

The Bristol Manifesto for Race Equality “Batook’s Blueprint”

Agenda for a Better Bristol

Bristol is a great city – one of the most sought after cities to move to and one of the cities that people are happiest to live in but serious inequalities prevent this being the case for all. By counter-acting racial inequality we recognise that there will be advantages for all citizens. We suggest these cross-cutting themes and priorities be applied to all those facing discrimination and disadvantage.

We – members of Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) and equalities communities from Bristol – call on this city to adopt this Manifesto and to work with us to achieve the positive change needed if our city is to truly belong to all who live and work in it

This Manifesto highlights some key themes where currently racial inequalities persist and where the gaps are widening. We ask public agencies that you sign up to and commit to positive change in these prioritised key areas to make Bristol a place where opportunity and achievement is for all regardless of ethnic origin. We then ask that you review this on a regular basis for outcomes and that you work with us to keep this a ‘live’ document that adapts as we make progress or face new challenges.

Background

Race equality appears to be at a standstill in Bristol. Inequality, lack of social mobility and exclusion from the economic, social, cultural and political spheres are among the key challenges facing Bristol’s BME communities. Such exclusion and inequality, whether it is driven by race, class, gender or any of the other means of dividing our world, has a huge cost.

The levels of social mobility in Bristol for most BME communities are today as low as they were in the 1970s. There continues to be a stark under-representation of BME people within mainstream organisations and there is a lack of diversity within the decision makers and leaders of the City. There is a cycle of self-perpetuating poverty, powerlessness and exclusion for BME people, which needs to be broken. This document, written and agreed by local BME people, seeks to provide some practical steps to address the inequalities currently still disproportionately faced by BME communities

We are dealing with inequalities rooted deep into the city’s way of doing politics and economics. We recognise that Bristol is not a special case. This is a national and a global problem. But Bristol has always sought to be a trail blazer and should now forge its very own future at the forefront for improved race equality.

This Manifesto is intended to give hope to the increasingly large share of Bristol’s population from BME backgrounds, that our children will have better opportunities: that they will not face the higher likelihood of them going to prison rather than university, that they will not be stopped, searched and criminalised but be in leadership positions. It would be to short change the Manifesto and the city to stop there. This Manifesto is for the benefit of all Bristol because the principles of equality cross all

The aspirations of key race equality advances in the past five decades e.g. race relations legislation, the formation of the Commission for Race Equality and development of local RECs; the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry recommendations and consequently the Race Relations Amendment Act have been squandered or are no longer on our agendas. Whilst we welcome the changes in equality legislation and the relevance and importance of the Equality Act 2010 this Manifesto further strengthens the Act with a focus on improved outcomes on race equality.

Our current standstill and lack of progress in race equality comes at a time when Bristol has become the second most ethnically diverse city outside of London, in terms of languages spoken, religions and numbers of different ethnic groups, with nearly a quarter of residents now being BME (including white other). In our schools the BME community has reached over one third, with a significant proportion being of Somali origin.

Current Context

Combine this with the following bleak facts for our local BME residents:

- Under-representation of BME people in our public sector workforces and their leadership teams e.g. health trusts; Fire Service; schools; local authority; police – this is either stagnant or decreasing.
- BME young people are more likely to be NEETs (not in education, employment or training) and though overall achievement has improved the sizeable gap with their white counterparts remains the same.
- Health inequality in particular mental health has appalling differentials for particular BME communities. The lowest life expectancy wards in Bristol are inextricably linked to race and poverty.
- Everyday racism both casual and pernicious continues unchecked and is more recently on the rise.
- Trust in the police is particularly lower across BME groups.
- The lack of BME representation in key economic, retail and cultural centres.
- BME communities are economically excluded and their potential for economic development is thwarted.
- Regulatory services are disproportionately enforcing and targeting BME dominated businesses.
- Recent Legal Aid cuts will lead to our losing the few BME law firms and staff in our city.
- Complaints relating to race are met with acute levels of defensiveness and there is a tendency to work harder at discrediting the victim or complainant than addressing the facts.
- Housing affordability limits BME communities' ability to live across all Bristol areas equally.

Institutional racism is still endemic in Bristol – as illustrated above by how our local agencies, services and outcomes look for BME people – over twenty years after the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence.

The Call

This Manifesto is a call to city decision makers (those elected and those not elected), especially public bodies and services that have the public sector equality duty, and private sector organisations. It requires joint action; it requires us taking the long term view for the economic and social benefits to the whole city and city-region made available through equality and inclusion. We do not come at this passively or meekly. We come with a strong sense of our own responsibility, our own legacy and the latent power in our communities. We are now 22% of the city's population. Our children are around 30% of the school population. As voters, consumers and citizens, our BME communities will increasingly be shaping life in Bristol and will be looking for leaders.

This Manifesto is a call to BME individuals and groups and their allies. It is not pretending to have the final word for the many different communities under the BME banner or the many challenges they face; it is here to offer an initial rallying point around some key issues. This is not meant to be a list of asks. It is a call to engage in proactively shaping and changing our future. The Manifesto provides a local blueprint for change and leadership in the memory of Batook Pandya MBE. In order to achieve the changes required, active leadership is required not just from the public, private and voluntary sectors but also from our local BME communities and businesses.

The Current Priorities

These themes have been identified as priorities, through consultation with BME communities, where changes need to be achieved now: Criminal Justice (Policing), Employment, Economic Inclusion, Education & Young People, Mental Health, and Political Representation. As a live document it is expected that as priorities and changes are achieved then new priorities will be identified for future action.

Manifesto for Race Equality in Bristol – Action Plan

Core Principles	Expectations	Changes to be Achieved
<p>1. Equality is a constitutional fundamental right for everyone, inclusive of all BME people, and should be demonstrated to be so.</p>	<p>1. To recognise that a democratic society cannot ignore the skills, knowledge, experiences and creativity of BME people and therefore must demonstrate inclusivity.</p>	<p>1.1 Public bodies to demonstrate they fully meet all their equality duties and responsibilities for BME communities. 1.2. Bristol City Council to use its leadership influence in all its spheres to ensure that the rights & responsibilities towards BME communities are met by other organisations (public, private, voluntary & business).</p>
<p>2. To address the cumulative impact of multiple discrimination and disadvantage for BME people.</p>	<p>2. To recognise that multiple discrimination and disadvantages when combined with race and other protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, or wider disadvantage, can have a cumulative adverse impact on BME people which needs to be tackled effectively to ensure fully equality.</p>	<p>2.1. Bristol City Council, Learning Partnership West, City of Bristol College and other relevant partners to develop specific NEETS pathway for BME young people in Bristol. 2.2 Bristol Mental Health and other local public bodies who have a duty to improve the mental health and wellbeing of local communities to address the under-usage of primary services and the disproportionate causes of higher admission rates among BME cohorts in secondary acute services</p>
<p>3. As a democratic society decision making bodies should include representation of BME people to reflect the society we live in.</p>	<p>3. To recognise and demonstrate the equal rights of BME people to participate in the formulation and implementation of policy, to hold public office, and to perform public functions at all levels of government including decision making.</p>	<p>3.1. An explicit commitment to a dramatic improvement in the levels of political participation in Bristol – from voter registration, to voter turn out to elected representation. 3.2. West of England Local Enterprise Partnership to target BME communities to publicise and support opportunities in becoming Non-Executive Directors.</p>
<p>4. To work towards the elimination of racial stereotyping and discrimination as a fundamental principle of achieving equality for BME people.</p>	<p>4. Local and regional agencies to promote the elimination of stereotyping, and the removal of obstacles which give rise to the inequalities in status and condition of BME people i.e. unequal roles of BME people in educational, justice, political, economic, social and cultural terms.</p>	<p>4.1. Identified Post-11 Academies, Colleges and Primary Schools/Academies to report on their race equality policies, practices and strategies, in particular to raise BME attainment and improve their effectiveness in supporting BME students and parents, and show how they are working with both Bristol City Council and other support agencies.</p>

		<p>4.2. The Chief Constable and PCC commit to reduce the race dis-proportionality and inappropriate use of Stop and Search of BME men by Avon & Somerset Constabulary.</p> <p>4.3. All agencies to take responsibility to ensure positive narratives and images of BME communities are portrayed in local communications and by the media.</p>
<p>5. A race equality perspective to be integrated into all activities of local and regional organisations to advance the equality of BME people.</p>	<p>5. The drafting of policies, procedures and practice which affect the daily lives of BME people must take into account a race equality perspective. These must analyse and address the effects they have on the experiences of the BME people, such as their working and living conditions.</p>	<p>5.1. Organisations, led by the public sector, to demonstrate that they collect, analyse & report ethnic monitoring data to accurately illustrate progress from a race equality perspective</p> <p>5.2. Organisations, led by the public sector, to demonstrate that they meaningfully engage BME communities & BME staff</p>
<p>6. To address and advance the equality of BME people, action plans and programmes must be properly resourced and funded.</p>	<p>6. Public bodies must deliver effective race equality action plans and programmes with the financial and human resources necessary for their implementation. Race equality plans must be incorporated into wider equality action plans.</p>	<p>6.1. Organisations, led by the public sector, to demonstrate at least 3 prioritised outcomes from their race equality action plans</p> <p>6.2. Organisations, led by the public sector, to demonstrate that BME communities & BME staff have been involved in prioritising the actions in their race equality action plans</p>
<p>7. To improve the social and economic position of BME people in the city.</p>	<p>7. Public, private and voluntary sector organisation must demonstrate a commitment to monitoring and take action to improve their workforce and customer racial profile.</p>	<p>7.1. Organisations, led by the public sector, to address discrepancies in representation (over or under) of BME staff at all levels of the workforce including management, and of BME service users</p> <p>7.2. Organisations, led by the public sector, to identify initiatives to promote recruitment, retention & progression of BME staff in order to nurture the clear talent within their organisations</p>

The Manifesto has been drafted by a range of agencies including Avon & Somerset Black Police Association, Black South West Network, Bristol BME Voice, Building the Bridge, Nilaari, SARI, Somali Media Group, Ujima Radio, Voscur, Bristol City Council Equalities and Public Health Teams, BME individuals and others.