

Southwark Stands Together: Play back from engagement sessions so far



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Starting the Conversation: Wellbeing Survey

Context

In response to the murder of George Floyd and the recent Public Health England report into the Impact of COVID-19 on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, the July 2020 Wellbeing Survey included questions about colleagues' views and conversations about race and equality.

Survey time: 14 – 24 July

Respondents: 1629, organisation-wide response rate: 33 %

Age Group	16 - 24	25-39	40 - 49	50 - 59	60 +	Prefer not to say	Blank
Responses	46	415	345	472	142	139	70
% of Total	3%	25%	21%	29%	9%	9%	4%

Ethnicity Group	Black	Asian	Mixed	White	Other	Prefer not to say	Blank
Responses	524	92	56	726	31	137	63
% of Total	32%	6%	3%	45%	2%	8%	4%

	Council-wide	Chief Executive's Department	Children's & Adults' Services	Environment & Leisure	Finance & Governance	Housing & Modernisation
Respondents	1629	106	317	306	251	646
% of Total		7%	19%	19%	15%	40%
Response Rate	33%	50%	23%	22%	43%	48%

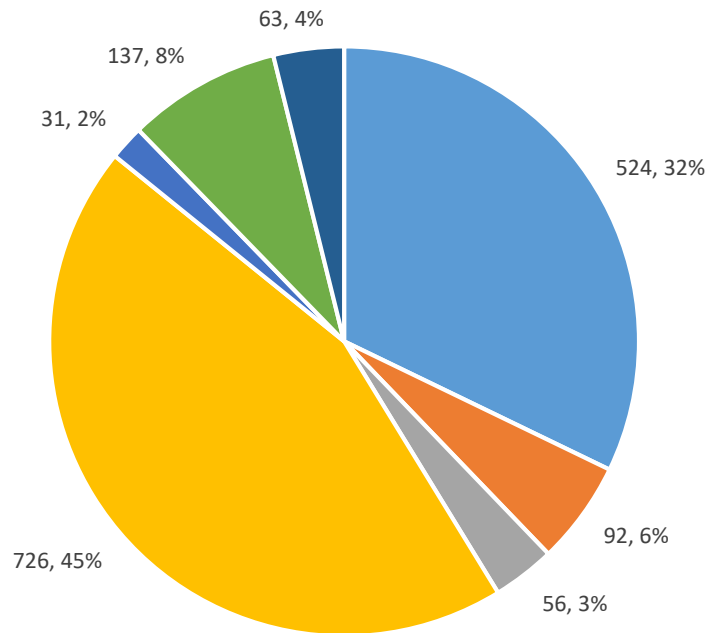
Respondents were asked to respond to a series of statements about race and equality in the UK, with answer options including strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree and strongly disagree. Respondents had the option to skip questions.

Please note that this analysis contains initial analysis and results may change due to quality control.

Respondent Profile

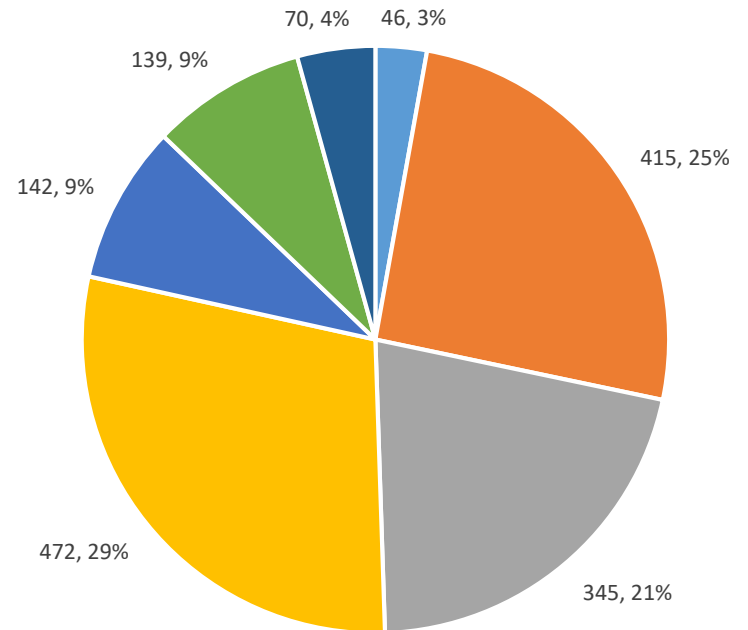
Ethnicity Distribution

Black Asian Mixed White Other Prefer not to say Blank



Age Distribution

16 - 24 25-39 40 - 49 50 - 59 60 + Prefer not to say Blank

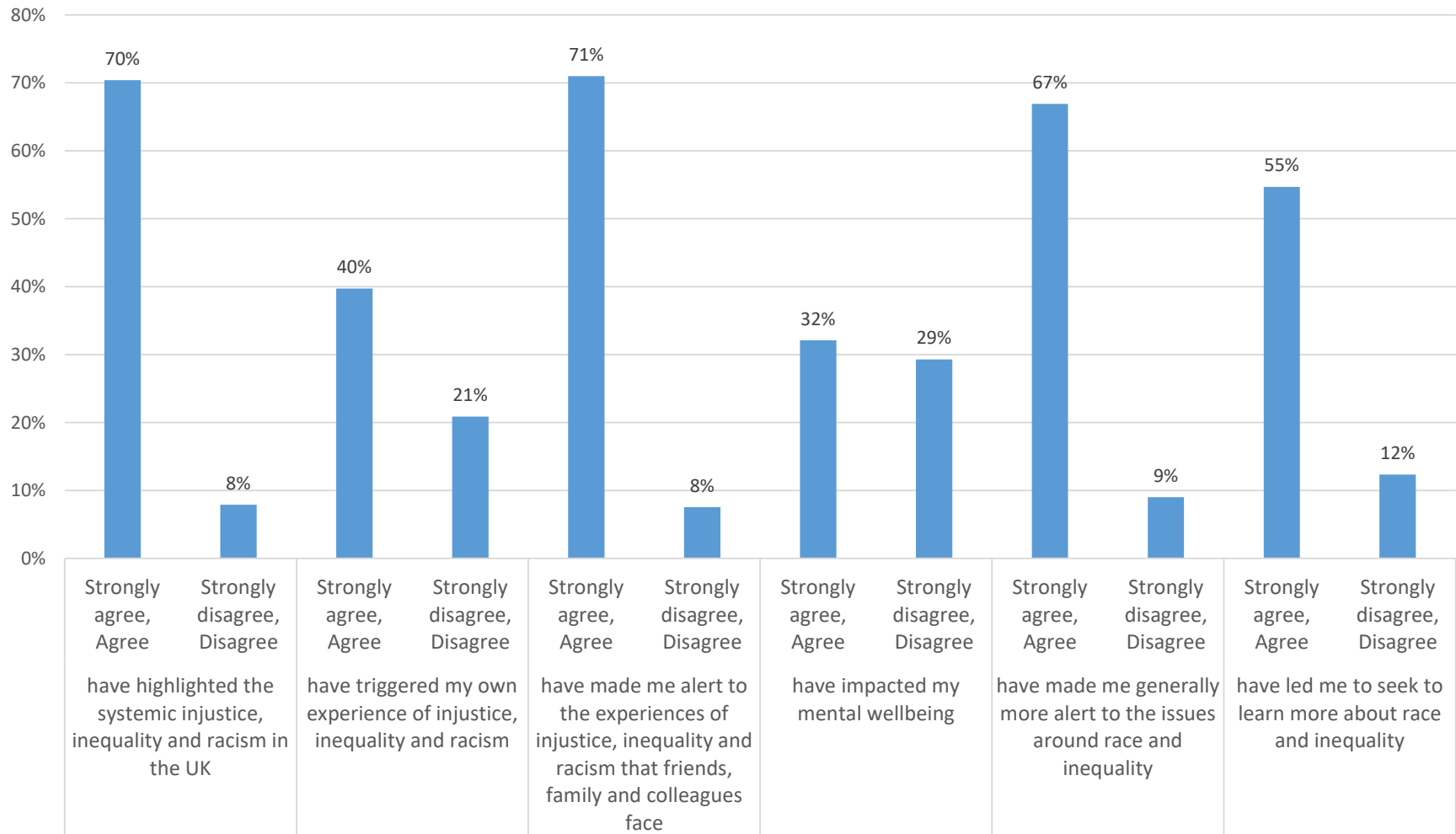


Council-wide

- 71 % of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the events have made them **more alert to the experiences of injustice, inequality and racism that friends, family and colleagues face**. 8% disagree or strongly disagreed.
- 70% agree or strongly agree that the events have **highlighted systemic injustice, inequality and racism in the UK**. 8% disagree or strongly disagree.
- 67% of respondents felt that the events have made me generally **more alert to the issues** around race and inequality. 9% disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- 55% agree or strongly agree that the events have led me **to seek to learn more** about race and inequality. 12% disagree or strongly disagree.
- 40% agree or strongly agree that the events have **triggered their own experience** of injustice, inequality and racism. 21% disagree or strongly disagree.
- 32% agree or strongly agree that the events have **impacted my mental wellbeing**. 29% disagree or strongly disagree.

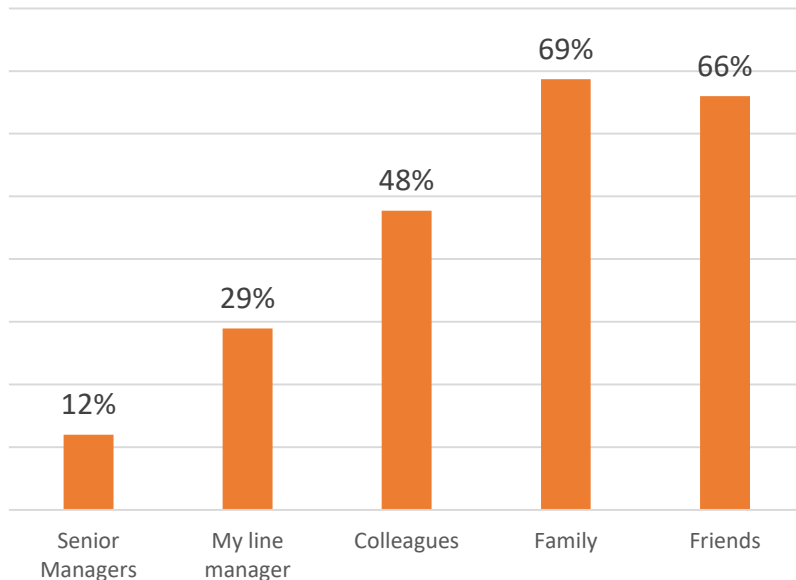
However, there are noticeable variances in the responses in age groups and ethnicities.

The murder of George Floyd and the recent Public Health England report into the Impact of COVID-19 on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnicity communities ...



Conversations about race and inequality

Council-wide, respondents most frequently discuss issues of race and inequality with their **friends and family**, followed by colleagues, line managers and senior managers.



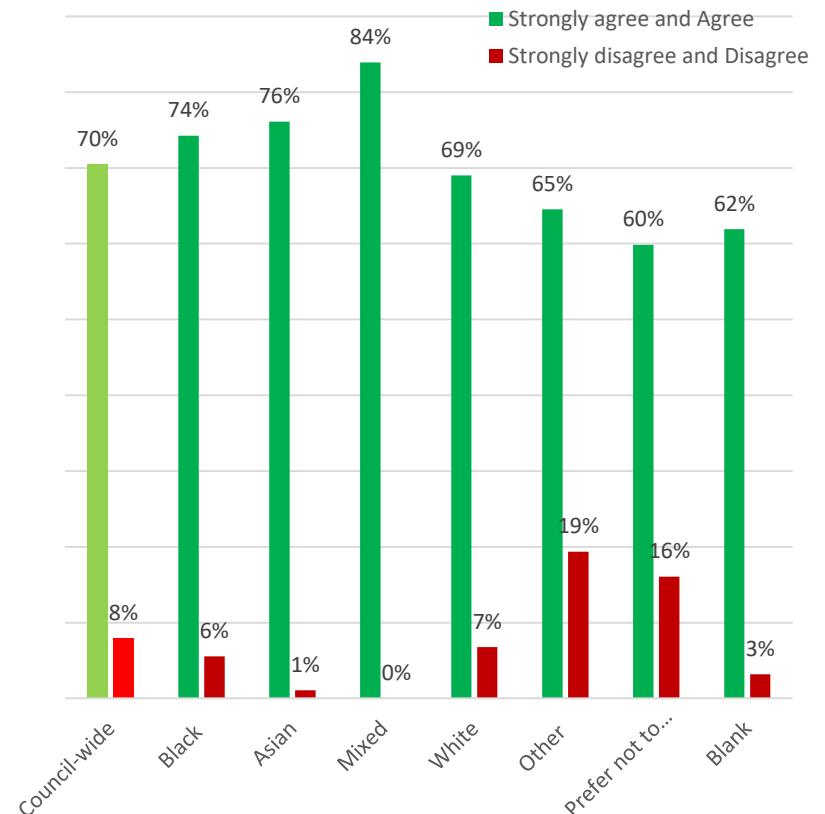
Age: The percentage of respondents who discussed race and inequality with senior managers and line managers increased with age up to and including respondents aged 40 – 49, and then decreases. The percentages of respondents who has such conversations with family and friends decreases with age. While 80% of 16 – 24 year olds discussed with their family, that percentage is 51% of those aged 60 and above.

Ethnicity and Departments: There are also variances in departmental results and across ethnic groups

The murder of George Floyd and the recent Public Health England report into the Impact of COVID-19 on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnicity communities have highlighted the systemic injustice, inequality and racism in the UK.

Council-wide, 70% respondents agree or strongly agree that the events have **highlighted systemic injustice, inequality and racism in the UK**. 8% disagree or strongly disagree.

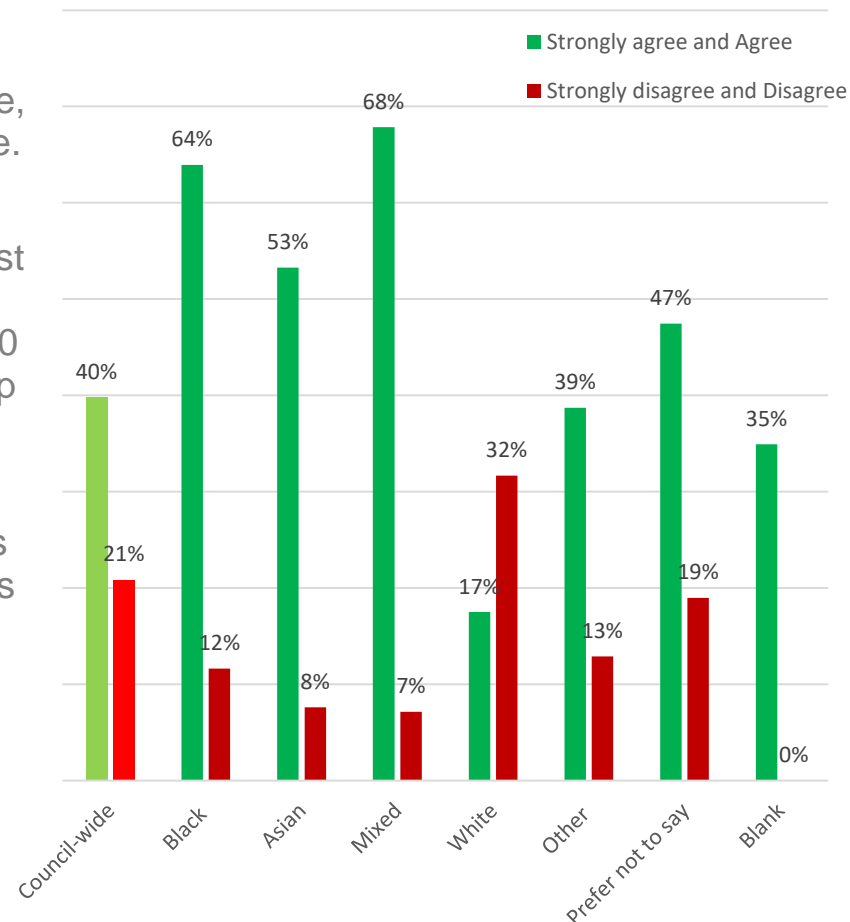
- **Age:** The percentage of respondents who agree or strongly agree decreases as age increases. While 76 % of 16 – 24 year olds strongly agree or agree, that percentage decreases to 71% in 50 – 59 year olds and drops to 57 % in respondents who are aged 60 and over.
- **Ethnicity:** The results vary by ethnicity. Above the council wide results, 84% of mixed-race respondents agree or strongly agree, 74 % of Black respondents agree or strongly agree and 76% of Asian respondents agree or strongly agree. Below the council-wide result, 69% of White respondents agreed to strongly agreed and 65 % of respondents whose ethnicity is categorised as other agreed or strongly agreed.



The murder of George Floyd and the recent Public Health England report into the Impact of COVID-19 on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnicity communities have triggered my own experience of injustice, inequality and racism

Council-wide, 40% agree or strongly agree that the events have **triggered their own experience** of injustice, inequality and racism. 21% disagree or strongly disagree.

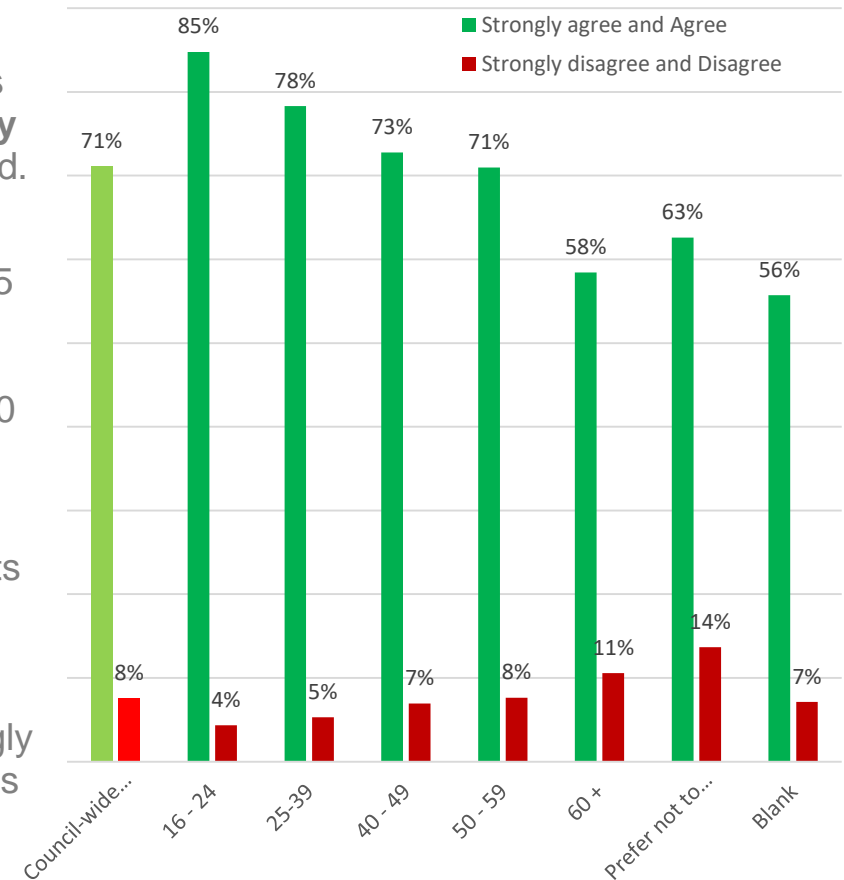
- **Age:** There is little change in percentages of respondents who agree or strongly agree across most agree groups, with 40% or 41% of respondents between the ages of 16 – 24, 25 – 39, 40 – 49 and 50 – 59 agreeing or strongly agreeing. Percentages drop to 29% for respondents aged 60 and over.
- **Ethnicity:** The results vary by ethnicity. Above the council-wide results, 68% of mixed-race respondents agreed or strongly agreed, 64% of Black respondents agree or strongly agree, and 53% of Asian respondents agree or strongly agree. Below the council-wide results, 39% of respondents whose ethnicity is categorised as 'other', as well as 17% of white respondents.
- In the ethnicity data, there are variance in the subgroups of various subcategories.



The murder of George Floyd and the recent Public Health England report into the Impact of COVID-19 on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnicity communities have made me alert to the experiences of injustice, inequality and racism that friends, family and colleagues face

71 % of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the events have made them **more alert to the experiences of injustice, inequality and racism that friends, family and colleagues face**. 8% disagree or strongly disagreed.

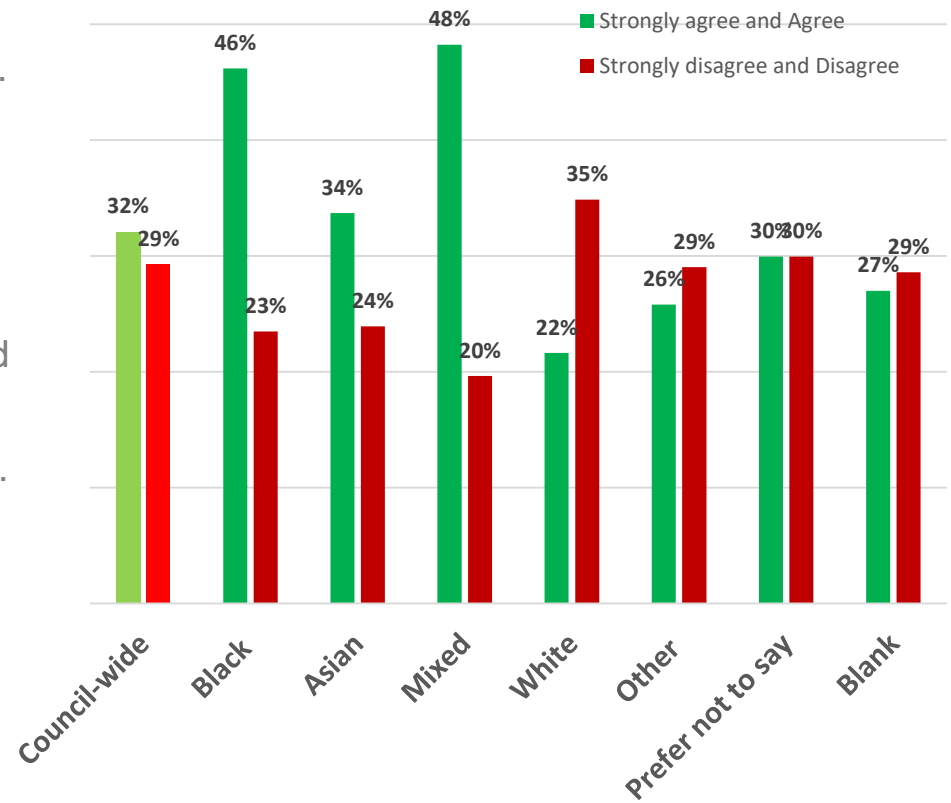
- **Age:** The percentage of respondents who agree or strongly agree decreases as age increases. While 85 % of 16 – 24 year olds strongly agree or agree, that percentage decreases to 71% in 50 – 59 year olds and drops to 58 % in respondents who are aged 60 and over.
- **Ethnicity:** There is comparatively little variance across some groups. 70% of mixed-race respondents agree or strongly agree, 72% of Black respondents agree or strongly agree and 72% of white respondents agree or strongly agree. With more variance, 84% of Asian respondents agree or strongly agree and 58% of those whose ethnicity is categories as other agreed or disagreed.



The murder of George Floyd and the recent Public Health England report into the Impact of COVID-19 on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnicity communities have impacted my mental wellbeing

Council-wide, 32% agree or strongly agree that the events have **impacted my mental wellbeing**. 29% disagree or strongly disagree.

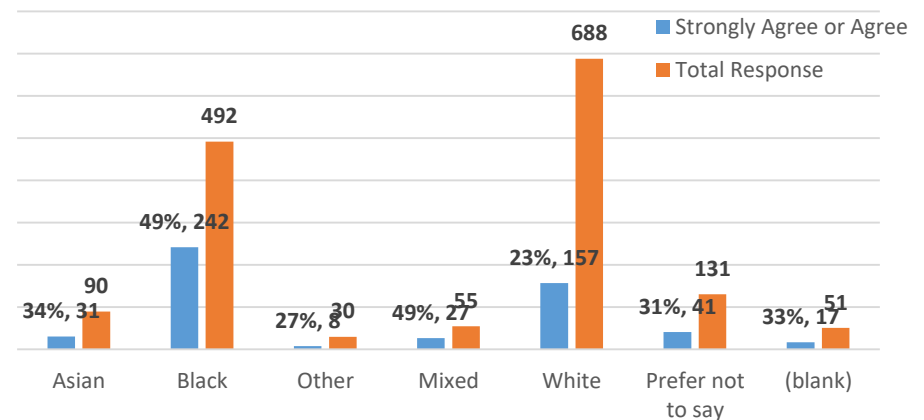
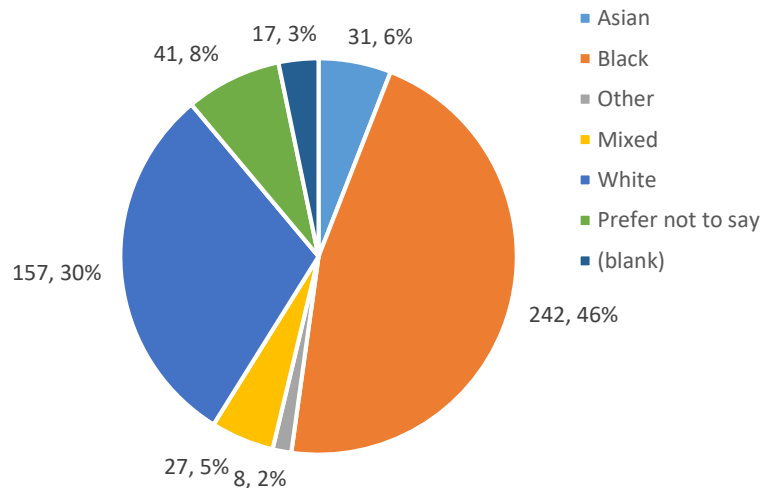
- **Age:** The percentage of respondents who agree or strongly agree decreases as age increases. While 50 % or 16 – 24 year olds strongly agree or agree, that percentage falls to 19% in respondents who are aged 60 and over.
- **Ethnicity:** There are variances across groups. 48% of mixed-race respondents agree or strongly agree, 46 % of Black respondents agree or strongly agree, and 34 % of Asian respondents agree or strongly agree. Below the council-wide results, 22% of white respondents agree or strongly agree, and 26% of respondents whose ethnicity is categories as other.



The murder of George Floyd and the recent Public Health England report into the Impact of COVID-19 on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnicity communities have impacted my mental wellbeing

Additional information on those who agree or strongly agree

Out of the **523 respondents who agreed or strongly agreed** that their mental health had been impacted, 46% were Black, 30% were White. 6% were Asian, 5% were from a mixed ethnic background, 2% selected 'other' as the ethnic background, 8% preferred not to say and 3% did not state their ethnicity.



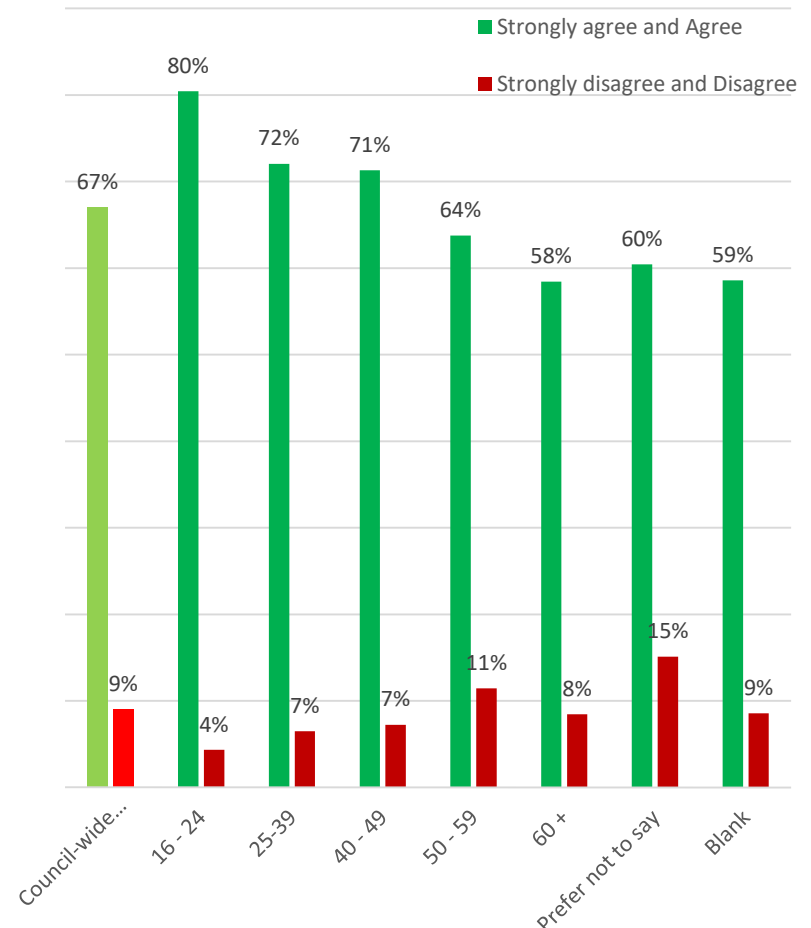
As shown above, this means that 49% of all Black respondents and 49% of all respondents from a mixed ethnic background agreed or strong agreed.

34% of all Asian respondents agreed or strongly agreed, together with 33% of those who did not state their ethnicity, 31% of those who preferred not to say, and 27% of those who select other. 23% of White respondents.

The murder of George Floyd and the recent Public Health England report into the Impact of COVID-19 on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnicity communities have made me generally more alert to the issues around race and inequality

Council-wide, 67% of respondents felt that the events have made me generally **more alert to the issues** around race and inequality. 9% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

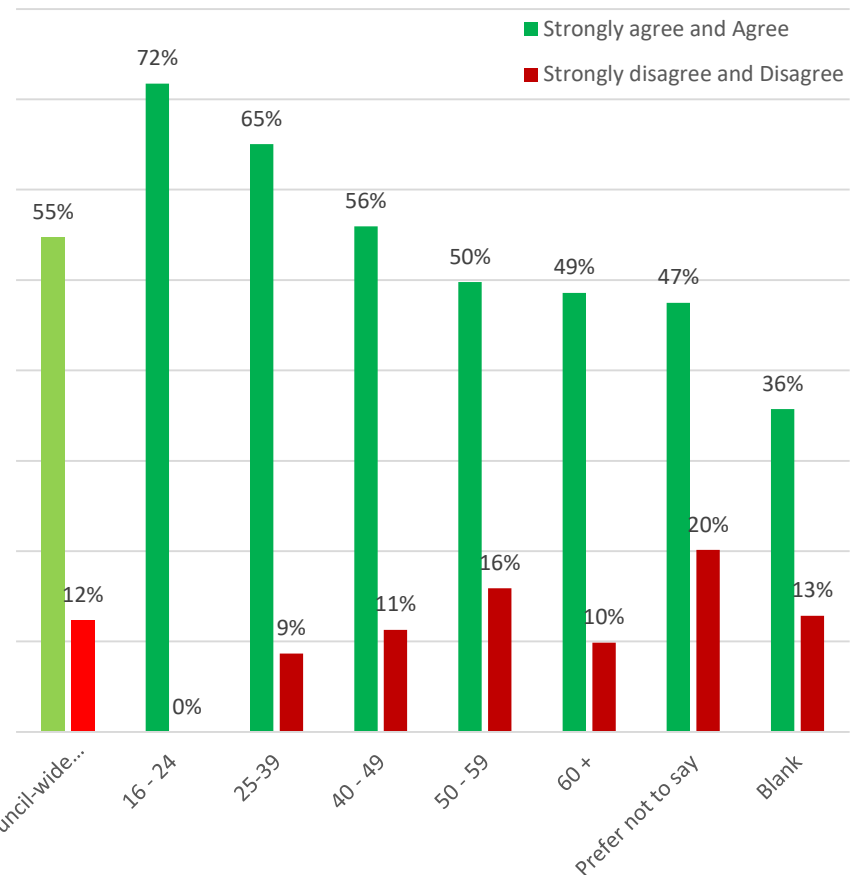
- **Age:** The percentage of respondents who agree or strongly agree decreases as age increases. While 80 % of 16 – 24 year olds strongly agree or agree, that percentage falls to 58% in respondents who are aged 60 and over.
- **Ethnicity:** There is relatively little variance across most groups. Above the council-wide results, 70% of white respondents agree or strongly agree. 66% of Black respondents agree or strong agree, 65% of Asian respondents agree or strongly agree and 63% of mixed-race respondents. 61% of those whose ethnicity it categorised as other also agree or strongly agree. For Black, Asian and mixed-race respondents, this is the only statement where there results fall below the council-wide results.



The murder of George Floyd and the recent Public Health England report into the Impact of COVID-19 on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnicity communities have led me to seek to learn more about race and inequality

Council-wide, 55% agree or strongly agree that the events have led me **to seek to learn more** about race and inequality. 12% disagree or strongly disagree.

- **Age:** The percentage of respondents who agree or strongly agree decreases as age increases. While 72 % of 16 – 24 year olds strongly agree or agree, that percentage falls to 49% in respondents who are aged 60 and over.
- **Ethnicity:** There is relatively little variance across most groups, with respondents whose ethnicity is categorised as other as an outlier. 55% of Black respondents agreed or strongly agreed, as did 57 % of Asian respondents, 57% of mixed-race respondents and 58 % of white respondents. 42% of respondents whose ethnicity is categorised as other agreed or strongly agreed, with variances within the group.



Departmental Trends

There are trends within the results of departments, when compared to council-wide results.

- Children's' and Adult Service and Housing and Modernisation achieved percentages above the council-wide results for respondents who agree or strongly agree with all statements.
- Respondents from the Chief Executive's Department received higher percentages of agreement or strong agreement in responses to all statements, but those regarding respondents' own experience of injustice, inequality and racism and the impact of the events on their wellbeing.
- The results for Finance and Governance were below council-wide results in all statements except for the statement about indicating greater awareness to issues around race and inequality.
- Environment and Leisure's results were below the council-wide results for agreement or strong agreement to all statements.

Continuing the Conversation: Listening Circles

Listening Circles

Listen circles were arranged in August to provide Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues a safe space to have a dialogue about the impact that recent events such as the murder of George Floyd and COVID-19 have had on them, as well as their experience as Southwark Council employees. Led by two Inclusive Employers facilitators, these have taken the form of an open dialogue where Southwark Council employees were given the platform to communicate their experience.

During the sessions, attendees were made aware of the counselling available through our occupational health provider, group sessions on managing anxiety and our mental health support and training. Attendees were also contacted after the sessions with information about support available from the Occupational Health provider Optima.

These sessions have provided us with valuable insights in order to prioritise and then design focus groups around key areas of concern to staff, seen on the next slides.

Listening Circles

Inclusive Employers provided information about the themes and topics that arose which centred around the following areas:

Culture & Everyday Interactions - some of the key points raised were around the fact that **historically nothing has really been done to tackle systemic racism in the organisation.**

- Examples of **Micro-aggressions** and **discrimination** were discussed ranging from everyday interactions to specific incidents.
- **Little funding or support** for events celebrating BAME communities or events attracting BAME demographics
- **Lacking transparency in decision making**
- Inconsistent **line management** experiences, **inconsistent experiences of White and BAME managers**
- **Fear of BAME staff showing emotion or calling out discrimination**, feeling of **isolation**, not enough **mental health support** for BAME colleagues, inconsistent support from line managers for those whose **mental health is impacted by COVID19**
- Overly **bureaucratic processes to address racism** in the workforce, concerns that claims of racism and discrimination **have no consequences.**

Listening Circles

Career Progression and Recruitment - some topics raised included the issues around **favouritism** and **nepotism** that impacted on career progression especially around acting-up positions and the **lack of senior BAME leadership** in the organisation which is not reflective of the borough. Concerns raised covered areas such as:

- **Recruitment**
- Distribution of **grades**
- Lacking transparency of numbers of colleagues participating in **PQS**
- Different **expectations** for roles when it is filled by a BAME person.

Listening Circles

Suggestions made by participants to address discrimination and racism in the workplace. Key themes in these suggestions are:

- **Transparency** in the next steps following listening exercises,
- **Calling out discrimination**, creating a **supportive culture for BAME employees**, **allyship from White colleagues**, **training managers to discuss racism**, involving senior managers in similar exercises and senior management taking responsibility
- Bringing in **external partner to investigate inequalities**, **data-driven work** to assess needs of different demographics, reporting on **progression of BAME officers**, Survey to understand **experiences of BAME colleagues**, highlighting **career opportunities for BAME colleagues**
- Involving **BAME staff in policy writing and review**, reviewing of **recruitment process**

The internship programme was highlighted as an example of best practice and a critical step to address social imbalances.

As per the Cabinet recommendations, the outcomes of the listening circles, together with up-coming focus groups and on-going engagement activities, will inform a workplan which will include measurable objectives and outcomes.

On-going Engagement: Other engagement activities

Other engagement activities

- Informal and locally arranged conversations within team meetings - however this is not consistent across the organisation
- Engagement with our recognised Trade Unions
- Bi- weekly engagement with EMpower our BAME staff network
- Engagement with our wider staff networks Women's Network, The LGBTQ+ Staff Network and NCompass our disabilities network
- Sessions conducted by our Occupational Health provider Optima on supporting staff through the trauma of racism and systemic racism

Areas of concern highlighted in engagement so far

We have received feedback from staff our staff networks, trade unions and individuals on the following as areas of concern:

- Senior management are not representative of the community
- Lack of equality of opportunity to develop and progress
- Lack of confidence that things will change
- Lack of communication and actions to address issues that have been long standing
- Lack of confidence to have open and honest conversations
- Lack of confidence to be your authentic self at work
- Lack of action after raising issues with line managers about discriminatory practice
- Senior management unaware of the impact of structural racism, racism and unfair treatment on staff from BAME backgrounds

SST Workforce Recommendations Cabinet Paper and next steps



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Cabinet recommendation

- a. Renew our commitment to equality and anti-racism with refreshed and on-going internal communications and engagement activities. Themes will include but are not limited to ally-ship, white privilege, gas-lighting, micro aggressions and incivilities.*
- b. Work with an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) partner in the next phase of staff engagement.*
- c. Review workforce statistics and work with the EDI partner on the creation of targets and measures to build a more inclusive workforce at all levels.*
- d. Look at our corporate learning and development offer and review our workforce development schemes including career progression, coaching, mentoring and reverse mentoring*
- e. Review our engagement strategy with all staff with a view to create more dynamic two-way communication channels between staff, trade unions and workforce leads on highlighting opportunities and also areas of concern to ensure our support is appropriate and targeted.*

Cabinet recommendation

f. Embark upon an on-going re-training and re-education programme of our leaders and managers so that they understand the critical role they play in addressing racism, structural racism and injustice in the workplace. We want to ensure our leaders are actively anti-racist.

g. Use the outcomes from the focus groups to inform the review and, where appropriate, revision of the council's employment policy and procedures.

h. Use the outcomes of our listening circles, up-coming focus groups and on-going engagement activities to inform a workplan which will include measurable objectives and outcomes, reporting back progress in October 2020.

i. Ensure there is always a safe space in which staff feel they can share their lived experiences of working at Southwark free from any repercussions

EDI Consultant

B. Work with an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) partner in the next phase of staff engagement.

- To support with the development of our workforce recommendations we are embarking on a procurement exercise to collaborate with a specialist EDI consultancy supplier to explore, identify and understand the concerns and issues in relation to our staff's lived experience of structural racism, racism and racial inequality with an acknowledgement that, through intersectionality, other inequalities within the workplace will be discussed. This will therefore include examining issues in relation to all protected characteristics and prioritising interventions for specific groups, where necessary.
- The supplier will provide a proposal to influence and direct our workforce strategy and help us further develop our existing action plans that sets out our strategic priorities for improving equality across the workforce to address structural racism, racial inequalities and injustice and remove barriers to achieving an inclusive council with representation at all levels.
- Interviews took place w/c 5 October with deliberations to select the preferred EDI consultant to take place by 16 October.
- The intention is to start working very soon with them starting with the formulation of staff focus groups themed around the employee lifecycle.

Developing Proposals

C. Review workforce statistics and work with the EDI partner on the creation of targets and measures to build a more inclusive workforce at all levels.

D. Look at our corporate learning and development offer and review our workforce development schemes including career progression, coaching, mentoring and reverse mentoring

G. Use the outcomes from the focus groups to inform the review and, where appropriate, revision of the council's employment policy and procedures.

H. Use the outcomes of our listening circles, up-coming focus groups and ongoing engagement activities to inform a workplan which will include measurable objectives and outcomes.

- A data and research working group has been set up including colleagues from HR, OT and Public Health to i) review our existing set of data including deep dive into areas of concern/interest and ii) research examples of good practice and case studies with demonstrable success
- Key data sets will inform and underpin focus group discussions, also supporting or dispelling commonly held beliefs about workforce outcomes. Focus groups will help with identification of priority areas and suggestions for improvement
- We will seek advice from the EDI consultant with a view to developing action plans around how best to address gaps, issues and challenges
- Annual workforce report to be taken to December Cabinet and include refreshed workforce equality plan. To include recommendations across the broad field of employment practice including recruitment, grievance, discipline, learning, coaching, leadership and mentoring (including reverse mentoring – see appendix)

Communication and re-education

A. Renew our commitment to equality and anti-racism with refreshed and on-going internal communications and engagement activities. Themes will include but are not limited to ally-ship, white privilege, gas-lighting, micro aggressions and incivilities.

- A communication strategy has been drafted which will incorporate multiple and diverse media of communication. This will include re-education, awareness of services offered by the council, career and life stories of our BAME colleagues, linking to relevant national and international awareness campaigns and providing useful resources for all staff.

F. Embark upon an on-going re-training and re-education programme of our leaders and managers so that they understand the critical role they play in addressing racism, structural racism and injustice in the workplace. We want to ensure our leaders are actively anti-racist.

- **Leadership Network** event took place 6 October to meet and discuss issues, challenges and opportunities with our Staff Networks – first of many themed around equality, diversity and inclusion
- **Directors Forum** event taking place 14 October with Sue Liburd. This event is an ‘Anti-Racism Refresh’ and explores what it means to be actively anti-racist and explore best practice and develop inclusive leadership. As Sue Liburd states: *The way we think influences how we act. Our actions reinforce our thinking. If we can refresh some of our thoughts, then we can impact our own behaviour and that of others.*

Staff Engagement

E. Review our engagement strategy with all staff with a view to create more dynamic two-way communication channels between staff, trade unions and workforce leads on highlighting opportunities and also areas of concern to ensure our support is appropriate and targeted.

I. Ensure there is always a safe space in which staff feel they can share their lived experiences of working at Southwark free from any repercussions

- **“What we’ve heard” playback Sessions** – We will be running a number of sessions to play back to all staff, the results of the race and inequality questions we asked in the wellbeing survey and also the themes that have come out from the listening circles. These will take place in October
- **Employee Lifecycle Focus Groups** – Following on from these playback sessions and the appointment of an EDI consultant, we will hold thematic focus groups around the employee lifecycle which will address some of the areas identified in the listening circles.
- **Ongoing engagement** with all staff networks, trade unions and subsidiary groups, e.g. Unison black members' group.

Other considerations

Reverse mentoring

- **Reverse Mentoring** is being re-launched as a proof of concept in Children's and Families. Concurrently we are collating expressions of interest from the leadership network of leaders who would like to be reverse mentored
 - Reverse mentoring aims to highlight biases and prejudices in a non-threatening way with the aim of improving inclusion. The programme is about exposure to different people, different views, and building relationships, which help us, understand, challenge and change our perceptions as leaders and decision makers.
 - Reverse mentoring is where a senior officer (Listener) is mentored by a BAME employee (Adviser).
 - The outcome for the Listener will be having an understanding of the challenges and barriers faced by individuals and how current policies and practices can be improved to reduce the adverse impact and also having a perspective of different cultural backgrounds and how it impacts on individuals.
 - The outcome for the Adviser will be the opportunity to share life and work experiences; barriers, challenges and behaviours, how they overcame the issues and what motivates them to reach their career potential.

Workforce Targets

- Overall the council's workforce is broadly representative of the local working age population
- This is not currently true at the top of the organisation. 22% of senior council officers at Grade 14 (Head of Service or equivalent) and above are black, Asian or from minority ethnic groups, compared to 38% of London's Working age population. Whilst this gap has closed over recent years the rate of progress remains slow.
- Taking account of these issues, the October report asks Cabinet to agree a new commitment to ensure the **top of the council's workforce is representative of the ethnic diversity of the local working age population by 2030.**
- Exact parameters for this target are being developed, taking account of the breakdown of different ethnic groups, agreed scope in terms of locality and projected comparator groups
- Other targets will be developed as part of wider Workforce Report
- Detailed work to be undertaken to put in place the actions to achieve this and other ambitions as well as medium and long term success measures.

New Values

- October's Cabinet Paper *proposes, for consultation and engagement with staff and the wider community, a refresh of the fairer future values with the following additions that reflect our commit to tackle inequality and discrimination, that as a Council we will:*

- ***Always work to make Southwark more equal and just***
- ***Stand against all forms of discrimination and racism***

If adopted, these values are proposed to be included in the refreshed Council Plan for adoption by Council Assembly in November 2020.

- This will inevitably impact on a range of activities including review of the Southwark Ways of Working (our behaviours framework) which will have to be updated to reflect these new values and will be incorporated into our communication strategy and training programme.