



Northamptonshire Rights and Equality Council

A Nine-point Plan to Advance Racial Equality in Northamptonshire

Introduction

We live in unprecedented times: a global pandemic, economic depression, global environmental challenges and, in the last few weeks (sparked off by the **Black Lives Matters** movement in the US), a resurgence of protests in the UK against racism and our contested history of involvement with slavery, colonialism and Empire.

Flowing from the latter there are growing demands for us all to **take action** against racial inequality and injustice - not just to express verbal or other forms of support through street protests or the issuing of statements.

This **Nine-point Plan** is a response by Northamptonshire Rights and Equality Council for us all to **TAKE ACTION** across Northamptonshire. These are our suggestions. They are neither comprehensive (others may wish to add to them) nor "written in tablets of stone". We hope nonetheless that they will prompt discussion and debate - but also lead on to the actions proposed.

Some of the terminology used may be unfamiliar. We hope this will lead to people wanting to know more, rather than dismissing what is being said simply because of the unfamiliarity. We hope that our attempts to explain/define some of the key terms used (these are *highlighted in italics*), or to provide further information, are helpful. If you need further clarification – please ask us!

It is vitally important in our view that genuine dialogues are opened up to explore these issues in greater depth and these conversations take place in a spirit of trying to find solutions to the racism and inequalities that exist and taking action.

If you do not think there is a problem at all, and are not prepared to re-examine your views and ideas, then it is unlikely dialogue with us will be very productive. If however, you are prepared to engage with us in a spirit of openness and respect, then we will be very pleased to engage – and hopefully **engage in action together**.

Northamptonshire Rights and Equality Council
June 22nd 2020

The Nine-point Plan to Advance Racial Equality in Northamptonshire

1. All people who benefit from **White privilege** in the County commit to reflecting on their attitudes and beliefs in respect of: race, ethnicity, racism, immigration, how different power relations operate to perpetuate inequality and how they consciously or unconsciously benefit from historic **racism** - with a view to taking positive actions themselves (both individually and collectively) to oppose racism and inequality.
2. All local employers with **over 10 employees be requested to**, in both the private and public sectors, to undertake race equality audits of their employment practices and to actively use lawful positive action measures to address historic and current under-representation (or in some cases over-representation in low pay/status areas) of Black, Asian and minority ethnic people.
3. All public bodies (in meeting their **legal responsibilities** to promote racial equality) should commit to contributing significant financial support to a dedicated fund – administered by an **independent funding body** - for long term projects and infrastructure for Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and other specialist voluntary sector organisations committed to working to advance racial equality and challenging racial prejudice, racism and white supremacist ideologies and behaviours.
4. Northamptonshire Police and Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner should commit to:
 - a) Setting a target to significantly reduce disproportionality in Stop and Search to zero by the end of 2021.
 - b) Examining the extent of detentions under the Mental Health Act and whether or not this is disproportionately and adversely affecting Black communities.
 - c) Ensuring that there are no racial disparities in the use of tasers.
 - d) Re-examining policing policies and practices in respect of drugs enforcement - to move from a "criminal justice/enforcement" model to one of decriminalising drug use and seeing drug addiction as a health issue requiring support and rehabilitation.

- e) Issuing a clear statement of policy in respect of the use of force against suspects/persons under their control to rule out any procedures or practices that may cause harm or in any way threaten human life.
- f) Suspend and investigate officers involved in any situation where there is an allegation of people suffering serious harm whilst being arrested or in police custody.
- g) Suspend and investigate any police officer who fails to intervene in circumstances where they see other officers engaging in unlawful or harmful practices (e.g. use of force) which breach force policy. It shall be a positive duty on all police officers to protect members of the public from harmful activity by other police officer(s).

5. An independent review should be held on how ***hate crime/incidents*** in Northamptonshire are dealt with by statutory and voluntary organisations, the resources that are allocated explicitly to tackling hate crime and how effective current responses are by all agencies currently involved. Targets should be established for: reporting of hate incidents, response times by agencies to support victims and challenge perpetrators, and the report-back mechanisms to victims. Particular attention should be given to tackling the growing incidents of overt prejudice, hate and harassment on social media – particularly on local community Facebook groups.
6. All local authorities and public bodies (including colleges and the university) undertake a **community audit** of all monuments, public works of art, names of buildings/rooms, and street names that may be linked to slavery, the history of colonialism/British Empire, and providing full disclosure/history with a view to either removing them or replacing them with positive/diverse images or works of art or more contemporary names/features which reflect our values of equality, diversity and racial justice.
7. All schools, colleges and the university should commit to auditing and re-examining the curriculum (both formal and informal) and ***decolonising*** it:
 - a) Removing racist assumptions around the production of knowledge and the content of the curriculum.
 - b) Studying the contribution of Black and ethnic minority communities in the UK (that are themselves diverse and

formed by **intersectionality** – with reference to class, gender, sexuality, disability, religion/belief etc).

- c) Acknowledging that historic **racism** and **eugenics** underpinned slavery, colonialism and the British Empire, and how these influence current attitudes to what being "British" means in today's world.
- d) Acknowledging the relationship between slavery, colonialism, and Empire and the economics/wealth of the UK.

Teachers/lecturers will need to be trained and supported in this task. Changes must then be embedded into the curriculum and not be seen as "tokenistic" or "add-ons".

- 8. The NHS and care sector in Northamptonshire should commit to setting **SMART** targets to reduce health inequalities for Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and staff. This is particularly important in the current context of the disproportionate numbers of deaths amongst Black, Asian and minority ethnic NHS and care sector workers from the Covid-19 virus which has brought the whole issue of inequality in health and social care into the spotlight. The Covid-19 pandemic has also exposed the vulnerability of Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities to "colour-blind" service provision. Providers are also encouraged to look to, and share knowledge and experiences of, 'countries of origin' and global health and wellbeing practices.
- 9. Shadow local councils in Northamptonshire should commit to adopting new policies to advance racial equality - with **SMART** action plans to address racial inequalities across all service areas and to especially incorporate strategic funding and support to promote Black, Asian and minority ethnic history, arts and culture.

NREC/6/2020

Some definitions and further explanations of terms

1. White Privilege

"As a white person I can take a whole range of advantages and privileges for granted as I go about my everyday life in the UK. So much so that I can even fail to notice that I actually have those advantages merely by virtue of being from the white majority.

For example I don't expect to be followed around by security guards whenever I visit expensive shops. I can generally drive my car or walk around anywhere in London without fearing that I might at any moment become the focus of police activity.

As a parent of white children I do not expect to have to explain to them why they are continually stopped and searched or why they may need to avoid any even innocent contact with the Police for their own safety. Nor do I have to explain to them that some people will treat them less favourably because of the colour of their skin, and I don't have to talk to them about how they should react to such behaviour and how it might make them feel.

I can assume that when I apply for a job my application will be treated fairly and that my name or my place of birth or any other signs of my origins or identity will not mark me down.

I can reliably assume that when I have to interact with the Police, government departments, private sector or any other organisations, I will be treated with due respect and courtesy.

"White privilege" then "refers to the myriad of social advantages, benefits, and courtesies that come with being a member of the dominant race."

<https://www.rota.org.uk/content/%E2%80%9Cwhite-privilege%E2%80%9D-useful-concept-current-uk-context>

Just because we are referencing "**White Privilege**" in this plan does not mean we do not recognise other forms of privilege too – such as class, disability, sexual orientation etc. It's just we want to focus on **this** and want to see specific action for it to be addressed. This may mean looking at other forms of privilege too, but we nevertheless want to remain focused. **Black Lives Matters** doesn't mean **only** Black lives matter, but it does mean that racism has to be tackled for all lives to matter equitably and we need to focus on this at this time.

It also doesn't mean that we are not aware of **intersectionality** and how this impinges on the experience of racism as experienced by the complexity of interacting characteristics (e.g. "Black men", "Black Gay men" or "Trans Black women" or "Disabled Black woman"...).

2. Racism

"Some things are glaringly racist – being called racial slurs, being attacked for looking or sounding different, being mistreated because of skin colour. Most of us can probably agree these things are racist. These fit into the established understanding of racism – 'the belief that one's own racial or ethnic group is superior' – as defined by the Oxford English Dictionary. But these basic definitions can miss crucial aspects of the true meaning of racism – power dynamics, prejudice, and structural racism. Professor Peter Wade, a sociologist from the University of Manchester, tells us how racism is more complex and insidious than the traditional definition, explaining that it is a system of oppression that has historically existed and continues to do so against minorities and debilitating their lives in covert and overt ways."

<https://metro.co.uk/2020/02/28/way-define-racism-may-stop-seeing-definition-hold-12287889/?ito=cbsshare>

3. Employers coming out of recession

We are mindful that this is a difficult period for local employers, but we are also concerned that moral, ethical and legal issues to ensure equality and justice do not get forgotten or pushed to one side as businesses/employers try to recover. Black and BME communities have made disproportionate sacrifices on behalf of all of us during the crisis. This should not be forgotten.

4. Legal responsibilities on public bodies

*The public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010 says that when public authorities carry out their functions they must have **due regard** to:*

- *Eliminate **unlawful discrimination** (against those with protected characteristics¹)*
- ***advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't*
- ***foster or encourage good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't or think about the need to:*

*Having **due regard** means public authorities must consciously consider or think about the need to do the three things set out in the public sector equality duty. It's the courts who decide if a public authority has done enough to comply with the duty.*

The Equality Act says public authorities should think about the need to:

¹ **Protected characteristics** in the Equality Act 2010 refers to: race (including race, colour, ethnic or national origins, nationality), gender/sex, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion and belief, maternity/pregnancy, marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment

- **remove or reduce disadvantages** suffered by people because of a protected characteristic
- **meet the needs of people** with protected characteristics
- **encourage people** with protected characteristics to participate in public life and other activities

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/law-and-courts/discrimination/public-sector-equality-duty/what-s-the-public-sector-equality-duty>

5. Independent Funding Body

We are suggesting that a fund that is independently managed should be established on a permanent basis to support and promote future racial equality initiatives and to support BME communities. We believe independence is required due to the highly contested and politicised nature of racial equality work. To put it simply – we do not trust public bodies with a history of institutionalised racism and discrimination to act impartially in this area. There needs to be trusted independent disbursement of such funds.

6. Hate Crimes/incidents

"A hate crime is when someone commits a crime against you because of your disability, gender identity, race, sexual orientation, religion, or any other perceived difference. It doesn't always include physical violence. Someone using offensive language towards you or harassing you because of who you are, or who they think you are, is also a crime. The same goes for someone posting abusive or offensive messages about you online".

*"A **hate crime** is defined as 'Any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's race or perceived race; religion or perceived religion; sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation; disability or perceived disability and any crime motivated by hostility or prejudice against a person who is transgender or perceived to be transgender.'*

*"A **hate incident** is any incident which the victim, or anyone else, thinks is based on someone's prejudice towards them because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or because they are transgender.*

"Not all hate incidents will amount to criminal offences, but it is equally important that these are reported and recorded by the police.

"Evidence of the hate element is not a requirement. You do not need to personally perceive the incident to be hate related. It would be enough if another person, a witness or even a police officer thought that the incident was hate related."

<https://www.met.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/hco/hate-crime/what-is-hate-crime/>

This definition of hate crime/incident has been agreed in order to aid investigations into allegations of hate and it does not mean that once an allegation has been made it is therefore proven.

7. SMART

SMART simply means:

Specific
Measurable
Achievable
Relevant
Time limited (time scale set)

8. De-colonising

"Decolonising (Our Minds) seeks to challenge the political, intellectual and structural legacies of colonialism and racism ...by promoting an awareness of global intellectual traditions, tackling structural inequalities within the institution, and engaging with ethnic minority and working-class communities..."

We look to have an impact on knowledge production ..., and to work alongside communities who are organising against the various manifestations of racism, marginalisation and inequality. Fundamentally, we hope to re-imagine (the university) and its role within its immediate surroundings and the world at large".

<https://www.facebook.com/pg/DecolonisingOurMinds/about>

De-colonising has also been described as "de-centring Whiteness" and recognising that knowledge has been produced by human beings across the globe of different skin colours, religions and nationalities historically and today... not just white/European men! This process recognises getting to the roots of colonialism, its links to the rise of racism, its links to eugenics and the role of Empire is vitally important in purging ourselves and society of notions of racial/national superiority in the way that post-war Germany has tried to purge itself of the ideology of fascism and Nazism – that first requires an acceptance of past wrongs in order to move into the future.

9. Eugenics

Eugenics is the practice or advocacy of improving the human species by selectively mating people with specific desirable hereditary traits. It aims to reduce human suffering by "breeding out" disease, disabilities and so-called "undesirable" characteristics from the human population. Early supporters of eugenics believed people inherited mental illness, criminal tendencies and even poverty, and that these conditions could be bred out of the gene pool.

Historically, eugenics encouraged people of so-called healthy, superior stock/races to reproduce and discouraged reproduction of the mentally

challenged or anyone who fell outside the social norm. Eugenics was popular during much of the first half of the twentieth century promoting the notion that white people were superior to Black people. It was component part of racism but with a seemingly “scientific” basis. These ideas are still very powerful today.

10. Intersectionality

"Intersectionality is a lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it interlocks and intersects. It's not simply that there's a race problem here, a gender problem here, and a class or LGBTQ problem there. Many times that framework erases what happens to people who are subject to all of these things.

Some people look to intersectionality as a grand theory of everything, but that's not my intention. If someone is trying to think about how to explain to the courts why they should not dismiss a case made by black women, just because the employer did hire blacks who were men and women who were white, well, that's what the tool was designed to do. If it works, great. If it doesn't work, it's not like you have to use this concept.

The other issue is that intersectionality can get used as a blanket term to mean, "Well, it's complicated." Sometimes, "It's complicated" is an excuse not to do anything.

At AAPF and the Center for Intersectionality and Social Policy Studies, we want to move beyond that idea.

We try to take ideas and make them into hands-on tools that advocates and communities can use. Part of it is public education. We use art and other projects to show how people are experiencing intersectional harms, such as mothers of women killed by the police, or young girls expelled from school. We work directly with advocates and communities to develop ways they can better see these problems and better intervene in advocacy."

Kimberlé Crenshaw

<https://www.law.columbia.edu/news/archive/kimberle-crenshaw-intersectionality-more-two-decades-later>

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