

WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO TO MAKE LONDON A FAIRER CITY?



AN OPEN SPACE EVENT

ON 21ST NOVEMBER 2015

BY THE LONDON FAIRNESS COMMISSION

AT COIN STREET COMMUNITY CENTRE

London
Fairness
Commission

rota
Race on the Agenda

DELEGATE LIST

Aisha Alademerin

Andy Gregg

Annette Zera

Annetta Bennett

Basharat Hussain

Carl Allen

Chiedza Chashe Preddie

Despina Tsiakalou

Diane Sempare

Dilawaiz Augustus

Elena Noel

Elizabeth Balgobin

Farah Aslam

Ghalib Khan

Is Smith

Iyiola Solanke

James Scott

Kay Kelleher

Layla Morady

Lizzy Willmington

Michel Kongbe Kabwe-Muakadi

Munira Folayan-Folami

Reanna Watts

Shawn Wiggins

Srabani Sen

Tele Amuludun

Wilford Augustus

Lord Victor Abedowale

Yvonne Field

Zack Dowding

Zainab Jama



INTRODUCTION

London is one of the world's greatest cities. It has become a byword for dynamism, diversity and creativity. All the signs are that London will continue to attract business, people and money from around the world. But a dark cloud of unfairness hangs over London's future.

Only half of London's residents currently believe they live in a fair city. Younger Londoners, the self-employed, disabled people and many ethnic minorities are more likely to think London is unfair. These groups make up a growing share of the city's population.

The London Fairness Commission was established to organise conversations across the capital in response to this situation, asking Londoners to consider:

- What is fairness?
- Is London fair?
- What should be done to make London a fairer city?

This is the first citywide debate on fairness since Charles Booth mapped levels of poverty and wealth in London over one hundred years ago. We are supported by Trust for London, Tudor Trust, City Bridge Trust and London Funders.

The London Fairness Commission wants to make the issues raised through this debate central to the coming Mayoral election. However, the Commission is not just about engaging politicians. We want an inclusive conversation with the widest possible range of Londoners from all walks of life, all parts of the city, and all sectors of the economy.

To this end we are organising a series of Open Space events with groups from across London, hearing the voice of civil society, older Londoners, ethnic minorities, and younger Londoners.

This report outlines the results of the third of these events with people from black and ethnic minority backgrounds, held in partnership with Race on the Agenda and supported by the Coin Street Neighbourhood Centre.

Thank you to all who took part, your ideas and enthusiasm for building a fairer city are invaluable to the work of the London Fairness Commission.

Lord Victor Adebowale
Chair of the London Fairness Commission



OPEN SPACE

WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO TO MAKE LONDON A FAIRER CITY?

Prompted by this question, the meeting used the Open Space process to create an agenda for the day. Topics were discussed in groups and ideas and recommendations noted. These notes appear in the following pages with our apologies for any errors in transcription!

At the end of the meeting delegates prioritised the different ideas and the numbers in brackets below reflect their votes. We have picked out the recommendations that received than four votes or more and listed them below:

- An external and independent 'ombudsman' with powers to investigate and enforce recruitment and promotion, as well as other equality issues. (6)
- An authority/strategic organisation is needed to hold organisations to account, not just looking at statistics but looking at the role that employees hold. (6)
- Mayor should have a standing conference in race equality with annual reporting, including young people/their energy and vibrancy. (6)
- Civic education should be part of formal education so that young people understand the political and legal system in the UK and Europe and can defend their rights. (5)
- Every child should be given compulsory legal education, not just wait until you are involved in the legal process. (4)
- Creating cheaper housing/land and keep it in public ownership. (4)
- Job Centres should become "BME- friendly", by providing holistic, tailored support to people with qualifications and skills instead of punishing people for not accepting low-paid and insecure jobs. (4)
- Prevent should not be in schools. Schools are education establishments. Prevent targets anyone who might query racial injustice. (4)
- We need anchor organisations and spaces. E.g. with the African diaspora there are community centres not in good repair and being led by people now in their 60s. These spaces need new leadership and need to be redesigned to bring in new/a range of communities. This would allow us to celebrate these communities giving them the space and confidence to mix. NB. Report by Ubele: "A place to call home", produced under "Project Mali". These spaces should be owned by the community. (4)

PREVENT AND RACISM IN SCHOOLS

- Prevent should not be in schools. Schools are education establishments. Prevent targets anyone who might query racial injustice. (4)
- Talking about discrimination and racial justice shouldn't be interpreted as 'radicalisation'. (3)
- London is fair for some people, for white middle class people. The word has 'fair' double meaning: fair as in light. (1)
- Prevent is a breach of human rights and should be challenged legally.
- Islington Council wanting to opt out of Prevent, how can others opt out?
- Communities need to stop being stigmatised. It is difficult for teachers and professionals to implement as they have a duty of care to the child first and foremost, to safeguard child. However, this shouldn't mean policing Muslim and BME children.
- Young people do not feel part of London.
- Early years and foundation children being labelled as terrorists and interviewed under prevent.
- Awareness of teaching history; what history do you choose to learn? What is being taught in schools? How are BME communities and issues represented in the history curriculum, and how is this received by students?
- Moving the conversation into communities.

ACCESS OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR BME PEOPLE

- An authority/strategic organisation is needed to hold organisations to account, not just looking at statistics but looking at the role that employees hold. (6)
- Addressing disproportionality and improving access to opportunities to employment and leadership. (2)
- Addressing unconscious and conscious bias in systematic process in corporations/organisations that leads to discrimination. (1)
- Greater accountability is needed to address tokenistic employment practices or is 'diversity' different for white people in power and BME people.
- Who is diversity for? Those at the top remain white.
- Fairer sentencing of BME offenders.



HOW DO WE HALT THE SOCIAL, ETHNIC AND RACIAL CLEANSING OF LONDON?

- Mayor should have a standing conference in race equality with annual reporting, including young people/their energy and vibrancy. (6)
- Creating cheaper housing/land and keep it in public ownership. (4)
- Limit privately owned public spaces - negative impact on value of land in London (inflating prices) (POPS). (3)
- Social cleansing in London should not become ethnic cleansing in London. Class is difficult on its own. (1)
- Consider the impact on race relations.
- See housing as a basic need and right that people have.
- Need solutions for young people to get housing in London.
- LAs shipping poor people out of London - worry about this. Affordability and future of the city.
- Joys of London are getting further away from people.
- Gentrification - pushing out the history of vibrant project that used to bring people together. This work is falling apart, there is disinvestment in communities.
- If we overlay the Booth poverty map of London to the current poverty map what will it show us? It used to show pretty much that the poor areas remained poor. Now the poor are squeezed out. First "affordable" shared ownership at £1.3m in Hackney.
- Over inflation on housing driving social cleansing. Council housing most valuable stock has to be sold creating the problem.
- Look at where land can be freed up for housing.
- Community spaces/public spaces being lost in London e.g. More of London is privately owned but is public space that they make the rules for and "police".
- Lots of poor people are in work and poor.
- When children move away from parents who will provide the care?
- To be white working poor is to be black.
- How can we all care about these issues - public debate.
- How we present the images of London are sanitised - white, perfect, tokenistic on race and the poor.
- Need to engage the arts in telling these stories.

LOWER INCOME FAMILIES HAVE ACCESS TO LOWER QUALITY AND NUTRITIONAL FOOD.

- Better food science classes in schools. (1)
- Subsidised healthy food for kids.
- Frugal living classes.
- Tax on fast food outlets.
- Subsidise healthy food outlets.



IDEAS ABOUT HOW TO MAKE LONDON FEEL FAIR TO BME PEOPLE

- Legislation - has it stopped discrimination? We are still having the same conversations. Governance needs to change in London - held to account on race equality. (3)
- London in the context of Prevent and Terrorism legislation and media reporting creates fears and ramps up micro-inequities and micro-aggressions. (1)
- Need to address education - training of teachers around race, have a London teaching standard.
- Infrastructure for race equality training across all institutions.
- Local authorities are important in areas to help people feel safe, be in supported communities and make you feel cared for in your locality. Young people need to be able to enjoy local facilities where they live - currently BME people need to travel out of their areas to enjoy a lifestyle like their peers e.g. enjoying a café culture and also need BME businesses supported for specialist services.
- We should have monitoring and data collection - this should be reviewed and there should be consequences when the data shows inequality / disproportionality. We should all be able to understand data and interrogate it - there is a disconnect between data and action in employment, mental health and other services.
- Building community based infrastructure support for BME communities and to build BME people's skills. This will help us campaign for issues of concern and enable BME people to act for themselves.
- A more systematic process e.g. the London Plan to have a community plan with social inclusion within it. Community spaces in London need to be maintained - leases coming up for renewal across London - keep these spaces for Londoners.
- London does not feel fair for BME people. We also understand that it does not feel fair to others e.g. white male homeless people or basically the white underclass. Our focus though is to tease out what would make London feel fair to BME people.
- London feels like white privilege is in your face - power has not shifted, it is more concentrated with white people in all institutions.

- BME people are impoverished not only through poverty – not all black people are poor – but are impoverished in different ways by racism and discrimination.
- Feelings is what gives you a sense of belonging – how BME people are treated needs to be fair.
- BME people’s experience in the system has to make you feel equal – there is a diminished sense and experience of being treated fairly in the system – in employment, public services, housing – there is a systemic sense of exclusion and unfair treatment. There is a growing perception that as a black person in the system you are not treated the same.
- When you look around London it looks diverse and fair but my experience (all in the group) is that it does not feel fair in work, subtle and overt forms of discrimination is experienced.
- Race feels like it is off the agenda.

GIVEN THE TRANSIENCE OF LONDON'S COMMUNITIES WHAT CAN WE DO TO ENSURE PEOPLE HAVE A STAKE IN LONDON AND FEEL LIKE THEY BELONG?

- We need anchor organisations and spaces. E.g. with the African diaspora there are community centres not in good repair and being led by people now in their 60s. These spaces need new leadership and need to be redesigned to bring in new/a range of communities. This would allow us to celebrate these communities giving them the space and confidence to mix. NB. Report by Ubele: “A place to call home”, produced under “Project Mali”. These spaces should be owned by the community. (4)
- Communities have created their own enclaves with different areas having different racial identities and people lacking the confidence to go beyond their community boundaries.
- Should housing policy drive more integrated communities, so that there is more of a balance in the people that live in an area?
- How can we build the confidence of communities to go beyond the areas/communities they live in? Could we use volunteering as a way of supporting people from the communities in which they live into other communities to volunteer? This could be helpful for refugee communities in building their confidence, and giving them a sense that they are giving back.



WHY DO SO MANY BME PEOPLE EXPERIENCE IN-WORK POVERTY AND ARE IN UNSTABLE JOBS?

- Job Centres should become “BME- friendly”, by providing holistic, tailored support to people with qualifications and skills instead of punishing people for not accepting low-paid and insecure jobs. (4)
- Shall we introduce quotas? YES 😊 People should be hired on merit but positive discrimination for certain jobs (police for example) could be beneficial. Skills such as speaking community languages, awareness of different communities and community groups, cross-cultural understanding are skills that should be valued, on top of the job specification. (1)
- More mentoring in the community is needed, where people feel comfortable to go to and learn / develop their skills.
- Race and class are the main factors.
- Excluding name / surname from job applications would be useful on first stages of recruitment but will not solve the wider problem of discrimination.
- It seems that minor jobs in the service sector or in health & social care aren't the choice of white British people because they aren't valued or paid well. There's a demand for those services on a very low cost and those jobs are only available to BME people.
- We need a change on the current narrative: from “BME people are on benefits/lazy” etc to “Why white British people do not accept low paid jobs”. These jobs should be valued and become more secure so not only people on the margin accept them.

(CHANGES HAVE BEEN MADE IN THE WAY SOME LOCAL COUNCILS HAVE INSTITUTIONALISED RACISM IN THEIR POLICING AND HOW THEY CATEGORISE THEIR COMMUNITIES.

- Independent monitoring e.g. the way the local council is conducting its work (3)
 - Inclusion of members of different communities in relevant communities.
- Setting quotas to increase employment of people from communities not represented at the council. (1)

WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS TO PEOPLE FROM BME BACKGROUNDS IN ACHIEVING EMPLOYMENT IN SENIOR POSITIONS?

- An external and independent 'ombudsman' with powers to investigate and enforce recruitment and promotion, as well as other equality issues. (6)
- Need to be more proactive in monitoring; naming and shaming and examples of good practice. (3)
- Changes to Equalities policies are not affecting change. Do organisations have a 'quota' to recruit people from BME backgrounds - representing communities? Private business has to move to engage BME at the top and bottom lines. (2)
- Teachers affect the aspirations of BME. (1)
- Set up a recognised commission that deals with unfair treatments in companies
- Numerous issues - name, colour, social class, education. Degrees are affected by where you go, people paying to do internships, giving work experience - these are usually accessed by people from private education.
- Educational aspirations need to be developed amongst families from BME backgrounds. 'Feel' that involvement is tokenistic. BME staff may not have the confidence to strive to apply amongst a room of white faces.
- Need a mechanism to control unfair treatments in companies, and public sector organisations.
- London cannot be fair unless there are robust mechanisms to challenge both overt and institutional racism. EHRC doesn't do this for us (and doesn't explain how it can help!)



WELFARE RULES FORCING BME KIDS TO LIVE IN POVERTY BECAUSE OF THE NATIONALITY OF THEIR PARENTS: THE ZAMBRANO REGULATIONS AND THEIR IMPACT ON FAIRNESS

The Zambrano Amendment Regulations were introduced in 2012. They banned Zambrano carers (carers whose right to residence arises from the fact that they are carers of British Children) from access to core benefits including income support, housing benefit, and child credit support etc. These families are therefore forced to live on emergency funding provided by local authorities under S17 of the Children's Act (which it itself under threat in the current Immigration Bill).

British children are therefore forced to live in destitution simply because of the nationality of their parents. They overwhelmingly live in one parent families, brought up by their mothers from Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. Thus there is a generation of black British children being forced to live in poverty. This is very unfair.

- Civic education should be part of formal education so that young people understand the political and legal system in the UK and Europe and can defend their rights. (5)
- Local Authorities should force central government to take financial responsibility for these children and not put further pressure upon local budgets. (3)
- The Regulations need to be repealed or at least amended to remove the punitive impact upon British citizens. British children should not be forced into poverty just because of the nationality of their parents. (2)
- Very few people know about the Regulations and their unfair and long term impact - there needs to be awareness raising activities. MPs, the Mayor and relevant groups need to be made aware of the short and long term consequences of the Regulations. Meetings should be held in London and elsewhere.
- Public sector employees may not be aware of why families are destitute and should be trained to be more sensitive in their response to the needs of these children and their families.



HOW CAN YOU RE-EDUCATE THE POLICE TO TREAT EVERYONE THE SAME DURING THE LEGAL PROCESS?

- Every child should be given compulsory legal education, not just wait until you are involved in the legal process. (4)
- What does policing in London mean? Police should go into educational institutions and speak to children before they are involved in criminal justice system. (2)
- Recruiting black and Asian officers and more women. You need to be inside the system to make change. (1)
- Attend safer Neighbourhood Boards - Borough Commander held to account. Residents should challenge police - regularly on questions relating to race, ask questions about how many black and Asian people are stopped and searched, tasered, remanded in custody? (1)
- How do young people use their energies in a more positive way? They need to take ownership of their own lives. (1)
- EM should get involved in Police Boards.
- What are these institutions for? Law Society, Ombudsman....
- 14-20 year olds should be better informed but they are not. Not clued up about their legal rights.
- The voluntary sector should be informing communities more.
- Voluntary sector and police need to work closely together.
- Why are some Boroughs better at monitoring the police, and poorer in others?
- MOPAC - be more informed.
- Create something - organisation or committee - who can encourage better recruitment policies.
- What are boroughs doing to manage tensions in the communities?

CONCLUDING REMARKS

It has been a very useful reflective and interactive process. About systemic change, how do we change the top of institutions. What role does LFC have in assessing scrutiny? There is a need for a higher authority that can hold institution to account. Change needs to happen with the criminal justice system, business, education, fairness and justice.

How are we going to provide housing for our children? No Mayor past or present has taken this on.

I've been informed and enlightened throughout the day. I'm taking away a lot from today. For me a starting point is about being informed. This is the reality, how do we make a difference beyond legislation? We need to listening to the next generation, different experience of blackness. There is a lot of indignation. We can tell a lot about a society about how it treats its children, and I have learnt a lot about how our children are treated today. It is an outrage.

This is a déjà vu experience for me, in terms of racial equality. Now we are talking about fairness. There is a need for a higher authority to ensure fairness or better access for BME communities in managerial positions. It reminds me of work of the racial equality commissions. Equality is not on the current political agenda. There have been so many consultative events in the past. A report will be written but in terms of genuine change I am pessimistic.

I think London is the best city in the world and I would hate for it to become the most unfair city in the world. I would hate to see all the young people have to move out of London. We need to Mayor to sign up that they have understood the LFC and that they are reporting back on fairness in London. We need the Mayor to produce a Fairness Report each year, and report back on fairness each year. Another focus has to be a campaign on rent capping.

I am very new in this city, I am here to learn about London and know more. I have learnt a lot today. I hope to make London my city.

What I have learnt today and from the 60+ years that BME people have been in this country is we still have a long way to go.

Thank you, we need a safe space to discuss these issues.

As long as race is official taken off the agenda and we need people like yourselves, like ourselves to put it on the agenda. Accessing funding by groups that are lead by black people is hard. We need to ask for what you want and what you need to fix the problem.

It was very helpful to talk about the myriad of places where unfairness is felt. There is a pattern here. What is that would make us feel that London is fairer? That it is a complex

and multi layered approach. We have witnessed a retraction since the 80's but we need to push it forward again.

Inequalities existed before I was born and will exist after I am dead. There is a limit with what we can do. This is a great forum to express and explore these problems.

It is wonderful to take part today and be a contributor to today. We need to keep race on the agenda. We need to hear more from young people, from all walks of life and engage with people who are the future.

London is one of the most diverse cities in the world, but it is resting on its laurels. We need to work with young people more, as well as schools and families to enable people to realise their potential.

I am very glad to be contributing to today. All of us need to love what we are doing. If it comes from our heart it will have more impact. London is one of the better places to live in the world. With this kind of initiative we can make London a paradise.

We need a balance between citizenship and ethnicity. We need more positive representation in terms of ethnicity, but with citizenship there are rights and obligations. You have to know your rights and demand your rights. Ethnicity at the moment is used negatively at the moment.

I'd like to address two practical points. Firstly there is a need to pull together all the work that is already happening in London at the moment. Secondly, my organisation did a literature review of reports over the last twenty years and they were all saying the same thing. Someone needs to make sure something happens with this report. It needs to go into business, voluntary sector and grass roots among others. Change needs to happen at all levels. This is a fantastic opportunity and let's make the most of it.

London is on the move, at the local and regional level. LFC and London Plan need to link in together. Community groups are coming together that are creating a community plan for London. Community organisations need new skills. Infrastructures have been decimated and BAME communities are being left behind.

I'm less interested in the report than action. We are London - we need to tell our friends and keep the conversation going!

