



Improvement East  
Eastern Region Sector Led Improvement



# Eastern Region Anti-Racist Practice Pledge One Year On





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# Welcome



**Antonia Ogundayisi,**  
**Service Manager - Anti-Racist Practice**  
**Essex County Council**




**Improvement East**  
Eastern Region Sector Led Improvement



## **Helen Lincoln,**

Executive Director, Children Families &  
Education Essex County Council and Eastern  
Region Sector Led Improvement DCS Lead

# Uncertain Times with Complex Change



## Eastern Region Anti-Racist Practice Pledge

Racism affects Black, Asian, Mixed-Heritage and ethnically diverse communities. In all its forms, it is a persistent and systemic issue requiring proactive and sustained efforts. In the Eastern Region, we are committed to demonstrating allyship in action. We will foster an anti-racist and diverse environment where all individuals, staff, and the communities that we serve are respected and valued. We, as members of the Eastern region, are committed to leading with integrity in the fight against racism.

**We pledge to:**

- Demonstrate Anti-Racist Leadership:** Actively promote and model anti-racist behaviours and attitudes within our workforce and communities, setting a positive example for others to follow.
- Promote Anti-Racism:** Actively encourage and support Black, Asian, Mixed-Heritage and ethnically diverse people within our communities and workforce, ensuring that their voices are heard and valued.
- Educate and Raise Awareness:** Promote understanding and awareness of racism and its impacts through continuous education and dialogue.
- Create Safe Spaces:** Establish environments where Black, Asian, Mixed-Heritage and ethnically diverse people and anyone who witnesses racism feels safe to express themselves and report incidents of racism without fear of negative consequences.
- Review and Revise Policies:** We will evaluate and update our policies on an annual basis to ensure they promote racial equity and do not uphold systemic racism.
- Engage with the Community:** Collaborate with community members and organisations to address racism and promote inclusivity.
- Hold Ourselves and our Partners Accountable:** Set clear, measurable goals to track our progress in promoting racial equity and hold ourselves accountable to these standards.
- Support Affected Individuals:** Ensure that systems, procedures, and support mechanisms are in place to prevent racism and assist those affected by racism to actively promote allyship.

Together, we believe that our collaborative efforts will lead to a racially just and equitable society in the Eastern Region where everyone is valued and respected.



## A modern youth justice system

Foundations fit for the future



### Children's Social Care: How we're transforming the sector

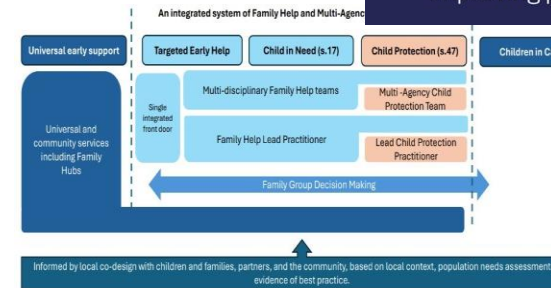



SEND Reform: Putting Children and Young People First  
Government Consultation




## POLICE RACE ACTION PLAN

Improving policing for Black people



Our evaluation of this provider

Causing concern	Attention needed	Secure	Strong	Exemplary
Achievement	Leadership and governance	Attendance		
	Curriculum	Behaviour and attitudes		
	Developing teaching	Inclusion		
	Personal development and well-being			
	Sixth form			

Safeguarding evaluation

Safeguarding Met Show

## "It's Silent": Race, racism and safeguarding children

Panel Briefing 4



### Giving every child the best start in life



CP 1302



Every Child Achieving and Thriving



## Local Government Reorganisation



## Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026

A guide to multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children

March 2026



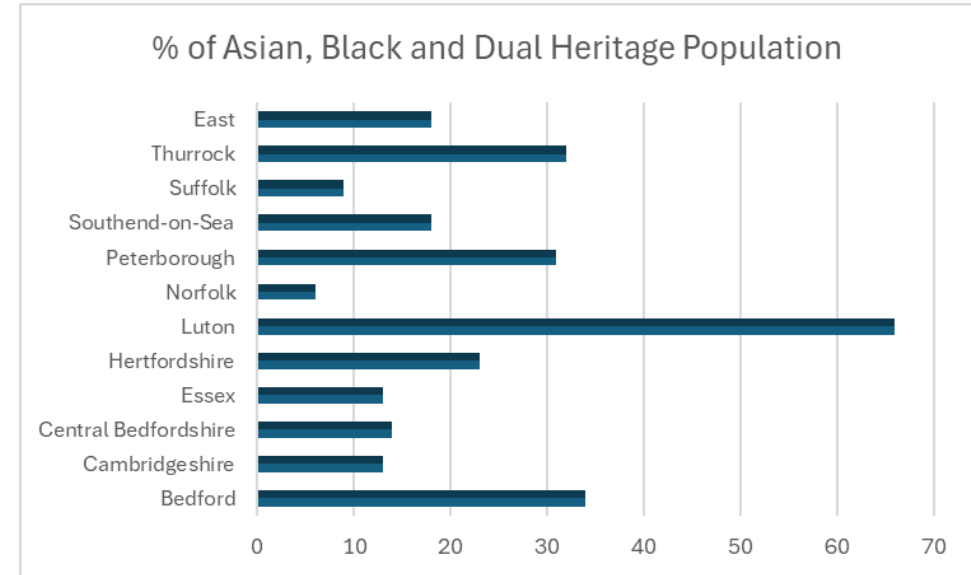
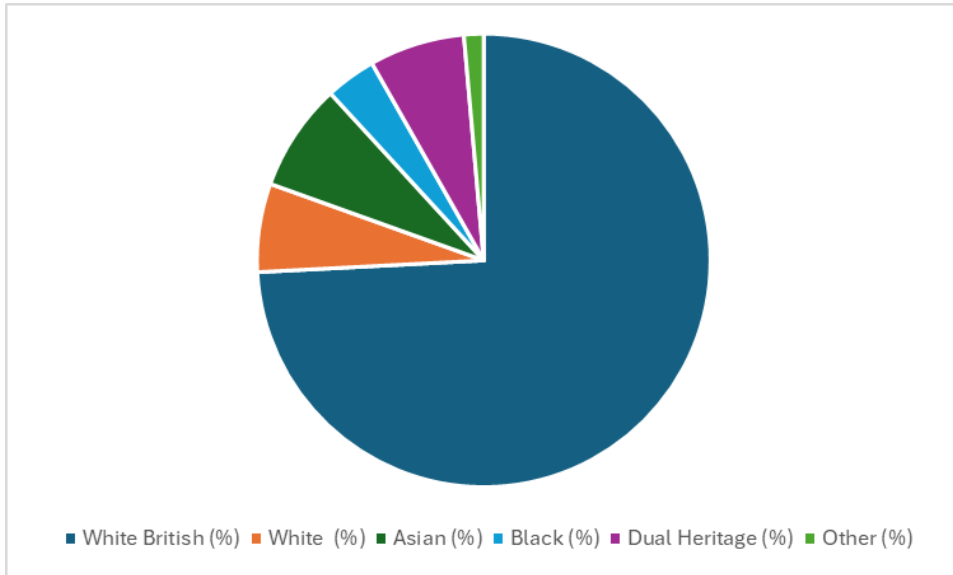
## Children's Social Care National Framework

Statutory guidance on the purpose, principles for practice and expected outcomes of children's social care

March 2026

# Social Care Statutory Guidance: Anti-Racist Practice

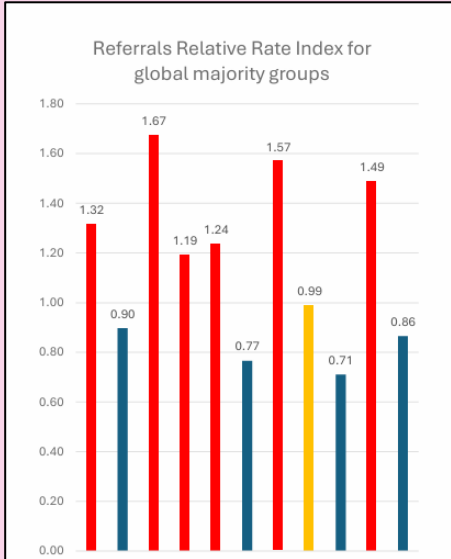
# Ethnic Diversity of the Eastern Region



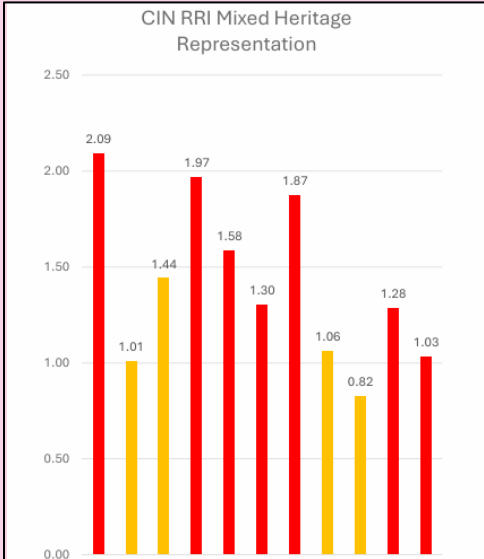
Taken from 2021 Census

# Eastern Region Anti-Racist Practice and Workforce Data

## Regional Anti-Racist Practice Data – Children & Families



Red indicates over representation of global majority groups ins referrals i.e. in 6/11 LAs

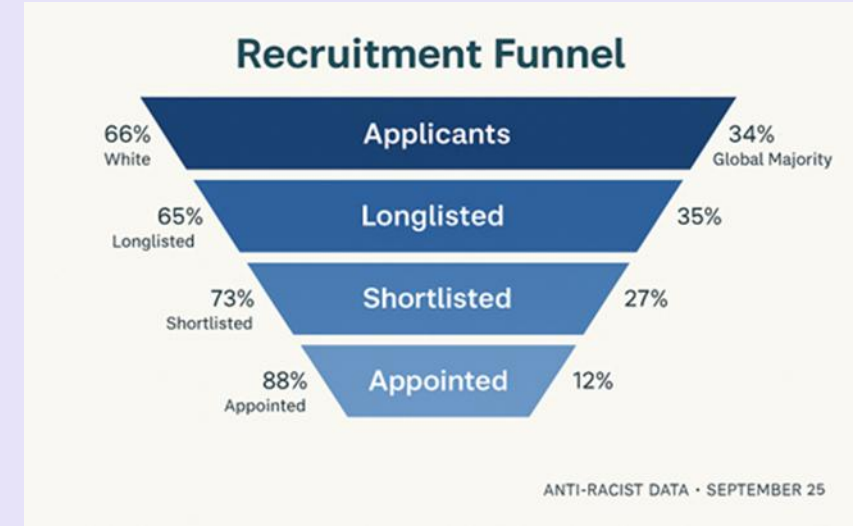


Red indicates that Children with mixed heritage are over-represented in CIN in 7 LAs in the region

Global majority children are more likely to be over represented at Referral and CIN plan but not at CP or CLA.

Children from mixed heritage backgrounds are over represented in all parts of the social care pathway.

## Regional Anti-Racist Practice Data – Workforce



# The Eastern Region Anti-Racist Practice Pledge



**Antonia Ogundayisi**  
Service Manager -  
Anti-Racist Practice  
Essex County Council



**Rachel Black**  
Improvement East  
Programme Manager

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7. **Hold Ourselves and our Partners Accountable:** Set clear, measurable goals to track our progress in promoting racial equity and hold ourselves accountable to these standards.
8. **Support Affected Individuals:** Ensure that systems, procedures, and support mechanisms are in place to prevent racism and assist those affected by racism to actively promote allyship.

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# Anti-Racist Practice Timeline

**May 2025**

Anti-Racist Leadership conference – official launch of pledge

**June 2025**

Regional Anti-Racist Leadership Forum formed

**September 2025**

Eastern Region Anti-Racist Practice CSC Data Collection underdevelopment

**October 2025**

Eastern Region Anti-Racist Practice Workforce Data Collection Developed and sent to LAs for collection

**October 2025**

Interactive Online training sessions – bi-monthly

**November 2025**

Global Majority Reflective Space launched - quarterly

**December 2025**

Anti-Racist Practice Diagnostic completed by all 11 LAs

**January 2026**

Eastern Region Anti-Racist Practitioners conference

**February 2026**

In Conversations with Black Males Pilot with SWE launched

**March 2026**

Eastern Region preSChnted Regional Anti-Racist Practice work during SWE Practice week

**April 2026**

Eastern Region DCSs agreed Anti-Racist Practice as a continuing regional priority

**May 2026**

Anti-Racist Practice Response to SEND White Paper

**Childre**



## Ahmina Akhtar,

Head of Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and  
Co-production



## Abraham Estheu

Anti-Racist Practice Lead, Norfolk County  
Council

# Experiences of Black Male Social Workers

## OVERARCHING THEMES

### 1. Cultural Competence Is Not Optional

Misunderstandings about culture, communication and identity are driving negative outcomes for Black men.

### 2. Disproportionality is a Major Concern

From case allocation to disciplinary processes, Black men face more scrutiny and harsher consequences.

### 3. Representation Matters

Lack of Black male leaders — and limited access to progression pathways — perpetuate exclusion.

### 4. Psychological Safety Is Missing

Many feel unsafe to speak openly, challenge decisions or be their authentic selves.

### 5. Community & Networking Are Crucial

Collective spaces empower individuals, provide resilience, and help counter isolation.

[Social workers share fitness to practise experiences - Community Care](#)



## Fair Referral Principles

- Guidance for employers on when to raise FtP concerns
- Designed to reduce disproportionality in referrals
- Responds to diversity data showing overrepresentation of some groups
- Promotes:
  - Consistent decision-making
  - Equitable standards
  - Fair application across the workforce

# 4 Pillars of Anti-Racist Practice in the Eastern Region

## Accountability

Regional Workforce & Children & Families Anti-Racist Practice Data Dashboard  
Regional Diagnostic – benchmark LAs  
Annual reporting to senior leaders and DCSs

## Implementation

Regional Anti-Racist Practice Leadership Forum  
Develop Regional Workforce & Children & Families Anti-Racist Practice Data Dashboard

Eastern Region Anti-Racist Practice Pledge – signed by all 11 DCSs

## Improving Practice

Bi-monthly regional learning webinars  
Practitioners' conference held on 22/01/25

## Communication & Engagement

Quarterly Regional Global Majority Reflective Space  
Anti-Racist Practice is a standard agenda item on key network meetings

# Key Challenges

LAs are at different places in their Anti-Racist Practice journey and therefore have different resources allocated and priorities

Promoting collaboration without formalised power

Communication and varying engagement in local areas

Changing landscape of LAs and Children's Services

# Key Areas of Progress



Commitment to the Pledge from **ALL** 11 LAs in the region



Establishment of the Regional Global Majority Reflective Space & learning spaces with engagement from 300+ attendees



Diagnostic engagement and benchmarking against the Pledge

# 2026-27 Focus

## Accountability

- ❖ Develop a regional framework that defines minimum standards and sets out what good looks like in relation to the Pledge.
- ❖ Establish a bi-annual self-evaluation and peer-challenge process to assess progress against the Pledge.
- ❖ Produce an annual report summarising regional activity, impact, and areas for improvement.

## Implementation

- ❖ Agree a standardised data set for Children & Families services and HR, and collect and report on this annually.
- ❖ Identify opportunities for collaborative development under the Pledge, such as, shared induction standards, consistent exit interview questions, and practice tools etc
- ❖ Undertake a regional anti-racist practice survey specifically for Global Majority staff to understand experiences and inform improvement actions.

# 2026-27 Focus

## Improving Practice

- ❖ Continue to deliver bi-monthly anti-racist practice webinars for colleagues across the region.
- ❖ Identify, share, and promote examples of effective practice to support learning and consistency across organisations.

## Communication and Engagement

- ❖ Continue to provide regional Global Majority Reflective Spaces
- ❖ Actively promote the Pledge through regional forums and communication channels to increase visibility and engagement.
- ❖ Ensure anti-racist practice features consistently across all regional networks and work programmes.



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Eastern Region Sector Led Improvement



## **Ann Graham,**

President of the Association of Directors of  
Children's Services and Executive Director,  
Children Families & Haringey Council



# Q&A Panel



**Thank you for  
joining and for  
your continued  
support**

## Upcoming Eastern Region Anti-Racist Events

- ❖ 14/05/26 Global Majority Reflective Space/Regional Survey
- ❖ 11/06/26 Allyship Webinar
- ❖ 09/07/26 Nervous System Informed Anti Racist Practice: The Impact of Trauma, Internalised Racism and Vicarious Trauma on Social Work

More to follow.....

Please visit [Upcoming Events – Improvement East](#) for more details and to book