



ST HELENS BOROUGH COUNCIL

RACE EQUALITY DECLARATION OF INTENT



EQUALITY
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Race Equality Declaration of Intent

St Helens Borough Council

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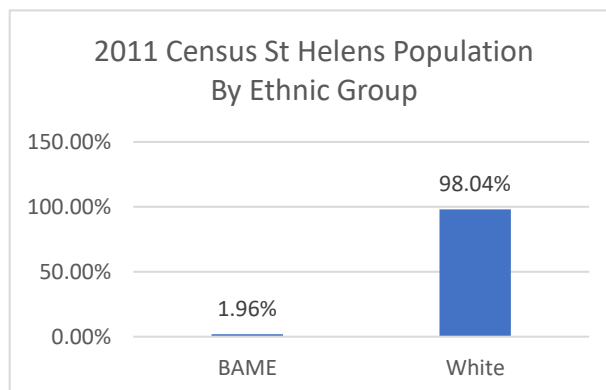
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St Helens Borough Council Race Equality Declaration of Intent

Introduction

Racism is a structural problem which exists in nearly all major institutions and organisations. St. Helens Borough Council recognises institutional and systemic racism as a legitimate issue, one that has no quick fix, but can no longer go unaddressed.

Although the number of residents from Black, Asian, and minority ethnic communities is low, St Helens Borough is home to people from many diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. The Council recognises that Black, Asian, and minority ethnic communities are not homogenous. Different communities and individuals within communities have differing needs. Needs should not be defined by stereotyping or presumptions. However, the Council understands and acknowledged that systemic and institutional racism is an issue affecting the outcomes for all Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) people.



St Helens Borough Council accepts that it has an important role to play in tackling race injustice and inequality and driving forward positive change.

- As a major employer, we must look internally at our own organisation, and ensure that it is representative of the population we serve, welcoming, safe and inclusive, and that BAME staff have equality of opportunity to develop and succeed.
- As a lead organisation within the community, we have a responsibility to ensure our services are accessible to all of our residents.
- Finally, as a partner in the Liverpool City Region Race Equality Programme, we must use our commitment to race equality to help identify best practice for us, and other organisations and stakeholders, to follow.

Put simply, we must do the right thing for our BAME employees and residents and influence the partners we work with to do the same.

Why now?

On the 25th May 2020, news spread of the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, USA, during the height of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The Pandemic -and its disproportionate impact on disadvantaged groups and ethnic minorities - and the Black Lives Matters Movement give social and racial justice a new level of urgency. There is strong expression of the need for change.

This context, and the global focus on racial injustice and inequalities mean we must act now to tackle race equality and work together to create an anti-racist culture through the elimination of bias, discrimination and injustice across systems and institutions.

St Helens Borough Council is committed to emerge from the current crisis and achieve the St Helens Borough Strategy vision of *Working together for a better borough, with people at the heart of everything we do by improving people's lives together and creating distinct, attractive, healthy, safe, inclusive, and accessible places in which to live, work, visit and invest.*

Our Race Equality Declaration Of Intent supports embodies the Borough Strategy priority to "Be A Responsible Council". It will enable us to invest in developing the strengths and skills of our workforce and members to enable them to communicate, listen, engage, and work in partnership well with our residents, communities, local organisations, and partners recognising the strengths and skills in our community. This will increase the Council's ability to meet our diverse community's needs by delivering accessible and responsive services.

St Helens Borough Council as an employer

St Helens Borough Council is a major employer in Merseyside, with over 2,900 employees. The council is proud to have a workforce where the percentage of BAME staff reflects that of the borough's BAME community; with 2% BAME staff in the Council's workforce and 2.4% BAME representation at a director and senior management level.

Equality Act 2010, Specific Duty 2011 requires public bodies to set measurable equality objectives and to publish information about their performance on equality, so that the public can hold them to account. St Helens Borough Council has set the following measurable race equality employment objective. "Set targets for BAME staff representation informed by 2021 Census and best employment and labour market data and publish information against those targets annually."

Proportional representation in the workforce is only one indicator of race equality in employment. An equally important indicator is the 'lived experience' of BAME staff and BAME residents, and we know that tackling the impact of systemic and institutional racism is the key issue to achieve. St Helens Borough Council is committed to creating a more welcoming, safe, and inclusive work environment, based on the value of mutual respect, trust, and dignity, which is critical to ensure the organisational capability meets the needs of our increasingly diverse community.

The council has set the following ambitions and actions in order to (i) achieve its 'measurable race equality in employment objective', and (ii) to foster an accessible, safe, and inclusive work environment where the health and well-being of our workforce is well supported, and our shared values and behaviours promote a positive work culture.

Ambition

The Council will:

- Support an inclusive and safe workplace environment for BAME Staff.
- Provide a mandatory race equality training programme for all staff.
- Evidence an effective response to racial discrimination and/or racial harassment.
- Improve BAME staff representation across the organisation.
- Demonstrate 'due regard' to race equality in employment policy and decisions.

Actions

The Council will:

- Work with BAME Staff Engagement Group to understand how the organisation can improve.
- Ensure all staff attend race equality training, and the programme continues to capture all future new starters to the organisation.
- Ensure discrimination and harassment cases are investigated and outcomes reached within reasonable timescales.
- Increase BAME staff representation taking into consideration local and regional demographics.
- Monitor impact assessment of policy and decisions.

Achievements

By 2025 there will be:

- Shared values and behaviours promoting a positive work culture. (this is one of the St Helens Borough Strategy Measures of Success under 'Be a responsible council' and supports the Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Duty to eliminate prohibited conduct)
- Evidence that BAME staff feel included, supported, and diversity is celebrated. (Qualitative outcome, supporting the Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Duty to eliminate prohibited conduct, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations)
- An Annual Equality Monitoring Report including the outcomes of staff training, discrimination and harassment monitoring, and impact assessment of policies and decisions. (supporting the Equality Act 2010 specific duty to report annually)
- A council workforce with representative ethnic diversity. (Quantitative outcome linked directly to the measurable race equality employment objective, and supporting the Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Duty to advance equality of opportunity, and Specific Duty to set measurable objectives)

St Helens Borough Council as a lead organisation within the community

The Borough Strategy is the key document that sets out the council vision St Helens Borough, the themes that identify our place, the priorities we will focus on and the outcomes we will strive to achieve. It is the vehicle through which the Council will achieve its Race Equality Declaration of Intent as a lead organisation within the community.

The vision - of working together for a better borough, with people at the heart of everything the Council does: improving people's lives together and creating distinct, attractive, healthy, safe, inclusive, and accessible places in which to live, work, visit and invest - was developed by listening and engaging with the community.

We see it as the starting point for resetting the council's relationship with residents, neighbourhoods, businesses, and partners. We want to ensure that our services and plans are inclusive and accessible, and delivered in a manner which is respectful of diversity, by staff that are aware of the systemic and institutional barriers that have prevented race equality.

Ambitions

The Council seeks to

- Promote good race relations and raise public awareness through the council's commitment to race equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- Demonstrate "due regard" to race equality implications in all policies and decisions.
- Improve how we communicate, engage and co-design with BAME residents, organisations, and businesses.
- Develop more responsive, accessible, safe, and inclusive services that meet the needs of our increasingly diverse community.

Actions

The Council will:

- Develop a coordinated communication strategy in relation to the council's commitment to race equality, diversity, and inclusion – which maximise the opportunity to improve awareness of good race relations, and acknowledge, value, and celebrate cohesion and diversity.
- Review and improve the Community Impact Assessment process and ensure all necessary staff are trained to complete assessments effectively.
- Review and improve the Council's Equality Monitoring processes to ensure appropriate collection, storage and use equality profile data to provide meaningful information to demonstrate equality of opportunity in service access, quality, and outcome.
- Support inclusive participation in engagement strategies for residents, community organisations, and businesses, representing people who share protected characteristics.

Achievements

By 2025 there will be:

- An effective coordinated race relations communication strategy. (Supporting the Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Duty to foster good relations between people who share different protected characteristics)
- Rigorous and substantial community impact assessments informing all policies and decisions in a timely manner, prior to sign off. (Quantitative outcome supporting the Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Duty of "due regard")
- Effective and consistently applied equality and diversity monitoring process for all services. (Supporting the Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Duty to advance equality of opportunity)
- Levels of customer satisfaction for all ethnicities is high. (Qualitative outcome, supporting the Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Duty to eliminate prohibited conduct - this contributes to one of the St Helens Borough Strategy Measures of Success for us as a responsible council)

St Helens Borough Council as a partner in the Liverpool City Region Race Equality Programme

Institutional racism is bigger than any individual organisation. St Helens Borough Council is working with the Combined Authority and the other Liverpool City Region (LCR) Councils to develop and deliver a Race Equality Programme that seeks to meet the shared vision of “tackling systemic injustice and inequality and driving forward positive change for our BAME employees and residents - influencing the partners we work with to do the same”.

Ambition

St Helens Borough Council and its City Region partners seeks to:

- Listen to and amplify the voice of our BAME community.
- Increase the number of organisations across the City Region prioritising race equality.
- Celebrate a diverse and inclusive community.

Actions

St Helens Borough Council will support LCR Race Equality Programme projects that:

- Engage BAME communities in honest conversations about racism and barriers in the City Region.
- Engage with young BAME residents and empower them to enact change in the City Region.
- Facilitate conversations between the BAME community and organisations across the City Region.
- Work closely with BAME communities to co-design solutions.
- Support local and national campaigns for racial justice.
- Educate and support the business community to tackle racism.
- Facilitate increased BAME representation in senior leadership and board level positions across the City Region.
- Share best practice and promote organisational models that tackle race equality.
- Change the narrative in our region for BAME residents, encourage positive narratives, challenge negative media, images, and communications.

Achievements

By 2025 there will be:

- Increased engagement between LCR organisations and the BAME community. (Quantitative outcome, supporting the Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Duty to advance equality of opportunity)
- An increase in the number of organisations taking positive action to address race equality. (Quantitative outcome, supporting the Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Duty to advance equality of opportunity)
- An improvement in the recognition and understanding the day to day experience of racism that makes life for BAME residents different from that of white people. (Supporting the Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Duty to foster good relations between people who share different protected characteristics, and to eliminate prohibited conduct)



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