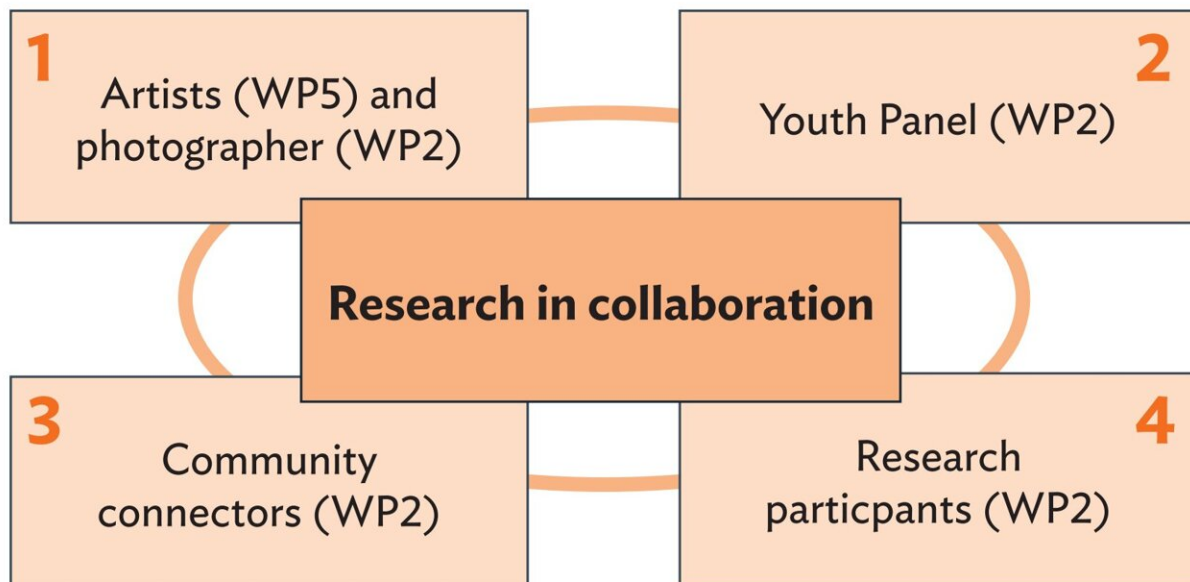


COVID disproportionately affected children in Black and ethnic minority families by exacerbating inequalities: Report

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Research in collaboration with youth panel, creative team, community connectors and research participants . Credit: *The Consortium on Practices of Wellbeing and Resilience in BAME families and communities* (2023)

Black and ethnic minority communities experienced great anxiety over work, education and disproportionate attention from police during the COVID-19 pandemic, finds a new report by researchers at UCL, Goldsmiths and Royal Holloway.

The research project, titled The Consortium on Practices of Well-being and Resilience in BAME families and Communities (Co-POWeR), details an 18-month investigation exploring the impact of the pandemic on people of Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds (BAME).

The report looked at those who experienced a disproportionate socio-economic and psychosocial impact, and examined the effects on their mental and emotional health and well-being, alongside the psychological and [social implications](#).

The team found that black and minority ethnic communities relied more on social networks and [community support](#) than formal support services borne of a pre-existing lack of trust and fear of racist responses.

The inequities of COVID-19's impact on BAME communities were already reported soon after the virus hit—with data revealing that while making up only 3.8% of the population in England, BAME people made up 5.8% of COVID-19 deaths.

The Co-POWeR report goes deeper, reviewing the impact of efforts to stem the transition of the virus on [family life](#), education and parenting.

Through engaging with young people and parents from BAME communities across England and Wales, as well as BAME professionals in [social services](#), the report shows that the disproportionate impacts of the disease were exacerbated by pre-existing racial and structural inequalities.

The key findings of the Co-POWeR report were:

- BAME children experienced increased anxiety over parental employment and income.

- Cramped housing, the absence of free school meals and a lack of access to internet and [digital services](#) had a negative impact on their ability to stay engaged with their education during lockdown.
- BAME children experienced inconsistencies in policing of lockdown rules. There were similar inconsistencies in supporting their education and mental health.
- BAME families were affected by low pay, precarious jobs, poor housing conditions and immigration control.
- BAME parents were not able to access financial support available to other workers during the pandemic.
- Multigenerational homes made social distancing a challenge especially in overcrowded housing.

Co-author, Professor Monica Lakhanpaul (UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health) said, "Children and young people from BAME communities deserve a better future. We have known that they have always been impacted by racial discrimination, but this combined with the impact of the pandemic puts them at further danger of being 'left behind'.

"It is important that we act now, provide them with the safe spaces to connect with each other, and rebuild their trust in the police and [education services](#). We, as a society, need to do better because these young people are our adults of tomorrow."

The authors recommended that policymakers and service providers address harm and promote resilience and well-being. This would mean ensuring investment in place-based community services within local and national government and children's service providers ensuring that there is an understanding of how policies and practices impact BAME communities and ensuring their voices are heard.

Other recommendations included co-producing youth services with young people, recognizing the importance of grassroots-level insider workers, building trust between police and BAME communities through active engagement, and addressing racial discrimination within children's social care, education and health services.

Co-author, Professor Claudia Bernard (Goldsmiths, University of London) said, "The recently opened COVID-19 public inquiry has pinpointed chronic blind spots in the Government's recognition of BAME communities in their emergency planning response to the virus, but our research shows that the formal support services at the local level were equally lacking."

"This wasn't an error of oversight but represented racial and structural inequalities that were present and baked into service provision before COVID. If we are going to build back better then service providers need to be culturally responsive to meet the needs of BAME families. Our recommendations place them in a position to achieve exactly that."

The study forms part of a larger Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) funded project, Co-POWeR Consortium on Practices of Well-being and Resilience in Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Families and Communities. The consortium began from the premise that BAME communities were afflicted by two viruses—both the pandemic and [racial discrimination](#).

Co-author, Anna Gupta (Royal Holloway) said, "I am so pleased to have been involved in Co-POWeR and to be able to share the findings of this important study that gives a voice to underrepresented BAME [young people](#) and their families."

"The study makes several important recommendations about how policies and practices can promote the well-being of these families going

forward and I hope that this research informs [decision-making](#) in the future."

More information: Report: [The Consortium on Practices of Well-being and Resilience in BAME families and Communities](#)

Provided by University College London

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