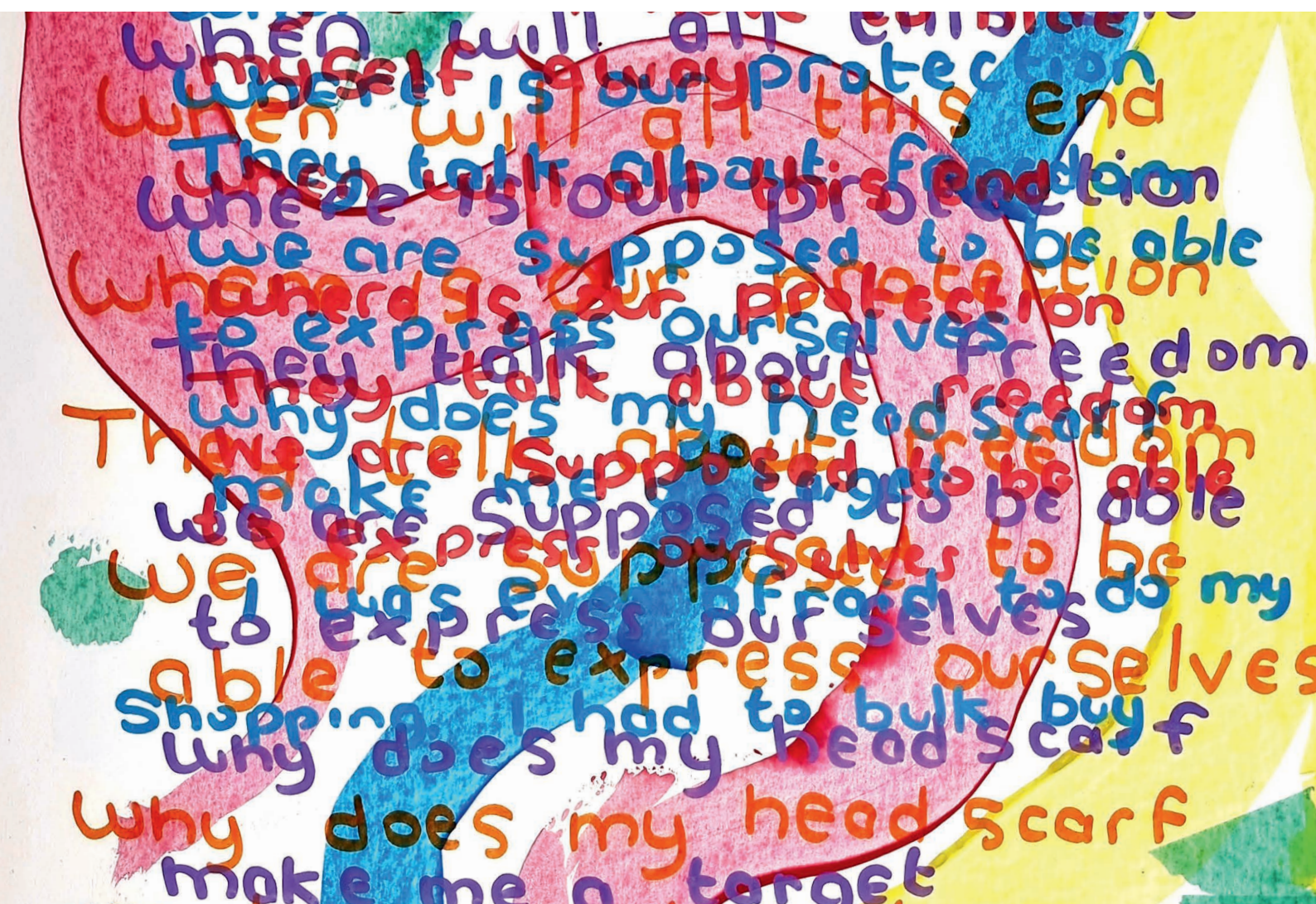
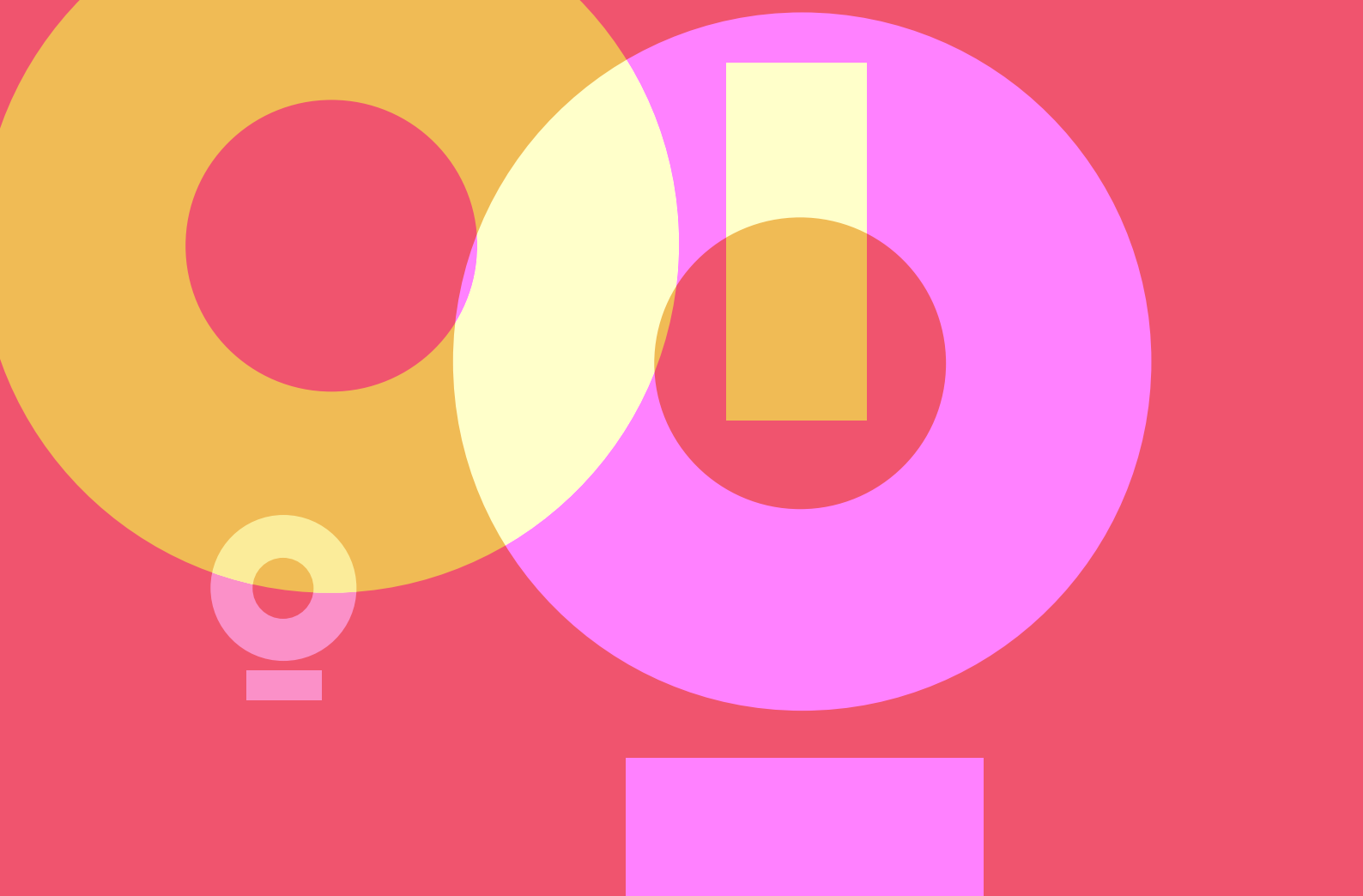


WHY DO I HAVE TO HIDE AWAY?

Documenting the impact of the 2024 far-right riots on Black, minoritised and migrant women and children

AUGUST 2025





Published by the Angelou Centre as part of the Stories of Colour initiative.

The Angelou Centre is a frontline violence against women and girls specialist organisation. We provide a safe, confidential place run by and for women from Black and racially minoritised communities in the North East of England.

This publication is also available online at www.angelou-centre.org.uk and www.projectresist.org.uk

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1. The title of the report is taken from the Stories of Colour quilt, a collective textile-based work produced by Angelou Centre services users. The quilt is a creative expression of Black, minoritised and migrant women's experiences of the far-right riots of 2024.

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Project Resist would also like to warmly thank our funders for their continued investment in Project Resist. Your support enabled the researchers to dedicate vital time and energy to this urgent and much needed work.

2. The Resist Network includes the Angelou Centre, Apna Haq, Humraaz, Hull Sisters, Project Resist, Rochdale Women's Welfare Association (RWWA), Saheli, Sangini, Safety 4 Sisters and Ubuntu Women Shelter. These organisations directly support women and children in the North West, Yorkshire, North East and South Scottish regions. All organisations also work within a national remit due to their strategic advocacy/campaigning work and specialist refuges and safe accommodation services.

Foreword

The Angelou Centre has always been a place of safety. A place where Black, racially minoritised and migrant women and children can find not only refuge but also a voice, a sense of belonging and autonomy. For over three decades, we've stood alongside survivors of violence and abuse, offering culturally grounded, trauma-informed and specialist support in a political and social ecosystem that too often overlooks us.

In the summer of 2024, a series of far-right riots tore through towns and cities across the UK. These acts of hatred reminded Black and minoritised communities that the systems meant to protect us – public institutions, local authorities, even the media – are not set up to confront racism, let alone address the ways it intersects with gender-based violence thus generating fear and division.

Stories of Colour was born from the painful reminder that we cannot fully operate in isolation from the racism, xenophobia and the growing hostility that shapes our political and social realities. And yet, those connections are too often ignored. The forces of inequality and oppression converge, harming our communities in sustained and cumulative ways.

Stories of Colour was created to bear witness to the events that unfolded – to honour lived experience, to support healing. And to demand meaningful change. It amplifies the voices of those most affected and challenges the silence, denial and inaction in a range of areas that often follow moments of racial and social crisis.

A *Guardian* investigation in May 2025 revealed that only one third of recommendations made in response to racial unrest over the past 40 years have been implemented. Even the limited progress that was achieved has often been reversed through disinvestment and political de-prioritisation. This persistent cycle of crisis, review and inaction makes clear that without a genuine vision of change and accountability, our stories risk being sidelined or buried once again.

Stories of Colour is not just a response to crisis. It is a call for transformation. It centres lived experience and highlights insights that can shape strategies for change.

Stories of Colour is not just a response to crisis. It is an act of resistance. The attacks we endured were not limited to the streets; they followed us into our homes, our schools, our workplaces, our places of worship and our daily journeys. A year on, many of our service users, staff and families still carry the fear, anger and pain.

As a Black feminist organisation, we know we must be more than a refuge and a women's centre. We must also be a shield against racism and harm. A space for healing. A centre for anti-racist education and a place where women can build the emotional and mental strength needed to survive and resist a hostile environment on many fronts.



This report is a call to action for local authorities, funders, policymakers, activists, campaigners and all those working towards a more just and equitable future. It's a plea to move beyond performative gestures and commit to deep, lasting change. To centre racial justice alongside gender justice and to create systems grounded in safety, equality, dignity and belonging.

The voices you'll read here are brave, powerful, and deeply honest. They deserve not just sympathy but action.

To the women, children and young people who trusted us with their stories: thank you. We see you. We believe you. Your voices will not be silenced.

Faty Kane
Executive Director
The Angelou Centre

3. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/may/25/only-a-third-of-recommendations-to-tackle-endemic-racism-in-uk-implemented>



About the stories of colour initiative

What is it

Stories of Colour was developed in response to the racist, anti-migrant, anti-Muslim and anti-minorities riots that shook the UK in summer 2024. Rooted in the lived experiences of Black, minoritised and migrant women, children and young people, it has made a powerful intervention into the public debates that have ensued – seeking to combine research, healing and creative expression with advocacy and policy change. The project centres the voices of those most affected and translates their stories into action.

Why it matters

The far-right riots made one thing painfully clear: Black, migrant and minoritised women continue to be ignored and marginalised from decision-making and public safety responses. Many women and children were silenced, retraumatised and left unsupported during the riots and in their aftermath. *Stories of Colour* ensures these voices lead the recovery not as an afterthought, but as the starting point for long-term change.

How are we doing it

Stories of Colour is delivered through three interconnected strands of work:

1. Creative healing

We create safe spaces for expression, using art forms such as poetry, painting, crafts, spoken word etc. These creative tools support participants in processing and overcoming trauma, reclaiming their voice, and expressing feelings and emotions on their own terms.

2. Anti-racist learning

Through workshops, talks and facilitated discussion spaces, we equip both staff and service users with the tools to navigate racism, build resilience and strengthen solidarity. We also engage professionals and the wider public in meaningful conversations around anti-racism and the urgent need to also tackle anti-migrant, anti-Muslim and other forms of racism from a gendered perspective.

3. Research, policy & advocacy

We document the lived experiences of racism, private violence and structural inequality affecting Black, minoritised and migrant women, children, and families. Our evidence and insights inform advocacy strategies and are shared with funders, policymakers and sector leaders to influence systemic change.

What we are learning

- **Everyday racism on the streets, in schools, housing and healthcare leaves deep, lasting scars**, especially for women and children already facing multiple forms of exclusion and inequality.
- **True healing begins with recognising and validating lived experiences of racism**, not minimising or rebranding them as the product of ‘frustration’ or ‘economic hardship’. Attempts to rewrite the riots in neutral terms serves to erase the pain and truth of those most affected.
- **Anti-racist learning is most effective when it is continuous**, co-created with those who live its realities, and grounded in lived experience that intersects with misogyny and other forms of discrimination. When led by Black, minoritised and migrant women it becomes a powerful tool for truth-telling, accountability, and transformative change that is not limited to raising awareness.
- **“By and for” women’s organisations are lifelines in crisis**. Yet all too often they are overlooked, underfunded or excluded from decision-making processes.
- **Racial justice and gender and social justice are inseparable**. We can’t address one without confronting the other.

Executive summary



“Racism and riots affect more women than men because they know we don’t have voices and are not listened to, and we have to be together to be safe because we are not safe alone on the street. The men in the community like to be in charge and they shouldn’t be, they won’t solve these problems.”^{4, 5}

(WOMAN SERVICE USER)

About the *Stories of Colour* project

Stories of Colour is an interdisciplinary social justice project that sets out to document the experiences of Black, minoritised, migrant women, children and young people in the aftermath of the far-right racist riots that took place across the UK – including the North East of England – during the summer of 2024. Developed by the Angelou Centre in October 2024, the *Stories of Colour* project has three strands: creative healing, anti-racist learning and policy, research and advocacy. The report *Why Do I have to Hide Away?* forms the ‘policy and research’ strand of the project with a focus on the impact of the far-right riots on the organisation’s service users, staff and the networks within which the Angelou Centre operates.

The *Stories of Colour* project serves as testimony and witness to the full impact of the public acts of racist violence and anti-immigration hostility, and its interrelationship with misogyny on Black, minoritised and migrant women and children during and after the far-right riots. Over the next three years, the *Stories of Colour* project will seek to create regional platforms that enable women and children to share their experiences and participate fully in developing ‘policy from the frontline’. The wider aim is to support the Angelou Centre and sister organisations in their anti-racist policy making with a particular focus on women and children’s rights. This work also aims to promote fair, inclusive and equality-based practice within local authorities, schools and funding bodies to ensure that there is a systemic and informed response to racial discrimination and violence in the future.

What Happened During the Far-right Riots of 2024?



“The Angelou Centre was closed; it was very quiet and empty in the West End of Newcastle and the shops were boarded up. It felt like everyone...and the community felt unsafe, as if we had to be home, even though it’s normally a thriving area. When this happens, you remember your vulnerabilities and how easy it is to feel vulnerable. I had to go out into town and I felt really fearful, it felt like we were having to watch people to see who would say or do something to hurt

us. We would stick to certain routes and locations and remembered how we were seen and what would happen if we said the wrong thing. I remembered that we were Black and Asian and women.”⁶ (WOMAN SERVICE USER)

-
4. Quotes taken from interviews with Black and minoritised women, including many who are survivors of gender-based violence, harmful practices and honour-based abuse.
 5. All *Stories of Colour* quotes in purple type are taken from interviews, workshops, and round tables and meetings, including interviews with women and children, staff and stakeholders from the Angelou Centre.
 6. Quotes cited throughout the report are taken from testimonies provided by research participants. Interviewees comprised of Black, minoritised and migrant women, children and staff.

On Tuesday 6 August 2024, in the wake of the far-right riots, the Angelou Centre was forced to close its doors due to fears of racial violence erupting in the area. The office closure, which lasted for three days, followed a week of national rioting and wide-scale public disorder (30 July to 7 August), which took place largely in post-industrial cities across the north of England in response to the shocking murder of three young girls in Southport.⁷ In the days before the violent and destructive Sunderland city centre riots on 2 August, local women had noted a rise in online far-right mobilisation and racist rhetoric, which they reported to the police.⁸

Following the Sunderland riots, many Black and minoritised community-based organisations found themselves putting into place their own safety and security measures with little to no support from the police, local council or other state agencies. Many women's organisations were working with traumatised women and children who were particularly exposed and vulnerable to racist attacks, which compounded their feelings of insecurity and fear. Despite widely circulated online racist warnings and threats, including specific references to the Beacon, a community and business centre on the West Road in Newcastle upon Tyne – only minutes away from the Angelou Centre's premises – no formal risk assessments or protective measures appeared to be put in place by the local council, police or other statutory bodies.^{9, 10}

As this report highlights, the riots were significant in that they signalled the emergence of a new public and political racist discourse that has in part been generated by the hostile anti-immigration environment and related policies, and a state led 'post-equalities' era of community disengagement.¹¹ In this climate, organisations led 'by and for' Black and minoritised women are facing an existential crisis brought about by chronic underfunding, increased bureaucracy, lack of state concern and the backlash against women's rights from within and outside of their communities. These developments indicate a worsening situation for a sector that is routinely excluded and marginalised from public policy making on a range of issues, but particularly around racial equality, integration and cohesion.

Emerging Themes of the Research

Gendered racism and intersecting forms of exclusion and marginalisation



"This made all our worries about safety worse. First it was Covid and now this. It feels the same although it's different, because we can't go out, people are scared on the streets, and worse they are scared of each other. I have too many worries. I'm always fearful for children due to news and the amount of abuse in our communities – it's heightened. As a single parent, there is more [of a feeling] of risk and danger from men in streets and men in our community." (WOMAN SERVICE USER)

One of the key themes highlighted by the report is the magnitude of exclusion that Black, minoritised and migrant women and children – and the organisations that support them – experience in relation to public discourse and policy on 'community informed' responses to cohesion. They experience public racism and increased incidents of violence within their families and communities in the context of the wider socio-political crises, and yet the gendered and intersectional dimension of their experiences has been completely overlooked.

7. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/jan/23/southport-attacker-axel-rudakubana-jailed>

8. Two women interviewed for this research said they had reported their concerns and completed online police reports but never heard back from the police.

9. The Angelou Centre is based in the West End of Newcastle upon Tyne, one of the most diverse areas in the North East. Recent estimations of the local demographic state over 20% Black and minoritised communities and that 20.3% of the local population as migrant. However, this data appears to be out of date, and local school intakes suggest that the Black and minoritised population in areas such as the Newcastle's West End is now almost double that of the 2021 census. https://newcastle.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Equality%2C%20diversity%20and%20inclusion/20240501_Equality-diversity-inclusion_Annual-report_2023-2024.pdf

10. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/article/2024/aug/02/beer-barrels-and-stones-thrown-at-police-in-sunderland-as-uk-unrest-rolls-on>

11. The 'hostile environment' is a series of socio-cultural, legislative and political measures enacted by the state against migrants to limit access to work, housing, health care and other citizenship rights. Migrants are in effect excluded from participation in civil society. The parameters of the 'hostile environment' policy are extended further through the incorporation of a surveillance culture that reaches all areas of society. This serves to socially police an individual's migration status in a racialised way. It can also include a form of racism that is determined by ideological presumptions about 'white' British identity, nationality and the often associated with a mythical or nostalgic idea about the nation state.

The research has unearthed a rich vein of evidence about the ways such exclusion (whether intentional or not) exacerbates the levels of domestic violence, abuse, poverty and isolation that many women continue to experience. The level of neglect and indifference shown by some politicians, statutory agencies and so-called community and faith leaders represents an abject failure to take account of women's needs and rights when addressing the causes and consequences of the far-right riots, resulting in further discrimination and the institutionalisation of human rights violations by the state.

Fear and restriction of movement

Another theme the research identified is the rising fear of public forms of hostility and racism that vulnerable women live with, exacerbating their inability to exercise their rights such as freedom of movement. Women and children testified to experiencing or witnessing racist verbal or physical abuse when in public spaces such as city centres and supermarkets. During the riots almost 90% of those interviewed had avoided leaving the house or going to the shops to get food or other necessary items for their household because they felt scared, intimidated and threatened. Over 70% said that they continued to approach public spaces with caution and experienced an increased level of distrust in people – particularly white people – who were not familiar to them. Some 60% of women discussed the devastating impact of the riots on their sense of safety on public transport; 40% of participants (including children) stated that either they, a family member or friends had been verbally and/or physically attacked on public transport since the riots. Threats against women and children on public transport, particularly in the evening, appear to have escalated since the riots, pointing to a regression of their right to safety in the public sphere.

The interplay of racism and misogyny



“We have had to change the women’s transport options and have had to restrict travel since the riots. The racism on the buses has been the worst – white people have been empowered to vocalise their racism and sexism. There is definitely more overt racism and misogyny in public spaces since the riots.”¹² (STAFF MEMBER)

Another significant theme was the manner in which vulnerable women were caught between rising racism and misogyny, leading to increased forms of imprisonment and isolation and a further deprivation of their rights in the family and community. Women's accounts of the riots highlighted the continuing connection between gender-based abuse, economic disadvantage, racism, anti-immigration policies and the increased power of right-wing and fundamentalist religious forces in communities.¹³ Many described how community and religious leadership and perpetrators of abuse also took advantage of the far-right riots to further tighten their control of women and girls in particular, and how they felt unprotected by statutory agencies that had a legal duty to protect and safeguard their rights.

Finally, the interviews with the women also exposed how public discussions and analysis of the far-right riots even from more progressive quarters included discussions on socio-economic inequality but lacked a simultaneous focus on the intersection between race and sex discrimination or other forms of inequality and disadvantage.

12. Black and minoritised woman service user.

13. We deliberately refer to gender throughout the report. Project Resist considers the term 'gender' and 'gender-based violence' to be apt and appropriate in relation to violence against women and girls. Violence against women and girls is often based on perceptions of a 'gendered' body that reinforces sex-based oppression and discrimination. The use of the term 'gender-based violence' adheres to a range of international human rights frameworks and as the recent Supreme Court ruling makes clear, sex-based rights are protected in the UK under the Equality Act. We therefore believe that the term 'gender' in relation to violence against women and girls should be reclaimed and actively used, alongside the notions of sex-based oppression and rights, to ensure that the many ways in which women, girls (and children) are abused (emotionally, physically, psychologically, spiritually, financially etc.) can be properly captured, comprehensively addressed, and their full rights and entitlements observed.

Key Findings

The report highlights the following key findings:

- The socio-political context of the UK has irreversibly changed in the wake of Brexit, austerity, the hostile environment and a shift towards a ‘post-equalities’ political agenda.¹⁴ This has also resulted in **the amplification of public forms of racism** in which all black, minoritised and migrant groups – and women in particular – become easy targets.

“There’s a lot of discrimination towards all the women here, Black women, Chinese women, women in scarves, women are just targets. I’m afraid to speak up because of my background and my culture. When they look at me, they just see someone who they think doesn’t belong, they think they know about me because of racism.” (WOMAN SERVICE USER)

- The **increase in anti-Muslim racism cannot be separated from anti-immigration racism and violence** since both were evident throughout the riots and form part of the same structural systems of power and discrimination that threaten violence against Muslims, migrants and other minorities alike. Experiences of all forms of racism are intertwined and threaded throughout the testimonies of the women and children interviewed for this report.

“Wearing the hijab or a scarf made you a target because people think it’s a sign to be racist to someone, when they shout at me, they shout at me ‘Black bitch’ [and] ‘dirty’ ... telling me to go home. This is what we share together here, we have all had racism but it’s more, because it’s about what was said before. They tell you that you don’t belong because you have an accent or different clothes or don’t look white.” (WOMAN SERVICE USER)

- The **impact of the hostile environment extends to organisations that support migrant women and children**, particularly specialist women’s organisations led by and for Black, minoritised and migrant women. They are left to fill the needs and rights gap created by discriminatory anti-immigration policies, without adequate resources.

“There should be less discrimination from services, there should not be discrimination around skin colour and dress code... because we are not seen to be allowed public funds. It’s not true, they discriminate.” (WOMAN SERVICE USER)

- **Women with insecure immigration status are physically and psychologically more vulnerable to racism and abuse.** This is compounded by the failure to include the impact of immigration laws and policies in any analysis of social justice and integration and cohesion. Migrant women experience higher levels of abuse precisely because discriminatory state policies construct their destitution and marginalisation and force them into dependency on communities, families and the wider society, which often exploit their vulnerability.

“I was really scared and still scared today. On the morning of the riots I went out, I was walking and thinking and looking behind me and now this is feeling the same, it hasn’t changed since the summer. Because I have hijab and I’m a migrant what rights do I have? I felt I will be attacked on the days of riots, but Home Office said I had to have a biometric done and I had no choice but to go. I was very scared ... but the staff here [Angelou Centre] they took me there and back even though [the centre was closed] because of the riots” (WOMAN SERVICE USER)

14. By ‘post equalities,’ we refer to a socio-political backlash against the Equality Act 2010, anything related to “EDI” (equality, diversity, inclusion) policies and by default the Human Rights Act 1998. This has been more vociferously led by the far right and other conservative political forces for over a decade – most notably witnessed at the recent local elections that saw Reform UK criticise the Equality Act and DEI initiatives – in ways that replicate a Trumpian populist political agenda. Despite the Covid-19 pandemic and the international response to the murder of George Floyd, black-led women’s grassroots organisations have reported a lack of adherence to equality matters by statutory agencies in their service provision.

- **Rising levels of public racism intersect with rising levels of misogyny thus exacerbating the range of abuses that women and children experience**, particularly migrant women and children and those without recourse to public funds (NRPF).¹⁵ These forms of abuse combine to heighten vulnerability and retraumatise survivors of domestic abuse and violence.

“Women have been re-traumatised after being imprisoned and controlled [in their own homes]. It’s difficult to safety plan with women. We do so much to support mothers who will not leave the house after the riots. Their husbands and families told them if they left the abuse that white people would not help them and would attack them – so when the riots happened it triggered so much and the types of abuse the women go through, which often involves threats” (STAFF MEMBER)

- **Children and young people experienced a profound sense of fear and trauma linked to the loss of safety and stability during the riots.** These feelings were internalised and manifested in behaviour marked by silence, withdrawal and trauma. The Angelou Centre’s counselling and therapeutic services provided an essential safe space that validated these feelings and helped them feel safe and to rebuild resilience.

“I was not allowed to go out on my own or with my friends. It must be with my family. My family suffered a lot during this time. I was scared that I might get acid thrown on my face or punched.” (CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S SERVICE USER)

“I was with my mum the whole time and she made sure I was with someone and never did anything alone. It became very difficult to travel alone. All my friends who are not white experienced racism even if they didn’t have a headscarf on like me. My mum had to take me to school.” (CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S SERVICE USER)

- There has been a **simultaneous escalation of right-wing populism, religious extremism and misogyny**, all connected by hatred and division that in specific ways impact on the rights and freedoms of Black, minoritised and migrant women and girls. These aspects of the riots continue to be seriously disregarded by policy makers and funders.

“There are multiple levels of racism that are being experienced but instead of supporting and demanding things for the better, socially women and children are being excluded and so the racism is escalating. Mothers in particular are feeling a lot of the consequences and this is very gendered. No one is looking at the wider impact of racism and how it draws young men into radicalisation and is informed by right wing misogyny.” (STAFF MEMBER)

- Specialist Black, minoritised and migrant led women’s organisations face **the double jeopardy of having to challenge both the state and patriarchal communities/leaders.** This oppressive situation threatens the conditions of their existence and leads to ineffective and inappropriate policies on racism, inclusion, cohesion and funding.

“Also, the police and local authorities or service... they run about after the community leaders like they can solve the racism, I mean what have they done so far to help? They haven’t included any women in these discussions, they haven’t invested in us or supported us, they do make referrals but even then, only sometimes. The men from authorities talk to men from communities, women are sidelined and this is dangerous.” (RESIST NETWORK MEMBER)

15. The NRPF Network defines NRPF in the following way: “A person will have no recourse to public funds when they are ‘subject to immigration control’. A person who is subject to immigration control cannot claim public funds (benefits and housing assistance), unless an exception applies. Section 115(9) of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 states that a person will be ‘subject to immigration control’ if they have one of the following types of immigration status:

- Leave to enter or remain, which has a ‘No Recourse to Public Funds’ (NRPF) condition
- Leave to enter or remain that is subject to a maintenance undertaking
- Leave to enter or remain as a result of a pending immigration appeal
- No leave to enter or remain when they are required to have this

<https://www.nrpfnetwork.org.uk/information-and-resources/rights-and-entitlements/immigration-status-and-entitlements/who-has-no-recourse-to-public-funds>

Introduction

“Safety Was Taken Away From Us”



*“I would have died without Angelou Centre because of violence he did... it was not just my husband; it was the family too. They abused and beat me and worked me all day and night... (they kept me in the home for a year) and I was not allowed to go out. I felt like I did then when the riots happened, I could not go anywhere to feel safe. **Safety was taken away from us again.**” (WOMAN SERVICE USER)*

The *Stories of Colour* initiative was developed in the immediate aftermath of the far-right riots that took place across the UK in the late summer of 2024. As part of this initiative, the Angelou Centre set out to document the experiences of Black, minoritised and migrant women and children.¹⁶ Driven by far-right individuals, groups, media influencers and politicians, the riots specifically targeted ethnic minorities, migrants and Muslims, as summarised by *State of Hate*, Hope not Hate’s 2025 annual report and reflection on the riots:

“In the summer of 2024, the UK endured the most significant and widespread spate of racist rioting in the post-war period. Opportunistic far-right actors capitalised on the horrific killing of three children in Southport, Merseyside on 29 July... Violence broke out in 18 towns and cities across England. While activists from known far-right organisations were involved in the trouble, most incidents emerged from localised, post-organisational far-right networks... What followed was a wave of startlingly violent far-right demonstrations in numerous towns and cities across England and Northern Ireland, nine of which descended into all-out riots. Mobs of thugs attacked police, fought with counter-protesters, hurled missiles, shouted far-right slogans, abused and physically attacked minoritised ethnic communities and, in some cases, set cars and buildings ablaze.”¹⁷

The roots of the 2024 racist violence and civil disorder are complex. They are in part a result of decades of socio-economic deprivation, deeply embedded structural inequalities and the neglect of post-industrial regions (particularly in the North East and North West of England) all of which have been driven by austerity policies. In addition, trust in politicians is at an all-time low and political disenfranchisement is high due to the failure of consecutive governments to recognise the critical importance of investing in jobs, community, welfare infrastructure and anti-racist interracial community building initiatives in the most deprived areas. In a time of profound demographic change, there has been a widespread failure to foster a sense of belonging and a vision of shared values based on the democratic ideals of rights and citizenship across all levels of society.

The rise and spread of these recent and far-reaching events are also partly rooted in the Brexit phenomenon and in the creation and extension of the hostile environment policy that has created the conditions for the rise of anti-immigration racism and far-right populism in the UK in the last two or more decades. Despite just 12% of Britons supporting the riots there has been a concerted political swing to the populist right over the past few years.¹⁸

16. The Home Affairs Committee’s inquiry into the far-right riots entitled: *Police Response To The 2024 Summer Disorder* notes that the riots took place between 29 July and 7 August 2024: “Following the murders of Bebe King, Elsie Dot Stancombe and Alice da Silva Aguiar in Southport on 29 July 2024, a group broke off from a peaceful vigil on the evening of 30 July and gathered outside Southport Mosque. Violence soon broke out, with both police and the mosque targeted. Over the next week, disorder broke out across several towns and cities including in London, Hartlepool and Aldershot on 31 July; in Sunderland on 2 August; in Hull, Liverpool, Blackpool and Stoke-on-Trent on 3 August; in Rotherham, Tamworth and Middlesbrough on 4 August; and in Plymouth on 5 August. On Wednesday 7 August the National Police Chiefs’ Council activated its national mobilisation plan, involving the creation of a national strategic reserve of public order officers. While further anti-immigration protests and counter-protests took place across the country, significant disorder was largely avoided after this date. In total, 246 events (including protests, counter-protests and incidents of disorder) took place, of which 88 were deemed significant, with many of these resulting in disorder. By 22 January 2025 the disorder had led to 1,804 arrests and 1,072 charges, the majority of which were for serious public order offences.” <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/47476/documents/246718/default/>

17. <https://hopenothate.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/state-of-hate-2025.pdf>

18. “Reform UK voters are the only voting group to support the wider protests, with eight in ten (81%) saying they supported them to some degree. A YouGov poll at the time, noted that fewer than one in five Labour or Lib Dem voters (18-19%) supported the protests, while Conservatives were split on the matter (43% support, 48% oppose). Just 12% of Britons though think that the recent disorder was justified, compared to 82% who thought it was unjustified. Again, Reform UK voters were more likely than others to think the racist protests was justified, at 33%, although only 7% considered it “completely justified” – and 64% took the opposing view.” <https://yougov.co.uk/politics/articles/50257-the-public-reaction-to-the-2024-riots>

This is further aggravated by the prevalence of a parallel rise in misogyny and the deliberate exclusion of migrants including women and children from access to their human rights of protection and equality. These socio-economic and political developments have deeply affected organisations such as the Angelou Centre and other specialist women's groups led by and for Black and minoritised women, affecting their ability to support women and protect them from harm.

During and after the riots, the Angelou Centre witnessed the impact of these events first hand on the organisation's service users, staff and the communities where they live and work. As a result of the women and children's experiences, the *Stories of Colour* initiative was created to respond to this and capture the exponential rise in the discriminatory and racist conditions in which the Black, minoritised and migrant women and children they support are living.

Working independently of the state, specialist Black and minoritised women's organisations such as the Angelou Centre and the Resist Network members support some of the most marginalised and economically excluded women and children who also experience domestic abuse, sexual violence and coercive control within their families and communities. Casework with women and children handled by these organisations often highlight underlying tensions that exist between patriarchal community values and women's equality; tensions that leave women and children caught between structural and systemic racism and community or family patriarchal norms, all of which undermine their fundamental rights and freedoms.

For decades, organisations led by Black and minoritised women, particularly across the post-industrial northern regions, have experienced a persistent combination of exclusion and poorly implemented policy decisions that have impacted on the rights of the women and children they support. Additional hostility from state and community institutions have further marginalised their voices and prevented their meaningful engagement during moments of public crisis, in post-recovery debates and in decision making following events such as the far-right riots.

For example, local Black and minoritised women led organisations in and around the North East such as the Angelou Centre and Sangini, were not initially invited to participate in strategic meetings held during and after the riots in which statutory and male community leaders were given a lead role.¹⁹ In the Angelou Centre's case, an invitation was extended only after the organisation raised concerns about its exclusion in a meeting with a senior official at the office of the Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner. Following the centre's re-opening after the riots, current Police and Crime Commissioner Susan Dungworth visited the Angelou Centre, met with staff and service users. At her request a further session was arranged for her to hear directly from the children and young service users.

Despite requests to be involved in discussions around recovery efforts following the riots, many grassroots Black and minoritised women's organisations were not invited to consultation meetings or if they were, their input was not acknowledged or given credence. Very few received direct support from the police or local authorities and those that did felt it was too little, too late – having been contacted weeks after the riots were over. These organisations, including members of the Resist Network, reported that they had received little or no support from the police or local authorities in the immediate aftermath of the riots.

This is in sharp contrast to religious bodies such as local mosques and male led community organisations, which were supported and helped to carry out safety checks during and after the riots and given additional funding to secure their premises.^{20, 21} Grassroots women's organisations such as the Angelou Centre on the other hand were

19. <https://angelou-centre.org.uk/> and <https://www.sangini.co.uk/>

20. Much of the funding provided by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government was distributed through a variety of regional voluntary sector intermediaries, including many that were dominated by so-called community and religious representative organisations. For example, 600k was given to the 18 affected cities (three million was given to Southport where the violence originated), including a portion to be distributed to frontline community groups in affected areas. In areas such as Hull, where the riots and disorder were particularly violent and destructive, no Black, minoritised and migrant led women's organisations received funding. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-recovery-fund-guidance/community-recovery-fund-guidance>

21. The Resist Network directly supports Black, minoritised and migrant women and children in the North West, Yorkshire, North East and South Scottish regions. The organisations also have a national remit due to their strategic advocacy/campaigning work and provision of specialist refuges and safe accommodation services.

left to fend for themselves: they had to be proactive in contacting statutory agencies and in challenging them about what they were doing to ensure the safety of their organisations and the women and children they supported.

The Angelou Centre's experiences were not isolated. Notwithstanding the very public and media driven weaponisation of violence against women and girls by the far-right to justify the riots and the cited victimisation and targeting of Black, minoritised and migrant women during the riots, little to no attention was paid to the risk or impact of the riots on women and children's safety by many local, regional and national multi-sectoral agencies.²²

Research Framework and Methodology²³

Across various media sources, it can be observed that far-right racism is further fuelled by the development of white supremacist narratives. The 2024 far-right riots for instance were driven by a range of racist tropes, stereotypes and disinformation that created a false public narrative about migrants and minorities. Project Resist's intersectional methodology and use of first-person testimonies as a principal research method seeks to counteract such supremacist and racist narratives by centring the voices and material experiences of Black, minoritised and migrant women and children – and of the organisations that support them.²⁴

The interview framework was divided into three key areas to allow for meaningful engagement with multi-lingual participants who had diverse experiences, backgrounds and abilities. Many of the participants had not taken part in research before, therefore the interview questions were semi-structured to enable participants to fully express themselves without feeling under pressure to respond in specific ways. The interview framework focused on:

1. The background and context to participant engagement with the Angelou Centre, in particular experiences of racism or race and community related concerns prior to the riots.
2. The impact of the far-right riots on the participants' physical, emotional and psychological well-being; on their family, friends and community. This also included their responses to media coverage.
3. The changes that participants wanted to see after the riots, including ways to address heightened levels of racism with suggestions about how women and children's safety could be improved.

The interview framework was further adapted for children and young people by creating a "listening to children" culture, using open questions, creative modalities and discussion points that enabled children and young people to safely engage with questions at their own pace.²⁵

In addition, the report draws upon:

- A literature review, wider research and media/news coverage of the far-right riots.
- In-person interviews, project development meetings and group workshops.
- Access to the Angelou Centre's data and evidence (via evaluations, monitoring and relevant internal/external reports).
- The *Stories of Colour* project activities and development plan.
- Creative work by the participants produced in sessions facilitated by multi-lingual Black and minoritised artists.
- Service user and interviewee demographics including global demographics as well as specific data that resulted from the report's research.
- Stakeholder and partnership information in relation to service users.
- Anonymised case studies and relevant work summaries.
- The Angelou Centre's social media, website, policy briefings and campaigning information.

22. An example of direct VAWG during the riots was documented by the NHS: <https://www.nursingtimes.net/leadership/filipino-nurses-attacked-as-nhs-community-condemns-racist-riots-05-08-2024/>

23. This consultation methodology has been developed by Project Resist and should not be used or referenced without permission.

24. Also see the Appendix for details of the ways that Project Resist's intersectional methodology addressed the Stories of Colour aims and objectives.

25. https://www.ncb.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/files/NO13%2520-%2520developing_a_listening_culture.pdf

Project Resist used an intersectional research framework that draws on a Black feminist analytical approach that is holistic, intersectional and contextual. Project Resist’s intersectional framework has been specifically developed to both challenge and address structural and socio-political issues and includes four modalities of research and engagement: narratological, participant-centric, trauma-informed and adaptive. The trauma-informed approach to the research included an adapted research framework (see Methodology and Appendix E and F).

Research Process

The research process involved regular engagement with the staff at the Angelou Centre and project facilitators as well as with service users through semi-structured in-person interviews, workshops and meetings. Eight roundtable group interview sessions took place with service users consisting of 22 Black and minoritised women, 19 children and young people and 10 members of staff between November 2024 and May 2025. The sessions were held on site at the Angelou Centre and supported by the Angelou Centre advocates and interpreters. The children and young people’s sessions also included a range of creative activities. Group interviews were semi-structured and lasted between two to three hours. All attendees had their travel expenses paid for, and any additional needs were supported. The opportunity to participate in the research was widely advertised within the Angelou Centre. All potential participants had their individual needs assessed (including language, access, travel and childcare needs) and were asked to sign consent, confidentiality and privacy notice forms (subject to explanation and agreement), which also included the opportunity to withdraw from the research at any point. An additional consent check took place after each session. Service user participants were consulted and briefed on the draft report and given the opportunity to feed back and comment on the report’s content during face-to-face sessions that took place in June and July 2025.²⁶

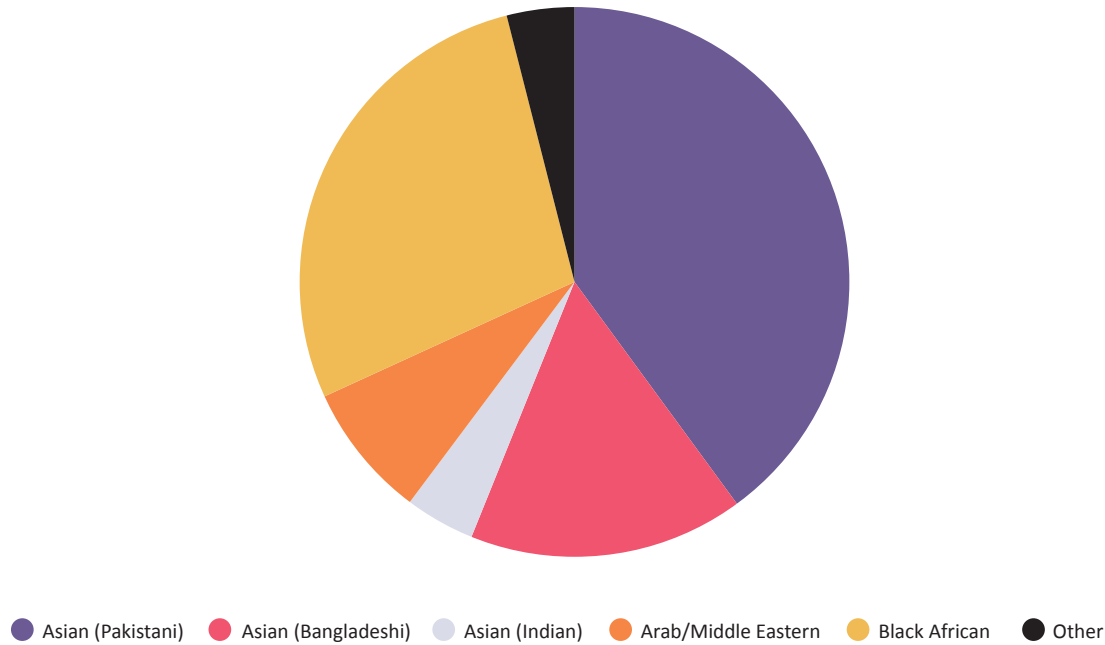
A further three round table discussions were held with 12 organisations led by and for Black, minoritised and migrant women (involving 18 individual women from these backgrounds). Two were held with the Resist Network organisations and one was held with regional women’s organisations between October 2024 and March 2025. These discussions helped to shape the research framework and the focus of the report.

Research Participants

The research participants were all women and drawn evenly from across the Angelou Centre’s range of services: 11 women were accessing training, wellbeing, inclusion or outreach support, and 11 women were receiving safe accommodation/refuge and/or domestic and sexual violence support. Of the 22 Black, minoritised and migrant women that participated in the research, 10 were Asian/Pakistani, and 7 were Black African, the smallest ethnic cohort were Arab (n=2). Eleven different languages were spoken and 25% of the cohort needed interpretation support. The majority of the participants were of Muslim (n=17), 3 were Christian and 1 was of Hindu background. There were no participants of mixed ethnicity/heritage. Over 40% of the cohort had recently experienced or were experiencing mental ill-health problems and were receiving therapeutic interventions to support their wellbeing. Three women had physical disabilities that included mobility issues, and one had severe hearing impairment.

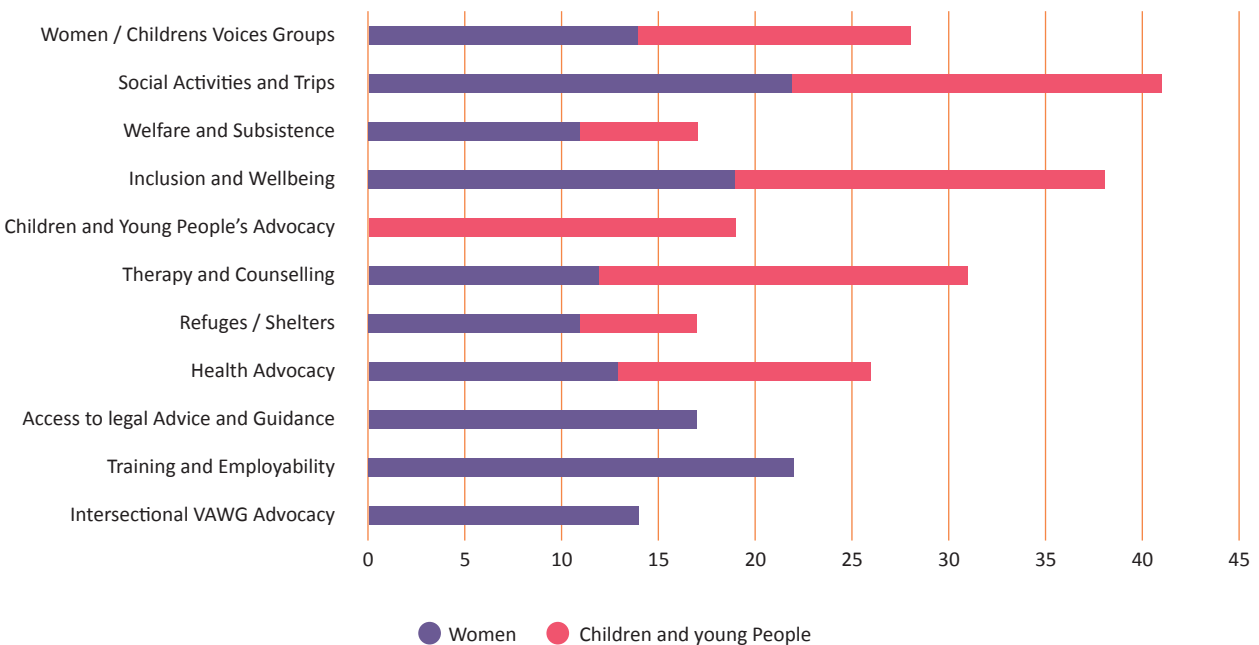
26. Trained advocates supported each session (1 staff member for every 4 participants plus relevant interpretation support) with additional follow up support where required. In advance of the interviews, group interview planning sessions took place in relation to the needs of the participants. Engagement with participants was coordinated by the Angelou Centre and all participants were provided with food and refreshments. The facilitator ensured that discussions stayed within the remit of the interview framework (to avoid re-traumatisation) and attendees were all given follow up support by staff at the Angelou Centre where needed.

Figure 1: Ethnicity of Women Participants



16 of the participants were migrant women (having either insecure immigration status or had recently acquired settlement), 8 had no access to public funds. 50% were mothers and of these women, 2 had been separated from their children (they had their children forcibly removed from their care). All 22 participants had benefitted from 3 or more services provided by the Angelou Centre including safe accommodation, specialist domestic abuse/sexual violence advocacy, counselling, parenting support, wellbeing and inclusion activities, accredited training, trips and ESOL classes.

Figure 2: Angelou Centre services accessed by research participants

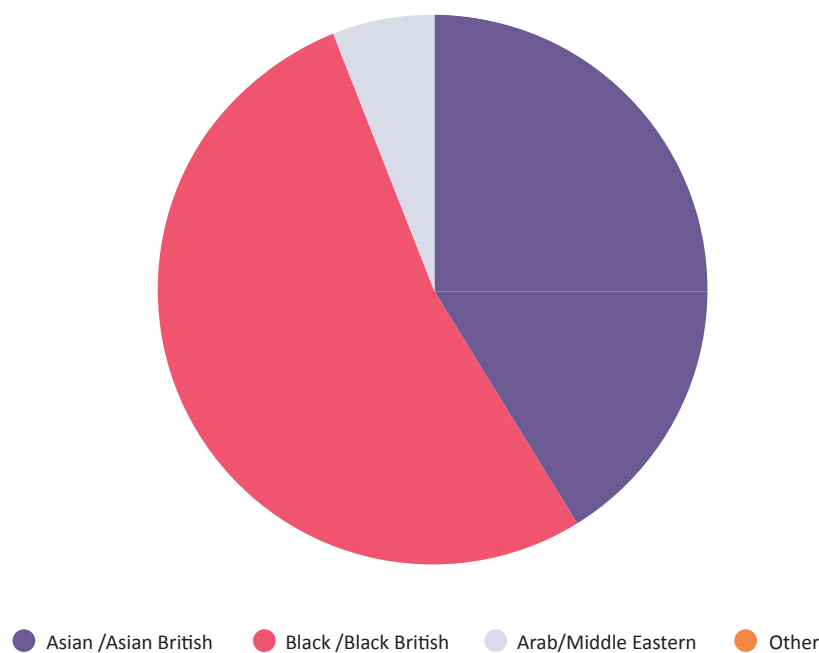


The cohort of children and young people that were interviewed differed from the female cohort. The Angelou Centre’s Children and Young People’s services are dedicated to children and young survivors of domestic abuse, sexual abuse/exploitation and harmful practices. Nineteen children and young people between the ages of 5 and 16 years of age participated in the research.

Three separate sessions were held with the children and young participants to ensure research activities were age appropriate; they included craft and drawing activities. The demographics of this cohort markedly differed from the women participants: %80 of the children were born in the UK, almost %50 were of Black African heritage. There were no children of mixed ethnicity or heritage.

Levels of disability were extremely high among the cohort of children and young people: over %60 (N=12) had a disability, the majority of which were severe learning or autism related. One participant was non-verbal. %60 of children had formerly been or were currently involved with local social services due to domestic abuse related child protection concerns. The age range was diverse with almost %50 of participants under 10 years of age. The youngest participants were 5 years of age (n=4), 3 participants were 13 years old, and the oldest participant was 16 years of age.

Figure 3: Ethnicity of Children and Young Participants



Angelou Centre staff research participants worked across all areas of the organisation: 5 were senior domestic abuse advocates or outreach workers from the Safe Accommodation (Refuge and Move On) services and Children and Young People and Outreach services. One participant was a senior manager, three were part of the Training, Well-being and Development Team and one was a project coordinator; %40 of interviewees were Asian (Pakistani, Indian and Bangladeshi), over %55 were of Black African heritage and %5 were Arab. There were no staff of mixed ethnicity or heritage.

Chapter 1

“The Racism is Not Said But It’s Done”

The socio-political context of the far-right riots



“Wearing the hijab or a scarf made you a target because people think it’s a sign to be racist to someone, when they shout at me, they shout at me ‘Black bitch’ [and] ‘dirty’...telling me to go home. This is what we share together here. We have all had racism but it’s more, because it’s about what was said before, they tell you that you don’t belong because you have an accent or different clothes or don’t look white.” (WOMAN SERVICE USER)

The 2024 far-right riots demonstrated that violence against women and girls is interwoven into the fabric of white supremacist ideology, racism and racial violence. The riots also signalled a recent turn in the public manifestation of violence against women and girls that is rooted in misogyny, racism and anti-immigration hatred. Violence against women and girls was used as an excuse to foment anti-migrant racism rather than as a focus for genuine public concern for the safety of women and girls.²⁷ The riots were reportedly triggered by the tragic murders of three girls in Southport: Alice da Silva Aguiar, Bebe King and Elsie Dot Stancombe and the attempted murder of another ten girls and women attending a children’s dance event. But this event followed a disturbing and well documented pattern of public forms of femicide in recent years that has nothing to do with race.^{28, 29, 30} This strongly demonstrates that the recent murders of the girls also highlight the wider crisis of women’s increasing lack of safety in public spaces regardless of which communities they belong to.

The misogynistic murders of the three girls in Southport were also weaponised by far-right leaning politicians, journalists, and affiliates, as well as by extremist fascist groups to justify racist and anti-immigration narratives and violence. The spread of disinformation, particularly online and the racist commentary that accompanied it, led to the rapid escalation of public violence and disorder that has been perceived as “the most significant disorder in the UK since the 2011 riots, in which at least 4,000 people were arrested (within one month of the event) and 1,984 prosecuted (within two months).”³¹ The 2024 riots saw some of the most destructive incidents of racist violence and disorder, which took place particularly across northern regions of England or the West Midlands.³² It could be argued that the coincidental timing of the murders lit the match to what has been years of far-right organising, in which the element of misogynist violence waited in the political wings to take centre stage. The far right has also benefited from the years that anti-racist experience and learning – developed out of concrete struggles and campaigns – had been forgotten and neglected.



“It’s as if the adults are not in the room; the police, schools, statutory agencies are not doing anything and didn’t respond appropriately, they were not equipped, there was no information for children, there was no community cohesion or race relations work or foundations – it’s as if it’s all ground zero and decades of anti-racist work hasn’t already been done.” (STAFF MEMBER)

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27. “Posting or sharing allegations of gender-based violence provides an excuse for some members of the community to validate or bolster their anti-migrant views in a way that appears more socially acceptable. This group of people are unlikely to have genuine concern for victims or ending gender-based violence. Rather, they want to exploit the narrative of “protecting women and children” to mask their anti-migrant views.” <https://hopenothate.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Allegations-of-gender-based-violence-HOPE-not-hate-resource.pdf>
28. For which Axel Rudakubana has been jailed for 52 years. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/jan/23/southport-attacker-axel-rudakubana-jailed>
29. Such as the high-profile murders of Sarah Everard, Sabine Nessa, Nicole Smallman and Bibaa Henry, and Ania Jedrkowiak.
30. Women are often murdered by men while pursuing their daily routines and activities in public spaces, for example, they are murdered while out walking, meeting friends, returning from a night out, engaging in physical exercise. Reporting by the media on these well publicised murders have tended to comment and frame concerns around the circumstances of the murder as being one of many ‘causal’ factors such as the time of day (early morning, dusk or evening) or location (‘deserted’ canal, park, beach). While in fact these murders take place in public spaces, at different times of the day, in rural, urban, or city centres around the country – mirroring the high levels of domestic homicide and suicides in women’s own homes.
31. <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/policing-response-to-the-2024-summer-riots/>
32. Of the 20 regions awarded recovery funding following the riots, 11 regions were based in the North East, North West, Yorkshire & Humber and 4 were in the West Midlands.

Footage and documentation of the riots also demonstrated the disproportionately high number of young people, particularly young men, participating in the riots. This also strongly highlighted the concurrent rise of online abuse and far-right influencers who promote misogynistic views in the so called ‘manosphere’ that also formed part of the wider context of the riots.^{33, 34}

Socio-economic deprivation, poor educational and health outcomes and the lack of educational opportunities for young people also appeared to be an overriding factor in identifying those who were more likely to be vulnerable to potential rioting and public disorder. Many of the young men involved in the rioting were living in socio-economically and educationally disadvantaged parts of the UK and it is significant that many did not cite racism as the reason why they participated in the riots.³⁵ In the court proceedings that followed the arrests of the young men who participated in the riots, it was noted that “...very few of the young people involved shared openly racist views. Judges were told youths saw the unrest as a social event”.³⁶



“Young people wanted to do something and had nowhere to go and nothing to do – they were being controlled and were not able to do anything so they joined the riots. There were so many young men that were out joining in because they had nothing else. It was really sad. As this took place during the summer holidays, it really inhibited freedoms. When they went to the school in September it was as if nothing had happened in terms of the school.”³⁷ (STAFF MEMBER)

In addition, social media and online disinformation played a significant role in fanning the far-right violence as noted by many commentators and by the participants of this research.³⁸ The platform had already been set by the rise of nationalist and white supremacist ideologies and years of state initiated anti-immigration rhetoric and the creation of the hostile immigration environment, which was then amplified on social media.

“Social media platforms, particularly X (formerly Twitter), played a significant role in the escalation. Elon Musk’s involvement in reshaping the platform led to a rise in unchecked misinformation, providing far-right groups with a wider reach to spread their false narratives. The lack of effective moderation allowed dangerous rhetoric to thrive, directly impacting real-world violence.”³⁹

Some of the interviewees in the research echoed their concerns and frustration at the role played by social media in fomenting the racist violence and the lack of political will at the highest levels to tackle this. There were few strategic interventions to address racial hatred as it spread online behind closed doors, before it manifested on the streets. Social media and private messaging apps were used by the rioters to agitate and organise and this was further inflamed by new right leaning and overtly right-wing media platforms emerging from the ashes of so called ‘legacy media’.⁴⁰

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- 33. EAW have defined online abuse as including: “cyberstalking, sexual harassment, grooming for exploitation or abuse, image-based sexual abuse (so called ‘revenge porn’, upskirting, sexually explicit deepfakes, sexual extortion and videos of sexual assaults and rapes), rape threats, doxing of women’s personal information, tech abuse in intimate partnerships, and much more. This abuse can have a long-lasting, devastating impact on survivors.” <https://www.endviolenceagainstawomen.org.uk/campaign/online-abuse/>
 - 34. The Women and Equalities Committee is currently undertaking an inquiry: <https://committees.parliament.uk/work/9089/misogyny-the-manosphere-and-online-content/>
 - 35. “Well over half of those charged with offences – most commonly violent disorder – came from the most deprived 20% of neighbourhoods. But social deprivation is not the only commonality. Using census figures, the Guardian found that suspected rioters were also far more likely to live in areas with high levels of poor health. More than a third (36%) came from the 10% of neighbourhoods with the worst self-reported health levels. In the Hendon and Docks area of Sunderland where at least six residents were charged, almost 12% of people said they were in bad or very bad health in 2021, compared with 5.4% across England and Wales. More than a quarter (29%) of rioters came from the 10% of neighbourhoods with the lowest levels of qualifications. Areas that have the most residents with no qualifications or a level 1 certificate as their highest include Hendon and Docks as well as Bolton upon Dearne.” <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/sep/25/local-left-behind-prey-to-populist-politics-data-2024-uk-rioters>
 - 36. This article goes on to cite: “Official figures show that the proportion of young offenders sentenced to immediate custody was six times higher for offences committed during the 2011 disturbances, compared with the previous year. The average length of custodial sentences was higher too.” <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/sep/26/simply-wanting-to-belong-to-something-why-did-children-take-part-in-the-english-riots>
 - 37. Black and minoritised woman service user.
 - 38. See for example <https://harmandcrime.blogs.bristol.ac.uk/2025/03/24/social-media-hate-and-resistance-what-we-learned-from-englands-2024-riots/>
 - 39. Ibid
 - 40. The term ‘legacy media’ is used to describe pre-digital or traditional forms of media such as newspapers and mainstream news broadcasting (radio and tv) as opposed to new digital media such social media platforms, non-credible journalistic sources and self-elected journalists, to promote current and breaking news items or opinions. While the proliferation of video evidence captured on smart phones has been a useful way to represent – for example – anti-racist citizen journalism in the face of an increasing level of media authoritarianism, it has also been manipulated by the far right and has led to a tidal wave of disinformation.



“Some of this needs to be stopped by the government and politicians. Things have not been helpful to stop the racists before the riots took place. It felt that riots went on for days and they did nothing. The police knew before the Sunderland riots, people reported it. It was on Facebook and they were not prepared. They should have nipped it in the bud and been there earlier.” (WOMAN SERVICE USER)

What are they doing to stop disinformation and media posts that divide everyone? There’s a difference between racism and violence on the street like we have seen, and people being racist behind doors, but they work together.” (WOMAN SERVICE USER)

Significantly, the prevailing media narrative and endless news cycle that reported on the far-right riots also served as a convenient context for the abuse of women and girls by violent perpetrators who played on their fear of racial hostility and attacks. Many women were told to stay indoors for their own safety and this served to reinforce patriarchal control and entrapment in an abusive relationship or marriage.



“There is a default to racism and racialisation. The media has got worse since the riots – it’s become more extreme. Black and minoritised women are weaponised by the media, by the rioters and by the men in communities to get what they want, but who is listening to us?” (STAFF MEMBER)

Women and children’s testimonies highlight how the day-to-day verbal, physical and psychological forms of racist abuse that took place before the riots have rapidly increased since the riots, alongside the mainstreaming of anti-migrant racism in the media and the politicised backlash against ‘diversity and inclusion’.⁴¹ It is in this context that women and children described their experiences of rising racial abuse specifically targeted at them; for example, while travelling on public transport both during the riots and afterwards. Their negative experiences also demonstrate a marked reduction in public safety for women and the constraints they face in relation to their right to travel freely without violence and racist harassment. This is further explored in Chapter 2 on the gendered dimensions of racism.

In addition, the sweeping success of Reform UK in the recent municipal elections of local councillors has led to disturbing political pandering to anti-immigration rhetoric across all parties, as demonstrated by Sir Keir Starmer in his now notorious and much condemned “Island of strangers” speech in May 2025 following the local council elections.^{42, 43}

As we have seen, recent incidents of civil unrest and racist violence come from a wellspring of political projects and policies that include the problematic framing of racism as a failure of minorities and migrants to integrate into a so called ‘national identity’ or to adopt ‘British values.’ These assertions mask profoundly discriminatory and unequal socio-political processes that create a hierarchy of citizenship and related problems that include:

- Social fragmentation and the further isolation of communities along ethnic, religious and class lines contributing to a distorted sense of belonging and citizenship.
- The creation of differential access to scarce resources among the poorest groups in our society, locally and nationally – making it impossible to isolate what occurs in local communities from the general national or global picture.

41. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cm2365p3m4ko>

42. Reform UK won 677 of the 1,600 seats in the May 2025 local council elections including control of Durham and Doncaster where Labour was “previously the largest party”: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cd6j8e38p79o>

43. Keir Starmer has since apologised for this speech. “The rhetoric was likened by some critics to the language of Enoch Powell, and the prime minister was accused of pandering to the populist right by insisting he intended to ‘take back control of our borders’ and end a ‘squalid chapter’ of rising inward migration.” <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2025/may/12/keir-starmer-defends-plans-to-curb-net-migration>

- The promotion of a neo-liberal economy resulting in the closure of local industries, the lack of adequate funding for local authorities, the partial dismantling and privatisation of the welfare state and the creation of an increasingly hostile anti-immigration environment. Factors that have contributed to decreased local resources and increased competition and division among individuals and groups.
- The erosion of state funded inter-racial community development programmes or initiatives in areas of socio-economic deprivation that have also seen the biggest demographic changes.⁴⁴
- Widescale funding cuts to anti-racist educational and youth programmes that have led to a disconnection between public education and anti-racist policy making.
- The role of the media, as well as other increasingly right-wing political discourses that blame migrants and newcomers for creating divisions and tensions.
- The failure to identify and address key barriers to inclusion, such as local religious and community power structures that promote inequality, hatred and sectarianism.
- The promotion of self-styled religious ultra-conservative and fundamentalist leaders as power brokers and mediators between state and community, irrespective of the part they have played in fuelling tension, sectarianism and inequality and in erecting barriers to inclusion, especially for women.

As far back as 2001, the Ouseley report into the riots in places like Bradford and Oldham castigated Black and minoritised community leadership as socially conservative, the assumption being that ‘traditional’ leaderships had maintained a stranglehold on their communities.⁴⁵ Recommendations included the need for strong political and community leadership and the creation of programmes that bring communities together under the banner of ‘social cohesion’.

What was absent from the public discussion that followed, however, was the need to connect an understanding of economic disadvantage and racism with the rise of religious fundamentalism operating through municipal and community politics, all of which also contribute to division and segregation. Little heed was paid to this part of the Ouseley report. Instead, successive government policies have continued to ensure that community and religious leaders are coopted at all levels of the state as part of the multi-faith approach to cohesion. The result is an increasingly segregated civic space including in education and the delivery of legal and welfare services that are increasingly faith-based and conservative.

In her recent report entitled *The Khan Review: Threats to Social Cohesion and Democratic Resilience* (published in April 2024), Sara Khan analysed the state of ‘social cohesion’ and the impact of what she terms ‘freedom-restricting harassment’ and online censorship. She was one of the few that pointed to the continuing connection between economic disadvantage, racism and the increased power of right wing and fundamentalist religious forces in communities and warned against growing extremism across all community and political factions.⁴⁶ She also challenged the promotion or advancement of an ideology based on violence, hatred or intolerance and the increasing use of community and religious leaders to promote a multi-faith approach to cohesion. This approach places unaccountable religious and community leaderships that claim to be representatives of minorities at the heart of power, which in turn lends itself to undemocratic decision making and to gatekeeping resources at the local level. The result is on one hand more segregation of services and public spaces through promotion of faith-based legal and welfare services and schools; and on the other, sectarianism and patriarchal control within minoritised communities.⁴⁷

Many grassroots community-based women’s organisations in the UK as elsewhere are experiencing the impact of the growing convergence of far right, right wing and religious fundamentalist ideologies and the curtailment of women’s human and democratic rights.⁴⁸ There has been a reported rise in religious fundamentalism and

44. In areas such as the North East of England and parts of West Yorkshire.

45. The Ouseley Report (2001): <https://www.sra.org.uk/globalassets/documents/sra/equality-diversity/ouseley-report.pdf>

46. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-khan-review-threats-to-social-cohesion-and-democratic-resilience>

47. “... groups are operating that are not proscribed and do not meet the threshold for terrorism but are seeking to replace democracy with an Islamist or neo-Nazi society. It identified the potential consequences of extremism as: the radicalisation of individuals; denying people their full rights and opportunities; supressing freedom of expression; inciting hatred; eroding democratic institutions, social capital and cohesion; and acts of terrorism.” <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-khan-review-threats-to-social-cohesion-and-democratic-resilience>

48. <https://www.secularism.org.uk/news/2025/02/rise-in-political-religion-threatens-womens-rights-report-finds#:~:text=The%20report%20highlighted%20how%20Islamic,upon%20individuals%2C%20particularly%20girls%22>. <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/lseupr/2024/02/06/the-creeping-ascent-of-the-far-right-in-mainstream-european-politics-and-how-to-stop-it/>

conservatism across all communities, but this has not received the same social and political scrutiny as the rise in racism and violence against women and girls (VAWG) in the wider population.^{49, 50} Both the forces of the far-right and growing internal tensions and sectarianism directly impact on Black, minoritised and migrant women and children.⁵¹ They are caught between the public escalation of racist ideologies combined with misogyny (particularly in the aftermath of the riots) and the rise of patriarchal and fundamentalist power within their own communities.

The far-right riots have therefore sparked many questions and concerns that are not included in public debates about far-right populism. Very few organisations have acknowledged let alone addressed the way entrenched right wing religious and nationalist ideologies are central to a growing anti-women's rights agenda. Nor have they included a gendered analysis of the riots or made any policy recommendations that address this.^{52, 53}

In the light of this, the announcement of a government's review into the riots happening in parallel with an ongoing review of 'social cohesion' is a troubling one. Our concern is that the focus will not be on how the state has and continues to create the conditions for both racism and misogyny to thrive.

In the next few chapters these themes are further unpacked as the testimonies from Angelou Centre service users are used to demonstrate how the riots had a profound impact on women's individual and social sense of safety, identity and well-being. The testimonies also speak to the lack of statutory and state responses to Black, minoritised and migrant women and children and how that further empowers religious and patriarchal leaderships to take control to the detriment of women and children's rights.



49. "All my reports have shown, in a nutshell that, firstly, these extremist and cohesion threats are worsening; secondly, that our country is woefully unprepared. We've got a gap in our legislation which is allowing these extremists to operate with impunity." Sara Khan, former Commissioner for Countering Extremism <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/article/2024/aug/04/conservatives-left-uk-wide-open-to-far-right-violence-says-former-adviser>
50. Feminist Dissent defines Religious Fundamentalism in the following way: "By religious fundamentalism we refer to modern religious-political interpretations of religious texts, which aim to create a social order based on a 'return to fundamentals' of an imaginary utopian past. The control of the minds and bodies of women and sexual minorities are central to this ideology. Fundamentalist movements want to impose their version of religion as the only valid one. They aim to reduce plural spaces and the right to interpret, dissent and doubt. They are often backed by violence or the threat of violence aimed at creating an atmosphere of terror. They are frequently flexible about the means they deploy and may seek to overthrow the existing order or make use of the institutions of the state such as parliament, the army, police and judiciary. They tend to use modern technologies and cultural and democratic spaces in order to establish and consolidate their power, whether in the community or the state. In many cases they make skilful use of the language of human rights while undermining fundamental rights and the principle of universality. In the most extreme cases, their ideology and activities amount to crimes against humanity and genocide." <https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/english/research/currentprojects/feministdissent/>
51. One example of growing sectarianism is the unprecedented communal riots in Leicester between Hindus and Muslims on 17 April 2022, that saw armed and unarmed men from Hindu and Muslim backgrounds marching through the streets chanting incendiary Muslim fundamentalist and Hindu Nationalist slogans.
52. For example the Runnymede's six-month review on the impact of the far-right riots, supported by organisations from the migrant and women's sector, made no reference to the specific impact of the far-right riots on Black and minoritised women. This is a key oversight: <https://www.runnymedetrust.org/news/six-months-since-the-riots-charities-urge-the-government-to-take-action-on-the-growing-threat-of-the-far-right>
53. Parts of this report have been taken from evidence submitted by Project Resist to the Inquiry into Social Cohesion submitted in January 2025: <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/328/women-and-equalities-committee/news/204164/women-and-equalities-committee-launches-new-inquiry-into-community-cohesion/>

Chapter 2

“Stuck Inside Like a Cage”

Black and minoritised women’s experiences of gendered racism



“My case is domestic abuse; I still have nightmares about it all. I still think of it, which is why I would go out. But the riots they took that away from us. We have been through domestic abuse in our homes, and this is like having secret abusers everywhere on our streets. I never used to be afraid of white people when I came here three years ago, but now after this it’s everywhere. This racism I never knew existed and it’s really frightening for me and the children. The workers here [Angelou Centre] helped us and made us feel supported during the riots, they brought us food, phoned us, made us feel safer and helped our children to feel safe.” (WOMAN SERVICE USER)

Many of the public debates and the commentary on the far-right riots has focused on an analysis of racial and religious hatred but few if any commentators, policy makers or think tanks have explored the gendered dimensions of the riots and their impact on women and children.⁵⁴ There has been little or no scrutiny of how Black, minoritised and migrant women have experienced the rise in public forms of racism or institutional discrimination and how it often intersects with increased levels of domestic abuse and community control.⁵⁵

Yet without such an analysis, it is difficult to see how policy making in relation to community building and cohesion can be effective or meaningful. The overwhelming evidence presented in this research powerfully illustrates how women and children’s voices have been ignored or excluded from regional and national debates on the far-right riots. It could be argued that policy and research, in its unchecked drift toward gender neutrality, is miles away from adopting an intersectional analysis that incorporates race, sex and class-based oppression.

The interviews and consultations conducted as part of this research have all revealed how women’s experiences of racism during and after the riots were also informed by their personal, social and financial circumstances. The testimonies fell into five distinct areas: their experiences of racism and gender-based violence; the impact of racism on those with insecure immigration status; institutional forms of discrimination and increased levels of patriarchal community and social control. Women’s experiences of racism and racial discrimination included targeted physical and verbal attacks but these also took place within a broader social context that has seen a drift towards a more conservative and patriarchal consensus.

In February 2024, Reem Alsalem, the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, conducted an official visit to the United Kingdom to assess the situation in respect to violence against women and girls. In her final report, she identified a number of gaps and failures in state responses and made a series of recommendations concerning the lack of safety for black and minoritised women and children from within their own communities:

“Within certain community settings, men exploit religious beliefs and practices to manipulate, coerce and silence their victims. Examples include forcing women into secret religious marriages for sexual exploitation and extorting money through blackmail after sexual abuse. Women in religious marriages also face significant hurdles when seeking divorce, compounded by the persistent issue of forced marriages.”⁵⁶

54. There has been an even greater gap in existing analysis of the impact of the riots on children and young people.

55. For example, in May 2025 the Race Equality Foundation published one of the few reports on the impact of the far-right riots *Understanding the Racist Riots of 2024 and What Should be Done*. They conducted round tables with 400 people and a number of organisations including women’s rights and VAWG organisations. However not one of their recommendations focused on women and only one recommendation made any reference to gender or the experiences of women. <https://raceequalityfoundation.org.uk/press-release/understanding-the-racist-riots-of-2024-and-what-should-be-done/>

56. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/country-reports/ahrc5947add1-visit-united-kingdom-great-britain-and-northern-ireland>

The ‘silencing’ of women’s voices during the riots suggest that the experiences of women cited in Alsalem’s report do not fit the dominant anti-racist paradigm. This approach tends to homogenise both majority and minority communities in ways that mask intersecting power relations based on race, sex and other social factors that produce differential discriminatory outcomes for different groups of people.⁵⁷

The testimonies of the research participants raise several issues that highlight why an intersectional analysis is vital to any understanding of the impact of the far-right riots. These issues are highlighted below and throughout the report:

- Experiences of racism in the public sphere often overlap when experienced in an institutional context; for example, discriminatory responses from statutory agencies such as the police, social care, education and health systems.
- The rise in patriarchal control of women and children within communities are connected to violence against women and girls. The spectrum of patriarchal control and abuse includes concerns such as honour-based abuse as well as harmful practices based on strict gender norms and misogynistic expectations of women and children.
- A focus on community relations that promotes faith-based leaderships has impacted negatively on many women and on the Black, minoritised and migrant led women’s organisations that support them.
- A failure to develop wider anti-racist community programmes that confront the parallel rise of right-wing religious forces have undermined both anti-racist and women’s struggles for rights and justice.

Gendered racism

During and after the riots, Black and minoritised women were easy targets of public expressions of racism and racist behaviours. They were vulnerable precisely because of the way they were publicly and socially perceived. Many racist behaviours were aimed at visible signifiers of women and children’s ethnicity and religion, such as the hijab. There were also other specific forms of racism that affected women such as different skin colour, culture and accents.

“During the riots some boys with bikes came into my garden with masks and started banging on the door and trying to break the electricity box and threw stuff over the yard and we had to call the police. I was too scared to come out of the house and they called us ‘Black pigs’ and we worried about being safe in the house. The police did nothing they just gave us a number to call and gave no help.”⁵⁸ (WOMAN SERVICE USER)

Women in the research discussed how the heightened levels of racism affected their everyday ability to earn a living, work, travel, support their children in school, shop for food or seek medical help. Many were re-traumatised as they recalled feelings of being imprisoned twice over – firstly by their experiences of domestic abuse and control and secondly by the racist abuse and violence.

“I had nowhere to go when the centre closed... I was alone in my house. I always go to (the organisation) every day for my mental health and support and things got worse. I couldn’t sleep and men were banging on my door.” (WOMAN SERVICE USER)

“I couldn’t go to work; I was too scared. A friend that works in Hartlepool had his car screen smashed and he was attacked as he tried to go to work. We couldn’t go to city centre after weeks of this. Things have changed forever, when something like that happens it takes your mind back to abuse, being stuck inside like a cage.” (WOMAN SERVICE USER)

57. Women and children have been an ‘inclusion’ or add-on to headline concerns that often appear to be gender neutral – see above.

58. This attack took place in a remote rural area in the North East of England. Rural areas also saw a rise in racist attacks during and after the riots, but these incidents have not been highlighted in the media.

Racism on public transport was a recurrent issue that came up in many if not all the interviews. Women discussed how they travelled in fear to and from the West End of Newcastle (one of the most diverse areas in the North East of England) to other parts of Tyne and Wear. They feared both verbal and physical racial attacks.

 *“I was scared to travel on the bus after the riots because British men were swearing at us on the bus and I’m still scared to go on the bus by myself.”* (WOMAN SERVICE USER)

 *“We have had to change the women’s transport options and have had to restrict travel since the riots. The racism on the buses has been the worst – white people have been empowered to vocalise their racism and sexism. There is definitely more overt racism and misogyny in public spaces since the riots.”* (STAFF MEMBER)

The women’s fears of racist violence were accompanied by distress caused by the general reluctance on the part of public transport officials, employees and other public bystanders to take their complaints seriously or to challenge such behaviour.

 *“We report racist incidents to local transport companies, nothing changes and it’s always the same reply ‘we will be training staff and drivers’. Why is this acceptable? It wouldn’t be acceptable to other people. To women like me, I don’t even get a ‘sorry’.”* (WOMAN SERVICE USER)

 *“A white man swore at me and pushed me and a woman with a push chair and the (bus) driver did nothing. The child had a bump on his head because of this – bus drivers did nothing.”* (WOMAN SERVICE USER)

 *“Viral videos were fearmongering. There was a local video circulating of kids with bricks and sticks getting off a bus and smashing up a shop and the men in it were attacked and then the bus driver let them back on the bus. Racism on the bus and public transport has been terrible, when reported to police they are telling us to stay downstairs on the bus. This does nothing to address the racism – there is no clear messaging or support.”* (STAFF MEMBER)

The lack of action to protect vulnerable people from racist violence on the part of those in authority demonstrates not just indifference but more significantly, a subtle cultural shift that has quietly taken place; one that has led to the social acceptance and normalisation of far-right narratives as a ‘rationale’ for racist behaviours.

 *“But really this is about the work that goes on before or after this, they just shove lots of migrant housing in poor areas because its cheap and don’t do any work on building communities together or helping migrants or helping the others. Lots of white people on my estate are unhappy, they want jobs. To me and my family they are nice – but when they go online, I think they change.”* (STAFF MEMBER)

Despite efforts by the Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner and the Mayor of the North East Combined Authority to tackle violence and abuse on public transport in the areas where the women lived, there appears to be an escalation of racism and abuse since the riots.⁵⁹ This has led to women and children continuing to fear being in public spaces.

59. The portfolio for this role lies with the Mayor of the North East Combined Authority, now led by Kim McGuinness. In the Mayor’s Local Transport Plan, she states that one of her five key areas to address is “enhancing safety, especially for women and girls”. However, this strategy appears to lack an anti-racist or an intersectional lens. Also see report Recommendations: <https://www.northeast-ca.gov.uk/how-we-work/transport/transport-plan>

 *“I’m uncomfortable even now, I feel scared and wonder what will happen next. It’s hard, I talked about the riots in counselling. Everyone will need help to recover from this. Feels like there’s more fear in the future and I worry about kids travelling by themselves.”*
(WOMAN SERVICE USER)

Institutional discrimination

Many of the participants also found themselves contending with what appears to be increased levels of institutional discrimination as they tried to navigate ways to access crisis support during the riots.

 *“It was sad, scary and difficult to keep the family safe. The children were really scared and didn’t want to go out. The kids saw everything. I saw everything that happened on the news – majority white people rioting. And a white social worker was really bad towards me and the children at the same time, which made me feel that this was all connected – it shocks me to think of racism connecting things.”* (WOMAN SERVICE USER)

 *“The support from the council wasn’t great [after the riots], it was nothing to do with Angelou Centre. I had limited financial support because of financial abuse and he and his family stopped me from getting my visa even though I should have been able to. When the woman from the council came (social worker) it felt like it was a favour and we had to beg for help so we didn’t starve. The accommodation was horrible and they didn’t communicate with me when I felt alone and like tomorrow we’d be on the streets, they wouldn’t speak to me or tell me anything.”* (WOMAN SERVICE USER)

In some cases, the participants felt as if the context of the riots provided not just state authorities but also non-specialist generic organisations with an excuse to turn vulnerable women away when seeking assistance and support, even in crisis situations.

 *“Other organisations were supposed to help me, (the generic non-specialist organisation) was not a good experience. They are not trustworthy they said it would be okay and then it was all taken away from me – in a day. They were saying I was out on the street because of my visa and all of a sudden, they changed toward me.”* (WOMAN SERVICE USER)

The widespread coverage of racist violence during the Sunderland riots on social media from non-legitimate news sources clearly demonstrated that social media played a key role in promoting extreme levels of disinformation and fear. This also resulted in far-right propaganda negatively affecting public confidence and trust in state agencies and politicians. Compounding an existing lack of faith in non-specialist multi-sectoral agencies, Black, minoritised and migrant women and children felt even more distanced from public services that acted as a further barrier to accessing protection and support during the riots. However, despite working with extremely distressed and vulnerable women and children at risk of racist violence and public abuse, organisations such as the Angelou Centre received little or no support from statutory agencies. This stood in stark contrast to the support that was provided to local religious institutions and leaderships.

 *“The thing is the police and authorities presume its only about one religion (Islam) because they don’t really want to tackle racism, they worry that if they do, they’ll be called racist, like that’s worse than women and children being threatened and attacked.”*
(STAFF MEMBER)

Continuum of public and private violence

Research shows that violence against women and girls in Black and minoritised communities is high compared to the size of their population but vastly under reported..⁶⁰ In 2024, police in England and Wales recorded 2,775 honour-based abuse (HBA) related offences, 201 forced marriage offences and 111 to FGM. However, we know that the scale and rate of HBA, forced marriage and FGM is far higher.⁶¹ It is estimated that there are 15-17 HBA related homicides in the UK a year.⁶² Research suggests that this rate is in fact much higher and is a major contributory factor to domestic homicides and domestic abuse related suicides among Black and minoritised women.⁶³ Reem Alsalem in her role as UN Special Rapporteur on VAWG outlined the failures of the state to address these matters adequately:

“Furthermore, Black, minoritised and migrant women in England experience higher rates of domestic homicide and need specialist support but are often not able to access it. Government responses to the abuse faced by such women have focused selectively on some forms, such as forced marriage, honour killings and female genital mutilation, failing to address other forms of violence experienced in a meaningful, intersectional and sustained manner... Wider structural barriers to effective assistance and protection, such as institutional and systematic racism and restrictive immigration policies, have been disregarded.”⁶⁴

The testimonies in this chapter point towards how the riots placed further limitations on Black and minoritised women and children, who were experiencing a continuum of violence during the riots in which domestic violence suffered in the home extended to racial harassment and violence experienced in the streets. The result is that Black and minoritised women and children’s safety was severely compromised and compounded in both the private and public sphere.

The testimonies of the women highlight recurring themes of acute loneliness, distress and fear as well as a heightened experiences of gender-based violence. For example, women who were single parents and had fled domestic abuse found themselves isolated and trapped as they tried to fend for themselves in the face of both domestic and racial violence.

“This all reminds me every day of the abuse I went through (from an abusive perpetrator and his family), being locked inside, being shouted at, being attacked, not being free to live my life or even go to see a friend.” (WOMAN SERVICE USER)

“This made all our worries about safety worse. First it was covid and now this. It feels the same although its different, because we can’t go out. People are scared on the streets, and worse they are scared of each other. I have too many worries. I’m always fearful for children due to the news and the amount of abuse in our communities... as a single parent there is more of risk and danger from men in streets and men in our community.” (WOMAN SERVICE USER)

Many women described how being confined to their homes during the riots left them even more distraught by the riots as they relived memories of being imprisoned in their home due to domestic abuse and control.

60. <https://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Joint-Briefing-for-Meg-Hillier-MP-Debate-EVAW-Imkaan.pdf>

61. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/so-called-honour-based-abuse-offences-year-ending-march-2024/statistics-on-so-called-honour-based-abuse-offences-england-and-wales-year-ending-march-2024-1/#:~:text=In%20the%20year%202022%2F23,2021%20to%20302%20in%202022.>

62. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5aa98420f2e6b1ba0c874e42/t/655639ddc55be306e7dfa5c5/1700149727418/Life+or+Death+Report+-+Nov+2023.pdf>

63. <https://news.npcc.police.uk/releases/report-reveals-scale-of-domestic-homicide-and-suicides-by-victims-of-domestic-abuse>

64. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/country-reports/ahrc5947add1-visit-united-kingdom-great-britain-and-northern-ireland>

“This all reminds me every day of the abuse I went through (from an abusive perpetrator and his family), being locked inside, being shouted at, being attacked, not being free to live my life or even go to see a friend.” (WOMAN SERVICE USER)

“Women have been retraumatised after being imprisoned and controlled, it’s difficult to safety plan with women. We do so much to support mothers who will not leave the house after the riots. Their husbands and families told them if they left the abuse that white people would not help them and would attack them – so when the riots happened it triggered so much and the types of abuse the women go through which often involves threats.” (STAFF MEMBER)

Women’s lack of access to financial and housing support was another theme that was raised across the interview sample. Poverty, having no recourse to public funds, the increasing cost of living levels and ‘in work’ financial hardships – all had repercussions on women’s safety and options to escape abuse during the course of the riots.⁶⁵

Furthermore, police responses to women who needed crisis support during the riots were severely compromised. This was partly because they lacked a coordinated response, and partly because they did not include women’s organisations in their plans to provide protection to community organisations. This meant that women’s groups like the Angelou Centre had to support women subject to gender-based abuse without police support, and had to take measures to protect their service users.

“During the riots we had an incident at one of the houses and the police didn’t turn up as they were too busy on the streets due to the riots. They didn’t once think that we are calling about a protected refuge address for Black and minoritised women and children, but we know they went straight out to the mosques.” (STAFF MEMBER)

It is clear from the accounts provided, that many Black and minoritised women experienced public forms of racist violence and private forms of violence such as domestic abuse simultaneously. Often the only lifeline or source of support available to such women were grassroots organisations led by Black and minoritised women – such as the Angelou Centre – which went out of their way to support women left to fend for themselves by both statutory and community-based organisations.

“I went through domestic violence, and here I feel I am prioritised as a person not just as someone who went through abuse. I’m given time to speak when I need to but I can also be a normal woman here and go to courses and laugh with friends. When I step outside things change, but here I feel alive.” (WOMAN SERVICE USER)

Staff from the Angelou Centre and other specialist services for Black and minoritised women were hypervigilant and alert to the need to put in place emergency plans to address women and children’s fears of violence, the impact of re-traumatisation and their lack of protection and safety in public spaces.

65. The Women’s Budget Group and Women’s Aid have highlighted the impact of policies on austerity on Black and minoritised women and children who are experiencing higher levels of poverty (particularly maternal poverty). Almost 50% of women of Bangladeshi and Pakistani heritage, and 40% of women of African heritage live in poverty. The Women’s Aid Federation of England have cited that the cost-of-living crisis has enabled perpetrators to further abuse women, stating that 66% of survivors during the cost-of-living crisis have experienced financial/economic abuse and coercive control.

Migrant women and insecure immigration status

 *“I was really scared and still scared today. On the morning of the riots, I went out. I was walking and thinking and looking behind me and now this is feeling the same, it hasn’t changed since the summer. Because I have hijab and I’m a migrant what rights do I have? I felt I will be attacked on the days of riots, but Home Office said I had to have a biometric and I had no choice but to go. I was very scared but the staff here (Black and minoritised led organisation in North East), they took me there and back even though they weren’t meant to be working because of the riots.”* (WOMAN SERVICE USER)

There has been a glaring lack of acknowledgment in public debates about the overlap between the violence of the far right and violence against women and girls, particularly in relation to abused migrant women with insecure immigration status and no access to public funds. As the testimonies in this research show, migrant women were and continue to be targets of racist and far-right violence – precisely because they had already been victimised and made vulnerable by their abusive partners and families and by the state’s policies of exclusion and hostility due to their immigration status. As the Domestic Abuse Commissioner has stated, the exclusion of migrant women brought about in part by the prohibition of access to public funds for this group makes them invisible to public policymakers.

Organisations led by Black and minoritised women have long highlighted how insecure immigration status leaves migrant women at risk of serious harm due to their lack of access to welfare services and protection from state agencies. They face particular forms of harm and coercive control that are exacerbated by immigration laws. Many are forced into financial dependency on their families and communities for their survival and this dependency strengthens the hands of their perpetrators who threaten and abuse them with impunity. As stated in the Domestic Abuse Commissioner (DAC)’s report *Safety Before Status*, which included research and evidence from the Angelou Centre:

“Perpetrators of domestic abuse often use a victim’s insecure immigration status to exert further power and control. This form of coercive and controlling behaviour is defined in this report as ‘immigration abuse’. Immigration abuse is a form of abuse that is compounded by immigration legislation, policy, and practice. Identifying and naming immigration abuse is vital in ensuring that national and local policy makers and front-line practitioners are equipped to identify and respond appropriately to victims and survivors.”⁶⁶

In effect, violence against women and girls is institutionalised by punitive immigration laws and policies – and also other laws such as the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and related measures that exclude protection for migrant women.

“Instead of being assured that statutory services will prioritise their safety, migrant victims and survivors face a stark choice: staying silent and risking further violence from the perpetrator or reporting their abuse and fearing immigration action.”⁶⁷

This leaves migrant women and children especially vulnerable to heightened risk of violence and harm with no secure pathways to support. A further barrier faced by migrant women is the practice of data sharing between the police and the Immigration Enforcement team at the Home Office, which acts as a deterrence to making disclosures and also puts them at further risk of abuse and exploitation.

It is against this backdrop that led many migrant women to experience higher levels of fear and trauma during the far-right riots. In interviews, migrant service users from the Angelou Centre compared their traumatic experiences of the riots with the discriminatory responses they had received from the police and other statutory and non-specialist domestic abuse services and generic charities. Their experiences of racist abuse not only served to heighten their feelings of anxiety and distress but also accelerated their feelings of distrust in both statutory and non-statutory generic agencies.

66. <https://domesticabusecommissioner.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Safety-Before-Status-Report-2021.pdf>

67. https://domesticabusecommissioner.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/FINAL-DOC_Firewall-Report_2023_V2.pdf

Women's experiences of institutional discrimination and exclusion from statutory services were also echoed by the specialist black and minoritised led organisations that support them. Members of the Resist Network described how they have seen particularly negative post-riot responses (similar to those during the pandemic) responses from statutory services. They commented on the failure of state services to uphold anti-discriminatory and equality principles when addressing the needs of vulnerable migrant adults and children. The increase in public forms of anti-immigration hostility appears to have excused some racist behaviours and discriminatory practices by statutory bodies towards migrant women and children. Both survivors and staff at the Angelou Centre stated that during and after the riots, migrant women were left excluded and unprotected even by agencies that had a legal duty to protect and safeguard the rights of vulnerable women and children.

 *“Social services were terrible ... as soon as they knew we were immigrants they asked more questions re visa, like an interrogation. I’m an immigrant who can speak up, I have a good education and English, I have learnt my rights...but others can’t. This bad behaviour was given licence and an excuse by the riot. The way the social worker acted with us felt as if she was looking us up and down. It’s about behaviour and they are no longer afraid – the riots incentivise bad behaviour.”* (WOMAN SERVICE USER)

Concerns about the rise in discriminatory responses by statutory agencies also echo previous research by the Angelou Centre, which has documented how the lack of secure immigration status and the consequent lack of access to state support has left victims/survivors at risk of “repeat domestic abuse” and subjected them to a ‘revolving-door’ crisis” – a process that involves being endlessly pushed from one statutory service to another without anyone taking responsibility for their safety.

In addition, Black and minoritised women's organisations complained that over the past decade, they have experienced a steady decline in access to local authority funding and resources. This has left them unable to meet demand or provide their service users with an adequate safety net, thus rendering them even more vulnerable to hostility from state and non-state actors in the context of rising racism.

 *“There’s been a real lack of preparation, an abdication of duties, communication regarding anti-racist protests, which were very different to different audiences. Communication was very poor, there was disinformation and lack of coordination from local authority staff, their staff were not available...it was very poor. It was left to us to bang on their door and say they need to listen.”* (STAFF MEMBER)

However, even under such constrained circumstances, organisations that specialise in supporting women and girls facing violence – such as the Angelou Centre – continued to support and protect migrant women.

Patriarchal control and the weaponisation of violence against women

 *“It isn’t just about religion, that’s just an excuse. It’s about the way that men in communities and some families cover up abuse. When this happened (the riots) I knew at the time what would happen and I was right. It might be six months after the riots but we feel it, us women, the control is worse... they deny abuse more.”* (WOMAN SERVICE USER)

One of the most significant themes to emerge from the research was the ways in which the far-right violence was weaponised to great effect by perpetrators of domestic abuse and religious and community leaderships alike, to exert even greater social control over women; control that was justified in the name of protecting them from racist violence.

“Some male community and faith leaders here are taking advantage of the far-right riots by taking control of the story and ignoring the needs of our women. They are using it to stop women from leaving the house by saying they are protecting women by controlling them.” (RESIST NETWORK MEMBER)

Women reported being fearful of leaving their family home even when they were desperate to do so, because they were told that they would be attacked by racists and that no one would help them.

“I came here [the Angelou Centre] in October 2024. People in communities told me a different story and said I wouldn’t be safe but when I came here, I felt very safe.” (WOMAN SERVICE USER)

Migrant women in particular were told by their perpetrators and community leaders that statutory services such as the police and social services could not be trusted since they would cancel their visa, have them arrested or detained and/or remove their children from care. The deliberate exploitation of women’s fears around their insecure immigration position in the community left many at risk of domestic and sexual abuse, honour-based abuse, exploitation, extortion and other culturally harmful practices.

Young women on the other hand, found themselves subject to greater family and community surveillance. Public messaging and media coverage of the riots were used by their families to encourage them to stay indoors. Many were confined to their homes and left in circumstances akin to imprisonment.

“The use of racism against women in communities comes from two places... it’s coming from the community leaders, men in communities and in their families who say ‘see what happens if you go out’ and ‘it’s on the streets’. The women we support rely on us and can’t leave the house. We have young women here who are made to feel that their fear is because they have been ‘westernised’.” (RESIST NETWORK MEMBER)

“Young women were being told ‘see you shouldn’t go out’. Patriarchs are using this to control and threaten young women., There’s a crackdown on them and women, children weren’t able to go out. But the police hadn’t said that people should stay at home. The police very disorganised.” (STAFF MEMBER)

The restrictions placed on women’s freedom, particularly that of younger women, during the riots put them at further risk of digital abuse, online racism and misogyny as well as domestic and sexual abuse in the family; this was at a time when they already experience higher levels of sexual violence and exploitation and technology-based abuse such as digital stalking, revenge porn and social media-based harassment.⁶⁸ Recent research by the Young Women’s Trust for example has shown how the impact of socio-economic exclusion, abuse and poverty experienced by young women exposes them to the increased risk of abuse and exploitation.⁶⁹ Higher rates of ‘in work’ poverty and the cost-of-living crisis has also left young women unable to afford food or essential supplies, which also makes them more vulnerable to online and economic exploitation at times of crisis.⁷⁰ It is also well documented that young women of a ‘transitional age’ (16-25) are disproportionately vulnerable to physical and mental ill-health, including increased suicidality, severe mental illness and onset psychosis. They therefore face a range of additional dangers.⁷¹

68. <https://www.cps.gov.uk/cps/news/more-do-tackle-rape-misconceptions-and-lack-understanding-consent-cps-survey-finds> “Young people were also far less likely to understand that if a person says online, they want to meet up and have sex, that doesn’t mean they have to have sex when they meet (28% of 18-24-year-olds got this right, compared to 54% of people overall)”

69. <https://www.youngwomenstrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Young-Womens-Trust-Annual-Survey-Report-2023.pdf>

70. <https://www.youngwomenstrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Cost-of-Living-Snapshot-FINAL-1.pdf>

71. ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8070090

Counter protests

 *“It was nearly all men at the anti-racist counter protests. We felt oppressed, we felt unable to keep women and children safe. Although it’s good that so many men from the community were out – it also tells another story about why they weren’t supporting women from the community to attend or making space for them.”* (STAFF MEMBER)

One of the most positive aspects to come out of the period of rioting was how thousands of peaceful anti-racist activists, with support from many ordinary people, mobilised in towns and cities across the UK to protect black, minoritised and migrant people and their organisations from racist attacks. These mobilisations with their messages of unity and solidarity far outnumbered the racist protests and eventually helped to turn the tide.⁷² However, while community-based anti-racist protests were rightly celebrated as moments of great hope, some interviewees told us that they were deterred from taking part because they were largely dominated by young men who mobilised around extreme religious identities. This made them feel uncomfortable because they are the same identities that have in community contexts fuelled sectarianism, misogyny and patriarchal control.⁷³

Survival and exclusion

 *“Also, the police and local authorities or service, they run about after the community leaders like they can solve the racism, I mean what have they done so far to help? They haven’t included any women in these discussions, they haven’t invested in us or supported us. They do make referrals but even then, only sometimes. The men from authorities talk to men from communities, women are sidelined and this is dangerous.”* (RESIST NETWORK MEMBER)

As previously described, despite threats during the riots women’s organisations were not contacted or provided with protection or support by the police or local authorities. Members of the Angelou Centre and the Resist Network recounted that like they had to close their organisations for short periods during the riots out of concern for the safety of service users and staff. They were forced to develop additional safety plans for individual women, secure their buildings and take other measures at their own cost to safeguard their users and organisations. For example, a Resist Network member in Scotland had to fund self-defence classes for women and develop safe community pathways for women living in their refuge. This is in stark contrast to local state response in areas such as the North West, where mosque leaders were provided with high levels of support to protect their premises and their users.

 *“We get no support from the local authority, the police or any local agencies. The religious leaders made a complaint, and the police got in touch but no one understood the threats to women’s organisations. We were left out of discussions about safety, whereas discussions with mosque leaders continued.”* (RESIST NETWORK MEMBER)

It is also clear that many local authorities are now featuring post-riot ‘community cohesion’ plans in their strategies but they have not shown any intention to meaningfully engage with Black and minoritised women’s organisations in the development and delivery of such work. Nor have they identified additional resources for this work. After the riots in the North East, the police and the local authority only spoke to community leaders and faith leaders at first.

72. See: <https://time.com/7009238/anti-racist-far-right-riots-britain/>

73. However, the full devastating impact of the 2024 far-right riots must now be contextualised and measured by the recent unfolding of further ‘anti-migrant’ protests during the summer of 2025. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/aug/08/three-thousand-riot-officers-readied-for-weekend-of-protests-in-england-and-wales>

Some Black and minoritised women's organisations were invited after they strongly advocated for themselves, but only to selected meetings.

“The men in the communities are listening to the religious leaders, we know that. But now we have the local authorities and police also just following what they say. No one came to us to ask us if we needed safety support, or whether our women were safe – even though we have a refuge and get threats from men and the community.” (RESIST NETWORK MEMBER)

Shortly after the riots, the Angelou Centre and its sister organisation Sangini convened a regional meeting of Black and minoritised women's organisations from across the women and migrant rights sector.⁷⁴ The women who attended the meeting shared their frustrations at being excluded from public meetings set up after the riots to discuss issues of community protection and recovery. Not only was there a marked absence of women in such meetings but as a consequence, there was an absence of any police, local authority or statutory sector support for local women's organisations.⁷⁵

“Despite promises we were deliberately excluded from local authority meetings (about the far-right riots in the North East) but they knew we wanted to have a role and seat at the strategic table and we had (publicly) advocated for that. There was a big meeting led by the local authority and they shut us down.” (RESIST NETWORK MEMBER)

“If we challenge, we get excluded. Our organisations were more threatened by the riots because we are run by black and minoritised women. But they didn't want to hear that or us because we work to end violence against women and girls and have to challenge the police, agencies and the communities.” (RESIST NETWORK MEMBER)

Ironically, the riots have increased black and minoritised women's reliance on specialist organisations for support and protection. Many in the Resist Network are witnessing a 15-20% increase in demand for assistance following the riots. This means that specialist organisations such as the Angelou Centre have become even more critical in providing a much-needed safety net to vulnerable women and children.

However, the reality is that Black and minoritised women's organisations are struggling to survive. Many face difficulties in paying for and maintaining safe premises for their activities. They face an ever-growing gap in income and struggle to acquire or maintain the premises and infrastructure needed to operate safely and effectively. A noticeable cost related to the riots that has been passed onto the public is the rise in building insurance fees and the need for additional health and safety measures.

74. In partnership with the Angelou Centre, Sangini has been developing the creative expression element of the *Stories of Colour* project.

75. The MHCLG Community Recovery Fund was awarded to Middlesbrough, Hartlepool, Sunderland but Newcastle did not receive funding despite two far-right protests and threats: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-recovery-fund-guidance/community-recovery-fund-guidance>

Chapter 3

“Racism Has Not Stopped Yet.”

Listening to Black, minoritised and migrant children and young people’s experiences of the far-right riots



“Children were scared and fearful in the refuges... women were terrified, it reminded them of the abuse they went through. Their children were asking to move from the refuge, scared that bricks would be thrown through the window, there was a lot of issues and children were seeing so much.” (STAFF MEMBER)

There has been little research or discussion about the impact of the far-right riots on Black, minoritised and migrant children or the specific ways they were affected by the riots, particularly in contexts where they became victims twice over – first as victims of domestic abuse and then as victims of the riots. Children and young interviewees recounted experiences that echoed those of the interviewed women. Key issues that have been identified correlate with children and young people’s experiences of domestic abuse within a family context and their anxieties of racism, which were heightened following the riots.

The children and young people who were interviewed were accessing or had accessed the Angelou Centre having experienced or witnessed domestic abuse. Painstaking work was therefore taking place to support them in contexts where they were suffering emotional and psychological damage, and to prevent a deterioration in their health and well-being. Some found it difficult to disclose their experiences of domestic abuse while others were reluctant to make full disclosures in fear of separation from their mothers.^{76, 77}

Against this background of trauma, black and minoritised children and young people were thrown into further turmoil by the riots leading to increased levels of fear, and uncertainty. Some had difficulty in articulating how they were feeling but they were clearly pained by how the riots affected their ability to have a normal life.



“First, I thought I would be happy this summer. We were happy somewhere new and safe. Then the racism happened.” (CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S SERVICE USER)



“People would ask me ‘what did you do over the summer’ and I’d say, ‘nothing because of the riots’ and walked right away from that conversation.” (CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S SERVICE USER)

The racist violence and disorder that the children and young people observed around them only served to reiterate deep seated feelings of confusion and distrust in anyone outside of their immediate family. This included distrust of inter-racial friendships with peers that then engendered intense feelings of isolation and precariousness.

76. There are a disproportionate number of Black, minoritised and migrant mothers who are losing custody of their children in the family courts *“both adults and children in the Black, African, Caribbean or Black British, Mixed or multiple and Other ethnic groups were over-represented in public law proceedings.”* <https://www.nuffieldjfo.org.uk/resource/what-do-we-know-about-ethnicity-in-the-family-justice-system-in-england>

77. These issues compound what is already an inequitable landscape for Black and minoritised mothers subject to private or family law proceedings and where there is an “escalating prevalence of domestic abuse”. The UN VAWG rapporteur, Reem Alsalem, recently raised a number of concerns about the use of parental alienation allegations and the family court system itself by perpetrators to abuse women: *“The overarching effect of allegations of so-called ‘parental’ alienation, is therefore seen in the voice of the child being minimised or silenced entirely. This has a consequential effect that little weight is given to the child’s wishes and feelings as set out in the welfare checklist contained in section 1(3) of the Children Act 1989”.*

“Me and my family were very afraid to leave our home. Fear overtook me and my family. In the news there was violence and so much was destroyed for no reason, even mosques. We don’t deserve this hatred; we are all human trying to survive and live a nice decent life. Lots of us had to live in fear. For the whole month we were meant to spend a nice summer holiday in peace but instead we were forced to be prisoners in our own home”. (CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S SERVICE USER)

Children and young people echoed experiences that were not dissimilar to those of the women interviewed, except that for some, the racism they encountered or witnessed was something they had never seen before.

“My family is used to it because they have been through this, but it was my first time to experience something like this.” (CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S SERVICE USER)

Key themes to emerge from their accounts include a growing sense of confusion, fear and betrayal, loss of autonomy, friendships, belonging and feelings of being trapped at home.

“I don’t understand why white people don’t realise that we fled from one country and now you want us to go back. They see what we are taking from this country, they don’t see how much we have given to this country.” (CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S SERVICE USER)

“I was not allowed to go out on my own or with my friends, it must be with my family. My family suffered a lot during this time. I was scared that I might get acid thrown on my face or punched.” (CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S SERVICE USER)

“I was with my mum the whole time and she made sure I was with someone and never did anything alone. It became very difficult to travel alone, all my friends who are not white experienced racism even if they didn’t have a headscarf on like me. My mum had to take me to school.” (CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S SERVICE USER)

“I feel scared in the dark, walking in a quiet area or standing at a bus stop.” (CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S SERVICE USER)

“There was a brick thrown at a bus window which was passing through. This was frightening.” (CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S SERVICE USER)

“I couldn’t go out with my friends. I could only go out with my parents.” (CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S SERVICE USER)

“I wasn’t allowed out the house.” (CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S SERVICE USER)

Some children and young people were particularly affected by a palpable change in attitudes during and after the riots from their immediate peers, friends and other adults.

“Children from other school’s shout at me, they made silly noises like barking when I am walking home from school. They are older than me, not primary school.” (CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S SERVICE USER)

“White children thought it was a bit of fun” (CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S SERVICE USER)

“I feel afraid that the way I wear my hijab – they might try to pull it down. I feel scared to go out. On the bus we are treated differently by bus drivers than other people on the bus. The driver will never help if someone is racist on the bus.” (Children and Young People’s Service User)

Children and young people were not only afraid for themselves, but also for their mothers who were often their only carers. Their fear stemmed as much from what they saw of the riots across social media platforms as it did from first-hand experience as one mother described:

“I had to stay at home with the children especially on weekends. We couldn’t go anywhere. My son was very scared for me and said ‘don’t go out we can live without eating and food in case someone attacks you.’ He gave me protection spray and he’s only ten. He saw everything from our window and the news and TikTok and You Tube. None of us could eat or sleep.” (WOMAN SERVICE USER)

“I think social media worked like a fuel in this riot.” (WOMAN SERVICE USER)

The accounts of children and young people showed that they had little or no physical access to safe places during the riots. Most were kept off school by their mothers or carers, who they completely depended on for their safety. They avoided travelling on public transport, playing in the park or walking to the shops, even when they were with their mothers and siblings. The lack of interaction with anyone outside their family forced many to retreat further into an online world that not only posed other risks but also caused even higher levels of anxiety. The 24-hour social media news cycle increased children and young people’s fear of being in public spaces.

The circumstances in which the children and young people found themselves was also made worse by the lack of any real effort by staff in schools or other educational institutions to tackle racism in schools. Over the years, there has been a marked decline in anti-racism work within educational settings, including efforts to empower all children and young people to stand up to racism together.

Some of the children and young people felt particularly unsupported by their schools and let down by some of their white friends. The historic failure to embed anti-racism in school culture, combined with the complete decimation of youth services, has left them feeling even more unsafe. It has shattered their belief that there are places where they can feel safe from both domestic abuse in the family and racial violence on the streets.

“Schools are not doing the work, young people don’t know what a youth worker or youth club is anymore. The schools need to do proper anti-racist work that is about tackling it constantly throughout the social and academic curriculum.” (PARENTING SERVICE USER)

“Teachers are predominantly white, so we don’t feel like we are seen. They have not lived our lives, and they are gravitated towards white people therefore we can’t relate to them.” (CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S SERVICE USER)

“I wish we could educate people especially younger generation about diversity; there is not enough knowledge about it.” (WOMAN SERVICE USER)

“Racism has not stopped yet. We still face a lot of struggles in school. One white girl kept a diary and wrote P or N word next to our names and the teachers excused her racist behaviour because she was going through anxiety.” (CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S SERVICE USER)

Radicalisation and the consolidation of extreme misogyny

The far-right riots also had a distinct impact on young men, both those who participated in the rioting and on the black and minoritised young men that were involved in counter protests. Some women commented that their sons were also being radicalised and drawn into right-wing misogyny, possibly influenced by social media. This is an issue around that has received little if any attention by those analysing the far-right riots and their consequences

“*There are multiple levels of racism that are being experienced but instead of supporting and demanding things better socially, women and children are being treated and excluded and so the racism is escalating. Mothers in particular are feeling a lot of the consequences and this is very gendered. No one is looking at the wider impact of racism and how it draws young men into radicalisation and is informed by right wing misogyny.***”**

(STAFF MEMBER)

There is an urgent need to explore in depth how far-right ideology overlaps with forms of violent misogyny and more generally violence against women. These connections have been observed for some time. The latest example is the eruption of the far-right violence in August 2024, in which many of the men who participated had also been reported to the police for domestic abuse.⁷⁸

It is not surprising that these links exist since one of the core aspects of far-right ideology is the creation of a ‘manosphere’ online to restore white male identity and male dominance over women. However, as our research has shown, it was not just the perpetrators of the racist violence but also men and boys involved in counter anti-racist protests who were also influenced by right-wing and misogynist ideologies and movements. This theme often runs through cases of domestic abuse where – as noted by specialist organisations countering violence against women – boys who have been affected by domestic abuse often perpetrate abuse against their mothers and sisters.

]Testimonies from racialised children and young survivors outlining their experiences of the far-right riots and their aftermath have been intensely negative and should be urgently addressed by public policy makers. As we shall see in the next chapter, the Angelou Centre is already playing a critical role in the safety, protection and well-being of women and children impacted by the riots, but they are doing so with little support, recognition or funding.



78. Two out of every five people arrested – 41% of the 899 individuals arrested for taking part in violent disorder, to be exact – had previously been reported to the police for domestic abuse, according to the data obtained by the Guardian. The offences they were accused of included actual bodily harm, grievous bodily harm, stalking, breach of restraint and non-molestation orders, coercive control and criminal damage. In some areas where the violence broke out on the streets, the figure was as high as 68%. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/jul/28/domestic-violence-crime-abusers-southport-protest>

Conclusion

“People in Power Are Doing This... and They Are Making it Worse.”



“If we are to foster a sense of trust, belonging, resilience and shared purpose, there needs to be an urgent reassessment of a range of governmental social policy approaches to issues such as immigration, racism, poverty, identity politics, religion and community.”⁷⁹

Set against a hostile political environment marked by growing inequality and socio-economic deprivation, Black, minoritised and migrant women and children’s experiences of inequality and marginalisation have been further exacerbated by the far-right riots and the acceptance of hyper-mobilised forms of public racism and misogyny. There has also been a failure to acknowledge the social and regional impact of the riots on women and children’s safety, particularly in the post-industrial heartlands of the UK where there has been a surge in right-leaning populism over the past decade, as demonstrated by the success of Reform UK in recent local council elections.⁸⁰

During and after the riots, organisations such as the Angelou Centre documented a high number of race related incidents and an increase in incidents of violence against women and girls. Punitive and discriminatory statutory responses and exclusionary policy making processes at local and regional levels have also rendered women and children invisible, which generates high levels of distrust in both statutory agencies and community institutions. The lack of trust has had a negative impact on the rights and freedoms of women, but it also poses a significant threat to social cohesion since the role that women can play in building resilience and in creating unity across social and racial divides – before, during and after periods of national crisis and recovery – is routinely ignored.⁸¹

We set out below some of the key observations and conclusions that have emerged from the research.

- There has been a failure to acknowledge the impact of the riots specifically on Black, minoritised and migrant women and children.
- Gendered forms of racism and its intersection with violence against women and children, thereby creating a continuum of private and public violence, has not been addressed in any social analysis or public policy.
- The far-right riots must be understood in the context of the hostile environment policy that has created conditions for the acceptance and normalisation of public forms of racism, including anti-immigration racism.
- The online spread of racial hatred generated higher levels of fear and anxiety about racial attacks in public space among women and children, confining them to the home; for some a profoundly unsafe space due to experiences of gender-based abuse.
- The most vulnerable women and children living in refuges and other safe accommodation experienced high levels of racial harassment on the streets as well as institutional forms of racism when seeking support, all of which exacerbated existing fears and anxieties borne out of a history of domestic abuse and harm in the private sphere.
- Women reported racist violence and threats to the police and other public bodies but there was a lack of response or engagement, placing migrant women with insecure immigration status especially at greater risk of racial violence.
- The riots were weaponised by religious and community leaders to further undermine women and children’s right to safety and security. They became a convenient excuse to wield greater patriarchal control.
- Specialist organisations were critical places of safety for Black and minoritised women and children during the riots.⁸² The three-day closure of the Angelou Centre for instance, combined with fear of the riots or experiences of racial abuse, profoundly impacted women and children’s physical and mental health.

79. Taken from the Resist Network’s submission to the Women and Equalities Committee’s Inquiry into Social Cohesion. <https://committees.parliament.uk/work/8696/community-cohesion/publications/>

80. Including Reform UK’s takeover of Durham County Council in May 2025, which has serious implications on both the Halo Project and the Angelou Centre as they support women and children that live in that area of the North East.

81. <https://www.undp.org/geneva/blog/advancing-resilience-building-through-gender-equality-and-womens-leadership>

82. “Most victims and survivors from minoritised communities want to receive support delivered ‘by and for’ their own community. This is because specialist ‘by and for’ organisations are better able to understand the context and complexity of abuse faced by minoritised survivors and build the trust critical to effectively assess risk and provide the right support.” <https://domesticabusecommissioner.uk/national-mapping-of-domestic-abuse-services/>

- Religious extremism and misogynist ‘bro-culture’ dynamics also shaped anti-racist counter demonstrations in minoritised communities, thereby making women’s engagement in anti-racist spaces uncomfortable and unsafe.
- After the riots Black, minoritised and migrant women and children (and the specialist organisations that support them) continue to be ignored by public policy makers and political leaders. In debates and policies on social cohesion and rebuilding communities, the focus remains on building relations with religious and community leaders. This further serves to silence, isolate and exclude women’s voices and experiences.
- There has been a failure to fund grassroots organisations that support Black, minoritised and migrant women and children and to do anti-racist post-recovery work. This neglect continues even though they have and continue to play a crucial role in enhancing rather than undermining community cohesion.

The powerful testimonies gathered from staff and users of the Angelou Centre and sister organisations from the Resist Network have all emphasised the urgent need to document Black and minoritised women and children’s experiences of the far-right riots. They point to the many silences and gaps that exist in relation to gendered and intersectional forms of racism and violence and underscore the importance of creating a platform to ensure that their experiences can be shared and hopefully heard. The testimonies are critical to our understanding of how the far-right riots affected the most vulnerable in our communities both locally and nationally, and crucial to any serious and meaningful attempt to develop policy on social cohesion and integration.

Learning from women and children

“If we challenge, we get excluded. Our organisations were more threatened by the riots because we are run by Black and minoritised women, but they didn’t want to hear that or us because we work to end violence against women and girls and have to challenge the police, agencies and the communities.”⁸³ (RESIST NETWORK MEMBER)

Throughout the research, the women and children have presented evidence of the impact of not only the far-right riots but also the ways that existing issues such as poverty, discrimination, hostile immigration policies and gender-based abuse were exacerbated by the riots. Their testimonies document the impact of the riots on their day-to-day lives and on their ability to access safety and protection in both the private and public spheres.

In the aftermath of the riots there appears to be a political push to consider the riots as a ‘one off’ or a ‘release of tension’, which allows the current government to promote yet another ‘social cohesion’ agenda that does not appear to have learned from previous failures to examine cohesion and integration. Despite decades of racial unrest, little has been done to build community cohesion and any actual attempts have been a resounding failure. They have done little to build an anti-racist consensus that also includes a rights-based approach to Black and minoritised women. On the contrary, there has been a systemic failure to support organisations that have a historic track record in working in partnership with women across all ethnic and religious backgrounds in ways that empower them and bring them together. As we have stated in the introduction to this report, the multi-faith strategies that form the basis of race relations policy in the UK have seldom recognised the politically complex histories of women’s inequality and their struggles for justice within minoritised communities or the ways they have built unity across difference.⁸⁴

Clearly, the evidence shows that there are key learning outcomes to emerge from this research, not covered by much of the social commentary on the far-right riots:

- the failure to analyse public forms of racism as they intersect with rising misogyny and gender-based violence
- the failure to examine how racial and patriarchal power has worked hand in hand to create a climate conducive to hatred
- violence and insecurity and the exclusion of Black and minoritised women from any discussion on how to rebuild social cohesion

83. Quote taken from a roundtable with a Resist Network member

84. The harmful impact of regressive cultural and religious values on their exercise of autonomy and rights was recognised by Dame Louise Casey in her 2016 review on opportunity and integration in isolated and deprived communities in the UK. “... in many areas of Britain, the drive towards equality and opportunity across gender might never have taken place. Women in some communities are facing a double onslaught of gender inequality, combined with religious, cultural and social barriers preventing them from accessing even their basic rights as British residents.” The Casey Review: a review into opportunity and integration, Dame Louise Casey (2016): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-casey-review-a-review-into-opportunity-and-integration>

Recommendations

Many of the recommendations we propose are underlined by two wider concerns: firstly, the failure of the state at local and national levels to promote anti-racist policies that address all forms of structural inequality and secondly, the failure to reset a social contract between the state and minorities that is built on the promotion of citizenship and human rights, especially those of women and children. Social cohesion cannot be built without their democratic participation and engagement. Although our recommendations are wide ranging, they are also aimed at organisations and decision makers in the North East region where our primary research was conducted.

Area 1: Women's Sector

- i. **Structured development of an anti-racist and human rights practice** to rebuild cohesion and integration; build collective confidence and promote the duty to recognise and respond to all forms of racism including intersectional and gendered forms of racism. This should include co-produced resources, promote peer-led empowerment circles and training for staff and service users.
- ii. **Development of a digital empowerment education programme** that addresses digital exclusion, racial and domestic violence and abuse, and recovery for Black and minoritised victim-survivors. This should include consultation with service users, training and the development of a strategic 'digital inclusion' plan.
- iii. **A submission to the forthcoming CEDAW examination of the UK, on the gendered impact of the far-right riots** collaboratively produced by the Resist Network and others in the VAWG sector incorporating the Angelou Centre's Stories of Colour research findings.⁸⁵

Area 2: Schools and Educators

- i. **Anti-racism curriculum and training:** Local areas should co-create anti-racism educational content for schools, involving education specialists and Black, minority and migrant women and focusing on gendered forms of racism and intersectional discrimination. This must include teacher training on handling disclosures of abuse and harm and fostering inclusive environments and support for student-led initiatives on anti-racism.
- ii. **Specialist counselling for children and young people:** The funding and resourcing of appropriate counselling services for Black, minoritised and migrant young people affected by the riots, racial discrimination and trauma. Embed these within schools and create more youth centres to reduce barriers to inclusion and equality of access and engagement.

Area 3: Local & Statutory Bodies

- i. **Policy making and community initiatives** must move away from relying on decision making processes that prioritise so-called community and religious leaders. Far from representing women's interests, many of these leaders actively work to deny women access to their right to safety, public resources and local decision making power.

85. CEDAW (Convention on all forms of Discrimination Against Women) is an international treaty on women's rights ratified by the UK in 1986. It obliges the UK to take measures to ensure women's full enjoyment of human rights without discrimination on an equal basis with men.

- ii. **Publish a review of the local statutory responses to the riots:** Northumbria PCC, alongside local authorities and community partners, should publish a review of their response to the 2024 and ongoing riots, capturing and highlighting gendered racism and the related experiences of Black and minoritised women in particular.
 - a. The review should address the intersection of racism with misogyny and socio-economic exclusion, ensuring that no one falls through the cracks in regard to social justice and equality.
 - b. The review should identify key learning outcomes, provide positive examples of good practice, and propose a forward-looking recovery and rebuilding plan based on challenging all forms of racism and hostility – especially towards migrants.
 - c. The focus must be on equality and inclusion and aim to remove barriers to inequality, develop and strengthen future responses to racism and rebuild community trust, especially among Black, minoritised and migrant women.
- iii. **Strengthen public safety through community-led partnerships and audits:** Northumbria Police Community Engagement Officers should work in close partnership with local grassroots women's groups, to develop and lead on collaborative projects such as safety audits of public spaces, particularly of areas where women and children experience higher levels of racial and sexual abuse and harassment. These audits must lead to tangible improvements, including better lighting, increased CCTV coverage, and the prominent display of signage affirming zero tolerance for race hate crimes and misogyny. Initiatives must ensure that public environments are visibly safe and inclusive of groups most at risk of racism and sexual violence.
- iv. **A review of the North East Combined Authority's (NECA) transport plans and board membership** should take place to ensure that there is an improved in-depth understanding of the prevalence of gendered forms of racism in their plans on regional public transport and the need to include a coherent anti-racist and anti-misogyny strand to NECA's future policy making and strategic plans.

Area 4: Funders

- i. **Funding for specialist research to explore:**
 - Gendered forms of racism including the intersections of racism with far-right politics, religious fundamentalism, socio-economic inequality and violence against women and girls.
 - The impact and future implications of the far-right mobilisations on Black and minoritised children and young people.
- ii. **Flexible, long-term unrestricted multi-year funding:** to cover core costs for Black and minoritised women's organisations is essential to build support, stability and resilience.
- iii. **Ring-fenced funding for grassroots black and minoritised led women's organisations and initiatives** to support projects that focus on anti-racist and inter-racial community building activities involving women from diverse backgrounds.
- iv. **Funding and resourcing advocacy and anti-racist work led by women:** Fund training to develop robust advocacy and creative and digital media, and to improve public engagement among Black, minority and migrant women. The purpose is to amplify their voices and support them to influence systemic change that addresses racism and intersectional forms of discrimination and oppression.
- v. **Support the development of anti-racism learning hubs:** This could be piloted by the North East Anti-Racism Coalition (NEARC), and aim to engage professionals and the wider public in rolling out accessible, meaningful anti-racist education including an understanding of gendered forms of racism. This should be developed through extensive consultation with women's groups during NEARC regional meetups. Led by the Learning & Awareness Working Group, these hubs should aim to provide interactive and inclusive spaces that centre lived experience, unpack systemic racism and intersectional forms of discrimination, and equip participants with practical tools for reflection and action and demanding accountability.

Appendices

Appendix A: Glossary & Note on Terminology

CSC	Children Social Care
DA	Domestic Abuse
NRPF	No Recourse to Public Funds
SV	Sexual Violence
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
HBA	Honour Based Abuse
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls

The following words are used interchangeably throughout the report:

- victim and survivor (specific term used where relevant or appropriate)
- domestic violence, domestic abuse
- sexual violence, sexual abuse

Appendix B: About the Angelou Centre

Why Do I Have to Hide Away? focuses on the historical and critical role that the Angelou Centre has historically played in anti-racist and inter-racial community building work amongst women and children. The organisation provides comprehensive and holistic support to women and children experiencing structural inequality and multiple forms of exclusion. Although the interview framework focuses on participants' experiences of the far-right riots, the testimonies from the women and children also include accounts of the range of support they receive from the centre that they would not receive anywhere else.

 *“When I came in this woman on reception here gave me confidence straight away and she gave lots of support and the next worker listened and believed and people told me everything would be okay, and for once I believed it. This is what gave me the front [confidence] to go on and we get so many courses and opportunities here. The most important thing is that all of these women are so strong. The staff here are always here for us – I feel I could fall and I wouldn’t hit the ground and they would pick me up and make me feel so safe. For years I had to watch my back and feel scared but now I have trust and safety – they transmit that force for me and my children I can say now I’m not afraid.”* (WOMAN SERVICE USER)

For over three decades, the Angelou Centre has been delivering holistic services with a focus on rights-based outcomes and the social and economic independence of women and children from diverse Black, minoritised and migrant backgrounds. The organisation has a local, regional and national profile due to its unique holistic model. It has developed specialist services that include a refuge established in the wake of complaints by service users about living in unsafe accommodation with inadequate support from generic and non-specialist services in the area. The diversity, expertise and commitment of the staff team instil confidence, trust and a sense of belonging among service users. Indeed, trust was regarded by the interviewees in this research to be a crucial element in their engagement with the services and this took on extra significance during and after the riots. Interviewees talked about the ways in which their trust in external multi-sectoral agencies had been eroded by their experiences of exclusion and discrimination, while the trust generated by the Angelou Centre made them feel safe.

 *“We trust the staff and trust Angelou Centre. They help me with classes like art and coffee morning and now that has built me up to start new courses. My friend helped me because she’d been supported by the Angelou Centre and gave me a worker’s name and she spoke to me and understood – helped me to get to the refuge.”* (WOMAN SERVICE USER)

The Angelou Centre’s Refuge and Safe Accommodation services (aptly titled Haven Refuge) crucially include support for migrant women with insecure immigration status and no recourse to public funds. It is one of the few organisations in the area to provide support to such women who are otherwise routinely turned away by other generic services, including other women’s organisations. The centre provides desperately needed crisis accommodation, which remains in constant demand. In 2025, bed capacity and support increased by 25%, making the refuge one of the largest non-commissioned facilities in the country. Related to this, the centre has developed a wrap-around multi-lingual service that provides support; this ranges from crisis to recovery work that takes account of the cultural, religious and racial barriers facing women and children.

 *“Angelou Centre is home and without Angelou Centre I can’t live. I feel really safe. I would like to work here after I’ve been supported. When I came here first, I was very low and unconfident and they said come to things like badminton club and art and craft class. At first my brain couldn’t do anything but now, I go to learning classes. I help and volunteer with the bike and walking club. They didn’t just say here’s a room and some keys, they invite me to be part of things and to have a life.”* (WOMAN SERVICE USER)

The training and well-being support offered by the Angelou Centre is also informed by the centre’s holistic rights-based model of empowerment. For example, its provision of ESOL and maths classes helps women attain a basic level of education that in turn supports their confidence and independence.

 *“There’s a lot of courses. Everyone is lovely. We do human rights, MAGICⁱ and other classes. We come together and help each other even though we were frightened to talk at first. Now we have confidence. [Staff members] bring us on walks and speak our language. All staff know what it’s like in our cultures for women. I had no confidence when I came here, now I know women need to be confident and they make us feel we are important like other people in the world.”* (WOMAN SERVICE USER)

Across all the interviews, women spoke of the importance and necessity of retaining specialist services for Black, minoritised and migrant women. They talked of the role that organisations like the Angelou Centre played in their safety and well-being.ⁱⁱ However, these services are working within an increasingly resource-starved hostile environment that is exacerbated by rising levels of racism, poverty, misogyny and religious conservatism. Yet the evidence shows that public bodies and policy makers continue to ignore and undermine the needs of Black and minoritised women and children and instead place emphasis on building race relations involving religious male community leaders only, irrespective of the fact that their role is extremely detrimental to the rights and autonomy of women. This approach fails to address the profoundly unequal circumstances of Black and minoritised women, who are overrepresented in statistics on female poverty and in data on domestic abuse, suicide and homicide.ⁱⁱⁱ

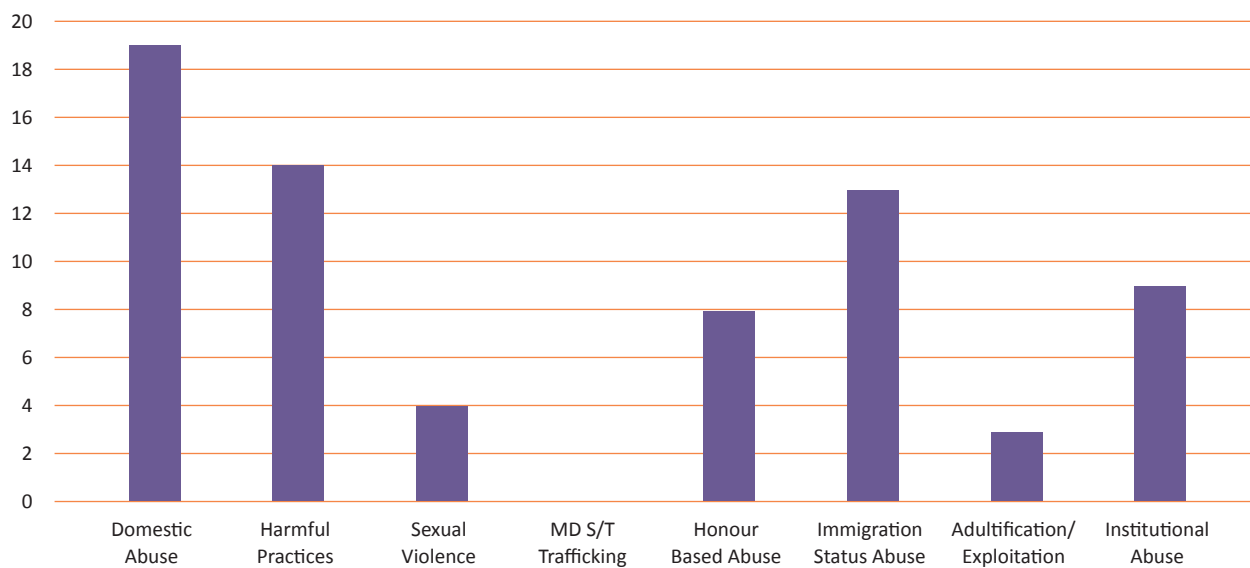
i. This stands for Meaning, Autonomy, Growth, Independence and Connection.

ii. In the Domestic Abuse Commissioner’s recent research into national community based domestic abuse services, *A Patchwork of Provision*, her office cited that only 51% of Black and minoritised victims/survivors who wanted to use a specialist service or refuge were able to access one. <https://domesticabusecommissioner.uk/national-mapping-of-domestic-abuse-services/>

iii. As evidenced in the Centre for Women’s Justice and Imkaan’s 2023 report: *Life or Death*. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5aa98420f2e6b1ba0c874e42/t/655639ddc55be306e7dfa5c5/1700149727418/Life+or+Death+Report+-+Nov+2023.pdf>

Appendix C: Addressing the Needs of Children and Young People

Figure 4: Types of abuse experienced by the research cohort of children and young people



Established in 2010, the Simba Project (Angelou Centre’s recently renamed Children and Young People’s Service) was developed in response to a gap in service provision for Black and minoritised young people and children experiencing or at risk of domestic and/or sexual violence and other forms of abuse. As stated above, the children and young people supported by the Angelou Centre experience multiple forms of violence and harm exacerbated by poor or negative statutory responses to their need for safety and protection (see Figure 4 above). Black, minoritised and migrant children and young people can have different support needs compared with adults – for example, in relation to early intervention and recovery. The Angelou Centre’s model of advocacy support aims to address specific forms of harm, including faith-based abuse, forced marriage, female genital mutilation and honour-based abuse. These types of harm often fall outside of specific categories such “domestic abuse” or “unaccompanied migrant children” that can mask other hidden and specific risks – such as forced marriage, sexual exploitation and abuse related to insecure immigration status, which can all go unrecognised and unaddressed.^{iv, v}

Developed over a period of five years and initially run and coordinated on a voluntary basis, this unique project has since gained regional recognition. In 2015 the project received adequate funding to enable it to change from a voluntary project into one that offered sustained specialist support, including advocacy and therapeutic services to children and young people. This work also feeds into the Angelou Centre’s longstanding local multi-agency safeguarding partnerships.

The Angelou Centre’s Children and Young People’s Service is designed to respond to the specific needs of Black, minoritised and migrant children and young people in a trauma-responsive and sensitive way that recognises the additional vulnerabilities, harms and risks that children and young survivors face both within and outside their communities. From its inception, the project has used a holistic approach that adheres to the following principles:

- iv. Such as *Working Together to Safeguard Children, Every Child Matters* and more specific legislation around forms of abuse such as FGM. Examples here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65803fe31c0c2a000d18cf40/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2023_-_statutory_guidance.pdf<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7b9db0e5274a7318b8fd0b/change-for-children.pdf><https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/female-genital-mutilation-resource-pack/female-genital-mutilation-resource-pack#fgm-statutory-multi-agency-guidance>
- v. In *A Lifeline for All: Children and Families with No Recourse to Public Funds* and more recently the Oxford University’s Migration Observatory have evidenced that: “Living in poverty has significant detrimental effects on children’s outcomes, both in childhood and later in life. Living on low income negatively affects children’s school attainment, cognitive and behavioural development, and their physical and mental health, even for short periods of time.” <https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-11/a-lifeline-for-all-report.pdf>

- *Best practice model* developed around appropriate interventions that address the impact of domestic and sexual abuse on Black, minoritised and migrant children and young people.
- *Bespoke service model* (designed in consultation with service users) that includes crisis intervention and advocacy support.^{vi}
- *Specific trauma-informed recovery model* that address specific socio-cultural harmful practices and the wider family and community contexts within which children, young people and their carers/mothers live.
- *Strategic advocacy model* used to challenge discriminatory institutional policies and practices in the criminal, family and welfare justice systems in relation to vulnerable adults and child protection
- *A rights-based approach* underpinned by UN conventions on the human rights of women and children. It is designed to ensure that children and young survivors of domestic abuse are believed, protected, supported and empowered to live with their mothers, carers or families free from abuse, coercion and fear.

Appendix D: About Project Resist

Project Resist is an autonomous organisation set up to support Black and minoritised women's struggles for equality, rights and freedoms in all aspects of their civil, social, political, economic and cultural lives. Using the tools of legal and political advocacy, we strive to challenge all systems of power, privilege and censorship that stand in the way of women's access to equality, dignity, peace and security.

Project Resist currently facilitates and supports the Resist Network; the Angelou Centre is a member. The network is made up of independent, specialist Black and minoritised women's grassroots organisations, based in the north of England and in south of Scotland.^{vii} It was set up by Project Resist to strengthen front-line advocacy and policy work on violence against women and children and related issues.^{viii}

Appendix E: Defining Intersectional Advocacy

- *Recognising the overlapping issues of oppression, discrimination and social identity in each woman's life*
- *Being open to exploring how these have played out in her life, the layers of abuse and violence she has encountered – working with current issues and historic legacies*
- *Understanding the complexities of family and community, and how this may make certain forms of action more difficult to take*
- *The importance of voice – finding, using and centring it*
- *Creating spaces where BME women feel recognised and where they can belong*
- *Challenging other organisations to recognise this complexity, to not offer options that are inappropriate for Black, minoritised and migrant women*
- *Recognising who is not using services and offering routes to reach out*

Compiled and Quoted from National Lottery Community Fund Women and Girls' Initiative, *Safer Pair of Hands: Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) specialist violence against women work*, 2020

<https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/insights/documents/a-safer-pair-of-hands-Black-and-minority-ethnic-bme-and-specialist-violence-against-women-and-girls-work>

vi. The Angelou Centre's approach to service delivery is developed in consultation with survivors. It is rights-based, holistic, wrap around, needs-led and trauma-informed. (See appendix)

vii. The Resist Network is a group of organisations led by Black, minoritised and migrant women working across northern regions of the UK. Coordinated by Project Resist, members include the Angelou Centre, Apna Haq, Humraaz, Hull Sisters, Project Resist, Rochdale Women's Welfare Association (RWWA), Saheli, Sangini, Safety 4 Sisters and Ubuntu Women Shelter. These organisations directly support Black, minoritised and migrant women and children in the North West, Yorkshire, North East and South Scottish regions. All organisations also work within a national remit due to their strategic advocacy/campaigning work and specialist refuges and safe accommodation services.

viii. For more information please see Project Resist's website and page about the Resist Network here: <https://www.projectresist.org.uk>

Appendix F: Research Methodology

Capturing and sharing experiences: Project Resist’s research framework supports, facilitates and captures the narratives of Angelou Centre users and beneficiaries with an intersectional lens. Through group sessions, consultations and interviews with women, children and young people and staff as well as with those who formed part of the creative development team, the report ‘translates’ these narratives into research findings – while retaining a primary focus on centring the voices of the women and children who form the bulk of the participants. Using narrative research modalities, the project also refers to quantitative and qualitative data from existing organisational data sets held by the Angelou Centre.

Driving policy change: Project Resist facilitated conversations with racially diverse multi-lingual users of the Angelou Centre including migrant women, survivors of domestic and sexual violence, mothers/carers, children and young women – who have all been impacted by the far-right riots in specific and unique ways. Their first-hand accounts inform and shape the report’s recommendations for policy change at the local, regional and national levels.

Fostering healing and empowerment: By using an intersectional research framework grounded in narratological methodology, Project Resist facilitated trauma-informed interviews, sessions and meetings that promoted the well-being of the participants. Project Resist has decades of experience delivering frontline VAWG, specialist case work, development and research work and in using a range of trauma informed research approaches when interviewing and consulting with women, children and staff. This approach fosters and facilitates healing and learning, while also empowering women and children to recount their experiences and making them feel valued. The approach is in line with the Stories of Colour project ethics.

Appendix G: Project Resist’s Research Framework

- 1. Narratological focus:** This prioritises the anecdotal and personal subjective experiences of participants/interviewees as a valid contribution and mode of inquiry. The approach encourages participants to remain engaged and active in the session and/or interview. All contributions are equally valued, and participants are given equal space to speak and give context to their responses. Participants have room to recount their personal and community experiences and to stray from the questions. Their responses are considered across the span of the full session, not only in response to the specific question. Improvisational facilitation is a core component of this approach and narratives that are shared and referenced are incorporated into the framing of the session.
- 2. Participant centric:** From the outset, it is made clear to all participants that the sessions are safe spaces to share accounts and ideas, and their contributions carry equal worth. Trust is also built by letting participants know how their ideas and narratives will be used in the research and informing them about the research’s aims and objectives. All participants are empowered and given the space to contribute, however they choose. Consent is revisited several times, and they are told that the research findings will be shared with them before they are shared with the public. Each session/interview is semi-structured and adapted according to individual needs. Listening to each other is prioritised and the involvement of support workers/facilitators minimised.
- 3. Trauma informed:** Throughout the interviews and sessions, considerations such as pace, safety, assessing the emotional temperature of the group/individual or any need to pause, take time out, interpret or further explain are all constantly reviewed. Women and children’s contributions are recognised, referenced and validated by the researchers during the session. Support workers and interpreters that the women and children feel comfortable with are present during the session/interview. Power imbalances in the session are acknowledged and the different roles of those involved made clear. Following the interviews/sessions, if needed, participants are offered additional support by their advocates and counsellors. The views and contributions of the participants are integrated and fully acknowledged across the lifespan of the research project.

- 4. Intersectional and adaptive:** Facilitated sessions are grounded in a shared set of agreed anti-oppressive principles and values, which include the use of an intersectional framework for understanding how power and discrimination is structured in families, communities and the wider society. Values of solidarity across difference and the importance of multiple perspectives and political viewpoints are included in the ground rules. Each participant is valued individually, not according to her presumed or group identity. Power hierarchies based on race, class and other factors are acknowledged, discussed and challenged to minimise harm caused in the interview/session.

Appendix H: Authors Biographies and Expertise

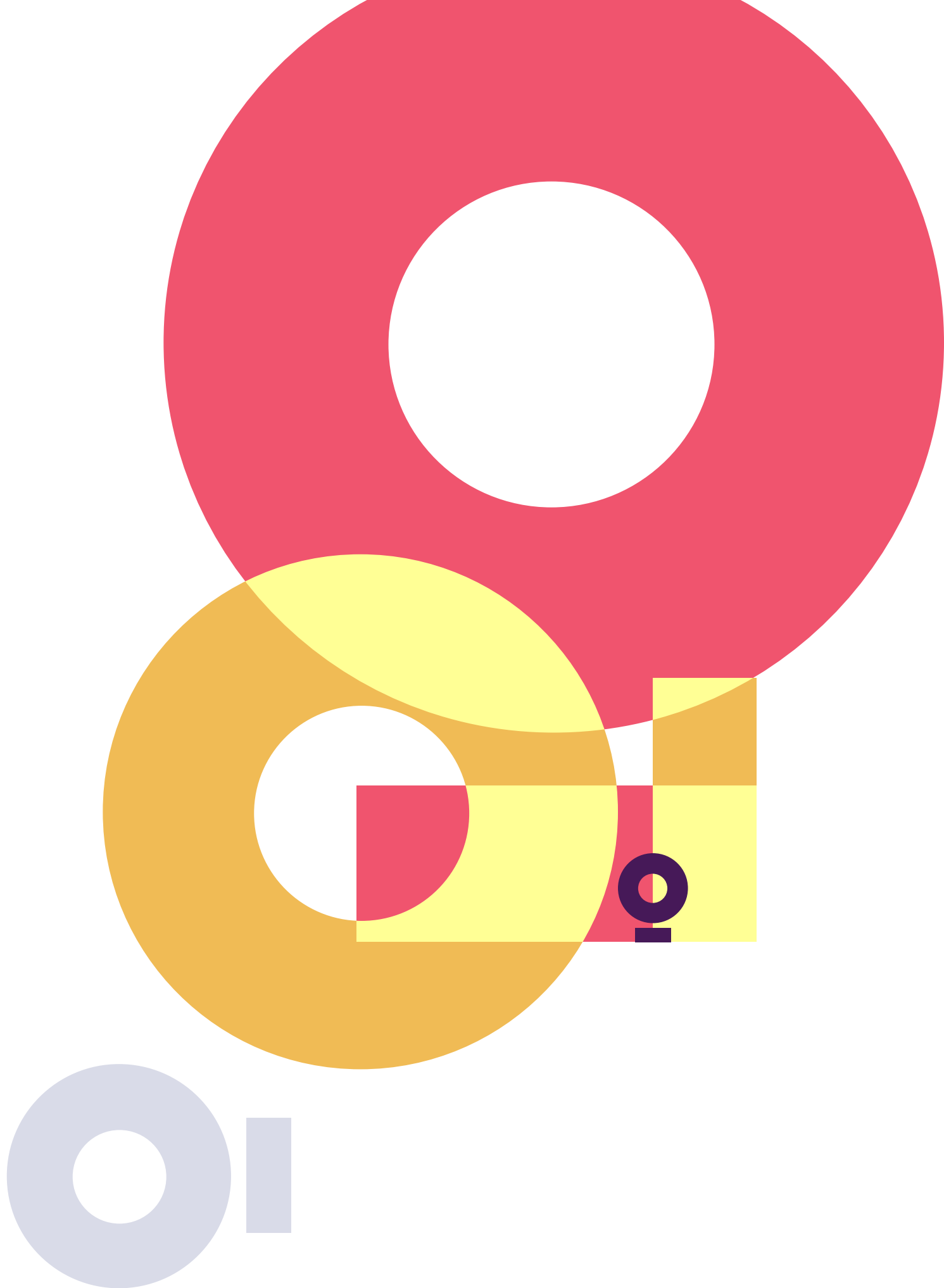
This report has been researched and co-authored by Dr. Rosie Lewis, Co-Director of Project Resist and Pragna Patel, Co-Director of Project Resist

Rosie Lewis has worked in regional and national strategic advocacy, infrastructure, frontline, research and policy roles supporting Black, minoritised and migrant survivors and organisations to end VAWG. She has been commissioned to develop and write policy briefings, evaluations and research reports for academic hubs, specialist VAWG organisations, funders and national second tier infrastructure organisations. She has over two decades of experience working with, assessing, and advocating for Black and minoritised women and children. This includes those with uncertain immigration status, NRPF and those in detention as well as working and managing frontline VAWG services – which has involved influencing local, national and international policy work in relation to multiply marginalised women and children. Rosie has also worked as a consultant in the culture, heritage and arts sector. She is both IDVA and ISVA qualified, has a Level 5 qualification in safeguarding, holds a First-Class Honours Degree, an MA in research and PhD in philosophy from Durham University

Pragna Patel is the former director and founding member of Southall Black Sisters (SBS), an advocacy and campaigning centre where she worked from 1982 to Jan 2022 with a break in 1993 when she left to train and practise as a solicitor. Over those 40 years she led SBS on some of its most important cases and campaigns on a range of issues including violence against women, immigration-related abuse and religious fundamentalism. Her trailblazing work has created many legal precedents and policies that have resulted in greater protection and justice for countless Black, minority and migrant women. She has often been called to give expert evidence and presentations based on her work at a variety of forums, both nationally and internationally. Pragna was a founding member of Women Against Fundamentalism and is currently a member of Feminist Dissent. In 2011 she was listed in *The Guardian's* top 100 women activists and campaigners. She has received multiple awards including the Bob Hepple Award for contributions to equality in 2015, an honorary doctorate in law from Keele University in 2019, and a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Criminal Justice Alliance in 2023. Pragna has written extensively on race, gender and religion.

Peorches
Against
Racism!





WHY DO I HAVE TO HIDE AWAY?

Documenting the impact of the 2024 far-right riots on Black, minoritised and migrant women and children

"Also, the police and local authorities or service they run about after the community leaders like they can solve the racism, I mean what have they done so far to help? They haven't included any women in these discussions, they haven't invested in us or supported us, they do make referrals but even then, only sometimes. The men from authorities talk to men from communities, women are sidelined and this is dangerous." (RESIST NETWORK MEMBER)

This report serves as our contribution to understanding the deep and often overlooked impact of the 2024 far-right riots on Black, minoritised and migrant women and children in the North and North East of England. Authored by Project Resist, it centres the lived experiences and testimonies of women and children survivors of racism, violence and abuse – particularly those supported by the Angelou Centre and sister organisations.

Drawing on in-depth research and testimonies, the report captures the socio-political context surrounding the riots, exposes the everyday racism experienced by many minoritised communities, and highlights the systemic barriers that force many women and children into silence and isolation. It also documents the critical role played by the Angelou Centre and sister organisations in providing support and in leading recovery efforts during this turbulent period.

Developed as part of the *Stories of Colour* initiative, the report not only honours the bravery and resilience of those who shared their stories but also aims to engage policymakers, institutions and wider society in the hope that they will listen, learn and act.

