



MANIFESTO FOR RACE AND HEALTH

Priorities for a
new government

In July 2024, the UK will have a general election, choosing a new prime minister and new government for the first time in five years. In the lead up to the election, political parties will make many promises about how they want to change the country in the future.

The NHS Race and Health Observatory is an organisation that was created to gather evidence about how people from different races and ethnicities experience healthcare.

We are interested in inequalities that exist because of a person's race, and we work alongside the NHS to ensure that everyone, regardless of their background, gets the care they require, and that NHS staff from different backgrounds are treated fairly. We do this by gathering evidence, influencing leaders, and helping to make practical changes in hospitals, GP surgeries, and other places where people receive care.

We are an organisation committed to equity, which is a little bit different to "equality". Equality usually means giving everyone the same thing. Health equity means giving each person what they need to be healthy, even if that means giving some people more than others.

Whoever wins the next election, it is important that the new government thinks seriously about racial equity when they are in power. At the NHS Race and Health Observatory, we have looked at the evidence we've gathered and developed seven priorities for a new government to deliver race equity in health. We call on any government to take these forward.



Protect the wellbeing of families for this and future generations.

Currently, evidence shows that mothers and babies from Black and Asian communities are more likely to die in childbirth than White people. Although there are pockets of innovative practice happening, it is not always clear how well it is working, and we believe that progress is not happening fast enough.

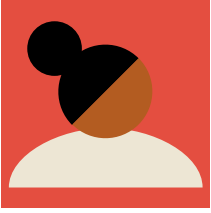
Any new government must make sure that evidence-based good practice is scaled up and spread across the country so that preventable deaths are avoided.



Improve mental health access, experience and outcomes for ethnic minority communities.

Recent reviews of the Mental Health Act in the UK have shown that Black people and people from other ethnic minority groups continue to experience discrimination, exclusion, and racism in mental health services.

Although past governments have committed to reforming this Act, we believe that not enough has been done, and that a new government must prioritise equity in mental health.



Make race equity a priority for leaders.

All of the priorities in this document will need strong leaders to deliver them. Politicians and leaders in the NHS must commit to making dramatic changes. It is also important that there are consequences for those leaders if they fail to deliver equity.

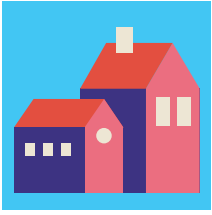
A new government should put processes in place to encourage leaders to make a difference and ensure equity is considered a critical part of any outcome.



Involve real people and communities in decisions that affect them.

The work we do at the NHS Race and Health Observatory has shown that health outcomes are better when the NHS works in partnership with people and communities.

A new government must ensure that people and communities are meaningfully involved in decisions about access to healthcare, the design of health pathways, and in public health campaigns.



Celebrate the benefits of equitable health care for the whole nation.

Our evidence shows that more equitable health outcomes are better for the country. Not only is it fair that all people get the care they need, but a healthier nation benefits our economy and society.

If we want to enjoy these benefits, a new government needs to understand that good health is not just about responding to illness, but thinking about other things that affect a person's health, including their job, where they live, and their experiences of discrimination.

The government must consider all of these things together to make the nation healthier.



Use data and evidence to improve health equity.

The government and the NHS use data and other evidence to make decisions about our healthcare, but sometimes this evidence focuses on some ethnic and racial groups more than others. For example, where one group is under-represented in data, the decisions made about their healthcare may not benefit them as intended.

It is important that a new government improves the way we collect data and evidence and makes sure that all different parts of society are appropriately represented.



Ensure that research is representative of our population.

The UK is considered a global leader in research, innovation, and impact. Our government and the NHS spend a lot of money on important and impactful research, but there is currently no requirement that this research is representative of the diversity in our society.

We believe that any research conducted with public money should apply to all racial and ethnic groups, and that research should prioritise the health of our most vulnerable communities and populations, including Black, Asian, and ethnic minorities.

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