

11 May 2021

To our patients, staff, communities and other organisations across the Black Country and beyond:

WE STAND UNITED AGAINST RACISM

Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust was created in 2020 to provide mental health services for local people and to support people with Learning Disabilities. We embrace all of our responsibilities as a lead provider in the modern public sector.

2020 also brought a new focus onto the intolerance, racism, discrimination and associated harassment and violence which still persists, in this country and globally. Situations like these compel us to reflect on our individual and collective responsibilities to stand united against racism. As a UK public service organisation, we are also empowered by the Public Sector Equality Duty 2010 to go beyond remedying individual cases, and to additionally work as an organisation in pro-actively delivering equality for all. New legislation concerning the Mental Health Act also focuses our minds onto significantly improving the way that all ethnic groups experience and receive such services in a more equal and equitable way. Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust thus reaffirms our condemnation of all forms of discrimination, racism and violence, and now declares our commitment to become an anti-racist organisation.

Throughout history, law and regulation have been shaped by progressive campaigns against injustice. In the UK, this includes the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, brought about by community campaigning which led to the Macpherson Inquiry, following the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence. Two decades later the Black Lives Matter movement, in the US and UK, has further impressed on us all the need for cultural and structural change. At Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust we recognise the role we can all play in challenging racism and delivering anti-racist practice.

We will therefore use our voice, and the documented data available, to drive our actions in reducing race disparity, both within our Trust and across the new NHS Integrated Care System for the Black Country and West Birmingham.

We know from the many readily available sources that there remains a consistent evidence base of variation and unwarranted disparity for individuals from an ethnic minority background, for example:



- The June 2020 report entitled Beyond the data: Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on BAME groups.
- The NHS Race and Health Observatory (RHO), has clearly stated institutional racism exists, including within the NHS.
- The NHS Workforce Race Equality Standard has for several years highlighted significant disparities across ethnic groups of NHS staff in the frequencies of disciplinary action, experiences of harassment and discrimination at work and access to promotion opportunities. Despite years of this measurement there has been an insufficient amount of meaningful change.

At a Black Country and West Birmingham level we know that our staff and communities are at detriment by facing inequalities in mental health, learning disabilities and autism. Inequality can stem from a wide range of social, cultural, economic and physical circumstances. We understand this, and that racism is only one of several factors, but it arises frequently in our work as an issue holding people back from thriving, causing them additional concern at work and at times affects safety. Some of our staff face increased levels of racial abuse, violence and aggression by patients and service users. Some of these incidents and actions are racist and discriminatory in nature. They are reported consistently, year after year. It is time for us, and it is our legal duty, to do more than we have before to address this inequality.

We also know that:

- Many Black-African and Caribbean people (especially men) struggle to get early access to psychological treatment
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people have similar difficulties in accessing healthcare
- Patients from an ethnic minority are consistently less likely to rate highly their overall experience of NHS services than people from White groups
- Black adults are more likely to be detained under a section of the Mental Health Act
- NHS staff from an ethnic minority are more likely to be subject to disciplinary process
- NHS staff from an ethnic minority have less access to career development, or to be promoted into senior positions
- NHS staff from an ethnic minority are more likely to suffer and report violence, aggression and abuse from patients and service users

As an indicator of the Trust's commitment, we will start with these actions, and more will follow as we co-produce further plans with our staff and service users:

- We are signing up to the National RACE Equality Code. The RACE Equality Code provides us with the opportunity to use a robust and comprehensive framework of measures and a methodology for transparent implementation of actions to which an organisation can demonstrate accountability.
- We will continue to work to reduce health inequalities faced by our ethnic minority communities. To this end we will contribute to public discussions about our duty and our efforts to eradicate racism in the services we provide.



- We will work with Prerana Issar, NHS Chief People Officer, and support her work to reduce workforce inequalities to implement Equality, Diversity and Inclusion initiatives as part of the NHS People Plan.
- We will use the voices of our senior leaders within the Trust and representation in our Integrated Care System to drive change.
- We will ensure we drive our agenda of becoming an Anti-Racist Trust by improving co-production with our ethnic minority staff and patient population communities.
- We will use the Workforce Race Equality Standard, the NHS Staff Survey measures for our organisation, and other local assessments as key public measures of our progress.
- We will strive for a better understanding of the systems and structures that we work in and the way in which they may perpetuate racism to the disadvantage of the population we serve.
- We will support our staff to speak out and engage as active citizens on issues that they care about around racism.

Finally, we confirm that we will continue our efforts, taking a data-driven and evidence-based approach, to becoming an Anti-Racist NHS Trust. This is a strategic priority for our Trust.

Yours sincerely

Jeremy Vanes
Chair

Joy Jeffrey
Vice Chair

Mark Axcell
Chief Executive Officer

Ashi Williams
Director of People

Sent on behalf of the Trust Board

Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

