

Racism and institutional racism

Institutionalised Racism

Institutionalised racism is concerned with racial discrimination that has been incorporated into structures, processes and procedures of organisations, either because of racial prejudice or because of failure to take in to account the particular needs of black and ethnic minority people.

The Lawrence Inquiry (1999) put forward the following definition of institutional racism:

'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 seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amounts to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping that disadvantage ethnic minority people.

It persists because of the failure of the organisation openly and adequately to recognise and address its existence and causes by policy, example and leadership.

Without recognition and action to eliminate such racism it can prevail as part of the ethos or culture of the organisation.'

In adopting the Council's new corporate equalities framework and strategy, it is proposed that Barking and Dagenham Council comply with the [Home Office](#) recommendation to adopt this definition of institutionalised racism.

In doing so, the Council recognises that the organisation is not necessarily free of unintended institutional discrimination and undertakes to take effective action to remedy the situation.

McPherson ('Lawrence') Report

This is the report that emerged from the Lawrence Inquiry in to the circumstances surrounding the [Metropolitan Police](#) investigation of the racist murder of the black youngster, Stephen Lawrence, in Eltham, South London.

The report contains over 30 recommendations of direct relevance to local government. It has been formally retitled the 'Lawrence Report'.

Racism

This term is used to describe a whole range of ideas and attitudes, that are used to justify placing (a) particular racial group(s) in an inferior position to another.

The Race Relations Act (1976) defines 'a racial group' as a group of persons defined by skin colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origins.

These negative attitudes often result in discriminatory or oppressive behaviour. Racism can be experienced in all aspects of people's lives.

On an institutional level, racism may take a multiplicity of forms. It encourages the design and support of systems that exclude or limit services, jobs and opportunities to black and ethnic minority people.

Racial Discrimination

The Race Relations Act (1976) defines 2 forms of racial discrimination as follows:

Direct Racial Discrimination

arises where a person is treated less favourably on racial grounds (i.e. on grounds of colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origins).

Indirect Racial Discrimination

is treatment which may appear as equal, but which in fact comprises of unintended practices and procedures that in outcome indirectly discriminate between racial groups.

Racial harassment

The Lawrence Inquiry defined a racist incident as:

'Any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or other persons.'

<http://www.barking-dagenham.gov.uk/6-living/equality/equality-language.html#lesbian>