

**Report to the
United Nations Working Group of Experts
on People of African Descent
July 2026**

justfair

Background image by [Aleea Rae Campbell for Fine Acts](#)

About Just Fair

[Just Fair](#) is the only UK-wide organisation solely dedicated to advancing [economic, social and cultural rights](#) (ESCR). We are internationally respected as a thought leader and principal advocate for the recognition and enforcement of ESCR in UK law and policy. Just Fair convenes the UK ESCR Network – a network of over 200 organisations and activists working to promote ESCR across the UK.

The purpose of this report

The purpose of this report is to update the United Nations Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent (the Working Group) on developments in the UK following the 2023 Country Visit and subsequent report with recommendations. We raise significant concerns about rising racism and discrimination against people of African descent (amongst others) in the UK.

We seek continued support from the UN in holding the UK government to account on its international obligations under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) which is the focus of our charitable objectives as an organisation. Consequently, this report focuses upon the ESCR of people of African descent in the UK.

Where appropriate we cross reference to recommendations in the Working Group's [2023 Country Visit Report](#) – this is indicated in square brackets at the end of the relevant section with the acronym WGCVR 2023 followed by the applicable paragraph from the 2023 report.

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Overview of UK context in 2026

1. The current context in the UK is broadly one of hostility to rights and acute risk of rights regression. Migrants are particularly targeted. There is [increasing](#) open racism and rising prominence and support for the policies of far-right movements which is creating a culture of hostility towards, and climate of fear for, migrants and racialised people across the UK.
2. Examples include:
 - a. The political party Reform's policy proposals to repeal [equality](#) (see also [AIUK](#)) and [human rights](#) protections should they be elected to form a UK Government. They have set out a number of [hostile](#) policy proposals which focus on demonisation, detention and deportation of people subject to immigration control. They have also indicated they would [deny visas](#) to individuals from countries seeking reparations [WGCVR 2023, para 77]. In May 2026 Reform [gained](#) 1454 seats on local councils and secured control of 14 local authorities in local government elections in England.
 - b. Far-right agitators seek to [disrupt and undermine](#) equality protections, including in relation to positive action initiatives which are aimed at challenging structural racism and address under-representation and inequality of access.
 - c. The main opposition party in the UK Parliament, the Conservative Party has indicated an intention to [withdraw the UK](#) from the European Convention on Human Rights should they win power.
 - d. Recent immigration reforms put forward by the UK Government – referred to as [Earned Settlement proposals](#) – which extend the time an individual must wait for settled status (permanent residency) from five years to ten and fifteen years in many cases, raise [serious concerns](#) about human rights compliance as well as risking the undermining of the rule of law. This is in part due to the fact that the changes would (as currently formulated) have retrospective effect and apply to those already on a path to settlement. [Research](#) has highlighted that two of the five nationalities most likely to be impacted by the changes are nationals from Nigeria and Zimbabwe. Civil society groups have [condemned](#) the proposals as racist and classist. A recent [report](#) from the House of Lords Justice and Home Affairs Select Committee has set out a number of criticisms of the Earned Settlement proposals [WGCVR 2023, para 87].

- e. This is in addition to ongoing failures to repeal legislation brought in by previous administrations such as the [Nationality and Borders Act 2022](#), which was earlier [criticised](#) by UN experts and [civil society](#) [WGCVR 2023, para 89].
 - f. There have been instances of civil disorder and violence directed at migrant communities in the UK – for example most recently in [Belfast](#). In addition to evident risks to the physical safety of migrants and their families, their homes and livelihoods have been impacted - see for example this testimony shared with the [BBC](#) and [the Guardian](#) newspaper by a Nigerian nurse and two Ugandan care workers living and working in Northern Ireland. The consequences for the health and well-being of impacted individuals and other rights such as work and education appear inevitable and require further independent documentation.
 - g. Rising anti-migrant and racist rhetoric has led to increasing expressions of ‘patriotism’ or nationalism in the form of extensive and increasing public displays of the St George’s Flag in England. It has been [reported](#) that in some areas this has created a hostile and intimidating environment for Black and Asian National Health Service (NHS) workers who care for people in their own homes. Areas have been described as ‘no-go zones’ with staff reporting that they feel deliberately targeted, and vulnerable due to their lone working in the community.
3. There has been a regression in a number of areas relating to the Working Group’s recommendations on combating racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia in the UK since its 2023 Country Visit. This delays and denies dignity for people of African descent and compliance with human rights obligation on the part of the State [WGCVR 2023, para 73].

UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the UK

- 4. The regression referred to above, along with the delay and denial of dignity for people of African descent in the UK, is highlighted by recent recommendations from the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights – CESCR - (see paragraphs 10 and 11 below). Just Fair led the largest ever [UK civil society engagement with CESCR](#), as part of its seventh review of the UK’s compliance with its ESCR obligations. The Committee

received the highest volume of submissions of evidence it has ever received (over 70) and made over 90 recommendations in its [concluding observations](#).

5. The Committee's concerns include:

- a. Not all jurisdictions within the United Kingdom have comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation and that equality legislation is inconsistently applied across jurisdictions while racial inequality persists (para. 24).
- b. Discriminatory migration and asylum legislation combined with barriers to asylum claims and the 'no recourse to public funds' condition undermine the economic, social and cultural rights of migrants and people seeking asylum (para. 26).
- c. Workplace discrimination (para. 34).
- d. Wage disparities and unequal pay for work of equal value which continue to disproportionately impact [amongst others] ethnic minority people (para. 36).
- e. Rising poverty rates which disproportionately affect [amongst others] ethnic minority groups, particularly those in low-paid or precarious employment (para. 44).
- f. Reports of discrimination and intimidation faced by migrants and ethnic minority people which hinders access to adequate housing (para. 46).
- g. Attainment gaps, persistent obstacles faced by [amongst others] migrant children in access to education without discrimination, serious cases of violence, bullying and cyberbullying based on [amongst others] race (para.56).

6. The Committee recommended the State Party:

- a. Ensure adoption of a comprehensive anti-discrimination and equality law, particularly in Northern Ireland and enact outstanding provisions of the Equality Act 2010 (para. 25 a and b).
- b. Prevent and combat discrimination, racism, stereotypes and inequalities faced by (amongst others) persons of African descent by implementing targeted awareness-raising campaigns and affirmative action measure in such areas as decent work, social security, adequate housing, healthcare and education to ensure that all persons fully enjoy Covenant rights without discrimination (para. 25 c).

- c. Review and repeal any laws that discriminate against migrant groups or limit access to rights for people seeking asylum, refugees, migrants and stateless persons ensuring full compliance with the Covenant (para. 27 a).
- d. Review the 'no recourse to public funds' condition to prevent an increase in poverty and precarity among migrants and people seeking asylum (para. 27 c).
- e. Enhance gender-responsive budgeting to guarantee women's equal access to employment, social security, healthcare, education and decision-making roles in both the public and private sectors, with targeted measures for women from ethnic minorities, including women of African descent (para. 31 c).
- f. Intensify efforts to address precarious working conditions and create decent work opportunities with a particular focus including women from minority ethnic groups (para. 35 a).
- g. Enhance protections against discrimination in employment and occupation, including based on ethnicity (para. 31 e).
- h. Strengthen measures to guarantee equal pay for work of equal value, particularly including ethnic minority people (para. 37 b).
- i. Develop or enhance measures to address the multidimensional determinants of poverty by focusing on poverty eradication through clear, measurable targets, paying particular attention to groups disproportionately affected, including ethnic minorities (para. 45 a).
- j. Take all measures necessary to ensure accessibility to affordable adequate housing for disadvantaged groups, including migrants and ethnic minorities (para. 47 a).
- k. Strengthen measures to prevent and combat intimidation by paramilitary groups against ethnic minorities and migrants in Northern Ireland in order to ensure their access to adequate housing and to prevent de facto segregation (para. 47 h).
- l. Increase efforts to ensure equal access to maternal health services for migrant women and women from ethnic minority groups with a view to reducing maternal and infant mortality rates (para. 53 a).
- m. Ensure that migrant children have access to quality education that is culturally appropriate and adapted to their needs (para. 57 d).

- n. Take effective measures to ensure the protection of all children from bullying and violence in schools and strengthen preventative measures and promotion of understanding and tolerance (para. 57 e).
 - o. Take effective measures to eliminate discriminatory attitudes and stereotypes in educational materials and the school environment and ensure that educational institutions and teachers do not perpetuate such stereotypes, including through provision of appropriate training programmes for teachers (para. 57 f).
7. Just Fair chairs the UK's ESCR Network and has lead engagement with the UK Government regarding CDESCR's concluding observations. To date, the UK Government has not published details of how it plans to implement CDESCR's recommendations.

The ongoing state of ESCR in the UK for people of African descent

8. In relation to **work-based rights** under ICESCR, there is evidence of ongoing inequality and discrimination:
- a. Trade Unions Congress (TUC) [research](#) shows that in 2024 16.3 per cent of Black and Minority Ethnic workers were likely to be in insecure work compared to 10.8 per cent of white workers. Between 2011 and 2024 the number of Black and Minority Ethnic workers in insecure work increased by over two and a half times. These workers accounted for just over two-thirds of the net growth in insecure work despite making up 17 per cent of workers in the UK. Almost one in five Black and Minority Ethnic men were in insecure work. [Black Equity Organisation](#) report that Black/ African/ Caribbean workers are more likely to be in insecure work (18.9 per cent) compared to their white counterparts (9.6 per cent).
 - b. TUC [research in 2026](#) also highlights that Black workers continue to experience racism, insecurity and unequal treatment at work across the UK and there is evidence that this is increasing and increasing in severity.
 - c. The UK Government has [committed](#) to introducing mandatory ethnicity (and disability) pay gap reporting for large employers. While a welcome first step in a context where there has been a [consistent pay gap](#) between 2012 to 2022 between Black, African, Caribbean or Black British employees earning a lower median gross hourly pay rate than white employees, pay reporting alone will not be sufficient to address the pay gap [WGCVR, para 81].

9. In relation to **social security**:

- a. [Research](#) highlights that the [sanctioning system](#) which applies in the UK social security system in relation to [Universal Credit](#) has an unequal and disproportionate impact on different minoritised groups. Analysis of Department of Work and Pensions data for the research carried out between February 2024 and July 2025 found that claimants with an ethnicity other than white, male claimants and young claimants were more likely to be in conditionality regimes where sanctions apply. Specifically, in July 2025 research found that Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British claimants of social security benefits were 64 per cent more likely to be in such a regime than white claimants - the regime with the most stringent conditionality requirements and where there is a much higher rate of sanctions is the 'searching for work conditionality regime'. In July 2025 Black/African/Caribbean/ Black British claimants were 99 per cent more likely than white claimants to be in this regime and thus at risk of sanctions.
- b. The no recourse to public funds condition results in '[immense hardship](#)' for people seeking asylum in particular and to whom it applies in terms of being able to afford food for themselves and their families (see also: [Joseph Rowntree Foundation](#)). The decision to persist with this policy is a political choice – underlined by the [decision](#) to extend access to free school meal provision in England to children in families subject to the no recourse to public funds condition. It is open to the UK Government to choose to take steps to end this harmful policy.

10. In terms of the **widest protection and assistance accorded to the family**, serious questions arise in relation to the UK's commitment to this. For example:

- a. [Black Equity Organisation](#) have highlighted that in 2024, 51 per cent of children in Black/African/Caribbean and Black British families were in poverty, double the rate of poverty for white children.
- b. The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) [research](#) in 2026 revealed that over 300,000 children already living in the UK could be forced to wait at least an additional five years (amounting to a default minimum waiting period of ten years) under the UK Government's Earned Settlement proposals (see also above). This delay in secure immigration status will impact the ability of young people to plan for the future, restrict access to higher education and student

finance as well as future employment opportunities. The parents of the impacted children may also be ineligible for support through an extended application of the '[no recourse to public funds](#)' condition which prevents access to state support and benefits. This increases the risk of child poverty for low-income households.

11. In relation to an **adequate standard of living**:

- a. It was reported in 2023 that [evidence](#) indicates that there are racial disparities in food insecurity in the UK. Food insecurity was found to be highest in households where the head of the household was Black, African, Caribbean and Black British (19 per cent compared to white 6 per cent or Indian 4 per cent). Black and minority ethnic people can experience particular [structural barriers](#) to accessing food support in the UK.
- b. A [report](#) published in 2025 by the Institute for Social Policy, Housing and Equalities Research found that Black people in the UK are four more times likely to experience homelessness than white people linked to [deep-rooted inequalities](#) in housing, employment and access to services.
- c. [Black Equity Organisation](#) also highlight UK Government data published in 2025 showing that in the two years to March 2023, 31 per cent of Black Caribbean and 22 per cent of Black African households were homeowners compared to 70 per cent of white British households. The data also indicates that in the same time frame 14 per cent of Black African households had issues with damp compared to 4 per cent of white British households. Black Equity Organisation note that insecure, inadequate housing 'inevitably impacts Black people's health and well-being and perpetuates disadvantage from one generation to the next.'
- d. The Grenfell Inquiry in [2024](#) found no evidence of race or social discrimination as playing a part in the disaster. The inquiry did recognise that some survivors were racially discriminated against in the immediate aftermath of the fire. [Justice4Grenfell](#) campaigners have highlighted that the finding of a lack of evidence of discrimination playing a part in the disaster was 'inevitable' given the Inquiry's terms of reference excluded considerations of discrimination (something that the Working Group recommended was changed following their 2023 country visit) [WGCVR 2023, para 85]. 2026 [research](#) has found that racism is embedded in the architecture and design of the housing system in London.

- e. The ongoing impact of the [Windrush Scandal](#) continues and there are [serious concerns](#) that the Windrush Compensation Scheme is not fit for purpose. Black Equity Organisation is [researching](#) the impact of the Windrush Scandal on the housing of those affected – the full scale of the impact of the scandal is yet to emerge. Their research seeks to highlight the numbers and impacts upon individuals and families whose homes were repossessed or who were evicted because they could not pay their mortgage or rent as a result of losing their right to work or social security benefits, as well as mapping existing good practice from statutory bodies in supporting impacted individuals [WGCVR 2023, para 84].
- f. There is a disproportionate impact of temporary accommodation and homelessness on Black families, who are according [evidence](#) given to the UK House of Commons Women’s and Equalities Committee in 2025, [twelve times more likely](#) to be in temporary accommodation than their white counterparts. This has serious consequences for maternal and infant health. Data published in 2026 by the [All-Parliamentary Group for Households in Temporary Accommodation shows](#) that 3 per cent of all stillbirths and neonatal deaths in England occurred among mothers who were living in temporary accommodation or experiencing homelessness during pregnancy. Babies in these cases were significantly more likely to be of Black ethnicity and from deprived backgrounds. These outcomes reflect the intersection of structural racism, poverty and housing inequality. Conditions associated with temporary accommodation, including overcrowding, frequent relocations, poor nutrition, and reduced access to healthcare, increase risks during pregnancy and early life, raising serious concerns about racial disparities in the realisation of the right to adequate housing and health.
- g. This issue is also reflected in [a briefing](#) published in 2026 by the Networked Data Lab at the Health Foundation investigating the relationship between housing quality and health in North-West London. This research found that Black or Black British people were disproportionately likely to be affected by damp and mould and ‘fuel poverty.’ Their data showed that Black or Black British patients were more than twice as likely to have a record of damp and mould exposure in their primary care records than white patients.

- h. People seeking asylum, who are disproportionately Black and from other racialised communities, experience systemic violations of their right to an adequate standard of living in the UK. [Research by Just Fair and Human Rights Watch \(2023\)](#) found that families are often housed for extended periods in unsuitable and degrading conditions, including overcrowded hotels and institutional settings with damp, mould and pest infestations. These conditions undermine physical and mental health, restrict access to adequate and culturally appropriate food, and severely disrupt children's education. These harms are not incidental but arise from policy choices, including delays in asylum decision-making, restrictions on the right to work, and exclusion from mainstream support.
 - i. The [Committee on the Administration of Justice](#) have highlighted as a serious issue the prevalence in paramilitary-linked racist signage in public spaces in Northern Ireland including examples which incite discrimination in housing by threatening public and private landlords who rent to migrants.
12. Regarding **health** across the UK, in addition to the issues highlighted as intersecting with the right to an adequate standard of living/ right to housing above:
- a. The [Independent Investigation into Maternity and Neonatal Services](#) in England (led by Baroness Amos), published its [Interim Report](#) in February 2026. The investigation has heard directly from over 400 families, received more than 8,000 public responses and gathered wide ranging evidence from staff. The experiences shared so far reveal significant human rights concerns, particularly around the right to health. The maternal mortality rate increased from 8.8 (per 100,000 maternities) to 12.8 (per 100,000 maternities) in the period between 2017 to 2019 and 2022 to 2024. Black women are almost three times as likely to die during pregnancy or up to six weeks after birth compared with white women. Racism and discrimination 'occurs throughout the system' [according](#) to the Interim Report and structural racism and persistent inequalities lead to 'notably higher risk of adverse outcomes' for Black and Asian women. [Research](#) has also highlighted that Black women in the UK are more likely to experience serious birth complications and perinatal mental health illnesses. Black babies are also twice as likely to be born stillborn compared with white babies. [Researchers](#) consider that these disparities may be explained by the link between systemic

racism, socioeconomic disadvantage and environmental stressors which may affect key biological processes in ways that increase risk for pregnancy related conditions which give rise to worse pregnancy outcomes for Black women.

- b. [Research](#) presented in 2026 from King's College London, in the largest study of its kind, found that Black people in England are twice as likely to experience strokes as their white counterparts, and are less likely to receive timely care. Stroke incidence was found to be 131 per cent higher in Black African and 100 per cent higher in Black Caribbean populations compared to white counterparts. Black African stroke survivors were 34 per cent less likely to receive follow up care from the National Health Service after a stroke and experienced strokes about ten to twelve years earlier than white counterparts. Given the importance of immediate treatment to prevent a further stroke, this difference in follow up care leaves Black people at greater risk of worse future health outcomes.
- c. [Research](#) (2026) into pain relief provided to patients with cancer in England has found that people from minority ethnic backgrounds experiencing cancer pain in the last three months of life were less likely to receive prescriptions for opioids compared to those who are white, and doses received were lower.
- d. The [Care Quality Commission's Monitoring the Mental Health Act Report 24/25](#): people are becoming more unwell before they are referred for assessments under the MHA and are also waiting longer to be assessed meaning they are often more unwell when they are admitted to hospital. Between 2023/24 to 2024/25, there was a 17 per cent increase in the use of community treatment orders. There are systemic challenges in the recruitment and retention of staff, with 9 per cent of roles in mental health trusts in the NHS unfilled in March 2025. In 2024/25, people of Black or Black British ethnicity were over eight times more likely than those of White British ethnicity to be subject to a community treatment order.
- e. In the same report, the Care Quality Commission found that staff in 77 per cent of mental health services said that they had not heard of the Patient and Carer Race Equality Framework (PCREF). This is a mandatory framework across all NHS mental health trusts and providers of mental health services. It aims to support NHS trusts to become actively anti-racist organisations.
- f. Particular [barriers](#) persist for undocumented migrants and those who have been refused asylum in relation to access to healthcare [WGCVR 2023, 91].

13. Discrimination in access to **education** in compulsory schooling age includes:
- a. Ongoing unacceptably high levels of structural race discrimination against Black children and young people ([Black Equity Organisation](#), 2024).
 - b. According to a 2025 [report](#) by the [Runnymede Trust](#) with the Communities Empowerment Network, African and Black Caribbean children are suspended and permanently excluded from school at a higher rate than white British children. In state-funded secondary schools between 2021/2 and 2023/4 white British pupils had an average suspension rate of 21.8 per 100 compared to Black Caribbean and Mixed White and Black Caribbean pupils had rates of 23.3 and 34.9 per 100.
 - c. Increasing police presence in schools creates unsafe school environments for marginalised young people in particular and risks the increased criminalisation of young people. Evidence suggests that police presence in schools is targeted at ‘high deprivation’ areas which according to [Children’s Rights Alliance for England](#) in 2024 has a disproportionate impact on racialised communities [WGCVR 2023, para 80 and 92].
 - d. Discriminatory treatment with disproportionate searches, including police strip searches of young Black people in school such as the case of [Child Q](#). Evidence indicates that 75 per cent of children subject to strip searches in 2019-2021 were from ethnically diverse backgrounds ([Black Equity Organisation](#)). Black children are still disproportionately strip searched by the police, although this fell from six times, according to data gathered between 2018 and June 2022, to four times the national average, according to data gathered between July 2022 and June 2023 ([Children’s Commissioner](#) and [Black Equity Organisation](#))
 - e. Information compiled by [Race Equality First](#) in 2024 highlights the extent to which ethnic minority pupils experience race/ identity-based bullying in Wales and their lack of confidence in teachers to address the issue and that there is appropriate training and support for teachers to ensure racism and islamophobia are effectively and robustly dealt with.
 - f. Failures to address the discriminatory experiences of minoritised children in school persist, with concerns raised that calls to collect data on school responses to racial discrimination, bullying and cyberbullying to ensure effective monitoring and measured improvements have been ignored ([Black Equity Organisation](#), 2024).

- g. The absence of disaggregated data was highlighted as an important issue by the [Black South West Network](#) in 2024 as part of the civil society submission to CESCR compiled by Just Fair. They highlighted the example of Bristol rankings 159 out of 348 districts in England and Wales for educational inequality. However, for Black people, Bristol has the third highest level of educational inequality in England and Wales.
- h. A lack of diverse representation in the curriculum and sector ([Black Equity Organisation](#)). Little progress has been made on decolonising the euro-centric curriculum ([Children's Rights Alliance for England](#)).
- i. [Research](#) in 2021 found a higher prevalence of autism spectrum disorder in Black pupils compared to the national English rate of prevalence, and autistic children were more likely to face 'significant social disadvantage.' [Research](#) published in 2025 also indicates an intensification of inequalities for racially minoritised neurodivergent learners due to the intersection of racism and ableism in schools. The [study](#) focused on the lived experiences of masking Black Autistic girls in UK education and highlights the importance of structural and systemic change in order to dismantle inequities and challenge discriminatory practices experienced by those whose experiences are rooted in a 'long history of oppression against women, Black people and disabled communities.'

Conclusion

- 14. We raise significant concerns about rising racism and discrimination against people of African descent (amongst others) in the UK. The examples highlighted in this report are illustrative - they are not exhaustive – which underlines the depth of concern regarding the backsliding taking place in the UK in relation to the protection of the rights and dignity of people of African descent in the UK.
- 15. We seek continued support from the UN in holding the UK government to account on its international obligations under ICESCR.
- 16. We would welcome further dialogue with the Working Group on these issues and in particular how we might continue advocate for the UK Government to comply with the recommendations of the Working Group, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the CESCR amongst others.