

By email to: effconsultation@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

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ADCS response to Cabinet Office consultation on reforming ethnicity facts and figures

1. The Association of Directors of Children's Services Ltd. (ADCS) is the national leadership organisation in England for directors of children's services (DCSs) under the provisions of the *Children Act (2004)*. The DCS acts as a single point of leadership and accountability for services for children and young people in a local area, including children's social care and education. ADCS welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Cabinet Office consultation on reforming the Ethnicity facts and figures data.
2. This consultation response will primarily focus on proposal 2: *to redevelop statistics presented by 2 ethnic groups to provide more useful information*. The proposal outlines a number of measure pages where all figures are for two ethnic groups: 'white' and 'other than white'. ADCS is clear that the label 'other than white' is both unhelpful and damaging. Diversity, equality and inclusion are topics that have been at the forefront of conversations across local authorities and other organisations, heightened by the range of disparities brought to the fore, including health and race, over the pandemic period and the importance of language has been consistently raised. It is therefore concerning that the label 'other than white' is considered acceptable for data collection.
3. The consultation document references research from the Race Disparity Unit that outlines some of the problems with aggregating ethnicity data via 'other' groups, such as masking trends in data and where there are cultural sensitivities in how and why some groups are aggregated. Whilst ADCS agrees that it is important we have detailed analysis of data available, this does not acknowledge the problem of using harmful labels. ADCS as a membership organisation has a role in promoting equality and diversity in the workforce and it is disappointing to see national datasets using reductionist language.
4. Some of the measure pages being consulted on relate to children and young people directly, specifically those who have been in custody. The proportion of children from Black and ethnic minority backgrounds offending for the first time, reoffending or in custody continues to grow despite sustained downward trends across the general cohort in conflict with the law over a number of years. More recently, latest data ([YJB, 2022](#)) show that the proportion of children cautioned or sentenced who are Black has been increasing over the last ten years and is five percentage points higher than it was in the year ending March 2011 (12% compared to 7%). This is despite a fall of 17% in the number of children receiving a caution or sentence compared with the previous year and a fall of 82% compared to ten years ago.

5. It is essential that we understand the detail behind the experiences of children and young people from different ethnic backgrounds in custody. Analysis of crime data in 2020 showed that young Black males are nine times more likely than White peers to be searched by the police, with this rising to 19 times more likely in London (UCL, 2021). Further, in a review commissioned by the then Prime Minister, Lammy (MoJ, 2017) stated the disparities in the youth justice system were his “biggest concern.”
6. Acting on this disproportionality has been a national priority for several years yet recent research shows that Black and ethnic minority children are less likely to receive an out of court disposal and are more likely to be remanded (YJB, 2021). Having access to more detailed information to understand these disparities will be key if we are to address the problems in the system.
7. In order to better understand the experiences of children from different ethnic backgrounds in custody, we must have detailed data analysis and not rely on high level data that could mask important trends. ADCS therefore urges government to develop all measures relating to children and young people so that analysis by more than two ethnic groups can be provided. The insinuation that the experiences of all children that do not fit into the category of ‘white’ or ‘white British’ are similar is both wrong and damaging.