

Race, Poverty and School Exclusions in London

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"I felt as though I couldn't defend him, it seemed that there were no options, he was permanently excluded and that was it. It was a devastating time" Parent

These are the words of a parent describing the experience of the exclusion of their teenage son. When we spoke to a small number of parents from different London boroughs who had been through this experience, their accounts all echoed similar themes that need to be heard. It is clear that often the lack of communication from schools during the exclusions process made the experience an isolating one for parents, leaving them with a feeling of helplessness:

***"I felt like we were left alone, there was no one to talk to, no one gave any advice."* - Parent**

Parents told us that by the time that schools were communicating with them it was at a point where the school exclusion process was already underway leaving them with no options to find a resolution. Parents also felt ill informed of the consequences of the process:

***"They pushed the managed move on me in a meeting and said that this was the only route that was on the table for you and if you don't accept this route then your child would not be able to go to another school."* - Parent**

Parents felt their children were unfairly targeted and that there was not much effort made by the school to work with them to prevent the exclusion from taking place:

***"Schools are quick to dismiss our kinds of children rather than see the problem and how they could approach the situation or find resources to help with their needs."* -Parent this same theme also flowed into the feedback from young people *"I got excluded for swearing at a teacher. A white girl swore at the teacher I did, she got sent out. I got sent to the Head Teacher and got excluded for it."* -Teenage child.**

Given these Parents' experiences and the fact that the data shows Black children and children on free school meals are being excluded at a much higher rate than their other school friends, we must see action from Local and National government to address this.

***"I was giving him some vitamins and he asked if they were from the doctor and I said no. and he said I thought the doctor had given me some tablets to help me be good at school so that they might like me."* -Parent speaking about a conversation with her seven-year-old son.**

In our report the data shows the areas of London where there are disproportionate exclusions for both Black children and for children on free school meals. Its clear local decision making matters hugely. So we call for the action of not just the national government to improve the exclusions process but also for London leaders and decision makers to address this at a local level by closely examining how their current policy and practice can be changed to address these injustices.

For London's families to have faith in the school exclusions process and for young people to have a more inclusive experience in mainstream settings it must be acknowledged that the current school exclusions system is flawed and disproportionately excludes black children and those living in poverty. This injustice must be challenged.

To read the full report and see the scale of the disproportionate exclusions [click here](#).