

Bristol Commission on Race Equality response to Bristol City Council “Advancing Equality and Inclusion” report

In the context of the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on BAME people and the Black Lives Matter protests, issues of race equity are at the forefront of public discourse. We therefore welcome the review of Bristol City Council which will act as a point of reference on which to build and respond to the voices of the marginalised, and we look forward to seeing its recommendations implemented. In their newly published report, *Advancing Equality and Inclusion at Bristol City Council*, it was confirmed that the council’s high aspirations around equality, diversity and inclusion have not been adequately reflected in practice.

The council has acknowledged that institutional racism is a legitimate issue which affects outcomes for Black, Asian and minority ethnic colleagues. This manifests in many ways, including a mean ethnicity pay gap of 12.06% and a median pay gap of 17.56% due to the lack of senior officer roles occupied by these colleagues, and a higher likelihood of having a formal grievance lodged against them compared to White colleagues. The issue of staff who are Black, Asian or from other minority ethnic groups being statistically more likely to be subject to formal grievance and disciplinary processes is a common challenge across Bristol’s public sector organisations, highlighted by the Bristol Race Equality Strategic Leaders Group in their Race Equality H.R. Data Product 2019.

The report has found that positive action needs to be taken in our high-level strategies and is particularly needed within recruitment and selection practice. It also finds that management, and leadership knowledge and practice must continue to be strengthened, an issue the council recognises and has been working to address; with new measures planned to improve and accelerate results. More also needs to be done to improve organisational culture and fill gaps in data availability and quality.

The proposals aim to increase representation of Black, Asian and other under-represented groups in its workforce; strengthen its approach to performance management; equip managers to better respond to difference and diversity; build trust with colleagues and ensure visible, well-informed senior leadership of equality and inclusion within the council, starting at the top with the Corporate Leadership Board and continuing through all spans of leadership and management.

To truly be a fair city, we need measurement of actions that transform the root causes of unsustainable development, such as inequalities, distributive injustice, and unequal power relations. There are difficult truths to address but the recovery period provides us with an opportunity to create meaningful change.

As we address the short-term issues and make our organisations equitable, we call to other public sector organisations, business, voluntary and community sector and the wider city to undertake a similar exercise in reviewing their organisations in terms

of **ethnicity pay gaps** and **BAME experiences**. We look forward to working with the city's organisations to undertake the exercise and achieve race equity.



Professor Olivette Otele

Chair of Commission on Race Equality (CoRE) Bristol

C/O Black South West Network

The Commission on Race Equality (CORE) has been set up by Bristol Mayor Marvin Rees to look at race and ethnicity discrimination in Bristol. Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities in the city experience significant inequalities in education, employment health, housing, and criminal justice. <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/policies-plans-strategies/commission-for-race-equality-core>

Black South West Network (BSWN)'s over-arching strategic intent is to build dynamic, independent, and strong BAME communities, businesses and organisations that are empowered to flourish while challenging systemic barriers and forging a true path for themselves. We believe that only through this will we significantly address racial inequality. <https://www.blacksouthwestnetwork.org>