



**Workforce race equality:  
Case studies of good  
practice from non-NHS  
employers**

## **Case studies of good practice from non-NHS employers**

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Prepared by: Caitriona Darling and the WRES Implementation team

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- Given due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity, and to foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic (as cited under the Equality Act 2010) and those who do not share it; and
- Given regard to the need to reduce inequalities between patients in access to, and outcomes from healthcare services and to ensure services are provided in an integrated way where this might reduce health inequalities.

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## 1 Summary

Interviews conducted with stakeholders from a range of non-NHS employers suggest that where organisations are making progress in improving workforce race equality, there are a number of elements common to their approaches. In summary, participants highlighted the importance of:

1. Expressing the **case for change**. Both the business case and narrative need to be clearly understood by the organisation, and can be used as important levers to persuade people who are reluctant about the value of change.
2. Embedded **accountability** at all levels. Senior staff and boards should be held responsible for progress. They must actively engage with the organisation's strategy, rather than placing the responsibility entirely on individual members of staff to use diversity and equality policies and initiatives to their advantage.
3. **Senior leaders modelling good behaviour**. Leaders have a key role in promoting equality and must use their position of influence to raise the profile of diversity strategies.
4. **Robust, reliable data**. This is essential to success. Organisations must be willing to put significant effort into understanding the experiences of their staff and proactively use data to address areas of concern.
5. Ongoing and consistent **communications and engagement** to underpin the above elements.

Each of the above points are outlined in detail within this report.

## 2 Introduction

This report is one of a series of publications produced by the NHS Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) Implementation team, to provide evidence and shares good practice around workforce race equality in the NHS. This report presents case studies of good replicable practice on workforce race equality from non-NHS employers. We are grateful to the organisations that participated and contributed to the research that is presented in this report.

Black and minority ethnic (BME) staff make up nearly a fifth of the total NHS workforce, and yet we know that the opportunities and experiences that they receive do not correspond with the values upon which the NHS stands. Research and data show that compared to their white counterparts, BME staff are more likely to:

- be discriminated against in recruitment, especially in the transition from shortlisting to recruitment;
- be seriously under-represented within the NHS at senior managerial and board positions;
- enter the disciplinary process;
- experience discrimination, harassment and abuse from colleagues and their managers at work; and are much less likely to believe that their trust provides equal opportunities for career progression.

Evidence suggests such treatment exists where there are relatively small numbers of BME staff, as well as where there are larger proportions of BME staff in the workforce. Such treatment impacts adversely not just on BME staff, but also upon organisational effectiveness, and patient experience and care. The business case for tackling workforce race discrimination has been summarised in a previous NHS England publication.<sup>1</sup>

Identifying good practice on workforce race equality, and on equality in general, is not only about research and evidence, it is also about effective implementation. WRES data point organisations towards the direction of focus required to make continuous improvement on workforce race equality. It is intended to focus organisations on what “good” looks like, and through the sharing of replicable good practice, on how “good” may be achieved and maintained.

The aim of this report is to help understand how learning and “good practice” on this agenda from non-NHS employers can be applied in the NHS.

There are a number of key themes which emerge from this report and should be kept in mind. These being:

- the crucial nature of the ‘narrative’ that links improving the treatment and opportunities for BME staff to organisational effectiveness and improved services – and in the case of the private sector, better market position;

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<sup>1</sup> NHS England [Briefing for NHS boards on the NHS Workforce Race Equality](#)

- the important contribution of accountability whereby organisations and their leaders, having identified challenges and set out their aspirations around race equality, hold themselves and their managers to account to deliver – not as voluntary effort but as a mandated expectation;
- the central role of demonstrable leadership – at every level of the organisation in modelling the behaviours and values expected of all staff in challenging discrimination, in proactively identifying challenges and opportunities for improvement, and in disseminating the narrative in a meaningful way;
- the importance of data and associated action planning in understanding the challenges and measuring continuous progress and improvement.

### 3 Methodology

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with stakeholders from a range of non-NHS organisations ([Appendix A](#)). Organisations were selected by the NHS WRES Implementation Team based on knowledge of good practice, and through a network of professional contacts. The aim was to gather insight and case studies highlighting good practice on workforce race equality. The interview script is provided as [Appendix B](#).

A high-level review of the literature on this agenda was conducted to complement and contextualise the insights gathered from the stakeholder interviews. Relevant publications were hand-sourced from academic literature.

## 4 General reflections

There were a number of common themes that emerged across interviews with non-NHS organisations. Though the specifics of individual initiatives to promote [equality, diversity and/or inclusion \(EDI\)](#) varied between organisations, there was some agreement to the elements that continue to help ensure their success. Interviewees expressed that: clarity around the case for change; accountability; leadership; and good quality data have been fundamental enablers for improvements in this area. They also recognised the importance of clear and consistent communications in supporting their various programmes, and wider EDI strategies. These themes are looked at in more detail below.

*Although the focus of the WRES Implementation Team is that of race equality, interviewees spoke in broad terms about their initiatives, approaches and experiences of equality, diversity and inclusion, rather than race equality exclusively. The terminology used in our report reflects this.*

Success in improving diversity can only be achieved when multi-level strategies are implemented over a sustained period of time.<sup>2</sup> Interviewees strongly supported this view, reflecting that there has been no single initiative or approach that can be credited with improving the diversity of their organisations. Rather it has been a case of concerted and sustained effort at various levels. They recognised that progress can be slow and several interviewees discussed the importance of acknowledging that engrained behaviours and attitudes take time to change – one individual remarked that for their organisation, improving race equality is like “*trying to turn an oil tanker*”. They stressed that senior leaders must recognise this, and advocate and support a long-term approach to tackling inequality. However, stakeholders also reflected on the importance of finding opportunities to speed up progress within a long-term plan. Interviewees provided some examples ([see Royal Mail’s balanced shortlisting](#)) of ambitious initiatives that have facilitated a modest, but important step change in equality, without which it would take many years to observe comparable progress.

Some interviewees reflected that progress on their EDI agendas has not necessarily been easy. Several initiatives have required staff and managers to move beyond their comfort zone in terms of considering race and ethnicity, addressing biases, and confronting issues and challenges more openly. For example, PwC have a strong focus this year on ‘talking about race’ which aims to address anxieties that people have about talking about ethnicity, so that more “*productive conversation can take place*”. Interviewees stressed the importance of understanding such challenges, and being cognisant that bringing about real change will take time and effort.

<sup>2</sup> Priest et al. [Promoting equality for ethnic minority NHS staff – what works?](#) BMJ 2015; 351: h 3297

## Key insights from interviews

### 4.1 Clear case for change

#### 4.1.1 Business case

The majority of interviewees articulated that there is a clear business case for putting substantial effort into EDI. Organisations appear to have first approached the topic of equality from a gender perspective, more recently extending their focus to incorporate race equality. Interviewees reflected that diversity is considered fundamental to the delivery of their business plans and many discussed the link between diversity and bottom line profit. Organisations recognise that by improving diversity they can attract and retain talented staff. For organisations with a large frontline staff base in particular – for example Royal Mail, BT and Zurich – there seems to be real recognition that they must adequately represent the people that they serve in order to compete for clients, expand into new growth areas, infiltrate new markets, and to best serve and retain their customers.

It appears that these organisations appreciate their moral responsibilities as employers to provide fair, equitable and positive workplaces for staff. However, there was a broader sentiment that as well as EDI being the right thing to do to improve the experience of employees, it is also an integral element of a successful, well-performing organisation.

Clarity around the rationale for improving race equality was cited as an important enabler. Interviewees reflected on the fact that being able to make reference to the underlying business case for change can act as an important lever for convincing people – where there is scepticism or lack of buy in – around the need to direct real effort and resources into EDI programmes. This seems to be particularly important at the outset. Interviewees commented on the power of being able to convince people why change was needed, in a way that connected to wider business goals. For those organisations a little further on in their EDI strategies, this conversation has now largely shifted from ‘*why do we need to do this?*’, to – ‘*what will we do?*’.

EY’s Vision 2020<sup>3</sup> articulates their plan for future success – its objective is to make EY the leading global professional services organisation and a \$50 billion business by 2020. They want to be recognised for having the best brand, being the best employer, having the greatest market share in their chosen services and markets, and having the best relationships with their clients. Diversity and Inclusion is seen as a key enabler of achieving this vision. *At EY, diversity and inclusiveness is not a “soft” skill; rather, it goes to the very heart of our Vision 2020 strategy. Recruits who join EY will be a part of high-performing teams that deliver exceptional client service because they are inclusive and instinctively value diverse perspectives.*<sup>2</sup>

The link between diversity and organisational performance has been commented on previously. Organisations with a diverse workforce perform better financially.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> [EY Vision 2020: our plan for our people, our clients and our future](#) (2013)

<sup>4</sup> McKinsey and Company [Diversity Matters](#) (February 2015)



Research by McKinsey<sup>6</sup> demonstrates that companies in the top quartile for racial or ethnic diversity are 35% more likely to have financial returns greater than their national industry average. Of the ten biggest global accountancy firms, there is a correlation between greater revenue and larger proportions of ethnic minority partners.<sup>5</sup> A 2009 study demonstrated the link between racial diversity and increased sales revenue, greater customer base, improved market share, and greater relative profits.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, speaking of IBM's diversity taskforce initiative in 2004, Harvard Business School Professor David Thomas recognised that a well-articulated business case for action is one of the fundamental factors in any corporate change programme.<sup>7</sup> The former CEO, Lou Gerster, ensured that an explicit link was made between diversity goals and business goals. Their diversity taskforce programme is credited with enabling greater expansion in new markets and the targeting of a broader range of customer segments. Comparisons can be made with healthcare. In the healthcare sector, when senior leadership does not reflect the diverse communities they serve, quality of healthcare and economic efficiency are reduced.<sup>8</sup>

Productivity increases as a result of diversity.<sup>10</sup> Diversity has been demonstrated to improve creativity and decision-making, promote innovation, and enhance economic growth because it drives deeper information processing and complex thinking, and gives people access to a greater variety of perspectives.<sup>11</sup> Others challenge claims that there is a concrete link between diversity and the financial performance of organisations, criticising the simplistic business case that is often made.<sup>12</sup> While acknowledging there is a correlation, they argue there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate a causal link between senior level diversity and profitability. For example, Kochan and colleagues demonstrated, across four separate studies, no link – either positive or negative – between diversity and performance.<sup>12</sup> Regardless of whether the link to business performance has been over-emphasised or -simplified, the usefulness of referencing the financial business case as a tactical lever in persuading people of the need for improved diversity can be important.<sup>14</sup> This was something that many interviewees reflected on.

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<sup>5</sup> Policy Exchange. [Bittersweet Success? Glass ceilings for Britain's ethnic minorities at the top of business and the professions](#) (2016)

<sup>6</sup> Herring, C [Does Diversity Pay?: Race, Gender, and the Business Case for Diversity](#) American Sociological Review April 2009 74: 208-224

<sup>7</sup> David A Thomas [IBM Finds Profit in Diversity](#) Harvard Business School (September 2004)

<sup>8</sup> Race Equality Foundation [High quality healthcare commissioning: why race equality must be at its heart. Better Health Briefing 27.](#) 2013

<sup>9</sup> NHS Leadership Academy. [Healthy NHS board 2013: principles for good governance.](#) 2013.

<sup>10</sup> Priest et al. [Promoting equality for ethnic minority NHS staff – what works?](#) BMJ 2015; 351: h 3297

<sup>11</sup> Galinsky et al. [Maximizing the Gains and Minimizing the Pains of Diversity: A Policy Perspective](#) Perspectives on Psychological Science 2015, Vol. 10(6) 742–748

<sup>12</sup> Kochan et al. [The effects of diversity on business performance: report of the diversity research network](#) Human Resource Management 2003; 42:1:3-21

#### 4.1.2 Diversity as part of a wider 'people' focus and organisational culture

When considering the case for change, several interviewees articulated that EDI is an embedded part of their broader focus on 'people'. Improving diversity and equality is not considered an 'add on', or a 'nice to have', but is a positive part of their culture as an organisation, and their approach to taking care of their staff. This is to be the case for the larger consultancy firms in particular. Other organisations – where large-scale equality strategies have been implemented more recently – are a little earlier in this journey. Although not yet fully embedded, there is recognition that this is the point to which they are trying get.

Zurich's Oxygen programme<sup>13</sup> was piloted in 2015 and fully launched in 2016. The programme centres on the '*8 things that Zurich people managers do*', and was introduced to ensure that all individuals responsible for the development and performance management of others know what is expected of them, and have the skills and confidence to carry out their roles to the highest standard. Diversity and inclusive leadership comprise core elements of the programme.

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<sup>13</sup> Zurich ['Bringing out the best in you'](#)

## 4.2 Accountability and responsibility

Several interviewees – those representing financial services firms in particular – articulated that embedded accountability was an integral aspect of their EDI strategies. For these organisations, as part of annual appraisal processes senior managers and partners are expected to meet certain standards around talent or their ‘people’ agenda, in addition to meeting targets related to financial performance. Broadly speaking, such people targets relate to hiring patterns, staff retention, progression, and qualitative feedback from individuals. Metrics around diversity and inclusiveness form part of these targets. For instance, the diversity of the talent pool, progression, absence, retention and reported wellbeing of specific staff groups. Where there is evidence of underperformance, managers can be personally penalised, receiving a lower appraisal score, and may ultimately lose out on financial bonuses. Interviewees reflected that this approach to accountability was an important mechanism for driving progress.

- EY have strived for parity around people and financial performance: 50% of the appraisal process concentrates on ‘people’ metrics, with the remaining 50% focusing on financial performance.
- In 2016, 30 percent of the performance appraisal process for people managers at Zurich Insurance centred on ‘people’ metrics.
- At Royal Mail, ‘*engendering ownership and accountability*’, is one of the eight key commitments that forms their diversity and inclusion strategy. Initially board level staff were held accountable. Subsequently, monthly scorecards for frontline senior managers were introduced to track and hold managers accountable for measures around headcount, recruitment and attrition, which are broken down and examined by gender and ethnicity. It has been proposed that line managers are held accountable in a similar way, from 2017 onwards.
- At one financial services firm, performance evaluations of staff are expected to follow an anticipated pattern (bell-shaped curve). There is a level of oversight by which evaluations conducted by managers are monitored. If there is a deviation from the anticipated pattern for specific groups – including women and BME groups – results are reviewed, and individual managers are held to account.

Business Unit Leaders (BULs) at Deloitte are appraised annually on their contribution to the organisation’s talent agenda, as part of their standard review process. This includes feedback from the Respect and Inclusion Lead around their level of engagement with initiatives over the course of the year, and feedback on how they have encouraged and participated in implementation of the organisation’s talent strategy. Individuals who are not meeting expectations can risk losing profit share or bonus, and their leadership position can be reviewed. The organisation aims to be open with teams around the reasons for any such action in an effort to demonstrate the level of importance that is placed on their talent agenda, and their approach to accountability.

This approach to accountability and responsibility aligns well to the available literature. A US study<sup>14</sup> that examined various approaches to promoting diversity across 708 private sector organisations concluded that efforts which focus on establishing and assigning responsibility for diversity are more likely to be effective compared to approaches that aim to tackle stereotyping or attitudes. Moreover, responsibility structures were shown to make initiatives such as training, networking, and mentoring programs more effective.

The importance of accountability, as part of a comprehensive approach to tackling race inequality has been recognised at government level by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.<sup>15</sup>

### 4.3 Senior leadership support and advocacy

Interviewees were asked to reflect on the key enablers of success, and there was clear consensus that senior leadership support and advocacy has been a crucial factor in the progress they have observed in terms of their respective EDI strategies. There is visible leadership support from the very top level in many of these organisations. Royal Mail's senior leaders have had a major role in advocating for equality, regularly speaking publicly about diversity, raising the profile of initiatives and the company's overall strategy. At EY, messages around EDI come from the global CEO and are cascaded through senior leadership in each of the regions.

Some organisations have recognised the importance of ensuring senior support for their EDI strategies, and have put in place specific initiatives to improve senior engagement with the agenda. Deloitte have found that their programme of 'leadership discussion' has been very successful. Initiated in November 2014, senior leaders have been taking part in intensive workshops to discuss various aspects of the company's approach to EDI, and to prompt them to consider their role in its success. The sessions are externally facilitated and chaired by a partner. Prompted by feedback and case studies provided through the minority staff networks, delegates are asked to consider their own behaviours as leaders, their appetite to change, and the type of organisation that they want to be part of. These initiatives encourage frank and open conversation about race.

Several interviewees – Royal Mail, Zurich Insurance and EY – outlined how their various minority staff networks have sponsorship from a designated senior manager or business leader to help provide support, advocate for the group and provide a link to senior leadership. This sponsorship is considered vital in improving the impact of the work of such networks and staff groups. Interviewees reflected on the importance of strong leadership support where there has been push back or challenge to the implementation of specific initiatives.

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<sup>14</sup> Kalev A, Dobbin F, Kelly, E. [Best practices or best guesses? Assessing the efficacy of corporate affirmative action and diversity policies](#) American Sociological Review, 2006, VOL. 71 (August:589–617)

<sup>15</sup> Equality and Human Rights Commission (2016) [Healing a divided Britain: the need for a comprehensive race equality strategy](#)

At Royal Mail, strong leadership and support from senior management has been seen as integral for the roll out of several key equality initiatives. For example, Royal Mail has introduced an ambitious balanced shortlisting approach, to address the under-recruitment of women to operational frontline roles. It was previously identified that only 18% of new recruits were women. The standard recruitment process involved two online tests from which the top three people were selected for interview. This was amended, so that the top two men and top two women were progressed to interview, resulting in a two-fold increase in the number of female recruits. There was initially some push back to the initiative, but strong advocacy coupled with good data and a thorough understanding of the legal context resulted in its successful implementation. A similar approach is currently being considered for BME staff.

Parallels can be drawn with the introduction of the 'Rooney Rule' in American football. To overcome a distinct lack of diversity at senior coaching level in the NFL, the rule (named after its originator Dan Rooney) states that each NFL team must interview one minority candidate for head coach or general manager roles. The rule does not guarantee representation or define quotas but aims to make appointment more likely. Although focused at senior level positions, the approach is generally accepted to be successful in the short to medium term, and has been subsequently adapted and used by companies such as Facebook and Pinterest.<sup>16</sup>

The presence of senior champions can be indicative of an organisation's commitment to tackling race inequality and promoting diversity and inclusion.<sup>17</sup> The Race at Work survey (2015) highlights that leaders should set the tone – like any other cultural change programme, they must champion and drive race equality from the top.<sup>18</sup> Core leadership support has been demonstrated to be a predictor of success in improving diversity in higher education in the US.<sup>19</sup> In schools, racist incidents are thought to be under-reported and under-recorded in part due to a lack of leadership.<sup>20</sup>

As diversity improves, organisational leaders also have an important role in helping to foster a psychologically safe working environment whereby all employees can feel confident to express their true selves, without fear of negative consequences. Such

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<sup>16</sup> Policy Exchange. [Bittersweet Success? Glass ceilings for Britain's ethnic minorities at the top of business and the professions](#) (2016)

<sup>17</sup> Business in the Community [Largest ever survey published on race equality in the UK workplace](#) [Press release] November 2015

<sup>18</sup> Ashe, S and Nazroo, J. [Equality, diversity and racism in the workplace: a qualitative analysis of the 2015 race at work survey](#) ESRC Centre on Dynamics of Ethnicity, University of Manchester

<sup>19</sup> Rowley LL, Hurtado S, Ponjuan L. [Organisational rhetoric or reality? The disparities between avowed commitment to diversity and formal programs and initiatives in higher education institutions](#). 83rd annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA, 2002.

<sup>20</sup> Equality and Human Rights Commission (2016) [Healing a divided Britain: the need for a comprehensive race equality strategy](#)

an environment is considered vital in ensuring positive performance in a diverse work setting.<sup>21</sup>

Three of the ten recommendations for employers from the Race at Work survey<sup>24</sup> highlight the crucial role of leadership in promoting equality. The report advocates that senior leaders must:

1. Recognise the existence of racism, and take action.
2. Act as sponsors and use their influence.
3. Take personal commitment for bringing the issue of race equality to the top table.

There has already been some acknowledgement of the requirement for a change in leadership culture and style in the NHS.<sup>22</sup> In addition to improving the diversity of senior management and executive structures, it is recognised that across the NHS, senior leadership must strive to better understand the challenges, and help lead on equality and diversity as an institutional priority.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Singh B, Winkel DE, Selvarajan TT. [Managing diversity at work: Does psychological safety hold the key to racial differences in employee performance?](#) J Occ Org Psych 2013;86:242-63.

<sup>22</sup> Kline, R. [The “snowy white peaks” of the NHS: a survey of discrimination in governance and leadership and the potential impact on patient care in London and England](#) (2014) Middlesex University Research Repository

<sup>23</sup> Priest et al. [Promoting equality for ethnic minority NHS staff – what works?](#) BMJ 2015; 351: h 3297

#### 4.4 Data as a fundamental enabler

Across all organisations, interviewees highlighted the fundamental role that data plays in their approach to EDI, with one stakeholder describing data as the “*bedrock*” of their approach. Robust and detailed data allows organisations to understand specific challenges and patterns within their workforce, and proactively address these. Interviewees described how important it is that data can be interrogated at the level of BME groups or subgroups to better understand issues, without making assumptions. For example:

- PwC were able to use organisational and staff data to identify that they had a specific issue around promotion to senior level for women, which was linked to underuse or lack of access to professional networks and relationships. As a result they initiated their ‘Talent Watch’ programme aimed at providing opportunities for sponsorship and advocacy for women and BME staff.
- BT used detailed recruitment data to review their hiring processes for graduates and apprentices at each stage by ethnicity and gender. By doing so they were able to identify issues candidates might have, from different ethnic backgrounds in the recruitment process. This is now enabling them to investigate why this might be and address any issues identified. They also identified that external recruiters were not offering a balanced talent pool for experienced hires. They have begun work to address this – they have written to each recruiter to outline their diversity strategy and expectations, and arrange a follow up face to face meeting.
- EY were able to identify that they were having difficulty recruiting women to experienced roles (as compared to graduate hires), which allowed them to change how they work with their recruiters to ensure that they draw from a more diverse pool of talent.

It was clear from stakeholder discussions that for data to be a real enabler of change, two things are required.

1. Managers and diversity leads must have access to robust, detailed data – the sample must be sufficient to ensure that accurate conclusions can be drawn.
2. There must be a willingness to proactively interrogate the data.

No organisation reported using a sampling approach as is often the norm in NHS organisations. All staff members are expected to take part, and interviewees reported engagement rates between 75% and 90%. Organisations reported undertaking staff surveys at least every two years, and described how participation is advocated for through all levels of leadership. At EY, messages of encouragement are cascaded from global leadership, to regional and business unit leads. Reminders and messages of encouragement are displayed on screens, sent through newsletters, email and Twitter. Partners and senior managers can track response rates in real time and are responsible for prompting their teams to respond.

BT have started doing ‘inclusion interviews’ in order to better understand the lived experiences of staff members from protected groups. Information from the interviews has been anonymised and is used in shaping their diversity strategy going forwards.

Similarly, other interviewees reflected on the power of verbatim comments from staff surveys to bring to life the experiences of staff members.

Royal Mail employs around 140,000 people and has a staff survey engagement rate of 89%. They investigated how best to facilitate staff participation, exploring the option of electronic surveys. However, staff feedback demonstrated that most workers preferred a paper questionnaire returned by post. The staff survey is supported by a dedicated engagement team, responsible for communications activities. The team host a 'Big Conversation', holding focused discussions with frontline staff and increasing visibility through various promotional initiatives. Team managers are expected to develop action plans in response to staff survey results.

When asked about metrics of success, interviewees generally referred to broad organisational metrics such as staff breakdown, representation at board and senior managerial level, or anecdotal or relatively informal qualitative feedback about specific initiatives. To some extent this may be because programmes are relatively new, or have recently been extended to target BME groups – there were several examples provided of programmes which have been demonstrably successful in terms of improving gender equality (see Springboard initiative below), and were then subsequently rolled out to address challenges faced specifically by BME staff. Additionally, although many organisations (PwC and EY in particular) reported very good disclosure rates in terms of staff ethnicity, many are still working to improve self-disclosure by staff, which seems to hamper efforts to track impact of initiatives. Finally, although some interviewees made reference to specific evaluations of initiatives, few were able to externally share the details of such.

Royal Mail's flagship 'Springboard' initiative has been running since 2005. Approximately 3,500 women have completed the programme to date, with on average 20–30 programmes per year. Despite some operational challenges Springboard has been very successful, with 10% of graduates moving to management positions. Royal Mail has recently begun rolling out 'Springforward' – a development programme aimed at first line managers encouraging them to consider their next career step. Initially aimed at female managers it has been further developed to address the issues facing BME managers. The first cohort of staff started in October 2016. They will attend a series of workshops and undertake a workplace based assignment to assist with goal setting, improve presentation confidence and develop skills for networking with senior colleagues.

Insufficiently detailed data has been cited as a significant barrier to improving race equality in the workplace<sup>24</sup> and beyond, in wider society.<sup>25</sup> A paucity of robust data limits the impact of initiatives and interventions, and renders some of the most vulnerable members of a community invisible.

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<sup>24</sup> Policy Exchange. [Bittersweet Success? Glass ceilings for Britain's ethnic minorities at the top of business and the professions](#) (2016)

<sup>25</sup> Equality and Human Rights Commission (2016) [Healing a divided Britain: the need for a comprehensive race equality strategy](#)



The requirement for improved data on workforce race equality in the NHS is fully acknowledged, and the recently introduced initiative of the NHS Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) provides the mandate for NHS organisations to begin addressing the gaps in experiences and opportunities between white and BME staff. In contrast to the private sector organisations represented in this report, many NHS organisations still have much progress to make on their approaches to workforce race equality.

## 4.5 Consistent communications and engagement

Effective communications and meaningful engagement play important roles in supporting EDI approaches. Clear and consistent communications is important for:

- Gaining buy-in and support across an organisation, and articulating the case for change in an inclusive way.
  - At EY, partners and senior managers are provided with a suite of materials to help support communications activities with their teams. This helps ensure communications are consistent and impactful. Senior staff members are responsible for cascading messages around EDI, and are supported to facilitate discussions with staff during ‘family counselling meetings’.
- Improving the quality of HR and staff survey data.
  - At Zurich Insurance, their ‘Be Counted Campaign’ is helping to improve data quality by encouraging all staff to disclose information around race, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, etc. Also, their biannual ‘Voice of the Employee’ staff survey is promoted and supported by an extensive communications campaign.
- Understanding the experiences of staff members, and guiding the company’s approach to tackling inequalities.
  - At BT, ‘Inclusion interviews’ are conducted to help management understand the lived experience of staff members from protected groups.
  - In many of these organisations, staff networks – as powerful advocates – were reported to play a pivotal role in engaging with, and understanding the experiences of BME staff.

As well as commenting on the role of specific communications initiatives, interviewees discussed the importance of ongoing and consistent communications, as part of a broad strategy. Specific initiatives outlined above formed part of wider communications plans – whereby organisations actively seek opportunities to include employees in change, inspire participation and celebrate diversity within their workforce. It is essential that everyone can see the benefit of interventions for themselves – the role of communications is critical in fostering good relations between groups.

## 4.6 Sustainability

The challenge of creating sustainable improvement in equality was recognised by all of the organisations interviewed. They recognised the importance of making some early progress, but noted that embedding sustainable change would take time. There also was acknowledgement that sometimes a small cohort of people is responsible for spearheading change, particularly at the outset. The challenge is to ensure that such individuals have the opportunity to drive improvement, without the organisation's entire equality or diversity approach relying on the energy of just one or two people.

We know that *“the key elements necessary for cultures of inclusion, respect and kindness...also are associated with high-quality health care”*.<sup>26</sup> Creating and sustaining those cultures is essential if specific measures to tackle workforce discrimination, and in particular improve talent management, are to be effective and sustainable. Without them there will be a serious risk of changing the demographic profile of teams, occupations or boards, but without the means of sustaining those changes, or drawing on the collective impact such changes can make.

We also know that creating an inclusive organisation with sustainable equality improvement initiatives and approaches needs more than good HR policies and compliance with equality legislation. It requires a proactive approach to both supporting individuals and existing teams and to transforming the leadership culture within organisations. West, Dawson and Kaur<sup>34</sup> report that in healthcare it is crucial that there is:

- A clear, compelling shared vision focused on the delivery of high-quality, continually improving and compassionate care. Where this is the case, staff are likely to demonstrate high levels of commitment and identification with their organisations. This shared identification can counter discrimination and exclusion.
- Sustained effective leadership at every level of the organisation around inclusion, with every team and department in every organisation involved and held accountable to that vision.

The non-NHS organisations interviewed within this report recognise the importance, not just of specific interventions grounded in narrative, accountability, metrics and leadership, but also the challenge of sustaining the improvements that stem from those interventions.

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<sup>26</sup> West, M; Dawson, J, Kaur, M. [Making the difference Diversity and inclusion in the NHS. Kings Fund; Data Analysis Report for NHS Trusts](#) King's Fund (2015)

## 5 Conclusion

There was some consistency across interviewees with regard to the types of initiatives that their organisations have trialled or put in place. For example, talent management or mentoring initiatives, specific interventions to encourage more balanced recruitment, and training for staff and management.

Stemming from the interviews with non-NHS organisations, a key point of learning for the NHS was the relative consistency with which interviewees described the key enablers to success:

- There was recognition that the **case for change** needs to be clearly understood by the organisation, and can be utilised as a lever to encourage people who are reticent about the value of change.
- **Accountability** needs to be built in at all levels, so that senior staff and boards are held responsible for progress and actively engage with the organisation's strategy, rather than placing the onus entirely on individual members of staff to use diversity and equality policies and opportunities to their advantage.
- **Demonstrable leadership** has a vital role to play in modelling good values and behaviours, promoting and using their position of influence to raise the profile of diversity strategies.
- Robust, reliable **data** is fundamental to success. Organisations must be willing to put significant effort into understanding the experiences of their staff, and to proactively use data to address areas of concern.
- Finally, many interviewees commented on the role that persistent and consistent **communications** and engagement plays in underpinning the above elements.

There are obvious differences between private and public sector organisations, and by no means can we expect that private sector approaches are immediately transferable to the NHS. However, organisations such as Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust have adopted a system wide approach to improving workforce race equality, which is due to be published later this year. The approach draws upon a rich evidence base from the United States on what works in order to improve workforce race equality in organisations. Research from the University of Michigan states that in order for the culture of organisations to improve on this agenda, attention needs to be paid **simultaneously** in ensuring that there exist:

- Demonstrable and robust leadership
- Accountability
- Mandated metrics
- Meaningful and sustained communications
- Visible role models
- Resources and support

There are clear similarities between the key points of learning on this agenda from non-NHS organisations and the evidence base that has been reported by the University of Michigan. There is a clear evidence base and blueprint for helping organisations to make the difference that our diverse staff, communities and patients need and deserve.

## 6 Appendices

### 6.1 Appendix A – stakeholders interviewed

Interviewees
Audrey Fearing, Partner (EY)*
Cass Blakeman, former lead for UK and Ireland on Ethnic Diversity
Gill Thomas, Diversity & Inclusion Specialist (BT Group)
Julie Thomas, Head of Diversity & Inclusion (Zurich Insurance)
Kay Clements, Diversity & Inclusion Manager (Royal Mail)
Louise Suen, Consultant and Multicultural Network Coordinator (Deloitte)
Patrick Maher, Partner and Respect & Inclusion Advisor (Deloitte)
Sarah Churchman, HR Director (PwC)

\*Audrey Fearing retired as a member of Ernst & Young LLP on 28 February 2017

## 6.2 Appendix B – interview script

### Background and case for change

1. Can you give us a general overview of what your organisation has been doing, in terms of workforce race equality?
  - *When did you begin to focus on this agenda?*
2. Why were you – as an organisation – persuaded that you needed to focus on workforce equality?
  - *Did service delivery and performance improvements factor into the decision-making regarding the initiative?*
  - *What is/was the role of stakeholder expectations/engagement (consumers, clients, impacted communities), in the decision to undertake equality initiatives?*

### Detail of initiatives

3. What types of initiatives have been put in place?
4. Why focus on these areas/initiatives specifically?
5. What did you expect the initiative(s) to achieve?
6. When did you expect to see results?

### Impact and metrics

5. Have they been successful?
  - *What are the benchmarks of success and how were they determined?*
6. Which have been most impactful?
7. What evidence/data does the organisation have to demonstrate their success?
  - *What types of metrics are you using?*
  - *In your experience, what types of metrics are working best?*
    - *Why? What makes a good metric?*
  - *Do you use data to track progress?*
8. What has the organisation tried in the past that hasn't worked?
9. In your opinion, why were these initiatives unsuccessful?
  - *Inquire about "institutional barriers" such as restrictive hiring requirements, internal promotion, etc.*

### Culture/organisational factors

10. How does workforce race equality fit, as part of the wider culture of the organisation?

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11. At an organisational level, do you think there were any particular factors or precursors that **enabled** the equality initiatives to become successful? (E.g. good data, leadership support, funding, communication, etc.)
- *[If applicable] As you changed the profile of the senior/executive team, what changed the in the culture of that team to contribute to the impact and sustainability of this agenda?*
12. Do you feel there has been a strong and consistent level of buy-in across managers and staff within the organisation?
- *Were there any groups that were particularly difficult to persuade (e.g. middle managers)?*
  - *Were there any groups/members of staff that played a key role in driving this agenda forward?*
    - *Are there staff networks involved in driving/supporting this work, and what is their role?*
    - *Are there any accountability measures built into these initiatives?*

### **Sustainability and next steps**

13. How can you be assured that this work sustainable, in the long-term?
- *What has fundamentally changed as a result of these initiatives, which means that the positive impact will be sustained over time? (E.g. if a key individual driving the work leaves the organisation)*
  - *What is an example of specific best practices being integrated into your permanent organizational operations?*
14. What is planned next/for the future?