

York's first Anti-Racism summit, hosted by the Archbishop of York, saw key figures and multi-faith leaders gather on 24 January.

Hosted at Bishopthorpe Palace in partnership with the grassroots campaign organisation, [Inclusive Equal Rights UK](#) (IERUK), around 60 leaders attended.

The summit included representatives from the Church of England, York Mosque and Islamic Centre, the York Liberal Jewish Community, York Travellers' Trust and Refugee Action York.



In July 2023, the City of York council's executive approved a city-wide five-year anti-racism and inclusion strategy, developed by IERUK. The ambition is for York to be the first anti-racism city in the north.

Haddy Njie, chair of Inclusive Equal Rights UK, was instrumental in raising the issue of racism in York, after experiencing racism in the city. She put forward the motion to make York the north's first anti-racist city, following similar initiatives in Oxford, Brighton, and Derby.

Haddy Njie said: "This summit is an important next step in our ambition to make York an anti-racist and inclusive city. Despite a wave of support for our strategy last year, we also saw threatening and racist responses, which highlights how urgent constructive dialogue and engagement is to ensure we make a lasting stand and promote inclusivity. All who attended the summit will leave with actionable solutions. Only by working together, can we make a lasting difference."

Police data shows instances of recorded racial hate crimes in York and North Yorkshire saw a 239 per cent increase since 2012, rising from 152 incidents to 515 in 2020. Across the UK, in December, police recorded a record rise in religious hate crimes after the Israel-Gaza war.

The Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, who co-hosted the event and chaired a Q&A session, said: "The Anti-Racism summit at Bishopthorpe Palace stands as a testament to our commitment to justice and equality. It is a collective call to action, reminding us that the eradication of racism and hate in our society is not just a goal, but a moral imperative, essential for the flourishing of all humanity."

Also attending the summit were leaders of North Yorkshire Council, Cllr Carl Les OBE, and the City of York Council, Cllr Clare Douglas, as well as the Lord Lieutenant for North Yorkshire, Jo Ropner, and the Rt Hon Lord Mayor of York, Chris Cullwick.

Figures from the education sector attended from York St John University, Askham Bryan College, and University of York, as well as representatives from North Yorkshire Police. Business leaders from York BID and the CEO of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Paul Kissack, also took part.

The summit coincided with the UN Education and Peace Day, and aimed to foster dialogue, understanding, and cooperation to help combat the pressing issues of racism and hate.

At the event, IERUK introduced the Anti-Racism Strategic Task Force leading the implementation of the anti-racism and inclusion strategy for the City of York. The strategy includes 12 action points for policing reform, including reviewing Stop and Search policies, and establishing unconscious bias training. It also focuses on healthcare, housing, and social welfare, to help make access to infrastructure and opportunities in York more equitable.

To sign the anti-racism pledge, go to: <https://www.ieruk.org.uk/pledge>

About IERUK

In July 2023, the City of York councillors approved the motion: [Making York an Anti-Racist and Inclusive City](#). It became the first city in the North of England to set this aspiration and commitment to tackle the rising issues of racism and discrimination.

Following the passing of the motion, Inclusive Equal Rights UK 3.0 (IERUK) was formed to fulfil the mandate of the motion with an overarching objective to develop a long-term anti-racism and inclusion strategy and action plan.

For more info, visit: <https://www.ieruk.org.uk/>

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