



# Implementing Anti-Racism in the Context of Policing: A Systematic Review



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# Executive Summary

## INTRODUCTION

While crucial initiatives addressing racism within the UK policing context emerged in the 1990s, prompted by landmark events and public inquiries, persistent racism and discrimination are acknowledged as persistent in policing. The terms "institutional racism" and "institutional discrimination" are difficult allegations and evoke strong reactions. Anti-racism as an individual and organisational practice has gained increased acceptance in the UK and organisational leaders are becoming more comfortable addressing institutional and structural racism through various anti-racist strategies and tools (Miller 2023).

Addressing racism and discrimination in policing presents challenges and opportunities to improve structures, policies, and practices. These challenges are addressed in Police Scotland's Policing Together Strategy that aims for the organisation to be welcoming, inclusive and representative of the communities they serve. We aimed to conduct a systematic review of peer-reviewed articles and grey literature considering the conceptualisation and implementation of anti-racism within policing to inform understanding of the evidence regarding related policies and practices and how they might be prioritised, implemented, and evaluated in support of this strategy.

## OVERVIEW OF THE APPROACH

We systematically reviewed available literature on the implementation and assessment of organisational anti-racism policies within policing, following criteria agreed with the Scottish Institute for Policing Research (SIPR). We accessed databases of indexed publications and our own personal libraries to identify extant literature to ensure systematic and comprehensive identification of sources. Our initial screening of the sources identified primarily focused on policing. Given the limitations of the work identified, in consultation with SIPR, we conducted a second, expanded phase of screening to include contexts beyond policing to ensure comprehensive engagement with supporting minority ethnic individuals in policing. Sources were evaluated against agreed inclusion and exclusion criteria and a total of 83 articles were identified for review. Full details of the method utilised are available in the accompanying technical

appendix to this review. Findings are presented here in response to our three main areas of interest: the operationalisation of organisational anti-racism, the means of assessment of anti-racism, and policies and practices discussed within extant literature.

## REVIEW FINDINGS

The review synthesised the findings of 83 articles, addressing key areas such as institutional legitimacy, organisational culture, intersectionality, community engagement, and the means of assessing anti-racism interventions. The findings revealed that while much of the literature focuses on understanding the theoretical foundations of racism to inform debate on anti-racism (e.g., Critical Race Theory, structural racism), there remains a significant gap in providing actionable frameworks for translating these theories into practical strategies within organisations. Additionally, there is a clear lack of robust assessment frameworks to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of anti-racism strategies, which affects both policing and non-policing sectors. Similarly, there is limited longitudinal evaluation of the impact of antiracist interventions. From the policing literature, the review revealed persistent institutional racism and resistance to organisational change, that are significant barriers to the effective implementation of anti-racism strategies. In non-policing sectors, while the commitment to anti-racism is more pronounced, operationalising and assessing anti-racism policies remains underdeveloped.

# Recommendations

This report outlines strategic recommendations to embed anti-racism within Police Scotland, aligning with the 24/25 Annual Police Plan. Key recommendations include:

- 1 Values-Based Approach:** Review organisational values to include anti-racism, ensuring it underpins cultural improvement.
- 2 Anti-Racism Oversight Group (AROG):** Establish a governance body with senior leaders, ethnic minority representatives, and partners to oversee anti-racism initiatives.
- 3 Strategy on Anti-Racism (SOAR):** Develop a comprehensive strategy supported by an Anti-Racism Action Plan (ARAP): Implement a trauma-informed, social justice approach; Incorporate lived experiences into training and interventions; Assign senior leaders' accountability for anti-racism initiatives; Establish benchmarks and monitoring systems for progress evaluation.
- 4 Recruitment and Retention:** Assess anti-racism attitudes during recruitment and strengthen pathways for under-represented groups.
- 5 Proactive Communication:** Promote anti-racism efforts through consistent and affirmative messaging to internal and external audiences.
- 6 Multi-Agency Collaboration:** Create regional committees to share best practices across health, education, and social care sectors.
- 7 Enhanced Training:** Expand anti-racism and equality training for recruits, leveraging resources like CRER's "Ten Standards for Training."
- 8 Data Transparency:** Use human resources data and surveys to identify disparities and guide targeted interventions.
- 9 Integration into Planning:** Include anti-racism activities in institutional reporting and planning frameworks to ensure accountability and transparency.



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# Glossary and Abbreviations

## Race/ ethnicity

- **Race:** A social construct that divides people into distinct groups based on certain characteristics such as physical appearance (particularly skin colour) ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, cultural history, ethnic classification.
- **Ethnicity:** A social construct that divides people into social groups based on characteristics such as shared sense of group membership, values, behavioural patterns, language, political and economic interests, history, and ancestral geographical base.

## Racial identity

- **Black:** We use the term Black when specifically referring to people of African descent. We also use the term black as an inclusive term for people of African and Caribbean / South American/ South-Asian descent who identify as black and share a common racialised experience in the United Kingdom based on their skin colour.
- **BME:** This term is used collectively to refer to non-white people.
- **BAME:** BAME stands for Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic, and is an acronym used in the UK to describe people from non-white British backgrounds. It includes people from a wide range of ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds.
- **Global Majority Heritage:** Global majority refers to people who are "black, Asian, brown, dual-heritage, indigenous to the global south, who have been

racialised as 'ethnic minorities'" and "represent approximately 80% of the world's population".

- **Minority ethnic:** We use this term to refer to people who are not white British nor black.
- **White:** White people, often used to refer to the idea of British people based on their skin colour.

## Racism

- **Racism:** The systemic subordination of members of targeted racial groups, who have relatively little social power, by the members of the agent racial group who have relatively more social power. This subordination is supported by the actions of individuals, cultural norms and values, and the institutional structures and practices of society.
- **Racism:** The conduct or words or practices which advantage or disadvantage people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be overt or covert.
- **Racism:** The result of a complex interplay of individual attitudes, social values and institutional practices. It is expressed in the actions of individuals and institutions and is promoted in the ideology of popular culture. It changes its form in response to changes in an environment.

## Types of racism

- **Active Racism:** Actions which have as their stated or explicit goal the maintenance of the system of racism and the oppression of those in targeted racial groups. People who participate in active racism advocate the

continual subjugation of members of the non-white people and protection of 'the rights' of white people. These goals are often supported by a belief in the inferiority of non-white people and the superiority of white people, culture and values.

- **Passive Racism:** Beliefs, attitudes and actions that contribute to the maintenance of racism, without openly advocating violence or oppression. The conscious and unconscious maintenance of attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that support the system of racism, racial prejudice and racial dominance.
- **Cultural Racism:** Those aspects of society that overtly and covertly attribute value and normality to white people and whiteness, and devalue, stereotype, and label non-white people as "other," different, less, than, or render them invisible.

## Levels of racism

- **Individual Racism:** Individual belief in the inherent superiority of people who are white.
- **Interpersonal:** When the private beliefs about the superiority of white people or the inferiority of non-white people are shared with others.
- **Institutional Racism:** The network of institutional structures, policies, and practices that create advantages and benefits for white people, and discrimination, oppression, and disadvantage for non-white people.
- **Structural:** A system in which policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate

racial group inequality. It involves the cumulative and compounding effects of several factors including the law, history, culture, ideology, and interactions of institutions and policies that systematically privilege white people over non-whites.

### Privilege, domination, shadism

- **White Privilege:** The concrete benefits of access to resources and social rewards and the power to shape the norms and values of society which white people receive, unconsciously and consciously, by virtue of their skin colour.
- **Collusion:** Thinking and acting in ways which the support the system of racism. Both white people and non-white people can collude with racism through their attitudes, beliefs and actions.
- **Internalised domination:** When white people believe and define their group's socially superior status as normal and deserved.
- **Internalised racism:** A form of self-loathing where the non-white person accepts the negative attitudes, beliefs, stereotypes and ideologies that white people perpetuate about them.
- **Horizontal Prejudice:** Where non-white people believe, act on, or enforce the system of racial discrimination and oppression among themselves. Horizontal prejudice (also known as colourism or shadism) occurs between members of the same racial group.

### Allyship, anti-racism, anti-racist

- **White ally:** A white person who actively works to eliminate racism. This person may be motivated by a sense of moral obligation, or a commitment to foster social justice.

- **Anti-racist, anti-racism:** An individual and organisational process of identifying and eliminating racism by changing systems, organisational structures, policies, practices and attitudes, so that power is redistributed and shared equitably.
- **White sanction:** Where the skills and capabilities of a non-white individual are, first, acknowledged and, second, endorsed/ promoted by a white individual, who is positioned as a broker and/or mediator acting on behalf of or in the interests of the non-white individual.

### Related concepts and abbreviations

**Criminal Justice Service (CJS)** - in the UK this is a collection of agencies including, but not limited to, the police, the courts, the Ministry of Justice and the Home Office that are involved in the detection and prevention of crime, the prosecution of people accused of committing crimes, the conviction and sentencing of those found guilty, and the imprisonment and rehabilitation of ex-offenders. **Collaboration** - a working practice whereby individuals (or organisations) work together for a common purpose to achieve benefit.

**Diversity** - refers to our different personal characteristics.

**Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)** - terms commonly used to describe concepts and practices that aim to eradicate discrimination and disadvantage arising from personal characteristics.

**Equality** - assumes each person is given the same opportunities and resources regardless of need.

**Equity** - allows for different circumstances and needs: resources and opportunities are allocated on the basis of need to reach an equal outcome.

**Equivalence** - of value or worth determined by the outcome rather than the means of achieving it.

**Gender-based violence** - refers to harmful acts directed towards an individual based on their gender.

**Inclusion** - values and involves everyone by creating enablers and removing barriers to participation.

**IPCC** - Independent Police Complaints Commission, the police complaints watchdog for England and Wales.

**Intersectionality** - how personal characteristics interrelate, for example membership of more than one minority group.

**LGBT+** - a collective term for those individuals who self-identify as lesbian, gay, binary, transgender, queer/questioning, asexual, pansexual, non-binary, and other non-binary terms used to describe gender. **Peer-reviewed publications** - documents that have been independently assessed for quality and technical rigour, such as academic journal articles and research reports.

**Scottish Institute for Policing Research (SIPR)** - SIPR is a collaboration between Police Scotland, the Scottish Police Authority, and Scottish universities. It aims to carry out high quality, independent research and to make evidence-based contributions to policing policy and practice

**Synthesise** - combining information from several sources to create new ideas based on critical evaluation of the resources considered.

**United Kingdom (UK)** - comprising England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

**United States (US)** - the United States of America.



# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 BACKGROUND

In the United Kingdom (UK), racism is often understood as interpersonal bias that is evident when individuals interact with each other. The racially motivated behaviour may in turn be reflective of internalised racism, where personal, private beliefs about race affect interpersonal interactions. Such beliefs are influenced by our culture(s) and may include negative beliefs about people of colour and/or beliefs about white people's superiority, and privileged entitlement.

In contrast, an emerging view characterises individualised forms of racism and discrimination as symptomatic of more systemic racism, achieved through cultural norms, together with the law, and organisational policies and practices that produce racially inequitable outcomes. These outcomes may be without purpose or malice, arising as unintentional and unanticipated, but consequential to people who are not white.

The terms "institutional racism" and "institutional discrimination" are difficult allegations and evoke strong reactions, at times prompting their dismissal as irrelevant to workplace dynamics (Smith et al., 2020). Recognising the urgency to combat racism, anti-racism as an individual and organisational practice has gained increased acceptance in the UK (Miller, 2021; Ogbonna, 2023).

Organisational leaders are becoming more comfortable addressing institutional and structural racism through various anti-racist strategies and tools (Miller, 2023), yet this has proved difficult to address within a policing context. While crucial initiatives addressing racism within the UK policing context emerged in the 1990s, prompted by landmark events and public inquiries, persistent racism and discrimination remain, as acknowledged in the Police Race Action Plan (2022) and Baroness Casey's report (2023) into institutional racism in the Metropolitan Police. In May 2023, Sir Iain Livingstone, former Chief Constable of Police Scotland addressed this, describing in his vision of Police Scotland as an anti-racist organisation. This commitment has been further endorsed by Jo Farrell, the current Chief Constable, as evident in the Policing Together Strategy (Police Scotland, 2024) aspiration to be welcoming, inclusive and representative of the communities they serve.

Addressing racism and discrimination in policing presents challenges and opportunities to improve structures, policies, and practices. We aimed to conduct a systematic review of peer-reviewed articles and grey literature considering the conceptualisation and implementation of anti-racism within policing to inform understanding of the evidence regarding related policies and practices and how they might be prioritised, implemented, and evaluated. This aim was achieved through four inter-related objectives, namely to:

- Examine the operationalisation of organisational anti-racism;
- Characterise means of assessment of organisational anti-racism;
- Identify the concepts and constructs relevant to assessing the development and embedding of anti-racist policies and practice in policing;
- Discuss the findings in relation to Police Scotland's strategic themes.

This report is intended to increase insights and understandings of anti-racism as a concept and practice, raising awareness of anti-racism practice in the context of policing in Scotland. Findings are presented to achieve the first three objectives. We go on to discuss the findings and make recommendations in relation to Police Scotland's strategic themes to achieve our fourth objective. We consider anti-racism at all levels of the police service to enable individual and organisational engagement with the potential for long-term societal change through informed organisational practices.

### 1.2 STRUCTURE OF THIS REPORT

The results of the review are reported here in summary to inform the senior executive of Police Scotland. We first provide an overview of the literature identified, and present findings relating to the objectives outlined. We consider the strengths and limitations of the extant literature before going on to discuss our findings and conclusions as they relate to Police Scotland's strategic themes and offer recommendations for implementing anti-racism in the context of policing in Scotland.

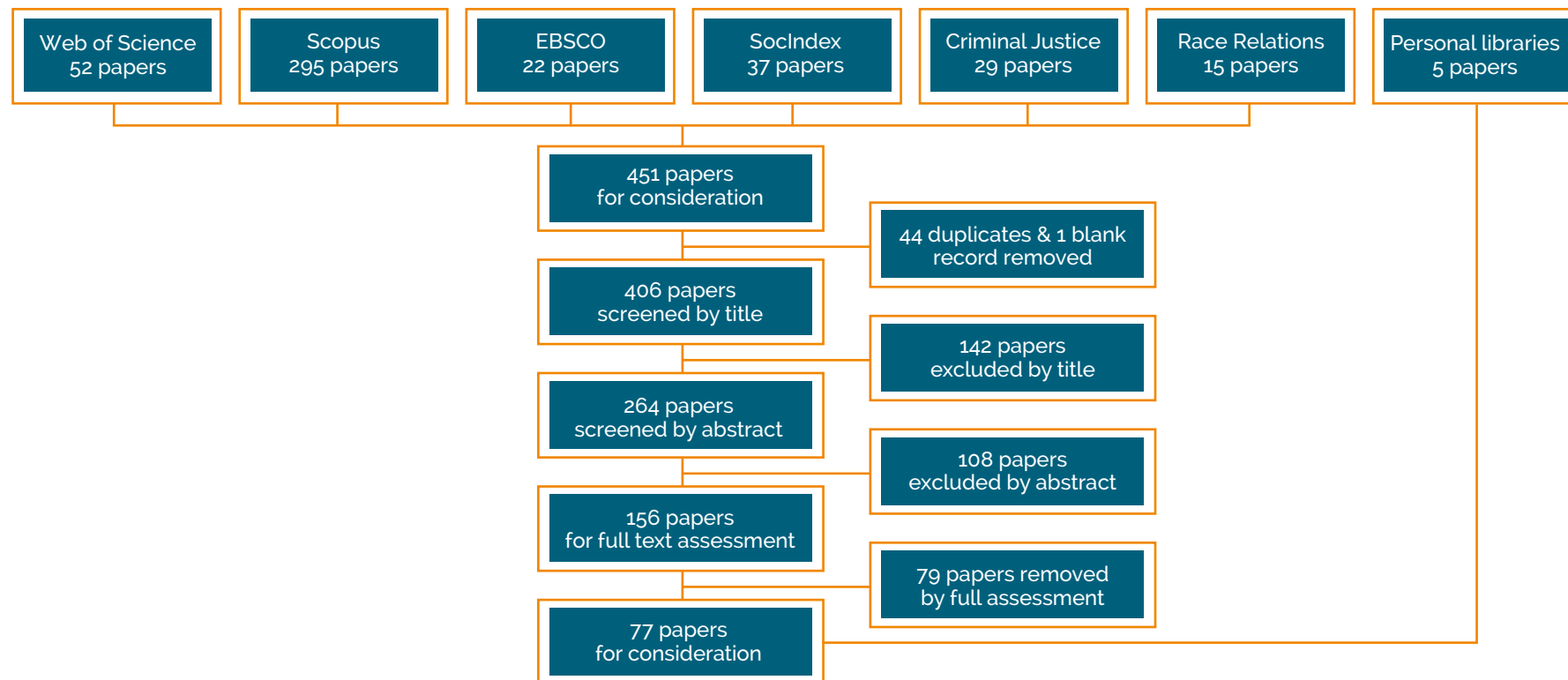
### 1.3 OVERVIEW OF REVIEW METHOD

We developed a search strategy for work considering the implementation of anti-racism in the context of policing through discussion with library management experts, drawing on our specialist knowledge of relevant keywords and subject headings in the field. Searches were conducted in Web of Science, Scopus, EBSCO, SocIndex, Criminal Justice, and Race Relations databases. All papers meeting the search criteria were included for screening against predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria (see Box 1). Titles and abstracts and full texts of potentially relevant papers were screened

independently by three authors (ZM, KL and ME). We then supplemented the articles for review with unpublished, peer-reviewed resources from our personal libraries relevant to anti-racism in the public sector in the UK. This process of identification and screening of sources is summarised in Figure 1. Sources identified were reviewed and summarised individually, then thematically analysed within the deductive framework

of the main objectives of the review. Themes emerging were discussed iteratively amongst the review team to inform deep consideration of the evidence in relation to Police Scotland’s strategic themes. This work is synthesised and summarised in the remainder of this report. Full details of the review method and the 83 individual sources included for full review are presented in the accompanying technical report.

1.3.1.1 Figure 1: PRISMA Diagram: identification of new studies via databases and registers (in accordance with Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff et al, 2009)



### 1.3.1.2 Box 1: Screening Criteria

#### Inclusion criteria:

- Primary empirical studies, peer reviewed articles using qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods designs based on outcomes: Studies assessing the implementation, operationalisation, or evaluation of anti-racism policies, practices, or interventions
- Peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, published reports.
- Studies published from 1990 onwards. (study period of similar employment)
- Studies published in English.
- Studies examining anti-racism policies, practices, or interventions at the organisational or institutional level (e.g., workplaces, government agencies, educational institutions, law enforcement agencies, criminal justice system, civil service and or public sector.
- Studies involving organisational stakeholders, such as employees, managers, leaders, or participants in anti-racism initiatives, i.e. members of the public, community groups or gatekeeper organisations (faith based or activists' groups).

#### Exclusion criteria:

- Non-empirical studies (e.g., opinion pieces, editorials, commentaries).
- Unpublished literature (e.g., dissertations, conference abstracts, non-quality assured materials).
- Studies focusing solely on individual-level attitudes, beliefs, or experiences related to racism or anti-racism, without an organisational/institutional component.
- Studies involving only public samples or samples outside of organisational contexts.
- Studies that do not explicitly examine anti-racism policies, practices, or interventions at the organisational level.
- Multiple reports from one study (duplicates)



## 2. Analysis of Findings

### 2.1 OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

Our initial screening of the sources demonstrated the limitations of the work, and so we expanded our inclusion criteria to include non-policing contexts too. This resulted in 54 papers relating to policing and 31 papers that met our inclusion criteria and considered the implementation of anti-racism in the public sector in the UK in a non-policing context. These papers from non-policing contexts do not represent the entirety of work in the field, but they have been indexed as relevant to policing activities in some way. We therefore reviewed a total of 83 papers relating to anti-racism in the public sector in the United Kingdom.

In reviewing sources relating to partner agencies and other sectors, including local government and education, we were able to consider the wider public sector context. Findings presented here examine the operationalisation of organisational anti-racism; characterise means of assessment of organisational anti-racism; and identify the concepts and constructs relevant to assessing the development and embedding of anti-racist policies and practice in policing, as presented in the papers reviewed. Observed trends within the literature are considered here, together with consistencies and debates in the arguments presented. Further details of each publication are provided in the accompanying technical report.

### 2.2 THE OPERATIONALISATION OF ORGANISATIONAL ANTI-RACISM

Many of the identified studies address the concept of institutional racism to inform organisational anti-racism strategies. Critical Race Theory and systemic frameworks provide strong theoretical foundations for anti-racism efforts, but their application to policing contexts is rarely explored in depth. Identified research focuses on systemic critiques, cultural contexts and issues within existing systems that require a range of holistic interventions. Yet we found limited examples of specific organisational changes or detailed strategies for operationalising anti-racism and few studies provide actionable frameworks for implementing and sustaining anti-racist reforms.

Studies considering theoretical constructs like Critical Race Theory (Gillborn, 2006) and structural analyses (e.g., Wight, 2003) frame systemic racism as a persistent

issue needing holistic interventions. Holdaway and O'Neill (2006) emphasise the need for standardised strategies to operationalise institutional anti-racism. They offer comprehensive insights into conceptualising racism in institutional settings while highlighting limited progress in policy assessment and the persistence of systemic resistance. Loader and Mulcahy (2003) offer a historical and cultural critique of UK policing, exploring how memory and politics shape institutional practices. Although Loader and Mulcahy provide valuable conceptual insights into systemic challenges, they fail to address the operationalisation or assessment of anti-racism policies, rendering their contribution largely theoretical, whilst offering minimal guidance for practical reform.

Long and Cullen (2008), highlighting the challenges in operationalising and assessing anti-racist policies in their critical examination of the UK's journey towards democratic policing, argue that while there have been efforts to address racism within the police force, these initiatives often lack depth and are not supported by effective evaluation mechanisms. They highlight the need for a holistic approach that integrates anti-racist principles into all aspects of policing, supported by rigorous assessment tools to ensure accountability and continuous improvement. Newburn (2008) argues that constructive reform demands a shift from crisis-led interventions to holistic, proactive strategies that address structural inequality. Such strategies should seek to embed accountability at all levels and prioritise cultural transformation in contrast to reactive policies such as the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 that address symptoms

rather than root causes of racism. Although McLaughlin's book, 'The New Policing' (2007) offers robust conceptual discussions on the cultural and sociological aspects of policing, it provides limited practical guidance on implementing and assessing anti-racist policies within police organisations. The emphasis remains on understanding the complexities of police culture and governance rather than offering actionable strategies for operationalising anti-racism. Hopkins, Reicher and Levine (2011) explore how systemic racism persists through cognitive categorisations, linking everyday behaviours with structural inequalities. Their theoretical analysis is solid and well-founded, offering valuable constructs to understand racial dynamics. However, it lacks actionable strategies for embedding anti-racist policies or practical assessment tools for organisational change. The article contributes meaningfully to conceptual debates but has limited utility for operationalising anti-racism or evaluating its implementation in practice. Its focus on cognition could inform future frameworks for policy application.

The focus on conceptual debate is enduring within the literature. Holdaway (1997) advocates for a theoretical focus on racialisation and institutional processes in criminology, critiquing the lack of engagement with race as a dynamic construct. The article offers robust conceptual contributions but minimal practical solutions. It provides limited insights into operationalising anti-racism and fails to present a structured assessment framework for policies or practices. Bradford, Jackson, and Taylor (2024) consider institutional racism as one of the core challenges and concerns issues in UK policing, highlighting issues of culture, racism and the need for systemic reform. Their critique of policing structures and culture suggests a need for systemic overhaul but lacks specific evaluations on suggested interventions. Similarly, in critiquing the limited success of embedding anti-racist policies in policing following the Macpherson Report, Bridges (1999) argues that the report introduced the concept of "institutional racism," but its recommendations lacked practical strategies for implementation. The article underscores the challenges of operationalising anti-racism within a [somewhat] resistant organisational culture and points to the absence of effective assessment mechanisms to evaluate progress. Organisational resistance and systemic inertia are identified as significant barriers to operationalisation. Although conceptually sound, the study does not offer actionable solutions, focusing instead on systemic barriers to reform rather than mechanisms for operationalising anti-racism.

Ethical practice and institutional legitimacy are important aspects of operationalising anti-racism. MacVean, Spindler and Sol's (2012) book serves as a valuable resource on ethical considerations and professional standards in policing. However, it provides limited focus on the operationalisation and assessment of organisational anti-racism. While it addresses various aspects of ethical policing, the text offers limited focus on the specific operationalisation of organisational anti-racism. The book lacks comprehensive discussions on implementing and evaluating anti-racist policies. McGregor (2024) examines police legitimacy through philosophical and sociological frameworks, highlighting systemic bias as a major barrier. The book's strength lies in its conceptual contributions, particularly on trust and legitimacy, but the absence of practical frameworks for embedding these ideas into policing weakens its impact as a guide for reform. While the book calls for comprehensive reforms to address institutional racism, it lacks actionable strategies for operationalising anti-racism within organisations. Furthermore, assessment methods are underexplored, leaving questions about how to evaluate progress. These contributions offer limited conceptual frameworks specific to addressing systemic racism within police organisations.

Whilst these policing studies provide valuable insights into anti-racism implementation, they often lack clarity on actionable steps for embedding these ideas in organisational processes, illustrating the challenges in translating concepts of systemic racism into policies, training, and organisational processes. Frameworks for transparency, accountability, and structural change are widely discussed but remain underexplored in practical application and guidance on embedding these frameworks into institutions.

This trend is also evident in the non-policing literature identified in our searches. Hills, Sefton and Stewart (2012) provide an analysis of social inequality and its implications for policy-making. However, their focus remains at a macro level and contributes to understanding broader systemic inequalities, with no structured discussion on operationalising or assessing anti-racism within organisations. Similarly, Herbert's (2008) book 'Negotiating Boundaries in the City: Migration, Ethnicity, and Gender in Britain' highlights the negotiation of racial boundaries in diverse urban settings, focusing on integration challenges. Khan (2021) offers a critical appraisal of systemic racism and its intersection with societal narratives, focusing on liberalism and identity

politics, providing interesting theoretical insights. Jarman (2003) examines racism in Northern Ireland, focusing on its impact on communities, particularly young people. Gillborn, Woolnough, Jankowski and Sandle (2023) highlight whiteness in curricula and the role of education in reproducing racism. Tomlinson (2019) explores historical neglect of racial understanding and consideration of the historical roots of racial inequalities as demonstrative of systemic racism in education that in turn contribute to perpetuating racial inequalities. Jhutti-Johal and Singh (2019) highlight the historical and social contexts of hate crimes, raising awareness of systemic issues. Iganski (1999) provides a nuanced examination of hate crimes within urban environments, focusing on the lived experiences of victims and the societal structures that perpetuate or challenge such acts. Iganski's analysis is rooted in the analysis of hate crimes as a social phenomenon, addressing both individual and collective harms inflicted upon marginalised communities. The strength of Iganski's work lies in its detailed exploration of the human cost of hate crime and its implications for social cohesion, particularly within diverse urban settings. However, it lacks deeper engagement with institutional practices, suggesting a need for more focus in this area.

Whilst these sources provide valuable sociological insights as critique of systemic issues, they do not provide actionable frameworks for embedding anti-racism within organisations. Organisational culture and the wider cultural context are important in theorising the causes of racism and informing anti-racist strategies but there is little consideration of theories in use. Actively addressing these issues is important to the ethical conduct and organisational legitimacy of policing, but there has been limited work to develop and evaluate frameworks and strategies for operationalising these theories for practical application. This absence of applied theory relevant to organisational anti-racism and anti-racist policing practices is an identified gap in the literature we have reviewed regarding operationalising and evaluating anti-racism within policing and other institutions. Put simply, these sources provide valuable insights into the social and cultural factors contributing to racism, but not what to do about it. This is consistent with the lack of structured assessments and institutional strategies for operationalising anti-racism we found in the policing literature.

### 2.3 THE MEANS OF ASSESSMENT OF ORGANISATIONAL ANTI-RACISM

The assessment of the impact of organisational anti-racism is critical to understanding their progress and effectiveness in fostering racial equity. Such assessment relates not only to the impact within the accountable organisation, but also to those minority group members affected. Despite this, our findings suggest a paucity of evidence considering assessment of anti-racism, although we did find some useful insights in the literature pertaining to education.

Long and Cullen (2008) identify this absence of robust mechanisms to evaluate the effectiveness of anti-racist initiatives within UK policing. They argue that existing assessment tools are inadequate for measuring progress, leading to a lack of accountability and call for the development of more rigorous evaluation frameworks to ensure that anti-racist policies are not only implemented but also effective in practice. This is consistent with our review findings. For example, MacVean, Spindler and Solf (2012) analyse professional standards and ethical considerations but provide limited methodologies for assessing organisational anti-racism. Harris (2006) focuses on empirical evaluation of racial profiling using metrics like 'hit rates'. While providing valuable assessment tools, the study's focus on US contexts reduces its applicability to UK policing. Operationalisation of anti-racism frameworks is minimal, and conceptual contributions are narrow, centred on quantitative measures rather than lived experiences. Joyce (2021) explores the historical and legal evolution of British policing. Concepts of law and order, diversity, and global policing are discussed providing insights into accountability measures with limited details of how these might be operationalised in assessment of anti-racism.

Accountability measures are also considered by Bridges (1999), who discusses the absence of robust mechanisms for evaluating the impact of anti-racist policies within policing, noting that while the Macpherson Report proposed several recommendations, there was no systematic process to measure their effectiveness or hold institutions accountable for their implementation. Assessment mechanisms, while improved since the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, are inconsistent and often fail to address systemic barriers to accountability (Newburn 2008).

Hockey (2020) critiques systemic biases in oversight mechanisms, particularly the IPCC, for reinforcing institutional inequalities. While identifying failures in complaint systems, the article does not address operationalising or assessing organisational anti-racism. Its conceptual contributions are limited to identifying structural harms without offering concrete pathways for and assessment of systemic change. This lack of assessment detracts from accountability, as demonstrated in Peacock's (2023) investigation of structural racism and punitive responses in criminal justice after the 2011 English disturbances. Whilst this paper critically analyses criminal justice responses to unrest and highlights the need to address structural racism, it lacks data-driven evaluation.

Our review findings suggest deficiency in robust evaluation methods for anti-racism initiatives in policing. This deficit in assessment and evaluation directly relates to police governance and accountability, impacting on institutional legitimacy. Studies frequently call for the development of better monitoring tools to track progress and accountability in policing reforms, but there is also a need to track the impact of reform, or the lack of reform, upon those affected by racism. The absence of detailed assessment tools, qualitative evaluation and/ or metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of anti-racist initiatives within policing suggests a need for more evaluation-focused work in this area.

The non-policing sources we reviewed offered some insights for this consideration of assessment, monitoring and accountability. Recent work in local government and education underscores the need for consistent application and rigorous assessment mechanisms to ensure meaningful organisational change. Hussain and Ishaq (2008) explore race equality initiatives in Scottish councils following legislative changes, highlighting partial progress in awareness training and community engagement, identifying inconsistencies in monitoring and a lack of comprehensive strategies. While it offers a foundational understanding of public sector responses, it stops short of providing robust frameworks or constructs for embedding anti-racism in policing. Our own work highlights a range of tools and techniques that might be integrated within a framework to support assessment of anti-racism strategies, including for example: Bias Assessment Tools: The Inclusive Curriculum Framework Inventory (ICFI) was used to measure the inclusivity of school curriculums and identify areas needing improvement (Miller et al., 2022). Community Feedback: Surveys and interviews with school leaders and community members provide qualitative insights into the effectiveness of anti-racism measures (Miller 2023; Miller 2024). Diversity Audits: Evaluating demographic

representation in staffing and student bodies to identify gaps (Miller 2024). Quality Assurance Processes: Participatory audits ensure transparency and broader buy-in (Miller 2022). Institutional Typologies: Miller (2016) categorises institutions into "engaged," "experimenting," "initiated," and "uninitiated," providing a framework to assess organisational readiness and commitment (Miller 2024).

A range of these and similar tools may be used to assess actions in support of organisational anti-racism strategies and should directly relate to any framework(s) developed to underpin strategic action plans. Assessment data should be collected on an enduring basis to allow longitudinal comparison of progress over significant periods of time (e.g., five or 10 years) given the challenge of achieving sustained impact in behavioural change.

## 2.4 THE CONCEPTS AND CONSTRUCTS RELEVANT TO ASSESSING THE DEVELOPMENT AND EMBEDDING OF ANTI-RACIST POLICIES AND PRACTICE IN POLICING

In this section we consider individual elements of policing policy and practice that we have identified within our review as relevant to assessing the development and embedding anti-racist action into policing in Scotland. Whilst the former findings sections have highlighted strong theoretical understanding of underlying factors of racism together with an absence of applied frameworks and means of assessment, this section integrates consideration of policing and some non-policing literature to review a range of areas for policy development and practical measures that together might contribute to implementing anti-racism in the context of policing. This is important as policies embedding equity and inclusion as "core business" are advocated to create structural accountability within institutions (Miller 2023 & Miller 2024). We consider our review findings relating to police governance and accountability, police employment practices, policing practices, and community engagement, then take time to consider aspects of intersectionality.

### 2.4.1 Governance and Accountability

Our review findings identified interesting areas of debate on the role of governance and accountability in supporting policing across diverse societies. Wight (2003) argues that policies based on individual accountability fail to address structural causes of racism and advocates for nuanced structural analysis in policy design to eradicate institutional racism. This analysis critiques individualistic approaches and the lack of structural focus in addressing institutional racism. McLaughlin (2007) discusses the balance between operational independence and public accountability, highlighting



tensions inherent in accountability mechanisms, managerial reforms, and political influence in police governance. Walsh and Conway (2011) advocate for the role of governance mechanisms in addressing systemic racism, but do not provide operationalisation tools. Skinner (2024) investigates racial biases in the governance of the UK's DNA database, focusing on ethnic monitoring and the need for racial equity in forensic databases, although there is a lack of evaluation of outcome bias to support this thesis. Although these articles demonstrate a lack of data on specific intervention evaluations in policing, their exploration of the role of governance in addressing racial biases illustrates the potential for unbiased governance mechanisms to contribute to organisational anti-racism.

#### 2.4.2 Police employment practices

Organisational anti-racism is reliant on collective understanding and activities as the organisational culture is shaped by the behaviours exhibited by police, civilian colleagues and partner organisations. The ways in which anti-racism is embedded in communications, employment policies, and policing practices are important in achieving a collective understanding of what is acceptable in an organisation based on shared values. In discussing gaps in implementation and operationalisation of anti-racism, Holdaway and O'Neill (2006) emphasise the need for definitional clarity, standardised strategies and frameworks to assess institutional racism effectively.

The need for definitional clarity regarding anti-racism is illustrated by investigations of differences in understanding of racism, as illustrated by debate on racism in the Northern Irish context. Fanning and Michael (2018) contrast institutional responses to racism in Ireland and Northern Ireland, critiquing failures to meet international obligations. They highlight civil society's role in advocating for and driving reform, and the gaps in state and institutional obligations and accountability under international rights treaties. McKee (2016) examines prejudice in Northern Ireland, linking it to sectarianism, economic interests and social contact. In contrast to these broader themes, more specific intergenerational differences may be important. Jarman (2003) analyses police-recorded data on racist harassment involving children in Northern Ireland, trends in youth victimisation and the role of young perpetrators in racist harassment. They recommend educational interventions and policy reforms targeting

young people to combat racism. Long and Cullen (2008) provide a thorough analysis of key concepts such as institutional racism, community policing, and democratic accountability. They explore how these constructs influence the development and implementation of anti-racist policies, emphasising the need for a policing model that is both democratic and responsive to the diverse communities it serves. They advocate integrating these concepts into the core values and operations of police organisations.

The values of an organisation contribute to shaping its culture by describing the collective expectations of how members of the organisation will behave. McLaughlin (2007) explores the complexities of police culture, discussing issues of racism, discrimination, and the challenges of fostering diversity within police forces. McLaughlin reflects on high-profile cases, such as the Stephen Lawrence inquiry, to illustrate systemic issues and the need for cultural change within policing institutions. Shiner (2010) argues that defensive attitudes among officers have hindered the effective implementation of anti-racism reforms, such as increased minority recruitment and recording requirements for stop and searches. Caveney, Scott, Williams, and Howe-Walsh (2020) critique how austerity has shaped UK policing, particularly in terms of diversity and inclusivity, highlighting residual racism in police culture. Grieve (2008) suggests interventions that could have implications for anti-racism work. These include improving objectivity in decision-making processes to mitigate biases, using evidence-based profiling to avoid stereotyping, and enhancing training for investigators to understand cultural and social factors affecting behaviour. The emphasis on standardisation and ethical practices aligns with broader efforts to ensure equity in criminal investigations. Hill and Augoustinos (2001) assess cultural awareness programmes and their impact on prejudice reduction, focusing on short- and long-term attitudinal changes, but the article does not explore organisational applications of anti-racism. These articles suggest attention to organisational culture and a shared understanding of expectations relating to anti-racism will contribute to implementing organisational anti-racism in policing.

Several human resource management policies detailed in the literature are illustrative of this attention to organisational culture and behavioural expectation, these including staff recruitment practices and diversity training for employees in policing and non-

policing contexts. Evidence supporting the efficacy of these interventions is limited. Many studies criticise the inadequate nature of racism awareness training, which often lacks depth and fails to challenge entrenched systemic biases. Cashmore (2002) and Rowe & Garland (2003) indicate the failure of cultural diversity training to address deeper structural issues. In 2008 the stagnation in addressing racism within British policing was highlighted (Newburn, 2008) and evidence of progress since then is limited within the literature reviewed. Efforts to operationalise anti-racism, such as through diversity training or minority recruitment, have often been shallow and tokenistic, lacking the depth to disrupt entrenched institutional practices. Kirk and Rovira (2022) use experimental methods to assess racial disparities in hiring during Black Lives Matter protests. The article provides a robust framework for evaluating organisational biases, particularly in recruitment practices, although it could be argued that this research is more applicable to workplace inequalities than institutional anti-racism in policing.

Positive actions in recruitment are highlighted in Miller's (2019) work, which examines strategies to improve the recruitment, retention and representation of Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) teachers in leadership roles. These include the development of frameworks to address barriers like workplace discrimination and structural racism (2024). Long and Cullen (2008) discuss the UK's efforts to implement anti-racist policies within its police forces, particularly following the Macpherson Report. While it acknowledges initiatives like diversity training and recruitment drives aimed at increasing minority representation, it notes that these measures often lack depth and fail to address systemic issues. The Inclusive Curriculum Project, discussed in Miller et al.'s (2022) study, implemented capacity-building workshops that enabled school leaders to recognise and tackle unconscious bias in curriculum development. Findings suggest that without comprehensive strategies, initiatives such as anti-racist employee recruitment policies and diversity training remain superficial and do not lead to substantial organisational change.

In addition to attending to organisational culture and human resource management, implementing antiracism in policing should consider the context beyond the organisation, and we identified sources discussing legislative and research activities.

Iganski (1997, 1999) focuses on legislative responses to racism and antisemitism, their societal impacts and policy inadequacies in addressing institutional resistance and systemic inequalities. Seal and Neale (2020) identify historical biases within mercy decisions for capital punishment cases in the UK to evidence the influence of systemic biases in judicial processes involving capital punishment and advocate for racial equity in criminal justice. Webber (2022) reviews structural inequalities and their perpetuation in the justice system as failures in addressing institutional racism. Smith (2013) provides critical analysis of youth justice, highlighting inconsistencies and detailing policies. The critique of systemic issues of discrimination and inequalities impacting young offenders offers insight into systemic reform needs in the UK. Souhami (2020) explores how police ethnographers construct narratives, addressing occupational norms in policing culture and how they shape police research and ethnographic practices in criminology. The collaborative nature of multi-agency service provision within the public sector in Scotland suggest the external context is an area that requires further consideration.

### 2.4.3 Policing Practices

Several of the sources reviewed focus on the ways in which authoritarian and discriminatory policing policies, impact marginalised groups, enabling impunity and erosion of human rights. Findings include individual critiques relating to county lines, knife crime, covert surveillance, and terrorism policies and practices, and several considerations of the policing of immigration, and stop and search practices.

Findings identified insightful critiques focusing on county lines, knife crime, covert surveillance, and terrorism policies and practices. Koch, Williams, Wroe (2024) examine the racialised policing of 'county lines' and the intersections with safeguarding and systemic racism, whilst also highlighting failures to address racial disparities. Its focus on safeguarding narratives provides valuable critiques and findings emphasise the need for actionable and systemic changes within policing frameworks. Williams and Squires (2021) examine UK knife crime policies, analysing racialized and social dimensions within criminal justice. They propose rethinking approaches to knife crime narratives and advocates for policy reforms to reduce racial bias and moral panic. Loftus (2019) critiques the role of covert surveillance in reinforcing systemic inequalities, linking technological practices with broader societal biases. Joyce

(2016) examines the evolution of protest policing in the UK, with a strong emphasis on power dynamics and policy implications. Conceptually rich, it identifies systemic barriers to democratic policing and highlights broader institutional issues. Its historical scope adds value to understanding policing culture but fails to offer actionable anti-racism strategies for contemporary practice. In each of these articles the conceptual contributions maintain a narrow focus on particular policies rather than holistic organisational reform. This suggests that actionable recommendations for embedding or evaluating anti-racist policies may need to identify and target a range of key issues to achieve meaningful change.

Two of the sources reviewed considered the policing of immigration. Parmar (2021) examines racialised discretion in policing practices, focusing on migration and the ways in which racial and discretionary practices interact to address racial biases in officer decision-making. In this article, Parmar (2021) argues the need for racially aware practices but does not offer a structured analysis and assessment on effectiveness of the proposed 'racialised discretion' model. Parmar (2023) goes on to examine emotional dynamics and the emotional impact of racialized policing practices in policing borders and migration control but does not evaluate intervention outcomes directly.

Five sources consider the disproportionate use of stop-and-search practices on ethnic minorities in the UK. Miller, Bland and Quinton (2000) identify systemic biases in police discretion, but assessment is constrained to public perceptions rather than institutional outcomes. Bowling and Phillips (2007) analyse statistical and qualitative evidence on racial bias in the operationalisation of stop and search practices. They present statistical and theoretical evaluation of stop and search data, critiquing the lack of proportionality and regulation, and highlighting the persistent discriminatory practices and the need for structural reforms. They advocate for curtailment or stricter regulation of stop and search powers, but do not offer a direct evaluation of intervention effectiveness. Shiner (2010) discusses the symbolic and practical significance of reforms like stop-and-search data recording as mechanisms for enhancing transparency, although there is limited consideration of specific outcome evaluation of the reforms discussed. Murray and Harkin (2017) discuss the influence of political climates and media scrutiny influenced stop and search reforms in Scotland, describing improvement in police accountability due to political scrutiny. Aston, Murray and O'Neill (2021) discuss organisational justice in stop and search reforms, focusing on Police Scotland, and present organisational justice as a method for fostering change in police stop and search practices in Scotland. Their positive evaluation indicates organisational justice frameworks foster police cultural change, particularly in stop and search policies.

Their recommendations suggest the utility of organisational justice frameworks to reform stop and search and illustrate the potential of focusing on a targeted range of policing practices as a means of implementing anti-racism in policing. The literature does however also illustrate the slow pace of reform of discriminatory stop and search practices within policing despite the supporting evidence, suggesting the need for greater intentionality in change.

#### 2.4.4 Community Engagement

Our review did not identify extensive consideration of racism and community engagement on this topic in the policing literature, despite this being essential for comprehensive anti-racist policy development. We found one paper that explored racist policing responses to racist offenses, linking systemic biases to social divisions and conflicts (Ray and Smith, 2004). They explore policing statistics and cultural dynamics relating to racial conflict and policing practices and propose a re-evaluation of approaches to racist offenses. They call for operationalisation through multi-dimensional strategies. Murji (2020) critiques framing riots as racial crises or post-political events, showing their ties to racialised policing. It suggests rethinking riots as 'legitimacy crises', reflecting systemic failures. However, the absence of frameworks for organisational anti-racism or robust assessment limits its utility for policing contexts. Gold (2022) explores procedural justice to improve police-community relations through Action Learning Research and provides valuable insights into fairness and legitimacy. Considering aspects of fairness in education, Parsons (2009) critiques neoliberal policies that perpetuate racial exclusions in education, calling them 'passive racism'. These sources suggest further consideration of community engagement would contribute to implementing antiracism in policing, increasing police accountability and opening up opportunities for better understanding of police legitimacy in practice.

#### 2.4.5 Intersectionality

Our findings highlight the importance of attention to the intersectionality of personal characteristics when implementing anti-racism. Overlapping social identities (for example someone who identifies as black and female) introduce systems of oppression and discrimination, amplifying potential for marginalisation and disadvantage. For example, Cunningham (2021) provides an extensive analysis of historical and current gender-based discrimination within policing and calls for intersectional approaches to address both gender and racial inequalities.

Intersectionality increases the need for collaboration on anti-racism between policing and other agencies, such as health and social care, and third sector organisations. Platt et al. (2022) investigate the intersectionality of racism and homophobia in police

enforcement and violence in East London, highlighting disproportionate targeting and violence against marginalised sex workers. The study advocates for structural reforms to reduce discrimination in policing and health services. Employing statistical models and quantitative data to assess enforcement biases against minority sex workers, they consider systemic inequities in policing and health care and their implications for law enforcement and public health policy. Harrison and Gill (2019) examine cultural and institutional barriers to reporting sexual abuse in South Asian communities, with a focus on policing practices. Aplin (2022) explores ethnic matching and its limitations in handling honour-based crimes in South Asian communities, providing valuable insights into cultural competence. Heimer, Hardiman and Dalton (2024) investigate how intersectional discrimination impacts police responses to sexual violence including rape and other sexual offences in England and Wales against migrant and minoritised women. They highlight systemic neglect and call for targeted reforms. These studies suggest that increased engagement with health inequalities, cultural competency and anti-racism in health and social care may contribute to implementing anti-racism in policing.

Moving beyond policing, the complexities of intersectionality between race, ethnicity and faith have been considered in the sources we reviewed. Iganski (2009) investigates the blurred line between racial and religious hate crimes, critiquing definitional inconsistencies and arguing for definitional precision. Macey (2009) critiques multiculturalism's failure to address systemic racism and gender inequality. Miah (2017) critiques the racialisation of Muslims in education and the securitisation policies shaping their experiences. They provide valuable discussions on racial politics, but solutions appear superficial. Lane and Smith (2021) critique the UK's approach to Roma integration, highlighting systemic policy inconsistencies. Harris (2023) explores the intersection of Islamophobia and police/prison abolition, establishing strong theoretical connections between racial justice movements, advocating for a unified anti-racism framework. Our own work in education has identified strategies to incorporate community perspectives to align anti-racist policies with local needs (Miller 2023). This work has included tailored anti-racism strategies focusing on inclusive policies and leadership training to ensure broad cultural representation (Miller et al., 2022) and integrate anti-racist principles into organisational ethos (Miller 2023). This suggests that implementing anti-racism in policing may learn from deeper consideration of initiatives elsewhere within the public sector, particularly in regard to aspects of intersectionality.



## 3. Discussion

### 3.1 OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

This systematic review aimed to explore the operationalisation of anti-racism policies and practices within policing, focusing on both policing and non-policing sectors. The review synthesised the findings of 83 articles, addressing key areas such as institutional legitimacy, organisational culture, intersectionality, community engagement, and the means of assessing anti-racism interventions.

The findings revealed that whilst much of the literature focuses on understanding the theoretical foundations of anti-racism (e.g., Critical Race Theory, structural racism), there remains a significant gap in providing actionable frameworks for translating these theories into practical strategies within organisations. Additionally, there is a clear lack of robust assessment frameworks to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of anti-racism strategies, which affects both policing and non-policing sectors. From the policing literature, the review revealed persistent institutional racism and resistance to organisational change, that are significant barriers to the effective implementation of anti-racism strategies. In non-policing sectors, while the commitment to anti-racism is more pronounced, operationalising and assessing anti-racism policies remains underdeveloped.

The individual measures described reflect the density of societal expectations of legitimate policing institutions, the complexities of police-community relations and the intricacies of addressing crime

and disorder. Importantly, whilst this report focuses on anti-racism, we note that several of the studies identified covered aspects of intersectionality of race with other identity dimensions such as gender, ethnicity, or socio-economic status, highlighting multi-dimensional systemic inequities. Intersectionality and community engagement are identified as essential but underexplored dimensions in anti-racist policy development. Most studies fail to address how overlapping identities like race, gender, and class intersect to create systemic inequities.

The aspiration within Police Scotland's Policing Together Strategy (Police Scotland, 2024) is to be welcoming, inclusive and representative of the communities they serve. We discuss the implications of our findings in relation to the four strategic themes of leadership; training; professionalism and prevention; and communications.

## 3.2 LEADERSHIP

### 3.2.1 Institutional Legitimacy and Accountability

The persistence of systemic racism in policing undermines public trust and institutional legitimacy, as highlighted by several studies. Deeply entrenched cultural norms and historical legacies within police organisations hinder the successful operationalisation of anti-racism strategies (Gillborn, 2006; Miller, 2016; Holdaway & O'Neill, 2006). A lack of confidence in policing is often observed, but less is discussed about the underlying causes and potential mitigation strategies. Governance and accountability mechanisms, such as those outlined in Police Scotland's Policing Together Strategy (2024), aim to address this issue by fostering inclusivity and representation. However, systemic biases and institutional inertia remain significant barriers.

### 3.2.2 Cultural Barriers and Resistance to Change

Institutional resistance to change remains a pervasive issue in policing, as deeply embedded cultural norms often hinder the effective implementation of anti-racism policies. Harrison and Gill (2019) emphasise that leadership buy-in is crucial to overcoming this resistance. Without active engagement from leadership and frontline officers, anti-racism initiatives risk becoming tokenistic or superficial. This challenge is not unique to policing. Miller (2023, 2024) highlights similar failures in non-policing sectors, where diversity initiatives frequently fail to address underlying systemic issues, offering a cautionary parallel.

Research has consistently shown that cultural resistance stems from factors such as entrenched power dynamics, fear of accountability, and the inertia of "business as usual" approaches (Holdaway & O'Neill, 2006). Studies by Bowling and Phillips (2007) further demonstrate how ingrained racial biases perpetuate discriminatory practices, even in organisations that claim to be progressive. These findings underscore the need for systemic interventions targeting organisational culture at multiple levels.

Trauma-informed approaches are increasingly recognised as essential tools for addressing cultural resistance. Hill and Augoustinos (2001) argue that such frameworks are critical for fostering environments where difficult conversations about race and racism can occur without fear of retaliation. Trauma-informed interventions also benefit

police officers, who often operate in high-pressure environments where racial biases and stress can intersect, affecting decision-making and interactions with minority communities (Esaki et al., 2022).

Accountability frameworks are another critical component for overcoming cultural resistance. Long and Cullen (2008) highlight the importance of establishing transparent mechanisms for monitoring progress and ensuring that anti-racism policies are implemented effectively. These frameworks should include clear metrics, such as bias audits and longitudinal tracking, to measure the impact of interventions. Moreover, as Quinn (2024) notes, accountability must extend to individual and organisational behaviours to dismantle the systemic barriers that perpetuate inequality.

Cross-sector comparisons also reveal valuable lessons for policing. For example, Fanning and Michael (2018) discuss how community-led initiatives in education and healthcare have successfully integrated anti-racism into organisational practices by prioritising the lived experiences of marginalised groups. These examples suggest that involving diverse stakeholders, including community representatives, in the design and implementation of anti-racism strategies can mitigate resistance and foster inclusivity.

### 3.2.3 Operationalising Anti-Racism and Trauma-Informed Approaches

To operationalise anti-racism effectively, organisations must prioritise creating a shared understanding of what constitutes racism and how it can be dismantled. This includes establishing clear definitions, consistent behavioural expectations, and comprehensive training for all staff members (Holdaway, 1997). Trauma-informed approaches are particularly important in fostering environments where difficult conversations about race and racism can occur without fear of retaliation (Hill & Augoustinos, 2001). Trauma-informed frameworks are vital for addressing both individual and intergenerational trauma, which affects not only minority communities but also police officers operating in a racially charged environment. Such approaches can create safer spaces for dialogue on race and racism, enabling systemic change without fear of retaliation (Hill & Augoustinos, 2001). Similarly, in education and healthcare, trauma-informed frameworks are essential to addressing systemic inequalities experienced by racialised communities. These frameworks must be embedded within an organisational justice model to align with institutional values and standards.

### 3.2.4 Anti-Racism as Organisational Culture

Embedding anti-racism within organisational culture requires consistent definitions, expectations, and training. The failure to establish these standards undermines the ability of institutions to address systemic racism effectively. Studies indicate a lack of longitudinal evaluations to assess the sustained impact of anti-racism initiatives, a gap that needs to be addressed in both policing and non-policing sectors (Miller, 2024).

Governance structures are essential for embedding anti-racism policies effectively. The Policing Together Strategy offers a framework for inclusivity, but addressing systemic biases is critical to achieving these goals. Cross-jurisdictional comparisons reveal inconsistent implementation of anti-racism policies across regions, underscoring the need for standardised approaches (Miller, 2024).

### 3.2.5 Risk Analysis and Cost of Inaction

There are unanswered questions as to the risk analysis for failure - Who pays the cost for anti-racism failing? The failure to implement anti-racism initiatives has significant personal and organisational costs. For minority ethnic individuals and families, institutional racism exacerbates inequality and erodes trust in public institutions. As Gillborn (2006) highlights, systemic racism not only creates daily inequities for affected communities but also perpetuates a sense of exclusion and disillusionment with public services such as policing.

For police organisations, these failures have tangible consequences, undermining institutional legitimacy and operational effectiveness. Holdaway and O'Neill (2006) discuss how unchecked institutional racism damages public trust and reinforces community-police disconnect, making it harder for law enforcement to operate effectively in diverse societies. Similarly, Long and Cullen (2008) argue that the absence of governance and accountability mechanisms for addressing systemic biases weakens democratic oversight and institutional transparency.

Acknowledging these costs through a structured risk analysis can serve as a powerful tool for advocating anti-racism among stakeholders. Police Scotland's Policing Together Strategy (2024) recognises the importance of inclusivity and representation in maintaining public trust. However, this strategy also underscores the need to confront systemic biases actively to achieve these goals. Furthermore, as Miller (2023) demonstrates in the context of non-policing sectors, organisations that fail to prioritise anti-racism risk both reputational harm and operational inefficiency. This parallel illustrates how the practical implications of inaction extend beyond ethical concerns, with significant organisational and societal repercussions.

### 3.2.6 Systemic Racism in Policing and Beyond

Systemic racism remains a persistent issue across sectors. In policing, entrenched cultural norms, historical legacies, and organisational resistance significantly impede efforts to foster equity and inclusivity (Gillborn, 2006; Holdaway & O'Neill, 2006). Such systemic biases erode public trust and undermine police legitimacy, exacerbating the disconnect between law enforcement and minority communities. Communities disproportionately affected by systemic racism, particularly Black and minority ethnic groups, are often excluded from decision-making processes, further entrenching inequality (Miller, 2016; Miller, 2023).

In non-policing sectors, such as education and healthcare, established mechanisms exist for addressing systemic inequalities. However, these mechanisms are frequently undermined by a lack of institutional accountability and clarity in their application (MacVean, Spindler & Solf, 2012). Similar to policing, these sectors often fail to incorporate the perspectives of marginalised communities into policy design, limiting the effectiveness and inclusivity of reforms (Miller, 2023).

### 3.2.7 Governance Mechanisms and the Need for Inclusivity

Governance mechanisms are critical to embedding anti-racism initiatives. For example, the Policing Together Strategy (Police Scotland, 2024) aspires to create an inclusive and representative force. However, achieving these goals necessitates addressing deeply rooted systemic biases within the organisation. Governance structures must ensure that the lived experiences of marginalised groups inform decision-making processes to create meaningful change.

In non-policing contexts, such as education and healthcare, governance mechanisms must similarly prioritise equity and representation. However, institutional policies in these sectors often fail to fully address racial disparities or the specific needs of marginalised groups (Miller, 2023). Effective governance must integrate intersectional approaches, recognising that race often intersects with gender, socio-economic status, and other identity dimensions.

### 3.2.8 Cross-Jurisdictional and Contextual Challenges

Anti-racism policies often lack cross-jurisdictional consistency, which limits their effectiveness. Variations in regional priorities and contextual considerations, such as differences in population demographics and local subcultures, create additional challenges (Miller, 2024). For example, Scotland's relatively homogeneous population presents different challenges compared to ethnically diverse areas like London, requiring tailored approaches to anti-racism.

### 3.3 TRAINING

Training plays a pivotal role in dismantling systemic racism within policing institutions. Systemic racism is a cultural phenomenon created and replicated through social interactions and language, which shapes how individuals and institutions understand and respond to racial issues. It is essential for colleagues to feel confident using language that accurately describes racism and anti-racism, fostering constructive and open conversations (Miller et al., 2022; Miller, 2024). Without this linguistic confidence, meaningful discourse is hindered, and opportunities to confront and address systemic biases are missed.

#### 3.3.1 Professional Development and Structured Training

Many institutions lack targeted and well-structured professional development opportunities to prepare leaders and staff for anti-racism initiatives. Research indicates that existing training programmes often fall short of providing comprehensive frameworks for understanding and addressing systemic racism effectively. As Holdaway (1997) argues, clear definitions of racism and anti-racism are essential to establish consistent behavioural expectations and foster accountability within organizations. This clarity enables a shared understanding of institutional commitments to anti-racism.

However, much of the current training remains superficial, focusing on surface-level diversity while neglecting the deeper structural and cultural roots of racism (Cashmore, 2002; Rowe & Garland, 2003). Miller (2020) extends this critique, emphasising the importance of equipping school leaders with the skills, attributes, and knowledge necessary to address institutional challenges related to migration, race discrimination, and systemic inequities. Miller argues that professional development efforts should prioritise training in areas such as curriculum diversity, recruitment and career progression, and leading change for racial inclusion.

Through an ecological lens, Miller (2020) advocates for anti-racist training as a central component of ongoing professional development for school leaders, particularly in multicultural and multi-ethnic educational environments. Such training must not only reflect the contexts within which leaders operate but also empower them to create

racially inclusive schools. This comprehensive approach equips leaders to address the collusion of personal and structural racism and promotes sustainable change in both educational and institutional settings.

#### 3.3.2 Lack of Evaluation and Assessment Tools

Despite the widespread implementation of training interventions, there is a significant gap in evaluating their effectiveness. Most programmes lack robust mechanisms to measure outcomes or assess progress over time. Tools such as bias audits, longitudinal tracking, and community feedback mechanisms are critical for ensuring accountability and demonstrating tangible progress (Long & Cullen, 2008). Without these tools, institutions cannot adequately evaluate whether training initiatives result in meaningful cultural change or simply reinforce performative compliance.

#### 3.3.3 Beyond Training: Allyship and Sponsorship

Promoting allyship and sponsorship is an essential complement to formal training programmes. These strategies empower individuals to actively support colleagues from underrepresented groups, fostering an organisational culture of inclusion and equity. Miller (2016; 2023) argues that allyship and sponsorship must go beyond symbolic gestures to become deeply embedded in organisational practices. Leaders and staff alike must be equipped with the skills and tools to engage meaningfully in these roles, ensuring that they contribute to sustainable institutional reform.

#### 3.3.4 Trauma-Informed Approaches

Training must also address the role of trauma in shaping interactions within and outside policing. Trauma-informed approaches are particularly relevant in the context of policing, where both officers and the communities they serve may be affected by individual and intergenerational trauma. Hill and Augoustinos (2001) highlight the importance of creating environments where difficult conversations about racism can occur without fear of retaliation or defensiveness. Incorporating trauma-informed principles into training can help institutions address systemic racism more empathetically and effectively, promoting healing and understanding.



### 3.3.5 Standardisation and Local Adaptation

The inconsistency in training quality and focus across regions further complicates the operationalisation of anti-racism. Standardised frameworks for anti-racism training are necessary to ensure uniformity in core principles and objectives. However, these frameworks must also be adapted to reflect local demographics and community needs. For example, significant ethnic diversity in urban areas such as London contrasts sharply with the predominantly white populations of rural Scotland (Census, 2022). Training programmes must balance standardisation with local relevance to ensure they are applicable and effective in diverse contexts.

## 3.4 PROFESSIONALISM AND PREVENTION

Anti-racism as an organisational culture remains critically underdeveloped across many institutions, despite its importance in fostering equitable and inclusive practices. The reviewed literature identifies key manifestations of systemic racism, including anti-Black and anti-minority biases, as well as biased decision-making processes that perpetuate inequality. These challenges underscore the need for cultural change to embed anti-racism as a core organisational value.

### 3.4.1 Cultural Change and Systemic Resistance

Systemic racism continues to be deeply entrenched within institutions, sustained by historical legacies and resistant cultural norms (Gillborn, 2006; Holdaway and O'Neill, 2006). Despite theoretical insights offered by frameworks such as Critical Race Theory (Gillborn, 2006), their practical application in institutional settings remains limited. For example, in policing, anti-racism often lacks operationalisation through actionable strategies, leaving efforts to address racism fragmented and superficial. Cultural resistance within organisations frequently results in an unwillingness to address uncomfortable truths about systemic inequality, further perpetuating the status quo (Harrison & Gill, 2019; Miller, 2024).

### 3.4.2 Biased Decision-Making and Organisational Fairness

The persistence of biased decision-making—whether conscious or unconscious—undermines the fairness of policing practices and the broader legitimacy of institutions. Research by Bowling and Phillips (2007) illustrate how these biases manifest in discriminatory practices such as stop and search, disproportionately targeting minority communities. Tools such as bias audits and structural accountability frameworks, as recommended by Long and Cullen (2008), are critical to mitigating these biases. However, the lack of robust evaluation methods and longitudinal data limits the ability to track progress and refine interventions over time.



### 3.4.3 Institutional Legitimacy and Accountability

Institutional legitimacy depends on transparency, accountability, and alignment with societal expectations. Yet, the reviewed studies consistently reveal gaps in governance and accountability structures. For instance, Miller (2023) critiques superficial diversity initiatives that fail to address root causes of systemic racism. Similarly, limited adoption of feedback mechanisms, such as community engagement or stakeholder consultations, hinders the development of inclusive policies that genuinely reflect the needs of affected communities (Esaki et al., 2022). Governance frameworks, such as those proposed by Police Scotland's Policing Together Strategy (2024), aim to build inclusivity and accountability but require stronger mechanisms for sustained implementation and evaluation.

### 3.4.5 Human Resources and Organisational Practices

HR practices play a pivotal role in shaping institutional culture, yet recruitment, retention, and promotion practices often fail to align with stated commitments to diversity and inclusion. Shiner (2010) and Rowe and Garland (2003) argue that these gaps exacerbate systemic inequalities, as minority candidates remain underrepresented in leadership positions. Contemporary interventions, such as reverse mentoring and allyship programmes, are rarely implemented, highlighting a missed opportunity for fostering meaningful organisational change (Miller 2016; Miller et al., 2022).

### 3.4.6 Need for Robust Evaluation Tools

Robust evaluation tools are essential for tracking progress and ensuring sustained institutional change. Bias audits and longitudinal tracking provide promising avenues for measuring the effectiveness of anti-racism initiatives (Long & Cullen, 2008). However, evaluation methods must also incorporate the voices of communities directly affected by systemic racism to ensure that policies are responsive to their needs (Fanning & Michael, 2018). Additionally, benchmarking progress across different regions and institutions can reveal patterns of success and areas requiring further intervention.

### 3.4.7 Benchmarking and Regional Variations

The literature underscores the need for benchmarking anti-racism initiatives to address regional and jurisdictional variations. For example, urban areas such as London exhibit greater demographic diversity compared to rural Scotland, where the population remains predominantly white (Census, 2022). These regional differences necessitate tailored approaches to anti-racism that reflect local contexts. Miller (2024) highlights that inconsistent implementation across jurisdictions not only undermines the effectiveness of interventions but also complicates efforts to address systemic racism comprehensively.

## 3.5 COMMUNICATIONS

### 3.5.1 The Role of Language in Anti-Racism

Language is a powerful tool in addressing systemic racism, yet it is often underutilised in fostering meaningful change. Effective communication about racism and anti-racism requires embracing discomfort and having difficult conversations about privilege, bias, and discrimination. Many organisations struggle to create an environment where employees feel confident using precise and appropriate language to discuss these topics. This hesitation stems from a fear of making mistakes or causing offense, which can silence necessary dialogue (Miller et al., 2022; Miller, 2024). Developing structured opportunities for professional development in communication skills is critical to addressing this issue.

Clear and inclusive language also plays a role in combatting systemic racism by promoting shared understanding and collective action. By normalising the use of anti-racism terminology and concepts, organisations can foster a culture where racism is openly addressed, and anti-racist practices are prioritised (Gillborn, 2006). Without cultural shifts, discussions of diversity risk being superficial and disconnected from actionable strategies.

### 3.5.2 Community Engagement and Marginalised Voices

The underrepresentation of community perspectives in the design, implementation, and assessment of anti-racism policies is a persistent gap. As noted in "Racism and Anti-Racism in the Two Irelands", community-led research is essential for creating policies that reflect the lived experiences of marginalised groups. However, these approaches remain underexplored, with few studies providing detailed methodologies for engaging communities effectively (Fanning & Michael, 2017).

The importance of lived experiences cannot be overstated, particularly in regions with unique demographic and cultural dynamics, such as Scotland. The 2022 Census highlights that 87.1% of Scotland's population identifies as 'Scottish' or 'Other British' within the White category, underscoring relatively limited ethnic diversity compared with cities like London, where ethnic minorities constitute 46.2% of the population. These differences demand tailored approaches to anti-racism policies that account for regional and local subcultures, as well as the unique challenges faced by families and individuals navigating minority status in predominantly white communities.

Community involvement in policing, such as building stronger relationships with community organisations and grassroots groups, is critical for shaping policies that are both inclusive and effective (Miller, 2023). By prioritising participatory frameworks, organisations can ensure that policies are informed by the experiences and needs of those directly affected by systemic racism.

### 3.5.3 Intersectionality and the Complexity of Minority Status

Intersectionality—the overlapping of race with other identity dimensions such as gender, sexuality, or socio-economic status—is frequently overlooked in anti-racism strategies (Miller, 2024). This oversight limits the ability to address the full complexity of systemic inequities and risks marginalising individuals whose identities do not fit into a single category. For example, minority women may experience unique forms of discrimination that are not adequately addressed by policies that focus solely on race or gender in isolation.

Incorporating intersectional perspectives into anti-racism efforts is particularly important in policing. Policies must acknowledge and address the compounded vulnerabilities of individuals who are marginalised due to multiple aspects of their identity. Similarly, in non-policing sectors such as education and healthcare, efforts must be made to design policies that reflect the diverse realities of marginalised communities (Gold, 2022).



### 3.5.4 Under- and Over-Policing of Communities

The dual phenomenon of under-policing and over-policing disproportionately affects minority communities. Over-policing, such as excessive stop-and-search practices, fosters mistrust and alienation, while under-policing in areas requiring protection leaves vulnerable communities underserved (Bowling & Phillips, 2007). Communication plays a pivotal role in addressing these issues, as transparent and inclusive dialogue between law enforcement and affected communities is essential for building trust and fostering collaboration.

Policing strategies must include community-driven feedback mechanisms to identify and rectify disparities in service provision. These feedback mechanisms should focus on improving procedural fairness and demonstrating institutional accountability to bridge the gap between police practices and community expectations (Gillborn, 2006).

### 3.5.5 Moving Towards Participatory Policy Design

To ensure that anti-racism policies are inclusive and effective, organisations must embrace participatory approaches that actively involve marginalised voices in decision-making processes. This requires a cultural transformation within institutions, moving beyond tokenistic consultations to genuine collaboration with community stakeholders. In policing, this means building lasting partnerships with minority ethnic groups and other marginalised communities to co-create policies that reflect their lived experiences (Miller, 2023).

In non-policing sectors, similar efforts are needed to empower communities to shape policies that address their unique challenges. For example, engaging parents, students, and community organisations in the design of anti-racist education policies ensures that interventions are responsive to the needs of those most affected by systemic racism (Fanning & Michael, 2017).

## 3.6 STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF APPROACH

This review provides valuable insights into the operationalisation of anti-racism within both policing and non-policing sectors, synthesising a broad range of studies. The strengths of this review lie in its comprehensive exploration of various theoretical frameworks, such as Critical Race Theory, and in its application to real-world organisational practices. The literature highlights the importance of systemic changes and community engagement in addressing racism at both individual and institutional levels. The growing focus on intersectionality represents a significant advancement, providing a more comprehensive understanding of how racism operates within organisations.

The review also identified several limitations within the literature. The absence of longitudinal studies and robust assessment frameworks makes it difficult to evaluate the long-term impact of anti-racism initiatives across sectors. Furthermore, while the review engaged with non-policing sectors, the inclusion of more cross-jurisdictional and participatory research would enhance the applicability of findings and provide more concrete guidance for operationalising anti-racism strategies. The lack of detailed studies on intersectionality in both sectors also limits our understanding of how overlapping forms of oppression influence the effectiveness of anti-racism interventions. While progress has been made in both policing and non-policing sectors, there remains a significant gap in translating theoretical insights into actionable, measurable and sustainable strategies for anti-racism.

## 4. Recommendations

The recommendations below aim to contribute to the priorities and commitments detailed in the 24/25 Annual Police Plan (Police Scotland, 2024).

- 4.1 Police Scotland should consider a **review of organisational values** to include anti-racism to allow a values-based approach to implementing anti-racism as a critical component of cultural improvement.
- 4.2 An **Anti-racism Oversight Group (AROG)**, comprising senior leadership, members of Black and minority ethnic communities, and partner representation (e.g. SEMPER, Police Federation), should be constituted to provide governance and oversight of the anti-racism within Police Scotland as part of the new operating model.
- 4.3 The organisation should reinforce its commitment to anti-racism by producing a proactive **Strategy On Anti-Racism (SOAR)** supported by a **holistic Anti-racism Action Plan (ARAP)** in support of the Policing Together Action Plan to increase front-line strength and drive service improvement.
  - a. The Anti-racism Oversight Group (AROG), should be accountable for **governance and oversight of the ARAP** and the delivery of the SOAR to ensure effective scrutiny within the broader culture of accountability.
  - b. The SOAR should implement a **trauma informed, social justice approach to anti-racism within the Human Rights Framework for Police Scotland** as a collaborative organisational change model for delivery and evaluation of the implementation of anti-racism in policing to tackle discriminatory behaviours.
  - c. The **ARAP should include a problem statement defining the ambition for implementing anti-racism**, recognising that institutional legitimacy is dependent upon Police Scotland being reflective of the population served.
  - d. The SOAR should include attention to the **lived experiences of racial and ethnic minority groups** within the organisation, to inform provision of targeted anti-racism interventions, such as training to support understanding of everyday discrimination that further enhances the training being rolled out in support of the Policing Together Action Plan.
  - e. The SOAR should detail a **range of policing practices as priority areas for anti-racist interventions** and identify a senior leader responsible for oversight and reporting to AROG on delivery and evaluation for each of the interventions.
  - f. The ARAP should **establish data structures and benchmarks for evaluation** of the progress of the delivery and efficacy of the SOAR anti-racism interventions to supplement the 2024/25 performance framework and provide regular monitoring of progress.
  - g. The SOAR should consider the potential for an **organisational anti-racism toolkit** to enable skills development and facilitate conversations about race, racism and anti-racism, establishing common ground for discussions about difference. Tools might include for example, a lexicon of terms to enable confidence in discussing race and ethnicity (such as the glossary provided in this report), training in the use of metaphors and stories to convey the lived experiences of individuals and groups, and anti-racism as criteria for prioritising review of policies, processes and procedures.
  - h. The toolkit should include **Improving Access initiatives** that focus on mitigating barriers to employee recruitment, retention and career progression for under-represented groups to attract and retain a diverse workforce that reflect and represent Scottish communities.
- 4.4 Progress with the implementation of anti-racism should be communicated and celebrated within an **affirmative anti-racism communications plan** to achieve consistent messaging with appropriate frequency and reach to drive cultural improvement.

- 4.5** AROG should instigate **Regional Multi-Agency Anti-Racism Committees (MAARCs)**. These MAARCs should involve experts from health and social care, and education in Scotland to facilitate the sharing of local best practice that best meets the needs of communities, and ensures attention to aspects of intersectionality, to achieve **effective service collaboration between blue light partners** and public services on the implementation of anti-racism.
- 4.6** The introduction of scoring attitudes towards anti-racism during employee recruitment and selection should be considered, using validated tools for psychometric testing, as one aspect of **enhanced vetting procedures**.
- 4.7** Include **anti-racism training and enhanced equality, diversity and inclusion content** of the anti-discrimination training that supports the Policing Together Action Plan.
- 4.8** Education on anti-racism during recruit training and probation periods should aim to **move away from the cultural assimilation of new recruits to the acculturation of new colleagues** as reflective of Scotland's changing population.
- 4.9** **Adaptation and adoption of Scottish Government affiliated training and policy resources** should be considered for the policing context where possible to ensure best value. These might include for example resources such as the 'Ten Standards for Training from an Anti-Racist Perspective' available from the Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights (CRER), and Education Scotland's Building Racial Literacy (BSL) Programme.
- 4.10** Experts within Police Scotland should **embed anti-racism into community engagement activities, with particular attention to intersectionality**, for example by extending existing work with faith groups to consider minority and under-represented groups.
- 4.11** Engagement with groups representing ethnic minority groups within the wider community should include **use of evidence on and evaluations of the progress and efficacy of anti-racism activities** to enable effective scrutiny and drive accountability.
- 4.12** Reporting of **human resources data and any staff surveys or research** should include data on respondent personal characteristics to allow analysis by respondent sub-groups, with additional consideration of intersectionality, to highlight of areas where the experience of minority groups is significantly different and would benefit from anti-racist intervention(s).
- 4.13** Activities supporting the implementation of anti-racism should be **more visible to both internal and external audiences** and included in Police Scotland's planning and reporting, including the Annual Police Plan, the Three-year Business Plan and institutional reporting, for example in returns to the Scottish Police Authority, to contribute to accountability and transparency.
- 4.14** Police Scotland should **implement a continuous feedback mechanism**, including anonymous staff surveys and community consultations, to regularly assess the experiences of racial and ethnic minority employees and community members. This data can inform updates to policies and practices, ensuring they remain relevant and effective.
- 4.15** **Measure the sustained impact of anti-racism initiatives through longitudinal and other studies**. This will enable Police Scotland to refine strategies based on evidence, ensuring continuous improvement and accountability. Such evaluations should assess both organisational culture changes and community perceptions of trust and fairness over time.

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