

Diocese of Leicester

Racial Equity Policy

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. We, the Diocese of Leicester ("**the Diocese**") embrace and value cultural diversity in its many forms and in all levels of the church. We are committed to the flourishing of all cultural backgrounds in body, mind and spirit and are committed to creating an environment where all members of the church irrespective of background, culture, ethnicity or nationality are able to fully participate in the life and worship of the church. Central to this commitment is the belief that the Good News is open to all, and that the church is a place where everyone is recognised, valued and afforded human dignity as we live out the New Testament principle that there is neither Jew, nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female.
- 1.2. The above approach recognises that our rich diversity is purposeful and aids our unity in Christ. It does not attempt to disregard an individual's cultural heritage or background as suggested by the so-called colour-blind approach. In contrast, it recognises that only by all nations, cultures, tribes and languages coming together can we gain a fuller understanding of God. All humans are made in God's image.
- 1.3. Acknowledging this basis, the Diocese is opposed to racism in all its forms. Whilst acknowledging that racism is present within society and sadly is present within the church, the Diocese is striving to build an anti-racist culture. This requires an awareness of what racism is, an understanding of how the church addresses racially discriminatory behaviour within the church family and the promotion of racial equity. The legislative and policy framework on Safeguarding and the Equality Act 2010 provide a robust context in which to address matters of racial discrimination that remains a persistent feature of contemporary society.
- 1.4. This policy outlines the principles as to how we as the Diocese shall create and implement anti-racist processes and procedures which underpin the creating of an inclusive and anti-racist culture within all the bodies and churches of the Diocese. Every employee of the Diocesan Board of Finance and all leaders lay and ordained of the local churches within the Diocese are called on to be

responsible for conducting themselves in a manner consistent with this policy in all their church-related activities and any work carried out on behalf of the Diocese.

2. RACISM IN THE DIOCESE

2.1 As we commit ourselves to Anti-Racism as the Diocese, we have to acknowledge, that both in our past and present the words, actions and inactions of the dominant social group, of white people, to those who are in the minority, UK Minority Ethnic/Global Majority Heritage ("UKME/GMH") people, within our diocesan structures and within our church communities, have disadvantaged, wounded and exploited GMH/UKME people in our midst.

2.2 We have within the Diocese historic links to chattel slavery and the slave trade, people within the churches of the Diocese were part of the hatred and prejudice that met Indian people fleeing here from Uganda in the 1970s. UKME/GMH lay and ordained people in our churches, have had their hair touched without consent. They have with casual words and actions been treated as second class members of the Body of Christ by their white siblings at tea and coffees after the service. UKME/GMH people have not been encouraged to read, preach or lead in our churches, because of their accents or because they did not suitably conform to the dominant social culture.

2.3 The presence of racism within our diocesan structures and within our church communities has caused and causes deep wounds and scars. It also distorts us as the Body of Christ and deprives us of the beauty and richness of diversity. We are created in great diversity in the image of God, because a monochrome humanity could never do justice to the vastness of who the triune God is. White Christians who have let racism shape their words, actions and inactions have sinned against God and against their UKME/GMH siblings in Christ. Becoming an anti-racist diocese is therefore a process of repentance for the sin of racism in our midst.

3. RACISM EXPLAINED

3.1 There are many ways in which racism has been defined and this can lead to misunderstandings and widespread confusion. For the purpose of this policy, racism is referred to as the collective prejudices of the dominant social group in

society which are often enshrined in law, institutions and societal practices. In order to enable the Diocese to build an inclusive and anti-racist culture, this policy holds predominantly white members of the Diocese to account, although we are also deeply aware that it will only be possible to put this policy into practice, if all of us from all our different ethnic and cultural backgrounds work together.

- 3.2 The Macpherson report¹, defined institutional racism as *“The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin”*. It can be detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour that amount to discrimination through prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people. It is important to note that individual or institutional racism need not be an intentional or premediated act; rather racism is more accurately understood in terms of the impact or outcome it has on minority ethnic people. The Equality Act 2010 outlines the forms discrimination can take in law which include harassment, victimisation and/or differential treatment based solely on the basis of one's colour of skin, ethnicity or nationality irrespective of whether it is of a direct or indirect nature. Clearly any incidences of racial discrimination would impede the ability of the church to promote a safe culture in all churches and its own specific mandate to spread the Good News, provide a welcome for all, or establish churches where the value and dignity of every human being is affirmed.
- 3.3 It is the intention of the Diocese to go beyond the basic legal requirements. The Diocese is not satisfied with just creating safe churches which are free from discrimination; rather it seeks to promote a culture which actively creates an environment in which everyone is able to flourish, worship and serve within their church community. To this end the Diocesan Board of Finance is a signatory to the Race at Work Charter.
- 3.4 It is therefore incumbent on the Diocese to set forth in detail the measures it intends to adopt in framing an inclusive and anti-racist culture and to ensure its continual review. The Diocese of Leicester Racial Equity Strategy sets out the direction to build an inclusive and anti-racist culture and highlights the key priority areas which

¹ Also known as Report of the Stephen Lawrence inquiry (*Report of an inquiry by Sir William Macpherson of Cluny*, published 24 February 1999 at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-stephen-lawrence-inquiry>).

should be addressed. This policy further outlines the principles for creating and implementing related processes and procedures.

4. OUR APPROACH: RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

4.1 It is commonly understood that the goal of the English criminal justice system is mainly to punish perpetrators, which however rarely does much to repair any of the damage done to the victims. In contrast the justice of God in Scripture and particularly in the person of Jesus Christ is restorative. Rather than punishing and destroying humanity for our many failures, God becomes one of us in the person of Jesus Christ. On the cross and in the grave, Jesus Christ overcomes the power, which sin, and death have over humanity and opens a new path towards forgiveness and reconciliation for all human beings. This shows that the first priority of God's justice is not punishment, but the restoring of what has been broken. God's will and purpose for creation is for wholeness and goodness. God wants and will see the damage done to victims repaired, their lives and bodies restored. As Scripture makes clear, the sin of perpetrators is not only damaging to their victims, but also to themselves.

4.2 In order to bring about healing and restoration to both victims and perpetrators, a process of repentance is necessary. The process of repentance as seen in the encounter of Jesus with Zacchaeus, shows that repentance is a process of changing the way we act, as well as doing all we can to repair the damage we have done. Zacchaeus' story shows, that this is restorative for both perpetrators and victims. The Diocese believes that although the process of repentance may not undo the hurt suffered by the victim, it can be an important step towards healing and possible future reconciliation. The Diocese therefore adopts a restorative justice approach under this policy.

4.3 A restorative justice approach depends crucially on the perpetrators' acknowledgment of wrongdoing and will to enter into a process of repentance, which goes beyond an apology. The Diocese commits to applying the principle of restorative justice to all of its policies, processes and procedures, present and future, in relation to racial equity, as long as perpetrators are willing to take

responsibility for their wrongdoing and with due care and commitment to the physical, mental and emotional safety of the victims.

5. OUR APPROACH: DEVELOPING AN ATTITUDE OF LISTENING AND LEARNING

5.1 The Diocese acknowledges wrongdoing which has disadvantaged, wounded and exploited UKME/GMH people in our midst. As a step in our diocesan process of repentance, of changing the ways we act, as well as doing as much as we can to repair the damage we have done, we commit ourselves with this policy to developing an attitude of listening and learning as well as achieving a redistribution of power within all the bodies and churches of the Diocese, by encouraging PCCs and committees to adhere to this.

5.2 The above explored assumption that power should disproportionately be held by white people is underpinned by the consciously or unconsciously held belief that while white people have things to say and teach to UKME/GMH people, white people have no need to listen to and learn from GMH/UKME people. This also means that white people expect UKME/GMH people to know, understand and assimilate to white cultures, but white people rarely consider it as vital to know, understand and possibly assimilate to the cultures of UKME/GMH people. We as the Diocese commit ourselves to developing an attitude of listening and learning from the UKME/GMH people within the Diocese. Only by cultivating a deeply rooted culture of listening and learning by white people within the Diocese will the Diocese be able to create and implement anti-racist processes and procedures which underpin the creation of an anti-racist culture within all the bodies and churches of the Diocese.

5.3 With this policy, we as the Diocese commit ourselves:

- (a) to actively involving UKME/GMH people in the writing and creating of anti-racist processes and procedures of the Diocese – this will mean that the thoughts, experiences and views of UKME/GMH people should be specifically sought before relevant processes and procedures are written, updated and adopted;

- (b) to finding at least one way within all the bodies of the Diocese and encourage churches of the Diocese to mark at least two of the following heritage and history months: Black History Month, South Asian Heritage Month and East and South East Asian Heritage Month;
- (c) to making it mandatory for every member of staff, clergy and licensed minister within the Diocese to undertake unconscious bias training and anti-racism training by December 2026;
- (d) to encourage the different bodies and churches of the Diocese to plan every year at least one training and learning event that will enable the participants to listen to UKME/GMH people and learn from them, be it by having UKME/GMH people as speakers or by using books, art or training materials created by UKME/GMH people, for example, Lent courses, IME sessions, book clubs or quiet days.

6. OUR APPROACH: ACHIEVING REDISTRIBUTION OF POWER

6.1 Ideology of racism demands that power belongs to white people. Racism is an ideology that was needed to justify systems like chattel slavery and colonialism and the genocides that came with it. While chattel slavery has been abolished, genocides are widely condemned and society is increasingly critical of colonialism, racism has become deeply imbedded in society, in ways we are often unconscious of. One of the important ways this shows itself is in power structures. It is expected that positions of power are held by white people. Only in majority UKME/GMH spaces and communities is it comfortable and acceptable to have UKME/GMH people in positions of power. To have a UKME/GMH person become priest of a majority white British church community or bishop of a majority white British diocese is most likely going to be met with questions, doubts and even outrage. Having a white person as priest of a majority UKME/GMH community on the other hand is often considered as normal and unproblematic.

6.2 The Diocese recognises that most of its positions of power are held by white people, which means that the power to make decisions, to shape and form who we are to become as a diocese lays mainly within the hands of white people. The Diocese also acknowledges that this is problematic, because it perpetuates white normativity and upholds institutional racism, without change or challenge to the

dominant culture. In order to create an anti-racist culture within all the bodies and churches of the Diocese, a redistribution of power has to take place within the Diocese.

6.3 With this policy, we as the Diocese commit ourselves:

- (a) to creating processes and procedures to deal with racial abuse and discrimination; any and all of these processes and procedures shall give agency and empower UKME/GMH people;
- (b) to always considering what UKME/GMH people should be considered and asked to apply for any posts and offices within the Diocese and within the churches of the Diocese, including all posts, lay and ordained, paid or voluntary, as well as any seats and offices within the governing structures of the Diocese and its churches; those responsible for any such appointment or recruitment should be able to show that they have considered and welcomed UKME/GMH people to consider applying or standing for posts and offices, and where any post or office is not filled by UKME/GMH people, to give reasonable explanations (this is not to suggest that all posts and offices should be filled by UKME/GMH people, but that the Diocese is committed to developing recruitment processes which are shaped by a real will for power redistribution);
- (c) to considering the extra strain on UKME/GMH people in positions of power within the Diocese and offering them extra support;
- (d) to working with UKME/GMH people to let the communal worship within the Diocese and in its churches be shaped by the experiences and worship traditions of the UKME/GMH people within the church communities;
- (e) to considering and paying attention to who leads different aspects of worship and community life from the front, as well as who speaks in the governing bodies and different meetings of the bodies and churches of the Diocese, and where UKME/GMH members are not seen and silent, to working with UKME/GMH members to encourage and enable them to become more visible and to have their voices heard, so that the Diocese and its church communities can be shaped and enriched by the gifts and expertise of UKME/GMH members.

7. POLICY REVIEW

7.1 The Bishop’s Council acting through the newly appointed Racial Equity Unit is responsible for creating and reviewing this policy for the Diocese as a whole. This policy should be reviewed every five years and updated as required.

Version CONTROL INFORMATION

Title	Racial Equity Policy
Version	1
Review date	18/01/2025