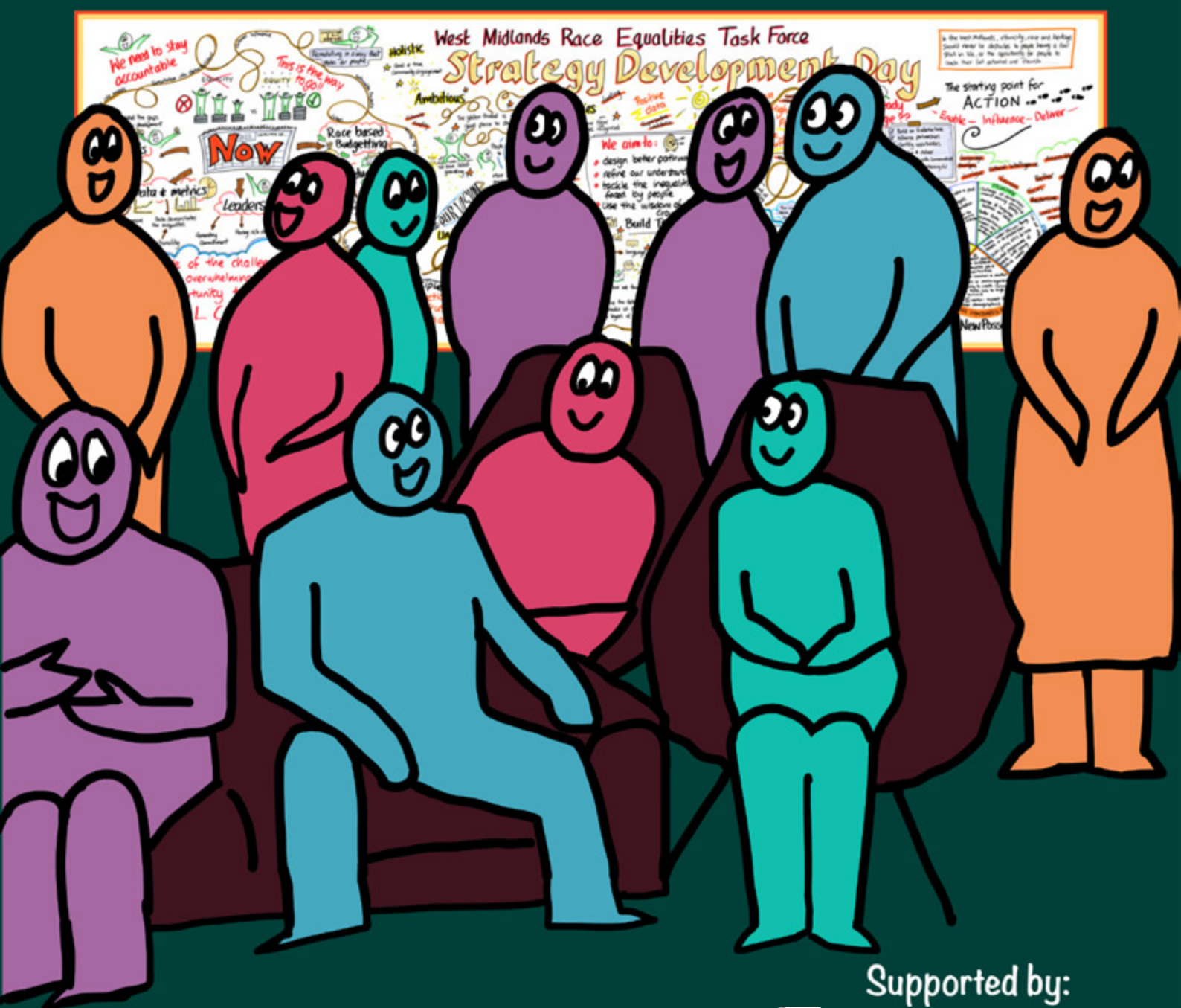


Race Forward

West Midlands Race Equalities Taskforce Independent Strategy 2023-2028



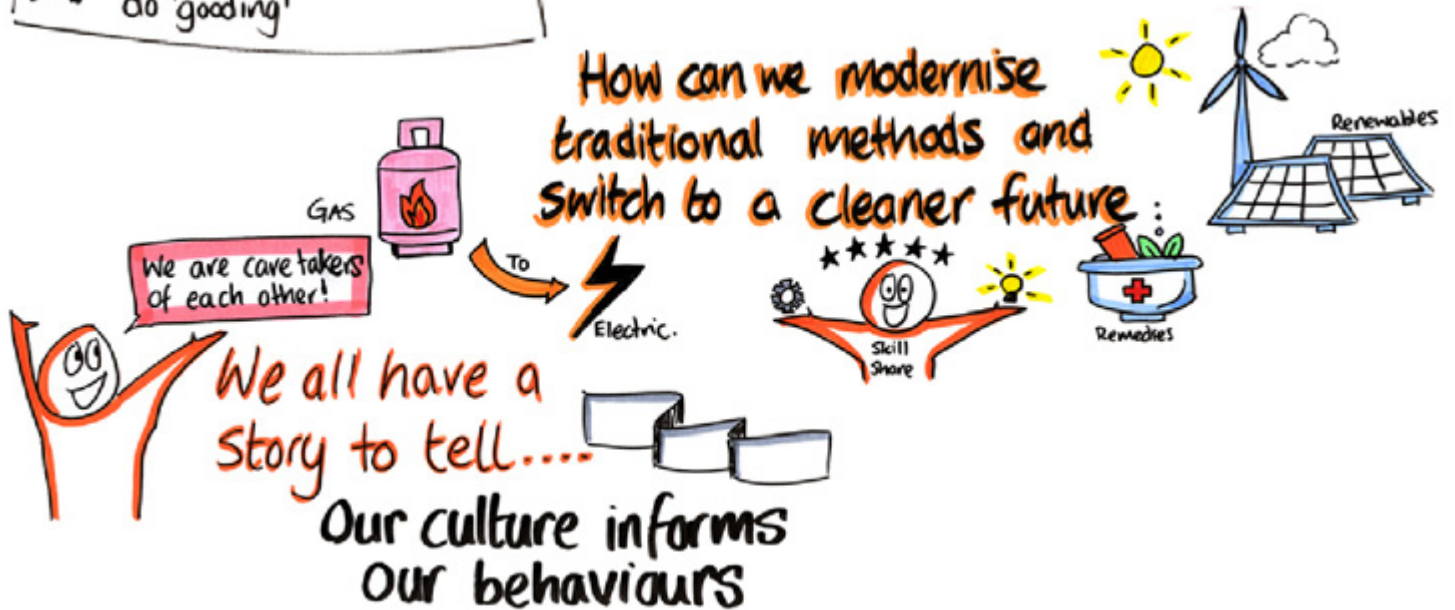
Supported by:



West Midlands
Combined Authority



TABLE NO / Session NO	SUBJECT
★	Build relationships with Communities
★	Where are the youth centres & connections?
★	Trust is essential
★	SAFETY is key
★	Start doing GOOD, not just do 'gooding'



Executive Summary

Did you know that 45% of people living in the West Midlands metropolitan area may experience race inequality in their day to day lives?

We are the independent West Midlands Race Equalities Taskforce and this is our strategy for tackling race disparities across our region.

Launched in 2022, the Taskforce was created by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Board to take action that will improve equality of opportunity for all of our communities. We believe that race, ethnicity and heritage should never be obstacles to having a fair start in life or the opportunity to reach your full potential and flourish.

This strategy sets out the steps we want to take over the next 3-5 years to help make that vision a reality. It explains who we are, why we were set up and:

- **The changes we want to make** - we will focus on the issues where the WMCA and its partners can make the most impact, from helping people to get better jobs, transport and housing to tackling disparities in education, health and criminal justice. We have also identified the need to improve data, leadership diversity and cultural intelligence to make change possible.
- **The action we want to see** - we want to make a real impact and have identified a number of 'priorities for action.' These ideas have been shaped by hard evidence, people's real experiences and engagement with public service leaders.
- **The partnerships we need to build** - we cannot deliver change on our own and hope that this strategy becomes a call to action for the whole West Midlands. Our aim is to enable, influence and mobilise change on a regional scale so that public services, businesses and communities are all doing more to tackle race inequality and make our region a fairer place for all.



Theory of Change

1.3 million people living in the West Midlands metropolitan area may experience race inequality.

The West Midlands Race Equalities Taskforce was set up to take action that will improve opportunity for our racialised communities.

We are an independent group that brings together a wide range of people and partners to find new and sustainable ways to tackle race disparities. We will focus on addressing inequality and improving opportunity through the policy areas where the West Midlands Combined Authority and its partners can make a difference.

Our strategy sets out what we want to do over the next 5 years to bring about lasting change on a regional scale.

Why race inequality matters

1.3 million people in the West Midlands may experience race inequality.

The unemployment rate for ethnic minority communities is 2x higher than for White British people.

People of Black and Pakistani heritage are 4x more likely to live in deprived neighbourhoods compared to White British people.

People from ethnic minority households are 18% points less likely to own their home than White British households (50%, 68%).

Ethnic minority communities are 2x more likely to live in a home without car ownership than White British people.

People of Black and Pakistani heritage are 2x more likely to be arrested than white people.

Where we


Jobs, skills and education


Health and wellbeing



Housing and homelessness

want to make a difference

Our Guiding Principles



Data and
'what works'
evidence



Coproduction



Vision

We have a vision that in the West Midlands, race, ethnicity and heritage should never be obstacles to having a fair start in life or the opportunity to reach your full potential and flourish.



Leadership
diversity



Intersectionality



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ssness



Building
trust



Transport



Cultural
intelligence

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Criminal
justice

Priorities for action

Our strategy sets out a number of ‘priorities for action.’ These are the key changes that we want to enable, influence and mobilise to help tackle race inequality across the region.

Theme	Priority for Action	Short term activity	Long term impact
Jobs, living standards, skills and education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop targeted jobs and careers pathways. • Invest in community innovation hubs to connect people to high growth sectors. • Create a task and finish group to tackle underemployment. • Shape what ‘good work’ looks like. • Promote cultural intelligence in schools. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enable change by building a better understanding of inequality through more granular data, community engagement and cultural intelligence. 	Remove barriers and build inclusive jobs, skills and education pathways that support people into meaningful careers and better living standards.
Health and Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with health partners to understand existing activity and where further action can be taken, e.g., around improving maternal care and Integrated Care System equalities strategy. • Support regional health literacy to help communities navigate support. • Take forward action in Mental Health, through reviewing services and creating a community campaign. • Support activity to encourage healthier behaviours, such as developing culturally appropriate health incentives. • Contribute to the Taskforce’s cross cutting priorities around building cultural intelligence resources and exploring the potential of a West Midlands ethnicity data standard. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Connect with a wide range of partners to learn and work together. 3. Influence change, both directly by influencing the work of the WMCA and partners supporting the Taskforce and indirectly by encouraging other organisations, businesses and communities to take their own action. 	Champion culturally intelligent health and wellbeing practices.
Housing and Homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a culturally sensitive resource to help people to navigate housing choices. • Explore the value of regional guidance on housing allocations. • Investigate race inequality in homelessness. • Identify opportunities to increase the supply of homes that meet the needs of racialised communities. • Explore the potential to use the West Midlands Design Charter to address race inequality. • Identify and leverage other opportunities to take action on race disparities in housing. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Initiate change by developing and testing different ways to make improvements. 5. Mobilise action by demonstrating what works and building the case for longer term change. 	Listen to people to develop equitable access to housing choices, and build homes and neighbourhoods that enable people to flourish.

Theme	Priority for Action	Short term activity	Long term impact
Transport and Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the potential to introduce race based budgeting. Strengthen equalities and community voice in decision making. Experiment with better transport for all. 		Connect lives through a sustainable and accessible transport network.
Criminal Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen Equality Impact Assessments with community voice. Help to build trust in the justice system. Support activity to track and tackle disproportionality in youth justice. Participate in a summit focused on improving data sharing to drive action. Monitor efforts to implement recommendations to tackle race inequality. Support activity to improve the prevention of race related hate crime. Target efforts to reduce re-offending among racialised communities. 	6. Hand over the Taskforce’s learning to public services, businesses or communities to deliver through their own work; and start the cycle again.	Level the scales and create a fairer criminal justice system that actively considers race and makes every community feel safe.
Cross cutting priorities	<p>DATA AND EVIDENCE</p> <p>Develop more consistent, granular and intersectional data on race inequalities and deepen our understanding of what works for our communities.</p>	<p>LEADERSHIP DIVERSITY</p> <p>Diversify and build leadership capabilities, so that communities are empowered and represented in power.</p>	<p>CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE</p> <p>Build cultural intelligence, so that decisions and activity work for racialised communities.</p>



Phrases we use

This is not an academic or political report and we wanted to make our ideas as simple and accessible as possible. However, the words we use matter, particularly when we are talking about an issue as important and complicated as race inequality.

How we talk about racialised communities...

Like many, we do not agree with the use of catch-all or umbrella terms such as 'BAME' (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic). This is because it ignores the diverse experiences and cultures that different communities have, as well as the inequality that some minority white communities face.

Instead, we try to be as specific as possible about the community or people we are talking about. This is not always possible due to how data is currently gathered by different organisations, which means that this strategy sometimes talks about 'ethnic minority communities' in quite a broad way.

We also use the terms 'racialised communities' and 'people who experience race inequality'. This is because it helps us to remember that race inequality is not inevitable but a result of power imbalances. People from different ethnicities, heritage and cultures experience additional challenges because of how they have been underrepresented in or let down by different parts of our society.

Systems thinking

A system is an organised set of ideas or a group of things that are connected or work together. Systems thinking is a way of exploring and developing effective action by looking beyond a specific organisation or issue to see the bigger picture, for example looking at all the different things that can affect a person's wellbeing.

Institutional, structural or systemic racism

Focusing on systemic racism means understanding race inequality and discrimination as a collective problem that needs to be deliberately addressed, rather than thinking about racism as being a result of an individual person's bias or attitude.

The Macpherson report defined institutional racism as 'the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin.'

This is similar to the term systemic or structural racism, which looks a bit more broadly at 'policies and practices that exist throughout a whole society or organisation, and that result in and support a continued unfair advantage to some people and unfair or harmful treatment of others based on race.'



Intersectionality

Intersectionality is about acknowledging that everyone has their own unique experiences of systematic inequality and that we must consider everything and anything that can marginalise people. For example, a person is not Black on a Monday, a woman on a Tuesday and disabled on a Wednesday - they experience all of these things at once.

Cultural intelligence

Cultural intelligence is when people have the ability and skills to go into new environments with confidence, and to make informed judgments based on observations and evidence to relate and work effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds.

Coproduction

Coproduction is a way of working that actively involves communities in making decisions and shaping services that affect their lives. It goes beyond consultation to put people on an equal footing to decision makers.

West Midlands Combined Authority

The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) is a partnership between 18 local authorities, the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner and West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority. It is led by the Mayor of the West Midlands, Andy Street, and the political Leaders of the seven constituent local authorities who make up the WMCA Board. The West Midlands Race Equalities Taskforce was set up by and has the support of the full WMCA Board.

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Introduction

The West Midlands Race Equalities Taskforce was set up to take action that will improve opportunity for all of our racialised communities. We are an independent group that brings together a wide range of people and partners to find new and sustainable ways to tackle race disparities. Our strategy sets out what we want to do over the next 5 years to bring about lasting change on a regional scale.

About our communities

We are proud of the incredible diversity of our communities.

Recently published data from the UK Census 2021 has found that of the 2.9 million people who live in the West Midlands metropolitan area, around 1.3 million did not identify as being from a White British background. This means that around 45 percent of people in the region are of an ethnic minority heritage.

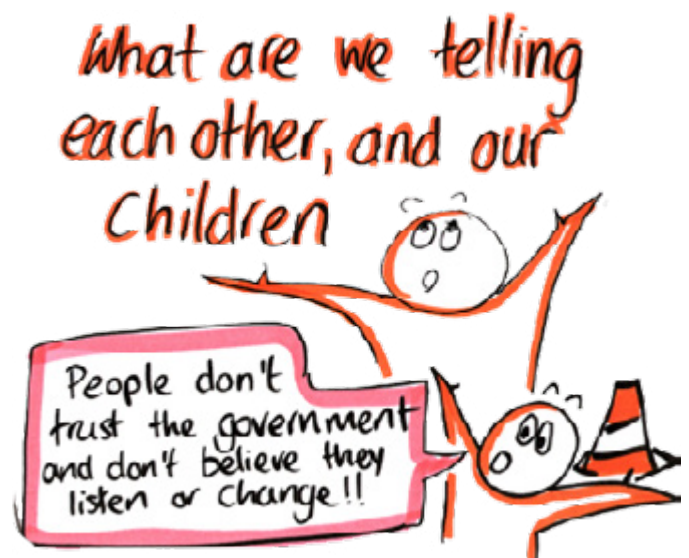
Although this statistic does not truly capture the full diversity of our population, it does show that the region is significantly more ethnically diverse than it was ten years ago.

About race inequality

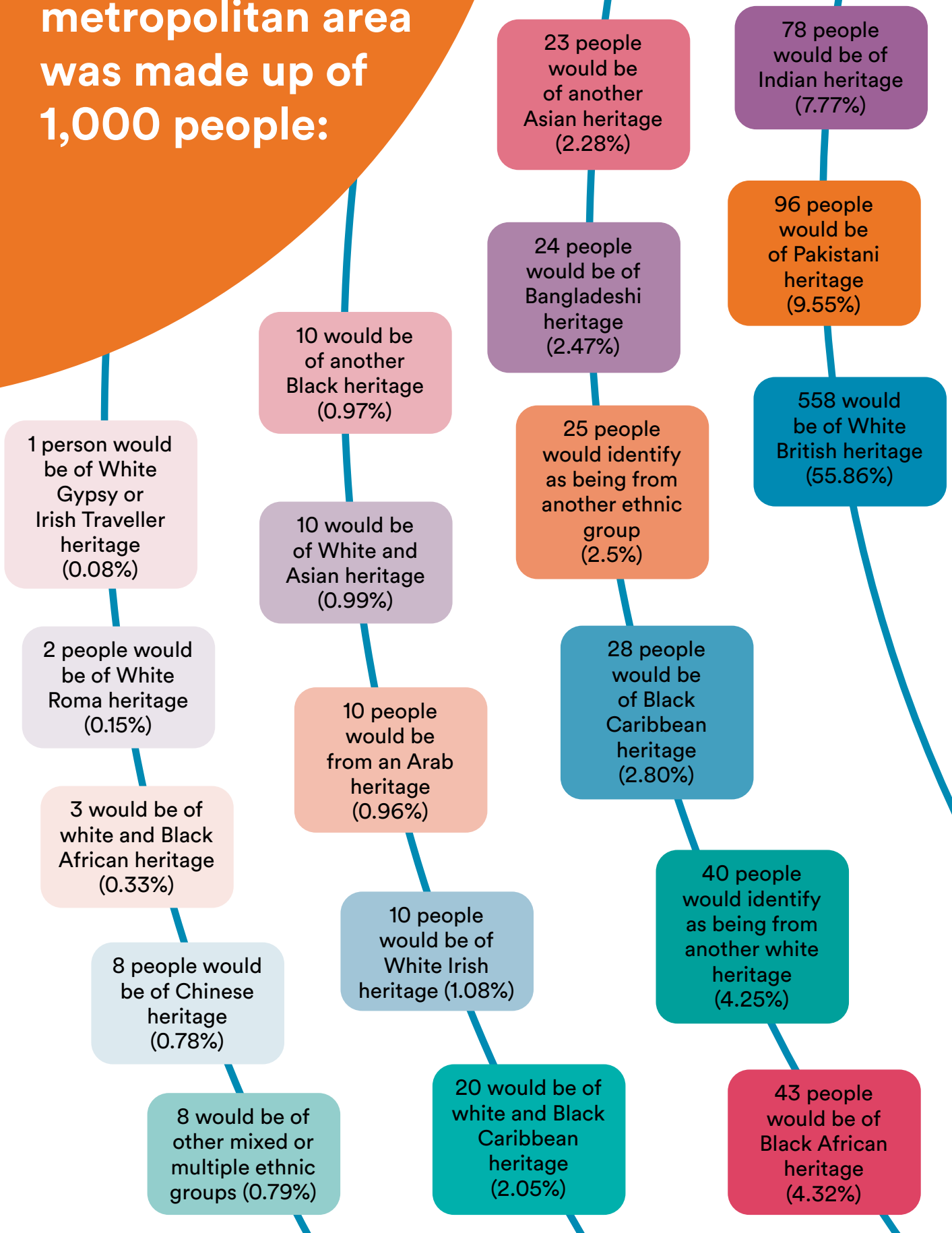
While it is important to celebrate the diversity of our communities, we must also recognise that many face longstanding inequalities and injustices that need to be addressed.

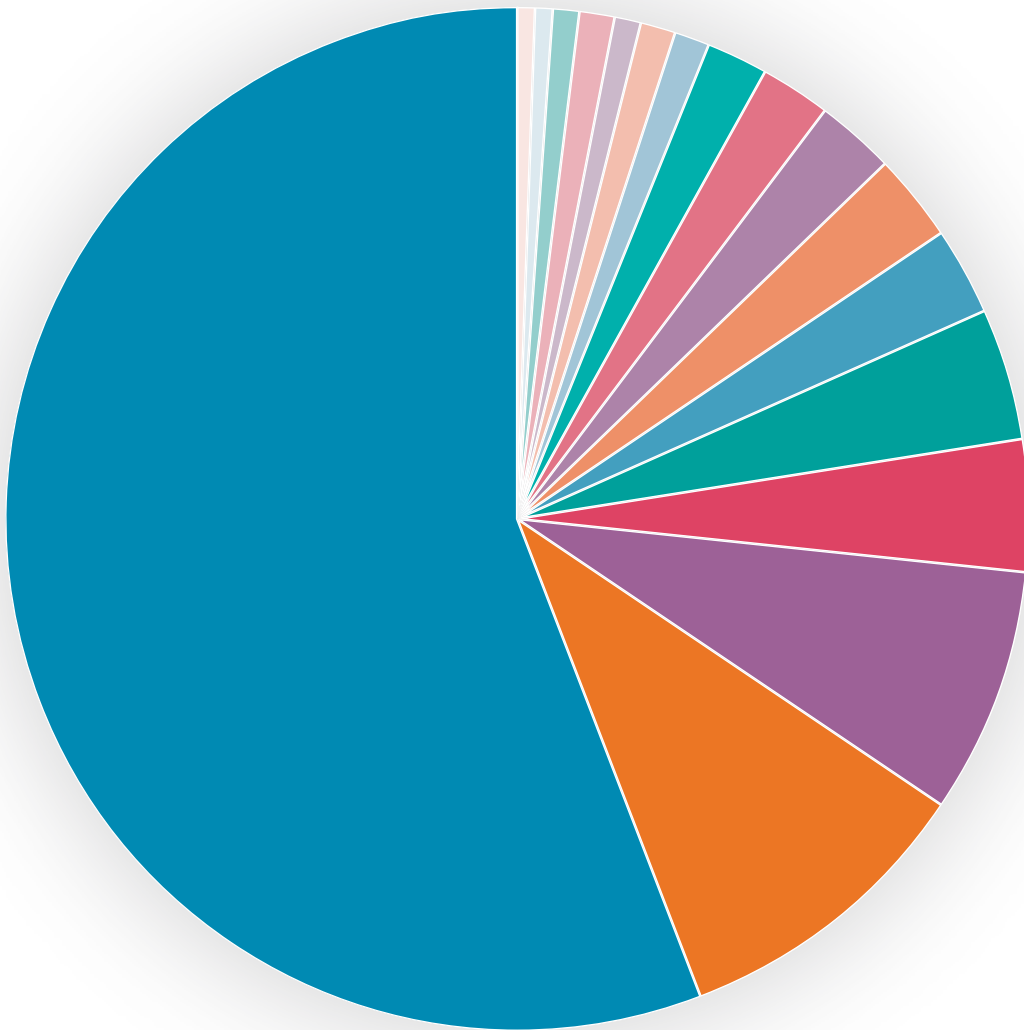
There is clear evidence to show that racialised communities experience additional barriers to success and challenges in life, from finding it more difficult to get good jobs, transport and housing to having poorer experiences in education, health and criminal justice.

We believe that if our racialised communities are not able to reach their full potential, then neither can the region as a whole. Only by understanding and actively tackling these inequalities will we be able to make sure that everyone in the West Midlands has the opportunity to contribute to and share in the region's success.



If the West Midlands metropolitan area was made up of 1,000 people:





Intersectionality:

21%

will be aged below 16 years.

22%

are disabled.

28%

would live in the top 10% most deprived areas (IMD 2019).

51%

would be women.

About the Taskforce

The West Midlands Race Equalities Taskforce was set up to take action that will improve equality of opportunity for all of our communities.


We were launched with a vision that: “in the West Midlands, race, ethnicity and heritage should never be obstacles to people having a fair start in life, or the opportunity to reach their full potential and flourish.”

Led by an Independent Chair, Yetunde Dania, the Taskforce brings together a wide range of partners to find new ways to address race disparities. Our Taskforce is made up of around 30 senior leaders from different sectors, places and communities, who will in turn work with and mobilise a much wider network of action groups and partners.

We are an independent group that was set up by the Mayor of the West Midlands, Andy Street, and the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Board to challenge and support them to tackle race inequality through their work.

Our focus will be on making changes in the areas where the WMCA has most responsibility and impact. This includes:

- Jobs and the economy
- Skills and education
- Housing and homelessness
- Transport and connectivity
- Health and wellbeing
- Criminal justice (led by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner).



“In the West Midlands, race, ethnicity and heritage should never be obstacles to having a fair start in life or the opportunity to reach your full potential and flourish.”

Vision of the West Midlands Race Equalities Taskforce

Our journey so far

Since our launch in Spring 2022, the Taskforce has worked quickly to explore different priorities and build our strategy. We have already started to make a difference and will continue to grow our networks and reach as we bring the region with us on a journey of change.

- **May 2021 - Andy Street re-elected as Mayor of the West Midlands**

Andy Street was re-elected as Mayor of the West Midlands with a manifesto commitment to set up an Equalities Taskforce to make sure that all communities can share in the region's success, by looking at the specific issues facing under-represented communities in West Midlands Combined Authority policy areas like transport, skills, jobs and housing.

- **July 2021 - Taskforce approved**

The West Midlands Combined Authority Board agreed to launch a new Race Equalities Taskforce to improve opportunities for all of our communities.

- **December 2021 - Independent Chair appointed**

Yetunde Dania was confirmed as the Independent Chair of the Taskforce. Yetunde is a practicing lawyer, partner and Head of the Birmingham Office at international law firm Trowers & Hamblins LLP, and is a vocal advocate for diversity and inclusion.

- **February 2022 - Members recruited**

Independent members of the Taskforce were appointed through a competitive recruitment campaign, which looked for strategic leaders with the passion and expertise to tackle race inequality on a regional scale. These members were joined by senior leaders from public bodies to make up the full Taskforce steering group (around 30 people).

- **April 2022 - Taskforce launched**

The Taskforce launched at the WMCA offices with a lively workshop to explore the UK Government's Levelling Up missions and what these should mean for addressing race inequality.

- **May 2022 - Evidence base reviewed**

During the Spring, the Taskforce also reviewed the independent baseline report on race inequalities that was produced by The Equal Group. The report evidenced significant disparities across the West Midlands and highlighted the need for more granular and intersectional data.

- **July 2022 - Trailblazer Devolution Deal influenced**

Building on our response to Levelling Up, the Taskforce challenged the WMCA to make sure that the region's Trailblazer Devolution Deal proposals will actively tackle race inequality. The WMCA policy leads coordinating proposals for culture, crime, finance, health, housing, skills, social capital and transport have all committed to prioritising inclusion and community engagement should the proposals progress to design stage.

- **September 2022 - Action groups launched**

Five workshops were delivered to launch the Taskforce's thematic action groups. These groups will drive forward the Taskforce's work across: Jobs, Living Standards, Skills and Education; Health and Wellbeing; Housing and Homelessness; Transport; and Criminal Justice.

- **October 2022 - Collaborated with the Mental Health Commission**

Members of the Taskforce also worked with the West Midlands Mental Health Commission to find recommendations for addressing race inequality in Mental Health.

- **November 2022 - Community Listening Exercise delivered**

The Taskforce held our first community event on 11 November, which saw more than 70 people take part in conversations about jobs, skills, housing and transport in the West Midlands. These insights and lived experiences have shaped this strategy.

- **November 2022 - Strategy developed**

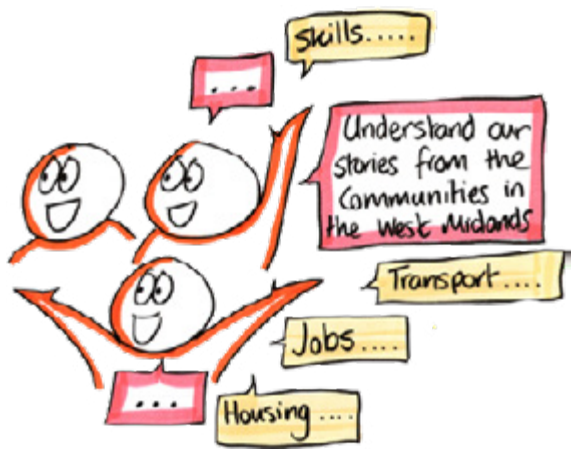
Taskforce members gathered with senior public service leaders and local authority 'subject matter experts' to develop a 3-5 year strategy for tackling race inequality across the region. This included identifying actions that can show progress within the first 12 months.

- **January 2023 - Finalised the strategy and began to action plan**

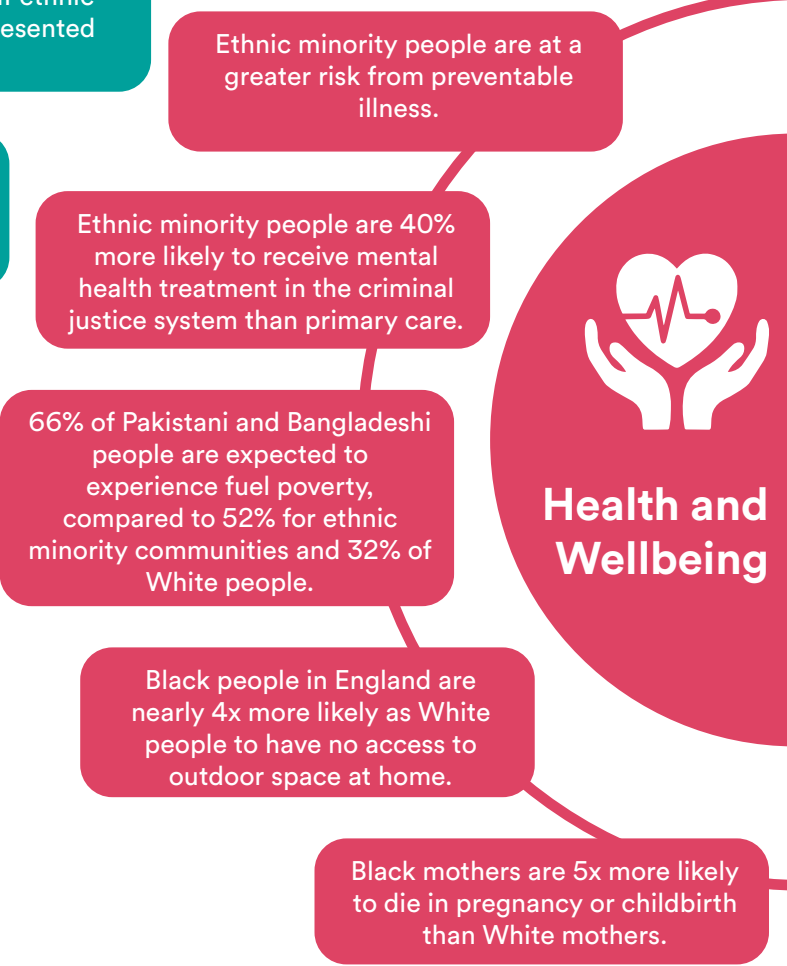
The Taskforce finalised our strategy ready to be shared with the region's decision makers at the WWMCA Board in Spring 2023. We have used our draft strategy as a basis for action planning, and will continue to engage with partners to secure their commitments to change.

The hard evidence...

Our strategy has been shaped by data and evidence. Race inequality is real. There is clear evidence to show that people from racialised communities face a range of additional challenges and barriers to success. For example...



Are we ready to change??





We need to stay accountable

Holistic

★ Good & true Community engagement
★



Housing and Homelessness

68% of White British households own their own homes, compared to 50% for all ethnic minority community households.

Black and Pakistani people are 4x more likely to live in deprived neighbourhoods compared to White British people.

45% of minority ethnic children lived in families in poverty after housing costs, compared to 20% of children in White British families.

People from ethnic minority heritage are 5x more likely to live in overcrowded housing in the West Midlands.

33% of applicants for temporary accommodation in the West Midlands are of Black heritage.



Remodelling in a way that works for people

People from ethnic minority backgrounds are 2x more likely to live in a household with no car ownership.

People from ethnic minority communities are more likely to live in areas with poor air quality.

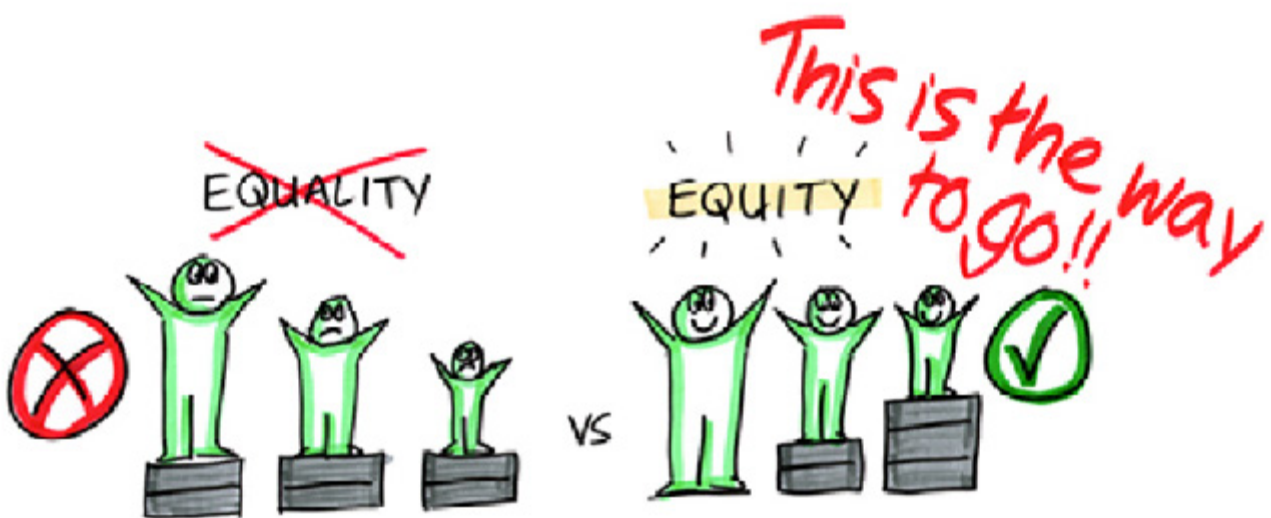
South Asian communities are most affected by traffic collisions.

Only 14.5% of the transport workforce are from non-white backgrounds.

West Midlands has the largest regional difference in internet use between different ethnic groups.



Transport



Community voices...

This strategy has also been shaped by lived experience.

We held a community listening event that brought 70 people from across the region together to share their views and experiences of jobs, skills, transport and housing in the region. The event aimed to understand the barriers people face and how to improve opportunity for all. It was hosted by Sharon Rai, DE&I Partner, NatWest Group at their Accelerator Hub in Brindley Place, Birmingham, and designed and facilitated by Suzanne Alleyne of the creative strategy and cultural thinking agency Alleyne& CIC.

People were asked to describe what jobs, skills, housing and transport meant to them, what barriers they experienced and what changes could help them to flourish. At the end of the event, participants were asked to vote on the challenge or idea that they would most want to see action towards.

This is what we heard...

JOBS - top priorities for change:

1. Asking “how [can] we value all jobs and roles?” and recognise and value the importance of “cultural and choices, options.”
2. Improve “skills and education” pathways and “advice” through “tackling biases, role models, opportunity to jobs you would have access to” and challenging where young people are “being told they can’t.”
3. “Employers should see what everyone brings to the table”, linked to issues around equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination and bias in the labour market.

SKILLS - top priorities for change:

Voted

3rd
priority
overall

1. Addressing “low expectations from teachers, scarring young people, diverting them from their chosen careers.” This linked to the idea that “education forces people into a box.”
2. Promoting “life-long learning: life skills/ hobbies/ academic etc.” and understand that “skills does not equate to qualifications.” This linked to the idea that “we need individuals with passion.”
3. Tackle a “lack of opportunities within the community to acquire new skills”, for example, by “connecting people to skills and opportunities, travel and money.”

You can read the full report on our Listening Together event online at: <https://www.wmca.org.uk/LTWRET>

HOUSING - top priorities for change:

Voted
1st
priority
overall

1. Recognise the need for “good quality, safe, suitable homes [as a] starting point for good jobs, banks, benefits and health.” Participants asked “what is adequate housing and who decides? A real choice is needed.”

Voted
2nd
priority
overall

2. Address “homelessness - not fair access is sometimes an issue.” In conversation, people spoke about ‘stigma’, ‘discrimination’ and gaining support feeling like a ‘struggle.’

3. Participants talked about a “codesign housing, points system like driving license” as being solutions to tackling ‘discrimination’ and ‘loss of community.’

TRANSPORT - top priorities for change:

- “Safety – poor lighting and racial harassment” emerged as a key priority for change on the transport network.
- People spoke about the need for transport planners and operators to “better engage [people] in their language across diverse communities and listen to them. Information for communities = empowerment.” This linked to a concern that “communities can’t challenge issues’ and ‘travel doesn’t run where people need it to.”
- We were told that “reliability is a big problem across all services” and that change is needed to deliver “public transport that is reliable and affordable.”

Other important themes:

- JOBS and TRANSPORT: participants spoke about the additional challenges that disabled people and those with a disabled family member experience.
- SKILLS: people spoke about there being a “no trust of government” and “broken” systems, and how “communities need to help themselves.”
- HOUSING: people highlighted how Gypsy Roma and Traveller communities face particularly severe “discrimination, inequality, racism, feel[ing] segregated.”
- People described “discrimination” and “racism” across JOBS, SKILLS and HOUSING and “racial harassment” in TRANSPORT.

What does HOUSING mean to you?



What does TRANSPORT mean to you?



Our strategy

The Taskforce was set up with a vision that in the West Midlands race, ethnicity and heritage should never be obstacles to having a fair start in life or the opportunity to reach your full potential and flourish. Our strategy sets out how we will try to make that ambition a reality.

What we want to achieve

To make our vision real, change is needed to tackle the race inequalities that 1.3 million people across the West Midlands metropolitan area may face in their day to day lives.

We want to enable, influence and mobilise action to dismantle the obstacles that prevent people from racialised communities from having a fair start in life or the opportunity to reach their full potential.

The Taskforce will focus on finding new ways to address race inequality and improve opportunity through the policy areas where the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and its partners have most impact.

This means we will concentrate on: **jobs, living standards, skills and education, health and wellbeing, housing and homelessness, transport** and, under the leadership of the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner, **criminal justice**.

Our strategy sets out the changes we want to see across each of those ‘thematic’ or ‘policy’ priorities. These ambitions have been shaped by data, insights from our community listening event, the expertise of our independent Taskforce members and support from public service leaders and subject matter experts. We will continue to work with a wide range of people and partners to enable change.

We have also identified three ‘cross cutting priorities’ that are needed to unlock change in a holistic way. These are to: improve **data and evidence** on race inequality, build **leadership diversity** and embed **cultural intelligence** across organisations and decision making.

Finally, our strategy also sets out the ‘guiding principles’ that will help to shape our work. These are to: **value coproduction**, take an **intersectional approach** and **build trust and within our communities**.

Our vision, cross cutting priorities and guiding principles are the golden threads that hold our strategy together. Whether we are looking at jobs or transport, we will need to start by understanding the experiences of racialised communities and then challenge the root causes of race inequality. This is how we will bring about meaningful change on a regional scale.

Our Vision:

IN THE WEST MIDLANDS, RACE, ETHNICITY AND HERITAGE SHOULD NEVER BE OBSTACLES TO HAVING A FAIR START IN LIFE OR THE OPPORTUNITY TO REACH YOUR FULL POTENTIAL AND FLOURISH.

Cross cutting priorities:

Develop more consistent, granular and intersectional data and evidence on race inequalities and deepen our understanding of what works for racialised communities.	Build and diversify leadership capabilities across the West Midlands, so that communities are represented in positions of power and therefore feel more empowered.	Improve cultural intelligence , so decision makers understand and actively think about cultural differences and their actions work for racialised communities.
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Thematic priorities:

Jobs, Living Standards Skills and Education	Create inclusive and equitable jobs, skills and education pathways that support people into meaningful careers and higher living standards.
Health and Wellbeing	Champion culturally intelligent health and wellbeing practices.
Housing and Homelessness	Listen to communities to develop equitable access to housing choices and build homes and neighbourhoods that enable people to flourish.
Transport	Connect lives through a sustainable and accessible transport network.
Criminal Justice	Level the scales of justice and create a fairer criminal justice system that actively considers race and makes every community feel safe.

Principles that guide our work:

Value coproduction. Engage communities in a meaningful way and enable them to coproduce the decisions and services that affect their lives.	Take an intersectional approach to make sure that we actively think about the multiple inequalities many people face and make life fairer for everyone.	Build trust among our communities that tangible action will be taken this time. Encourage the system to trust and invest in communities.
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Who we work with

Race inequality is a complex, deep and longstanding problem in our society. It is everyone's responsibility and everyone will need to play their part in addressing disparities if we are truly going to make the West Midlands a fair place for all.

The Taskforce was set up with partnerships in mind. Bringing people and partners together is central to what the Taskforce is and how we will create change for the West Midlands.

The West Midlands Race Equalities Taskforce



Race Equalities Taskforce

Independent Chair

Yetunde Dania is the Independent Chair of the West Midlands Race Equalities Taskforce. She is a practicing lawyer, partner and head of the Birmingham office at international law firm Trowers and Hamblins LLP and a vocal advocate for diversity and inclusion.

Independent members

Over half of the Taskforce's membership are independent and were appointed through a competitive recruitment exercise. They are 'strategic doers' who have a passion for equality and have experience in bringing about change. They represent different places, communities and sectors across the West Midlands.

Partner representatives

The other members of the Taskforce are senior leaders who have been appointed by public service bodies from across the West Midlands. They provide valuable insights on different priority areas and advice on how changes can be made. Their role is to champion the work of the Taskforce and find ways to deliver on its ambitions within their own organisations.

Taskforce action groups

The Taskforce can then establish thematic action groups with wider membership to drive forward its work on different priorities. Groups include members of the Taskforce's steering group plus 'subject matter experts', whose role is to help shape and deliver on the Taskforce's ambitions.

The Taskforce was set up by, and has the full support of, the Mayor of the West Midlands and the West Midlands Combined Authority Board.

Partners and networks

Partnerships are central to our strategy and how we will enable, influence and mobilise lasting change across the region. We understand that the Taskforce cannot work on its own and that our role is not to create new projects that are separate from existing activity. Instead, we want to work together with public services, business and communities so that everyone is doing more to shift the dial on race inequality.

WORKING WITH PUBLIC SERVICES

The Taskforce has strong links with public services in the region, with half of our membership being senior leaders from public bodies in the region, such as local authorities, the Department of Work and Pensions and the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner.

This partnership is essential to how we will ensure our work as a Taskforce adds value to existing activity, responds to local priorities and can connect with opportunities to make a tangible impact.

We will continue to support wider participation across public services and make sure that we add value to existing efforts, learning from and building on what works well.

WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES

The Taskforce is committed to taking a community focused approach. We want to make sure that communities can shape and influence our work - for example, how we have already used what we learned from our community listening event to shape this strategy.

This means that we will:

- Value intersectionality and coproduction and work to build trust (our 3 guiding principles).
- Recognise the strengths in communities and neighbourhoods, rather than seeing people as ‘problems.’
- Make sure that engaging with us is a meaningful and positive experience. We will engage with people in a focused way about specific challenges and involve them in shaping solutions.

WORKING WITH BUSINESS

Our ambition is to build partnerships across all sectors to enable change. This includes engaging with and influencing businesses and employers, who have a vital role to play in improving equality of opportunity. We have not started this work yet, however our action plan already highlights where working with business will be key to success.

How we will make a difference

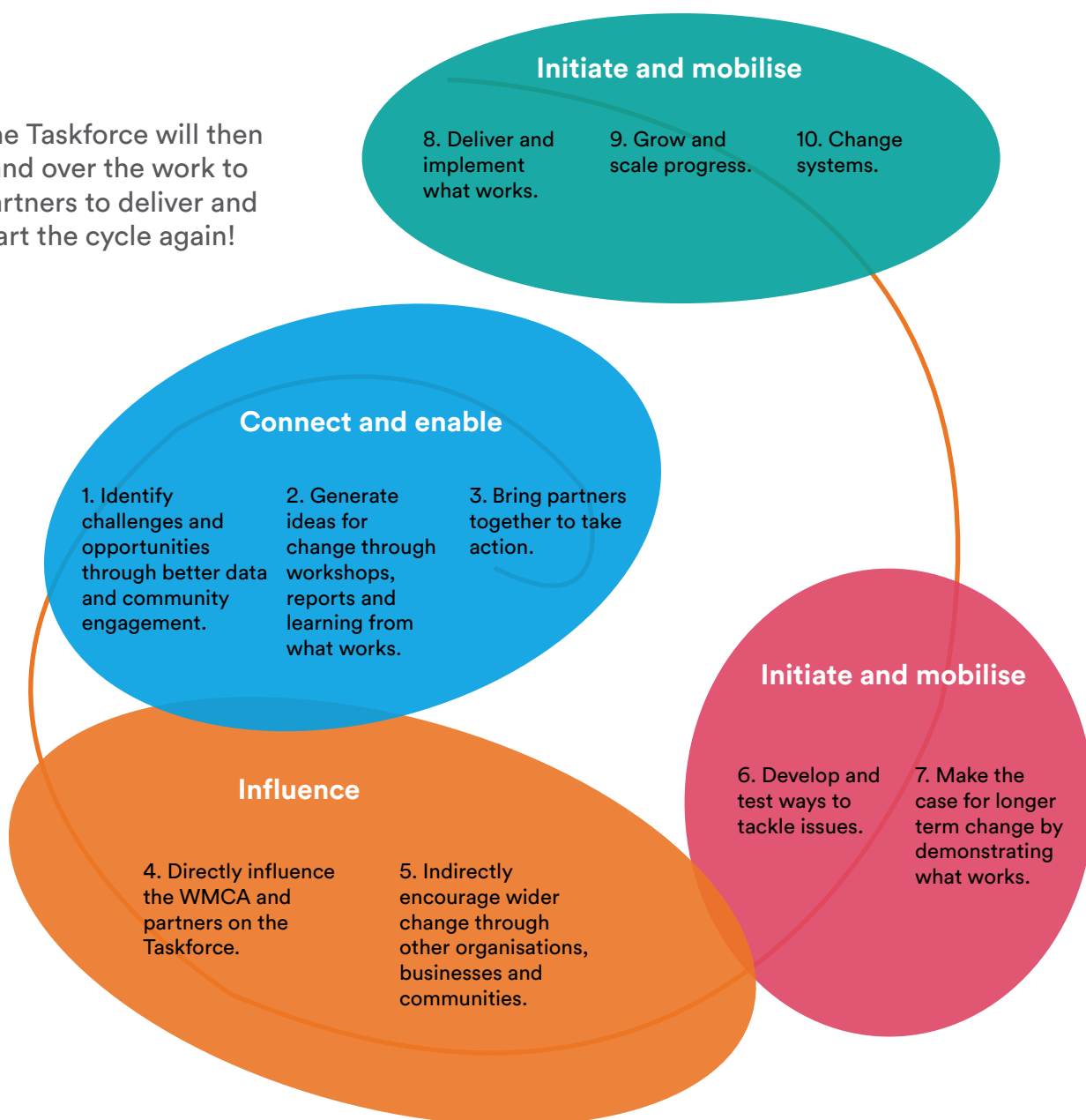
Our aim as a Taskforce is to create lasting change on a regional scale. We want to take action that has the potential to improve opportunities for the 1.3 million across the West Midlands metropolitan area who may experience race inequality.

This shapes the way that we need to work. New projects and funding won't be enough to make a lasting difference, and we cannot hope to make up for all the areas where public services and employers fall short. Instead, we need to challenge and support organisations to improve the way they work, so that everyone is working to address race disparities.

The Taskforce will take a 'social innovation' approach. We will bring together a wide range of partners to learn from each other and find new ways to improve equality of opportunity for all of communities.

Our social innovation spiral:

The Taskforce will then hand over the work to partners to deliver and start the cycle again!





ENABLE AND CONNECT

We will plant the seeds and lay the foundations for systemic change.

We will enable change to happen by building a better understanding of race inequality through more granular data, stronger community engagement and cultural intelligence.

We will connect with a wide range of partners to learn from each other and find new ways to address race inequality.

INFLUENCE

We will inspire and agitate for change, even when we're not in the room.

We will directly influence the WMCA and partners who support the Taskforce to try out new ways to tackle race inequality through their work.

We will also indirectly influence wider change, by encouraging other organisations, businesses and communities to take their own action.

INITIATE AND MOBILISE

We will initiate change by developing and testing different ideas to improve life for racialised communities. We will fail fast, learn quickly and share results.

When we succeed, we will make the case for longer term change and mobilise action by demonstrating what works.

HAND OVER, START AGAIN

We will then hand over our learning on what works back to the system – be that public services, businesses or communities – so that they can deliver, grow, scale and embed the change through their own work.

Finally, we will start again, building on what we have learned and achieved to shift the dial even further.

Our Priorities for Action

The West Midlands Race Equalities Taskforce is focused on making a lasting change on a regional scale. Our priorities for action set out how we will bring our strategy to life.

This section of our strategy sets out the ambitions we have developed for each of our priorities. It explains why race disparities matter in each of those areas, and identifies some key 'priorities for action' that we believe are the right next steps for bringing about change.

Our ideas have been shaped over the past year through our work as a Taskforce, including reviewing data and evidence, holding our community listening event and taking part in a number of workshops with public service leaders and subject matter experts.

We want to continue to build those partnerships, to test out different ideas and learn quickly, so that we can make collective progress to address race disparities and improve opportunity for all. We know that we cannot deliver this strategy alone.

This means that our priorities for action may be updated and changed as we learn, to make sure that we are working on the right challenges with the right people in the right way to deliver on our strategy and vision.

Contents:

- Jobs, living standards, skills and education
- Health and wellbeing
- Housing and homelessness
- Transport
- Criminal justice
- Cross cutting priorities: data, leadership and cultural intelligence



Jobs, Living Standards, Skills and Education

Jobs, skills and education are stepping stones to reaching better standards of living. Meaningful and fairly paid work can give people a sense of pride and a chance to thrive, rather than just survive. However, evidence shows that racialised communities do not have an equal chance to succeed in either education or the workplace.

There are significant gaps between what children from different ethnic groups achieve at school and, on the whole, people from ethnic minority communities are twice as likely to be unemployed than White British people. Data also tells us that there is no shortfall of talent in racialised communities. Second generation Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean people are more likely to be highly educated than their White British counterparts, but are less likely to be employed. This inequality harms people and their families and prevents our region from reaching its full potential.

That is why we believe focus needs to shift beyond measuring qualifications and job statistics and towards removing barriers that prevent people and communities from reaching their potential. We know that many people face invisible barriers to success because of race inequality, and our ambition as the Taskforce is to make those invisible barriers more visible to support systemic change.

The Race Equalities Taskforce has a vision for more culturally intelligent, better connected and people-led education and career opportunities. We want to remove barriers and create inclusive and equitable jobs, skills and education pathways that support people into meaningful careers and higher living standards.

This means working with communities, partners and employers to understand and break down the barriers that exist and help people to grow and fulfil their aspirations.



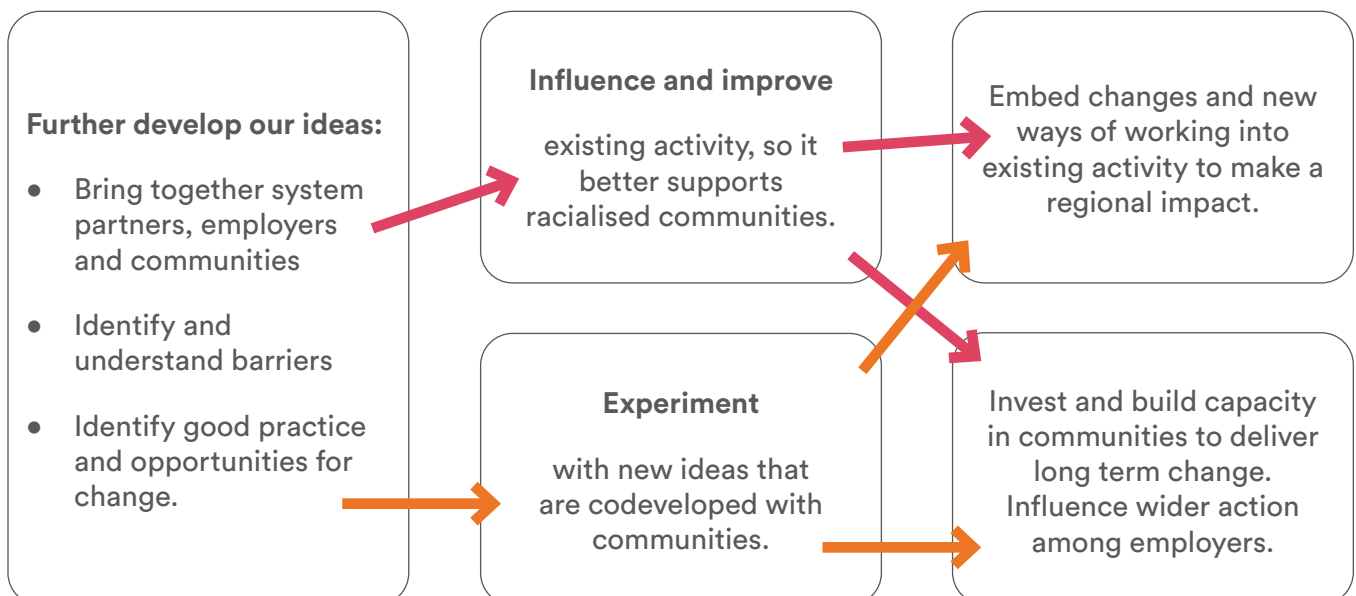
Our ambitions

REMOVE BARRIERS
IMPROVE PATHWAYS

Action ideas

- » **Develop targeted pathways** from school to careers that are designed to address the barriers that young people who experience race inequality face. We will explore attainment, employment and labour market data to understand the barriers and then work with partners, schools and young people to identify ways these can be tackled. Our aim is to develop a pathway that can be trialled by the 2023/24 academic year.
- » **Invest in Community Innovation Hubs** as an alternative source of skills support and a delivery vehicle for different Taskforce activities. We will create a task and finish group to shape how we can extend, improve and create new community-based activity. Our aim includes to secure investment into community centres, so that they can better support entrepreneurship and connect local people with opportunities in high growth sectors.
- » **Tackle underemployment** by creating a new task and finish group which will investigate why people from racialised communities are often unable to access the level of work that they are qualified to do, and how this can be addressed. We will work with partners such as Chambers of Commerce, universities and employers to identify how we can collectively remove bias, empower communities and widen choice.
- » **Shape what ‘Good Work’ looks like** by engaging and influencing the West Midlands Combined Authority’s Economic Growth Board as they develop economic policy, including their planned activity to address insecure and low paying work.
- » **Promote cultural intelligence in schools**, by working with Human Resource leads in schools across the region and drawing on good practice, such as the Young Changemakers’ ‘Not So Micro’ campaign for training teachers on microaggressions.

How we will work...



Health and Wellbeing

Race inequalities in health are complex, deeply entrenched and limit people's chances in life.

Although different communities encounter different challenges, evidence shows that people who experience race inequality are more likely to be in poor health and report having poorer experiences of healthcare than White British people. These health inequalities were highlighted by the coronavirus pandemic, which demonstrated the issues and distrust in health services that exist for many racialised communities, as well as how wider inequalities such as jobs and housing interlink.

Race inequalities are visible in health through differences in life expectancy and access to good care. They are widened by a lack of health awareness within communities and driven by a health system that does not fully understand how to respond to cultural difference.

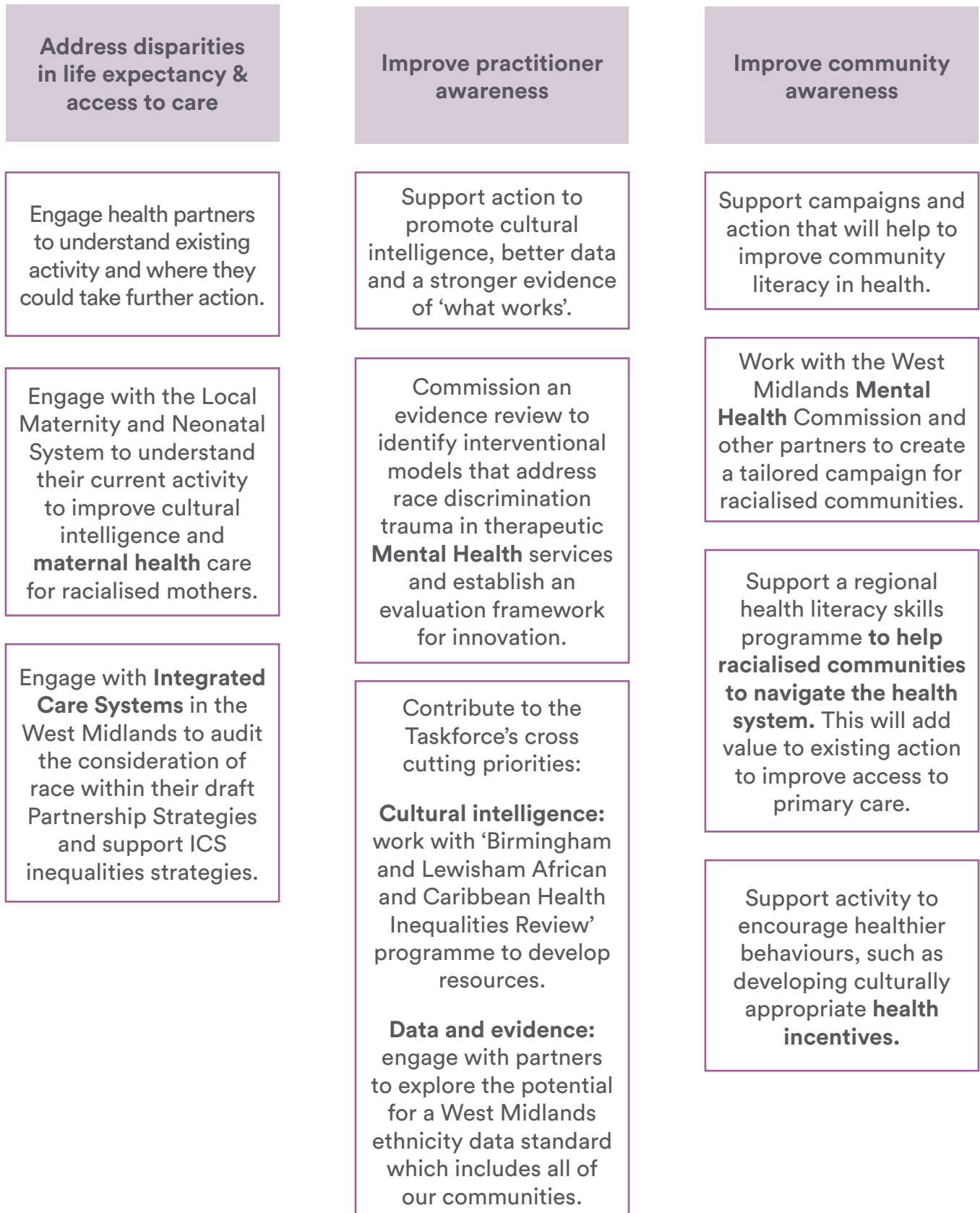
Our aim is to champion a **culturally intelligent health and wellbeing system**. We want to encourage practices that are evidence based, recognise intersectionality and support good practice that meets the needs of our communities.

The Race Equalities Taskforce will help to make change happen by working with communities and health and wellbeing partners. We will focus on supporting action to tackle the intelligence gap - through more granular data, a stronger evidence base and a more culturally competent health system, that can offer racialised communities the right support in a sensitive way.



Our approach and action ideas:

We will focus on areas where the Taskforce and a regional approach can **add value** to existing efforts. Our role will change depending on the type of challenge we want to tackle:



Housing and Homelessness

Safe, secure and affordable housing is a basic need for everyone. It provides a foundation from which people can build their lives, travel to work and visit their friends. Housing should meet the health and cultural needs of its occupants and offer people a place to call home.

Too many communities across the West Midlands experience race inequality in housing and find that housing provision fails to meet their needs.

For example, race inequality in housing significantly impacts people's chances in life, such as how people from Black and Pakistani heritage are 4 times more likely to live in deprived neighbourhoods compared to White British people.

The housing aspirations of racialised communities are also not fully understood, valued or prioritised by the 'system.' There is a significant shortfall in larger social homes, which contributes to the figure of ethnic minority communities being 5 times more likely to live in overcrowded households.

Meanwhile, the current focus on increasing home ownership risks leaving racialised communities further behind, because ethnic minority communities are 18 percentage points less likely to own their own home than White British people (50%, 68%).

The Race Equalities Taskforce has an ambition to listen to communities to develop equitable housing choices and build homes and neighbourhoods that enable people to flourish.

We want to shift the focus onto improving housing choices for all. This means developing a more intersectional, accessible and affordable offer. It means increasing diversity in the housing sector and becoming more culturally intelligent, better joined up and flexible to local needs.



“One of the loudest messages at our community listening event was that people have a really consistent understanding of what housing should be - safety, security, sanctuary - but we just accept that it isn’t the way. That is something that the Taskforce have taken away and want to challenge...” *West Midlands Race Equalities Taskforce*

UNDERSTAND INEQUALITY, COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS AND BARRIERS TO HOUSING CHOICES

- » **Develop a culturally sensitive resource** that can help racialised communities to navigate housing choices. We will begin by working with partners, reviewing data and listening to communities to understand people’s aims and experiences of housing options and how these can be improved.
- » **Explore the value of regional guidance on social housing allocations.** Informed by the above, we will explore the potential of developing region-wide guidance on housing allocations that actively considers race disparities. The regional approach offers the opportunity to convene housing associations who work on a bigger footprint, and support communities across council boundaries.
- » **Explore the impact of race inequalities in homelessness** by launching a joint task and finish group with the WMCA Homelessness Taskforce.

TACKLE THE ROOT CAUSES OF HOUSING INEQUALITY, INCLUDING LACK OF PROVISION

- » **Identify opportunities to increase the supply of homes that meet the needs of racialised communities.** We will work with the partners across the West Midlands to identify...
 - Opportunities to develop or target affordability schemes to racialised communities.
 - Early adopters to help us make change, for example working with developers who are focused on racialised communities.
- » **Explore the potential to use the West Midlands Design Charter to actively address race inequality.**
- » **Identify and leverage other opportunities to take action on race disparities in housing.** For example:
 - Work with the WMCA’s retrofit team to identify how to target engagement and support for Bangladeshi and Pakistani households.
 - Work with the WMCA’s environment team to support Black communities to engage with the Green Grants scheme.

Transport

Transport literally connects us to the opportunities we need to thrive. A reliable, affordable, safe and accessible public transport network can give everyone a chance to participate in social, cultural and leisure activities. Similarly, investing in good quality walking and cycling routes can help people to stay fit and healthy at the same time as improving the environment around us.

However, racialised communities face multiple barriers to getting around and experience the negative impacts of how transport currently works.

Evidence shows that people from ethnic minority communities are less likely than White British people to live in a house with car ownership but are more likely to live in areas with high air pollution. People from racialised communities are also more likely to be reliant on public transport and yet many feel unsafe on the network, as well as finding it unreliable.

The Race Equalities Taskforce has a vision of better transport for everyone. We want to help connect lives through a sustainable and accessible transport network.

This means working with communities to find new ways to improve how we can all get around the West Midlands. We want to influence a shift towards lower car use and better access to public and active transport, that gives everyone a fair chance to get to work, education, good homes and green space.



OUR BIG IDEA:

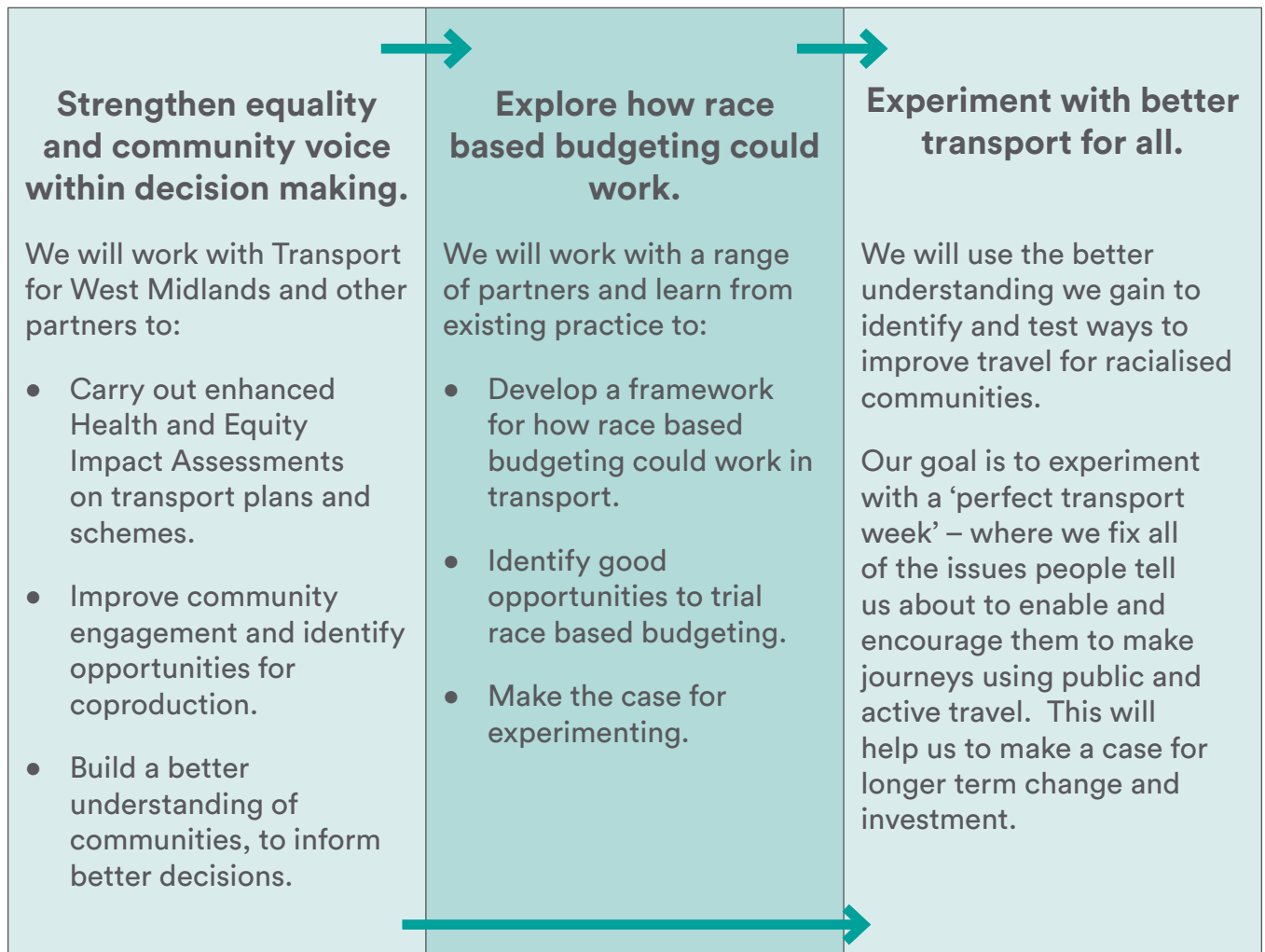
We will explore the potential of and make the case for trialling race based budgeting within transport.

Our ambition is to make the West Midlands the first region in the UK to build race equity based budgeting into its decision making processes.

Race based budgeting can work in different ways, from looking at a whole public service to focusing on a particular project or programme. However, the main idea is to really make sure that money is spent on solving the biggest challenges that racialised and other disadvantaged communities face.

It is an innovative approach that can help to tackle race inequality at the same time as making sure that funding is used effectively.

This will be underpinned by other activity to...



Criminal Justice

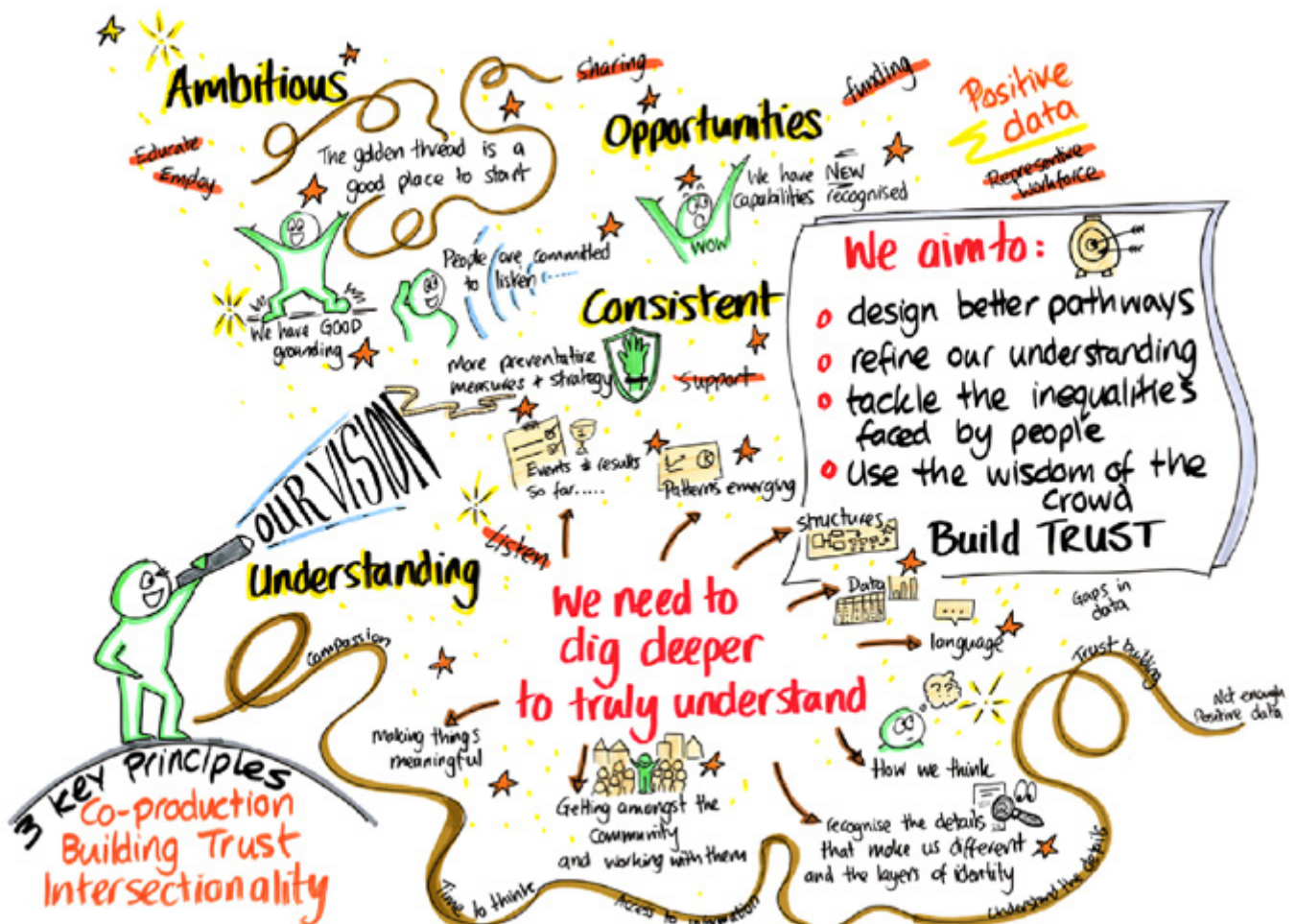
It is well evidenced that racialised communities, particularly people of Black heritage, face injustice within the criminal justice system.

Black people are 3 times more likely to be arrested by white people in the West Midlands and, in our youth justice system, children from ethnic minority communities were less than half as likely to be dealt with pre-court than white children (30%, 70%). Evidence shows people from racialised communities are also more likely to be victims of some crimes.

Recognising these inequalities, the National Police Chief's Council have launched a race action plan that sets out their vision for a police service that is anti-racist and trusted by Black people. Their report states that 'although much has been done over the years to tackle racism, discrimination and bias in policing, change has not been fast enough or significant enough.'

We agree and want to help make that vision real for racialised communities in the West Midlands. Our aim as the Race Equalities Taskforce is to **level the scales of justice to create a fairer criminal justice system that actively considers race, is culturally intelligent, and where every community feels safe and supported.**

This means working together with communities and partners across the wider criminal justice system to drive a shift from inertia and towards collective responsibility and action.



Aims and action ideas

The Race Equalities Taskforce’s criminal justice activity will be led by the **West Midlands Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC)**, to ensure that we connect with the right partners and add value to existing work. Our action will contribute to two of the strands within the **West Midlands Police (WMP) Fairness and Belonging Plan**.

Strand: better understand and build stronger relations with communities	
Strengthen Equality Impact Assessments with community voice	We will trial action to strengthen Equality Impact Assessments (EA) by engaging with communities throughout the design and delivery of ideas. This could include strengthening existing activity, such as the Violence Reduction Partnership’s Youth Assembly, or trialling a citizen panel to review an EA for a major project.
Help to build trust in the justice system	We will work with OPCC and WMP to review, strengthen and constructively support their approach for increasing racialised communities’ trust and confidence in the justice system.
Strand: work with partners to understand and tackle disparities	
Track and tackle disproportionality in youth justice	We will support WMP and OPCC to work with young offending teams to understand if the breakdown of first time entrants into the youth justice system by ethnicity and race, to identify where action is needed to tackle disproportionality.
Improve data sharing to drive action	WMP and OPCC will convene partners across the criminal justice system for a half day data summit to understand current activity to identify and measure race disproportionality, and how data gaps can be addressed.
Implement race recommendations	We need to constantly monitor efforts to implement existing recommendations to tackle race inequality and actively identify where more work is needed.
Prevent race related hate crime	We will look to improve the prevention of and early intervention in response to race related hate crime, by working with WMP and OPCC to develop an evidence based approach that current activity can be mapped against.
Target efforts to reduce re-offending	We will work with criminal justice partners to better understand patterns of re-offending and identify ways to improve the uptake of intervention support among racialised communities.

Cross cutting priorities: data, leadership and cultural intelligence

Our population in the West Midlands is incredibly diverse. Around 45 percent of people living in the metropolitan area identify as being of an ethnic minority heritage and this proportion is expected to grow.

Given this, it is essential that every leader and organisation across the West Midlands does more to truly understand and respond to the priorities of their ethnic minority customers and communities.

Everything we do as a Taskforce aims to support that goal. We want to enable, influence and mobilise a wide range of partners, across all sectors and communities, to take action that will address race inequality and improve opportunity for all.

We believe that a holistic approach is needed to enable change. This means looking beyond individual issues such as jobs, health, housing, transport and criminal justice - to understand the root causes of race inequality and how different challenges overlap. After all, this is how racialised communities experience inequality in their day to day lives.

This has led us to identifying our 'golden threads' - the cross cutting priorities that we think are key to addressing race inequality in the West Midlands, in whatever form it takes...



#1

Developing more consistent, granular and intersectional data on race inequalities and deepen our understanding of what works for racialised communities.

#2

Diversifying leadership capabilities across the West Midlands, so that communities are represented in power and therefore feel more empowered.

#3

Building cultural intelligence, by improving the ability of decision makers to understand and actively think about cultural difference, so that their decisions and activity work for racialised communities.



Priorities for action

DATA AND EVIDENCE

The challenge:

The independent baseline report produced by The Equal Group found that: “Currently, ethnicity data related to the various policy areas is not consistent across local authorities and other stakeholders. Similarly, access to the data is not consistent, particularly when it comes to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI).”

Action:

Engage with, convene and learn from a range of local, regional and national partners to work towards improving ethnicity data in our region. This includes a specific aim to explore the potential of a ‘West Midlands ethnicity data standard’, that could help to develop more granular and consistent insights.

LEADERSHIP DIVERSITY

The challenge:

In 2018, the West Midlands Leadership Commission published a report that evidenced a significant ‘diversity gap’ at senior levels. However, 5 years on and despite good activity and a growing appetite for change, the makeup of leadership across the West Midlands has not significantly changed.

Actions:

The Taskforce will drive forward activity to support people from underrepresented groups to reach leadership positions, and work towards setting targets for achieving leadership diversity for the West Midlands. Our first step will be to support a series of roundtables to identify next steps from the Leadership Commission’s activity.

CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE

The challenge:

The Birmingham and Lewisham African and Caribbean Health Inequalities Review (BLACHIR) identified the need to equip decision makers with ‘the ability and skills to go into new environments with confidence, and to make informed judgments based on observations and evidence to relate and work effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds.’

Actions:

The Taskforce will work with the BLACHIR programme to help to develop resources that will support cultural competency for different ethnic communities.

The Taskforce will engage with a wide range of partners to promote and enable greater cultural intelligence, particularly among decision makers.

Next steps: taking action together

We are determined to bring our strategy to life and know that we cannot do this alone. This is a call to action for the whole West Midlands.

Race inequalities are obstacles to having a fair start in life and can make it more difficult for people to reach their full potential and flourish. These disparities matter in a very personal way to those who do not have an equal chance to succeed and mean that we cannot unlock the potential of our region as a whole.

The Taskforce was launched by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Board to bring about lasting change on a regional scale.

This strategy set out our plans for how we will find new ways to tackle race inequality and improve opportunity over the next 5 years. It outlines the priorities we will focus on, the partnerships we need to build and the action we want to enable, influence and mobilise.

We have not developed this strategy in isolation and we cannot make it real on our own. Addressing race inequality across the West Midlands is an incredibly huge, important and urgent ambition and we need to move forward together to make a meaningful difference.

Moving forwards...

- **We will focus on impact:** this strategy set out the changes and action that we want to see across the West Midlands. We will work quickly and regularly track our progress to make sure that the Taskforce is working on the right challenges with the right people in the right way to deliver on our strategy.
- **The good news is that work has already started:** over the last year the Taskforce has already built strong partnerships and secured real commitments to action. And, we are neither the first nor only group to be driving forward change. Across the region, communities, activists, businesses, public services and countless others are already leading fantastic work to address discrimination and improve opportunity for all.
- **Our call to action:** we are calling on public services, businesses and communities to share what good practice is already happening and improve the way they work so that everyone is doing more to tackle race inequality across our region. Our ask is to work together, go further and move faster to drive forward real change by, for and with racialised communities in the West Midlands.

Please read, share and respond to our strategy, and help us to make a real difference for our region and communities.

Get in touch: raceequalitytaskforce@wmca.org.uk

Thank you to...

We would like to recognise and thank everyone who has contributed to our strategy and committed to helping us deliver on our action plan.

The independent members of the Taskforce:

- (Chair) [Yetunde Dania](#), Trowers and Hamlins LLP
- [Alex Cole](#), Founder and CEO, TIN Ventures Ltd
- [Annum Mahmood](#), Youth Futures Foundation
- [Arthur Tsang](#), Bourneville Village Trust
- [Cleo Stewart](#), Cleo Stewart Legal Services (CSLS) Legal Consultant
- [Daniel Cash](#), Aston University Law School
- [Denise Myers](#), Evenfields Careers
- Bishop [Desmond Jadoo](#), Community Leader
- [Hannah Buckley](#), Strategic Leader in Housing
- [Honey Ajuwon](#), NatWest Markets
- [Josh Smith](#), Inspire Education Trust
- [Julie Blake](#), Research Impact Officer and Teacher
- [Kiran Trehan](#), West Midlands Leadership Commission
- [Manny Sandhu](#), West Midlands Employers
- [Mary Osuagwu](#), Construction Project Manager
- [Melvin Riley](#), Activist and Diana Award Changemaker
- [Ridhi Kalaria](#), Sustainability and Social Justice Programme Manager
- [Shakeil Hemmings](#), Prison Reform Project Lead
- [Shani Dhanda](#), Disability Inclusion Specialist and Social Entrepreneur

The partner representatives on the Taskforce:

- [Alethea Fuller](#), West Midlands Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
- [Alex Shapland](#), West Midlands Fire Service
- [Allison Duggal](#), Coventry City Council
- [Darren Ralph](#), West Midlands Police
- [Emma Taylor](#), Sandwell Children's Trust
- [Irena Hergottova](#), Walsall Council
- [Jin Takhar](#), City of Wolverhampton Council
- [Dr Justin Varney](#), Birmingham City Council
- [Kiran Trehan](#), York University and West Midlands Leadership Commission
- [Mark Taylor](#), City of Wolverhampton Council
- [Mary Morrissey](#), Solihull Council
- [Michelle Ugwueze](#), West Midlands Police
- [Mohammed Ahsan](#), Department of Work and Pensions
- [Philippa Venables](#), Walsall Council
- [Rafika Daglas](#), Department of Work and Pensions
- [Sue Harrison](#), Birmingham City Council

And the fantastic subject matter experts from partners across the region, who have and will continue to play a vital role in developing and delivering Taskforce activity.

Public bodies represented on the Taskforce and who have nominated subject matter experts to support Taskforce activity:

- Birmingham City Council
- Coventry City Council
- City of Wolverhampton Council
- Department of Work and Pensions
- Dudley Council
- Sandwell Council
- Sandwell Children's Trust
- Solihull Council
- Walsall Council
- West Midlands Combined Authority
- West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service
- West Midlands Police
- Mayor of the West Midlands
- West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner

Those who facilitated and participated in our community listening event:

- Alleyne& CIC
- NatWest Group
- 70+ participants

The Mayor of the West Midlands, Andy Street, and the West Midlands Combined Authority Board for establishing this Taskforce and empowering us to make a difference through their activity.

The project team, who have supported the Taskforce's work: Ed Cox, Claire Dhami, Lucy Gosling, Madiyha Ghafoor and Sukhdeep Nijjar (WMCA), and Dan Farag (The Young Foundation).

Carrie Lewis, @NewPossibilities, live scribe and designer.

Messages of support...

“ Race, ethnicity and heritage should not prevent people from fulfilling their potential. However, this is the stark reality for many and that is why the Taskforce exists. Our ambition is to make the West Midlands a national leader in addressing race inequality and we know that we cannot do this alone.

This strategy is our call to action for every leader, business, public body, voluntary organisation and community. We want to hear about how you are already making positive changes and working together to find new ways to address persistent issues to eradicate racial inequalities. And, although tackling systemic racism will be a regional effort, everyone, whether they are in a position of power or not, has a responsibility to take action to drive lasting change for the better.

I believe each and every one of us has a duty to leave the world in a better place. So let's collaborate and learn from each other to bring about the change which will undoubtedly make our region better for everyone. ”

Yetunde Dania,

Partner at Trowers and Hamlins LLP and Independent Chair of the West Midlands Race Equalities Taskforce

“ The Race Equalities Taskforce is an important initiative both for our organisation and indeed for the West Midlands as a whole. I'm grateful for the Taskforce's efforts in developing this thoughtful and ambitious strategy which we must translate into action for communities right across our region. Change can be challenging and race inequality is a far from straightforward matter to address as there are genuine disparities to solve. What is clear, however, is that the greatest risk now is inaction. Working together, we must demonstrate our commitment and deliver tangible outcomes so that everyone can reach their full potential. ”

Andy Street,

Mayor of the West Midlands

“ I am incredibly proud of our diverse communities in Sandwell and across the West Midlands. Every day people do amazing things to improve the lives of their neighbours and local places. Too often, however, these achievements are in spite of inequality. Our role as political leaders is to represent our communities. This has to mean taking a stand against the inequalities and injustice that make life more difficult for many, including those who experience race disparities. That is why I welcome this report from the Taskforce and will continue to champion their work across our region. ”

Councillor Kerrie Carmichael,

Leader of Sandwell Council and WMCA Portfolio Lead Member for Inclusive Communities

“ Race equality and outright discrimination are longstanding challenges that need to be tackled with urgency. We are already taking significant action to ensure that the principles of anti-racism and equality are a top priority for West Midlands Police. I welcome this report and our role in leading on the Taskforce’s criminal justice activity, which we will continue into the future. Our next step will be to bring together partners from across the criminal justice system to identify where we can all do more to ensure that our work is actively and avowedly anti-racist. ”

Alethea Fuller,

Deputy Chief Executive of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for the West Midlands and member of the West Midlands Race Equality Taskforce

“ As a social entrepreneur, I understand that solving problems often means disrupting the way things currently work. I have seen first-hand the impact of systemic bias on the lives of people across our region who have been unable to overcome challenges such as digital and fuel poverty or benefit from inclusive employability pathways. Race inequality will not be easy to ‘fix.’ However, the Taskforce cannot and will not be afraid to facilitate and champion the uncomfortable conversations that are required to make real and sustainable change happen for those in the West Midlands that need it most. ”

Alex Cole,

Independent Member of the West Midlands Race Equalities Taskforce

“ Our aim as a Taskforce is to support and challenge every organisation to build equity into their business as usual. We want to develop a stable evidence base on race inequality and use it to make truly informed decisions. However that evidence base must come from the communities themselves in order to create lasting impact. Over the last year, I have led the development of the Taskforce’s activity on transport – looking at independent evidence, listening to communities and working alongside some fantastic transport professionals. We know that there are clear race disparities. This strategy sets out the steps we will take to help to bring about a sustainable transport network that is designed for communities and helps people to connect to opportunities and live their lives. ”

Ridhi Kalaria,

Independent Member of the West Midlands Race Equalities Taskforce

“ While the world is fast changing and full of complex problems, one area which I fear will not see the same pace of change is inclusion. The race inequalities evident today will continue across generations to come unless we take action now. Delivering impactful change through collaboration with the right people who have the same values, drive and ambition is possible. We have seen great achievements through regional collaboration – so let’s apply this to race inequalities too. Our strategy sets out the Taskforce’s next steps for bringing forward that real change. ”

Manny Sandhu,

Independent Member of the West Midlands Race Equalities Taskforce

