

# MANIFESTO FOR RACE EQUALITY IN SCOTLAND

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT  
ELECTION 2021



**CRER**

Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights

# INTRODUCTION

**Scotland has reached a historic moment for action on race equality.**

With the Black Lives Matter movement prompting protests at home and abroad, and the Covid-19 pandemic highlighting the stark inequalities Black and minority ethnic (BME) people face, racial injustice cannot continue to go unchallenged.

The Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights has been working to eliminate racial discrimination and promote racial justice across Scotland for 20 years. Through research and campaigning activities which respond to the needs of communities, our work aims to tackle deep-rooted issues of racial inequality.

The 2021 Scottish Parliament election is an opportunity for everyone to take action.

This short summary sets out our manifesto on race equality in Scotland.

Firstly, we believe that all of Scotland's political parties should be striving to challenge racial inequalities and racism.

We don't need more research or inquiries to understand the problems – they've barely changed in a decade. Black and minority ethnic communities are tired of waiting for change.

But words are not enough. We need action, not just action plans. We're calling on Scotland's political parties to adopt the ten commitments we set out here into their own manifestos.

Each of these are well-evidenced, practical steps towards a more equal Scotland.

Secondly, we're calling on everyone in Scotland to use their vote to make a difference. Find out what commitments your local candidates and their parties are making on race. Visit our manifesto website to find out more about the evidence behind the commitments we're putting forward, and how you can support our aims.

# MANIFESTO COMMITMENTS

**Our research shows clearly the extent of the racial inequalities that persist in Scottish society.**

**BME households are twice as likely to be in poverty, and BME children are the only at-risk group for whom child poverty is still rising. BME people are experiencing rising levels of homelessness. There are huge gaps in the employment rate for minority ethnic people, including those with good qualifications and someone is charged with a racist hate crime on average every three hours, 365 days a year.**

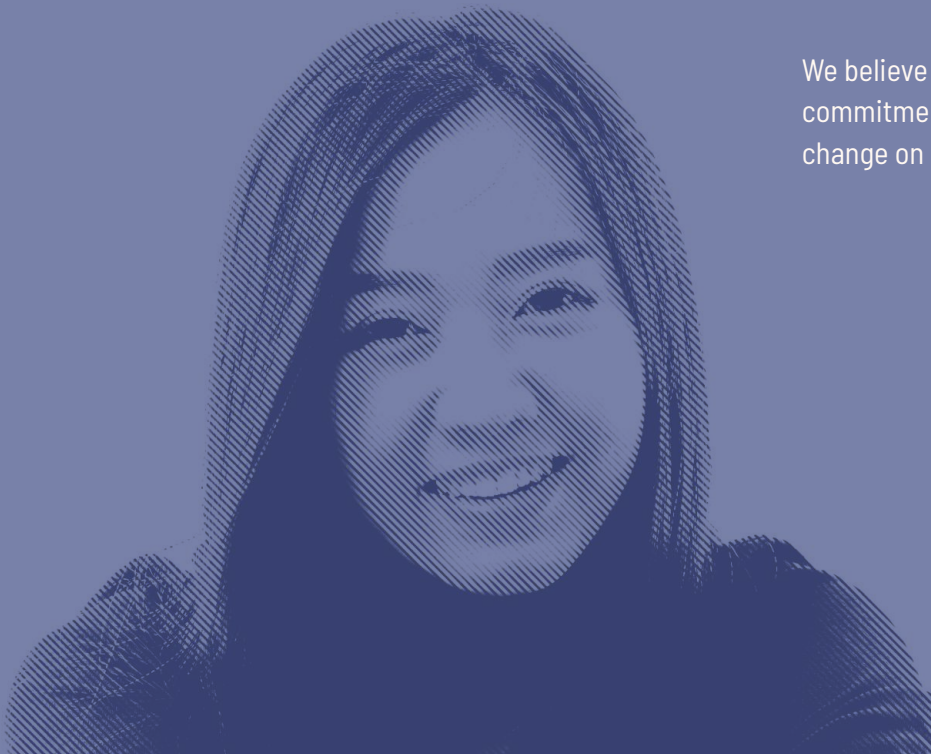
These are just a few examples of the disadvantages we need to tackle.

Racial inequalities, particularly the economic ones, will only be heightened by the Covid-19 pandemic. The ramifications of this will continue far into the next Scottish Parliament term.

So much work remains to be done to reduce racial inequality in Scotland. Progress to date has been hampered by actions which are ineffective or simply not implemented.

Change will only come if specific, targeted, robust action is taken.

We believe that the following manifesto commitments would kickstart the road to change on race equality in Scotland.



**COMMITMENT 1:** Renew the approach to implementation of the Race Equality Framework for Scotland 2016–2030, with action planning that focuses clearly on the visions and goals of the Framework and reports progress accurately and transparently.

**COMMITMENT 2:** Amend the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 to require Community Planning Partnerships to act with a view to promoting community cohesion.

**COMMITMENT 3:** Work with BME stakeholders to build a targeted approach to tackling poverty in minority ethnic communities, mainstreaming this into anti-poverty and child poverty strategies and action plans.

**COMMITMENT 4:** Achieve equal representation for minority ethnic people within Scottish Government by 2025 by setting a Positive Action Plan with annual progress reports, and encourage wider change by requiring all bodies funded or contracted by Scottish Government with over 100 staff to take similar action.

**COMMITMENT 5:** Implement and fully resource the recommendations of the Expert Reference Group on Covid-19 and Ethnicity.

**COMMITMENT 6:** Amend the Curriculum for Excellence Social Studies benchmarks to include a specific experiences and outcomes measure: 'I understand Scotland's historical role in empire, colonialism and transatlantic slavery, and the diversity of Scottish society in the past'.

**COMMITMENT 7:** Introduce mandatory recording of racist incidents and prejudice-based bullying in Scotland's schools, with data to be collected, analysed and published by Scottish Government on an annual basis.

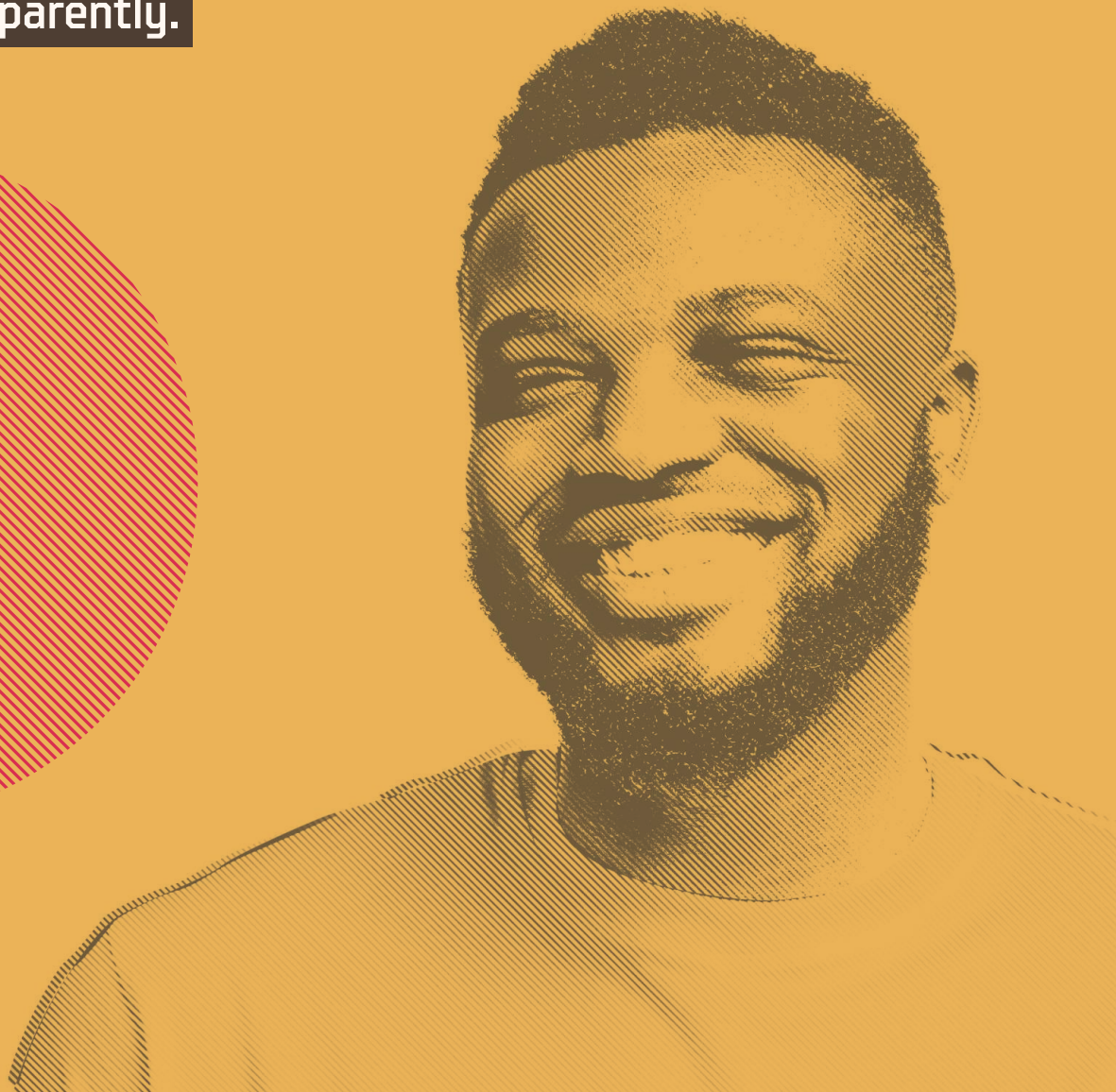
**COMMITMENT 8:** Revise the Scottish Specific Public Sector Equality Duties to create a system that genuinely holds public bodies to account on tackling inequalities.

**COMMITMENT 9:** Amend the legislation on Local Housing Strategies to require local targets for access to social housing for minority ethnic groups, with monitoring requirements on progress towards meeting those targets.

**COMMITMENT 10:** Support the development of a national museum, archive and learning centre dedicated to illuminating Scotland's histories with regard to empire, colonialism, slavery and migration.

# RACE EQUALITY POLICY

**COMMITMENT 1: Renew the approach to implementation of the Race Equality Framework for Scotland 2016-2030, with action planning that focuses clearly on the visions and goals of the Framework and reports progress accurately and transparently.**



**The [Race Equality Framework for Scotland 2016-30](#) is the main national strategy on race equality. This was developed from the ground up. CRER supported 400 minority ethnic people to get involved through our Community Ambassadors Programme, as well as 300 workers in the public, voluntary, academic and trades union sectors.**

The visions and goals of the Race Equality Framework were based on the experiences, needs and priorities of people from minority ethnic communities. Because of this, we believe that achieving these visions and goals should be the primary aim of the work Scottish Government does on race equality.

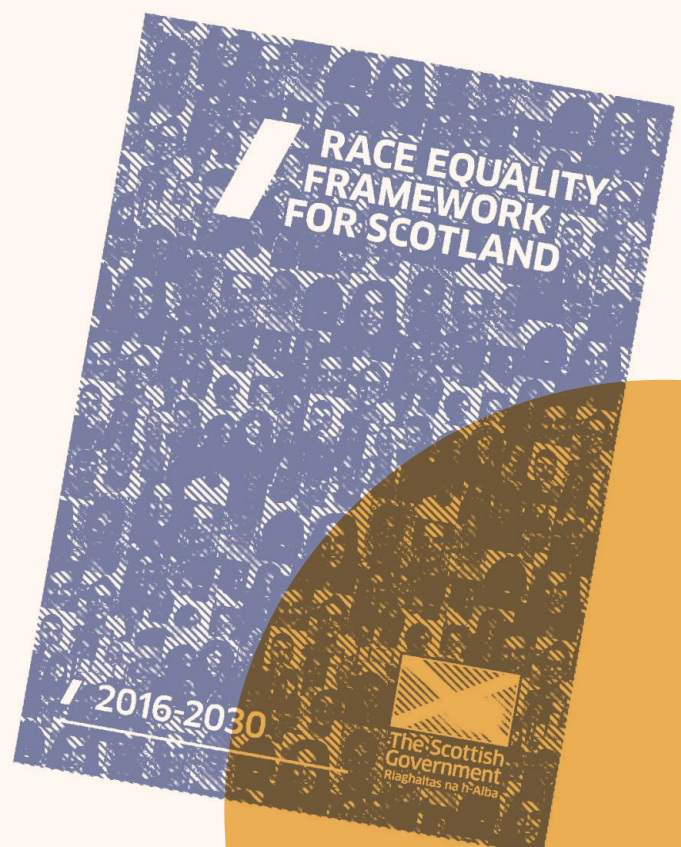
The Race Equality Framework was met with cross-party support on its launch, and we're calling on all political parties to reaffirm their commitment to implementing it over the remaining ten years of its lifespan.

Many of the initial actions set out in the Framework remain incomplete, having been overtaken by the actions in a separate Race Equality Action Plan, which was developed without involving minority ethnic people.

A renewed set of actions will be needed to meet the visions and goals of the Framework, and to avoid the mistakes of the past, we believe that the approach to reporting on progress also needs to be refocused.

Despite the creation of a Race Equality Programme Board involving senior Government officials, little progress has been made on the majority of stated actions within the Race Equality Action Plan's annual highlight reports. There has never been a progress report on the actions set out in the Race Equality Framework, which were agreed by civil servants and approved by Ministers.

**We call upon all parties to give the Race Equality Framework the priority status it deserves, by committing to renew the approach to its implementation and ensuring that action planning focuses clearly on the visions and goals of the Framework and builds in the mechanisms needed to report progress accurately and transparently.**



# COMMUNITY COHESION

**COMMITMENT 2: Amend the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 to require Community Planning Partnerships to act with a view to promoting community cohesion.**



**The [Race Equality Framework for Scotland 2016-30](#) highlights the relationship between community cohesion, safety and discrimination. Quite simply, everyday experience of racism and discrimination can reduce feelings of belonging, damaging community cohesion.**

In 2019-20, racist hate crime charges rose in Scotland for the first time in 10 years, with an [increase of four percentage points](#). Over three thousand racist hate crimes occurred last year. That's more than all of the other categories of hate crime combined.

These figures are alarming, and underreporting means that the true number of racist hate crimes is likely to be much higher.

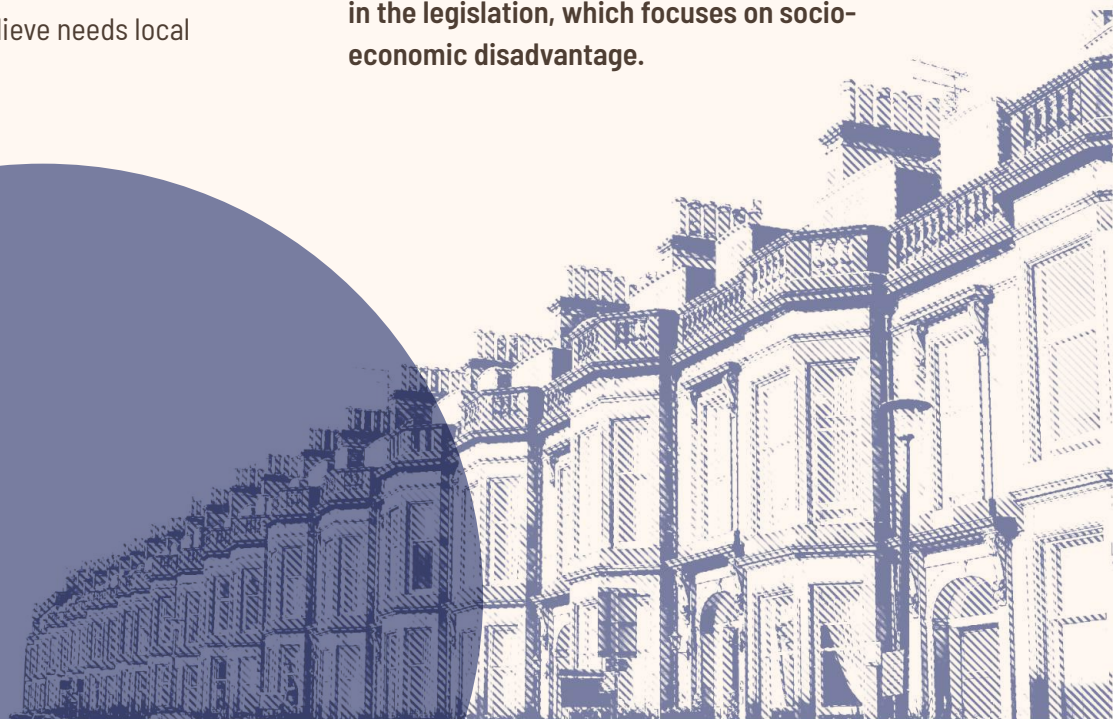
BME people are less likely to feel that they can trust and rely on their neighbours, and less likely to feel like they belong in their neighbourhood. This lack of community cohesion at a local level is something that we believe needs local solutions.

True community cohesion requires equal participation and representation for minority ethnic people in all areas of life. In community life, in decision making, in employment in different sectors (including education and the public sector), and in political and civic life.

Our commitment on community cohesion focusses on one area where we think a big difference could be made at local level.

Legally, each Local Authority area in Scotland must have a [Local Outcomes Improvement Plan](#) which is shared by its Community Planning Partners (like the Council, health board, police and universities). This is a legal requirement under the [Community Empowerment \(Scotland\) Act 2015](#). We believe that building community cohesion into local outcomes improvement work would create better relationships in local communities and help to prevent hate crime.

**We're therefore calling for the Community Empowerment Act to be amended to require Community Planning Partnerships to act with a view to promoting community cohesion. This is similar to the anti-poverty approach in the legislation, which focuses on socio-economic disadvantage.**

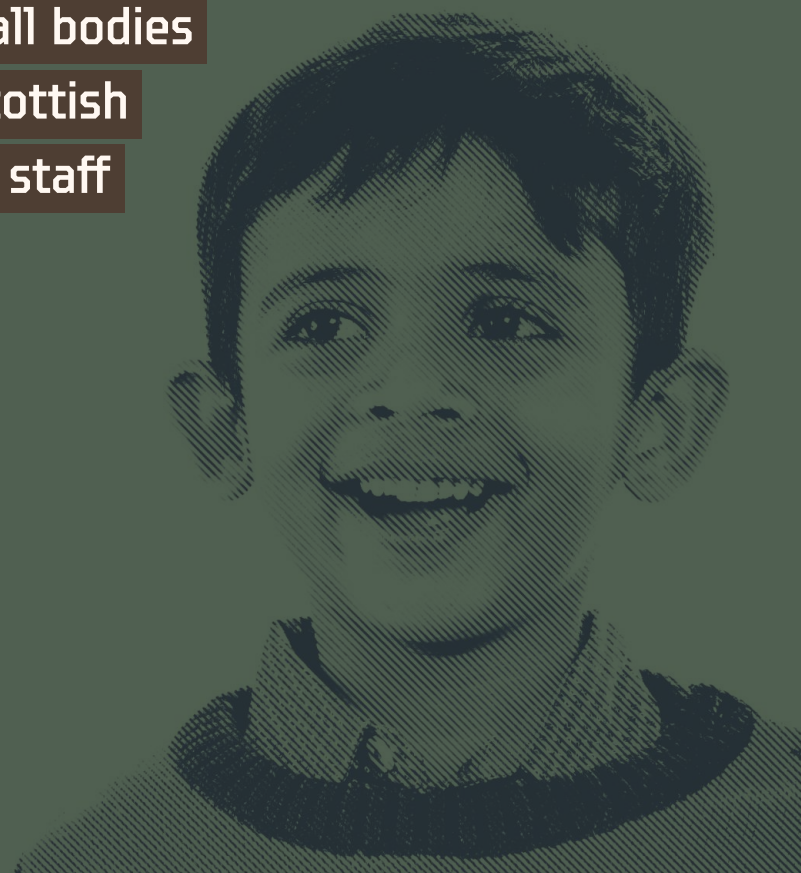




# POVERTY AND EMPLOYMENT

**COMMITMENT 3: Work with BME stakeholders to build a targeted approach to tackling poverty in minority ethnic communities, mainstreaming this into anti-poverty and child poverty strategies and action plans.**

**COMMITMENT 4: Achieve equal representation for minority ethnic people within Scottish Government by 2025 by setting a Positive Action Plan with annual progress reports, and encourage wider change by requiring all bodies funded or contracted by Scottish Government with over 100 staff to take similar action.**



**BME people in Scotland are twice as likely as white British people to be in poverty. BME children are the only group identified as a priority, high-risk group for child poverty that are still seeing a rise in poverty levels. Despite this, the need to tackle poverty in BME communities is not well reflected in anti-poverty strategies.**

The current [Fairer Scotland Action Plan](#), which includes anti-poverty elements, only commits to taking forward the implementation of the Race Equality Framework. The Race Equality Framework cannot be treated as an alternative to ensuring equality for minority ethnic people across the range of national strategies.

With child poverty levels on the rise in BME communities, failure to act now will condemn future generations to socio-economic disadvantage.

**We need a targeted approach to tackling poverty in minority ethnic communities. We believe this can be achieved by working with BME stakeholders to build an approach to mainstreaming this into anti-poverty and child poverty strategies and action plans.**

The background to poverty in minority ethnic communities lies in the ethnicity employment gap, as most recently documented by the Scottish Parliament [Equalities and Human Rights Committee](#). The impact of structural racism and discrimination in the labour market is clear, with lower employment rates and higher rates of in-work poverty for certain minority ethnic groups.

The Scottish Government has an existing target for fair workforce representation for minority ethnic people by 2025, but there is no way that the current level of progress will even approach meeting this. Targeted action is now being taken, but this needs to be stepped up to make a difference.

**We're asking all parties to commit to a plan of positive action, and to use contract compliance to ensure that all bodies Scottish Government funds or contracts through procurement processes with over 100 staff take action too.**



# HEALTH

**COMMITMENT 5: Implement and fully resource all of the recommendations of the Expert Reference Group on Covid-19 and Ethnicity.**



## The Covid-19 pandemic has exposed serious inequalities in health outcomes for minority ethnic people in Scotland.

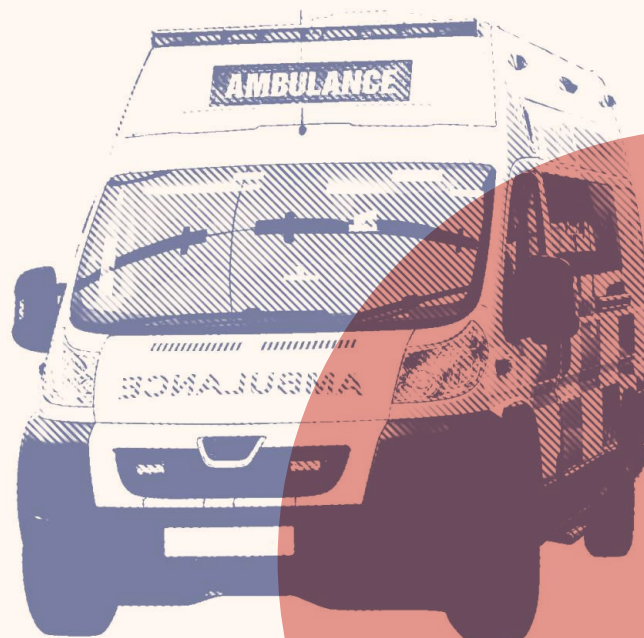
In December 2020, [Public Health Scotland](#) noted that there was a “two-fold increase in risk of admission to critical care or death due to COVID-19 among those of South Asian origin, and this seems to be particularly evident among those of Pakistani ethnicity”. It was also highlighted that there was evidence of increased risk of hospitalisation for those of Caribbean or Black ethnicity due to Covid-19.

This is just the latest in a line of reports that outline the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on BME people in Scotland. In May 2020, an Expert Reference Group on Covid-19 and Ethnicity was established to consider and inform the approach of the Scottish Government around the impacts of Covid-19 on BME people. This included providing advice and guidance on how we can change systemic issues, improve the data on ethnicity and reduce the risks of Covid-19.

The Expert Reference Group (on which CRER was represented) produced [two reports](#), one focusing on systemic issues and the other on improving health data and evidence. In total, the group produced 31 short and long-term recommendations that ranged from creating inclusive public health messaging and tackling poor quality housing and overcrowding, to linking data to the census and including ethnicity in health records.

Implementing these recommendations will have a lasting impact on the health of BME people in Scotland beyond Covid-19. However, it will take a long-term commitment, into the next parliamentary term and beyond, to achieve this. The severity of the racial inequalities uncovered by the Expert Reference Group is something that all of Scottish society needs to take on board.

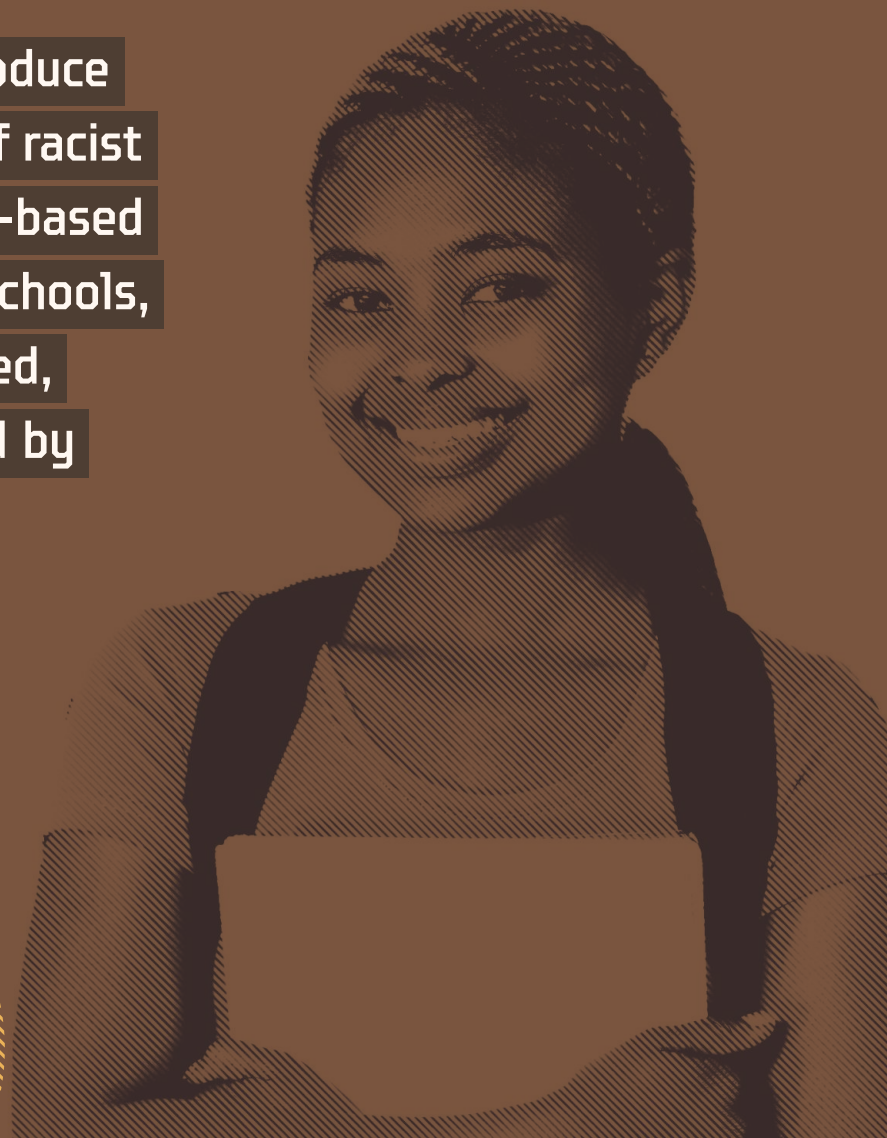
**To ensure these inequalities are tackled, we're calling on all parties to commit to implementing and fully resourcing the recommendations of the Expert Reference Group on Covid-19 and Ethnicity.**



# EDUCATION

**COMMITMENT 6: Amend the Curriculum for Excellence Social Studies benchmarks to include a specific experiences and outcomes measure: 'I understand Scotland's historical role in empire, colonialism and transatlantic slavery, and the diversity of Scottish society in the past'.**

**COMMITMENT 7: Introduce mandatory recording of racist incidents and prejudice-based bullying in Scotland's schools, with data to be collected, analysed and published by Scottish Government on an annual basis.**



**Scotland's schools should be a safe, supportive and equal environment for minority ethnic students, where anti-racism is embedded.**

However, this is not always the case. Too many young people are missing out on opportunities to learn about the diverse histories, heritage and cultures of Scotland, including Scotland's role in empire, colonialism, slavery and migration. Petitions with thousands of signatures have shown [widespread support for change](#), especially amongst young people themselves.

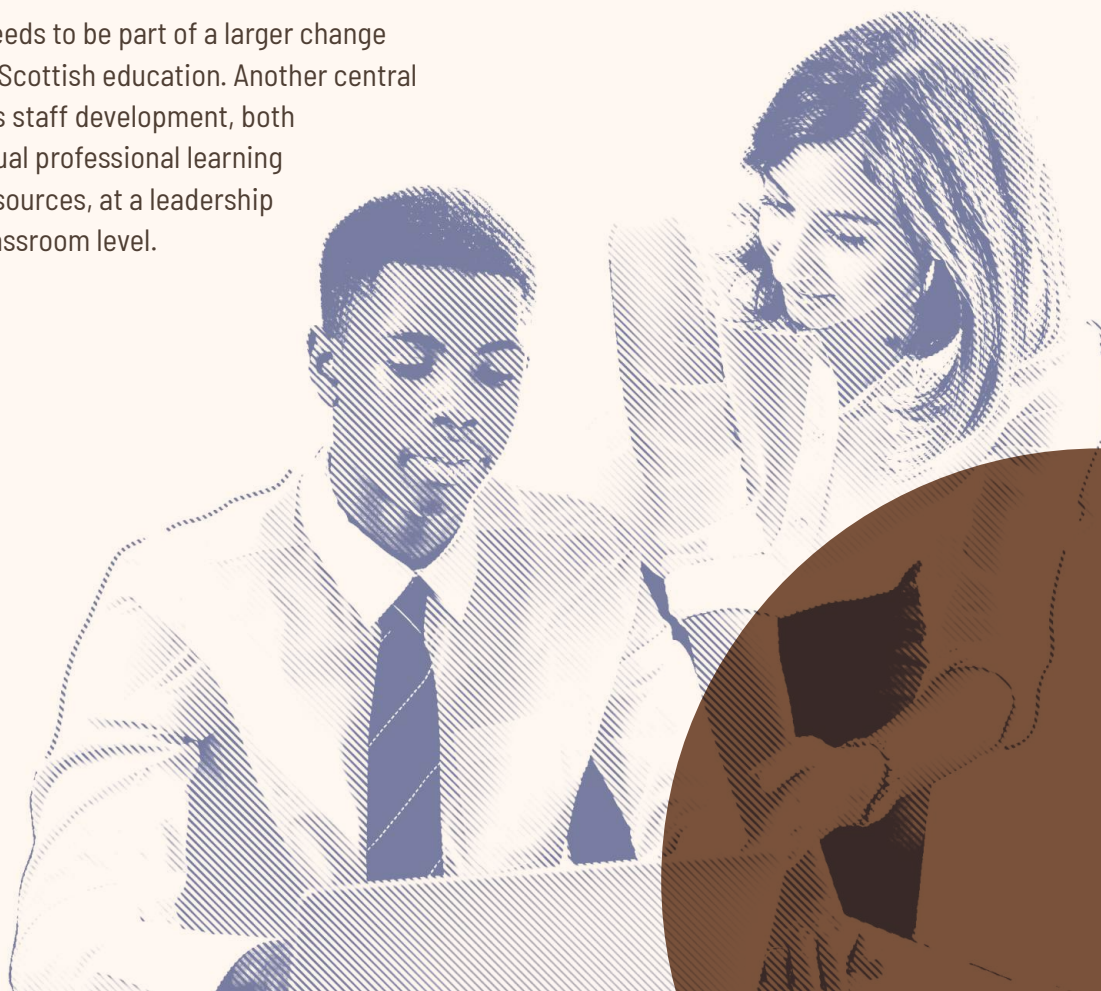
**We're calling for a specific change to the social studies curriculum, to ensure that all teachers understand how critical this is.**

This needs to be part of a larger change within Scottish education. Another central point is staff development, both continual professional learning and resources, at a leadership and classroom level.

However, without action to address racism and prejudice-based bullying, anti-racist education efforts will fail. Research has highlighted the widespread existence of both subtle everyday racism and overt racism within schools, impacting pupils and teachers, with teachers reporting that bullying based on race is the most frequent type of [prejudice-based bullying](#).

An inquiry by the [Equality and Human Rights Committee](#) has shown the devastating impact that racist bullying can have on minority ethnic learners.

**We're calling for a mandatory, Scotland-wide approach to monitoring and reporting on racist incidents and prejudice-based bullying in schools. Accountability for the welfare of minority ethnic young people is urgently needed, at both local and national level.**



# PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTIES

**COMMITMENT 8: Revise the Scottish Specific Public Sector Equality Duties to create a system that genuinely holds public bodies to account on tackling inequalities.**



**The [Public Sector Equality Duties](#) set out legal responsibilities for public sector bodies in Britain to address inequalities and tackle issues like racism. They need to consider, throughout their work, the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between groups of people.**

In Scotland, most public sector organisations are also required to meet a [specific set of duties](#) under Scottish legislation to make sure they fulfil these responsibilities. For example, they must assess the impact of the work they do on equality groups including minority ethnic people, publish a set of outcomes designed to tackle inequalities and publish a report on how they build equality into their work ('mainstreaming equality').

CRER undertook research for the Equality and Human Rights Commission which showed that these specific duties have resulted in [very little change in people's lives](#). The focus on simply publishing documents, rather than creating change, means that organisations can meet the requirements of these duties simply by producing paperwork.

Because of this, equality work becomes a box ticking, administrative exercise. The Public Sector Equality Duties are simply not working to create effective and lasting change for minority ethnic people.

The Duties as they stand aren't enough to provide genuine accountability. Public bodies need to show that they are meaningfully tackling the real issues.

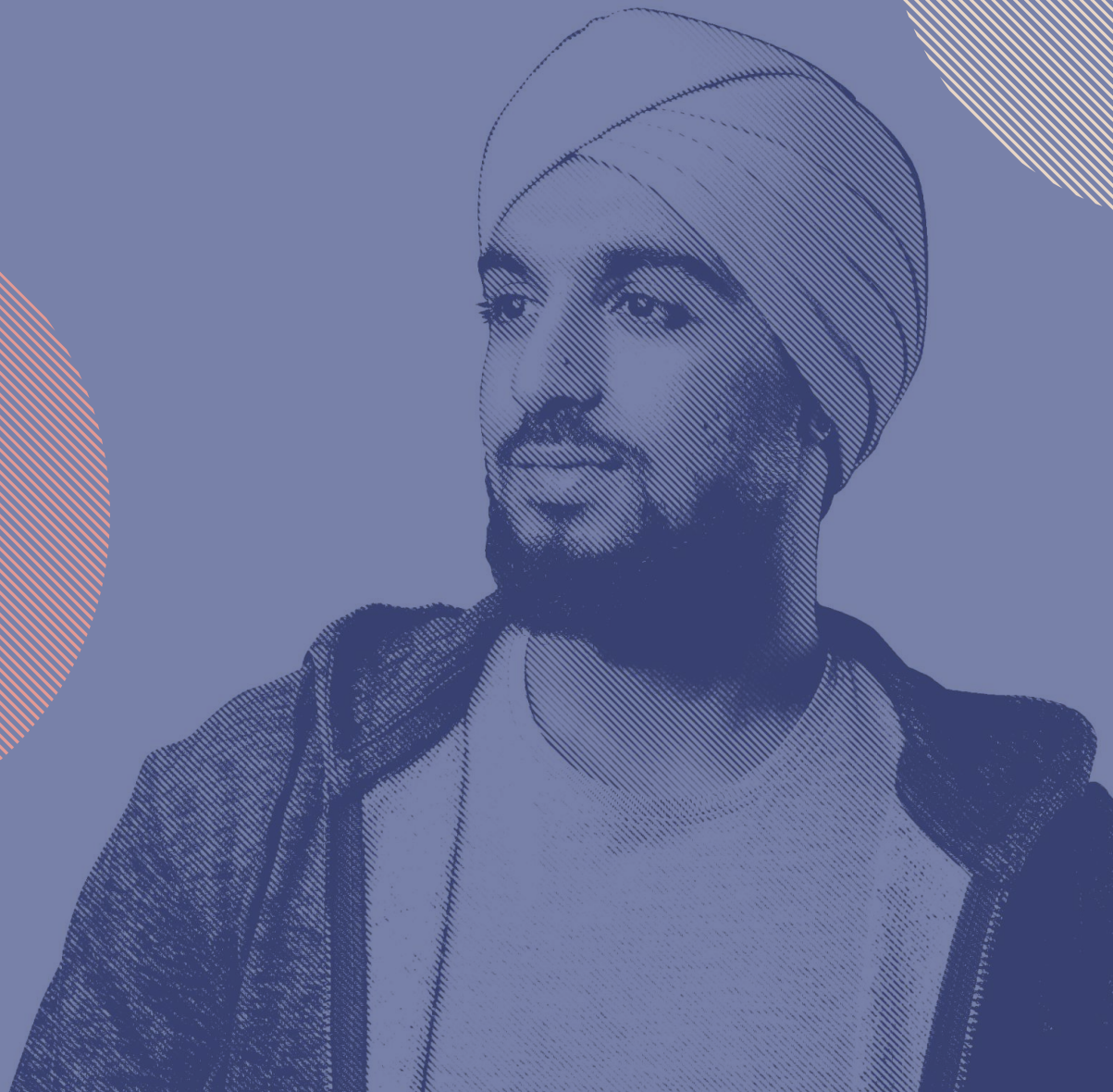
**We believe that the Scottish Specific Equality Duties need to be revised. We're calling on all political parties to commit to building a system which holds public bodies to account for taking effective action on racial inequalities.**





# HOUSING

**COMMITMENT 9: Amend the legislation on Local Housing Strategies to require local targets for access to social housing for minority ethnic groups, with monitoring requirements on progress towards meeting those targets.**



**Good quality, affordable housing has the potential to reduce a range of inequalities throughout people's life course ranging from health outcomes to poverty. However, our research has highlighted [serious inequalities in BME people's experiences of housing in Scotland](#).**

We know that BME people are more likely to privately rent their home, which is usually more expensive than social renting or home ownership. BME people are experiencing rising levels of homelessness, and older BME people's accommodation needs are often not well met. We also know that people born into a BME family in Scotland are nearly four times more likely to live in an [overcrowded household](#).

A commitment was made by the current Scottish Government to carry out an evidence review to identify gaps and determine what further research is required to inform race equality in future housing programmes. In January 2021, as part of the housing research actions in the REAP 2017-2021, an evidence review of BME people's housing needs was [published](#). While this review and the commitment from the Scottish Government are welcome, and there is a need for more up-to-date statistics, many of the problems are already known and need to be acted upon now.

One of the key steps that could be taken to improve minority ethnic people's housing situation is to increase access to social housing. Currently, Local Housing Strategies need to be accompanied by an Equality Impact Assessment and the guidance on developing these stresses the importance of the Public Sector Equality Duties. However, continuing racial inequalities in access to social housing show that this is not enough.

**We believe that social housing providers need to be more accountable for ensuring their work benefits all of Scottish society equally. We're therefore calling for the legislation on social housing to be amended, requiring appropriate local targets to be set on access to social housing for minority ethnic communities.**



# SCOTLAND'S BLACK HISTORY

**COMMITMENT 10: Support the development of a national museum, archive and learning centre dedicated to illuminating Scotland's histories with regard to empire, colonialism, slavery and migration.**



CRER has worked in partnership with Glasgow City Council as co-chairs of a committee campaigning to establish a Scottish museum of empire, colonialism, slavery and migration.

Its work has secured support and expertise from colleagues at the National Museum of African American History and Culture (part of the Smithsonian Institute), Dr. Richard Benjamin from the International Slavery Museum in Liverpool, Professor Sir Geoff Palmer (a patron of the campaign) and many others.

We welcomed the upturn in interest in commemorating Scotland's Black History following the Black Lives Matter protests of 2020. In particular, cross-party support for this agenda was seen in the Scottish Parliament, with two motions leading to debates.

Scottish Government has asked Museums Galleries Scotland to convene an Empire, Slavery & Scotland's Museums Steering Group examining how Scottish museums and galleries can better address the legacies of slavery, empire, and colonialism. We were pleased to accept an invitation to take part in this group. We will push for future work in this area to have the voice of minority ethnic communities at its heart.

Fair and accurate representation of Scotland's diverse history is needed throughout its museum collections. However, without a way to draw the many threads of this history together, the truth will remain untold. Cities like Liverpool, London and Bristol have found a way to address this through dedicated spaces. It's time that Scotland fulfilled this need.

We will continue to press for a coherent way of telling these stories; a meaningful and engaging platform through which education, curiosity and reflection on our past can be satisfied. This includes looking at the contributions of Black and minority ethnic individuals and communities, as well as exploring Scotland's global role.

**We're calling on all political parties to support the development of a national museum, archive and learning centre dedicated to illuminating Scotland's histories with regard to empire, colonialism, slavery and migration.**



# WHAT'S NEXT?

CRER will be campaigning on each of these commitments in the lead up to the 2021 Scottish Parliament elections.

But we can't do this alone. Please join us in pushing for equality for Black and minority ethnic communities to be reflected in Scotland's political system.

## Political Parties and Scottish Parliament 2021 Candidates.

We're asking you to confirm your commitment to anti-racism by building the commitments set out here into your 2021 election manifestos. If you have questions about these commitments or would like to discuss, please contact us at [racemanifestoscotland@crer.org.uk](mailto:racemanifestoscotland@crer.org.uk)

## Activists and allies.

We believe that everyone in Scotland can help to secure a future where race equality becomes a reality. Find more information about how you can help promote the Race Equality Manifesto for Scotland 2021 [here](#), and how you can support our work in general [here](#).



To request this document in an alternative format, contact [racemanifestoscotland@crer.org.uk](mailto:racemanifestoscotland@crer.org.uk) or tel: 0141 418 6530

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