



# **Anxiety, Confusion and Distrust**

**How BAME people  
in Britain have had a  
worse experience of  
the COVID-19 pandemic**

Findings from the Wellcome Monitor,  
published August 2020

# Findings from the Wellcome Monitor

**An effective response to COVID-19 depends not just on government and health services but on the public too. This means that it's vital for those who make and implement policy to communicate well with the public and to respond to people's concerns and experiences. And there are particular issues that are more pressing in areas with Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) populations.**

Decisions have to be based on an informed understanding of the diverse ways that people are affected by the pandemic and by lockdown policies.

To provide such evidence, the Wellcome Monitor surveyed people from different ethnic groups across England, Scotland and Wales, using a nationally representative sample that included a boost of BAME participants. There are some striking and worrying differences, with BAME people having worse experiences than White people. These findings are an important counterpart to other published research on how infection, hospitalisation and death rates vary between ethnic groups.

The fieldwork was conducted in late March and April, when the UK outbreak and control measures were much more severe than they are today. But these findings are more than just a snapshot of that period: they offer insight into differences in perceptions within British society, and they suggest what we might expect to see again, in the event of a resurgence.

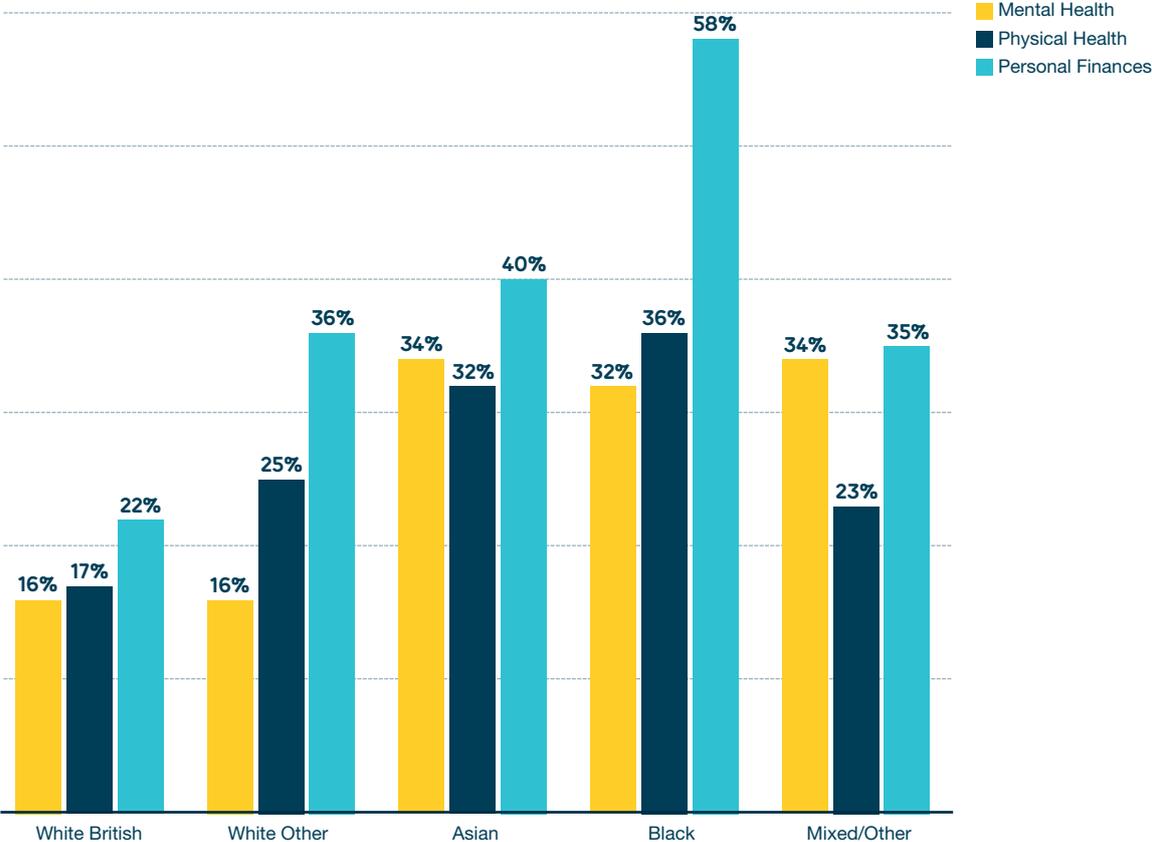
**Below are some key points.**  
**The full report is available at:**  
**[wellcome.ac.uk/monitor-2020](https://wellcome.ac.uk/monitor-2020)**

**Higher concern about finances and health**

BAME people were more likely than White people to be very concerned about the impact of coronavirus on their personal finances (43% vs 23%), physical health (30% vs 18%) and mental health (34% vs 16%).

By far the biggest worry among any ethnic group was that three-fifths of Black people were very concerned about the effect on their personal finances.

**Figure 1:**  
**Proportion very concerned about the effect of the coronavirus outbreak on their mental health, physical health, and personal finances by ethnic group**



How concerned are you about the effect the coronavirus outbreak is having on...?

**Base:** All GB adults (18+).

**Mental Health:** White British (2036), White Other (143), Asian (170), Black (95), Mixed/Other (106).

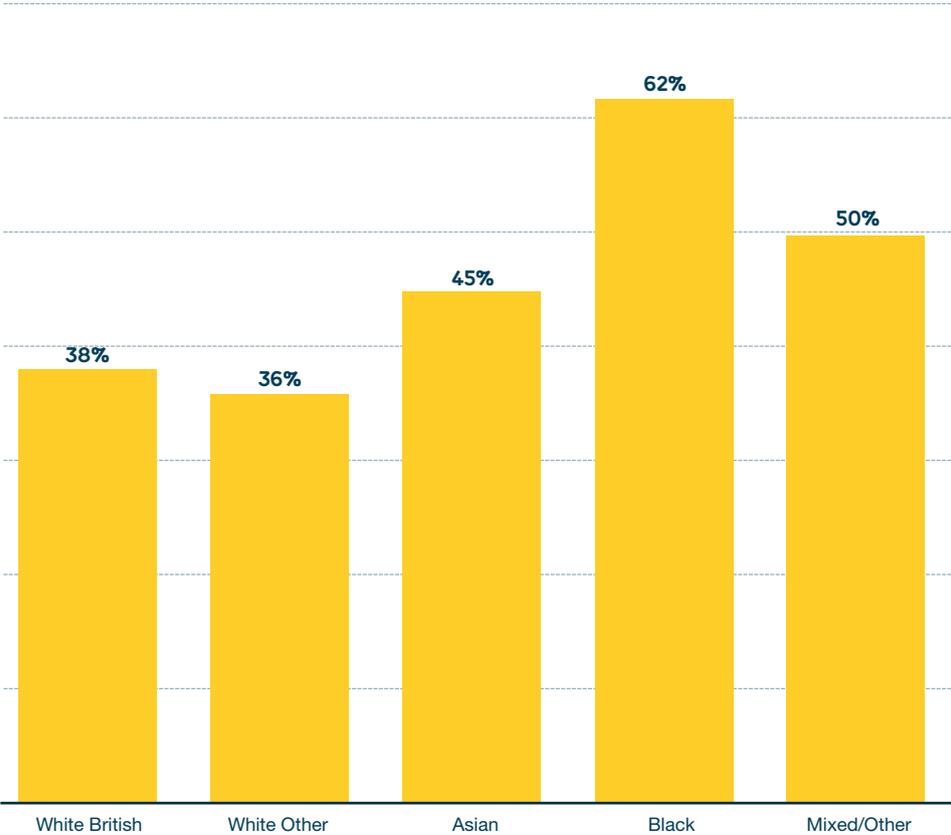
**Physical health:** White British (2051), White Other (146), Asian (171), Black (96), Mixed/Other (105).

**Personal finances:** White British (1990), White Other (143), Asian (172), Black (94), Mixed/Other (104).

**Higher concerns about education**

BAME people were more likely than White people to be very concerned about the effect on the education of their children (50% vs 37%). Black people were particularly likely to be very concerned (62%).

**Figure 2:**  
**Proportion very concerned about the effect of the coronavirus outbreak on the education of their children**



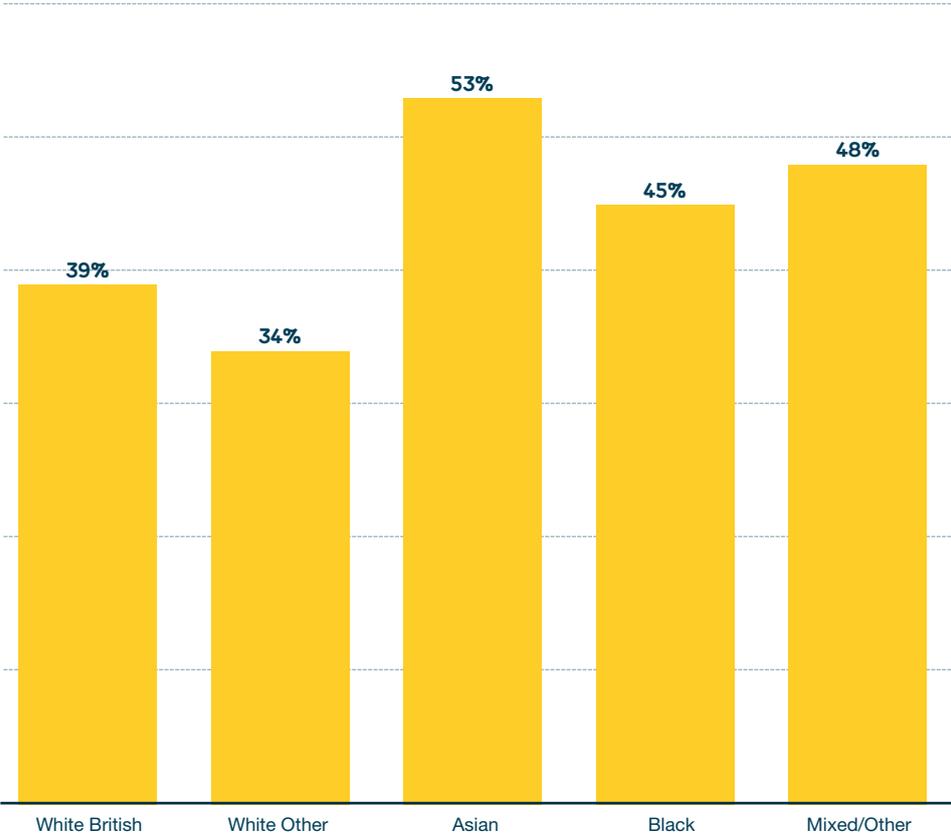
How concerned are you about the effect the coronavirus outbreak is having on...? The education of your children.

**Base:** GB adults (18+) who had children. White British (885), White Other (82), Asian (119), Black (61), Mixed/Other (59).

**More trouble following restrictions**

BAME people were more likely than White people to find it difficult to follow restrictions put in place by the government (50% vs 38%).

**Figure 3:**  
**Proportion finding it very or quite difficult to follow restrictions, by ethnic group**



How difficult would you say you are finding following the restrictions that are in place to prevent the spread of coronavirus?

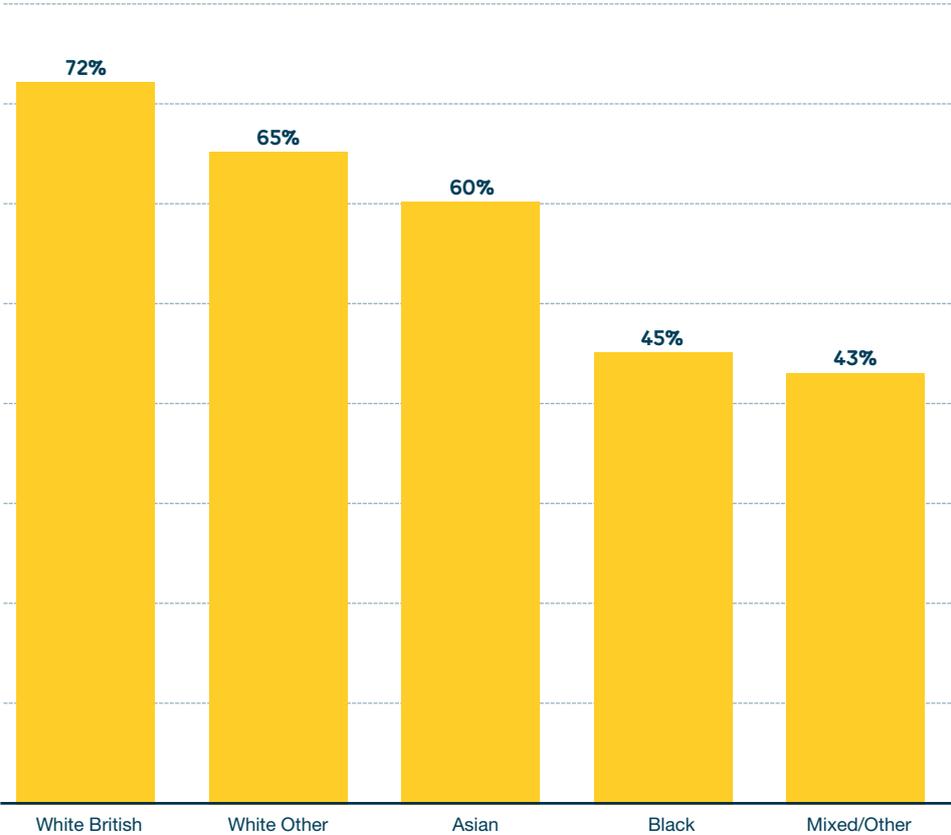
**Base:** All GB adults (18+). White British (2065), White Other (146), Asian (173), Black (98), Mixed/Other (106).

**Lower clarity of official information**

BAME people were less likely than White people to say that information about coronavirus was very clear (52% vs 71%). This concern was particularly high among Black people (45%).

When asked what could be made clearer, BAME people were more likely than White people to want better information on hygiene tips/rules, including effectiveness of gear like masks (31% vs 9%).

**Figure 4:**  
**Proportion finding information about what to do very clear, by ethnic group**



Thinking about the information you have seen or heard about what to do during the coronavirus outbreak, how clear is it to you what you should do to minimise your risk of getting or spreading the coronavirus?

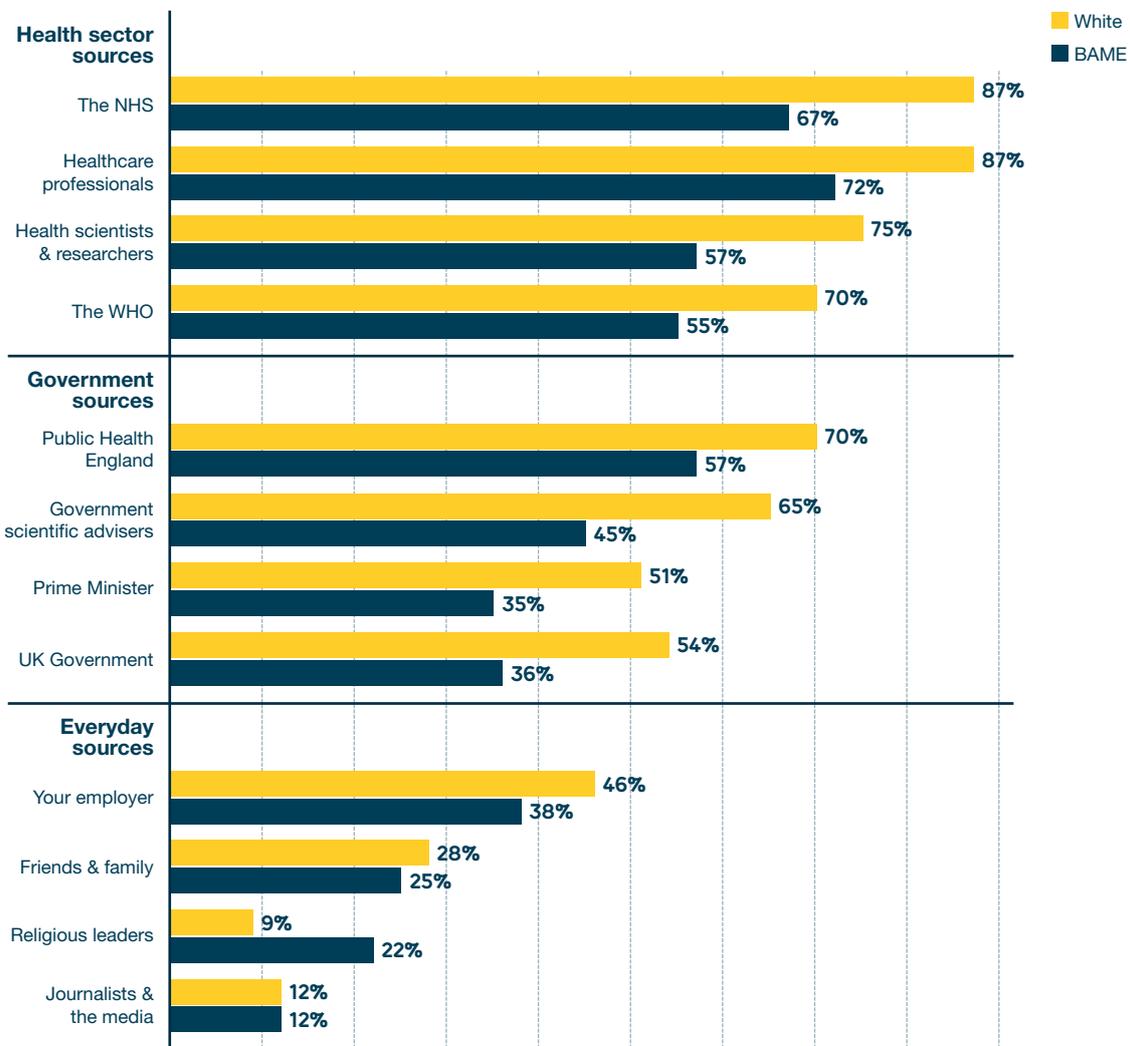
**Base:** GB adults (18+): White British (2065), White Other (146), Asian (173), Black (99), Mixed/Other (106).

### Less trust in scientists, government advisers and other sources

BAME people were less likely than White people to trust information on coronavirus from a wide range of sources, including healthcare professionals, health scientists, the NHS, the government (including scientific advisers) and the WHO. There were no significant

differences based on race and ethnicity in trust in friends and family or trust in the media (although this was low across the board), and BAME people were more likely to trust information from religious leaders (but again, these sources were generally less trusted overall).

**Figure 5:**  
**People among different ethnic groups having complete trust or a great deal of trust in information from different sources**



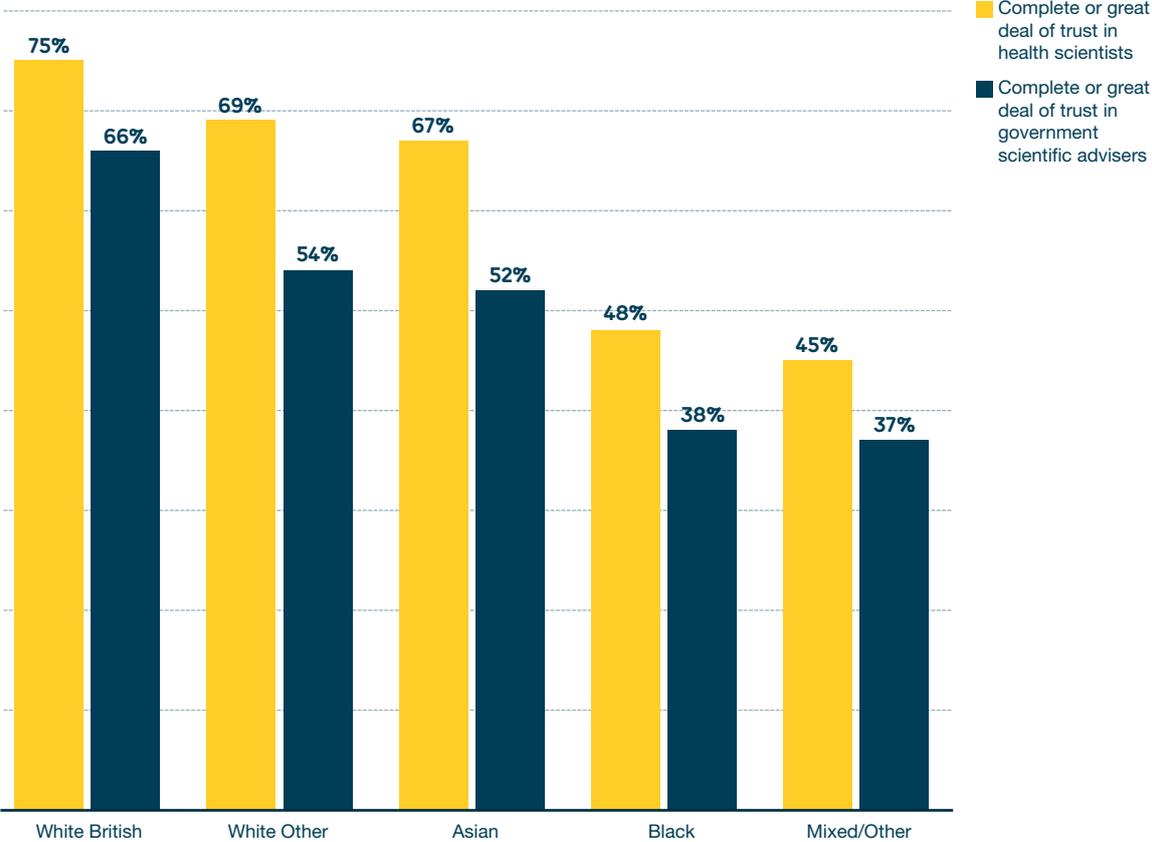
To what extent do you trust information about coronavirus from each of the following sources...?

**Base:** GB adults (18+): White (2161-2206), BAME (373-379);  
 'Your employer': GB adults (18+) in paid employment:  
 White (1053), BAME (205).

57% of BAME people reported having either complete trust or a great deal of trust in information from health scientists, compared with 75% of White people, and 45% of BAME people had either complete trust or a great deal of trust in information from government scientific advisers, compared with 65% of White people.

Looking in more detail at specific ethnic groups, trust in information from health scientists and government scientific advisers is particularly low among Black people.

**Figure 6:**  
**Trust in scientists and government scientific advisers among different ethnic groups**



To what extent do you trust information about coronavirus from each of the following sources: Health scientists and government scientific advisers?

**Base:** GB adults (18+): White British (2065), White Other (146), Asian (173), Black (99), Mixed/Other (106).

## About Wellcome Monitor

The Wellcome Monitor fieldwork was conducted via the NatCen online panel between 30 March and 26 April 2020, with 2,651 adults across England, Scotland, and Wales. It included a boosted sample for minority ethnic groups to increase statistical validity in the analysis for them. NatCen's panel is the first random probability online panel survey in Great Britain. Interviews were conducted online, or by phone where required.

The sample breakdown was:

Ethnicity	Sample size
Asian	174
Black	99
Mixed or other ethnic group	106
White British	2065
White – Other	146
Don't know	48
Refused	13
TOTAL	2651

We have used the term 'BAME' to describe people from Black, Asian and Mixed/Other ethnic groups. While a general term that can sometimes blur important differences, it can be useful for describing collective experiences, and it is commonly used in the public sector and across higher education. Where differences in our findings are noteworthy (and statistically meaningful), we have given more detailed figures for more specific ethnic groups.

**Full results are available at:**  
[wellcome.ac.uk/monitor-2020](https://wellcome.ac.uk/monitor-2020)

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**Wellcome Trust, 215 Euston Road, London NW1 2BE, United Kingdom  
T +44 (0)20 7611 8888, E [contact@wellcome.ac.uk](mailto:contact@wellcome.ac.uk), [wellcome.ac.uk](http://wellcome.ac.uk)**

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