# Promoting Race Representation and Culture Change

## Report prepared for the North West Business Leadership Team (NWBLT)

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# Author's Foreword

## "Prejudice is a burden that confuses the past, threatens the future, and renders the present inaccessible."

**Maya Angelou.**

Professor Lilian Otaye-Ebede (PhD)

Recent figures show that very little progress has been made in changing the racial representation of the UK workforce across all levels but predominantly within senior leadership. More worrying is the heart-breaking experiences of racial discrimination reported by individuals and how these have negatively impacted on their sense of selves, progression, retention, health, and wellbeing. This report is a call to action.

The business case for having a racially representative workforce has been evidenced over and over again, however, as organisations we need to move beyond this and focus on justice, fairness, morality and inclusivity. This is the right thing to do. Our workplaces have to reflect our communities, and those working in our organisations need to feel a sense of belongingness and inclusion.

This is not an easy task and there are no quick fix methods to resolving these issues, as they are often times systemic. Hence a targeted, planned, structured, holistic and strategic approach is required.

Initiatives to tackle race discrimination, increase race representation and create inclusive cultures have not resulted in achieving the required change. This can partly be attributed to the lack of comprehensive measures which are aimed towards and underpinned by an anti-racist agenda. Anti-racism should lie at the heart of any Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) agenda, as initiatives that fail to underpin it are at risk of imminent failure. We therefore encourage organisations to focus keenly on anti-racism as a foundational and instrumental approach towards enabling systemic, behavioural and structural change, which will in turn have the desired, lasting impact.

Through this report we celebrate the pledge and commitment the North West Business Leadership Team has made towards taking a first step to engage with this discourse of creating a race representative and inclusive workforce. We learn from some examples of organisations that are making and have made concerted efforts towards changing the status quo. We showcase these examples, underpinned by scholarship, of initiatives that organisations have utilised in addressing the structural and systemic issues that have hindered race representation and inclusion. We re-iterate that for change to occur and last, a comprehensive anti-racist approach is required.
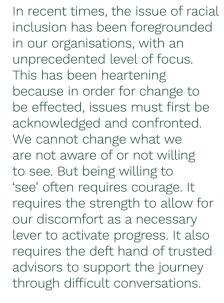
**Professor Lilian Otaye-Ebede (PhD)**
*Professor in HRM & OB, University of Liverpool*

# NWBLT Foreword

## "Embracing diversity is not just a moral imperative but also a driver of innovation, competitiveness and overall performance"

**Sharon Amesu**



Sharon Amesu, Co-Chair of the NWBLT's Diversity Drivers

In recent times, the issue of racial inclusion has been foregrounded in our organisations, with an unprecedented level of focus. This has been heartening because in order for change to be effected, issues must first be acknowledged and confronted. We cannot change what we are not aware of or not willing to see. But being willing to 'see' often requires courage. It requires the strength to allow for our discomfort as a necessary lever to activate progress. It also requires the deft hand of trusted advisors to support the journey through difficult conversations.

That's why I'm delighted that the members of the North West Business Leadership Team have demonstrated our steadfast commitment to leaning into this conversation and that critically, we have had the benefit of the knowledge, skills and experience of Professor Lillian Otaye-Ebede and Dr Samiah Shaffakat to support us in our collective endeavour.

They have demonstrated exemplary dedication and expertise in conducting extensive research, leveraging academic journals, and drawing from examples of organisations, to provide a comprehensive and thought-provoking analysis. Their outstanding work has unveiled the challenges faced in achieving racial diversity while showcasing the immense potential for growth and success through inclusive practices.

It is evident from their findings that some progress has been made and that this is ongoing. The report reveals significant pockets of hope.

However, it also acts a clarion call for us to avoid the allure of complacency, because racial diversity remains inadequate across every sector in our region.

It reminds us that we must continue to bolster our efforts to address a critical concern in today's organisational landscape: the pressing need for greater racial diversity and inclusivity, especially within senior leadership teams.

It compels us to see that the work to be done is great and that we cannot come down from building the walls of equity and justice.

It serves as a powerful call to action, revealing that embracing diversity is not just a moral imperative but also a driver of innovation, competitiveness, and overall performance.

I encourage all readers to share this report widely within your organisation and engage your teams in meaningful discussions.

I encourage us to see this as an opportunity for us to transform our region and leverage the greatest resource we hold, the rich diversity of our communities.

Finally I encourage us individually and collectively to be unrelenting in our pursuit to foster workplace cultures that celebrates diversity, inclusion, and belonging for all.

**Sharon Amesu**
*Co-chair of the NWBLT's Diversity Drivers and Director of SA Consulting*

# NWBLT Foreword

As highlighted by Professor Lilian Otaye-Ebede, increasing the representation of ethnic minorities across UK businesses has made slow progress. As a group we commissioned this report to help change this and provoke action across organisations. This is not simply about representation in its basic form, but the true meaning of inclusion, diversity and equity. We must focus on confronting biases while listening and learning from each other to set us on the right path.

Organisations should be guided by a strong set of values, at the heart of which should be inclusion, diversity and equity. There are some great initiatives out there, many of which are highlighted in this report. These are helping to improve representation of ethnic minorities and other historically under-represented groups in business. While there is no silver bullet and change takes time, organisations should look closely at examples of best practice that not only help attract more diverse talent into the workforce, but also ensure inclusive workplaces become a reality for all.

Businesses in the North West have an opportunity to lead the way and I hope this report sets us on that path.

**Warren Middleton**
*Co-chair of the NWBLT's Diversity Drivers and KPMG Manchester Office Senior Partner*



Warren Middleton, Co-Chair of the NWBLT's Diversity Drivers

## "Improving diversity delivers prosperity for everyone"

**Warren Middleton**

"To get real diversity of thought, you need to find the people who genuinely hold different views and invite them into the conversation."

**Adam Grant**

Khurram Hussain, Deputy Chair of the NWBLT's Diversity Drivers

Professor Lilian Otaye-Ebede and Dr Samah Shaffakat's report commissioned by the North West Business Leadership Team provides some important insight as well as offering solutions and guidance for organisations to improve their diversity, equity and inclusion performance.

This report makes both the business and moral case for diversity. The report highlights that companies with diverse leadership teams outperform their less diverse counterparts by creating greater shareholder value through increased innovation, improved decision-making, greater customer empathy and engagement, and the competitive advantage of attracting and retaining a broader and better talent pool. The moral case too, is compelling. The principles of equality, justice and fairness are invariably interlinked with individual organisational values and purposes often centred around universally understood principles such as integrity, respect, inclusivity, sustainability and customer-centricity.

There are other less easy-to-measure benefits to having a diverse culture and strong DEI performance. Diverse leadership teams tend to avoid the pitfalls of 'groupthink', collective rationalisation and the illusion of invulnerability. A diverse leadership team also has the 'pull effect' of attracting diverse talent as potential future employees can see others 'like them' in role model leadership roles. There is also the aspirational effect of inspiring individuals to reach their full potential and take on career opportunities outside their comfort zone.

Attitudes and expectations towards diversity are changing too. In 2020 global investment banking group Goldman Sachs announced its support for driving sustainable and inclusive economic growth by only underwriting IPOs in the US and Europe of private companies that have at least one diverse Board member. In 2021, this target was raised to two diverse candidates for each IPO client. The CEO of

Goldman Sachs himself cited benefiting from the counsel and experience of a Lead Director on the Goldman Sachs Board who is a black man from Nigeria. Increasingly too, organisations are refusing to partner with or appoint advisors where a team offering no diversity is being proposed. Shareholders are also expecting and demanding better DEI performance and are asking more insightful and well-informed questions about company culture and leadership intent.

Societies that embrace diversity tend to be more innovative and economically prosperous. The presence of diverse perspectives and talents can lead to the creation of new businesses, technologies, and industries, driving economic growth and job opportunities for all. It is very pleasing to see the NWBLT take the initiative with the publication of this report.

**Khurram Hussain**
*Deputy chair of the NWBLT's Diversity Drivers and Partner, Warren Partners*

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# 1. Executive Summary

While progress has been made in recent years, research reveals that there is still significant lack of racial diversity within organisations as a whole, but more prominently amongst senior leadership. This lack of racial diversity is not only a social issue, but it has shown to limit the business potential of these companies. Research suggests that companies with a diverse workforce and leadership tend to outperform their less diverse counterparts through increased innovation, competitiveness and better performance amongst others (Dixon-Fyle, Hunt, Dolan & Prince, 2020; Otaye-Ebede, 2019). More importantly, having a racially diverse workforce enhances a culture of inclusiveness and belongingness where all employees feel part of their organisation and consequently are able to thrive – i.e. "being energised and empowered to do meaningful work" (Microsoft, 2022).

In this report, we utilise desk-based research, and draw on findings from academic journals and publicly available material from exemplar organisations. We provide an overview of racial representation within UK organisations with particular focus on example initiatives that have been used to increase race representation within organisations.

## 1.1 Key Findings

The report features boxed examples of initiatives focused on recruitment and selection, training and education, progression, retention, staffing and other relevant interventions. Diversifying recruitment processes, developing and implementing bespoke leadership development, mentoring and sponsorship programmes, delivering comprehensive training packages, were amongst the key initiatives identified that had positively impacted the race representation rates in organisations. Although some of the examples show firms that have demonstrated a commitment to diversity implementing programmes aimed at increasing race representation and inclusivity at all levels, it is still evident that many still lack such initiatives, and those that do aren't approaching them as a holistic measure towards driving positive change.

We summarise our findings below:

**Infrastructure: Staffing and Governance:** These are the support systems within the organization that help shape, guide and direct the internal anti-racism processes, policies and practices. They are a collection of individuals, committees and teams who are tasked with the responsibility of managing and strategically guiding and supporting the success of the organisation's race-related DE&I drive (i.e. governance). Some organisations have referred to them as the race advisory panel, race equality taskforce, race governance team etc. A strong infrastructure enables adequate planning and decision proactivity as organisations recruit and manage diverse employees. It also ensures that the company's vision, mission, and goals are racially inclusive and that employees understand and align with them. Most importantly, it ensures leadership commitment, involvement, ownership, and accountability which are key for success. Lloyds Banking Group is a good example of an organisation that has a strong and effective governance structure.

**Recruitment and Selection:** Lack of representation within organisation's remains a key issue as detailed above. As representation is a key step towards creating a race inclusive culture, it is important that organisations pay increased attention to their recruitment and selection strategies with the aim to remove biases that prevent racially minoritised individuals from entering into the organisation. Such strategies could include the collective use of inclusive recruitment strategies (i.e., blind hiring practices, anonymous applications, diverse panels, structured interviews, human-centric AI

recruitment, positive action Recruitment for Black and Ethnic Minority Individuals, widening reach and access to enable more racially diverse individuals to apply for roles, as well as ensuring robust investment is made into training and development of recruitment panels on inclusive recruitment practices, so as to mitigate the risks of conscious and unconscious bias by the hands of initial assessors. What is key to success here is the collective approach rather than one singular practice being implemented.

### Training and Education:
Research into the effectiveness of diversity training programmes has yielded mixed results, with some findings showing it to have the desired effect, while others reveal that they haven't been as effective. Recent scholarship has attributed the lack of effectiveness of diversity training to a number of reasons, including, a piecemeal approach; not being well organised; the inadequacy of just one compulsory EDI training program; duration etc. Consequently, for diversity training to be effective particularly for increasing race representation, removing bias and eventually promoting a health and racially inclusive workplace, certain criteria need to be met. First, training for race representation can only be effective in achieving the desired goals when complimented by other initiatives which target awareness and skills development (Bezrukova, Spell, Perry & Jehn, 2016). Second, these training initiatives need to be conducted over a period of time (Bezrukova et al., 2016). Third, they need to be

comprehensive, covering various areas such as unconscious bias, multiculturalism, anti-racism, allyship, cultural competency etc and offered as a suite of training programmes (Devine & Ash, 2022). Finally, they need to be repeated after a certain period to act as reminders to all employees. Good examples of training programmes that have been effective include: Microsoft's Differentiated Development and Learning Programme and AVIVA's training programme.

### Progression and Promotion:
Lack of racial diversity at senior levels still remains a huge issue in many organisations. Our findings show that there are some steps which have proven successful in shifting this narrative and creating more opportunities for racially minoritised individuals to progress into senior positions. These steps include implementing programmes that support skills development *(such as IIBM's Black Talent Programme and Mock Promotion Panels)*, provide support through mentoring and sponsorship, create opportunities for meaningful networking, create safe spaces for sharing and where necessary use of 'positive action' initiatives such as leadership training programmes aimed at racially minoritised groups, mentoring schemes for ethnic minority staff where they are under-represented in senior roles or a *'tie-breaker'* scenario in promotion.

### Race Inclusive Culture and Climate:
While '*race representation*' matters, organisations must proactively seek opportunities to create inclusive organisational

environments that increase the prospects of these hired individuals from racially minoritised backgrounds, as without this the recruitment efforts are unlikely to be successful (Holvino et al., 2004; Shore et al., 2018). Leaders play a very important role in promoting a racially inclusive culture as they are uniquely placed to influence racially inclusive environments and interactions across individuals, teams and organisations (Nishii & Leroy, 2022). Research has shown leaders' influence on individual perceptions of inclusion amongst racially diverse staff (Brimahall et al., 2016) and on creating an inclusive climate (Mor Barak et al., 2022). Given this unique influential position, it is important that organisations equip their leaders with the necessary resources needed to become racially inclusive leaders. As a general rule, leaders by demonstrating their own acceptance of employees from diverse range of backgrounds can develop high-quality relationships thereby endorsing race-related equality and inclusion within their organisation. By doing so, greater power sharing and better reciprocal exchanges will be possible (Hollander, 2009). Creating an inclusive culture also requires organisations to provide a platform for employees from racially minoritised backgrounds to share their lived experiences, stories and perspectives. This in turn will provide a learning opportunity for all employees, promote a culture of empathy and respect, and foster a sense of belonging for those from racially diverse backgrounds.

## Other Initiatives

### Data Capture and Reporting:
The success of the above initiatives is hinged upon strong data collection and analysis procedures to identify where the issues are, in order to adequately address them through targeted initiatives. Capturing of data not only helps establish a baseline and measure progress but is also a crucial step towards an organisation being able to report. Reporting infers to employees that the organisation is transparent and serious about making positive changes. Reporting of data has been shown to have a positive impact on perception, culture and performance. Through our findings, we therefore encourage organisations to adopt a similar approach to PWC by using data to inform their race action plans.

### Race Charter Sign-up:
Organisations that sign up to a race charter are publicly committing to making a difference through targeted initiatives which could include appointments of BAME employees into senior level positions, capturing, reporting and publicising of data and progress, ensuring race equity becomes a part of the organisation's ecosystem, taking action to support BAME staff career progression. What is significant about such sign-ups is that organisations then commit publicly, set out an action plan and can be held accountable. There are a number of Race Charters which organisations can sign up to including: The Advanced HE Race Equality Charter (for HE institutions); The BiTC Race at Work Charter (for Businesses); Change the Race Ratio etc.

### Increasing Representation on Boards/Senior Leadership:
Increasing race representation in senior leadership positions remains a massive challenge for many organisations as blacks and minority ethnic individuals still remain dramatically under-represented in these roles (Eagly & Chin, 2010). Despite efforts to change the status quo, we are still yet to see any significant changes. Having a racially representative senior leadership team can enable the development and nurture of a racially inclusive culture as it provides a 'role model' effect thereby encouraging participation and aspiration for racially minoritised individuals. It also enables diverse perspectives in decision making, thus increasing the potential for competitive advantage (Roberson & Park 2007). Increasing representation at senior leadership levels is all-encompassing and requires targeted efforts which can include: inclusive recruitment for high level positions, career progression initiatives for internal candidates, positive action initiatives, mentoring and sponsorship programmes for black and ethnic minority individuals.

## 1.2 Recommendations

While we present examples of initiatives that have been used by organisations to increase the number of racially diverse employees in the workplace, it is important to adapt these strategies thoughtfully and in conjunction with other strategies. It is also important to note that organisations should not rely solely on any singular one of these exemplar initiatives to address the issues of race equity, representation, and inclusion. However, they should take a more comprehensive approach that includes a range of strategies both human-led and AI-driven. It is also important to note that organisations should strive not just for representation but inclusion and belongingness. Evidence exists of organisations, despite being racially diverse still don't have a culture and climate that supports race inclusion, thus defeating the purpose of race representation as it results in high turnover and general dissatisfaction. Our recommendation is that recruitment strategies should be implemented to increase the race/ethnicity diversity of the workforce, more importantly, once these people have been recruited, creating a fair and inclusive culture will enable them to thrive and remain in the organisations for longer. It is therefore hoped that the examples provided in this report would act as a guide to positively drive NWBLT members into positive action.

# 2. Introduction, Scope and Methodology

## 2.1 Introduction

Despite decades of academic research and practitioner efforts to increase the representation of racially minoritised individuals within the workplace, data still shows that very little progress has been made. Particularly within the UK, evidence has shown that Black and ethnic minority individuals remain under-represented in organisations as a whole, and the situation is even worse when it comes to representation at senior leader positions (Powell, 2021). The recently published Parker Review highlighted the continuing issues to do with lack of representation at boards and senior level positions within FTSE-100 companies in the UK.  According to the report, little progress has been made over the years as black and racial minorities are still under-represented in boardrooms.

It is evident therefore that organisations still grapple with ways in which this can be changed so as to create a fairer, more racially representative, and inclusive organisation.

To harness the positive outcomes of having a racially diverse workforce, NWBLT and its members are committed to increasing and promoting race representation at all levels within their organisations, particularly amongst the senior leadership teams. As part of this commitment, in July 2021, NWBLT and all its member organisations signed up to the following pledge:

- My management team and I will have a zero-tolerance approach to racial discrimination harassment and bullying.

- I will be actively anti-racist and an ally to racially minoritised groups.

- I will take steps to ensure that racially minoritised groups are represented at all the tables that I can influence.

- I will create safe spaces to speak.

This report was therefore commissioned as a step towards fulfilling this pledge and creating a racially diverse and inclusive workforce. The findings provided in this report are hinged on the first phase of a three-phased recommended approach to increasing racial diversity within the organisations.

## 2.2 Scope of the Review

This report provides a summary overview of key findings from desk-based research on initiatives that can aid organisations in creating a more racially representative organisation. It is important to note that from these examples we wouldn't be able to ascertain the overall beneficial effect of the initiative within the organisations. We also wouldn't be able to determine which of these examples would be best suited for NWBLT member organisations as 'one hat doesn't fit all'. Hence the proposal for a three-phased approach where subsequent phases will require an in-depth insight into member organisations to explore the unique characteristics and experiences and recommend initiatives that are tailor-made to fit their organisational needs.

## 2.3 Methodology

We adopt a rapid literature review method in searching and synthesising key academic and grey literature evidence on relevant initiatives used for promoting race representation and inclusion. Using this method allowed us to identify effective practices in organisations combined with academic justifications for their relevance. It draws upon bodies of literature about race equality strategies in organisational context and is organised into sections that align with five key themes identified in the literature:

- Infrastructure: Staffing and Governance

- Recruitment and Selection

- Training and Education

- Promotion and Progression

- Culture and Climate

- Other interventions.

The structure of this review report assists in providing clearer navigation of the complex challenges organisations experience when implementing strategies to promote race representation and inclusion. Through this lens, NWBLT member organisations can reflect upon their strategies, practices and processes, and how they can be adapted or improved to achieve positive outcomes.

# 3. Infrastructure: Staffing & Governance

Infrastructure in this context refers to the support systems within the organisation that help shape, guide, and direct the internal processes and practices. The diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) infrastructure within the organisation forms part of the overall HR infrastructure (i.e. policies, processes, tools, records/data and other elements) and is an important facet to increasing race representation and inclusion. The DE&I infrastructure also comprises the collection of individuals, committees and teams who are tasked with the responsibility of managing and strategically guiding and supporting the success of the organisations race-related DE&I drive (i.e. governance). This could include setting up of a race advisory panel/group, race equality taskforce, race focused leadership team, recruitment of a dedicated race inclusion leader who will be supported by a team of individuals, tasked with the responsibility of supporting the organisations senior leadership in developing clear anti-racist policies and goals, including a 'race action plan', and communicating these widely across the organisation. The success of this is hinged upon strong data collection and analysis procedures to identify where the issues are, in order to adequately address them through targeted initiatives. A strong infrastructure enables adequate planning and decision proactivity as organisations recruit and manage diverse employees. It also ensures that the company's vision, mission, and goals are racially inclusive and that employees understand and align with them. Most importantly, it ensures leadership commitment, involvement, ownership, and accountability which are key for success (Lloyds Banking Group, 2023).

**LLOYDS BANKING GROUP RACE ADVISORY PANEL**

As part of Lloyds Banking Groups commitment to addressing the challenges experienced by Black and ethnic minority employees and increasing the numbers of Blacks and ethnic minority employees within their senior leadership, they set up a Race Advisory Panel. This is a group of 23 Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues from across the business, tasked with the responsibility of shaping the race diversity initiatives, providing invaluable feedback and influencing the diversity strategy to ensure that progress towards set targets is being made. They also act as a sounding board and critical advisor.

https://www.lloydsbankinggroup.com/who-we-are/responsible-business/inclusion-and-diversity/ethnicity/our-stand-for-racial-equality.html

# 4. Recruitment and Selection

Diversifying recruitment strategies is one way to increase the ethnic diversity of an organisation. Consequently, organisations have utilised various recruitment strategies to achieve this objective, with some proven to be more successful than others.

The presence of bias in recruitment has been shown to be one of the major hindrances to the recruitment of racially minoritised individuals (Beattie & Johnson, 2012; Chamberlain, 2016). These biases present themselves in multiple ways, and across multiple stages of recruitment from the initial listing of job adverts, through to the screening and evaluations of CVs, shortlisting, interviewing and the eventual candidate selection.

One such initiative which has recently gained traction and has proven to be successful in reducing recruitment biases and increasing the number of racially minoritised individuals within organisations is the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in recruitment processes. Although effective, companies that have demonstrated positive outcomes from this initiative have been those who've combined the use of AI with human-led initiatives.

## 4.1 Human-Centric AI Recruitment

This approach requires the use of a hybrid system where a hiring personnel takes a recruitment decision with the support of an AI hiring system. Human-based recruitment on its own has been wrought with issues to do with recruiters channelling their preconceptions and biases into who is recruited to fill a certain position. According to Upadhyay and Khandelwal (2018), AI systems can be programmed to avoid such biases (conscious or unconscious) found in the recruitment process. Although not totally bereft of bias (given that the programming is done by humans), AI can help remove bias from the recruitment process by anonymising CVs and job applications and using algorithms to identify candidates based on their qualifications and experience. This can help reduce the impact of unconscious bias and increase the number of diverse candidates in the hiring pool. The use of AI can also help in improving candidate matching by using machine learning algorithms to match candidates with job requirements and company culture. This can help ensure that candidates from under-represented groups are not overlooked due to biased assumptions or lack of fit.

Similarly, although more efficient with proven reduction in recruitment biases, the use of AI technology in recruitment on its own has been shown to also have negative impacts in that, in certain instances the machine learning (ML) programming inadvertently disfavours particular demographic groups while favouring others (e.g., Cramer et al., 2018, p.16). Therefore, recent research into AI recruitment has called for a human-centric approach to the use of AI for recruitment. Although still in its infancy, a few organisations have trialled it with evidence of better results and increased opportunities for racially minoritised individuals.

AI is most effective when used at the initial screening phase as it eliminates human bias concentrating on detecting core skills required for the effective performance of the job. Emphasis however should be placed on investing time and effort into the initial development of AI programming so that careful attention is paid towards making every effort to eliminate or reduce 'machine and/or human bias' from the process. The framework developed by LinkedIn (Page 50 - https://app.box.com/s/y5i7635s1 5rx3yl78hj5jlnnh02asa75/ file/263787765561) helps illustrate areas of recruitment where AI would be of most importance and areas where humans need to be involved in the detecting core skills.

## GENPACT – COMBINATION OF AI/HUMAN CENTRIC APPROACH

Genpact uses AI powered tools for screen and assessments of candidates before the interview process. Textio, an AI writing platform helps them to standardise and gender neutralise job descriptions, attracting the right talent and thereby contributing to the company's diversity efforts. Automated assessments facilitated by AI powered HackerRank enable technical recruiters and managers to evaluate talent objectively, helping them make better hiring decisions.

**How AI is helping make employees happy at Genpact**

## 4.2 Inclusive Recruitment Practices

Inclusive recruitment includes the processes, practices and measures that collectively make up varying elements involved in attracting, assessing, and appointing racially diverse candidates to vacant job roles within organisations (cf. CIPD, 2022). These processes include combining various practices aimed at reducing bias and creating a fairer, more inclusive recruitment process. They include initiatives such as the use of blind hiring practices; anonymous application procedures; diversifying interview panels; use of inclusive writing and language in job descriptions; widening reach and access to enable more racially diverse individuals to apply for roles; ensuring recruitment panels are trained on inclusive recruitment practices, use of structured interviews etc.

The Chartered Institute for Personnel Development (CIPD) has created a guide on stages of inclusive recruitment which includes useful key recommendations that can be implemented as a starting point for NWBLT members. This guide can be assessed via the following link - https://www.cipd.org/uk/knowledge/guides/inclusive-employers/

## LLOYDS BANKING GROUP INCLUSIVE RECRUITMENT

Lloyds Banking Group have set a target to increase representation of Blacks in senior leadership roles from 0.6% to at least 3% by 2025. To achieve this goal, it has adopted an inclusive recruitment strategy which includes: ensuring diversity on all senior executive recruitment shortlists with a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) candidate, training and upskilling recruiters, hiring managers and third-party suppliers to ensure they understand the expectations and have the tools to hire inclusively. As part of this, they started working with new recruitment partners to help them better reach BAME talent. They also introduced a diverse shortlist and waiver process for executive appointments to ensure these include at least one BAME candidate.

**Our stand for racial equality - Lloyds Banking Group plc**

## 4.3 Positive Action Recruitment for Black and Ethnic Minority Individuals

Positive action refers to voluntary actions an organisation can take to address any imbalance of opportunity or disadvantage that an individual(s) with one or more protected characteristics could face (UKGOV, 2023). According to the Equality Act 2010, it is **not** unlawful to recruit or promote a candidate who is of *equal merit* to another candidate if the employer reasonably thinks that the candidate has a protected characteristic (i.e. Race) that is under-represented in the workforce; or that people with that characteristic suffer a disadvantage connected to that characteristic. Hence to increase race representation, organisations can **lawfully** utilise positive action recruitment practices. These could include: selecting a racially minoritised candidate over another candidate if they are both of '*equal merit*', as a proportionate to address under-representation (often called a '*tie-breaker*' or '*tipping point*'); including statements (such as – we welcome applicants of all ethnic minorities) in job adverts to encourage applicants from disadvantaged or under-represented groups; encouraging businesses to refer to their D&I

policy/commitment to diversity when advertising for roles, which could help attract high potential diverse talent who will be selective about their choice of employer.

If positive action initiatives are utilised, these need to be done properly to avoid positive discrimination. The boxed example of Lloyds Banking Group is one way in which positive action can be utilised where targets are set and processes are put in place using positive action initiatives to achieve those targets.

## 4.4 Debiasing Strategies at the Interview Stage – Use of Structured Interviews

Research suggests that blind hiring increased the likelihood of disadvantaged groups receiving interview calls, but not necessarily job offers afterward (See Fath, 2023). One of the best ways to prevent discrimination at the interview stage is through the use of structured interviewing which helps make sure that the interviewers don't deviate from job-related questions and lessens the impact of homophily – the tendency to prefer people with similar characteristics on candidate evaluation/performance. Homophily

can also result in the use of undefined, or unmeasurable methods (such as 'cultural fit' as a selection measure particularly in more senior roles) to deselect candidates. The potential for homophily effects can have negative consequences, as it may result in dissimilar applicants being blocked from selection as well as increase the possibility that litigation might ensue as well (Offerman & Gowing, 1993; Williamson, Campion, Malos, Roehling, & Campion, 1997). Homophily can lead to candidates from a dissimilar group being treated differently by the panel which often results in negative reaction in candidates impacting their test-taking motivation as well as acceptance rates (Ryan, 2001; Saks & McCarthy, 2006). Research suggests that when structured interviews are used, the impact of applicant race (Huffcut & Roth, 1998) and gender (Olian, Schwab, & Haberfeld, 1988) produce small main effects.

The following links provide further references and guides on how structured interviews have and can be used –

• https://rework.withgoogle.com/guides/hiring-use-structured-interviewing/steps/introduction/

• https://outsmartingimplicitbias.org/module/how-to-conduct-a-structured-interview/)

## USE OF STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS IN DIAGEO AND UNILEVER

Diageo and Unilever have implemented a structured interview process for their recruitment, which involves using a set of standardised questions and scoring criteria. This helps to ensure that all candidates are assessed fairly and objectively, reducing the potential for bias.

# 5. Training and Education

Diversity training programmes have been used for decades as a tool to create awareness and reduce cognitive, behavioural and attitudinal bias which leads to racism and lack of representation in firms. Research into the effectiveness of diversity training has yielded mixed results. On one hand, some studies have shown it to have a positive effect on outcomes (e.g., Anand & Winters, 2008), while others have said these training initiative are oftentimes ineffective (Rob & Doverspike, 2001), with the positive effects of this diversity training (as it is currently done) rarely lasting for long periods (cf. Dobbin & Kalev, 2016)). Rynes and Rosen (1995) argue that the adoption of diversity training does not increase top management diversity and overall workforce diversity, and sometimes could lead to backlash (Duguid & Thomas-Hunt, 2015). Recent scholarship has attributed the failure of diversity training to a number of reasons, including them being piecemeal, not well organised and inadequate in terms of there being just one compulsory DE&I training programme. However, this does not negate the importance of training and education in creating a racially representative and inclusive workforce.

Consequently, for diversity training to be effective particularly for increasing race representation, removing bias and eventually promoting a healthy and racially inclusive workplace, certain criteria need to be met.

First, training for race representation can only be effective in achieving the desired goals when complimented by other initiatives which target awareness and skills development (Bezrukova, Spell, Perry & Jehn, 2016). Second, these training initiatives need to be conducted over a period of time (Bezrukova et al., 2016). Third, they need to be comprehensive, covering various areas such as unconscious bias, multiculturalism, anti-racism, allyship, cultural competency. and offered as a suite of training programmes (Devine & Ash, 2022). Finally, they need to be repeated after a certain period to act as reminders to all employees.

## MICROSOFT DIFFERENTIATED DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING PROGRAMME

Microsoft has a voluntary (opt-in) training and development programme for mid and senior-level management. The programme lasts for nine months covering multiple courses on allyship, unconscious bias, privilege etc. During the nine month experience, direct managers of all participants are required to participate in a parallel track to grow how they understand and support their employees. The overall aim is that the training programme would form the basis of forming a shared language and understanding that would build the foundation of change throughout the organisation. This training alongside other initiatives have contributed to the year-on-year increase of racially diverse employees.

**Microsoft Global Diversity & Inclusion Report 2022**

In summary, training that focuses on building a diverse workplace culture is essential and will help organisations enhance the visibility of racial minorities. The following training programme can be implemented by organisations:

1. **Anti-Racism Training:** This training is designed to help individuals and organisations defend racial justice and equal opportunity for all by actively and purposely confronting systemic and individual racism.

2. **Unconscious Bias Training:** Individuals participating in this training will gain insight into their unconscious biases, and the impact of these in order to make better, more informed decisions at work and to interact more effectively with colleagues.

3. **Diversity and Inclusion Training:** Training: During this training, participants will learn about the significance of diversity and inclusion at work, as well as ways of nurturing an environment that is welcoming to people from different backgrounds and cultures. It covers topics such as developing strategies for creating inclusive teams, effective communication, and developing cultural awareness.

4. **Recruitment and Hiring Training:** This training is focused on mitigating biases with regard to the recruitment process and can include employing inclusive language in job advertisements, using a range of platforms and methods to find candidates from diverse backgrounds, using blind hiring in initial stages of thehiring process.

5. **Inclusive Communication Training:** Through this training, employees can gain greater understanding of how their communication impacts colleagues of different backgrounds, as well as develop strategies and techniques to better communicate with co-workers who are of a different culture and background.

In summary, training should focus on cultivating a workplace culture which is inclusive and where everyone feels welcomed, no matter who they are or what race or ethnicity they belong to. A good way to encourage a diverse and inclusive workplace to implement a suite of mandatory and voluntary training programmes designed to address racism unconscious bias, cultural insensitivity, and to promote racially inclusive recruitment and hiring practices, and inclusive communication techniques.

## AVIVA TRAINING PROGRAMME

Aviva in 2021 introduced a suite of training programs to educate all employees. These include: an annual mandatory anti-racism training for all UK employees;  an annual inclusion training session for Board and Group Executive Committee members; a reverse mentoring program partnering Aviva executive committees with black colleagues; webinars on race and external insight hosted by The Diversity Practice.  These training initiatives have seen early impact targeted at creating awareness and cognitive change.

**Black Lives Matter action plan - Aviva plc**

# 6. Progression and Promotion

One key issue that has plagued companies is the lack of progression experienced by black and ethnic minority individuals. This is particularly worrying especially for organisations that have been successful in increasing the number of racially minoritised individuals within their organisation, but almost all remain in junior positions. Research has shown the persistent and pertinent issues to do with lack of progression for racially minoritised individuals (Wyatt & Sylvester, 2015). These have been attributed to several factors including: systemic racism (Baker-Bell, 2020), limited access to career-related assistance or guidance (Parks-Yancy et al., 2008); being excluded from important social networks (Tomlinson et al., 2013); biased performance evaluation (Stauffer & Buckley, 2005); less support and fewer career-related resources (Schaffer & Riordan, 2013).

To curb these progression issues experienced by racial minorities, organisations have implemented several initiatives, with examples as follows.

## 6.1 Career Training Programmes

**LLOYDS BANKING GROUP CAREER ACCELERATION PROGRAMME**

The Career Acceleration Programme supports colleagues with the tools they might need to accelerate their career, providing bespoke development sessions, networking opportunities, peer to peer support through mentoring circles, and support to find a mentor or sponsor. By the end of 2022, over a quarter of the colleagues enrolled on the programme had either been promoted or taken a lateral move to progress their career.

**Our stand against racism: 2021 update - Lloyds Banking Group plc**

## UNITED UTILITIES STEPPING UP PROJECT

United Utilities recognised the lack of black and ethnic minority employees in leadership roles. To address this issue, they set up a stepping up leadership training programme targeted at identifying high achieving BME individuals to train and develop the soft skills needed to thrive in leadership positions. The training programme was run by an external provider and covered such areas as influence, networking, language, branding etc. As part of the programme, external BME senior leaders were invited to share personal career experiences to serve as a learning and motivational tool. The programme also created a safe space for attendees where open and frank conversations could be had both with fellow attendees and those delivering the sessions. It created an opportunity for networking and access to key individuals within and outside the organisation that could act as catalyst to promote BME employees.

**Dr. Ali E Osman (PhD), Production Manager, Manchester Bioresource Centre, Energy Services United Utilities**

## 6.2 Black and Ethnic Minority Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)

ERGs are internal groups of employees with shared identities or backgrounds or demographic (Catalino, Gardner, Goldstein & Wing, 2022). Catalyst defines ERGs as "groups of employees in an organisation formed to act as a resource for both members and the organisation…." (Kaplan, Sabin, & Smaller-Swift, 2009. ERGs can assist organisations in developing initiatives that facilitate diversity and inclusion (cf. Welbourne, Rolf & Schlachter, 2015). They can also provide a platform for employees to engage in discussions related to bias and discrimination. ERGs are different from other groups such as 'networks', as they are more formal, have a particular objective/focus e.g. support black employees, and have leadership involvement, buy-in and accountability (c.f., Gilley & Kerno, 2010). Research has shown that ERGs with thoughtful execution, and if done properly, have the potential to tackle deep-rooted issues to do with systemic racism and help organisations reach race related DE&I goals that organisations have found challenging to achieve (Foldy, 2019). One of such goals is to remove structural barriers which prevent black and ethnic minority employees from moving up the career ladder.

## IBM UK BLACK BUSINESS RESOURCE GROUP (BBRG)

The IBM UK Black BRG was originally formed out of a desire to understand and challenge the lack of race representation in IBM UK, to provide a safe space where Black employees can share their experiences, and to provide a developmental avenue for members to obtain the support required for them to progress in their careers. In 2018 the Black BRG began a campaign to help attract, engage, develop, and retain black and ethnic minority individuals. Through clear plans and engagement with senior leadership, they were able to achieve change. The campaign summary below reflects the initiatives IBM undertook.

**James Stewart – IBM UK (Principal Account Technical Leader)**

## The Campaign 2018 - 2022

### Attract

- More black senior leaders
- Report on ethnicity pay
- Find more black talent

**How**
- External hiring - Recruitment control points
- Diverse interview panels
- Marketing for black talent

### Engage

- With our black IBM-ers at all levels
- Increase visibility of BRG

**How**
- SLT round tables
- Reverse mentoring
- Buddies for early professionals
- Improvement to induction material
- Environment for open conversations for example the Black men of tomorrow (BMOT)

### Develop

- Existing black IBM-ers

**How**
- Support career progression and raising eminence (career coach)
- LOB Black talent programs
- Mandate diverse candidate slates for promotion
- Sponsorship
- Mock promotion panels from BAME members

### Retain

- New & existing black employees

**How**
- Role models
- Opportunities to develop capabilities (pipeline)
- Selection for stretch projects
- Clear route to promotion & career planning

### Benefits to IBM

- Increase employee satisfaction & engagement
- Raise IBM external eminence with clients outside our traditional stomping ground
- Enables IBM to enter new markets and drive business
- Attraction & retention of diverse talent driving innovation
- Better integration & retention of new hires

**DIAGEO'S RACE, ETHNICITY AND CULTURAL HERITAGE (REACH) ERG**

Diageo's REACH ERG provides a safe space for ethnically diverse employees and allies to support each other. At the same time it helps leaders better understand the unique concerns of the diverse communities. The ERG also helps to foster an inclusive environment through acknowledging and celebrating the contributions of Diageo's ethnically diverse employees. It draws on the expertise and successes of the US based African Heritage Employees at Diageo (A.H.E.A.D) ERG

https://www.diageo.com/en/careers/why-diageo/inclusion-and-diversity/resource-groups

## 6.3 Positive Action Promotion Programmes

As detailed in section 3.3 positive action for promotion purposes is allowed under the UK Equality Act, 2010. This could include: leadership training programmes aimed at racially minoritised groups, mentoring schemes for ethnic minority staff where they are under-represented in senior roles or a '*tie-breaker*' scenario in promotion.

**LLOYDS BANKING ETHNIC MINORITY MENTORS PROGRAMME**

Lloyds became the first FTSE-100 firm to set an ethnic diversity target. The bank aims to have 13% of senior management from a Black, Asian or minority ethnic background by 2025. Lloyds implemented an Ethnic Minority Mentors programme to increase representation at a senior management level. As a result, the number of minority ethnic managers has trebled.

**Ethnicity - Lloyds Banking Group plc**

# 7. Race Inclusive Culture and Climate

Ferdman (2017), defines an inclusive organisation to be one where "people of all identities and many styles can be fully themselves while also contributing to the larger collective, as valued and full members." (pg. 235). While '*race representation*' matters, organisations must proactively seek opportunities to create inclusive organisational environments that increase the prospects of these hired individuals from racially minoritised backgrounds, as without this the recruitment efforts are unlikely to be successful (Holvino et al., 2004; Shore et al., 2018). The culture of an organisation is an important recipe to creating climates of inclusion.

**EY CULTURE CHANGE PROGRAMME**

EY's culture change programme is hinged on three aspects – belongingness, listening and inclusive transformative leaders. In order to create an environment where everyone can excel, EY focuses on belonging, understanding differences, creating spaces for people to voice their needs, and providing learning experiences to develop more inclusive leaders. EY also supports the creation and maintenance of this equitable culture of belonging, by listening to their employees' perspectives, providing them with the knowledge to promote awareness and enable action. EY also offers a variety of support services. Finally, they work on developing the skills of their leaders to become Inclusive Transformative leaders, who through empathy and trust, help EY achieve their purpose and cultivate deep ties with each other and their clients. By harnessing the talents, experiences, perspectives and viewpoints of individuals and groups, these leaders enable EY to create an environment that is open, inclusive, and safe for everyone to contribute their best work.

https://assets.ey.com/content/dam/ey-sites/ey-com/en_us/topics/diversity/ey-dei-transparency-report-2022-release.pdf

## 7.1 Leaders

Leaders play a very important role in promoting a racially inclusive culture as they are uniquely placed to influence racially inclusive environments and interactions across individuals, teams and organisations (Nishii & Leroy, 2022). Research has shown leaders influence on individual perceptions of inclusion amongst racially diverse staff (Brimahall et al., 2016) and on creating an inclusive climate (Mor Barak et al., 2022). Given this unique influential position, it is important that organisations equip their leaders with the necessary resources to become racially inclusive leaders. As a general rule, leaders by demonstrating their own acceptance of employees from a diverse range of backgrounds can develop high-quality relationships, thereby endorsing race-related equality and inclusion within their organisation. By doing so, greater power sharing and better reciprocal exchanges will be possible (Hollander, 2009). For leaders, 'doing diversity' involves a vision grounded in comprehensive knowledge and commitment not only to a specific time

bound programme, but to the improvement of the organisation, and society in general. Doing diversity necessitates doing things differently. It involves making decisions with an awareness of how they would affect different subgroups. As role models, leaders would not only serve as examples, but also help in developing and positioning other role models to maximise effectiveness (DiTomaso & Hooijberg, 1996). For those who have been disadvantaged, marginalised or excluded from engaging fully, leaders would seek to create 'safe passages' or connections and they would ask other organisational leaders to do the same as well. They would strive for superior performance while being inclusive. Leaders would cultivate a culture in which employees are given room to develop their own commitment to diversity, while having a firm zero tolerance policy against discrimination. Furthermore, they would be able to understand how collusion perpetuates unmerited privileges and disadvantages by understanding the dynamics of the structures that maintain them, and assist in transforming them (DiTomaso & Hooijberg, 1996).

## 7.2 Humanising Race Inclusion Efforts:

Creating a race inclusive culture requires an understanding of and learning from the lived experiences of racially minoritised individuals. Adopting this approach can significantly enhance an organisation's effort to create a race inclusive culture through providing critical insights, fostering understanding, empathy and respect amongst employees. Learning through shared stories of lived experiences can help all employees better understand the unique challenges experienced by racially minoritised individuals, which could in turn encourage empathy, debunk stereotypes and challenge unconscious biases. It can also help foster a culture of open dialogue which could make it easier for organisations to address issues related to race and ethnicity through shaping more inclusive policies and practices, promoting better interpersonal relations and communications amongst employees, hence making the workplace fairer and more equitable. It is important to note though that lived experience stories must be treated with respect and used as a springboard for change, rather than a form of token engagement. It must also be coupled with other actions to address the issues and requires leadership commitment and efforts to foster an inclusive culture.

### ACCENTURE 'BLACK IS' FILM SERIES

As a means towards gaining further insight into the lived experiences of Black and racially minoritised individuals, Accenture commissioned the 'Black Is' film series which was sponsored by Andrew Finlayson. Each film is a unique, personal story about what it means to be black, and showcases the complexity of the Black experience. The film series was launched during Black History month in October 2020 to explore the power and pride in the black community. The aim was to trigger wider conversations around race, foster understanding and to challenge unconscious bias. The UK produced video series is now a key content for the Accenture Global Racial and Ethnic equality education programme.

**Andrew Finlayson – Creative Growth Lead (Health Outcomes & Life Sciences) and Accenture UK Northwest Regional Head**

**https://www.accenture.com/gb-en/about/inclusion-diversity/uk-workforce#block-black-is**

# 8. Other Initiatives

## 8.1 Data Capture and Reporting

Despite these '*leading practices*' approaches showcasing example initiatives that organisations have used in increasing their race representation and creating a fairer more equitable organisational culture, it is important that individual organisations take a 'data-driven' approach if they are to ensure sustainable long-term institutional culture change. Taking stock requires collecting both quantitative and qualitative data which will help identify more specifically where racial inequalities may be manifesting within the context of your institution so that targeted action to address those inequalities can be developed and implemented, and the impact assessed.

**PWC DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING APPROACH**

Historically, PwC took a 'leading practices approach' which involved supporting member firms with tools, guidance and infrastructure that were based upon what was most widely advocated as leading practices such as mentoring, networks etc. Five years ago, PwC decided to take a step back, take stock, and ask themselves - "If we are doing all the right things and investing time, budget and energy, why are we not making more progress?". This resulted in PwC making a transition from a 'leading practices' approach to a 'data-driven' approach, which has then lead to more targeted and effective strategies to do with addressing DE&I challenges.

Capturing of data not only helps establish a baseline and measure progress, but is also a crucial step towards an organisation being able to report. Reporting infers to employees that the organisation is transparent and serious about making positive changes. Reporting of data has been shown to have a positive impact on perception, culture and performance. One such data driven approach which is being encouraged is on ethnic pay gaps. Previous studies suggest that there is a difference in earning of people from ethnic minority and white backgrounds. This is linked to ethnic minorities being at a social disadvantage and it also stems from direct discrimination (Guryan & Charles, 2013; Lang & Lehmann, 2012). Organisations have started reporting their ethnic pay gaps. However, the number still remains really low with only 13 out of FTSE-100 companies declaring the figures (Booth 2021). For those reporting it, they have developed different strategies/action plans when disparities were apparent. Using a percentage of average non-BAME earnings, ethnicity pay gap analyses show the difference between BAME and non-BAME average hourly earnings (CIPD, 2023). Having a fewer number of BAME staff in senior level roles is another factor that results in ethnicity pay gaps.

## DELOITTE - ETHNICITY PAY GAP REPORT

In order to address the ethnic imbalance within Deloitte, the company has designed and implemented an ethnicity action plan. This plan consists of a range of carefully considered actions such as – boosting student recruitment, exploring and identifying potential leadership opportunities for ethnic minorities, taking an ethnicity-focused view of all promotion and reward decisions, setting up a BAME Advisory Council to assist in developing the firm's strategy, and exploring identifying both internal and external development opportunities (including mentorship programmes outside the firm).

**What we are doing to close the gap?**

## 8.2 Race Charter Sign-up

Organisations that sign up to a race charter are publicly committing to making a difference through targeted initiatives which could include appointments of BAME employees into senior level positions, capturing, reporting and publicising of data and progress, ensuring race equity becomes a part of the organisation's ecosystem and taking action to support BAME staff career progression. What is significant about such sign-ups is that organisations then commit publicly, set out an action plan and can be held accountable. There are a number of race charters which organisations can sign up to including: The Advanced HE Race Equality Charter (for HE institutions); The BiTC Race at Work Charter (for Businesses); Change the Race Ratio.

## UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL RACE EQUALITY CHARTER SIGN UP

The University of Liverpool has signed up to the Advanced HE Race Equality Charter (REC) with the explicit goal of eliminating any racial disparities for staff and students and achieving race equity on campus. The REC helps universities to improve the representation, progression and success of minority ethnic staff and students within higher education, providing a framework through which institutions work to self-reflect on institutional and cultural barriers standing in the way of minority ethnic staff and students.

https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/hr/diversityandequality/race/

## 8.3 Increasing Representation on Boards/Senior Leadership

Increasing race representation in senior leadership positions remains a massive challenge for many organisations as blacks and minority ethnic individuals still remain dramatically under-represented in these roles (Eagly & Chin, 2010). Despite efforts to change the status quo, we are still yet to see any significant changes. Having a racially representative senior leadership team can enable the development and nurture of a racially inclusive culture as it provides a 'role model' effect thereby encouraging participation and aspiration for racially minoritised individuals. It also enables diverse perspectives in decision making, thus increasing the potential for competitive advantage (Roberson & Park 2007). Increasing representation at senior leadership levels is all-encompassing and requires targeted efforts which can include: inclusive recruitment for high level positions, ensuring Executive Search firms are themselves representative of the candidate pools they seek to engage, career progression initiatives for internal candidates, positive action initiatives, mentoring and sponsorship programmes for black and ethnic minority individuals.

### WARREN PARTNERS & KPMG BOARD FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME

Driven by the need to see positive change in the ratios of ethnic minority individuals on boards and in senior leadership positions, Warren Partners in collaboration with KPMG and the CBI, launched 'The Board Fellowship Programme'. This initiative helps to identify business leadership talent from minority ethnic groups and places them as a fellow with a main market listed business for 12 months. TThis provides mutual benefit both for the participant and for the host board as the participant gets mentored, is exposed to the processes and skills required to succeed as a board member, secures invaluable experience to position them for future Board roles, and has access to a valuable network. On the other hand, the board benefits from the expertise and contributions of a diverse and credible individual, helping them in their deliberations and decision making processes and enabling them to see the benefit of a diverse board.

**https://www.warrenpartners.co.uk/insight/test-insight-1-3/**

# 9. Conclusion

As mentioned earlier, even though there has been some progress in enhancing experiences of racial and ethnic minorities in the workplace, there is still a considerable distance to cover with regards to their representation across all levels and particularly at senior leaderhsip levels, as well as developing a culture which facilitates their development and progress.

The starting point is a commitment to change first from senior leaders and then from all staff within the organisation. The next step is 'data'. Data enables you to see where you are and identify areas where more needs to be done in increasing representativeness and creating inclusivity. It also provides organisations with a tool to benchmark and set achievable data-led targets. Setting targets is a good way to focus attention, keep organisations accountable and monitor progress. Next is the need to increase awareness and educate the workforce, followed by using a range of recruitment strategies to enhance race diversity and representation. Organisations also need to focus on creating a racially inclusive organisation where all employees can thrive.

There is more to creating a culture of inclusion than simply conducting diversity training and developing different recruiting initiatives. It entails acknowledging and addressing existing biases and a true dedication to transformation. Here are some of the approaches that organisations can adopt:

1. **Conduct a race diversity and inclusion assessment:** Determine where diversity and inclusion efforts are lacking by doing a comprehensive assessment which includes obtaining employee feedback and reviewing policies that add to existing biases.

2. **Develop a race focused diversity and inclusion strategy:** It is imperative for organisations to have a well-defined diversity and inclusion strategy which demonstrates their commitment to the endeavour. Progress should be monitored using specific metrics and goals.

3. **Implement training and education programmes:** Develop specific training to target microaggressions, unconscious biases and systemic racism, and offer these on an ongoing basis. These should be supported by other initiatives such as leadership development, mentoring and sponsorship.

4. **Foster an inclusive workplace culture:** Organisations should cultivate a workplace culture that allows all employees to feel welcome and included. Open communication channels, ERGs and having an open-door policy are some of the initiatives that can help with this.

5. **Hold leadership accountable:** Leadership must be held accountable for creating a culture of inclusion. They should be trained on the importance of diversity and inclusion and held responsible for ensuring that these efforts are being implemented throughout the organisation.

6. **Celebrate diversity:** Organisations should hold events and undertake activities to embrace race diversity by arranging cultural celebrations as well as giving out DE&I awards targeted at racially minoritised individuals.

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