V3 approved by the NCCPE on 09/10/2026

Blueprint

Co-development of NCCPE resource for racially equitable public engagement

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Executive summary

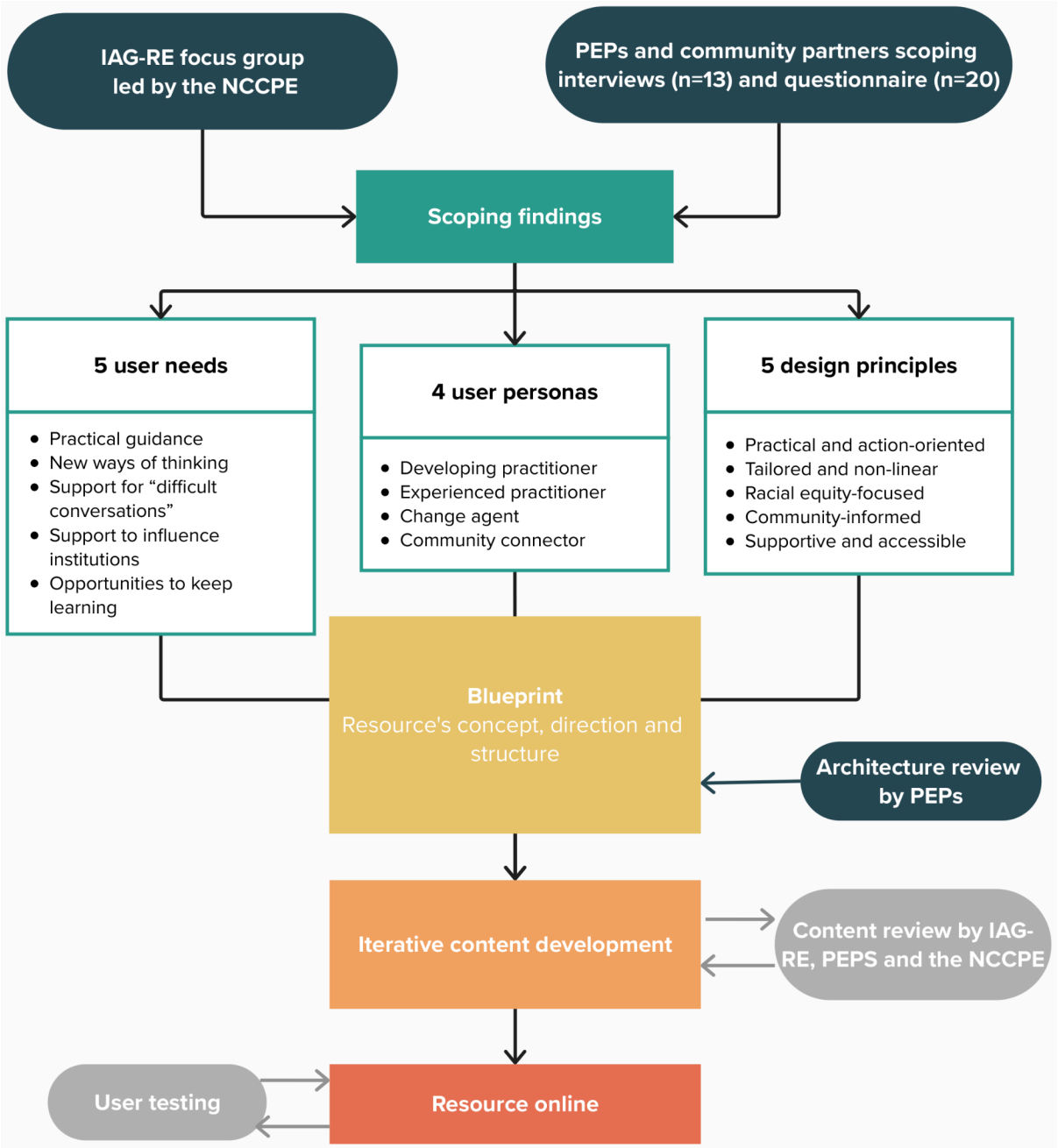
The National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE), in collaboration with University College London (UCL), is creating an online resource to help Public Engagement Professionals (PEPs) promote racially equitable public engagement in UK higher education and research institutions.

The blueprint sets out the concept, structure, and content hierarchy of the resource, based on input from a focus group composed of the NCCPE Inclusion Advisory Group Racial Equity (IAG-RE), semi-structured interviews (n=13, July 2026), an online scoping questionnaire (n=20, July 2026), and an architecture review questionnaire (n=23, September 2026).

In brief

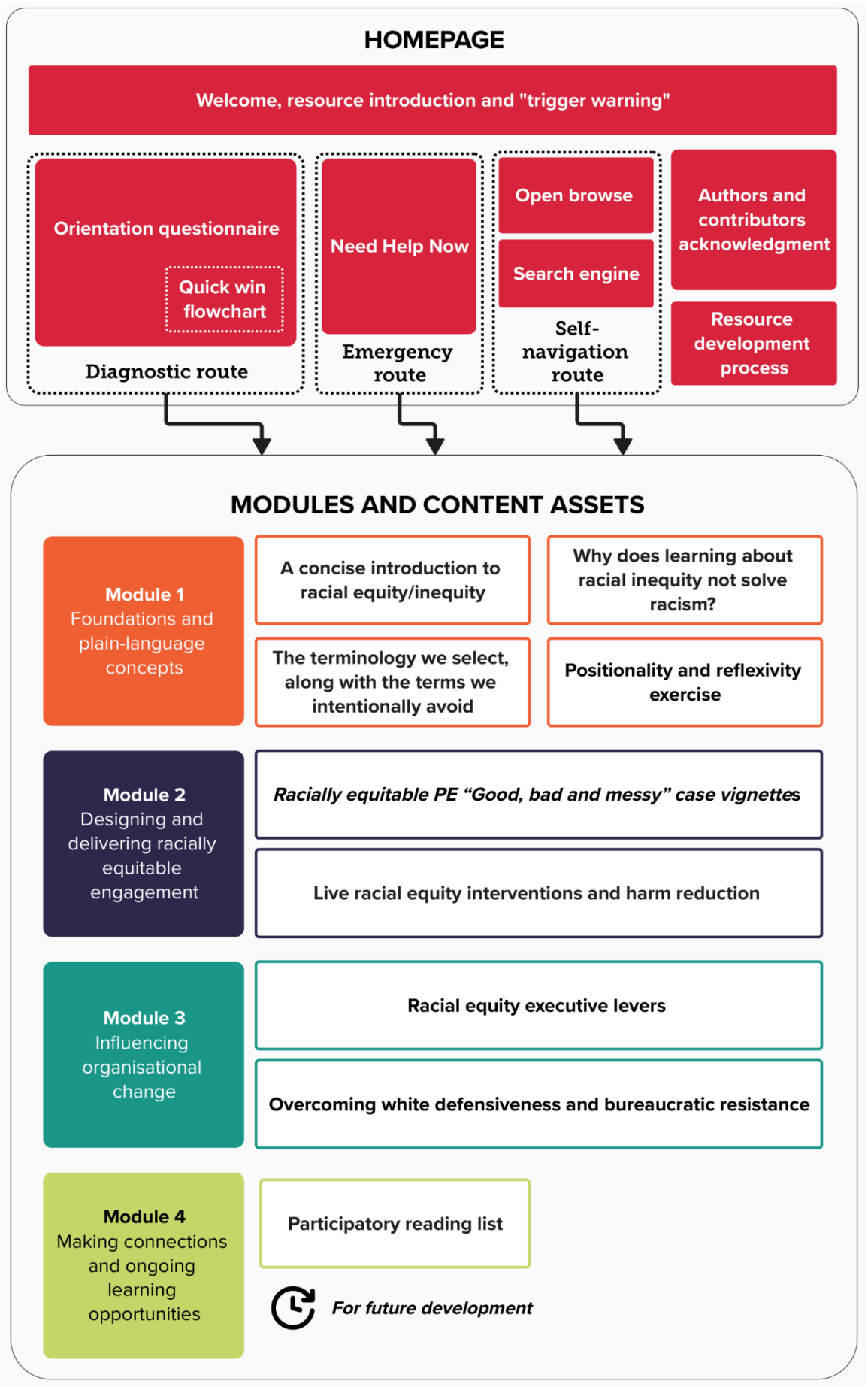
Purpose	This resource aims to advance racial equity in public engagement across UK higher education by shifting from awareness to action, diversity to equity, consultation to partnership, representation to power sharing, and isolated projects to lasting institutional change.
User personas	Developing practitioners, experienced practitioners, change agents, and community connectors.
Core architecture	Triple-Navigation Homepage featuring a 2-minute Orientation Diagnostic, a "Need Help Now" Emergency Route, and an Open Search/Browse route.
Module organisation	**Module 1:** Foundations and plain-language concepts **Module 2:** Designing and delivering racially equitable public engagement **Module 3:** Influencing organisational change **Module 4:** Making connections and ongoing learning
Risk mitigation	Layered navigation reduces cognitive load. The 'Quick Wins' flowchart addresses superficial compliance, while executive memos shift responsibility from individuals to institutions.

Our process



Resource architecture

The blueprint employs a layered, multi-entry site architecture:


HOMEPAGE
Welcome, resource introduction and "trigger warning"
Orientation questionnaire
Quick win flowchart
Diagnostic route
Need Help Now
Emergency route
Open browse
Search engine
Self-navigation route
Authors and contributors acknowledgment
Resource development process
MODULES AND CONTENT ASSETS
Module 1
Foundations and plain-language concepts
A concise introduction to racial equity/inequity
Why does learning about racial inequity not solve racism?
The terminology we select, along with the terms we intentionally avoid
Positionality and reflexivity exercise
Module 2
Designing and delivering racially equitable engagement
Racially equitable PE "Good, bad and messy" case vignettes
Live racial equity interventions and harm reduction
Module 3
Influencing organisational change
Racial equity executive levers
Overcoming white defensiveness and bureaucratic resistance
Module 4
Making connections and ongoing learning opportunities
Participatory reading list
For future development

01 Resource vision and principles

This evidence-informed blueprint establishes the concept, architecture and content hierarchy for the NCCPE online resource on racially equitable public engagement for Public Engagement Professionals (PEPs).

It draws on insights from:

- 1 **focus group** led by the NCCPE on 10 March 2025 with the NCCPE Inclusion Advisory Group Racial Equity (IAG-RE) members with knowledge and experience relating to racial equality within public engagement, public participation and/or public involvement
- 13 **semi-structured interviews** from 20 to 24 July 2026 with practitioners working in public engagement, research, and community settings
- 1 **scoping online questionnaire** completed by 20 practitioners in July 2026
- and **feedback** from 23 practitioners who reviewed the first version of the resource architecture, developed based on the scoping, in August and September 2026.

The first version of the resource, scheduled for publication in November 2026, will focus solely on the essential elements that can be developed within the current resource constraints.

This blueprint prioritises the content development as follows:

- **Essential (High priority)**: Must-have elements that will be produced for the November launch.
- **Good addition (Medium priority)**: Elements that would significantly improve the overall quality of the resource but cannot be developed within the current available resources or time constraints.
- **Nice to have (Low priority)**: Additional features that would be beneficial.

This prioritisation is informed by user needs, the guiding principles established during the scoping phase, and the opportunity to signpost to other NCCPE or external resources.

Purpose of the resource

This resource aims to advance racial equity in public engagement across UK higher education by shifting from awareness to action, diversity to equity, consultation to partnership, representation to power sharing, and isolated projects to lasting institutional change.

Evidence from previous phases

- **Scoping interview:** Scoping interviewees noted that current HE engagement frameworks privilege institutional compliance over community benefit, leading to widespread tokenism and community distrust.
- **Architecture review feedback:** Architecture review respondents overwhelmingly demanded an institutional lever tool that challenges administrative barriers and does not place the burden of change solely on individual practitioners.

Our vision for the resource

The resource is built around a central question: **How can practitioners in public engagement design and sustain racially equitable public engagement when the systems they work within (re)produce racial inequity?**

Our vision for this resource is a living[1], actionable, supportive, practitioner- and community-informed resource that moves higher education and research practitioners from theoretical awareness of racial equity to concrete, everyday racially equitable public engagement practice and institutional change.

Evidence from the draft architecture review

- **Practicality over theory:** Users strongly prefer a focused, deep, highly practical tool over an expansive, shallow overview.
    - 52% prioritised practicality (immediate application) first.
    - 74% ranked breadth last (3rd rank over practicality and depth).

[1] The "living" dimension of the resource is not included in the scope of the worked commissioned by the NCCPE. We address our recommendations for the post launch at the end of this document.

- **Action-oriented:** As one respondent noted, the primary goal is to help users *"take real action in practice — not just learn concepts."*
- **Overall validation:** The proposed direction is strongly supported, with 73.9% of users rating the draft architecture highly.

Intended users and personas

The previous phases clarified the intended resource users and personas.

The **main target is PEPs working in higher education and research institutions in the UK**[2], regardless of prior experience with racial equity practice and the full range of public engagement practice. The scoping identified four main user personas:

- **Persona 1: Developing practitioner**
  A practitioner, regardless of public engagement experience, who is relatively new to applying racial equity approaches to public engagement.
- **Persona 2: Experienced practitioner**
  A practitioner with established racially equitable engagement practice who wants to deepen their approach and support others.
- **Persona 3: Change agent**
  A practitioner seeking to influence organisational culture, policy or systems.
- **Persona 4: Community connector**
  A practitioner, community member, organisation, or individual with hands-on experience facilitating public engagement partnerships between universities and the public.

Evidence from the draft architecture review

Relevance to personas

[2] Secondary audiences can include PEPs from the NHS, science museums, charities, or funders; research support staff, such as members of DEI teams, institutional leaders, and community partners who influence or take part in public engagement; and others who support or fund institutional change.

- Almost half of respondents (48%) identify as Community Connectors working at the intersection of community and research.
- The cohort is well split across experience levels, with Experienced Practitioners looking to deepen their work (39%), Developing Practitioners early in their journey (35%), and Change Agents focused on institutional systems (30%).

Risks mitigation

PEPs identified four major risks during previous phases:

- **Overwhelm and cognitive load:** A huge, unwieldy, academic site that practitioners bookmark and never revisit.
- **Conceptual vs practical disconnect:** Spending too much time defining terms without giving users actionable tools for "tomorrow morning."
- **The "Tick-box" risk:** Allowing institutions to use the resource as a superficial badge of honour without changing real power or funding structures.
- **Individual burden vs institutional accountability:** Placing the heavy burden of changing institutional culture onto low-power, junior, or racially marginalised staff without providing top-down executive levers.

Identified risk	How the blueprint addresses it

Overwhelm and cognitive load	• **Layered architecture:** Use of accordion menus, short collapsible text blocks and pop-up glossaries[3]. • **Homepage orientation/diagnostic questionnaire[4]:** A 2-minute Xerte decision-tree questionnaire mapping user needs, project stage, and immediate friction points directly to 1–3 relevant content assets. • **Plain-language theoretical content:** Simplify technical jargon; add plain-language definitions, glossaries, and offer a *"Read the theory behind this"* link to more practical content assets. • **Targeted theoretical foundations:** Where explicit grounding is necessary, dedicated sections introduce key racial justice theories alongside examples.
Conceptual vs practical disconnect	• **Action checklists[5]:** Each module will feature a checklist designed for immediate, next-day execution. • **Practical content assets:** Downloadable and editable tools. • **Failure analysis:** "The good, the bad, and the messy" case vignettes showing examples of failures, friction, and reparation.
The "tick-box" risk	• **"Quick wins" diagnostic flowchart[6]:** Intercepts users seeking superficial quick fixes and pivots immediately to reflexive questions that interrogate power preservation and institutional urgency. • **Organisational readiness audits:** Fact-based self-assessments that measure structural power distribution and resource allocation.
Wellbeing, individual burden	• **Executive leverage tools:** Module 3 provides strategic memos and formal approaches

[3] The technical feasibility is currently under review by the NCCPE. If this core mechanism cannot be implemented, the layout of the resource will need to be re-architected to avoid page density.
[4] Prototype available in the annexes.
[5] Prototype available in the annexes.
[6] Prototype available in the annexes.

and institutional accountability	explicitly linking racial equity to major sector drivers (REF/KEF/TEF/Athena Swan). • **Care and backlash protocols:** Dedicated protection frameworks, escalation/de-escalation/retreat scripts, and peer-debriefing structures designed to shield practitioners racialised as minorities from emotional labour, isolation, and burnout.

Content not developed for this resource

Feedback from the architecture review showed that 48% of reviewers wanted two content packages to help with key operational challenges. These are not only about racial equity, but also cover broader equity issues and specific public engagement approaches:

1. **Community partnership template/toolkit:** Standard partnership agreement templates, shared Intellectual Property (IP) agreements, and co-production governance frameworks to protect community ownership.
2. **Administrative relief toolkit:** Practical checklists for accessible event design, easier community reimbursement processes, and plain-language consent forms that avoid institutional delays.

We want to keep the focus on racial equity, and instead of only creating new toolkits or content, we will guide users to existing resources on the NCCPE platform or other relevant field sources. When these resources lack a racial equity lens, we will walk users through how to use these specific resources in a racial equity way or in the context of a higher education institution.

We will choose resources based on their relevance, accessibility, evidence of impact, and how well they reflect racial equity and inclusive public engagement. Our signposting will curate these resources, explain how they connect to racial equity, and offer guidance on how to use them well. Signpost content can include different media: articles, books, video, podcasts and poems.

02 Four-module architecture

The resource is structured as a practical, navigable and hands-on environment. Users should be able to enter at different points depending on their role, experience, immediate task and level of confidence.

A central diagnostic tool helps users identify relevant development areas and confidently guide their next steps. In addition, specific sections of the resource will acknowledge its authors and contributors and be transparent about how the resource was developed.

Homepage: triple-navigation entry points

A homepage that guides users toward tailored resources based on context without triggering imposter syndrome.

1. **Orientation questionnaire / Diagnostic Route (High priority):** A 2-minute questionnaire mapping user context to 1 to 3 tailored modules and/or practical tools

2. **Need Help Now / Emergency route (High priority)**: Rapid access to scripts, escalation/de-escalation tools, and safety protocols to address acute friction or harm.

3. **Open browse and search engine[7] / Self-navigation route (Medium priority)**: Keyword and category search for experienced practitioners to access tools directly.

Evidence from the draft architecture review

- **Orientation:** 87% of architecture review respondents requested a 2-minute orientation diagnostic to prevent information overload and avoid triggering imposter syndrome.

  Respondents confirmed that non-judgmental, transparent recommendations encourage adoption while preserving user agency and allowing them to navigate freely.

[7] The technical feasibility is currently under review by the NCCPE.

- **Rapid-access support:** Requested by questionnaire respondents who faced active harm or 'microaggressions' during project delivery.
- **Free access:** Validated by 65% of questionnaire respondents who wanted quick reference access.

Module 1: Foundations and plain-language concepts

High priority

- **Focus:** Structural racism in higher education, institutional power dynamics, privilege, and intersectionality (race intersecting with class, gender, disability, ...). We will not assume prior knowledge regarding racialization, racism, or bystanderism.
- **Content:**
  - ***A concise introduction to racial equity/inequity*** **(High priority)*:*** defining core concepts: Race, racialisation, structural racism, racial equity, anti-racism, and distinguishing racial equity from broader EDI initiatives
  - ***The terminology we select, along with the terms we intentionally avoid*** **and why(High priority):** (eg., racialised as minority/majority, global majority vs people of colour, non-white, BIPOC)
  - ***Why does only learning about racial inequity not solve racism?*** **(High priority):** Identifying white-centrism as a non-neutral baseline, naming racism without overburdening racialised staff, navigating defensiveness but also empathy and compassion.
  - ***Positionality and reflexivity exercise*** **(High priority)**: Practical activity to map professional positionality, navigate privilege, and recognise how it shapes practice.
  - ***Colonial legacies in Higher Education*** **(Medium priority)**: Historical research cultures, extractive knowledge practices, and valuing minoritised community knowledge.
  - ***Structural and institutional power*** **(Medium priority)*:*** How administrative systems reproduce inequality,

power dynamics in decision-making, and individual-institutional intersections.

- **Signpost content:**
  - Unconscious bias
  - Decolonisation approaches
  - Anti-racist actions and frameworks

Evidence from the draft architecture review

The architecture review highlighted severe user fatigue with academic language; 87% of feedback emphasised plain-language definitions and visual conceptual models to ensure accessibility for non-specialist HE staff.

Module 2: Designing and delivering racially equitable engagement

High priority

- **Focus:** Relational public engagement cycle, trauma-informed facilitation, managing harm.
- **Content:**
  - ***Live racial equity interventions and harm reduction* (High priority):** Response mechanisms, de-escalation scripts, and decision trees for interrupting white fragility, defensive tone-policing, and racial harm in real time.
  - ***Racially equitable PE "Good, bad and messy" case vignettes* (High priority)**: Annotated narrative case studies examining racial power dynamics, institutional failure points, white defensiveness, and processes of community repair.
  - **Racial accountability and community repair (Medium priority):** Mechanisms to ensure public engagement outcomes directly benefit communities racialised as minorities.
  - ***Trauma-informed and racially equitable public engagement* (Medium priority):** Protocols explicitly designed to protect Global Majority participants from

racial traumatisation, harm, and performative "story extraction" during public engagement.

    - ***Embedding learning*** **(Medium priority)**: Sharing practice across teams, facilitating conversations about race, addressing dominant norms, creating local communities of practice, and ensuring project continuity during staff turnover.

- **Signpost content:**
    - Equitable planning, recruitment and participation
    - Equitable designing and facilitating
    - Evaluation, feedback and complaints
    - Working equitably with communities (fair agreement, equitable pay, and IP management)

Evidence from the consultation process

- Scoping interviews identified the grant application phase and community recruitment as primary structural failure points where power imbalances occur.
- Questionnaire participants requested immediate crisis intervention scripts for live sessions.

Module 3: Influencing organisational change

High priority

- **Focus:** Navigating institutional bureaucracy, addressing resistance, making cases linked to sector levers, conducting accountability audits and pushing back on institutional urgency.

- **Content:**
    - ***Racial equity executive levers + case vignette "setting your team up for failure"*** **(High priority)*:*** How to align racial equity metrics directly to university drivers (REF, KEF, TEF, Equality Act Public Sector Equality Duty, Athena Swan) to force leadership accountability beyond performative diversity statements.

    - ***Overcoming defensiveness and bureaucratic resistance*** **(High priority):** Listing common institutional excuses alongside evidence-based racial

equity counter-arguments, legal obligations, and policy references.

    - ***Change agents protection and backlash protocol* (High priority):** Managing emotional labour, workload allocation, compassion fatigue, and isolation among minoritised staff and legal/institutional defence against harassment for staff
    - ***Institutional audits* (Medium priority):** Structural racism and power distribution diagnostic
    - ***Organisational change case vignettes* (Medium priority):** Recognising structural barriers required to shift responsibility from individual champions to institutional structures
    - ***Sustaining and influencing change* (Medium priority):** Embedding responsibility across departments, establishing accountability metrics, and shielding individual champions from burnout.

- **Signpost content**
    - Support researchers facing external harassment campaigns.
    - Workplace rights advice (eg. Acas)

Evidence from the consultation process

- Scoping interviews noted that individual racial equity efforts consistently fail without executive alignment and leverage against sector evaluation metrics like REF and KEF.
- Interviewees universally highlighted this to mitigate severe emotional labour, isolation, and burnout among PEPs racialised as minorities.
- Demand for toolkits simplifying procurement, finance, and community reimbursement.

Module 4: Making connections and ongoing learning opportunities

- **Focus:** Building communities of practice, ongoing reflexivity prompts, sector mapping, and peer debriefing structures.
- **Content:**

- Participatory reading list**(High priority)**[8]
- Communities of Practice and peer networks **(Medium priority)**
- Interactive UK racial equity practice maps **(Medium priority)**
- Downloadable self-reflection workbooks **(Medium priority)**
- Short audio practitioner reflections **(Medium priority)**
- Living repository/ Case study database **(Low priority)**

Evidence from the consultation process

- Scoping interviews highlighted high rates of practitioner isolation among racially minoritised staff, calling for structured peer support networks.

Module 4 will be functionally incomplete at the November launch, given our current time and resource constraints, and will consist of a "Participatory reading list". We see Module 4 as a full hub for peer networks and learning that the NCCPE can develop and maintain.

[8] The only asset of Module 4 that we can produce within the resource and time limitation.

03 User pathways and interaction model

The resource avoids a one-size-fits-all pathway and offers tailored, non-linear journeys based on the four identified personas, guided by the Orientation/Diagnostic questionnaire.

Persona user journeys

1. **Developing practitioner**
   A practitioner, regardless of public engagement experience, who is relatively new to applying racial equity approaches and wants to move safely from uncertainty to confident action without being overwhelmed.

   - ***Entry and motivation:*** Enters via the 2-minute Orientation questionnaire seeking plain-language concepts and structured, non-academic guidance to build confidence without triggering imposter syndrome.

   - ***Navigation pathway:*** Starts in Module 1, progresses to the Module 2, and uses curated, signposted toolkits.

   - ***Core interaction:***
   - Completes the *Positionality and reflexivity exercise* to map institutional privilege.
   - Uses the *terminology selection guide* to understand why white-centrism is a non-neutral baseline.
   - Refers to Module 2 signposted content for equitable recruitment and budgeting.

   - ***Outcome:*** Moves from hesitation to racial equity practice, equipped with plain-language definitions, practical checklists, and foundational confidence to run racially equitable projects.

2. **Experienced practitioner**
   A practitioner with established engagement experience seeking advanced tools to handle live friction, prevent racial harm, mentor colleagues, and protect community relationships.

- ***Entry and motivation:*** Bypasses introductory material using the Open browse / Search engine or enters via the "Need Help Now" Emergency route during acute project friction or instances of racial harm.
- ***Navigation pathway:*** Enters directly into Module 2 and connects to Module 4.
- ***Core interaction:***
  - Deploys *live racial equity intervention* scripts to interrupt white fragility and tone-policing during live sessions.
  - Applies *Trauma-Informed and culturally safe public engagement protocols* to prevent performative "story extraction".
  - Analyses *"Good, Bad, and Messy" case vignettes* to navigate failure points and community repair.
- ***Outcome:*** De-escalates real-time racial harm, embeds culturally safe facilitation, and accesses peer debriefing structures to mitigate emotional exhaustion and burnout.

3. **Change agent**
   A practitioner or senior staff member seeking to dismantle institutional whiteness, dismantle bureaucratic roadblocks, and leverage strategic sector drivers for systemic accountability.

70% of scoped users identified institutional change as their primary need

- ***Entry and motivation:*** Arrives seeking executive leverage tools, racial equity negotiation frameworks, and solutions to rigid institutional barriers.
- ***Navigation pathway:*** Enters directly through Module 3
- ***Core interaction:***
  - Downloads *Racial equity executive levers* (strategic memos) linking racial equity metrics directly to REF, KEF, TEF, and the Public Sector Equality Duty.
  - Runs the *Overcoming defensiveness and bureaucratic resistance* matrix to counter institutional deflections.

- Implements the *Change agents protection and backlash protocol* to protect staff and partners racialised as minorities.

- **Outcome:** Secures top-down executive alignment, restructures administrative barriers, and shifts the burden of racial equity work from individual champions to institutional structures.

4. **Community connector**
   A community partner, practitioner, researcher, or organisation working at the interface of higher education and communities racialised as minorities to protect community interests, enforce fair pay, and hold universities accountable.

   - **Entry and motivation:** Seeks transparent terms of engagement, non-extractive financial models, and mechanisms to hold HE institutions accountable to their equity commitments.

   - **Navigation pathway:** Directly accesses practical resources in Module 2 and accountability tools in Module 3

   - **Core interaction:**

   - Utilises signposted content to ensure community knowledge is not extracted or exploited.

   - Runs the Overcoming defensiveness and bureaucratic resistance matrix to counter institutional deflections.

   - Implement the reflection of *Why does only learning about racial inequity not solve racism?*.

   - **Outcome:** Enforces fair financial compensation, protects community IP, and holds higher education institutions accountable to anti-racist power-sharing commitments.

04 Implementation prioritisation

To ensure effective delivery for the November 2026 launch within existing resource constraints, we evaluated content and assets against user demand and Implementation effort.

Asset deliverables table

Priority	Asset	User demand	Conception effort for resource team	Release target
High	**Diagnostic route** (Orientation questionnaire)	High	Medium	Version 1 (Nov 2026)
High	**Emergency route** ("Need Help Now"):	High	Medium	Version 1 (Nov 2026)
High	**"Open Browse / Search Engine" route**	High	Medium	Version 1 (Nov 2026)
High	**Resource process and list of contributors**	High	Medium	
High	**Action checklists for modules 1, 2 and 3**	High	Low	Version 1 (Nov 2026)

High	**Module 1:** A concise introduction to racial equity/inequity	High	Medium	Version 1 (Nov 2026)
High	**Module 1:** The terminology we select, along with the terms we intentionally avoid	High	Medium	Version 1 (Nov 2026)
High	**Module 1:** Why does learning about racial inequity not solve racism?	High	High	Version 1 (Nov 2026)
High	**Module 1:** Positionality and reflexivity exercise	High	Medium	Version 1 (Nov 2026)
High	**Module 1:** Signpost content on Anti-racist actions and frameworks, unconscious bias and decolonisation approaches	Medium	Low	Version 1 (Nov 2026)
High	**Module 2:** Racially equitable PE “Good, bad, and messy” case vignettes	High	High	Version 1 (Nov 2026)
High	**Module 2:** Live racial equity interventions and harm reduction	High	Medium	Version 1 (Nov 2026)
High	**Module 2:** Equitable public and community engagement signpost	High	Low	Version 1 (Nov 2026)
High	**Module 3:** Racial equity executive levers	High	High	Version 1 (Nov 2026)
High	**Module 3:** Overcoming white defensiveness and bureaucratic resistance	High	Medium	Version 1 (Nov 2026)

High	**Module 3:** Change agents protection and backlash protocol	High	Low	Version 1 (Nov 2026)
High	**Module 3:** Signpost content on workplace rights, and support researchers facing external harassment campaigns	High	Low	Version 1 (Nov 2026)
High	**Module 4:** Participatory reading list	Medium	Low	Version 1 (Nov 2026)
Medium	**Module 2:** Trauma-informed and racially equitable public engagement	High	High	Future development
Medium	**Module 3:** Institutional audits	High	Medium	Future development
Medium	**Module 3:** Organisational change case vignettes	High	High	Future development
Medium	**Module 4:** Communities of Practice and peer networks	High	High	Future development
Medium	**Module 1:** Colonial legacies in HE	Medium	Medium	Future development
Medium	**Module 1:** Structural and institutional power	Medium	Medium	Future development
Medium	**Module 2:** Racial accountability and community repair	Medium	Medium	Future development
Medium	**Module 2:** Embedding learning	Medium	Medium	Future development
Medium	**Module 3:** Sustaining change	Medium	Medium	Future development
Medium	**Module 4:** Short audio practitioner	High	High	Future development

	reflections			
Low	**Module 4:** Self-reflection workbooks	Medium	Medium	Future development
Low	**Module 4:** Living repository	Low	Low	Future development
Low	**Module 4:** Interactive practice mapping	Medium	High	Future development

Strategic priorities

To ensure effective delivery for the November 2026 launch within existing resource constraints, we will focus on developing the following strategic priorities first, with high user demand and transformative impact:

- Diagnostic route (Orientation questionnaire)
- Emergency route ("Need Help Now"):
- Each module action checklist
- Module 1: The terminology we select, along with the terms we intentionally avoid
- Module 1: Why does learning about racial inequity not solve racism?
- Module 1: Positionality and reflexivity exercise
- Module 2: Live racial equity interventions and harm reduction
- Module 3: Racial equity executive levers
- Module 4: Participatory reading list (launching a short bibliography)

05 Limitations and considerations

While this blueprint provides a structured racial equity framework for embedding racially equitable practice across UK higher education, several key limitations and operational considerations must be acknowledged to ensure realistic implementation and sustainable impact:

- **Institutional inertia and administrative constraints:** although the resource offers strategies for overcoming administrative obstacles, its effectiveness depends largely on institutions' willingness to change rigid procurement, financial, and legal policies.
- **Risk of performative compliance:** if accessible toolkits, checklists, and templates are provided, organisations or PEPs might regard racial equity practice as a shallow "tick-box" activity rather than committing to ongoing structural reform and power-sharing. Even with continuous reflexivity mechanisms to reduce this risk, they cannot entirely prevent it.
- **Emotional labour and burnout among PEPs racialised as minorities:** In our experience, PEPs racialised as minorities still end up carrying the majority of the emotional weight when it comes to changing the institutional culture. The resource alone is not sufficient to eliminate systemic racism unless there is specific institutional funding, protection of workload, and formal support from leadership.
- **Sector heterogeneity and context sensitivity:*** Sectors vary widely, and public engagement is highly context-sensitive across UK higher education institutions. As a result, PEPs will need to adapt guidelines, templates, and engagement protocols locally.
- **Evolution of sector drivers:** The strategic alignment with sector evaluation frameworks (such as REF, KEF, TEF, and Athena Swan) is based on continued policy support for equity-focused engagement; if there are changes to national policy, funding priorities, or higher education regulatory

standards, then the executive levers and business case frameworks of the resource will need to be updated regularly.

To address these considerations, the resource should not be seen as a fixed solution but as a dynamic, living infrastructure that requires continuous community accountability, institutional investment, and a firm commitment to combating racism throughout the higher education sector.

Appendix

Appendix A: Orientation questionnaire prototype

Appendix B: Quick wins flowchart

Appendix C: Module 1: Action checklist prototype

Appendix D: Architecture review summary

Appendix A: Orientation questionnaire prototype

Homepage orientation/diagnostic questionnaire: A 2-minute Xerte decision-tree questionnaire mapping user needs, project stage, and immediate friction points directly to 1–3 relevant content assets.

> *We will refine content prototypes during the content development phase, after the blueprint is approved. They will be reviewed by users before implementation. These prototypes are intended to give you a sense of the tone and approach we will adopt while developing the final content.*

Start → **Step 1 [QUESTION] What main challenge or situation are you facing today?**

- Step 1 [ANSWER A] **You are dealing with ongoing issues, racial harm, or a serious problem right now:**
    - ↳ Direct to Emergency Route (Need Help Now)
- Step 1 [ANSWER B] **You want to understand the basics of race equity, explore key concepts, or safely learn the terminology:**
    - ↳ Direct to Module 1
- Step 1 [ANSWER C] **You are involved in planning, carrying out, or assessing a public engagement project:**
    - ↳ Proceed to Step 2
- Step 1 [ANSWER D] **You need to clear up administrative issues, tackle resistance in your organisation, or get support from leadership:**
    - ↳ Direct to Module 3
- Step 1 [ANSWER E] **You are looking for quick solutions or immediate tasks to tackle:**
    - ↳ Direct to "Quick wins"

Step 2 [QUESTION] Which stage of the project are you currently working on?

- Step 2 [ANSWER A] **Planning and recruitment:**
    - ↳ Module 2 (Safety and allyship) alongside signposted external partnership templates.
- Step 2 [ANSWER B] **Live delivery and facilitation:**
    - ↳ Direct to Module 2
- Step 2 [ANSWER C] **Evaluation and reporting back:**
    - ↳ Direction: Direct to Module 2 and Module 4

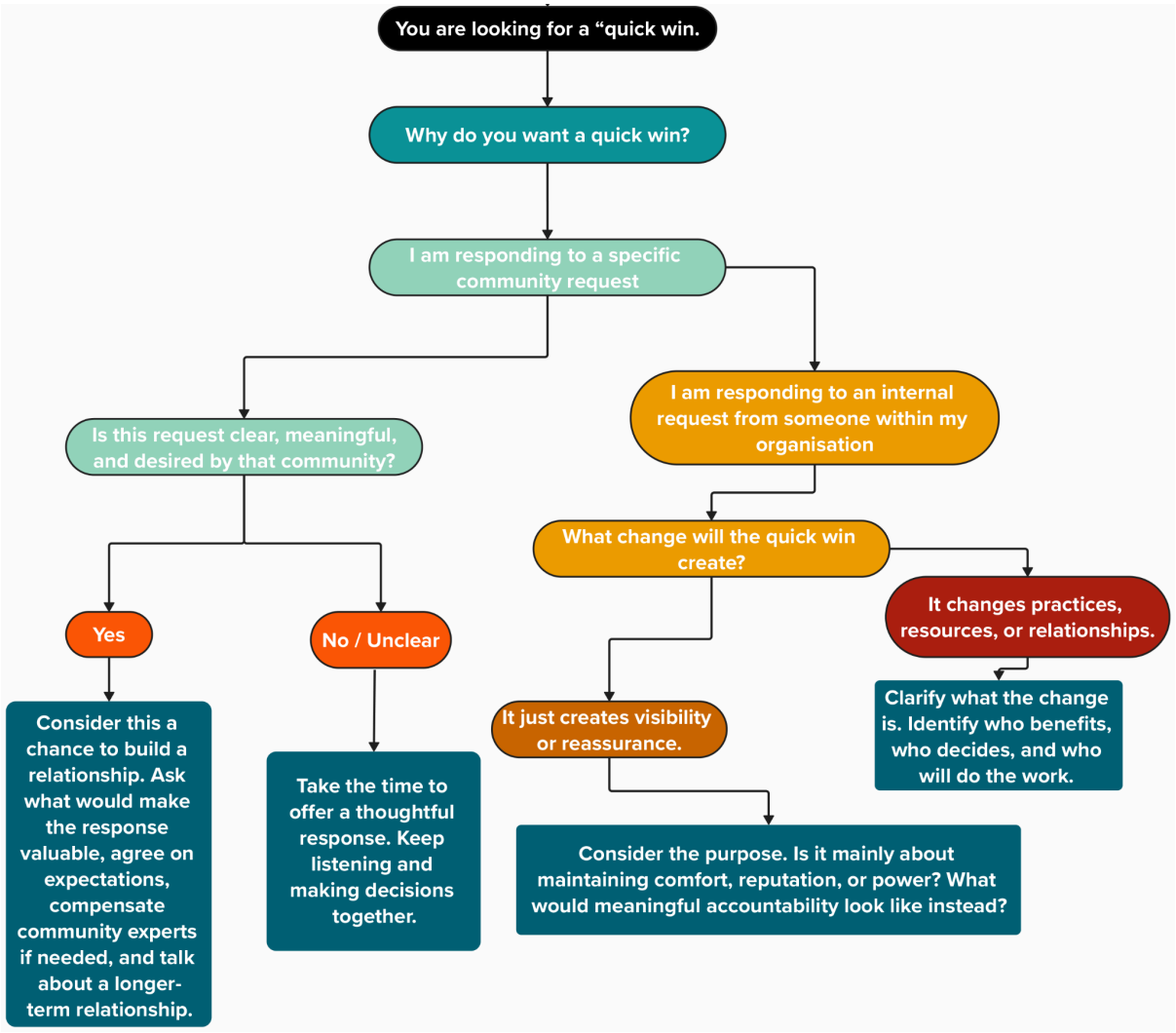
Example of tailored outcome pathway and rationale:

- **Project planning pathway:** Connects users directly to Module 2 and curated external resources.
- **Live facilitation pathway:** Connects users to Module 2 Live racial equity interventions and harm reduction.
- **Systems and institutional pathway:** Connects users to Module 3 strategic memos to leverage REF/KEF sector drivers.

Appendix B: Quick wins flowchart prototype

"Quick wins" diagnostic flowchart intercepts users seeking superficial quick fixes, pivoting immediately to reflexive questions that interrogate power preservation and institutional urgency.

We will refine content prototypes during the content development phase, after the blueprint is approved. They will be reviewed by users before implementation. These prototypes are intended to give you a sense of the tone and approach we will adopt while developing the final content.



Reflect before taking action; consider these questions:

- What harm could this "quick win" do to relationships, trust, or reputations?
- Who might have to do extra unpaid or emotional work?
- Whose knowledge or consent is missing?
- What happens after the action is taken?

Appendix C: Module 1 action checklist prototype

Each module will feature a checklist designed for immediate action.

> *We will refine content prototypes during the content development phase, after the blueprint is approved. They will be reviewed by users before implementation. These prototypes are intended to give you a sense of the tone and approach we will adopt while developing the final content.*

- ☐ **Check your team's language and terminology:** Go through your project proposal or team documents using the plain-language guide from Module 1. Replace vague "EDI" wording with specific terms like racial equity, racialisation, and structural racism.
- ☐ **Complete a positionality self-assessment:** Use the Module 1 reflexivity exercise to map your institutional power, privilege, and personal background before your next stakeholder meeting.
- ☐ **Identify power dynamics:** Find out who has authority over budgets and decision-making in your project as compared to who is doing unpaid advisory or emotional work.
- ☐ **Review white-centric assumptions:** Check your project's main assumptions to ensure that dominant norms and approaches are not seen as the default or neutral standard.
- ☐ **Differentiate between equity and diversity:** Ensure that your project goals are focused on changing power dynamics and resource distribution, not just counting how many individuals racialised as minorities are involved.

Appendix D: Architecture review summary

The architecture review evaluated the resource's draft blueprint.

- n=23
- UK-based higher education PEPs + community partners
- Strong familiarity with racially equitable practices

Methodology

- **Evidence base:** Built upon an initial scoping phase comprising 1 IAG-RE focus group (Inclusion Advisory Group), 13 semi-structured interviews, and an online questionnaire (n=20).
- **Evaluation Criteria:** Assessed across five core dimensions: Relevance, Practicality, Equity, Usability, and Feasibility.

Respondents' profile (n=23)

- **Public engagement Role:** 78.3% indicate public engagement is their main role (34.8%) or a significant responsibility (43.5%).
- **Prior knowledge:** Nearly 70% are fairly familiar (35%) or very familiar (35%) with racially equitable practices, with only 4% reporting no prior familiarity.
- **Institutional sector:** 60.9% work directly in higher education institutions, 26.1% are academics/researchers, and 13.0% are freelancers/consultants.
- **Community representation:** 26.1% serve as community researchers or community partners.
- **Geographic base:** 82.6% are located in England, 13.0% in the broader UK, and 4.3% in Scotland.

Relevance of personas

The survey validated the framework's four user personas, showing balanced engagement across practice levels:

- **Community connectors** (47.8%): Operating at the interface of research and community.
- **Experienced practitioners** (39.1%): Trying to deepen established practice.

- **Developing Practitioners** (34.8%): Early in their journey, requiring clear, step-by-step guidance.
- **Change agents** (30.4%): Focused on shifting institutional cultures and systems.

Major findings and core priorities

- **Overall impression:** Achieved a positive mean score of 4.09/5 (73.9% positive rating). 91.3% found the structure clear and 82.6% found it manageable.
- **Primary focus:** 74% prioritised actionable practice (39.1%) or systems change (34.8%) over foundational theory (13.0%). Practicality was ranked as the top design principle.
- **Architectural strengths:** Strong appreciation for pairing practical engagement steps with structural foundations (power, privilege, colonial legacies) and providing dual entry points (diagnostic tool vs direct browsing).
- **Key concerns:** High density and academic jargon risk alienating community partners. Respondents warned that self-diagnosis can be difficult without an explicit "novice" entry point, and noted that the framework overemphasises "barriers" relative to "enablers".
- **Top requested tools:** Respondents most often requested community partnership templates (47.8%), difficult conversation scripts (47.8%), and organisational change diagnostic tools (47.8%).