



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
AN INDEPENDENT COMMISSION
INTO RACISM AND RACIAL DISPARITIES
IN SHEFFIELD

Chaired by Professor Kevin Hylton,
Commissioned by Sheffield City Council | June 2022

FOREWORD

BY KEVIN HYLTON



In June 2020 I was invited to be the Independent Chair for the Sheffield Race Equality Commission. I was informed by the then Leader of the Council (Julie Dore) that the Commission had cross-party support and was jointly endorsed by the CEO of the city council and its partners.

At this time there was nationwide recognition of the blight of racism nationally and internationally and many organisations were keen to make statements about how much they wished to disrupt it. The systematic tokenism of statements and vacuous protestations were not lost on me at this time. In addition, I received many invitations from organisations in education, sport, and business to speak on this issue as a sop to deflect the gaze from their own lack of race equality and antiracism activity. Many of them sought an authoritative Black voice either because they did not have any in their own organisations, thus emphasising a lack of diversity, or they did not value the voices of racialised colleagues to speak on such matters. Both situations remain unacceptable. My invitation from Sheffield City Council to chair the Commission emerged out of this backdrop, which required a persuasive case that there was substance to the initiative.

As Independent Chair I appointed 24 Sheffields to represent the diversity and wealth of lived and professional experience in the city. The diversity of this group was exceptional in terms of gender and ethnicity. Though I am familiar with Sheffield, the Commissioners shared with me their experiences of growing up, working, living, leaving, and returning to the city. Race and ethnicity were elemental in their experiences and their observations of city dynamics. The past melded with the present. City leaders were disconnected from the community, community organisations felt undervalued and fragmented, and parents were apprehensive for their young people. These perspectives were valuable in the planning and implementing of evidence hearings. Yet this type of diversity in leadership and cultural competence was lacking among many city stakeholders attending the weeks of hearings from December 2020 to July 2021.

The COVID Pandemic affected everyone and became a constant presence in how we conducted business. Our meetings and hearings were online thus presenting intense logistical pressures that ultimately led to the Commission taking longer to conclude its work and report than planned. The breadth of evidence and range of attendees in the hearings still gave the Commission confidence that Sheffield's story would be convincingly told.

Over 150 pieces of evidence and in excess of 400,000 words of transcripts from open public and closed hearings, focus groups and interviews led to 10 key findings that addressed how social contexts framed approaches to race equality and racism. Finding 1) Austerity, Covid, and Black Lives Matter exemplified this. This backdrop became the starting point for an examination where the following themes unfolded:

- 2) Race, racism and racial inequalities
- 3) Reporting, grievance and disciplinaries
- 4) Antiracism
- 5) Data and research
- 6) Communities, consultation and co-production
- 7) Funding, procurement and enterprise
- 8) Workforce, diversity and leadership
- 9) Board membership, leadership and governance, led the Commission to question the nature of:
- 10) Trust and confidence in the city.

Based on the foundations of the findings emerged 7 recommendations requiring the city and its key partners to not only implement the recommendations within 36 months, but to also commit to become antiracist within 24 months. Such actions are what will ultimately convince me of the substance to this initiative.

The report and its recommendations represent a moment for Sheffield to embrace, learn and grow. This is a moment to really consider the findings and the recommendations to then build a different future where racism and racial disparities are disrupted and dismantled. Our lived experiences and diversity should lead to a productive diversity that become a transparent asset which makes Sheffield one of the best cities to live in. The Commission and myself have presented the report and recommendations for change and now it is imperative for the city to collectively engage on this shared journey, leading and delivering change together.

It has been impossible beyond mentioning every contributor to this inquiry in the Hearings Attendance list [Annex C], and Individuals and Organisations who submitted Evidence [Annex D], to make reference to everyone's name or organisation in the text. On that note, where organisations or individuals are mentioned it is to emphasise a shared point that has been triangulated through hearing the voices and reading the evidence of multiple contributors. I would like to thank all individuals and organisations who gave their time to this inquiry. I give credit to all of those who have made a contribution to this report and its deliberations.

In Sheffield, there is much work to be done to tackle racism and racial disparities, beginning with endorsing this report and the implementation of its recommendations.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Prof. K. Hylton'.

Professor Kevin Hylton
Chair Sheffield Race Equality Commission

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Race Equality Commission (REC) has concluded that racism and racial disparities remain significant in the lives of Sheffield's citizens. What have been shared with the Commission spans education, crime, justice and policing, sport and culture, health, business and employment, civic life and communities, and more. The perpetuation of racism, and racial disparities across sectors and major institutions in the city compel the Commission to restate the urgency to instigate positive measures and improvements in organisations and among its citizenry.

The Race Equality Commission was established by Sheffield City Council to make a non-partisan strategic assessment of the nature, extent, causes and impacts of racism and race inequality in the city and to make recommendations for tackling them.

It has support from all the political groups in the local authority, and following the original support from Julie Dore (Leader of SCC) and Charlie Adan (Interim CEO) has had renewed support from Cllr. Terry Fox, Kate Josephs (CEO) and Eugene Walker (Acting CEO).

Following the show of support from civic leaders, the Commission was endorsed by over 50 influential organisations across the city. This offered a high degree of confidence early on that the recommendations of the Commission would be recognised and implemented.

The Sheffield Race Equality Commission's Terms of Reference describe a process similar to a Parliamentary Select Committee mounting an inquiry prioritising SIX main areas:

- Business and Employment
- Civic Life and Communities
- Crime and Justice
- Education
- Health
- Sport and Culture

The Commission received over 150 pieces of evidence [see Annex B] and spoke to over 165 witnesses at the hearings. The witnesses spanned individuals and organisations from the Sheffield community to large city-wide providers, strategic bodies, national organisations, and significant Sheffield alumni. In addition to the 150+ evidence submissions there were over 600 pages of transcripts from hearings amounting to 400,000+ words.

The Commission's examination of evidence and transcripts generated significant themes. The analysis and deliberations have led to this report, published after an interim report. This final report augments the issues and recommendations raised in the interim report by privileging the voices of those who spoke to the Commission. It does this by drawing on the transcribed voices and words of those who gave evidence by using an accessible narrative rich approach.

In this report, so many of the themes emerging from the evidence were repeated across organisations and communities in the city. To avoid repetition, a **Thematic** approach was adopted to consider **Cross-Cutting** issues impacting our Sheffield community. These cross-cutting themes apply to all organisations in the city whereas more specific **Sector-Centric** issues that could not be considered elsewhere are picked up in the second **Specific Themes** section that follows.

Where available each of the themed sections is followed with examples of good practice drawn from inquiry evidence.

A. Themes (Cross-Cutting)

- i) Austerity, Black Lives Matter, COVID-19
- ii) Race, Racism, and Inequalities
- iii) Reporting, Grievance and Disciplinary
- iv) Antiracism
- v) Data and Research
- vi) Communities, Consultation and Co-Production
- vii) Funding and Gatekeepers
- viii) Workforce Diversity and Leadership
- ix) Board Membership and Governance
- x) Trust and Confidence

B. Themes (Specific Issues)

- i) Crime and Justice, Police
- ii) Education
- iii) Health
- iv) Housing

STARTING POINT

As a starting point for the city and its key stakeholders the Commission expects the following promises to be met by the city's key anchor institutions and partners – both to set the standard for other organisations across the city and also to lead by example – to ensure the necessary conditions for success in the implementation of the recommendations are sustainable:

I/We promise to:

- Endorse the Race Equality Commission's recommendations and agree to implement them as priority.
- Join the Working Group that will facilitate a sustainable Race Equality Legacy body by actively and financially contributing to its establishment and ongoing working effectiveness to check and challenge the key stakeholders' implementation of the Commission's recommendations.
- Meet the Commission's criteria for (and become) an antiracist organisation within 24 months of the publication of this report.
- Aim to meet the recommendations of this report in 36 months.

This report and its recommendations go beyond the necessary consideration of workforce pipeline issues where recruitment, retention, promotion, and organisational performance measures continue to be areas of concern. And even though most people are familiar with the language of diversity we share in this report that focuses these recommendations, in reality there is a paucity of representative workforces, leadership and governance structures that underpin this call to action.

In these recommendations, the Commission draws on its reading of evidence and testimonials from hearings. For example, where it is observed that there is a danger of fissures widening in the community where key stakeholder engagement strategies have been weak, ill-informed and ineffective, it is deemed here that collaboration and joint power sharing through consultation and co-production become areas for attention and improved practice. In addition, while there is the clamour in the city for more sustainable, inclusive and equitable community funding and procurement strategies we concur in the recommendations and propose the need for them to be the focus of substantive joined-up solutions.

The Commission is greatly encouraged that a growing number of organisations across Sheffield are busy seizing the initiative and rolling out ambitious Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) transformation programmes to tackle racism and race inequality. However, a word of caution here: the Commission also heard from many witnesses who cited the available (or lack of) data as clear evidence that racial disparities can often emerge from well-intentioned but flawed processes (whether through design or implementation) that have then led to unintended outcomes. It is therefore imperative that organisations:

- Find the right approach and solutions that are best suited to them, their people and the communities they serve,
- Ensure that the organisational environment is conducive to implementing change,
- Be prepared to redistribute resources to areas traditionally under-served,
- Proceed carefully, with sensitivity, care, and cultural competence,
- Adopt and maintain a transparent and inclusive approach to delivering solutions in consultation with key partners and communities, and
- Ensure their approach is continuously reviewed and refreshed to ensure it remains relevant and effective.

Regarding the organisational environment, transformation and change alone are no guarantee that an organisation has successfully rid itself of the ugly spectre of racism and racial disparities. For change to be fully effective and sustainable in any organisation, the Commission believes that management and leadership should view any transformation exercise through the lens of the organisation's culture (i.e., vision and values). Specifically, for leaders to ask themselves the question: *are our values still relevant and recognisable not just to us but also to our employees, customers and other key stakeholders; moreover, do we truly live our values (i.e., walk the walk, and talk the talk) or are they purely words on paper?*

The national race think tank, the Runnymede Trust, would argue that good intentions are not enough. Systemic change requires more than individuals operating in meaningful silos. Many organisations would argue that they are 'not racist' (neutral) though this is different to being 'antiracist' (proactive). An organisation that is simply 'not racist' is likely to do little to challenge the racial disparities and racism in its system. There is no place for race neutrality in this scenario. And, even among those organisations that identify as 'antiracist', there can remain a divergence in approaches to action and change that can be glacial at one end and stellar at the other. At one end you have an organisation that is content to meet its statutory obligations (and comply with anti-discrimination legislation), leading to incremental change; and at the other end you have an organisation that is willing (and able) to make the necessary adjustments and establish sufficient conditions to be rated amongst its peers as 'best-in-class'.

Whilst there is no legal definition of what constitutes an 'anti-racist' organisation, the Commission would expect such an organisation – as an absolute minimum and cognisant of Sheffield's rapidly changing socio-demographic profile (see Chapter 1) – to possess the following qualities:

Culture: Zero tolerance policies (with severe sanctions for proven) harassment, bullying and discrimination,

Leadership: Line managers hold specific responsibilities (and incentivised) to ensure EDI is well managed in their areas,

Debiased Systems: Robust EDI controls and processes in place to ensure that ethnically diverse employees (and prospective applicants via the use of anonymous CVs and guaranteed interviews) are well supported in their career progression (inc. mentoring, training, 'deputy' opportunities, ethnicity pay gap reporting),

Empowered Staff: Have 'safe spaces' available for employees to voice ideas, share suggestions and raise concerns informally with specific hubs (chaired by an appropriate race inclusion ally*) for different ethnic groups and other protected characteristics (e.g., LGBTQ+),

Governance: A strong diverse membership that includes a designated board member role with specific expertise on EDI and race,

Data Gathering and Reporting: Accurate data and metrics (segmented by grade / pay band / gender / department / location / specific ethnicities) regularly captured and reported to identify Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) performance (inc. benchmarking) and prioritised issues (as early indicators of racism and racial disparities),

Transparency and Accountability: Operates an EDI policy with specific intersectional 'joined-up' race content (with EDI performance regularly assessed and published, e.g., annual report and accounts) which sets robust standards of good practice that apply across the organisation end-to-end (inc. procurement, funding criteria, customers) and extends throughout the supply chain (with equivalent standards also binding upon any third party which does business for or on behalf of that organisation).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations from the Sheffield Race Equality Commission are a Call to Action emerging from the evidence gathered and analysed in the writing of this report. The recommendations are specific and actionable (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-bound - SMART) requiring of each relevant organisation a long-term, sustainable action plan from which to ensure systemic progress and positive change in Sheffield.

Each recommendation can be tracked back to submitted evidence, reports and transcripts from Commission hearings. There are **7 Recommendations**, covering **43 Action Points**.

Recommendation 1: Sheffield: An Antiracist City is fundamental to everything that follows. It is framed by 5 detailed Actions that directly relate to Recommendations 2-7. Recommendation 1 is overarching and reflects the broader thematic issues found in this Race Equality Commission report.

These recommendations apply across the board and cannot be ignored or avoided regardless of sector or type of organisation. Sheffield: An Antiracist City underpins the principles, values and recommendations to all of the recommendations. It should also be viewed as a minimum aspiration for the city. As a result, Recommendation 1: Sheffield An Antiracist City is outlined here:

Recommendation 1: Sheffield: An Antiracist City - (Governance, Leadership & Workforce). All subsequent recommendations must be read in conjunction with this Antiracist City recommendation

ACTION 1

All the city's key anchor institutions, partners and third sector organisations to agree a single set of **transparent measurable targets** which they will report on annually to establish more representative ethnic diversity in the workforce with a focus at leadership levels. It will recognise multi-ethnic, intersectional differences. Specifically:

- a. Sheffield anchor institutions to establish and publish a consistent set of ethnicity data including ethnic diversity of their workforces at all grades, recruitment, selection and promotion and ethnicity pay gaps. To be published as part of an annual diversity report for the city. This should include:
 - i. a narrative description,
 - ii. 'reform or explain' disparities in organisations, and
 - iii. the actions that will be undertaken to address disparities.
- b. Establish an observatory model to collect and share complete and robust data on ethnicity and other intersecting characteristics across social, health, economic and environmental factors. To include strategic public sector bodies such as the Sheffield City Partnership, the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority, the Cultural Consortium, and third sector organisations.
- c. For organisations to ensure they have capacity and capability to collate data, analyse coverage of service, offer uptake, and make quality improvements.

ACTION 2

Organisations need to invest in **educating and developing leaders and employees** to design-out racism from their organisation, services and practices.

- a. Endorse antiracism in their organisations and ensure there is dedicated antiracism training for senior leadership teams to ensure a 'golden thread' of EDI work in all areas.
- b. Race equality responsibilities to be conspicuous in duties and titles within senior leadership groups. Leadership key performance indicators identified as good practice.

- c. To implement an appropriate race equality framework that moves beyond a generic equalities approach, to structure a specific approach to race.
- d. Make transparent the use of robust Equality Impact Assessments that are less tick-box and more holistic in order to drive improved understanding of potential change impacts on ethnic groups:
 - i. Incorporate independent reviews of completed Equality Impact Assessments, to ensure there has been proper consideration of race equality.
- e. All city organisations should engage specialists to improve race related practice. Organisations should:
 - i. Assess systems for in-built bias and implement rapid interventions to debias those systems to ensure that change is mainstreamed. This may include a) holding recruitment panels to account for decisions to independent members b) chairs to explain outcomes to senior managers where under-represented candidates are unsuccessful c) establish EDI KPIs for recruitment panels; independent expert evaluation of equity in the pipeline from recruitment to promotion.
 - ii. Commission racial literacy to the training as a vehicle for enhancing cultural competence and take responsibility for how racism can be addressed in organisations. Deliver comprehensive and compulsory learning and development on EDI and racial literacy to the city's key anchor institutions, partners and third sector organisations.
 - iii. To improve communication with Black, Asian and Minoritised Ethnic communities by minimising less popular use of terms and, instead, placing focus and emphasis on intersectionality, and specific group preferences and needs regarding ethnicity, language, and culture.

ACTION 3

Fully **empower and involve employees from under-represented ethnic communities** and people with protected characteristics in the organisational and strategic development of organisations in the city so that they have an equal role in shaping the city's future. This should include:

- a. Engage staff and staff networks to ensure their ideas and concerns can be shared in-confidence and in public. Managers and senior leaders should encourage staff to participate.
- b. Staff networks are established and adequately resourced where required to facilitate safe space discussions and escalation of issues.
- c. Robust mechanisms to raise grievances or complaints in a safe and confident manner must be transparent and put in place which either replace or improve the flaws within grievance and whistleblowing procedures.

ACTION 4

Governing bodies and city partnerships should seek to increase the diversity of their boards to reflect the diversity of their client group and the city. They should:

- a. Establish annual transparent measurable targets to establish more representative ethnic diversity.
- b. Governing bodies and partnerships that lack diversity should work with diverse community organisations to find appropriate solutions to address the lack of diversity. This could include:
 - i. establishing a pool of 'critical friends' from diverse ethnic communities to work in partnership with boards that lack diversity; or
 - ii. Key organisations to establish a pipeline of experienced 'board ready' candidates available for consideration in city governance through better engagement, investing in developing talent, capacity building and recruitment. This may involve implementing the VAS/SADACCA 25 by 25 (25x25) initiative that targets a more representative increase in ethnic diversity of governing body leadership by 2025.

ACTION 5

Establish a **Legacy Delivery** group to monitor, review, and publish the progress of race equality in the City of Sheffield. This group must be long-term, sustainable and initially steered by the city's key anchor institutions, partners, third sector and community stakeholders. The group should be supported by key stakeholders to:

- a. Multi-agency assembly to be established and adequately resourced (politically and budget) to prioritise targets and actions to tackle racism and racial disparities in Sheffield.
- b. Take focused action to build strong and effective relationships and partnerships with all key stakeholders to address issues of inequality and exclusion, including access to services and employment, across the city.
- c. Key organisations and strategic bodies to establish regular learning opportunities to share information and good practice to enhance race related activities.
- d. Key organisations to contribute to annual 2-day event to share and focus their commitment to the city's race equality and publish their annual progress report(s).

Recommendations 2 to 7 are outlined below and in fuller detail in the full report

Recommendation 2: Educating Future Generations and Showing Leadership in our Educational Institutions

Recommendation 3: Inclusive Healthy Communities: Wellbeing and Longevity for All

Recommendation 4: One Sheffield in Community Life: Inclusion, Cohesion and Confidence

Recommendation 5: Celebrating Sheffield Through Sport and Culture: Past, Present and Future

Recommendation 6: Proportionality and Equity in Crime and Justice

Recommendation 7: Sheffield Equal and Enterprising: Supporting Black Asian and Minoritised Ethnic Business and Enterprise

- An Important part of the city's journey from being promoted to a destination city with a vibrant and diverse culture with different places to go and things to do that extend well beyond what the city currently has to offer.

We believe the successful delivery of these recommendations will ensure that there is a lasting and positive legacy from the Commission's work.

Each organisation and strategic body in the city (irrespective of its size and whether a business, charity, private or public sector body, educational institution, social enterprise or sole trader) will find themselves at contrasting stages regarding each of the recommendations. The Commission believes that every organisation that operates in the city will find the Commission's recommendations to be highly relevant. Of course, the extent to which all or some of the recommendations will apply (and how these are prioritised and tailored) to a specific organisation will vary, and is very much dependent on the scale, nature and size of that organisation, its leadership and culture (inc vision and values) and where it currently sits on its EDI journey.

Even where an organisation considers that it is well advanced in its EDI journey, the Commission invites each and every organisation to carefully examine all of the Recommendations and Actions and, where it is appropriate or beneficial to do so, seek to incorporate and embed them successfully so that EDI becomes simply 'business as usual' and the 'way things are done'.

In its inquiry approach to identify the key indicators of racism and racial disparities the Commission also took into account the years of austerity that the city had endured and the extent to which this had impacted all Sheffielders, particularly Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic communities. In shaping the recommendations, the Commission sees their delivery as being:

- Crucial for improving the lives of all Sheffielders – and being particularly beneficial for historically underserved ethnic communities in a strategic way that will also greatly assist the city to support the UK government in delivering its "Inclusive Britain Action Plan",
- Integral to the city's socio-economic future (in terms of sustainable growth and attracting additional investment), and



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Sheffield Race Equality Commission go to:
www.sheffield.gov.uk/raceequalitycommission

Sheffield City Council
www.sheffield.gov.uk



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