

NORTH EAST

RACE EQUALITY FORUM

INFORMATION BRIEFING

No. 15



Is Britain Fairer project

The culmination of a three-year project by the Equality and Human Rights Commission to review the state of equality and human rights in England, Scotland and Wales.

Each report examined six areas of everyday life: education; health; justice and security; living standards; participation; and work. The aim was to assess progress towards a fairer Britain over the last three years. The EHRC highlighted trends, emerging issues and the action that needed to be taken now to improve the life chances of the next generation. It also made a number of recommendations to the UK, Welsh and Scottish Governments and other organisations to tackle the issues identified in the report and support increased equality in Great Britain. The main findings from the overall report are summarised below, while the supporting data for each of the reports are available at:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/britain-fairer/britain-fairer-2018-supporting-data>

Is Britain Fairer?

Key findings include that in Great Britain:

- More children are now performing to the required standards at school, and more people from ethnic minorities are obtaining degree level qualifications and more people from disadvantaged areas are attending university. However, despite improvements in school attainment for most children, those from lower income backgrounds and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children are getting below-average school exam results and are

more likely to be excluded from school, and poorer young people are less likely to go to university.

- Half of all children report that they are bullied with some groups at greater risk than others. Bullying of lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) children is highly prevalent and has been linked with mental health conditions and higher risk of suicide.
- While the overall proportion of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) has declined, disabled people are around twice as likely as non-disabled people to be NEET.
- Overall employment has risen and unemployment has fallen, while the rate of insecure employment has risen both overall and for many groups. Young people, disabled people, Pakistani and Bangladeshi people, and Muslims have consistently lower employment and higher unemployment rates and are more likely to be in insecure employment than other groups.
- The gender pay gap in hourly earnings for full-time employees in Britain has narrowed. It is consistently wider in England than in Scotland or Wales. The size of the gender pay gap for full-time employees varies considerably between occupations and industries.
- Three-quarters of mothers have had a negative or possibly discriminatory experience during pregnancy, maternity leave or on their return to work from maternity leave.
- Although women's share of company board positions has increased considerably in recent years, they remain under-represented on them and are still much more likely to be non-executive directors than executive directors.
- People are also getting more involved in politics and voting. More people are online, where increasingly services are provided digitally. Online activity is increasing most for disabled and older people who have



previously been more excluded.

- Disabled people, however, are finding themselves increasingly excluded from mainstream society, starting in education and continuing later in life. The disability pay gap persists and the likelihood of disabled people being in low-pay occupations has increased. Disabled people are more likely to be in poverty, they face poorer health and a lack of access to suitable housing. There has been a sharp increase in recorded disability hate crimes and disabled people experience high rates of domestic abuse and sexual assault in England and Wales.
- People from certain ethnic minorities, such as Indian people, have continued to succeed in education and at work. But Black African, Bangladeshi and Pakistani people are still the most likely to live in poverty and along with Black Caribbean people are more likely to experience severe deprivation, which is damaging their health and education and work prospects. Some ethnic minorities have poorer access to healthcare and higher rates of infant mortality, and black people have low trust in the criminal justice system. Gypsies, Roma and Travellers face multiple disadvantages including achieving below-average school results, experiencing difficulties accessing healthcare, worse health, and often have low standards of housing.
- Child poverty has increased and infant mortality has risen for the first time in decades. Tax and welfare reforms continue to disproportionately impact the poorest in society, as well as some ethnic minorities, women and disabled people and they weaken the safety net for those unable to work or stuck in low-paid or precarious work. Homelessness continues to be a serious concern and disproportionately affects particular groups.
- Whilst women's equality has progressed significantly in some ways, there are still many factors holding women back at work, some stemming from gender stereotypes at school. Bullying and sexual harassment remain widespread in the workplace, although a lack of recent large-scale Britain-



wide surveys means that it is difficult to quantify their precise extent. Sexual and domestic violence is a persistent and growing concern which disproportionately and girls.



- We have seen a marked backwards move in justice and personal security since the improvements we found in our 2015 review. Reductions in legal aid and changes to the legal system have led to individuals not being able to access justice. There has also been a deterioration in detention conditions, with more incidents of self-harm and assaults and with overcrowding in prisons risking prisoner safety.
- We have been able to paint a comprehensive picture of equality and human rights for disabled people, people from ethnic minorities, women and men. But gaps in the data available to us mean that we do not yet know as much as we would like about the experiences of groups who share other protected characteristics. Evidence is particularly scarce for LGBT people, people with a religion or belief, and pregnant women and new mothers.

The report is available at:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/britain-fairer-2018>

Contact: *For further information, back copies of Information Briefings or Research Briefings, or to join the Network, email gary.craig@galtres8.co.uk*

The North East Race Equality Forum is a Network of around 300 individuals and organisations in the North East Region committed to promoting racial equality in the context of social justice. No one organisation is necessarily committed to every idea published in the name of the Forum. The Forum is supported by the 'Race', Crime and Justice Regional Research Network, which includes researchers from each University in the region.