

Racial Justice Audit

Diocese of Bath and Wells
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July 2025



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1. FOREWORD

This audit exists because many across the Diocese of Bath and Wells chose to speak out rather than remain silent. Their honesty, questions and frustrations - and above all, their continued hope - shape every page that follows.

Each quote is more than decoration; each story is a line of accountability, reminding us that racial justice is not an abstract aspiration but a lived, visible practice - one that must be evident in leadership, policy, theology and daily community life.

In preparing this audit, I listened to clergy, lay leaders, ordained and non-ordained staff, volunteers, refugees, ethnically diverse congregants, community members, and those who drifted away from the Church because they no longer saw themselves reflected within it. Their voices name barriers and illuminate paths forward. Their testimonies act as both mirror and mandate.

This document is a tool for action, not a record for the archive. May it continue to shape conversations, hearts, and structures - until every parish, deanery, school and governance table reflects the truth that we are all made equally in the image of God.

To everyone who entrusted me with your stories, thank you. May this audit do justice to your courage.

Anira Khokhar

July 2025

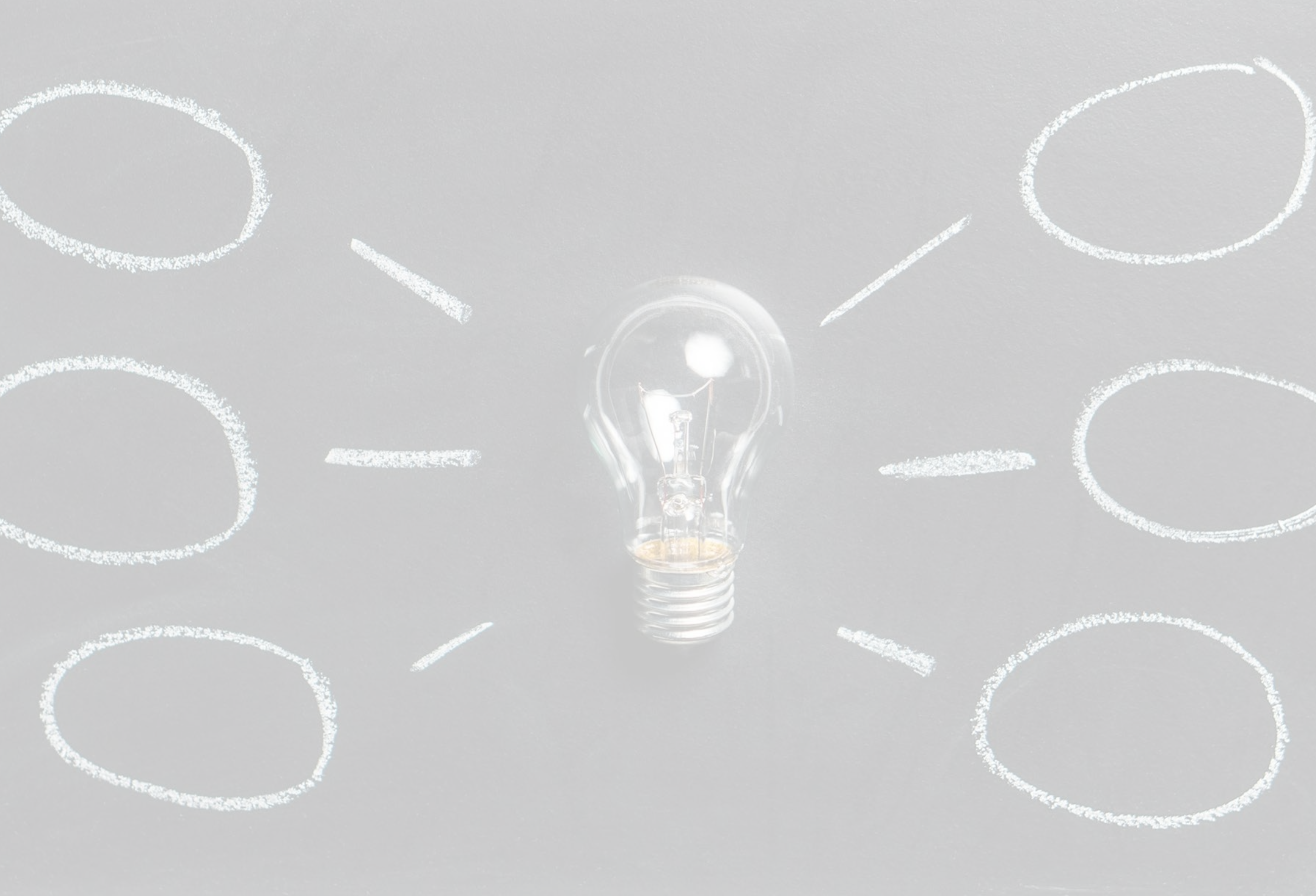
2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The audit finds that while the Diocese of Bath and Wells has taken important initial steps, progress towards racial justice remains uneven and too often aspirational. A decisive shift is now required: from statements of intent to consistent, accountable action embedded across leadership, governance, and parish life.

A pair of glasses with thin, light-colored frames and clear lenses is resting on a document. The document has some text and a small, colorful graphic (possibly a logo or seal) visible. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light gray.

“You cannot change what you do not acknowledge. This audit will give us a mirror. What we do next matters more.”
Participant quote

The Racial Justice Audit provides an independent assessment of the Diocese of Bath and Wells’ progress towards equity and inclusion. Commissioned to evaluate how leadership, governance, policy, and parish life embody commitments to racial justice, the audit establishes a robust foundation for practical action and systemic change across the Diocese.



Evidence was gathered through 55 consultations with clergy, lay leaders, and parishioners, with more than half of participants drawn from diverse ethnic communities. A participatory approach placed lived experience at the centre while also examining:

- Diocesan policies and governance structures
- Theological formation and pastoral practice
- Engagement with national and statutory frameworks, including *From Lament to Action* (Church of England, 2021) and the Equality Act 2010 (UK Government, 2010)

Principal Insights

Anti-racism training is inconsistent, non-mandatory, and rarely integrated into theological formation.

Leadership remains overwhelmingly white and older, with ethnically diverse voices significantly underrepresented in positions of authority.

Many parishes demonstrate warm hospitality but often fall short of fostering genuine belonging or inclusive leadership.

Core diocesan policies express inclusion but fail to outline clear anti-racism commitments or routes for accountability.

Promising practices in youth work, refugee engagement, and multicultural liturgy offer replicable models of inclusion.

“Jesus stood with the oppressed. Why do we hesitate to do the same?” Participant quote

Sustaining Racial Justice across Somerset's Contexts

Based on the audit, the recommendation is that racial justice moves from aspiration to sustained and practical action. Transformation requires intentional commitment and a willingness to embed racial justice in the life of the Diocese.

Transformation requires:

- A deeper understanding of the diverse contexts across Somerset
- Distinct, tailored approaches for advancing racial justice in different settings
- Courage, consistency, and accountability from diocesan leadership.

Good welcome on the door - tourist city culture helps. But internal action is slower..." Participant quote

Key Strategic Recommendations

1

Appoint a **Diocesan Racial Justice Adviser** to coordinate strategy, training and accountability, with a seat (*Paid/Voluntary*) on the Bishops Council.

2

Embed **mandatory, tiered anti-racism and cultural competence training** across all deaneries and governance levels.

3

Revise HR and safeguarding policies to explicitly name racial harassment and provide safe reporting pathways.

4

Develop leadership pathways, bursaries and mentoring schemes for diverse ethnic clergy and lay leaders.

5

Invest in parish-level innovation: inclusive liturgies, multicultural hospitality, interfaith partnerships and youth-led justice work.

6

Publish an **annual racial justice progress report**, with transparent demographic monitoring and community feedback loops.

Shared journey forward

This process is the beginning of a long-term diocesan commitment. Parishes, chaplaincies, and communities are invited to engage in ways that reflect their local context, contributing to a shared movement of dialogue, renewal, and action.

The Diocese of Bath and Wells now has the opportunity to play its part in leadership within the Church of England by showing how commitments to racial justice can be translated into systemic and sustained change. This audit marks not an end-point but the beginning of a collective journey of transformation, renewal, and accountability.



3. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

This Racial Justice Audit was commissioned by the Diocese of Bath and Wells to provide a clear and rigorous evaluation of how far its structures, policies, leadership practices, and daily parish life reflect a genuine commitment to racial justice, and equity and the Christian imperative for justice. This work sits within a wider moment of theological reckoning for the Church of England, which through landmark reports such as *From Lament to Action* (Church of England, 2021) has recognised the need to address both historic and ongoing racism within its institutions.

Diocesan Context

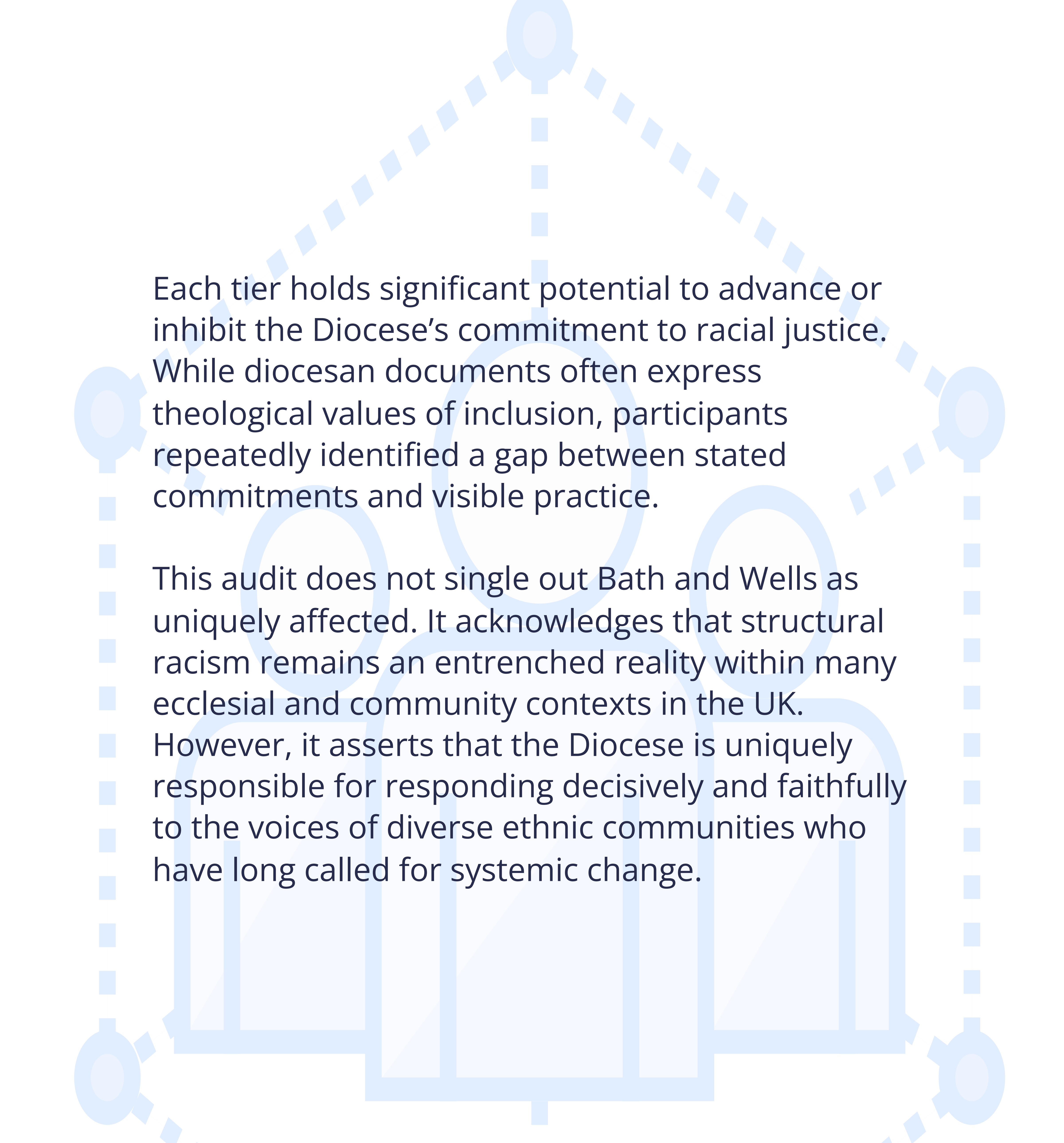
The Diocese of Bath and Wells serves a diverse and evolving area. Spanning the largely rural historic county of Somerset, the Diocese includes over **466 parishes**, organised across three Archdeaconries (Bath, Taunton and Wells) and supported by more than **180 Church of England schools**. While its heritage is deeply rooted in rural parish life and historic Anglican traditions, its communities now include growing migrant populations, ethnically diverse families, young people born and raised in Bath and Somerset, and newly settled refugee groups. Its mission, therefore, lies at the intersection of tradition and the lived realities of modern, multicultural Britain.

Governance and Leadership Structure

The Church of England is led by bishops, and governance decisions are made through synods and councils. The structure includes several levels, each with its own responsibilities and powers.

AREA	CLERGY LEADERS	GOVERNANCE BODY
Church of England	Archbishop of Canterbury	General Synod
Diocese	Diocesan Bishop	Diocesan Synod
Deanery	Area Dean	Deanery Synod
Parish	Incumbent	Parochial Church Council (PCC)

The Church of England is often described as led by bishops and governed by synods, though this simplifies a more complex structure. Governance follows a layered system, with the General Synod at the top, parochial church councils at the local level, and diocesan and deanery synods in between. Each level includes both clergy and lay members.



Each tier holds significant potential to advance or inhibit the Diocese's commitment to racial justice. While diocesan documents often express theological values of inclusion, participants repeatedly identified a gap between stated commitments and visible practice.

This audit does not single out Bath and Wells as uniquely affected. It acknowledges that structural racism remains an entrenched reality within many ecclesial and community contexts in the UK. However, it asserts that the Diocese is uniquely responsible for responding decisively and faithfully to the voices of diverse ethnic communities who have long called for systemic change.

"We don't see ourselves in the leadership. We don't hear our experiences in sermons. We're not invited into decision-making spaces." Participant quote



“White fragility is real - some shut down when you raise deeper issues.” Participant quote

Audit Purpose and Objective

The core purpose of this audit is to provide a robust, credible evidence base that informs a strategic diocesan response to racial injustice. Specifically, it aims to:

1. **Assess** the Diocese’s current capacity, practice and culture regarding racial equity and inclusion.
2. **Identify** strengths, promising practices, and replicable models already present in parishes, schools and community partnerships.
3. Surface **systemic** gaps, barriers and areas of concern that hinder full representation and participation.
4. Offer **practical**, theologically grounded recommendations for sustainable action at every level of diocesan life.
5. **Place** the experiences of ethnically diverse individuals at the centre of diocesan priorities, ensuring their experiences shape diocesan priorities and practice.

4. METHODOLOGY

This audit adopts a combination of qualitative methods including thematic and policy analysis and comparison against statutory and ecclesial frameworks. The methodology prioritised lived experience and participatory engagement, grounded in the principle that racial justice work must centre the voices of those directly impacted by structural exclusion.

4.1 Research Design

The audit was carried out over seven months (January–July 2025) with:

Stakeholder Consultations: More than **30 in-depth consultations** were held with diocesan officers, bishops, archdeacons, clergy, lay deans, churchwardens, staff, volunteers and parish leaders - covering a representative spread of deaneries and parishes across the Diocese.

Community Consultations: **25 conversations** were conducted with congregants and community members from diverse ethnic backgrounds, including those with lived experience of exclusion, racism, migration, refugee status, and interfaith community work.

Policy Review: Seven core diocesan policies were assessed - including Disciplinary Procedure, Equal Opportunities Policy, Recruitment and Selection Policy, Learning and Development Framework, Whistleblowing Policy, Pay and Job Evaluation Policy, and Flexible Working Procedure.

Observational and Desktop Research: Attendance at diocesan meetings and public events; analysis of *From Lament to Action* report (Church of England, 2021), Census 2021 data, and Church EDI resources.

4.2 Analytical Framework

Thematic and systemic analysis was conducted using:

Thematic Coding: Transcripts were coded thematically to identify recurring patterns, barriers, enablers, and divergence.

Critical Race and Theological Lens: Findings were interpreted through a critical race framework grounded in Anglican theology, especially the principle of *Imago Dei* (*all are made in God's image*).

Comparative Benchmarks: Evaluated against the Equality Act 2010 and the Church's commitments in *From Lament to Action*.

4.3 Ethical Considerations

All participants received clear information on the audit's purpose and scope. Informed consent was gained verbally or in writing. Quotes have been anonymised.

Where participants described trauma, appropriate safeguarding and signposting procedures were implemented.

All data handling complied with GDPR and qualitative research ethics.

"The process gave us permission to speak truths we had never shared so directly before." Participant quote

4.4 Limitations

The audit recognises several limitations:

- Incomplete or inconsistent quantitative data limited statistical analysis - particularly around ethnicity.
- Some deaneries chose not to participate despite being invited.
- Several policies were under review during the audit period.

Nonetheless, the qualitative depth, triangulated data, and national benchmarks provide a robust evidence base.

“Sometimes it feels like we’re not even seen, let alone heard.”
Participant quote

5. THEMATIC AND SYSTEMIC ANALYSIS

This section explores systemic and cultural barriers to racial justice across the Diocese, highlighting gaps in leadership, training, governance and theology. Practical, faith-informed recommendations are offered to strengthen inclusion, equity and representation in all areas of diocesan life.

5.1 Leadership, Representation and Visibility

A consistent and prominent theme throughout this audit is the significant absence of racial and cultural diversity across all levels of diocesan leadership. From the Diocesan Synod to Parochial Church Councils (PCCs), decision-making structures remain predominantly white and ageing, underscoring a notable disconnect between the Diocese's stated commitment to inclusion and its operational reality.

"They do not do enough. We need more ethnic people and more diverse voices on PCC."

While the Diocese of Bath and Wells serves increasingly diverse urban and semi-urban communities, particularly in Bath, Yeovil, and Bridgwater, this demographic reality is not reflected in its leadership.

Clergy and lay leaders from ethnically diverse backgrounds are few in number and report feeling isolated, tokenised, or unsupported when appointed to governance roles.

The lack of visible diversity at senior levels influences who feels welcome to lead, whose voices are recognised as credible, and how decisions are made regarding worship, policy, safeguarding, and parish life.

"Our congregation is very white British we don't really have diversity in leadership either." Participant quote

Systemic Constraints

Leadership remains overwhelmingly white and older, with ethnically diverse voices largely absent from decision-making spaces.

Many parishes demonstrate warm hospitality but struggle to translate welcome into visible belonging and representative leadership.

Anti-racism training is inconsistent, optional, and rarely integrated into theological formation.

***“I was warmly greeted. But after that, I didn’t know where to sit, how to get involved, or what anything meant. I felt like an outsider in God’s house.”
Participant quote***

Strategic Actions

To embed representation and visibility in leadership structures, this audit recommends that the Diocese:

Develop and Publicise a Racial Justice Leadership Pipeline

Create bursaries to support theological training and ministerial development, specifically targeting ethnically diverse candidates

Share pathways and case studies publicly to encourage uptake

Introduce Mentoring and Sponsorship Schemes

Establish mentoring at deanery and diocesan levels

Prioritise support for ethnically diverse women and young adults

Require Annual Demographic Reporting

Collect and publish disaggregated demographic data by role and ethnicity

Track representation to monitor progress transparently

4. Embed Representation Commitments in PCC and Synod Practice:

Encourage PCCs to proactively co-opt or invite diverse representation where local community demographics indicate under-representation.

Provide guidance and training for PCCs and Synod members on why racial diversity in governance strengthens mission and witness.

5.2 Training and Theological Education

A recurring finding in this audit is that many clergy, lay leaders and congregations feel ill-equipped to engage with racial justice issues in a confidently or theologically grounded way.

Though the Diocese expresses a commitment to inclusion, participants described a lack of robust, mandatory training and a tendency to treat race as an optional or uncomfortable topic.

When anti-racism or so called “*unconscious*” bias training is offered, it is often outdated, inconsistent, or overly generic.

Some clergy fear “*saying the wrong thing*” or feel that sermons on justice rarely address race, power, or structural inequality.

“Theological formation is so white. Where are our scholars of colour in the diocesan library or on training days?” Participant quote.

Some described experiences where biblical universalism “***we are all one in Christ***” was used to bypass uncomfortable truths about historic and present-day exclusion.



"We're told 'we're all equal before God,' but I need someone to see I'm also Black in this Church.." Participant quote

Systemic Constraints

Inconsistent, optional or superficial anti-racism training.

Limited access to theological frameworks that integrate race, power and liberation theology.

Clergy discomfort about addressing race from the pulpit for fear of causing offence or being seen as *'political'*.

Lack of recommended readings by theologians who come from diverse ethnic communities.

Outdated or harmful terminology (e.g. BAME, *"unconscious"* bias, coloured)

Strategic Actions

To strengthen training, learning and theological formation, this audit recommends that the Diocese:

Introduce Mandatory Tiered Anti-Racism and Cultural Competency Training

Tailored training for clergy, PCCs, lay leaders, ordained, and readers

Embed in induction, IME (Initial Ministerial Education), and CME (Continuing Ministerial Education)

Embed Liberation Theology and Diverse Theological Voices

Commission or curate training content that includes theologians from diverse ethnic backgrounds

Include modules on intersectionality and postcolonial theology

Facilitate Shared Learning


Partner with other dioceses and theological educators to host open learning events and collaborative training

Support peer learning groups for clergy

Develop an Online Resource Hub

Host inclusive sermons, liturgies, study guides, and recommended readings

Make resources available to parishes, schools, and chaplaincies



No one knew how to report racism. And if you did, it just disappeared into silence."
Participant quote

5.3 Governance and Anti-Racism Infrastructure

A consistent finding in this audit is that, while the Diocese of Bath and Wells has several core policies that express a commitment to fairness and inclusion, few explicitly address systemic racism, racial harassment, or institutional discrimination.

For many participants, this lack of clarity created confusion and mistrust about how to report racism or seek redress.

Policy language remains overly generic, with limited reference to specific equity measures or theological principles related to justice and healing.

As a result, key practices - such as recruitment, disciplinary action, and pay progression - risk unintentionally reinforcing bias, despite good intentions.

Systemic Constraints

Existing policies lack clear anti-racism terminology, operational definitions, or mechanisms for accountability

Parish and diocesan staff are often unsure how to escalate racial complaints safely

Tracking of outcomes by ethnicity (e.g. discipline, pay) is limited or absent

Policies rarely draw on theological commitments to justice, repair, or reconciliation

“It feels like the rules are written to keep people like us out whether intentionally or not.”

Participant quote



Strategic Actions

To strengthen governance systems and policies, this audit recommends the Diocese:

1. Embed Explicit Anti-Racism Language

Update HR and safeguarding policies to define terms such as racial discrimination, microaggressions, and cultural trauma.

Ground language in Scripture and Church teaching on justice.

2. Create a Diocesan Racial Justice Policy Handbook

Develop a practical guide for PCCs and parishes to apply anti-racism principles in local governance.

3. Establish a Diocesan EDI Monitoring Group

Tasked with annual reviews of policies, complaints, and demographic data - disaggregated by ethnicity.


4. Provide Safe, Clear Reporting Pathways

Revise whistleblowing and grievance procedures to include race-based concerns.

Provide access to independent mediation or advocacy services to those raising concerns

5. Align with Legal and National Benchmarks

Ensure full compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and Church frameworks such as *From Lament to Action*.



"I walk into a church, and instead of being seen as a fellow Christian, I'm made to feel as though my skin colour defines me more than my faith." Participant quote

5.4 Community Culture and Belonging

Many congregants from diverse ethnic backgrounds experience a dissonance between the Church's verbal expressions of welcome and its everyday culture and practice.

While parishes often pride themselves on hospitality, deeper cultural and systemic barriers to belonging often persist.

For some, the welcome ends at the door - little opportunity for participation in leadership, worship planning, or decision-making.

These often reflect white British norms by default, which can unintentionally exclude other cultural expressions of faith - including food practices at events, liturgical language, musical styles, and church imagery.

Participants also reported faith-based forms of exclusion, particularly for migrant worshippers whose expressions of faith differed from local expectations.

"When we hosted a Sudanese choir, the whole community turned up. It reminded us that worship is global, not just English."
Participant quote

Systemic Constraints

Worship style, imagery, and liturgical language often reflect narrow cultural norms

Hospitality practices don't always account for diverse customs and values

Liturgical calendars and community celebrations rarely acknowledge culturally significant non-Western events

Congregations and leaders may lack the confidence or tools to adapt worship formats

"Jesus was a brown man from Palestine so why is he still portrayed as white and why does our liturgy still reflect that erasure?"
Participant quote



Strategic Actions

To foster authentic belonging and inclusive community culture, this audit recommends that the Diocese:

1. Support Local Liturgical Adaptation

Encourage the inclusion of global saints, multilingual prayers, and culturally diverse hymns.

2. Provide Cultural Hospitality Guidance

Create resources for PCCs to host inclusive gatherings that reflect community diversity.

3. Establish Listening Sundays

Designate services led by congregants from diverse ethnic backgrounds to influence liturgy and sermons.

4. Audit Imagery, Language and Spaces

Support parishes in auditing visuals, signage, and communication through a racial justice lens.

5. Celebrate Interfaith and Cross-Cultural Events

Collaborate with local groups to celebrate significant non-Western religious or cultural observances

5.5 Theology and Teaching

The Church of England's theological tradition proclaims justice and reconciliation as central to discipleship, this audit found that explicit teaching on racial justice is inconsistent, optional, and usually reactive.

While many parishes regularly engage with prophetic texts about justice, they rarely draw direct connections to racism, structural inequality, or historical injustice.

Some clergy expressed fear of being perceived as *"political"* or divisive, meaning that sermons on racism are rare - typically emerging only in response to high-profile events such as the murder of George Floyd.

Study groups may touch on unity and love but seldom explore how these themes relate to systemic exclusion or personal testimony.

Others described instances where theology was used being used as a means of avoidance - bypassing difficult truths about race and exclusion.

"The one-time race was mentioned was after the George Floyd protests. But nothing since."

Participant quote


Systemic Constraints

Sermons and Bible study rarely incorporate race or reflect on racial injustice

Materials often omit theologians from diverse ethnic backgrounds

Clergy report feeling unprepared or fear of backlash when preaching about race

Teaching frequently defaults to a universalist theological lens, avoiding direct engagement with racism

A photograph of a person holding a brown hat over their face, standing in a field of yellow sunflowers. The image is partially obscured by a white torn-edge effect.

“The Marks of Mission talk about transforming unjust structures. But when it comes to race, we avoid it. It makes people uncomfortable.” Participant quote

Strategic Actions

To embed racial justice more fully within theology and teaching, this audit recommends the Diocese:

1. Use the Five Marks of Mission as a Practical Framework

Provide parishes with resources that explicitly connect racial justice to the fourth *Mark of Mission*: “*To transform unjust structures of society*”.

2. Platform Diverse Ethnic Theologians and Preachers

Develop a speaker network comprising ethnically diverse theologians and practitioners to lead teaching sessions, deanery training, and open Q&A's.

3. Develop Liberation Theology and Postcolonial Resources

Commission sermon guides, study materials, and training rooted in liberation theology, postcolonial perspectives, and global Christian voices.

4. Equip Parishes to Theologically Reflect on Migration and Belonging

Highlight scriptural narratives of exile, hospitality, and migration as spiritual entry points for local theological reflection.

5. Share Good Practice Consistently

Use diocesan newsletters, online platforms, and training events to promote examples of inclusive theological teaching already in use.

6. PRACTICE-BASED EVIDENCE AND INSIGHTS

While this audit highlights structural barriers and cultural gaps, it also presents local examples that demonstrate how meaningful change is both achievable and already in motion.

These examples illustrate what becomes possible when intentional leadership, theological reflection, and community collaboration align.

This section gathers these stories in one place to offer scalable and inspiring models that can be scaled across the Diocese.

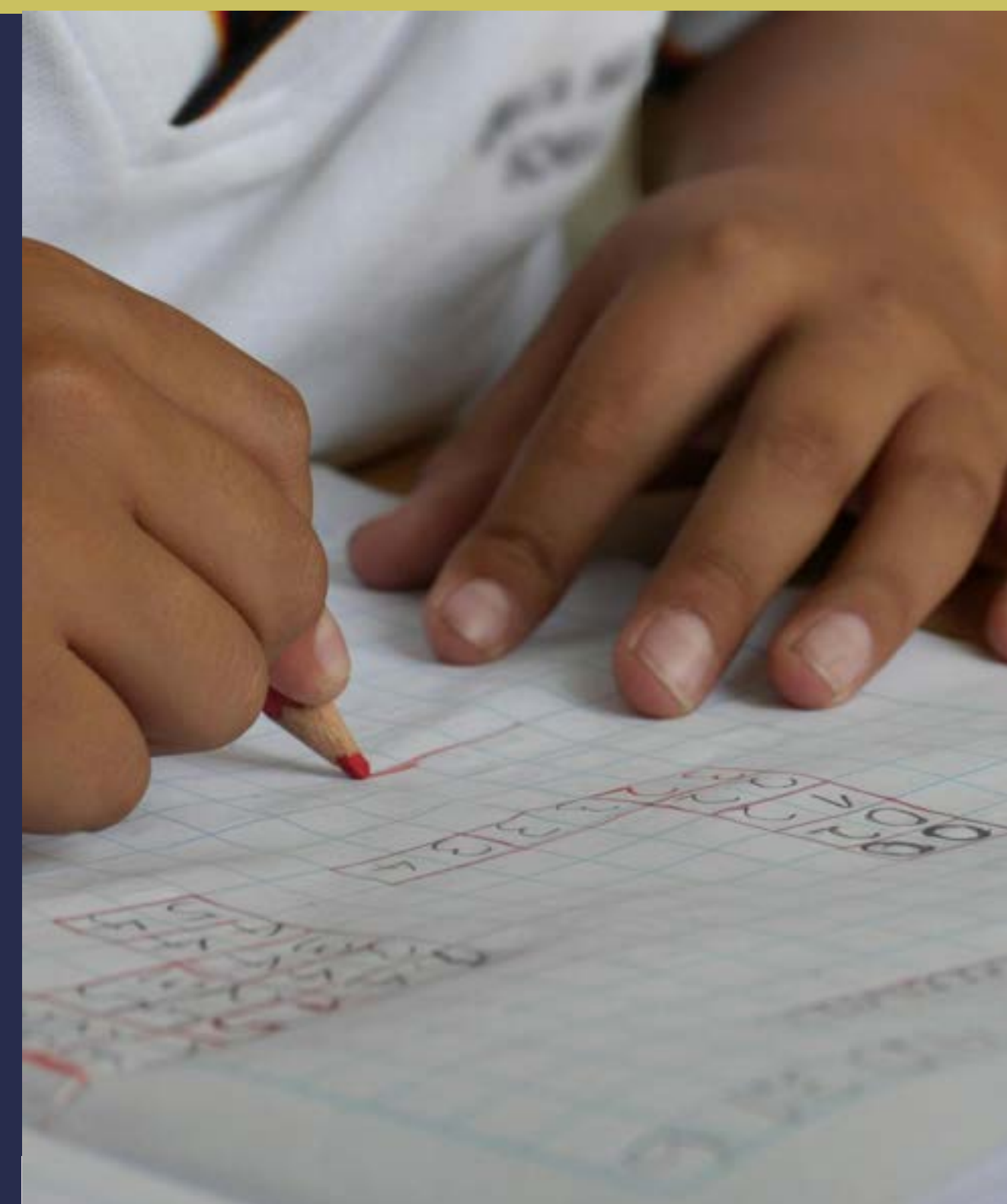
- 6.1. Inclusive Leadership
- 6.2. Contextual Theology and Study
- 6.3. Community and Belonging
- 6.4. Policy and Governance
- 6.5. Training and Learning



6.1 Inclusive Leadership

Inclusive Governor Appointments in Church Schools

In the Mendip area, two church schools successfully appointed governors from diverse ethnic communities, demonstrating representation in governance.



Refugee Ministry Leadership

Parishes working with refugee support centres have offered lay leadership and pastoral roles to newly arrived community members.



Sustained Partnerships

Bath Abbey collaborates with BEMSCA and cross-sector partners on anti-racism. Wells Cathedral has improved clergy diversity and welcome practices. Schools in Weston-super-Mare and Bridgwater lead inclusion through staff representation and community links.



Cross-Cultural Leadership in Worship Teams

A parish in Taunton formed a worship team including British Nigerian and Caribbean elders.



6.2 Contextual Theology and Study



Addressing History

Public theology at Bath Abbey is evolving through exhibitions and poetry reflecting its links to slavery, blending worship with truth-telling.



Guest Theologians

Parishes in Wells and Bridgwater, have welcomed diverse ethnic theologians and speakers to lead sessions on reconciliation and systemic injustice.



Anti-Racism Teaching

Sermons and study groups across rural parishes now explore themes like racial bias, antisemitism, and the marginalisation of groups such as Travellers and Muslims.



Five Marks of Mission Series:

A rural parish structured its Bible study around the Five Marks of Mission, grounding discussions of racial justice in theological reflection and local relevance.

6.3 Community and Belonging

Racial Justice Sunday:

While many churches observe Racial Justice Sunday, inclusion of diverse speakers and service leadership enhances its authenticity.



Interfaith Engagement:

Interfaith efforts around Hinkley Point show how shared space can foster trust and learning.



Overseas Partnership

Local churches reference the Diocese's Zambia Link as a historic model for global partnership - though not always explicitly anti-racist, it shows cross-cultural solidarity.



Engagement:

The most inclusive churches are deeply embedded in schools, food banks, and refugee outreach - building trust through consistent presence.



6.4 Policy and Governance



Anonymised Recruitment:

Although not explicitly referred to as *anonymised recruitment*, the Diocese of Bath and Wells removes personal details at shortlisting to ensure fair and merit-based selection, supported by Safer Recruitment Guidance, the Ex-Offenders Policy, and Wells Cathedral procedures.



Youth Provision Data Monitoring

Youth workers are collecting disaggregated ethnicity data to assess participation and uncover equity gaps in youth provision.



EDI Monitoring Group (Emerging):

A few parishes are piloting small EDI groups to review complaints and safeguarding cases through a racial justice lens.



Challenging Bias in Leadership:

Momentum is building for active interventions in biased systems, including access to leadership and targeted training.

6.5 Training and Learning

Lent Series on Race and Reconciliation

A Wells parish led a Lent study using works by Black British theologians, focused on repentance and repair.



Youth-Led Theological Curricula:

A Bath-based youth chaplain co-developed a curriculum with Somali and Kurdish youth, exploring scriptural migration stories in relation to their lived experiences.



Embedding Inclusive Theology in Sermons and Study Groups:

A few clergy across the Diocese now integrate racial justice themes into sermons and small groups - using inclusive readings such as the Good Samaritan - helping even less diverse parishes to reflect theologically on inclusion.



7. DETAILED POLICY REVIEW

This section provides a focused evaluation of seven key diocesan policies that directly influence racial equity in church life. These policies were selected due to their relevance to leadership pathways, safeguarding, accountability, recruitment, and day-to-day governance.

Each policy was assessed against the Equality Act 2010, *From Lament to Action* (Church of England, 2021), and theological principles of justice and dignity.

The review identifies strengths, gaps, and opportunities for reform to ensure diocesan frameworks support - rather than hinder - racial justice.

7.1 Disciplinary Procedure

Policy Analysis:

The policy contains no explicit reference to racial harassment, discrimination, or microaggressions as forms of misconduct.

Unclear process for defining, investigating, and recording race-based grievances

Policy Enhancements:

Clearly define racial harassment, discrimination, and microaggressions

Align with the Equality Act 2010

Include restorative responses and access to independent mediation

7.2 Equal Opportunities Policy

Policy Analysis:

Policy language remains vague and lacks any reference to cultural competence or anti-racism principles.

Lacks a theological rationale

Policy Enhancements:

Add a clear anti-racism statement, grounded in Micah 6:8

Reference From Lament to Action explicitly

Include specific equity measures in recruitment, training, and staff development

7.3 Recruitment and Selection Policy

Policy Analysis:

A notable strength is the adoption of anonymised shortlisting.

No formal requirement for diverse interview panels, even when feasible

No monitoring of applicant outcomes by ethnicity

Policy Enhancements:

Make anonymised shortlisting mandatory

Recommend diverse panels for all hiring processes

Collect and publish ethnicity data on applicants and appointments

7.4 Learning and Development Framework

Policy Analysis:

The policy does not require mandatory training in anti-racism or cultural competence, nor does it provide differentiated training pathways based on role.

Policy Enhancements:

Make anti-racism and cultural competence training mandatory for all leadership levels.

Embed training modules within IME and CME requirements.

Publish an annual training calendar with accountability tracking

7.5 Whistleblowing Policy

Policy Analysis:

No explicit reference to racism

There is a lack of explicit support or protection for individuals reporting discrimination

Policy Enhancement:

Recognise racism as a legitimate whistleblowing concern

Signpost independent advocacy options

Include escalation routes and anonymity protection

7.6 Pay and Job Evaluation Policy

Policy Analysis:

The policy does not include any mechanism for monitoring pay equity by ethnicity.

No plan to address potential disparities

Policy Enhancements:

Disaggregate pay data by ethnicity

Align with Equality Act and equal pay legislation

Conduct annual equity reviews

7.7 Flexible Working Procedure

Policy Analysis:

The policy focuses solely on general flexibility and does not account for cultural or religious observances that may impact scheduling needs.

Policy Enhancements:

Acknowledge how faith-based or cultural needs impact scheduling

Train line managers in cultural awareness

8. STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR IMPLEMENTATION

This roadmap translates the audit's evidence and community testimony into a practical, actionable plan for the Diocese of Bath and Wells. It outlines clear priorities for change, structured across realistic time frames, with built-in accountability at every level.

These recommendations are rooted in national Church commitments (*From Lament to Action, 2021*) and legal duties under the Equality Act 2010. These are not peripheral add-ons but essential to faithful discipleship, structural repair, and cultural transformation.

8.1 Overarching Strategic Goals

The Diocese should commit to:

Embedding explicit anti-racism practices across governance, leadership, recruitment, and pastoral care

Amplifying ethnically diverse voices in all decision-making spaces

Providing consistent theological and practical training on racial justice

Supporting local parish culture to move from welcome to genuine belonging

Establishing clear, safe systems for reporting, learning, and accountability



8.2 Phased Implementation Plan

Racial Justice over the next three years.

LEADERSHIP AND REPRESENTATION

0 - 6 months

Adviser

Appoint a Diocesan Racial Justice Adviser; begin mapping current representation

6 - 18 months

Mentoring

Launch and scale leadership mentoring and sponsorship programmes

18 - 36 months

Publish

Publish annual demographic data; embed diversity targets into governance cycles

TRAINING AND FORMATION

0 - 6 months

Design

Develop and mandate anti-racism and cultural competence training; identify suitable trainers and theologians.

6 - 18 months

Deliver

Deliver tiered training to clergy, PCCs, and staff; launch an online resource hub

18 - 36 months

Embed

Fully integrate racial justice modules into IME, CME, and lay leadership training

POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

0 - 6 months

Update

Update all core policies to explicitly address racial discrimination

6 - 18 months

Handbook

Publish a Diocesan Racial Justice Policy Handbook for PCCs

18 - 36 months

Review

Conduct annual reviews of policies with oversight from the EDI Monitoring Group

REPORTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

0 - 6 months

Transparency

Establish clear, safe reporting pathways with independent support.

6 - 18 months

Safeguarding

Train safeguarding and HR teams on how to respond to racial harassment

18 - 36 months

Annual Plan

Publish an annual racial justice progress report for Synod and the wider public.

Progress Summary

The diocesan strategy prioritises leadership, training, policy, parish culture, and accountability. It represents a comprehensive and phased approach to institutional transformation.



8.3 Key Accountability Structures

Racial Justice Adviser: Oversees coordination, training, and monitoring

EDI Monitoring Group: Reviews policies, complaints, and demographic data

PCCs and Deaneries: Lead local audits, listening, and practical implementation

Synod and Bishop's Council: Share ultimate accountability for diocesan progress in collaboration with the Racial Justice Adviser.

“Church leadership without accountability is performance. Accountability shows integrity.” Participant quote

8.4 Monitoring and Reporting

Publish public annual reports online and to Synod

Demographic data will be tracked and shared transparently, disaggregated by ethnicity, role, and parish context.

Regularly consult with ethnically diverse and interfaith communities



9. CONCLUSION

Over the past seven months, this Racial Justice Audit has listened deeply to hundreds of voices across Somerset - from parishioners in rural pews to community members in city centres, from clergy and lay ministers to diverse ethnic communities and school staff.

A consistent message emerges: the Diocese of Bath and Wells holds immense potential for inclusion, healing, and justice. Yet it still carries the imprint of historical inequality and unaddressed racial disparities.

Despite this honest critique, the mood remains hopeful. Across the Diocese, many are ready to listen, reflect, and act. Parishes are reshaping liturgies to reflect lived diversity. Leaders are re-examining theology through a justice lens. Young people are stepping into visible leadership roles.

This is more than institutional reform; it is the Gospel lived and embodied in the present.

Racial justice is not a peripheral issue - it is central to the Gospel and Christian discipleship. As Luke 4:18 reminds us, Christ came *"to bring good news to the poor... to set the oppressed free."* One consultation participant expressed it clearly and courageously: *"We want this to be more than a report, we want it to be the start of a shift in culture and hearts."*

The challenge is not one of quick fixes or one-off initiatives. Genuine transformation requires long-term commitment, critical self-reflection, and deep structural change. Leadership must reflect the full diversity of God's people. As one participant observed: *"Leadership shaped by comfort zones, rather than reflecting Christ's body in its fullness," fails to meet this calling.*

Worship must resonate with the lived experiences of diverse ethnic communities. Policy must be rooted in equity and accountability at every level of the Church.

This audit is both mirror and mandate. It calls every parish, deanery, and diocesan structure to ask: *How are we living the Gospel in racially just ways? Whose voices are we missing? What healing, repair and resurrection does Christ call us to now?*

Racial justice is the Gospel embodied. It is the Church's faithful response to the liberating ministry of Jesus - the Christ who came *"to let the oppressed go free"* and to *"proclaim release to the captives"* (Luke 4:18). It is the call to let *"justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream"* (Amos 5:24).

The Diocese must now respond with action that is: **Christ-centred, biblically grounded, theologically honest, prophetically bold, pastorally compassionate, and structurally accountable.**

Love must be made visible through policy. Reconciliation must be evident in practice. And the Church must be courageous enough to be transformed by the very Gospel it proclaims.

10. GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ACRONYMS

The glossary provides definitions and context for terms and acronyms used throughout the Racial Justice Audit. This supports shared understanding, consistency in language, and theological clarity, particularly in areas relating to equity, governance, training, and community belonging.

Acronym	Full Name
PCC	The Parochial Church Council is the central forum for decision-making and discussion in relation to parish affairs.
EDI	Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. A framework for ensuring fair treatment, representation, and opportunities for all, especially those from marginalised backgrounds.
HR	Human Resources. The department or function dealing with personnel, policies, recruitment and staff wellbeing.
IME	Initial Ministerial Education. The early formation and training provided to ordinands before and just after ordination.

CME	Continuing Ministerial Education. Ongoing theological and pastoral training for clergy and lay ministers after ordination or licensing.
BAME	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic. <i>Note: This term is considered outdated. The audit recommends using “diverse ethnic communities” to avoid homogenising or hierarchical language.</i>
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation. A legal framework that governs how personal data is collected, stored and used.
ONS	Office for National Statistics. The UK’s national statistical institute responsible for census data and demographic information.
UK	United Kingdom
ACC	Anglican Consultative Council. An international body facilitating cooperation within the worldwide Anglican Communion.

Term	Definition
Diverse Ethnic Communities/ Ethnically Diverse	A respectful and inclusive term referring to individuals from racially, culturally, or ethnically diverse backgrounds. It affirms visible and lived ethnic diversity without creating hierarchies.
Anti-Racism	A proactive stance involving the identification, challenge, and transformation of systemic racism embedded within policies, practices, and institutional culture. It goes beyond passive non-racism to demand active engagement.
Cultural Competence	The ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact across cultures. It includes awareness of one’s own biases and the ability to adapt practice to diverse contexts.
From Lament to Action	A 2021 report from the Church of England’s Anti-Racism Taskforce. It outlines theological and structural commitments to address racism within church life.

Intersectionality	A framework that examines how different aspects of identity (e.g., race, gender, religion, disability) interact to shape lived experience, privilege, and oppression. Coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw.
Liberation Theology	A theological tradition that interprets the Gospel through the perspective of the oppressed, emphasising justice, human dignity, and the transformation of unjust structures.
Microaggressions	Subtle, often unintentional, comments or actions that marginalise individuals based on race or identity. Though small in isolation, their cumulative effect can be damaging.
The Five Marks of Mission	A framework used by the Anglican Communion to articulate the Church's mission. The fourth mark – “To transform unjust structures of society” – is central to racial justice work.

Structural Racism	The system of public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and norms that reinforce and perpetuate racial inequity. Often embedded in governance and theology.
Whistleblowing	The act of reporting wrongdoing or discriminatory practices within an organisation. A robust and safe whistleblowing process is essential for accountability and trust.
BEMSCA	Bath Ethnic Minority Senior Citizen Association

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