

The Anti-Racism Observatory for Scotland

Revised structure and model, after a review
by Ministers

September 2023

How to read this report

Important documents and information

To make it easy for readers to find certain important documents and information, we have put in electronic links to them where we first talk about them. These can be found in both the main body of the text and the footnotes.

The words we have used

We have tried to make our language clear and easy to understand. However, we may still have used some words or phrases that readers have not seen before or do not understand. Where we think we have done this we have explained them, either in the text where the words appear or in a footnote on the same page.

The Anti-Racism Observatory for Scotland

The [Anti-Racism Interim Governance Group](#) (AIGG) considered a number of options for what form Scotland’s Anti-Racism Observatory (AROS) should take. These included setting it up as a Scottish charitable organisation¹ or placing it in a university, voluntary organisation or public institution.

However, one of the AROS’s roles will be to hold these kinds of institutions to account². For that reason, we felt it was important to keep it physically separate from them. And so, as we said in our [Initial Structure & Model, May 2023](#) paper, we proposed that the AROS be set up, at least to start with, as a company limited by guarantee³.

After reviewing this decision with Scottish Ministers, it was instead agreed that the best way forward would be for an existing organisation to host the new body. Although this was not the model we had suggested, there are several reasons why we believe this is a sensible way forward. The host organisation will be chosen through a formal procurement process⁴. And whoever is successful will then host the new body for no longer than two years. That will give us time to work with communities⁵ to co-design⁶ the AROS for the long term. It will also allow us to build relationships with communities and other organisations who may become future hosts or partners.

With the AIGG no longer active, a small “AROS design” team will work with the Scottish Government to appoint the host organisation. The team has no powers as such and will be in place for a limited time only. Its members have a similar profile to the AIGG’s—in terms of lived and learnt experience and expertise—as well as expertise in employment and organisational development.

¹ A legal form unique to Scottish charities that can enter into contracts, employ staff, incur debts, own property, sue and be sued.

² Hold to account (accountability) here means to make sure that organisations do what they say they will do on anti-racism.

³ A company that does not have shares or stakeholders but is owned by guarantors who agree to pay a set amount of money towards its debts.

⁴ The way public institutions such as the government buy work, goods or services from companies.

⁵ Please see [“A final note on our wording”](#) at the end of this document.

⁶ Come together as equal partners to design something (similarly, co-produce and co-create).

Structure

Advisory Board

The AROS will advertise publicly for members of its advisory board and recruit them through a full and open process. We will look for a range of expertise. We are particularly keen to hear from people with experience in the creative industry, finance, governance, research and academia, and the legal sector. We will also keep two spaces for community or grassroots⁷ applicants and a further two for young people. On that note, we will follow best practice when it comes to defining “young”, as all AROS members must be aged 16 or over.

We expect that a lot of the work of the advisory board in its first two years will be co-designing and setting up the AROS.

The advisory board will meet every two months, and at other times where needed. At the very least, half of its members +1 must be at every meeting (this is what is known as a quorum).

Staff

During the AROS’s first year, we will recruit staff to work in the following areas:

- Chief Executive Office (Co-CEOs)
- Community outreach and participation
- Policy
- Data and accountability
- Communications
- Repository platform development (technical role)
- Administration
- Apprenticeship roles

Partners Group: Public institutions

We will ask the following public institutions to put forward a senior member of their staff for this group:

- Scottish Government
- Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)
- Scottish Human Rights Commission (SHRC)
- Public Health Scotland
- Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)
- Presiding officer/Executive member of Parliament staff
- Others, as identified

The group’s purpose will be to help public institutions become anti-racist⁸. Its members will also work with us to develop ways of holding public institutions to account for their progress on becoming anti-racist.

The group will meet three times a year. It will also take part in an annual accountability exercise to see what progress public institutions are making on anti-racism.

Partners Group: Accountability groups

(In Year 1, the AROS will invite members to this group. In future, we hope partners will be able to join us in a more open process.)

This group will be made up of a range of community organisations and grassroots groups (they do not need to be formally recognised groups as such). It will also include experts on relevant subjects with lived experience of racial inequity⁹.

The purpose of the group will be to help shape both the AROS’s long-term goals and how it will go about them; hold us to account for reaching those goals; and, serve as another link between the AROS and communities.

The group will meet at least four times a year. Along with AROS staff, it will co-produce the annual accountability exercise.

⁷ Local people who come together to bring about social or political change.

⁸ When resources and power are shared fairly across all racial groups.

⁹ Unfair, unjust, avoidable or resolvable (i.e. can be removed) differences between people grouped by “race”.

More details about the AROS's advisory board

How we will help young people to join us

The advisory board will be made up of individuals only. That means no members of Intercultural Youth Scotland (IYS) may join it. However, we are pleased that IYS has agreed to work with us to find the best way of recruiting and supporting young people. We are keen that young people do not feel excluded or that they are there just for the sake of appearances.

How the advisory board will work

We expect the co-CEOs to develop the advisory board's remit once they are in place, with advice from the Scottish Government and legal experts. For that reason, all we can say at this stage is that in its first year the board will have 13 members. All 13 will have voting rights on how the AROS is run as well as on legal and financial matters. All minutes of its meetings will be made public. We also expect that,

- No person shall be able to be chair of the board for more than three years in a row.
- In the future, new members will be voted onto the board. These votes will take place at an annual general meeting (AGM).
- To sign off the AROS annual accounts, two-thirds of its board members must be there to do so at its AGM.

How we will pay members

We do not believe it is right to build off the unpaid labour of people of colour when tackling systemic racism¹⁰. However, we need to be aware of how the public will see things. Therefore, we suggest a day rate of £200, for no more than two days of work per month, for all members. That puts the highest possible payment at £4,800 per year, for attending meetings, pre-meeting work, doing meeting minutes, and so on. We will review this annually to make sure it stays in line with the cost of living.

If any member takes on further work on behalf of the AROS (where all members agree and there are no conflicts of interest), we will pay them at the going rate.

¹⁰ Racism that is built into our systems and our society.

Activities and influencing in the AROS

In all our communications we will make it clear that co-designing the AROS is something we must do iteratively—that is, by building, testing and refining everything as we go. Our goal is to become a best-practice leader in participating, co-producing and sharing power with adversely racialised¹¹ communities. But this will take time. Nor can we do it without the help of communities. Therefore, we cannot expect to have everything up and running from day one.

With this in mind, below we have set out the AROS's programme of activities for its first two years. We will review this after 18 months.

Building capacity

Of communities

- To give communities the skills and power to hold public institutions to account for anti-racism, we will co-produce and run a capacity-building¹² programme. We will do this with community groups and individuals with the right knowledge and expertise.
 - Possible subjects might be how policy is made, how political power works in Scotland, “race” and racism, and accountability.

As part of this, we will also,

- Build on what community members told us in the community survey about the skills they want to develop.
- Learn from national and international best practice in capacity-building—for example, models in the cultural sector, Wales's anti-racism action plan and community reports by the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development).
- Consider other creative ways of building capacity, such as inviting AROS staff to take up placements¹³ in the Scottish Government.

Of public institutions

- We will co-produce and run a programme of capacity-building for decision-makers and policy-makers in public institutions.
 - This will focus on anti-racism in policy-making, co-production and lived experience.
- We will also consider other creative methods of building capacity. These could include offering placements in the AROS to public institution staff.

¹¹ Please see [“A final note on our wording”](#) at the end of this document.

¹² Building skills and ability.

¹³ Temporary jobs giving people work experience.

Hosting a free and interactive digital library

Lived experience of communities

- We will make it clear to communities that it is worthwhile sharing their experiences¹⁴. We will do this by,
 - Giving them safe spaces and the skills to share those experiences.
 - Creating a digital library where their knowledge and experience can be stored and shared more widely.
- We will, in turn, share what we learn from communities and community researchers with our Public Institutions group. In that way, we will bring communities' experiences and concerns into the national spotlight.
- We will value communities' lived experience as much as we do research and data on policy.

Policy, research and strategy

- The digital library will also hold all the information, research and data we have on past and present anti-racism strategies, policies and commitments.
 - We will start by putting Scottish Government documents into the digital library.
 - As soon as we can, we will add documents from Scotland's other public institutions to it.
- Everyone—communities, other members of the public and organisations—will be able to see and use this information.

Holding others, and ourselves, to account

- We will continue the work of the Anti-Racism Interim Governance Group to develop the best way of holding the Scottish Government to account on its Immediate Priorities Plan (on "race equality").
 - This will expand over time to take in other anti-racism work, by the Scottish Government and other public institutions.
- Together with community partners in our Accountability Groups, we will co-produce an annual accountability exercise. This will assess what progress public institutions are making on anti-racism.

¹⁴ This is not about taking on individual cases of racism; it is about building a library of experience and evidence.

- We will improve the quality of “race” and ethnicity data so that we can assess the impact public institutions are having more accurately.
 - Communities will also hold the AROS to account. This will involve reflecting on whether our work is helpful and effective. It will also include looking at what anti-racism work is being done elsewhere that we can learn from.

All this will centre on putting power in the hands of communities.

Changing how we think and talk about “race”

- In all our work, we will seek to change the way people think and talk about racism and adversely racialised communities. That includes challenging people’s ideas about who should have the power to set policy and make decisions that affect adversely racialised people’s lives. We will do this by,
 - Joining up with the work that local, national and international community partners, young people, creatives and academics of colour are doing on this.
 - Linking in with other digital platforms and creative outlets, and using all types of media and social media to spread the word—again, locally, nationally and internationally.

Setting out a programme of research

- To improve our understanding of racism and anti-racism we will fund, or apply for funding for, more MScs and PhDs:
 - Subjects we are keen to explore in this way include community participation in policy-making; communication, language and how we talk about “race”; data and ethics.
 - We would particularly encourage members of adversely racialised communities to take up these degree places.
- We will research ways of collecting, analysing and reporting on “race” and ethnicity data that do not reinforce the false ideas of “race science”¹⁵ and other systems of racism.
 - We will then look at how we build the capacity of researchers and communities to use these safe and ethical¹⁶ ways of doing research.

¹⁵ The false belief that people can be divided up into “races” and that certain races are superior or inferior to others.

¹⁶ Truthful, fair and honest.

Being an advocate by speaking up for communities

- We will call for the power to make decisions, review policy and hold public institutions to account to be shared with communities.
- We will co-design ways for public institutions to share that power with communities; and we will expect public institutions to use them.
- We will champion anti-racism learning in Scotland's public institutions.
- We will recommend that the AROS serve as the secretariat¹⁷ for the Scottish Government's working group looking at its Immediate Priorities Plan (IPP) and Race Equality Framework (REF).

¹⁷ Provide administrative (admin) and clerical support.

A final note on our wording

There are several words that we use a lot and which we would like to explain here:

- “Race”: It is widely understood that “race” is not a biological fact but a political idea that we, as a society, have invented¹⁸. When differences between groups are understood in terms of differences in appearance (e.g. skin colour) or other biological features, they are said to be racialised¹⁹. All groups in society can be said to be racialised in some way. But certain groups, such as communities of colour, are racialised with the aim of making them out to be somehow less worthy or important. For this reason, we refer to these groups or communities in this report as being adversely racialised or racially minoritised.
- Community: We recognise that this word is too broad to do justice to the diversity of Scotland’s people. We use it here as a shorthand way of talking about communities of colour, as well as those who face racism generally, living in Scotland.

¹⁸ National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2023) Using population descriptors in genetics and genomics research: A new framework for an evolving field. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/26902>

¹⁹ 1. Miles, R. & Brown, M., 2003. Racism. Second ed. London: Routledge; 2. St Louis, Brett. 2005. Racialization in the "zone of ambiguity". In: Karim and S. John, eds. Racialization: Studies in Theory and Practice. Oxford University Press, pp. 29–50; 3. Banton, M. (2005) Historical and contemporary modes of racialization. In K. Murji, & J. Solomos (Eds.), Racialization: Studies in Theory and Practice (pp. 51–68). Oxford University Press; 4. Erel, U., Murji, K. & Nahaboo, Z. (2016) Understanding the contemporary race-migration nexus. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 39(8), pp. 1339–1360.