

Anti-Racist Practice Strategy

2023-2028

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**“In a racist society,
it is not enough to be
non-racist, we must
be anti-racist.”**

**Angela Y. Davis
Educator, activist
and author**



Foreword



Councillor **Beverley Egan**

As the Cabinet Member for Children and Families, it is my responsibility to make sure that Essex supports all children and all families across the County to achieve their full potential. We need a particular focus on Black, Asian and Dual-Heritage and ethnically diverse children, families and staff, who are the target of racism. Racism can no longer be a barrier to people accessing our services, feeling heard and understood and receiving the support they need. This strategy sets out our commitment to being an anti-racist organisation in terms of our language, practice and ways of operating and I am proud of the way we are challenging ourselves to improve our ways of working so that there is racial equity of access and service.

Foreword



Helen Lincoln, Executive Director,
Children Families and Education

We can no longer simply talk about the systemic and oppressive effects of racism. We have the power to act, and we will.

Nationally, Children and Families Social Care have seen the ongoing damaging impacts of systemic racism which is persistently seen through the disproportionate number of Black, Asian, Dual-Heritage and ethnically diverse children and families in the Social Care system. Our Global Majority staff, children and families are disappointed and re-traumatised by multiple systems that should be supporting their holistic wellbeing. This will no longer be tolerated.

This anti-racist strategy lays out our vision. The voices of our Global Majority staff and children will not only be heard and amplified, but will be valued, and we will remain committed to dismantle racist structures and systems.

I am proud of the journey that Essex Children and Families Social Care have boarded, and I am confident that collectively, we will be the change that we want to see.

Foreword



Sukriti Sen, Director Local Delivery Mid

A moment in time in May 2020, when I, like so many people around the world witnessed through the powers of social media, the horror of a person being murdered because of the colour of their skin.

What followed for me as a senior leader, a public servant and a social worker with the values of promoting equality and social justice, was a period of introspection, reflection and a strong desire to do 'something'. Opportunities were created for all our staff, children, and families to talk about racism in themed quadrant days, in safe spaces, forums and in a plethora of activities to raise awareness. Permission was given for the first time for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people to share real life stories of what it was like working, growing up and living in Essex – the feelings of trauma, fear, pain and hurt, only small examples of the experiences and emotions felt by many. But what next?

I made a pledge, that I would keep the momentum of the discussions we had started at the forefront of our thinking and to create tangible actions that would bring sustainable change. What we have embarked on is a very ambitious journey of bringing race and Anti-Racist Practice into all aspects of our work in Children and Families. As the Strategic Lead for Anti-Racist Practice, I am very proud that in Essex we now have a five-year strategy and a commitment to deliver on the plan for our communities, our workforce and our children, young people and families.

A message from our Directors of Local Delivery



**Nicky
O'Shaughnessy,**
Director Local
Delivery North



Gaye Cole,
Director Local
Delivery South



**Michelle
Hayden-Pepper,**
Director Local
Delivery West

“We do not need any more data – we are ready for action. As Directors of Local Delivery, we stand beside Black, Asian, Dual-Heritage and ethnically diverse children, families and staff as anti-racist leaders. We believe that this strategy will accelerate our activities to address and dismantle the structures, systems, and practices that promote and uphold racism. As advocates for racial justice, we will lead from the front – with courage, with commitment, with diligence and with hope.”

Directors of Local Delivery

Introduction



Antonia Ogundayisi,
Service Manager for Anti-Racist
Practice

The Office for National Statistics (ONS), describes Britain as “increasingly growing in its diversity” (2022). There are named British cities which are reported to have a majority Black, Asian, Dual-Heritage and ethnically diverse, or a “Global Majority” population. The data suggests that the trajectory of Britain is gradually diversifying in its racial, ethnic, religious and cultural identity.

A growing ethnically diverse population re-affirms the necessity of racial equity and inclusion.

“Ethnic diversity has increased in Essex since the 2011 census. In 2011 ethnic groups other than White British accounted for 9.2% of residents, compared to the 14.9% recorded in 2021.”

Research and Insight,
Chief Executive Office (2022)

Why Race?

Children and Families are prioritising Race as an area of focus because it is often diluted with other forms of subjugation. Racial discrimination is a unique form of oppression, as it intersects with all other forms of oppression. We know the historical and current contexts pertaining to Race have led to feelings of discomfort, but we recognise that discomfort should not be centred; but rather, the focus of our narrative, thoughts and feelings should be: racial equity for all. Although there has been intention to combat racism, progress has not been tangible nor rapid enough.

Our duty

- Section 22 of the Children Act 1989 places a legal obligation for social workers, that “.. a local authority must give due consideration to the child’s religious persuasion, racial origin, and cultural and linguistic background.”
- We have a duty to comply, as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, to ensure that a person must not be discriminated against because of their Race.
- The Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) requires that social workers recognise discriminatory practices and inequality and develop a range of approaches to appropriately challenge service users, colleagues and senior staff.

“Different races may have different views. Someone who is white might not have the measure of racism.”

A Young Person in Care

“I want to talk about Race... but I’ve felt like I have never had the permission.”

Team Manager

Our Children and Families Anti-Racist Practice Statement

Children and Families Social Care recognise and acknowledge the trauma that Racism evokes. We pledge to change structures, processes and practice which perpetuate racism. We are committed to ensuring that anti-racism is the bedrock of our practice with children, families and staff.

Children and Families will create, develop and embed a culture where racism is addressed effectively. We actively want to lead by example; with integrity, zeal and fortitude to ensure that every child, every family and every staff member is treated fairly. We will educate ourselves of the experiences of Black, Asian, Dual-Heritage and ethnically diverse children and families, whilst holding our partners accountable to achieve an excellent standard of practice. This is the foundation of who we are, what we stand for and how we do our work.

Our Vision

Children and Families Social Care will acknowledge and address Racism. Black, Asian, Dual-Heritage and ethnically diverse children, families and staff will be equally valued; treated without partiality and have the right conditions to thrive, reach and achieve their full potential.



Our Foundational Principles

- Racism is a systemic problem, one that has pervaded all aspects of life. It can be perpetuated and conserved by even the most well-intended and confident staff without awareness or realisation.
- Racism is a difficult topic to speak about, and the discomfort that this brings should not be discounted but acknowledged and explored.
- While leaders are responsible for learning about Racism, Black, Asian, Dual-Heritage and ethnically diverse people, staff, children and families are experts in the creation of strategies and change cannot be achieved in isolation of the senior leadership team.
- White members of staff in leadership positions should be courageous, have sustained focus and anti-racism should be a rolling agenda.
- Success will be measured not solely by outcomes, but also an improvement of the overall wellbeing of Black, Asian, Dual-Heritage and ethnically diverse children, families and staff.
- Black, Asian, Dual-Heritage and ethnically diverse people staff have the right to achieve their full potential in environments that are free from racial oppression and inequalities, but their strengths should also be recognised, acknowledged and affirmed.

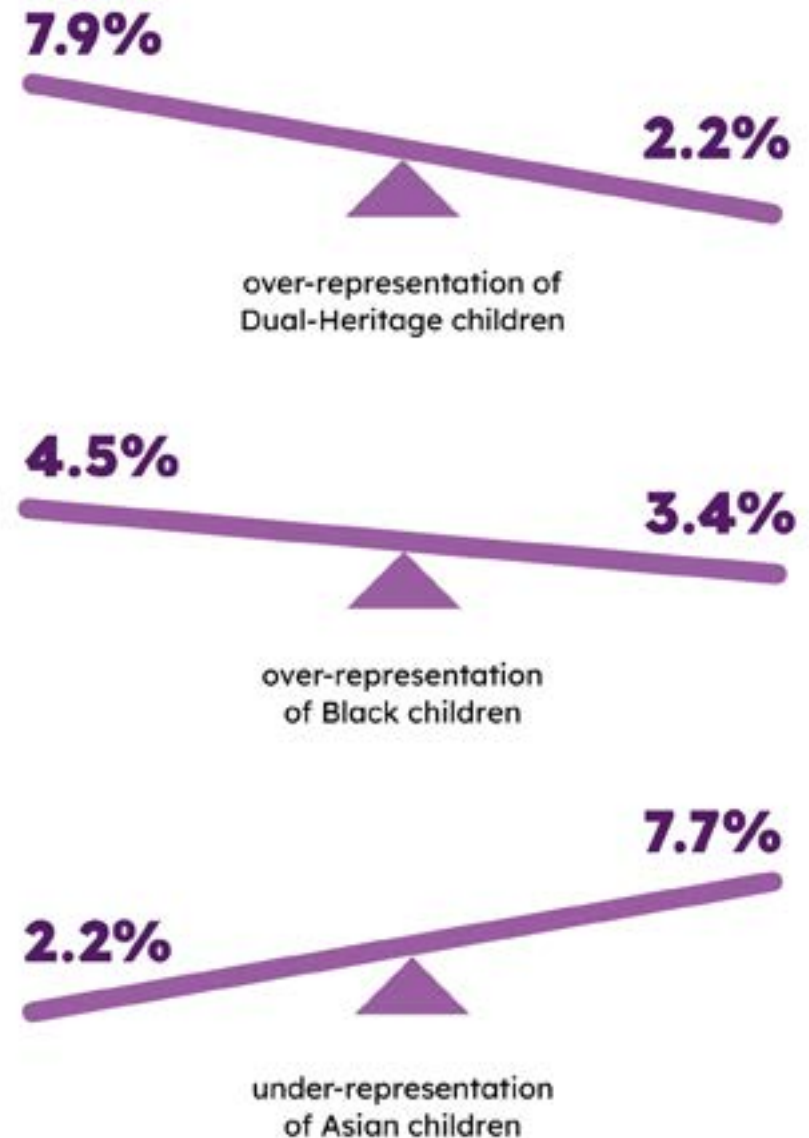


The persistent challenges are:

1 In Practice

- An ongoing over-representation of Dual-Heritage children (7.9% compared to 2.2% of the national 0-17 average)
- An ongoing over-representation of Black children (4.5% in comparison to 3.4% of the national 0-17 average)
- An under-representation of Asian children (2.2% compared to 7.7% of the national average)

In November 2022, 11.3% of children and families' ethnicities were recorded as unavailable. We want to see an improvement in how Race, Ethnicity and Culture is being asked, explored, understood or recorded. We will be an Organisation that is confident in exploring and considering, the impact of Race and Racism.



How do White foster carers educate young people about things they may not have experience of or may not have an understanding of difference?

“If you act out aggressive they’ll use it against you.”

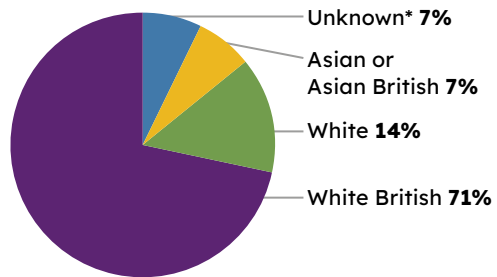
Proud To Be Me –
Black, Asian, Dual-Heritage and
Ethnically Diverse Young People In Care

2 In the Workforce

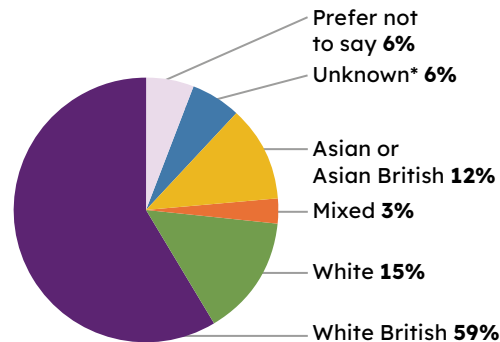
In May 2023, the Children and Families function comprised of 1,664 members of staff. According to information provided by People Information Analyst, between 2017 and 2023, the demographic representation of Children and Families was predominately White British.

There are still a large proportion of staff who have not disclosed their ethnicity and whilst other staff 'prefer not to say'. Below indicates the current racial and ethnic make-up of our roles and functions in Children and Families.

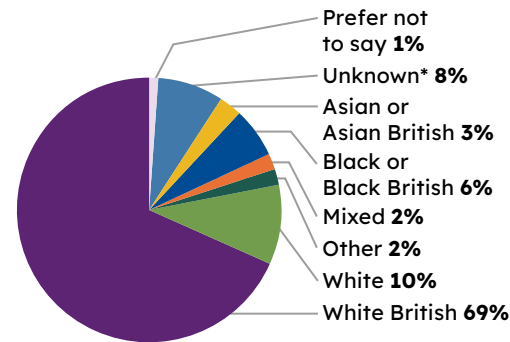
**A Executive Directors
B Director Local Delivery
C Heads of Service**



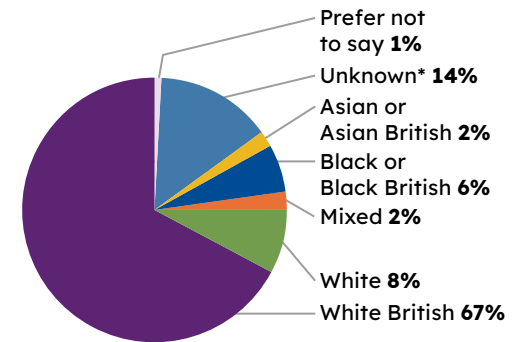
SCD1 Service Managers



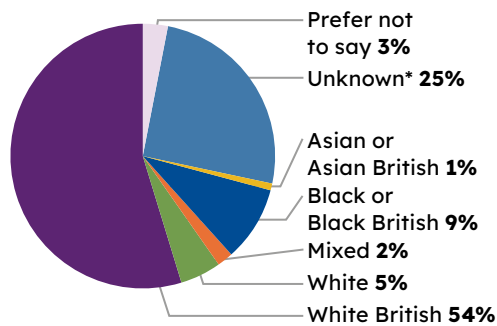
SCD2 Team Managers



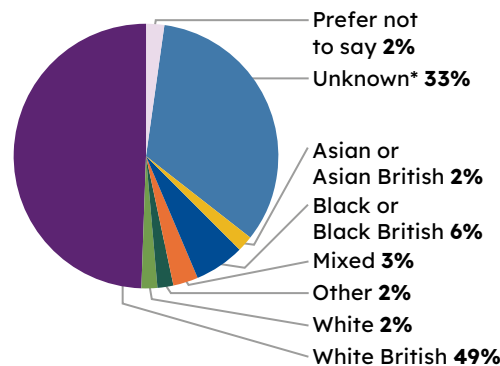
E Senior Practitioners



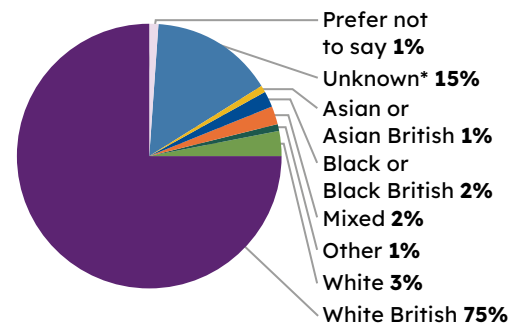
F Social Workers



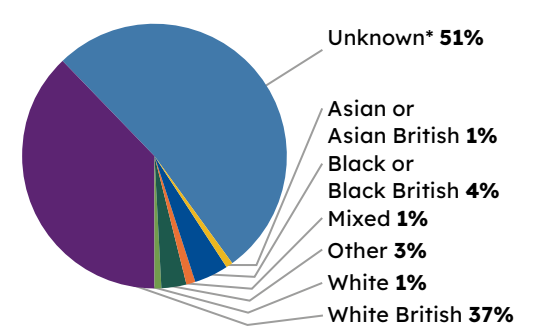
G Newly qualified social workers or occupational therapists



H Community support workers



Other



Developing and embedding anti-racist practice is a key strategic objective. It is envisaged that enhancing the allyship, solidarity and confidence of our workforce, will have a direct influence on the quality of social care practice for Children and Families. As such, the first phase of the strategy focuses on the development of Anti-racism within the workforce, with a vision that the quality of social care practice will, in parallel, be strengthened. The priorities for subsequent years will be mapped as we progress. Anti-racism will be on our agenda as a rolling item and to work towards embodying anti-racist principles. Anti-Racism is dynamic work. We are committed to oppose racism and are striving for racial equity, so that Race is no longer a deciding factor in determining how anybody's life is valued.

How we want it to be...

“I never thought about applying for that role... I don't see anyone that looks like me.”

Team Manager



“It is important to embed Anti-Racist Practice in how we operate, which will help to ensure that Essex is fairer for everyone. This will drive improvements to the services we provide to our communities by having an inclusive workforce, being culturally aware, creating strong and informed leaders and facilitating collaboration and learning with our partners about what works well.”

Andrew Lowing,
Senior Equalities and Partnership Adviser

“We need an anti-racist strategy to create a workplace free from prejudice, bias and oppression and foster equality and acceptance at every level.”

Sukaina Kapasi,
Global Majority Network Lead

“Our diverse workforce brings creativity, innovation and supports a culture where we celebrate our differences and educate and learn from each other. Our workforce Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy supports our People Plan 2021-2025 theme of Diversity is Our Strength where we work towards being an organisation that reflects the diversity of the communities we serve.”

Faizal Hakim,
Equality Diversity and
Inclusion Lead

Governance & Evaluation

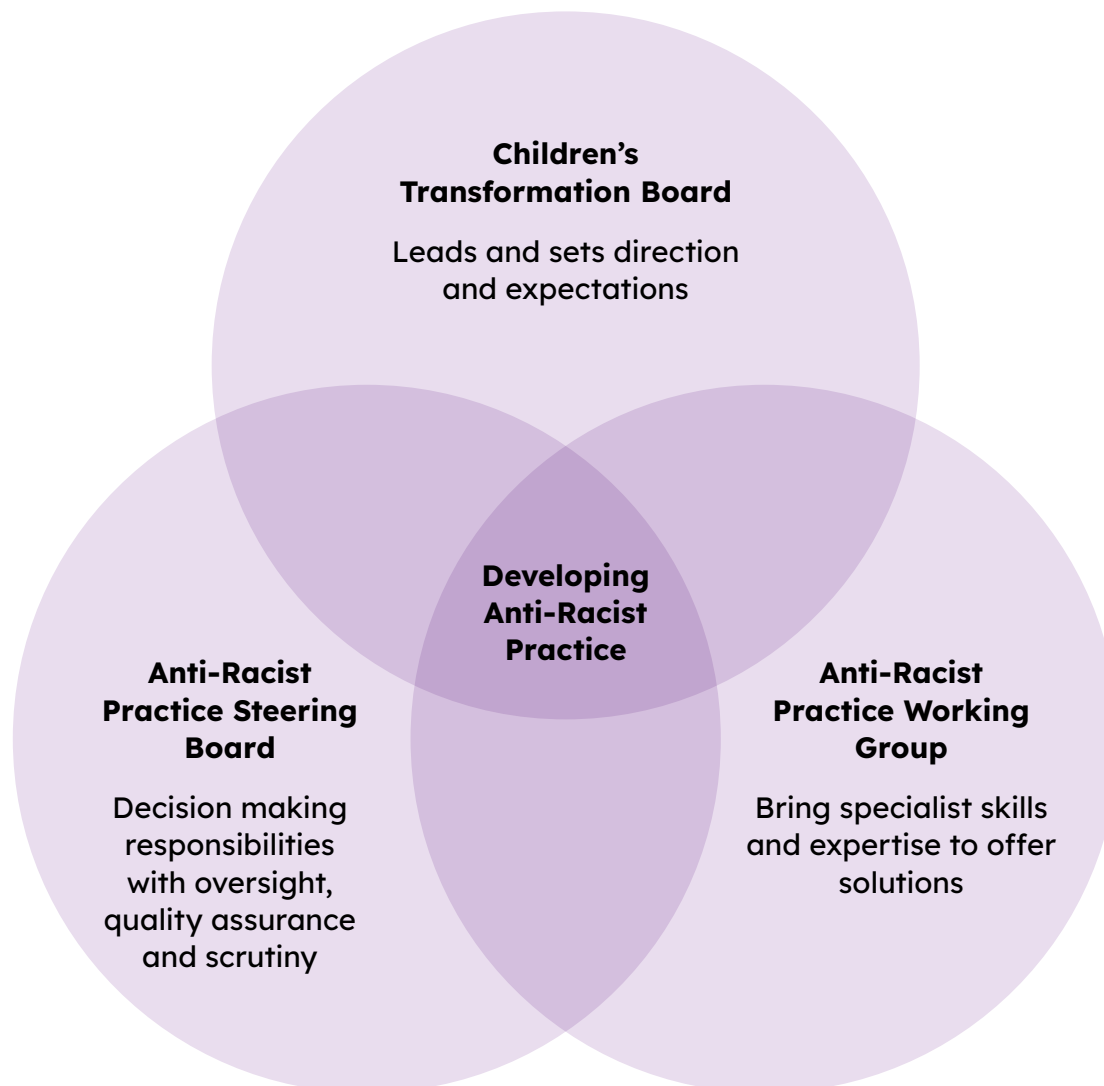
Governance

Expectations for Monitoring:

- Annual Report to Children's Transformation Board
- Annual Review and update of Action Plan to reflect highlights or issues presented to ARP Steering Board
- Bi-Monthly Key Briefing to Anti-Racist Steering Board
- Monthly reviews shared with Anti-Racist Practice Working Group
- Monthly feedback from Global Majority Networks
- Ongoing Evaluation by External agency

Evaluation

The University of Essex will provide us with an external evaluation of our work, in order to support us to understand our impact and distance travelled. Evaluation will be ongoing.



Our Mission

We will affect systemic change in four key areas:

1 Demonstrating Leadership

Our leadership team will acknowledge history and the generational trauma experienced by Black, Asian, Dual-Heritage and ethnically diverse people; take ownership and accountability to ensure that all staff are culturally competent and confident to openly discuss Race, Racism and to fully support Black, Asian, Dual-Heritage and ethnically diverse people, children, families and staff.

2 Amending our Policies and Procedures

We will foster structural and systemic resolutions to racial inequalities by amending or creating key policies and procedures.

3 Diversifying our Workforce

We will create an environment conducive for Black, Asian, Dual-Heritage and ethnically diverse people and staff to feel psychologically safe to express their experiences of working in Essex, a place where their wellbeing and progression remains a priority. We will ensure that Race, Culture and Ethnicity is not a barrier to achievement.

4 Developing and embedding Anti-Racist Practice

We will set and endorse excellent practice standards, facilitating a learning culture to develop and strengthen social work practice in the lives of Black, Asian, Dual-Heritage and ethnically diverse people, children and families. We will create a framework for excellent practice by critically appraising theory and ensuring that our practice tools are inclusive and that every child's race, culture and ethnicity is explored and is central to planning and support.



High Level Findings

Progress has been made. Race being a key agenda item within Children and Families; but we know that there are still areas that we need to address, with recognition that “becoming anti-racist”, is a lifelong endeavour.

Our progress so far:

- ‘Anti-Racist Practice’ is a strategic priority in Children and Families
- The establishment of Global Majority Networks across all quadrants
- The appointment of Race Equality Leads – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead, Anti-Racist Practice Service Manager
- Development of Practice Resources – Race, Ethnicity and Culture Thinking Tool and Practice Guidance
- Amendment of key documents to incorporate anti-racist practice lens
- A working Group established to develop induction process for International Social Workers
- A working Group established for to review Ethnicity Labels on our Child Information System
- Celebratory Black History Month events across quadrants
- Establishment of “Leading the Global Majority” learning spaces for Managers



Our Anti-Racist Practice Strategy

After the appointment of an Anti-Racist Practice Service Manager, an initial scoping activity was conducted to explore key areas for development.

High level findings are summarised as follows:

- We need precision regarding ethnicity data
- We need to develop racial policies, procedures for effective routes of escalation
- We need to have an effective integration progress for international social workers
- We need to have effective progression routes for Black, Asian and Dual-Heritage staff
- We need to address the disproportionate disciplinary action against Black, Asian and Dual-Heritage staff
- We need to address the failure rates for black Newly Qualified Social Worker in their Assessed Supported Year of Employment
- We need to create a culturally inclusive culture for Black and Asian and Dual-Heritage staff
- We need to develop practice competence and confidence of social workers to consider and address Race
- We need to develop confidence of Leadership to effectively lead and manage staff
- We need to promote representation/racial diversity at team and senior management level

Our Approach

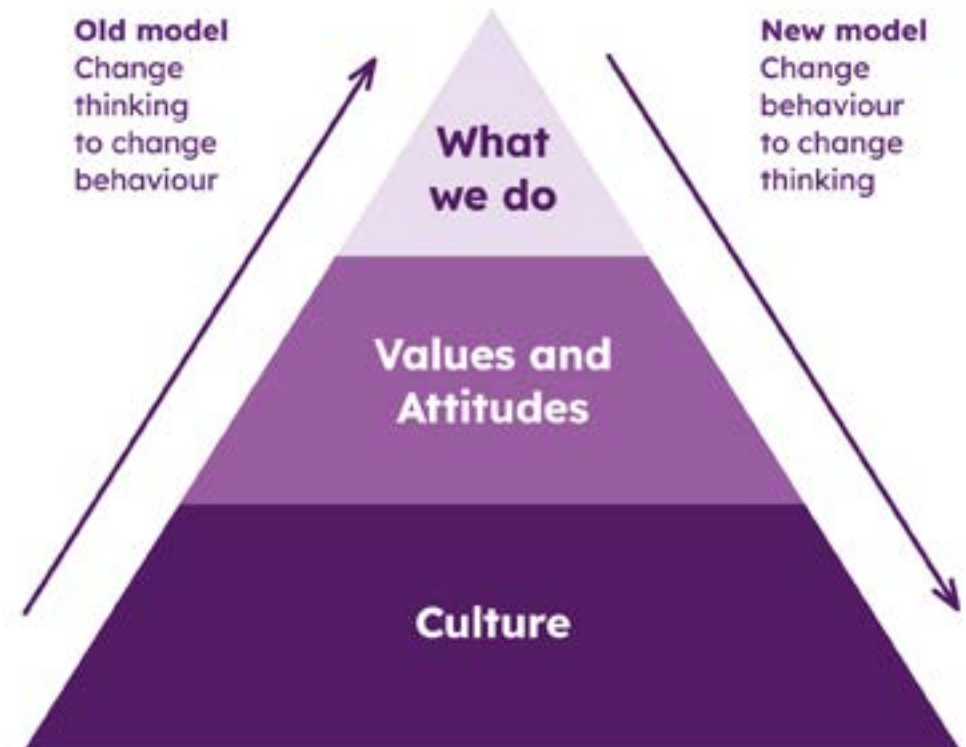
This strategy takes a whole system's approach, and has incorporated the voices of:

- Children and families – Children in Care Council
- Global Majority Networks
- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Lead
- People and Business Partners
- Development Manager for Race (Adults Social Care)
- Service Manager for Anti-Racist Practice
- Directors of Local Delivery
- Service Managers
- Team Managers
- Senior Practitioners

A key objective from all parties is to **build the confidence of leadership and practitioners to address issues pertaining to Race and Racism** and to **support the career progression and retention of staff**. We are seeking to find innovative solutions and are keen to see tangible change. As such, our approach is informed by Shook (2010) as proposed by Reid, W (2020) of the British Association of Social Workers (BASW): 'How to Change a Culture: Lessons from Nummi', whereby we adhere to the following principles:

- Start by changing what people do, rather than how they think
- 'Act your way' into a new way of thinking, rather than 'think your way' into a new way of acting
- Give employees the means by which they can successfully do their jobs
- Recognise that the way problems are treated reflects your corporate culture

(Shook, 2010)



Strategic Outcomes

- A skilled, confident workforce who understand the importance of race and culture and its impact on the life experiences of Black, Asian and other ethnically diverse people children and families
- A workforce engaging in challenging and uncomfortable conversations about racism and supported to do so
- Black, Asian and other ethnically diverse people and staff openly and honestly share experiences of racism in the workplace and from service users and seek resolution
- Black, Asian and other ethnically diverse people families guided towards early help services from first contact
- Ethnicity, Race and Culture reflected in assessments and care planning
- Stabilisation/levelling of the over-representation of Black, Asian and other ethnically diverse Children in Need, Child Protection and Children in Care figures



Key Priorities (2023–2028)

- Communications Strategy
- Mandatory ARP practice training
- Develop ARP Learning and Development Officer

- Fair, transparent progression process
- Employee Development Programme
- ARP Lens in ASYE Policy and Process



- Develop ARP Policy
- Monitor and Track Disciplinary Outcomes
- Develop ARP Ambassador Role

- Publish ARP Statement and Plan
- Enhance permanence of Children in Care
- ARP Lens applied to key documents

Children and Families Social Care Anti-Racist Practice Action Plan 2023–2028

Title

Anti-Racist Practice, Action Plan

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to set out the high-level action plan, for the Anti-Racist Strategy from 2023–2028.

Author

Antonia Ogundayisi – Anti-Racist Practice Service Manager

Date

12 May 2023

Version number

New Action Plan – Version 1

Review frequency

Annually

Next review date

May 2024

Approval and Sign Off

Name	Role
Councillor Beverley Egan	Cabinet Member for Children and Families
Global Majority Network(s)	Consultation Group
Helen Lincoln	Executive Director, Children and Families
Sukriti Sen	Director Local Delivery (Mid)
Nicky O'Shaughnessy	Director Local Delivery (North)
Tanya Gillett	Head of Youth Offending Service
Paul McGee	Head of Essex Social Care Academy (ESCA)
Antonia Ogundayisi	Service Manager, Anti-Racist Practice
Sarah Willings	Business Intelligence Partner
Sheila Woodward	Service Manager, Child Involvement Service
Nahida de Leon	Service Manager, Quality Assurance Safeguarding Service
Sarah Muckle	Assistant Project Manager
Anti-Racist Practice Working Group	Specialist skills and expertise

Demonstrating Leadership

Our Mission:

Demonstrating anti-racist leadership is essential to the embedment of Anti-Racist Practice in Children and Families. We will ensure that all of our leaders are confident and competent to talk about Race and challenge practices which uphold racism. Our leadership team will acknowledge history and the generational trauma experienced

by Black, Asian, Dual-Heritage and ethnically diverse people; take ownership and accountability to ensure that all staff are anti-racist, culturally competent and confident to openly discuss Race, Racism. We will fully support Black, Asian, Dual-Heritage and ethnically diverse people, children, families and staff.

Our Plan:

Action	Lead	Governance Groups	Timescale	Strategic Outcomes
All children and families social staff will understand the ARP agenda, which will be facilitated through a clear Communications Strategy	Executive Director, Helen Lincoln	Functional Leadership Team (FLT) Anti-Racist Practice Steering Board	December 2023	A skilled workforce who understands the importance of Race A workforce engaging in challenging and uncomfortable conversations and supported to do so
All C&F social care staff, starting with leaders, will take part in Anti-Racist Practice Training. This will be mandatory	Essex Social Care Academy (ESCA)	Anti-Racist Practice Steering Board	February 2025	Staff openly and honestly share experiences of racism and seek resolution
Learning spaces and resources will be established to create an ongoing learning culture	Essex Social Care Academy (ESCA)	Anti-Racist Practice Steering Board	February 2024	

Amending our Policies and Procedures

Our Mission:

We will foster structural and systemic resolutions to racial inequalities by amending or creating key policies and procedures.

Our Plan:

Action	Lead	Governance Groups	Timescale	Strategic Outcomes
<p>All policies and procedures will be amended and adapted to reflect ARP principles.</p> <p>We will create a bespoke ARP Policy</p> <p>We will create a zero-tolerance statement</p>	<p>Lead for Policy, Mark Campbell</p> <p>Head of Children's Improvement Partnerships, Dave Barron</p>	<p>Functional Leadership Team (FLT)</p> <p>Anti-Racist Practice Steering Board</p> <p>Policies and Procedures Board</p>	February 2025	<p>A skilled workforce who understands the importance of Race</p> <p>Ethnically diverse staff openly and honestly share experiences of Racism in the workplace</p>
<p>We will monitor and track disciplinary outcomes</p>	<p>People Business Partner, Chris Formosa</p>	<p>Functional Leadership Team (FLT)</p> <p>Anti-Racist Practice Steering Board</p>	February 2024	
<p>The workforce ambassadors will support the review of our practices, policies and procedures to ensure that they are anti-racist.</p>	<p>People Business Partner, Chris Formosa</p>	<p>Functional Leadership Team (FLT)</p> <p>Anti-Racist Practice Steering Board</p>	February 2025	

Diversifying our Workforce

Our Mission:

We will create an environment conducive for Black, Asian, Dual-Heritage and ethnically diverse people and staff to feel psychologically safe to express their experiences of working in

Essex, a place where their wellbeing and progression remains a priority. We will ensure that Race, Culture and Ethnicity is not a barrier to achievement.

Our Plan:

Action	Lead	Governance Groups	Timescale	Strategic Outcomes
We will develop a fair, transparent, progression programme	People Business Partner, Chris Formosa Global Majority Networks Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead, Faizal Hakim	Functional Leadership Team (FLT) Anti-Racist Practice Steering Board Policies and Procedures Board	By February 2028	A skilled workforce who understands the importance of Race Ethnically diverse staff openly and honestly share experiences of Racism in the workplace
We will create an employee development programme	People Business Partner, Chris Formosa Director Local Delivery (DLD) for North, Nicky O'Shaughnessy Global Majority Networks Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead, Faizal Hakim	Functional Leadership Team (FLT) Anti-Racist Practice Steering Functional Leadership Team (FLT)	By February 2025	Stabilisation of the over-representation of Black and Dual-Heritage Children and families
We will create an, Anti-Racist, Assessment Supported Employee Year (ASYE) Policy and review the process, from start to finish	Essex Social Care Academy (ESCA)	Functional Leadership Team (FLT) Anti-Racist Practice Steering Board	November 2024	

Developing and embedding Anti-Racist Practice

Our Mission:

We will set and endorse excellent practice standards, facilitating a learning culture to develop and strengthen social work practice in the lives of Black, Asian, Dual-Heritage and ethnically diverse people children and families. We will create a framework for

excellent practice by critically appraising theory and ensuring that our practice tools are inclusive and that every child's race, culture and ethnicity is explored and is central to planning and support.

Our Plan:

Action	Lead	Governance Groups	Timescale	Strategic Outcomes
We will publish an ARP Statement and Plan	Executive Director, Helen Lincoln	Functional Leadership Team (FLT) Anti-Racist Practice Steering Board	By September 2023	A skilled workforce who understand the importance of Race Ethnically Diverse staff who openly and honestly share experiences of Racism in the workplace
We will enhance the permanence of Black and Dual-Heritage children in Care We will ensure that placements address the ethnic, racial and cultural needs of Black, Asian, Dual-Heritage need and ethnically diverse children in care	Head of Permanence and Sufficiency, Sarah Carter	Functional Leadership Team (FLT) Anti-Racist Practice Steering Board	By February 2028	Stabilise the over-representation of Black and Dual-Heritage children and families in Care, Child In Need and Child Protection Figures Ethnicity, Race and Culture reflected in assessments and Care Planning
We will incorporate an ARP Lens into key practice models and guidelines, including service manager templates	Director of Local Delivery (DLDs) Lead for Policy, Mark Campbell Head of Children's Improvement Partnerships, Dave Barron	Functional Leadership Team (FLT) Anti-Racist Practice Steering Board	July 2025	A workforce talking about Race Ethnically diverse children diverted to early help

Action summary

2023	2024	2025	2028
<p>September 2023 We will publish an ARP Statement and Plan.</p> <p>December 2023 All children and families social staff will understand the ARP agenda, which will be facilitated through a clear Communications Strategy.</p>	<p>February 2024 Learning spaces and resources will be established to create an ongoing learning culture. We will monitor and track disciplinary outcomes.</p> <p>November 2024 We will create an Anti-Racist, Assessment Supported Employee Year (ASYE) Policy and review the process.</p>	<p>February 2025 All C&F social care staff, starting with leaders, will take part in Anti-Racist Practice Training.</p> <p>All policies and procedures will be amended and adapted to reflect ARP principles.</p> <p>We will create a bespoke ARP Policy.</p> <p>We will create a zero-tolerance policy.</p> <p>The workforce ambassadors will support the review of our practices, policies and procedures to ensure that they are anti-racist.</p> <p>We will create an employee development programme.</p> <p>July 2025 We will incorporate an ARP Lens into key practice models and guidelines, including service manager templates.</p>	<p>February 2028 We will develop a fair, transparent, progression programme.</p> <p>We will enhance the permanence of Black and Dual-Heritage children in Care.</p>

Appendices

Appendix 1

Links to other strategic documents

- [Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy](#)
- [Children and Families Co-Parenting Strategy](#)
- [Essex County Council People Plan](#)
- [Corporate Equalities Statement](#)
- [Everyone's Essex](#)

“We must all stand against the cause (racism) and the effect (inequality), through commitment to ensure sustainable change. It is therefore everyone’s business to creating and maintaining an inclusive workplace. It should be a priority because the psychological effects caused by the day-to-day experiences of racism towards staff cannot be measured, however this cannot be ignored.”

Phil Chiza,
Development Manager
for Race
and
Alison Ansell, Director for
Adults Social Care

This information is issued by:
Essex County Council
Children and Families

Contact Antonia Ogundayisi:
Antonia.ogundayisi@essex.gov.uk

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 facebook.com/essexcountycouncil

The information contained in
this document can be translated,
and/or made available in alternative
formats, on request.

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