

TACKLING RACIAL INEQUALITY

Good Practice Case Studies

LB Southwark
Southwark Stands Together

Set up in July 2020, in the midst of the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic and in response to the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis and the Black Lives Matter movement, Southwark Stands Together (SST) defines how Southwark will work to become an unashamedly anti-racist organisation



Problem we were seeking to address

“People say about COVID-19 that no-one is safe unless everyone is safe. It’s the same with inequality - no-one is equal unless everyone is equal”

Eleanor Kelly, Chief Executive of Southwark Council

Healing and Reconciliation: why Southwark is Standing Together

Between June and August 2020 over 1,500 people participated in listening exercises including four open listening events, two outreach face-to-face engagement sessions, and 1,268 residents responded to an online survey.

Our Council staff, 25% of whom live in Southwark, were also asked to speak about their experiences. Over 70% of participants said that they had experienced racial discrimination in the last 12 months. Nearly half of people that responded to our survey from an ethnic minority felt that racial discrimination is a bigger problem in society now than 10 years ago.

Southwark Standing Together (SST) began with a clear focus on eliminating racism, discrimination and inequality. Through these listening exercises it grew to become about how we – together with our communities – heal and reconcile, and how we set about becoming unashamedly anti-racist by making good on our pledges and asking others to join us to do the same. We describe some of what we found and how we have responded below.

Partners involved

LB Southwark

Community Southwark

Healthwatch Southwark

Mummies Republic

Bridges Outcomes
Partnership

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The impact of hate crime

The 2019/20 figures show that there were 105,090 offences where one or more of the centrally monitored hate crime strands were considered a motivating factor. Racist hate crime also increased during 2020 with offences increasing following the Black Lives Matter protests and far-right groups counter-protests after the death of George Floyd. We worked with more than 600 individuals and groups to begin development of a local action plan to address hate crime.

Key findings from those conversations include:

- The need to improve confidence in police response times and outcomes
- The importance of working with schools
- The need to provide training to help everyone better understand the different barriers that individuals face

In response we continue to undertake significant partnership work, particularly with the police. Through this, more than 1,400 young people across more than 30 primary and secondary schools have been engaged through positive workshops promoting diversity, tolerance, and equalities, and the dangers of prejudice. We have also provided interactive Hate Crime awareness-raising workshops across 10 local primary schools, reaching 813 primary-age young people in total.

The impact of multiple disadvantage, health and socio-economic inequalities

To guide our work on SST, we completed a Health Impact Assessment. Our research showed that people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities experience a number of challenges such as socio-economic deprivation, poor housing conditions, poorer health outcomes and barriers to accessing services. We also know from national research that Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities are most likely to have mental health impacts as a result of social isolation, trauma and wider social and economic inequality.

Health inequalities

Our research also showed that Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities were at higher risk of infection, severe illness, hospitalisation and death from COVID-19. 'Long COVID' or the number of people with ongoing symptoms that can last weeks or months after the infection has gone is also influenced by social and economic factors.

To address health inequalities, we have partnered with communities to develop a network of Community Health Ambassadors, in partnership with Community Southwark and Healthwatch Southwark. Ambassadors help their family, friends and wider community make sense of the latest advice and information to help ensure we all stay safe. Over two thirds of these community leaders are from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds.

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We have also been having deeper conversations with our communities about health and wellbeing which has given us a better understanding about the risks of COVID-19 to particular communities. To support this work, seven community and voluntary sector organisations have been awarded Community Health Grants, meaning work can be targeted at groups most in need or at risk.

Our values define who we are as a council, and how we will work to serve the residents and communities of Southwark

Socio-economic inequalities

Between March 2020 and January 2021, the number of people claiming Universal Credit in the UK rose by 98%. The number of people claiming Universal Credit in London rose by 134% and in Southwark by 103%. We also know that Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, young people and people in low-income households experienced job, financial and household insecurity which led to increasing financial stress and negative impacts on mental health.

To address the impact of socio-economic disadvantage, Mummies Republic was set up, which is part of South London Bermondsey Mission. The Mission reaches hundreds of women a year dependent on Universal Credit in low income, single parent families. It supports them through the stress and anxiety of food poverty, accessing mental health services, domestic abuse services and then to move on to safety. Mummies Republic helps signpost and access services and support during crisis. They support a caseload of around 30 consistent households with an average of 150 women and children who are experiencing long term disadvantage. This work is about engaging and supporting the most vulnerable in our communities – in doing so, they are creating a community.

The solution/actions

Becoming unashamedly anti-racist

In addition to the pledges, we have introduced two new values as part of our refreshed Borough Plan:

- always work to make Southwark more equal and just
- to stand against all forms of discrimination and racism

Our values define who we are as a council, and how we will work to serve the residents and communities of Southwark.

Remodelling how we engage with our communities

The people involved in the listening events revealed clear concerns over the 'traditional' types of engagement and conversations the Council was having with its communities. We want to achieve a better understanding of people's needs which will help us to make better, more informed decisions. This will

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in turn lead to better services, reduced discrimination and a reduction of inequalities. We hope it will also help to build trust and confidence in ourselves as officers, the Council and our engagement processes.

Going forward we will develop a five-phase approach to engagement:

1. Exploring the current situation
2. Review what we have understood
3. Deliberative solution exploration
4. Continued collaboration to further inform action planning.
5. Evaluation and review

The language we use and how we communicate

There is a phrase now commonly used by both our community and council officers – ‘council speak’. In short, it refers to a ‘language’ that many members of the community simply do not understand.

We recognise that we must, as officers, communicate with compassion to help relieve trauma and distress, breaking down siloed working internally to work as one council and pool our efforts to eradicate racism, discrimination and inequality.

The value of lived experience, data and research to guide change

On a day-to-day basis Council officers are having many interactions with people living and working in our borough but often not collecting information such as lived experience or equality monitoring information.

Moving forward, the data and information collected locally across the work of SST can be shared with our community and voluntary sector partners where appropriate. We are committed to sharing data sets around the work we have completed especially in the following areas:

- Incorporating the inequalities agenda into public health
- Equality and Inequality consciousness across the five phases of community engagement
- Disproportionality within Southwark’s Youth justice system

It Takes a Village: a new way of thinking, operating and being

It Takes a Village builds on 18 months of collaboration with stakeholders and individuals across Southwark. Since February 2021, we have consulted with over 30 groups and organisations, and 160 individuals in understanding the problems in accessing effective support for people facing multiple disadvantages. It places individual residents and social connection at the core of its work.

Bridges Outcomes Partnership is supporting us to develop a strength-based approach to the commissioning of services focussing on people experiencing multiple disadvantage. We have also begun developing a ‘passport’ approach

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to fast-track individuals facing multiple disadvantage into health and social treatment, support and housing, and informal advice and case consultation to get the best, most creative responses for people facing the most challenging problems.

A local Women's Network has developed, a collaborative across Council, voluntary, community sector, grassroots and individuals, bringing together women across all sectors and organisations, to learn from and befriend each other, and to share cultures and experiences.

We piloted a workshop in early May with managers from Southwark Council's mental health team to de-formalise the language of services and to share skills, practices and techniques that are both service-led and individual and community-led. This has laid the foundations for how we can do more to work with our communities and staff to improve our understanding of the lived experience of service users.

Healing through remembrance and celebration

We will focus more on what matters – our lives and our stories as our legacy. This will include the use of storytelling and oral history to hear and listen to the voices of the people living in our borough. Our communities will be invited to work with us in the shaping an in-depth consultation on how we can celebrate the contribution of the Black community to Southwark.

Background

Southwark Stands Together (SST) was set up in July 2020 in the midst of the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic and in response to the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis and the Black Lives Matter movement.

Through SST Southwark Council is reaffirming its commitment to putting equality, justice and standing against all forms of discrimination and racism at the centre of how the Council will work to become an anti-racist organisation. Moreover, it is about how we work together and engage with the community to bring about real and lasting positive change, eliminating barriers where these exist and creating a borough that puts equality at the heart of all we do.

SST is built on five pledges to:

- promote an open and transparent culture where employees who experience/see racism or discrimination are able to raise it and expect the issue to be dealt with swiftly and fairly
- listen to and amplify our diverse voices within our organizations on how we create an inclusive, fair and representative workplace at all levels
- work to address and prevent structural racial inequalities and structural

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racism within our organization, the organizations we partner with and within the service the service we deliver

- champion organizations that address racial injustice and organizations that promote equality and diversity
- ensure that people of all backgrounds can rise to the top of the organisation

Desired outcomes/delivered outcomes

The work is organised across eight work streams (see detail below) which are a blend of council and other partners where relevant:

Theme	Where we are planning to get to	Priority recommendations
Employment and business	Our residents from diverse backgrounds are accessing quality jobs and locally inspired Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic-led Small Business are thriving backed by accessible and effective business support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support residents from diverse backgrounds to access quality employment opportunities including apprenticeships, internships, and careers information • Explore how we can provide effective business support which is accessible to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic - led SMEs
Education	Our young Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic young people participating fully and meaningfully in a revived environment where their heritage is reflected in teaching as well as receiving exposure to new opportunities and excellent support for their transition into the world of work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in partnership with schools, head teachers and education leaders to develop and implement a Southwark standard for professional development and teacher induction; using the experience and knowledge of BAME professionals in Southwark this will further our aim to address racial discrimination, unconscious bias and reflect cultural understanding across the school environment • Improve the experience of young people with respect to meaningful work experience; develop networks within and beyond school that provide advice and guidance and exposure to opportunities that helps them develop their aspirations and confidence and understanding linked to the world of work

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<p>Health</p>	<p>Harnessing the passion and commitment of our Black, Asian, and Ethnic Minority communities to address health inequalities; hearing their views on effective health and care and working with a fully mobilised health sector.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a strong partnership approach across the whole health sector to address the wider health inequalities that disproportionately impact BAME communities and their physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. • Recognise that discrimination can occur in many different ways from front line to backroom functions and adopt and embed organisation wide approaches to improve the experiences of Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic patients in health and care
<p>Culture</p>	<p>Greater opportunities for our Southwark based Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic artists to receive support in the development of new product and the showcasing of their work amongst increasingly diverse and supportive organisations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a borough-wide programme, inspired by Arts Council England's Agents for Change model, that works with Southwark arts organisations to diversify their boards, thus ensuring that they represent the community and provide opportunities for growth and development for individuals in the sector. • Offer support to Southwark-based BAME artists for the research and development stages of creating new product, and work with local cultural organisations such as theatres and galleries to showcase this work; and increase the amount of artistic content commissioned from Black and culturally diverse artists
<p>Communities</p>	<p>Heard, increasingly engaged and active Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities playing key roles in shaping their services, supporting their neighbours, creating together spaces that are vibrant warm and welcoming, and sharing equally in local resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with our partners and participants in the SST listening activity, to develop a tool kit to improve our reach with BAME communities. • Review our grant making and commissioning processes to remove any barriers to equal access to funding and delivery opportunities; to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - how targeted support can be offered to groups from BAME backgrounds, who have not previously accessed grant funding - whether the way in which we structure our grant making enables or disables people to access these opportunities - the support in place for people to access funding - our grant making and commissioning processes and requirements and the barriers these may generate

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<p>Interaction with policing</p>	<p>A community that can celebrate good news stories where Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic residents are working closely with the police and developing increasing levels of trust and confidence through positive engagement models.</p>	<p>Building Trust between the Police and the Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at existing positive engagement models and what works well and build on that model (e.g. police and schools officer) <p>Police visibility and accessibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve communication strategy linked to Community Safety and Policing reporting good news stories as well as the negative ones.
<p>Renewing the public realm</p>	<p>Our Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic residents in Southwark are collaborating in developing a diverse and inclusive public realm that establishes best practice standards, shapes key policies and celebrates our communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the naming, public art and built environment policies to ensure that they reflect and contribute to the community and council’s vision for a diverse and inclusive public realm identifying future opportunities to ensure that our built environment celebrates the diversity of our communities. • Use Peckham Library Square project as a pilot scheme to establish best practice for incorporating representation, inclusion and diversity in future public realm and capital projects.
<p>Council work-force</p>	<p>Creating a culture where everyone can be themselves at work and are supported to achieve their full potential in an organisation that is representative of the community and that has pledged to become an anti-racist organisation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renew our commitment to equality and anti-racism with refreshed and on-going internal communications and engagement activities. Themes will include but are not limited to ally-ship, white privilege, gas-lighting, micro aggressions and incivilities. • Embark upon an on-going re-training and re-education programme of our leaders and managers so that they understand the critical role they play in addressing racism, structural racism and injustice in the workplace. We want to ensure our leaders are actively anti-racist.

Early progress

- Two new values added to guide all we do: ‘always working to make Southwark more equal’; ‘standing against all forms of discrimination and racism’ and developed a new equalities framework entitled “a fairer, more equal Southwark”
- Evaluated cumulative impact of the whole budget with an advisory panel of councillors in place to oversee the process
- Supported local business through the pandemic with £16.2m of additional restrictions grant; 48% of which identify as minority ethnic

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- Developed a health ambassadors programme – over two thirds of community leaders are from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds
- At July 2021, increased number of Black, Asian and minority ethnic colleagues at senior management level from 22% to 26% since 1 April 2020
- 84.5% of those starting work through our employment support (Southwark Works) were from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Developing a programme of funding for artists from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities
- Engagement on the development of a Black Cultural Centre will begin in October, Black History Month
- Ensuring greater diversification at board level for Southwark’s arts organisations. Olmec, the delivery partner, has recruited a cohort of 15 prospective trustees from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds to take part
- We will launch the “Southwark Standard” with schools this term which will host schools’ own diverse practice (curricula, resources, CPD opportunities, mentors, careers journey library)
- In July an outdoor community workshop involving more than 150 young people took place in partnership with Lambeth Young Advisors and the local police to look at the impact of stop and search and breaking down barriers.

Contact



If you would like to get involved, please email SST@southwark.gov.uk

You can find out more about how we are working to tackle racism, discrimination and inequality by visiting:

www.southwark.gov.uk/engagement-and-consultations/southwark-stands-together