

Summary: Racial Justice Strategic Scoping Report for Consortium LGBT+

The Racial Justice Strategic Scoping Report has been developed for Consortium LGBT+ through consultations with relevant stakeholders to scope out the current picture of racial justice work* in the LGBT+ sector, understand the key areas of sector-wide need, and identify key actions that need to be implemented across a range of stakeholders to create positive systems change.

This report has been informed by community consultation through semi-structured interviews with a diverse range of seven LGBT+ Consortium member organisations who actively work on racial justice, as well as consultation with two Consortium staff members and two trustees.

The findings from the interviews have been analysed thematically to draw out three thematic areas for discussion in the report:

- Day-to-day challenges
- Partnerships and collaborations
- Structural challenges

Then, a series of recommendations have been developed from the findings and discussions with Consortium's engagement team to inform the next steps of racial justice work for Consortium and the LGBT+ sector.

These recommendations are pitched at four levels:

- Recommendations for the Racial Justice Engagement role
- Recommendations for Consortium
- Recommendations for the LGBT+ sector
- Recommendations for future work

Below is a brief summary of key findings:

Day-to-day challenges

- Limits to **organisational capacity** was cited as the main challenge to racial justice organisations.
- Many organisations interviewed have limited experience **fundraising** with mainstream funders. Apart from limited organisational capacity, other barriers include feeling like mainstream funding is 'not worth it', or that the funder will not understand the needs or see the potential of funding for a specific, intersectional cause.
- There can be a **lack of good quality data on the needs of the community** that the racial justice organisations serve - this also impacts organisations' abilities to fundraise from mainstream grantmakers, who often require this information.
- For interviewees, many who are leading their organisation, **burnout** is a concern; they often end up shouldering most of the responsibilities and stresses of running their organisation. Many interviewees emphasised the importance of setting boundaries between their role within the organisation and other parts of their life.
- Some interviewees also mentioned that it can be particularly challenging to navigate spaces such as mainstream networking events, meetings with funders, and other professional opportunities or events outside of the LGBT+ sector - mentoring or peer support were suggested as potential solutions, to build confidence and provide insights on how to navigate these spaces.

Partnerships and collaborations

- For smaller and newer organisations, partnering with a **more established or experienced organisation** is a good way to learn relevant skills.
- Generally, interviewees are interested in **exchanging skills and knowledge** of running an organisation with others working on the same thematic issues.
- Interviewees raised the issue of generalising of ‘racial justice work’ - several conveyed that they would be interested in more opportunities to **meet organisations working with the same cultural or racial communities**, to address issues *within* their community
- Some interviewees identified that a **competitive attitude** emerges when working with more mainstream LGBT+ organisations.
- Some interviewees recount **being challenged about the specificity of the communities they work** with when collaborating with mainstream LGBT+ organisations - the language around ‘inclusivity’ is co-opted to suggest that providing services to a specific racial community is exclusionary. This sentiment points to a lack of genuine understanding of *why* racial justice work is needed.
- Many interviewees expressed **willingness to engage more with their local authority and statutory organisations**, but some felt that they lack the expertise to do so.
- While interviewees acknowledge that local authorities and statutory organisations are interested in promoting more equitable outcomes for LGBT+ people of colour, another barrier stems from the fact that they are **uncertain of how critical they can be** once they are given a seat at the table, and what changes can realistically be achieved.

Structural challenges

- As a whole, participants reflected that **racism is widespread in the LGBT+ sector**, and several interviewees expressed the sentiment that, for white people, LGBT+ identity can be used as a shield from having to interrogate their whiteness.
- While there is recognition that more LGBT+ people of colour should have **leadership roles** within voluntary sector organisations, several interviewees also recognised that, due to structural inequalities affecting racialised communities, they are also less likely to have the time and resources to take unpaid trustee roles in organisations. There needs to be more opportunities where LGBT+ people of colour are **actively supported** into these positions.
- Interviewees have lots of anecdotes about being asked to **provide services for free** - this is exploitative and unfair, especially when organisations who are asking are much better resourced.
- When it comes to working with mainstream organisations, interviewees also reflected on the **emotional labour** that they have to perform - while people of colour are often expected to talk about their identity in professional settings, white people are not expected to talk about whiteness. People cannot expect every person of colour to be a ‘voice’ for racial justice.
- While there is a lot of value in **lived experience**, LGBT+ POC’s **expertise as sector professionals** should also be recognised when asked to be a part of a project or consultation.
- LGBT+ racial justice organisations should also **recognise their own value and power** when working with other organisations - their contributions to panels, consultations and projects add **value and credibility**, and this power can be leveraged to advocate for themselves.