



Perceptions of Safety
amongst
Somali and Black African/Caribbean Youths
in Bristol

Research by: *Transparency Solutions* and *S.A.R.I*

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1. Executive Summary

“There are postcode issues. It’s more to do with association than racism”

This report sets out the findings and recommendations based on a series of interviews with 48 youths of Somali and Black African/Caribbean youths and 13 adults with a stake hold in the lives of young people. The research was centred in East Central Bristol. The report is based on the sample described above and whilst efforts were made to ensure a good cross section of respondents we cannot claim it is representative of all youths of Somali and Black African/Caribbean ethnic origin in Bristol.

Young people of Somali and Black African/Caribbean living and/or socialising in the Easton, Ashley and Lawrence Hill areas of East Central Bristol are leading segregated lives based on postcode rather than ethnicity. Whilst there is little evidence that the vast majority are either involved in crime (gang-related or otherwise) or are victims of it, the fear of crime persists. This fear is largely one of violence and crime occurring in other, nearby neighbourhoods, which is thereby creating ‘no go areas’ for many young people: specifically Easton for those living in St Pauls; St Pauls for those living in Easton; and Easton and/or St Pauls for those living in Barton Hill. Furthermore, there is a widespread conviction that gun and knife crime is part of Bristol life although agreement on the extent differs wildly and crucially, no one who took part in this research had any personal experience of gun or knife crime nor did they for the greater part, personally know any victims or perpetrators.

Somalis and Black African/Caribbean youths living in more traditional ‘white areas’ of Bristol are making an active choice to socialise in Ashley, Easton and Lawrence Hill where they have familial and cultural ties, friends and where they feel most comfortable and safe. We found no evidence of racial tensions between Somalis and Black African/Caribbean’s, in fact quite the reverse with compliments being paid on both sides and any criticisms equitable.

Minor crimes, including some not so minor crimes such as muggings, are being under-reported and trust and confidence in the police is generally quite low with a number of (unsubstantiated) examples of police harassment and victimisation cited both from direct personal experience and second hand. Despite this, almost everyone who took part in this research did say that they would report a serious crime to the police. Confidence in statutory agencies generally is mixed. Whilst the police service fares less well, schools are generally well thought of with only a relatively small number of specific complaints. Where a common criticism exists, it is that black children are not treated as fairly as white children. Youth service provision is greatly valued and appears to be well used amongst youths in these areas. There is clearly concern amongst all respondents that recent and planned cuts to youth services will negatively impact on young people. Their experiences at the various youth centres they go to are positive, inclusive and culturally appropriate ones which they will struggle to replace.

Youths in East Central Bristol have very clear ideas for change.

2. Acknowledgements

We are indebted to a number of people who helped us complete this research, report and recommendations. Particular thanks go to Modupe Odusote and Roseanne Looker both of whom gave their time in the university holiday period to accompany the community researchers, record and transcribe the many interviews conducted.

Thanks to Richad Ferron and Liban Obsiye for working tirelessly over many weekends and evenings in order to reach the youths surveyed.

Corinne Funnell and James Hoggett of UWE provided invaluable assistance in designing the questions. Ours thanks to them also.

We were overwhelmed by the kindness and generosity shown to us by a number of community organisations in Ashley, Easton and Lawrence Hill most notably The Crypt, Felix Road Adventure Playground, Easton Community Centre, Docklands and the Malcolm X Centre who all gave time, assistance and, on several occasions, a private space in which to speak with the young people we were working with.

2. Definitions

‘Youth’

For some people the term ‘youth’ carries a negative connotation (Muncie, 1999) and agreement differs as to the age to which it should be applied. For the purposes of this report however the term ‘youth’ will be used throughout to describe young people aged between 13 and 22.

‘Area’

This term is used to describe the area of East Central Bristol and specifically the wards of Ashley, Easton and Lawrence Hill where our research was centred.

3. Introduction

Evidence exists to suggest elements of ongoing tension between some members of the youth from both the Somali and Black African/Caribbean communities in Bristol. It is believed that the relationship between the two communities is on the whole a positive one but where tension does exist, it has led to a number of incidents and even fatalities. The most recent of these incidents happened on 15th March 2013 when two Somali young boys were stabbed in St Pauls allegedly by groups of Black/African Caribbean youth. Despite the frequency of such incidents there have been no studies carried out to measure the extent of ethnic tension between the two groups and the perceptions of gang related crime on youths of Somali and Black African/Caribbean ethnicity living in Bristol.

4. The Research

Stand Against Racism & Inequality (S.A.R.I) and Transparency Solutions Ltd (TS) were commissioned by The Safer Bristol Partnership to carry out research, primarily amongst the youth from each community to determine:

- General perception of living in the area
- Experience of crime and victimisation
- Perception and experience of agencies
- Ideas for change

4.1. Methodology

We decided upon the method of semi-structured interviews and followed the generally accepted standard for this method:

- The interviewer sought written permission from the respondent to conduct a formal interview which was recorded and later transcribed for analysis.
- The interviewer used an 'interview guide.' This was a list of questions grouped into sections that were covered during the conversation.
- Each interviewer followed the guide but they were able to follow topical trajectories in the conversation that strayed from the guide when they felt this was appropriate

Semi-structured interviews are particularly useful when the research only allows for one interview with each respondent and when there is more than one interviewer. Both were applicable in this instance.

4.2. The Fieldwork

The primary demographic we sought to target were young males from both the Somali and the Black African/Caribbean community in the inner city areas of Easton, St Pauls and Barton Hill. It was important that it was a random sample. The point of a random sample is that every representative in the target population has an equal chance of being selected, within a sample frame, so as to minimise the opportunity for bias.

The parameters of the sample frame were mostly males with a small percentage of females, in the neighbourhoods of Easton, St Pauls or Barton Hill. Locations targeted included youth and community centres, public parks, cafes and other high street establishments with a social function e.g barbers shops.

Interviews with 48 youths were supplemented by a further 13 interviews with a number of other stakeholders including parents, youth workers, the Police and community leaders. We also conducted two focus groups with a range of attendees from the survey sample. The field work took place from August to October 2013.

5. Background

5.1. The Research context

In various reports, studies and media, Bristol has been labelled as a city of geographical divisions and social disparity. Whatever the truth, it is fair to say that Bristol is broadly divided according to ethnicity. According to the 2001 census, the ethnic minority population of Ashley, Easton, and Lawrence Hill was 25.6%, 24.9% and 31.7% respectively with Ashley and Easton associated primarily with the Black African/Caribbean population who began settling in the 1950s. Since the late 1990s the demographics have changed considerably with the arrival of significant numbers of migrants and refugees. Of those, the Somali population is particularly noticeable due to their 'different dress and physical appearance' (Dresser and Fleming 2007). By 2011, the proportion of the population who are not 'White British' had increased from 12% to 22% of the total population in East Bristol. The largest growth has been in the White Other, Black African and Black Other groups – this includes growth particularly in the Polish and Somali populations. This compares to an overall figure in Bristol where the Black and Minority Ethnic group (BME1) population has increased from 8.2% in 2001 to 16% in 2011.

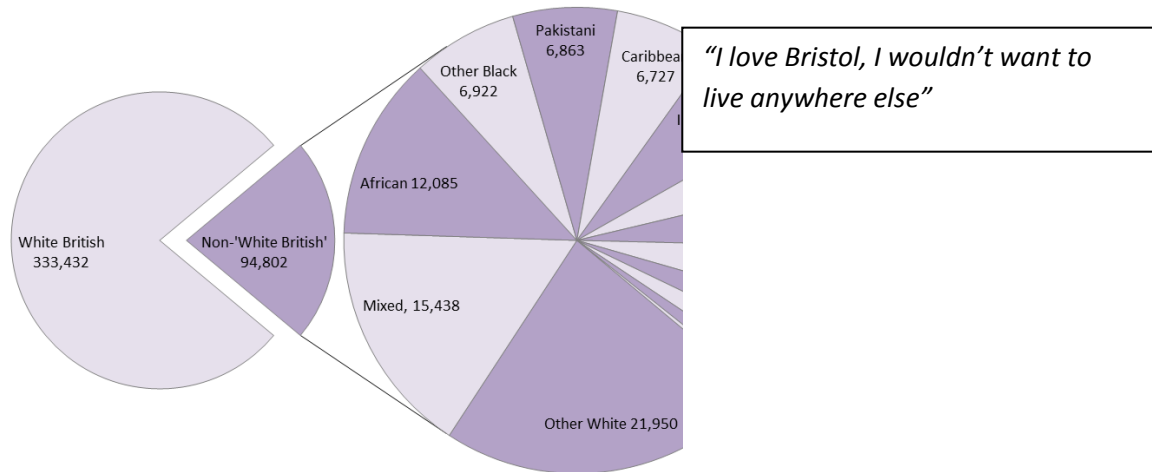
When we look closer at the demographic landscape, it changes significantly for young people. Bristol has a relatively young population, especially in terms of children under 10 years of age. In terms of this report, this will have considerable impact on schools and youth services especially. Diversity is projected to increase further. At present, 26% of children and young people attending school in Bristol are BME and in some inner city wards, including Lawrence Hill it is over 50%. In 2008, nine schools in East Bristol had more than 25% pupils of Somali origin. Bristol City Council's Community Cohesion Strategy 2010-13 confirms that Black Somali children are the largest non-White group with 2,237 pupils or 4.5% of the total population and Somali is the most widely spoken first language, other than English, by children in the years from nursery to Year 11 at 21.4%.

There is no definitive figure of the number of Somalis living in Bristol and estimates vary wildly with some reports claiming up to 30,000. A more reliable estimate of 10,000 can be found according to Bristol City Council's Somali Community Calculator (2010) which was based on a formula of known statistics, assumptions and variables. The arrival of large numbers of Somalis in a relatively short period of time into the already culturally mixed areas of Easton and St Pauls and the predominantly white area of Barton Hill has rapidly altered the cultural landscape of this part of the city.

Parts of Ashley and Easton have a reputation often quoted in the media, both locally and at times nationally for crime and violent incidents. In the recent past there have indeed been several high profile incidents (some fatal) involving alienated black youths, narcotics, gang violence and use of guns and knives; and of ethnic tensions most notably between established ethnic Jamaicans and newcomer Somalis. To give some context: Hate Crime, gun and knife or other premeditated fatalities in areas outside of Easton and St Pauls, even those which attracted widespread national interest such as Bijan Ebrahimi in Brislington, Joanna Yeates in Clifton and (Andrew) Isa Ibrahim in Westbury-on-Trym, do not impact on the reputation of the area in the same way that serious crimes in Easton and St Pauls do.

This report sets out the current reality for young people of Black African/Caribbean and Somali origin against this background.

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6. Findings

6.1. Breakdown of findings

Sections 6.2-6.5 below are concerned solely with the findings from face to face interviews and focus groups with youths. Sections 6.6 – 6.8 present the findings from other stakeholders we interviewed.

6.2. General perception of living in the area

An overwhelming majority of respondents we spoke to were very positive about living in Bristol with only one person actively expressing complete dissatisfaction with Bristol, the remainder were more balanced.

When asked about the area they spent most of their time in, it was almost always Easton, St Pauls or Barton Hill with a few citing 'The Centre' mostly as an addition. The area they spent most time in corresponded for the most part with where they lived and went to school and where their out of school activities were centred. Even for the older respondents, some of whom were at college or working, their own neighbourhood was most often cited as the place they spend the majority of their time. Things that they liked about their neighbourhoods broadly corresponded with their reasons for spending time there: it's where family and friends are and where they carry out their social activities. Their perceptions of their own neighbourhoods were very positive with many expressing pride in the multi-cultural diversity of the area. This was true of both Somalis and Black African/Caribbean's.

The vast majority of respondents lived in Ashley, Easton or Lawrence Hill. This was to be expected as we were soliciting respondents in each of these areas but 7 out of the 48 youths we interviewed came from elsewhere including Redcliffe, Henbury, Brentry, Cotham, Kingswood and Fishponds. In fact, this figure mirrors the findings of the 2011 census which shows that while in 2001 the BME population lived largely in Ashley, Easton and Lawrence Hill and Eastville, by 2011, 7 additional wards had a BME population of 14% or more. Without exception, those who hailed from outside of the area said they did so because it was where they had friends and family and where they

"Where I live, I've got no one to talk to, no one to hang around with"

"I feel unsafe in St Pauls. There are lots of bad people there"

"I feel unsafe in St Pauls because I'm from Easton"

"I feel unsafe in Easton, especially the stabbings and shootings in Stapes" (Stapleton Rd)

"If you are a Somali and you live in Easton and come to St Pauls you may be shot"

felt comfortable.

Interestingly too, a number of the youths we spoke to were also concerned about what they perceived to be an unfair negative reputation of the area, one for example saying that no one would take any notice of a group of people outside of a pub in other parts of Bristol but in St Pauls they would be seen as a gang.

6.3. Experience of crime and victimisation

6.3. (i) Perceptions of safety

As an introduction to this section, respondents were asked what made them feel unsafe. 59% said 'nothing' and that they felt safe in their community. Of the rest the main reasons given for feeling unsafe were gangs, a general fear of attack, 'insane people' (more than once) and fear of stabbing. Three people said that the fear of the Police made them feel unsafe.

The next question asked where they felt unsafe. Many respondents, even those who had previously said they felt safe, gave an example of a place in which they felt unsafe. For 33% of respondents it was either Easton or St Pauls depending on where they lived/spent time. If for example they were rooted in Easton, they cited St Pauls as the place in which they felt unsafe and vice versa. Interestingly, more than one of those living/spending time in Barton Hill cited both Easton and St Pauls as places in which they felt unsafe.

In the case of St Pauls it was always a generic 'St Pauls' but in the case of Easton, Stapleton Road was often specifically mentioned. Two people cited the subway beneath junction 2 of the M32 which links Easton and St Pauls. Many responses were qualified with reasons of violent crime taking place such as stabbings and shootings.

"On Stapleton Road in the evenings, or afternoons you get a whole load of people outside shops and it kinda makes you feel a bit uneasy"

A number of youths spoke about groups of people on the streets which made them fearful. Many said they actively took 'avoiding action' for example crossing the street or taking a different route entirely.

At this point in the interview, the majority of respondents had talked in some capacity or another about street crime. We then asked them if they or anybody they knew had been threatened or harmed. 68% said no, 10% said yes and 22% gave examples of friends who had been threatened or harmed. When questioned further, of those who said a friend had been threatened or harmed, it often changed to a 'friend of a friend' or 'someone they had heard of' suggesting the figure of 68% may be higher in reality if not in perception.

Of those with direct personal experience, two had been the victim of a mugging (for a phone), another had been threatened (but not physically harmed) by a group of youths. Another had been a victim of cyber bullying and one of racist abuse. Fights and bullying were also mentioned. In answer to the same question two people replied that they had been threatened by the police.

"I'm not a snake, I don't talk to the police or stuff like that"

6.3. (ii) Experience of guns, knives and gangs

We then asked whether knife and gun crime exists. An overwhelming percentage, 73% said yes, 12% said no and the rest did not know. Of those who said yes, the responses ranged from 'but not much' or "'it's minimal" to 'it's very widespread'. Some of those who answered yes said that knife crime existed but not gun crime. When asked whether they knew people who carried, all but two respondents said they had no personal experience of gun or knife crime nor did they know anyone who carried. One said they had seen a gun on someone in a nightclub and another refused to answer.

"I know 2 gangs but they're not proper gangs if you ask me. I've seen American gangs, they have to do it, sell weed and stuff because they live in a country where they have to pay for their doctors and dentists. We get it for free. "

Attitudes to reporting crime were fairly consistent. The majority of respondents (65%) said they wouldn't report a crime unless it was serious. The main reasons for this were fear of reprisals, fear of being seen as a 'snitch' and low levels of confidence in the police. Without exception however, everyone said they would go to the police on account of a serious crime (usually murder was the example given). Somali respondents were more likely to report a crime than Black African/Caribbean young people. In answer to the question 'Who would you turn to?' most respondents said family, friends, police in that order.

When asked to define the word 'gang'. All but one described a version of a group of young people, usually male, involved in some kind of criminal or anti-social behaviour'. A few spoke about the rival gangs of Easton and St Pauls and made reference to the red and blue bandanas. Not one of the respondents we spoke to had any experience of being involved in gangs, neither had they ever been approached to join a gang.

6.3. (iii) Staying safe

The young people we spoke to shared common strategies for staying safe. For the most part they choose their friends carefully and avoid going out late at night or alone and they generally stay within their own communities or communities with whom they have familial ties or roots.

6.3. (iv) Perceptions of victimisation

We asked everyone we spoke to 'does racism exist?' 48% said yes and 40% said no. The rest did not know or did not express an opinion. Again the responses were often qualified with 'a bit'. Some respondents gave examples of racism between different groups of people without further prompting and these most often included a general between 'whites and blacks'. 12% said that the police were racist. We were told that many older black youths actively choose to stay at home or indoors with a friend rather than be out for fear of police harassment. It is important to note that we had not introduced any questions about the police at this point and can therefore reject the idea of bias with some confidence.

Every respondent was asked what they thought about both Somalis and Black African/Caribbean's regardless of their own ethnicity. Again it was overwhelmingly positive and even when criticism was levelled against a particular group, for example "Somalis are loud" it tended to be balanced with "but Jamaicans have attitude" (this example from a Jamaican).

From African-Caribbean youths:

"Somalis can sometimes be rude but I'm friends with lots of them. Jamaicans can be loud"

"I've heard Somalis can be loud but the ones I know are funny and polite. People think they shoot people but they don't"

From Somali youths:

"Some Somalis are good and some are bad. African-Caribbean's are the same"

"We share the same values and issues"

Three people said there were racial tensions between Somalis and Black African/Caribbean's but were unable to elaborate and another said his mother complained that Somalis were stopping her getting the housing she felt she needed. Many, particularly those of school age said they had Somali/Black African-Caribbean friends.

The older youths we interviewed (post school age), tended to speak more strongly about the existence of racism (as did their parents as we will see later) which suggests that schools play a large part in the integration of communities but when pupils leave or outside of school, they tend to socialise with people from their own family and community networks. Financial issues also come into play. Most Somali families send money back to Somalia, even those on social benefits and this leaves very little for paid for activities for their children.

6.4. Perception of statutory agencies

We asked respondents to tell us what they thought about the three statutory agencies they were most likely to come into contact with, namely the police, schools and the youth service.

Respondents had the opportunity to talk about other statutory agencies if important to them although none did.

6.4. (i) The Police

Thoughts about and experience of the police elicited the most passionate and detailed responses of all the questions, usually when as a negative experience although one respondent had great memories of a snowball fight with some local police officers,

Overall, 68% of respondents were more positive than negative about the police. A few said there were 'good and bad' in the police. Interestingly however, this question also provided the greatest disparity in responses from Somalis and Black African/Caribbean's. If we analyse the responses in terms of ethnicity, 80% of young Somalis believed the police were doing a good job but only 35% of young Black African/Caribbean's thought so. When asked for details of their experiences (good and bad), a number of people said they had been stopped or followed, others cited bad experiences of friends and family. In every example given the respondent believed that it was the police in the wrong.

"I'm not a fan of the police to be honest. That's just because I've been treated in certain ways by the police, which kind of puts me off them"

No one was able to name their local neighbourhood police officer. One got it wrong and several said they knew their local Police Community Support Officer (PCSO).

6.4. (ii) Schools

Schools fared much better with 83% believing that schools did a good job. Of those who felt that schools were not performing the primary reasons given were not teachers not working well enough with black children and teachers not listening to children. When prompted for positive and negative experiences to support their belief however, there was more criticism than the headline figure would suggest with stories of white children being favoured over black children as well as some more generic examples of teachers not listening. It must also be said however that when prompted for examples, some of them were not of direct personal experience, one for example related to 'another school'. What exists though is the belief amongst youths that black pupils are treated differently from white pupils. Whether that is perception, or reality, or a mix of the two, it is a concern.

"Schools are not doing enough to protect children from getting bullied"

"We were in a lesson and this teacher sent out only the black kids, the rest of the kids who were mostly white got to stay in the lesson and learn"

If we were to break it down further, those who had left school were typically more approving than those still attending. Unlike attitudes to the police however, there was no marked difference in the responses between Somalis and Black African/Caribbean's and this is true of perceptions of youth service agencies also.

6.4. (iii) Youth Service

The youth service came out best of all in the opinions of the youths we interviewed with an overwhelming 90% supportive of the youth service. Only 2 respondents had anything critical to say and the rest said they had no experience. A few mentioned projects and services that they were no longer available but that they would like to see return. Whilst the youths themselves didn't necessarily link lower levels of service provision to cuts, it was noticeable to our researchers, for example, on at least two occasions The Crypt was closed when it should have been open due to lack of staff. Those which garnered a particular positive mention were Felix Road Adventure Playground, The Crypt, The Mill and Docklands.

"It's a fun place to go and at the same time it's protective"

"It's alright but there used to be more workshops and stuff"

"Youth clubs are good, they help the younger generation to come together"

"Youth clubs are cool. Studio 7 are helping me with my music"

Many youths that we spoke to rely on these centres as a place to go which is safe as well as fun. Furthermore and importantly, BME youths, especially those who live outside of the area, come to these places because they are both inclusive and culturally appropriate, two factors highlighted by them, as missing from their 'out of school' lives in their own residential neighbourhoods.

6.4. (iv) Perception of racism in agencies

Again the Police fared the least well, followed by schools with approval ratings for the youth services particularly high. 33% believed that at least some police officers were racist with 17% believing schools to be racist (within this figure, racism was attributed to teachers in two cases, the others spoke about racism existing generally in schools). Only one person cited an example of racism within their personal experience of youth services.

Considering that the schools in the area are inner city, multi-cultural schools with a much higher number of BME pupils than the national average, it is of concern that almost one in five respondents have personal experience or a personally held belief that racism exists in schools.

The figure leaps to one in three with respect to the police and as before, across all services, the figures for experiencing or having perceptions of racism were higher amongst Black African/Caribbean's than Somalis. Clearly, the police still have a considerable way to go to change the public perception generally and perhaps of even greater concern is that the prevailing perception amongst many young people (majority of whom have had no personal experience of the police) share those beliefs and will be carrying them through into their adult lives unless there is a significant shift.

6.5. Focus Groups

Getting youths to attend the focus groups presented the research team with their greatest challenge as it was extremely hard to convince them of the value of giving up their time to attend or, in the case of the Somali youths, for them to find the time. Typically, Somali youths lead very structured lives with religious and other extra-curricular study taking up time after school or college. There was also the added complication of young Somali females needing permission to attend which was not

generally forthcoming. In the end we held two focus groups, one comprising young Somalis males and some of their parents and one made up of Black African/Caribbean's and some of their parents.

The findings from both focus groups were broadly in line with the findings from the face-face interviews with the additional key points highlighted as follows:

Generally the youths all said they felt safe in their communities. They said they felt gangs had been a problem in the past but were not so much of an issue now:

"It's older people getting killed"

In terms of victimisation and racism, they were in agreement that the main issue for them was gangs of white youths coming into the area (Barton Hill and Easton) to pick fights. They had been called words such as 'coons' and 'monkeys'.

Disapproval of schools and the police was higher in the groups than in the one-one interviews with instances that black teachers had been pushed out because of racism from other teachers and that the community police are racist and biased.

6.6. Interviews with Parents

We interviewed 8 parents of Somali and Black African/Caribbean ethnicity. What was striking but perhaps not surprising was their belief that their children were at a significantly greater risk than the children believed themselves to be. Sociologically we know there to be a shift in attitude to risk with the cognitive ageing process; the older we get, the more risk averse we become. This coupled with more life experiences and a generally greater awareness of news and current events would go a long way to explaining this. The broad consensus however was that although knife and crime did exist, it was at lower levels than in the past. Gang culture was not such a concern even though two parents said they knew someone who had been part of a gang in the past.

The majority view was that their children were at risk of being pressured to join gangs despite the youths themselves telling us otherwise. Several parents had direct personal experience of crime or had an older child or other family member who had been caught up in an incident and/or with the police.

Every parent we spoke to agreed that racism exists but another interesting divergence from the youths is that generally they were possibly even more positive about Somalis/Black African/Caribbean's than their children, seeing them as 'fellow Africans'. The Somalis looked towards them as an example of the level of integration that can be achieved into 'British life' and there were a number of very positive comments. In contrast however, some of the commonly held beliefs for example 'Somalis get money to start businesses' prevails.

"We need more youth engagement. It's been cut back because of the austerity measures and that's a very dangerous situation"

Attitudes to the police mirrored attitudes amongst the youth with much lower levels of trust and confidence in the police from Black African/Caribbean parents than Somali parents. Many Somalis, both youths and adults we spoke to, talked about the police in terms of 'safety'. A likely reason for this, though not one based on any qualitative research, is that this particular group of people came to the UK as refugees from a country gripped in a bloody and prolonged civil war and they see

Britain as a safe refuge. It would be of huge benefit to better understand the basis for this difference and to disseminate it amongst other communities. Further to this, some older Somali youths did speak about problems with the police. Without any hard evidence to support this, it suggests there may be a small window of opportunity for the police to work to foster positive relations with the Somali community to stop there being almost a cultural norm of hostility between them and the community as there can be with Black African/Caribbean communities.

The parents were slightly more critical too of schools with the primary concern being low expectations of black children and a 'natural preference' to communicate with white parents. Once again, the youth services achieved very high approval ratings and were thought to offer vital services.

6.7. Interviews with other stakeholders

3 out of the 5 people we spoke to believe the young people they work with or come into contact with to be vulnerable to gang culture and/or crime either as victims or as potential future perpetrators. All of the stakeholders we interviewed, including youth workers believed that knife and gun crime exists in Bristol although 2 felt that it was exaggerated in the media. The older people we spoke to had more examples generally to share with our researchers but in most cases it was an incident in the past and involving older people. Confidence in the police generally was considerably higher and this was in large part due to the working relationship that many of them have with the police on a regular basis, although expectations of the police to actually solve issues was not particularly high.

Naturally, given that three of the stakeholders we spoke to were working within the area of youth service provision, there was a great deal of concern over the effects of cuts to youth service provision.

A number of other findings came from the research exercise as a whole:

- The willingness of the youths to engage in the interviews and the number who expressed pleasure in being asked for their views. Often seen as 'hard to reach' the success of the interviews may be in large part due to the way in which the research was organised: it was on their territory, with researchers from their communities. Harder to achieve, were the focus groups which asked them to come to a prescribed place at a prescribed time and to be part of a group with others they may not necessarily know.
- Older youths (always Black African/Caribbean) were often reluctant to be recorded and Somali females were reluctant to be interviewed at all. We actually only interviewed one Somali female and that was in her own home with prior permission sought from her parents. Any follow up or subsequent work involving Somali females would benefit from a female Somali community researcher.
- Those at the older age range of our primary demographic are, we are told, spending more time at home or at the homes of friends and are reluctant to go out for fear and past experience of police harassment. This is of concern and further work should be done to investigate this and address it as necessary.
- Whilst there was no overt racism or any suggestion of underlying racism, neither was there any visible integration between the two communities. There are

undeniably friendship groups between the two communities in school but this is not continuing outside of school in any meaningful way. We know that Somali girls are very protected by their parents and we also know that Somali children generally lead much more prescribed lives than their Black African/Caribbean counterparts for example, attending mosque school. There are however shared interests amongst the youths we spoke to, particularly sport/football and music/performance upon which to base more work to support wider integration.

7. Ideas for change

We asked the respondents what could be done to make positive change, their ideas for change. There were many answers but five predominant themes emerged:

- More youth services provision
- More community events
- More agency involvement at a community level
- More done to raise aspirations of black children in schools
- Greater BME representation within agencies

Examples of more youth provision included football tournaments, away days, after school activities. Ideas for community events included festivals and street parties and with the focus on bringing Easton and St Pauls together. With respect to the police it included 'drop in sessions' in the community or in schools so that young people could talk through any issues or fears. More police visiting schools was mentioned several times and there was also a rather more generic 'less racism in the police'. A number of people suggested they would like more fun with the police, one person remembered a snowball fight with police officers. Youths want interaction with the police that is not based on taking action or criminalising them.

No firm ideas for ways to raise aspirations amongst black children in schools emerged although the desire was clear. A great number of people stated the need for there to be more black police/teacher/other professional workers.

8. Post research interview with Police

Upon the completion of the fieldwork, the police were interviewed to give a current and up to date context in which to place the findings as follows:

Almost always, gang related violence is as a result of power struggles within the gangs or with rival gangs with reprisal attacks following after a 'cooling off' period. Prosecutions are rare as victims do not pursue.

Until about two years ago, gang culture in St Pauls was primarily Black African/Caribbean based and in Easton, it was Asian based. Somalis hardly featured. More recently these dynamic have changed with Somalis, Asians and Black African/Caribbean's working together engaged in criminal activity, primarily organised drug dealing. In purely economic terms, it is more beneficial to put aside their differences. There is still however a very marked divide between gangs operating in different neighbourhoods.

The police have been proactively working to raise their visibility, particularly in Easton and St Pauls with a focus on gangs, drugs and vice which has resulted in more arrests made and more custodial sentences handed down; higher levels of public confidence (in safety) and less serious incidents. It has also meant a greater number of people being questioned under the 'Stop and Search' powers which has led to a greater number of complaints. The police are acutely aware of the sensitivity of 'Stop and Search' and are keen to reassure the public that they using these powers appropriately and with care.

Whilst stabbings do still occur, shootings are very rare. An estimated 80% of those working in organised crime gangs carry or have immediate access to knives but other weapons including firearms are also very rare.

“...with gangs, it's more about postcode than colour...”

9. Conclusions

9.1 General perception of living in the area

- Youth in Bristol have a very positive attitude to Bristol as a whole which changes significantly on a local level. Local neighbourhoods are polarised with fear of crime being the most oft cited reason.
- The stigma of particular areas e.g St Pauls, Stapleton Road is significant enough that it affects the perceptions of youths living within very close proximity and is greater than the reality of their experience
- Young people who have moved with their families or carers to other parts of Bristol are choosing to spend their spare time in the Inner city areas of Ashley and Easton.

9.2 Experience of crime and victimisation

- Youths are fearful of groups of other youths or groups of adults 'loitering'.
- The fear of crime however is significantly greater than the incidence of crime.
- There is no evidence of gangs actively recruiting new members or targeting youths for any criminal or other purpose.
- Crime is under-reported to the police with the two most given reasons being fear of reprisals/being seen as a 'snitch' and low levels of confidence in the police.
- Overt racism is very isolated and marginalised with the two communities co-existing well however there is no meaningful integration other than in school. This has already been the subject of other research: 'Parallel Lives? Ethnic Segregation in Schools and Neighbourhoods' (Burgess, Wilson, Lupton: 2005, and our findings would tend to confirm the findings of that paper.

9.3 Perception and experience of agencies

- There is mistrust of and hostility towards the police, particularly within the Black African/Caribbean demographic. Many of those we asked said this does not extend to any incidents or potential incidents of serious (life-threatening) crime where police involvement is considered essential but the reality is that this has not been tested amongst those we spoke to and we know from S.A.R.I case files that there have been incidents, for example, a

life threatening stabbing, where the client did not want the police involved. We must therefore consider this trend of hostility towards the police as very concerning.

- There is a widespread belief that schools still need to do more to address the concerns of black youths and their parents, particularly to continue to mitigate any racism and to raise aspirations and achievement standards for non-White British children
- Youth provision is highly valued, regularly accessed and considered to safe places to be with staff they can talk to yet these services are at risk leaving youths and their parents worried and unhappy about this.

10. Recommendations

10.1 More BME workers working in professional and statutory agencies.

Whilst much has been done to address inequalities in representation there is still a way to go, particularly with the significant change in demographics in Bristol over the past ten years. At the time of writing this report there are no qualified Somali youth workers in the city and the number of Somalis and Black African/Caribbean's in other agencies are often under-represented, with hardly any role models in the police and teaching professions.

It is essential that recruitment methods and channels are equally accessible to people from all ethnic backgrounds, and that information about professional careers is presented in a way that means BME candidates feel encouraged to apply. In addition, another approach would be a shift away from workplace based recruitment strategies towards collaboration with already established community and faith groups, learning centres and engagement with the wider community.

10.2 Increased youth service provision.

The current reality is considerable budget cuts in youth services with many projects and schemes closed or under threat. Our recommendations are however categorically to review this strategy and to listen to the views of Bristol's youths.

Time after time, the youths themselves affirmed that youth centres/clubs/schemes/playgrounds provide:

- A safe place to be
- Professionals they can talk to
- An alternative to being on the streets and being vulnerable
- Opportunities to explore and experience new and different things

There needs to be greater recognition of what community centres are doing for youths in the area and what more they could be doing. Community services are often the hub of local activities and yet they are often not bought into consultation and inter-agency working as much as they could be. They have vital insights into the community that is of benefit to many statutory agencies.

There is a clear need to raise awareness of lack of appropriate and safe resources for BME young people in outer estates and their need for the resources offered by East/ Central area – the importance of adventure playgrounds and multi-cultural places and spaces such as those which exist in East/Central Bristol.

Older youths are not been catered for effectively and there is a need to consider meaningful youth activities which appeal to them and get them out of their homes.

10.3 Further research

10.3 (i) To specifically understand neighbourhood polarisation and how to effectively address it.

One of the key findings from this research is the fact that certain areas are considered 'no go areas' for youths. What we were unable to do as it was outside of the remit of this work, was to get a detailed understanding of whether this extends to other neighbouring areas and the impact it has on people's lives. To recognise the commonalities as well as the differences and find ways to bridge the gap.

10.3 (ii) To expand the cohort from this study

This study has revealed a great deal from a relatively small sample. It would be of great benefit to the statutory authorities, agencies and crucially to the communities of Ashley, Easton and Lawrence Hill, to expand the cohort to a much wider piece of research to include for example more girls and older people and with the aim of moving to the next stage of a working group who are willing to work with the commissioning body and others to effect real change.

10.4 Community cohesion initiatives

Linked to the recommendation for more research outlined above is a recommendation for a number of community cohesion initiatives to build on the goodwill that does currently exist between the Somali and Black African/Caribbean communities and to dispel any lingering myths. Further resources need to be made available to continue and build upon the work of this report. The most effective way would be to fund a cross agency partnership comprising the Council, Police, SARI and TS to carry out a number of community cohesion initiatives outlined below:

10.4(i) A leaflet/DVD/App to challenge a number of popular myths which persist amongst the two communities aimed specifically at youths and using the findings of this research to be made widely available through schools, youth clubs, community groups etc.

This should also include myth busting for practitioners about the reality of life in Ashley, Easton and St Pauls

Bristol City Council already has a number of similar 'myth busting' leaflets and it is recommended that this would sit within that family of publications.

10.4(ii) Community Champions made up of representatives from both communities working together to promote different community initiatives. For example, a good working relationship has been established between our two community researchers. A starting point could therefore be a small budget to allow them to disseminate the findings of this study to youths more widely across Bristol in an accessible way, allowing for discussion and facilitating workshops or discussions leading to commitments to positive action from other pairs or groups of youths representing the two communities and working in partnership. As examples this could include volunteering, attending spectator sporting events together.

This idea could be extended to other groups of people for example, women or inter-generational within and between the two communities. This could be facilitated by the working group described above.

10.4(iii) A Culture Café

A travelling 'culture café' would be an ideal mobile venue to run café style events bringing communities together to hear and input into issues that are important to all such as racism; bullying; increasing BME representation; discipline; staying safe.

It would be vital that the community had maximum ownership of the activities with excellent representation of the various different communities to promote and develop meaningful community cohesion and to break down existing segregation. This would include representation between white and black communities across the different postcodes. The emphasis would be on sharing food, stories and experiences.

One such topic, involving the police, could be to look at the way the police work in Somalia and Jamaica for example and compare and contrast that with the way the police carry out their work in the UK to increase confidence in the police.

10.4(iv) Shared leisure activities

Sport and music are two interests in common between Somali and Black African/Caribbean youths. There are already a number of agencies doing good work in this area and it is important these are supported at a funding and capacity level. Other ideas are for mixed ethnicity groups of youths to attend sporting events together, for example at Bristol City F.C. perhaps in conjunction with the club itself.

10.5 Acknowledgement of Easton and St Pauls.

In the longer term for the various recommendations above to lead to a celebration of the youth of East Central Bristol and a more balanced portrayal of the area in the media nationally.

There is a need to showcase and promote greatness in the area. Radio 4, for example broadcast an article on Bishopston and Gloucester Rd. Stapleton Road would make a great advert for entrepreneurial diversity in Britain.

A vibrant and colourful multi-faith, street based festival with food stalls, a showcase of youth talent and aimed at the wider communities to bring them into the area would provide not just a much needed economic boost but would have a huge impact on the way the area is perceived.

In order to do this successfully, it is essential that the elected politicians as well as the statutory agencies get behind it.

10.6 Recommendations for the police

There is a need for the Police, to provide and effectively deliver a broader range of information to young people on all aspects of policing, including policy formulation and operational decisions, specifically in Ashley, Easton and St Pauls initially but this could potentially be expanded further across Bristol. It is important this information is delivered in a format that is interesting, interactive and engaging and in a way that young people can identify with and understand.

Agencies need to proactively engage in more outreach. This should be a combination of formal and informal, for example the police could hold regular, informal drop in sessions at places where young people are e.g schools, youth centres, to enable them to ask questions, share concerns and build relationships. Equally, to continue with other community engagement activities with the youth such as football matches with mixed teams made up of youths, police officers and others.

The older members of the community still talk with affection of the police SPLASH programme of the late 1980s where officers were given support and structure to engage with young members of the community leading them on outdoor activities. The importance of early interactions with the police being social rather than enforcement based should not be underestimated. The legacy of SPLASH remains but needs to be refreshed with the younger community.

There is a need for training for the police (which could take the form of briefings by SARI) to prevent racial profiling of areas; to increase respect for BME young people and to increase their confidence in dealing with East Central young people on the streets. Training is needed particularly for the Response teams.

10.7 More work between the Community Cohesion team at Bristol City Council and Early Years Education providers

To initiate and develop strategies to address the growing number of BME children under 7 years old which will link to the overall cohesion strategies. Transparency Solutions would be pleased to help facilitate this process.

10.8 Recommendations for schools

A briefing should be developed to disseminate to schools and to share the voices of the people interviewed. Schools still need to do more to increase BME representation amongst teaching staff and to do more to promote aspirations of and be aspirational for BME children. One way is for schools to work with BME parents to promote the confidence that schools have ambition for their children. This would involve elements of training which SARI in partnership with TS is able to provide.

There is also a need for schools to acknowledge BME children feel that there is institutional racism as well as positive experiences and friendships. Schools can address this by open honest discussions and consultation with young people on how to promote respect for difference and cohesion which goes beyond the school campus.

10.9 Widespread dissemination of this report

The cross part group described above should present this report and findings to Senior Officers from key agencies to inform future work for young BME people and for promoting cohesion between African Caribbean and Somali communities. To include the Mayor; Chief Operating Officer; People lead; Nick Gargan; PCC; Safer Bristol Executive and others as well as to a wide variety of professionals to include schools; police officers; youth service leads; community development workers and housing officers etc and should be disseminated via media; bulletins; networks and to key strategic forums.

11. Appendix

11.1 Contact details Transparency Solutions

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11.2 Copy of questionnaire