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**compassionate**  
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Driving forward **Equality**  
**Diversity** and **Inclusion**  
in the Midlands



Time for action: Midlands workforce, race, equality and inclusion strategy

# Midlands Workforce, Race Equality and Inclusion (WREI) Strategy

Implementation guide for NHS organisations and ICSs 2022

February 2022 (V1.0)



## Background

NHS England and NHS Improvement Midlands' Workforce and OD team launched the [Workforce Race Equality and Inclusion \(WREI\) Strategy](#) on 27 May 2021. The strategy was developed in collaboration with our 11 ICSs in the Midlands in response to addressing the urgent inequality issues experienced by the workforce as described in the [People Plan- action for all of us](#) and the [phase 3 letter](#) from the executives of NHS England and NHS Improvement.

The Midlands is the second largest ethnically diverse area in England. As such it is pertinent that we remain focused on achieving the goal set out in the strategy. However, we strongly believe in the principles underpinning the strategy and their potential impact on the whole workforce.

The **three principles** that underpin our strategy are:

- **Educate** – “We can all learn more about discrimination”
- **Challenge** – “We need to work together to challenge racism and other types of discrimination”
- **Support** – “We need to support each other to take action”

We believe that if these principles underpin the actions we take, they will make a significant shift in progressing equality and inclusion across all protected characteristics in the Midlands in the next 12 months to five years.

## Aim and objectives

**The strategy aims to create an anti-racist, compassionate, and inclusive working culture for every member of staff, at all levels within health and social care services in the Midlands.**

The two most important drivers that will help us embed those three principles across all of our actions are leadership and accountability:

1. We need both the right leadership, and the most diverse leadership, at all levels within our health care system. Senior managers need to both manage and lead by example.
2. Accountability will be the key to the success of the strategy. Anyone, at any level must account for the progress or lack of progress within their organisation.

**Only if those two crucial elements above are embedded in the health and social care culture, will our organisations be able to effectively tackle institutional racism.**



NHSE/I Midlands have put this guide together to support organisations and ICSs to embed the strategy. We recognise the importance of making sure organisations have access to a wide range of resources, information, and support to implement the recommendations within the strategy effectively.

This guidance has been developed to achieve the following objectives:

1. Act as a short guide to support organisations to implement the strategy
2. Provide resources including good practice, evidence-based research and lived experience of colleagues in the Midlands.

This guidance is a working document and therefore will be reviewed and updated in collaboration with stakeholders in the region. We encourage organisations to provide us with feedback, share good practice and contribute to its development by emailing us at [nhsi.midlandsedi@nhs.net](mailto:nhsi.midlandsedi@nhs.net).

## Tips on how you can implement the strategy

Here's a checklist of activity to consider if you are in the early stages of implementation:

1. Board to sign off and endorse the strategy and this should include:
  - a. Each member of the Executive to make an individual commitment to the action they will take.
  - b. Board members to take personal responsibility and allow the workforce to hold them accountable in achieving their objectives.
  - c. Board to ensure that these principles are reflected in the senior leadership team and managers commitment across all levels.
  - d. Commitment to designated EDI resources.
2. Organisations and systems to use the principles of challenge, educate and support within all EDI initiatives.
3. All organisations within an ICS must collaboratively create the right governance structure to ensure staff networks are central to the decision-making process.
4. Use the [WREI Self-Assessment Tool](#) to monitor progress against the required outcomes within the strategy.
5. Staff lived experience is essential if the strategy is to be a success. Therefore, all organisations must consider the following:
  - a. Develop accessible and inclusive feedback mechanisms.
  - b. Do not rely solely on annual staff surveys, WRES and WDES data.
  - c. Implement a feedback mechanism to capture experience of bullying, harassment and discrimination in the workplace (including confidence and support to speak up).



6. Organisations and systems must be transparent in sharing good practice on what is working and what is not working.
7. Comms team to engage with senior leadership team and EDI Lead to promote the strategy and communicate progress regularly.
8. Prioritising objectives pertinent to your workforce
  - Identify the short-term goals – [this can be accessed here](#).
  - Use your existing WRES and WDES data along with feedback from your staff networks to identify the priorities (within the strategy) for **your organisation**.
  - Identify quick wins.
9. Create a psychologically safe space to start conversation about racism and other forms of discrimination in the workplace.
10. Networking- work in an integrated way to draw expertise from health and social care.
11. Sharing good practice and lessons learnt – be prepared to showcase and share what is working and what is not working which can also be valuable.
12. Focus on all the positive aspects of implementing the strategy:
  - a. Improved health and wellbeing for staff and reduced staff absence and sickness.
  - b. Better staff engagement, satisfaction and improved retention.
  - c. Better service provision and outcome for local communities.

## Supporting materials

Template communications you may wish to adapt or use locally:

### Internal bulletin copy

'Time for action: bringing the Midlands Workforce, Race, Equality and Inclusion Strategy to life' by [\[insert local EDI Lead / HRD\]](#)

"Have you heard about the Midlands Workforce, Race, Equality and Inclusion Strategy? Launched in May 2021, the strategy provides a framework which aims to support all NHS organisations, including ours, to create an anti-racist, compassionate and inclusive working culture.

"The [NHS People Plan](#) published in July 2020, emphasised that racism is a problem that needs to be addressed urgently. However, that in no way diminishes the need to address the equality and inclusion needs of people with other protected characteristics.



“Research has shown that by addressing race inequalities, this also has a positive impact not only on other staff groups, but on patients’ outcome as well. We know that if we have a healthy and inclusive working environment for all our staff, then we can provide a high performing healthcare service that is accessible and inclusive to everyone.

“The strategy sets out what needs to be achieved and the timeframe to reach these goals, but race, equality, and inclusion is everyone’s business, and the responsibility to turn this strategy into reality within our organisation rests with each and every one of us.

“At [insert Trust/organisation name] we have already [insert local initiatives / actions already taking place and ways staff can get involved].

“Visit the NHS England and NHS Improvement Midlands website: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/midlands/wrei/> to read more about the strategy and to access resources which aim to educate and support our local discussions on addressing race inequalities.”

## **Intranet copy**

We are supporting and embedding the Midlands Workforce Race Equality and Inclusion Strategy to ensure our organisation is inclusive for all of our colleagues and to address race inequality within the NHS.

We know that if we have a healthy and inclusive working environment for all our staff, then we can provide a high performing healthcare service that is accessible and inclusive to everyone.

Visit the NHS England and NHS Improvement Midlands website: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/midlands/wrei/> to read more about the strategy and to access resources which aim to educate and support our local discussions.

[add local data / links to local resources / initiatives] ...

## **Copy for staff social media (e.g. closed Facebook groups)**

At [insert Trust/organisation name] we want to continue to create an inclusive and healthy environment for the entire workforce, and therefore we will be supporting and embedding the Midlands Workforce Race Equality and Inclusion (WREI) Strategy.

Research has shown that by addressing race inequalities, this also has a positive impact not only on other staff groups, but on patients’ outcome as well.



We would like to encourage all colleagues to learn more about racial discrimination, to feel confident to challenge and to support each other to take action. There are materials available on the Midlands WREI website

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/midlands/wrei/> which aim to educate and support our local discussions on addressing race inequalities.

We also have [\[add links to local resources / initiatives\] ...](#)

## Additional resources

### Videos: Let's talk about race

#### The White Ally: Steve Morrison

Steve Morrison, Regional Director of Workforce and OD at NHS England and NHS Improvement (Midlands), talks about what it means to be a white ally and the importance of recognising white privilege in tackling racism. This film is a short introduction to the strategy.

- <https://youtu.be/2DqkzSYjbmK>

#### The Cultural Ambassador: Suresh Packiam

Suresh Packiam, a trained cultural ambassador and a BME leader, talks about the positive impact cultural ambassadors have in addressing racism. This short video also highlights one of the biggest obstacles we face in moving the race equality agenda forward.

- <https://youtu.be/cFBxCisadX8>

#### How my lived experience has shaped me: Shajeda Ahmed

Shajeda Ahmed, a senior female BME leader, shares her lived experience of racism and how this has shaped who she is today. Shajeda talks about how we can create an anti-racist and inclusive working environment.

- <https://youtu.be/aa5fiRxIUyg>



### **A bit of me: Byron Batten**

A social worker by background, now working as a senior leader; Byron Batten, Head of Inclusion-Improvement, Communication and Engagement at UHB, talks about how racism has impacted on him and his journey in life. Byron advocates for organisations to enable colleagues to bring their whole selves to work.

- <https://youtu.be/m6jCxE2Yf-c>

### **The pace of change: Byron Batten**

Byron Batten shares his perspective about how great the NHS is to work for, but also how much progress is still needed to address racism affecting some of our Black, Asian and other ethnic minorities colleagues in the workplace.

- [https://youtu.be/0kr\\_mfMd1dA](https://youtu.be/0kr_mfMd1dA)

### **What white allyship ISN'T: Lenea Nyamapfeka**

Lenea Nyamapfeka works as an Equality and Inclusion Compliance Manager and also as a WRES Expert. Lenea talks about what white allyship isn't, as well as providing food for thoughts for those wanting to be an ally.

- <https://youtu.be/ftddHMYp1IE>

### **The right fit: Mwamba Bennett**

Mwamba Bennett, a Senior Contract Manager, explains how equality of opportunity can be misunderstood and that we need to do better to involve people with lived experience of racism to improve policy and practices. Mwamba believes that the Black Lives Matter movement has created some positive shift.

- <https://youtu.be/C5Vv6d4BC28>

### **The Advocate: Jennifer Pearson**

Jennifer Pearson, an experienced leader and a lead nurse in the Midlands speaks about the power of staff voice. Jennifer believes that we have made some positive shift in creating space for minority staff to be heard and have their say but the pace of change in achieving fairness and equality is too slow.

- [https://youtu.be/a\\_HyhMWDK-U](https://youtu.be/a_HyhMWDK-U)



## Staying safe: Jennifer Pearson

Jennifer Pearson talks passionately about her role as a lead nurse. As a black female leader and a clinician, Jennifer reminds us why BME voice in decision making process is key in delivering services that meet the needs of our diverse communities.

- <https://youtu.be/MqEJHdxstNQ>

## Videos: Black History Month 2021

Black History Month (BHM) is an annual celebration of the contribution that Black African and Caribbean communities have made both locally and across the world. The NHS is the biggest employer of people from diverse backgrounds in Europe. The significant contribution of Black people in communities right across the UK in our NHS and schools, small business, arts, academia, sports, volunteering help make Britain to be the strong and diverse country we are today.

For 2021 we celebrated BHM with a number of events, hearing from colleagues and leaders on:

- Actions and interventions that better support and improve the lives of Black colleagues
- Leadership that makes a difference
- The Impact of Allyship

These can be [watched back on our dedicated page](#).

## Easy Read

An easy read version of our Midlands Workforce Race Equality and Inclusion Strategy is [available to download here](#).

## Coming soon...

Keep an eye on our webpage: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/midlands/wrei/> for more resources coming soon, including a podcast series. We will regularly update the page with any new materials, including updated versions of this toolkit.

## Acknowledgments

The Regional NHSE/I Midlands Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team would like to thank all colleagues who have worked in collaboration with us in making invaluable contributions to the strategy. We are keen to continue working in partnership with local, regional, and national colleagues across sectors to provide you with ongoing supporting materials, including sharing good practice and lived experiences. To contribute to this guidance please contact us by email at [nhsi.midlandsedi@nhs.net](mailto:nhsi.midlandsedi@nhs.net).

