

# SASW Anti-Racism Action Plan

## Introduction

SASW's Anti-Racism Action Plan is part of our overall commitment to improving Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) for our members. It sets out actions which will help us fulfil our commitment to promote anti-racism in social work. We recognise the deeply harmful impact of racism, as highlighted in our report ['Racism in Scottish Social Work: a 2021 snapshot'](#). We strive to work towards ending racism, discrimination and oppression and promoting human rights for social workers at every stage of their careers and for people who use social work services. This plan will help us challenge both our own and others' perceptions, drawing on the accounts of those who have experienced racism.

### Key Findings from the Report:

- Racism exists within social work in Scotland.
- Racism is experienced in both employment and educational settings, from colleagues, managers and people who use services.
- The impact of racism on BAME social workers is significant.
- When racism is reported it is rarely dealt with in a satisfactory way.
- Racism experienced within social work is harmful both to individuals and to the profession.

SASW is part of BASW UK which has a UK wide EDI project. We will work together with UK colleagues as the overall organisation strives to become more inclusive, equal, and diverse.

This plan is co-produced with members of SASW's Anti-Racism Advisory Group (ARAG) and BASW UK EDI Lead Officers. It is a fluid document and will be reviewed and amended accordingly between now and October 2023.

This plan adopts the same terminology as our 2021 report and should be read in conjunction with it. It is underpinned by the following documents:

- [BASW UK summary position on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion](#)
- [BASW UK Statement on Anti-Racism](#)
- [BASW Code of Ethics for Social Work](#)
- [Racism in Scottish Social Work: a 2021 snapshot](#)

SASW recognises that race often intersects with other protected characteristics and factors of oppression and that while there may be common characteristics, each person's experience of racism is personal to them. To understand racism and its impact it is vital that we listen to the voices of those who have experienced it, at all levels, and that we advocate, empower, and enable both those with experience of racism and allies to take action to address it.

## Progress so far

Since the report launch in July 2021, we have taken several actions, which include:

- Presentation of the findings of the report to social work leaders: Chief Social Work Officers group; the Scottish Government's Collective Leadership Subgroup on Children's Services Workforce; and to the senior management group of one local authority.
- Two social workers from BAME backgrounds have been co-opted to our National Standing Committee (NSC).
- Establishment of an Anti-Racism Advisory Group (ARAG) made up of social workers and academics from across Scotland whose input helps guide and shape our work.
- Presentation of report findings at an event hosted by the Higher Education Institute network event 'Anti-racist social work in Scotland: a space for discussion'.
- Delivery of a workshop on anti-racist social work leadership, in partnership with members of the ARAG, at the Social Work Scotland Conference in October, and representation from the ARAG on the conference panel.
- Co-production of 'Respect and Recognition: the contributions of minoritised social workers' event with Edinburgh University as part of Black History Month 2021.

Much remains to be done. Our proposed actions are divided into four priority areas, which tie into the wider objectives of BASW UK: Social Work Practice and Education, Leadership, SASW Staff and NSC, and Stakeholder Influencing and Campaigning. Under each heading we identify aims and actions necessary to meet them

## Priority Area 1: Social Work Practice and Education

**Aim: zero tolerance of racism. Should racism be experienced, social workers and students can raise experiences of racism with confidence they will be supported, and appropriate action taken. Every organisation needs to have their own anti-racism strategy, which speaks to their commitment to end racism in the profession.**

### What SASW will do:

- 1.1 Together with members of our Anti-Racism Advisory Group (ARAG) to pursue the development of an anti-racism training offer to workplaces and educational institutions. This includes exploration of potential funding to support the offer.
- 1.2 Reach out to universities, practice educators and the SSSC to highlight the experiences and needs of students from minoritised backgrounds, who frequently report differential or unfair treatment in academia and practice learning settings.
- 1.3 Work together with BASW's Advice & Representation Service and the Social Work Professional Support Service (SWPSS) to ensure social workers experiencing racism can access the proper support and guidance.
- 1.4 Encourage and support members, from BAME backgrounds and allies, to write or speak up about experiences or viewpoints to raise awareness.
- 1.5 Conduct a second anti-racism survey and roundtable, as follow-up to those held in 2020/21, seeking members views on actions so far, impact, and next steps.

## Priority Area 2: Leadership

**Aim: increased diversity amongst the social work workforce, with increased representation of people from BAME backgrounds in leadership roles.**

### What SASW will do:

- 2.1 Provide input to leadership groups on the findings of our report to encourage reflection and discussion on how to break down barriers to promotion for social workers from BAME backgrounds.
- 2.2 Work in partnership with Social Work Scotland to address the lack of diversity amongst social work leaders and raise awareness of racism in the profession. Plans include a roundtable bringing leaders together to seek commitment to anti-racist actions.

- 2.3 Support the efforts of SSSC to improve the data they collect on equality and diversity of the workforce.

### **Priority Area 3: SASW Staff and National Standing Committee (NSC)**

**Aim: embed an Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) approach, visible across all the work SASW does, which promotes diversity amongst the staff group and National Standing Committee (NSC)**

#### **What SASW will do:**

- 3.1 Actively seek applications from diverse groups to the NSC and monitor representation annually.
- 3.2 Position EDI as a standing consideration in each of our activities.
- 3.3 Communicate with members - share information and opportunities to support equality, diversity, and inclusion with members through our ebulletin and the EDI hub on our website.
- 3.4 Promote and support SASW representation on BASW UK's EDI Advisory Group, which reports to BASW Council.
- 3.5 Include specific reference to our anti-racism agenda in SASW's Business Plan and Quarterly reviews.

### **Priority Area 4: Stakeholder Influencing and Campaigning**

**Aim: work collaboratively with stakeholders across the sector to raise awareness and promote anti-racism**

#### **What SASW will do:**

- 4.1 Advocate for anti-racism to remain firmly on all agendas where social work policy and practice are being discussed.
- 4.2 Build relationships and explore opportunities to partner with others to raise consciousness of racism across the sector and to consider developing joint programmes of work where we have common aims.