



CRER

coalition for racial
equality and rights

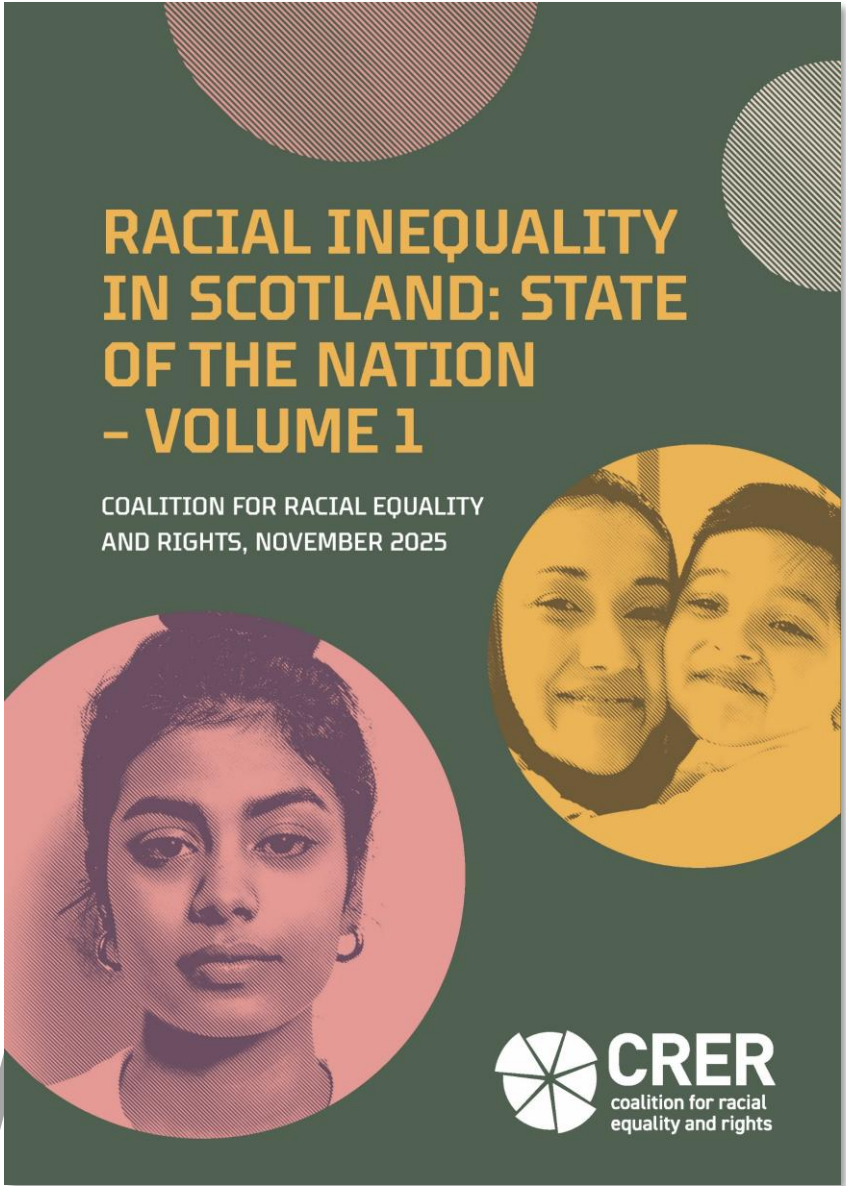


Understanding and challenging youth justice inequalities

Introduction

- CRER is a strategic anti-racism charity based in Glasgow, specialising in using research and evidence-based policy interventions to promote racial justice
- Lucien Staddon Foster is a researcher and anti-racism campaigner, overseeing CRER's research on housing, mental health and the justice system





Employment



Housing



**Mental
Health**



**Criminal
Justice**



**Community
Cohesion**



Youth Justice and Ethnicity

Children and young people in Scotland can have a complex relationship with the justice system

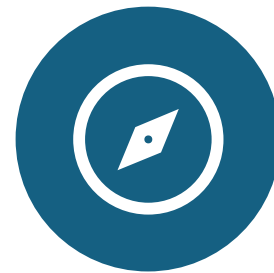
With an **intersectional** lens, we can recognise that children and young people from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds have a unique experience of this, affecting:



Policing



Detention



**Navigation of
the system**



**Visibility in
data**



Policing BME children and young people

Between April 2024 and June 2025:

18,300 children and young people were stopped and searched by the police

2,300 of these came from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds

This means that BME groups comprise a greater proportion of stopped and searched children than they do adults

12.4%



9.0%





Policing BME children and young people

Some ethnic groups are more likely to be stopped and searched than others. For example, children and young people from African, Caribbean and Black ethnic backgrounds make up:

0.8% of children and young people in Scotland

4.2% of those stopped and searched by the police

Children and young people from African, Caribbean and Black backgrounds are

2.5x

as likely to be stopped and searched than their expected rate



Policing BME children and young people

Children and young people from African, Caribbean and Black backgrounds are

4x

as likely to be strip searched than those from white Scottish/British backgrounds

Between April 2024 and June 2025, 251 strip searches were conducted on people aged 15 to 24, of these:

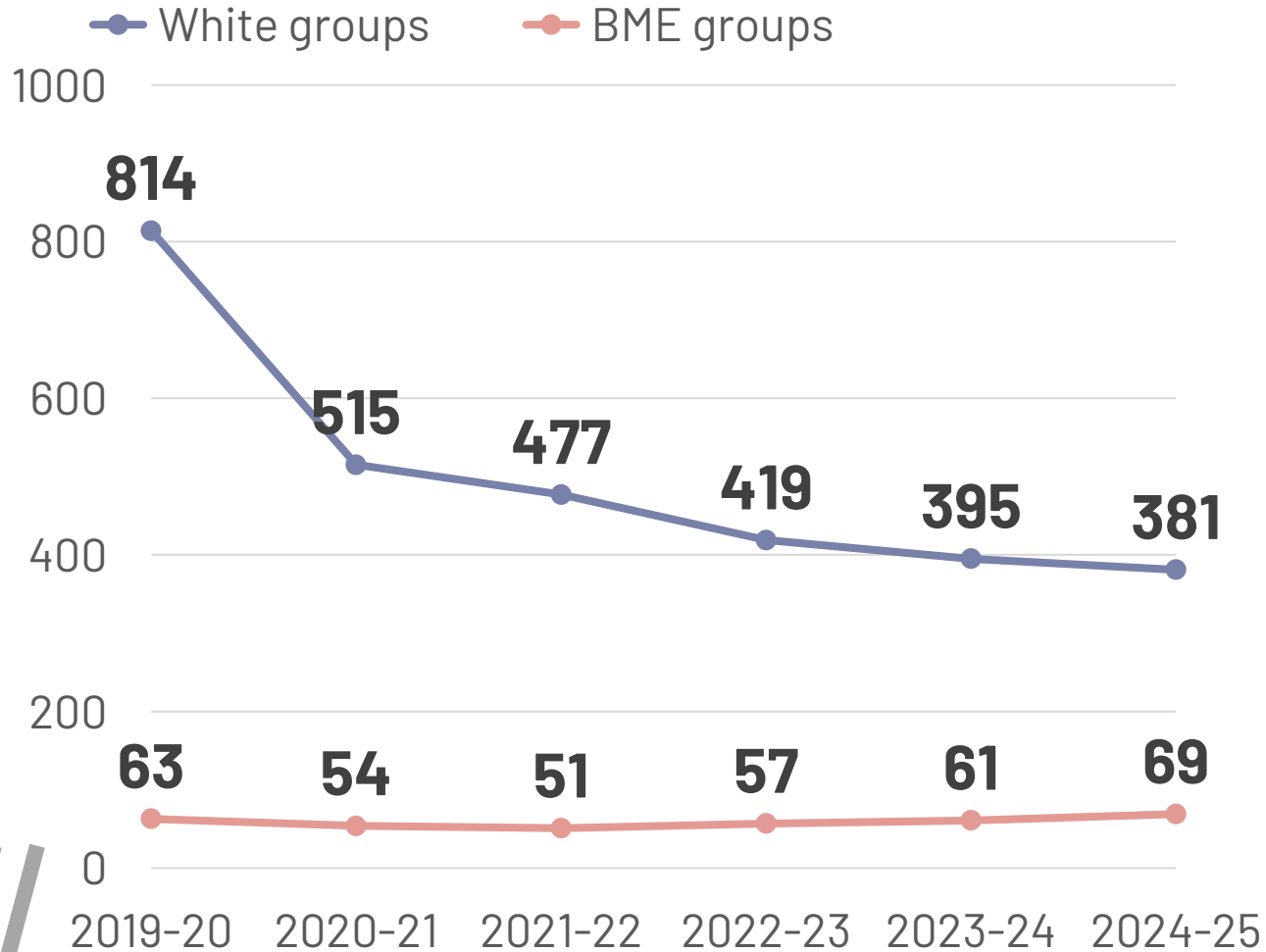
24% came from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds

This means that for BME groups, **1 in 25** searches are strip searches

For white groups, this was **1 in 91** searches



BME children and young people's experiences of detention



In 2024-25, **15.3%** of U21s in detention came from BME backgrounds

Since 2020, BME groups have comprised a greater share of U21 detainees. While the system is changing, not everyone seems to be benefiting



Visibility within data

Intersectional data is extremely limited in Scotland, masking our ability to monitor how children and young people from BME backgrounds experience the justice system

Example: Police use of force

African, Black and Caribbean groups

72%
more likely
to be subjected
to the use of
police force than
white Scots



Under 18s

2.5x
more likely
to be subjected
to the use of
police force than
adults



Visibility within data

Data is essential for trust, confidence and accountability – the foundations of policing by consent

“If you can’t see a problem, you can’t solve it”
- Dr Kimberlé Crenshaw

“Data is the friend of systems change”
- Dr Celestin Okoroji



Navigation of the system

Currently, a lack of data stops us from understanding:

- The number of BME children kept in police station custody and how long they are detained for
- The ethnicity of children in the Children’s Hearing System and their experiences

So, what can we do?



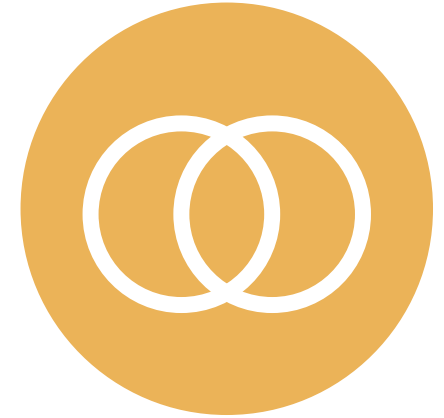
**Improve
Scottish data**



**Value lived
experience**



**Take an
anti-racist
approach**



**Embrace
intersectionality**



Going forward

Getting the data is only part of the challenge – we need to use this knowledge for evidence-based approaches in the design, delivery and evaluation of policy

CRER will use its State of the Nation report as a foundation for targeted research and campaigning

But we all have a duty to challenge racism – so what will you do?

**If you don't
challenge racism,
who will?**

www.crer.org.uk