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Prejudice against black and ethnic Scots “widespread”, survey says

Around one third of black and ethnic minority people in Scotland have experienced discrimination within the last two years, research reveals.

A further third of those surveyed by the University of Edinburgh and the polling company Survation said that discrimination is a “widespread problem” in Scotland.

Researchers asked a representative sample of more than 500 black and ethnic minority people in Scotland a range of questions exploring whether they had been affected by racial discrimination.

Of those who had experienced discrimination, 38 per cent said it had happened when applying for a job, while 31 per cent said it had affected their promotion chances.

Almost one third – 32 per cent – reported experiencing discrimination while using public transport and 18 per cent when attending school, college or university.

A significant majority – 83 per cent – of those who said they had experienced discrimination felt this was because of their perceived ethnicity. Some 44 per cent felt it was also based on their perceived religion.

Some black and ethnic minority groups reported higher levels of discrimination than others, the study found.

More than half of respondents with a black African Caribbean heritage said they had experienced discrimination in Scotland in the last two years. This compared with nearly a third of both Asian – 30 per cent – and mixed – 32 per cent – heritage respondents.

Researchers found that 61 per cent of those who had experienced discrimination did not report it to any kind of authority.

More than a third – 34 per cent – of respondents said they felt incidents of racial discrimination had become much more frequent. Some 47 per cent said the frequency of incidents had remained the same and 13 per cent said incidents had become less frequent over the last two years.

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More than half – 51 per cent – believed that the Scottish Government is doing enough to tackle discrimination, and 30 per cent disagreed.

Even more respondents – 62 per cent – stated that they had confidence in the authorities and other organisations to pursue discrimination cases, while 27 per cent disagreed.

Lead researcher Professor Nasar Meer, of the University of Edinburgh’s School of Social and Political Science, said: “This survey points to continuing trend of discrimination that is felt in the everyday lives of black and minority ethnic Scots. Whether it is in the street, on the bus or in the workplace, black and ethnic minority Scots are clearly encountering experiences that as a society we have to do much more to challenge.

“While there is good news to report – that black and ethnic minority Scots continue to have faith in Scottish institutions to take racism seriously – there is clearly an acceptance of both low-level and more obvious experiences of racial discrimination in Scotland. This is illustrated in considerable under-reporting, and so more targeted support is needed to help overcome this.”

The study was carried out through a research fellowship awarded by the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

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