



# STRATEGY TO ADDRESS RACISM AGAINST PEOPLE OF COLOUR

September 2020

## ITEM

Strategy to address racism against people of colour

## ACTION

Note report, consider and approve any recommendations

### 1. Background

In response to the Black Lives Matter protests that continue across the globe, Trustees asked the Trust to prepare a paper for their consideration in relation to racism against people of colour. The following examines how the Scottish Civic Trust (SCT) might change and develop its work practices and projects in response to the continued and growing demand for racial equity. It sets out a proposed anti-colour-based-racism strategy for the organisation and examines SCT's role from three key perspectives:

1. As an employer, how can we address racism against people of colour in our work practices and projects?
2. As the owner of the Tobacco Merchant's House, how can we reinterpret our building's history equitably?
3. As a national heritage charity giving advice to over 127 small trusts and charities across the country, how can we set an example for addressing racism against people of colour and what advice can we give to others trying to do so?

### 2. Context: defining terms

In order for SCT to tackle racism, racism must be understood and key terms must be defined.

"Anti-racism" mostly simply means the practice of opposing racism. Anti-racism has recently replaced "Diversity and Inclusion" as the best practice to combat racial inequity in the cultural sector. This change has resulted from the need to take up a more direct approach to racial equity that focuses on taking action.

"Racism" refers to variety of practices, beliefs, social relations and phenomena that work to reproduce a racial hierarchy and social structure that yield power and privilege for some, and

discrimination and oppression for others. Racism is more than being prejudiced against people of a certain race or races - it exists when prejudice is enacted across a power imbalance.

Racism is pervasive in society and takes several different forms. Racism is typically thought of as overt beliefs of white majority ethnic supremacy, known as “ideological racism”. However, racism is embedded into society and implicates people beyond those who actively hold racist beliefs. Racism shapes our society through its institutional and representational forms.

“Institutional racism” refers to how ideas of white majority ethnic superiority are embedded into society at a systems level. It describes how white majority ethnic people in positions of power have written racial inequity into the policies and laws that govern society’s institutions and organisations. For example, hiring policies that require a higher education degree favour white majority ethnic candidates, who are overrepresented in higher education. Institutional racism preserves and perpetuates racial gaps in wealth, education and social status.

“Representational racism” refers to depictions of racial stereotypes. Representational racism has resulted from historically white majority ethnic creators of knowledge and media representing other races as criminals or minor characters, or omitting other races from representation. These racist stereotypes reinforce the normalcy of institutional racism, often making racism invisible to white majority ethnic people and enabling racism’s continuance.

For the purposes of this particular strategy, in the context of responding to Black Lives Matter, we are focussed on racism against people of colour. Throughout this paper, racial discrimination against people of colour is called colour-based racism.

### **3. Context: Scottish heritage and racism against people of colour**

SCT has already expressed its commitment to supporting people of colour to become better represented in heritage. In SCT’s 2019-2024 Strategic Plan, one of SCT’s five listed priorities is leading thinking and action in improving the diversity of Scotland’s heritage. To this end, SCT employs a Diverse Heritage Officer, but there is a greater opportunity for the incorporation of anti-colour-based-racism work in our other work strands. This strategy will outline how anti-colour-based-racism can be embedded throughout the organisation so that SCT can more completely fulfill its objective to improve the diversity of Scotland’s heritage.

Racism has also increasingly been an issue of top priority for the national agenda. The recent Equality Act of 2010 brought together pieces of equality legislation into a single Act that identifies groups of people protected against discrimination, harassment or victimisation. Of these protected groups are people of colour.

As an employer, SCT can directly combat institutional racism against people of colour. Institutional racism against people of colour causes disproportionate unemployment and job stratification. People of colour are unemployed at a higher rate than those from white ethnic groups. Whereas approximately 3.6% of people from white ethnic groups were unemployed before the onset of COVID-19, 5% of people from mixed racial or multiple ethnic groups, 6% of people from Asian ethnic groups and 9% of people from Black/African Caribbean ethnic groups were unemployed before the onset of COVID-19.

People of colour also are more likely to be employed in lower grade jobs, where there is often less access to training opportunities and connections that may help them progress into promoted posts. The clustering of people of colour in lower grade jobs is not a reflection of educational attainment - whereas non-white ethnic minority pupils are overall outperforming white pupils, people of colour remain underrepresented in higher education and senior roles of organisations.

As the owner of the Tobacco Merchant's House, SCT can directly impact representational racism against people of colour. The representational colour-based racism of the heritage sector has determined whose histories are remembered and celebrated. This colour-based racism has been brought to light in the recent movements to remove public statues of slave owners and rename streets named after slave owners. Sites across Scotland have been involved in this debate - calls have been made for the removal of the Lord Roberts statue in Glasgow's Kelvingrove Park, the Henry Dundas statue in Edinburgh, the Duke of Sutherland monument in Golspie and more. SCT's Tobacco Merchant's House, named after a man with ties to the slave trade, is implicated in these debates about who deserves to be remembered, and how.

As a national heritage organisation, SCT can work to mitigate representational racism and institutional racism against people of colour by platforming and publicising more histories of people of colour by people of colour. Research done by SCT's Diverse Heritage Officer on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic participation in heritage shows that people of colour note there is "generally a lack of representation in the mainstream [Scottish heritage]", which has in turn led to the underrepresentation of people of colour in heritage staff and audiences. By publicising more histories of people of colour and co-creating programmes with people of colour, SCT can engage more people of colour with heritage, thereby helping to redress the underrepresentation of people of colour in heritage audiences and staffing.

In its varying roles as an employer, owner of Tobacco Merchant's House and national heritage organisation, SCT can work to dismantle racism against people of colour in our own organisation and change public discourses about race in Scottish heritage.

#### **4. Policy**

The following are recommended policies for the Board to consider:

##### **Redress**

**On an annual basis, review, analyse and fund changes to our own organisational practices such that they redress the role of colour-based racial bias in hiring, colour-based racial discrimination in the workplace and underrepresentation of people of colour in our projects. This will take the form of a report to the Board, which will update on ongoing initiatives and suggest new ideas.**

***Rationale:** Initiatives responding to racial discrimination are receiving increasing support at national and UK level, leading to a rapidly developing field of best practices for organisations to combat colour-based racism. However, activists have also voiced concern that attention to anti-racism will decrease once protests cease. By committing to an annual review of practices and projects, SCT will ensure it remains abreast of current developments and keeps anti-colour-based-racism central to our mission.*

##### **Reinterpret**

**Consider our building's history in light of best practice guidance on decolonising historical narratives, and create a plan to reinterpret the Tobacco Merchant's House.**

***Rationale:** The Tobacco Merchant's House's interpretation is minimal and does not fully address the building's ties to slavery. In light of recent calls to be more transparent about Glasgow's past, we should consider reinterpreting our building's ties to the slave trade.*

##### **Support**

**Seek out and publicise research, advice and case studies relating to heritage and colour-based racism.**

***Rationale:** One of SCT's priorities is to empower communities to take action. By using our network to source the best and most current advice on anti-colour-based-racist action, we can support local change.*

## **5. Practice**

The following outlines how SCT can put the above policies into practice.

### **5.1 Redress**

#### *Recruitment*

SCT already has an Equal Opportunities Policy in place that states our commitment to providing equality of opportunity to all staff and volunteers.

In order to further diversify the employment pipeline for the heritage sector, Scottish Civic Trust will investigate the possibility of hosting a placement from the Next Step Initiative's Sustainable Development Education Programme, which seeks to create more opportunities for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) people to access and engage with the Scottish heritage sector. This placement will occur within the next two years after the approval of this paper. We will also partner with Thistles & Dandelions, an organisation that encourages BAME women to volunteer in heritage, by sending all of our volunteering opportunities to them.

SCT already sits on the Our Place in Time Working Group for Heritage Volunteering, which oversees the Make Your Mark campaign. The Make Your Mark campaign aims to increase the number and diversity of volunteers in Scottish heritage by promoting volunteering opportunities to diverse audiences and encouraging heritage organisations to make their volunteering practices more inclusive. We will continue to be involved in the campaign and advertise our volunteering opportunities through Make Your Mark.

We will change our recruitment practices to account for the systematic exclusion of people of colour from higher education and positions by crafting our job listings to be skills-based and experience-based. Education qualifications will not be emphasised.

We will advertise all new paid and volunteer posts on relevant diversity-specific job boards, job fairs, and circulate all new paid and volunteer posts through our network of diverse community organisations and equalities networks.

We will review resumes with names, genders and dates removed, as this has been shown to reduce the impact of bias on hiring.

We will avoid referral hiring, or the practice of hiring candidates known through the Civic Trust's existing heritage networks. Referral hiring maintains hierarchies by minimising the opportunity for people of colour, underrepresented in the heritage sector, to begin work in the heritage sector.

#### *Workplace*

SCT employees will undertake equalities training, such as that offered by the Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector. This training will be completed within a year of this policy's approval. Training will be refreshed every three years.

SCT will maintain a zero tolerance for racism in the workplace. Should an issue arise, SCT has HR protocols in place to support grievances. A complaint will be raised with our designated HR person, who will ensure that the incident will be explained in writing. The Director will then review the complaint, conduct a reasonable investigation if necessary and then deliver a decision.

*Project: Doors Open Days*

Doors Open Days has considerable potential to influence the integration of marginalised histories into heritage nationwide. The Doors Open Days coordinator will continue to work with the Diverse Heritage Officer to reach out to people of colour about co-creating events for Doors Open Days, or supporting group visits to Doors Open Days.

Doors Open Days 2021 will feature an online lecture series about histories and cultures of people of colour in Scotland.

Doors Open Days' network of participating venues will be encouraged to join the Make Your Mark campaign to connect them with volunteers from marginalised groups and receive guidance on inclusive volunteering.

The Doors Open Days coordinator and Diverse Heritage Officer will investigate the possibility of year-round cooperation between venues, regional coordinators and BPOC (Black and People of Colour) community groups to discern the capacity for offering venues as spaces for community group events.

*Project: My Place Mentoring*

The My Place Mentoring Officer will continue to regularly liaise with the Diverse Heritage Officer to support relevant BPOC community groups with heritage projects.

The My Place Mentoring Officer will research BPOC community groups and approach them directly about offering Mentoring support.

The My Place Mentoring Officer will circulate information about Mentoring through organisations that work with BPOC, including those already in contact with the Diverse Heritage Officer.

*Project: Diverse Heritage*

SCT's 2020 annual conference will focus on race and Scottish heritage. Its content and format will be co-created with organisations and people who work on the issue of racism within Scottish heritage.

Our Diverse Heritage Officer will develop a programme of informal, taster events where community group members can learn about the work of SCT, gain an introduction to heritage and the built environment in Scotland/locally and receive information on how to get involved. These events can be held at the Tobacco Merchant's House or venues more convenient or comfortable for community groups. These events will be similar to the successful "Funder's Chats" events that the Diverse Heritage Officer already hosts at the West of Scotland Regional Equality Council.

SCT will investigate the possibility of developing outputs from Diverse Heritage community projects into educational materials or toolkits which can be used in schools and adult learning across Scotland.

## **5.2 Reinterpret**

Current site interpretation at the Tobacco Merchant's House only references the original owner, after whom the site is named, and briefly explains the recent renovation. SCT will commission research into the history of the Tobacco Merchant's House, according to best practices in decolonising history and with a focus on Black experiences and perspectives. The contract for researching will specify that we particularly encourage applications from Black researchers.

The new research about the history of the Tobacco Merchant's House will inform the content and design of a new educational resource for visitors to our building. This resource can contribute to school and adult-learning on empire, slavery, history and heritage in Scotland.

The new research about the history of the Tobacco Merchant's House will inform the content and design of a new relief sculpture in the vestibule. The contract for creating the artwork will specify that we particularly encourage applications from Black artists.

We will install a "talkback board" in the vestibule of the Tobacco Merchant's House, opposite the new relief sculpture. "Talkback boards" are considered best practice in inclusive museum theory. They are spaces that ask visitors questions about the interpretation that has been provided and aim to create discursive spaces that encourage multiple points of view. The talkback board's initial question will ask visitors about their opinions on renaming buildings and streets named after people with connections to the slave trade and colour-based racism. The flexibility of the talkback board will allow us to update the question according to contemporary events.

The SCT Board will be consulted for further approval when proposals for the above resource and plaque are developed further. We aim to complete the reinterpretation of Tobacco Merchant's House within three years from the approval of this policy.

## **5.3 Support**

SCT already works with a number of organisations addressing racial inequity in Scotland, including the West of Scotland Regional Equality Council, Next Step Initiative, Pachedu, Scottish Refugee Council and Empower Women for Change. We will continue to work with them to co-create projects and events for people of colour. We will also create an organisation contact database for SCT groups and Doors Open Days venues to use should they wish to co-create programmes with BPOC organisations. This will be released within six months of the approval of this policy.

In order to raise awareness about colour-based racism and its ties to Scottish heritage, the Diverse Heritage Officer will create an anti-racism reading list to be circulated to all staff and posted publicly on our website. This will be released within three months of the approval of this policy.

The Diverse Heritage Officer and Communications Officer will collaborate on an inclusive language guide for communications. This will ensure that SCT avoids using stereotypical or harmful phrases that could alienate and oppress people of colour. We will make this inclusive language guide available on our website within the next two years.

SCT will invest in promotional and programme materials in languages other than English and Gaelic, and provide interpreters at events when required.

This strategy to address racism against people of colour will be publicly accessible on SCT's website as a guide for other heritage organisations and to demonstrate our commitment to existing and future partners. It will be available for adaptation by any organisation that should wish to implement a similar policy. The strategy will be publicly released within a month of its approval.

SCT's local groups will have the option to book early bird tickets to the 2020 annual conference, which will take place in December 2020 and be focussed on race and Scottish heritage.

SCT local groups will be encouraged to join the Make Your Mark campaign to connect them with volunteers from marginalised groups and receive guidance on inclusive volunteering.

We will publicly release an update of our anti-colour-based-racism work at six month intervals. This information can be pulled from our quarterly board reporting. We will incorporate this six monthly review into our social media cycle to help sustain a commitment to anti-colour-based-racism within the Scottish heritage sector.

SCT will create a dedicated page on SCT's website for anti-colour-based-racism resources. This will include the full text of this strategy, the anti-colour-based-racism reading list, recordings from the conference about race and Scottish heritage, the inclusive language guide, recordings from the Doors Open Days 2021 BPOC lecture series.

SCT will investigate establishing a forum or network in the Scottish heritage sector to discuss anti-colour-based-racism; support awareness raising and knowledge building; provide a place of support for staff, board and volunteers from BPOC communities; and provide helpful guidance for SCT's tri-annual anti-racism strategy update. We will aim to have this forum operational within 3 years.

## **6. Conclusions**

Addressing racism against people of colour is an area of continued and pressing importance for Scottish heritage. Not only is racial equity a national priority, but the ongoing Black Lives Matter movement calls for institutional and representational changes in both society at large and in Scottish heritage more specifically. By following the policies and practices laid out above, it is hoped that we can play an appropriate role in empowering Scotland's diverse communities and redressing racism against people of colour in Scottish heritage.

**ACTION: THE BOARD IS ASKED TO APPROVE THE POLICIES AND PRACTICES OUTLINED IN THIS PAPER.**

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*The action points outlined in this document were informed by consultations with the West of Scotland Regional Equality Council, Roots Scotland, Thistles and Dandelions, Empower Women for Change, Next Step Initiative, Inspiring Families Development Network Scotland, Glasgow Night Shelter for Destitute Asylum Seekers, Colourful Heritage and the Our Shared Heritage project at Glasgow Museums.*

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