

# RACE EQUALITY

## in SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE

### 2021-22



## FOREWORD

**T**he Covid-19 pandemic has shone a stark light not just on the disproportionate impacts of the pandemic, but the longstanding inequalities in society. We are clear that action is required and so this time last year, I wrote to you asking you how we can best achieve our aim to tackle these inequalities – on an ongoing basis.

This is a key priority for South Gloucestershire Council and through my role as Cabinet Member for Public Health and Equality of Opportunity, I am keen to improve outcomes across all aspects of life for people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic heritage in South Gloucestershire.

I am clear that to deliver meaningful change and positive outcomes for local people, we need to hear from and genuinely engage with you, so I wanted to firstly thank you for sharing your feedback when you responded to our survey 12 months ago. Here, we've highlighted what you told us about your priorities and given a sample of what we have been doing over the last year - and will be doing going forward - to act on your feedback.

I hope this summary is helpful. If you would like to find out more about this work, or have feedback, please do contact me at any time.



**Cllr Franklin Owusu-Antwi**

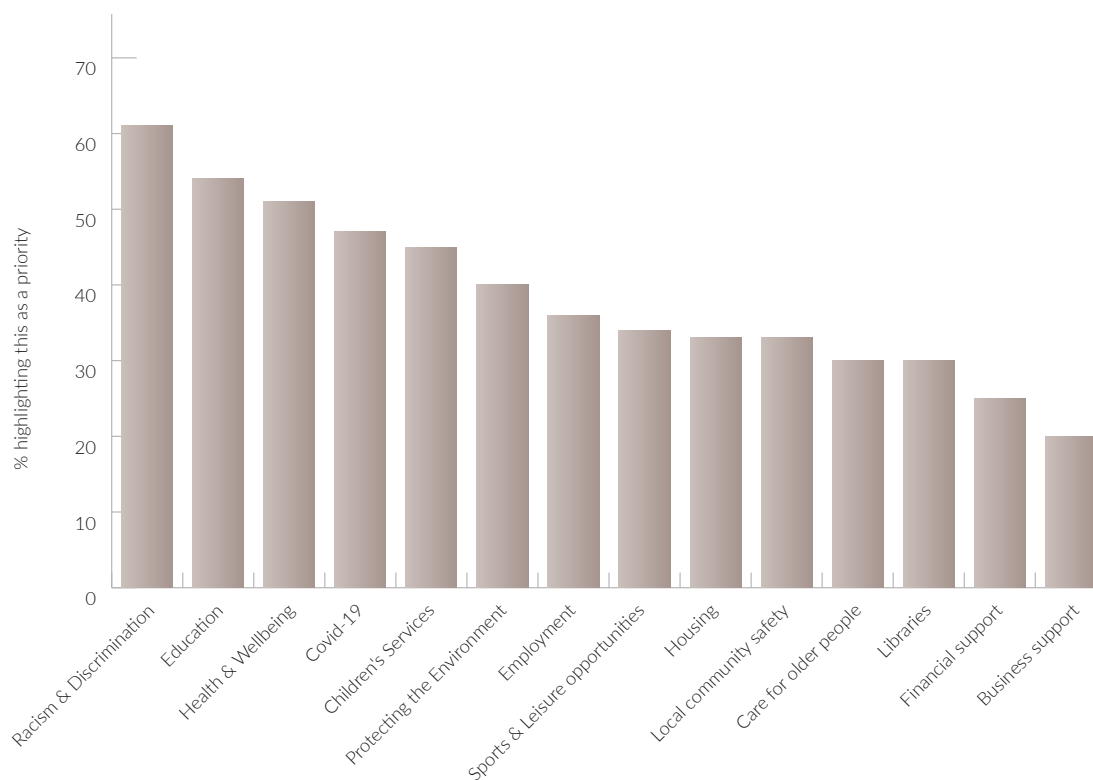
Cabinet Member for Public Health and Equality of Opportunity

## WHAT YOU TOLD US: YOUR KEY PRIORITIES

You told us that to make the biggest difference, the key things we need to focus on are:

1. **Tackling racism and discrimination**
2. **Improving educational outcomes**
3. **Improving health and wellbeing outcomes**
4. **Tackling and building a better future post Covid-19**
5. **Improving services to support vulnerable children**

### Issues of greatest importance to local people



## WE'VE HEARD YOU

**We** are very aware that there is much work to do. To achieve lasting, positive change we must and will focus resource on your key priorities.

### 1. Tackling racism and discrimination

- We have increased our investment into and support for independent partners and groups including South Gloucestershire Equalities Voice, the South Gloucestershire Equalities Forum and the South Gloucestershire Race Equality Network. These partnerships bring together local people and groups representing Black and minority ethnic communities. They meet regularly to discuss and agree a wide range of proactive, positive, local actions to tackle racism and discrimination.
- We continue our local work to improve community cohesion and have developed a new Community Cohesion Strategy.
- We are taking a leadership role in the area by positively influencing others to take action on race equality – we host the South Gloucestershire Equality Forum.
- We commission Stand Against Racism & Inequality (SARI) to provide direct case work support to individual victims of hate crime and to drive strategic and preventative work to tackle hate crime.
- We provide grant funding to community groups whose remit is to combat the impact of racism and discrimination.





## 2. Improving educational outcomes

- We know there are gaps in educational attainment and our work is focused on closing and ultimately eliminating those gaps.
- We directed £1m funding to an Educational Attainment Programme and to establish a youth employment hub.
- Within this, we have established a Race Equality in Education Taskforce focused on:
  - improving pupil experience
  - driving up attainment
  - ensuring equality of opportunity of all our young people.
- We've implemented a new incident reporting system to identify race related and other equalities related incidents so they can be addressed proactively.
- The South Gloucestershire Youth Council completed research on race equality in schools and has made recommendations to senior leaders, which will be incorporated into the work of the Race Equality in Education Taskforce. We also conducted a pupil survey, which has helped us identify gaps so that further resource can be allocated accordingly.
- We are also supporting schools to develop their vision, curriculum, policies and processes in race equality.

Key measures of the impact of our work will include pupil attainment and improvements in pupil experiences of school life.



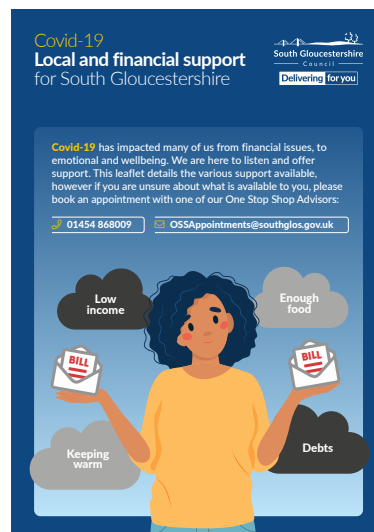
### 3. Addressing gaps in health and wellbeing outcomes

- Some groups experience significantly worse outcomes from Covid, highlighting a wide range of inequalities including pre-existing gaps in health and wellbeing.
- We continue to monitor vaccine uptake by diverse communities. Gaps in uptake according to ethnicity have narrowed over time for older age groups, but remain within younger age groups. This guides the focus of our continuing work in relation to the Covid vaccine.
- We have recently undertaken Mental Health Needs Assessments. Our analysis has identified needs across Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities which are being fed into targeted actions.
- We have developed a comprehensive Recovery Plan in schools focused on mental health and the issues which influence mental health
- We have implemented a holiday hunger programme.
- We plan to deliver further mental health awareness training with the South Gloucestershire Race Equality Network.



#### 4. Building a better future post Covid-19

- Covid-19 has been much more than a health crisis. It has impacted every aspect of people's lives, with many of the worst impacts being felt by minority ethnic groups. Our work therefore is similarly multi-faceted.
- I was privileged to join expert speakers at a series of equality events aimed at raising awareness of some of the key issues around Covid, for example vaccine information.
- We have implemented financial support schemes including the Emergency Assistance Grant, Winter Grant, Covid Local Support Grant and the Community Resilience Fund. We have and continue to target emergency funding to those most financially affected and have seen significant uptake from people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic heritage.
- We've seen a link between quality of housing and Covid outcomes. As part of our priority to ensure everyone has housing which meets their needs, we continue to increase the number of affordable homes.
- A new Housing Strategy will be developed, which has identified race equality as a key issue. We have also invested £1m extra into our Disabled Facilities Grants, which fund adaptations to homes to ensure elderly and disabled people of all backgrounds can continue to live in their own homes.





## 5. Improving services to support vulnerable children

- A disproportionately high number of people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic heritage access support from our Children's Services teams. We are listening to families and taking action to best support them.
- Both our Children's and Adults Social Care divisions have launched equality action plans which contain clear actions to ensure best practice in the area of race equality.
- We are rolling out race equality training for all staff
- We have implemented processes to assess and scrutinise practice in the area of race equality.





## BUILDING MORE INCLUSIVE AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES

We believe we can have greatest positive impact if we work as one, and we have sought to provide opportunities for groups to come together and build stronger community working.

Throughout the past year, as well as playing an active role in regular meetings of community groups, we also hosted and jointly ran events including a 'Connecting Communities' event with the South Gloucestershire Race Equality Network, a multi-faith event to bring together groups representing different religions, celebration events to mark Black History Month and information events for diverse communities on the Covid vaccine.

The council has adopted a Green Infrastructure Strategy which has been prepared through engagement with groups including the South Gloucestershire Race Equality Network, Black2Nature, the Black Seeds Network, and other groups representing people of Black, Asian and minority ethnic heritage, faith and cultural groups. Through this work, priorities for action are being identified so that everyone in our communities feels welcome, inspired and empowered to access the natural environment and to get involved.

Our libraries continue to proactively support diversity and inclusion by promoting a culturally diverse stock list. Libraries also regularly hold specific events to mark significant cultural occasions and to celebrate events like Black History Month.

BLACK  
HISTORY  
MONTH



## HELP US TO HELP YOU

These are just a few of the actions we have been taking over the last 12 months and we will continue to take action with vigour.

You can help, and I would encourage you to find out more about our work, give us feedback and share your ideas. If you'd like to play an active role in supporting our work, please contact [equalities@southglos.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@southglos.gov.uk) and/or get in touch with the South Gloucestershire Race Equality Network at [SGREN-Committee@outlook.com](mailto:SGREN-Committee@outlook.com)



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Franklin Owusu-Antwi'.

**Cllr Franklin Owusu-Antwi**

Cabinet Member for Public Health and  
Equality of Opportunity

