Top 20 Must Do’s for successful Race Equality Schemes and the Top Race Equality Achievers

This RaceActionNet briefing sets out the context for the duties to publish and review race equality schemes; the top 20 things that are needed in a scheme and to support the promotion of race equality; and the top 15 local authorities that have scored 95 per cent or more in data returns on promoting race equality, and whose race equality schemes are available for comparison on the RaceActionNet website at www.raceactionnet.org.uk.

Context

Eliminating unlawful racial discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity and good relations between people of different racial groups is a General Duty imposed by statute on public bodies including local authorities. ¹

Publishing a race equality scheme is one of the Specific Duties imposed by statute on public bodies including local authorities. ²

Reviewing the assessment made of local authorities’ functions and policies (or proposed policies) that are relevant to performing the General Duty, is a statutory duty to be done within three years from 31 May 2002 and within each further period of three years. ³

The Government has announced its intention to introduce a Single Equality Bill that would bring together all previous equality law and in particular would require public bodies to (a) consider the diverse needs and requirements of their workforce and the communities they serve when developing employment policies and when planning services; (b) make public bodies more transparent so inequality cannot be hidden; and (c) improve enforcement. ⁴

The current race relations duties remain applicable and in force until the proposed new legislation reaches the statute book.

Top 20 Questions about Race Equality Schemes and what is needed to support them

1. Does the Race Equality Scheme (RES) list the functions and policies that are relevant to the General Duty?
2. Does the RES consist of a **strategy**, which addresses the General Duty and each of the Specific Duties?

3. Does the RES contain clear **priorities**, **targets** and **outcomes** in order to fulfil the General and Specific Duties?

4. Does the RES set out arrangements for (a) assessing and consulting on and publishing the results of the likely impact of its proposed policies on the General Duty to promote race equality, (b) monitoring its policies for any adverse impact on the promoting race equality and publishing the results?

5. Is the RES supported by a **timetabled, three-year action plan**?

6. Is the RES clearly integrated in all **corporate and service-level plans and strategies**?

7. Is the RES clearly integrated in **procurement and partnership strategies and policies and best value reviews**?

8. Is the RES actively **communicated to the public and to staff**?

9. Is the RES **reviewed regularly** by the local authority?

10. Is the RES **owned by council members and senior officers who share responsibility for ensuring outcomes** are met and are involved in reviews of the Scheme.

11. Is the RES supported by **representation in the workforce** at all levels of the range of ethnic groups in the local area and the relevant labour markets?

12. Is the RES supported by **improving staff perceptions** of equal opportunities for all ethnic groups and **reducing differences**?

13. Is the RES supported by **annually published staff monitoring data** that shows the numbers of staff from each ethnic group who (a)receive training, (b)benefit or suffer detriment as a result of performance assessment procedures, (c) are involved in grievance procedures, (d) are the subject of disciplinary procedures, or (e) cease employment.

14. Is the RES supported by widening the **ethnic profile of service users** having regard to need and relative to the local population?

15. Is the RES supported by **improvement in satisfaction rates** among service users of all ethnic groups and **reductions in any differences**?

16. Is the RES supported by **reductions in the number of complaints** from service users of all ethnic groups and **reductions in any differences**?
17. Is the RES supported by the provision of services that **meet the needs of all ethnic groups** in the communities that the authority serves?

18. Is the RES supported by **improvements in service outcomes** for all ethnic groups and **reductions in differences**?

19. Is the RES supported by **increasing confidence in reporting racist incidents**?

20. Is the RES supported by **increasing satisfaction in the way racist incidents that resulted in action are handled**?

**Top 15 local authorities**

All the following local authorities listed alphabetically scored 95 per cent or more in data returns on promoting race equality, one of the measures used by the Audit Commission to measure ‘corporate health’ that took into account most of the above issues.  

You can compare your own Race Equality Scheme with theirs on the RaceActionNet website:

- Gravesham
- Greater London Authority
- Haringey
- Havering
- Isle of Wight
- Lewisham
- Middlesbrough
- Northamptonshire
- Reading
- Rutland
- Shrewsbury and Atcham
- Staffordshire Moorlands
- Suffolk
- Tameside
- Tower Hamlets.

For more information and for no obligation online free inspection of the RaceActionNet website go to [www.raceactionnet.org.uk](http://www.raceactionnet.org.uk) or telephone 020 8348 8263.


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5. The Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) system is in the process of being replaced by the Local Area Agreement outcome data set.