



South Yorkshire
POLICE

South Yorkshire Police Race Action Plan 2024-26





Foreword

As a force, we accept that racism, discrimination and bias exist within policing. We are ashamed of those truths and we must face up to the reality that policing needs to change and evolve if it is to secure the trust and confidence of Black and Black heritage people as well as the general public.

We know, nationally, confidence in the police is 20 per cent lower in Black Caribbean communities than the national average¹.

Locally, we know from our own data analysis of population rates, Black people in South Yorkshire are three to four times more likely to be stopped and searched and three to four times more likely to be the subject of use of force, compared to White people.

We also know our workforce is still not representative of the communities we work to serve. In South Yorkshire, Black people make up two and half per cent of our communities², yet just over one per cent of our workforce are from a Black or Black heritage background. This disparity is wider when we consider that four per cent of 18 to 49-year-olds across South Yorkshire are Black or from a Black heritage background.

It is crucial that we better understand these disparities in order to be able to explain them and deliver meaningful change. This work is not the responsibility of our Black colleagues, and nor do we expect this to be achieved by simply asking our Black communities what we should do. We can work together on this journey to improve policing by becoming a better informed and engaged workforce which takes into account their needs, vulnerabilities and experiences and recognises the reason why change is needed.

Our local plan aligns to the four workstreams identified in the national Race Action Plan and sets out the strategic direction and commitment of South Yorkshire Police in improving policing for all communities, while also delivering improved outcomes for Black and Black heritage communities.

I am acutely aware we have a long way to go in achieving the aims set out in this plan, however, we have taken practical steps in the right direction. To support the delivery of our local aims we have created a local action plan, which sets out the priority actions we will take next. This will allow our Black and Black heritage communities and colleagues to hold us to account and an opportunity for us to highlight the meaningful progress we want to achieve, on a regular and ongoing basis.

As the lead for this crucial piece of work, together with our Chief Constable, I am committed to ensuring the force takes the necessary action to not only tackle racism, discrimination and bias, but to take the force to the position of being anti-racist.

Delivering the long term changes we want in things like training, culture, outcomes and behaviour will take time, but there is nothing more important in policing than building the trust and confidence of our communities.

We know our Black and Black heritage communities will only engage with us and join us if they truly believe this is not just words on a page. I can reassure them it is not, and we will take meaningful action to improve policing for Black and Black heritage people in South Yorkshire now and for future generations, ensuring they are treated with the fairness, integrity and trust they deserve.

Deputy Chief Constable Sarah Poolman, Race Action Plan Lead

¹ GOV.UK (2021). [Confidence in the local police \[internet\]](#). [Accessed September 2024].

² ONS (2021). [Ethnic group, England and Wales: Census 2021 \[internet\]](#). [Accessed September 2024].



Our Aims

- To earn the trust and confidence of the Black and Black heritage communities we serve, through fair, transparent and accountable policing.
- To become an organisation which better reflects the communities we serve and one where Black and Black heritage people feel confident to join, progress and play their part in delivering a policing service.
- To create an inclusive culture where everyone across the force is supported and respected.

Our Approach

Since the launch of the national Police Race Action Plan, we have been carrying out work to better understand the racial disparities affecting Black and Black heritage people in South Yorkshire, including within our own workforce.

We have been talking to our Black and Black heritage communities about their experiences of policing, as well as speaking to our Black and Black heritage colleagues about their own experiences of racism, discrimination and bias within South Yorkshire Police.

Aligned with the force's Community Engagement Strategy, active listening is fundamentally key to this work, and to support this, we have formed a county-wide Police Race Action Plan Independent Advisory Group, which is made up of members of the community, with an independent chair. The group have been involved in the formation of this plan and we will consult them throughout

our ongoing work, acting as a critical friend, scrutinising our actions.

Internally, we have set up a robust governance structure for the plan and established an internal Black Heritage Action and Advisory Group. The group is made up of members of our Black workforce and provides a formal opportunity to hear more about their lived experiences, gain insight and to consult them on our local plans.

Where possible, we want our work as part of this local plan to be data and evidence-led. While improving data-accuracy is a requirement of our work, to ensure we fully understand the extent of the issues affecting our Black communities, a holistic Police Race Action Plan analytical dashboard has been developed internally. This dashboard is able to describe how the force is operating across a broad range of measures which were identified from the Police Race Action Plan. With this growing knowledge, we can identify disparities and areas for improvement, and track changing trends over time. Understanding of why this data shows what it does and how to improve are the vital next steps to ensure the data is able to inform meaningful action going forwards.

We will also look at published research and the wider lessons that can be learned from other organisations who have undertaken similar work to identify further insights that can be applied to inform our approach.

We will deliver our activity under the following six core themes:

Build an anti-racist, inclusive and informed workforce: we will deliver activity to ensure our workforce understands Black culture, Black history and the important role they play in creating a representative, fair and inclusive organisation.	Improve relationships and confidence within communities: we will build relationships with our Black and Black heritage communities and improve confidence in policing through positive engagement.
Increase representation: we will focus on attracting and retaining more people from Black and Black heritage backgrounds.	Support Black colleagues: we will support our Black and Black heritage colleagues to develop and grow, and ensure they feel empowered to bring their whole self to work, and to progress their careers.
Proportionate use of police powers: we will provide transparency and accountability around the use of police powers and do something about it where disproportionate.	Achieve justice and protect victims from harm: we are committed to achieving proportionate justice for victims of crime and reducing the risks of harm, which are acute for Black and Black heritage people.

Local Actions

Underneath these core themes, a series of key areas of action have been established to drive our local activity forward.

Where we are now	Where we need to be	What we will do
Build an anti-racist, inclusive and informed workforce		
The force has developed this local plan, aligned to the national plan. However, we know the Police Race Action Plan (PRAP) is not understood by the majority of our workforce. As a result, we are not gaining the benefits of having a workforce who are galvanised to play their part in improving trust, confidence and relationships with the Black and Black heritage community.	All our employees understand the need for change and the challenges we face to gain the trust of the Black and Black heritage community. As an organisation we take responsibility to educate our colleagues about the part they must play, which is driven by leaders within the organisation.	Working with our Black Heritage Action and Advisory Group, and complementing the wider inclusion and culture programme, we will develop an internal communications strategy focused on improving awareness of PRAP and our local plan. All leaders across the organisation will be informed of their responsibility to drive this work forward. The communications strategy will be developed and implemented by Q1 of 2025/26.
The force's leadership training already covers some aspects of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI), however, the Police Race Action Plan is not yet a specific part of our training. There are further opportunities to build upon this existing training and to build in new training specific to PRAP. We know our current training does not go far enough to address the issues our Black communities and colleagues face.	Training delivery is used to support the PRAP agenda by improving the cultural awareness of our people.	We will deliver a full audit and review of our training practices in Q4 of 2024/25, for investment consideration in 2025/26. This will include the implementation of new additional training inputs on racism, anti-racism, trauma associated with disproportionality, and Black history and its connection to policing.

Where we are now	Where we need to be	What we will do
Increase representation		
While we have undertaken work to understand the issues, we acknowledge that members of the Black community still feel there are barriers to joining the police.	The force has addressed and removed the psychological and practical barriers which deter Black people from applying to and joining the organisation, in both staff and officer roles.	<p>By Q4 of 2024/25, we will have completed a review of previous work delivered around increasing representation to look at where improvements will be made through the delivery of a new Positive Action Strategy. This will focus on improving public engagement, to ensure we are engaging in the right ways and through the right channels, alongside internal awareness.</p> <p>We will review the application, sifting, interview and vetting process to understand barriers currently stopping Black people from applying and being successful in joining the organisation, while maintaining the high standards expected of us. This will include looking at what information is passed onto line managers as part of sifting, to remove any potential bias, as well as increasing representation on recruitment panels. This work will be undertaken by Q1 of 2025/26.</p>
We have the national Our Black Workforce survey data and our internal SYP Black workforce survey data, which allows us to better understand the main challenges facing our Black and Black heritage colleagues.	The force has addressed and resolved the issues that are causing our Black and Black heritage officers and staff to leave or consider leaving the organisation.	<p>We will formally launch our internal peer support group for Black and Black heritage colleagues and build support of the group within our current workforce and new recruits. This group has formed and is already beginning to influence this work. The formal launch will take place in early 2025.</p> <p>We will utilise the survey results and any data from exit interviews to take positive steps to identify and resolve problems before our Black and Black heritage officers and staff feel there is no other option than to leave the organisation. This work will evolve and by Q2 of 2025/26, we expect to be in a good position to have a constructive plan, with work underway.</p> <p>We will ensure there are consequences following reports of racist behaviour and a set of approaches are available for staff on how to respond to and manage incidents with understanding and compassion shown to all victims.</p>

Where we are now	Where we need to be	What we will do
Proportionate use of police powers		
We know that nationally and locally Black people are disproportionately subjected to stop and search. Our research to date shows self-defined ethnicity data is not consistently being gathered and therefore our understanding is limited.	Self-defined ethnicity data around stop and search is consistently recorded, enabling us to fully understand the proportionate use of this power.	We have invested in our force stop and search recording system to make it mandatory for officers to record a person's self-defined ethnicity. The technical solution is expected to be in place during Q4 of 2024/25, with ongoing instruction and accountability to progressively achieve accurate recording.
We know that some of our workforce don't understand the procedural justice model and how to apply its principles when using police powers. As a result, some officers lack confidence and understanding around the use of stop and search powers in certain situations.	Our workforce is fair and informed in their use of police powers. We recognise this is not just about processes followed around the use of police powers, but also around an officer's mindset when utilising their powers.	We will ensure all officer training around use of powers incorporates training around procedural justice, unconscious bias and communication – covering how and why police powers should be used to help build confidence in using powers fairly and proportionately. We will also scrutinise the use of powers to assess the impact of any training. Work is underway to improve this, with the force's Use of Force lead invested in this important area. By Q1 of 2025/26, we should expect tangible improvements. It is, however, likely this will be ongoing work to shift mindsets, underpinned by system changes.
We are currently unable to record ethnicity data when officers stop a vehicle, and therefore we are unable to understand the disproportionality around the number of Black people who are subject to vehicle stops.	Self-defined ethnicity data is captured consistently in the recording of vehicle stops, so the force fully understands the proportionate use of this power.	We will develop an appropriate technical solution to enable officers to efficiently record vehicle stops and their rationale and specifically the person's self-defined ethnicity. We will educate officers on the new system and the importance of recording ethnicity data and how to confidently and appropriately request this information when conducting vehicle stops. The technical solution is expected to be in place during Q4 of 2024/25, with ongoing instruction and accountability to progressively achieve accurate recording.

Where we are now	Where we need to be	What we will do
Improve relationships and confidence within communities		
<p>We have a dedicated PRAP Independent Advisory Group made up of members from different Black heritage communities from across South Yorkshire. The group has been established and are committed and motivated to support SYP in building positive relationships with Black communities, ensuring our actions align with their needs.</p>	<p>We listen to the voices of our Black and Black heritage communities and use this to influence our actions and decision-making in order to improve trust and confidence.</p>	<p>We will meet quarterly with the Independent Advisory Group and regularly consult with them on the delivery of our local plan, so the group see their value and are motivated to continue to feed into this work. The force's Independent Advisory Group (IAG) is established with a strong cohort of volunteers who come together and are invested in supporting the force in change.</p> <p>We will also share a biannual process update via the SYP website, providing an update on our progress towards delivering our local plan.</p> <p>We will continue to develop our community engagement within Black communities and listen to the needs of each community and respond to it. We will have a cohort of dedicated and trained positive action and engagement points of contact to support our People and Organisational Development team, and Neighbourhood Policing Teams, with targeted activity. The cohort will be from our own diverse workforce.</p> <p>By Q4 of 2024/25, this advocate network will be identified and beginning this work.</p>
<p>We do not fully understand where all of our Black and Black heritage communities are based in South Yorkshire or the effective ways to engage them.</p> <p>Individuals and teams have some community contacts, but they are not accessible to all or utilised to drive targeted engagement activity.</p>	<p>We understand the make-up of our Black and Black heritage communities. We go directly to them rather than expecting them to come to us, in order to positively engage with them and build relationships. This includes a focus from our Neighbourhood Policing Teams on better understanding and engaging with our Black communities.</p>	<p>We will carry out a community mapping exercise defining where our Black and Black heritage communities are based and identifying the places where our officers, particularly those from Neighbourhood Policing Teams, can go and engage people proactively – with an emphasis on crime prevention and making communities feel safer.</p> <p>We will create an engagement strategy focused around positively engaging with our Black communities. This will be developed and implemented by Q4 of 2024/25.</p> <p>We will have an accessible list of key contacts and utilise this to collaboratively work on addressing the needs of our Black communities. This key contacts list will be established and continually expanded by Q4 of 2024/25.</p> <p>We will record and monitor our engagement with Black communities and each Neighbourhood Policing area will be accountable for identifying and overseeing this. This will be reviewed every quarter by our Neighbourhood Governance team. The resulting information will be used to provide accountability and to drive forward improvements.</p>
<p>We have limited open channels of communication with our Black and Black heritage communities around what activity we are delivering as part of the PRAP.</p>	<p>Our Black and Black heritage communities have trust and confidence in our policing service. There are appropriate routes of accountability in place, so our communities can always provide us with feedback on our delivery, and we deliver our plan with openness and transparency.</p>	<p>We will provide six-monthly public updates, setting out the progress we have made against our local plan, and publish these on the South Yorkshire Police website. We will also provide regular updates via our external force channels regarding the PRAP activity being delivered.</p> <p>We will utilise our dedicated PRAP IAG to support and feedback around this activity.</p>

Where we are now	Where we need to be	What we will do
Support Black colleagues		
<p>Some of our Black and Black heritage colleagues describe feeling unsupported and at times alienated within the organisation.</p> <p>This is evidenced through feedback from national and local Black workforce surveys, as well as our localised Black workforce internal action and advisory group.</p>	<p>We have a positive environment where Black colleagues feel supported and valued. Everyone's differences are valued and there is a culture of allyship, where everyone across the force feels empowered to challenge inappropriate behaviours.</p>	<p>We have already established an internal action and advisory group, whereby we meet with our Black and Black heritage colleagues on a quarterly basis. This provides an opportunity for the force to consult our Black workforce directly, and work together to influence change, support each other and drive improvements. This will continue and be further developed over time.</p> <p>We will develop a dedicated peer support network for our Black colleagues to seek regular support. This will fit in with an organisational justice model and an escalation process to address any inappropriate behaviours or attitudes. This will be formally launched by early 2025.</p> <p>We will carry out a review of our internal processes for reporting racism, harassment and discrimination, so we can work with our Black colleagues to improve the processes. This review will have taken place by the end of 2024.</p> <p>We will support our Black colleagues with their career aspirations by identifying appropriate coaches and mentors with their development needs. This coaching scheme will be in place by Q4 of 2024/25.</p>
<p>At present, we are aware officers and staff often don't record hate crimes they are subjected to, for a variety of reasons. Those who do report hate crimes are currently provided with a basic level of support.</p>	<p>All officers and staff subjected to hate crime are provided with an enhanced level of support.</p>	<p>We will incorporate the enhanced victim care principles into the support provided to any officer or staff member who records a hate crime against them. The relevant area leads will come together and develop a suitable new policy for this enhanced support. This new policy will be in place by the end of 2024.</p>

Where we are now	Where we need to be	What we will do
Achieve justice and protect victims from harm		
Data shows young Black people are more likely to become a victim of serious violent crime than those from other ethnic backgrounds.	We support prevention and early intervention activity where possible, to reduce disproportionate levels of most serious violence within our Black and Black heritage communities.	The force leads for gun and knife crime will work with our partners to understand and ensure effective action is taken to reduce the likelihood of Black people becoming victims of violent crimes. The causes are complex and systemic. By Q1 of 2025/26, a comprehensive, multi-agency prevention plan, drawing upon national best practice and with the support of our IAG, will be launched.
<p>When a Black person is a victim of crime, data shows the offender is less likely to be brought to justice. The reasoning for this is somewhat unknown, however, could be explained by methods of recording ethnicity data.</p> <p>In addition, hate crimes are sometimes mis-recorded as other crime types, meaning victims don't receive the specific hate crime victim support.</p>	Black and Black heritage victims of crime are fully supported through the investigative process with particular focus on hate crime victimisation. We work wherever possible to increase action taken outcomes and increase victim support provided, minimising disparity where possible.	<p>Force analysts will carry out work to understand why a Black victim of crime is less likely to have their investigation resolved by successfully identifying and prosecuting the offender, in comparison to victims from other racial groups. This will look at current reporting practices, as well as investigation quality.</p> <p>An effective plan will be in place to drive improvement in this area, with the PRAP IAG providing scrutiny and advice to ensure it is suitable for the needs of our Black communities.</p> <p>This plan will be in place by Q4 of 2025/26.</p> <p>The force lead for hate crime will ensure improvements are made around the recording of hate crimes against Black people, so victims of hate crime can be provided with an enhanced level of support.</p>
Data shows Black and Black heritage people are more likely to be reported missing. Due to issues with data recording, the true disparity is unknown at this time.	We understand why Black and Black Heritage people are more likely to be reported missing and engage with relevant partners to tackle the underlying causes. We work to reduce any disparities through our support to incidents and follow-up processes.	<p>The force lead for missing people will work to understand why Black and Black heritage people are more likely to be reported missing and will undertake work to improve data recording, so the true disparity data is known.</p> <p>The force lead for missing people will work with partners and the PRAP IAG to take positive steps to reduce any disparity identified.</p> <p>This plan will be in place by Q1 of 2025/26.</p>
Due to issues with data recording, we do not have an accurate understanding of whether Black and Black heritage people are more likely to be unfairly detained by police under the Mental Health Act, and therefore any disparity is unknown.	We understand why Black and Black heritage people may be more likely to be detained by police under the Mental Health Act and engage with relevant partners to tackle the underlying causes, while working to reduce any disparities.	<p>The force lead for mental health will work to understand if Black and Black heritage people are more likely to be detained under the Mental Health Act and will undertake work to improve data recording, so any disparity data is known.</p> <p>The force will collaborate with social services, health and community partners to agree a joined-up approach to safeguarding individuals who are experiencing a mental health crisis or who are being detained under the Mental Health Act. This will aim to take positive steps in reducing any disparity identified.</p> <p>This plan will be in place by Q1 of 2025/26.</p>



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