

Brighton & Hove City Council Anti-Racism Strategy 2023 – 2028

Racism has no place in Brighton & Hove.

We are committed to proactively eradicating racism in all its forms, creating and embedding Anti-Racist policy, practices, and procedures into all council services.

We recognise the destructive impact of racism on individuals, organisations, and society.

We will work to create a culture within the council, and in the city, where Black & Racially Minoritised people who visit, live and work in our city can thrive.

This strategy provides a roadmap for us becoming an anti-racist council and delivering on actions, co-created with communities, to create lasting change in our council and city.

Foreword

At Brighton & Hove City Council it is not enough to be 'not racist'. We must be anti-racist. This is evidenced through systemic change which means looking at our policies, practice, procedures, and services and challenging ourselves with the questions, 'are these actively anti-racist?' Are we actively creating equitable voice, outcomes, and value for Black & Racially Minoritised people in the city? If not, why not and what needs to change?

We made a pledge in 2020; worked on ourselves and our relationships with Black & Racially Minoritised residents, set this in writing. We want communities to feel able to hold us to account and, importantly, ensure that we hold ourselves to account. It is not for the communities to do the work. We must better understand the varied lived experiences and systemic barriers faced by Black & Racially Minoritised people who live, work, and visit the city.

We recognise that our initial anti-racism pledge was motivated by the severity of anti-Black racism. We commit to focusing on this when actioning anti-racism work.

We stand by the belief that "one either allows racial inequities to persevere, as a racist, or confronts racial inequities, as an anti-racist. There is no in-between safe space of 'not racist.' The claim of 'not racist' neutrality is a mask for racism."¹

The council, councillors and staff know that achieving the vision and the aims of this foundational strategy will take some time. A strategic approach is important to clearly state where we want to get to and how we plan to get there. This is an ongoing journey, and the strategy sets out a framework for the first five years. We will review constantly and make it part of the operating principles of the council for the future. Residents rightly want to see action and change. So do we. However, disconnected individual action, no matter how good, does not create long-term change. We need a considered plan to achieve fundamental change ensuring we truly understand anti-racism, and anti-racist principles are embedded in how we work, think, and deliver. We hope this strategy sets us on the right path.

Geoff Raw, Chief Executive

¹ From the book 'How To Be An Antiracist', Ibram Kendi, 2019

1. Introduction

This strategy sets out:

- Our renewed commitment to becoming an anti-racist council first pledged in 2020
- Our long-term vision and aims
- Our strategic themes and priority actions to achieve change
- How we will monitor and report on our progress and be held accountable
- Our gratitude to everyone who has and is helping the council with its work to become an anti-racist organisation and has informed the thinking on this strategy

It is supported by a set of appendices which:

- Provide actions detailing how we intended to work towards our vision and aims
- Explain the terminology and definitions we are using and the importance of intersectionality
- Outline how this strategy fits with the council's existing Fair and Inclusive Action Plan and our council values
- Show the work we are currently doing to become an anti-racist organisation
- Feature key data that has informed the strategy and priority actions
- Make clear how the strategy can be accessed in different formats and who to contact for more information about the strategy

2. Our Vision and Aims

Our vision is to be an anti-racist council that fully grasps and understands the severity of racism in all its forms and manifestations. Actively using its power and influence to eliminate racism within the council and the city.

We are a city in which Black & Racially Minoritised people have equity of access, opportunity, and representation of voice.

We do the necessary work year on year to become anti-racist, acknowledging that the work and the change is our responsibility.

Our systems, policies, and practices reduce inequity for Black and Racially Minoritised people and we truly understand the diverse and intersecting lived experiences of Black & Racially Minoritised people who live, work, and visit the city.

We are a council with anti-racist principles embedded in how we think and act as a service provider and employer. The city and the council are a beacon of change to residents, organisations, and local authorities nationwide.

Our aims are to:

- Purposefully consider anti-racism in our thinking, actions and decision making throughout the organisation.
- Collaborate with and platform from Black & Racially Minoritised people and organisations led by Black & Racially Minoritised people, as standard practice in the council.
- Empathetically and consistently learn and better understand the experiences of Black & Racially Minoritised people, recognising the experiences and impact unique to different communities.
- Actively use people's feedback, and data to improve how we serve and support Black & Racially Minoritised people.
- More efficiently and effectively meet the requirements of Black & Racially Minoritised people who live, work, and visit the city through changing our systems and practices.
- Remove council policy that perpetuates racism and introduce policy that is directly and overtly anti-racist.
- Create a portfolio of anti-racism work undertaken by staff and councillors across the council; highlighting key service areas where change is prioritised.
- Take responsibility for challenging ourselves as an organisation, making change where we can and challenging others where we can influence, using our role as a civic leader.
- Support and influence the city, its communities and businesses to become anti-racist.

This is a five-year strategy. It provides the base for the council's work on becoming anti-racist and supporting equity for Black & Racially Minoritised people. From this groundwork, we will develop focussed actions over the 5-year period that build on our work to date. We recognise that becoming an anti-racist

council requires sustained work. Our intention is that progress against this strategy will influence our anti-racism work beyond 2028.

We are deeply committed to fulfilling our civic and public sector equality duties. Along with this strategy we are creating an Accessible City Strategy, seeking re-accreditation as a City of Sanctuary, and will be developing future equality strategies.

We seek to influence change, by joint work with other public organisations such as the Police, NHS, with businesses and community and voluntary sector organisations and with organisations that we funded to delivery services on our behalf. Through this, we aim to convey and connect community voice, to promote the adoption of best practice and to encourage proactive, inclusive solutions.

3. Strategic Themes and Core Priority Actions

Through the process of developing the council's Anti-Racism Strategy three key strategic themes for change within the council have been identified and prioritised. These are:

- Engagement: communicating and collaborating
- Data: collecting and using
- Policy and practice: reviewing and changing

Core priority actions have been identified under each theme for the whole council, and for individual directorates to support the creation of an anti-racist, accessible, inclusive council, and city.

Our intent is for the strategic themes and core priority actions to focus work on embedding anti-racism into business-as-usual practice, mindsets, and service delivery.

We are prioritising critical action that identifies and works towards tackling root cause issues. We intend to create more impactful, intersectional and meaningful changes to the experiences of Black & Racially Minoritised residents and communities.

The themes have been mapped with the existing equality, diversity, and inclusion priorities of the council, for example, the council's Fair and Inclusive Action Plan and each directorates own equality action plan. This is to avoid confusion, duplication, and increased reporting pressure on services.

Strategic theme 1: Engagement: communicating and collaborating

Through our priority actions we want to create a council that:

- Engages sensitively, flexibly, and innovatively with Black & Racially Minoritised residents and Black & Racially Minoritised led organisations; creating quality and sustainable dialogue between council services and communities with two-way feedback. That recognises the burden and impact of asking for peoples' lived experience and actively avoids engagement fatigue and harm.
- Improves and builds communities and residents trust in the council by centring communities of identity in our equalities work. We do this by taking a nuanced anti-racist approach that considers intersectional barriers, impacts, and requirements.

Strategic theme 2: Data: collecting and using

Through our priority actions we want to create a council that:

- Tracks, develops, and refines our organisational knowledge through data-led insights and equality, diversity, and inclusion-informed data dashboards.

- Intentionally collects, learns from, and uses qualitative and quantitative insights to proactively improve council-wide leadership, skills and knowledge, diverse representation, retention, and the experience and success of our people, residents, and communities.

Strategic theme 3: Policy and practice: reviewing and changing

Through our priority actions we want to create a council that:

- Intentionally and consistently conducts robust equality impact assessments, holding ourselves to account and proactively applies and embeds innovative best practice into the way we think, work, and deliver.
- Identifies, recognises, and resolves barriers to equity, accessibility, inclusivity using anti-racist approaches, creating sustainable long-term change by improving inclusive leadership, self-education, and council culture.

Our Core Priority Actions for the duration of this strategy are to:

1. Increase and improve the communication and engagement with Black & Racially Minoritised residents, service users, customers and tenants aligned to a new engagement strategy being developed for the whole council. Our engagement should be nuanced, intersectional and used proactively to change council policy and practice.
2. Improve the collection, analysis, and use of qualitative, quantitative, and intersectional data regarding Black & Racially Minoritised residents (be they service users, customers, tenants) to better understand their access to and experience of services, using this proactively to inform service improvement.
3. Identify, review and co-produce key policies, plans, strategies, and work, embedding anti-racism principles to improve their impact on outcomes for Black & Racially Minoritised people, with intersectional insights. Done alongside our own intersectional anti-racism council learning and development.

Details of directorate-level priority actions to take forward their work against these core priority actions are available in supporting document 'Brighton and Hove City Council Anti-Racism Strategy Priority Actions 2023-2028'.

4. Monitoring and Reporting

Performance against the strategy will have community accountability via the anti-racism Community Advisory Group and ongoing community engagement with Black & Racially Minoritised stakeholders.

Key highlights of performance, progress and barriers will also be reported to the council's Tourism, Economy, Equalities and Communities Committee and the City's Equality & Inclusion Partnership.

Our progress will be monitored through our internal performance management framework. This includes the Corporate Equality Delivery Group chaired by the Chief Executive that oversees all the council's equality, diversity, and inclusion work.

Detailed action plans with measures of success will support our implementation over the five years of the strategy. Quarterly performance monitoring is undertaken by our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Officers on each of our five directorates, acting as critical friends in addition to community accountability. This will be supported by the provision of case study and lived experience-informed learning.

Additionally, each Directorate has an Equality Delivery Group to lead and deliver its equality work, ensuring the Directorate continues to embed equity, accessibility, anti-racism, and intersectional thinking in how we act and deliver as a service provider and employer.

Actions will also be monitored for leadership through individual staffs' performance reviews with their manager.

More information is available in the Appendices to this strategy.

5. Our Gratitude

The strategy, and the supporting documents, have been created through sincere dialogue with the Anti-Racism Community Advisory Group (CAG), the council's 'BME' Workers Forum and engagement with Black & Racially Minoritised-led community and voluntary sector organisations and businesses.

Thank you to everyone that gave their time, energy, and resilience to talking with us for the development of this strategy. We offer our gratitude to:

- All staff, focus group participants, local advocates and community members who have contributed their thoughts, time, and shared their lived experiences with us.
- A Seat at the Table
- Black & Minority Ethnic Community Partnership
- Black & Minority Ethnic Young People's Project
- Black Anti-Racism Community Organisation
- BPOC Arts & Culture Network Brighton & Hove
- Bridging Change
- Brighton & Hove Jewish Community
- Brighton & Hove Multicultural Group
- Brighton & Hove Muslim Forum
- Brighton & Hove Muslim Women's Group
- Brighton Black History
- Chinese Educational Development Project
- Community Voices
- Community Works
- Euromernet
- Friends, Family, Travellers
- Hangleton & Knoll Multicultural Women's Group
- Hummingbird Project
- MOSAIC
- Network of International Women Brighton & Hove
- Oromo Community
- Racial Harassment Forum
- Radical Rhizomes
- Sussex Indian Punjabi Society
- Sussex Jewish Representative Council
- Trust for Developing Communities
- Urban Flo
- Writing Our Legacy

