

Hackney Anti-Racism Action Plan

Introduction

Over the last five years, Hackney has taken action to tackle racial inequality. We have started to identify and take action that impacts at an individual, community, system and societal level. In July 2020, the Council adopted a motion to work towards being an anti-racist organisation. This helped strengthen the focus and commitment to anti-racism. It specifically talked about what we need to change within institutions. Last year there was an election of the Council and directly elected Mayor. At the very beginning of this new administration, in May 2022, the Council held an Anti-Racist Praxis Conference, led by the Children and Education Directorate. We also published the progress we had made online on our [anti-racism hub](#). This highlights good practice and show evidence of progress and impact. But this work also shows there are gaps. We need to adopt a consistent approach across all of the work of the Council. We need to work with the wider system as well to develop one common approach and set of actions. This means statutory partners, voluntary and community sector, businesses and employers.

To have an impact, we need to make sure everyone in the system is starting from the same understanding of what racism is and what anti-racism is. This way, we can make sure that we are progressing the right actions. This is the best way to sustain the work in the long term. It avoids repeating patterns of bias and discrimination that are deeply embedded in society.

Hackney residents will be affected by other Councils and institutions outside of Hackney. We want to ensure their experience of other institutions is fair. By building a common understanding of anti-racism across public institutions, this will become the norm. This is why Hackney took a leading role in helping shape an anti-racist statement that all London Council leaders have now adopted.

The anti-racism action plan is a key way to support us meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty. This is because racial inequalities are very significant and we have a duty to take action to tackle discrimination and disadvantage and promote equality. We need to keep a persistent focus on eliminating discrimination and tackling disadvantage.

The anti-racism action plan could therefore have been adopted as a stand alone plan. We have chosen to develop it as part of a wider Equality Plan. It is a discrete plan and will have discrete accountability and governance. But by locating the work within a wider assessment of need and priorities, we can be very clear about the urgent case for adopting an anti-racism action plan. It also helps us to take an intersectional approach, and consider how racism and racial inequality intersect with other forms of discrimination and disadvantage that someone may experience.

The work to develop an anti-racist action plan has helped develop this wider Equality Plan. It has helped us to develop an understanding of what an anti-discriminatory mindset means.

It has helped us to understand the complex range of actions needed across the system to tackle inequality. This has helped us develop a wider set of equality objectives.

This has to translate into whether residents experience frontline services differently. In October, we will convene an all staff summit focused on culture, behaviour and practice. It has to be about whether we are making an impact on outcomes. We are going to work closely with residents and partners to look at these outcomes and what difference we can make and by when.

Over the next few months we will be inviting residents, community partners and statutory partners to help us shape this plan.

Defining anti-racism

The London Councils Anti-Racist Statement

Local authorities in London are committed to achieving racial equality because we recognise that persistent racial inequalities are unacceptable and adversely affect all Londoners. We know that certain groups are more likely to face inequality, experience poor outcomes and to live in poverty than others. Often these outcomes are used as an excuse not to acknowledge racial inequality, but groups are not more disadvantaged by chance. Structural disadvantage is rooted in racism and discrimination that is both historical and current.

We do have legislation to protect against overt racism, negative attitudes and treatment, but many of the systems that discriminate do so because of more subtle and covert unchecked “prejudice, assumptions, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping.” This wording draws on the Macpherson Report 1999 definition of institutional racism which is still relevant today. This is a dehumanising process that is unacceptable and communities are tired of being treated this way. We cannot let another generation down by not actively responding to what remains a clear and compelling articulation of what needs to change.

All local authorities should be committed to taking an anti-racist approach because the most damaging aspects of inequality and racism are embedded in society. It is not enough to “not be racist” or to focus on tackling conscious hatred, like racial abuse. It is everyone’s responsibility to proactively and continuously:

- Unpack and reset beliefs, assumptions and values;
- Take action when we observe racism come into play, in beliefs, assumptions and values and the decision and actions that follow, however subtle;
- Be humble and educate ourselves in what we don’t know about racial inequalities and racism that exists, rather than putting the onus on others to educate us.

Our collective commitment to achieve racial equality focuses on what London councils can do together to have a positive impact on life outcomes at all stages, including in relation to health and wellbeing, employment and education. This is about social justice and promoting equality because all Londoners should be able to reach their potential in all spheres.

Accountability -embedding anti-racism into the mindset-culture, behaviours and practice

We will need to set up the right groups and support to make sure that:

- Everyone progressing actions within the anti-racism action plan are working together towards a common set of outcomes and intermediate outcomes
- We are tracking progress against intermediate outcomes and regularly assessing if these are making a difference on our long term outcomes.
- We are taking action to embed equality, diversity and inclusion into service design, delivery and practice.
- We are taking action to ensure an open and humble and anti-racist leadership style
- We are taking action to ensure that the workforce reflects the ethnic diversity of Hackney's population at all levels and are working towards a common set of measures of success.
- We are tracking progress against these measures of success and our workforce is becoming more reflective of the diversity of the community at all levels.

To support this we propose establishing governance that will include:

- A delivery group of senior officers
- Sessions led by the lead Cabinet Member with Cabinet leads and senior officers to review progress and impact.
- The Council's Corporate Leadership and Cabinet will jointly consider progress on a six monthly basis.
- We want to develop this further by developing proposals to involve residents in holding us to account. This is why we are asking you how we should do this as part of this consultation and engagement.

We will ask partnerships and partners to work towards one shared understanding and commitment to anti-racism.

Hackney's diversity

- 53.1% of Hackney residents identified their ethnicity within the 'White' category. The second most common ethnic group category in Hackney after "White" is 'Black', with 21.1% of Hackney residents identifying in this category. Hackney has a significantly higher proportion of residents who identify as 'Black' than for both London and England.
- Hackney's Asian population is 10.37% which is significantly less than the average for London (20.7%) but is more in line with the average for England (9.6%). Census data does not give us an accurate estimate for the Turkish population and we will do more work to develop an accurate estimate. 2% of the population wrote in Turkish as an identity, 3.3% gave Turkey as their place

of birth. Others will have identified themselves under other categories such as Other White.

- Hackney is also home to distinct ethno-religious groups:
 - People of the Jewish faith makeup 6.7% of the population which is much higher than London (1.7%) and England, (0.5%). This community is largely made up of Orthodox, or Charedi Jewish people who mainly live in the North East of the borough. We understand this is likely to be an underrepresentation of the current population. We will do more work to develop an accurate estimate.
 - Many Kurdish people from Turkey live in Hackney and Haringey. The majority of Turkish-speaking residents belong to the Sunni sect of Islam, with most Kurds are Alevi who make up about 1% of Hackney's population. There are also a small number of Kurdish Christian.
- An estimated 89 languages are spoken in Hackney. The top 10 preferred languages in Hackney are: English (80.1%), Turkish (3.2%), Spanish (2%), French (1.3%), Portuguese (1.3%) Yiddish (1.3%), Italian (1.2%), Polish (0.9%), Bengali (with Sylheti and Chatgaya) (0.8%) and Gujarati (0.6%).

Groups facing key inequalities

- Black Caribbean, Black African, Other Black groups, and Turkish Kurdish groups face key inequalities in education, health, income, and employment. We also see these inequalities in the Charedi community.
- Within the Muslim community - there are many different groups. They will have specific needs that will not be catered for by one generic approach to engagement.
- Hackney is home to smaller communities who face significant inequalities. This includes: Gypsy Roma Traveller, South American, Chinese (including Hong Kong Chinese), Somali and West Central African communities.
- In considering how we tackle racial inequality, we need to consider communities who are oppressed or marginalised by a wider majority group, for example a minority religious group.

The Action Plan

Tackle racial inequality at every life stage, by taking protective, preventative and positive action

We see racial inequality at every life stage: Pregnancy, School readiness, Key Stage 4 (GCSE), Leaving school, Employment, Parenthood, Caring and Old age.

When people face difficulty they can also experience inequality or unfair treatment. Examples include- Assessment of additional needs, Exclusions, Entering the criminal justice system, Unemployment, Eviction, Debt and Illness.

There is proven bias in the system that is going to be leading to unfair and unequal outcomes. We need to take preventative action at every life stage, working across

the whole system. We need to be specific to needs and intersectional in the way we work.

We will closely work with Hackney's population health hub to:

Develop our understanding

- Refresh existing equality evidence base for the whole population. We will look at population data, national data on outcomes, service take up, service outcomes and qualitative insight together. We need to ask who is facing inequality (avoiding blanket categories) and to understand the root causes of inequality across the life course. This analysis will be intersectional.
- Prioritise the groups we need to think about. We need to avoid blanket categories and build on existing work.
- Develop cross-cutting positive, protective, purposeful, preventative work.
- Review progress and impact of work so far.

Identify the solutions needed

- Identify whether the right conditions are in place to have an impact and what needs to change.
- Work closely with residents and partners across the system towards actions that support common objectives and outcomes:

Developing an outcomes framework that can be adopted by all partners that:

- Identifies proposed interventions (including existing ones)
- Sets out how these will impact positively on outcomes
- Sets timescales for change.
- Considers evidence about how realistic these plans are, including benchmarking data
- Involves residents throughout in providing critical challenge.

Existing work to build on:

A focus on children and young people

- The joint Children and Education Action Plan has a focus on Early Help, Health and Education. It will seek to tackle the overrepresentation of black and global majority children in exclusions and children's social care. It will ensure that early years, education and early help is inclusive and anti-racist can have an impact on outcomes across the life course.
- Improving outcomes for black children and young people - continued focus on education, mental well being and reducing harm and employment
- Integrated Care System - Children, Young People, Maternity and Families

Health inequalities

- Establishing a commission to ensure that local mental health services are meeting the needs of all residents and tackling inequality of outcomes.
- Neighbourhoods - embedding anti-racism into frontline practice
- Gypsy Roma Traveller strategy - identifying cross cutting actions

Build prosperity and wellbeing, ensuring a focus on racial inequality

Develop our understanding

Plans that tackle poverty and help people to thrive need to be looked at through an anti-racist lens. This is to make sure that black and global majority communities do benefit and equally that there isn't a disbenefit.

A regeneration scheme may include outcomes that support people from black and global majority backgrounds into jobs. If the scheme also leads to inequality this needs to be thought about. This could be by displacing local businesses or increasing local house prices

Hackney has worked with other local authorities to develop its approach to an inclusive economy. This goes beyond traditional economic development metrics. We will build on this work and seek to embed this understanding across planning, housing and regeneration strategy.

We will work with leads for Employment and Skills, Area Regeneration, Housing (house building, housing strategy, housing management and housing needs), Planning, Health and Wellbeing and Poverty Reduction to look at where racism is showing up in systems.

Identify the solutions needed

We will identify actions for each area identified above

Existing work to build on

- Anti-racism sessions with senior managers in the teams that lead on Employment and Skills, Area Regeneration, Housing Strategy, Housing needs and Planning. These facilitated sessions developed an understanding of racism and where it shows up
- Anti-racism is an explicit commitment in the local Integrated Care System plans. It is a specific focus for the Health Inequalities Steering Group. This group develops proactive work to tackle inequality, reporting to the Health and Wellbeing Board
- The Poverty Reduction Framework was adopted in March 2022. It explicitly includes actions that embed anti-racist practice and promote a diverse community partnership. These actions are now being progressed. For example the Council is seeking to embed anti-racism into sustainable food actions.

Embed anti-racism into service plans and practice

Some groups are more likely to face inequality and experience poor outcomes and to live in poverty. But groups don't happen to be more disadvantaged by chance. The origins of structural disadvantage are related to prejudice and discrimination. This is historical and current. It is deeply embedded into societal structures, including public institutions. As well as taking action to tackle key racial inequalities and disadvantages in communities, we need to work with other institutions across the system to embed the following into the way we work:

- Inclusive, humble, trauma informed and anti-racist approaches and practice
- A whole system approach that sees issues from a resident / borough rather than a siloed service perspective
- Understands Hackney's diverse communities and is aware of the impact of poverty
- Considers how we collaborate with communities, co-designing long lasting solutions

This needs to be embedded into culture, service planning, practice and accountability.

This is the only way we will stop repeating the patterns of failure. This is a failure of public service that is linked to unchecked bias, prejudice, ignorance, stereotyping. This unfair treatment can have a devastating impact on people's lives. It is a waste of resources and of talent.

This will need the right support corporately and from managers and needs to start with them understanding what racism means and what actions need to be taken to develop anti-racist services and practice.

Develop our understanding

- We have developed a tool to help us understand where racism shows up and what it looks like. It helps us look at our systems and decision making. The tool looks at organisational narrative and approach. It looks at the willingness to work intersectionally and with complexity and to support proactive work. The aim of the continuum is to encourage learning, understanding and reflection and then action.

Identify the solutions needed:

- Engage with services to identify where they are in terms of anti-racist practice and how we embed anti-racism.
- Develop a resource pack, workshops and training sessions
- Develop service planning guidance
- We are engaging with the Population Health Hub to integrate these tools into wider work.

Existing work to build on:

This will build on the practical work that is already underway to embed anti-racism into service design, delivery and practice:

- The Children and Education Practice Model is embedding anti-racism into all areas of practice and all roles.
- Work is under development to embed anti-racist practice into Neighbourhoods work. This is about ensuring that this early preventative work is inclusive and anti-racist. This is key to ensuring that people receive appropriate support and work is being evaluated.
- Tackling Racism and Inequality Programme. This is a London wide health inequality work -led by the Association of Directors of Public Health London. The action plan has five themes for area development; to diversify the workforce and encourage systems leadership, coproduction with communities, trust and cohesion, improve ethnic data collection and research and embed public health into social and economic policy.

4. Celebrate and serve diverse communities and value their contribution

Hackney's diverse, dynamic and changing population is what makes Hackney feel unique. It gives different areas their unique sense of identity. There is, however, a risk that the very communities that helped create a sense of place are excluded and marginalised.

Although there is a high level of trust in the population overall, this is much lower for Black and Global majority residents and social housing tenants. Some residents feel that Council communication does not resonate with their experience of life in the borough. They feel we are too defensive when presented with new ideas or challenges.

In response, we need to develop a culture that is comfortable with hearing residents tell us uncomfortable truths about how racism is playing out. We need to be more open and confident about working with residents to be part of the solutions. We must pay attention to residents who we are least likely to hear. We have to remain agile and adaptive to meeting new needs that we identify through this dialogue. We need to put residents and communities first, thinking about underserved communities.

Developing our understanding

We need to develop the anti-racism action plan further during the consultation and engagement period, asking openly what we should be doing that is different, what we can learn from work communities are leading, what new solutions residents want to see and what good practice we should look at.

Identify the solutions needed:

- We need to increase the level of community engagement activity to support delivery of this action plan. This will also help strengthen accountability and support co-production.

- We need to develop a more consistent approach to involving residents in checking and challenging our work.
- We need to develop ways to enable ongoing co-production across the system.

Existing work to build on:

- Hackney CVS, in partnership with the Council and health partners are leading a Lottery funded programme. This will help us develop ways to engage with young black people, parents and the wider community. We are working with Hackney CVS on how this resource can support the anti-racism work we need to do across the system.
- The Police Action Plan in Trust and Confidence is being developed to complement and support the wider anti-racism action plan. The Police locally have been engaged in the development of the wider anti-racist plan, and further sessions on anti-racism are planned with them.

Change as an institution: the leadership and management culture and diversity of leadership

Developing our understanding

The work we have led on tackling inequality in Hackney continually comes back with urgency to the reality that structures and systems do not work for all.

We need a workforce that:

- understands what being inclusive, humble, anti-discriminatory, anti-racist and trauma informed means.
- is confident working with communities
- can operate in a no blame culture, but also knows that racism will not be tolerated.
- leads and works as a system- from a resident / borough not service perspective
- understands Hackney's diverse communities and is aware of the impact of poverty
- reflects the diversity of Hackney, at all levels
- can collaborate with communities, co-designing long lasting solutions

In December 2018, the Council adopted a Corporate Equalities Programme to foster a culture of inclusive leadership and increase workforce diversity especially at senior levels. This was informed by focus groups with black and global majority staff. These focus groups were led by directors to identify the solutions needed to achieve a more diverse and inclusive workforce. This insight has informed work since then. It recognised that managers' understanding of what racism was was variable. Not all managers were confident talking about racism. Staff shared how inaction or minimising could cause huge stress Working in teams when in a minority could be isolating and stressful.

Since then we have further developed our understanding about the relationship between racism and other forms of discrimination, frontline stress, progression and

wellbeing. There is a well established body of work that shows that people who are marginalised because of who they are can experience stress and trauma that affects their wellbeing. There is also a growing body of work that shows how this plays out in the workplace and impacts on performance at work. Recent research also shows that when minorities' wellbeing increases, so does their resilience, performance, career prospects, and their organisation benefits as well.¹ To achieve a workforce that is reflective of the diversity of Hackney at all levels, we need to continue to address these issues.

Identify the solutions needed:

Improving our understanding of workforce profile and dynamics

- Detailed workforce profiles will help us identify nuances that exist within different staff groups. This needs to be about the whole employee journey.
- Positive actions will be identified corporately and by division

Work to build on:

- Corporate Equalities work from 2018-2021 which put in place changes across the employee journey and had a positive impact on diversity at senior levels. This included the Inclusive Management Toolkit.
- Hackney's anti-racist approach has been proactively embedded into new policies e.g. bullying and micro-aggression and into new training
- We have piloted Peer Support sessions for black staff. This is to see how this support better supports the wellbeing of staff impacted by everyday racism and this work is informing wider work of OD and HR.
- We have developed our Employment Assistance to bring in more diverse practitioners with an understanding of anti-racism
- We have trialled and are now rolling out sessions for leaders on anti-racism and how racism shows up
- Since 2022, we have included a range of specific questions about equality, diversity and inclusion and racism in the residents survey which provides a more specific baseline on perceptions of the Council with regards to racism. These will also be used with staff.

¹Most recently, Free to Soar: Race & Wellbeing in Organisations Edited by Kandola, B. Pearn Kandola Publishing (2020)