

# Anti-racist practice

## Close the Gap strategy



Close the Gap

# Why we are doing this



Close the Gap is Scotland's expert policy advocacy organisation working on women's labour market equality. For 25 years we have been working with policymakers, employers and unions to influence and enable action that will address the causes of women's inequality at work. We work to centre intersectional analysis in our work to ensure what we do is evidence based and grounded in the experiences of women who are most marginalised. We recognise we need to go further: centring intersectionality means working to become an anti-racist organisation.

We are operating in a context where structural racism continues to shape labour market outcomes, and where there has been a visible rise in far-right activism and an ongoing backlash against equality and human rights. In this climate, silence or neutrality is not enough: a proactive commitment to anti-racism is essential. This is why we worked with anti-racism consultants, Mòr Diversity, to develop a systematic approach for embedding anti-racist practice in Close the Gap.

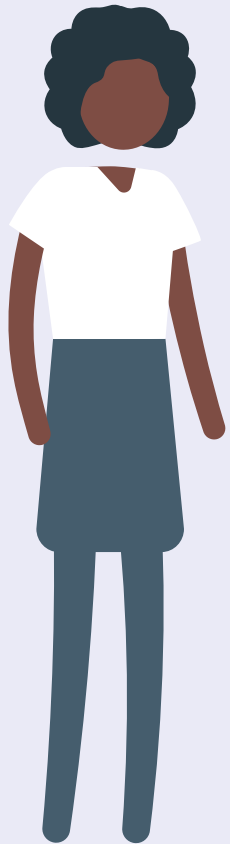
We have developed an action plan on anti-racism that sets out our three-year commitment across four areas: how we position ourselves externally and build engagement, the internal transformation of our culture and systems, our approach to continuous learning, and how we embed accountability across everything we do.



It is a roadmap that will engage our staff team and our board of trustees, helping us to build a more effective, intersectional approach to our work and further our commitment to advance justice for all women. Our ultimate aim is to be an organisation where anti-racist practice is not a separate workstream, but is woven into everything we do - from how we recruit and support staff, to how we do research and engage with decision makers.

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## What does anti-racist practice mean at Close the Gap?



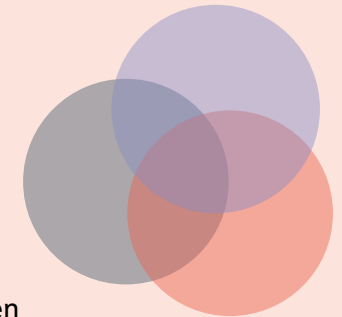
Anti-racism is an active and ongoing commitment to identify, challenge and change the systems, structures and behaviours that sustain racism. It goes beyond being 'not racist' - it requires deliberate and continuous action to dismantle inequality and redistribute power. It means recognising the causes of discrimination and inequality and understanding how they operate, not only in the labour market, but throughout society. Our action plan uses the **structural, cultural, institutional and personal (SCIP)** analysis as a tool to identify how discrimination operates, allowing us to move beyond personal prejudice to target systemic barriers across these four interconnected levels.

## What does intersectionality mean?

*'Intersectionality is a lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it interlocks and intersects.'*

### Kimberlé Crenshaw

The term intersectionality was coined by civil rights advocate and critical race theorist, Kimberlé Crenshaw and is rooted in the Black feminist movement. It explains how Black women face discrimination based on racism and sexism, however, within anti-discrimination law, race and gender are treated as mutually exclusive categories, therefore ignoring and erasing the experiences of Black women.



An intersectional approach recognises that women are not a homogenous group and do not experience inequality in the same way. Different groups of women experience multiple, intersecting inequalities and discriminations that overlap and combine to create different levels of inequality.

# Our path to becoming an anti-racist organisation

To establish an accurate baseline for our anti-racism commitment and to build our action plan, we undertook three main activities. Our process involved:

## 1. An audit of policies, procedures, and practices.

This included engagement with the Close the Gap team and board of trustees to examine and build our understanding of anti-racism, privilege, and the intersection of race with gender. This exercise was essential for taking a critical look inwards and defining what becoming an anti-racist organisation means to us in practice.



## 2. Collaborative insight.

Crucially this process involved engagement with an external group of racially minoritised women. Their contributions provided essential context and insight, driving clarity on power dynamics and the necessary organisational culture shift required to make meaningful change.



## 3. Action planning.

Based on the findings of the audit and lived experience engagement, we held an action planning workshop with the staff team to identify the key learnings and to shape what an anti-racist Close the Gap looks like in its role as a charity, employer, and service provider. Our board provided critical oversight and input into our priorities for the plan.



# Our guiding principles

**Close the Gap will align its work and internal practices with four core principles that will embed the commitment to anti-racism:**

**1.** We embed anti-racism in all we do to ensure we promote justice and meet our legal responsibilities.

**2.** We all share responsibility for building a culture of challenge, curiosity, and learning.

**3.** We use our voice to centre and amplify the lived experience of racially minoritised women.

**4.** We will be accountable and measure progress.



# What we are doing

Our plan sets out actions in four key workstreams:

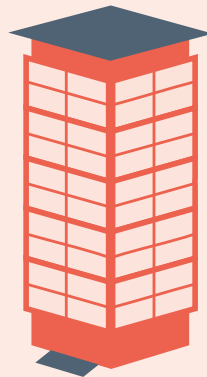
## 1. Positioning ourselves and building engagement

This theme defines how Close the Gap operates externally, leveraging our position as we become an anti-racist organisation. We will proactively engage with racially minoritised women and with organisations working on anti-racism to ensure our policies and programmes are informed and shaped by lived experience and expert knowledge.



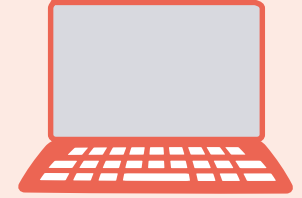
## 2. Transforming systems

This theme focuses on the internal change required to transform our culture and systems toward shared accountability. We will introduce mechanisms for systematic review to ensure all policies, processes, and practices align with our anti-racism principles, including how we recruit, develop policies, and support staff and trustees.



## 3. Developing our anti-racism education and learning

This theme addresses our commitment to continuous learning and sustained institutional growth. We recognise that anti-racism requires ongoing education and self reflection and not just one-off training. We commit to an ongoing learning and development programme for all staff and trustees, with the goal of embedding the knowledge and skills needed to take meaningful, action-orientated steps towards anti-racist practice.



## 4. Championing accountability

This theme focuses on formalising accountability both internally and externally. We will clearly define the role of staff in implementing our anti-racism commitment, and the board's role in governance, oversight, and challenge. We will strengthen the expectation we place on the employers we engage with through our programmes and projects. We will embed anti-racism more explicitly in our policy advocacy and research work, ensuring that the evidence we produce, the positions we take, and the recommendations we make are informed by racially minoritised women's experiences.



# How we will measure success

The three-year plan is designed to be iterative, underpinned by a continuous improvement approach. We know that some actions will take time to see meaningful change and we aim to build learning and sustainability into each piece of work. To monitor our progress, we have developed an evaluation plan which includes a suite of indicators of success and change. The evaluation plan will be regularly reviewed and is designed to capture formal and informal learning. We will publish annual updates on progress and share successes and challenges.


We know this work will require commitment, humility, and persistence. There will be discomfort, learning, challenge and missteps we will need to address along the way. But we are clear that advancing gender equality demands that we confront racism directly and structurally. This action plan set out that we will do that openly, accountably, and in partnership with those whose experiences must shape our work.




Close the Gap works in Scotland on women's labour market participation. We work with policymakers, employers and unions to influence and enable action that will address the causes of women's inequality at work.

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