Public sector
Self-assessment tool

The journey to race equality

Delivering improved services to local communities
Introducing the tool

Our report, *The Journey to Race Equality*, sets out a framework for improving public services for black and minority ethnic communities. It helps public sector organisations to assess their current performance in race equality and to identify and challenge the barriers preventing progress. We have developed this self-assessment tool to help you to understand where your organisation is and what you need to do to improve.

The tool explores the five stages of the journey to race equality. It gives examples of what you might expect to see at each stage, identifies the barriers and assumptions that may be preventing progress and highlights the breakthroughs that are most likely to help your organisation move forward.

**Exhibit 1**

**The stages of the journey to race equality**

Organisations at the earlier stages must quickly improve by adopting the characteristics of those at the later stages.

*Source: Audit Commission analysis*
The purpose of the tool is to help you to improve race equality outcomes. It is a practical tool, designed to be used at any level of the organisation or across a partnership. It is not a ‘tick box’ assessment.

We have suggested key breakthroughs to focus on at each stage of the journey, reflecting the areas of change that are most important. Different parts of your organisation are likely to be at different stages of the journey. For example, overall, you might be at intending but some departments could be more advanced and be considered as developing.

### Using the tool

The tool can be used flexibly and adapted to suit your particular needs. You might want to add details to the descriptions of each stage to make them ‘live’ in your organisation. You might decide to concentrate on improving one or two problem areas to help you prioritise what action to take.

You will need to think through how best to use the tool in your organisation. A good starting point might be to use it with your race equality steering group, or equivalent. We recommend that the management team and key members and non-executive directors are fully involved. This will help to ensure that they are signed up to implementing the action plan.

You will get maximum benefit from the tool if you use it in an environment where everyone feels comfortable about being open and honest. It can be helpful to have a workshop session with a facilitator for this. A possible workshop format could be:

1. **Explain the tool and make sure that everyone understands its purpose.**
2. **Start by thinking about the progress that your organisation has made in improving local outcomes using the framework on page 4.**
3. **As individuals, assess what stage your organisation is at, noting real behaviours and outcome improvements to support your assessment.**
4. **In discussion, you may be able to reach a consensus about what stage your organisation is at. Equally, there may be some important and useful differences of perspective. Exploring participants’ examples and evidence openly will enhance both the quality of discussion and your eventual assessment.**
5. **Agree what stage you would like your organisation to get to and the key actions needed to get there. Think about the barriers and assumptions that you need to challenge and about how you can build on your existing strengths. Note the actions, who will be responsible for making them happen and when they should be done by.**
6. **Agree when to re-assess your organisation.**

It is not necessary to have read the report *Journey to Race Equality* before using the tool, although if some participants have done so it may add depth to your self-assessment. Referring to it will also help with your action planning, for example, by seeing what other organisations have done. Additional sources of advice and guidance are listed on pages 16 and 17.
Assessing progress on outcomes
Before assessing where you are on the journey to race equality, you should check how clear you are about the outcomes that you are aiming to improve. Ask yourselves the following key questions:

*Do we know where the main areas of inequality for our organisation and local community are?*

*Are we confident that local black and minority ethnic communities and our staff would identify the same areas?*

*Have we defined what race equality means for our organisation in terms of tangible outcomes?*

*Are we able to provide robust evidence to demonstrate how outcomes are improving?*

If the answer to any of these is ‘no’, then it would be unrealistic to assess your organisation as beyond the ‘starting’ stage overall. As you work through the tool, your action planning should prioritise activities that will create a picture of local inequalities and a vision for how these will improve over time. You can use the framework opposite to keep a record of the outcomes you have identified and how you will know they have changed.

A good starting point is to begin a dialogue with your staff and black and minority ethnic communities – what are biggest issues for them? If you are struggling to identify people to talk to, be imaginative in reaching the community (for example, visiting local businesses and any existing groups) and remember that staff at all levels (both those from black and minority ethnic groups and white British staff) will have relevant experiences and ideas to contribute.

Once you have started to identify and improve outcomes, you can use the framework to map them to the key outcome areas and use any gaps to help you to focus further activity.

Wherever you are on the journey, it is vital to focus on improving outcomes. Objectives do not have to be set in stone and can be revised as you gather more information. It is usually wise not to try changing everything at once; taking action on one or two issues will get the ball rolling and have a knock-on effect.
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Resisting

The journey to race equality | Self-assessment tool

Culture & rationale
There is little, if any, discussion and debate about race equality. It is not clear what constitutes unacceptable staff behaviour; overtly racist language is rarely challenged and racist incidents are not reported. Black and minority ethnic staff feel isolated and wary of raising issues.

Leadership
Senior managers and non-executive directors/members do not regard race equality as relevant to the organisation or the local community. Any discussions focus on barriers and reasons not to do things, such as a small black and minority ethnic population or fear of a ‘white backlash’.

Managers and leaders do not recognise or support the work of any staff who are trying to address race equality issues at operational level.

Managing performance
The race equality scheme is non-existent or has very limited ambitions with no clear action plan – progress is not monitored and it is not obvious who is accountable for delivery. Race equality is invisible in all other plans and performance management systems.

Vision, priorities & outcomes
There is no recognition that the organisation should be addressing race equality. It is assumed that everyone is treated fairly and there is no discrimination, but evidence to confirm or challenge this is not sought. Any ethnic monitoring data being collected is not being analysed.

A small number of staff are aware of race equality issues and may be attempting to address them, but with no support or recognition.

Working with partners
The organisation does not see the need to engage in partnership working on race equality. Strategic-level relationships with other public sector agencies are generally weak and ineffective. Organisations who are addressing race equality have failed to influence other partners.

Community engagement
The organisation lacks basic information on the local black and minority ethnic communities – how many people, which groups they come from or where they live.

There is an assumption that black and minority ethnic people are adequately represented through existing consultation and engagement processes.

Capacity
No specific resource is allocated to race equality work beyond that needed to comply with legislation. Managers and leaders do not believe there are any skill and knowledge gaps, but have no evidence to support this.
## Barriers to watch out for

- The assumption that race equality has little significance to the organisation’s staff or to the community it serves.
- Fears that it will be difficult and uncomfortable to talk to staff about race equality – those from black and minority ethnic communities might not want to be singled out and there might be a ‘backlash’ from others.

## Breakthrough points

- **Culture & rationale**: Think about how and why race equality is relevant to the organisation. Think about the ways in which addressing race equality issues will improve services overall. Use this ‘rationale’ to start challenging assumptions that race equality is unimportant.
- **Leadership**: Talk to staff, members and non-executive directors – what issues are they aware of and how would they tackle them? Provide a safe environment for black and minority ethnic groups to discuss issues.

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### Strengths to build on:

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### Areas to develop:

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Intending

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Culture & rationale
Race equality is seen by most as a problematic and separate issue directly competing for resources. This is not recognised as a problem.

Leadership
Some leaders understand the relevance of race equality, but leadership rarely discuss race equality and some are resistant. Leaders have not developed a rationale for race equality work and give inconsistent messages.

Managing performance
There is a general commitment and desire to ‘mainstream’ race equality, but a lack of clarity on what this means in practice.

One or two departments have made more progress in integrating race equality, but little is done to share good practice or to influence other parts of the organisation to move forwards.

Vision, priorities & outcomes
Race equality work is based around processes and polices. It is unclear whether outcomes for black and minority ethnic communities and staff have changed. Objectives are based on national performance indicators, rather than local knowledge.

Leadership
Some leaders understand the relevance of race equality, but leadership rarely discuss race equality and some are resistant. Leaders have not developed a rationale for race equality work and give inconsistent messages.

One or two key individuals are leading work at corporate level. Very few departments have someone actively leading race equality work.

Information collection and analysis is unfocused, making it difficult to identify local issues or realistically assess progress. This may lead to over-confidence.

Basic values and standards of behaviour are being developed, but the process for reporting and tackling inappropriate behaviour is unclear.

Community engagement
The organisation is very reliant on a few key relationships (for example, the local Race Equality Council) and a limited number of ‘expert’ staff.

Efforts to engage black and minority ethnic communities have been focused on one-off events that have had limited follow up. Those who attended have not received any feedback.

Specific partnership working on race equality is restricted to one or two organisations. Meetings lack focus as no clear race equality objectives for the locality have been defined.

The action plan is expected to be implemented from within existing budgets and roles, but it is unclear how much resource is needed or whether staff have the necessary time and skills.

Capacity
The action plan is expected to be implemented from within existing budgets and roles, but it is unclear how much resource is needed or whether staff have the necessary time and skills.

There is insufficient capacity to drive, co-ordinate and monitor race equality work across the organisation.

There is no significant investment in training for staff. Any training is poorly delivered and is not followed up or evaluated.

Staff are uncomfortable with collecting ethnic monitoring data and do not understand why it is necessary.

Working with partners
Working with partners to reduce local inequalities is seen as complex and difficult – a rationale for working jointly to change local outcomes is not in place.

Specific partnership working on race equality is restricted to one or two organisations. Meetings lack focus as no clear race equality objectives for the locality have been defined.

Black and minority ethnic communities are under-represented in existing consultation and engagement processes.

Staff are uncomfortable with collecting ethnic monitoring data and do not understand why it is necessary.
Barriers to watch out for

- Race equality being regarded as a low priority that does not merit significant resources. The need to meet national targets is used as a rationale for avoiding activity.
- Discomfort in engaging black and minority ethnic communities based on fears about alienating those who are ‘missed’, having to deal with racist remarks and fear of a ‘white backlash’.

Breakthrough points

- **Vision, priorities & outcomes**: Create an early vision that is based on existing information, even if it’s not perfect. Start talking with staff, members and non-executive directors and the local community about what needs to change.
- **Leadership**: Demonstrate the senior management, member and non-executive director commitment to staff and local communities (and other, less committed leaders) by communicating the message that delivering race equality benefits everyone.

Strengths to build on:

Areas to develop:

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Starting

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Culture & rationale
A broad rationale based on being ‘fair and decent’ is articulated throughout the organisation, but many staff are still unclear about how race equality is relevant to their work.

Leadership
One or two senior figures are very committed to race equality and reducing discrimination. This is visibly demonstrated (for example, by attending events or at staff briefings).

Vision, priorities & outcomes
An understanding of the local issues is developing, but the organisation’s specific objectives are focused on the more tangible areas of employment and access to services.

Managing performance
The action plan is clearer about the accountability of different parts of the organisation, but the extent to which it is implemented varies.

Working with partners
Strategic partnerships around race equality are developing, but one organisation or sector tends to set the agenda and do most of the work.

Community engagement
Local black and minority ethnic people are consulted on policies, but they have little involvement in developing them and receive limited feedback.

Working with partners
Racial equality is starting to be incorporated into mainstream service reviews and policies, but the effectiveness of this approach is not fully monitored or challenged.

Leadership
A steering group, or equivalent, has been set up to oversee progress, but members may not have sufficient seniority or capacity to effect change.

There is a low level of scrutiny from non-executive directors and members – it is often focused on receiving irregular updates.

There is an organisation-wide policy for reporting and tackling inappropriate behaviour, but this is inconsistently implemented and communicated to staff.

There is a belief that more information is needed before the issues can be prioritised and addressed.

Lots of data is being collected, but it is not being fully analysed to reveal inequalities.

Some staff are unclear about why they are collecting information and how it is used.

Working with partners
Increasing numbers of ‘champions’ are driving race equality work. The extent of their influence and seniority varies, meaning that progress varies across the organisation.

There are some examples of effective operational partnerships specific issues (for example, racial harassment).

Funding is largely dependent upon external sources, with limited internal resources being allocated. No major decisions on shifting resources to invest in race equality have been made.

Training is likely to be voluntary. It is not very participative and staff report that it has little relevance to their everyday job. Identification of training needs is left to individual managers, but they are not clear what the organisation expects.

There is an organisation-wide policy for reporting and tackling inappropriate behaviour, but their role is unclear and their potential value to the organisation is not fully recognised.

There is a belief that more information is needed before the issues can be prioritised and addressed.

Lots of data is being collected, but it is not being fully analysed to reveal inequalities.

Some staff are unclear about why they are collecting information and how it is used.
Barriers to watch out for

- Confusion about what mainstreaming means, leading to a reluctance to allocate specific resources to race equality work, limiting capacity and progress.
- Difficulty engaging beyond community ‘leaders’ and reaching all black and minority ethnic communities.

Breakthrough points

- **Vision, priorities & outcomes**: Develop a more detailed vision that is based on changing specific outcomes and set local targets for these.
- **Leadership**: Recognise and support potential ‘champions’ within the organisation to drive the work and share their expertise (among members and non-executive directors, as well as staff).
- **Community engagement**: Develop the trust and confidence of community groups and contribute to building their capacity.

Strengths to build on:

Areas to develop:

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Developing: The journey to race equality | Self-assessment tool

**Culture & rationale**
Staff at all levels understand how race equality is part of delivering good services to the community. Managers, ‘champions’ and leaders actively ‘myth bust’ to challenge assumptions.

Some managers discuss race equality with their team and are looking at their responsibilities in achieving the objectives, but this is not systematised.

There is increasing legitimacy across the organisation for raising and discussing the issues and staff feel more comfortable challenging inappropriate behaviours.

**Leadership**
Senior leaders demonstrate their commitment and send consistent messages about the importance of race equality. It still may not be clear how much of a priority race equality is.

A senior leader is responsible for performance in race equality. They regularly review and challenge progress and report to members and non-executive directors.

Most middle managers are signed up, but there are pockets of resistance that still need to be challenged.

**Managing performance**
Responsibility and accountability at service level is clear.

Targets have been set, but need to be more clearly aligned to outcomes. It is not always clear what progress has been made.

The steering group has representation from across the organisation and has an effective route to senior management, members and non-executive directors.

External challenge to progress is pro-actively sought and seen as valuable.

**Vision, priorities & outcomes**
The organisation has set a vision with specific outcomes identified.

Information collection and analysis is centrally co-ordinated, building a picture of local inequalities.

Local targets aligned to outcomes have been set. Ethnic monitoring is being integrated into information collection for existing targets.

**Working with partners**
Partnerships are effectively addressing cross-cutting race equality issues. Partnership working is built on existing groups.

The organisation actively contributes to developing the thinking and approach of the partnership, without being overly directive.

External advice and support is sought and valued.

**Community engagement**
Creative methods of engagement are being developed to fully involve black and minority ethnic communities in changing the way that services are delivered.

The potential of voluntary or community groups to provide services is recognised and the capacity of the sector is being built.

There is regular feedback to those who have been consulted – being clear about what a realistic response to their expectations is and what has changed.

**Capacity**
The resource implications of the action plan have been identified and some funding allocated. External funding is also used to help to deliver the plan.

Skill and knowledge gaps have been identified and training adjusted in response, but it is not being delivered to everyone and it is not always followed up by managers. Equalities issues are being integrated into other training, particularly management development.
Barriers to watch out for

- Local partnerships not working effectively enough to significantly reduce inequalities, which all partners have an influence over.
- Insufficient capacity to achieve race equality objectives – perhaps because it is seen to compete with other priorities, or the benefit of investing is not fully understood throughout the organisation (for example, the relationship between achieving race equality objectives and meeting other targets).

Breakthrough points

- **Capacity**: Ensure that there is sufficient capacity to achieve race equality objectives by:
  - identifying the skills and knowledge needed by staff and non-executive directors and members; and
  - accurately costing race equality work, drawing out benefits of investing in it.
- **Leadership**: Give race equality sufficient priority and allocate the necessary resources.
- **Working with partners**: Jointly develop a strategic vision for the whole community. Clarify the roles and responsibilities of each partner in achieving it.

Strengths to build on:

Areas to develop:

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Achieving The journey to race equality | Self-assessment tool

Culture & rationale
The importance and relevance of race equality is openly and regularly articulated and discussed by staff. They demonstrate clear commitment to delivering fair services to all sections of the community and understand how their role impacts upon this.

Race equality is integrated into targets, competencies and behaviours. Managers effectively tackle poor performance, identify skill gaps and find solutions.

Leadership
Senior managers are informed about progress and key barriers. They actively broker solutions and tackle obstacles.

Non-executive directors and members are engaged in scrutinising and challenging progress. They take a key role in feeding in community experiences and views.

Accountability of leaders at all levels is clear – who they report to, how often and why. Champions are visible and credible throughout the organisation.

Managing performance
Race equality targets are incorporated into all budgets and business plans. They are integrated into work plans down to individual level.

Mainstream budget planning and decision-making processes consider potential impacts on race equality. There is planning around the longer-term investment required.

Race equality is mainstreamed but not invisible, with corporate reporting and analysis of progress. Additional projects or working groups are time limited with a specific purpose.

Vision, priorities & outcomes
Race equality work is prioritised, ensuring that it makes the greatest possible impact on the most important local outcomes.

It is integrated into other objectives and priorities.

Information is being used to check for inequality throughout the organisation. Where headline data reveals a problem, the issue is further investigated to identify underlying causes and an appropriate response.

Working with partners
All partners were involved in developing a vision for race equality in the locality. Roles and responsibilities for achieving objectives are clear.

Strong and effective multi-agency working is achieving outcome change. Partners work together to deliver services, train staff and engage black and minority ethnic communities.

Leaders are acting to influence ‘resistant’ local partners and the local media – communicating and ‘selling’ the vision and rationale outside the organisation.

Capacity
Internal resources are being made available. Existing resources are re-directed based on monitoring and evaluation of current work.

Training and information are delivered and accessed in a variety of ways. Creative, participative methods are used (including the involvement of community groups) to help staff to identify what they might need to change and why.

Managers are clear about what competencies are required, can identify staff training needs and support staff to apply their learning.

Community engagement
Engagement with ‘grass roots’ black and minority ethnic communities is effective.

The organisation is aware of any demographic changes (for example, asylum seekers arriving in the area) and responds quickly to start engaging them.

There is awareness of where black and minority ethnic voluntary and community groups are providing services. They are supported to do so, in line with the vision and priority outcomes.
Barriers to watch out for

- There is no need to explicitly address race equality or review progress because it is fully mainstreamed.

Breakthrough points

- **Vision, priorities & outcomes**: Use the reviewing and reporting process to ensure that priorities and objectives continue to reflect local issues.

- **Managing performance**: Ensure that race equality work is not ‘buried’ by regularly reviewing progress on changing outcomes.

- **Leadership**: Act as a ‘thought leader’ for the local area and beyond, sharing the organisation’s knowledge and experience to influence other public sector organisations, the media and wider community.

Strengths to build on:


Areas to develop:


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Further advice and guidance

This is not an exhaustive list, but provides some good starting points.

Audit Commission reports (available at www.audit-commission.gov.uk)
- The Journey to Race Equality: Delivering Improved Services to Local Communities (www.audit-commission.gov.uk/raceequality)
- Equality and Diversity: Learning from Audit, Inspection and Research
- Directions in Diversity: Current Opinion and Good Practice (summarises current opinion on diversity)
- Connecting with Users and Citizens
- Change Here! Managing to Improve Local Services
- Performance Breakthroughs: Improving Performance in Public Sector Organisations (approaches to managing performance)

General
- Commission for Racial Equality (www.cre.gov.uk)
- Home Office: community and race (www.homeoffice.gov.uk/comrace)
- National Statistics – race and ethnicity data for your area (www.statistics.gov.uk)
- RaceActionNet – network bringing together expertise and experience in tackling racial harassment and racist attacks – membership required for full access (www.raceactionnet.co.uk)
- BMESpark – network bringing together expertise and experience in responding to the needs and concerns of black and minority ethnic communities – membership required for full access (www.bmespark.org.uk)
Health

Department of Health race equality page
(www.doh.gov.uk/race_equality)

Health for Asylum Seekers and Refugees Portal – resources for healthcare staff working with refugees and asylum seekers
(www.harpweb.org.uk)

Local government

Local Government Association
(www.lga.gov.uk)

Welsh Local Government Association
(www.wlga.gov.uk)

Improvement and Development Agency
(www.idea.gov.uk)

Employers Organisation – DIALOG (Diversity in Action in Local Government)
(www.lg-employers.gov.uk/diversity)

Library of local performance indicators
(www.audit-commission.gov.uk/performance)

Police

Association of Police Authorities
(www.apa.police.uk)

Association of Chief Police Officers
(www.acpo.police.uk)

Voluntary sector

Ourpartnership.org.uk – focuses on partnership working between voluntary groups and public sector organisations
(www.ourpartnership.org.uk)

Refugee Council – advice and guidance for refugees and asylum seekers and those working with them
(www.refugeecouncil.org.uk)

Runnymede Trust – policy research and advice on how best to promote the value of diversity
(www.runnymedetrust.org)
To order further copies of this self-assessment tool (priced £10 for a pack of five), or the accompanying national report (priced £15), please contact:
Audit Commission Publications,
PO Box 99, Wetherby,
LS23 7JA
Tel: 0800 502030.

In addition you can order a four-page briefing and a one-page summary, both of which are free.

These are also available on our website at:
www.audit-commission.gov.uk