

## REPORT TO CABINET

DATE: 13 November 2025

## REPORT OF CORPORATE MANAGEMENT TEAM

### CABINET DECISION

**Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Resources and Transport-  
Councillor Paul Rowling**

**Cabinet Member for Access, Communities and Community Safety – Councillor Norma  
Stephenson**

# ANTI-RACISM CHARTER

## Summary

Creating a fair, inclusive, and respectful workplace is central to Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's values and commitment to equality.

The Council is committed to tackling racism in the workplace and promoting a diverse and inclusive workforce. Working in partnership with the Council's Employee Race Equality Network and endorsed by the Colleagues Powering Our Futures Board, we have developed an Anti-Racism Charter (Appendix 1).

The Charter demonstrates the Council's public commitment as an employer to actively challenge racial discrimination and advance equity and inclusion across the organisation. It outlines commitments to address racial disparities in recruitment, promotion, learning and development, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and pay and reward. It also recognises the impact racism can have on mental health and commits to creating a psychologically safe culture of belonging for Black, Asian, mixed-heritage and other ethnically diverse colleagues.

The Charter aligns with the Council's people policies, organisational culture and inclusive values. Signing the Charter reinforces the Council's compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and supports the Public Sector Equality Duty by demonstrating due regard to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations.

It is proposed that Cabinet recommend the Charter to Council for adoption and invite the Mayor, Leader and Chief Executive to sign the Charter on behalf of the Council, together with the Lead of the Employee Race Equality Network and Trade Union representatives signing on behalf of employees.

## Reasons for Recommendation(s)/Decision(s)

Racism remains a lived reality for Black, Asian, mixed heritage, and other ethnically diverse people in the UK. By signing this Charter, the Council will be making a public commitment to

addressing racism and promoting equity and inclusion across the organisation. This will include actively working to understand, explain, challenge, and address racial inequity and injustice, while supporting colleagues from minority ethnic backgrounds and protecting them from harm.

## Recommendations

Cabinet is requested to:

1. Recommend to Council the adoption of the Anti-Racism Charter (Appendix 1) as a statement of the Council's corporate commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.
2. Recommend that Council authorise the Mayor, Leader of the Council and Chief Executive to sign the Charter on behalf of the Council at the meeting of Full Council, alongside the Lead of the Employee Race Equality Network and Trade Union representatives signing on behalf of employees.
3. Note that implementation of the Charter will be overseen through the officer led Colleagues Powering Our Futures Board, with progress reported to Cabinet after twelve months.

## Detail

1. Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council is committed to tackling racism in the workplace and to promoting a diverse and inclusive workforce. Racial discrimination can have a significant psychological impact on the health and well-being of those affected; therefore, we need to continue to develop an inclusive workplace culture where employees feel safe to challenge racial discrimination and inequalities.
2. Developed in partnership with the Employee Race Equality Network and endorsed by the Colleagues Powering Our Futures Board, the Anti-Racism Charter demonstrates the Council's commitment to challenge racial discrimination and promote inclusion and equality for all.
3. Racism remains a lived reality for Black, Asian, Mixed Heritage, and other ethnically diverse people in the UK. This is not a distant issue—it is present, persistent, and deeply felt across our communities and within our workforce. We are proposing this Charter at a time when our minority communities feel increasingly unsafe, not only due to a rise in race-related crimes nationally, but also because of a growing feeling exclusion and diminished belonging. The Charter offers an opportunity to be more visible in our stance, more confident in our actions, and more proactive in addressing the subtle yet enduring forms of racism and inequality that continue to shape everyday experiences for our minority workforce. It is a reaffirmation of our commitment to stand against racism wherever it exists—calling on our leaders to demonstrate allyship, challenge discrimination, and champion racial diversity.
4. The Anti-Racism Charter commits the Council to address any racial disparities in recruitment, promotion, learning and development, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and pay and reward. It also recognises the impact racism can have on mental health and commits to creating a psychologically safe culture of belonging for our Black, Asian, Mixed Race, and ethnically diverse workforce.

5. The Council’s workforce profile (as at 30 September 2025) does not fully reflect the diversity of the communities we serve. Currently, 4.3% of Council employees identify as being from Black, Asian, Mixed Heritage, or other ethnically diverse backgrounds. A further 4.3% have not disclosed their ethnicity, while 91.4% identify as White. In comparison, the 2021 Census indicates that 8% of the local population is from ethnically diverse backgrounds. We recognise this disparity and, in line with our Inclusive value, we are committed to taking steps to ensure equality and inclusion across our workforce and communities—by attracting, recruiting, and retaining a more diverse workforce that better represents and reflects the community we serve.
6. In summary, there are many benefits of an anti-racism charter for both an employer and an employee. These include:

**For the Employer**

- Promotes a positive work environment where employees feel respected and valued, leading to increased job satisfaction and productivity
- Attracts and retains diverse talent and demonstrates an employer’s commitment to diversity and inclusion, making the workplace an attractive place for diverse talent to work and stay
- Diversity promotes innovation aligning with the Council’s values and behaviours, where outside the box ideas are heard

**For the Employee**

- Promotes a sense of belonging among employees, regardless of their race, ethnicity, or cultural background
- Aims to reduce discrimination and harassment in the workplace, creating a safer and more inclusive environment for all employees
- Encourages open communication about issues related to race and ethnicity, creating opportunities for learning, understanding, and growth
- Supports mental health by recognising the impact racism can have and helping to create a psychologically safe culture of belonging

7. The Charter provides a structure for how we can all work together to achieve a safe, inclusive and positive place to work.
8. By signing this charter, the Council will be making a public commitment to addressing racism and promoting equity and inclusion across the organisation. This includes actively working to understand, explain, challenge, and address racial inequity and injustice, while supporting colleagues from minority ethnic backgrounds and protecting them from harm.
9. It is therefore recommended that Cabinet to invite the Leader, Chief Executive, Lead of Employee Race Equality Network and Trade Union representatives to officially sign the Anit Racism Charter (Appendix 1) at full Council on 19 November 2025.

**Community Impact and Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment**

10. A Community Impact and Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment has been completed.
11. The proposal to adopt an Anti-Racism Charter is a positive action that strengthens equality, diversity, and inclusion within the Council. It does not create any adverse impact on individuals or groups with protected characteristics. Instead, it:
  - Promotes equality of opportunity by addressing racial disparities in recruitment, progression, and development.
  - Fosters good relations by encouraging understanding and reducing prejudice.
  - Eliminates unlawful discrimination by reinforcing compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and embedding anti-racist principles into policies and practices.
12. Because the Charter is designed to enhance equity and inclusion, there are no negative impacts to mitigate. The actions proposed are supportive and beneficial to all employees, particularly those from minority ethnic backgrounds, and align with existing Council policies and legal obligations.

### **Corporate Parenting Implications**

13. There are no corporate parenting implications arising as a result of signing the Anti-Racism Charter.

### **Financial Implications**

14. There are no financial implications arising as a result of signing the Anti-Racism Charter.

### **Legal Implications**

15. There are no direct legal implications arising from signing the Anti-Racism Charter, it is a voluntary commitment.
16. Signing the Charter reinforces the Council's compliance with the Equality Act 2010, which requires employers to prevent discrimination and promote equality across all protected characteristics, including race.
17. The Charter supports the Council's Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act, helping demonstrate due regard to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations.
18. It aligns with best practice in employment law, reducing the risk of discrimination claims and supporting a fair, inclusive workplace.

### **Risk Assessment**

19. The Anti-Racism Charter is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems, Council policy and procedures are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

### **Wards Affected and Consultation with Ward/ Councillors (refer to Concordat for Communication and Consultation with Members)**

20. Not Applicable.

## Background Papers

21. None

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## APPENIDX 1

# Anti-Racism Charter



Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council is committed to tackling racism in the workplace and to promoting a diverse and inclusive workforce.

Our Council pledges to introduce the following ongoing commitments within 12-24 months of signing this Charter:

### **Our Leaders and Senior Management Team will:**

- **Demonstrate Allyship:** Provide active and consistent effort to support and advocate for colleagues from underrepresented groups.
- **Champion Racial Diversity:** Recognise the need and benefit of a racially diverse workforce and actively promote inclusive recruitment and progression practices.
- **Acknowledge the Impact of Racism:** Recognise how racism affects staff wellbeing and take proactive steps to support affected individuals.
- **Challenge Racism:** Speak out and act against racism internally and externally wherever it arises.
- **Lead Strategic Change:** Implement and regularly review the Council's Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Strategy to improve racial equity, diversity and inclusion so that the Council continually works towards reflecting the communities it serves.
- **Promote Diverse Leadership:** Support the development and promotion of racially diverse leaders through targeted programmes and mentoring

### **Our Council will:**

- **Be Actively Anti-Racist:** Commit to being anti-racist in all we do, not just non-racist, by embedding anti-racism into our culture, policies, and practices.
- **Champion EDI Strategy and Policy:** Maintain a clear and visible EDI Strategy and Policy, championed by leadership and informed by colleagues.
- **Deliver Anti-Racism Initiatives:** Implement a visible programme of anti-racism initiatives and actions, with measurable outcomes.
- **Conduct Impact Assessments:** Undertake Equality & Poverty Impact Assessments for all strategic-level decisions and People & OD Policies.
- **Ethnicity Pay Gap Data:** Record and share ethnicity pay gap data annually.
- **Report Workforce Diversity:** Publicly share the ethnic diversity of the Council workforce and use this data to inform action.

- **Mandatory EDI Training:** Ensure all colleagues complete EDI training every two years, including unconscious bias and anti-racism.
- **Manager Training:** Provide robust equality training for managers involved in recruitment, promotion, and investigations.
- **Support Employee Wellbeing:** Provide dedicated wellbeing support for colleagues experiencing racism in the workplace.
- **Recruit and promote Fair Treatment Ambassadors:** Fair Treatment Ambassadors will offer a non-judgemental, empathetic, confidential, and informal listening and signposting service for colleagues concerned about bullying, harassment, or discrimination, including racism.
- **Transparent Reporting Process:** Establish a clear, accessible, and transparent process for reporting, investigating, and documenting incidents of racism, with accountability in outcomes.
- **Enable Employee Voice:** Create regular opportunities for feedback from ethnically diverse colleagues through Employee networks and surveys

### **Our equality auditing process will review:**

- **Culture and Behaviour:** Regularly assess our culture, values, and behaviours to remove racial discrimination in all its forms.
- **Recruitment and Promotion:** Review recruitment and promotional processes to identify and address race disparities in equality of opportunity.
- **Policy Integration:** Ensure all People and OD policies continue to promote solidarity and tackle racism.
- **Disciplinary and Grievance Outcomes:** Audit formal investigations to identify and address race disparities in outcomes of comparable cases.
- **Employee Feedback:** Analyse feedback from Employee surveys, stay and exit interviews to identify and address race disparities.