



BUILDING RACIAL LITERACY AND AWARENESS OF ANTI-RACISM

Report by Chief Officer, Education and Children's Services

PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of the Report is to brief the Members on the requirement for Education and Children's Services in the Western Isles to build racial literacy and embed anti-racist practice.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Vision, Values and Call to Action from the National Discussion on Education highlighted the importance of a curriculum that advances human rights, equity, inclusivity, and appreciation of diversity to recognise, respect, and represent the unique talents, characteristics, needs, interests, and potential of all learners. Identifying principles such as anti-racist education as being essential in creating a contemporary curriculum that prepares learners for the modern world.
- 2.2 With a view to changing the curriculum, as part of the Scottish Government's Anti-Racism in Education Programme, Education Scotland supported the co-design of Anti-Racist Curriculum Principles. Education Scotland developed the Building Racial Literacy programme with the aspirational goal of making every educator in Scotland racially literate, effective at dealing with racism and confident in leading anti-racism. A wide range of partners including education practitioners and stakeholders were involved in the development of this programme.
- 2.3 Two members of Education and Children's Services staff joined Cohort 4 of the Building Racial Literacy Programme which ran online from October 2023 to March 2024. Attending this course involved preparing a Building Racial Literacy Action Plan. In August 2024 one member of Education and Children's Services staff attended further training on Leading Effective Anti-Racist Professional Learning and is now an Anti-racism Mentor.
- 2.4 The expectation from Education Scotland is that the staff who attended this training work with others to develop plans to build racial literacy and anti-racist practice across Education and Children's Services in the Western Isles. For this to be effective the understanding and support of members of Elected Members and Senior Managers within Education and Children's Services is essential.
- 2.5 As a first step to begin the awareness raising process it is proposed that:
 - A seminar on Promoting Anti Racist Education in Scotland is offered to all Council members
 - A session on Promoting Anti racist Education in Scotland will be included in the Education and Children's Services Senior Managers conference in February 2025
- 2.6 Further actions to be considered following awareness raising could include Senior Managers within Education and Children's Services developing an Anti-Racism Plan for Education and Children's Services around the four themes of the Scottish Government's Anti-Racism in Education Programme, as detailed at para 5.6.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 It is recommended that the Comhairle:

- (a) agree to arrange a Seminar for Elected Members on Promoting Anti Racist Education in Scotland; and**
- (b) support building racial literacy and awareness of anti-racism within Education and Children’s Services in the Western Isles.**

Contact Officer: Sally Kane, Principal Educational Psychologist
Appendix: None
Background Papers:

IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The following implications are applicable in terms of the Report.

Resource Implications	Implications/None
Financial	None
Legal	None
Staffing	The report relates to staff training opportunities.
Assets and Property	None
Strategic Implications	Implications/None
Risk	The proposed training and other actions aim to build racial literacy within Education and Children’s Services and hence reduce the risk to the Comhairle from legal action relating to racism and race related unconscious bias.
Equalities	Building racial literacy and awareness of anti-racist practice within Education and Children’s Services supports the Comhairle’s commitment to Equality and Diversity.
Corporate Strategy	Inclusion Equality & Diversity
Environmental Impact	None
Consultation	Consultation will be a future action. It will be important to consult with learners, education and children’s services staff and parents particularly those who identify as Black Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) when developing anti-racist policy and practice.

BACKGROUND

- 5.1 The Vision, Values and Call to Action from the National Discussion on Education highlighted the importance of a curriculum that advances human rights, equity, inclusivity, and appreciation of diversity to recognise, respect, and represent the unique talents, characteristics, needs, interests, and potential of all learners. Identifying principles such as anti-racist education as being essential in creating a contemporary curriculum that prepares learners for the modern world. [All Learners in Scotland Matter - national discussion on education: summary report - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)
- 5.2 The history of Scotland includes involvement with the transatlantic slave trade, colonialism and racism. Outdated ideas and beliefs of racial inferiority and superiority associated with this past continue to

exist in contemporary Scottish society. These ideas influenced the thinking of the communities that people in Scotland grew up in and biased the curriculum in schools and universities that they attended. People are often unaware that these ideas continue to influence their thinking and are unaware of the negative impact that these ideas continue to have on all members of our communities but disproportionately on members of our communities who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour.

- 5.3 With a view to changing the curriculum, as part of the Scottish Government's Anti-Racism in Education Programme, Education Scotland supported the co-design of Anti-Racist Curriculum Principles to support educators, leaders and learners understand what an anti-racist curriculum can mean in practice. [A' cur cruth ur-nuadh air gach rud \(education.gov.scot\)](#) [Breaking the mould - Our Curriculum must be an Anti-Racist Curriculum \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- 5.4 Education Scotland developed the Building Racial Literacy programme with the aspirational goal of making every educator in Scotland racially literate, effective at dealing with racism and confident in leading anti-racism. A wide range of partners including education practitioners and stakeholders were involved in the development of this programme. [Building Racial Literacy | Programmes | Professional learning programmes, webinars and events | Professional Learning | Education Scotland](#). The course creates safer braver learning spaces with a focus on personal growth and learning, avoiding blaming and shaming.
- 5.5 In embedding Anti-Racist practice in the Western Isles it will be important to recognise that racism is an issue for all people although it is black, indigenous and people of colour who are dis-proportionately negatively impacted by racism.
- 5.6 Further actions to be considered following awareness raising could include Senior Managers within Education and Children's Services developing an Anti-Racism Plan for Education and Children's Services around the four themes of the Scottish Government's Anti-Racism in Education Programme. These themes are:
 - Curriculum Reform (this workstream led the development of Scotland's Anti-Racist Curriculum Principles – how might these be promoted with practitioners and leaders? This could include input at a Head Teacher development day)
 - Diversity in the Teaching Profession and Education Workforce (this workstream recently published an [action guide](#) for local authorities on increasing and retaining Black and Minority Ethnic teachers, with the [latest annual data report](#))
 - Education Leadership and Professional Learning (this workstream funds the Building Racial Literacy programme – how might learning from the programme be shared with practitioners and leaders)
 - Racism and Racist Incidents (this workstream is developing a whole school approach to responding to racist incidents)