

# IYC

**Ipswich Youth Council presents:  
Black Lives Matter -  
A Youth Discussion**

**Official report**

**29 June 2020**

## ***Ipswich Youth Council presents: Black Lives Matter - A Youth Discussion - official report***

Black Lives Matter - A Youth Discussion was held over zoom on Thursday 25 June 2020. This was a free public event for 12 -18 year olds, supported by Pacitti Company (makers of SPILL Festival of Performance) and promoted and chaired by Ipswich Youth Council's founding members Isaac Codjoe and Will Pope.

The event asked:

What are the issues facing young black people in Ipswich and what can educational institutions, police, local authorities, government and young people themselves, do to support the Black Lives Matter movement and make meaningful change for black people in Ipswich.

The event was chaired by Isac Codjoe, supported by Will Pope with special guest Phaniel Mutumburi (Business and Operations Director) for Ipswich & Suffolk Council for Racial Equality (ISCRE) to offer expert guidance on the movement.

At the start of the event, Isaac outlined the Ipswich Youth Council's aims:

- **Giving the young people of Ipswich a voice** - Here at IYC, we believe that the young people of Ipswich currently don't get the say that they deserve in matters that affect them and their futures. Which is why so strongly believe in the need for a platform where young people can speak and voice their concerns on many different cases
- **Getting young people involved with decision making** - Here at IYC we also believe that young people should have a valued say when it comes to making actual key decisions for young people. This is as young people do know what we want and would rather have our own input than have someone tell us what we should or shouldn't like
- **Bringing young people together from all over town** - Here at IYC we believe in diversity and inclusion. We want this platform to be as wide as possible so that it can benefit all of the young people of Ipswich, not just a certain demographic. We also believe, the more views we collate the better as we want to be as representative as possible

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This was followed by a mutually agreed code of conduct to ensure every young person's voice was heard respectfully and safely.

The event was structured around 15 minute sections:

- 1) What is systemic racism?
- 2) What are Ipswich's police and organisations interactions with black young people? i.e. what are the issues and what are the positive things.
- 3) What can young people, organisations and decision makers do to make positive change?

Isaac and Will explained to the young people in the space that should they not feel comfortable speaking aloud, they could write in the chat box, in which Isaac would read it out and open it for discussion. Phaniel was asked to expand on points made by young people, offering legal advice and experiences.

*At the Black Lives Matter protest I saw a sign which said 'You've messed with the last generation!' - We want change!'*

~ young person

*We are constantly having to fight.*

~ young person



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**Question 1) What is systemic racism?**

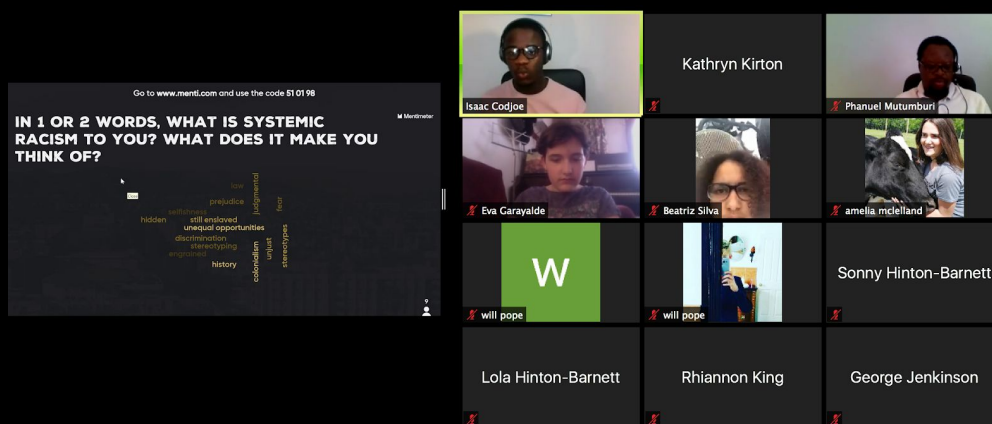
An online tool was used to engage all young people with what they thought systemic racism was. They were live projected on the screen.

*Society doesn't want you to win. Black people are inferior to white people. Black people are below white people.*

*~ young person*

*Children in my class would say I have 'African hair diseases'*

*~ young person*



*Children at school would say to me 'your hair is like cotton wool, other kids would wipe white boards with it'*

*~ young person*

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*Two people were in trouble at school for something but only one got bag searched and they were not white. I spoke to the both of them, both of them agreed they had done something equally wrong, yet only one of them had been searched. The only reason I can see they were different is because they were black and the other person wasn't. Teachers say 'it's not in schools' but it is and it needs to be addressed.*

*~ young person*

*I am what my mum describes fondly as 'gene soup'; - on my father's side I am Basque, Italian and Native American. I have relatively pale skin and have never directly experienced racism. However, in primary school I was targeted for being apparently 'other' - in terms of being both not very 'British' looking, and being neuro divergent (not autistic, just different to the so-called 'norm').*

*~ young person*

Phanuel spoke directly to the young people in the space who had spoken from their experience of racism at school.

*If you see something which concerns you, talk to your parents or reach out to ISCRE who offer free legal advice. They will be in touch with the school. It is the school's duty to protect young people, if they aren't they are breaking the law.*

*These must be challenged.*

*~ Phanuel Mutumburi.*

It was overwhelmingly expressed that many young black people are experiencing racism at school yet schools are denying there are any discriminatory or racist issues within their school. Young people are not being heard, and are being denied the opportunity to feel safe in their own school.

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Question 2) What are Ipswich's police and organisations interactions with black young people? i.e. what are the issues and what are the positive things.

*When I see a police officer...*

*As a black person I feel worried, I feel I might get stopped and searched.*

*As a white person I feel safe.*

*~young people*

*The same people who are protecting you are the same people oppressing you. There are some good people within the police and the government, you just have to find them.*

*~young person*

There was a clear message from young black people in the space that there is fear associated with the police. A young person spoke about their father's experience in Ipswich:

*Once my dad had got home from work on his bike. The police had stopped him.*

*Police: Where are you going?*

*Dad: Cycling home.*

*Police: You fit the description of someone we're looking for*

*We are being attacked for our skin rather than the content of our character.*

*~ young person*

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Another young person spoke on research they had conducted at school:

*I'm in Year 13 & did my EPQ on youth gang crime, where I focussed on stop & searches as a topic within it. It very much appears that in recent years, stop & searched were politicised as a weapon to target & marginalise young black (and other ethnic minority) people, specifically boys. There is a constant encouragement by high police chiefs and also MPs to use stop and search powers to target young black men because of a stereotype of 'what a gang member looks like'.*

*~ young person*

Phanuel responded to the experiences young black people had experienced in Ipswich with the police, explaining that he works with the Suffolk stop and search group every other month where members of the community come in and analyse the data received from the police. The information is showing that they are failing consistently. BAME people are being treated unfairly.

He went on to offer advice on what to do should a young black person be stopped:

Remember the go wisely acronym:

<b>G</b>	Grounds for the search
<b>O</b>	Object the officer is searching for
<b>W</b>	Warrant, particularly if the officer is in plain clothes
<b>I</b>	Identification, proof that the officer is indeed a police officer
<b>S</b>	Station to which the officer is attached to
<b>E</b>	Entitlement, any citizen being searched by a police officer is entitled to copies of all paperwork
<b>L</b>	Legislation, the legal power which gives the officer the right to stop and search
<b>Y</b>	YOU are being detained for the search or for the purpose of essentially informing the citizen in no uncertain terms the purpose and nature of the search

He elaborated, explaining:

- If a police officer decides they want to stop and search you, they must have reasonable suspicion either you have committed a crime or are about to.

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- You can ask why you are being stopped, on what grounds are you stopping us- this is a legal requirement
- Ask them details - which station, their full name, a receipt for the reasons why they've stopped and searched you
- Bringing this information to ISCRE this can be used to challenge them.
- Police have video cameras on their person. You have the right to ask them to switch it on to directly record straight to the station.
- You can also record the incident, but you should be aware that you shouldn't interfere with what a police officer is doing. Opt to ask the police officer to record via their video on their person.

### **Question 3) What can young people, organisations and decision makers do to make positive change?**

Isaac spoke about next steps for this discussion and for Ipswich Youth Council.

Next steps for the discussion would be to:

- Share this report with decision makers, organisations and media outlets
- Make the report public

**Next steps for Ipswich Youth Council would be to:**

- Encourage young people to get in touch who couldn't make it to share their experiences
- Encourage young people to join the Ipswich Youth Council core team - a survey is public on the Facebook page
- A follow up meeting to be scheduled

**Actions for decision makers and organisations were outlined below:**

**For MP Tom Hunt:**

- 1) Publicly acknowledge institutionalised racism is an issue within Ipswich, and to outline the ways in which he aims to tackle it
- 2) Encourage change in police services for stop & searches targeted at black people in Ipswich
- 3) Bring up discussion of teaching about colonialism, black history and black culture into the curriculum so that young people can further understand each other.



*Black History is SO much more than slavery*

*~ young person*

**For schools:**

- 1) Have a clear recording and report system for incidents involving racism and discrimination and clear ways in how they will/ did address it, make this available to students and parents. This in return should make it clear to students and parents how their respective schools tackle forms of racism which would lead to them feeling safer and more comfortable at school.
- 2) Teach more about diverse cultures, such as black history and culture - not just slavery. This is as we believe if young people are taught about other cultures they're more likely to understand each other which in return could lead to a decrease in stereotyping, microaggressions and other forms of racism.

**For Suffolk Police:**

- 1) The potential creation and distribution of cards for everyone, which outline the rights regarding stop & searches

*I have an Amnesty International human rights 'passport' which has all the human rights on it. Potentially something similar with our rights regarding stop & search could be interesting to distribute around Ipswich.*

*~ young person*

- 2) Training for police to stop stop & searches targeted at black people and racial profiling  
in Ipswich

**For young people:**

- 1) Educate yourself - [read books](#), [watch films](#), [documentaries](#)
- 2) When you hear, friends and family being racist to others, or just being ignorant, speak out, tell them that it is unacceptable

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- 3) Have diversity of thought, try to meet different people, they can offer you different experiences and views which could help you even improve yourself - be curious.
- 4) Write to your [local MP](#), teachers or councillors
- 5) Shop at black owned businesses ([Click here for examples](#))
- 6) Sign petitions <https://www.you.co.uk/black-lives-matter-petitions-uk/>
- 7) Open the discussion with someone about BLM! Talking is the best starting point for change

*I think every single type of racism needs to be tackled in the future so that everyone is truly equal. Obviously many things are now socially unacceptable such as racially targeted name-calling, but microaggressions are still prominent. My black friends have been targeted with microaggressions, whether it's about their hair or their names, so every single aspect of racism needs to go for there to be true equality.*

*~young person*



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Everyone is welcome to use the contents of this document if it is useful, so long as those uses are not commercial, and are about making things better for young black people in Ipswich. Please credit Ipswich Youth Council and Pacitti Company if you use any contents.

This report was created by Alice Sandon (Participation Producer at Pacitti Company) Isaac Codjoe (Ipswich Youth Council Founder) and Will Pope (Ipswich Youth Council Co-Founder)

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1. <https://www.cosmopolitan.com/uk/reports/a32739526/racism-books-black-lives-matter/>
2. <https://www.birminghamupdates.com/blm-how-can-i-help-educate-yourself-with-documentaries-film/>
3. <https://members.parliament.uk/member/4771/contact>
4. <https://www.thestrategist.co.uk/article/black-owned-uk-businesses.html>