

# LIVERPOOL CITY REGION

## ANTI-RACISM STRATEGY DELIVERY FRAMEWORK



Liverpool City Region  
Race Equality Hub

**NO PLACE  
for RACISM**



**LIVERPOOL  
CITY REGION**  
COMBINED AUTHORITY

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LIVERPOOL CITY REGION

**NO PLACE**  
for **RACISM**



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# Introduction

# 1 Introduction

Racism is multifaceted, intangible and a complex system of oppression that operates through attitudes, actions, and policies to create unequal life outcomes based on race or ethnicity. It is often thought of as the product of individual prejudice, whereby bad people hold prejudicial and discriminatory ideas. However, beyond this simple good vs bad notion, racism involves power dynamics that privilege certain groups while disadvantaging and excluding others, even where this is not intentional or conscious.

Racism also shifts its focus, often marginalising different groups at different times, shifting almost seamlessly from anti-Irish prejudice and discrimination, to Jewish communities, people of African and Caribbean heritage, people from South-East Asian communities, manifesting as Islamophobia and often heightened during periods of political instability and economic crisis.

We provide an understanding of these different forms of racism, not as an academic exercise, but in order to enable recognition, so that we have the tools and strategies to address them in a way that is both effective and that brings about tangible change.

The framework is not intended to be a kind of anti-racism ‘pick and mix’ that allows organisations to cherry pick the actions they find easy or are willing to prioritise for expedient or convenient reasons.

The different forms of racism are presented here in order to provide a framework that will enable the necessary practical action to be taken and contribute to the elimination of racism and all its complexities across all sectors and areas of LCR.

The initial step is to identify which types of racism are applicable to each organisation or group or individual.

Identifying the types of racism should be a dynamic, ongoing learning process that includes Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups as a key part of the identification and prioritisation process.

The next step involves understanding how to implement the necessary actions that will address these identified types of racism. Once again Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups and communities should form a key part in identifying effective action and the appropriate roadmap and timeframe in which outcomes can be expected to be realised and to identify what success looks like.

Finally, the sharing of good practice, an honest assessment of what did or did not work and why, is critical for greater learning and understanding and where you can, find ways to celebrate your successes.

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# Internalised Racism

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# Internalised Racism

AIM

## (Tackling Internalised Racism) Aim

Black people feel seen and believe they are valued members of the LCR.

**Internalised Racism** are the subtle and overt messages that reinforce negative beliefs and self-hatred in individuals from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities.

This relates to the ongoing mental and emotional strain from daily encounters with racism, resulting in a range of negative emotional and physical symptoms, such as anxiety, headaches, back pain, and chronic pain.

This distress can also lead to decreased confidence, difficulty concentrating, and reduced motivation. The emotional consequences can include fear, anxiety, isolation, and low self-esteem.

## Negative Impact of Internalised Racism

- **Racial Trauma, Identity, and Belonging:** Communities in Liverpool City Region continue to experience the weight of history, memory, and exclusion. Legacies of slavery, repatriation policies, segregation, and recent events like the 2024 riots shape daily life and perceptions. It is important to recognise Liverpool's immigration and settler history, as well as its long-standing indigenous Black communities, but also recognise both the different and similar needs of newer communities across LCR.
- **Sense of Exclusion:** Many participants feel "in" Liverpool City Region but not truly "of" it, excluded from the region's cultural narratives and identity.

- **Scouse Exceptionalism:** While Scouse identity is a source of civic pride, it can also act as an invisible barrier, excluding those who do not fit the “white, working-class Scouse” mould. (This dynamic is noted in the Liverpool City Council Anti-Racism Strategy).
- **“Death by 1,000 cuts”:** This refers to the constant exposure of racism and microaggressions and how this is exhausting and wears down a person’s well-being over their lifetime. The effect is not about one major traumatic event, but the compounding stress of many small ones.

## What do we need to do?

- **Trauma-Informed Approaches:**  
The importance of safe spaces and culturally responsive wellbeing, including investment in mental health, legal aid, and trauma-informed services tailored to race-based stress and prejudice.
- **Celebration of Love and Joy:**  
Stresses the value of celebrating achievements and fostering joy within communities.
- **Accountability:**  
Urges accountabilities for all forms of media and ensuring access to support and safe spaces for sharing experiences.

## The change we want to see

- **Feeling Safe and Accepted:**  
The importance of individuals and communities feeling safe, accepted, proud and able to share in the unique identities and exceptionalism that forms a key part of the Liverpool City Region identity.
- **Emotional Freedom:**  
Being able to be oneself and feel accepted, thereby reducing feelings of isolation.
- **Truth and Healing:**  
An honest recognition of Liverpool’s history and public narratives that both celebrate contributions and acknowledge harm.

## The challenges

- Counteracting one-dimensional and negative media and historical perceptions of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, their capabilities and achievements.
- Lack of opportunity to hear the voices of people with lived experience of racism in discussions around race, migration, Islamophobia, asylum and refugee policy and for their humanity to be asserted.
- Lack of education materials, tools and resources that develop greater understanding of how and where negative perceptions emerge and challenge them effectively with alternative perceptions and depictions that promote the diversity of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities.

## Good practice examples

### 4 Wings Project:

This initiative provides women with support, guidance, and encouragement to overcome obstacles. The project is recognised as a safe space where women feel comfortable sharing their stories without fear of judgement.



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# Interpersonal Racism

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# Interpersonal Racism

**Interpersonal Racism** refers to racist acts and microaggressions carried out by one person against another.

## Negative Impact of Interpersonal Racism

- **Random Racial Abuse:** Individuals experience unpredictable racial abuse and live with a fear of verbal, emotional or physical attack (often because their faith is identifiable through their dress or appearance).
- **Racial Trauma:** These experiences contribute to racial trauma, affecting emotional well-being and a sense of safety.

**AIM**

**(Tackling Interpersonal Racism) Aim**

Interactions free of racial hatred.

## What do we need to do?

- **Dialogue:** This is about initiating dialogue about racism, even when uncomfortable and requires proactive action and not just sentiment.
- **Education and Training** are essential for challenging individual biases. There is a need for well-resourced programmes of racial literacy and community education.
- **Reporting and Accountability** leading to safe reporting mechanisms and community liaison roles.
- **Restorative Practice.** Promote restorative approaches that focus on providing opportunities for learning and reflection and repairing trust and relationships, not just punishment.
- **Intersectional knowledge** that recognises that racism often acts in tandem with other forms of oppression including class, gender, disability and sexuality.
- **Partnerships:** with anti-racist community and cultural organisations.

## The change we want to see

- **Compassionate Dialogue:** Conversations about race and identity should be grounded in openness, honesty, love and understanding, not confrontation or defensiveness.
- **Respectful Treatment:** Treat everyone as valued community members deserving of support, rather than with suspicion or bias so that they can feel safe in all settings/spaces.
- **Challenging Stereotypes:** Break the association between whiteness and Englishness, promoting a more inclusive sense of national identity that all communities can enjoy and feel part of, while at the same time feeling able to enjoy and celebrate their cultural or national heritage.
- **Individual Recognition:** Stresses the importance of recognising and respecting each person's individuality and lived experience.
- **Safe Disclosure of Identity:** Create environments where people feel safe and confident to disclose their identities without fear of judgment or reprisal.
- **Eradication of Hate Crime:** This enables Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities to have faith in hate crime reporting and investigation processes and are able to live and thrive across all areas of the Liverpool City Region.

## The challenges

- **Inconsistent Accountability:** There are no consistent consequences for racism or microaggressions, leading to a lack of deterrence and accountability.
- **Insufficient Tools and Support:** People lack the resources and support needed to identify, challenge, and report racism, resulting in fear and reluctance to speak up.
- **Cultural and Structural Barriers:** Many individuals are afraid to discuss race due to lack of understanding, denial, or fear of backlash. This is compounded by “consultation fatigue,” where Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority communities are repeatedly expected to educate others.
- **Leadership Challenges:** Councillors and officials may avoid difficult conversations about race, racism and anti-racism due to lack of skills, fear of media scrutiny, or concerns about being seen as divisive.
- **Unclear Responses to Islamophobia:** There is a lack of clarity and confidence in how to respond effectively when Islamophobia occurs. The excuse that Islam is a religion, rather than a race is often used to justify prejudice and discrimination against Muslims or people who appear to be Muslims.

## Good practice examples

- The **Anti-Racism Strategy Virtual Team** – a collection of employees from across the Liverpool City Region who came together to support the development of the Anti-Racism Strategy - demonstrates strong enthusiasm for involvement in anti-racism work by white colleagues.
- **Merseyside Police** offer a bespoke 2-hour anti-racism training tailored to local history, delivered alongside the ‘Call it Out’ campaign.
- **Embrace** Local Authority Shared Training provides understanding and education of anti-racism across our local authorities.
- **Reciprocal mentoring** programs support ongoing learning and allyship.
- **Staff networks** offer additional support and safe spaces for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic workers.

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# Institutional Racism

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# Institutional Racism

**Institutional Racism** focuses on transforming organisational structures, policies, and cultures to eliminate racism.

It emphasises leadership accountability, policy reform, training, and robust monitoring, while acknowledging the challenges and highlighting good practice for meaningful change.

## Negative Impact of Institutional Racism

- **Institutional racism** affects employment, skills, and well-being, leading to psychological distress and reduced opportunities.

**AIM**

### (Tackling Institutional Racism) Aim

To eradicate institutional racism within the Liverpool City Region.

## What do we need to do?

- **Co-Design Over Consultation:** Involve those directly affected by racism in planning and decision-making as equal partners and where appropriate ensure fair compensation for community members contributions – moving from token consultation to genuine power sharing.
- **Inclusive Leadership:** Promote leadership that reflects the region's diversity and champions anti-racism.
- **Funding and Resources:** Secure sufficient and consistent funding for anti-racist posts and strategies.
- **Senior leadership** buy-in is essential for driving anti-racist policies and practices.
- **Regular review and revision of policies** (recruitment, promotion, service delivery, procurement, resource allocation) are necessary to ensure equity, openness and transparency.
- **Data, Monitoring, and Evaluation:** Improve data collection, monitoring, and analysis to inform decision-making and action plans, ensuring regular reviews and transparent reporting.
- **Quality Assurance and Commitment:** Establish quality assurance mechanisms (e.g., Ofsted-like standards), set clear commitments (akin to legal rights bills), and ensure all organisations sign up to anti-racist principles and regular accountability.
- **Equalities Legislation:** Delivery within the context of equalities legislation for public authorities and for local organisations to act within the framework and spirit of the equality's legislation.
- **Political will and buy in:** support our political leaders in having the courage to challenge racist and divisive narratives, irrespective of political allegiances.
- **Accountability:** establishment of open and transparent mechanisms for monitoring progress and evaluating outcomes and impact, utilising the skills and knowledge of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities to achieve this.

## The change we want to see

- The goal is for organisations to reflect the communities they serve, with inclusive leadership, equitable policies, and a culture of accountability and continuous improvement.

## The challenges

- **Institutional Racism:** Institutions can legitimise racism through their policies and practices, which may unintentionally reinforce inequality and exclusion.
- **Leadership Challenges:** There is often a lack of racial literacy among middle and senior managers, making it difficult to recognise and address racism effectively within organisations and a lack of senior leadership buy in.
- **Political climate:** the increasingly inflammatory use of racist and divisive narratives from across the political spectrum that seeks to de-humanise those with lived experience of racism provides a hostile and divisive environment that leaves Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities

vulnerable and in fear and further emboldens racist acts and narratives.

- **Lack of investment and funding:** Lack of investment, scaling back and tokenism of equalities policies, practices and actions and failure to adopt anti-racist perspectives to mainstream investment and funding opportunities.

## Good practice examples

- **Anti Racist Captains in Schools:** Bluecoat School has appointed student leaders in partnership with Show Racism the Red Card.
- **Creative Expression:** Drama and creative arts are used as vehicles for anti-racist messaging.
- **Race Equality in Education Role:** Dedicated roles supporting race equality in the education system.
- **Positive Action Recruitment:** Programmes to improve diversity in hiring.
- **LCRCA Aspire/Discover Traineeship:** Local initiatives supporting race equality in employment.

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# Structural Racism

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# Structural Racism

**Structural Racism** is about multiple institutions collectively upholding racist policies and practices.

## Negative Impact of Structural Racism

- **Education:** There is clear, longstanding under-representation of Black students and staff in higher education, reflecting a systemic failure to deliver equality of opportunity.
- **Racism in schools:** This is a major concern, with representation gaps, discriminatory practices, and exclusionary curricula undermining safety, aspiration and attainment.
- **Employment and Economic Opportunity:** Employment discrimination is the top concern for residents, especially among African, Caribbean, Pakistani, and Chinese communities.
- **Grassroots organisations** are chronically underfunded, and procurement processes often exclude racially diverse-led enterprises, perpetuating economic inequality.
- **Media and Misinformation:** Media bias and misinformation, especially during events like the 2024 riots, fuel division and violence. Stereotypes and rumours, particularly on social media, target racially diverse communities, including Muslims and asylum seekers.

**AIM**

### (Tackling Structural Racism) Aim

Systems & institutions commit to tackling racism explicitly and consistently.

## What do we need to do?

- **Leadership, Allyship, and Accountability:** Foster environments where leaders and white allies take proactive responsibility for anti-racist work, including supporting peer learning, reverse mentoring, and visible stances against racism.
- **Community and Voluntary Sector Engagement:** Prioritise targeted support, trauma training, and sustainable funding for grassroots and voluntary sector organisations, recognising their frontline role in crisis response and community support.
- **Policy, Practice, and Structural Change:** Drive holistic change by co-creating actions with excluded groups, scrutinising equality impact assessments and consultations, and upscaling good institutional practices across sectors.
- **Collaboration and Shared Learning:** Bring organisations together to share good practice, create sector-wide forums, and develop shared resources such as language databases and standardised EDI curricula.

- **Resourced community participation:** Utilising and acknowledging the skills, knowledge and expertise of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities and remunerating and rewarding them appropriately in recognition that they hold unique and specialist knowledge.

## The change we want to see

- **Accountability and Celebration in Media:** Media should play an active role in holding politicians accountable while also highlighting and celebrating the diversity and valuable contributions of Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic communities.
- **Open, Transparent Dialogue:** Fostering open, transparent, and curiosity-driven conversations are essential for building understanding and trust across communities.
- **Representation Matters:** The phrase “You can’t be what you can’t see” underscores the importance of visible diversity in media and public life, as representation inspires and empowers individuals from all backgrounds.

## The challenges

- **Translating Mission Across Roles:** There is a need to effectively communicate and embed the anti-racism mission at every level—middle management, frontline staff, customers, and students.
- **Borough Networks and Collaboration:** Each borough has its own networks, which can lead to fragmented efforts. A key challenge is finding ways to “join up” these networks for unified action and shared learning across the Liverpool City Region.
- **Power and Influence of Mass Media:** Mass media holds significant power in shaping narratives, influencing public opinion, and either supporting or undermining anti-racism efforts. Media can be a force for accountability and celebration but also risks perpetuating stereotypes and division if not used responsibly.
- **School Response to Bullying and Racism:** Reports of bullying and racism in schools are often not taken seriously, with complaints from children and parents being ignored. This lack of accountability and response undermines trust and safety, highlighting the need for robust reporting mechanisms and a culture of zero tolerance.
- **The Political Environment:** Establishing the LCR Anti-Racism Strategy as a model of good practice, that other areas of the UK can follow, represents a significant challenge to the current political environment and will establish the city region as something of an outlier.
- **Lack of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Decision Makers:** Supporting Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic leaders and potential leaders to access leadership and decision making opportunities. Across a range of sectors there exists a dearth of leaders from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, meaning that important pathways to leadership do not exist. Many Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic leaders complain that their skills and talents have only been recognised in environments outside the city region.
- **Lack of resources for community groups/leaders:** Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic community groups are often chronically under-resourced but undertake incredible work in providing opportunities and services that meet the needs of their communities, in a way that mainstream providers often fall short. Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic leaders, in addition to often leading organisations within a financially challenging and under-resourced environment, face additional pressures including how to respond to local and national developments in relation to race and racism. How to share this burden with a wider cohort of leaders will be an important feature of the strategy.

## Good practice examples

- Initiatives like the **Sefton Anti-Racism Charter (CVS)** foster shared commitments to anti-racism across organizations.
- **Positive action programmes** highlight targeted support and cross-sector collaboration for greater cohesion.



The Anti-Racism conference.

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# Systemic Racism

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# Systemic Racism


AIM

## (Tackling Systemic Racism) Aim

Racial Justice, to dismantle the racist systems and eradicate all forms of racism in the Liverpool City Region.

**Systemic Racism** is said to occur when racially unequal opportunities and outcomes are inbuilt or intrinsic to the operation of a society's structures. It is the policies and practices that exist throughout a whole society or organisation, which result in and support a continued unfair advantage to some people and unfair or harmful treatment of others based on race.

Racism in Liverpool is systemic, not incidental. It is embedded in institutions, reinforced by history, and reproduced through everyday experiences. *Page 12: Tackling it requires structural reform, not one-off initiatives.* 

History and memory shape the present. Slavery, repatriations, segregation, and riots are not distant history but living memory. Communities insist that Liverpool can only become anti-racist if it acknowledges this legacy honestly and creates space for truth, healing, and celebration of diverse contributions. *(LCC Anti-Racism Strategy).* 

## Negative Impact of Systemic Racism

- **Minimisation and Concealment:** Racism is often minimised or hidden behind multicultural façades, making it harder to address openly.
- **Entrenched Bias in Public Services:** Residents report entrenched patterns of racial bias and inequality in health, housing, policing, and council services.

Testimonies highlight racial stereotyping in healthcare, discriminatory housing practices, and inconsistent policing. Hate crime and hate speech are pressing concerns, with doubts about whether incidents are taken seriously or recorded properly.

- **Leadership and Accountability Gaps:** Communities question whether institutions truly represent them. Barriers include lack of diverse leadership, defensiveness when racism is raised, broken promises, and a culture where racism goes unpunished. Resistance from White communities is a recurring theme, with some dismissing racism as exaggerated or divisive, and fearing loss of place or resources.
- **Personal Accounts of Safety and Hostility:** Some individuals only feel safe in specific community spaces. Incidents of physical assault and verbal abuse (such as being attacked for wearing a hijab) cause trauma and reluctance to speak out. The safety of the Muslim community is not prioritised, leading to hyper-alertness to threats, microaggressions, and local hostility. Mental torture and racism are ongoing realities for many. Refugee groups are reluctant to use trains or buses due to fear of hate crimes.
- **Fear and Exclusion:** Diverse ethnic communities report feeling targeted, stared at, and excluded in public spaces. Younger children from these backgrounds are particularly fearful for their safety.

## What do we need to do?

- **Well executed LCR Anti-Racism Strategy:** Develop a clear, inclusive definition of racism for the region and build racial literacy across leadership and institutions.
- **Systemic and Structural Change:** Challenge systemic barriers through civic leadership and grassroots action. This requires a cross-sector approach to anti-racism training and more diversity training and leadership representation. It is about shared responsibility across organisations and communities to challenge racism and ensure accountability for progress.
- **Long Term Approaches:** promote long-term collaborative programmes to tackle racism and discrimination, with appropriate resourcing.
- **Sustained Investment and Recognition:** Ensure sustainable investment in communities, fair allocation of resources, and recognition of unpaid community labour.
- **Fostering Belonging and Honouring History:** that focuses on creating a sense of belonging for all communities by recognising and celebrating diverse histories and contributions.
- **Countering Misinformation:** by committing to actively challenging misinformation and stereotypes about race.

## The change we want to see

- **Leadership and Accountability:** Change must start at the top. Leaders must own mistakes and use the opportunity for reflection, learning and a commitment to do better, rather than a crisis management approach. CEO's and Executive leaders must demonstrate bravery in challenging racism and leadership should be visible, integrity-based, and accountable, with clear consequences when racism occurs.
- **From Collaboration to Collective Action:** Shift language and practice from “collaboration” to “collective action,” emphasising shared responsibility.
- **Representation and Visibility:** Representation must go beyond visibility to influencing and decision-making. Diverse cultures should be celebrated and visually represented throughout the region.
- **Fully Funded Initiatives:** Anti-racism initiatives require full funding and long-term strategic approaches at the community level, building power within Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities by working across divides and finding solutions rather than scapegoats.

- **Civil Society and Sector Engagement:** Civil society, sports, faith, and cultural sectors play a vital role in empowering communities, building shared identities, and strengthening relationships through volunteering and other impactful work.
- **Public Service Reform:** Services must be accessible, equitable, and accountable, including trauma-informed practices, safer policing, fair access to housing and healthcare, culturally competent safeguarding, and genuine partnership with communities in design and delivery.

## The challenges

- **Leadership Gaps:** There is a lack of racial literacy among leadership, and leaders often lack historical and economic context for understanding racism. They also lack the understanding and knowledge to articulate the moral and business case for taking anti-racist action. There is no clear strategy for upskilling or supporting leaders to model courage.
- **Resistance and Engagement:** Resistance from those in power and insufficient engagement with communities' hinder progress. Tokenism is a risk without genuine

empowerment, and divisions within communities—especially discrimination faced by refugees—highlight the need to address overlapping forms of discrimination.

- **Role Models and Short-Term Actions:** Schools require support to gain access to positive role models. Interventions and actions against racism are often too short term to create lasting change.
- **Community Cohesion and Safety:** Following tensions and arrests, residents and communities are shocked to find themselves living among perpetrators of hate. Officers in certain local authorities are fearful of challenging racist narratives and holding conversations about race and racism. There has been a lack of investment in community cohesion provision and programmes across the sector.
- **Protecting Black Leaders:** There are concerns about how to protect Black leaders from harm and burnout.
- **Narrative and Dialogue:** Many institutions with reach to wider audiences, particularly online, have avoided sharing and amplifying positive stories that promote inclusive local pride or highlight communities working together.

Few organisations lead dialogue or community engagement that reaches people concerned about immigration and diversity. This lack of confidence creates more space for divisive narratives to spread.

- **Cultural Defensiveness:** Resistance and defensiveness remain major barriers. For many, anti-racism is wrongly perceived as taking something away rather than building a fairer city for all. This cultural defensiveness, expressed through fears about safety, and resource scarcity, must be confronted honestly if progress is to be made.
- **Islamophobia:** There are double standards in media coverage against Muslims, and when a perpetrator is Muslim, this is highlighted. There has been an increase in anti-Muslim graffiti and hate crime and people making judgments and assumptions.
- **Scale and Scope:** Racism is pervasive, deep-rooted and historically ingrained. It can seem insurmountable; therefore, it can be difficult to understand how it can be effectively challenged and dismantled. Taking action within LCR acts as an example for other areas to act similarly, demonstrating how with courage and collaboration, amazing results can be achieved.

## Good practice examples

- Initiatives like “**World in One City**” engage youth organisations to foster inclusion and belonging.
- Housing associations run **tenancy support schemes** and holistic training to address barriers and support community cohesion.
- **Fire service recruitment** includes bursary schemes to support applicants without driving licenses, attracting more female, Black, Asian, and minority ethnic candidates.
- Past initiatives, such as **CVS funding** for Black, Asian, and minority communities, offer models for revisiting and scaling up good practice.

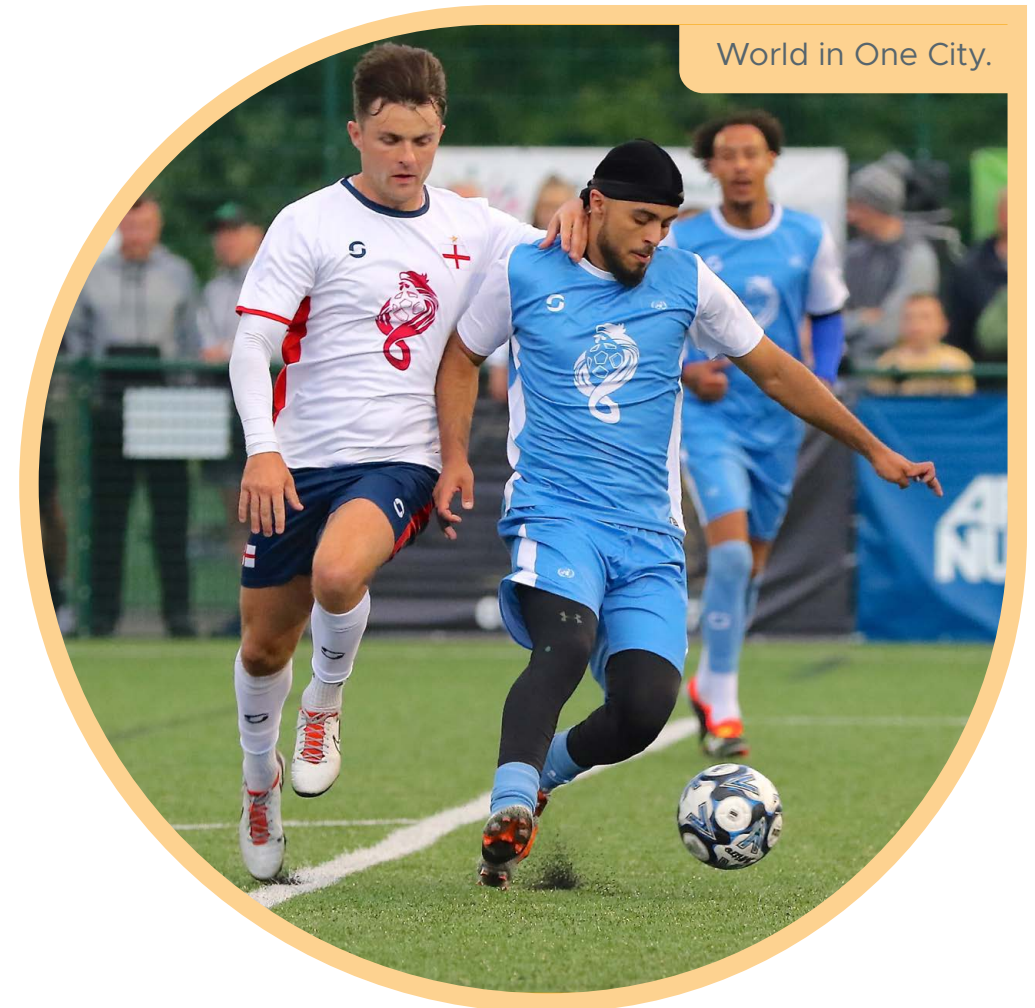


Photo Credit Glen O'Connell \_ World in One City

# NO PLACE for RACISM



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