



BORN FOR A PURPOSE  
EMPOWERMENT CENTRE



Developing Mental  
Resilience And  
Employability Skills For  
Bame Women During And  
Beyond COVID-19

Developing Mental Resilience And  
Employability Skills For Bame Women During  
And Beyond COVID-19

Final Report

## Table of Contents

*Executive Summary*

*Background*

*Aims and Objectives*

*Methodology*

*The Survey*

*Result of the Survey*

*Ethnic Makeup*

*Mental Health Impact*

*Employment*

*Other Dire Issues*

*Training and Support*

*Training Courses*

*Conclusion and Recommendations*

## Executive Summary

The Covid pandemic has been a cause of numerous crises across the entire BAME community. Fear of the unknowns creates a ground for anxiety and an influence on the mental health of individuals. These mental health influences have been identified in numerous national and international survey reports. Covid impact reports on BAME has shown an elevation in fears and anxieties of up to four times of that of the general population. Bearing this in mind, this supports the need to build Psychological Resilience. The impact of the pandemic goes way beyond the issues of mental health; it also impacts employment and finance among other tensions in people living meaningful lives. Women, especially BAME women, are the most affected due to culture

Supporting women of BAME backgrounds is a major part of organisation focus. This survey gives the organisation the opportunity to have a greater knowledge of the community's needs, which is key to ensuring that this particular group of women gain the tailored support they need. The findings of the survey provide some answers and the findings will enable us to develop meaningful strategies and to present the community we represent with the best possible solutions that can support their lives and livelihood moving forward.

This survey primarily focused on presenting a snapshot of specific areas of needs within our community, from which our organisation will be able to build knowledge-based strategies that are based on real needs, and will ensure that the ladies we seek to support can truly benefit from the training and support package we put in place. The results from the survey also provide the organisation with an opportunity to develop and deliver new programmes based on other dire needs presented by the ladies themselves.

The survey attracted primary women of African origin or descent, representing 87.1% and only 22.9% that represents the combination of people of Asian and Caribbean background. From the results of the survey, we were able to identify issues facing the participant as a result of being associated with the impact of the pandemic. We were also able to identify other longer-term issues that are real barriers to growth among this particular group of BAME women.

The survey shows that of all the participants, more than half of them, 64.5%, felt that the pandemic had affected their mental health. Looking deeper into some main causes, the result shows that in the areas of feeling anxiety, stress and depression scored greater at 58.1% than their feeling of being worried, frustrated and hopeless about their future 46.8% and struggling with low self-esteem and low confidence of 37.8%

Looking at employment among our participants totalling 59.7% of which 38.7% being full time and 21% of part-time and how they relate to UK national employment rate of 75.1% overall and 71.8% of women or local rates of 75.3% overall and 72.7% of women, these were quite low figures. We however could relate the lowness of this figure with the 22.6% that were either students or those that aren't able to work due to their immigration status as asylum seekers. The survey identified approximately 9.8% of the participants who stated that they lost employment as a direct result of the pandemic, however, we conclude that this figure is much higher, after discounting the 22.6% that were outside of employability not being able to work due to their status or students.

While the result shows that a majority that is 64.5% were concerned about the demand for technology skills, there was even a greater concern borne out of the result on which 90.3% of the participants saw social-racial inequality being of great concern. The result also shows that almost three quarters (72.6%) of the participants welcome training and support. From a list of 7 courses, the participants were able to highlight courses that they were interested in with Mental resilience scoring the highest, followed by boosting of confidence and the third choice being mindfulness and self-care.

## Background

This survey is part of a small grant programme funded under the National lottery community fund that specifically looks at the effect of COVID 19 on women within the BAME communities. The survey focuses primarily on BAME women in two areas, that is Stoke and Nottingham. This survey does not intend to represent BAME women across the region or nationally. It also does not provide a representative picture of BAME women across the UK. It primarily represents the experiences of those women who participated and their needs and as a sample survey would be too small and narrowly focused to identify the problem to the fullest extent.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been detrimental to the BAME communities in many ways and the impact on mental health is one of the issues. The BMJ Journal "Evidence-Based Mental Health" identified that for people from BAME groups, even before the current pandemic there were already significant mental health inequalities and inequalities have been increased by the pandemic in several ways. The article goes on to identify that there is growing evidence of specific mental health consequences from significant COVID-19 infection, with increased rates of not only post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety and depression, but also specific neuropsychiatric symptoms.

Another of the many issues is in employment, whereby we have seen many people not able to work during the lockdown and without any salary due to the type of contract that their jobs provide, others being made permanently redundant. According to an article in LONDON (Reuters) - Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) people in Britain have been hit harder by job losses during the coronavirus crisis than the population as a whole, researchers have found. This report shows that for BAME groups, employment fell to 67.4% from 72.0% in just 3 months, in comparison to 79.4% from 81.1% of whites.

Unequal impact? Coronavirus and BAME people - a report from the House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee shows that compared to their White counterparts, BAME people experience the virus more severely and with more adverse health outcomes, including death. According to the report the Office of the National Statistic (ONS) report that compared to White groups after adjusting for region, population density, socio-demographic and household characteristics, the raised risk of death involving coronavirus for people of the Black ethnic groups were 1.4 times greater for females compared to those of a white ethnic background.

## Aims and Objectives

The aim was to investigate how well BAME women coped with the pandemic, the impact on their mental health and on how it affected their employment within Nottingham and Stoke. The survey aim is to contribute to the wider programme in helping to address mental resilience and employment. This is about providing evidence-based support and solutions when an individual's life circumstances change unexpectedly for the worse. Our objective is to help individuals to rise to the challenges, by creating opportunities whereby BAME women can rise above those challenges and become stronger than they were before.

Part of the objective is to provide a more tailored level of support in building confidence and self-esteem and for those that have lost employment to help in building a range of key skills that will enhance their chances when seeking new employment opportunities. We aim to live the spirit of individuals, so they can see and realise their goals in being born for a purpose. Having a greater understanding of the general needs we will be able to deliver a more comprehensive programme while helping this particular group to build their mental resilience moving forward.

Combating the impact of mental health issues will be about helping individuals to build mental resilience through these core methods Positive Thinking, Anxiety Control, Visualization, Goal Setting, Attentional Control. The information captured from the survey will allow the organisation to strategically plan a more effective system of support.

## Methodology

This research was done via an online survey webform, paper-based forms and via social media with BAME women locally to Nottingham and Stoke. The research also considered information drawn from published reports gained through literature reviews.

In addition to the survey, we did a number of qualitative interviews via telephone across the two cities that provided us with greater insight into BAME women's experiences and needs during the pandemic. Through the various methods used our organisation was able to gather good insights into the experiences and needs of the participants.

## The Survey

In the survey, we wanted to identify the participants' ethnicities, ages and locations. We wanted to find out if any as a result of the pandemic had lost employment. We wanted to know about their mental wellness, seeing if they were having feelings of anxiety, stress or depression that were directly associated with the pandemic. We want to know if they were struggling with low self-esteem and lacking in confidence. We also wanted to know if they were feeling worried about the social-racial inequalities.

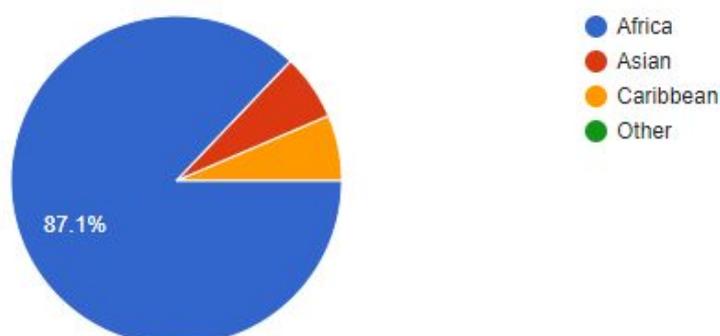
We want to see to what extent people have lost confidence in pursuing their dream jobs and the main reasons why they felt they lost their confidence. And finally, we wanted to know about any support that they feel they need that will help to boost their mental resilience and improve their opportunity to find work through a new employability skill set.

## Result of the Survey

Results from the survey will provide the organisation with the evidence required to shape programmes and services to meet the affective needs of this particular group of women. The survey enabled participants to tell us of their experiences, concerns and needs, and provide the organisation with an opportunity to provide a range of support and training packages including signposting wherever the organisation does not have the capacity to deliver. A total of 75 women from across Nottingham and Stoke participated over a three months period.

### Ethnic Makeup

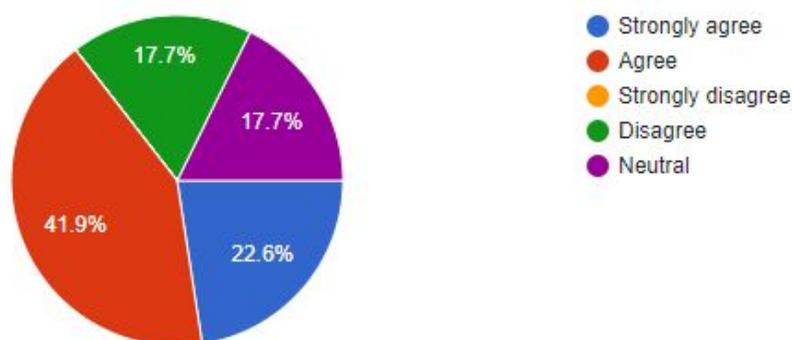
The following chart will show the ethnic makeup of all the participants that participate in the survey.



The result shows that most of the women that participated were primarily of African origin or descent, representing 87.1% with those from Asian of Caribbean background together representing 22.9%

### Mental Health Impact

We wanted to know what impact if any were there on individuals mental health. To assess this we asked the group to score their feelings based on a set of statements presented. We wanted to know if individuals agree or disagree, strongly agree or strongly disagree or if they were neutral. Strongly agree or strongly disagree represents the greater level in which individuals felt, relating to each of the statements. To gain an assessment on the overall mental health impact feeling of individuals, we first asked them to score themselves based on the following statement "I feel covid-19 impact my mental health"



From this, we were able to obtain that 64.5% of the participants agreed that the pandemic impacted their mental health with 22.6% strongly agreeing and 41.9% agreeing. None of the participants strongly disagree and only 17.7% disagree with another 17.7% being neutral about it.

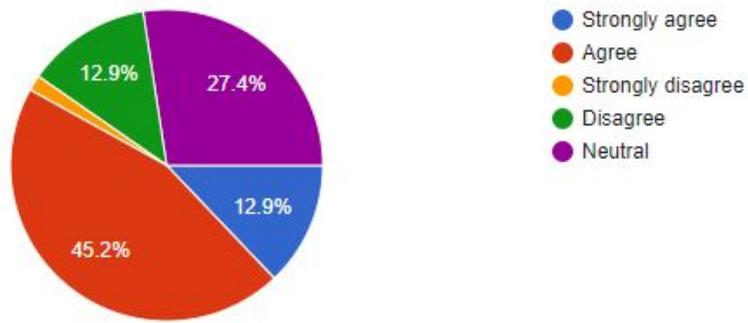
To help us to analyse and get a better picture of the pandemic impact on mental health the survey poses the following three statements:

I feel anxious, stress and depressed

I feel worried, frustrated and hopeless about my future

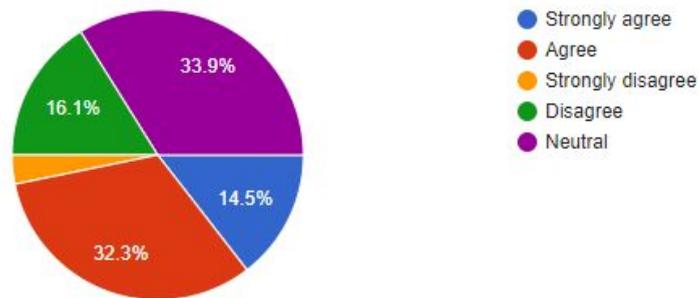
I am struggling with low self-esteem and low confidence

Based on the statement: "of feel anxious, stress and depressed"



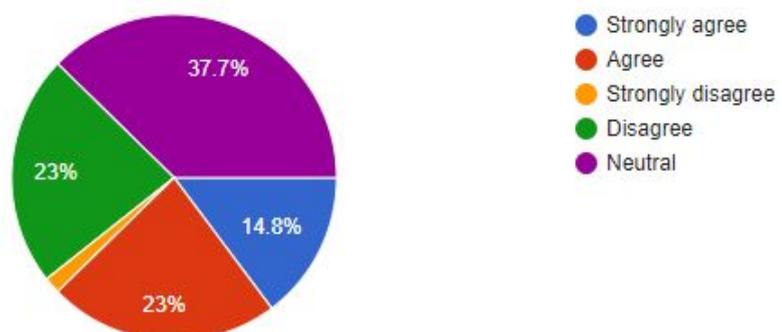
58.1% of the participants agreed that due to the pandemic impact they felt anxious, stressed and depressed with 12.9% strongly in agreement and 45.2% in agreement. There was another 27.4% that were neutral and for those that there were no impacted represents a total of 14.5%

Based on the statement: "of feel worried, frustrated and hopeless about my future"



The chart shows that those who feel worried, frustrated and hopeless about my future represent 46.8% of which 14.5% agreeing strongly with the statement while 33.9% were neutral with only 19.3% felt that this statement did not apply to them in any way.

Based on the statement: "of struggling with low self-esteem and low confidence"

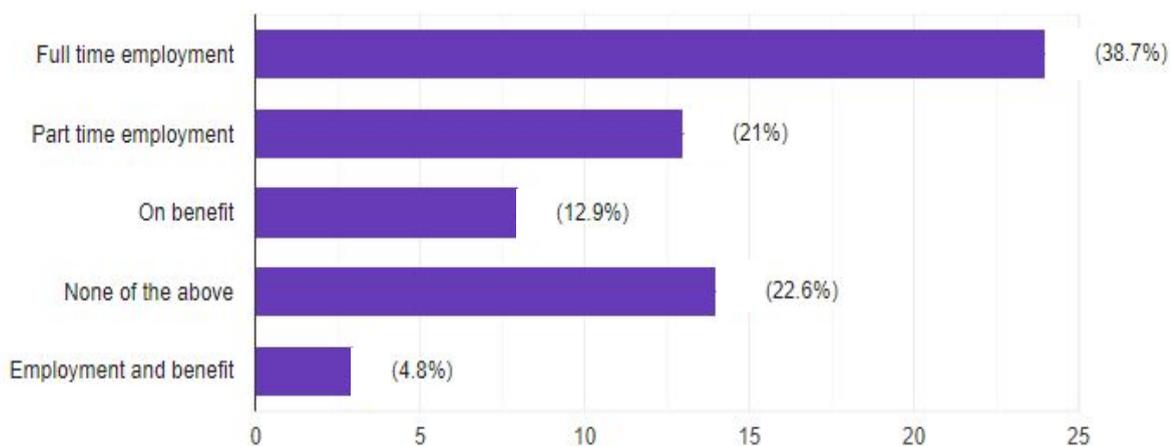


Struggling with low self-esteem and low confidence there were 37.8% felt this statement applied to them with 14.8% from the 37.8% felt the most impacted and 37.7% were neutral to this statement while 24.5% did not feel that this statement applied to them.

The overall picture of BAME women mental health as the survey will show that

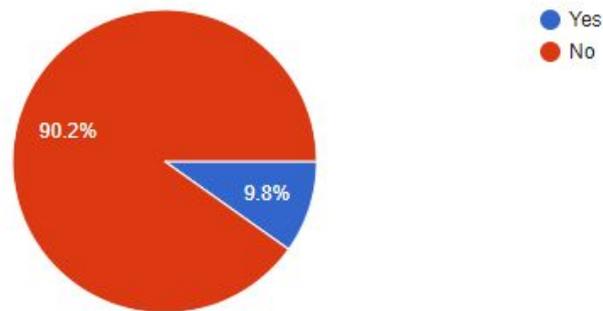
### Employment

In order for us to understand the impact of the pandemic in relation to employment the survey looks at the participant’s employment status, that if they are in full time, part-time, a mix of part and benefits, purely on benefits or does not have employment status. Not having an employment status being either students or asylum seekers. Here the survey identified that 38.7% were in full employment, 21% were in part-time employment, 4.8% had a mixture of employment and benefits with another 12.9% were unemployed and on benefits. There were also 22.6% that none of the above applied to.



We wanted to see how much of the participant's jobs were affected by the pandemic.

For this, we compared the numbers that identify as either having a mixture of employment and benefits and those on benefits to those that stated yes to the question of losing their jobs through the COVID-19 pandemic.



The data shows that 9.8% of all the participants lose their jobs as a result of the covid-19 pandemic, however in analysing the data, those who lost employment is much greater, as only 77.4% of all the participants identified themselves in having employment status, hence an assumption that the 22.6% were either students or asylum seekers.

## Other Dire Issues

The survey wanted to capture some of the deeper feelings of individual participants, by learning about their needs and concerns. We wanted individuals to express themselves so our organisation can get a better picture based on each individual’s most dire problems. Here we asked participants to name the specific challenges they are facing. From this, we were able to identify Child care, Finance, Divorce and failures, Lack of finance, Immigration control, Self-esteem and lack of confidence

Apart from those outlined above the following are a few of the challenging statements told by some of the participants:

“I am of age 20, a single mum, been home for almost 2 years now doing nothing, ( childcare) when I got pregnant, everyone in my family got furious with me, and none was willing to help me reach my dream(finance?)”

“I don't see myself moving in life, am at one point no sign of better things to come because of immigration control.”

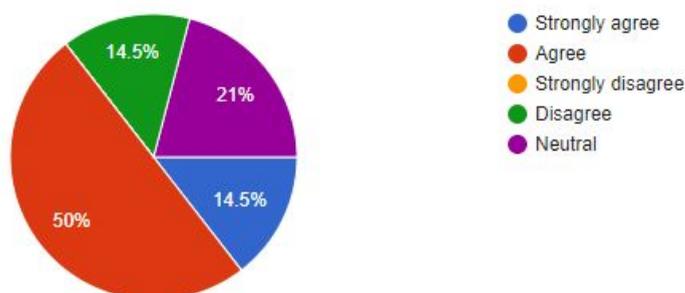
“Being a BME person, there is a lot of misunderstanding out there, stereotype beliefs that are discouraging me from pursuing my dream job”

“Poor health and being a carer to my disabled daughter”

“I dreamt of being a banker.”

The survey wanted to see some of the other problems this particular group of BAME women face that impacted their lives. We wanted to see if they are concerned about the growing demand for more technology skills. To establish this the survey provided a statement on which the participants were asked to score the strength of their feelings on strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree or strongly disagree. “I feel worried with the changes and demand for technological skills”

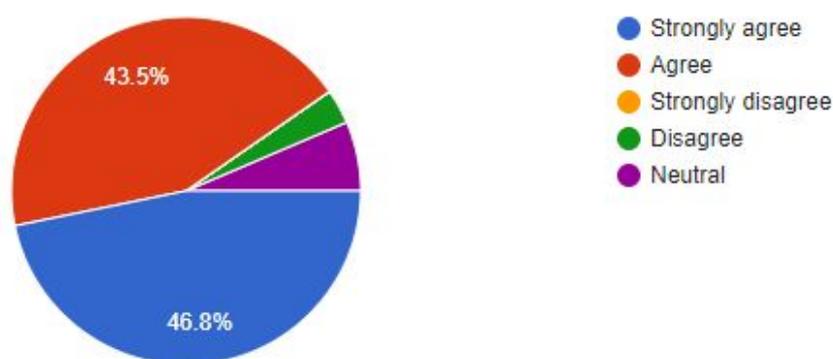
The following chart provided the response of the participants



Here we can see that 64.5% are concerned about the changes and demands, with a high of 50% in agreement and 14.5% strongly agreeing. Another 21% were neutral and only 14.5% disagreed with the statement.

The survey wanted to see the participants' feelings on what role, if any, that social-racial inequalities play in their lives. For this, they were asked again to score their feelings based on whether they strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree or strongly disagree. Hence the following statement of which to score on was made "I feel worried with the social-racial inequalities"

The following chart provided the response of the participants

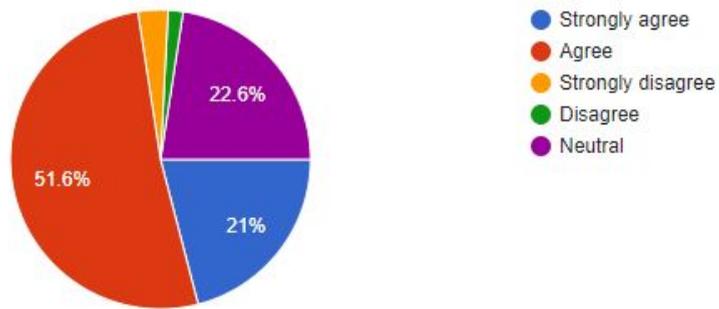


Response to the statement on social-racial inequalities scored extremely high amount the participants as the data show that 90.3% agree with the statement of which 46.8% strongly agreed and the combination of those that were either neutral and disagreed represents 9.7%

### Training and Support

Building mental resilience and developing skills are a few of the key goals of the organisation. We, therefore, wanted to see to what level participants would be interested in participating in courses designed around these two areas. For this, participants were asked to score their interests based on whether they strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree or strongly disagree. The following statement "I will welcome any support that can boost my mental resilience and employability skills" was used.

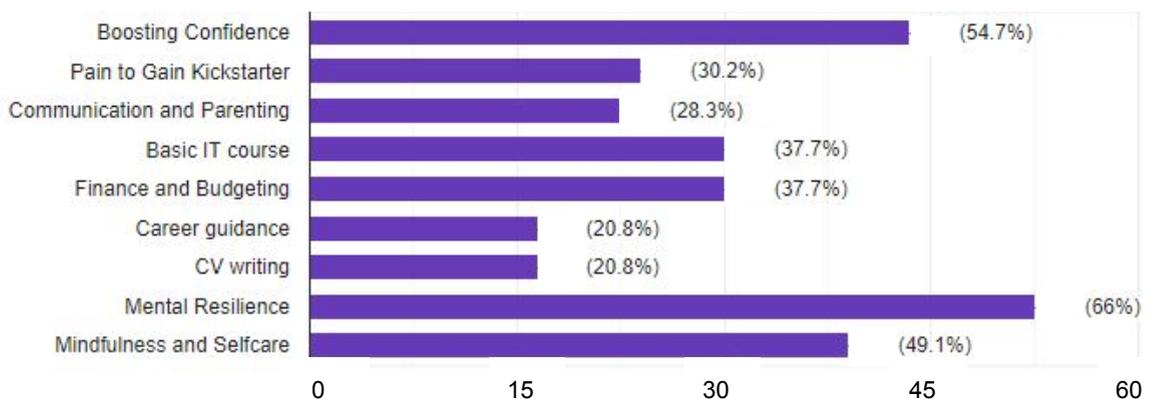
The following chart shows the response based on the above statement.



The data shows that 72.6% of the participants welcome training and support, while 22.6% were neutral and 4.8% did not feel they need this type of support.

### Training Courses

The following chart identified the choice of courses that the some of participants are interested in



From the data, we can see that those looking for a mental resilience course was the highest with 66% of participants having an interest, followed by boosting confidence at 54.7%, mindfulness and self-care at 49.1% Basic It along with finance and budgeting both representing 37.7 participants each. Pain to Gain Kickstarter 30.2%, Communication and parenting 28.3% with Career Guidance and CV writing both with 20.8%

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The data from the survey clearly shows that there are many BAME women that are struggling and are finding it difficult to move forward due to the loss of confidence and self-esteem. While this is not all due to the pandemic, there is a general need for ongoing support.

In concluding we must be clear that the result only represents the views of some of the BAME communities as the BAME community is quite a diverse one. We can define the BAME community as a diverse mix of ethnicities from different cultural backgrounds other than white British and trying to pull together such a wide span of culture is a difficult task. We can clearly state based on the participants' ethnicities that the result primarily represents the views of a majority of Africans who were the main participants in the survey and represents 87.1% of all the participants.

We can conclude based on the data provided by the participants that the pandemic had impacted their mental health as 64.5% of all the participants felt so, with 41.9% agreeing and 22.6% strongly agreeing. We can also conclude that those that strongly agreed felt the impact the most. Looking deeper into mental health and in the areas of anxiety, stress and depression the result identifies that 58.1% could relate to these issues with 12.9% strongly agreeing and 45.2% agreeing, again the data show over half of the participants having been impacted by the pandemic.

We also saw that 46.8% of the participants agreeing with the feeling of being worried, frustrated and hopeless about their future and another 37.8% agreeing that they were struggling with low self-esteem and low confidence.

In employment and in relation to the impact of the pandemic on employment, the data shows that 9.8% of all the participants lose their jobs as a result of the pandemic. In analysing the result it is difficult to find the true picture as many of the participants did not fit in the employability categories and for those that fit in the employability category, there was no data to establish those that were already unemployed and losing their work wasn't an impact of the pandemic.

The data shows that approximately 22.6% were either students or asylum seekers and concluded that asylum seekers are legally unable to work. Once we deduced those that are outside the employment area then we were able to conclude that approximately 12.5% of participants that were eligible to work, lost their jobs as a direct result of the pandemic. When looked at data elsewhere this figure is fairly disturbing even at a lower figure of all the participants, 9.8% of all the participants, whereby national research "Black, minority Britons hit hardest by COVID job losses, researchers say (2020). Reuters." That shows that nationally BAME community jobs lost was approximately 4.6% in BAME communities when compared to job losses of 1.7% in the white community.

In areas of concern, the result was able to identify Child care, Finance, Divorce and failures, Lack of finance, Immigration control, Self-esteem and lack of confidence as some of the major individual concerns of the participants. However, there were 64.5% of participants had concerns about the growing demand for more technology skills. We can also conclude that social-racial inequalities are a huge concern as 90.3% of the participants identified agreed of which 46.8% strongly agreed and for those that are looking for support and training the survey identified 72.6% that welcome.

## References

Beyond the data: Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on BAME groups (2020). Public Health England.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/892376/COVID\\_stakeholder\\_engagement\\_synthesis\\_beyond\\_the\\_data.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/892376/COVID_stakeholder_engagement_synthesis_beyond_the_data.pdf)

Black, minority Britons hit hardest by COVID job losses, researchers say (2020). Reuters.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/ukhealth-coronavirus-britain-minorities/black-minority-britons-hit-hardest-by-covid-job-losses-researchers-say-idUKKBN23F1X5>

COVID-19, mental health and ethnic minorities;

<https://ebmh.bmj.com/content/23/3/89>

Unequal impact? Coronavirus and BAME people - House of Commons

Women and Equalities Committee:

<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/3965/documents/39887/default/>

BORN FOR A PURPOSE EMPOWERMENT CENTRE



**BORN FOR A PURPOSE EMPOWERMENT CENTRE**



Design By:

