

Cllr Johnson Situ
Cabinet Member for Growth, Development
and Planning
Peckham Ward

Cabinet Office
Southwark Council
P.O Box 64529
London SE1P 5LX

johnson.situ@southwark.gov.uk

Tel: 020 7525 0243

Date: 03 July 2020

Southwark Stands Together

We are writing to you on behalf of Southwark Council to ask you to join the council in standing together against racism and injustice, and to work with us to take positive action to ensure equality of opportunity and a fairer future for all.

The killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis has shocked the world and reminded us once again that we cannot and should not tolerate racism in any form or from any person. Southwark is one of the most diverse boroughs in the country and it is our rich diversity, and the way our different communities, different ethnicities and different faiths, all live and work side by side, which makes our borough great.

The disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on our residents who are from BAME communities, alongside recent tragic events in the USA and the anger they have caused, have been a huge wake-up call. As a council we were already working hard to tackle the health inequalities in our borough, to provide opportunities for people on lower incomes to reach their potential and to make sure our workforce is representative of the borough we serve. But we know there is much more to do. We need a step change.

That's why the council has launched 'Southwark Stands Together', our response to the injustice and racism experienced by our BAME communities. Over the next few months, we are carrying out a listening exercise with communities across the borough, partner organisations, and our staff, to hear their concerns, and identify solutions to address entrenched and persistent racism and injustice. Alongside this, we are also undertaking an anti-racist audit of the borough to identify statues and street names that do not reflect our borough's diversity, especially anything with links to slavery or our country's colonial past, and to identify positive opportunities for the celebration of more diverse figures.

As an important partner in our borough, we would like to invite you to be part of this work. The council has set out a number of pledges which we are asking businesses and organisations in the borough to sign up to, to demonstrate their commitment to this cause. We are asking you to join the council in making these pledges:

- I/We pledge to promote an open and transparent culture where employees who experience/see racism are able to raise it and expect the issue to be dealt with swiftly and fairly.
- I/We pledge to listen to and amplify our diverse voices within our organisations on how we create an inclusive workplace at all levels
- I/We pledge to work to address structural racial inequalities within our organisation, the organisations we partner with and within the service we deliver.
- I/We pledge to champion organisations that address racial injustices and organisations that promote diversity.
- I/We pledge to ensuring that people of all backgrounds can rise to the top of the organisation.

As part of the listening exercise, we are eager to hear from businesses in the borough about any innovative work you are doing to promote diversity and tackle inequality within your organisation. We also want to understand the challenges that BAME led businesses and staff in the borough face as a result of racism and structural inequality.

We hope that you will join the council in committing to tackle racism and injustice in our borough, and that you will work with us to identify solutions which will lead to lasting and meaningful change. The council would welcome a dialogue with businesses so we can work together to find solutions to some of these very challenging issues. We don't have all the answers yet but we are committed to listening, and to learning how we can most effectively challenge inequality in Southwark and stamp out injustice.

If you would like to be part of the Southwark Stands Together work, or if you are able to share information about what your organisation is doing so we can share best practice with businesses across the borough, please get in touch by email: SouthwarkBusinessDesk@Southwark.gov.uk We will be reporting back to Southwark's Cabinet in September and we would encourage businesses to join us on this journey to develop relevant recommendations for local organisations to adopt.

With best wishes



Cllr Johnson Situ
Cabinet Member for Growth,
Development and Planning



Cllr Stephanie Cryan
Cabinet Member for Jobs, Business and
Innovation