

# MIXED RACE ORGANISATIONS IN THE UK

## Joint Statement

As a coalition of mixed race<sup>1</sup> organisations we seek to advance the social well being of people, couples and families of mixed race. One of our main objectives is to influence and improve ways in which public services such as education, health, social care and criminal justice are delivered to the mixed race population through discussion and debate, research, campaigns and the arts.

In the past mixed race people, couples and families have frequently been portrayed as occupying a problematic position in our social fabric and life. They have been described as marginal, isolated, and confused, burdened with identity problems, and disadvantaged in their life chances. In the last decade or so much fresh thinking has shifted the ground from that of problematising our various communities to celebrating their diversity. New cultures of human rights, equality and diversity, and the positive duties expected of our public bodies have created an environment in which our coalition is seeking positive engagement with the various sectors in society, including government, voluntary bodies and NGOs, and the private sector: we are uniquely placed to share our knowledge and experience and to represent the interests of this community. We are aware, too, that disadvantage and discrimination persist, some of which is mediated by differences in socio-economic position across our different communities, and we seek positive change to ameliorate these drawbacks.

People in Harmony (PIH) was established in 1972 as a support group for families at a time when the disadvantages of racial mixing were emphasised in the wider society. Over the years, PIH has challenged these assumptions and evolved to meet the needs of our members and of the mixed race community throughout Britain through support, representation, awareness campaigns, research, and dialogue with the public services. Our work has involved engagement with schools, local authority social services, official bodies such as the Office for National Statistics, and government departments such as Communities and Local Government.

Over the last few years other mixed race organisations have become established in different areas of Britain, some to meet specific issues such as lack of family support, others to cater for the emergence of new kinds of mixed race communities as the ethnic/cultural mix of our population has become increasingly diversified. In 2008 we decided to develop our objectives through sharing our skills and experiences with other mixed race groups, thereby providing a stronger and more representative voice for these various communities.

**We ask you to support us in pursuing our objectives to achieve a fairer and more equitable society for the mixed race community for whom our coalition caters; we set these objectives in the broader context of the endeavours of all communities to achieve a fairer and more just society for the diverse population of this country.**

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### **We would specifically like to see:**

- Mixed race experiences and identities reflected throughout the school curriculum
- Health and social care practitioners learn more about how mixed race families, their children, and young people see themselves
- The language of public policy acknowledge and recognise mixed race identity
- The provision of training & awareness raising on mixed race issues in the criminal justice system
- A more robust challenging of attitudes that are hostile to mixed relationships in the wider society and in some ethnic communities in particular
- A proper representation of the mixed race community in our public life and on our public bodies
- Consultation on public policy issues with the grass roots organisations representing mixed race people, couples and families.

### ***People in Harmony in consultation with:***

***Multiple Heritage Project***

***MixTogether***

***Sputnik***

***Inheritance Project***

***Planet Rainbow Project***

***MOSAIC Black and Mixed Parentage Family Group***

***Intermix***

***Starlight Black Child Mixed Heritage Group***

### **The Mixed Race Population<sup>2</sup>**

In 2001 more than 677,000 people in the UK described themselves as being 'mixed' in response to the Census question on ethnic group, half of whom were children aged 15 and under. In the years between 2001 and 2006 the 'mixed' group has been one of the fastest growing, with rates exceeding 30% in all but one of the four Census 'mixed' categories: only the 'Black African' and Chinese groups have grown faster. Moreover, the 'mixed' group is expected to grow by around 40% between 2001 and 2010, to achieve almost a million persons. For the period 2010-2020 demographers predict a growth rate of 30%, the fastest of all groups (including White, Black, Asian, and Chinese/Other). This will give a 'mixed' population in excess of 1.2 million, though still smaller than the Asian (3.5 million) and Black (1.6 million) groups.

The mixed race community is highly diverse in terms of its composition. While the Census predominantly captured mixes of the white group and one of the other main communities (African, Caribbean, and Asian), the community is in fact much more varied, including mixes of ethnic minority groups and mixes that involve multiple groups and not just those of two groups assumed by the census. The recent inflow of migrants from the new accession countries in Eastern Europe is increasing this diversity.

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The 'mixed' group is also diverse in terms of its age structure; those aged 15 or under comprising 44-58% of the different 'mixed' categories. The 'mixed' community is also varied in terms of its nativity, those born in the UK comprising 79% of the population but over 90% in persons 15 or under. While the largest number of mixed race people live in London (33%), sizeable communities are also found in the south east (13%) and the West Midlands (11%).

### *Education*

Whilst mixed race young people are doing less well overall in terms of GCSE passes there is again considerable variation across the different categories, with white/black Caribbean young people performing worst and white/Asian boys and girls performing well above average. These outcomes are partially linked to poverty as revealed by data on eligibility for free school meals.

### *Children in need and looked after*

Children of mixed race are disproportionately represented in the care population. Whilst the latest data (2007) show that 60,000 children were looked after in England or 0.55% of those under 18 years, children from the 'mixed' group comprised around 8% of these 60,000 children. These 5,110 'mixed' children probably comprise substantially in excess of 1.5% of all those aged under 18.

The Audit Commission's 2004 review of the Youth Justice System (*Youth Justice 2004*) reported that 'in 2001/02, about 7 per cent of black young people and 8 per cent of those of mixed race were remanded to custody; by 2002/03 these proportions had increased to over 10 per cent and nearly 12 per cent respectively. In contrast, the rates for white young people remained at less than 6 per cent over the same period'. The possible reasons for these differences are likely to be complex and are the subject of research.

These data are cause for concern and require a more refined understanding of cultural and social factors and investigation of appropriately sensitive service provision.

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<sup>1</sup> Mixed race is the term preferred by the greater number of mixed race people, as shown in a recent survey (Aspinall *et al* 2006) set up to advise the ONS on 'mixed' categories for the upcoming 2011 Census. See: [http://www.pih.org.uk/features/mixedraceinbritain\\_report2.pdf](http://www.pih.org.uk/features/mixedraceinbritain_report2.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> This statement has been produced using data from official sources including the Census 2001, the first in which categories for the 'mixed' group were used.

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### ANNEX

The Communities and Local Government 2006 report on *Improving Opportunities, Strengthening Society* reported the following findings for the 'Mixed' group [<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/rep2006>]:

- The minority ethnic population was generally younger than the White population. The Mixed group had the youngest age structure – half (50 per cent) were under the age of 16.
- In 2004/05 people from Mixed race backgrounds (29 per cent) were at a higher risk of victimisation than those from White backgrounds (24 per cent).
- Amongst the percentage of pupils achieving five or more A\*–C grades at GCSE and equivalent in 2005, by ethnicity, pupils from the Gypsy/Roma and Traveller of Irish heritage groups, Other Black, Black Caribbean, Black African, Pakistani and Mixed White/Black Caribbean groups performed relatively poorly.
- Variations in achievement across the nine Government Office Regions show that, combining ethnic groups, there was greatest variation for Mixed race pupils; the proportion achieving five or more A\*–C grades was 17 percentage points higher in the South East (61 per cent) than in Yorkshire and the Humber (44 per cent).
- The amount of variation between ethnic groups differed according to whether FSM were received. Among non-FSM pupils, people from the Chinese (82 per cent), Indian (72 per cent) and Mixed White/Asian group (also 72 per cent) performed especially well. For FSM pupils, Chinese pupils still performed very well, but the next best performing group was the Any Other Ethnic group (44 per cent achieving five or more A\*–C passes), followed by the Mixed White/Black African, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, and Mixed White/Asian groups (all 39 per cent).
- In 2004/05 there were statistically significant increases in employment rates for all ethnic groups except Mixed race, Chinese and Bangladeshi. Unemployment rates were highest for the Black Caribbean, Black African, and Mixed race groups (all 9 per cent) and Bangladeshi people (8 per cent), compared with 3 per cent for White people.
- Between 2001 and 2005 employment rates increased for all minority ethnic groups except those of Mixed race background, Chinese people and Bangladeshi people.
- In 2004/05, 287,013 offences were notified to and dealt with by Youth Offending Teams. Where known, 85 per cent of the young people involved were White, 6 per cent were Black, 3 per cent were Asian, 2 per cent were of Mixed race and 1 per cent were of Chinese and Other origin.
- Convicted youths from minority ethnic groups were more likely than White youths to be sentenced to custody. 10 per cent of Black offenders and those of Mixed origin were sentenced to custody, 8 per cent of Asian offenders and those of Chinese and Other ethnic origin, and 6 per cent of White offenders.
- Both the 2003 and 2005 Citizenship Survey found that Asian, Black and Chinese people were more likely than White or Mixed race people to think that residents respect ethnic differences between people.
- In 2005 Mixed race people were less likely than other ethnic groups to believe that their local area was a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together.

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