



PROMOTING DIVERSITY

Probation, police and prison staff met in the spring to consider the under-representation of black staff and its impact on service delivery. **Trevor Barnard**, Treasurer of ABPO, reports on the event. Also, **Professor Theo Gavrieledes** talks about the work his organisation has carried out, in partnership with London Probation Trust, to embed race equality in probation work.

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Black staff networks within the Criminal Justice System marked this year's United Nations International Day for Elimination of Racial Discrimination by launching a number of significant initiatives to enhance the struggle for racial equality in employment and service delivery.

An historic joint declaration to 'work together to promote race equality and eliminate racial discrimination in all parts of the Criminal Justice System' was signed by leaders of the Association of Black Probation Staff (ABPO), the National Black Police Association (NBPA) and RESPECT (the network for BAME staff within the Prison Service) on March 21.

The following day, the networks hosted the 'Race and the CJS Symposium' at Newbold Revel Training College in Rugby. This unique event brought together Probation, Police and Prison service staff to share and explore experiences, issues and ideas around the theme of: *How far have we Come? Black staff career progression and under-representation within the Criminal Justice System – the impact on service delivery and community engagement.*

The morning session, which was chaired by Janet Brown (ABPO Race and Equalities portfolio holder), included keynote speeches from Dr Richard Stone OBE, author of *Hidden Stories of the Lawrence Inquiry* and Mike Franklin, a former IPCC Commissioner.

The highlight of afternoon session was the formal launch of The NILE Group, a cross-CJS consortia of Black/BAME staff networks. NILE is an acronym for the 'National Initiative for Leadership and Empowerment'. The principal aims of this new umbrella body are to:

➤ Empower Black/BAME

staff networks, Black/BAME employees and Black/BAME communities in their dealings with Criminal Justice agencies

- *Equip* Black/BAME networks, Black/BAME employees and Black/BAME communities to be knowledgeable and confident when dealing with Criminal Justice agencies
- *Enable* Black/BAME staff networks, Black/BAME employees and Black/BAME communities to hold Criminal Justice agencies to account
- *Enhance* efforts to eliminate racial discrimination, advance racial equality and to foster good relations between people of different racial origins

Leaders of ABPO, NBPA and RESPECT explained that this historic initiative will provide Black/BAME networks with the means to coordinate and improve their efforts to bring about much needed changes in the way the CJS treats Black/BAME staff and the communities from which they come.

The launch of The NILE Group was the culmination of a series of joint initiatives between the networks, one of which involved piloting a unique cross-CJS career progression programme for Black/BAME staff (entitled 'Step Forward'). The Symposium marked the completion of the pilot project and the Learners, Coach/Mentors and organizers of the West Midlands pilot were awarded certificates in recognition of their contribution to the success of the project.

Charles Crichlow, a serving Police Constable in Greater Manchester Police, was presented with The NILE Group award for 'Exemplary Conduct in a Public Office', in



From left to right: Franstine Jones, President of the National Black Police Association; Conrad Reid, Chair of RESPECT; Sharon Clarke and Angela Clarke, Joint Chairs of the Association of Black Probation Staff signing The NILE Group Governance Document



From left to right: Bevan Powell OBE, Chair of The NILE Group and a group of WEST Midlands Step Forward Pilot participants

recognition of his 'vigilance, integrity and courage in defending the human rights of individuals attending the public session of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry held in Manchester'.

In 1998 PC Crichlow alerted his superiors in Greater Manchester Police to the serious implications of a circular from Special Branch which requested information and intelligence on members of the public attending the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry. Sixteen years later, the concerns that he had raised and escalated were echoed in the revelations of the Ellison Review regarding the covert Police surveillance of the Lawrence family.



It was therefore fitting that Charles Crichlow (above) was presented with his award by Dr Richard Stone, a panel member of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry.

NILE: A Challenge for BME CJS Leadership

The launch of NILE in March this year seemed both timely and of significance to BME CJ leadership as fundamental changes face the Probation Service and by implication, ABPO.

ABPO had its origin in the need for an anti-racist perspective to impact on the Service's practice over 30 years ago. This was not wholly about the absence of BME staff or even how the few within were being treated - it was about the disproportionate level of incarceration of people from the BME communities, the policing of these communities as if they were colonies within the UK, and the collusion of the Service in leaving BME offenders to the racist practices of "autonomous" probation officers.

Today, the notion of "diversity", constructed to justifiably emphasise the value of adhering to the notion of valuing "difference", has been largely used to negate the need for "anti-racism". Just as how the Robinson's notion of "God is dead" was meant to negate religion, and Blair's "we are now classless society" to negate workers' economic demands. Politicising and professionalising "diversity" was meant to negate the existence of racism. ABPO's view on "diversity" must therefore

be necessarily "critical"; and cannot just reflect the views of those having a career in that "industry".

There are several facets to the existence, perpetuation, and promotion of racism that continue to reinforce what W.E.B. Dubois is referred to as the "race-line". Camouflaging their diverse manifestations or identities will only reinforce the view that racism is very much alive (and far from being "kicked out").

One speaker after another, including Dr Richard Stone and Mike Franklyn, advised the audience of the NILE launch that intelligence and community engagements were important ingredients in confronting ongoing racism within our society.

Adilla's "Flight of the Geese" was a truly motivational story regarding leadership and empowerment, but the real challenge to NILE lies in assisting its supporting organisational leaders to more fully understand the contexts in which they are employed, as well as their need to critically represent to those contexts the impinging realities of the wider BME communities.

Angela Clarke Joint Chair of the Association of Black Probation Staff

Toolkit: Embedding Race Equality in Probation



By *Dr. Natalia Paszkiewicz*, Research and Policy Coordinator, Independent Academic Research Studies (IARS), and *Professor Dr. Theo Gavrielides* (left), Founder and Director of Independent Academic Research Studies (IARS) and Restorative Justice for All (RJ4All), Adjunct Professor at the Centre for Restorative Justice at Simon Fraser University and Visiting Professor at Buckinghamshire New University.

At this critical point in time, when the criminal justice system in Britain is going through some fundamental reforms, issues around race, disproportionality and the quality of criminal justice services that are being provided to Black and minority ethnic (BME) groups need to be considered.

IARS evidence and the extant literature suggest that the current

policy, legislative and institutional changes have put race at the bottom of the agenda. This paper draws on the findings from our recent *Race in Probation* project (see p. 34), focused on developing innovative approaches to the resettlement of BME offenders.

One of the outputs of this programme was the production of a user-led toolkit that can help probation providers to embed

race equality in their services.

The toolkit can also help explore and develop bottom up and innovative approaches to support voluntary sector providers and their Probation Trusts partners to deliver resettlement services to BME offenders, those at risk of offending and their families. It is divided into two areas, namely user to user support and organisational culture.

Here are some of the findings

that have come out of this research. BME service user involvement in probation includes a number of different strands from ex-offenders helping to review and monitor the service to participating in delivering the service as employees, for instance in the role of engagement workers and mentors. Service user input should be embedded throughout the rehabilitation process, and it works best where service users have some ownership of the process and the opportunity to contribute to the design and development of projects. Focus on dialogue-based approaches to service user involvement, such as service user groups, should also include clear incentives and outcomes for BME service users. Throughout the process, BME service users can benefit from:

- Developing confidence
- Validating personal experience
- Learning different perspectives

Effective BME user involvement can contribute to:

- Improved understanding between the service users and probation staff
- Reduced risks of misunderstanding, misrepresentation or mistreatment of service users
- A shared partnership which ultimately aims to improve resettlement outcomes

It is crucial to value the knowledge of users and to recognise that this is different from, but equal to, professional knowledge, and is of critical importance to desistance.

Working together to increase understanding of BME service users' experiences requires having a set of principles for engagement. Principles are the stepping stones for effective service user involvement and illuminate the core values essential for meaningful engagement. This requires a long term commitment to building partnership arrangements between probation services users and probation officers. Some of the key principles of engagement are:

1. Respecting the individual uniqueness of people and challenging negative stereotypes
2. Consulting with different groups of BME service users to explore different topics in order to ensure their diverse voices are heard
3. Helping BAME service users to become active in the rehabilitation process and supporting them to develop their own ideas of desistance

The BME category is not culturally homogenous and this needs to be taken into account when engaging service users from those backgrounds. It must also be pointed out that foreign offenders face particular challenges given the fact that they are subjected to immigration controls. It is important to promote community sentences as a viable and effective option for foreign national offenders, to improve sentencer confidence and enable closer working relationships with related agencies and departments. Resettlement programmes targeting offenders with uncertain immigration status could mark a significant improvement for many BAME offenders within the criminal justice system.

The notion of cultural racism

whereby cultures, and not biological features, are perceived as inferior/superior should be included in the discussion. Probation interventions and programme requirements should take into account offenders' specific religious and cultural needs, and offender managers should feel informed and confident in dealing with these. An individualised service is more likely to improve user engagement. Therefore, it is recommended that service providers explore the role that human rights values can play in raising cultural awareness.

A lack of trust in the criminal justice system among BME offenders can result in an unwillingness to cooperate with probation services. Perception of probation services as yet another punitive, enforcement-oriented body will impede any efforts aimed at involving ex-offenders in the design and delivery of resettlement programmes.

Having a caring and non-judgmental relationship with a probation officer is paramount to facilitating user involvement. Furthermore, establishing a trusting relationship with only one probation officer, rather than working with many practitioners, highlights the significance of encouraging full disclosure as it can mean that professionals are able to provide ex-offenders with tailored support. This relationship should ideally be initiated when still in prison. However, heavy workload makes it difficult for probation officers to visit people in prisons and this is likely to be compounded by the Transforming Rehabilitation reforms.

To conclude, probation reports and assessments will become a lot more successful in achieving desistance if they are focused less on managing risks and more on identifying and nurturing individual talents. By identifying each

offender's potential strengths, self-image, pride and hope are created while the system is steered towards capturing these opportunities rather than just managing risks.

You can purchase and download the full Race in Probation toolkit from the IARS website: <http://www.iars.org.uk/content/RaceinProbationToolkit>

Race equality matters in Probation

I have concerns over the impact that the Transforming Rehabilitation reforms may have on equality - and race equality in particular.

My concerns form part of a programme run by IARS. The project started in 2012 to identify and review existing probation practices that should be highlighted and maintained.

The review focused on the BME population of probation users. The nexus of our investigation was the London Probation Trust (LPT) and our primary research question was whether race equality can drive quality in the probation service. If the current reforms are all about competition and quality outcomes, then where does race equality sit?

In London, 29% of its population (census 2011) is from a BME background, so a similarly high percentage should be expected for LPT's current caseload. In fact, internal LPT 2012 research has shown that out of the 41,091 offenders that the trust manages, 20,723 come from a BME community. This accounts for half of LPT's users.

We are not living in an equal society. Racism is embedded within our institutions and societies. We also need to accept that there is disproportionality in the criminal justice system.

The shift in public spending philosophy will lead to a competitive market in probation services. This has put an emphasis on outcomes, not activities, and as a result there is a need to look at each user afresh and ask: "How satisfied are they if we are to compete for continuing to deliver services to them"? This shift is, in my view, welcome.

Communities are becoming more organised through local structures and community leaders. This is a community-based infrastructure that should not be underestimated.

This is particularly true for London, which historically has had a strong and well-organised BME voluntary sector. By this I mean the locally based, often unfunded projects that are set up to bridge a gap in service provision and provide voice, engagement and representation of BME groups in London's life.

It is through these bodies that relationships can be built and a dialogue between mobilised communities and structures can take place in a trusting and equal way.

It took years for Probation Trusts to build trusting and worthwhile relationships with these groups. I wonder how many private contractors and new providers are aware of these relationships or can ever replicate them?

A new Zeitgeist is coming. Society is changing, and with it the users of public services - including those of probation. Excluding the voices of the community is no longer an option. We should not forget that the battle for justice for Stephen Lawrence was not fought by government or agencies, but by his family.

This societal mobilisation is also seen in phenomena such as the recent student demonstrations, the riots, public debates and media attitudes. It is also seen through the active and increased role of voluntary and community-based organisations.

The best solutions to a social justice problem come from those who are affected by it.

Involving the user in the design, delivery and evaluation of policies, services and practices that affect them is more than a matter of common sense.

It is also a matter of basic rights, such as the right to be involved in decisions that affect you.

Identifying someone's strengths and nurturing their talents as opposed to seeing them as a "risk" and "managing them" is also something that we should all embrace.

Prof. Theo Gavrielides



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