

# The Anti-Racism Observatory

Scotland is going to have a new structure - the Observatory - to hold the Scottish Government and other public sector bodies to account for their commitment to anti-racism. The Observatory will host local, national, and international expertise about how racism functions. It will help the Scottish Government deliver sustainable anti-racism policies and practices. To make sure anti-racism actions in Scotland are accountable to people adversely affected by racism, we would like to hear from you.



## Why are we doing this now?

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed racial inequity on a global scale. The

Scottish Government has increased its commitment to addressing racial inequalities, especially in health. By 2030, the Scottish Government has committed to building a fair, inclusive Scotland “where everyone can feel at home”<sup>1</sup>. We need to make use of this momentum, and the Observatory is a key step to monitor and realise this commitment.

## What has happened before and why hasn't it worked?

There have been 39 policies over 20 years related to race equality in Scotland, with 817 commitments and actions <sup>2</sup>. Despite this, there has been little progress.

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1 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-action-plan/>

2 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/crer-anti-racist-policy-making-scotland-review-summary/>

As shown by this diagram, recent work by the Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights (CRER) has shown that there is a vicious cycle which stops progress.

1. Firstly, when a new “race equality” initiative is announced, it comes with a lot of hype, but little attention is paid to what has come before.
2. Communities are not told what has been done with their input and are often not involved in making decisions.
3. So, when the new policies are launched, they fail because irrelevant actions are taken.



There is no accountability for this failure because there is a lack of continuity in the people delivering these policies, and the political priorities keep changing.

# How will the Observatory be different?

To create genuine, long-term change for communities affected by racism, the Observatory will:

1. **Practice anti-racism:** We must actively disrupt processes through which racism is embedded and reinforced in our systems and institutions (e.g. organisations, public services including schools and the NHS, and the Scottish government).
2. **Be led by communities:** Policies created in the name of communities affected by racism should be led by them.
3. **Promote accountability to communities:** Government should keep track of what has happened already, monitor the implementation of anti-racism policies, and inform communities affected by racism about the progress made.
4. **Protect racialised communities:** Safe spaces should be created for communities affected by racism to shape anti-racism policies.



## What will the Observatory do?

The following functions have been proposed for the Observatory. However, this is a work in progress, and we would like to hear from you about this. This process involves co-design, which is designing the Observatory with people, so the Observatory's functions could be different to what is proposed here:

1. **MAPPING AND SIGNPOSTING** previous and ongoing work on racism and anti-racism so that we can **keep track**. This publicly available interactive map will include work being done on health, as well as economic, historical, cultural, and political factors affecting communities.

2. **ANALYSING** data on racism and anti-racism from the public and private sector.
  - The Observatory will develop good practice for using data to promote anti-racism.
3. **HOLDING THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABLE FOR ANTI-RACISM IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR**, e.g.:
  - Institutions should develop measures to monitor their delivery of anti-racism actions.
  - Institutions should assess gaps in data on racism, the consequences of these gaps and how they may be overcome.
4. **PROMOTING COLLABORATION** between institutions and people adversely affected by racism.
5. **CHAMPIONING CO-DESIGN** of anti-racism policies and practices with people adversely affected by racism.

We would love to hear from you about your thoughts on the Observatory, and how it can work best to deliver change-making policy and practice in Scotland. Please scan the QR code with your phone to complete a 2-minute survey.



For more information, you can email us at:  
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