

MEETING THE BITC RACE AT WORK CHARTER

An employer's guide

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The CIPD is the professional body for HR and people development. The registered charity champions better work and working lives and has been setting the benchmark for excellence in people and organisation development for more than 100 years. It has more than 150,000 members across the world, provides thought leadership through independent research on the world of work, and offers professional training and accreditation for those working in HR and learning and development.

Business in the Community is the largest and longest established, business-led membership organisation dedicated to responsible business, founded by HRH The Prince of Wales 40 years ago.

We grow the responsible business movement and collectively create a greater impact focused on:

- developing a skilled and inclusive workforce
- ensuring work is good for everyone
- innovating to sustain and regenerate the planet
- building thriving communities.

BITC Advisory Services supports organisations to take action against the commitments and drive change. They offer a range of advisory products and services. This can include the design and development of diversity and inclusion strategies, guidance on ethnicity pay gap reporting, learning and development programmes for senior leaders and employees, and development and delivery of sponsorship and mentoring programmes.



Guide

Meeting the BITC Race at Work Charter: an employer's guide

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1 Introduction

Not since the inquiry into the murder of Stephen Lawrence, which popularised the term 'institutional racism', has there been such a heightened focus on racism. The murder of George Floyd, the Black Lives Matter Movement, the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on black and minority ethnic communities, and the harrowing account of racism experienced by the Yorkshire County Cricket Club Captain, Azeem Rafiq, are all landmark examples of race discrimination in organisations and society.

The 2017 government-sponsored *Race in the Workplace: The McGregor-Smith Review* detailed the disparities in employment and progression experienced by black and minority ethnic people (BAME). The findings led Business in the Community (BITC) to create the [Race at Work Charter](#) in late 2018. The charter is linked to [BITC's Race at Work Scorecard](#) (which looks at how UK employers were performing against the recommendations outlined in the McGregor-Smith Review) and outlines calls to action to improve race equality, inclusion and diversity in the workplace.

Following the results of the Race at Work 2021 survey, the charter has been expanded to include allyship and inclusive supply chain commitments, meaning signatories are now required to make seven commitments:

- 1 Appoint an executive sponsor for race.
- 2 Capture ethnicity data and publicise progress.
- 3 Commit at board level to zero tolerance of harassment and bullying.
- 4 Make equality, diversity and inclusion the responsibility of all leaders and managers.
- 5 Take action that supports black, Asian, mixed race and other ethnically diverse employees' career progression.
- 6 Support race inclusion allies in the workplace.
- 7 Include black, Asian, mixed race and other ethnically-led enterprise owners in supply chain.

BITC has a clear set of objectives that it wants signatories to achieve, which includes:

- encouraging leadership, allyship and connections to foster advocates and allies that are willing to proactively take actions to ensure their workplace is safe and inclusive
- encouraging businesses to take strategic action on leadership by bringing the attention of all senior leaders within the organisation to the issue of race relations
- promoting mentoring and sponsorship of ethnic minority employees by putting them forward for development or progression opportunities, especially in organisations that do not have ethnic minority role models in senior positions
- co-developing or co-creating race equality and inclusion strategies with people from all race equality groups.

The CIPD has continuously campaigned for race equality through our public policy work, engagement with government, and guidance to employers. The CIPD [viewpoint](#) on race equality, inclusion and diversity (EID) is a belief that: 'People from all black, Asian, minority ethnic, mixed and other race equalities backgrounds should be able to achieve their full potential at work where their difference is valued, celebrated and where they feel safe and a sense of belonging.'



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The CIPD also believes that it is vital to take a more intersectional and personalised approach to I&D interventions and actions, given that a person from a diverse racial background can also experience barriers relating to their gender, disability, age, sexuality, neurodiversity, social class, religion and so on. The CIPD believes that, like mandatory gender pay gap reporting, there should be *'ethnicity pay reporting, which can serve as a catalyst'*.

The CIPD's views on race align with the Race at Work Charter and the belief of BITC that *'every employer must prioritise action on race equality, inclusion and diversity (I&D), where race I&D is part of a wider I&D strategy in organisations'*.

This guide aims to provide a practical framework that signatories of the Race at Work Charter can follow to meet the seven calls to action. We have given research-backed recommendations to improve race I&D and highlighted resources to support the race inclusion commitments.

2 The Race at Work Charter and how to meet the seven commitments

The Race at Work Charter requires signatories to make seven commitments to help tackle ethnic disparities in the workplace. Below we've outlined advice on how to meet each of these commitments.

1 Appoint an executive sponsor for race

Senior management sponsorship is key to getting real momentum behind I&D initiatives. CIPD research has shown that lack of progress on I&D is often linked to senior executives not prioritising it as a business imperative. The CIPD report, [*Diversity Management that Works*](#), identified three levels of commitment to I&D from senior executives:

- **level 1:** advocacy, communicating values and recognising that the culture and values of the organisation need to integrate I&D and change
- **level 2:** advocacy and resources to support activity that promotes I&D, recognising that it needs investment
- **level 3:** advocacy, resources and holding people to account, both through KPIs that incentivise managers and being willing to 'call out' and act upon bad behaviour, applying sanctions when needed.

To meet this part of the Race at Work Charter, we recommend that organisations should:

- Ensure executives have KPIs specifically related to race inclusion.
- Champion race equality throughout the organisation and ensure race is firmly on the agenda.
- Task executives to lead on race equality strategy with oversight of the delivery of programmes of work.
- Encourage senior leaders to question the lack of diversity at senior levels and commit to taking firm action.
- Initiate ethnicity pay reporting to encourage action to redress pay differences.



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Further advice and calls to action on each of these points are outlined below.

Executives must have KPIs specifically related to race I&D

Senior leadership accountability is key to fostering any significant change on race I&D. Requiring leaders to report on their performance on improving race I&D at work will encourage them to commit to and deliver measurable positive outcomes.

Champion race equality throughout the organisation and ensure race is firmly on the agenda

Senior leaders championing race throughout an organisation will lead to all parts of the organisation taking race equality and inclusion seriously. This could take many forms, including discussing race I&D implications of all agenda items at senior management meetings, sponsoring ethnic minority staff networks, or actively participating in race inclusion events such as Black History Month. This, in turn, will lead to more action on the ground around race.

Task executives to lead on race I&D strategy with oversight of the delivery of programmes of work

Senior leaders need to have oversight of I&D initiatives to ensure outcomes are delivered on time and to budget. They can provide impetus for the organisation to support I&D.

Key behaviours and actions include:

- accessing, researching and understanding the different ethnic minority communities and businesses with a view to collaboration, joint problem-solving and partnerships
- developing a programme of colleague volunteering, engagement and outreach activities with ethnic minority businesses
- sharing ongoing contract opportunities information through targeting networks, local ethnic minority media and organisations
- establishing targets to improve supplier I&D and integrating in wider governance, business planning and performance management and reporting to senior leadership.
- effectively monitoring supplier contracts by ethnicity, timely payment, and fair remuneration
- training procurement teams and wider colleagues about the benefits of supplier diversity, including reducing volatility in supply chain, contribution to local economy, job creation, access to new markets including in the context that ethnic minority businesses have international networks and customers
- developing and delivering race I&D inclusion training, which includes conscious and unconscious bias detection and elimination for all teams
- monitoring and publishing procurement data by ethnicity, location and, supplier size to ensure equity of access, treatment, outcomes and accountability. Additionally, introduce key performance indicators to track supplier performance linked to internal goals
- developing and encouraging reciprocal mentoring with ethnic minority businesses to help build better understanding and relationships.

Encourage senior leaders to question the lack of diversity at senior levels and commit to taking firm action

Senior leaders genuinely holding organisations to account for the lack of diversity by reviewing policies, processes and systems through a race inclusion lens will lead to real and sustained change. Setting targets for the recruitment and promotion of ethnic minority employees can have a significant impact on increasing representation and inclusion across an organisation.



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Initiate ethnicity pay reporting to encourage action to redress pay differences

Experience from gender pay gap reporting has shown that this helped in reducing the pay gap in some organisations. Organisations are encouraged to introduce pay gap reporting and analysis for ethnic minorities. This will help with accountability into pay decisions and will start organisations on a course towards fairness in decisions on pay and progression for ethnic minorities.

2 Capture ethnicity data and publicise progress

The CIPD report, *Diversity Management that Works*, found data can help organisations understand the nature and extent of challenges and barriers in career progression. It also found evidence that suggests UK employers are poor at collecting data on workforce diversity. The McGregor-Smith Review established that a large percentage of FTSE 100 companies need to have better data to drive progress on race and ethnicity. The review outlines what organisations need to do to get progress on ethnicity inclusion, stating that:

'Organisations need to establish a baseline picture of where they stand today, set aspirational targets for what they expect their organisations to look like in five years' time, and measure progress against those targets annually.'

One of the key challenges to achieving these aims is a lack of disclosure of ethnicity data,¹ with employees citing a variety of reasons that hindered disclosure, including:

- weak trust in their employer
- being unsure how the data would be used
- belief employers will claim to be acting on inequalities with no change evident.

To meet this call to action, organisations should seek to:

- Review the data you already collect and ascertain whether this is sufficient to measure the ethnic minority demographic of your organisation. If you don't currently collect ethnicity data, set up processes for doing so.
- Carry out meaningful analysis of the data, drawing out patterns of under-representation.
- Identify internal and external channels to distribute the data; don't just put it on your website.
- Develop meaningful actions to address disparities found.
- Lay out a clear plan to continue collecting data and reporting on progress as well as regularly evaluating the effectiveness of programmes to address disparities.

Review your data

To establish whether your data is sufficient to measure your organisation's ethnicity profile, you need to review what you already collect. If you don't currently collect ethnicity data, set up processes for doing so.

According to a PWC study,² 75% of organisations do not have enough data to support ethnicity pay reporting. To remedy this, organisations should:



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- Review the data you already have to see whether the categories used to self-identify align with the Government's [list of black, Asian and minority ethnic groups](#).
- Ascertain if you have enough data in each category to allow for aggregation and reporting while protecting individuals from being identified.
- Establish how can you collect ethnicity data. According to [CIPD research](#),³ the majority of ethnicity data is collected from application forms (44%) followed by onboarding forms (21%).⁴ An underutilised tool is the staff survey. A staff survey is a great medium for collecting data on ethnicity as there should already be a relationship of trust with those who make the effort to complete a questionnaire.

Carry out meaningful analysis of the data, drawing out patterns of under-representation and barriers

There needs to be a good reason for collecting ethnicity data; [CIPD research](#)⁵ found the top four steps employers can take to encourage disclosure are:

- Give a clear explanation of how the data will be used.
- Offer assurances of confidentiality.
- Share visible evidence of the organisation's dedication to creating a fairer and more inclusive organisation.
- Ensure senior leaders show their commitment to I&D.

Identify channels to communicate what the data means, both internally and externally; don't just put it on your website

A large proportion of employees (30%)⁶ believe their employer will not do anything with the ethnicity data. It is important to ensure that data is widely distributed internally using a variety of channels, such as a staff newsletter, promoting through social media, or information in the annual report.

Develop meaningful actions to address shortcomings found

More than a third of employees in our [survey](#)⁷ wanted to see evidence of their employer's dedication to creating a fair and inclusive organisation. Employers need to develop an action plan to address the findings of ethnicity disclosure, such as how to increase representation at all levels of an organisation.

Lay out a clear plan to continue collecting data and reporting on progress

Communicate a clear plan showing how the organisation will continue to collect data and report on progress, as well as evaluating the effectiveness of programmes to address shortcomings. Employers should increase their efforts to collect ethnicity data and consider how they can encourage more disclosure.

They should also review the effectiveness of any actions taken to address any lack of representation identified and report the outcome to employees to help boost confidence in the employer's commitment to creating inclusion. A data-driven approach is essential to both identifying areas of inclusion where improvements are required and monitoring the effectiveness of strategies, policies and programmes of work.

3 Commit at board level to zero tolerance of harassment

Bullying and harassment can be major issues in the workplace, with some of it related to personal characteristics such as race and ethnicity. They can be detrimental to the performance of individual employees as well as affect their physical and mental wellbeing, be disruptive to teams and departments, and ultimately have legal implications.

Bullying and harassment have a legal context that is important to understand for both employers and employees. The Equality Act 2010 defines harassment as:



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'unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual'.

Although bullying doesn't have a legal definition, the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Employment Rights Act 1996 place obligations on employers to protect employees from bullying.

Acas defines bullying as:

'offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient'.

The CIPD report, *Managing Conflict in the Modern Workplace*, found that 15% of employees had experienced bullying at work and 8% had suffered harassment.⁸ Bullying is more prevalent in the public sector, with 21% claiming to have experienced bullying compared with 14% in the private sector and 10% in the voluntary sector. Worryingly, 40% of employees say they have been bullied or harassed by their line manager or supervisor, followed by 29% saying the perpetrator was a team member.⁹

To meet this call to action, organisations should seek to:

- Develop an anti-harassment and anti-bullying policy and framework.
- Run an organisation-wide campaign on dignity and respect in the workplace.
- Create a network of anti-bullying champions to support victims and act as a first point of contact and signpost sources of help.
- Ensure people managers have adequate training to be able to address race discrimination.
- Carry out enforcement of a zero tolerance approach where harassment or bullying occurs.

Develop an anti-harassment and anti-bullying policy and framework

CIPD guidance on tackling bullying and harassment recommends the development of a well-designed policy on bullying and harassment. The policy should clearly explain what constitutes bullying and harassment and its impact on victims, highlighting that it is a disciplinary offence and can have legal implications, including personal liability. The policy should include a section on race-related bullying and harassment with examples of the types of inappropriate behaviours, such as jokes, banter, cyberbullying, threats and physical assault.

Run an organisation-wide campaign on dignity and respect in the workplace

Focusing on the positive aspects engendering dignity and respect is a better focus and more likely to elicit engagement. Creating awareness and clearly setting out how employees should behave towards colleagues, customers and partners will ensure everyone knows what is expected of them. Crucially employees will know what kind of behaviour is unacceptable and could lead to disciplinary action. Ensure that this campaign and supporting policies set out clearly how you want your customers, clients, contractors and service users to engage with your employees.



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Create a network of anti-bullying champions to support victims

Allyship has been very effective¹⁰ in many areas of inclusion, including race and ethnicity. Creating a network of anti-bullying champions that can be the first point of contact for victims can be powerful in helping employees to come forward. These champions can also signpost to sources of help.

Ensure people managers have adequate training

Line managers have an important role to play in preventing the escalation of incidents of bullying and harassment and can, if they address issues when they arise, foster informal resolution. It is important for managers to feel confident so that when they are faced with a conflict, they can address it. Resources for line managers on dealing with conflict at work are available on the [CIPD website](#).

Carry out enforcement of zero tolerance approach

Zero tolerance should mean exactly that. If there are still incidents after the organisation has developed and communicated its anti-bullying and harassment policy and made attempts to foster dignity and respect among the workforce, a firm approach should be taken in line with the organisation's disciplinary procedures. This may include sanctions up to and including dismissal.

4 Make equality, diversity and inclusion the responsibility of all leaders and managers

Equality and inclusion are often the realm of people professionals and I&D leads, and maybe the chief executive, as well as staff networks. Yet the case for organisation-wide 'buy-in' is strong and, by now, well known. Even within the executive team you may have the CEO and the HR director who have genuinely bought into the need for inclusion, with the rest repeating the same message. Starting at the top, senior leaders, and especially those from core/revenue-generating functions, need to have an understanding of what equality and inclusion means for them and their area of responsibility and why it is important. Some senior executives do believe¹¹ the benefits outweigh the costs when it comes to I&D, despite the time, energy and skill required. That belief needs to be fostered across organisations to achieve genuine progress on equality and inclusion.

To meet this call to action, organisations should seek to:

- Create an inclusive organisational culture.
- Ensure that all leaders and managers take ownership for delivering I&D.
- Make I&D a key responsibility in job descriptions (and assess it during interviews).
- Assess performance on I&D during appraisals.
- Ensure leaders and managers are plugged into I&D by developing networks and events, and ongoing communications.

Create an inclusive organisational culture

An inclusive organisational culture where employees bring their whole selves to work, where no one has to try to 'fit in', will lead to more authentic behaviour and improved performance. The CIPD report, *Building Inclusive Workplaces*, defines inclusion and makes the case for why it is good for everyone – not just people with protected characteristics – and how people professionals and wider business can become more inclusive.¹²



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Ensure that all leaders and managers take ownership for delivering I&D

The relationship between employees and line managers is very important in building inclusion.¹³ Managers have the role of implementing I&D policies into day-to-day working practice. The way managers treat employees, consulting them in decision-making, is essential in creating an inclusive workplace. Senior leaders must 'walk the talk' and champion inclusion as they set the tone for how the organisation behaves. Buy-in for I&D is important at all levels of organisations, including senior leaders, middle managers, team leaders and supervisors. Anyone that has people management responsibility and is in charge of resource and budget allocation needs to buy in to I&D. The CIPD report, *Diversity Management that Works*, provides evidence that progress on inclusion is unlikely without senior management support. Middle managers also need cues from the top to prioritise I&D. Gaining buy-in from managers requires involving them in formulating I&D initiatives and allowing autonomy on how initiatives are implemented locally rather than being prescriptive.

Make I&D a key responsibility in job descriptions (and assess it during interviews)

The trend over the last two decades is to have a customary sentence right at the end of a job description requiring a commitment to I&D. This is tokenistic at best and is sometimes tested at interviews where the panel expect a generic statement about the candidates' commitment to I&D. It is very rarely tested as a competency. Employers need to develop competency-based questions on I&D that test the candidate's approach to applying inclusion in day-to-day working practices. An example of this may be a question asking a candidate how they have inclusively managed a team.

Assess performance on I&D during appraisals

Accountability is key to getting progress on inclusion. While there is a slowly growing trend to include I&D KPIs for senior leader roles, that trend is yet to extend to all staff across organisations. The expected I&D performance of employees will be vastly different from that of senior leaders but should nonetheless be meaningful. This could include KPIs around inclusively working as part of a team, which may be assessed through 360-degree feedback, taking part in allyship programmes and supporting minority groups through advocacy and other activities.

Develop networks, events and ongoing communications

Ensure leaders and managers are plugged into I&D by getting feedback from 'the shop floor'. This is very important for leaders to know that I&D initiatives and programmes are working and also to keep in touch with the reality on the ground in terms of what is not working or failing to make a positive change.

5 Take action that supports black, Asian, mixed race and other ethnically diverse employees' career progression

The potential to progress one's career is a key consideration when looking at jobs. More employees from ethnic minority backgrounds prioritised career progression as an important part of their working life compared with white British employees.¹⁴ Ethnic minority employees are also more likely to say that their identity and background has an effect on the opportunities they are given. The report also found evidence that ethnic minority employees feel the need to alter some aspects of their behaviour to fit in, and censor how much they tell colleagues about themselves and their personal life. Transparent career paths and seeing role models that have progressed would help boost career advancement, according to the report.

Managers underestimating BAME employees' career ambitions and making assumptions about their career paths were also reported as hindrances to advancement. This is echoed



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in the CIPD report *Race Inclusion: Ensuring equality of career progression opportunities*, which found that 22% of the BAME group respondents said that their career progression has failed to meet their expectations because they have experienced discrimination, compared with 15% of the white British ethnicity respondents.¹⁵

Against this backdrop it is important to identify what kind of organisational culture supports ethnic minority employees in advancing their careers and achieving their potential.

To meet this call to action, organisations should seek to:

- Offer opportunities for ethnic minority employees to build relationships across an employer organisation.
- Provide employees from ethnic minority backgrounds the chance to work on a variety of stretching projects at work.
- Provide high-quality line management and support.
- Give improved access to training and development opportunities.
- Introduce positive action programmes to increase the pool of diverse talent.

Offer opportunities for ethnic minority employees to build relationships

One of the key enablers of career progression is opportunities for employees from ethnic minority backgrounds to build relationships across an organisation.¹⁶ This could include professional working relationships, colleagues acting as sponsors and mentioning ethnic minority employees when progression opportunities arise, and networking with peers that can open doors to cross-departmental projects.

The report identified relationships built across an organisation as a key enabler to career progress, with 37% of respondents stating it is important. Similarly, 28% of respondents from ethnic minority backgrounds and 27% of white British respondents stated that 'who you know/informal relationships' played a part in career progression.¹⁷ Employers can help develop these relationships by setting up networking events for ethnic minority employees to network with senior colleagues from across an organisation. Aim to match ethnic minority employees with senior sponsors who can mention their name when progression opportunities are discussed.

Provide ethnic minority employees the chance to work on a variety of stretching projects at work

Another enabler of career progression is to have the opportunity to get involved in different projects which help develop employees' skills. Skills and talent being overlooked was one of the reasons given by 38% of employees (BAME and white) as to why their career progression had failed to meet their expectations.¹⁸ Strive to offer ethnic minority employees the opportunity to work on a range of projects to enhance their skills (and improve their peer networking, as discussed above).

Offer high-quality line management and support

A key enabler for both white and ethnic minority employees (30%) is good-quality line management at key points in their career. Conversely, 36% of employees whose career progression had failed to meet their expectations said they had experienced poor-quality line management.¹⁹ Employees given people management responsibilities need to be equipped with the appropriate skills and knowledge, including how to support the career development of their reports. Line managers should be provided with training



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and guidance on using meetings and performance appraisals to assess the skills gaps of employees and identify development opportunities. Resources on supporting development are available as part of the line manager support materials on the [CIPD website](#).

Give improved access to training and development opportunities

A lack of effective training and development programmes was cited by a quarter of ethnic minority respondents as a reason for a lack of career progression, including 18% stating that they received little or no training when they entered the workplace.²⁰ The impact of a lack of training or inadequate training on career prospects is higher for ethnic minority employees than it is for white British workers. Receiving effective training had contributed to the career progression of 23% of respondents (BAME and white).²¹ First and foremost, employers should set employees up for success by initiating an effective onboarding process, including training on how to carry out the various duties of the job. Line managers should support employees by providing coaching and/or mentoring during the initial few weeks after a new employee comes on board.

Introduce positive action programmes to increase the pool of ethnic minority talent

Twice the number of ethnic minority respondents compared with white British employees said they had not participated in an effective graduate programme at the start of their career.²² Employers and especially people professionals should identify where ethnic minorities are under-represented and initiate effective positive action measures, including early career and graduate programmes, middle and senior management development programmes, mentoring schemes and work shadowing. The Equality Act 2010 allows positive action measures to be taken where there is evidence of the under-representation of a group with protected characteristics. HR professionals should improve their own [understanding of positive action](#), so they are better equipped to advise their organisation.

6 Support race inclusion allies in the workplace

The [BITC Race at Work 2021](#) survey found that 39% of white employees said they were getting support from employers to promote race equality; however, 26% said that they would like more support. Those in privileged leadership positions in organisations can encourage and provide support to black, Asian, mixed race and other ethnically diverse colleagues. When you have privileged identities, you have more power. So, your voices and your opinions are more likely to be heard and are taken more seriously. By using your privilege to enable and empower black, Asian, mixed race and other ethnically diverse colleagues, you can significantly boost their confidence and capabilities.

Being an ally doesn't necessarily mean you fully understand what it feels like to be oppressed. It means you're taking on the struggle for justice and equality as your own in overcoming barriers and discrimination. As an ally, you want to understand how you can help dismantle inequalities alongside those that face unjust systems.

Allyship is a vital tool to enabling opportunities for black, Asian, mixed race and other ethnically diverse talent to thrive and progress. It is a lifelong process of building relationships based on trust, consistency, and accountability with marginalised and disadvantaged individuals and/or groups. It is an opportunity to grow and learn about ourselves and others and involves recognising inequalities, understanding the impact of discrimination, disadvantage and taking practical steps to support, including sponsoring, advocating and sharing growth opportunities.

Below are a series of practical steps on how to be an effective ally.

Widen networks

Most people have 'people like me interest networks'. This can influence hiring, promoting, and offering other career-growth opportunities to people who are 'just like me/us'. To diversify your network, spend time with black, Asian, mixed race and other ethnically



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diverse colleagues and actively listen to their lived experience. Join and encourage others to join employee networks, resource groups, conferences/focus groups. Follow a diverse range of voices on social media. In all of these settings, you can get to know individuals from diverse backgrounds, hear about their experiences, and learn from them.

When someone is sharing emotion and sentiment over their lived experience inside and outside the organisation, this may require greater empathy and understanding. Avoid undermining their experiences by interrupting and sharing your views. Use accurate, race and culturally sensitive language. While terms such as 'BAME' are useful in certain contexts, it can be simplistic and limiting in terms of individual experiences and the wider spectrum racial diversity and the multiple disadvantages and barriers (intersectionality) experienced by people.

Inclusive thinking and behaviour

Inclusive thinking and behaviour involves constant vigilance of bad behaviours from yourself and others, however small. These are sometimes called microaggressions. When those bad behaviours are detected or observed, allyship is the willingness to challenge and engage – with tact and diplomacy. Allies always let the world know what they stand for – and crucially what language and behaviours, witting (conscious) or unwitting (unconscious), they will not tolerate around them.

For example, meetings are often filled with non-inclusive behaviours, such as interruptions, idea hijacking, misdirected questions, and housework tasks. Conscious attention is needed to observe what is happening and take appropriate action. If someone is being interrupted, interject, and say, 'Let's hear X finish her thought.' If someone is repeating another person's great idea and getting all the credit, say something like, 'Great idea. Thanks to Y for suggesting it earlier.'

If a client is asking you questions instead of the most qualified black, Asian, mixed race or other ethnically diverse person present, redirect the conversation with, 'Z is the expert on that topic. Let's hear from them.' Speaking out for under-represented colleagues in meetings and other settings will help ensure all voices are heard, with the added bonus of helping everyone know that they are valued.

Invite a colleague from a black, Asian, mixed race or other ethnically diverse under-represented group to join your next high-profile meeting; give them insight into the discussion while increasing their visibility with the people around the table.

Advocating

We all know the value of someone speaking highly of us. Next time you are in a decision-making position, use your social capital to advocate on behalf of a colleague from an under-represented group. Using your position to share their achievement or what you have learned from them is a great way to boost their standing and reputation. Support them with their professional goals, for example joining a different team or the board of a professional association to gain a certain kind of experience or publishing an article for the company blog.

Sponsorship

Sponsorship programmes are aimed at supporting black, Asian, mixed race and other ethnically diverse colleagues, progression. They must not be seen as filling a deficit inherent in black, Asian, mixed race and other ethnically diverse colleagues, but rather to redress inequalities of access and outcomes in opportunities inherent in their experience. Actions include recommending black, Asian, mixed race and other ethnically diverse colleagues for:



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- high-profile assignments and speaking opportunities
- skill-building projects and giving presentations
- representing your department or organisation to improve their visibility internally and externally. This will help to enhance social networks and build credibility.

When undertaking performance appraisals, having a full understanding of your black, Asian, mixed race and other ethnically diverse colleagues' experiences, including barriers relating to intersectionality, can ensure you are objective and can tailor support and development around their specific needs and experiences.

Being an ally is an ongoing lifetime journey and you don't have to do it all at once. Start with a single act. While it may seem small, you'll make a difference. You may even start a ripple effect, inspiring others across your organisation to act as better allies. [The BITC Black Talent Allyship toolkit](#) includes case studies to guide your actions.

7 Include black, Asian, mixed race and other ethnically-led enterprise owners in supply chain

Black, Asian, mixed race and other ethnically diverse people who completed the Race at Work 2015, 2018 and 2021 surveys said that they wanted to see role models from their own backgrounds. This can be facilitated by the progression of talent in the workplace and supporting business leaders from black, Asian, mixed race and other ethnically diverse backgrounds more widely.

The CIPD is encouraging employers to ensure black, Asian, mixed race and other ethnically diverse-owned businesses and enterprises are part of their supply chains and procurement. Employers should ensure that black, Asian, mixed race and other ethnically diverse suppliers have equitable access, treatment and outcomes within the supply chain and procurement.

The CIPD [guide on sourcing diverse suppliers](#) outlines seven steps to increase the diversity of your supply chain:

Step 1 – Examine the data.

Step 2 – Craft the business case.

Step 3 – Set targets.

Step 4 – Find diverse suppliers.

Step 5 – Engage with diverse suppliers.

Step 6 – Monitor performance and remove obstacles.

Step 7 – Celebrate and share success.

Following these steps will enable you to diversify your suppliers in a meaningful and sustainable way, to benefit your company and wider society.

Building long-term, sustainable relationships is vital to establishing robust and authentic supply chain partnerships that reflect the communities and customers being served. Assess and measure the internal and external impact of supplier diversity.



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3 Conclusion

The CIPD recommends that employers sign up to the [BITC Race at Work Charter](#). We have a vast range of resources, including research reports as well as guidance on race inclusion, to support employers to meet the seven calls to action of the charter, including:

- [Developing an Anti-racism Strategy](#) – guide
- [How to Have Difficult Conversations about Race at Work](#) – guide
- [Barriers to BAME Career Progression to the Top](#) – report
- [Race and Employment](#) – factsheet
- [How to Source Diverse Suppliers](#) – guide

Signing the Race at Work Charter signals an organisation's serious commitment to fostering race inclusion in their organisation. The commitments made in the charter will ensure there is a clear focus and prioritisation of race equality in employment and career progression. For further information about the charter, BITC membership and advisory services, please contact race@bitc.org.uk

The CIPD is proud to partner with BITC in offering our skills, knowledge and expertise to support employers in meeting the charter commitments.

4 Appendix: Advice for small businesses on meeting the Race at Work Charter

Introduction

Smaller employers often face similar challenges to larger organisations when it comes to inclusion and diversity (I&D), but they may also have constraints, such as fewer resources and a lack of dedicated HR and I&D support. This advice is aimed at supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to meet the commitments of the Race at Work Charter. Medium-sized businesses are those that employ between 50 and 250. Small businesses are defined as employing fewer than 50 staff, and micro businesses are organisations employing fewer than ten people.²³

While many of the measures undertaken by larger employers to improve I&D may not work for SMEs, and diversity monitoring and reporting may be more difficult due to smaller numbers of staff, the Race at Work Charter offers a way for SMEs to work towards improving their I&D. The seven Race at Work Charter commitments outline that businesses should aim to:

- 1 Appoint an executive sponsor for race.
- 2 Capture ethnicity data and publicise progress.
- 3 Commit to zero tolerance of harassment and bullying.
- 4 Make equality, diversity and inclusion the responsibility of all leaders and managers.
- 5 Take action that supports black, Asian, mixed race and other ethnically diverse employees' career progression
- 6 Support race inclusion allies in the workplace.
- 7 Include black, Asian, mixed race and other ethnically-led enterprise owners in supply chain.

This guide provides practical steps that smaller employers can take to help meet the seven charter commitments and, ultimately, improve their inclusion and diversity.



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1 Appoint an executive sponsor for race

Leadership is key to creating an inclusive workplace and tackling discrimination.

Senior leadership accountability for race inclusion

Most micro and small firms are typically run by an owner-manager who can ensure they take personal responsibility for improving race inclusion in their firm. Slightly larger employers, for example those with 50 or more staff, need to be creative about making senior leaders in the business or managers accountable for race inclusion. Building in reverse mentoring and 360-degree feedback processes can be one way to encourage senior leaders to take ownership of delivering inclusion and diversity.

Champion race equality and lead by example

Senior leaders will be much closer to employees in smaller organisations. Therefore, it is vitally important that leaders display inclusive behaviours in all of their interactions with employees, customers, suppliers and any other stakeholders. Leaders and managers in SMEs will need to reflect on their own behaviour and knowledge around the issue of race at work and access [information and guidance](#) in order to ensure that they are role-modelling the right behaviours.

At the heart of inclusive workplaces are leaders and managers who treat people fairly and consistently and with respect, regardless of their background or personal characteristics.

Lead on race inclusion strategy and support the rollout of initiatives

In all organisations, and particularly in smaller firms with no HR function, the starting point for improving race inclusion is understanding the legal requirements associated with employing and managing people, including employment contracts and status. It is crucial that key people management practices, for example recruitment and reward, take place without bias or discrimination. The [CIPD's People Skills Hub](#) provides access to resources on the people management 'essentials' that need to be in place to underpin an inclusive business.

Once the core HR and people management policies and practices are in place, business leaders and managers should work with HR/I&D if they have these roles in-house or (where possible) engage an external consultant to help develop I&D strategies, policies and initiatives. These should be developed keeping in mind the size of the organisation and its access to resources. Employers can access the free resources of the CIPD, including our research report, [Diversity Management that Works](#).

2 Capture ethnicity data and publicise progress

Collecting data may be more challenging within smaller organisations, particularly considering:

- Small sample sizes may make it difficult to aggregate data and protect individuals from being identified.
- Encouraging the disclosure of race and ethnicity data may also be difficult; employees may be concerned about being identified and there may be issues around trust in management to use the data only for equality reporting purposes.
- There are challenges in carrying out meaningful analysis, especially where small changes in the employee profile can skew the results.
- It may be challenging to publicise progress for all of the reasons already mentioned, to protect anonymity, and there may be a lack of meaningful analysis and potentially misleading results.

Employers need to think about their organisation and what is possible in terms of reporting while ensuring individuals are not identifiable. Consequently, small and micro employers should focus on engaging with individual employees via one-to-ones, for



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example, where they can ask individuals about their perceptions of fairness and equity in the organisation. This may serve as a better measure of the impact of inclusion and diversity programmes instead of attempting to collect large data sets.

In slightly larger organisations of more than 50 staff, and certainly in those with over 100 employees, collecting and analysing workforce data becomes increasingly important to understand employees' perspectives on racial inclusion and if there are areas of the organisation or practices such as promotion where there might be bias.

3 Commit to zero tolerance of harassment and bullying

Bullying and harassment are common issues within all organisations, and it is no different for smaller employers. Smaller employers may have fewer formal processes for addressing this issue when it arises. Depending on the size of the organisation, employers may choose to develop anti-harassment and anti-bullying policies similar to larger employers. However, for organisations employing fewer than 50 people, there may not be much merit in creating long and complex policies, especially if you have to hire external expertise. Instead, writing a simple code of conduct on the expected behaviour of staff may suffice. It is important that employers check with a qualified employment lawyer that the code of conduct meets all relevant legislation.

Employers should then promote the code of conduct to employees and ensure all staff are encouraged to read it. It should also be mandatory reading for any new hires to ensure that, as your business expands, everyone is made aware of the business standards, values and culture of inclusion that you wish to foster. Managers should gain an understanding of managing conflict so that they are equipped to address any issues when they arise. This may be done through training or accessing some of the free resources available from the CIPD, including our report, *Managing Conflict in the Modern Workplace*. There is also a guide specifically for [line managers on managing conflict](#).

4 Make equality, diversity and inclusion the responsibility of all leaders and managers

Inclusion and diversity will be much closer to senior leaders and managers in smaller organisations. Leaders and managers must take personal responsibility for I&D and give it the same degree of importance as other essential employment policies, such as health and safety and employee wellbeing. Leaders should actively engage in getting feedback from the 'shop floor' and set and regularly review the achievement of I&D goals. Smaller teams make it possible to get much wider feedback on I&D than in a larger organisation. Smaller employers could invest in employee engagement software or other infrastructure but could easily collect feedback through the one-to-one process. Even collecting anonymous feedback may be relatively easy through an online questionnaire using a free survey platform. This makes it possible for employers with resource constraints to collect robust data to support I&D.

5 Take action that supports black, Asian, mixed race and other ethnically diverse employees' career progression

Smaller employers can take steps to improve inclusion through positive action measures. These are proportionate actions that employers can take to encourage under-represented groups to apply for jobs or provide additional support to help career progression. The positive action can be:

- additional support for individual employees from the line manager
- mentoring from senior leaders
- funding made available to employees from under-represented groups to attend external training courses



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- access to stretching projects that help employees demonstrate their skills and knowledge and build their expertise – creating a fair and inclusive working environment, where employees, regardless of their background, can make a valid contribution and develop a successful career is important to employers of all sizes, regardless of staff numbers or resources.

More information on positive action is available in our [FAQs about race in the workplace](#).

The Race at Work Charter provides a framework for SMEs to aspire to in creating inclusive workplaces where people of all races can bring their whole self to work and have a fulfilling and rewarding career. The importance of race inclusion has been highlighted by the *CIPD Race Inclusion Reports*, which show inequalities are still pervasive in many workplaces and there is a need to talk about race and collect data to support the identification of disparities. The reports also show that there are disparities in career progression opportunities for ethnic minorities.

Signing the charter and working towards achieving the commitments demonstrates the promise of employers to address race inequalities and create a working environment where all employees can flourish.

6 Support race inclusion allies in the workplace

Whatever the size of your business or organisation, you can still be an ally to ethnic minority colleagues. Whether acting as a mentor, sharing a colleague's accomplishments, being mindful of their lived experience and cultural differences or helping an individual advance their career, an ally is there for ethnic minority colleagues in meaningful ways.

Allyship is the continuous process of using your power in the workplace to empathise and support those in more marginalised or disadvantaged positions. It is about building relationships of trust, consistency and accountability, and having the confidence to stand up and speak out against discrimination and inappropriate statements.

As with inclusivity, allyship spans all levels of a business. One of the most interesting parts of allyship is that there's not really a concrete definition or set process; allyship can be unique to each business, reflective of their unique teams.

The first step towards allyship may involve some difficult conversations where you ask colleagues to understand their own privileges. What's really important is to take a step back and listen, hear and learn about the experiences of others that might be different from yours. Allyship is all about action; it is not enough to claim to be an ally then sit back and do nothing. It's all about what you're doing as an individual to drive transformative change. For those driving forward allyship, you should be thinking about empowering ethnic minority colleagues and cultivating a 'culture of belonging'. Business and people leaders should set the example and not be passive observers but instead have a responsibility to stand up for inclusion and represent the beliefs of an inclusive business.

Allyship in practice encompasses a range of actions, such as lifting others up by advocating, sharing growth opportunities, not viewing frustration venting as a personal attack and recognising micro-aggressions and prejudices. Most importantly, it involves listening, self-reflection and change.



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7 Include black, Asian, mixed race and other ethnically-led enterprise owners in supply chain

You don't have to be working in a procurement function to impact supplier diversity. The intention to work with a more diverse range of suppliers in line with your organisation's I&D strategy applies no matter the size of your organisation. Key behaviours and actions can include:

- researching and understanding the different ethnic minority communities and businesses with a view to collaboration, joint problem-solving and partnerships. This could include reaching out to a local Chamber of Commerce network
- developing a programme of volunteering, engagement and outreach activities with black, Asian, mixed race and other ethnically diverse-owned businesses
- sharing ongoing contract opportunities information through networks, local black, Asian, mixed race and other ethnically diverse media and organisations
- establishing targets to improve supplier EID and integrating this into wider governance, business planning and performance management
- effectively monitoring supplier contracts by ethnicity, timely payment, and fair remuneration
- training for procurement teams and other colleagues about the benefits of supplier diversity, including reducing volatility in supply chain, contribution to local economy, job creation, access to new markets, including in the context that black, Asian, mixed race and other ethnically diverse businesses have international networks and customers
- monitoring and publishing procurement data by ethnicity, location and supplier size to ensure equity of access, treatment, outcomes and accountability
- developing and encouraging reciprocal mentoring with black, Asian, mixed race and other ethnically diverse businesses to help build better understanding and relationships.

Not all of these actions will be feasible for all SMEs, but the intent and action where possible to improve supplier diversity will have a positive impact on your organisation's I&D strategy.

More information on positive action is available in our [FAQs about race in the workplace](#).

The Race at Work Charter provides a framework for SMEs to aspire to in creating inclusive workplaces where people of all races can bring their whole self to work and have a fulfilling and rewarding career. The importance of race inclusion has been highlighted by the [CIPD Race Inclusion Reports](#), which show inequalities are still pervasive in many workplaces and there is a need to talk about race and collect data to support the identification of disparities. The reports also show that there are disparities in career progression opportunities for ethnic minorities.

Signing the charter and working towards achieving the commitments demonstrates the promise of employers to address race inequalities and create a working environment where all employees can flourish.



5 Endnotes

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CIPD

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
151 The Broadway London SW19 1JQ United Kingdom
T +44 (0)20 8612 6200 **F** +44 (0)20 8612 6201
E cipd@cipd.co.uk **W** cipd.co.uk

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