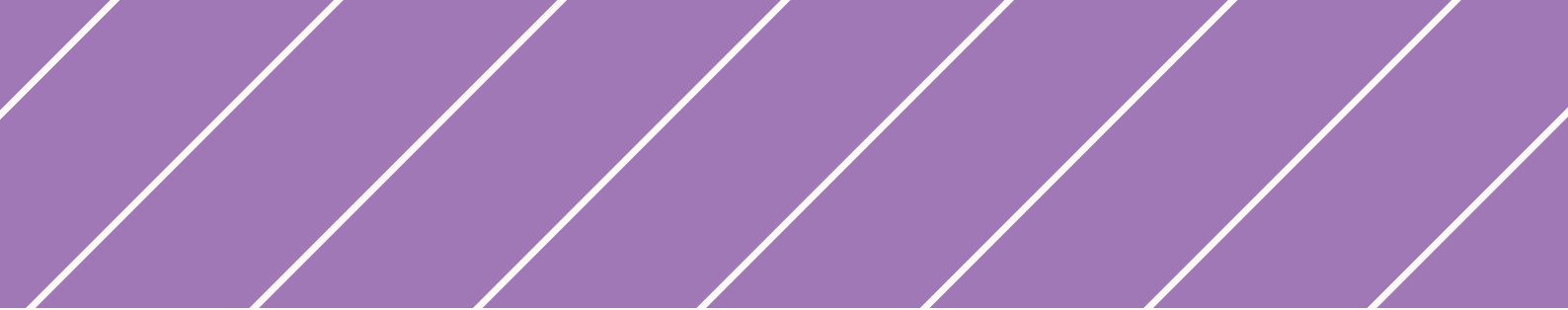
Fergus McMillan told us that statistics among the BAME community for the uptake of apprenticeships are improving but that part of the challenge is *"BAME families tend to favour higher education over apprenticeships"*. We also heard about a pilot scheme the "Ethnic Intersectionality Incentive" (EII) which supports entry to the MA programme for BAME individuals. In its written submission SDS said this pilot *"recognises that in Scotland, black women, ethnic minority women and disabled women are the among the most disadvantaged in the labour market, with Muslim women experiencing particular disadvantage"*.



We heard from witnesses that part of the problem can be a lack of funding and that lots of short-term projects exist but that these may only be funded for a limited time, usually 1-4 years and then the funding ends. This makes the projects hard to evaluate and impacts difficult to capture. Often data is not collected. Trishna Singh from Sikh Sanjog told us that her organisation had run a number of successful programmes in partnership with SDS but that *“those successful models fizzle out”* because of a lack of long-term funding. She considered this was where works needs to be done. She described the need for *“handholding”* and *“confidence building”*. Surbjit Dhillon from CEMVO told us about a confidence programme which only received one year funding and this can be an issue as the confidence aspect and increase in self-esteem can be very important for young BAME women in overcoming barriers. Fergus McMillan from SDS considered there should be *“more collaboration and partnership working.”* He said *“the most effective programmes involve working together from the start”*.

The Scottish Government’s written submission states that “it is determined to progress towards the eradication, inequality and injustice and in building a better, fairer Scotland”. Ms McKelvie also referred to a number of current policy initiatives that are in place. She told us that to ensure effective implementation of the Scottish Government’s REAP, a Programme Board had been established to oversee the work. They are also continuing work to publish a toolkit to help employers in their recruitment of people from minority ethnic backgrounds and are engaging with stakeholders to discuss the development of a Fair Work position on race equality.




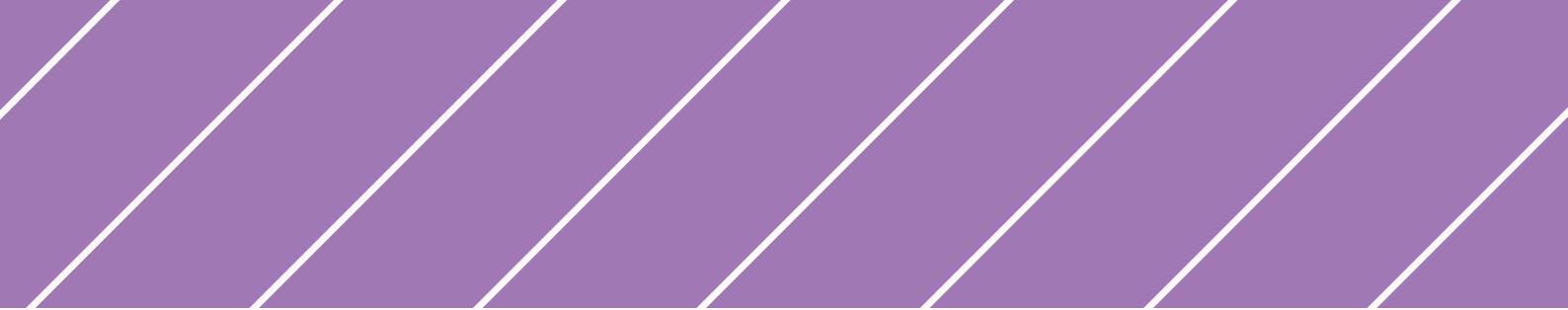


The Scottish Government's written submission highlighted a number of programmes which are being implemented in addition to existing initiatives. It states "We are actively engaging with equality groups on the way policies are implemented and we ensure that our stakeholders are involved in any developments and changes that occur."

The Minister told us the Scottish Government are funding up to fifty places on a Leadership Development Programme for Minority Ethnic Young People. to focus on helping them break down the barriers to accessing and contributing to public service and public life. £470,000 of funding will be used to deliver the programme. There is also a Skills Recognitions Scotland Project led by Dr Ima Jackson which has developed a framework for a skills recognition service to enable people who have migrated to Scotland to gain recognition and validation for skills achieved out with the UK and to overcome issues of unemployment and under employment.

The Scottish Government written submission states it has allocated £2.6 million in 2019/20 to fund organisations working to advance race equality. In addition, it states that the Workplace Equality Fund is providing £800,000 of funding across 25 projects that tackle workplace barriers for priority groups. It also intends to launch two funds the Supporting Equality and Human Rights Fund (SEHR) and Delivering Equality Safe Fund (DESF) this year. It states that these funds will allow eligible organisations to apply for three years funding to carry out work supporting equality and human rights.






Witnesses were very positive about the Scottish Government initiatives. Surbjit Dhillon of CEMVO praised the project which is helping BAME women into jobs in early learning and childcare by engaging with third sector and other organisations. Viana Maya told us however that the initiatives are not reaching the communities as effectively as they could and there needs to be more work on reaching out to communities rather than expecting them to access programmes. She told us that trust can be a problem. Dilraj Sockhi Watson said that Amina were looking at sectors where there were highly qualified BAME women who were still not progressing and there was work to be done there. *“If there are no mentors, they will not progress”* she said.

Trishna Singh said *“There are lots of wonderful initiatives put in place by people who want to see change. If we look at the history of successful initiatives, why are they not followed on. We come back to the same conversations. When we look at boards, they are all white, middle class and Scottish. They don’t have lived diversity experience. It is lived experience that is important. To hear from those who have lived experience is a much more effective way to deliver information. To say “This is what it feels like”.* All our witnesses agreed that more investment was needed in the right places. Surbji Dhillon said this needs to start as early as possible in schools then onto employers and then during progression at work. Funding is needed across all levels.

We welcome the current initiatives in place and future plans and commitment by the Minister and the Scottish Government. We hope that our recommendations can feed into these initiatives to ensure the existing gaps in implementing policy are addressed.



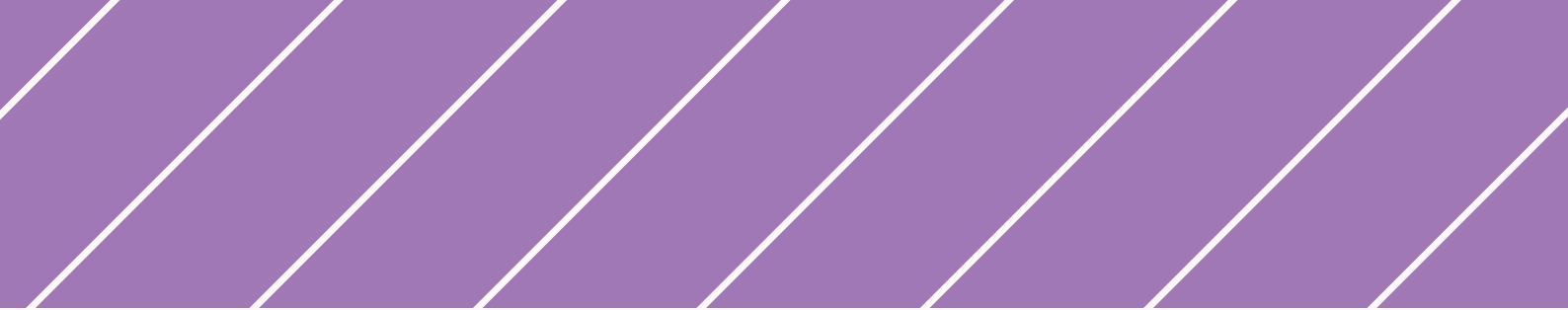
BAME WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE

WHAT ACTIONS ARE EMPLOYERS TAKING?

Our surveys engaged with both employers and employees separately. Our employers survey data indicated that many employers have an inclusion and diversity policy or working group in place but it was unclear and inconsistent as to whether there were specific policies for BAME women or how they were implemented. We asked employers what they were doing to address under representation of BAME women and the responses were mixed.

One organisation offered volunteering opportunities to women including BAME women. Another organisation advertised job vacancies in BAME specific media and attended career fairs at the Mosque. Generally, however, there was a missed and inconsistent response, and the majority of organisations who responded were not supporting BAME women specifically. We found that private sector employers were the least likely to offer support or to use targeted recruitment for BAME women.


Some organisations offered unconscious bias training and introduced blind recruitment. Most employers who responded to our survey (**86%**) had policies in place to deal with racial harassment but it was unclear what was done to ensure employees read and understood the policies. Only a few organisations said this was mandatory. When asked what challenges organisations had in retaining BAME women, employers did not appear to collect data from exit interviews.

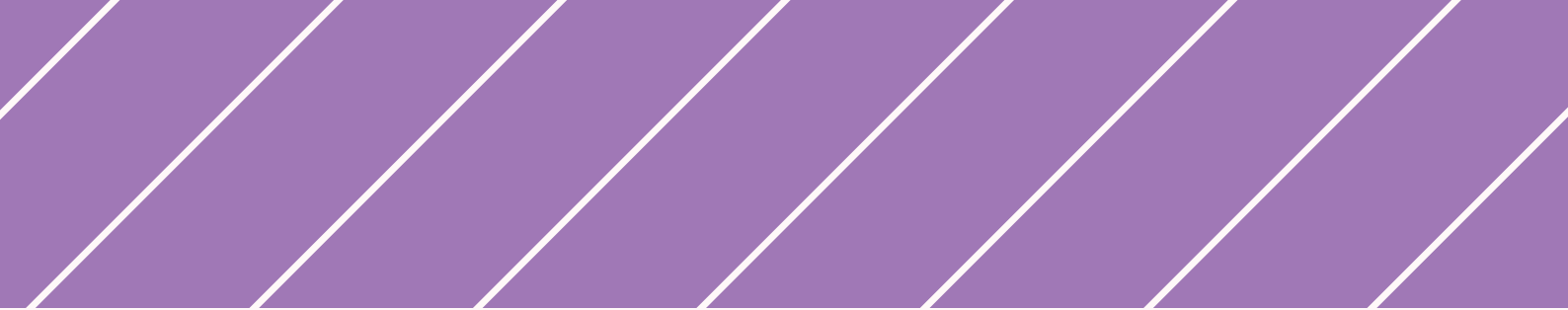


We explored what could be improved in the workplace to improve outcomes for BAME women. Dilraj Sokhi-Watson of Amina said *“Employers perception of black, minority ethnic women’s labour market participation indicates there is a low level of awareness regarding the intersectional nature of BME women’s needs in employment and the wide society. Additionally, BMEs women’s labour market participation in Scotland in lower where young women are likely to experience a “triple penalty” based on their gender, ethnicity and faith when accessing the paid labour market.”* Witnesses also highlighted an absence of Scotland-specific evidence on BAME women’s experience of the labour market.

Dilraj Sokhi Watson of Amina told us that women need support not just into employment, but throughout the employment journey. Surbjit Dhillon of CEMVO told us that BAME women need to be on boards and in management teams and that services need to be *“tailored to specific women”*. She highlighted that BAME women are not groups but individuals and that they need to be seen as such.

Trishna Singh of Sikh Sanjog said that there needs to be investment so that people who are experiencing harassment at work can address this with their employer rather than just leaving the job and the issue not being addressed. If the employee leaves but says nothing, the employer may not even know and the workplace culture never changes. Surbjit Sokhi Watson of CEMVO said *“Policies are great on paper but more needs to be done to ensure they are monitored. To say this is where we started, and this is where we are now”*. She said, *“Based on CEMVO Scotland’s experience, for any strategy or policy to be effective, it has to start from the top of the organisation and work its way down. It’s only meaningful if it’s embedded in the whole organisation”*.






Fergus McMillan of SDS said *“work needs to be done building and supporting employers. We need safe and supportive environments. Also, parents and families are influences and some work could be done there”* Our evidence shows that policies are in place but that does not translate into victims coming forward. **The culture of whole organisations needs to change to ensure BAME women feel they are in a safe and supported place.**

Our employer survey data indicates that most employers had policies in place and were generally satisfied with their current BAME policies and plans. Our overall employees’ data however suggests that this is not reflected in the experience of BAME women in the workplace.

From our employer survey data, we were able to identify a number of good and bad practices in organisations. Good practices included offering opportunities to women only, commissioning recruitment companies to source BAME employees, attending career fairs in secondary schools with a high percentage of BAME students and providing in-house training for BAME women, making unconscious bias training and blind recruitment mandatory, providing diversity training by BAME people. Bad practices included having little or no data collection on the number of BAME employees recruited or of effectiveness of programmes in place, a lack of understanding of challenges BAME women face and no tools to support BAME women who may be experiencing racial harassment at work.



BAME WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES AS EMPLOYEES

Our survey asked a number of questions to see how BAME young women viewed the workplace. The answers were in clear contrast to the perception of their employers. More than half (**52%**) of the young women surveyed reported that they had felt disadvantaged at work due to their ethnic, religious or cultural background.

We found also that BAME women often internalise workplace issues and racism and laugh off situations for fear of speaking out. This affects self-confidence and their ability to speak freely. We want BAME women to have the same opportunities to be visible, tell their stories and embrace their identity.

Although the majority (**71%**) of our respondents stated that their organisation had policies in place to deal with racial harassment including reporting to their line manager, “zero tolerance”, supportive HR departments, diversity and inclusion committees, training for new employees and disciplinary procedures, we were surprised to learn that **21%** reported that their organisation had no policy at all. Most respondents reported that their organisation had an equality, diversity and inclusion plan but the vast majority had not read any plan or been encouraged to do so. Our evidence also suggests that little work was being done by employers to ensure that employees were aware of those policies.

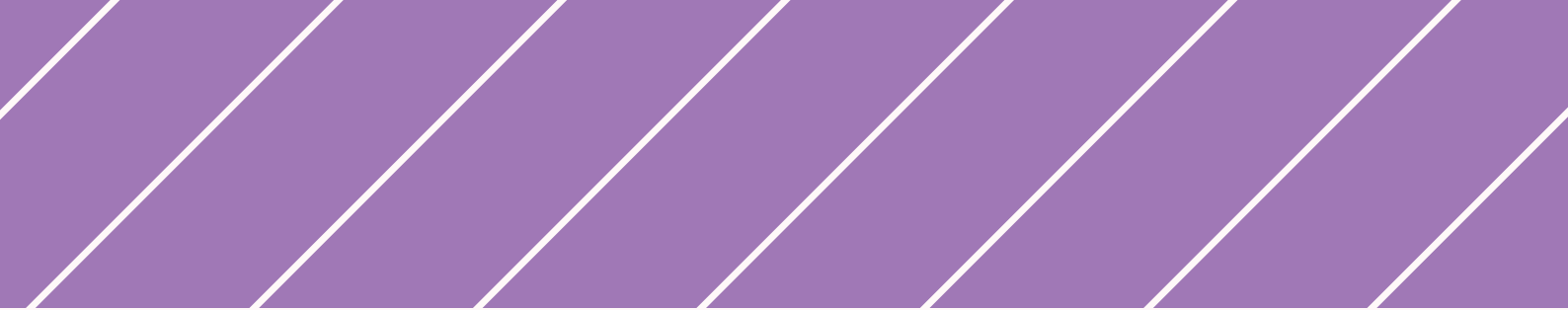
Greater measures are needed to bring these policies to the attention of employees to ensure effective implementation.

As to the effectiveness of any equality, diversity and inclusion plan the feedback was mixed with 36% reporting it not applicable as no plan was in place and only 17.6% and 14.1% respectively reporting the plan was very effective or extremely effective.

We asked witnesses how racism was being addressed in the workplace with the creation of, for example, diversity networks, cultural awareness programmes, and anti-harassment policies and how they were working. We had heard from Fergus McMillan that SDS run projects and CPD events and that information for employers is readily available. Viana Maya of AAI Employability also told us about a diversity work programme they run which provides training for employers on how they can be more inclusive.

Having heard about the importance of visibility and role models for young BAME women, we were interested to hear whether they felt the organisations they had applied to were representative of BAME communities (through, for instance, their advertising). More than two thirds found that their role or organisation did not appear to be representative at all.

Around half (**50.5%**) however felt that their organisation offered them a diverse and inclusive environment. One respondent commented *“I wear a headscarf and pray and have been free to do both. I am not subject to overt racism by any immediate colleagues”* Those who did report an inclusive environment however also reported shortcomings particularly in more senior roles *“The business has a diverse working environment for BAME women. Although it does not seem inclusive. Assistant Managers are all white females”*. Another said there were *“many opportunities and many ethnic minorities working. However, men are still favoured and paid more it seems in the private sector.”*




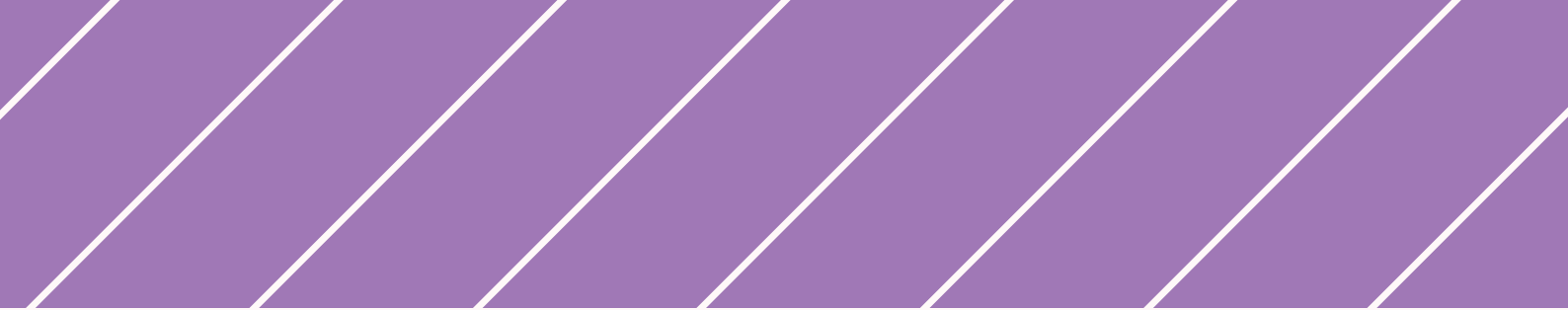
We found that many people asked were the only or one of the only BAME women (or person) in their company and this was not a focus *“the reality is that there are barely 1 or 2 people of colour in a team of 40. Often representation can be an afterthought, or they feel uncomfortable addressing this issue more strongly because they feel they’re not the right people to do it as they are all white women. What the problem is, and they haven’t identified it, is they need more women of colour in the organisation so that it doesn’t feel like they’re speaking FOR them”.*

Our respondents reported an absence of BAME women in leadership and roles with **80.4%** of respondents reporting that there were no BAME women in leadership positions. Where BAME women did hold these positions the responses from young women were extremely positive. One respondent found it *“extremely heartening and inspirational”* and said it *“shows progression is possible”*. She said it highlighted *“inclusivity”* and that *“people are not judged based on their ethnic origin but rather on their abilities and experiences.”*

The responses highlighted a common thread of ‘wider understanding,’ where a BAME woman in a leadership position translated to being ‘able to easily express our needs’ and organisations being able to ‘better understand the culture and background the staff and clients are coming from.

When BAME women were asked how their organisation supported them in their career progression the majority did not know or did not feel supported, and most wished for greater support. Only two respondents from the sample noted that they are being supported as BAME women distinct from their white co-workers.






Most employees (**86%**) were also not aware of any measures their organisations had taken to proactively source candidates. This highlights the need for organisations to connect and collaborate with BAME organisations to help create a BAME narrative and avoid bias in the sourcing process. Respondents highlighted the need for *“mentor and development schemes”* for *“young BAME women in school,”* with a *“focus on people of colour.”* The position of a ‘specific Equalities and Diversity officer’ was also mentioned as having value.

The majority of the participants were aware of current policies in place but many commented that a plan is not often put into action or effectively evaluated although it remains visible externally.

There was also agreement that targeted mentorship opportunities and greater senior BAME representation within the workplace for young BAME women would increase confidence and reduce the effects of systemic disadvantage in achieving career aspirations. Our evidence suggests that employers should be working directly with BAME communities to increase awareness of job and networking opportunities. Third sector organisations could also provide employers with access to BAME communities to increase their representation as well as awareness raising training to create more inclusive workforces. It was clear from our research that HR and inclusion policies are only a small part of the effective action that is necessary to improve the experience of BAME women in the workplace.



THANKS

The Young Women Lead Committee would like to extend sincere thanks to all of the individuals and organisations that contributed to this inquiry and supported this vitally important piece of work. We believe that this report highlights the many opportunities for positive worthwhile change, and we look forward to the Scottish Government's response to our recommendations. **Together we can work towards improving outcomes for Scotland's young BAME women, and help create a better Scotland for all.**

We also want to acknowledge and thank everyone who provided training and support to the Committee during the Young Women Lead programme since it began in October 2019:

**PINAR AKSU
SARAH ALI
HANNAH AXON
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STUART BUCHANAN
MAXINE CAIRNEY
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SURBJIT DHILLON
RODGER EVANS
KATIE GOH
KATIE HEATH
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IONA SOPER
CAROL STEWART
SAMANTHA STEWART**

The Committee would specifically like to thank all the ethnic minority women who took the time to share their stories with us so openly.

YOUNG WOMEN LEAD COMMITTEE 2019/2020

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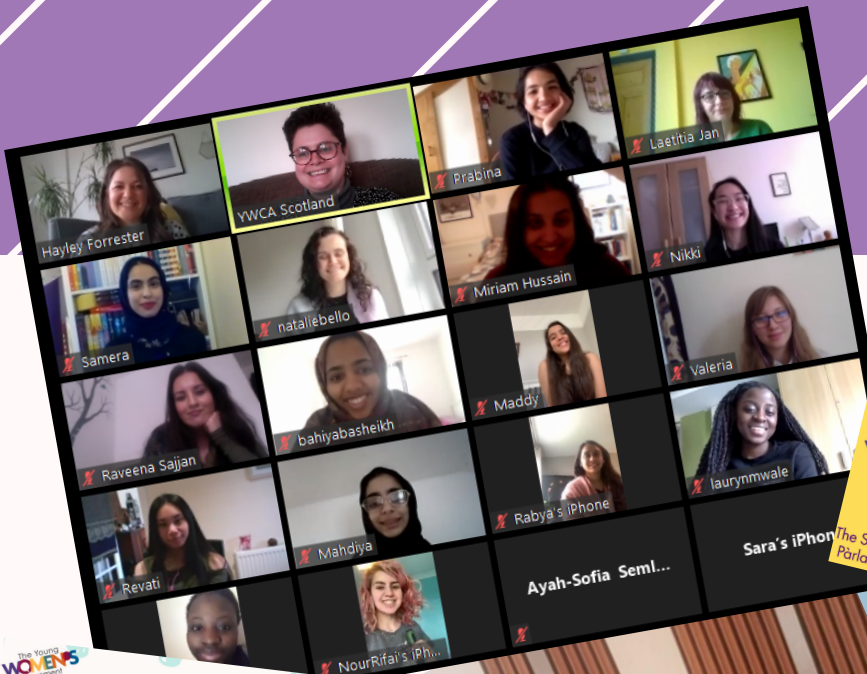


The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

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SAMEERAH ALI
MARAH CHIKUSE



ELENA SOPER
SARA AL-MASHAT
DR PATRYCJA KUPIEC
AMY KING



CALLING ALL EMPLOYERS!
 BIG, MEDIUM AND SMALL - WHAT PRACTICES DO YOU HAVE IN PLACE TO SUPPORT BAME WOMEN INTO EMPLOYMENT?
 FILL OUT THE SURVEY BELOW TO TELL US WHAT YOUR ORGANISATION IS DOING TO CLOSE THE GAP ON INEQUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE.
#BAMEINTOEMPLOYMENT

The Young WOMENS Movement
 The Scottish Parliament
 Parlmaid na h-Alba

YOUNG WOMEN LEAD 2019-2020

This year's Young Women Lead (YWL) cohort has chosen to investigate the transition from education to employment for young women from BAME (Black, Asian, and Ethnic Minority) backgrounds. We are working in partnership with the Scottish Parliament, where our committee runs its own inquiry. Once our evidence gathering phase has been completed, we will produce a report with recommendations to the Scottish Government.



BAME Workplace Microaggressions

Where are you REALLY from?
 I'm almost as dark as you!
 Something spicy for lunch?
 Are you sure that's what happened?
 Wild H K!
 Can I touch your hair?
 What are you?
 I'll be glad to get your friend on BAME committees

Do you?
 You don't look like your name



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