Race Equality through Leadership in Social Care

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Contents

Race equality through leadership in social care

This booklet is entitled Race Equality through Leadership in Social Care. It has been commissioned and edited by the Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS), The Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) and the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) and has been produced by the Race Equality Unit (REU) with support from the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) for leaders in Social Care not only to acknowledge the progress that has been made but also to help all social care organisations accelerate progress to achieve equality of access and beneficial outcomes for all people in their communities.

Research has shown that organisations that are successful in this area of diversity are in that position because of effective leadership.

This booklet does not question the leader's commitment to race equality but acknowledges that the provision of culturally sensitive services and supportive employment practices can be very challenging.

This booklet will enable you to

* **Argue the case for race equality in your political, managerial and business environments**
* **Identify actions that a leader can take to promote good practice in this area of work**
* **Prepare a leadership check list to enable you to engage all managers and measure success**
* **Work in a multiplicity of environments and take the lead in this vital area of work**

It is about action; it is concise and is intended to be a basis of discussion in your management teams. It has arisen from work carried out by the partners listed above to help social care organisations respond to the requirements of the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000. It is hoped that the actions you take will make a positive contribution towards a society that actively enjoys race equality.

We are pleased to co-sign and launch this important document.

Dame Denise Platt, DBE
Chair
Commission for Social Care Inspection

Andrew Cozens
President
Association of Directors of Social Services

Jane Campbell
Chair
Social Care Institute for Excellence

Those who support race equality in principle are often unsure of the effective way to proceed. This booklet is written to assist leaders of social care organisations to focus on the actions necessary to promote race equality. Under each heading is a brief explanation followed by self-assessment checks to measure progress. The aim is to encourage action.

You will know that the issue of race in Britain today is complex. It arouses passions both constructive and destructive. It makes serious and searching demands on those who confront it. In the fields of health and social care these complexities are compounded by illness, poverty and despair. At the same time there is clear evidence that change can be achieved, which produces better outcomes for the users of services, employees, and social care organisations. This document is intended to help you take action to achieve change through:

- **Leading service delivery**
- **Articulating the moral legal and business reasons**
- **Understanding key national levers and drivers**
- **Directing a successful organisation**
- **Directing communications**
- **Directing employment practice**
- **Championing the corporate response**

"The extent to which health and social care really delivers racial equality will determine whether it is truly reformed and 'modernised'."
CRE

The materials provide you with arguments to advance the case for race equality at a corporate and strategic level, and will help you champion change in your organisation and demonstrate your commitment to race equality.

In this context the person identified as the champion of change in an organisation must have commitment and as importantly they must be able to articulate the case for race equality with a clear vision of the organisation's strategic direction. They must be able to communicate this vision effectively and be in a position to mobilise the necessary resources.

Any public service should be judged by the quality of its service delivery, and the outcomes achieved by those using the service. In matters of race equality, as with other aspects of service delivery, to change the things that matter, programmes of change must be rooted in the experiences and priorities of those who use the service.

One of the leadership roles in service delivery is the development of effective mechanisms for consulting with black and minority ethnic service users. Effectiveness in this area goes well beyond merely organising meetings. There is also the danger in any consultation exercise that the findings are skewed by the presentation of sectional interests as the 'voice of the community'.

Social care organisations should be acting in concert with other agencies to make race equality part of the mainstream. NHS Trusts, adjacent councils where the demography supports the pooling of effort, local and regional consultants where the expertise is not available in-house, community and voluntary groups all have a role to play. Consultation should take place internally as well as externally. It is important that councillors, management, staff and trades union should be explicitly included in the process.

The purpose of consultation processes is to establish baselines for the commissioning and setting of equality objectives and targets through the involvement of people who use services in the design, monitoring and review of those services. Effectiveconsultation also generates a more constructive flow of information in which all parties are better informed.

Self-Assessment Checks

- **There are shared consultations with other organisations**
- **There are partnerships with black and minority ethnic voluntary and community organisations**
- **Black and minority ethnic people using services are involved in the design and evaluation of those services**
- **There are new services being commissioned and developed in response to identified need**
- **There are systems in place to map/audit community groups and community needs**

Social care as a profession works with the impact of discrimination, and whatever the individual understanding, everyone within the profession is charged with the responsibility to deal with inequality and injustice. Race and other equalities are therefore at the core of the social care value base and constitute a moral imperative.

The legal obligation to address race equality is woven through all social care legislation, and is a firm basis for the promotion of race equality in all aspects of social care practice. Additionally, the Race Relations Amendment Act (RRAA) 2000, which strengthens and adds to the existing provisions of the Race Relations Act 1976, places a statutory duty on all public bodies to: eliminate unlawful racial discrimination; promote equal opportunities; and promote good relations between people from different racial groups.

"Race equality is a moral imperative. It also makes the best use of available pool of talent and allows everyone, regardless of colour or race, to achieve their full potential. So there are economic and social benefits too."

Jack Straw, 2001

The business case for modernisation and reform of the public services concerning race equality is extensive. It covers opening up of areas of recruitment in an intensely competitive labour market; financial savings on disciplinary, grievance andtribunal costs; tapping into a vibrant voluntary sector resource; and demonstrating that the strategy adopted results in sustained and recent progress.

Self-Assessment Checks

- **The organisation's current business plan includes race equality objectives with a set of measures and achievable outcomes identified and appropriate resources allocated**
- **A senior management ethos in which race equality is an explicit part of all quality assurance processes**
- **The effect of policies on disadvantaged groups is routinely assessed.**
- **Race Equality is a regular item on the senior management agenda**
- **Race Equality is regularly referred to in public forums, internal newsletters, and management and team briefings.**

Public services are under intense pressure from all quarters and not least the pressure to reform. There are a number of key national levers that are driving the social care agenda. These include the following:

- **Increasing choice and control for those using services**
- **Equality of access**
- **Performance assessment**
- **Evidence-based practice**
- **Increasing partnership between and with public, voluntary and private sector organisations**

While the principal driver of race equality in the public sphere is the revised Race Relations Amendment Act 2000, promoting race equality is intrinsic to the change agenda in social care and is integral to all the national levers identified above. The Act covers policy, service delivery, and employment practice.

To secure this development it is important that there should be mechanisms and actions that ensure staff and other stakeholders understand the race equality strategy and what it seeks to achieve. These mechanisms include training, supervision and staff meetings/briefings as well as wider consultation events.

The capacity for continuous improvement should be an explicit goal making clear that there is no room for complacency or premature self-congratulations.

"The written and spoken commitment of leaders is not enough. It must be demonstrated by action and consistency of message."
Journey to Race Equality,
Audit Commission

Self-Assessment Checks

- **There is a clear plan to address national objectives and key thresholds**
- **There is a clear risk assessment in relation to promoting race equality**
- **Resource allocation matches identified priorities**
- **Strategic plans are linked to an explicit evidence base.**

An organisation that is successful in promoting race equality is likely to be successful in other key performance areas because it is an indicator of committed, constructive and clear leadership.

Strong project and performance management is the key. The level of seniority of operational management in this area sends a message to the organisation and to other organisations. Much has already been done to eliminate overt racism and direct discrimination. A successful organisation moves beyond the obvious to tackle covert and indirect discrimination.

A successful organisation recognises and unlocks the potential for change in its workforce and in its community by creating opportunity and supporting involvement. It will have a strong team of appropriate seniority working to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the race equality scheme and making their findings public.

Tangible evidence of a successful organisation is to be found in improved employee satisfaction ratings across all racial groups and increased take-up of services across all racial groups. Success in promoting race equality must have tangible benefits for all concerned but particularly for those who are most likely to be discriminated against.

An organisation that is successful in promoting race equality will have a workforce that is confident in working with the diversity of modern society and able to deliver the services that meet the evolving needs of different communities.

Self-Assessment Checks

- Race equality is incorporated into all the work of the organisation
- Covert and indirect racism is identified and addressed
- There is development of a core of strong project managers who are committed and confident in dealing with issues of race equality
- Black and minority ethnic individuals and groups from both within and without the organisation are involved in all the stages of development from policy formulation to evaluation.
- There will be positive feedback from staff on their experience in the workplace.

It requires careful planning to create an organisation with a strong, stable set of management arrangements. The aim is that everyone, regardless of racial or ethnic background, national origin or religion has a stake and equal opportunity to participate.

Conflicting perceptions of current global realities combined with different communities' variable rates of achievement in the labour market make communication even more important. Black and minority ethnic communities are not a monolithic entity. There are distinct and significant variations between and within groups. However, the last 30 years has also demonstrated that problems can be resolved and positive change achieved.

Perhaps the area of greatest growth in the management of the modern organisation is information. A dynamic and flexible organisation has unclogged its arteries of communication. A better-informed workforce is better motivated and a confused and demoralised workforce is a breeding ground for negative attitudes.

Once the directors of change understand the necessity of addressing the issue of race equality they need a communications system that allows them to confront opposition, correct error, encourage compliance and quality assure progress.

"If you are doing it, it's happening. If you believe someone else is doing it, it's not happening"
Sir Herman Ousley

Self-Assessment Checks

- Senior management openly report progress and are held accountable for performance against race equality objectives
- Race equality objectives are cascaded into individual performance plans
- There is support for and consultation with black workers' groups
- There is effective participation/engagement with black and minority ethnic communities.
- All publications are monitored for race equality messages
- Consultations and their outcomes are published

Race equality is most thoroughly exposed in relation to employment. It is in this context that racism is most subtle and oblique. In the next ten years black and minority ethnic communities will account for half the growth in the working-age population. In a competitive labour market this potential source of recruitment, far from being ignored or taken for granted, needs to be nurtured and supported.

Social care organisations have a duty under the law to collect ethnic monitoring data on staff in post; applicants for jobs; promotion and training. Councils with more than 150 full-time staff are further required to analyse ethnic monitoring data and publish their findings in relation to grievances; disciplinary action; performance appraisal; training and those leaving the organisation.

Race equality raises highly contentious issues about the allocation of resources, about institutional racism, about blocking promotion, about the conduct and outcome of disciplinary hearings, about authority being undermined. Racism in the workplace is usually covert and difficult to demonstrate much less prove. It is this covert racism that is most damaging and most difficult to report and challenge.

It is all too easy given the pressures of the working environment for white managers to marginalise the experience of black and minority ethnic staff, reducing their account of racism to a question of perception. To counteract this tendency attention must be paid to the impact of employment policies and practices on the particular experience of black and minority ethnic staff.

Major programmes of change not only impact on core systems within the organisation, but also transform relations with other departments in the corporate structure. Social care has long been a domain in which issues of race equality and racial diversity have been explored. For many years race equality has been an integral part of social work and social care training. Although the outcomes of this investment are still disputed, there can be little doubt that it constitutes the most significant and enduring investment in the public sector. This places social care leaders in a better position to lead on race equality

There may occasionally be a lack of will at the corporate level to tackle issues of race equality. The proposition may be put forward that low numbers of black and minority ethnic people in an authority dictate that race equality cannot be a high priority. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 makes it clear that this cannot be used as an excuse for inaction.

Social care directors clearly have much to do to set their own house in order. Nevertheless, the years of experience in addressing race equality in recruitment and retention, in service delivery, in community consultation, in press relations and in voluntary sector partnerships qualifies them to take a corporate lead in promoting race equality. They can emphasise the public duty imposed by law, the importance of the government's social inclusion agenda, officers' responsibility for advising members about these issues in relation to their departments, and the shared consequences of performance assessment drivers. These are often the very areas in which their corporate colleagues are struggling to deliver.

Self-Assessment Checks

- Selection processes are designed to promote access for minority groups as part of a regular workforce reporting procedure which is addressed as a management issue
- All allegations of racial discrimination are reported and acted upon
- Black and minority ethnic staff are represented at all levels of the organisation
- Staff at all levels receive or have access to race equality training.
- There are reductions in allegations of racial discrimination
- The impact of human resource procedures is analysed, publicly reported on and then implemented.

Self-Assessment Checks

- Championing race equality in the corporate environment through the social inclusion initiative
- Promoting innovation and good practice by acknowledging staff that have shown commitment and initiative.
- Including race equality specifications in contracts and procurement.
- There is social care leadership in support of the Council's race equality performance objectives
- There are a number of jointly commissioned pieces of work in the area of race equality.

The promotion of race equality, the recognition that no racial or ethnic group is inherently superior or inherently inferior, is ultimately the responsibility of every member of society. What is at issue here is public sector leadership in creating context and opportunity to eliminate the institutional bias against black and minority ethnic people and communities. This bias is both a historical legacy and a current operating principle. It takes the form of *"processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people"* (Macpherson, 1999).

No council, however rural or remote, is immune from engaging with difference. The demographics, social trends, cultural attitudes, the political climate all create new challenges and new surprises. Racial difference is not defined only by skin colour. Race equality is a lever for change in every local authority not least because to engage with it constructively requires the type of mind that is able to function effectively in the wider public service reform agenda.

Social care organisations have a particular institutional advantage in that their core business is so central to the work of the social inclusion agenda. Other public sector organisations can benefit from the experience developed in service delivery, training, promoting black managers and similar areas but only if that experience is organised, developed and coherent.

A central plank of public sector reform is the shift in emphasis from the provider of services to the consumer of services. Organisations have to become much more sensitive to market trends and consumer choices. Progress in implementing race equality is a useful measure of how successful an organisation is in responding to this shift in emphasis.

Finally, organisations in the public sector are accountable. Through various processes of inspection, assessment and audit judgements are made about local authority performance across a wide range of services. Race equality standards play an increasing part in informing these judgements. Delay, obfuscation and diversionary activity indicate not only a failure to come to terms with organisational responsibilities in relation to promoting race equality; they nearly always act as indicators of even more fundamental organisational defects. Race equality is not an option. It is central to the principles of the public sector.

- **The Equality Standard for Local Government**
  www.lg-employers.gov.uk

- **Race and Equalities Measurement and Implementation Toolkit**
  Hampshire County Council Social Services
  contact: Mohammed Mossadaq
  phone: 01962 845880
  email: mohammed.mossadaq@hants.gov.uk

- **Diversity Excellence Model: The Strategy and Framework for Implementing and Measuring Diversity in your organisation**
  www.cmps.gov.uk/diversity

- **Journey to Race Equality : Delivering improved services to local communities**
  Audit Commission
  www.audit-commission.gov.uk

- **CRE publications relating to the Statutory Duty to Promote Race Equality**
  www.cre.gov.uk

- **The Race Equality Impact Assessment**
  www.cre.gov.uk/duty/reia/index.html

- The revised draft **Employment Code of Practice**
  www.cre.gov.uk

- **Towards Racial Equality : An evaluation of the public duty to promote race equality and good race relations in England and Wales** (2002)
  CRE/Schneider-Ross

- **Learning Difficulties and Ethnicity – A Framework for Action** (2004)
  Department of Health

- **Delivering Race Equality: A Framework for Action. Mental Health Services** (2003)
  Department of Health

- **Equality and Diversity in Local Government in England. A Literature Review** (2003)
  ODPM

Acknowledgements

Race Equality through Leadership in Social Care

Health and Social Care Directorate
Southampton City Council
Civic Centre
Southampton
SO14 7LYQ

Contact:

John Beer, Executive Director, Health and Social Care
email: john.beer@southampton.gov.uk