

LONDON COUNCILS STATEMENT ON RACE EQUALITY

As agreed at Leaders' Committee 13 October 2020

Introduction

In recent months, the brutal killing of George Floyd has brought to the forefront feelings of enormous frustration and anger about the ongoing scale of racial injustice that confronts us. The disproportionate impact of COVID 19 on Black, Asian and other Minority Ethnic communities underscores the longstanding challenge that we must address - making London a fairer place for its citizens.

London Councils is itself reflecting on that challenge and the things that the organisation can do to contribute to addressing that challenge. That includes its day to day work with London's boroughs, our partner organisations and with Londoners, as well as our organisation internally. This statement captures the state of that reflection to date, but also acknowledges that there is an ongoing and evolving conversation on these issues and that the content will change as that conversation changes.

London Local Government and Racial Inequality

London Councils recognises that racial inequalities exist in all areas of public life with devastating consequences for far too many Londoners. We pledge to work with our member authorities to create a fairer and more equal society.

As public bodies, we and our member authorities have a legal duty under the Equalities Act 2010 to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Councils across the capital along with London Councils itself agree that they can make a difference by committing to lead change across different communities, building more diverse and inclusive workplaces and challenging ourselves and others to identify and remove inequalities in access to services.

By working together and with London's Black, Asian and other Minority Ethnic communities, London local government will work consistently towards the goal of greater equality.

London Councils working with its member authorities

London Councils will work with its member authorities on this agenda against the same three broad areas of activity as illustrated below.

Demonstrating Leadership

We will:

- Reflect the importance of this agenda in our Business and Work Plans. Our 2020/21 Business Plan commits to us working to build a fairer, more inclusive capital and to collecting and sharing best emerging local government practice on tackling inequalities, co-ordinating where appropriate across service areas with the aim of helping local initiatives to tackle unfair outcomes (e.g. those disproportionately affected BAME communities). The importance of this theme is reflected more broadly in the Business Plan and work plans, for example in the work with Public Health England and other partners to identify and tackle the disproportionate impact of COVID 19 on Londoners from minority ethnic communities.

- Seek to ensure that tackling racial inequality is an issue that is captured in the work of the London Recovery Board.

Building Inclusive Workplaces

We will:

- Support London local government to collect, analyse and publicise pan London local government workplace ethnicity data.
- Support the development of inclusive employment policies and practices (e.g. training and mentoring programmes) as well as career progression and recruitment initiatives designed to advance the goal of building more inclusive workplaces at all levels.

Challenging and Improving Practice across Services

We will:

- Facilitate and support thematic reviews by CELC Lead Advisers exploring disproportionality issues across a range of service and policy areas and share emerging best practice among member authorities in tackling inequality.
- Challenge our own direct service delivery at London Councils to identify disproportionality issues and practice that may tackle inequality.

London Councils as an Employer

London Councils strives to create a working environment that is free from discrimination in any form and in which our staff and our stakeholders are treated with dignity and respect. We recognise that many of our staff, along with those across the capital, are feeling pain and anger as a result of the wider racial injustices highlighted by document. We wish to discuss these feelings with our staff, in a variety of settings, gain a better and deeper understanding of the impact this has on individuals and identify ways in which, in our working environment and lives, we can help colleagues feel that London Councils is striving for fairer outcomes.

We will:

- Prompt wider conversations with staff about the issues that racial inequality raises and identify further steps that we can take to promote equality in the workplace
- Learn from initiatives on successfully building inclusive workplaces that our member authorities implement
- Reaffirm our commitment to training and support, including mandatory equalities training for staff across the organisation to raise awareness of these issues and as a means of tackling inequality in the workplace.