

# Implementing anti-racism in a police context: A Review

**The SIPR Executive Committee approved a Responsive Research Fund on this topic.  
The document was prepared by Police Scotland and reviewed by SIPR.**

## Background

### 1. Overview and rationale

Discrimination (racism, homophobia, sexism, misogyny) is a sensitive and complex issue. For many, it is a difficult topic to discuss. Institutional racism and other discrimination (institutional discrimination) as a term can generate a visceral reaction and can be dismissed as being an issue in a workplace. In recent years there has been increased prominence given to the argument that to effectively tackle racism it is necessary to be 'anti-racist'.

The former Chief Constable, Sir Ian Livingston, made it clear that those who hold racist views are unwelcome in policing. He emphasised that "it is not enough to be alert to racism and deal with it on a case-by-case basis. Nor is it enough simply to be non-racist. Police Scotland needs to be anti-racist". He asserted that "Police Scotland should seek to challenge the existence and workings of racism at all levels – personal, cultural, and institutional". The current Chief Constable, Jo Farrell, has echoed these sentiments.

Police Scotland's [Policing Together strategy](#) has a vision which seeks for the service to be "welcoming, inclusive and representative of the communities we serve". An outcome (1) of this is that the service is "an anti-racist organisation [having] zero tolerance for any discrimination, bullying or harassment". As one of the largest public sector organisations within Scotland, it is critical that Police Scotland ensures its policies support minority ethnic people moving into, staying and progressing in its employment.

"Institutional discrimination", "institutional racism", and "anti-racism" are terminologies used to describe different forms of systemic oppression and activities to limit the impact of such oppression. These terms are applied in various settings, with a variety of theoretical underpinnings. Given the different applications of discrimination (across, or compounded by different protected characteristics), it is not always clear whether the different terms refer to the same experiences of institutional discrimination, and how they are defined in terms of being actively prevented.

To support embedding sustainable, long-term change, this project seeks to commission a review of organisational anti-racism conceptualisation and implementation in order to increase Police Scotland's understanding of these and other related policies and inform its planned approach.

### 2. Details of research proposal for consideration and agreement

#### 2.1. Research aims

To identify, review, and synthesise primary qualitative and quantitative literature on the implementation and assessment of organisational anti-racism policies and practices, with a focus on its application in a police context.

## 2.2. Research questions

- What examinations of the operationalisation of organisational anti-racism as a concept have been conducted and are used in the literature?
- How are assessments of organisational anti-racism completed (i.e., in what settings are these assessments appropriate, who completes these assessments, what methods are used, and are assessments to be completed more than once over time)?
- What constructs/concepts are typically measured in order to assess the development and embedding of organisational anti-racism policies and practices?

## 3. Methodology

This research seeks to investigate the evidence base of, and review, theoretical and applied literature describing forms of anti-racism organisational development and related evaluations therein. The focus is on anti-racism, but, if limited, learning could also be drawn from wider anti-discrimination literature. Electronic databases will be searched to obtain eligible, peer-reviewed, studies including PubMed/MEDLINE, PsychINFO, Embase, Web of Science, CINAHL, and ProQuest: dissertations and Thesis Global. These databases, and others where relevant, will be searched for English language publications using concepts related to:

- Institutional racism and anti-racism
- Collective, cultural, racial and/or societal group identity discrimination
- Integrative scholarship (reviews, systematic reviews, meta-analysis)

### 3.1. Types of studies to be included

To describe organisational conceptualisation, definition, implementation, and assessment of organisational anti-racism developments, published peer-reviewed articles of existing empirical literature, as well as grey-literature will be considered. Studies that integrate existing literature through analyses of theory or reviews will be included.

### 3.2 Examples of potential milestones:

- Preliminary searches
- Piloting of the study selection process
- Formal screening of search results against eligibility criteria
- Data extraction
- Risk of bias (quality) assessment
- Data analysis

## 4. Tangible benefits that Police Scotland will obtain from commissioning this research study

This review seeks to go beyond reviewing anti-racism as a concept and/or policy. the emphasis is on how others (internal and external to policing and to Scotland) have conceived of, implemented, and evaluated activities related to organisational anti-racism development. By ascertaining a rigorous, academically robust, review of the available evidence, this project seeks to support several Police Scotland strategic themes:

- Strategic outcome 4: "our people are supported through a positive working environment enabling them to serve the public". Objective: to "support our people to be confident leaders, innovative, active contributors, and influencers"

- Strategic outcome 5: "Police Scotland is sustainable, adaptable, and prepared for future challenge". Objective: to "use innovative approaches to accelerate our capacity and capability for effective service delivery".
- "...we are a people driven organisation...we value our workforce and are committed to investing in their development and wellbeing" (p.10).
- "...we need to focus on ensuring that we have the skills, tools and capacity to address future needs rather than focusing on the size or structure of our organisation...failure to invest in our people and infrastructure will compromise our ability to deliver the policing services that Scotland needs" (p. 11).
- "...we will continue to recognise and invest in the development and wellbeing of our workforce" (p. 14)

## Information for Applicants

### 5. Eligibility

Applications are welcome from any researchers (who do not need to be based in Scotland or at a university). However, priority will be given to bids involving staff based at one of the [15 SIPP member universities](#).

We encourage interdisciplinary partnerships and proposals can be submitted by a single institution or across organisations (and can include national and international academic and non-academic partners).

### 6. Anticipated timescale(s) for completion

Start date **Thursday 29 February 2023**, with a completion date of **Friday 30 August 2024**

### 7. Value

A total of **£20,000** will be available to **one** successful team. This is not essential, but we always welcome proposals which include co-funding from other sources.

## Application and Award Process

### 8. Application

A short application form is available to download in the above link.

Applicants are required to complete the relevant application form (download from above link) including the following information:

- Description of team – one paragraph per named investigator which details experience and expertise in the proposed topic including one for each named investigator);
- Details of the project including background, aims and objectives, methodology, and timeline;
- Proposed budget including a brief justification of resources required; and
- Clear indication of the expected outputs and impact of the project.
- A letter of support from Police Scotland (or the relevant external body) should be sought if the project will require access to personnel or data. If so please contact Police Scotland's Research and Strategy Team ([AcademicResearch@scotland.pnn.police.uk](mailto:AcademicResearch@scotland.pnn.police.uk)).

## 9. Assessment

Applications will be subject to a review stage which will include assessment by an independent panel comprising of senior academics and members of the SIPR Executive Committee, including policing partners. Reviewers will be asked to score against four key criteria:

- Suitability and expertise of investigative team (i.e., Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator's experience and expertise in the field of study);
- Suitability and quality of the planned methodological approach;
- Feasibility (i.e., a project's ambition and ability to deliver outcomes to budget and within timescales); and
- Potential benefits/impact (i.e., project legacy and potential to influence policy and practice).

## 10. Criteria

Applications are welcome from researchers with priority given to staff based at one of the [15 SIPR member universities](#).

Projects must be in place to commence the review no later **Thursday 29 February 2024**.

Applicants will also be required to report where this funding has enabled the generation of external income as well as where this project has been included as an impact case study.

## 11. Indicative timeline

Timeline/ milestones	Date
Call Open	Wed 20 Dec 2023
Closing date for applications	Fri 26 Jan 2024
Grant awarded	Fri 2 Feb 2024
Project initiation meeting	Prior to 23 Feb 2024
Latest start date	Thu 29 Feb 2024
Mid-grant update due	Fri 31 May 2024
Final draft of report and briefing paper submitted for review	Fri 16 Aug 2024
Completion date – final report accepted	Fri 30 Aug 2024