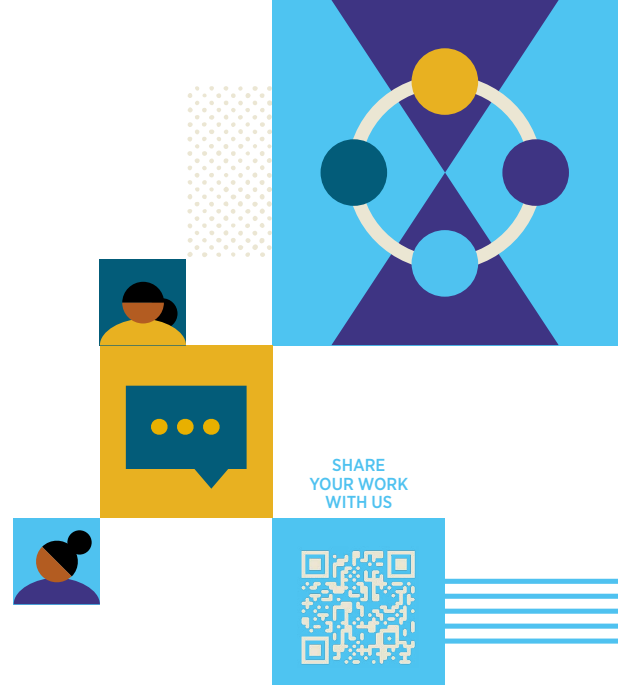


ANTI RACISM PRINCIPLES

Anti-racism is about more than pledges and good intentions. To meaningfully combat racism in healthcare, we need to think about tangible actions. This series of briefings highlights concrete steps that healthcare providers can take to ensure that their services work for everyone, regardless of the colour of their skin.



3. MEANINGFULLY INVOLVE RACIALLY MINORITISED INDIVIDUALS & COMMUNITIES



INTRO

Creating an anti-racist healthcare system requires the meaningful and sustained inclusion of racially minoritised communities from the outset. Too often, their involvement is tokenistic, transactional, or comes too late to effect real change. True inclusion means actively partnering with those typically excluded from healthcare decisions, ensuring their voices shape priorities, design, and implementation. By embedding them into planning and delivery, healthcare systems can begin dismantling long-standing power imbalances that contribute to racial injustice. Involvement must not 'symbolic', but system-wide, intentional, and ongoing to ensure equity is ingrained at every level, driving lasting transformation toward a more just and inclusive system.



WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Racially minoritised communities have long faced systemic exclusion in healthcare, leading to inequitable access, experience, and outcomes. These inequities, including higher illness rates, premature deaths, and cultural safety barriers, stem from long-standing patterns of exclusion and discrimination in the healthcare system. True healthcare reform requires meaningful involvement, not tokenistic consultation. By actively centring their voices, knowledge, and lived expertise, we can begin to challenge the imbalance of power and assumptions that has shaped the healthcare system. When services and care are designed with those most impacted by health inequities, it leads to improved trust, greater cultural safety, and ultimately, better health for everyone.



AN EXAMPLE IN PRACTICE

[Evidence shows that HIV disproportionately impacts African and Caribbean communities in Bristol](#). Although they comprise 5.9% of the city's population, they accounted for 28% of HIV cases in 2022. Negative perceptions and shame associated with HIV and sexual health, alongside previous poor experience and mistrust of health services, can discourage African and Caribbean heritage communities from seeking HIV and sexual health services.

To tackle these issues, [Common Ambition Bristol](#) was set up in 2021 with funding from The Health Foundation, and led by Brigstowe, a Bristol-based HIV charity, in partnership with African Voices Forum, University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust, and Fast Track Cities Bristol. This included two dedicated testing clinics offering PrEP (a preventative HIV drug), weekly outreach with barbers and Black-owned businesses, and engagement with around 30 businesses. Awareness efforts spanned local media, community organisations, and social media influencers, supported by printed materials and a [website](#). A short film, [HIV: Talk. Test. Protect.](#), was created to challenge myths and stigma surrounding HIV and sexual health.

Securing support from local NHS organisations was also crucial, with a presentation to University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust helping to highlight the project's impact. The [CEO personally joined outreach efforts](#) to witness its success firsthand, highlighting the importance of community involvement.

Common Ambition Bristol have shared their experiences through a [toolkit on co-producing health and care service](#).



HOW TO GET STARTED

- If you are a **practitioner**, , cultivate cultural humility through continuous reflection on personal biases and practices. Engage actively with racially minoritised individuals and communities, seeking their input on how services can better meet their needs. Build trust through genuine partnerships to improve care.
- If you are a **senior leader**, , integrate the voices of racially minoritised individuals and communities into governance, strategy, and accountability structures, ensuring they have real influence. Allocate funding and resources to foster meaningful relationships with communities.
- If you are a **commissioner**, collaborate with racially minoritised communities to co-design funding priorities. Streamline application processes and provide support to encourage greater grassroots and community involvement.
- If you are a **researcher**, partner with communities as co-investigators to shape research questions, design studies, collect data, and share findings in ways that are culturally relevant and impactful.



HOW TO GET STARTED (CONT'D)

- **Everyone** should advocate for decision-making processes that include racialised communities, remove barriers to participation—such as offering flexible involvement options—and ensure transparency in how community feedback is used. Strengthen trust and accountability by demonstrating the tangible impact of their contributions.

