












# black youth *charter*

## contents

	introduction	2
	education	6
	employment	7
	health	8
	media	9
	family and communities	10
	culture	11
	environment	12
	facilities	13
	police, law, judiciary	14
	immigration and asylum issues	15
	politics	16

# black youth *charter*

## introduction

**This Charter has been written by the National Black Youth Forum (NBYF) on behalf of all Black young people in the UK.**

The National Black Youth Forum is a group of Black young people aged between 13 and 25 years, of African and Asian heritage - any reference to 'Black' in this publication is to encompass all our peers from these backgrounds.

The Forum was set up after a major national Black youth conference in 1995 hosted almost 1,000 Black young people from across the UK. At this event, a number of issues were identified that young Black people were unhappy with. It was felt that at the root of these concerns lay institutionalised racism, an oppression which is embedded in the structures of the society we live in. It is unfortunate that it took the murder of an aspiring young Black man and its subsequent mis-investigation for this to be realised.

We believe that as young Black people, we are at a disadvantage in life. We encounter inequality in education, employment, in the recognition of our health needs, in our representation in the media; we suffer over immigration issues; we are denied our separate and distinct cultural needs in our living environments and in the facilities that are needed for recreation; we suffer injustice at the hands of the police and in the political arena.

The Forum came to the conclusion that these inequalities exist not only because of the views of individuals in society but because of the sheer magnitude of institutionalised racism that exists in the police force, the education system and in central and local government. We are not treated the same as our white counterparts. We are not respected - our cultural, family, health and religious needs are not respected or met.

The Forum held its first meeting in 1998 and in January 1999 work began on this Charter. As a group, we shared our personal experiences and knowledge of the experiences of other Black young people. In doing so, we identified how we have been hurt or offended, ill-treated and made to feel unequal. We then identified what we believe to be our basic rights to redress these inequalities. We feel that as young Black people, we should do all we can to overcome inequalities in society.

We consulted the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and, while not wanting to be repetitive, we felt the need to identify those rights which we felt were still being violated in the UK.

We believe that this Charter can be a tool for change; we believe that if its aims are put into practice, it will begin to level the playing field in key areas of young Black peoples' lives. We demand that these rights are recognised by central government and acted upon.

# black youth *charter*

The process of compiling the Charter was hard. We discussed, we debated, we laughed and we cried, but we worked together. We lost original members along the way and we gained new ones. Throughout the process, perhaps the most important thing we learned was to respect each other.

Through our extensive national consultation processes, we hope we have encompassed the concerns of all Black young people in the UK and apologise for any omissions.

We also want to thank all those individuals and organisations without whom the Charter would have remained unrealised: Robert McFarlane (Save the Children), Alison Angus (National Union of Students), Nadya Kassam (editor), the numerous youth workers and groups who we consulted with and also the individual members of the Forum for their commitment and perseverance.

We hope that this Charter will protect our rights as young Black people and the rights of future generations.

Yours in hope,



CHURCHES COMMISSION FOR RACIAL JUSTICE

# black youth *charter*

## Forum Members

Kam • Alveena Ahmed • Leshae Ali • Sam Anderson • Sherett Angus • Theraze Angus  
Daniel Bartram • Nita Bhalla • Khalida Bibi • Monique Brito • Spencer Brown • Lee  
Campbell • Carole Chimanga • Blandina Chisveto • Benhilda Chisveto • Soraya Cordle  
Gemma deCordova • Louise deCordova • Serena deCordova • Shiolah Elliott • Ludwig  
Evelyn-White • Naomi Everly • Leighmond Friday • Annette Garrison • Ras P • Phillip  
Henry • Robert Harvey • Nannette Jackson • Shanell Johnson • Chris Jones • Hadija Kalissa  
Alero King • Leanna Lang • Melissa Latchman • Krish Majumdar • Sampson Makinde  
Genaya McKenzie • Aisha Mohamed • Oscar Murema • Kathleen O'Sullivan • Inka  
Oshodi • Michael Ross • Remi Runsewe • Rachelle Saleh • Abdul Salik • Ahsan Shah  
Nathan Simeon • Chanel Stanley • Bianca Stephenson • Dawit Tesfay • Nadine Thomas  
Shuheeb Uddin • Bendu Walker • Kevin Watson • Karl Wilson

## Forum Youth Workers

Alison Angus • Hilary Brown • Ronald Burke • Caroldeanne Ferguson • Gary Forde  
Andy Hamilton • Keith Murrel • Zaurian Luqman • Robert McFarlane

## National Steering Group

The British Youth Council • Commission for Racial Equality • Community & Youth Workers  
Union • Confederation of Indian Organisations • Council of African and Caribbean Churches  
• De Montfort University • Institute of Race Relations • National Assembly Against Racism  
• National Black Caucus • National Black Students Alliance • National Union Of Students •  
Operation Black Vote • The Prince's Trust • Reading University  
Save the Children • Sia • Trade Unions Congress • Westminster Race Equality Council

If you would like further copies of this publication, or would like to make general enquiries  
about the National Black Youth Forum, please contact us at the address listed below.

By Post: Information Desk  
The National Black Youth Forum  
PO BOX 139  
EAST OXFORD D.O  
OX4 1FT

By Email: [infodesk@nationalblackyouthforum.org.uk](mailto:infodesk@nationalblackyouthforum.org.uk)

Dedicated to the following young Black people who have been  
killed in racist attacks

*Navid Sadiq, 15 years old*

*Rohit Duggal, 15 years old*

*Rolan Adams, 15 years old*

*James Tossell, 16 years old*

*Daniel Blake, 18 years old*

*Lahkvinder 'Ricky' Reel, 18 years old*

*Stephen Lawrence, 18 years old*

*Ali Ibrahim, 21 years old*

*Ashiq Hussain, 21 years old*

*Akofa Hodasi, 24 years old*

*Ruhullah Aramesh, 24 years old*

*Donna O'Dwyer, 26 years old*

*and to all young Black people in the UK.*



# black youth charter

## education



1. We have the right to an education which is in our best interests and which allows us to develop our talents through formal and informal learning.
2. We have the right to be safe in any learning environment, inside or outside the educational institution.
3. We have the right to an education that promotes the elimination of racism.
4. We have the right not to be excluded from school on the basis of prejudice and racist stereotyping by our teachers and others in authority.
5. We demand a national process which identifies and changes institutional policies and practices, including identifying individual attitudes and behaviours that perpetuate racism.
6. Black young people have the right to be educated by teachers who are not racist. We want our teachers to receive ongoing race awareness training, so that this awareness be demonstrated in their teaching practice.
7. We have the right to be consulted and to influence the racial equality aspects of teacher training.
8. We have the right to positive advice, work experience and information when choosing subjects in relation to our personal and career aspirations.
9. We have the right to the provision of the necessary resources and support to maintain our standard of education, even if we have been excluded from formal education.
10. We have the right to appeal against inadequate teaching methods.
11. We have the right to have our parents directly involved with our education and development at school and at home. Our parents should be given assistance and support in forming and sustaining a group that monitors our progress.



# black youth charter

## employment



1. We have the right to equal treatment in employment, based on our merit and skill, regardless of our colour, religion, gender or class.
2. We have the right to support from the government for enterprise development which looks at employment creation, culturally diverse economic services, goods and activities.
3. We have the right to high quality, appropriate training and support in pre-vocational job seeking and 'up-skilling.'
4. We have the right to a proactive monitoring mechanism that tracks our career development whilst in employment.
5. When being given careers guidance, we have the right to make informed choices based on sound advice within an equal opportunities framework.



# black youth *charter*

## health



1. We have the right to be informed of and educated about any biological, health and genetic issues that apply to us.
2. We have the right to more funding for research from the government to combat diseases that particularly affect Black communities.
3. We have the right to live in a healthy environment, free from potential harm such as sewage, used syringes, electricity or railway lines and derelict buildings.
4. We have the right to participate in and be consulted about research into Black health issues.
5. We have the right to see medical practitioners who are trained to understand that there are cultural issues which specifically affect Black people and who take this into account in their medical practice.





# black youth *charter*

## media



1. We have the right to be protected from material in the media which may be detrimental to our minds and development.

2. We have the right to be represented and portrayed in a realistic and positive way to avoid stereotypical exploitation, especially in advertising, but also on the Internet and CD-ROMs, in print journalism, television, radio and any media developed in the future.

3. With respect to media misrepresentation, we have the right to public redress in the same form as the mis-representation occurred.

4. We should have equal access and rights to pursue careers in all areas of the media and at all levels.

5. We have the right to be enabled to broadcast programmes and print materials that serve the needs of Black young people.



# black youth charter

## family and communities



1. We have the right to have positive representations of our families and our communities in the media.
2. We have the right to have all family structures respected.
3. Together with our families, we should have our specific housing needs met.
4. If for any reason we become looked after by the local authority we have the right to be consulted about our placement and services, to ensure that our spiritual, emotional, mental and physical needs are being fulfilled.
5. We have the right to actively participate in the development of our communities with unlimited support and financial assistance from the government.
6. We have the right to equal standards of service from local education authorities, health and social services departments.
7. We have the right to unlimited support and assistance in our community development and we want the government to provide economic support, consultation and real commitment to local, regional and national groups that provide services to our communities.
8. We should be consulted on monitoring the economic and social progress of our communities.
9. We have the right to have a representative local and national group that is proactive, reactive and supportive.
10. We want the right to be involved in maintenance in the community to gain spiritual fulfilment.



# black youth charter

culture



1. We want all information that relates to us as individuals and communities to be presented in a positive, balanced and unbiased way.

2. We have the right to be taught and to teach Black history as part of our cultural education. The teaching of Black history should also be formally incorporated into the National Curriculum.

3. We should have the right to access our Charter and to have support through resources to distribute it to our communities, in order to ensure our protection and preserve/sustain our community.

4. We have the right to have the resources to develop cultural education classes, from pre-school to our last term of compulsory learning. Each local education authority (LEA) should be giving us assistance and support to develop this.



5. We have the right to be given the opportunity to learn and use languages that are specific to our heritage.

6. We have the right to unlimited access to all cultural resources and technologies in all available formats, for example written, visual, audio, for self-help and group learning.

7. We have the right to have our way of life preserved.



# black youth *charter*

## environment



1. We have the right to be protected from exposure to abusive practices and substances such as drugs and emotional and sexual abuse.

2. We have the right to refuse the unsuitable environments which we are allocated to live and be educated in. We also have the right to request alternatives without reprisal.

3. We want the right to have and express cultural and religious practices in compulsory environments.

4. We want equality in the provision of services in our environment, for example prompt refuse collection and parks and playgrounds which are properly maintained, to ensure our health and physical safety.



5. We want to be included in and consulted on matters affecting our environment and to be involved in its monitoring, implementation and development, especially when there are proposed changes.

6. We want the right to funding for regeneration projects that seek to develop high quality and healthy environments for our families and communities.



# black youth charter

## facilities



1. We should have our individual needs acknowledged, accepted and catered for, whether they are cultural, social, religious, or relating to our mental health or (dis)ability.

2. We have the right to have racially sensitive services that are confidential and supportive.

3. We want our services to be delivered by people who can actively display a knowledge and understanding of our cultures and religious backgrounds.

4. We have the right to the preservation of our individual and community identities, and the freedom of expression when using these facilities.

5. We have the right to meet together without being stereotyped as a threat and discuss issues that directly or indirectly affect us; resources should be provided by government in order to put this into practice.

6. We should have ownership over and involvement with the decision-making and financial issues that relate to our facilities.

7. We want the right to appropriate training and assistance in maintaining and developing our facilities. The sustainability of these skills will ensure the survival and development of the community. The government should provide financial assistance after direct consultation with Black young people.

8. If we are dissatisfied with the provision of a facility, we have the right to a space where we can express our dissatisfaction and have support to solve the problems.





# black youth *charter*

## police, law, judiciary



1. We have the right to protection from hostility in society, particularly in the form of racism.

2. We have the right to access all files and records that may be held containing information about us by the police, the judiciary or any other organisation.

3. We want the right to have effective monitoring of the police, so that any discriminatory practices can be identified, challenged and corrected, to ensure that we are treated equally.

4. We have the right to be policed, judged and legally represented by professionals who have appropriate anti-discriminatory training which should be done in consultation with us.

5. We have the right to protection and the respect of our human rights whilst in police custody.



7. The Black community has the right to a proper, independent investigation when Black people die in police custody.

8. We have the right to policing procedures which should be to a universal standard across the service.

9. The police should be accountable to Black young people, and there should be a statutory mechanism for accountability and communication with Black communities.



# black youth *charter*

## immigration and asylum issues



1. We want equal rights to protection from violence without the threat of being deported.

2. We want the right to access further and higher education.

3. We want the right to be adopted by someone of our own cultural background if we have been separated from our families as a consequence of immigration or seeking asylum.

4. We want adequate, sustainable funding to be provided for our maintenance.

5. We have the right not to suffer separation from our parents or family through deportation.

6. When we reach adulthood, we want the choice of residency and protection from deportation.

7. We have the right not to be detained illegally.

8. We have the right to at least two independent doctors from the same cultural background as ourselves on entry into the country. If there is a dispute over our age, a second medical opinion and paediatric analysis should be provided.

9. We want agencies that provide ongoing aftercare counselling and guidance for us to have greater support from the government.



# black youth *charter*

## politics



1. Black young people want and need the support and resources to maintain and develop an effective, formally constituted Black Youth Council, whose representatives should be formally heard and consulted by local and national government on issues that affect Black young people.

2. We want access to appropriate up-to-date information in order to fulfil the points in our Charter.

3. We want the right to have a formal input into legislation that impacts upon our lives.



4. We want the right to vote from the age of 16.

5. Surgeries for public servants, i.e. Assembly Members (AMs), Members of Parliaments (MPs) and Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), should be held at times and in venues which are accessible to us, such as schools, colleges, youth projects, universities and cultural centres.

6. We want the right for issues that affect Black young people to be taken seriously at all levels of local and national government.

7. We want a cross-departmental Minister for Black Young People to promote our issues and concerns and ensure equality across legislation.

