Making the Most of an Ethnically Diverse Britain:

The Role of Further Education

Black FE Leadership Group

Activist. Authentic. Authoritative.

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

Google for Education

What's inside

What's inside

TOWARDS A TRULY ANTI-RACIST FE SYSTEM
- Reversing a decade of lost potential!
- Creating measurable and sustainable change!
- Enabling a culture of self-improvement!

Foreword

The *Black Further Education Leadership (BFELG) Inaugural Conference 'Making the most of an ethnically diverse Britain: the role of Further Education' took place on 23 February 2021. The ideas for the Conference were inspired by the positive response to a data presentation that we made to Department for Education (DfE) senior officials at a meeting in November 2020. Grounded in BFELG Research, and revealing the full extent of the challenges in creating an Anti-Racist FE system, the presentation of the same title as the Conference included recommendations for actions to address and effect permanent change. Though hard-hitting, the presentation was described as compelling and outstanding, and the general consensus was that the key messages needed to be heard by wider audiences.

The Conference was challenging and solutions-focused. It was also timely in the context of the long-awaited FE White Paper, Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth, which published a month earlier in January 2021, firmly located the government's ambitions within the context of dealing with the coronavirus pandemic, preparing to recover and rebuild in its aftermath, as well as seizing the opportunities arising from our

exit from the European Union. In the White Paper, the Secretary of State for Education, Rt. Hon. Gavin Williamson MP states that 'Our nation stands at a critical juncture….To give ourselves the best chance of success we must ensure everyone has the skills which will allow them to get good jobs, both now and in the future. This statement resonated with the themes of the BFELG Conference. Furthermore, aspects of the White Paper - for example, 'recover and rebuild post-Covid', 'retain, update skills', 'get good jobs', 'FE will be well managed and governed', and 'have the best quality teachers' reinforced the Conference Keynote presentations, narrative, and recommendations.

Alongside Anna Artemyeva, Head of Google for Education, our partner organisation, I had the privilege of welcoming over 200 participants to the Conference and then publicly reflected on the formation of the BFELG and our achievements in barely 7 months of existence.

Our story really began in the summer of 2020, although seeds had been sowed prior to the pandemic and Black Lives Matter (BLM). Amidst concerns about the impact of Covid-19 and other factors on Black students'

progress and the lack of representation of Black staff in senior leadership positions, within weeks of gathering together in July 2020 as a small group of Black individuals with interest in FE, the Black FE Leadership Group (BFELG) was born as an Activist, Authentic, Authoritative organisation. The very public murder of George Floyd and ensuing events worldwide touched all of us and certainly helped to invigorate the Black FE voice, which had been subdued nationally.

I shared with Conference attendees how only a couple of weeks later, we sent an OPEN LETTER to the Rt. Hon. Boris Johnson, Prime Minister, and other system leaders, calling for them to address systemic racism in the sector and how by February 2021 BFELG had developed into a UK wide organisation with over 500 members, developed the BFELG 10 Point Plan Diagnostic Toolkit which enables organisations across the breadth of the further education and skills sector to undertake a comprehensive audit of their antiracist practice; successful advocacy with Ofsted leading to an agreement to develop a coaching and shadowing scheme for senior Black leaders who want to train as FE inspectors -admittedly we were pushing at an open door; engagement with over 50 sector organisations such that there is now widespread acceptance of the need to address the systemic and insidious racism that continues to taint and damage our society. BFELG was recognised by the Times Educational Supplement (TES) as their 'People of the Year' 2020. I took the opportunity to express

gratitude to our member, supporters and allies.

The Conference itself was an outstanding success and achieved its objectives which were to highlight the compelling BFELG Research, the Impact of Covid-19 and the Digital Divide on Black communities, recommend actions to address and effect permanent change, provide opportunities for participants to contribute to and influence the debate, as well as offer practical takeaway actions for implementation.

Throughout the Conference, there was strong interplay between the contrasting themes of loss and hope, missed opportunities and solutions, separation and belonging. Beginning with our amazing young Kristin Ini and Joanna, who opened the Conference singing 'Stand Up' by Cynthia Erivo set to evocative black and white imagery, these themes continued to play out through the Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London Sir Kenneth Olisa's analogy in his opening message, the BFELG Keynote presentations and all the contributions. The Provocation, which closed the conference, brought the themes together, anchoring hope and belonging with a powerful call to action for all our diverse communities to work together in support of an ethnically diverse Britain.

Overall, feedback and suggestions from the Conference confirm that there is a genuine desire across a good proportion of leaders of the FE systems in England and the

devolved nations to tackle systemic racism at every level. This bodes well for our collective future. BFELG has responded proactively to requests for support and new opportunities for further engagement with senior leaders, governors, and organisations in a systematic, innovative and sustainable way. In this regard, Partnerships and Allyships have been key,

This Conference Report 'Making the most of an Ethnically Diverse Britain: the role of Further Education' is a must read for everyone invested in education and anti-racism. The Report captures the Conference presentations and dialogue, the contributions of influential speakers and delegates from a range of backgrounds and summarises the main themes. It is particularly pertinent in the context of the recently published controversial report of the Commission for Race and Racial Disparities. This Conference Report is offered in the hope that the contents will influence individual reflection and resolve, thought leadership, system-wide anti-racism action, implementation of the White Paper and further debate.

As the Government seeks to level up communities across the country, the Black attainment gap and the underrepresentation of Black leaders simply cannot persist. In a sector in which Black students make up approaching 30% of the student body, and where their representation will only increase, failure to recognise the insidious nature of systemic and structural racism, and failure to address the issues at their root undermines our nation's ability to fully engage with all the constituent communities that FE serves and achieve success.

Anti-racism action benefits everyone. It is the rising tide that lifts us all towards making the most of an ethnically diverse Britain.

Stella Ngozi Mbubaegbu CBE

Summary and Key Messages

The Inaugural BFELG Conference took place on Tuesday, 23 February 2021. It was held on the YouTube platform in partnership with Google for Education, and skillfully compered by Rosemary Campbell-Stephens MBE all the way from her home in the Caribbean. Rosemary is a veteran, inspirational educator, who embraces the label 'disruptor'. Her breadth of experience is international.

The Conference was a timely intervention given the January 2021 publication of the Skills for Jobs White Paper. The White Paper focuses on harnessing the full potential of Post-Brexit Britain, enabling Post-Covid Recovery and Levelling Up Britain.

The BFELG inaugural highlighted several crucial points related to the White Paper, with an underlying concern being how to reverse both the damaging effects of a decade of lost potential in the FE system and the disproportionate impact of the Covid pandemic on Black students, staff and communities.

Presentations

In their presentation, Robin Landman OBE and Amarjit Basi, BFELG Executive Members and impressive keynote speakers, relied on ethnicity and FE data from the last decade to help us predict future trends with some significant revelations. Landman reminded us that the Black dividend was of no small value to the UK economy, estimated at £300 billion per annum in purchasing power. Basi alerted us to a change in demographics. By 2030, **1 in 5 UK** citizens will be Black. This will increase to **1 in 3** by **2061**. Indeed, Black people will account for more than **20%** of the working population within 30 years. From 2020 to 2028, while there will be an expansion of ALL 16 – 18-year-olds by 17%, **the growth in Black students will be nearly a quarter, 23%.**

Yet, the most shocking of the data shared was the illustration of the experiences of Black students (relative to white students) during their post-16 education and training journeys. The research confirmed that whilst

some Black students make relatively positive progress through compulsory schooling, drastic disparities occur from the age of 16 years, where we see an inexplicable drop in attainment and progression for Black students, affecting their future destinations, employability and earnings. For example, the evidence presented confirmed that Black students face endemic barriers in securing progression into higher tariff universities, access to paid training and sustainable jobs. Influential education leaders spoke to these findings, making valuable recommendations from the benefit of their expertise. **Denise Brown,** Principal & CEO of Stoke on Trent College, provided us with eight recommendations demanding strong leadership from the Secretary of State for Education and the NUS student body. **Sharmarni Salvarajah**, Deputy Director of Post-16 Strategy, Skills, and Reform, working intently with the White Paper, promised to keep the FE sector closely informed about the processes for implementation of the White Paper and stressed the importance of collecting the correct data. **Iestyn Davies**, Chief Executive of ColegauCymru, attributed the success of the 13 Welsh FEI (Further Education Institutions), to resilience. The UK FE sector needs to become much more robust to the challenges it faces. Legislation may be required to support and effect the desired policy changes.

Ann Francke OBE, CEO of the Chartered Management Institute made significant comparisons with her expertise on gender equality to highlight some crucial points. If pay equality is to be achieved, compulsory data collection in relation to ethnicity must be a nationwide practice and policy. The BFELG is firmly behind this.

But perhaps the most encouraging diversity statistic of all came from Francke's business case. Not only are better business decisions made with an ethnically diverse senior leadership, but in straight economic terms, the top quartile of ethnically diverse companies outperform the bottom quartile of the least ethnically diverse companies by very impressive profit margins of 36%.

Paul Joyce, Deputy Director, Further Education and Skills, Ofsted, stressed the importance of collecting data of the right quality and delivered more efficiently to ensure greater accuracy. There was also the suggestion that Ofsted could give equality and diversity more attention during inspections. **David Russell,** CEO of Education and Training Foundation (ETF), responding to the data presented, emphasised that it very powerfully challenged a DfE narrative that the race equality problem, namely disparities in educational outcomes, had been more or less solved. The BFELG data blows a big hole in that narrative. The dip in educational attainment at level 3 shows that the narrative does not hold, and that's just so crucial. ETF is increasing its focus on diversity matters. Another set of influential speakers looked at the broader issues impacting learning for Black FE students, particularly given the pandemic. **Janak Patel**, BFELG Executive Member

explored the impact of Covid-19 on Black communities. He gave ten specific aggravating factors, including the mortality rates of young Black people given their higher levels of exposure (compared to white people), due to their occupations; the disproportionate loss of household income; the higher levels of workplace discrimination; 'Brexit related' racial abuse; racial profiling / stereotyping; the loss of learning from reduced access to educational facilities; educational bias (August 2020 examination results), not to mention the general challenges that come with maintaining online technology. **Robin Ghurbhurun,** Managing Director UK, FE Education and Skills at JISC, demonstrated through an on-gong JISC study that digital and data poverty was a pressing concern for the FE sector with a disproportionate impact on the educational experiences of Black learners, as well as other disadvantaged groups. Ghurbhurun called for a large-scale level of research. He highlighted the span of approximately 400,000 FE and skills learners from Black backgrounds (almost a quarter of all learners across the sector). 11% of the UK population are currently without internet access, and 29% of Black African and African Caribbean are without access to a suitable computer or device. Poor WiFi connection is also high, particularly among Black and African Caribbean at 43%.

Addressing some of these problems, **Kirri Gooch,** the National Accounts Manager, Google for Education, looked at digital inclusivity, particularly addressing the gap between

outdated IT resources within the educational sector with students' needs. Key questions were raised about decisions makers. Why do IT technical teams influence curriculum? How can a mentality of openness be developed so that embedding the curriculum throughout was the focus? **Conrad Taylor,** Business Learning Technologies Manager, City of Wolverhampton College, offered creative, practical solutions by looking at four types of digital resources necessary for effective inclusion, namely, 1. the physical, 2.digital literacy, 3. Content, and 4. the social. The college created a supportive provision for disadvantaged and vulnerable learners. The physical was provided through a home-loan scheme giving students a device for short term/long term periods against a means test. Taylor was particularly proud of their digital literacy work and their award-winning international programme that helped students to develop digital enterprise and employability skills for free. Known as Inspiring Digital Enterprise Award – iDEA is a digital version of the Duke of Edinburgh Award. To ensure greater inclusion, the content uses a range of different tools via Google and Microsoft so that students can use their first language. Taylor also works with the community using relevant audio materials. Translator software helps parents' evenings, open evenings, and parents' support meetings to reduce those digital barriers. Socially, the college works with the local authority, Adult Education Services, and all schools within the borough.

As the CEO of AOC (Association of Colleges),

David Hughes expressed concern for 'building back fairly' the FE sector. After providing us with an overall picture of systemic racism, Hughes addressed three questions including, 1. How is FE doing on racism and fairness? 2. What needs to be done to help build back fairer? and 3. What are we doing at AOC to help achieve that?

The Presentations were interspersed with Question and Answer Sessions led by Rosemary Campbell-Stephens and Roundtable discussions. The Roundtables with feedback to a Plenary, were led by senior sector leaders, Dr Ali Hadawi CBE, Suki Dhesi, Anthony Bravo, Satwant Deol, Paul Cook and Dr Darrell DeSouza.
Stella Ngozi Mbubaegbu CBE closed the Conference with a powerful 'Provocation' and call for collaborative action.

Compelling evidence
The data presents compelling evidence of systemic racism in Further Education and should be shared more widely. Having collated information from readily available published reports and analysed this through the Black lens, the BFELG argues that in order to harness the full potential of Black students, the Black workforce and communities, the FE system must reform to address the systemic lag that has characterised the last ten years. Continuing to disappoint and disempower, disengage and divert Black students, suppresses the economic growth potential for all of us.

There is a school of thought that says gaps in pass rates of Black students are more to do with disadvantage than ethnicity. However, 2019/20 data shows significant gaps in pass rates for adult Black students in the most and least deprived areas. In other words, gaps in pass rates are not just due to social disadvantage but due to ethnicity itself. This is significant and needs to be looked at.

Demographic Growth
Black communities are set to grow significantly over the next decade. Concentration and dispersal of Black people across geographical areas are becoming apparent. This expansion will also see the growth of majority/minority cities and towns, leading to a greater concentration around the larger conurbations. There are implications for the combined authorities, and within that, there will be increased dispersals in areas that hitherto have not been so diverse.

Population growth and changes are driven by the populace of young Black groups and those of mixed heritage. This has clear implications for skills, education, employment, for public policies, for comparative income and wealth alongside their respective financial contributions to UK plc. 1 in 3 young people will be from Black backgrounds by 2061. From 2020 to 2028, within this decade alone, while there will be an expansion of ALL 16 – 18-year-olds by 17%, the growth in Black students will be nearly a quarter, 23%. It is therefore imperative and urgent that Policy makers, funders, regulators, colleges and

training providers begin to plan accordingly.

System Leadership
The Secretary of State for Education should provide strong leadership for anti-racism, adopting a joined-up approach across all system organisations and regulators. Accountability and transparency of individual organisational targets and outcomes will be important in order to demonstrate leadership by example.

Culture change
Culture 'eats strategy for breakfast' and vice versa. The role of ETF is pivotal to professional development for anti-racism culture change. This should be a key component of, as well as skilfully embedded into, all sector programmes and initiatives including leadership development.

The BFELG 10 Point Plan Diagnostic Toolkit offers organisations and teams a methodology and framework to undertake a cultural audit in order to enhance their understanding of what parts of their organisation are excelling and those organisational behaviours that are inhibiting progress. Through appropriate facilitation, the 'Toolkit' equips teams at all levels with the understanding, education and confidence to conduct meaningful conversations about race and ethnicity within the organisation. In addition, the 'Toolkit' provides a focus on how to address bias in policies and practices, ways of doing things, and the norms and values that may

be inadvertently hardwired into the organisation to create inequality.

FE Sector Research and Innovation
FE is underserved by research. As a critical component of professional development, the FE sector itself, teachers, practitioners, managers, leaders should engage in research, both quantitative and qualitative in order to develop the evidence base, develop and own the tools to be able to challenge, influence and bring about sustainable change. FE policymakers, and regulators should enable this by recognising and funding research, including applied research.

Many questions asked at the Conference by presenters and attendees could benefit from research, for example, to understand the underlying causes of ethnic disparities and the lived experience of Black learners, staff and leaders within the FE system, sector and wider community without which solutions to tackle issues at the root may not be developed. These questions demand that we consider why strategies and actions implemented to address race inequality in FE since the inception of the 2010 Equality Act, have palpably failed students, staff and communities.

Data Collection and Publication
Mandatory collection of their workforce data by all system and sector organisations in receipt of government investment is a must.

This includes all organisations in receipt of any government monies for Build Back Better projects and initiatives. Data should be timely and used to set and monitor targets for better representation of Black staff.

Boards and leaders should make full use of their existing locally collected data to set targets and monitor improvement in representation, development and progression of Black staff at all levels of their organisation.

College Boards and leaders should pay greater attention to participation and achievement rates of their Black students and apprentices of all ages and across all programmes and levels. They should set targets for improvement, monitor these rigorously and report on outcomes. This is URGENT. ' What gets measured gets managed and what gets managed gets done' has not been consistently adhered to as a driving ambition.

Large scale research into Black student and staff lived experiences should be prioritised and funded. Not since the **Commission for Black Staff in FE** research published in "**Challenging racism: further education leading the way**" (2002) has there been sector-wide work to investigate and capture the experience of Black staff in FE. The Commission was black-led and its report and recommendations had significant impact.

UK and international delegates shared and benefited from great examples of strategic and practitioner level innovation and emerging excellent practice and creative solutions in relation to embedding anti-racism. Many delegates expressed a need for more support. ETF, AoC and BFELG colleges and other key stakeholders should collaborate to develop a joined-up approach to sustainable innovation and funded research for the sector.

Implementation of the White Paper

The social and economic context of Post-Brexit Britain is one of increasing ethnic diversity. The White Paper: **'Skills for Jobs'** places the importance of local skills and labour market assessments, front and centre of a more responsive and enabling FE system. This presents massive and not to be missed opportunities to realise the full potential of local areas by placing ethnic diversity at the heart of local skills responses and post-pandemic recovery.

Employers at the heart of the system

Ethnically diverse leadership teams boost financial performance and the top quartile of ethnically diverse companies outperform in profitability by a staggering 36% against the bottom quartile of the least ethnically diverse companies. This is a core message for UK plc including FE and should be more widely promoted. Employers, funders and all stakeholders should collaborate to redress the significant under-representation of Black people on apprenticeship programmes and other forms of paid training. Small businesses need support to contribute to this agenda.

Individual CEO and Board level commitment to ethnic diversity must translate into action and demonstrable social and business impact.

The Government should develop and implement more joined up labour policies particularly for young people.

Post-Pandemic Recovery

COVID-19 has had a disproportionately adverse impact on Black communities socially and economically. With lost learning this year, and the ripple effect beyond education and training into employment, it will be even more critical for colleges to address racism and inequality to avoid exacerbating previous patterns of higher unemployment levels in these communities and slower recovery. It matters how colleges respond to this agenda.

Digital and Data Poverty

Digital and data poverty is a massive concern and is likely to disproportionately affect Black communities. As with the Covid-19 pandemic, serious action needs to be taken to avert and ameliorate negative impact on the nation's bottom line. Jisc are leading this important area of work. The moral imperative is obvious.

Ofsted and other regulatory bodies

The negative impact of the withdrawal of the limiting grade of Equality and Diversity from Ofsted Inspection Frameworks cannot be underestimated. As a powerful agent of change, Ofsted should profile the experience and outcomes of Black cohorts in FE and skills inspections. In addition, Ofsted should consider refining the current Education Inspection Framework (EIF) to focus more clearly on the language of grade descriptors in relation to ethnic diversity, for example, defining what 'Outstanding' and 'Good' leadership and management including governance for equality and diversity look like.

All regulatory bodies including the FE Commissioner should profile the experience of Black students, staff and communities in all strands of their work and decision making.

Decolonising the Curriculum

The vocational and technical curriculum and FE qualifications must reflect the realities of our modern, ethnically diverse Britain. Decolonisation should cover the entire curriculum and not be narrowed to just a pastoral and social development curriculum. In addition, the occupational standards that feed into qualifications need to be reformed. The onus is on all the key players including IfATE, FE providers, FAB and awarding organisations – **and employers – given their responsibility for developing and validating qualifications as part of the FE White paper** - to collaborate

on a clear and sustained strategy to redress the historical imbalances in the curriculum and to ensure that there is inclusive content, pedagogy, assessment and awarding. There is scope for NUS FE and learners to have a strong voice in the process.

Teacher development led by ETF will be key to enabling teachers and trainers to contribute to and deliver revised curricula. Professional development programmes should be redesigned to enable the management and leadership - including governors - to play a confident and appropriate role in the process.

Ethnicity Pay Gap

Compulsory Ethnicity Pay-Gap reporting along the same lines as Gender Pay-Gap reporting should be instituted as a priority by Government. For immediate action, ethnicity-pay gap reporting should be mandatory for the receipt of any government monies for any of the Build Back Better initiatives. However, system and sector leaders should implement and publish their Ethnicity PayGap data voluntarily before legislation.

BFELG Commitment

BFELG is passionately resolved to "play our full part, as leaders, as expert practitioners and as role models to enable the FE system to 'step up' to its responsibility for addressing race inequality." Working with our partners, champions and allies we are ready to amplify the key messages and actions contained

herein, help to shape system thinking and support meaningful and sustained implementation to create a truly anti-racist FE system across the UK. And we won't go away.
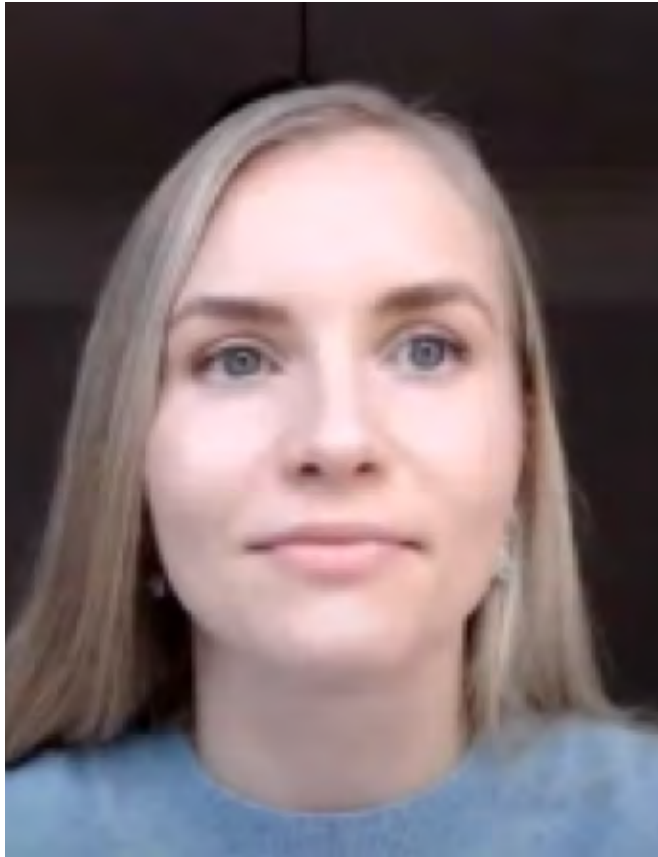
Official Opening

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Anna Artemyeva

HEAD UK & IRELAND GOOGLE FOR EDUCATION

Message from Sir Kenneth Olisa OBE

LORD-LIEUTENANT OF GREATER LONDON

Anna Artemyeva

HEAD UK & IRELAND GOOGLE FOR EDUCATION

Google for Education welcome the partnership with BFELG as a driver for change in the education sector.

In our dedication to creating a more diverse society, Google embraces a culture of belonging. We have several services including, **The Black Googler Network (BGN).** This is an internal employee resource group with a mission to cultivate black leaders. We also want to empower the communities where we operate and to transform the tech industry.

Black Googlers can run programmes, celebrate and, most importantly, build a support system.

Google Careers also supports Black+ Googlers throughout their careers. Currently, we're looking at the experience of under-represented Googlers and all of our internal processes. We doubled our recruitment and retention team so that each organisation has a designated consultant to support under-represented Googlers. We intend to triple our investment by the end of next year.

We have launched a new Speaker series involving EMEA Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Council. We have industry leaders and experts from all across Europe and Africa who speak about their own racial justice experiences. The localised conversations allow us to appreciate their unique histories. We pay much attention to attracting new talent.

We are committed to increasing the representation of

'underrepresented' groups to senior level to 30% by 2025.

We will more than **double** the number of Black Googlers across all other levels. For nearly ten years, we have run a UK Top Black Talent Programme for those who are building careers in the tech industry. We also support small black business owners in the UK.

Finally, we hold ourselves accountable for creating an inclusive workplace. We integrate anti-racism educational programmes. We provide diversity, equity and inclusion employee and management training. Then we share our progress by providing transparent reports. Throughout the day, you will be challenged to think about how to achieve racial equity in your organisation. I urge you to

1. Have an open mind,
2. Be willing to learn new perspectives, and
3. Use this time to formulate ideas on how you might personally and professionally commit to racial equity.

Each person's journey from talent to fulfilment can be compared with water flowing through a leaky pipe. Although some water makes it to the end, much doesn't. Success or failure is a matter of chance. As educators, you know prenatal conditions, disruptive home lives, negative peer pressures, low aspiration, low self-confidence, poor health, and a multitude of other circumstances are the leaks that reduce your students' chances of making it through that pipe and fulfilling their potential. **As educators, your role is not passive but 'active plumber' nurturing talent from cradle to career.**

As a businessman, I know that every drop of wasted talent isn't just a question of social injustice for the individual's concerned. It also weakens our nation's ability to survive and prosper in an increasingly competitive world. I'm thinking of the economic impact of COVID plus Brexit amplified by the depressingly selfish foreign policies adopted by countries around the world. Today's conference is, therefore, well-timed. The Black FE Leadership Group investigated my metaphorical pipe and have made some fact-based discoveries about its nature and, more importantly, the preventability of its wasteful leakages. The BFELG will present you with the evidence you need to help your students improve their chances.

I wish you the very best and enjoy.

Message from Sir Kenneth Olisa OBE

LORD-LIEUTENANT OF GREATER LONDON

Session // 1
BFELG Keynote

BFELG Keynote Presentation 'Making the most of an Ethnically Diverse Britain: The Role of Further Education'

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Robin Landman
EXECUTIVE MEMBER, BFELG

Amarjit Basi
EXECUTIVE MEMBER, BFELG

* 'Black' is used as an inclusive definition for people from ethnically diverse backgrounds who share a lived experience of the effects of racism.

The data spans the past decade, the coming decade and the following thirty years. We recast what it is to be British in a post-Brexit Britain while we focus upon optimising the potential for all black people in education, skills and employment. It's important to note that this comes ten years after the Equality Act 2010, so it is a valuable time to reflect. It also comes on the eve of the latest census, which we believe will only strengthen the messages we are sharing with you. And poignantly, it comes with the recent death of Lord McPherson fresh in our minds twenty-two years after his seminal report, namely, the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry. This gives us pause for thought about the lost opportunities.

Robin
Landman OBE

EXECUTIVE MEMBER, BFELG

The Black Dividend

If the black workforce achieves its full potential in terms of its participation and progression, this will add 1.3% to GDP - the equivalent to £24 billion per year.

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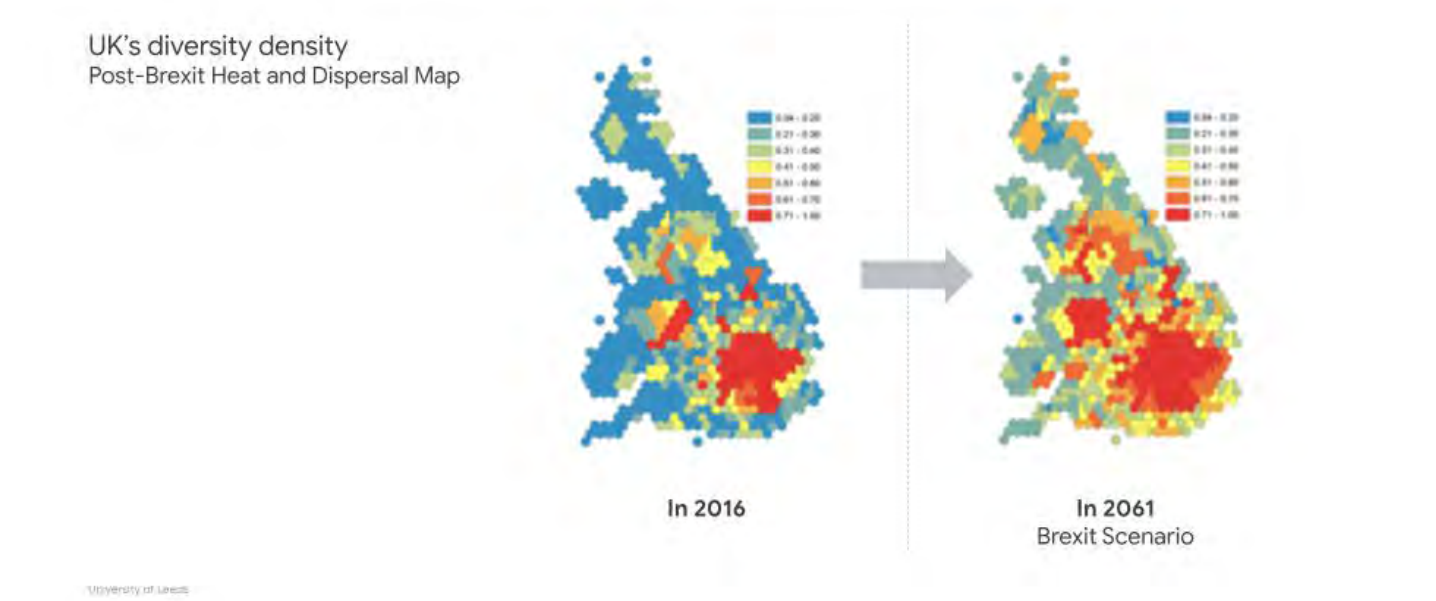
Amarjit Basi

EXECUTIVE MEMBER, BFELG

Key Considerations

Expanding Ethnicity across Populations as Black communities are set to grow significantly over the next decade, and the concentration and dispersal of that are becoming apparent.

This expansion will also see the growth of majority/minority cities and towns, leading to a greater concentration around the larger conurbations. There are implications for the combined authorities, and within that, there will be increased dispersals in areas hitherto that have not been so diverse. Most significantly, it is happening now, as can be seen in the Top 10 cities.

The Future (2000 – 2050)

The population growth and changes are driven by the populace of young black groups and those of mixed heritage. Significantly this growth is caused by higher fertility rates and not by increased immigration. By 2050 the clear majority group will be the category 'Other Ethnic Group'. This has clear implications for skills, education, employment, for public policies for comparative income and wealth alongside the respective financial contributions to UK PLC are apparent.

A Decade of Lost Potential

Increasing Barriers Post-16

The reality is, during a decade that commenced with the Equality Act 2010, from the age of 16, black students encounter major inequalities throughout their education/employment journeys. This hinders their potential and their contributions within their communities and the UK a whole.

Most Black groups improve educational attainment relative to White students to 16, and then....
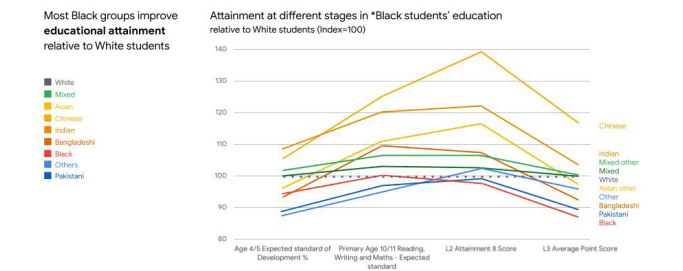
The academic performance of white students tends to remain constant as they progress through their educational journey from age 4/5 to 16 years. Although most Black groups make good progress through their schooling, their potential is stunted at the age of 16. (DfE, ESFA, HESA, ONS Data) There are notable exceptions. Black African and Black Caribbean, Pakistani, Irish Travellers and Roman Gypsies tend to underperform over that compulsory phase.

For some groups, under-attainment at 16 and into post-16 spans the whole of the past decade. For example, Black Caribbean attainment for post-16 has been persistently low for the past nine years. (ESFA Data)

Black students are significantly over-represented on college courses but under-represented on apprenticeships. So while black student participation in apprenticeships is typically around 12%,
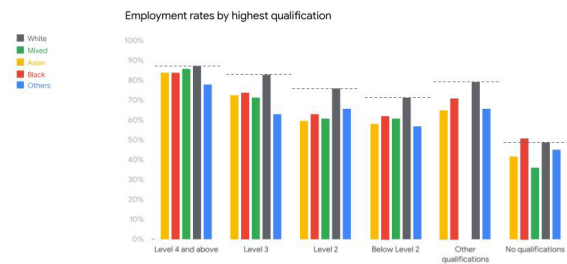
this compares with 25% on other post-16 programmes (DfE, ESFA, ONS Data). Achievement rates for Black apprentices are lower than their peers. Moreover, Black apprentices are concentrated in a narrow group of low paid sectors - health and social care, hospitality and business administration.

All Black groups, including Asian and Chinese students, are underrepresented at Russell Group Universities. Fewer black students gain places in high tariff universities, including higher-performing level 3 students Chinese and Indians.

Furthermore, black students gain fewer first class and upper second-class degrees than their white peers. Black Afro-Caribbean and Black African, Pakistani and Bangladeshi students perform significantly worse throughout their educational journey.

Inequities in Employment and Earnings

Employment rates are lower for black groups than their white peers at all levels of qualifications. The lowest employment gaps occur for those holding either level 4 and above. Or for those that hold no qualifications. Furthermore, in all years after graduating, most black groups have lower

average earnings than their white peers'. (ONS Data) So if we take earnings 1, 3, 5 and 10 years beyond graduation, with the exception of Chinese and Indian students, all black groups under-earn compared with their peers. Notably, Chinese and Indian students, albeit earning well, face barriers in securing executive roles.

Further Challenges – COVID-19

Research confirms that black communities have been disproportionately impacted by Covid-19 socially and economically. Covid-19 impacts black communities more because they're more likely to be employed in Covid-19 vulnerable sectors, live with multiple comorbidities, be in frontline jobs requiring face-to-face contact and live in more tight-knit communities incorporating multi-occupancy.

Furthermore, there are serious trends in youth custody. If we evidence the stark implications of black students' exclusions at school and indeed from Post-16 education, they follow through into the criminal justice system. The total black prison population in the UK is proportionately more per capita than in the US. It costs the US taxpayer £300 million per annum. (Lammy Review 2017)

And during all of this time, we've encountered an imbalance in the FE community. With the FE students on the one hand and composition of the FE workforce including at senior leadership and governance levels.

Have we measured the right things? It begs

the question. How can it be that there are persistent gaps in black student participation, attainment, progression as same destinations? And with black students reporting negative experiences in their learning, particular reference to the YMCA Report Young and Black October 2020 Report? And obviously, with black representation at all levels of the FE workforce going backwards? Despite all these factors, the evaluation of FE provision's effectiveness has barely changed over the past decade.
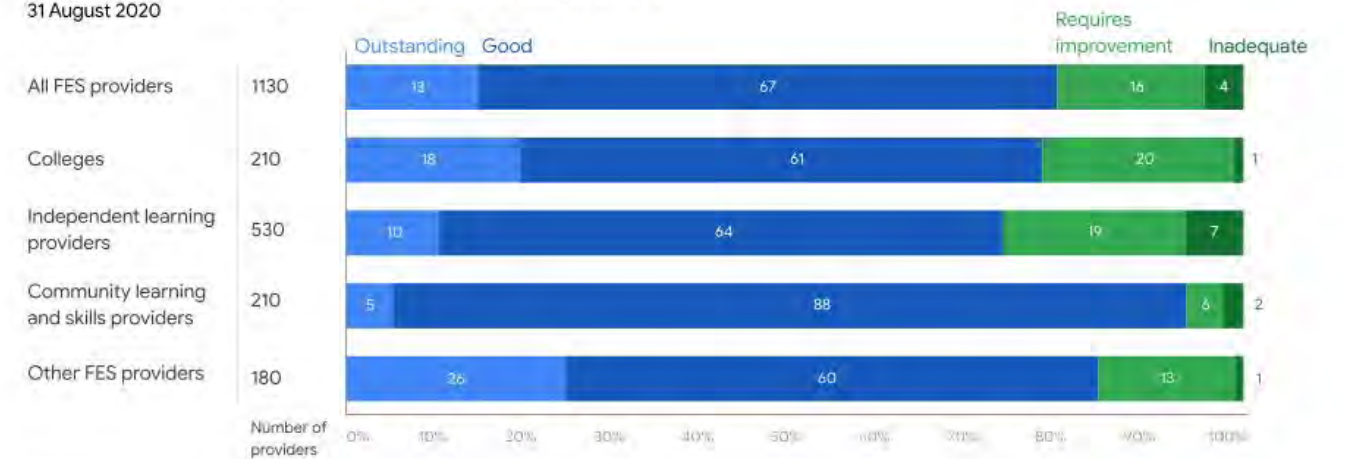
Has our system ignored the data and or taken a backward step in measuring the impact of teaching, learning and assessment on black students? And leadership and management on black staff?

We have to ask ourselves, is this the direct effect of removing a limiting grade for equality and diversity from Ofsted's Inspection Framework? Has the FE system and leadership merely paid lip service to their responsibilities for ensuring race equality? As we seek to implement FE reform, is there an accurate recognition that a profound cultural change is required to address the inequities that have been allowed to develop.

There is a systemic choice to be made. **Either** the FE system reforms to harness the full potential of Black students, the Black workforce and communities or we continue the systemic lag

that has characterised the last ten years. Do we continue to disappoint, **drag**, disengage and divide Black students, staff and communities and suppress economic growth with obvious implications for UK pic? What will our choice be?

BFELG Reform Proposals

All of these proposals require significant support from the government. The BFELG stands ready to play its full part in enabling positive and sustaining change in racial equality. Our contribution is our 10 Point Plan below, including our recently developed **10 Point Plan Diagnostic Toolkit.**

We offer to share our intellectual capital, provide deep insight and act as a critical friend.

Session // 2
Leaders respond to the keynote

Q&A Panel

▼

**Rosemary Campbell-
Stephens MBE**

CONFERENCE HOST

This session was designed for system and sector leaders to respond to the key themes and recommendations of the Keynote Presentation. Important questions were asked by the renowned educationalist and facilitator Rosemary Campbell-Stephens MBE of an illustrious panel. Pulling out the key themes from the keynote, Ms Campbell-Stephens spoke to

**Denise
Brown**

PRINCIPAL & CEO,
STOKE-ON-TRENT COLLEGE

**Iestyn
Davies**

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF COLEGAUCYMRU

**Paul
Joyce**

DEPUTY DIRECTOR, FURTHER
EDUCATION AND SKILLS, OFSTED

**Sharmarni
Salvarajah**

DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF POST-16 STRATEGY,
SKILLS AND REFORM
DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION (DFE)

**Ann
Francke OBE**

CEO CHARTERED MANAGEMENT
INSTITUTE

**David
Russell**

CEO OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING
FOUNDATION (ETF)

Denise Brown

PRINCIPAL & CEO
STOKE-ON-TRENT COLLEGE

Q. As one of the signatories to the BFELG Open Letter, and given your excellent track record in this area, where would you begin with the first proposal, namely, a 'radical revision of FE curricular and qualifications to reflect contemporary values, incorporating the importance of colonial history and its influence on society today?'

A. Every part of the FE System should be involved from the beginning, with strong leadership of anti-racism from the Secretary of State for Education. OFQUAL should ensure diverse representation with explicit anti-racist aims and Awarding Bodies should rely upon broader representations within the FE and Skills Sector for designing and developing qualifications.

OFSTED could address racism in curriculum content, design & implementation. The FE Commissioner's Office could evolve to provide a critical supportive lens holding FE organisations to account to ensure Black learners are getting the progressive structure they need. As commissioners of provision, if the Education and Skills Funding Agency were to award tenders that emphasised anti-racism and inclusivity, that could be a 'game changer'.

Student Unions should demand a radical review for change in the curriculum. Just think how much better black learners would perform if they were introduced to a curriculum that spoke to their experiences? Teacher Training Organisations could give all teachers the skills they need to address racism and implement anti-racism in their teaching.

The AoC and ETF should also be demanding of government organisations that there needs to be a radical overhaul.

Sharmarni Salvarajah

DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF POST-16
STRATEGY, SKILLS AND REFORM
DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION (DFE)

Q. The White Paper states that Trailblazer local areas will pilot Local Skills Improvement Plans. Where will these be? Are some of these areas ethnically diverse?

A. The White Paper came out last month, so we are still working on the detail. To test it well, we need to test in all sorts of different areas. So ethnically diverse areas will certainly be considered, but those decisions have not been made yet made. As soon as they are, we will inform the sector about the process and the places selected.

Q. Notwithstanding the dearth of data, aggregated by ethnicity, what are the Department's plans to ensure that Black students can take advantage of the emerging opportunities in the White Paper?

A. We are determined to transform how we deliver skills in this country. Central to this is looking at individual experiences and ensuring that everybody, wherever they live, whatever their background, whatever their particular needs are, they're able to access the training for the jobs that can lead to good outcomes for them. Practically, we are placing considerable emphasis on improving the qualifications that are available to people and making sure that those qualifications do lead to good outcomes in all instances, and that's just incredibly important to everybody, but we know from the data that it's even more important to people who are coming from a more disadvantaged background.

Another huge part of the White Paper is better information. People can't make choices without the correct information to support that, so letting people know what opportunities are out there and what those opportunities lead to is important. Better information about wage-return data, for example, is also critical to what we're doing, which leads to the third question.

We cannot understate the importance of gathering good data. That is something we are absolutely committed to as we roll out the policies. So we are entirely committed to reviewing outcomes for the individual policies that we're putting in place. We'll also look at participation and outcomes by local area and see how that matches up against the demographics of a particular site. And we will also keep looking at that data over time. It's not going to be a one-off thing.

We want to use data effectively to change what we do. We're not just going to gather it and let it sit there. Data should be informing our practice all the time. If we can get that right, that is how we will affect change. The White Paper offers considerable opportunities to both employers and to learners. Data to iterate what we are doing will be the key to our success.

Q. What could colleges in England learn about the model of system leadership that colleges in Cymru have - in particular, when addressing issues of equity

Iestyn Davies

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF COLEGAUCYMRU

A. Diolch am eich cwestiynau a helo o Gymru.

Diolch am roi'r cyfle imi fod yn rhan o'r gynhadledd hon. Mae'n fraint go iawn.

Thank you for your questions and hello from Wales. Thank you for allowing me to be part of this conference. It's a real privilege.

We have a strong and resilient FE sector with 13 Further Education Institutions (FEIs). This enables us to face our challenges which are not that different from the rest of the UK.

We have a clear understanding of what our vision, role and responsibilities are. We know we're not schools. We're not trying to be like midsize technical universities. We are proudly FE. #WeAreFE. We are confident. Our identity is supported by a devolved government that has full responsibility for education up to 16 and beyond and higher education policy. Financial settlement is slowly improving. That gives us a context in which we can address some tough challenges that we face.

Wales is not hugely ethnically diverse. Identity in Wales is not always determined by ethnicity but more to do with the Welsh language. So now I want to answer that first question in the context of Welsh language and Welsh identity in Wales, bearing in mind that when people were given that opportunity, roughly 55% identified themselves solely as Welsh. Not even Welsh British. So what

we were looking at was a situation where we had a real strong understanding of a sense of values and culture that is different even from 'notional British values', and I know that already translates differently in other parts of the UK.

So we've got to be really careful about how we understand identity that goes beyond even identity around ethnicity. Language is a complicated enriching factor. Roughly 20% of people living in Wales will say they speak Welsh and use Welsh. So that's a different qualifying factor from those who identify solely as Welsh. We have a dispersal of language skills in use that actually is unequal across Wales as well. The greatest growth in the Welsh language is not all in what we call the yn hanesyddol lleoedd Cymraeg eu hiaith – historically Welsh-speaking Welsh places along the West and Seaboard, actually North Wales. The largest growth in the Welsh language is actually in South East Wales. I live in Newport within shooting distance of the border. So we find growth in the Welsh language is strong here. So how do you cope with that? It's an unseen, if you like, of diversity. It's often an unheard diversity but one which is common to our experience.

Government Support

So what we've seen in Wales is the introduction of a new set of legal standards that sets out what citizens of Wales can expect in terms of the treatment of the Welsh language. The reality is that unless you have that strong steer from the government unless sometimes

it's backed up by statutory intent and regulation, the kind of well-meaning changes that we want simply don't happen. We have to have a very clear expectation of what it is that people can see and experience from the FE community. The Welsh language standards that derived from the Welsh Language Measures of 2011 make it very clear what the expectation is on us as college leaders and as part of the FE sector. Without fundamental changes at the governmental level, nothing will make a big difference on the ground in some of the more difficult areas around diversity and inclusion in the wider UK.

Q. Q - If you had to choose one, of the ten proposals from the Open Letter, from BFELG to Westminster, which proposal would it be?

A. Anything to do with culture. We know the phrase, don't we, 'culture eats strategy for breakfast'? That's the reality. Unless you can get to grips with culture, your best strategies, your best intentions, with the best will in the world, will largely transpire into weak systems of change.

But I really want to look at the contributions FE can make to a more diverse society and the communities around it. We've recently responded and contributed to the FE Commission for the College of the Future. We've also commissioned our independent research because we've got an election happening in May to elect new members to our Parliament to form a new government. So we've been looking at some of the real deep-seated challenges around what FE does in Wales and how it contributes to social, economic and industry renewal. What we've identified is the need for fundamental changes to our curriculum. Without fundamental changes to our teaching and learning approach, very important because of the kind of system we have in post-16 education in the UK, unless we change qualifications, unless we think much more widely involving much more use of transversal skills but also hard transferable skills that can relate to a number of occupational classifications, unless we dig deep, redesign our curriculum, change our teaching offer, really embolden and invigorate our learning experience, particularly around assessment, we will not enable change in our communities and our society. Unless, as

FEIs, we get to grips with these incredibly complex problems around teaching, learning and particularly assessment, we will actually start to inhibit the kind of change that may be happening more widely.

The reality is that colleges are usually a 2-year experience, but it's an experience, as we all know, that lasts a lifetime. We've got to make sure that this lifetime experience is a good one for our learners and really impacts some changes at all levels of society. Whether that diversity is obvious, clear and distinct, or whether it's like some of the challenges we face, like diversity in Wales where it's more hidden, we need to be agents for change in the FE sector. We have to start and take responsibility for the issues that we can deal with.

Ann Francke OBE

CEO CHARTERED MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

Q. What are the five benefits of having a more ethnically diverse C-suite?

A. Actually, they're quite phenomenal. The first is that having an ethnically diverse leadership team boosts your financial performance. I can quote the latest data on this from McKinsey (2020):

> **If you are on the top quartile of ethnically diverse companies, you outperform in profitability by a staggering 36% against the bottom quartile of the least ethnically diverse companies.**

That is a huge business incentive for everybody, and if you consider the FE sector and a lot of the financial challenges, financial stability is critical. So if you want to be more financially sustainable, become more ethnically diverse in your leadership team. The two go hand-in-hand. The second benefit is that ethnically diverse leadership increases your ability to attract and retain talent. We saw that there's not enough representation in management and leadership throughout the FE sector. If you want to change that, you start by becoming more ethnically diverse at the top because people need to see role models. They need to see people who look like themselves as leaders. The third benefit, and we've heard culture does indeed eat strategy for breakfast, is that ethnically diverse cultures boost authenticity, boost trust, and boost employer engagement. Fourth, this is a huge opportunity, as we saw in the Keynote presentation. You've got as students 30% ethnic diversity in your customer base but only 6% in your leadership base. That's a huge gap, and it's completely unacceptable. You're not representing your customer base, and you should be because you will boost your brand if you do that. Part of the reinvention of FE is to boost the brand. Lastly, and there's evidence on this, you will make better decisions. It's proven that ethnically diverse teams and, indeed, diverse teams generally make better decisions than teams that are all the same, the typically white and male team. They make the poorest decisions, and they also up the risk.

If you look at the top twenty greatest corporate implosions since 2000, the main driver has been groupings, and that is really defined as a bunch of older white men sat round a table of similar backgrounds making all the decisions.

So if that's not a compelling argument for ethnic diversity, I don't know what is.

Q. What can we learn from the progress on gender diversity about how we should approach increasing ethnic diversity?

A. All those five benefits also apply to gender diversity. There's better data on gender diversity than there is on ethnicity, and so there's so much we can learn from gender diversity. Still, I'm going to focus on the one major point that I think is the enabler of this, and it has come up in people's conversations, and that is data. We have to get better at collecting data on ethnicity. It's vital to make progress, and one of the things that enabled progress on gender is getting the data on things like the gender pay gap and the representation of gender at all levels of the organisations and the statistics on the percentage of women versus men who got promoted. Because we found things like huge pays gaps. We found things like lots of women at the bottom of organisations, very few women at the top.

And we found things like men were 40% more likely to get promoted. Now we have to get similar robust data on ethnicity in order to make progress.

We are huge advocates of instituting ethnicity pay reporting. I actually worked with Sharmini on gender pay gap reporting in the past, and I'm delighted to say that the government is reinstating it now. I urge all companies to report by 4 April and not to take advantage of the grace period. We should introduce this ethnicity pay-gap reporting, and I would make this mandatory for and this is a simple thing that many of you could support, the receipt of any government monies for any of the Build Back Better, and I know the BFELG agrees with this.

> **I would make data collection mandatory on ethnicity and indeed the gender and disability of all of those learners and recipients so that we can actually monitor who is getting what, are we becoming more diverse and actually promoting greater inclusion?**

So that is what I would say is the main learning. What gets measured gets managed and what gets managed gets done.

Paul Joyce

DEPUTY DIRECTOR, FURTHER EDUCATION AND SKILLS, OFSTED

Q. What baseline data aggregated by ethnicity will OFSTED be recommending to the DfE that needs to be mandatory in terms of addressing the systemic challenges that this conference is about and enable you at OFSTED to effectively quality assure progress, specifically on race equality within the FE sector?

A. I find myself agreeing with entirely what Ann was saying before around data. Data is important. We know from experience what is measured does have an impact. It does drive behaviour. It's essential, therefore, that what is measured and what is collected does drive the right sort of behaviour. So, in my view, anything that we can do in terms of data collection that helps monitor and measure the progress of race equality within FE should be absolutely welcomed.

There's a raft of data that needs collecting, and we at OFSTED will obviously use that data as part of our inspection, and we'll always consider that data when we make judgements to hold providers and the sector to account, whether that's for the quality of provision or whether that's for the effectiveness of leadership and management. And that's in areas as Ann was touching on in terms of governance, the composition of governing boards, of senior leadership teams, and whether or not senior leadership teams, managers, governors do represent the student populations and communities that institutions serve. It's imperative. I think it's also essential for me to say that whilst data is important, it must be the right data – that it's measuring the right things and telling us the right things. So it really does need to be useful and meaningful. It needs to drive the right behaviours, so accuracy, timeliness, and data completeness are really important.

In terms of recommendations for DfE, there lies some of the difficulties in DfE data in terms of its timeliness and sometimes its accuracy. A lot is being done with data to make data more useful, more meaningful and to enable policymakers to act upon it.

But currently, we find some of the difficulty with data supplied is that there's often too big a time-lag in us getting that data for it to be meaningful and useful at the time of inspection.

So that's one of the timing issues that I think could improve. There's also an issue about the voluntary nature of some of the data returns that we currently get from DfE - voluntary data returns in terms of staff composition, the rather blunt instruments around retention and achievement rates, for students' participation rates. They're not always helpful. They're certainly not helpful if they're not complete in terms of staff and student composition. So, anything we can do to promote collecting the right data in its totality, so it's complete and is produced in as timely a manner as possible, should be encouraged. And I've been really encouraged that the BFELG are working quite closely with the DfE and ESFA on identifying what some of those specific data asks should be and what should be collected.

I've talked a little bit about the limitations of data. Data does play an important role in

inspection, but certainly with the introduction of the Education Inspection Framework, whilst data will always be used by inspectors and is essential, it will always be a part of the picture for us. Some of the difficulties for us, particularly in FE being a relatively small sector, national data sets sometimes can be unhelpful when you're looking at providers in a locality that's very different to the national picture. So, looking at similar institutions or data for similar rather than the national picture where a local area can look very different, would also be useful. And we're particularly keen on looking at the context and individual circumstances and looking at data within that light. So, data will never be the be-all and end-all of our inspections.

Q. Is there any chance that OFSTED could actually, seriously, give a higher profile to equality and diversity?

A. **We certainly seek to ensure that equality and diversity are well evaluated through inspection.** We focus on individual student experience and on the curriculum rather than wholly on the outcomes – that is something that we've moved towards. Is there more we can do? Yes, there is. We obviously need to continue to look at equality and diversity, how we evaluate it and what we do. And yet, we could do things better, and as a panellist has said before, and other organisations and institutions should always seek to do so.

David Russell

CEO OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOUNDATION (ETF)

Q. My concern is that your suite of leadership programmes aimed at everyone do not refer, as far as I can see, to diversity at all, or to the kind of cultural competencies that all leaders will need to address systemic racism, or indeed, any other forms of inequality? So, on reflection, what's wrong with this picture?

A. That's a very specific question about our programmes which I am happy to answer, but I have to respond to the data that Amarjit and Robin presented because it's just so powerful. There's something really important here to say about education policy. There's a narrative in the DfE that says the race equality problem has been solved. It's really important to recognise that this narrative has been running for a while. The narrative goes like this. We used to have a big problem with disparity with educational outcomes. It was all about the inner city and the problems of the inner city. London was the lagging region, places like Birmingham were in a bad place and so on. That's all been turned on its head. London is now the top-performing area largely to do with the positive impact of immigration but lots of other things. The inner city is no longer the problem. There are now two problems, the narrative says. They are the geographical issue - the coastal strip. If you look right along the North of England, right down the coast and along the South and up the West as well, this is where deprivation bites in terms of educational outcomes. That's the geographical issue and in terms of other performance gaps, it's actually about socio-economic groups. It's about income and poverty and we need to close the gap between poor kids and the rest. That's how the narrative goes. But the data that Amarjit presented, I think really blows a big hole in that narrative. The dip at level 3 shows that the narrative does not hold, and that's just so crucial.

Minority ethnic groups are performing relatively poorly at level 3. Minority ethnic groups are also over-represented in FE colleges at level 3. This is a big challenge for us.

The single most important thing that we can do to level up and eliminate these disparities and outcomes by ethnicity is to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the FE system. That is the really big picture, and that's what the ETF is most focused on – outcomes for learners.

Black leaders are sorely under-represented at top levels, in the middle and at the bottom so there are no quick fixes. There's no obvious bottle neck that needs to be uncorked. It's a bigger problem than that. It's a problem of recruitment, retention, development and leadership. ETF now has a Director of Diversity who reports directly to the CEO. A big part of this role is to prioritise and focus on inclusive practice across all ETF's different interventions in the sector .

ETF runs a senior leadership programme with a focus on leadership and diversity, one strand for Black staff to bring on and support Black talent and the other, working with governing bodies which are largely white, older, and still a bit male-dominated, to train

them and to address issues of unconscious bias, and structural inequality. They are decision-makers, so you have to start at the top.

ETF's broader senior leadership work with Oxford Said Business School is not topic-specific. So a synopsis of the curriculum would not show diversity and inclusion. Nor would you see managing finance, a massive issue. Nor will you see leading teaching and learning, nor managing mergers, or stake holder management. It's not that kind of programme. At heart, it's about trust, authenticity, reputation, adaptive leadership, scenario planning, self-knowledge, storytelling, change leadership, horizon scanning, and strategic planning. It's about values, behaviours, dispositions and how you devote your time and energy as a leader.

The ETF is really committed to equality, and we feel like we haven't done what we could've done. For the last 5 or 6 years, it's been a relatively weak strand of our work. That is all changing now with a personal commitment from me and from my board which has also diversified itself. So we feel there is great movement and action on this.

I give back the credit to the Black FE Leadership Group because

they are the wind in our sails on this and it's an opportunity we're not going to miss. We're really excited about that.

Session // 3
Roundtable Discussions

With the Session 1 Keynote presentation made by Robin Landman and Amarjit Basi, and the developing discussions in Session 2 as background, six Roundtable discussions took place in Session 3 enabling participants to contribute to the debate. The discussions considered the following BFELG Reform Proposals outlined in Session 1, drilled down further and made recommendations:

1. A representative system leadership – led by **Satwant Deol** (Principal/ CEO)

2. National and local targets to redefine success - led by **Darrell DeSouza** (CEO/Group Principal)

3. Incentivising employers – led by **Anthony Bravo** (Principal/CEO)

4. Reform the curricula & qualifications – led by **Paul Cook** (Principal/CEO)

5. Pedagogical and professional development – led by **Dr Ali Hadawi CBE** (Principal/CEO)

6. Quality Frameworks, Regularity Frameworks & Limiting Grades – led by **Suki Dhesi**, (Vice Principal)

During the Plenary (Session 4) that followed, Rosemary Campbell-Stephens invited the Roundtable leaders to feedback to the Conference. T

* 'Black' is used as an inclusive definition for people from ethnically diverse backgrounds who share a lived experience of the effects of racism.

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Session // 4

Roundtable Plenary

Plenary
▼

Rosemary Campbell-Stephens MBE

CONFERENCE HOST

Satwant Deol

PRINCIPAL CEO

Anthony Bravo

PRINCIPAL / CEO

Dr Ali Hadawi CBE

PRINCIPAL/CEO
CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COLLEGE

Dr Darrell DeSouza

CEO/GROUP PRINCIPAL HCUC

Paul Cook

PRINCIPAL/CEO
HEREWARD COLLEGE

Suki Dhesi

VICE PRINCIPAL OF HSDC
HAVANT AND SOUTH DOWNS COLLEGE

Roundtable // **A Representative Systems Leadership**

Satwant Deol

PRINCIPAL CEO

We had great discussions.

A joined-up approach

DfE should lead by example , driving a joined-up approach with other agencies like Ofsted, ESFA, ETF, the FE Commissioner's Office and the LEPs . There was a great example of systems leadership in Liverpool. Led by the Council a whole city diversity plan was developed by a group of stakeholders that included the NHS, Police, universities, schools, colleges, and employers.

Targets

Target setting is key. What gets measured gets counted and then gets managed. It sets behaviours. As Denise Brown said this morning as well, targets need to be driven right across system and sector organisations. That's the kind of energy and passion that we need from the sector now. Targets were set for the recent vaccines, they got measured and behaviours got changed. There was a target for the gender-pay gap. We need an equivalent target for ethnicity pay-gap reporting.

To support target setting and measurement, DFE should ensure collection of staff data and Ofsted should review staff profiles when awarding grades.

Culture

Culture came up quite a lot—a culture of making sure that we're not letting people fail. Everyone should feel enabled to participate and achieve their potential - growing ourselves as individuals, growing through sector support - and having an inclusive culture. ETF will be so pivotal to leadership development for culture change.

College level

Within the college, Governors and leaders are instrumental in driving system and sector leadership, and diversity. We should start with the board. How diverse is our board? How inclusive is the board? Having a Board that champions diversity and reflects it at the Board level is key.

The Board, senior leaders and managers set targets, measure and reinforce these through College strategies, policies and procedures. How do we ensure that the recruitment policies and procedures in the college are right and robust? Development and success of a diversity workforce plan should be driven through college values, behaviours, and measurable targets. Reflecting a diverse workforce at every level of the college should become the DNA and backbone of every successful College. There was also a lot of discussion about developing our future workforce - our students, - and developing

our leaders as well and getting that right. Leaders in colleges must be held accountable for the development of Black leaders.

We discussed examples including rebuilding a diverse pipeline from everywhere in the organisation, from teachers, support staff all the way up to the board level. This is the time to seize the opportunity.

Some colleagues felt they needed help and weren't sure where they would go and what mechanisms were in place to support them. Working with recruitment agencies to ensure that staff are recruited from diverse backgrounds and working with BFELG to embed and monitor Diversity in action were suggested.

> **There's a lot of learning to be done and what colleges need is for system organisations to be there for us.**

Roundtable // **National and Local Targets**

Dr Darrell DeSouza

CEO/GROUP PRINCIPAL HCUC

Data

We opened up with data and that is nothing new. We have data. It's really what we do with it, what we intend it to show and what it should be telling us. That said, the Keynote speakers emphasised a decade of decline, and that struck home. Although we've had data it's clearly not been sufficient to show us the discreet effect of the last 10 years and the level of decline. So we need a sharpening up of what we're really looking at in a timely manner. This was something we agreed needs improving.

The national context of data is important. We need to start defining this more precisely. More importantly, when we look at local data and local targets the context is crucial for making comparisons. Linked to that the data that's used by Ofsted was felt to be a very powerful lever for change. A couple of examples shared in the session suggested Ofsted could be sharp on accountability at leadership and management level for participation in apprenticeships, and really what is being done to address the low percentages, if that indeed is the case, with the local employer.

A question was raised in relation to the data presented and that was, did black youngsters do well at secondary level? There was a feeling that the divide prior to 16 years, starts there. Also from published data, it was felt pupil attainment certainly from an ethnicity perspective is not highlighted enough and even somewhat buried. There was little focus on issues relating to this area from a recent Ofsted inspection.

The general feeling was that using data to upturn the downward spiral was something everyone could sign up to and really get action focused on. However, DfE data can have a lot of lag in it and therefore is not that conducive to helping to drive change. These were consistent points both from FE and training providers perspectives.

More precise timescales would be beneficial. This led to questioning some of the data entries within the ILR itself. Students have been known to be confused and actually find some of the questions asked, offensive. So that is an area that could be worth looking at.

College Boards

In terms of college boards, there was a feeling that whatever the national data might be driving, time lags notwithstanding, for local impact, college boards should agree what's happening in their own midst. That would be something they could do independent of time-lag concerns. There could be short quick wins that are relevant to their own environment.

Mandatory Data

There was a general consensus that we should push for mandatory collection of workforce data. A point of note was you could find more data on a school's website than you could with colleges—time for that to change.

Culture

Culture is important in institutions for driving change, so we should caution against an overreliance on data for pushing change with the fear that we undermine the overall holistic approach.

Ethnicity Pay Gap

The ethnicity pay-gap report could be very powerful in the same way as gender-pay gap. Both public visibility and public accountability call for change, so we look forward to that.

Regions with low ethnic diversity have a part to play because we don't live in such a small world that those regions and individuals won't encounter the wider world. It's a matter of respect. We all have an interest in this as UK plc was a very powerful point for the Keynote presentation to end on.

Roundtable // **Incentivise employers**

Anthony Bravo

PRINCIPAL / CEO

We discussed what the benefits were for having a diverse workforce, and then we were going to talk about what some of the technique was, which was very useful, and then we were going to look at what the incentives could be.

I wrongly assumed that the only thing that motivates business is money so the only way you could get business to do anything would be through some form of financial incentive. Interestingly it was suggested that that was not necessarily the case because we argued that there could be other factors that influenced business. In the end, we concurred that the most important thing is for organisations to become aware of what the benefits of an increase of diversity could be. and The McKinsey data that Ann Francke had referred to that demonstrated a 36% increase in profitability with a diverse senior leadership team needs to be highlighted a lot more in business organisations. That's an important thing. Hopefully, then they would make an internal decision to take action. But external motivations are also very important.

Initially, I thought it was just the money, but one of the group suggested it was also about 'whiteness', and that provoked an interesting debate. Can the desire for money be actually outweighed by the desire to stay white is a

really interesting question. It reminded me of what my mother used to say about me having to be better than the average white person if I wanted to get a job, so I do resonate with that, in hindsight.

So, in terms of actually using money as a motivation, we realised that even before we do that, we needed to have the data which everyone else is saying is the relationship between what's measured gets managed. But if we can measure the data, then how can we incentivise businesses to change. For example, if you've got a diversity plan in place you could get some sort of tax relief. If your diversity plan shows that it's actually made an impact, you may be rewarded for that too.

That sounds really cynical, but we did reflect and realise that if you get employed in the organisation because of that, people may be resentful, but if you don't get into the organisation at all, then you haven't got anything to do. So maybe it is better to have some cynicism, get some people in and have the opportunity for things to happen. That could be for tax, or it could be for government contracts, so for you to acquire a government contract, you need to have a clear, actionable diversity plan. It was also suggested that awards in recognition of diversity could be attractive to many organisations for reputational reasons.

An interesting point was made about small businesses. They sometimes need support, and that could be by providing them with

case studies, checklists, consultancy, toolkits. All of these will help any organisation to address the diversity agenda. But some of the smaller ones could well benefit from the colleges offering them a recruitment service. A number of colleges do that for SMEs. They'll recruit people to jobs or apprenticeship roles. So those were the things we actually discussed – the overall benefits of a diverse workforce, the boss wanting to improve diversity, or taking advantage of contracts etc., to improve financial viability.

Roundtable // **A reformed curricula & qualifications**

Paul Cook

PRINCIPAL/CEO
HEREWARD COLLEGE

Our Roundtable had good representation from Scotland, England and Wales. There was a lot of energy and passion and a feeling that the opportunity is now. A number of attendees reported really good initiatives:

Liverpool: A decolonising the curriculum working group had been set up in one college, taking on best practice from across the country; Being assertive and not waiting for naturally occurring opportunities to challenge inequality in the classroom. Let's not wait for those opportunities to naturally occur. Let's challenge them right from the get-go. Let's be assertive with this agenda—some good examples of working with an awarding body.

Scotland: 36 professionals are meeting up from across the HE and FE sectors to look at fundamental curriculum reform and tackling racism and discrimination on campus.

Leeds: a 5-year roadmap had been developed with milestones toward a more diverse curriculum.

We concluded that
- Reform is needed to the occupational standards that then feed into qualifications.

- Decolonisation should cover the entire curriculum and not be narrowed to just a pastoral and social development curriculum.

- Governing bodies should be empowered to do something about this agenda.

- Training and CPD for teachers should build confidence and include the knowledge to explore with students, naturally occurring opportunities for learning about ethnic diversity and how to challenge discrimination

- Curriculum should meet the needs of a diverse community. There are issues for subjects where there isn't the skillset to deliver the curriculum, for example, Hairdressing to meet the needs of Black communities.

It was a great discussion but a lot of assistance is needed for our colleagues across the country and the nations to ensure that this passion and drive that we're seeing now doesn't peter out – that we do backfill with the things that are needed for people to keep the momentum.

Roundtable // **Pedagogical and professional development**

measuring data and gradings, though these are all important.

And that is really the critical aspect that should come out from this conference. That is the fundamental feedback from the group.

We were powerfully reminded this morning by our brilliant Keynote speakers about the past 20 years and how much little movement has been made. So, notwithstanding that data is important, we looked at what needs to change in further education internally and in terms of policymaking and regulation to enable change to actually happen this time. Otherwise, if we fast forward 20 years we'll be looking back having exactly the same discussion as we had this morning.

Our group believe there are two key points here. One is around research, and that is where the sector itself teachers, practitioners, managers, leaders engage in research both quantitative and qualitative so that they can develop and own the tools to be able to challenge, influence, and also have the evidence base. The other point is for policymakers and regulators to enable this research to take place and to recognise it by funding it, by making it possible, by recognising colleges that prioritise research so that we can start as a sector to own our evidence, have the tools we need to be able to influence our own professional practice as leaders and managers as teachers as assessors, as policymakers. This is way beyond

Dr Ali Hadawi CBE

PRINCIPAL/CEO
CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COLLEGE

Roundtable // **Quality Frameworks, Regularity Frameworks & Limiting Grades**

Suki Dhesi

VICE PRINCIPAL OF HSDC
HAVANT AND SOUTH DOWNS COLLEGE

This was a really interesting discussion. We talked about where we are now and the importance of sharing where we are now with the entire sector. The statistics today have been incredibly powerful. We've all been moved by them, but they must be shared more widely. In terms of where we are now, we talked about the imperative, the urgency. 1 in 3 young people will be from Black backgrounds by 2051. So there is urgency to act. And then we talked about what action we should take. Should the action be limiting grades?

Should colleges be penalised for not improving their data in relation to Black communities, whether that be by attendance, retention, achievement, progression, number of students in national competitions, number of students on scholarships? And we also talked about the importance of a positive solution rather than a negative one. So rather than a limiting grade, we discussed the importance of refining the EIF and the language within the EIF. In relation to leadership and management to be very clear on the grade descriptors and what does outstanding look like in terms of ethnic diversity? What does good look like? The links to governance. We talked about the solution. What do we need for these young people in our sector?

We talked about the importance of a standard – a racial justice standard. We have other standards in the sector, the Gatsby framework, the teachers' standard. We know these so well. We embed these so well. The racial justice standard needs to incorporate minimum standards in relation to data relating to Black students, minimum standards in relation to recruitment, Black students onto apprenticeships, minimum standards in relation to the workforce.

We are all role-models within our workforce but we heard in terms of statistics today, 4% of leaders are from Black backgrounds despite the fact that there are 30% Black students in FE colleges. 6% of teachers are from a Black background. So there are masses of disparity with those statistics. To ensure that we as role models have a positive impact, the minimum standard or racial justice standard can ensure we operate in the right way and really do understand the data and the imperative around the seismic shifts that are needed.

Session // 5

The impact of Covid and Digital and Data poverty on Black Communities

BFELG Keynote Presentation

Janak Patel

CONSULTANT IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT JP EDUCATION AND TRAINING LTD

This presentation focuses on the added disparities in outcomes for Black communities that arise as a result of COVID-19 and positive strategies to mitigate these. It highlights the levels of multiple deprivation and disadvantage within the black communities before the pandemic, the impact of COVID on black communities and students now and in the future, and finishes by looking at possible solutions.

Looking at indices before Covid-19, the evidence for deprivation and disadvantage suggests the impact is greater on Black communities (Race Disparity Audit). People from Pakistani and Bangladeshi Islamic communities and people from the Arabic nations experience some of the highest levels of deprivation. For example, Pakistani people experience almost three times higher than the lowest levels of deprivation and disadvantage. People from Black African, Black Caribbean and Mixed communities have the second highest levels of poverty and disadvantage. (Race Disparity Audit)

This section presents BFELG findings of the impact of COVID on Black communities and then students.

* 'Black' is used as an inclusive definition for people from ethnically diverse backgrounds who share a lived experience of the effects of racism.

PAGE - 65

COVID Factor 1 – Comorbidity and Mortality
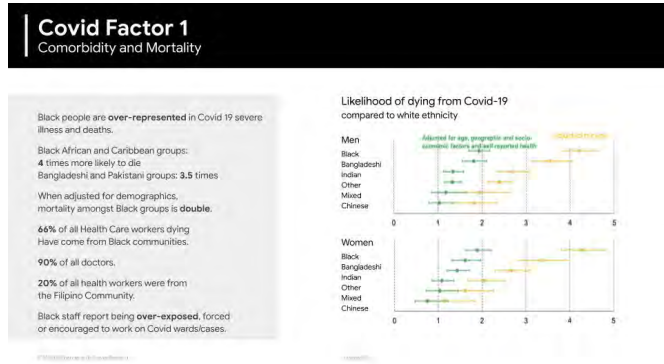
In terms of mortality, people from Black African and Caribbean communities are four times more likely to pass away from COVID and Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities are 3½ times more likely. A standard narrative suggests that Black people have a higher death rate because they are more likely to live in disadvantaged areas rather than due to their ethnicity. However, research shows that even when data are adjusted for various demographics, Black communities still have much higher death rates. For example, the death-rates of Black Africans and Caribbean communities are double. (IFS/ONS/Channel 4 (Documentary - Is Covid Racist?)

Death rates among Black people who work in the health sector are significantly higher. The proportion of death-rates among younger Black people are also much higher. Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Black African and mixed ethnicity are considerably higher. This is similar to 20 – 39 year-olds with the addition of Other White. The education sector needs to bear that in mind when they're educating students. (IFS)

People from Black communities are more likely to work outside of their home. Workers from Black African communities are at 41%, with many other communities over 30%. Therefore, Black people are more likely to be exposed to COVID. (Runnymede Trust – Over Exposed, Under Protected))

Factor 3 – Occupations
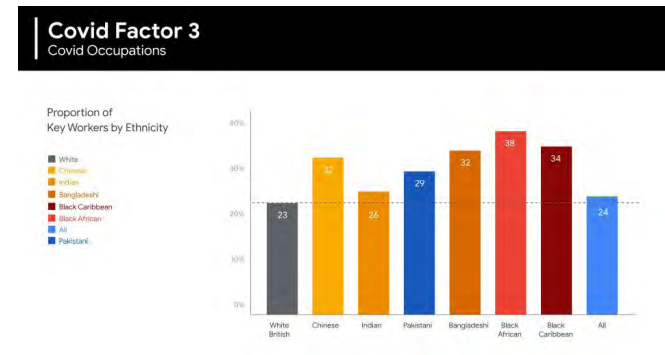
Black communities are much more likely to be employed as keyworkers and in public-facing industries thus, more exposed to COVID at a higher rate. For example, overall, black communities represent 14% of England and Wales, yet 30% classified themselves as keyworkers. (Runnymede Trust)

Factor 4 – Loss of Household Income

A much more significant proportion of all Black communities have their income reduced. Some details from the research highlighted that over half of the white people reported that they had not been affected financially during the pandemic, with only a third of Black communities saying the same. Black communities were more likely to report that they had to resort to using their savings or start borrowing money or skip meals as a result of financial difficulties. (Runnymede Trust)

Factor 5 – Workplace Discrimination

A great number of keyworkers from Black communities reported that they had not been given adequate PPE (Personal Protective Equipment). Indian and Pakistani keyworkers reported that they were more exposed to COVID despite managers knowing they were more likely to catch the virus or that the impact is much greater. (Over-Exposed, Under Protected - Runnymede Trust)

Factor 6 – Racially Motivated Abuse
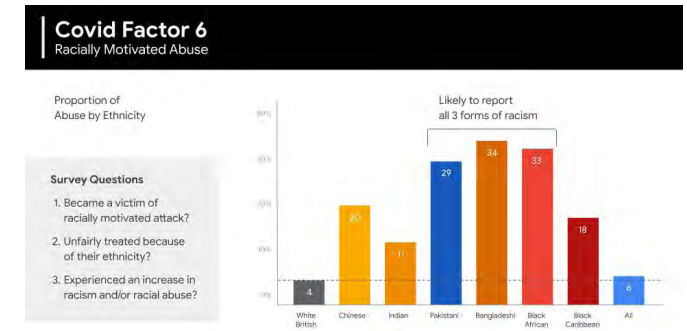
The racially motivated attacks on Black people increased when Brexit, immigration or terrorism were in the media. In the same survey, respondents were asked whether they had been victims of various forms of racism during the pandemic. Black communities reported that they had experienced all three forms of racism at a very high proportion.

Factor 7 – Racial Profiling and Stereotyping
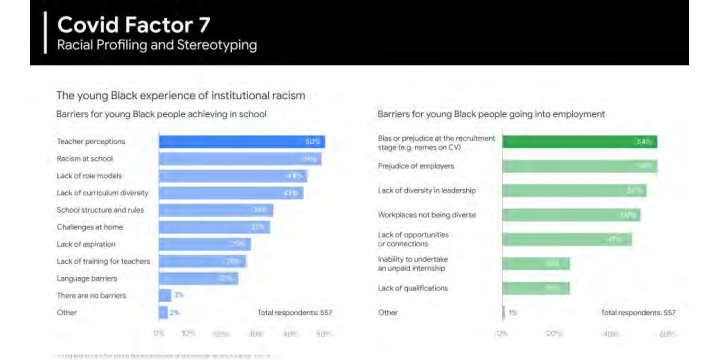
In October 2020, the YMCA published a report 'Young and Black– The young Black experience of institutional racism in the UK' based on a survey of young Black students and employees. The summary of findings reveals that:

1. 49% feel racism is the biggest barrier to attaining success.
2. 50% said the biggest barrier was teacher perception of them. For example, being too aggressive.
3. 76% of young people from black communities reported hearing racist language.
4. 70% felt the need to change their hair in order to look more 'professional'.
5. 50% feel a lack of diversity was a barrier in gaining employment.
6. While 52% feel the same about a lack of diversity in leadership

Factor 8 – Loss of Learning

Covid Factor 8
Loss of Learning
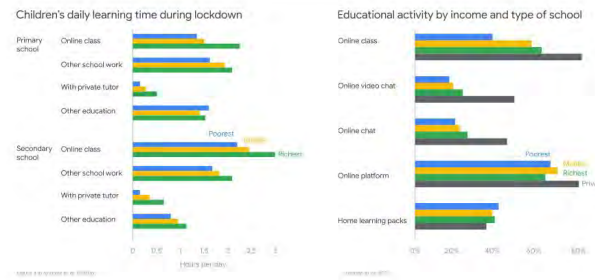
Access and quality of learning during this pandemic are dependent upon the income of families, catchment areas and the type of school children are studying in. Our research shows that the poorest primary and secondary children have the least access to school or online or alternative education. Students from more prosperous backgrounds have significantly more access to additional learning such as private or other education.

Students who study in state or private schools, in more prosperous catchment areas, have significantly greater access to learning. Black students are disproportionately affected. Extended school and college closures are exacerbating educational inequalities. All Post-16 providers, including HE, will be dealing with these issues now and possibly long-term.

Factor 9 – Educational Bias

Covid Factor 9
Educational Bias

We remember the overall impact of the publication of the exam results last August 2020. We also remember that students from poorer and Black communities were negatively affected by the use of first, the algorithm and then the predicted grades. In the spring of 2020, a survey ' **Predicted Grades, Predicted Futures**' , conducted by the Equality Act Review concluded as follows:

1. 80% of students were concerned about their grade predictions.
2. 31% were concerned that their grades would be under-predicted.
3. 23% of black participants raised concerns relating to bias.

At present, grade predictions do not take into account learning styles, bias and individual circumstances that may limit the student's potential. **Predicted grades will affect students' futures. We need to address these issues today so that we don't make the same mistakes again in 2021.**
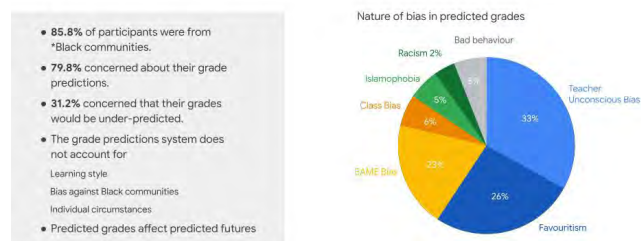
Factor 10 – Pandemic and Technology means Loss in Jobs and Earnings

Employment vulnerability and future changes in technology will have an impact on some Black communities.

- Indian communities are least vulnerable to unemployment with the impact of automation and COVID-19.
- Chinese groups are more vulnerable to COVID-19 but less to automation.

- Pakistani & Bangladeshi communities are the most vulnerable to COVID-19 and automation.

We need to ask the following questions. Are we pushing or encouraging Black students into certain courses or industries which will negatively affect their long-term futures? Which other industries will affect which communities post-pandemic and then in the longer term as technology changes? Does the further education sector need to look at its curriculum offer? What about career's advice and guidance?

The number of adult enrolments has fallen significantly, and the gaps in pass rates are still there. In terms of 16 – 19 year olds, there is a modest overall increase but a reduction in Black student enrolments which is against all trends. As with adults, data provided by AoC show that the gaps in pass rates for 16 – 19 year olds are also still there. The disparity in apprenticeships continues with an overall reduction in numbers, even more significantly, with a reduction in participation of Black people in apprenticeships.

> There is school of thought that says gaps in pass rates of Black students are more to do with disadvantage than ethnicity. However, we found that in 2019/20 there are significant gaps in pass rates for adult Black students in the most and least deprived areas. (AoC) For 16 – 19 year olds (AoC data), gaps in pass rates are small in most disadvantaged areas but actually larger in the least disadvantaged areas. In other words, gaps in pass rates are not just due to social disadvantage but ethnicity itself. This is significant and needs to be looked at.

In summary, the impact of COVID is significant. A report published by United Nations (Policy Brief: Education during COVID-19 and Beyond (**https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2020/08/sg_policy_brief_covid-19_and_education_august_2020.pdf**   ) highlighted that the educational impact of college and school closures are disproportionate. All phases of education and training are affected. The disparities in learning opportunities are enhanced with greater variability in the use and effectiveness of learning strategies in schools. There are inconsistencies in support for teachers.

I'm sure there will be increased dropouts in the future. And there will be a much more significant ripple effect beyond education and training. Then into employment.

Some of the recommendations made in the report are:

PAGE - 68   * 'Black' is used as an inclusive definition for people from ethnically diverse backgrounds who share a lived experience of the effects of racism.

* 'Black' is used as an inclusive definition for people from ethnically diverse backgrounds who share a lived experience of the effects of racism.   PAGE - 69

What does COVID levelling up look like?

- There is a need to look at a new definition of safeguarding.
- Plan for an inclusive re-opening of places of learning.
- Focus on equity and inclusion.
- Address learning losses and prevent drop-outs. Listen to the voices of all concerned.
- Coordinate all key actors in terms of health, welfare, childcare, and employers.
- Increase, protect and target funding.
- Enable flexibility of learning, accreditation, and articulation.
- Support and develop teacher's readiness. Remove barriers to connectivity.
- Most of all, strengthen all aspects of data and monitoring.

Presentations

Robin Ghurbhurun

MANAGING DIRECTOR UK (FURTHER EDUCATION AND SKILLS) AT JISC

In the summer of 2020, Jisc undertook a study into UK colleges' enforced transition to wholescale remote learning and teaching caused by the pandemic. We published a report in 2020 with several recommendations for the government, for agencies such as ourselves, for colleges and indeed, captured many key themes. One recurring key theme was digital and data poverty as a pressing concern for the sector. We also touched on digital leadership and digital pedagogy. But we could not get away from the voices of learners, teachers, leaders, and agencies across the UK. The number one concern that they could see was the ability of learners to engage in online learning effectively – primarily because of the barriers presented, particularly around data and digital poverty. In the autumn of last year, we decided to continue our study into the impact of online learning on a number of communities. We mainly looked at the effect on Black communities and whether the pandemic disproportionately widened the digital social divide within those communities. The approach initially was to undertake some desktop research using existing literature and data. Then we spoke to ten leaders and senior managers from three General FE Colleges, one sixth form college and one adult and community learning provider:

- Central Bedfordshire College (England)

- Glasgow Clyde College (Scotland)
- Gower College Swansea (Wales)
- The Henley College (6th Form)
- Westminster Adult Education Service

We also spoke to NUS further education student representatives.

General observations about the study

- This is a complex and multi-faceted social topic; only 'scratched the surface'
- Confirmed what we already knew about the fundamental issues around lack of digital access but has further highlighted barriers leading to disadvantage and a more nuanced picture of learner experiences
- Surfaced evidence of how digital and data poverty is impacting the educational experience of BLACK learners as well as other disadvantaged groups
- Provided examples of where providers have learned from experience and put in place interventions which are helping learners
- Large scale empirical data linking digital poverty with ethnicity and learning experience/outcomes appears to be lacking, but FE providers are collecting data around attendance and engagement which provide some indicators of where interventions are needed and help building understanding at a local level

Jisc

Three Research Questions

1. What is the impact of digital and data exclusion on BLACK learners' educational experiences and outcomes?
2. Are BLACK learners more likely to be disproportionately affected by digital and data poverty?
3. What steps can we take to address digital and data poverty?

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1. **What is the impact of digital and data exclusion on BLACK learners' educational experiences and outcomes?**

Jisc conducts a digital experience insight survey every year. 1n 2020, approximately 20,000 learners from FE responded to the study. And this is the first cut of the survey we later published this year, and thus far, we have had about 5,000 learners that have responded since October – December 2020. We knew there were approximately 400,000 FE and skills learners from Black 3backgrounds. This was almost a quarter of all learners across the sector.

Access to suitable devices, connectivity and study space

- **Smartphones are often the only device available to access learning** – having a 'smartphone only' is nine times more likely in more deprived social groups (DE compared to AB)
- **Having to share devices and data,** particularly in larger households, can limit appropriate access to learning
- **Main barrier to connectivity is cost** - at least 1 in 5 adults who are offline said cost was a barrier for them
- 11% of UK population do not have internet access – this includes many learners who are 'off-grid' and have no means of accessing online learning from home
- Vulnerable learners see **college as a 'sanctuary'** and is often the only conducive place to learn for many learner groups

BAME learners

- **BAME learners are more likely than White learners to lack access to suitable devices** - particularly Black learners (see table)
- ESOL learners especially **asylum seekers and refugees often have no access to any device**
- **Mobile data costs are more of a problem for learners from BAME backgrounds** especially Black/ African/ Caribbean (see table)
- Noticeably **more Black/ African/ Caribbean than White learners report problems with a safe and private area to study** (see table)

There are around 400,000 FE and skills learners from BAME backgrounds which accounts for 23% of all learners across the sector

When learning online, have any of the following been a problem?	BAME	White	Black / African / Caribbean
No suitable computer/device	23%	13%	29%
Poor Wi-Fi connection	39%	35%	43%
Mobile data costs	23%	13%	35%
Access to online platforms/ services	28%	16%	33%
Need specialist software	17%	9%	25%
No safe, private area to work	13%	8%	18%

Jisc FE student DEI survey 2021, provisional data based on all answering each question (to note questions were not compulsory so base sizes vary in each case).

Jisc

Twenty-seven per cent of those in full-time education did not feel they possessed the basic digital skills good enough to engage with online learning. So, 'learning to learn' was one thing. Learning to learn online was another. Many lacked the basic skills to know how to access online learning effectively.

Ten million in the UK are thought to need new or additional mental health support due to the pandemic. Research shows that black communities are suffering more significant impacts on mental health and anxiety than white counterparts. In terms of impact on learner engagement and outcomes, it's very early days. We know the achievement data is yet to be published for many institutions. Indeed, many institutions are yet to see the

full impact of the pandemic until we look at data that is coming out from January assessments and then later in the year with regard to teacher-based assessment.

Walsall College found that during the first lockdown in March-May last year, 20% of learners that were not engaged with online learning were from Black groups. That is quite disproportionate, bearing in mind 33% of their learners overall are Black. Initial attendance data can look promising, but there are concerns around disengagement, particularly from Black African and Black Caribbean learners from Westminster Adult Education Services, and that is noticeable when you think about the widening attainment gap within the black groups—just having learners registered and online, is one thing but the assumption that they are engaged in learning is very different. Therefore, attendance isn't always a good indicator for learner experience.

Attainment data suggests learner groups achievement rates link with those identified as at more significant social disadvantage in the UK. More data on the impact of digital data, attainment and learning outcomes are needed.

2. Are BLACK learners more likely to be disproportionately affected by digital and data poverty?

Digital disadvantage is a complex picture

Certain BLACK learners are at a greater structural disadvantage

• **Learners experiencing social disadvantage are particularly vulnerable to digital disadvantage.** The UK poverty rate is twice as high for BLACK communities as for white groups leading to greater 'structural' disadvantage.

• The **pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on BLACK communities** in terms of mental and physical health.

• Not all BLACK learners are disadvantaged though **Asylum seekers and refugees and Black African and Black Caribbean learners appear to be noticeably impacted.**

• Early indicators from the Jisc 2021 digital experience insights survey show a **higher proportion of BLACK FE learners are having problems with digital access compared with White learners.**

• **More evidence is needed around the impact of digital and data poverty on learning outcomes for different ethnic groups.**

But other learner groups are vulnerable too

Learners in economic poverty across all ethnicities are vulnerable to digital disadvantage but there are other factors too. The learners we identified in this study include:

  o White learners from disadvantaged areas with levels of high deprivation

  o 'Off grid' learners

  o Learners with special educational needs

  o Learners with English or Welsh as a second language

  o Care leavers

  o Learners below level 2

  o Learners on vocational courses

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The learners we identified in this study include:

• White learners from disadvantaged areas with levels of high deprivation.
• 'Off-Grid' Learners
• Learners with special educational needs
• Learners with English or Welsh as a second language
• Care Leavers
• Learners below level 2.
• Learners on vocational courses

This is just the first phase from our deep dive, and these are the next steps for consideration we are thinking about in partnership with BFELG:

Continue to broaden understanding:

• Broaden our scope across a wider demographic – understand similarities and differences between groups?
• Deeper dive on Black learners only?
• Study impact on learner outcomes?
• Scale to a wider group of providers?
• Work with agencies with expertise in social/action research?

3. What steps can we take to address digital and data poverty?

What steps can be taken to address digital and data poverty?

1. Engage with and influence local and central government and other funders

2. Continue to build the digital skills and confidence of both staff and students

3. Increase flexibility of delivery and approaches to help remove barriers for all learners experiencing digital disadvantage including introducing hybrid and blended learning models

4. Share good practice, knowledge or examples of interventions that identify and prioritise learners with their digital access needs

5. Encourage or facilitate consistent and improved data collection at the local and national level

6. Engage with content providers and edtechs around the affordability of resources and accessibility of learning platforms

7. Continue to build understanding around digital and data poverty in FE

Kirri Gooch

NATIONAL ACCOUNT MANAGER AT GOOGLE

Conrad Taylor

BUSINESS LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES MANAGER

Kirri Gooch explained the context of Technology at the heart of education in the UK before COVID

Education as an Ecosystem
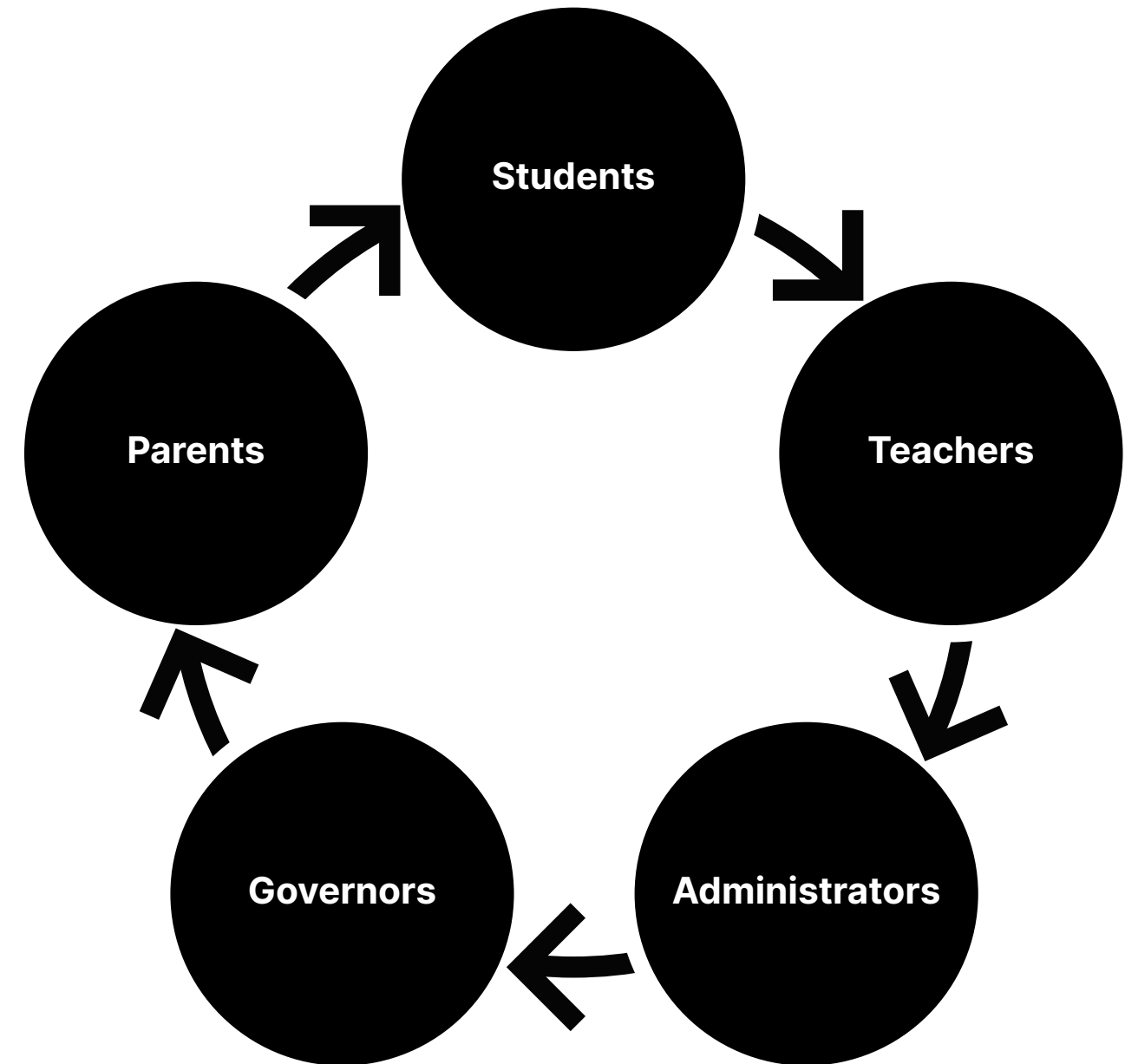
Technology is at the heart of this ecosystem, making it possible to join the dots. While technology alone will not improve education, it can be a valuable part of the solution. It's a balancing act between boosting teacher capabilities while ensuring the best learning experience for students.

Over the last year, Google for Education has influenced policy and positively impacted it. We are successfully supporting colleges to share best practice by highlighting the opportunities available. We began by looking at the students' perspective to understand their views.

The Student Perspective

- 72% of students felt that IT enabled them to learn at their own pace.
- 32% of students wanted digital technologies to be used more on their course.
- 8 in 10 students use a smartphone to support their learning.
- Assistive technologies are considered vital for learning for about 8% of students. This includes 'Special Needs' students. A further 10 % said that they choose assistive technologies to help with their studies.

So why is IT in education still outdated?

- Resources not updated for ten years.
- Offline content is not available online.
- Non-mobile friendly software used.
- Money wasted on printing.
- Technology is unavailable in every lesson.

Access

- Students are unable to connect to the college Wi-Fi on personal devices, i.e. mobile phones.
- Static PC Suites are challenging to book.
- Students can only access the curriculum by being physically present.
- False assumptions are made about the level of student digital skills
- Students are without access to a device at home.

Who is responsible for making IT decisions?

- Does it make sense that some IT technical teams make decisions on behalf of the curriculum?
- Some IT leaders in education have a cultural mentality of restriction, not openness towards IT access
- Current IT strategies fail to embed technology throughout the curriculum in favour of focusing on computing alone.

However, there are some excellent examples of colleges and schools using technology well, pre-COVID

'G Suite is the best digital pencil case we could find to help staff and students. It is our job to prepare learners for the digital expectations of jobs ten years from now, and the collaborative and creative cloud-based approach of Google does this for all 80 full-time courses every day.'

Scott Hayden
Digital Innovations Specialist
Basingstoke College of Technology

The freedom for students and tutors to find work with interesting applications – anything from anatomy to mind-mapping – has changed the way they think about learning and teaching. Traditionally, students and teachers have just taken what we've provided. Now we're a facilitator, giving them access to tools that allow them to be more innovative

Mark Brandish
Head of IT Services, Coleg Cambria

'Google is great because when you get homework set, it is easier to complete, and you can do it on any device. It is better than my old school as we didn't have anything as good as Google, so we had to do nearly all the homework on paper. Google has helped me in my vocational because all of our work gets put up on there, so if we miss any, we can catch up. This means we don't fall behind.

Student
Leeds City College

How Has Covid-19 changed the digital landscape?

- We are prioritising the need for effective IT across the whole education sector.
- Educators are forced to move offline content online.
- It made us consider the importance of student access to devices / Wi-Fi at home.
- Students have had to take ownership of their learning.
- It made us rethink how we deliver education to young people.

After the pandemic, what shall we do? Will this be a new normal when we are post Covid-19, or will we revert to old habits?

Conrad Taylor outlined some of the practical approaches used by City of Wolverhampton College to become more digitally inclusive. An FE institution of 600 staff and just over 6,000 students across four campuses, course provisions range from Pre-entry Foundation Degree to Sixth Form and vocational training with some commercial aspects.

The City has 200 languages spoken in its communities and schools. It is one of the 6th most deprived areas in England and ranked 20th overall out of 326 local authorities. Twenty per cent of Wolverhampton's adult population are without qualifications making this barrier crystal clear. Wolverhampton's population is circa 256,600, and thirty-two per cent of residents are from Black backgrounds.

Four types of digital resources necessary for effective inclusion were identified by Warschauer (2012) in 'Technology and Social Inclusion: Rethinking the Digital Divide'. The college mirrored these four elements to ensure adequate measures were implemented for inclusion as outlined in figure 1.

Digital Resources for effective inclusion

Mark Warschauer, in his book Technology and Social Inclusion identifies four types of digital resources necessary for effective inclusion:
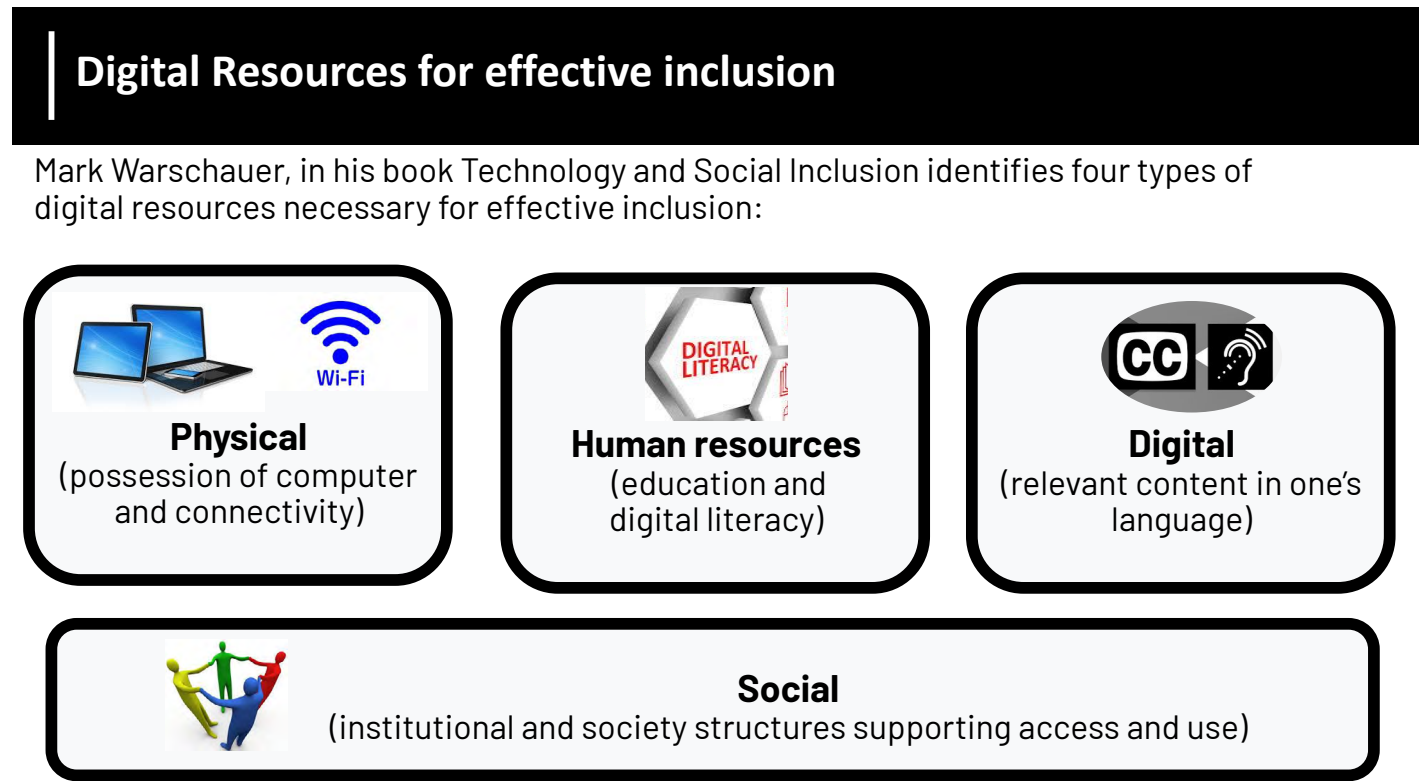
Figure 1.

Effective Inclusion - Physical

Levels of support are offered to students, including a home loan scheme. Based on students' circumstances, a device for short term/long term periods can be granted. Secondly, a survey of all students is conducted assessing equipment and internet access. In the last survey, over 246 students were without equipment and 49 without internet access. This issue is addressed by providing Chrome Books and portable routers where possible to students and staff. The college also signed up to data providers such as Vodafone and 02 to provide internet connectivity for its students.

Effective Inclusion - Digital Literacy

The college is passionate about Digital Literacy, aiming to provide the best platform for all students and staff. In 2018 the college joined with JISC on their Inside Survey. This allowed students to say what they would like, such as upskilling themselves in digital capability. Their feedback led to creating a programme called DFL – Defining Future Learning. DFL seeks to empower students and staff with the skills and confidence to use technology effectively in today's digital world – to live, learn, and work.

Defining Future Learning (DFL)

Defining Future Learning (DFL) seeks to empower our students and staff with the **skills** and **confidence** to **use technology effectively** which will enable them to **live**, **learn** and **work** in a digital society.

[Google Applied Digital Skills](#)

[Education & Training Foundation (DTPF)](#)

[Microsoft Training Centre](#)

[Microsoft Training Centre](#)

When a student joins the college, several paths are provided in various ways to develop their digital skills. The student can choose what they need to upskill in their chosen career path. Masterclasses are also offered, allowing students to join for free and do courses such as building a website. The college has had students who want to promote themselves as yoga teachers, for example, and the college provides those digital skills for them to promote themselves.

Inspiring Digital Enterprise Award – iDEA

iDEA replicates the Duke of Edinburgh Award as a digital equivalent.

Practical Approaches - Impact - iDea Badges

Developing Digital Skills Jan 2021

- Participants – **2,800**
- Bronze Award winners: **1,134**
- Silver Award winners: **245**
- Total number of iDEA badges: **64,243**

NB: The City of Wolverhampton College was awarded pioneer status for developing their students' digital skills.

The iDEA is an award-winning international programme that helps students to develop digital enterprise and employability skills for free. These programmes are categorised into 4 - core areas, namely (1) Citizen – becoming a digital citizen, (2) Worker – you can work effectively within the business (3) Maker – you create things like YouTube videos, images, graphics and (4) Entrepreneur – how to be a boss with the digital skills required.

Effective Inclusion – Digital (Content)
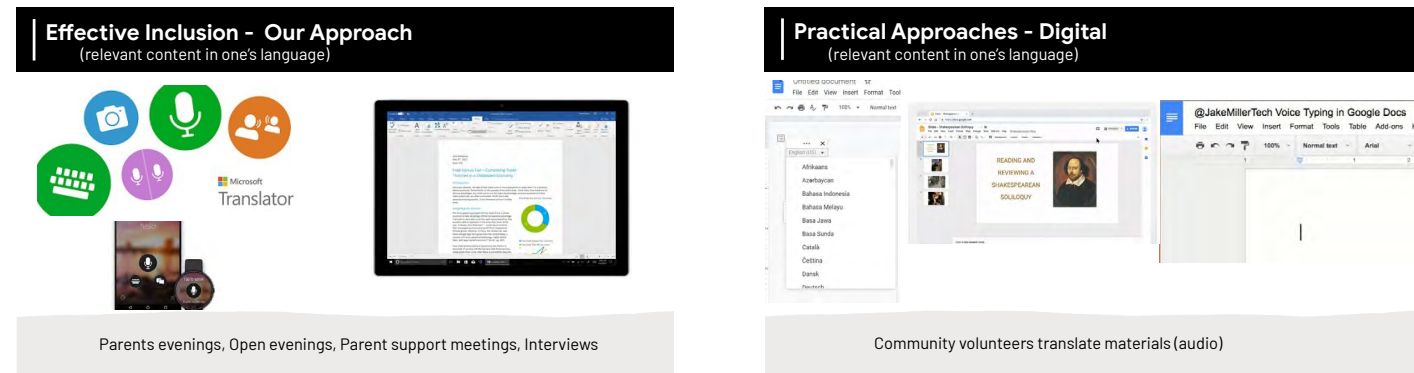
To ensure that the content created is in the student's first language, the college uses a range of different tools via Google and Microsoft, such as Immersive Reader, which reads for the students, and they can choose their own language. The college also approaches volunteers in the community to translate materials into relevant audio. Microsoft translator is used for parents' evenings, open evenings, parents' support meetings, and when they come for interviews – to support and remove those digital barriers. These tools are highly effective in connecting students for whom English might not be their first language.

Dictation tools are also utilised, which help accessibility. Tools on the Google platform make it possible to do a presentation, and you can translate straight away. You can also dictate in different languages. These are just some of the tools the college currently engages with to remove the digital barriers for staff and students.

Effective Inclusion – Social

The Social aspect is where work is necessary with multiple organisations, including the community, to remove the digital divide. The college works with the local authority, Adult Education Services and all schools within the borough. Digital lead forums have been developed, and someone is selected from each institution as a digital lead. Regular meetings are held to discuss barriers and how literacy within the community might be addressed. Volunteers are recruited to create videos and make these available on YouTube for access by the community. The college also decides on the best type of courses available to support the community digitally, making them available right across the City of Wolverhampton.

These are just some of the practical approaches that City of Wolverhampton College uses to address the digital divide for their staff and students. These strategies can be rolled out across any city in the UK.

David Hughes

CEO, ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES (AOC)

Race and colour really matter in our society, and the evidence shows the scale and scope of the challenge and distance we have to travel to address the very unequal and unfair outcomes for Black people in work, in education and in our society more widely. It's vital that we think about the issues and act now to use the change and the turmoil from the pandemic to build back fairer rather than build back what would just reinforce all the inequalities.

A Runnymede Trust staff blog **intersectionality here between being black and poverty** suggests that people from Black backgrounds will be disproportionately hit by Covid-19 in part because of that poverty issues. Institute for Employment Report from last week, '**An Unequal Crisis**', showed the impact of the pandemic on the youth labour market. The figures that came out just today (23rd February 2021) are saying that 60% of the rise in unemployment over the last year has been amongst young people (1/9 of the overall workforce). That's a really shocking statistic. And the impact on Black young people is particularly hard.

Covid-19 is having an unequal and unfair impact on black people and on young people. A report today from **Fair by Design** again shows that high living costs are hitting black and ethnic minority communities much more, and there's a poverty premium that impacts Black people.

We don't know how FE is doing on racism

and fairness. We don't know enough about the statistics for every college and every organisation working in the sector. We should know, and it's a problem that we just don't know enough from the analysis of evidence to understand what's really happening. There's not been enough research for the last decade. We need to learn more about

- the makeup of the FE workforce and governing bodies and why this is a long way behind the student makeup
- the lived experience of Black staff and students
- why achievement and outcomes for some Black students are worse than others. For instance, we don't have DfE or Ofqual looking at whether that bias is around the choice of qualification or whether it's about unfairness in the system.
- why Black students are over-represented in BTEC
- why Black people are over-represented or under-represented in some apprenticeships, and whether the outcomes of apprenticeships are good enough or not

In terms of recruitment, promotion, leadership, progression, it's a really big indicator that the sector and the government are not getting this right. We have not been examining and analysing the data with enough energy. The issues haven't been a priority in the last decade, and they've been overlooked. People have been willing to accept the data without actually interrogating it properly, and we need to make that change.

We've got to get the government and agencies to take this more seriously.

We've got to get the analysis right. An essential indicator of the scale of the problem is that the research doesn't cover FE adequately enough. Like schools, other sectors have got a lot more basic data, elemental analysis, fundamental understanding, and research. The Runnymede Report **Race and Racism in Secondary Schools** came out last year and is important and helpful to look at issues around race and racism in that sector, but we don't have anything like it for FE.

The response to the Covid pandemic has shown colleges at their best. They moved quickly, effectively. They focused on students, and they focused on community. They're agile in closing and partially opening, fully opening and closing. They've moved to online teaching and learning in a way that actually schools are a long way behind. They've put loads of energy into mental health support. They looked after vulnerable staff and students. And they've done that despite all sorts of changes in government policies and directions. They've shown why they are so important and why we need a really thriving college in every community, and why we need to get the investment right after a decade of neglect. But even more significantly, we know that in a recession, colleges become much more important.

The evidence from the last recession in 2008 demonstrates the sanctuary quality

of colleges allowing people to go and learn in a harsh labour market environment. With lost learning this year, it will be more critical for colleges to address race and inequality. So it matters how colleges respond to this agenda.

Lost learning is worse for people from disadvantaged backgrounds. It impacts everybody, but there are more support networks, more resources available to some families compared to others. The government need to give more flexibility to programmes for young people and adults to help them get the skills they need to enter the workforce. Equality and inclusion are important in all those programmes to ensure there are no barriers to entry, no barriers to success and no barriers to the outcome.

We need much more active Labour market policies, particularly for young people. The Prime Minister talked last year about a 'youth opportunity guarantee'. **Disjointed policy initiatives such as Kick Start, Traineeships, Bootcamps did not focus on the individual or particularly impacted groups within our society, including young black people. We could then create the service and support and the delivery that meets their needs rather than them fitting into the requirements as perceived in a white world.** There should be more support for some sectors in the economy such as construction, health, social care, digital where equality and lack of inclusion issues abound. Apprenticeship programmes were poorly hit

by the pandemic, and we've got to make sure that the issues of inclusion are brought up in that.

All of these solutions require more funding, better measures of success, flexibility and time to build capacity. We are working with the Educational Recovery Commissioner to make sure it all works.

There are three roles for the AoC: Make sure the AoC as an organisation has the best inclusive culture we can have; provide massive support to our members to help them share good practice, to learn from each other and make sure that we celebrate success; use our leadership role to push other agencies, government departments, education, Ofsted, Ofqual, the Funding Agency, the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education, awarding organisations, university researchers and others, to do the analysis, put in place the programmes, to be much more inclusive.

I look forward to working with you all in the future.

Session // 6

Q & A Panel

Rosemary Campbell-Stephens MBE

EDUCATIONALIST AND FACILITATOR

Janak Patel

CONSULTANT IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT JP EDUCATION AND TRAINING LTD

Kirri Gooch

NATIONAL ACCOUNT MANAGER AT GOOGLE

David Hughes

CEO, ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES (AOC)

Robin Ghurbhurun

MANAGING DIRECTOR UK (FURTHER EDUCATION AND SKILLS) AT JISC

Conrad Taylor

BUSINESS LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES MANAGER

Rosemary Campbell-Stephens MBE **// Janak Patel**

What impact did this study on Covid-19 have upon you personally? As a professional in the field from the BAME community, how did it leave you feeling?

Rosemary

The data is shocking and depressing. It shows that racism is systemic and affects every stage and aspect of our lives. We just get up come to work. We get more qualifications, and we apply for more jobs. On top of that, there is the issue of equal pay. We see all of this in our children's lives as well, and that's more shocking. It is depressing.

Is there any data focusing on teacher's perceptions that you would have liked to have included within the remit of your study, all things being equal?

Janak

Rosemary

Although we have not done any research on the hostile environment for Black staff in FE, what is clear, is that not much has changed in the last 10 -15 years. We still hear horror stories. We would love to see research that looks at the experience of Black staff. The Commission for Black Staff in FE, many years ago, did this research, but we didn't do enough with it.

This follows the earlier discussion about data, that it should not just describe what is there but should be acted upon. The sector should create its own data, its own action research.

Janak

Rosemary

Rosemary Campbell-Stephens MBE **// Robin Ghurbhurun**

Do you have any creative ideas about what you described as a deep dive into black students' experiences beyond the desktop research and what speaking to student representatives might look like?

Rosemary

We believe this is where the expertise of an external specialist would come in to suggest how to reach and engage with specific hard to reach learners. The irony is, when we've surveyed 5,000 learners, the ones we're trying to reach are off-grid and offline. At the moment, we've only been able to facilitate this through an online medium. With colleges opening up shortly, that provides us with an opportunity to act, access more learners. I think that's incredibly important. We know that 25% of Black African and Caribbean learners didn't respond to the online survey at all, which in itself speaks volumes. We have to see the 'whites of eyes' and meet with learners in their environment, whether it's community centres or colleges, wherever they feel safe. I think we'll be able to do that in the early summer of this year before we publish our final findings.

Robin

Yes, we're in a new ecosystem where learning is taking place everywhere and not just within our colleges and places of learning but to what extent do you think you could begin to facilitate colleges doing their own action research?

Rosemary

At least three providers (GFE & Adult Colleges) said they simply don't have the capacity or resources to do the research themselves. That's where people like ourselves and, indeed, the AOC (Association of Colleges) can work together to try and capture some of this learning because colleges have got a lot on their plates. We must support them, capturing the learning as action research as they move to the year-end, and we're willing to do that.

Robin

Rosemary Campbell-Stephens MBE // **Kirri Gooch**

A question to you about the Google platform. What, if anything, is Google for Education planning to do differently for 2021/22?

Rosemary

Right now, our product teams are really focused on making these tools more globally accessible. Recently we made some announcements for improvements on Google Classrooms specifically and making that available offline, which you can already do in Google Drive. We're also creating better access through mobile devices.

Our local teams in the UK are involved in working closely with the DfE and the devolved nations on their national devised programmes to support disadvantaged students. Chrome Books are affordable, so schools can get more devices for their money. At the national level, they're also being provided with Wi-Fi dongles. There has been global and UK recognition of these disadvantages that we need to try and bridge the gap.

We've recently acquired a company called **neverware**, and potentially, their software allows you to convert old devices. There was a PISA or VISA report in 2018 stating 1.1 million devices exist in the UK education system that are unusable. This software allows you to convert those into Chrome devices, making them useable again. With this product, I've worked closely with the Welsh government to deploy 10,000 devices to disadvantaged students, and that was a programme that ran in 2020.

Finally, we recognise that the UK team needs to build a device trainer network. We want to promote people - who are possibly overlooked for specific roles in IT- for advocating IT in their schools and colleges. This year, we hope to launch a mentoring programme that may start to affect some of the challenges we face right now.

Kirri

Rosemary Campbell-Stephens MBE // **Conrad Taylor**

Conrad, you had some wonderful examples of excellent practice, but who did Wolverhampton College work with to provide the home loan scheme to students?

Rosemary

This was an internal scheme, something we have done for many years pre Covid-19. We get students to apply for a loan device, and then we assess the student's circumstances and determine whether they can have the device or not - whether long-term or short-term. The scheme has been proven to be successful over many years.

Conard

When you say that you signed with data providers who offer free sim cards, it's really the devices and contract deals and the data plans where the costs come in for students, isn't it?

Rosemary

That is where the actual cost is for students. But some students have devices such as their phones but with not enough data on them for accessing remote learning. We saw the opportunity to sign-up for some of these sim cards from O2, Vodafone and many more for a limited period. This allowed us to provide those sim cards to disadvantaged students to enable them to access remote learning for a while. Overall, the contract and the device and plan stay live with the students and the provider.

Conard

I love the digital literacy work you describe - the inside survey, defining future learning, DFL (Defining Future Learning), and the fabulous translation tools. How are these very practical but effective initiatives being shared across the FE sector and the country?

Rosemary

We work with key partners such as Jisc, the ETF (the Education & Training Foundation), and the consortium. We are given a chance to showcase what we're doing via workshops relevant to the H/FE sector and training providers. Case studies allowed us to collaborate with other providers. My last case study with JISC involved collaborating with a university in Auckland, New Zealand, so we reached far afield. The account managers of JISC encourage collaborative work and are supportive when issues arise in trying to bridge that gap. I would recommend any organisation to Jisc and their account manager.

Conard

Rosemary Campbell-Stephens MBE **// David Hughes**

First, do you have a reason for committing to building back fairer and tackling racism within the college sector? If you wouldn't mind sharing what that personal reason is – where your drive comes from?

Rosemary

I was brought up in London in a very multicultural society in a relatively poor household. I understand what poverty means, and we spent a lot of my early years affected by that very badly. But I also saw just how much racism, sexism, inequalities, and unfairness impact society on communities. I think it becomes part of your education. You grow up in an environment like that and you can do two things. You can turn towards it and say this is something I want to do something about, and I think that's what I've done with my career. Never enough. Always more to do, but it's been part of what I've always tried to achieve. Or you can do what some of my brothers did. I've got three older brothers who decided to ignore it and reject it, and actually, they weren't going to move towards it. They were going to deny it. I think that's what happens in society for whatever reason.

David

I have two more questions. How can college leaders be incentivised? Say if they were your brothers to build back fairer in race equality and inclusion when they're just struggling to build back?

And the second question is about culture. Is there an emphasis upon getting people from diverse backgrounds to come into AOC and change the culture? Or is it to change the culture so that when Black people arrive, they can be there while being Black and stay?

Rosemary

I think for some people, they're willing to step into it (a culture) and make mistakes and be called out for it and maybe be exposed because they say the wrong thing, or they do the wrong thing. Other people are more nervous and more circumspect, and I think our job at AOC is to support the nervous to become more confident. To reach out to them, show them how it can be done, and work with them, alongside them, to give them that support. I don't think they don't want to, they're just nervous about how to, and how to act and behave. But we also need to work with white leaders to create a more inclusive culture and allow everybody to be who they are, make sure Black people can succeed, and people with disabilities and women. So, I don't think it is about persuasion. I think it is about enabling and confidence.

On the AOC issue, I think it's really simple. I want to work in an organisation where everybody can be the best that they can be. I want everyone to feel comfortable and confident. I want the sort of organisation which I think we're developing where I've had a couple of Black staff in the last six months come to me personally to say I'm really uncomfortable with something that's happened, something that's been said and challenged us on that. We've worked with them on that, and we're making changes. It feels to me that that's actually a good sign that Black staff, not very senior, are willing to come to the Chief Executive and say, 'David, there's something wrong, and we need to do something about it'. That's not the only measure by any means, but it seems to me that that's a really important part of the culture. You allow and enable and support people to challenge from their perspective. So, culture is everything. Then you can connect internally because our job at AOC is complex. Therefore, we have a responsibility to get it right for ourselves and keep challenging and supporting everybody else to get it right for themselves.

David

Thank you so much for that. It's key that we're not revisiting these conversations as somebody said earlier, in another ten, twenty years without us having moved forward, and so we have to be courageous.

Rosemary

In the past, it was about Black people coming into a culture with their lived experiences, their knowledge, their connections with the communities that they served. But they really weren't valued within the sector and so what we had was the veneer of representation but no real change in culture, no real listening, or valuing of what needed to change. And so most people left. Now we're in a time where we want to avoid that. It's not just about fitting people into existing spaces. It's really about changing those spaces so that they're better for everyone, as you rightly say.

Thank you to all our presenters.

Provocation

Stella Ngozi Mbubaegbu CBE

EXECUTIVE MEMBER, BFELG

I put my cards on the table in front of you. I do not mean to offend anyone. My intention is to provoke everyone black and white into action.

This provocation will either anger, irritate or exasperate.

Or it will encourage, persuade, challenge, prompt, urge, motivate or galvanise. Whichever way it is, the simple truth friends and colleagues is that collectively, as system and sector leaders, by commission or omission, or indifference, we have presided over the current state of affairs, a lost decade of opportunities, systemic racism at every level in all of its ugliness.

The answer to the rhetorical question 'how can it be' is, 'because it is … it's what we've allowed'.

I know that most people attending this conference are already committed to anti-racism, racial justice, committed to making the most of an ethnically diverse Britain. Otherwise, you would not be here. You would not have taken the time during these unprecedented difficult times to join the Conference. I know that all our speakers and presenters are influential leaders and supporters of the work

of the BFELG. Looking at the delegate list, I can see that some organisations are taking a serious strategic approach by bringing whole teams to this conference.

So, I do not mean to offend.
Supporters and colleagues, the truth is that individual and collective action must now go beyond kite marks, charters and initiatives. Nothing less than systemic change can even begin to bring about the transformation required to make the most of an ethnically diverse Britain.

So, now that the keynote presentations are done, the panellists and Roundtables have debated the data and recommendations, the Plenary has absorbed the key points, and all the questions have been skilfully posed and answered, and the solutions and actions duly defined and noted; new questions asked and new issues surfaced for further debate; now that all of that is done, the real work of making the most of an ethnically diverse Britain begins or continues in earnest.

It's the real work – the real work to make the personal and professional choices. To act, to do, to speak, to step forward, to act on the plethora of reports, the existing research and evidence before our very eyes, to put anti-racism at the heart of the FE system. To seek out the black lens and perspective, to reach out to friends and colleagues to say please 'lend me your eyes'.
The work is to level up by taking action to reverse the data trends. To do the work

required to build back, with anti-racism at the heart and not as an afterthought. To do the work to make the most of an ethnically diverse Britain **because it is the right thing to do**. There's not just a moral case. There's a social and business case too.

Hear me loud and clear - Anti-racism benefits everyone!

We must work together in partnership.

The BFELG seeks to work in real partnerships and strong allyships. We must together build lasting relationships. I love Edwin Markham's poem (1852 – 1940) and I quote -

'He drew a circle that shut me out, We drew a circle and took him in. '

This is the reciprocal attitude we need to have towards each other Black and white colleagues, friends and supporters.

Colleagues, this is indeed a Kairos moment, an opportune time for action. Put another way, in that famous Julius Caesar quote,

There is a tide in the affairs of

men,

Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune.

Omitted, all the voyage of their life is bound in shallows and in miseries.

On such a full sea are we now afloat.

And we must take the current when it serves or lose our ventures.

LET'S NOT MISS THIS MOMENT. There is too much to lose.

Thank you all for coming. We, at the BFELG, very much look forward to continuing to work with you all, collaboratively, as we journey together towards a truly Anti-Racist FE System and beyond. **DO
STAY SAFE.**

Acknowledgements

Thank you to
Sir Kenneth Olisa OBE, Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London for his vote of confidence in the BFELG Department for Education (DfE) for their support and encouragement

Thank you to all our presenters
Anna Artemyeva; Anthony Bravo; Denise Brown; Rosemary Campbell-Stephens MBE; Paul Cook; Iestyn Davies; Satwant Deol; Suki Dhesi; Darrell DeSouza; Anne Francke OBE; Robin Ghurbhurun; Kirri Gooch; Dr Ali Hadawi CBE; David Hughes; Paul Joyce; Robin Landman; Janak Patel; David Russell; Sharmarni Salvarajah; Conrad Taylor. Stella Ngozi Mbubaegbu CBE

View all speaker profiles here

Thank you
To Kirri Gooch, Emma Shuard, Ben Rouse, Lawrence Tijani and Conrad Taylor from our partner, Google for Education for your unwavering and generous assistance. What a fantastic team!

To Jisc for making their **Digital Poverty Report** available, ahead of publication, exclusively to our Conference delegates.

Finally, we pay tribute to three women. Firstly, to Rosemary Campbell-Stephens MBE for her

skilful hosting throughout. Secondly, to **Stella Ngozi Mbubaegbu CBE** for her 'Provocation' in closing the Conference and lastly, to our young singers who opened the event Kristin Ini Agu featuring Joanna Bako,

Version with powerful black and white imagery created for BFELG Conference

Conference Figures

Over 60 Colleges

The vast majority of attendees were: Senior Leaders, CEOs and Governors

WE DEMAND JUSTICE

Attendees:

Further and Higher Education institutions, DfE, Ofsted, Education and Training Foundation, Association of Colleges, Private Training Providers, Awarding Bodies, Times Educational Supplement, FE News, CMI, NUS, WorldSkills UK, Recruitment Agencies, The Children's Trust, Fujitsu, Consultants including international, BFELG members.

in

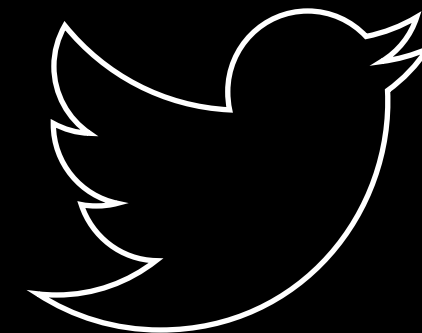# 1,272
New Followers on LinkedIn Black FE Leadership Group

332
New Followers on Twitter @FeLeadership

Google for Education

Evaluation of Conference

The Conference aimed to be participatory and to include the diversity of BFELG supporters and membership. It succeeded in that aim. Feedback received from the participants, speakers and guests were positive throughout and following the Conference, including the responses received on the evaluation form. For the first question, the evaluation form included questions about participants level of satisfaction (Excellent, Very good, Good, Poor) regarding:

1. **Conference logistics, registration, organisation and overall experience.**
   Every evaluation form returned to BFELG was either 'Satisfied', 'Very satisfied' or 'Good'. Only one was 'poor' due to difficulties with registration.

   Further questions included levels of satisfaction (Good, Partially, No) regarding:

2. **The BFELG presentation on anti-racism in FE**

3. **The BFELG presentation on Covid-19 in black communities**
   Every evaluation form returned to

BFELG was either 'Yes' or 'Partially', with 91% saying 'Yes' to the BFELG Covid-19 presentation. Only 78% said 'Yes' to the BFELG presentation on anti-racism in FE. Seven people said 'partially' with a range of views, including the desire to have more information on pay-gap data in FE, more Black student involvement, or the equivalent in case studies.

A further set of questions included levels of satisfaction (Yes or No) regarding:

4. **Further information re the JISC Survey on data & digital poverty in the black community**

5. **Conference content: Roundtables, Plenary, Q & A**

6. **Participant engagement**
   Every evaluation form returned to BFELG said 'Yes' with a 91% rate to each of these last set of questions.

The very positive additional comments that participants wrote on the form or subsequently emailed to BFELG included the following:

"It was a great opportunity for ETF to be a part of it. I thought it was a cracking conference, with a really motivating mix of "head-work" and "heart-work". I look forward to our next steps together."

David Russell
CEO, Education and Training Foundation (BFELG Partner organisation)

"Exceeded all expectations"

Dr Ali Hadawi
Principal & Chief Executive, Central Bedfordshire College

"Lovely powerful music to start; Great imagery; Wonderful."

Dr Marlene Ellis
Director, The Hat-Trick Copywriter Ltd

"It has been a revelation. Well done all concerned putting together that which has never been seen the like of. A lot of inspiration and perspiration with hard work and expertise. Thank you."

Dr Maxine Room CBE
Managing Director, MG Consultancy London Ltd.

Other comments from delegates and members include:

"What a conference... I have never left a conference speechless..." please lend me your eyes" - so many take-aways."

I would like to be able to share the information I have gathered today and the Toolkit with my organisation... I would be delighted to feedback on your inaugural Conference and show my senior leadership team and board members what the BFELG have achieved in such a short space of time. Your passion and dedication have provided me with momentum and energy, so many thanks.'

'Thank you for an inspirational day and a true call to action. 'If not now....'

'Thank you very much for a thought-provoking, insightful and very informative Conference today. A well done to all who contributed (and) made it possible.'

'This data is making me quite emotional.'

'Very powerful content and data.'

'Great panel discussion, thought-provoking and informative with bite...'

'Thank you to all speakers- that was very insightful - food for thought with HOPE – really pleased to see wide representation of orgs / leaders'. Palvinder Singh

'It's been a great day, and our team are also leaving feeling very inspired'

'Rosemary, brilliant and insightful questions. Thank you'

'Thank you to the panel some very interesting and thought provoking conversations. Thank you for your honesty and accountability in making important change'

'Really inspiring content today, thank you to all contributors and organisers'

Great conversations and excellently hosted

About the Black FE Leadership Group (BFELG)

We are passionate about:

- Community
- Equity & Social Justice
- Heritage and Legacy
- Transformation through learning

> **Woven through everything we are and what we do, are colourful threads of belonging and joyful celebration**

Our purpose:

The *Black Further Education Leadership Group (BFELG) UK exists to challenge systemic racism in Further Education (FE) for the benefit of all *Black communities and the wider UK society as a whole, to be the authoritative voice of Antiracism in the FE sector and to further the interests of Black students, staff and leaders. Our mission is to eradicate racism in FE; our vision is an antiracist culture at the core of all aspects of FE life and work.

Our beliefs:

- Every individual has the right to live a fulfilling life.
- For as long as systemic racism exists, everyone's potential will be held back.
- An antiracist education helps people to define and challenge themselves, widen their experience and shape their world.
- An antiracist FE system unlocks the full potential of all individuals, organisations and communities.

Our values:

We are:

- Welcoming, courteous and respectful
- Lively
- Optimistic and solutions-focused
- Adaptable
- Collaborative.

We have:

- Ambition
- Courage
- Integrity
- Compassion
- Soul

We:

- Embrace our past; our histories of pain; our contribution
- Show up for each other
- Pool support, wisdom and resources
- Find answers through the undeniable power of truth

Our approach:

- **Black-led**
- **Antiracism at our core**
- **Values-driven**
- **Urgency**
- **Agency**
- **Formidable intellectual capital**
- **Lived experience and deep insights**
- **Critical Friend**
- **Independent and yet collaborative**
- **Challenging and yet courteous**
- **Resolute – we are not going away**
- **Call out all forms of racist behaviour**
- **Solutions-focused**
- **Pursue sustainable options**
- **Alert to innovative solutions**
- **Subsumption-resistant to broad 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)' initiatives**

*'Black' is used as an inclusive definition for people from ethnically diverse backgrounds who share a lived experience of the effects of racism.

Co-founders

Robin Landman OBE

EXECUTIVE MEMBER, BFELG

Janak Patel

EXECUTIVE MEMBER, BFELG

Stella Ngozi Mbubaegbu CBE

EXECUTIVE MEMBER, BFELG

Amarjit Basi

EXECUTIVE MEMBER, BFELG

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