BME Teachers in Scotland

An overview of the representation of BME Teachers in Scotland's Local Authorities

Who we are

The Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights is a Scottish anti-racism charity based in Glasgow. We are focused on working to eliminate racial discrimination and harassment, and promote racial justice across Scotland.

Our key mission is to:

- Protect, enhance, and promote the rights of minority ethnic communities across all areas of life in Scotland; and,
- Strengthen the social, economic, and political capital of minority ethnic communities, especially those at greatest risk of disadvantage

CRER takes a rights-based approach, promoting relevant international, regional, and national human rights and equality conventions and legislation.

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Introduction

Representation in the teaching workforce has significant implications for racial equality, given the public-facing nature of the profession and the direct and sustained contact with children. Black and minority ethnic (BME) teachers are more likely to discuss racism and discrimination with pupils, and BME pupils report feeling more comfortable discussing these issues with BME teachers. Furthermore, BME teachers provide strong professional role models for BME pupils.

However, the impact of equal representation is not only limited to a matter of "you can't be what you can't see". A lack of BME representation among teachers also affects how pupils of all ethnicities understand race in Scotland and their awareness of racial equality issues: it is important for white pupils to see BME individuals in responsible, mainstream roles such as teaching.

There is a chronic issue of underrepresentation of BME communities in the teaching workforce in Scotland. Following the publication of research by the Scottish Liberal Democrats in 2015, it emerged that the head teacher of one Scottish secondary school had an Asian ethnic background and the head teacher of one Scottish primary school was Black.[1] The research further demonstrated that there were only 18 BME principal teachers out of 5,402 secondary principal teachers.

A study[2] conducted by the General Teaching Council for Scotland shows that in some Scottish schools there are significant numbers of pupils from minority ethnic communities, yet there appear to be very few teachers from these communities. It is clear that there are still barriers that young people from these communities face, especially those whose families are second or third generation residents of Scotland, that make teaching less attractive or possible as a career for them. Barriers include dissuasion from the teaching profession from family pressure and career guidance and potential discrimination in career pathways.

The Scottish Government's Race Equality Framework for Scotland 2016-2030[3] offers a significant commitment to address this underrepresentation:

> *Scotland's education workforce better reflects the diversity of its communities.*

CRER is supportive of this goal and of work planned[4] to achieve parity in the teaching workforce. However, before this can be accomplished, we need to better understand how far away Scotland is from equal representation. That is the impetus behind this research.

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[1] BBC News Scotland (2015). 'Lack of diversity' among Scottish school heads.
[2] General Teaching Council for Scotland. Ian Matheson. Current demographics in the school teaching population in Scotland
[3] Scottish Government (2016). Race Equality Framework for Scotland 2016-2030.
[4] Scottish Government (2017). Race Equality Action Plan 2017-2021.

Existing Data

There is little Scottish-specific data publicly available on the ethnicity of the teaching workforce, particularly at a local authority level. This is worrying, as all education authorities in Scotland are required by the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012[5] to gather and publish data on the relevant protected characteristics (including race) of its employees.

Nationwide, the Scottish Government report[6] that only 1.0% of primary, 2.0% of secondary, and 1.0% of special school teachers come from a BME background, despite BME groups constituting at least 4.0% of the Scottish population.

Although the Scottish Government data[7] does detail the ethnic breakdown of the teaching workforce by local authority, it does not address recruitment.

Given the dearth of data on this matter, CRER elected to undertake bespoke research.

Methodology

CRER issued Freedom of Information Requests to each local authority in Scotland addressing the ethnic breakdown of current teachers, applicants, shortlisted candidates, and appointment both for teaching posts and promoted teaching posts.

To allow for the data to be comparable, we requested that all information be disaggregated into all white groups, all non-white groups, and all unknown or unspecified. We also requested that, wherever possible, data was disaggregated by ethnicity in line with the broad categories of the 2011 Scottish Census, as well as separate data for 'unknown ethnicity' and 'not disclosed ethnicity.'

We also requested that the information by published by school year wherever possible.

This information was the collated into an Excel document which compared the percentage difference of white individuals, non-white individuals, and individuals with unknown ethnicity across current posts, applications, shortlisted candidates, appointments, and leavers for each local authority.

These percentages were also compared to the population for the local area as recorded by the 2011 Scottish Census.

The data obtained through the FOI for staff currently in post was also compared to data published by the Scottish Government over the same time period.

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[5] The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012. Duty to gather and use employee information.
[6] Scottish Government (2018). Summary statistics for schools in Scotland, No 8: 2017 edition.
[7] Scottish Government (2017). Teachers Census, Supplementary data 2017.

Key Findings

1. A significant proportion of local authorities were not able to comply with the FOI request and did not hold the data in question, despite the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duties to gather and use employee diversity information.
2. The data given by local authorities in response to the FOI request differed considerably from data published by the Scottish Government about the local authorities in question.
3. According to the data obtained from the FOI request, only one local authority in Scotland has a BME teacher rate of over 4.0% (the national BME population).
4. BME groups are overrepresented in teaching applications, but underrepresented in shortlisted candidates, appointed candidates, and staff in post.
5. The largest discrepancies between local authority staff in post and recruitment data and the local BME population was between the local authorities with the highest BME population rate.
6. Although more work is needed to achieve parity in teacher training, there is still an issue with current representation figures with far fewer BME individuals appointed to teaching positions than completing teacher training courses.

Response to Request

Several issues emerged with the responses to the FOI request:

➢ Eleven authorities were late in responding to the request
➢ Twelve authorities did not hold all the data requested
➢ Despite a request to consolidate data into 'white, non-white, and unknown ethnicities,' many presented the data in such a way that figures were individual ethnic groups were redacted due to data protection concerns
➢ The most common gaps in data were in recruitment figures, especially for applications and shortlisted candidates

Furthermore, data on staff figures did not align with figures published by the Scottish Government. The FOI request data yielded significantly more unknown ethnicities than the Scottish Government data, and the total number of teachers did not align for any of the 32 local authorities.

The inability to produce the requested information is also concerning, given the requirement of the Scottish Specific Public Sector Equality Duties to monitor and publish the information which was requested.

Population Data

The 2011 Scottish Census determined that BME groups constitute 4.0% of the population of Scotland. CRER anticipates that, as the Census is now over 6 years old, this figure will have increased.

Six local authorities in Scotland had a BME population which is above this average:

➢ Glasgow City – 11.6%
➢ City of Edinburgh – 8.3%
➢ Aberdeen City – 8.1%
➢ Dundee City – 6.0%
➢ East Renfrewshire – 5.9%
➢ East Dunbartonshire – 4.2%

Only two local authorities having a population of less than 1.0% (Orkney Islands Council and Western Isles Council).

Scottish Government Data

The Scottish Government publishes information about the ethnicity of Scotland's teachers in its annual Teachers Census. The information included in this study is from the 2016 iteration.

Through this research, the Scottish Government determined that:

- Eleven local authorities reported having 0.0% BME teachers
  - Nine of these local authorities have a BME population of over 1%
  - Four of these local authorities have a BME population of over 1.5%
- No local authority had BME representation of 4.0% (the national average) or higher
  - This included those local authorities with a much higher BME population
- Only four local authorities were able to report a 0.0% Not Known Ethnicity figure

The most significant discrepancy between the BME population and the proportion of BME teachers was within the most ethnically diverse local authorities: Glasgow City, City of Edinburgh Council, Aberdeen City Council, and East Renfrewshire Council.

Staff in Post Data

Utilising data obtained through the FOI requests, CRER was able to determine that:

- No local authority reported 0.0% BME teachers (until the Not Know Ethnicity figures were factored out)
- Only one local authority reported having more than 4.0% BME teachers
- Nine local authorities had more than 1.0% BME teachers – this did not include the two local authorities with the highest BME population

There was a significant proportion of Not Known Ethnicity – eight local authorities had more than 50% of teachers having an unknown ethnicity. This made analysis quite difficult, and as such we also analysed the data with the Not Known Ethnicity figures discounted. When this was the case:

- Five local authorities reported having no BME teachers, including three with a BME population of over 1.5%
- The largest discrepancy between the local population and teacher representation was again within the most ethnically diverse local authority, with the exception of one
- Five councils had a BME teacher proportion that was greater than the local population – in general, these were local authorities with a BME population of approximately 1.5%[8]

Comparison

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[8] For further studies, it will be important to consider wider travel-to-work areas for more accurate comparisons.

There was a significant discrepancy between the data held by the Scottish Government and the data the local authorities provided through the FOI requests.

➢ One local authority with an above-average BME population reported 1351 white teachers in its Scottish Government data compared to 609 in its FOI request data
➢ Another local authority with an above-average BME population reported 47 BME teachers in its Scottish Government data compared to 76 in its FOI request data
➢ A local authority with a below-average BME population reported 1794 white teachers and 24 BME teachers in its Scottish Government data compared to 2639 white teachers and 54 BME teachers in its FOI request data

The reasons for this significant discrepancy are unknown, but would warrant further consideration.

Recruitment Data

Overall, the recruitment data gathered from the FOI requests was difficult to analyse fully, as several local authorities did not hold complete information and others redacted significant amounts of information. This resulted in incomplete data for 13 of the 32 local authorities (40.6%).

Application data

For data relating to applications, the results were as follows:

➢ Three local authorities did not hold any application data, with ten having a Not Known Ethnicity rate of over 5.0%
➢ Eight local authorities had a BME application rate of over 4.0%
  o This was an overrepresentation for five local authorities and an underrepresentation for three
➢ 19 local authorities had a higher rate of BME applications than the local BME population
  o For staff however, this was the case for only five local authorities

In total, there was a 1.0% or less difference between the BME application rate and the BME population rate for 25 local authorities. This demonstrates that BME people are applying for teaching posts in proportionate (or over-proportionate) rates.

Shortlisting data

For data relating to shortlisted candidates, the results were as follows:

➢ Eleven local authorities did not hold any shortlisting data
  o This included three of the six local authorities with the highest BME population
➢ No local authority had a BME shortlisting rate of more than 4.0%
  o This compares to 8 for applications

- Nine local authorities had a higher rate of BME shortlisting than the local BME population, compared to 19 for applications.
  - Only one local authority had an over-representation of greater than 1.0%.
  - This disparity suggests that BME individuals are less likely to be shortlisted for a position than they are to apply for a position.

Again, with the Not Known Ethnicity responses disregarded, the largest discrepancy between the BME shortlisting rate and the BME population rates was within the local authorities with the highest BME populations.

Appointment data

For data relating to appointments, the results were as follows:

- Every local authority had data for candidate appointment, with 15 having a Not Known Ethnicity response rate of over 5.0% (the highest for recruitment data)
  - Those local authorities with a very high rate of Not Known Ethnicity responses (over 20%) did not hold any shortlisting data
- Six local authorities had a BME appointment rate of more than 4.0%
  - As might be expected, these were the local authorities with the highest BME population
- There were 16 local authorities in which there was a 1.0% or smaller difference between the BME appointment rate and the BME population, as well as 8 local authorities for which the appointment rate was higher
  - However, these tended to be local authorities with a lower BME population rate (approximately 2.0%)

As with the rest of the recruitment data, the largest discrepancy between the BME appointment data and the BME population rate was within the local authorities with the highest BME population.

The analysis also found that local authorities without shortlisting data were likely to have a very high rate of Not Known Ethnicity responses at the appointment stage; this illustrates the importance of data collection early-on in and throughout the recruitment process.

Teacher Training

CRER also requested[9] information from the Scottish Funding Council on teacher training figures. Analysis of the data received demonstrated that compared to 4.0% of the population, only 2.7% of those enrolled in a teacher training course and 2.9% of those entering a teacher training course have a BME background.

The General Teaching Council for Scotland did not hold any data on the ethnicity of its membership.

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[9] The data was requested as it was not published by the Scottish Funding Council.

Overall Findings

Consistently, the largest discrepancy – for staff figures and recruitment figures – between BME rates and the local BME population was within the local authorities with the highest BME population. Local authorities in areas with a lower BME population were more likely to be representative in teacher ethnicity.[10]

Furthermore, while BME people are significantly over-represented in the application stage for many local authorities, this did not translate into appointment or staff levels.[11]

Finally, there is confusion (or wilful ignorance) within local authorities around data collection and publication, with significant variation across bodies.

Conclusion

It is clear from the data analysis that there are significant racial inequalities throughout the teaching profession in Scotland – from teacher training courses and recruitment, to representation and discrimination in the sector.

Current approaches are not doing enough to address this, locally or nationally. This is worsened by a lack of Scottish-specific and local data, both qualitative and quantitative.

In line with the commitment made in the Race Equality Framework, the Scottish Government must commit to tackling this issue with a robust approach informed by the experience of BME people and organisations.

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[10] However, consideration in future studies should be given to representation levels in the wider travel-to-work areas, as teachers will not always live in the local authority in which they work.

[11] This is consistent with CRER's wider employment data analysis of the public sector, which consistently shows that BME groups experience discrimination during recruitment. A CRER study evidenced that for local authority jobs, even after the interview stage, white candidates were almost twice as likely to be appointed as BME candidates.