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Dear Darren Jones MP

PUBLICATION OF THE COMMISSION ON RACE AND ETHNIC DISPARITIES REPORT

I am writing in my capacity as the sponsoring Minister for the independent Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, to bring your attention to its report published on 31 March 2021, and available online:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/commission-on-race-and-ethnic-disparities>

The Commission has taken an evidence-based approach to its work, focusing on areas including education, employment, health and the criminal justice system.

The Commission's findings and recommendations

The Commission's findings were built on reviews of both existing and newly-commissioned research, engagement with key experts, and consideration of the work already being carried out by the government in each of the four areas.

The report acknowledges that overt and outright racism persists in the UK, but also highlights the progress that the UK has made in tackling racial inequality. Where cases of racism do exist, the Commission recommends stronger actions to be taken to hold those responsible to account, including further funding for the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) to legally challenge instances of significant and unjust racial disadvantage or racial discrimination.

The evidence examined finds that, while disparities do exist across some areas, the picture is a complex one and many factors lie behind them. Among these are geography, social class, deprivation and family structures.

You may be particularly interested in some of the key findings for the Employment, Fairness at Work, and Enterprise portion of the report, which are:

- Over the past 50 years ethnic minorities have been making progress up the professional and occupational class ladder. However, significant disparities in unemployment rates for young people remain. The second generation has been making rapid progress, and in some cases, have surpassed, White people.

- The pay gap is at its lowest level since 2012. The hourly median pay gap between all ethnic minorities and the White group has shrunk to 2.3%.
- Disparities in unemployment rates have been declining sharply since 2013. 8% of the Pakistani and Bangladeshi group, 8% of the Black group, and 6% of the Mixed group were unemployed in 2019, compared with 4% of the White group. For people aged 16 to 24, unemployment rates are far more pronounced. We await published statistics on the impact of COVID on these figures.
- Unconscious bias training has been shown to have unclear or mixed impact. 'Nudge'-style procedures and a better understanding of how selection for top jobs operate have been proven to produce among the best results and beneficial outcomes.

In response to its findings, the Commission has put forward 24 recommendations for further action across Government, public bodies and the private sector. These have been grouped under four overarching aims:

1. to **build trust** between different communities and the institutions that serve them;
2. to **promote greater fairness** to improve opportunities and outcomes for individuals and communities;
3. to **create agency** so individuals can take greater control of the choices and that impact their lives; and
4. to **achieve genuine inclusivity** to ensure all groups feel a part of UK society.

Recommendations being put forward for Employment and Enterprise include:

- Develop resources and evidence-based approaches of what works to advance fairness in the workplace, and which are readily available to employers.
- Pilot a new enterprise programme to nurture talent and encourage innovation, targeted at aspiring entrepreneurs from underrepresented and low-income backgrounds across the UK.
- Require publication of a diagnosis and action plan for organisations who choose to publish ethnicity pay figures. These should set out the reasons why any disparities exist and what will be done to address them.
- Issue guidance that clarifies how to apply the Equality Act to algorithmic decision-making and require transparency for public sector bodies when such is applied to decision making concerning individuals.

The Government is now considering the full recommendations made in this report and will be responding in due course.



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