

# **Apprenticeships and diversity in context in Greater Manchester**

Final report

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# Contents

Contents .....	2
Executive Summary .....	3
1 About this report .....	5
2 Introduction: previous research .....	6
3 Apprentices in Greater Manchester .....	8
4 Ethnicity in education and training .....	14
5 Ethnicity and the labour market .....	21
6 Conclusions.....	23
Figure 1: Apprentice ethnicity gaps by ethnic group (parent categories in dark green) .....	9
Figure 2: BAME apprentice ethnicity gap and number of apprentices by local authority .....	11
Figure 3: Proportion of BAME apprentices by age band.....	12
Figure 4: Proportion of BAME apprentices by subject area .....	13
Figure 5: Proportion of BAME apprentices by level of apprenticeship .....	13
Figure 6: Attainment 8 and Progress 8 by ethnicity .....	14
Figure 7: Destinations of KS5 leavers by ethnicity, 2015/16.....	15
Figure 8: Ethnicity by level of FE learning – 16-18 year olds .....	17
Figure 9: Proportions of GM KS5 leavers attending HEIs by type of HEI, 2015/16 .....	18
Figure 10: NEET 16 and 17 year olds by ethnicity (December 2017) .....	19
Table 1: Apprentice numbers by ethnicity .....	10
Table 2: Destinations of KS4 leavers by ethnicity, 2015/16 .....	15

# Executive Summary

- This report is the outcome of research carried out in Greater Manchester (GM) to support the Five Cities Project, which aims to ensure apprenticeships are accessible to all communities. The research looks at ethnicity patterns amongst the GM workforce, and school, further education and university populations, and explores why there are relatively few apprentices from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds.
- There are 36% fewer BAME apprentices than would be expected in GM given ethnic diversity overall. We refer to this as an ‘ethnicity gap’: a comparison of proportions with the population as a whole and the population of apprentices. In GM 16.2% of residents come from ethnic minority communities; but only 10.4% of apprentices are from these communities.
- The ethnicity gap is at its most acute among young apprentices between the ages of 16 and 18. People from BAME backgrounds constitute over a fifth of all young people, but among young apprentices they make up just 8%. The gap is lowest among ‘mid-career’ apprentices: those between the ages of 31 and 49. For this age group proportions of BAME apprentices are virtually in line with the proportion of the population overall. Therefore, the issue of a lack of diversity among apprentices is much more pronounced among young people.
- The proportion of BAME apprentices decreases at advanced and higher level. Just 8% of all apprentices at higher level are from BAME backgrounds.
- BAME apprentices are also heavily concentrated in just three subject areas: business administration, health and social care and retail and commercial enterprises (81% of BAME apprentices compared with 72% of ‘white’ apprentices). They are underrepresented in engineering and construction – subject areas likely to lead to better paying employment.
- Yet the existence of an ethnicity gap ought not to be considered ‘a problem’ in itself. There must be consideration of the other opportunities and learning pathways that young people might pursue before forming a judgement regarding social exclusion.
- The report examines data relating to other learning routes in order to contextualise findings about the apprenticeship ethnicity gap. It finds:
  - BAME young people outperform people from ‘white’ backgrounds at key stage 4 (GCSEs). Patterns are mixed for different minority communities with Chinese and Asian young people performing especially well both in GM and in England as a whole, while those from a ‘black’ background are more in line with the overall ‘white’ group (the research is limited by the official categorisations of ethnicity in government datasets). BAME young people overall are also more likely to pursue an ‘education, training or employment’ destination after sitting their GCSEs and therefore less likely to become NEET (not in education, employment or training). Furthermore, they are overrepresented among those pursuing academic routes at key stage 5 (sixth form settings in schools, sixth form colleges or level 3 courses in further education colleges). At key stage 5 itself the differences evident at GCSE between ethnic groups narrow somewhat. Nevertheless, BAME young people are more likely to go to university than white young people. Put together the data presents evidence of a relatively academic orientation among BAME communities (although there are

obvious differences between ethnic groups). This may imply apprenticeships are not seen as aspirational by ethnic minorities and their families, and as less likely to lead to prestigious professional careers than other learning choices.

- However, although BAME young people are more likely to go to university they remain under-represented among Russell Group Universities, and, most obviously, Oxford and Cambridge. This implies there remain some barriers to entry within the most prestigious institutions. Evidence shows that 'black' and Asian candidates are less likely to be offered a university place than 'white' candidates, even with the same subjects and grades.

- The report also examined level 3 courses undertaken by young people. It found about 30% of people undertaking level 3 are from BAME backgrounds. Again, this appears to suggest that apprenticeships are in some way unusual to other learning pathways as apprenticeships have much lower BAME participation.

- Apprenticeships are jobs and as such are likely to exhibit some of the patterns of labour market discrimination that exist in the wider culture of work. BAME people have higher rates of unemployment and underemployment and tend to be overrepresented in lower paid and more insecure work.

→ The report argues there are two fundamental drivers behind the lack of ethnic diversity in apprenticeships both in GM, and nationally, reflecting both choices and constraints.

- First, BAME young people aspire to and are encouraged towards high educational attainment, and that the expectations of families and communities in this respect are especially significant. Academic pathways resulting in higher education are often the desired outcome and currently apprenticeships are not seen as enabling aspiration to the same degree (although whether that is down to perception or reality is debatable).

- Second, as apprenticeships are based in the workplace, they will reflect some of the wider inequalities in the labour market endured by BAME workers that are evident in employment rates, recruitment and progression barriers, pay rates, and significant ethnic segmentation. Potential apprentices face a double barrier in that they must pass an application process with both a provider and an employer.

→ The report concludes that although there is some evidence of a more academic orientation among certain ethnic groups which may potentially disincline BAME young people towards apprenticeships, there is also evidence that ethnic discrimination persists both in the skills system and the labour market. For example, rates of application to the apprenticeship system from ethnic minority candidates are in proportion to the overall population – but successful application rates are much lower. Candidates from a 'white' background are more than twice as likely to successfully convert an application into an apprenticeship.

→ Lastly, the report highlights the importance of an approach which considers diversity in its widest sense. The interaction of ethnicity with other characteristics such as gender, socio-economic background and disability have a combined influence on the choices and opportunities available to people, and the barriers they face in the navigation of education and skills pathways and the wider world of work.

# 1 About this report

- 1.1 The ‘5 Cities Project’ was launched by the Department for Education in February 2018. Five major UK cities have pledged to work with the government to drive up apprenticeships amongst underrepresented groups and ensure they are accessible to individuals from all backgrounds. This research aims to explore what lies behind apprenticeship take-up patterns amongst different ethnic groups in the Greater Manchester (GM) city region. Part one, which is presented here, looks at data relating to ethnicity patterns amongst the GM workforce, and school, further education and university populations. The aim was to place data regarding ethnic patterns in apprenticeships within the bigger picture of ethnicity and education as a whole.
- 1.2 Many survey datasets, including those utilised for this report, allow comparisons across a set of (self-identified) ‘ethnic groups’ which are often clustered broadly under: black, Asian, mixed, other and white.<sup>1</sup> These categories reflect vast generalisations of ethnicity which “do not begin to convey the extent and modes of diversity existing within the population today”.<sup>2</sup> Every ethnic group has particular cultural traditions, histories and trajectories within UK society and therefore faces different barriers. The intention behind using these ethnic categories within this report is to identify trends with the aim of reducing inequalities within apprenticeships in Greater Manchester. To this end, and because numbers within groups are often too small to produce a robust analysis, a black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) category is also used to provide comparisons with the ‘white’ category, in keeping with much recent research which looks at ethnicity.
- 1.3 The report is organised as follows:
- **Section 2:** a review of existing literature which looks and ethnicity and education, including apprenticeships;
  - **Section 3:** analysis of data relating to ethnicity and apprenticeships in GM;
  - **Section 4:** analysis of data relating to wider education and training in GM;
  - **Section 5:** a review of existing literature regarding ethnicity and the labour market;
  - **Section 6:** conclusions

<sup>1</sup> Peter J. Aspinall, *Collective Terminology to Describe the Minority Ethnic Population*, (Sociology), 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Stephen Vertovec, *New complexities of cohesion in Britain: Super-diversity, transnationalism and civil-integration*, (Commission on Integration & Cohesion) 2007, p.7.

## 2 Introduction: previous research

### 2.1 Ethnicity and education

At a national level, pupils and students from BAME backgrounds achieve higher educational attainment than ‘white’ pupils and students. Although patterns vary for different ethnic minorities, when aggregated into a BAME group, multiple studies have found that BAME students overall are more likely to stay in education post 16 and more likely to attend school sixth forms or sixth form colleges than their white peers.<sup>3</sup> This is apparent even when controlling for prior attainment or neighbourhood. There is significant diversity between different ethnic groups. Young people from an Asian background are more likely than those from a black background to continue education post 16.<sup>4</sup> White British boys who are in receipt of free school meals (FSM) have been the lowest achieving group at key stage 4 (KS4) for a decade. The only exception is young people from a gypsy, Roma or traveller background, who have the lowest educational outcomes of any group in the UK.<sup>5</sup>

2.2 The relationship between ethnicity and education has been the subject of much interest within educational research. Within this, the focus has tended to be on attainment; little exists below national level and that which does has concentrated on London.

### 2.3 Ethnicity and apprenticeships

Nationally, BAME people are underrepresented within apprenticeships, making up 15.6% of the working age population but just 10.5% of apprentices.<sup>6</sup> This is not necessarily for want of trying, as people from BAME backgrounds make up 19% of all applications to the Skills Funding Agency’s ‘Find an Apprenticeship’ website, but white applicants are twice as likely to succeed.<sup>7</sup> The All Party Parliamentary Group on apprenticeships stated in their annual report 2016/17 that one of their key recommendations was to do more to encourage those from underrepresented groups to take on apprenticeships, including BAME people.<sup>8</sup> One solution was the Five Cities project outlined above.

National level research has identified a number of barriers which, if addressed, could increase the representation of BAME people within apprenticeships. The influence of families and communities is key. With BAME led communities and SMEs often using local networks to build business and recruit, apprenticeships can be seen as less of a priority due to the support, cost and time investments they entail.<sup>9</sup> Previous research has also found that BAME communities were more likely to view apprenticeships as a second best option; this may be due to a lack of awareness and some outdated perceptions of apprenticeships.<sup>10</sup> Additionally, the aspirations of parents can have more of an influence on young people from BAME groups than they do on white young people.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Rebecca Allen, Meenakshi Parameshwaran and Dave Thomson, Education datalab, *Social and ethnic inequalities in choice available and choices made at age 16*, Social Mobility Commission, 2016

<sup>4</sup> Simon Burgess, *Aspirations, Language and Poverty: Attainment and Ethnicity*, Claire Alexander, Debbie Weekes-Bernard and Jason Arday (eds), *The Runnymede School Report: Race, Education and Inequality in Contemporary Britain*, 2015, pp. 17-21.

<sup>5</sup> Philip Kirby and Carl Cullinane, *Research Brief: Class differences: Ethnicity and disadvantage*, The Sutton Trust, 2016.

<sup>6</sup> Learning and Work Institute, *Three million apprenticeships: building ladders of opportunity*, 2017

<sup>7</sup> Jeremy Crook, *Eradicating the opportunity deficit for black, Asian and minority ethnic young people*, in: *All change: Where next for apprenticeships?*, Learning and Work Institute, 2018

<sup>8</sup> All party parliamentary group on apprenticeships, *Annual report 2016-2017*, p.12.

<sup>9</sup> Mark C Straw, *Mind the Gap: A Research Project Supporting Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities into Apprenticeships*, Unity in Diversity CIC, 2014.

<sup>10</sup> B Newton, L Miller, J Oakley, B Hicks, *Good Practice Evaluation of the Diversity in Apprenticeships Pilots*, Institute for Employment Studies, 2012

<sup>11</sup> Simon Burgess, *op cit*.

- 2.4 Although ethnicity clearly has a significant impact on the likelihood of a person applying for and becoming an apprentice, there are a number of other influences at play. Longitudinal research has shown that the factor which has the strongest relationship with apprenticeship take-up is actually prior academic attainment, with young people in the lower half of attainment at KS4 most likely to say they'd apply.<sup>12</sup> Young people in the 'Mind the Gap' research did not see their ethnicity as being a barrier; rather they felt that a lack of quality careers advice and guidance had a bigger impact. BAME businesses and young people in this report also noted the use of 'BAME' as a homogenous term was counterproductive, as different groups had different needs and strengths.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, the combination of ethnicity with gender and class or socio-economic background explains disadvantage and individual challenges more comprehensively than any factor taken alone.<sup>14</sup> Viewing disadvantage through an intersectional lens in this way can lead to a more nuanced and detailed understanding of the barriers that any person faces in a given situation, including apprenticeships.
- 2.5 Regarding discrimination, if apprenticeships follow similar trends such as those found in the labour market, then despite prohibiting legislation, ethnic discrimination will be persistent and often covert. For example, a recent meta-analysis of studies on discrimination in hiring practices across OECD countries found that minority groups have a 40% lower chance of being invited for interview than a majority competitor, when all other factors are held the same.<sup>15</sup> Recruitment practices, especially within smaller companies, are often informal. This results in delivering 'more of the same' and can exclude non-traditional entrants. Combined with a lack of role models and mentors to encourage young people and it is not surprising that apprenticeships mirror the same gendered or ethnically segregated patterns that are seen in the labour market.<sup>16</sup> Chadderton et al. argue that to address the lack of diversity in apprenticeships, more connections must be made between ethnic underrepresentation and the ethnic segmentation of the labour market (see Section 5).<sup>17</sup> Add in the disparity between BAME application rates and successful applications and there is evidence for a degree of systematic discrimination by employers, and possibly providers because they also screen applicants for apprenticeships.<sup>18</sup>
- 2.6 Where apprenticeships fit into this complex picture depends in part on whether they are a truly valuable alternative to other educational options, and whether they can be seen as an effective transition into the labour market. It is clear that young people from BAME backgrounds are in many cases achieving higher grades and attending more academic institutions than white pupils, at least until university. There is however an issue with translating these successes into labour market outcomes. If apprenticeships are shown to be a high quality transition from education to the labour market then they can potentially be of use to BAME people. Yet if they continue to reflect discrimination and ethnic segregations in the labour market (regardless of any increase in actual numbers) then this will not assist in the pursuit of a more equal society.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Elnaz T. Kashefpakdel and Jordan Rehill, *Teenage Apprenticeships*, Education and Employers Research, 2017.

<sup>13</sup> Mark C Straw, *Mind the Gap*.

<sup>14</sup> B Newton et al., *Good Practice Evaluation*.

<sup>15</sup> Eva Zschirnt and Didier Ruedin, *Ethnic Discrimination in Hiring Decisions: A Meta-Analysis of Correspondence Tests 1990-2015*, Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 2016, Vol 42:7, pp. 1115-1134.

<sup>16</sup> Becci Newton and Joy Williams, *Under-representation by gender and race in Apprenticeships: Research summary*, Institute for Employment Studies, 2013.

<sup>17</sup> Charlotte Chadderton and Anke Wischmann, *Racialised norms in apprenticeship systems in England and Germany*, Journal of Vocational Education and Training, 2014, Vol. 66:3 pp.330-347

<sup>18</sup> Sandra Kerr, *Apprenticeships for all* [online blog] < <https://race.bitc.org.uk/news-opinion/opinion/apprenticeships-all>>, [4 April 2018]

<sup>19</sup> Marley Morris, *Supporting ethnic minority young people from education into work*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2015

## 3 Apprentices in Greater Manchester

### 3.1 The ethnic makeup of apprentices in GM

Apprenticeships are disproportionately dominated by people from a white ethnic background. National trends are reflected in GM, whereby there are thousands fewer apprentices from BAME backgrounds than would be expected given the diversity of GM's residents. White people account for 88.9% of apprentices, compared to 83.8% of the general population.<sup>20</sup>

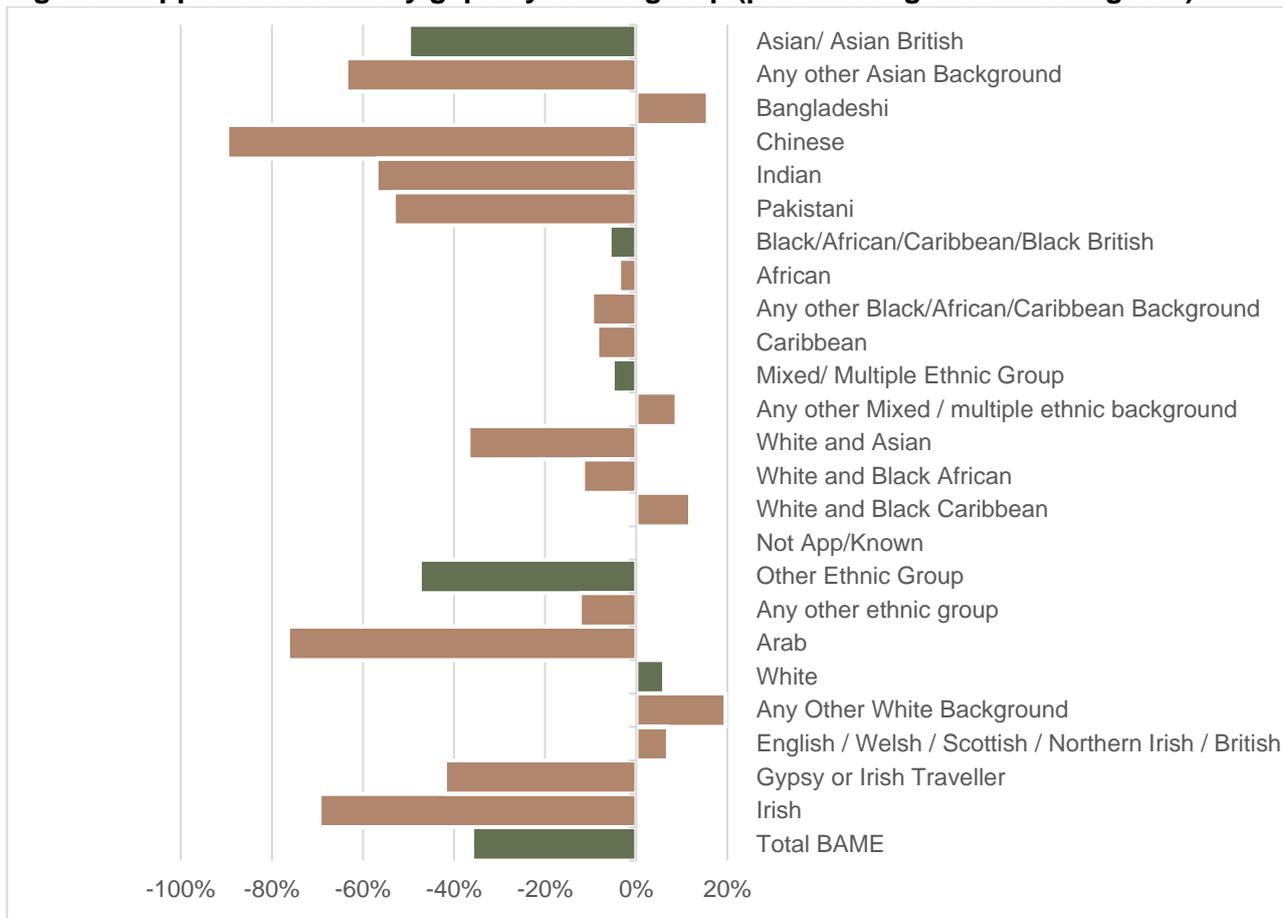
3.2 This section utilises the concept of an 'ethnicity gap' which is the difference between the proportion of people within an ethnic group in GM, and the proportion of that ethnic group which is represented in a particular sector which in this case is apprenticeships. For example, BAME apprentices account for 10.4% of total apprentices yet BAME people account for 16.2% of GM residents. Therefore there are 36% fewer BAME apprentices than we would expect given the numbers of BAME people across GM.

3.3 In order to measure this gap, ethnicity data from the 2011 census has been used. Since GM is becoming increasingly diverse over time, ethnicity gap figures based on the 2011 census are conservative estimates, as the proportion of BAME people will have increased over the last 7 years. According to the 2011 census GM is more diverse than the UK, with 16.2% of people identifying as having a BAME background compared to 14% nationally. This compares to 8% of Merseyside, 16% of South Yorkshire Metropolitan County and 18.5% of West Yorkshire Metropolitan County.

3.4 The apprentice ethnicity gap in GM is most extreme for the Asian group and breaking this down further, Figure 1 shows that Chinese, Indian, Pakistani and 'any other white background' groups all display a gap greater than -50%. The gap is less severe for apprentices in the Black/African/Caribbean/Black British and Mixed/Multiple (excluding white and Asian) ethnic group categories.

<sup>20</sup> Unless otherwise stated, apprenticeship figures refer to starts in 2015/16 in Greater Manchester (latest available data at the time of research). Data from 2016/17 shows a very slight increase of 4% (140 people) in the number of BAME apprentice starts. This is compared to a drop of 8% (2,100) in the number of white apprentice starts.

**Figure 1: Apprentice ethnicity gaps by ethnic group (parent categories in dark green)**



Source: Localities Data cube 2015/16, Skills Funding Agency

**3.5** Expressing the ethnicity gap in this way presents a stark picture of the ethnic makeup of apprentices in GM. Table 1 shows that within many of these groups, whilst the gap may be large, the actual numbers of the population it is referring to are relatively low. For example, although the apprentice gap for Arab people is one of the most severe (-76%), it would take just 170 more apprentices from an Arab background to reduce this gap to 0%.

**Table 1: Apprentice numbers by ethnicity**

Self identified ethnicity	Apprentices (15/16)	Total GM residents (2011 census)	Apprentices as a % of population
Asian/ Asian British	1,544	272,173	0.57%
Any other Asian Background	117	28,435	0.41%
Bangladeshi	448	34,186	1.31%
Chinese	30	26,079	0.12%
Indian	260	53,461	0.49%
Pakistani	689	130,012	0.53%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	790	74,097	1.07%
African	487	44,691	1.09%
Any other Black/African/Caribbean Background	119	11,639	1.02%
Caribbean	184	17,767	1.04%
Mixed/ Multiple Ethnic Group	652	60,710	1.07%
Any other Mixed / multiple ethnic background	147	11,925	1.23%
White and Asian	112	15,657	0.72%
White and Black African	100	9,997	1.00%
White and Black Caribbean	293	23,131	1.27%
Other Ethnic Group	163	27,425	0.59%
Any other ethnic group	123	12,399	0.99%
Arab	40	15,026	0.27%
White	27,019	2,248,123	1.20%
Any Other White Background	954	70,414	1.35%
English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	25,936	2,141,687	1.21%
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	10	1,523	0.66%
Irish	119	34,499	0.34%
<b>Total BAME</b>	<b>3,149</b>	<b>434,405</b>	<b>0.72%</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>30,383</b>	<b>2,682,528</b>	<b>1.13%</b>

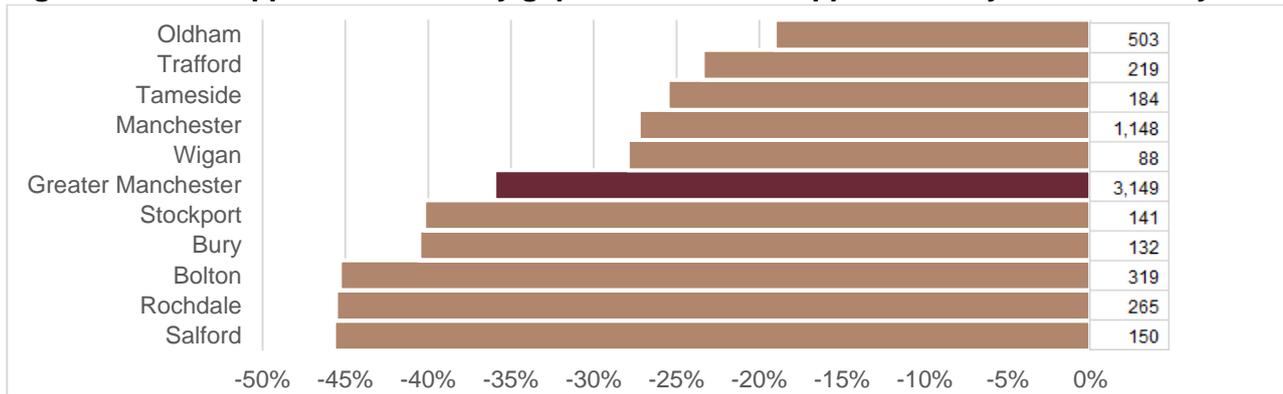
Source: Localities Data cube 2015/16, Skills Funding Agency; Census 2011

**3.6** Due to the low numbers in many of these self-identified ethnic groups, it is not possible to analyse them according to other characteristics. For this reason, analysis by local authority, age, gender, sector and level groups these ethnicities into broader categories, or uses the combined black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) category.

### **3.7 Apprentices by Local Authority**

Numbers across ethnic groups by local authority are small, therefore it is not possible to draw solid conclusions regarding particular groups. Taking BAME apprentices as a whole (see Figure 2) demonstrates that Rochdale, Salford, Bolton, Bury and Stockport all have the most extreme ethnicity gaps (-40% or more). Oldham has the smallest ethnicity gap, at -19%. The breakdowns by ethnicity and local authority show that in many areas, Black/African/Caribbean/Black British and Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups are actually positively overrepresented, however Asian/Asian British representation is so low that it widens the overall BAME ethnicity gap considerably.

**Figure 2: BAME apprentice ethnicity gap and number of apprentices by local authority**



Source: Localities Data cube 2015/16, Skills Funding Agency

**3.8** Regardless of the difference between the local authorities, there is clearly a lack of BAME representation within apprenticeships across the whole of GM.

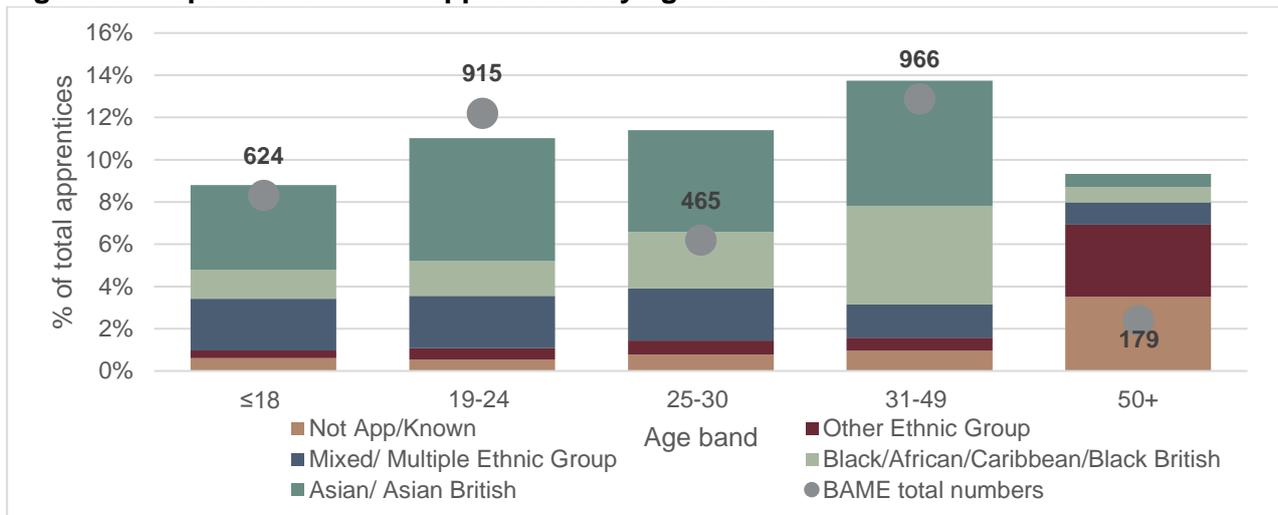
**3.9 BAME apprentices by age band**

All BAME groups reflect similar trends across the age bands. The proportion of BAME apprentices is lowest amongst those 18 and under. Proportions of BAME apprentices then increase throughout the 19-24 and 25-30 age bands, peaking in the 31-49 category before dipping again slightly in the over 50s. Figure 3 shows that proportions of BAME groups are similar in all age bands until the over 50s, where Asian/Asian British apprentice numbers suddenly decrease and the proportion of ‘not known’ and ‘other ethnic group’ people increases.

**3.10** BAME apprentices as a whole tend to be older than white apprentices. The apprentice ethnicity gap is smallest within the 31-49 age group. It could therefore be inferred that the ethnicity gap is less of an issue for this ‘mid-career’ group. Older apprentices are more likely to have become an apprentice through their existing employer rather than young apprentices who tend to apply for advertised vacancies.<sup>21</sup> This suggests that apprenticeships are more accessible for BAME people who are already in employment as a career progression opportunity, rather than to young people as a post KS4 option. The notion that apprenticeships as a whole suffer from the same endemic discrimination patterns as the labour market may therefore be too simple: the ethnicity gap is much more pronounced for young people from a BAME background than it is for people over 30.

<sup>21</sup> Learning and Work Institute, *Apprentice Pay: sticking to the rules*, 2017

**Figure 3: Proportion of BAME apprentices by age band**



Source: Localities Data cube 2015/16, Skills Funding Agency

**3.11** Using more detailed ethnicity data which is available for 16-17 year olds shows that despite making up approximately 23% of this age group in GM, BAME young people only account for just over 8% of apprentices. Therefore, there are nearly two thirds fewer 16 and 17 year old BAME apprentices than we would expect if there was equal ethnic representation. The lack of BAME representation in apprenticeships presents the biggest issue for young people, especially those under 18. It would seem wise for efforts to increase diversity within apprenticeships in GM to focus on this cohort.

**3.12 Apprentices by gender**

There are no significant gender differences within ethnic groups. BAME apprentices are split almost equally into females and males (49% and 51% respectively). White apprentices are split less equally with 54% females to 46% males. The gender split remains even across the age bands. The only age group within which males and females differ significantly is 25+ white apprentices, where there are 7,195 females to 4,329 males

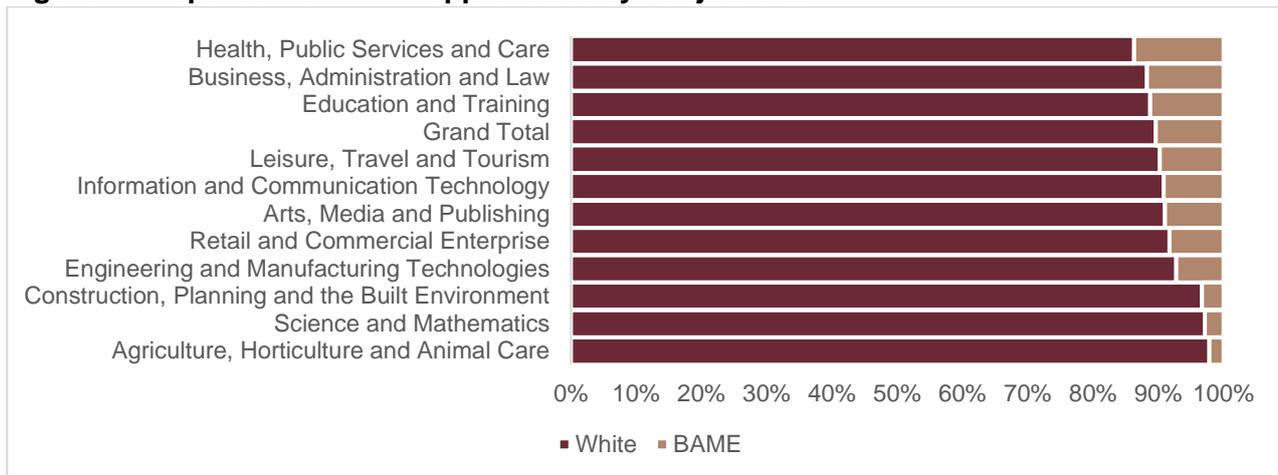
**3.13** There is however a large amount of variation by gender within subject areas. The breakdown of BAME apprentices by gender and subject shows that half of all female BAME apprentices are studying health and social care frameworks, making up 78% (746) of total BAME health and social care apprentices. There are gender differences within other subjects as well, for example male BAME apprentices account for 91% (267) of total BAME apprentices studying engineering and manufacturing technologies. This is likely to be one reason why the gender pay gap is also prevalent within apprenticeship pay – and in fact is larger than the pay gap for all workers.<sup>22</sup> However, these trends within subject areas are reflected for all apprentices regardless of ethnicity.

**3.14 BAME apprentices by subject area**

BAME apprentices are highly concentrated in the three subject areas of business and admin, health and social care and retail and commercial enterprises, with 81% of BAME apprentices studying these subjects compared to 72% of white apprentices. Additionally, there are much smaller proportions of BAME apprentices studying engineering, manufacturing and construction subjects (11% compared to 19% of white apprentices).

<sup>22</sup> Learning and Work Institute, *Three million apprenticeships: building ladders of opportunity*, 2017

**Figure 4: Proportion of BAME apprentices by subject area**

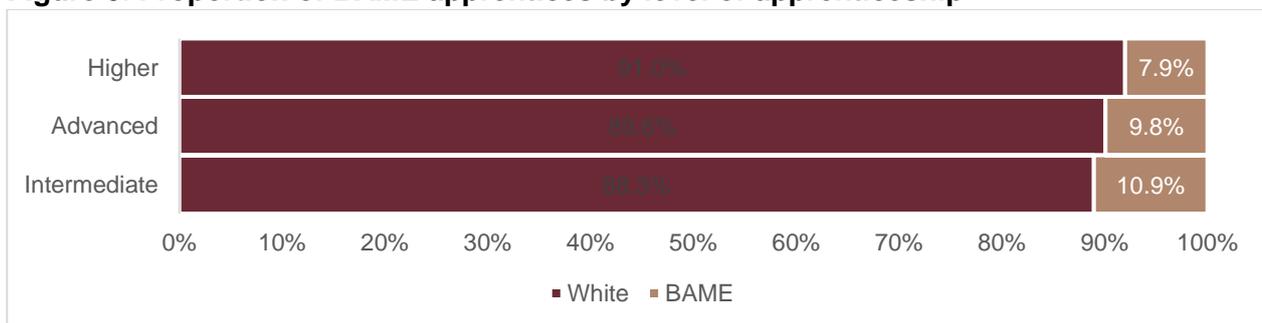


Source: Localities Data cube 2015/16, Skills Funding Agency

### 3.15 Apprentices by level

The proportion of BAME apprentices decreases at advanced and higher level. BAME people account for just 7.9% (135) of higher level apprentices. In other words, the higher the apprenticeship level, the smaller the proportion of BAME people, as can be seen in Figure 5. This is concerning, as it suggests that BAME people are facing additional barriers to higher level apprenticeships, that could provide transitions into better paid positions in the labour market.

**Figure 5: Proportion of BAME apprentices by level of apprenticeship**



Source: Localities Data cube 2015/16, Skills Funding Agency

### 3.16 Starts and achievements

This report has thus far focussed on numbers of apprenticeship starts, that is, numbers of people who *began* an apprenticeship programme. But the data for achievements shows that in 2015/16 BAME people accounted for a slightly higher proportion of apprenticeship programmes achieved – 11.1% as opposed to 10.4% of starts. This indicates that BAME people are slightly more likely to complete their programmes than white people. This theory is consistent with young people’s educational outcomes in general, whereby BAME young people tend to outperform white young people.

**3.17** A lack of BAME representation in apprenticeships alone does not automatically mean there is a problem which needs solving. Provided young people are developing in other ways - more academic pathways, for example - the ethnicity gap could be simply a reflection of different choices. The next section of this report explores the other routes young people from BAME backgrounds take in education and the labour market.

## 4 Ethnicity in education and training

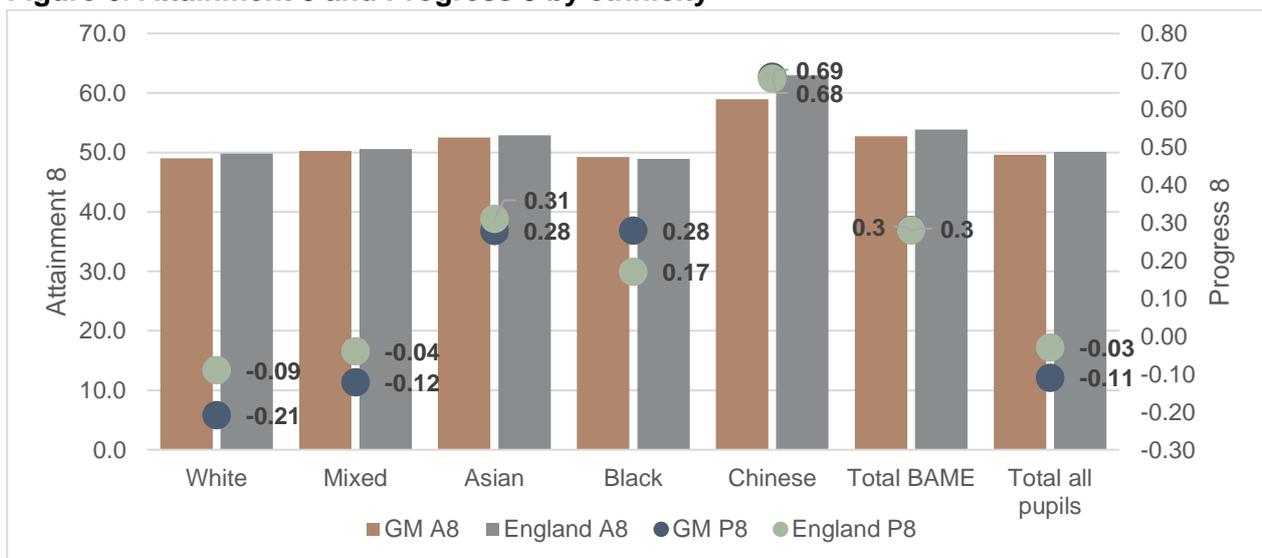
4.1 It is clear that BAME people are underrepresented within apprenticeships. However, any consideration of this fact must bear in mind what they might be doing instead. The majority of this section will focus on young people since they have been identified as the group which experience the most severe ethnicity gap within apprenticeships. In order to do this, the following section includes an analysis of the ethnic make-up of different aspects of education and training, including further education and sixth forms, NEETs (not in education, employment or training) and higher education. Following this there is a summary of literature relating to BAME representation in the labour market, to contextualise the consequences of ethnic differences in education and training on eventual careers.

### 4.2 Key stage 4 attainment and progress

Attainment 8 and Progress 8 are the recently introduced methods for measuring GCSE results, otherwise known as key stage 4 (KS4). Attainment 8 gauges pupils' performance across KS4 exams at the end of secondary school. Progress 8 measures the progress students make between the end of primary and leaving secondary school. As Figure 6 shows, there is a very small lag between most pupils in GM and the national average. Black pupils in GM achieve marginally higher than the national average and there is slightly less of a gap between black and white pupils in GM than there is nationally. Chinese pupils tend to excel at KS4, but in GM they are four points behind the national average in Attainment 8.

4.3 Although some of the differences in Progress 8 measures between GM and England may appear large on Figure 6, this only amounts to 8% of a grade lower for all pupils. Black pupils in GM are again doing well by this measure: they scored 11% of a grade ahead of the national average. BAME pupils as a whole are ahead of white pupils by one quarter of a grade in Progress 8, and by 3.1 in the Attainment 8 measure.

**Figure 6: Attainment 8 and Progress 8 by ethnicity<sup>23</sup>**



Source: KS4 achievement tables 2015/16, Department for Education

<sup>23</sup> Schools and universities record ethnicity data slightly differently to the census and further education, in that 'Chinese' is separated out as a separate parent category from 'Asian/Asian British'. This is reflected in sections 4.4 to 4.14 of this report.

#### 4.4 KS4 destinations

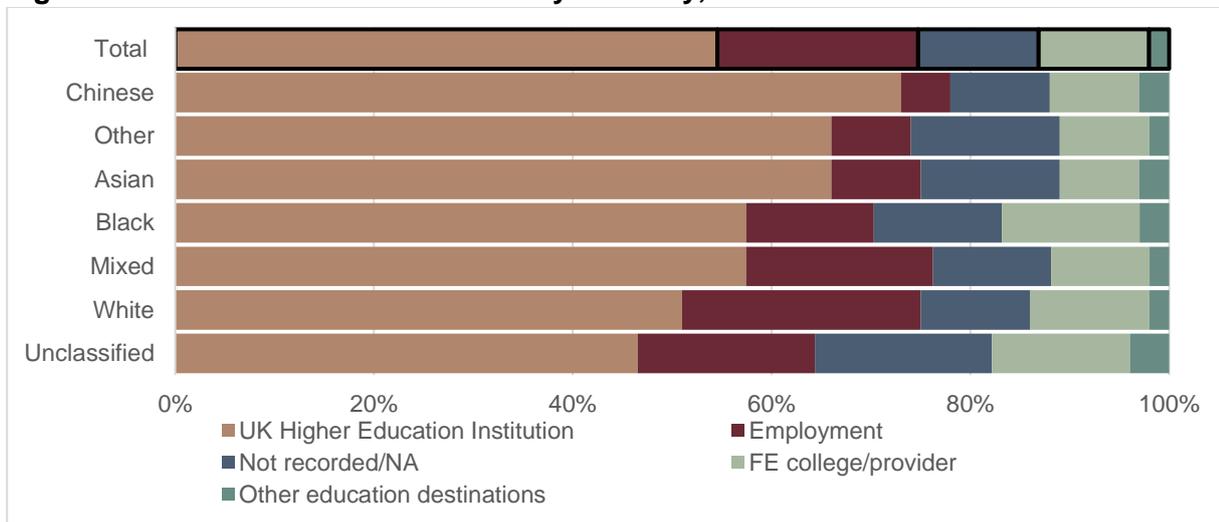
The destinations of KS4 leavers are tracked and recorded, along with their ethnicity which allows us to identify what education or training destinations were taken by school leavers after GCSEs. Overall, 92% of young people who left KS4 in 2014/15 sustained an education, training or employment destination continuously for the 2015/16 academic year. This ranges from 96% of Asian and Chinese young people and 95% of black young people, to 92% of white young people and 91% of young people from a mixed background.

#### 4.5 KS5 attainment and destinations

By the end of KS5, the differences between ethnic groups are narrowing, but Chinese students still excel, and white students are no longer the lowest achieving group. Students from a mixed background are also doing much better in terms of attainment, and it is possible that, as with white students, those with the lowest attainment have moved on to other less academic routes, therefore raising the average attainment. This is further supported by the KS4 destinations and NEETS data which shows much higher proportions of young people from these backgrounds entering employment/training or becoming NEET.

4.6 Post KS5 destinations data applies to the 60% of young people who studied at level 3 before going on to their chosen 'destination'. Figure 7 shows that all BAME groups in GM were more likely to go to university than white young people, who were more likely to go into employment. This follows on logically from the KS4 destinations data, as young people who progress to the more academic option of school sixth form over college are more likely to go to university.

**Figure 7: Destinations of KS5 leavers by ethnicity, 2015/16**



Source: KS5 destinations tables 2015/16, Department for Education

#### 4.7 BAME representation in all further education and training

Further education and training is a vast category containing courses ranging from short, functional skills courses lasting just a few hours up to A levels and NVQs taken over a year or more in classroom and workplace settings. Nevertheless, FE arguably provides the most relevant comparison with

apprenticeship ethnicity trends in that vocational college courses, especially at level 3, are what might be regarded as a genuine alternative to an apprenticeship.

#### 4.8 Traineeships

Traineeships are usually preparation courses for apprenticeships or employment for young people without the necessary skills to go straight into either. They consist of unpaid work experience lasting from a few weeks to a few months, combined with a focussed period of work preparation training and basic maths and English. In GM, there is a greater proportion of BAME people undertaking traineeships than apprenticeships, (15% vs 11%). Some practices surrounding traineeships have been criticised for being exploitative, with critics claiming that in a minority of cases they amount to little more than free labour for businesses, with no added value for the young person.<sup>24</sup> Proponents of traineeships state that they are a stepping stone to accessing an apprenticeship, for young people who do not have the required skills and experience. If this is the case, it raises the question of why traineeships are not resulting in greater volumes of BAME young people progressing to an apprenticeship. Nevertheless, the data on traineeships heightens a sense of the exceptional nature of apprenticeships: why should traineeships be roughly representative of the GM population and not apprenticeships?

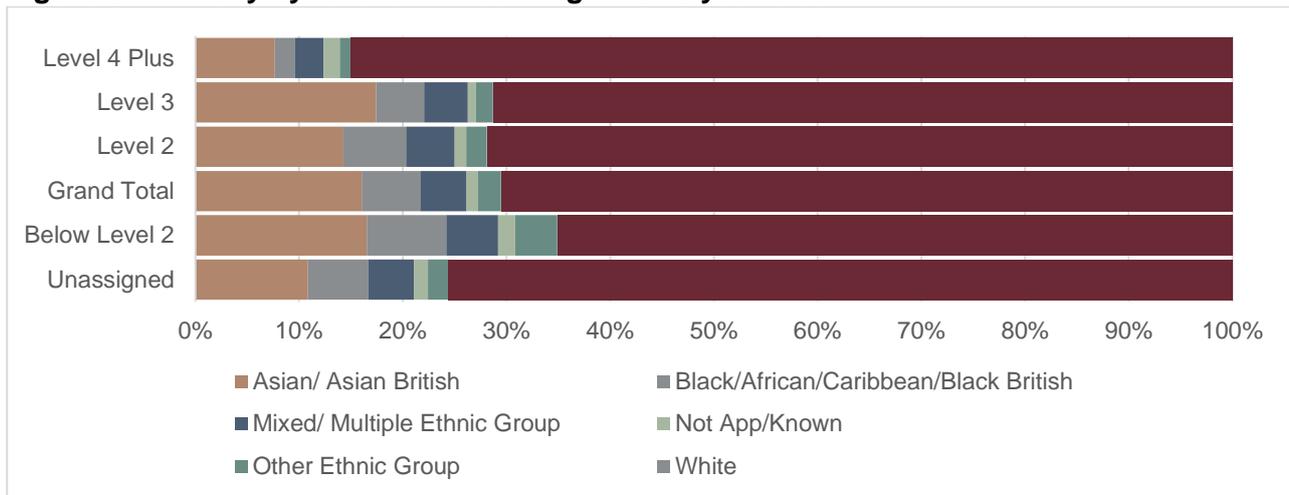
#### 4.9 Ethnicity and levels of further education

The ethnic make-up of learners is different depending on the level of further education. Figure 8 shows that among FE students<sup>25</sup>, only 41% of Black/Black British 16-18 year olds were studying for a Level 3 qualification compared to 50% of white and 54% of Asian/Asian British 16-18 year olds. White young people were the least likely to be studying a below level 2 course, and Asian young people were the most likely to be studying a level 3 course. Patterns within further education do not match those in apprenticeships or in KS5 learning. This is perhaps because of the extremely wide range of courses that is covered under the 'further education' banner. It is also possible that because more BAME than white young people follow academic education routes, those who follow FE routes are less academic and are therefore learning at lower levels. However, if we take level 3 courses as a whole, it is clear that they are much more diverse than apprenticeships: just under 30% of level 3 learning is undertaken by people from a BAME background.

<sup>24</sup> TUC, *Traineeships – TUC response to Discussion Paper*, 2013

<sup>25</sup> FE students cover young people attending one of the ten GM based colleges or an independent training provider. Sixth form colleges are excluded.

**Figure 8: Ethnicity by level of FE learning – 16-18 year olds**



Source: Localities Data cube 2015/16, Skills Funding Agency

**4.10 Subjects**

Young BAME people are positively represented within many subject areas of further education. The most popular subjects for BAME people were ICT, business and science and mathematics, arguably amongst the top subjects for career and earnings prospects. Some 42% of Asian/Asian British young people were studying these subjects, compared to 28% of Black/Black British young people and 26% of white young people.

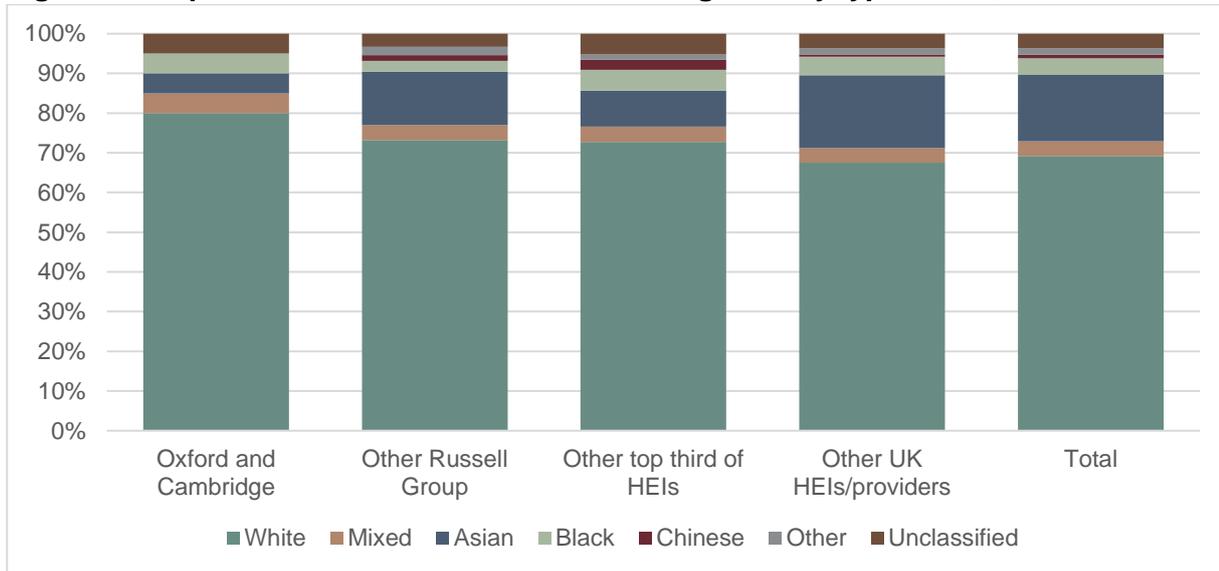
**4.11** Preparation for life and work courses accounted for 21% of further education courses, however this rises to 28% of courses undertaken by Black/Black British young people, and 38% of those taken by young people who identified as being from an Arab or ‘other’ ethnic background. Preparation for life and work courses are mainly basic English and maths plus some other functional skills courses. Therefore there are clearly some groups of young people who are more likely to be studying these basic courses and therefore less likely to be able to access higher level education and more lucrative labour market opportunities in the future.

**4.12 Higher education**

**4.13** As we note above, BAME young people are more likely to make it to a university than a person from a white background. Yet there is evidence that despite this academic achievement, BAME young people are not yet making it to the very top of the academic hierarchy. When it comes to the most

prestigious higher education institutions – Russell Group Universities – white people are more likely to attend than BAME groups (see figure 9). This is true both nationally and within GM.

**Figure 9: Proportions of GM KS5 leavers attending HEIs by type of HEI, 2015/16<sup>26</sup>**



Source: KS5 destinations tables 2015/16, Department for Education

**4.14** Although BAME young people make up 31% (3,190) of KS5 leavers in GM who go to university, this drops to 26% (790) of those who go to the top third of UK HEIs, and just 20% (20 people) of GM KS5 leavers who go to Oxford and Cambridge. This means that despite more BAME young people than ever making it to university, they are still underrepresented among elite institutions.

**4.15** Looking in more detail at the ethnicity breakdown of those from GM attending the top third of UK HEIs shows that Chinese students are positively represented – forming 0.9% of those who go to university but 2% of those going to the top third. However Asian students form 16.7% of those going to university from GM and only 13% of those going to the top third. Black students form 4.2% of those going to university and only 3% of those going to the top third. So there is a disproportionate lack of young people from an Asian or black background from GM attending the top quality universities.

**4.16 Applications and offer rates of UK HEIs by ethnicity**

Analysis by UCAS, the higher education applications system in the UK, suggests that applications from people with different ethnic backgrounds have different rates of success, even when grades and subjects are the same.<sup>27</sup> For example, for the 2017 June application deadline cohort, the difference between the actual offer rate and the offer rate that is predicted if grades and subject choice were the only factors was -2.3 for Black applicants, -0.8 for Asian applicants and +0.3 for white applicants. There may be other factors exerting an influence on this process including personal statements, teacher references or relevance of subjects studied to course choice. Nevertheless, it could be implied that there is at least an element of systematic discrimination in the university

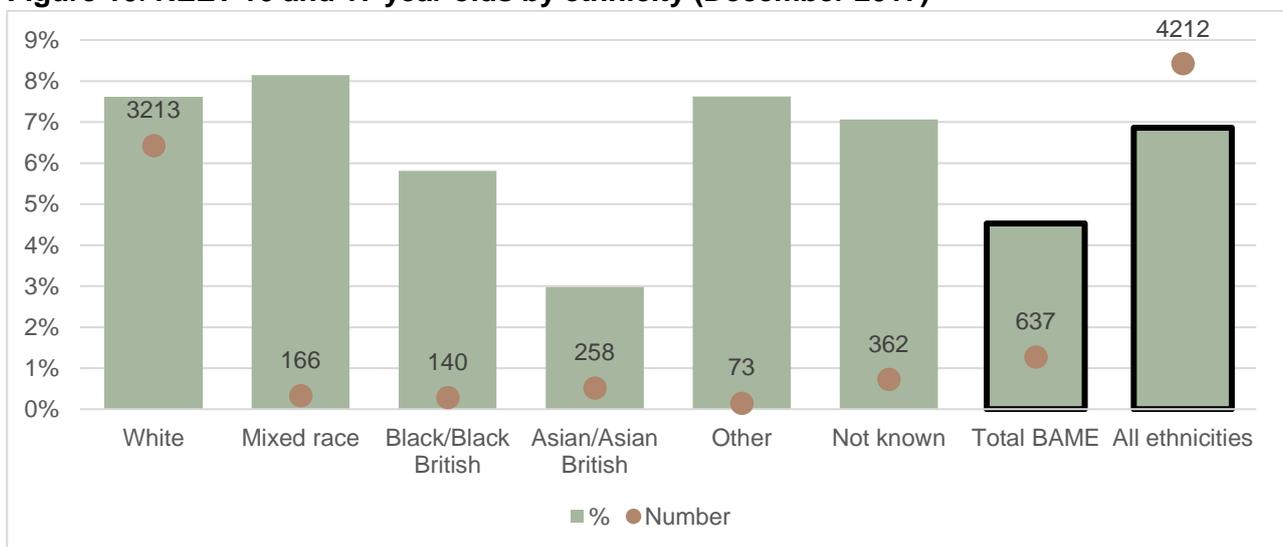
<sup>26</sup> Only 100 KS5 leavers from GM attended Oxford and Cambridge in 2015/16 therefore these numbers should be treated with caution  
<sup>27</sup> Analysis and Insight, *Sex, area background and ethnic group (End of Cycle 2017)*, 2018, p.9

applications system. This is especially apparent when considering the high attainment of BAME school pupils.

**4.17 Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)**

In direct contrast to elite higher education, there are the young people who have fallen out of the system and are not engaged in any formal education, employment or training (NEET). Statutory NEET reporting now only covers 16 and 17 year olds, but the widely understood definition extends up to the age of 24. In GM, BAME 16 and 17 year olds are less likely than white 16 and 17 year olds to be NEET. There is, however, significant variation between BAME groups, as can be seen in Figure 10. NEET incidence amongst Asian/Asian British young people is low (3%) and brings the BAME NEET figure down considerably because this group accounts for 14% of all 16 and 17 year olds in GM.

**Figure 10: NEET 16 and 17 year olds by ethnicity (December 2017)**



Source: NCCIS at risk tables, December 2017, Department for Education

**4.18** Comparing NEET incidence with apprentice ethnicity gaps is very illuminating. The largest apprentice ethnicity gap is within the Asian/Asian British group, and this group also have the lowest NEET incidence. Young people from a mixed race background are more likely to be NEET than other ethnicities and they have a fairly small apprentice gap. Similarly, white young people show one of the highest NEET incidences and are overrepresented within apprenticeships. These findings show that higher NEET incidence is associated with higher apprenticeship uptake within ethnic groups. They also suggest that using apprenticeships to help NEET young people in GM may not necessarily increase diversity within apprenticeships, as young people from BAME backgrounds are overall less likely to be NEET than their white peers.<sup>28</sup>

**4.19** Greater Manchester Talent Match is a Big Lottery-funded programme which supports young people aged 18-24 who have been NEET for 12 months or more, and need extra support to help them along their pathway to work. Data from this programme shows that of the 1,900 young people who have been supported, only 3.6% (68 people) began an apprenticeship.<sup>29</sup> The viability of apprenticeships as an option for NEET young people is currently low and addressing this would likely require a step

<sup>28</sup> There are also likely to be significant differences by gender however NEET figures by ethnicity and gender are not available  
<sup>29</sup> Greater Manchester Talent Match evaluation data

change in employer practices, pre apprenticeship activity and apprenticeship design, in order to engage these young people who are the furthest from the labour market.

## 5 Ethnicity and the labour market

- 5.1 So far this report has found that despite underrepresentation within apprenticeships, educational outcomes for BAME young people are in many respects better than those for white young people, bearing in mind there is a significant amount of variation between different BAME groups. This section considers the situation of BAME people in the labour market more generally, and specifically within GM, to contextualise the consequences of ethnic differences in education and training on eventual careers.
- 5.2 There is a vast body of evidence which demonstrates that the experiences of BAME people in the labour market are in most cases worse than those for white people, due to the persistence of discrimination and racism in employment. The UK poverty rate is twice as high for BAME groups as for white groups, and the more recent high rates of university attendance and low NEET incidences are not yet transforming into more positive labour market outcomes further down the line. Despite the educational successes of many BAME young people, all BAME groups are more likely to be overqualified for the role they work in, and get less of a return for their A levels or university education than white people.<sup>30</sup>
- 5.3 BAME graduates are more likely to work in low-paid occupations for example within the caring, leisure and hospitality industries. This is especially true for black African and Bangladeshi graduates, where 25% and 22% respectively work in low paid occupations, compared to 13% of Indian graduates, 11% of white graduates and 9% of Chinese graduates.<sup>31</sup> The actual quality of work is often poorer as well. One in thirteen BAME employees and one in eight black employees are in insecure work, compared to an average of one in seventeen of all employees.<sup>32</sup>
- 5.4 Once in employment BAME people (particularly those identifying as black and/or Muslim) face a second disadvantage in barriers against career progression.<sup>33</sup> BAME people can also face unequal opportunities for professional development, especially when organisations fail to have clear opportunities for training. This is exacerbated if progression is reliant on opaque processes or informal networks. A lack of BAME role models or mentors at higher levels compounds these barriers.<sup>34</sup> Evidence from the Chartered Institute for Professional Development shows that more BAME employees than white employees said progression is an important aim of their working life. Despite this, one in eight of the UK working population is from a BAME background but only one in sixteen people in the top management positions.<sup>35</sup>
- 5.5 Ethnic disparities within the labour market nationally are also reflected within GM. The most recent briefing from the Inclusive Growth Analysis Unit states that “in 2016, all BME groups in GM were less likely to be employed than White people”.<sup>36</sup> The proportion of BAME people in employment in GM was 59.7%, compared to 63.8% for the UK, although the employment rate for all GM residents is lower than the UK average. Within this, Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups had the lowest level of employment, at 56.4%. However, this was higher than the UK average for these groups. The mixed

<sup>30</sup> Debbie Weekes-Bernard, *Poverty and Ethnicity in the Labour Market*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2017

<sup>31</sup> Resolution Foundation, *Rapid increase in BAME graduates still leave big gaps when it comes to their jobs and pay packets* [online blog] < <http://www.resolutionfoundation.org/media/press-releases/rapid-increase-in-bame-graduates-still-leave-big-gaps-when-it-comes-to-their-jobs-and-pay-packets/> > [accessed 17 April 2018]

<sup>32</sup> TUC, *Insecure work and ethnicity*, 2017

<sup>33</sup> Yaojin Li, *Ethnic Education and Labour Market Position in Britain (1972-2013)*, Debbie Weekes-Bernard and Jason Arday (eds), The Runnymede School Report: Race, Education and Inequality in Contemporary Britain, 2015, pp.22-26.

<sup>34</sup> Claudia Wood, *Progression in work*

<sup>35</sup> CIPD, *Addressing the barriers to BAME employee career progression to the top*, 2017

<sup>36</sup> Farah Elahi, *Addressing Ethnic Inequalities in the GM Labour Market*, Inclusive Growth Analysis Unit, 2017, p.2.

ethnic background group had the highest level of employment of any ethnic minority group, at 66.9%. This is compared to an employment rate of 72.9% for white people in GM.

- 5.6 Research by the Centre for Dynamics of Ethnicity in GM has shown that the considerable ethnic employment inequality that exists in GM did not improve between the last two censuses, and in fact worsened for Black African people. Within census defined ethnic groups there is also a huge amount of variation between areas in ancestral country of origin, which makes comparisons between areas difficult to make.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Nissa Finney, Kitty Lympelopoulou and Farah Elahi, *Ethnic Inequalities in Manchester: A need for local partnerships and solutions*, Centre on Dynamics of Ethnicity, 2017

## 6 Conclusions

- 6.1** The aim of this report was to establish the nature of ethnic diversity in apprenticeships in Greater Manchester, and to situate this knowledge within wider information about education and work and how they affect BAME communities.
- 6.2** The apprenticeships data shows a lack of ethnic diversity which is apparent across GM and worsens the higher the apprenticeship. The issue is most severe for young people, particularly those under 18; the ethnicity gap diminishes virtually to nothing for those in their mid-careers. This is likely due to people accessing apprenticeships through their existing employers - a process which provides more parity than the apprenticeship applications system. Very low numbers of apprentices from an Asian background affects the overall apprentice gap in GM significantly; the gap for apprentices from a black or mixed background is much smaller and in some cases non-existent. Within this there are of course exceptions, notably for the Bangladeshi group who are positively represented within apprenticeships in GM.
- 6.3** Despite the apprentice ethnicity gap, analysing the educational pathways and outcomes for BAME groups outside apprenticeships shows that overall they achieve better educational outcomes than white young people, which leads to a lower chance of being NEET, and a higher probability of attending better quality KS5 destinations; and following that, university. This is particularly true for people from an Asian background, whereas people from a black or mixed ethnicity background tended to have educational outcomes that are similar to white people. Conversely, although all BAME groups were more likely than the white groups to attend university in general, white people are overrepresented within the top third of HEIs, Russell Group universities and Oxford and Cambridge in particular. Furthermore, both nationally and locally, white people have higher rates of employment than all BAME groups, and national research outlined above has evidenced the complex and persistent barriers and layers of discrimination that BAME people face in the labour market.
- 6.4** Taken together, this evidence suggests two fundamental drivers behind the lack of ethnic diversity in apprenticeships both in GM, and nationally.
- Firstly, that BAME young people aspire to and are encouraged towards high educational attainment, and that the expectations of families and communities in this respect are especially significant. Academic pathways resulting in higher education are the desired outcome and currently, apprenticeships are not seen as enabling aspiration to the same degree. Whether that is down to perception or reality is debatable. However with the increasing emergence of higher and degree level apprenticeships, this perception is likely to change.
  - Secondly, as apprenticeships are based in the workplace, they inevitably reflect inequalities in the labour market that are apparent through employment rates, recruitment and progression barriers, and significant ethnic segmentation. Potential apprentices face a double barrier in that they must pass an application process with both a provider and an employer. Provider recruitment processes will therefore be contributing to the issue.
- 6.5** Lastly, to return to a point made in the introduction, the BAME category and broader ethnic groups used for analysis in this report are an unwieldy and ultimately unrealistic generalisation of ethnicity.

Despite being self-identified they represent the list of choices available to an individual on a form, rather than the unique and nuanced 'ethnic identity' that a person holds, which will be intertwined with culture, religion, gender and a myriad of other factors that constitute identity and social position. As a result, the importance of an intersectional lens should also be borne in mind when thinking about diversity in apprenticeships. Ethnic diversity needs to be considered alongside disadvantage and gender at the least, as these characteristics interact to have a combined influence on the choices and opportunities available to people. This approach necessitates a holistic view of an individual which avoids reducing them to a specific characteristic such as ethnicity. In doing this, education and training support and guidance can be offered which ultimately addresses individual barriers and plays to personal strengths.