#ETHNICITYPAYGAP CAMPAIGN®
RESEARCH REPORT

Impact of the Ethnicity Pay Gap on Black Women in the UK

Dianne Greyson PGCert, Founder, Ethnicity Pay Gap Campaign
Susan Baker MSc

CONTENT

LIST OF TABLES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There is an increasing body of research that evidences the significant barriers Black women face to achieving equal pay with their White peers, as well as access to career progression.

This report notes that much of this evidence relies on statistical data that is relatively limited and does not give voice to the lived experience of Black women. The #EthnicityPayGap survey and interviews aims to address this omission and in doing highlights both the behaviours and practices that can perpetuate pay disparity and the toll it can take on mental and physical wellbeing. There are also consequences for employers in terms of recruitment and retention.

I would therefore argue that there is both a moral and economic incentive for organisations to recognise and address wage inequality. To reiterate my comments made during the Ethnicity Pay Gap House of Lords debate: "Diverse organisations that attract and develop individuals from the widest pool of talent consistently perform better." Those are not my words. I am adopting them, but they are the words of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, and they ring true.

During that debate I congratulated Dianne for her campaign, and I commend her for continuing her activism by co-authoring this report. I am hopeful that the findings and recommendations will contribute to the momentum for change.

The Rt Hon the Lord Boateng PC DL

INTRODUCTION

ABSTRACT

We invited women with an African or African Caribbean heritage to complete an online multiple-choice survey with the option to participate in follow-up interviews. The purpose of this research was to explore the lived experience of women who had encountered wage inequality where their ethnicity was thought to be a factor. 344 women completed the survey, with a smaller proportion agreeing to an interview. Our results suggest most women in the sample had experienced pay disparity and those who had sought redress were not successful in achieving parity with their peers. These experiences had a deleterious impact on their physical and mental wellbeing as well as a loss of morale, which often led to them leaving their employment. There was strong support for employers making pay gap recording mandatory and for organisations to have a framework to mitigate against any ethnicity pay gaps in the future. Our report also includes recommendations for reform.

BACKGROUND

The #EthnicityPayGap Campaign was founded in 2018 by Dianne Greyson. The campaign has two expressed aims: to make it a legal requirement for companies to both report on and address pay disparity based on race, and to highlight and encourage companies to eradicate the cultural and systematic practices that both generate and maintain pay inequality for some people of colour.

The extent of the ethnicity pay gap is staggering and stands at an estimated £3.2 billion a year. Despite this, there has been a distinct lack of impetus from central government to bring about change. Last year, a petition to introduce mandatory ethnicity pay gap reporting gained well over 100,000 signatures, which is the threshold needed to justify a parliamentary debate. The debate took place on the 20th September 2021. While it was acknowledged that there is widespread support for mandatory reporting from employers and unions, the government provided several challenges that would impede any attempts to make ethnicity pay gap reporting mandatory, including a reluctance for people in employment to disclose their racial identity. Unfortunately, the debate concluded with no clear roadmap to a recording framework.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In their 2017 briefing, *The Gender Pay Gap by Ethnicity in Britain*, The Fawcett Society observed that up-to-date evidence of income disparity for minority ethnic women was not available. Their conclusions were based on an analysis of Labour Force Survey data from the 1990s to 2017. Using this data, their report noted that 13% of Black African women have never worked, compared to 3% of White British women, and that rates of unemployment for Black Caribbean women is twice the rate of those of White British women. Black African women also have a lower hourly rate of pay than White British women. The briefing noted that Black African and Black Caribbean women face higher levels of unemployment than White women.

The TUC have commissioned a number of reports exploring the working experiences of Black and other minority ethnic women and note the role of intersectionality in pay disparity. It concluded that gender pay disparity cannot be addressed without addressing pay disparity for Black and Brown women, and women living with a disability. Their briefing, *BME Women and Work*, notes that "BME women are overrepresented in insecure jobs. One in eight…are insecurely employed…creating huge financial uncertainty, anxiety and stress."[1] The briefing also acknowledges the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on Black and Brown women in the work sphere, particularly with regard to accessing PPE and risk assessments. The COVID-19 pandemic has also led to increased unemployment for Black and Brown workers.

Wage differences based on race and gender can be complex in origin and influenced by several interlocking factors. The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) published their ethnicity pay gap report for 2019/2020 in March 2021, and found that the average hourly rate for White staff was 29.3% higher. The report noted that Black, Brown and other minority ethnic staff tended to be employed at the lower grades in the organisation; consequently they missed out on certain pay bonuses. The Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) completed an analysis of the ethnicity pay gap in 2017. Their exploration of the drivers of income inequality identified that Black and Brown workers tend to live and work in London, where wages are higher, but for some workers who have been born abroad, their rate of pay can be negatively impacted regardless of location.

"BME women are overrepresented in insecure jobs. One in eight… are insecurely employed… creating huge financial uncertainty, anxiety and stress."

Household structure and health status can also be a factor when explaining the ethnicity pay gap. Allmark et al (2010) completed an evidence review of the experience of non-White British customers engaging with the Department for Work and Pensions. They established that a higher proportion of Black and Brown adults suffer from long term illness or disability. Further, Black African households will have a higher proportion that are either single individuals with a health condition or lone parents, in comparison to White British households, which are more likely to consist of couples without dependent children. This will of course impact on the ability to both achieve and sustain employment, as well as seek a promotion that could lead to higher pay.

Geraldine Healy, professor emeritus of employment relations at Queen Mary, University of London observed: "Studies over the years, including our own, have found that for black women being overlooked for promotions, facing moving goalposts in promotion and job applications, and being asked to train a successful applicant for a job which they failed to get are recurrent experiences." [2]

A survey conducted by Robert Walters identified that 42% of Black professionals had not received a pay increase after negotiation.[3] *The McGregor-Smith Review* (2017) reported that Black women were less able to secure opportunities for employment that match their skills and abilities, observing that over 40% of all Black African employees with A-level and graduate-level qualifications are overqualified for their current jobs.

Access to spheres of influence and opportunities for professional development have also been identified as factors impacting on wage disparity. The McGregor-Smith Review also noted that "the main barrier many individuals felt was standing in their way was the lack of connections to the 'right people.'" [4] The review acknowledges the increasing influence of unpaid internships as a route to a career, but that these internships are not accessible for more economically disadvantaged groups. Our literature review found very limited research that would provide details of how many Black and Brown women have undertaken unpaid internships, but the Red Cross published a report in 2017, titled *Recruiting, Supporting And Developing Black, Asian And Minority Ethnic (BAME) Staff: Findings And Recommendations For The British Red Cross*, which does briefly explore how unpaid internships are accessed and experienced by their Black and Brown employees. The report concludes: "in addition to a lack of knowledge about internships, people from lower socio-economic backgrounds, and by extension many BAME people, are less likely to have the means to support themselves financially during a period of unpaid work. This can leave the British Red Cross with an exceptionally narrow internship pool. This is an issue which is reported by staff involved in recruiting and supporting interns.[5]

---

2 *'Mediocre' managers stifling black professional women's careers, study suggests,* October 2021.
3 *Driving Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace,* March 2021.
4 Page 26.
5 Page 49.

Research from the London School of Economics and Political Science, The Inclusion Initiative (TII), found that while all women experience substantial differences in pay, hours and representation in top jobs in comparison to men, it is Black women, regardless of whether they are born in the UK or overseas, who have the lowest probability of becoming top earners. While 1.3% of UK-born White men are in the top 1% of earnings, only 0.2% of UK-born White women and less than 0.1% of UK-born Black women are in the same category. Grace Lordan, Associate Professor of Behavioural Science and Director of TII, observed: "It is striking that men are consistently the top earners, regardless of race. This is true both if we consider UK born workers, or those that move to the UK from other countries. What is even more striking is that Black women, regardless of whether they are from the UK or elsewhere have the lowest probabilities of being top earners."[6]

A report by the Universities and Colleges Employee Association (UCEA) states, "Our analysis demonstrates the complexity of pay differences within the sector and highlights the importance of considering intersectionality rather than simply looking at ethnicity and gender pay gaps in isolation. With the likelihood of ethnicity pay gap reporting on the horizon, this report shows that calculating a broad 'BME' pay gap on its own will hide significant differences between different ethnic minority groups as well as differences within ethnic groups by nationality and gender."[7]

While the above body of research is both illuminating and contains constructive recommendations that will be discussed later in the report, it was difficult to tease out the experiences of women of African and/or Caribbean heritage as they were rarely discussed as a unique demographic. Due to a lack of data, their experiences were often combined with those of other minority ethnic women, or with African and/or African Caribbean men. This report will avoid using the homogenous term BAME where possible and will instead refer to Black (of African and/or Caribbean heritage) and Brown (Black and mixed heritage) women. In compiling this report, the Ethnicity Pay Gap Campaign hope to elevate their often unheard voices.

---

6 *Black Women are least likely to be among UK's top earners* - London School of Economics and Political Science, 3rd March 2021.

7 *Intersectional analysis shows the largest pay gaps in HE are for Black men and women*, 22nd November 2018.

Our sources of data consisted of an online survey designed by the #EthnicityPayGap Campaign and follow-up one-to-one interviews. The survey consisted of 27 multiple choice questions and was live from May 26th to August 6th 2021. The survey was publicised and promoted via articles published in The Voice and online vocational magazines including The Nursing Times and Community Care. It was also publicised on social media platforms by Fair Play Talks, a global platform covering wellbeing, diversity, equity and inclusion news across all diversity spectrums and industries.

344 women completed the online survey. 69.8% of the respondents were employed in the public/non-profit sector, with the remaining 30.2% employed in private companies. 77.3% were in full-time employment. 71% had either an academic or professional qualification. 58.1% identified as Black British/Black Caribbean, 27% identified as Black British/Black African and 14.8% identified as Black Other. The majority were approaching middle age, with 27.9% aged 36-45, and 38.7% aged 46-60. 21.8% of respondents received an annual salary of £27,000 to £37,000, 13.1% were paid £16,000 to £26.000. Only 2.9% were paid over £100.000.

Answered: 344   Unanswered: 0

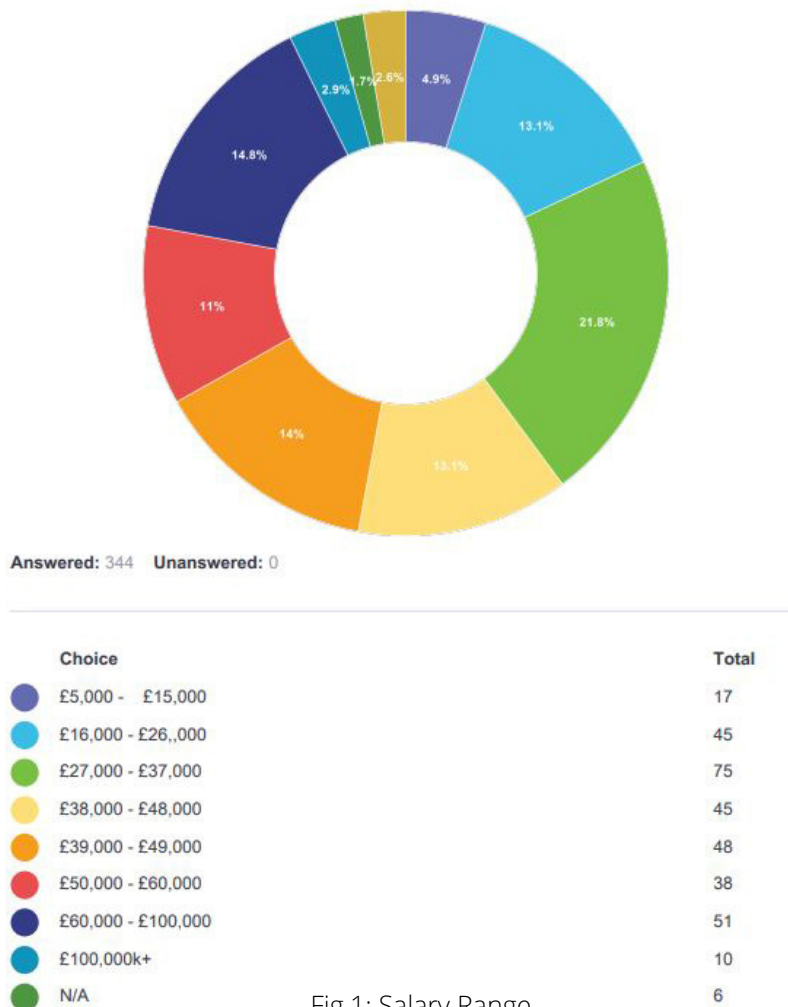| Choice	Total
£5,000 - £15,000	17
£16,000 - £26,,000	45
£27,000 - £37,000	75
£38,000 - £48,000	45
£39,000 - £49,000	48
£50,000 - £60,000	38
£60,000 - £100,000	51
£100,000k+	10
N/A	6

Fig.1: Salary Range

As noted above, the #EthnicityPayGap Campaign was keen to hear the voices behind the statistics, so all respondents were asked if they would be willing to participate in follow-up interviews. 134 women (39%) agreed to do so, but only a fraction of that number attended the interviews, which were video recorded and transcribed with the participants' consent. The survey had a space for further comments, and several expressed a fear of reprisals if they had an interview, despite reassurances that the interviewees' details would be kept confidential.

PAY DISPARITY

52.3% of respondents confirmed they had experienced a pay disparity where they were being paid less than their White colleagues working in the same role, with 31.4% stating they were unsure if they had ever experienced a salary disadvantage.
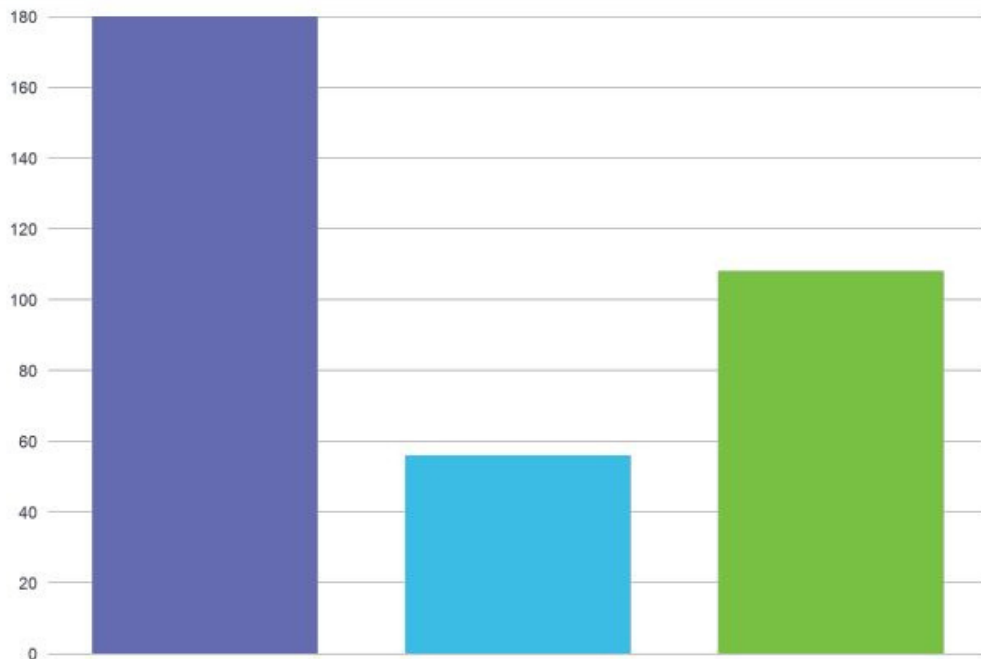
Answered: 344   Unanswered: 0

Choice	Total
Yes	180
No	56
Unsure	108

Fig.2: Experience of Pay Disparity

The inequality in pay ranged from £3,000 to £10,000 per annum.

The interviews provided an opportunity to explore when and how these pay disparities took place.

"If I had known this before I [started] I would have been like, no, not going. I had a colleague within the team who was an account manager, [we both had] the same title: account manager. But the day before I was given my offer, he was promoted out of cycle with a pay rise to senior account manager... he was on a much higher salary, but we were doing the same role, bar his new title. Which is something that I found out at the three-month mark and that was when I really thought: I need to leave."

Another interviewee described how she was prohibited from having medical insurance for her and her daughter, but a White male colleague who joined the organisation shortly afterwards was provided with health insurance for his entire family, despite the fact that they were doing the same job.

The interviewees were asked to recount what strategies they deployed to find out if their salary was on par with their peers. It was a recurrent theme that the culture in Britain to not openly discuss pay could be an impediment, and that it was particularly difficult to have these conversations with their White colleagues.

"People here tend to shy away from talking about figures. You know, it's indecent, talking about money."

"I find when I ask, particularly White men who you're able to gain that trust and have that relationship with, they are very forthcoming... with White women, I've had to be very careful about what you say around salary and how you broach the subject... But with Black colleagues, particularly Black women, there is that openness from the start, because actually what we have is 'make sure you're not getting cheated. Ask for this much. This is how you ask for this much. This is what I'm doing. This is what you're doing. Here's my job description. Make sure you're saying you're doing all of these things for promotion.' Actually, it's almost like a reciprocal mentor in the organisation. Who do you trust? Who do you talk to and who are you going to be able to have that reciprocal relationship with where you're helping each other? And that relationship for me sits with the Black women in every organisation I've been in. It doesn't matter what role or function."

ACCESS TO PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION

While the survey itself did not directly enquire about opportunities for professional development – this was explored at the interview stage – respondents were asked if they had applied for a promotion in their current role and the outcome. 127 women said they had, and of that number, 84 were not successful, 12 were offered the post, but asked to take a pay cut, and 4 stated that the position was suddenly closed when they applied.

The women we interviewed spoke of how critical the support of their line manager was in influencing the outcome. Those who did not receive any guidance as to how to effectively meet the criteria for the post they applied for were not successful. Others disclosed how their line managers were actively obstructive.

"There's always someone else. Better suited for the role type of thing. Or who would get naturally more recognition than you do. But as I've gotten older as well, I kind of stopped caring about certain things. So I'm at a stage in my life where I want peace. There are always impediments because the men always have an advantage. The White woman will have an advantage over me, though slightly less so. The level I'm at now, I had to kind of like fight for it. And it took longer for me to get there than obviously it would have taken some of my peers. I know that for sure. But, you know, you can't be battling everyday all day. Coz you lose your mind. And like I said, at this point in my life, I just want some peace."

"It's interesting. I was reflecting on when I was 18. I was started off as a nursery nurse. I became a psychiatric nurse and when I did the training, I was a victim of pay disparity from then. I was encouraged to do the lower qualification, the enrolled training. It was couched to me, 'Oh, you know, it's two years of training'. I didn't know the implications of being an enrolled nurse then, so I did it. So from the beginning of my career at 18, I was set on the wrong path."

"I was actually working with one of the directors in the training centre. I said to him that I really loved the program and I'd love to be considered for the program as a trainer. He looked at me and he basically said, 'Don't be silly. Do the typing'; and that is what crushed me. My career got knocked, and it got knocked for three years."

"I was still having to cover my old job. I had four jobs effectively. Then in a meeting, they tried to give me some more work. I said I really don't have capacity. So that was interpreted as me not coping, not actually that you've given me too much work. The clinical director at the time and the operational director went off on two days away to redesign the service line. So they decided that I wasn't coping, and that they would give it to another manager who was on maternity leave and hadn't started the role at all. Bearing in mind I've done it before. [They informed me] during a tea break. Then I had to go back into a big meeting with them after they had just told me basically that they weren't giving me this promotion."

"Look at social work. That's where a lot of Black women are – but have we been promoted at the same level?"

"I didn't get [the promotion]. Someone from HR took me to one side and said 'they're not going to give that job to a dread'."

"Me saying that I was going for my masters, that's what triggered her. So she made it her sole purpose, every time I had to leave to go to uni for my classes, she would try and give me something that would take me beyond my time and would make me late."

"The opportunities are not there for certain, basically, BAME individuals. You're not in the right space to find out what's going on or somehow you don't know where the openings are. There are no opportunities to do secondments and things like that. So you're kind of just left really stuck. I had to push to get the practice educator training. Certain people are able to get those 'insider whispers'. And that's how it is."

All interview respondents spoke of their efforts to fit in and access those 'insider whispers', and the toll it took on them.

"You have to code switch every day. You have your home self, you have your professional self, and the professional self is just so wearying, because you always have to be on guard. And then you've got to tone down the bits that are probably going to get you labelled a certain way. And it's not just words, but you know, like social situations, it's just a lot. And, obviously, it's more pronounced at work because that's your livelihood so you've got to be careful that you don't get yourself in a position where people are looking for the first thing to victimise you."

"I found that within those organisations it's that hyper visibility versus invisibility. All mistakes are magnified and those opportunities to grow are kind of restricted. And then moments where you're overachieving [it's assumed] that's the way you work. Success comparative to other colleagues and the team was not recognised. There was a lot more grace afforded to a lot of people failing upwards, which I was not able to access."

HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Perhaps not surprisingly, the experiences of these women had a negative impact on their mental and physical wellbeing. One interviewee was very clear that the stress she had endured from being marginalised and having her career opportunities repressed at work caused her to have a miscarriage. Others experienced depression and anxiety.

"My head was so clouded and just felt so low that I needed to take sick leave and had never taken sick leave before."

Other interviewees spoke of needing to access psychotherapy and requiring input from occupational health.

The COVID-19 pandemic perpetuated and exacerbated the health challenges that these women experienced. The TUC briefing _BME Women and Work_ notes: "The COVID-19 pandemic has added a more deadly aspect to this lack of workplace power and protection. BME workers have told the TUC they are frequently denied access to PPE and to appropriate risk assessments.[8]

One interviewee spoke of being pressured to return to working in the office despite being clinically vulnerable, and her request for home working was not accepted until her GP and consultant specialist intervened.

"But white colleagues who were clinically vulnerable, they weren't questioned or cross-examined. They were treated differently."

8 Pages 4-5.

SEEKING REDRESS

Of the 180 women who reported experiencing a pay disparity, 86 spoke to their line manager, 69 did not take any further action, and 20 respondents spoke to a relative for advice and support. A small proportion, 10 women, also discussed their concerns with a union.

The outcomes were not encouraging. Although 25 women had their pay reviewed upwards, 19 advised that while their employers agreed to review their pay, no changes in pay were made. 30 women were told by their employer that nothing could be done.

One interviewee detailed how she asked her line manager and human resources (HR) to investigate why she was being paid less than her White counterparts. After attending four meetings with HR and her line manager, she was paid to leave the organisation and was made to sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement. Another respondent told us that she was put through a disciplinary process for trying to get to the bottom of her pay disparity.

Given the high proportion of respondents who worked in the public sector, we wanted to explore why the numbers who had sought support from their union and/or human resources were so low. The responses were mixed.

"I'm with SWU [Social Workers Union]. They gave me lots of good advice."

"My experience of unions is one of distrust. They're not really there for the individual. They take you so far and then they leave you to fend for yourself...and when a union person that is supposed to be supporting you turns around and says, 'you know, I have a mortgage to pay', what does that tell you?"

"My union has been very responsive and supportive."

"HR works for the company. They're not really there for you."

The interviews revealed the frustration felt by women due to the length of time it took for their concerns to be listened to, or for their claim of pay disparity to be addressed. The interviewees spoke of feeling isolated when trying to deal with their pay disparity and experiencing coded messaging that they should be grateful for having a job or were accused of being an 'angry Black woman'.

Another constant theme from the survey commentaries and interview narratives were that many women decided to leave their employer due to pay inequality and barriers to professional development/advancement. It was notable that they tended to leave within six months of these negative experiences.

MANDATORY ETHNICITY PAY GAP REPORTING

40.7% of respondents stated their employers had not compiled and published data on pay disparity based on ethnicity, 36.9% were unsure and 22.4% confirmed that their employer was publishing data about ethnicity pay gaps. This correlates with research from People Management that only a quarter of large firms are calculating their ethnicity pay gap.[9]

We asked our respondents about their views on whether the government should make ethnicity pay gap reporting mandatory. 305 women (88.7%) were strongly in favour, with 9.9% holding the view that mandatory reporting would be helpful.

9.9%

1.2% 5%

88.7%

Answered: 344   **Unanswered:** 0

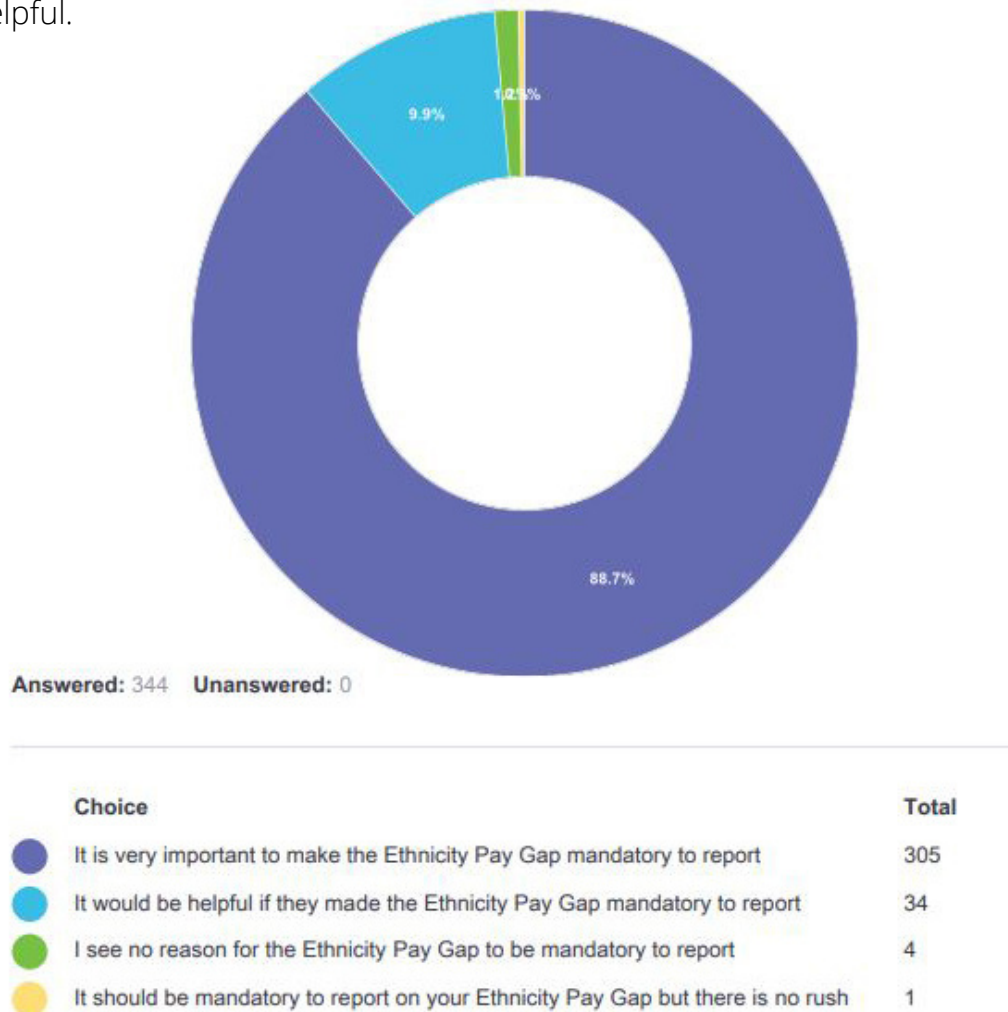|	Choice	Total
●	It is very important to make the Ethnicity Pay Gap mandatory to report	305
●	It would be helpful if they made the Ethnicity Pay Gap mandatory to report	34
●	I see no reason for the Ethnicity Pay Gap to be mandatory to report	4
●	It should be mandatory to report on your Ethnicity Pay Gap but there is no rush	1

Fig. 3: Mandatory Pay Gap Reporting Favourability

At interview stage, there was some surprise expressed that mandatory reporting was not already in place, given that gender pay gap recording has been mandatory since 2017. Interviewees also argued that the government should implement penalties to those organisations who do not have a framework and action plan in place.

Some of the respondents who are employed where ethnicity pay gaps are recorded and published explained that there had been some difficulties with interpreting the data, partly because staff were reluctant to state their racial identity. Also, staff did not know where the information was held.

---

9 *People Management,* 10th September 2020.

86% of respondents stated that they would be more inclined to work for an employer who published data about pay disparity based on ethnicity. However, some mentioned caveats to their acceptance. They felt that organisations would need to demonstrate how they were dealing with their ethnicity pay gap with clear targets and timeframes.
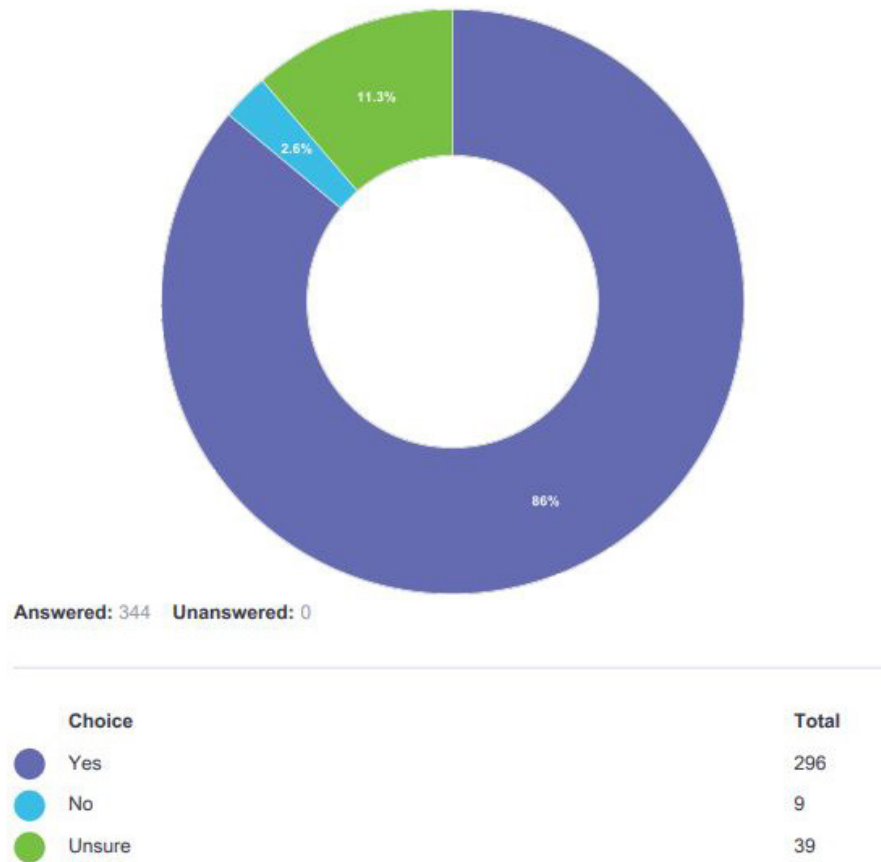

Choice	Total
Yes	296
No	9
Unsure	39

Answered: 344   Unanswered: 0

Fig. 4 Inclination Towards Employers Reporting their Ethnicity Pay Gap

"People should really realise that the more they are open with each other, it will force the companies to be more equitable because you know, if you go to them, you can say openly, 'Look, so-and-so is earning this so why am I not earning that?'"

"Then there is actual data supporting the lifespan of a Black or other ethnic minority employee going through that organisation. With mandatory reporting, my assumption would be that the C-suite has to make things happen relating to diversity – that they have responsibilities and if they don't achieve them, they're having to explain to their board why not."

"What we need, especially as professionals and young professionals coming through, is action. They need support, need development, need the same opportunities as other people. There's this idea that if you're employing people from ethnic minority backgrounds, that it's somehow taking down the quality. But these people have the same qualifications if not more than the people that you're typically attracting. You have people who face barriers to entry or barriers in their personal life and barriers from racism and sexism and misogynoir. They're coming into organisations with a resilience that your middle class White employees don't have. And, actually, that person probably has a lot more to offer."

DISCUSSION

In this report we have undertaken a quantitative survey followed by a series of qualitative interviews to explore and highlight the lived experiences of Black and Brown women in the workforce. The results demonstrate a correlation between the findings of previous research. There is an intersectionality that fuels the income inequality that Black and Brown women experience, as well as cultural factors that keep them locked out of the more informal routes to career advancement and discussions with their White peers about pay.

The survey and interviews showed that the majority of respondents did consider themselves to have received less pay than their White peers for the same roles, and that their ethnicity was a factor but a significant majority were unsure if that was the case. A potential area for further research would be to explore if this is due to a lack of data provided by employers, or a lack of awareness of the myriad ways in which pay disparities can occur.

Two under reported consequences of pay disparity were highlighted in our report. First, that the marginalisation, hostility and resistance that the respondents had faced took a toll on their physical and mental wellbeing, and that these pressures on their health were compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic. Secondly, these women are moving on from their positions once it becomes apparent that advancement is unlikely. This cannot be beneficial for any organisation where this is happening, due to the disruption caused by staff turnover and the loss of talent.

The majority of our respondents worked in unionised environments, so it was striking that our survey revealed such low numbers of women turning to their unions for advice. The interviews suggested some uncertainty that unions would effectively advocate for them, but a minority spoke very positively of their engagement with their unions and found them highly supportive.

There were some difficulties with our sample inasmuch as it was small and self-selecting. All of the interviewees shared similarities in terms of age, managerial seniority and income. The methods used to promote the survey does not appear to have attracted many participants who were on a low income when compared to women who were earning above the national average. There was also a significant drop off in the number of women who were prepared to be interviewed; it is noted that this may have been due to fear of speaking out, but it also may have been helpful to provide other methods for women to express their views and personal experiences in more detail if they did not feel comfortable with being interviewed.

Nonetheless, given the alignment with previous research in this area, it can be argued that the conclusions established in this report are valid and adds to the body of knowledge that already exists. The survey results also make a strong case for the necessity for mandatory ethnicity pay gap recording as a route to attracting and retaining talent.

The intersectional challenges that Black women face when it comes to pay have been highlighted by those who responded to the questionnaire. Many felt frustrated about the lack of action on the ethnicity pay gap were doubtful that gender pay gap reporting will bring parity for them. We would therefore suggest that any response needs to take a whole systems approach.

The McGregor-Smith Review developed a framework that would allow organisations to take the first steps. Details can be found here.
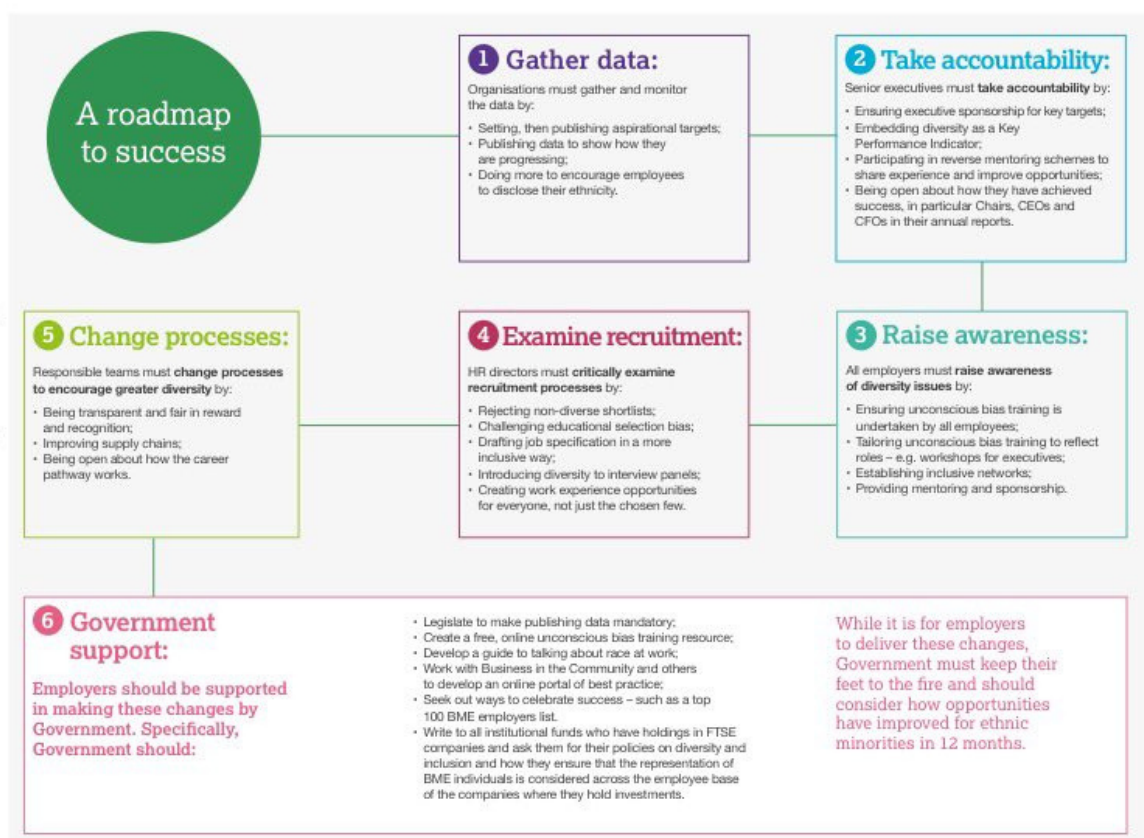
Our research leads us to make the following recommendations:

1. We endorse the conclusion from the McGregor-Smith Review that unpaid internships are unethical and restrict access for economically disadvantaged people, as well as Black and Brown women. Therefore, we recommend that all internships should be paid, and any organisation seeking to offer internships should make active efforts to attract candidates from under-represented groups.

2. Our survey provides evidence that Black and Brown women have a high failure rate when attempting to seek professional development and promotion. A lack of support with preparing for advancement and an inability to access the 'right people' who are in the know about upcoming opportunities was a strong theme. We would suggest that there is a gap in service that HR, professional bodies and unions can fill. There is a need to develop and offer training and learning spaces with the aim of raising awareness of the reality of wage disparity to enable Black and Brown women to navigate some of the exclusive organisational behaviours that lock them out. HR can and should be more aggressive in challenging those 'insider whispers' and 'drinks down the pub' that are only available for some.

3. We would invite unions in particular to consider how they can promote themselves as effective agents for challenging wage disparity. Our research suggests that unions are perceived as missing in this space and are not seen as the first port of call for advice and support when wage disparity is experienced.

4. We would also recommend that appraisal processes are realigned to identify gaps in knowledge and experience and utilised as a route to preparation for promotion or developing a specialism.

5. HR departments should be supported at C-Suite level to challenge and phase out the use of capability and performance management procedures to deter Black and Brown women from challenging unfair treatment.

6. We invite employers to expand their understanding of the impact of racism, and update their staff welfare policies accordingly. Racism is a public health issue and our research adds to the emerging evidence that racism can contribute to mental and physical health disorders.

7. Not feeling safe to talk about the relationship between race and lesser pay remains a live issue that will undermine any efforts made by employers to address the imbalance. The Fawcett Society have developed the Right to Know strategy that could be adapted to address the ethnicity pay gap and give employers, unions and employees the confidence to speak up and speak out.

8. We are aware that some organisations have reported their ethnicity pay gap and we applaud them for doing so. However, merely recording and publishing data will not foster change. All ethnicity pay gap reporting must be combined with targets and action plans with timescales embedded. Financial penalties should be available and applied if they are not enforced. If wage disparity due to race is to end, addressing the ethnicity pay gap must become a statutory requirement.

REFERENCES

Allmark, P. et al. (2010). Ethnic minority customers of the Pension, Disability and Carers Service: An evidence synthesis. Department for Work and Pensions. [online]. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ethnic-minority-customers-of-the-pension-disability-and-carers-servicean-evidence-synthesis-rr684 (Accessed 23 September 2021)

Breach, A. et al. (2017). Gender Pay Gap by Ethnicity in Britain - Briefing [online]. Available at: https://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/gender-pay-by-ethnicity-britain (Accessed 15 June 2021)

Brown, J. (2021). 'Mediocre' managers stifling black professional women's careers, study suggests [online]. Available at: https://www.peoplemanagement.co.uk/news/articles/mediocre-managers-stifling-black-professional-womens-careers (Accessed 13 October 2021)

Competition and Markets Authority (2021). Ethnicity Pay Gap Report: 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 [online]. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ethnicity-pay-gap-report-april-2019-to-march-2020 (Accessed 17 May 2021)

London School of Economics (2021). 'Black women are least likely to be among UK's top earners' [online]. Available at: https://www.lse.ac.uk/News/Latest-news-from-LSE/2021/c-March-21/Black-women-are-least-likely-to-be-among-UKs-top-earners (Accessed 26 June 2021)

Longhi, S. and Brynin, M. (2017) The Ethnicity Pay Gap. Equality and Human Rights Commission. [online]. Available at: https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/research-report-108-the-ethnicity-pay-gap.pdf (Accessed 14 September 2021)

McGregor-Smith, R. (2017). Race in the workplace: The McGregor-Smith Review [online]. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/race-in-the-workplace-the-mcgregor-smith-review (Accessed 2 March 2021)

Office for National Statistics (2020). Ethnicity pay gaps: 2019 [online]. Available at: https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/articles/ethnicitypaygapsingreatbritain/2019 (Accessed 3 March 2021)

Powell, C. (2021). Ethnic minority workers far less likely to receive pay rises than white counterparts, research warns [online]. Available at: https://www.peoplemanagement.co.uk/news/articles/ethnic-minority-workers-far-less-likely-to-receive-pay-rises-than-white-counterparts#gref. (Accessed 27 August 2021

The People's Pension (2020). Measuring the ethnicity pensions gap [online]. Available at: https://thepeoplespension.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/Measuring-the-ethnicity-pensions-gap.pdf (Accessed 15 September 2021)
Trade Union Congress (2020). BME women and work: TUC Equality Briefing [online]. Available at: https://www.tuc.org.uk/research-analysis/reports/bme-women-and-work (Accessed 16 March 2021)

Walters, R. (2021) Driving Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace [online]. Available at: https://www.robertwalters.co.uk/hiring/campaigns/diversity-and-inclusion.html (Accessed 27 August 2021)