

Leicester Diocese Racial Equity Strategy

Introduction:

1. A priority aspiration of the Diocese of Leicester is to be an institution in which we are “*Shaped by God Together* in our lives and communities, as we seek the growth of His Kingdom”. Our purpose is to ensure that all can thrive and be instrumental in building church communities that flourish in worship, learning, and service. The simple and tragic fact, borne out in the available data and in the stories of the communities in which we have worked for nearly one hundred years, is that people of global majority heritage have a much steeper hill to climb toward that ambition.
2. If we expect to help all members of our diocesan communities to flourish, we must do more than closing gaps and pointing to disparities. All of our work must strive to achieve race equity, a state in which all have the unrestricted opportunity to reach the potential we know they have and respond to God’s calling over their life.
3. Achieving the goal of race equity, of truly removing the fortified racial barriers our church has erected over time, requires dedicated people using sophisticated tools and resources to incorporate racial equity and participation at every stage of our work for progress and transformation.
4. To do this effectively we need to ensure that our mission and ministry actively promote a culture that is palpably anti-racist, and lead to a fuller sense of belonging for all, translated in the full participation of all people, particularly those of global majority heritage, in the life and structures of Leicester Diocese.
5. We believe that a Church where everyone belongs equally is one that provides a range of experiences and perspectives, which strengthen and expand our capacity to minister effectively across cultural, racial and ethnic boundaries. We are committed to live the gospel imperatives of justice and reconciliation, building an inclusive culture that addresses and redresses the legacy of racism in the Church, as well as in wider society. We believe that in cultivating such an environment, we will become a Church that is more representative of the context she serves, and potentially more relevant and effective in her mission and ministry to that community.
6. We recognise that though the burden of responsibility for racial justice has often fallen on racially marginalised and minoritized communities, we cannot expect these constituencies to be the key artisans of the change we long for. A successful outcome to our journey to racial

justice will therefore depend in great measure on the willingness of white British Anglicans to demonstrate decisive leadership and responsibility in addressing and redressing the ongoing legacy of racism within our church.

7. Our recent attempts in tackling racism have accentuated the truth that we come to this with a deficit of credibility, competence, and confidence. However, we remain committed to build on past efforts and work to transform our diocese into a space where all can truly belong and flourish. To that end, we need a collective commitment to embrace, own and deliver on this strategy, and develop the tools and resources to make it happen, trusting that it is together that we will be able to make positive and lasting change for the better.
8. As we state our commitment to the gospel imperative for racial justice and equity, we trust that we will be transformed as a Diocese and witness growth in depth of discipleship, the number and variety of those committing to follow Christ, as well as the nature of our service of the world.

Theological considerations:

9. Recent global and national events have highlighted the truth that our lives are more interconnected than we often appreciate. However, that truth has also uncovered the painful reality that we live deeply fractured and disconnected stories. Racism continues to be a leading cause in creating greater division across our nation, our communities, and our Church, thus enshrining racial injustice and inequality in all areas of society.
10. Eurocentric Theology, as a discipline, has historically had an ambiguous response to racism. Often silent, it has, at its worst, offered a framework that justified and enabled racist practices, and sustained racial injustice in the Church and in society. However, theological discourse can contribute to the promotion of racial justice within ecclesial communities and the larger landscape of society, especially as it demonstrates how race and racism have distorted the exercise of the Christian faith everywhere and desecrated the image of God in humanity.
11. From the outset, Judeo Christian scriptures assert the unicity of human life and its intrinsic value (Gen 2:7). It also posit mutuality and responsibility as an essential element of human self-definition, as expressed in Cain's question to God after he has executed his murderous intents towards his brother: "Am I my brother's keeper?" The rest of scripture may be an endeavour to answer that question.

12. Throughout the Old Testament, this striving echoes with the unambiguous call to justice and righteousness expressed in the disavowal of the oppressor, and a stated bias towards the marginalised and minoritized (Exodus 23:9; Amos 5:24). But at its core, this biblical demand for justice is predicated on the ideal that God's people are to flourish in a justly ordered society, in harmony with God and within itself.
13. However, in biblical tradition justice is not attained merely through cosmetic remedies, but demands attention to retribution, reparation, and restoration. While the end game for retributive justice is not transaction, but transformation of fractured relationships, true justice implies a commitment to atonement (often through public and collective symbolic acts) and reparation (Numbers 5:5-10). This resonates with cultic language and explicitly references sacrifice; here understood as its etymology suggests, in restoring sacredness to what was violated and desecrated.
14. Equally, Hebrew scriptures insist on the fact that history does not have a neutral footprint, but past failures have a persistent impact on the present and the future (Ecclesiastes 3:15). Nevertheless, the bible teaches also that God is committed and invested in the process of redeeming history and enacting full reconciliation across the whole of creation through time and space. This is ultimately expressed in the mystery of incarnation.
15. This quest for a reconciled world culminates in the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Christ who offers a vision of life that is not driven by mastery and anxiety to devastate, subjugate, and colonise the other and the environment, but instead animated by grace and love that is so committed to the flourishing of the other that it is willing to undergo the ultimate gift (John 3:16).
16. Furthermore, this moves us from exclusion to embrace. It reframes our rapport to the other beyond hostility and fracture into neighbourliness. It opens up an avenue for a future that is relational, not transactional. This activated future enables the emergence of reconciling communities that enact that give an immediacy to the kingdom of God among us.
17. The vocation of the Church is therefore a commitment to embody the life of Christ and labour at fostering a kingdom of grace and love. This call culminates in the ultimate vision of humanity gathered in all its diversity in worship before God. In the end, as in the beginning, difference is offered as an integral part of God's purpose in creation. Humanity is invited to partner with God in tending to it, so that the

whole of creation may flourish, and humanity may live reconciled with itself, its environment, and God.

Our Core Values:

18. The Diocese of Leicester operates with a set of core values and Guiding Principles that inform our shared life and ministry. These Core Values include statements which are particularly relevant to diversity and cultural competence, as follows:
19. *Attentive*: We want to pay attention to the lived experience of racial exclusion and segregation across Leicester Diocese. Particularly, we want to be more aware of systemic, structural, and institutional expressions of racism as well as interpersonal racism (both in their explicit and implicit forms). We want to call out expressions of normative whiteness whenever we encounter them. We want to actively seek out the gifts brought by all in service and ministry, especially among people of global majority heritage.
20. *Creative*: We want to be freed from the tyranny of the status quo that stifles imagination and creativity in the way we offer and receive ministry. We want to be imaginative in our responses to the legacy of racism and its ongoing impact on people and structures, and be bold and innovative in our efforts towards repentance, reparation, restoration, and reconciliation.
21. *Generous*: We want our diocese to be a space where all are present and participating in learning, leadership, worship, and service, irrespective of ethnicity and culture. We want all stories to be shared and received in humility, grace and mutuality. We want to distribute resources in an equitable way, paying particular attention to the areas that have been historically under resourced.
22. Ultimately, these values, offer a descriptive vision of the kind of relationships we long to build with each other. We hope that, as we grow in our understanding of racism and its corrosive power on all our lives, we may be able to build healing practices, and develop holy habits that will take us to a place where we can repent of our past failings, commit to reparation, and work for reconciliation.

Process

23. The commitment to advance racial equity is undoubtedly a daunting challenge. Despite decades of active engagement with the issue within the Church of England, we have made very little headway in

changing either structures or people's experiences. The following steps should provide us with a framework to help us in the undertaking of this important work.

- Establish and disseminate an understanding of race equity and inclusion principles.
- Engage UK majority populations in facilitated learning on anti-racism
- Engage minoritized and marginalised populations and stakeholders
- Gather, analyse and monitor data about racial equity outcomes
- Conduct systems analysis of root causes of inequities
- Identify strategies and target resources to address root causes of inequities
- Conduct race equity impact assessment for all policies and decision making bodies
- Continuously evaluate effectiveness and adapt strategies
- Design tools and practices that foster resilience for racial justice

Key Aims:

24. Our strategy will focus on the following key aims:

- Numerical and proportional increase of people of global majority heritage at all levels across the Diocese (Governance, Ministry, diocesan staff, etc...)
- Distinct Focus on belonging that will help to build our culture and reputation as a place that attracts, develops, retains and fully engages all the diverse gifts across our organisation
- Develop, implement, measure and monitor the impact of policies, practices, and processes that aim for greater racial equity
- Continue to highlight and challenge the legacy of systemic racism and attend to the imperative of repentance, reparation, restoration, and reconciliation

Key objectives:

25. As an organisation, Leicester Diocese has a considerable amount of work to do in respect to measuring and monitoring race and ethnicity. Our diversity data recording and reporting clearly needs improving if we are to effectively measure and assess progress in our commitment to transforming the ethnic makeup of the diocese and build a culture that is intentionally anti-racist.

26. Increasing representation is only one indicator of how successful we are at creating a deliberately inclusive workplace and building a

strong and diverse community. This effort to increase representation needs to attend to the historic underinvestment in deployment of people and financial resources in areas with higher proportions of people from the global diaspora.

27. We recognise that to achieve the benefits that diversity, inclusion, and belonging provide, we will need to focus on at least the following key objectives:

- *Set ambitious racial equity and intentionally anti-racist requirements for the whole organisation*
- *Review and assess progress and areas for improvement.*
- *Grow an inclusive culture that patently values ethnic and cultural diversity.*
- *Examine and redress the legacy of historic and ongoing experience of white body supremacy and normative whiteness in our diocese*
- *We want Diversity, inclusion, and belonging to be a natural part of what we do – firmly embedded in diocesan culture*

Key Priority areas:

28. While our aspiration is to transform all aspects of diocesan life, we recognise the need to frame our strategy around a number of priority areas where we hope to see convincing and decisive change in policies, practices, procedures, and people so that ethnic and cultural diversity become a normative experience and expectation for all.

- *Governance and leadership Boards & Committee*
- *Vocations to lay and ordained ministry*
- *Ministry deployment (lay and ordained)*
- *Deployment of resources especially in areas of suppressed abundance (Multiple Deprivation Areas)*
- *Children, young people and families in households, in schools and in churches:*
- *Facilitated learning and development*
- *Safeguarding and wellbeing*
- *Iconography (representation and participation)*

Key Metrics:

29. Determinants of change are not always easy to define and control. However, we want to measure and monitor the following quantitative and qualitative indicators as we assess progress in our efforts to make our diocese a safe space for all, especially those of global majority heritage:

- *Proportion of board members who are ethnically diverse.*

- Proportion of staff members and volunteers, at each level, who are ethnically diverse.
- Number of relationships with diverse organizations, including ecumenical partners.
- Number of pages (print or web) of materials (stories, images, etc...) displaying ethnic diversity in diocesan communication.
- Number of board and staff training programs conducted.
- Number of parishes, schools and related organisations that have developed/adopted a racial equity action plan
- Proportion of favourable responses to evaluation surveys after board and staff training sessions.
- Five-year change in responses to Cultural Competence Assessment from a baseline to be established in 2021 and reviewed annually.

Implementation:

30. An organisation that fosters mutuality in belonging is one that ensures that questions of diversity and inclusion are the responsibility of all its members (especially those in the majority group) to contribute to generating an inclusive culture and environment.
31. However, ultimate accountability lies with the senior leadership of the Diocese whose responsibility is to oversee the delivery and implementation of the outlined Strategy, ensuring continuity and consistency (in policies, practice, processes, procedures and people) where relevant, and discontinuity where necessary.
32. To that end, an implementation action plan will need to be set up, approved by the relevant diocesan bodies (Bishop's Council) continually updated, and progress will be assessed at least quarterly by The Bishop leadership Team and reported annually to the Bishop's Council.
33. To guarantee a degree of independence in our commitment to accountability, we will set a Racial Equity Unit (REU) as a working group of DFEMA. This REU will be made of members of DFEMA, external partners (critical friends) and key diocesan representatives. Terms of reference will need to be agreed, and suitable the RUE will need to be suitably resources in order to carry out its work effectively.
34. In order to give life and vitality to this document, and indeed, the whole process, we want to embed and embody it around a set of practices and habits (including devotional and prayer resources) that will inform our mission and ministry. Therefore, particular attention needs to be given to the diffusion of this strategy at all levels of our diocesan community, especially considering how it will be interpreted,

implemented and monitored at parochial level, in Fresh Expression of Churches, and in our schools. To that end we will produce prayer resources, as well as bible study material for individual or collective use across the diocese. Facilitated learning on issues of racism will also be provided across the diocese, particularly to those in leadership and decision making positions. Additionally, we will signpost towards existing resources to help us in our commitment to live well together (e.g. the CofE's Pastoral Principles for living well together).

35. The implementation plan must include monitoring and measurement against the following criteria:
- a suite of diversity statistics to be produced and analysed by HR (quarterly?)
 - racial /ethnicity gap and success data in representation
 - learning and development data
 - Safeguarding disclosures relating to racism
 - benchmarking against both the local and national contexts
 - this strategy is to be reviewed in 2023