

## Who, where and what should be the focus of addressing deprivation and ethnic inequality to promote integration?

*The disadvantage of ethnic minorities is a central feature of British society. The Casey Review into Opportunity and Integration commissioned by the government shines a light on the persistent socio-economic inequalities of ethnic minority groups and calls for deprivation and inequality to be tackled as a means of promoting integration. But who, where and what should be the focus for addressing ethnic inequalities? Kitty Lympelopoulou and Nissa Finney provide some pointers, from the Centre on Dynamics of Ethnicity (CoDE)'s work with Runnymede on local ethnic inequalities.*



Image: Flickr, Chris Guy

The remit of the Casey Review was to examine how ‘ethnic and faith groups in particular – have fared economically and socially; and some of the issues that are driving inequality and division in society’. The Review has attracted a lot of controversy since it was published last month. One main criticism is that it places **too much focus on the isolation and segregation of Muslim communities**. Another is that the onus of integration is again on migrants and ethnic minorities who Casey thinks should take an oath to ‘British values’, an **ambiguous and problematic notion**.

But there is one significant departure from policy attempts in recent years to grapple with ideas of integration and cohesion. The Casey Review firmly identifies the persistent deprivation and social exclusion of ethnic minorities as a barrier to integration. Casey advocates “targeting minority groups for assistance in a genuine endeavour to create a fairer and more equal society” and calls for funding for area-based initiatives to address key priorities where greatest challenges exist.

Some of the key priorities identified in the review include the promotion of English language skills, social mixing and tackling barriers to employment. Casey also calls for better data and research across a range of issues relating to integration and the development of a set of local indicators of integration. The Review acknowledges the need to understand how different ethnic groups

perform compared to each other on a range of economic and social outcomes including labour market and education.

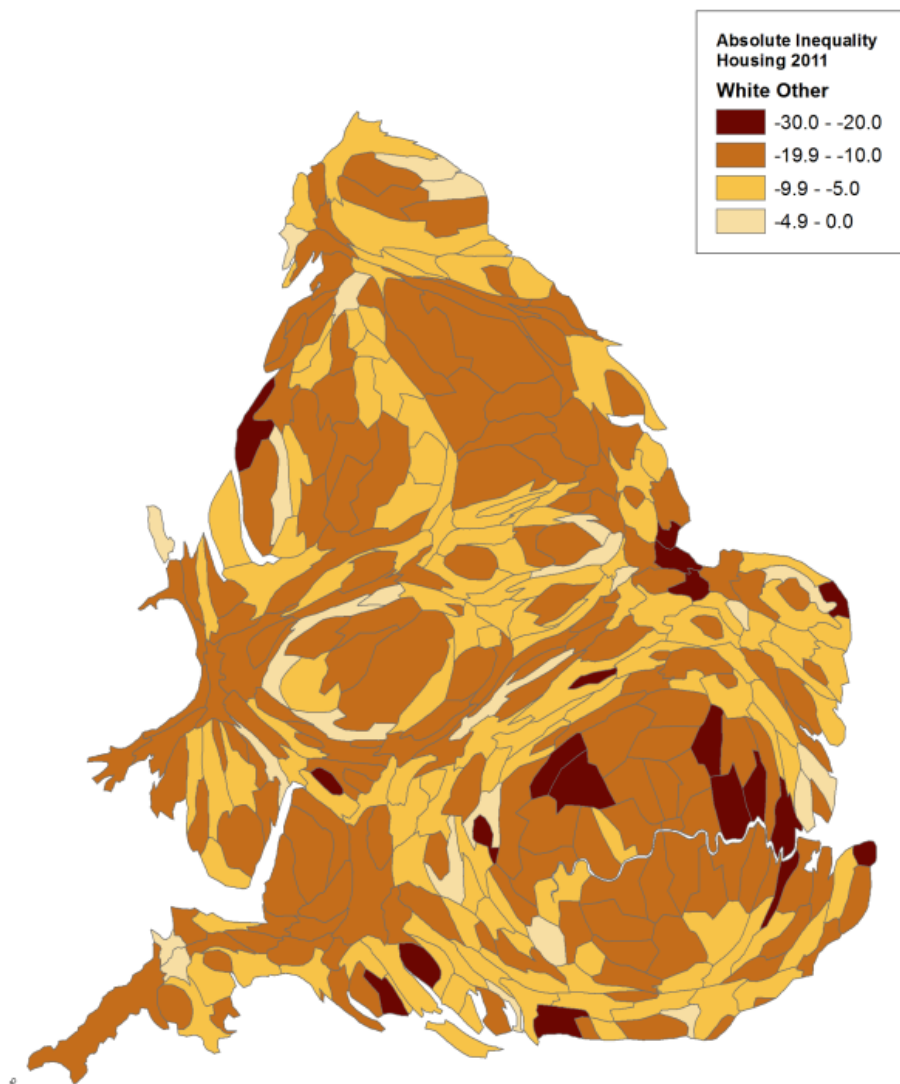
The recognition of the need for targeted interventions to address inequalities begs the question *which groups should be targeted and where?*

Our research on **local ethnic inequalities** examined how ethnic minority groups have performed against the White British group in different socio-economic domains. We analysed this for all districts in England and Wales. Using data from the 2001 and 2011 Censuses we developed a set of ethnic inequality indicators which measure the absolute difference in the proportion of the White British ethnic group and ethnic minority groups who experience disadvantage in the labour market (unemployment), education (no qualifications), health (Limiting Long-Term Illness) and housing (overcrowding).

Our findings show that patterns of ethnic inequalities are complex and they vary by ethnicity, locality and indicator of inequality. For example, while employment inequalities are severe for several ethnic minority groups including Black, Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Mixed ethnic groups, inequalities in education affect some ethnic minority groups, such as the White Other group, but not others. Casey suggests that it is the underperformance of White British pupils in schools relative to ethnic minority pupils that needs addressing to reduce education inequalities. While it is true that the education gap in recent years **has narrowed or disappeared for most ethnic minority groups** our analysis shows there have been large **increases in ethnic educational inequality for the White Other group**.

There are also **severe ethnic inequalities in housing** and these have been increasing over time. People from all ethnic minority groups are more likely to live in overcrowded housing than White British people. This is the case across the country as shown in Map 1.





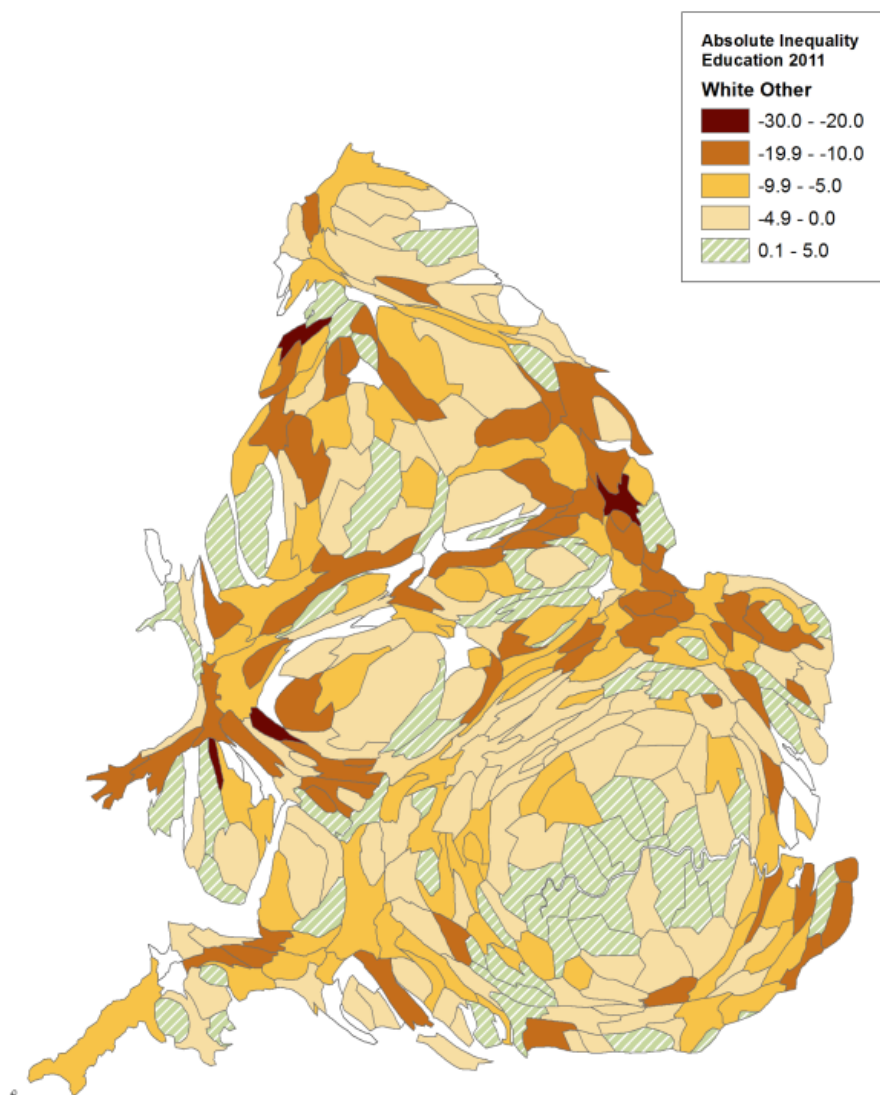
**Map 1: Housing inequality (% overcrowded) for the White Other ethnic group compared to the White British, districts of England and Wales, 2011**

*Note: negative score (brown shading) indicates disadvantage for the White Other group (higher % overcrowded).*

*Source: Census 2011*

And **ethnic inequalities are not just a feature of deprived and ethnically dense areas** as suggested by the Casey Review, as shown in Map 2. Inequalities also exist in less deprived and rural areas with low ethnic minority concentrations. The relationship between ethnic concentration and ethnic minority disadvantage is not as straightforward, and depends on the socio-economic indicator considered. In terms of health and housing, for example, ethnic minorities perform worse than the White British in deprived areas in London and in former industrial and manufacturing towns. Yet in terms of education and housing, ethnic inequalities are more severe in rural and semi-rural areas with small ethnic minority concentrations.





**Map 2: Educational inequality (% with no qualifications) for the White Other ethnic group compared to the White British, districts of England and Wales, 2011**

Note: positive score (green shading) indicates advantage for the White Other group (lower % with no qualifications); negative score (brown shading) indicates disadvantage for the White Other group (higher % with no qualifications).

Source: Census 2011

As Casey suggests, some of the underlying reasons for the persistent disadvantage of ethnic minorities relate to immigrant integration. Increases in ethnic inequality in education and housing have been highest outside traditional ethnic minority settlement areas where the White Other group grew from migration from the EU Accession countries. Lack of cultural resources and knowledge of British education and housing systems can explain inequality patterns in relation to this group. So too, can poor English language proficiency and service provision not sufficiently designed for diverse populations. But the underperformance of Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups in the labour market which persists despite improvements in educational attainment suggests that employer discrimination will also need to be tackled as a means of promoting integration.

In developing new initiatives to address social exclusion and inequalities the government will need to pay attention to the ways socio-economic inequalities vary locally for different ethnic minority



groups. Targeted policies will be needed at the local level to address some inequalities, for example education inequality and to improve English language skills. Employment and housing inequalities on the other hand, might be better addressed by national policies which aim to address the shortage of affordable housing and the persistent barriers ethnic minorities face in the labour market including discrimination.

For further details see *Lymperopoulou, K. and Finney, N. (2016) 'Socio-spatial factors associated with ethnic inequalities in districts of England and Wales, 2001–11' Urban Studies, 1-21. doi: 10.1177/0042098016653725*

## About the authors



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