Anti Racism Collaboratives

Prospectus for host organisations

The National Lottery Community Fund
Health Inequities: Structural Racism and Discrimination Partnership

Race Equality Foundation | November 2026

Executive summary

Structural racism is a driving factor in the health inequities experienced by Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic communities. Lasting improvement requires changes in the institutions, policies and social conditions that shape people's health, alongside changes in their experience of services.

The Race Equality Foundation is establishing Anti-Racism Collaboratives (ARCs) in Greater Manchester, Lambeth and Barking and Dagenham to deliver lasting system change in health equity.

We are seeking trusted, minoritised ethnic-led voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations to host these local partnerships. Each ARC will bring communities and statutory partners together to co-produce evidence-led Change Programmes, supported by a Co-Production Panel (CPP) and a Foundation Changemaker.

The programme combines local action with national influence. Community priorities will guide changes in healthcare and the wider determinants of health, while the Race Equity Maturity Index (REMI) will support anti-racist organisational practice. Learning across the ARCs will inform policy, commissioning and the wider Lottery partnership.

The Foundation is the recipient of the Lottery award and remains the accountable body for its use and programme delivery. The five-year programme has an overall funding envelope of approximately £5 million, including an annual envelope of £116,000 per initial ARC in years one to three for local partnership activity.

This is a paid commission for a local VCSE to host an ARC. They will receive funding and structured support for their agreed role.

Introduction

Health inequity is far from a new problem, but its persistence demands urgent action. Racism damages health through discrimination, unequal access to the conditions for good health, and inequitable treatment within public services. These pathways interact across the life course and cannot be addressed through individual behaviour change alone (Marmot et al., 2024).

Structural racism refers to the ways in which economic, political and social systems, institutional practices and the distribution of power produce and sustain racial inequalities. Its effects are evident in education, employment, income, housing and neighbourhood conditions, as well as healthcare. The Institute of Health Equity's review of London identifies the need for coordinated organisational action, community co-production and sustained investment across these sectors (Marmot et al., 2024).

Longitudinal analysis of Understanding Society data links experiences of racial discrimination with poorer physical and mental health, both directly and through reduced socioeconomic resources over time. The study measures interpersonal discrimination rather than the full effects of institutional and structural racism, but demonstrates why racism and socioeconomic disadvantage should be considered together (Stopforth et al., 2022; Stopforth et al., 2023).

Our own 2019 review of racial disparities in mental health also identifies inequalities throughout pathways into care, assessment, treatment and recovery. It highlights barriers to timely support, discriminatory experiences and the contribution of trusted voluntary and community organisations (Bignall et al., 2019).

The Health Inequities: Structural Racism and Discrimination Partnership is a five-year programme with The National Lottery Community Fund (TNLCF). As a national partner, the Foundation will contribute evidence, shared learning and influence, while delivering locally rooted change through Anti-Racism Collaboratives (ARCs).

This prospectus sets out our collaborative model for systems change, the structure and aims of the ARCs, the role of host organisations and the support available from the Race Equality Foundation.

Programme aim and objectives

The centrepiece of the programme is the creation of local ARCs that bring together communities, voluntary organisations and statutory partners to tackle the structural causes of ethnic health inequities. Each ARC will convene a Co Production Panel (CPP) of local people with lived experience, giving communities authority to set priorities, shape action and assess progress.

Co-production is central to our methodology. We design change with communities, sharing decision-making power and valuing lived experience alongside professional expertise. The CPP is an equal member of the ARC itself, acting as the governance mechanism for any action taken.

The CPP determines local priorities and approves the design, direction and delivery of Change Programmes within the funded programme's purposes and resources. The Foundation remains accountable to TNLCF for the award and for ensuring that approved work can be delivered responsibly.

Our objectives are to:

- strengthen community leadership
- co-produce two evidence-led Change Programmes annually in each ARC
- embed anti-racist organisational practice through our Race Equity Maturity Index tool (REMI)
- translate local learning into wider policy and systems change

The model will be tested and refined throughout the five-year period so that it can be adapted in other places, with sustained local ownership and resources.

About the Anti Racism Collaboratives

The ARCs will be the vehicle for local change, driven by committed partners with widespread knowledge and expertise to tackle health inequities.

The three initial ARCs will be based in the **London Borough of Lambeth, the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, and Greater Manchester**. Each will be hosted by a trusted local minoritised ethnic-led VCSE organisation and supported by a dedicated Foundation Changemaker.

ARC partners will include

- VCSE and faith organisations
- people with lived experience
- primary and secondary care providers
- local authorities
- public health and social care

Partners from housing, education, employment and environmental justice will participate where relevant to the priorities identified by communities.

Experiences and outcomes vary between ethnic groups and are shaped by intersections with age, disability, gender, faith, migration circumstances and socioeconomic position. The ARCs will therefore combine community knowledge, existing research and local ethnicity-disaggregated data to understand the inequities facing particular communities and identify where action can make a difference.

The ARC will convene regularly in productive collaboration to drive forward the actions and priorities of the Change Programmes, support community leadership, and coordinate wider influence and learning.

Partners with influence and decision-making authority over services, policies and resources will make specific commitments to the ARC work and report on its implementation. Their responsibility for these commitments sits alongside the Foundation's overall accountability to TNLCF.

Our approach to commissioning

Commissioning practices are often imbued in inequitable systems, leading to biases in how institutional decisions on priorities, resources, action and review are made.

The Foundation will use this understanding in our appointment of and support for ARC hosts.

The ARCs themselves will also help communities influence how statutory institutions commission and organise services locally, connecting the Lottery investment with wider decisions that shape health.

Engagement will include people beyond the CPP, particularly those poorly served by existing services. Relevant local needs assessments and strategies will inform this work and be challenged where they overlook racism or community experience.

CPPs and partners will agree the outcomes sought and compare possible responses, considering evidence, equity, feasibility, costs and risks. Changemakers will identify the decision-makers and resources needed across institutions. The CPP will approve local priorities and proposals; the Foundation will authorise expenditure and agreements within the award conditions and available resources.

Partners will implement agreed action and review its effects with the CPP. Findings will inform whether an approach continues, changes or stops, and how resources are used next. Communities will receive accessible feedback on what was decided, what changed and any commitments still outstanding.

The role of the host organisation

The host organisation provides the trusted community relationships and local infrastructure that enable the ARC to work.

The Host will:

- jointly recruit and support CPP members
- coordinate local engagement and meetings
- maintain inclusive participation
- provide trauma-informed pastoral support
- help sustain relationships between partners
- support agreed monitoring, learning and financial reporting

The Host will work closely with its Changemaker and the Programme Coordinator at The Foundation. We will provide a comprehensive onboarding process to outline their complementary duties, accessible participation, member payments and specialist support.

The Host is accountable to the Foundation for its agreed funded contribution. The Foundation retains programme accountability, while institutional partners remain responsible for changes within their authority.

About the Co Production Panel

Each CPP will comprise 10–12 people from local minoritised ethnic communities with lived experience of health inequities. Members will be recruited jointly by the host and Foundation, through outreach that seeks diverse and intersectional perspectives beyond existing organisational networks. They will serve renewable two-year terms and meet up to six times a year.

The CPP will:

- set priorities for the ARC
- co-design and approve change programmes
- shape evaluation and evidence
- assess ARC progress

The CPP is the accountability and governance mechanism of the ARC. No Change Programme will proceed without CPP approval. Members will also help interpret learning and approve how their communities' experiences are represented and shared, with opportunities to co-author publications.

Members will receive induction, development opportunities and one-to-one support. They will be paid fairly for participation including preparation and follow-up work, with payments processed within seven days. Accessible venues, interpretation, reasonable adjustments and practical support will enable involvement.

In recognition of the potential for further harm from participation, members will have access to independent trauma-informed counselling and may step back from participation when needed.

Structured facilitation, turn-taking and anonymous contributions will help address differences in confidence and power. Hosts and Changemakers will maintain routes for wider community input and feedback so that the CPP remains connected to people beyond its membership. Community members may raise concerns directly with the Foundation.

Our objective is for participation in the CPP to strengthen community confidence and influence over statutory decisions. We will share our experience in effective co-production methods with Host organisations, including in the development of REMI and other community-led health work.

The Change Programmes

Each ARC will co-produce two targeted, evidence-led Change Programmes per year. Priorities will be determined by the CPP, drawing on community insight, local data and research. Change Programmes will address the institutional practices and wider conditions contributing to inequity, with a clear account of who has the authority to act.

Programmes may focus on improving healthcare access and experience, such as earlier detection of cancer, or on wider determinants, such as equitable access to housing improvement and retrofit schemes. Work on screening might combine trusted community engagement with changes to invitation systems, interpreting provision, appointments and provider accountability. Housing work might address the criteria and investment decisions that exclude communities living in poor-quality homes. These are examples rather than predetermined priorities.

Each programme will record the inequity and intended outcomes, proposed institutional changes, named decision-makers, partner commitments, resources and timescales.. Annual plans will distinguish new programmes from continuing work so that improvements can be embedded. For example, changing a screening invitation system is a delivery commitment; improving equitable access is the outcome to assess.

Embedding race equity through the Race Equity Maturity Index

REMI is a co-produced self-assessment tool that helps organisations assess their level of race equity maturity, measure progress of any changes made, and identify further action on anti-racist practice, including leadership, workforce and commissioning.

In year one, each ARC will identify and support three to four local organisations to begin using REMI, with further adoption in subsequent years.

Assessment will inform practical improvement plans, named responsibilities and reviews of progress. The Changemakers will support organisations to connect REMI findings with changes in practice and accountability, using community experience and other evidence alongside assessment scores.

Supporting the Anti Racism Collaboratives

Three Foundation Changemakers will provide systems leadership, evidence and practical support. Our Director of Policy and Engagement will act as Lead Changemaker with a focus on Lambeth, while the other two Changemakers will focus on Greater Manchester and Barking and Dagenham.

Changemakers will:

- engage senior decision-makers
- support co-production
- translate evidence into action

They will map commissioning decisions and budgets relevant to CPP priorities, secure institutional commitments and escalate barriers to implementation. They will facilitate CPP meetings, steward change programmes and REMI, and connect local learning with national policy. Their strategic role is intended to complement the Host's community relationships, pastoral support and local coordination.

The Programme Coordinator will support meetings, records, accessible participation and communications across the sites. The Foundation will provide research, financial guidance, communications and public affairs support.

Hosts will receive onboarding, reporting templates and support tailored to their capacity, alongside quarterly cross-site learning. Development needs will be identified jointly so that community expertise is supported by the practical systems needed for delivery.

Evidence and learning

The programme is grounded in evidence-led action. Existing research, local data and lived experience will be brought together to identify the mechanisms producing inequity and to develop credible responses. Where data are incomplete, ARCs will identify the gaps and use complementary forms of evidence rather than assume that an absence of data means an absence of need.

Quarterly reflection will bring CPP and wider community feedback together with evidence of delivery and change. Partners will review progress, unmet commitments and unintended effects, agreeing adaptations and escalating barriers where necessary. Changes to programme plans will require the CPP approval and, where funding or award conditions are affected, the Foundation authorisation. Both successes and failures will inform learning across ARCs and TNLCF partners.

An independent evaluator will be commissioned in year one. The evaluation framework will be co-produced with the ARCs and CPPs and will combine quantitative measures with interviews, reflection and case studies. Success measures will be agreed and reviewed annually. Evaluation will assess the programme's contribution to change, recognising the time required for population health outcomes to improve.

The Foundation's policy, communications and public affairs teams will translate learning into accessible reports, tools and policy briefings. This will connect local experience with opportunities to influence commissioning, institutional practice, national policy and the design of future funding programmes.

Expected outcomes and sustainability

At a local level, we expect communities to influence priorities and resource decisions, organisations to embed anti-racist practice, and institutional changes to improve access, trust and experience. Two Change Programmes annually and REMI adoption are delivery commitments. Their value will be assessed through outcomes agreed with each CPP, supported by baseline evidence and measures of whether particular communities benefit. Population health improvement is a longer-term ambition to which the programme will contribute.

At a national level, we aim to strengthen recognition of structural racism in policy and practice, ensure lived experience informs priorities, and develop an ARC model that can be adapted beyond the initial locations. Findings will inform national influencing and the wider TNLCF partnership, including future funding design.

Sustainability begins with how change is designed. ARCs will seek to embed improvements in routine policies, commissioning and organisational responsibilities, while building local community leadership and relationships. Hosts, CPPs and institutional partners will develop plans for continuing resources and ownership, with local fundraising strategies taking shape by year three. Our ambition is that statutory bodies adopt and resource effective approaches so that the benefits continue beyond the grant.

Governance and decision making

The Race Equality Foundation is the recipient of the TNLCF award and remains the accountable body throughout the funded programme. It is responsible to TNLCF for the use of funds, delivery against the award, monitoring and reporting, and compliance with funding conditions. The appointment of hosts or delegation of tasks does not transfer this accountability. The Chief Executive oversees delivery, with Trustee accountability; the Lead Changemaker manages the other Changemakers and Programme Coordinator.

The CPPs set local priorities and approve Change Programmes. The Foundation authorises expenditure and formal commitments and retains legal, financial, employment and safeguarding responsibilities. Each ARC's partnership agreement and Governance and Decision-Making Framework will define these respective powers, delivery duties, conflicts of interest and routes for concerns. Consensus-building will guide CPP decisions.

Where a proposal cannot meet funding conditions, legal or safeguarding requirements, or available resources, the Foundation will explain and record its reasons and work with the CPP on alternatives. CPP approval does not authorise expenditure on its own, and the Foundation's authorisation does not substitute for CPP approval of a Change Programme. Differences will be resolved transparently within these respective responsibilities.

Institutional partners remain responsible for the decisions and resources they control. Any commitments and progress will be recorded and reviewed with the CPP. The local Changemaker will take unresolved barriers or inaction to the relevant senior decision-maker and the Foundation's programme leadership. The Foundation will oversee corrective action and any implications for delivery or reporting to TNLCF, with clear feedback to the CPP.

Role	Principal responsibility
Co-Production Panel	Sets priorities, approves programmes and assesses benefits.
ARC host organisation	Community relationships, local coordination and CPP support.
ARC partners	Implement agreed institutional changes and report progress.
Changemaker	Evidence, facilitation, systems leadership and influence.
Race Equality Foundation	Accountable body to TNLCF for funds, programme delivery and award conditions; authorises expenditure and agreements.

Timeline and milestones

The programme runs from July 2026 to July 2031. Year one establishes the people, partnerships and governance needed for community-led delivery. The indicative milestones below will be developed into local workplans that reflect appointment dates and CPP decisions.

Period	Milestone
July - November 2026	Recruit Changemakers and ARC hosts; establish local relationships and governance arrangements.
November 2026 - February 2027	Recruit and induct CPPs; map evidence and baseline data; begin REMI with local organisations.
February - June 2027	Co-produce, launch and learn from the first Change Programme in each locality.
April - July 2027	Develop and begin the second Change Programme, informed by CPP priorities and early learning.

The external evaluator will be commissioned during year one, supporting the development of the evaluation framework and baseline evidence. Reflection and learning will accompany programme design and delivery from the outset.

Years two and three will build on early learning, with two new Change Programmes per ARC annually, further REMI adoption and cross-site policy outputs. A cross-site evaluation in year three will inform the next phase and the selection of two additional locations.

In years four and five, the model will extend to the new locations while the original ARCs move towards locally owned implementation and funding. Support for the initial sites will taper, with sustainability planning, institutional adoption and local fundraising developed throughout the programme. The final phase will consolidate evaluation, national dissemination and a model that other places can adapt.

Resources and funding

The Foundation's five-year programme is supported by an overall funding envelope of approximately £5 million. The budget allocates an annual envelope of £116,000 per initial ARC in years one to three, with provision for inflation. This is the resource for the local collaborative as a whole. The Host organisation receives £40,000 to support staffing and capacity. The remaining £76,000 covers co-production costs, delivery of Change Programmes, engagement, training and learning.

Centrally funded Changemakers, coordination, research, communications and evaluation support this commission. A Host's funded contribution will be agreed before appointment, with a costed scope of duties and allowance for relevant overheads. Resources for local priorities will be agreed through workplans approved within the Foundation's financial framework. The ARC envelope is shared across local purposes and is not solely a Host payment.

From year four, funding for the original ARCs is planned to reduce to 50% as they move towards local system ownership, enabling two additional ARCs to be established. The transition is part of the funded programme and will be planned with hosts, CPPs and statutory partners rather than treated as a sudden withdrawal of support.

The Foundation will hold the award, oversee the budget and authorise expenditure. Hosts will account to the Foundation for their funded work through proportionate financial and delivery reporting. Partnership agreements will specify payment arrangements, responsibilities, reviews and how changes or delivery

difficulties are addressed. Risks will be allocated to those able to manage them; Hosts will not be expected to finance unagreed duties or assume responsibility for institutional decisions they do not control.

Becoming an ARC host

Hosts will be selected through an open expression-of-interest process in each locality. Eligible applicants must be a Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic-led VCSE organisations with demonstrable local community trust and a commitment to anti-racist practice and shared decision-making. Application guidance will define eligibility, including leadership and geographical requirements, and explain any permitted partnership applications.

Assessment will consider community reach and trust, understanding of health inequities, inclusive and trauma-informed CPP support, partnership coordination and governance and financial stewardship.

Applications should explain community relationships, relevant experience and the approach they would take to hosting.

Constructive relationships with statutory partners and the ability to challenge inequitable practice will be valued. Evidence will be assessed proportionately to the role and organisation; community expertise and delivery ability will carry equal weight alongside organisational systems.

Before applications close, prospective Hosts will be able to discuss the role, funding and support, and test the practicality of the expectations. Relevant questions and answers will be shared with all applicants. Guidance will publish the assessment criteria and their relative importance, required evidence, selection stages and timetable, with accessible application arrangements and proportionate due diligence.

Selection will include shortlisting and interviews, with community perspectives informing assessment. The Foundation will make and record final appointment decisions as the accountable body, using published criteria and declared conflicts of interest.

Applicants will receive feedback and have a route to raise concerns about the process. Due diligence will cover governance, finance, safeguarding and insurance; identified development needs will inform support where appropriate.

Hosts and the Foundation will agree any changes to duties or resources in writing. Where delivery falls behind, they will address causes and agree proportionate corrective action, while institutional partners remain responsible for their own commitments.

Further information

For further information about the programme and the expression-of-interest process, please contact Nomusa Okorie, our Programme Coordinator, at nomusa@racefound.org.uk.

Local Changemakers will be available to discuss the collaborative model and the support offered to hosts.

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