

# NETWORKS DAY 2021



— NATIONAL DAY FOR —

## STAFF NETWORKS

**Wednesday 12th May 2021**

**#Togetherness**

**#MakingWorkBetter**

**COMMEMORATIVE MAGAZINE**

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A flock of birds, possibly swallows, is seen flying in a bright blue sky filled with soft, white clouds. The birds are scattered across the upper half of the frame, some in sharp focus and others slightly blurred, suggesting movement. The overall mood is one of freedom and unity.

## #TOGETHERNESS

**Together** we are stronger – **together** we are more

**Together** we are louder – **together** we will roar

**Together** we are happier – **together** we can smile

**Together** we are bolder – **together** we will thrive

**Together** is a word that conjures up so much

The sense of being joined by the sharing of a cup

The sense of being joined by the sharing of a cause

The sense of moving forward beyond the pregnant pause

**Together** we are stronger - **together** we are more

**Together** we are louder – **together** we will roar

**Together** we are happier – **together** we can smile

**Together** we are bolder – **together** we will thrive

**Together** is a feeling that fills us all with hope

A feeling that **together** we collectively can cope

A feeling that protects us against all types of weather

Like flocking birds convening behind a common feather

**Together** we are stronger – **together** we are more

**Together** we are louder – **together** we will roar

**Together** we are happier – **together** we can smile

**Together** we are bolder – **together** we will thrive

Together we will conquer, together we will win

**Together** we will finish what we came here to begin

**Togetherness** is more than this – a wider, broader church

**Togetherness** will help us find the answers that we search

**Together** we are stronger – **together** we are more

**Together** we are louder – **together** we will roar

**Together** we are happier – **together** we can smile

**Together** we are bolder – **together** we will thrive

Paul Deemer, April 2021 (Visuals, Elliot Deemer)



# EDITOR'S WELCOME

It seems like yesterday when I launched the first ever National Day for Staff Networks at Harper Collins UK in London.

The air was filled with excitement and there was a real sense of community in the room. This was the start of something special - the day for employers to celebrate their networks and say 'Thank you' for their insight, innovation and the support they bring to colleagues in the workplace.

2021 is the 5th time the UK is celebrating this day and it seemed fitting to do something special to mark this special anniversary. This Networks Day Commemorative Digest captures the diversity and depth of networks with pieces from colleagues who lead staff networks as well as those from the wider inclusion space. In addition, there are contributions from the wonderful Campaign Committee members covering themes such as compassion, intersectionality and resilience.

Over the years, the campaign has been very fortunate to have received sponsorship from Sandwell & West Birmingham NHS Trust, Sugar Media and Marketing, Norton Rose Fulbright, The Power of Staff Networks, Peabody, Lexis Nexis Risk Solutions and our champion sponsor, Bank of America. Their contribution has and continues to be a fantastic demonstration of practical and financial support and I thank them for this.

It goes without saying that Networks Day could not happen without our supporters, champions and of course, networks themselves celebrating and making it an annual success. It's been such an honour to lead the charge and a pleasure witnessing 'the family' celebrating each other.

The theme for this year is #Togetherness. COVID19 has meant a period of change and challenge. Now, more than ever, there needs to be continuous collaboration between networks. Whether you are looking to strengthen your own network or whether you want to work more effectively with other networks in your organisation, how we communicate is critical. Networks, through compassion, and by working together, learning together and sharing together means that we can all be stronger, safer and smarter – together.

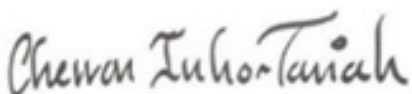
I am surrounded by a wonderfully passionate and caring Campaign Committee who generously volunteer their time and creativity to shape every National Day. I would like to use this opportunity to say thank you to Abdul, Rob, Rasheed, Jerome, Yvonne and Nichole.

I have thoroughly enjoyed pulling this digest together and I hope it inspires you to continue what you do; making work better.

## Happy Networks Day!

**PS: Visit the website for a range of resources to help you celebrate.**

Warmest wishes



**Cherron Inko-Tariah MBE**





**BANK OF AMERICA**

## CELEBRATING NETWORKS DAY WITH BANK OF AMERICA

At Bank of America (BofA) we are committed to being a great place to work, by creating an inclusive environment for all our employees around the world, working to ensure our programmes and resources enhance their experience and further their careers. Our commitment to being an inclusive workplace means creating opportunities for our teams to grow and develop, recognising performance and supporting their physical, emotional and financial wellness. One way we demonstrate this is through our support of our Employee Networks. These are bank-supported groups made up of employees who share a dimension of diversity along with their allies.

### **Our Employee Networks create and support communities**

There are 11 Employee Networks with over 280 local chapters with 140,000 memberships globally. Across EMEA, we have over 8,000 employees who are members of our employee networks with 23 chapters. Our research shows that Employee Network members have a 5% higher employee satisfaction score than non-members. By having the opportunity to pursue their interests through an Employee Network, they feel supported and are more likely to be engaged and develop camaraderie with colleagues.

### **A spotlight on our Parents and Caregivers Network (PCN)**

The PCN is a global Network that aims to create a supportive environment for employees with caring responsibilities for children, other family members and loved ones and for employees who feel they might become parents/carers in the future. PCN does this by providing access to applicable support, information and resources and by influencing the bank's policies and practices in support of employees who are parents and/or caregivers.

**Lesley White, Head of Global Commercial Banking International and Executive Sponsor of PCN EMEA at Bank of America** said: "Networks provide employees and their allies with opportunities to connect with each other to develop leadership skills, broaden their view of diversity, mentor one another and address issues that matter to them, meanwhile encouraging collaboration, generating and harnessing great ideas, bringing lasting value to our business and our workforce. "The Parents and Caregivers Network plays an important role in shaping the culture and values of the business, building connections among colleagues, encouraging careers to flourish and providing support and advice in balancing work and home life. Bank of America's continued commitment to the Network enables us to provide an essential platform of care for our employees as their needs evolve over time."

Speaking about her experience with joining the network and taking on the responsibility of co-chair for the PCN UK chapter, **Reena Shukla, Director in EMEA Operations at Bank of America** said: "I returned from maternity leave after my first child and joined the Network to find out more about resources the company offered as well as to connect with other members. My first few months back were challenging, as I adjusted to new routines whilst still wanting to work towards my career ambition.

"It's important for me to be a visible champion of the Network as well as being a Mum, to highlight that with the help and support of the resources in the firm I feel I have a well-balanced life managing my childcare and work commitments without sacrificing my career aspirations. The PCN brings together like minded people to talk and share experiences, which is an excellent resource and important community that truly adds value within the business."

Across EMEA, there are PCN chapters in London, Bromley, Chester, Camberley and Dublin. With further ones being set up in Paris and other countries in the region later this year. PCN's reach continues to grow strong with new members added daily. The Network runs an excellent, engaging calendar of activities throughout the year, including: regular networking events, external speaker series, webinars on a variety of topics and also works hand in hand with the benefits and human resources partners to understand the support available to parents and caregivers across the business from offering free emergency childcare, back-up adult and eldercare to providing free access to a range of 500 clubs to keep the children entertained during school holidays - to mention a few.

**Eoin Kashishian, Managing Director, Global Corporate & Investment Banking and co-chair of PCN UK, Bank of America** said: "One of our key focus areas for the PCN has been to encourage other dads to be actively involved in Network activities, speak up and lead by example. As a father of two young children, I fully appreciate how a supportive and flexible work culture is a necessary ingredient to achieving a sustainable work-life balance. Another important part of our strategy has been to further highlight the importance of carers, and the often complex issues they have to overcome. This is even more in the spotlight given current working conditions as a result of covid-19."



**LESLEY WHITE**

*"I took on the PCN co-chair role at the end of 2018. I was inspired by some of the other employee networks such as the Disability Advocacy Network and the hugely positive impact they had on employees across the bank. I am incredibly proud of all the work our PCN committee, made up entirely of employees volunteering their time, has done and continues to do for the bank's parents and carers."* **Eoin Kashishian**





## HOW STAFF NETWORKS ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE AT #TEAMUDH

Staff networks at University of Dorset Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust are making a real difference to the working lives of staff and the experience of patients.

They support employees and patients in partnership with the Trust; provide challenge, change and leadership on critical issues and a calendar of events throughout the year.

The Trust has supported them through its Inclusion Champions Programme, which has involved leadership development and guest speakers from other trusts.

With this support and the courage and energy shown by the networks, they are really adding value to the overall staff and patient experience at our hospitals.

### BAME network

The network has driving greater support for BAME colleagues [throughout Covid-19](#); bringing food and medical supplies to overseas staff who were having to self-isolate and hosted health and wellbeing forums for clinical and non-clinical staff.

The network also [campaigns for action on Black Lives Matter](#), resulting in a commitment to action from the Trust and communications on the support available to our black colleagues and advice on how all staff can support the movement.

They have taken part in reverse mentoring, and celebrated Black History Month with several stories about BAME staff.

### Pro Ability network

The network, which is for people with physical disabilities, long-term health conditions, special needs and mental health challenges, launched on 31 October 2019 and are already making a difference.

They met with staff to listen to their issues and signpost them to support and, in partnership with their executive sponsor, Medical Director Alyson O'Donnell, they are helping managers make reasonable adjustments for staff.

The network has been successful in getting captioning turned on for Microsoft Teams meetings to assist hearing impaired staff.

### LGBTQ+

One of the main successes of the LGBTQ+ network has been the roll out of more than 3,000 rainbow lanyards with accompanying staff pledges to be inclusive colleagues.

The network raised awareness of the issues around LGBTQ+ History Month with a series of powerful stories discussing what it means to be a LGBTQ+ NHS member of staff or patient.

It also had a presence at Pride 2019 on the NHS bus in the parade and a stand in Bournemouth Gardens.

## International Doctors Support Initiative

IDSi lead Pam Miceli said the network had been instrumental in supporting international doctors with practical information and advice and a friendly face to discuss their worries.

She said: "We have supported several international doctors to stay at the hospital after they came up against behaviour that wasn't acceptable."

## EU Network

The EU Staff Network have been instrumental in supporting EU nationals, especially post the EU referendum.

They campaigned for a [letter of appreciation and support](#) to be sent out to all EU and international members of staff, which was promoted alongside a series of films titled [We Love Our EU NHS Staff](#) organised by the Trust's communication's team.

The network helped arrange support for staff who would like to apply for the EU Settlement Scheme and have supported the career development of EU nationals.

## Armed Forces Support Group

The Armed Forces Support Group supports our staff who are reservists, veterans or immediate family members of the armed forces.

The group organised RBCH's VE day celebrations in May 2020 and were also instrumental in gaining the Trust's accreditation as a Veteran Aware NHS trust.

UHD is now one of 47 trusts across the UK to be named Veteran Aware and have been granted the status in recognition of its commitment to improving NHS care for veterans, reservists and members of the armed forces.

## Freedom To Speak Up

In 2019 the Trust was acknowledged for its 'Freedom to Speak Up' (FTSU) culture after receiving an FTSU score of 84% - the highest score for an acute trust.

The service offers confidential advice for anyone with concerns about patient safety or the way their concerns have been handled. The service is having an impact on a diverse set of colleagues.

We are proud of our networks because they really are #MakingWorkBetter in our Trust.





My name is Madiha and I work at University College London (UCL). I am fortunate enough to work at a world-renowned institution that is recognised for its academic excellence and global impact. It values the diversity of staff and students; and recognises the importance of supporting those who have caring responsibilities. It is well documented that staff and students value a family friendly working environment (Audrey et al, 2008). UCL places very high emphasis on promoting a culture of family friendly policies and provisions that encourage work-life balance 'UCL acknowledges that its staff are most productive when they have achieved a work-life balance that enables them to meet their responsibilities outside work'.

### UCL PARENTS & CARERS NETWORK

#### why did I set it up?

I am a parent, which is one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. I set up the [UCL Parents And Carers Together network](#) in 2014 with strategic support from the UCL Equalities, Diversity & Inclusion team. It is a volunteer-led grassroots network and aims to support UCL staff members who are thinking of becoming parents, starting families, going on maternity leave, returning from maternity leave and balancing ongoing caring responsibilities with work.

Since its launch I have successfully led the PACT network, developing the strategic vision that feeds directly into the UCL 2034 strategy "Improve the consistency of experience and support of staff and students around pregnancy, maternity, paternity, childcare and caring responsibilities" to make it a more family friendly workplace, giving our students and staff the best support, facilities, and opportunities, and EDI strategy of valuing our staff and delivering on equality and diversity (Bijl-Brouwer et al, 2019).

**Power of human support:** Leading the PACT network has been an incredibly humbling experience for me. It is an absolute privilege to be in a position where I find myself approached by colleagues from all over the university, who share their life stories and who ask for advice. I have met people I would have never thought I would come across. I have heard personal stories of human strength that defy belief. I have seen people battle with grief yet put on a brave face each day to face the world. I have witnessed colleagues come to me and pour their heart out. There is something unique and special about the notion of sharing



**MADIHA SAJID**

experiences with each other, which in my opinion, is incredible and not replaceable by any form of technology. 'Sometimes talking to others in a similar situation is the most powerful form of support.'

**Maternity at work** – supporting expectant mothers: A very important stream of work that PACT does is with expectant mothers who are preparing to go on maternity leave or are returning to work. My personal experiences of raising a child and managing a busy workload inform the discussions that we have and provides a supportive environment for others to share their experiences. It is extremely rewarding and very valuable as one delegate's feedback says "It is comforting to know that nothing is wrong with me and others are going through the same emotions of becoming a new mother. It makes me feel better..."

**Are we there yet? Bringing children and parents face to face!** I believe in being inclusive by design. It is very important to give a voice to every group and I invited schoolchildren to take the hot seat and engage in meaningful dialogue with parents. The session covered important themes like family relationships, wellbeing, social media, impact on mental health, and school life. This event was a huge success and parents, students, speakers and schoolchildren really enjoyed the opportunity to give candid opinions, heart felt answers and honest reflections of what they thought about each of these themes. As one delegate put it "... the session left me a whole new impression about UCL and how UCL as an employer cares about its staff's work life balance especially family commitment".

**Dads@UCL** – spotlight on experiences of fatherhood: As part of PACT's strategic objectives, I have launched the Dads@UCL campaign, which aims to raise awareness about experiences and challenges of fatherhood and male carers. This will help UCL to enhance the support provision for male carers across the university. A delegate said *"A group like this is something that I have thought would be really valuable to any father, where the space to discuss the different contexts and challenges from the man's perspective/experience is so disparate and rare"*.

Leading Covid response: In the wake of a global pandemic, I rose to the challenge by setting up an online platform for all staff and students, signposting to sources of help, planning, and delivering regular sessions, and working with UCL HR colleagues to provide advice and information about furlough support and flexible working (Cluver, 2020). A colleague noted "There are many parents and carers who would not have made it through the last year, in particular, without support from PACT."

## WOMEN'S HIGHER EDUCATION NETWORK how and why is it important?

I am also part of the [Women's Higher Education Network](#) (WHEN) which is a UK-based national network for women working in the higher education sector. It is an inclusive network uniting women with different roles, from different institutions, different fields, different backgrounds and experiences. Our goal is simple: to speed up gender equality. WHEN believes in the importance of connecting and uniting women from diverse backgrounds who can share unique experiences, exchange ideas and learn from one another.

**WHEN wins global recognition:** In 2019, WHEN won global recognition for [Best Practice for celebrating International Women's Day](#). For WHEN, IWD is a day to celebrate successes and progress and a unique opportunity to develop the organisation's own call-to-action to accelerate global gender balance. We focused on exploring the notion of finding balance in diversity, cultures, work and life.

**WHEN webinars:** Running a very successful [series of monthly webinars](#), WHEN strives to share the experiences and wisdom of women for strength and change. We have heard insights from women in senior leadership positions, vice chancellors, women in management roles, women who are at early stages of their career, women who are juggling caring responsibilities, and women who are keen to share their skills.

**WHEN annual conference 2020 – The Power of NOW:** This year's annual conference focused on what lessons could be learnt from the Covid-19 crisis and how this learning can be used to facilitate equity in the higher education sector. With powerful keynotes, panel discussions, a variety of workshops and even a virtual networking session, the conference was the highlight of the year for us as we explored key lessons for achieving a step change. As quoted by one speaker *"Each time you stand up for yourself, you are standing up for all women"*.

## HOW IS INCLUSION EMBEDDED AT UCL? Think differently, do differently.

At UCL, inclusion and diversity is at the heart of strategic planning that underpins policies and procedures, and frameworks for all staff and students. It is one of the core principles for the senior leadership team and the EDI team sits directly under the Provost's Office. A significant milestone in the history of UCL was the de-naming of some buildings at UCL which had links to Eugenics.

UCL strives to embed inclusion at all levels. Some initiatives include an improved framework for academic promotions, training fair recruitment specialists, leadership programmes for BAME staff member, inclusive advocacy schemes, sponsorship programmes, creating inclusive buildings, gender neutral toilets, funding scholarships for BAME students, and providing family friendly policies. There are challenges – yes – and it is an uphill journey. However, we are beginning to seeing a shift. For instance, we have moved from **24% to 30%** Female Professors in the past five years.

## WHAT SUGGESTION WOULD I GIVE TO MY PEERS AT OTHER UNIVERSITIES?

For colleagues who are reading this, I have three things to say:

- Inclusive by design! Inclusion begins at the heart of planning! If you are planning any initiatives for your staff and students, ask them first. Do not assume that you'll know their lived experience.
- Don't fix the women! Build systems that better serve both women and men. We can shout about gender equality all we like – but unless we make our infrastructures, policies and systems functional for both women and men, things will not improve.
- Lead by example! Whether it is work-life balance, working within core hours, asking for help, admitting your mistake, or resolving a conflict – lead by example so that others can follow and can approach you easily.

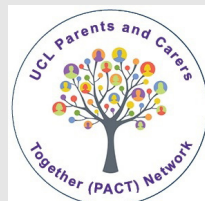
So there we have it! Some examples from a world renowned university who is on its mission to achieve gender equality, and to make it a diverse and thriving organisation.

For further information, please contact Madiha Sajid on [m.sajid@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:m.sajid@ucl.ac.uk)

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**HIRA ALI**

## **4 INTERNAL BARRIERS FACED BY WOMEN AT WORK AND HOW TO OVERCOME THEM**

The inspiration to write my book *Her Way to the Top: A guide to smashing the glass ceiling* came a year into my move to London. After training women for 14 years, I had begun to notice a trend in the obstacles women face in their career path. From Karachi to Dubai and Dubai to London, the women I was interacting with had made me realise that professional women across the globe, irrespective of their background, shared similar strengths and challenges.

In this article, I will be exploring some of the internal challenges holding women back globally, and my most recommended strategy to address them.

### **# 1 Challenge: Impostor Syndrome**

The confidence gap was universally acknowledged as a challenge in my survey. Feelings of inadequacy are incredibly common - we don't recognise our own self-worth or believe we are qualified enough to achieve something. Millions of people, including celebrities, athletes and CEOs, have shared their own feelings of constant self-doubt and unworthiness.

#### **Coping Strategy - Own Your Success**

When these feelings rear their ugly head, think back to positive feedback, accomplishments and the people you have made a difference to - this will show that you belong where you are. You don't have to be ostentatious, but downplaying your success will not help you reach the next level. Own your success and acknowledge it gracefully, rather than minimising it to justify it. After all, you achieved what you did because you worked hard and were passionate. Sharing your success will inspire and motivate the next generation to try even when they are scared.

### **# 2 Challenge: Perfectionism**

Women tend to go "all-out" in perfecting the details of nearly everything they do. Many of the time pressure we experience is courtesy of our own self-imposed high standards and expectations. We find it hard to delegate, as we believe others may not be completing the task as meticulously as we would, which often leads to gatekeeping. This however, can be counter-productive as it will take up a major chunk of our valuable time and can be exhausting not just for us but others around us.

#### **Coping Strategy- Consider if it adds more value?**

Consider whether spending more time perfecting something truly makes a considerable difference or not. As a trainer, I would spend hours trying out different fonts and templates until I realised spending more time on the content is much more meaningful than the design elements. Truly consider the importance of what you are spending so much time on - would this time be better off spent elsewhere? On many occasions 'good enough' would be preferable to spending hours on excruciating details.

### #3 Challenge: Time Poverty

Women across the world are suffering from 'time poverty'. In my survey, a large majority of women, irrespective of where they lived, confessed that managing time was the primary challenge holding them back in their careers. Respondents ranked it the third highest challenge after FOMO and Impostor Syndrome. For working mums especially, spare time can be incredibly hard to come by.

#### **Coping Strategy - Embrace the Power of Saying No.**

Many of the time pressures we face are down to our inability to say no. Before saying yes to a commitment, visualise yourself in that situation first. Are you excited or would you be relieved if it was cancelled? If you answered yes to the second option, that's a clear indicator to excuse yourself. Don't give in to FOMO moments; focus on all of the benefits you realised by saying no.

### #4 Challenge: Fear of Vulnerability

Respondents were very divided on the issue of vulnerability. Some women said it was helpful to express this, while many others believed their vulnerability had held them back in their career. Vulnerability is typically considered a weakness, hence we as women will do anything we can to avoid the appearance of not being 'strong enough' and hide our softer side. Expressing vulnerability is scary for even the most confident women.

#### **Coping Strategy: Believe that you are worthy**

In order to be comfortable being vulnerable, you need to believe you are worthy enough. When you work from that place, you are not only kinder and gentler to yourself but also to the people around you. If you are cautious of your actions and how people will react, you will not be able to express your true self, authentically. Love and appreciate yourself first, and the rest will follow.

Hira Ali is an author, writer, speaker, and executive coach focused on women's and ethnic leadership development. She is the Founder of Advancing Your Potential and International Women Empowerment Events and Co-Founder of Career Excel and The Grey Area. Contact her on Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, or Facebook. In 2019, she released her first book entitled *Her Way to the Top: A Guide to Smashing the Glass Ceiling*. Her second companion book — *Her Allies: A Practical Toolkit to Help Men Lead through Advocacy* — invites men to join the gender equality movement.





## National Day for Staff Networks

# "Compassion"

*"Compassion is even more powerful than courage. Sure, with courage you can conquer a world - but only with compassion can you heal and build it."*

– Rasheed Ogunlaru



**RASHEED OGUNLARU**

## WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT?

Leading a successful staff network requires commitment and courage – as you would expect - but it also requires just as much compassion. It will require you to be compassionate to yourself, your steering group team, your members and stakeholders – and it will also require the compassion to understand those who may not yet appreciate the power and potential of your staff network.

### Compassion starts with you

The moment that you become a network lead the demands and expectations on you and your time are likely to increase, if you're not careful you may succumb to stress and burnout. So here are a few tips to avoid it

- Make sure you get the sleep, rest, exercise and nutrition you need
- Diarise and protect 'you time' time for yourself, loved ones, hobbies... time away
- Keep perspective and develop a strong friend and peer network of support.

### Compassion - with your steering group / team

Leading a steering group can also be challenging. Even though you're all working – or should be – toward the same objective, you may have differing ways and means to get there and perspectives.

- Take time to get to know your team and what makes them tick
- Be present, patient, listen, really value others and their passion, skills and views
- Be kind, considerate and courteous at all times even when others are not

### Compassion - with members and target audience

Remember that leading a network is all about service. Our role is all about understanding our members and target audience, giving them a safe space, helping to improve the workplace for one and all through best practice and learning from their lived experience.

- Remember that your network members are all beautifully different and diverse
- Welcome members and really listen and learn from their lived experience
- Be mindful, warm and role model the inclusive leadership the network seeks / needs

### Compassion - with all staff, stakeholders and senior leaders

Ultimately the network exists to help contribute to the organisation and to improve the workplace for all staff and improve services for customers.

- Drop the us and them thinking and about "I, We, All" mentality
- Be passionate and courageous when challenging inequality but with high integrity
- Seek to build alliances, bridges, partnership and understanding with all audiences

All in all this will mean that you don't just have the mindset and strategic approach to build your network but that you have the heart and warmth that can bring about a real sense of pride, belonging, growth, kinship and oneness in your organisation.

**Rasheed Ogunlaru is a leading life, business and leadership coach and author of Soul Trader – Putting the Heart Back Into Your Business.**

**50 Years  
of Disabled  
People's Rights**

Manchester Histories DigiFest 2020

# Celebrating Alf's Act

**Celebrate / Learn / Challenge**

## **50 YEARS OF DISABLED PEOPLE'S RIGHTS: CELEBRATING ALF'S ACT**

**A**sked about the impact of the first ever disability rights legislation in the world that he introduced, Alf Morris (MP for Manchester Wythenshawe and later Lord Morris of Manchester) famously remarked "it may not add years to your life but it will add life to your years". We too had life added to our years on Friday the 4th and Saturday 5th September as we celebrated 50 years of the landmark legislation "The Chronically Sick and Disabled Person's Act 1970", affectionately known as 'Alf's Act'. Following an initial approach by the Morris family to The University of Manchester's Disabled Staff Network, we partnered with Manchester Histories, Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People, North West TUC, Manchester Metropolitan University and others to produce a digital online festival under the Manchester Histories banner <https://manchesterhistories.co.uk/>. Our themes were 'celebrate, challenge, learn' and through a call out to individuals and groups in Greater Manchester and beyond, a wonderful montage of disabled people's lives, histories, contributions, political struggles, and joyous creativity was produced.

Compered by comedian Jackie Hagan, we were led into thought provoking, moving, entertaining and fascinating contributions exploring the positive legacy of Alf's Act as well as the contemporary challenges of today. Debates about the right to life in the wake of doctors encouraging disabled people to consider "Do Not Resuscitate" orders at the height of the COVID-19 crisis, mingled with art and music commissioned from disabled artists for the



festival's themes. Projects exploring disabled people's 'lifeworlds' scattered across the programme including one by young deaf sign language users in South Africa using the medium of photography, lockdown blogs from disabled people's perspectives and historical dramas including the stories of incarceration experienced by people with learning difficulties and much, much more. The two-day live DigiFest was accompanied by in depth filmed pieces and a gallery which are still accessible now (<https://manchesterhistories.co.uk/whatson/page.aspx?ID=297> and <https://manchesterhistories.myportfolio.com/>) including three short films about the life and work of Alf Morris specially produced for the event.

Led by disabled people, front and centre, and with high levels of access for the audience in this online medium, the DigiFest is itself something that would have been unthinkable 50 years ago. The world in which Alf's Act was born was one where disabled people were literally not seen, not educated alongside others, rarely regarded as having the potential to live independent lives and not supported to do so. People's preferences for language and communication were at best overlooked and at worst denied and disabled people's contributions to society and the benefits they brought were not



recognised. True, today is different and the Equality Act 2010 brings important protections and also promotions of disabled people's rights. But there is still much to be concerned about as the DigiFest's live debate with Victoria Macdonald (Channel 4 News' health and social care editor) demonstrated. Seemingly common-sense relaxations in some Local Authority duties of assessment and care under the Coronavirus Emergency Act have placed many disabled people at a disadvantage. The appropriation of 'vulnerable' as a stigmatizing term to describe people at greatest susceptibility to COVID-19 (including many disabled people) has been a step backwards. Yet as many contributors to the festival alluded to – restrictions in movement and socialization, barriers to working as usual and isolation are hardly new experiences for many disabled people. In that sense the resilience, honest emotional reflection, and practical ability just to get on with it, possessed by many disabled people, has found a new value and recognition in the eyes of others.

The online DigiFest, free and open to all, raised the profile of the ongoing struggles for disabled people's rights bringing new perspectives to many watching. It celebrated the diversity of disabled people's contributions to making society better for everyone. It highlighted what is to be learned from the past 50 years of disabled people's rights and showcased the future in the rich mix of rights still to be won, creative avenues still to be explored, and the inclusive and accessible communities still to be fully realised.

You can watch recordings of both days of the live DigiFest on Manchester Histories' the following link. <https://manchesterhistories.co.uk/getinvolved/page.aspx?ID=282>



### HERE IS A LIST OF THE MANCHESTER HISTORIES DIGIFEST 2020 TASK GROUP:

- Gill Morris, Lord Morris' daughter, and CEO and Founder of DevoConnect
- Lady Irene Morris, Lord Morris' wife
- Karen Shannon, CEO of Manchester Histories
- Janine Hague, Project Manager at Manchester Histories
- Professor Alys Young, Academic Lead for Disability Equalities at The University of Manchester
- Kirsty Hutchison, Co-Chair of the Disabled Staff Network at The University of Manchester
- Dr Jessica Boland, Co-Chair of the Disabled Staff Network at The University of Manchester
- Dr Rosamund Oates, Deputy Head of the History Research Centre at Manchester Metropolitan University
- Jules Hussey, Creative Director at Brazen Productions
- Dr Hamied Haroon, Member and Ex-Co-Chair of the Disabled Staff Network at The University of Manchester







Lexis Nexis Risk Solutions are delighted to be sponsors of Networks Day. We have over 35 Global ERG's covering a range of diversity areas such as Race, LGBTQ, Disability, Gender and Mental Health and all employees have 2 paid days to attend our events.

These groups really are the heart of our D&I strategy.

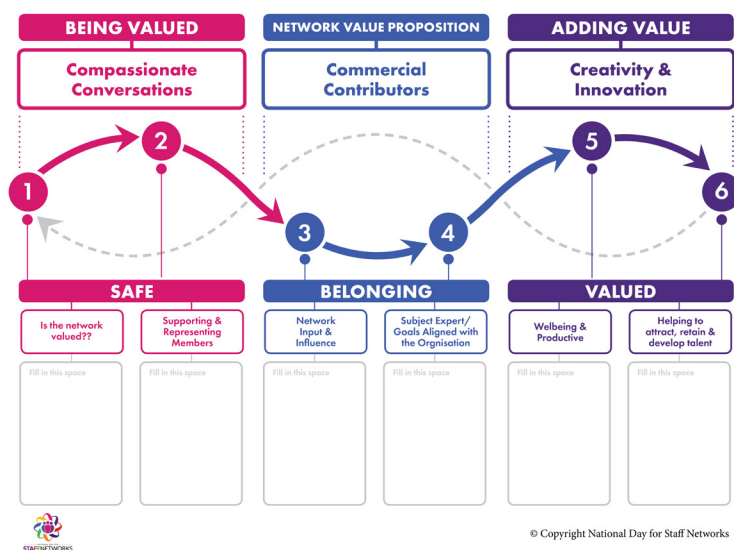
**JO PORTLOCK**

Director, Diversity and Inclusion



# THE VALUE CONTINUUM

The Value Continuum is an effective tool to help networks assess their added value.

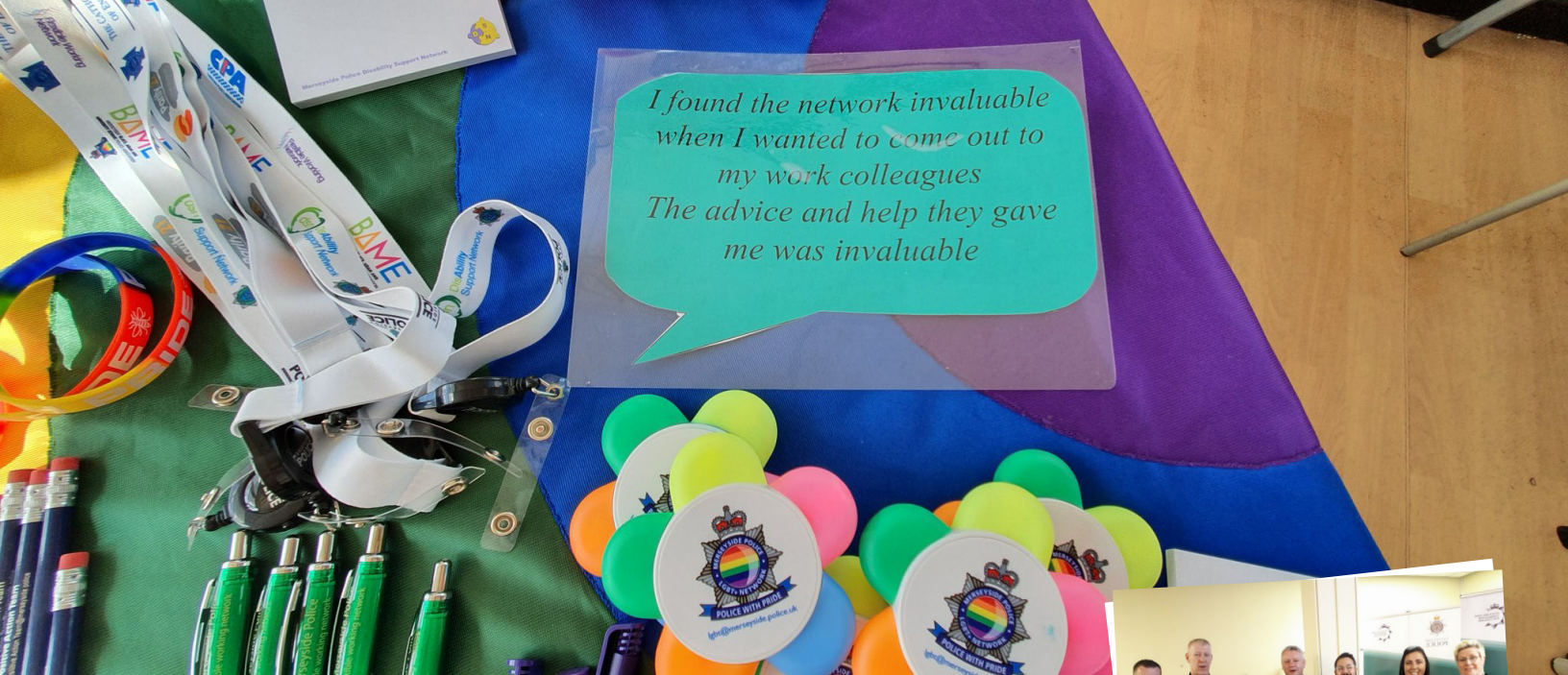


Download the toolkit today from the 'resources' page at

**[www.networksday.co.uk](http://www.networksday.co.uk)**

**#MakingWorkBetter #AddingValue #Togetherness**





## CELEBRATING THE 5TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIONAL DAY FOR STAFF NETWORKS #MAKINGWORKBETTER

*"The National Day for Staff Networks is an opportunity for staff networks to link arms to challenge the status quo; for intersectionality to arise; to stand together under a canopy of unity and make work better."*

**Cherron Inko-Tariah MBE**

**M**any staff networks (employee/business resource groups, Diversity/Affinity Groups etc) provide employees from under-represented groups with valuable guidance and timely advice as they navigate their organisation's culture and endeavour to offer their authentic best in the workplace. The National Day for Staff Networks is a celebration of the expanding and diverse range of work by networks across the public, private and voluntary sectors which continues to foster inclusive workplaces; thus making work better.

The launch of the National Day for Staff Networks took place on Wednesday 10th May 2017 at Harper Collins UK in London Bridge (London UK). This was an historic moment because despite existing in the UK for over 30 years, it was the first time that a day was being set aside specifically to celebrate and recognise the valuable contribution of network groups.

### There are three aspects to the day:

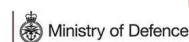
- **Celebrate networks:** To encourage employers to acknowledge and recognise how staff networks, through their insight, innovation, and intelligence, add value and help make constructive use of difference thus improving the corporate health of the organisation.
- **Inspire all staff:** Given the 'intersectionality' of employees, identify ways how they can work together to inspire by sharing their stories and raising awareness.
- **Transform the organisation:** Networks to share about the lived experience of their members to influence inclusive practices, foster a sense of belonging and offering constructive challenge to help transform the organisation.

Since 2017, on the second Wednesday in May, the UK has been marking Networks Day in all sorts of ways e.g. Launching new networks, holding all network conferences.

The Day continues to gain momentum because networks have and continue to play a meaningful role in supporting and strengthening marginalised communities as well be business critical and effective mechanisms of voice, innovation and inclusion.

### Since the launch, each year has its own sub theme:

- 2018 – Share Your Story   ■ 2019 – Leading for Change
- 2020 – Adding Value   ■ 2021 – Togetherness



### National Staff Network Day

Today is National Staff Network Day and I want to take this opportunity to make a pledge to champion diversity of thought and experience. We need more than just diversity though, we also need to ensure we are inclusive.

I pledge to be an inclusive leader for change in Defence.

#LeadForChange #makingworkbetter

Chief of Defence People Lieutenant General Richard Nugee





Over the last 5 National Days, we have seen 1000s of people participate. It has been wonderful to see the increasing number of diverse staff networks across different sectors in the UK come together as a community to celebrate.

Even during unprecedented times.

No one expected the arrival or impact that COVID-19 would have on our lives. The crisis knocked many off their equilibrium; people felt out of kilter but in many organisations, networks were the 'first responders'. They reached out to their members and found new people turning to a network to get reassurance, solace and encouragement. The Institute for Corporate Productivity found that nearly 40% of organisations relied on their employee networks to take the lead on wellbeing during the pandemic.

The pandemic meant that the National Day for Staff Networks campaign team had to think differently about what celebration looks like and what inclusion feels like when you are not sharing the same physical space with colleagues. That is why we decided to press ahead with the day in 2020 and hold virtual celebrations. We wanted to show support to networks during this time and hosted a series of events throughout the day.

We have seen a rise of senior network champions showing their support and our senior leaders social media campaign was a resounding success. Leaders from organisations across various sectors shared their support for networks which many found encouraging!

**None of what we do would be possible without our sponsors, supporters and ambassadors over the years including:**

Sponsors	Supporters/Partners	Ambassadors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bank of America</li> <li>Lexis Nexis Risk Solutions</li> <li>Norton Rose Fulbright</li> <li>Harper Collins UK</li> <li>Peabody Housing</li> <li>Sandwell &amp; West Birmingham NHS Trust</li> <li>The Power of Staff Networks</li> <li>Sugar Media &amp; Marketing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Voice at the Table</li> <li>Changez Life</li> <li>Transport for London</li> <li>KPMG</li> <li>Leeds City Council</li> <li>Dods Group UK</li> <li>UK Civil Service</li> <li>TP Consultancy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rob Wilson</li> <li>Beverley Powell</li> <li>Jodie Thompson</li> <li>Anna Button</li> <li>Hamied Haroon</li> <li>Solomon Lebesse</li> <li>Helen Riddell</li> <li>Tiwonge Chipeta</li> <li>Edith Akenkide</li> <li>Kristina Tamane-Laing</li> </ul>

The support of our sponsors, and partners means that we can continue empowering networks to be influential and effective. We are exploring how to expand our network of Ambassadors so watch this space!

The next celebration is on **Wednesday 11th May 2022.**

### How can you support the campaign?

- Join us in the biggest network survey...EVER!
- Commit to participating or hosting a regional event.
- Become a sponsor - we have some fantastic sponsorship packages.

Get in touch for other options: [info@thepowerofstaffnetworks.co.uk](mailto:info@thepowerofstaffnetworks.co.uk)

For more information about Networks Day, the Value Continuum or to find out more about the campaign, visit our website: [www.networksday.co.uk](http://www.networksday.co.uk) or email Cherron Inko-Tariah

**Employee networks #AddValue when they #ShareTheirStory,  
feel empowered to #LeadForChange and tap into their power #Together.  
That is worth celebrating.**

**We hope you will show your support for the National Day for Staff Networks as it enters its 6th year. It's not just a day; it's a movement.**







## Leading for Change

# HANNAH CHANDISINGH

### Why did you become a network lead? (I was not 'Chair' I was a lead – we took a shared leadership approach)

I am an activist at heart. I care very deeply about people and fairness and justice, which is a huge part of my life both in and out of work. A lead role in the network just seemed a natural fit. I'm also not a timid person by any stretch of the imagination – and I don't mind speaking truth to power. Not everyone has that luxury, and I felt strongly that I needed to use that to give a voice to others who might not find speaking up so easy.

### What challenges have you faced leading the Network (especially during since Covid if applicable)

Covid changed everything for us in the NHS, especially for minority ethnic staff, who were disproportionately affected by the virus – more likely to be on the front line, more likely to get

seriously ill, but less likely to have well-fitted PPE. Our greatest challenge to date has been responding to that, mobilising to make sure that not only our colleagues' voices and concerns were heard but ensuring people's safety as much as we possibly could. Things were changing by the day.

Though this was a very intense and difficult time, the result was that we became much more visible, more unified, and our membership skyrocketed. We're stronger for it, we have greater trust in each other, and our voice is heard louder than ever before.

### How does your network add value?

Our network listens. It gives people the opportunity to be heard, even if they wish to stay anonymous. It shows people that they are not alone; it brings people together in joy and celebration. And for me it keeps me going in the long fight – when I'm feeling low, when I feel that nothing is changing, when things are really tough, the people around me in the network bring me hope. Every single one of them is incredible.

The network also has power – it's an independent voice to hold the organisation to account, to engage with strategy but also to provide an essential critical voice.

### What legacy do you want to remain once you move on?

We've come a really long way, and have moved from being what may have seemed to outsiders like quite an exclusive club to something a lot more open and vibrant, where we hear from more people of different ethnic backgrounds, in different careers, with different perspectives. I would love for that ethos to stay with the network and to keep going.

### As part of the 5th National Day for Staff Networks, we are promoting "Togetherness". What does this mean to you and your Network?

Togetherness is the glue that holds the network together. We all move through the world in different ways, but we stand together in pain and joy. Whether that is the power of an ally standing up in support of an ethnic minority colleague, or the celebration as all our cultures come together at Eid, Diwali, Holi or Christmas. It is not facing this fight alone, even in the darkest moments.



## How has leading a network helped you? New skills, new role etc

My background is in communications and marketing – that's always been my career. However leading the network made it clear to me that this was what I was built for.

I used my platform to build some amazing connections with the Trust's inclusion team and some key senior leaders, in summer of 2020 sitting down for a chat with our Chief Executive to talk through what it would mean for us to embed an anti-racist approach across our hospitals.

The anti-racist approach was backed by the board and I was delighted to move into a formal role leading that programme for the Trust. Now I don't think I'll ever leave EDI – this is where my heart is.

## Who is/are your Equality role-models?

For me it's close to home. I am constantly in awe of the people I work with every day, the like Karmini McCann, the network leads, who all put their heart and soul into what they do. Not a day goes by when I am not inspired by their incredible passion, and the compassion they have for others. They make me a better person.

I'm also very immersed in the mixed/multiracial experience as a British Mauritian Metisse, and I am really enjoying seeing so many mixed people starting to be given a platform to discuss the nuance of their experiences in mainstream culture right now. Just hearing their reflections makes a huge difference to me and validates how I feel somehow. To name a few, Afua Hirsch, Tracee Ellis Ross, Emma Slade Edmondson and Nicole Ocran. I could listen to them speak all day long.

## What advice would you give to your successor?

My best advice would be to seek out the voices that you don't hear around the table. Some of the most important, most



**Karmini McCann, Head of Inclusion and Engagement**



powerful stories and perspectives will come from the people who don't have the confidence or the security to speak up. Really focus on how you can build those relationships, because the more trust you can build with those quiet groups, the better your actions as a network will reflect the people you represent. You can have years of experience under your belt but if you can't connect with your people, you'll never be able to meet their needs.

## What 3 things are you looking forward to do most post-Lockdown, when you're able to?

I am really looking forward to my family being reunited. I've got a three-year-old who hasn't seen his grandparents in over a year – and he's growing up so fast. When we can all come together again I'll be overjoyed.

I've also been saving up to go to Mauritius with my sister. It's where our family is from but we've never had the chance to go there, as we didn't have a lot of money growing up. Now things are a bit different and I cannot wait to go bask in the sunshine, walk in the hills and meet some cousins, as soon as it's allowed!

## What is your favourite quote and why?

"Kindness matters, but kindness does not equal justice.

Civility counts, but civility is not the humane response to injustice. Justice is.

Love is essential, but love is not a passive, weeping bystander. Love puts in work."

Dr Bernice King

I have this quote on my wall next to my desk. It reminds me to keep going, to never get complacent. To put in the work, every day.



**University Hospitals of  
Morecambe Bay**  
NHS Foundation Trust



## Sandra Weekes (Chair) and Jane Bekoe (Deputy Chair) lead the Together We Rise Racial Heritage Network at Homerton University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. We spoke to them about their experience of leading a staff network.



### Why did you get involved in leading the network?

"I became the Chair of the Together We Rise Racial Heritage Network (TWR), by default. I was passionate about hearing the lived experience of the employees who identified themselves from a racial heritage background within the organisation. Following the resignation of the previous Chair and the declining number of members, I stepped forward."

"As the Deputy Chair, I volunteered my support over the years to the Network. I was approached by critical friends of the Network to take up the role to deputise the Chair. People often approached me about their lived experiences and thought that the Network would be the most appropriate platform to discuss and support them."

TWR is driven by our passion, commitment to hear the voices of the staff whilst working within the organisation to improve the lived experience of Black and Racial Heritage staff.

### What do you bring to the roles?

We bring compassion, empathy, creativity, time, and our authenticity along with drive for change. We have also built the courage to work with the executive team to provide challenge, offer support and direct change that addresses inequalities and disparities evident in the Working Race Equality Standard (WRES) reports. Our mission is to encourage processes that are equitable and inclusive of all employees within the organisation.

Our leadership skills include listening and supporting others in the Network by creating a safe space for employees to discuss their lived experience and on a separate forum, enable our allies to express their concerns or issues in relation to race.

### What role do you see the network playing within the organisation?

TWR is the first of its kind within the organisation. Therefore, it is a template for any other networks within the organisation. Through its challenges, TWR has been persistent and remained resilient to continue its work in providing a safe place for members.

TWR works collaboratively throughout the organisation. We are a trusted resource who can provide insight on potential adverse impact some policies may have on staff before they are implemented or revised. This is how we contribute to drive equity and inclusion for all employees.

### What is your legacy?

We want to leave a legacy where TWR is a respected platform where the lived experience of our members is taken seriously and we are properly resourced with budget and time for those involved in leading the network. Where members are encouraged to attend meetings and get involved with the network. With regards to the organisation, we want to leave that the Network in a position where it is fully established and incorporated into the organisational business similarly to the Freedom to Speak Up Guardians.

### As part of the 5th National Day for Staff Networks, we are promoting "Togetherness". What does this mean to you and your Network

Togetherness is representative of our network. Togetherness means

something that unites people from similar backgrounds that gives them a sense of security and belonging within a group of people while remaining your authentic self.

### How do you manage your Work, Life, Balance schedule/ challenges

Before COVID, all duties in relation to the network had been completed in our own time. However, because of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent Black Lives Matter protests, we had to ask for corporate time because we were getting more and more involved in supporting and advising the organisation as well as our members. We have both agreed that we will take time for self-care, and emotional wellbeing to ensure we have a good work/life balance and avoid biological weathering.

### Who is/are your Equality role-models

In no particular order (as they are all heroes in this field)

Marvin Rees and Asher Craig have been persistent in their roles as Mayor and Deputy Mayor respectively, of Bristol, actively challenging the disparities at National level for people of a Racial Heritage backgrounds.

Tracy Joliff, Director of the Leadership Academy continues to fight injustices in the NHS. Her work involves inclusion, equality and social justice through leadership. However, her work to eradicate systemic discrimination has been something to admire.

Rashid Ogunlaru who is a Life Coach, Inspirational Speaker is committed to developing and facilitating the REACH Career and Personal development course for the organisation. He demonstrates the ability to diplomatically identify problems and provide a positive solution, through his work he has empowered employees to apply for promotional positions both internal and external where many have been successful their attendance on either personal or career development course.

Dame Elizabeth Anionwu for her work in fighting for the voices of people with Sickle Cell to be heard and recognised. Dame Elizabeth developed the first nurse lead Sickle Cell clinic and was an integral part of commissioning the statue of Mary Seacole outside a London hospital.

### What advice would you give to your successor?

Three pieces of advice:

- The role is challenging, and emotionally impacting. However, it is also rewarding being involved in systemic changes which will benefit the next generation.
- Time - there will never be enough time and you will find yourself making sacrifices to support members. However, it is important that you find a work/life balance to ensure that you look after yourself.
- Finally, it is pivotal that any successor MUST read the book 'The Incredible Power of Staff Networks' by Cherron Inko-Tariah MBE before taking up the post!

# Together We Rise Racial Heritage Staff Network





**VARSHA DODHIA**

## **“STEPPING UP” CO-CHAIR OF BAME STAFF NETWORK AT CENTRAL AND NORTH WEST LONDON FOUNDATION TRUST.**

The COVID pandemic has laid bare the stark disparities faced by Black Asian and ethnic minority communities across Britain. The shock for me came when the first ten doctors who died after catching COVID were all minorities. I knew Dr Alfa Sa’adu who had served as Medical Director of Ealing Hospital. Within my extended family we lost two members, my husband’s brother died in December and we, as family did not really get to say our final goodbyes to him whilst he was conscious. The funeral was surreal during lockdown.

As members of CNWL BAME staff network committee, we had initiated various online forums for staff to share their experience through Open Mic, Standing in our shoes and vaccinations sessions. What I heard at these events alarmed me and motivated me to step forward to put my expression of interest to be elected for the BAME network. I was elected with Samuel Oriwedu as Co-Chair.

We have large number of BAME staff members who have given decades of service and have years of dedication imprinted on us, often feeling we miss opportunities compared to some of our white colleagues. We have lived experience of accessing NHS services, good or not so good. Many of us have caring roles for our ageing parents or children and young adults. Women amongst us sometimes struggle to maintain a work-life balance. There is intersectionality which need to be addressed because staff from BAME background are less likely to be appointed (WRES data).

Time and again, I see situations where people live in an ‘us and them’ society, where other people are seen as the problem. I am like a three-legged stool, a British national of South Asian ethnicity who was born in Kenya. I see deep-seated inequalities and

injustices continue, but are swept under the carpet. I have faced feedback that is distorted and have had a chance to say my piece as a reverse mentor. I see micro aggressions as soon one even starts to speak of a different adverse experience.

By stepping up to a leadership role, I want to be a change agent and follow the lead set by previous chairs to galvanise members and allies to amplify a movement for change. The NHS People Plan and talk about compassionate leadership can be leveraged as agents of change. The CNWL first BAME conference focused on this under the title “Culture Shift: Changing credence, behaviours and outcomes” was received with thunderous applause.

I want our BAME members to have opportunities for learning, progression, mentoring others and being mentored. This support leads to individual empowerment that in turn helps to promote self-esteem, confidence, engagement and performance. I want to see far fewer BAME staff face disciplinary action; there needs to be early intervention of support and more of restorative justice.

As a new appointed co-chair, I am stepping up to work with members, allies and management to that we can shift the culture, influence behaviours and improve outcomes.

**Varsha Dodhia**





# LexisNexis®

## RISK SOLUTIONS

### **LEXIS NEXIS RISK SOLUTIONS IS ONE OF THE SPONSORS FOR THE NATIONAL DAY FOR STAFF NETWORKS 2021. JO PORTLOCK, DIRECTOR FOR DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION SHARES ABOUT THEIR RESPONSE TO COVID 19 AND 2020**

**I**ronically the last 'in person' meeting we held in 2020 was an Employee Resource Group (ERG) fair. We held this event to promote and encourage employees to get more active in our D&I work. It was mid-March and we had 6 of our biggest ERGs showcase their work so that employees could find out about our D&I networks. The event had a huge buzz to it with lots of people having signed up and committed to become active in our groups, and ERG leaders walking away with more ideas of how to create great in person events at our biggest office in Atlanta.

Two weeks later, all the offices were closed and overnight our 9,000 employees had become homeworkers. Our ERG leaders were cancelling events and suggesting we had a two month pause on our programming. However, necessity is the mother of invention and after a few days reflection we all started to realise that there were ways to carry on with our events, education, and community virtually, realising our employees would need our ERGs more than ever.

So just over 12 months later how did we do and what did we learn? We achieved some amazing results. Previously, 80% of our ERG events were hosted in our 5 biggest offices meaning that over half of employees never had access to our programming. The virtual format suddenly opened all of that up with our 2020 attendance exceeding 14,000, compared to 8,500 in 2019.

We expanded our ERGs to cover new geographies and topic areas, growing from 26 to 35 groups. In 2020 we started initiatives including Women in Technology, Pan Asian, Hispanic Heritage and Dyslexia Awareness. We noticed a huge desire for employees to connect with each other and our ERGs certainly enabled that.

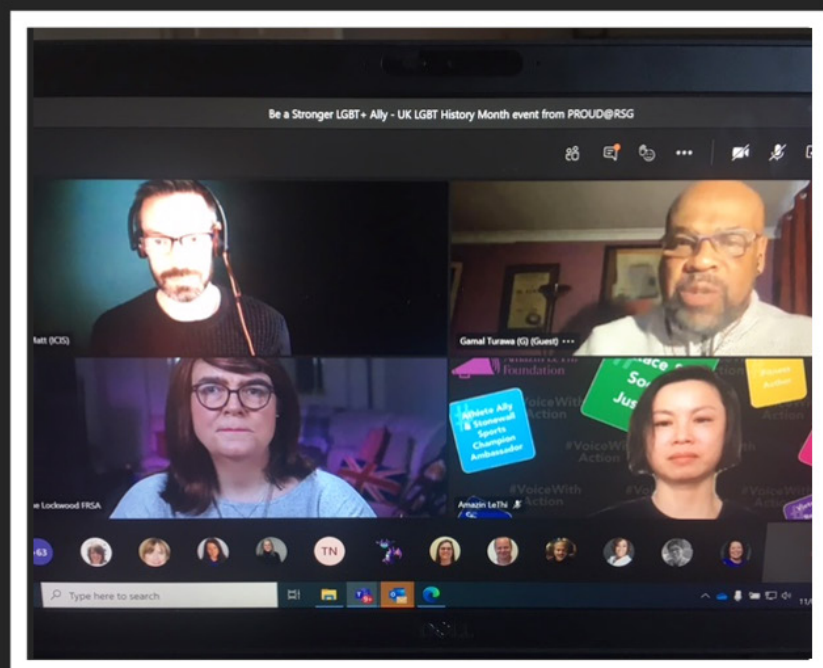
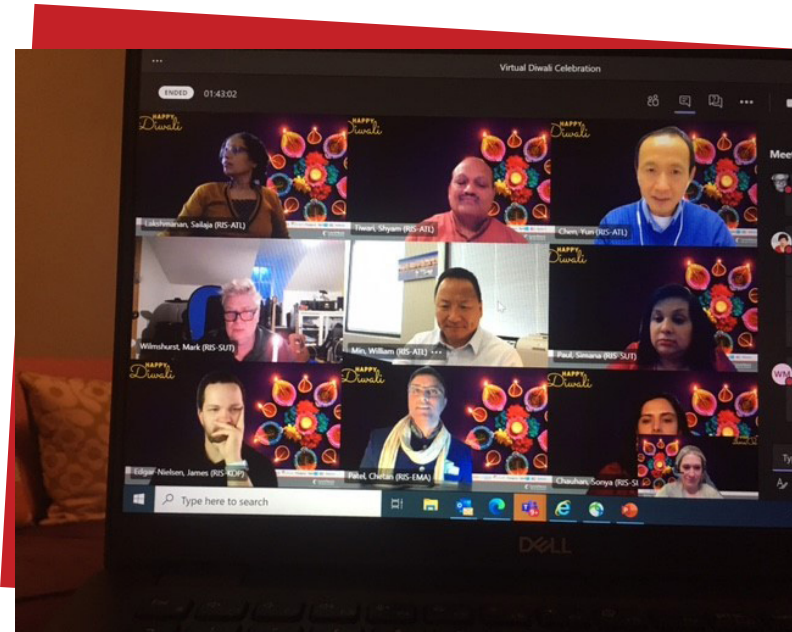
It is hard to talk about 2020 without touching on the topic of George Floyd's death and the race activism that resulted. There was a huge response from employees and initially we were not sure what to do and how to support. Our first offering was to hold an open forum conversation, a moderated session where employees could ask questions and share experiences and emotions during this difficult time.

Our first session held close to 300 people and lasted nearly 3 hours, highlighting the importance of seeking support from colleagues during times of challenge. One of our Group MD's emailed me afterwards saying he was going to make a point of educating his teenage children about the impact of systemic racism based on what he learnt that day. We continue to run these sessions today and employees have said how helpful it is for them to have a forum to discuss race, and for others to learn the impact that microaggressions and inequities have on their colleagues, and what we can all do to be allies.

Personal reflections and learnings for me on 2020 is to firstly value your colleagues and co-workers experiences, someone always knows something you don't. You do not always have to try to solve things, sometimes it is enough to hear someone and show empathy. Secondly the need for authenticity is key to 21st century leadership. Many industries are facing challenging times and it is my belief that those with inclusive workplaces that value the diversity of their employees will recover fastest. Lastly you can measure success in many ways within D&I.

While statistics typically get the attention of business leaders, I certainly get the most pride from hearing the stories of our employees. Last year for the first time we were discussing race at work, someone shared that getting involved virtually in our pride network had given them the confidence to come out at work, and business leaders had the courage to share their own challenges with mental health during lockdown.

As we are already a third of the way through 2021, I can honestly say our workplace is changed for the better and for good.







**ROB NEIL**

# INTERSECTIONALITY, NETWORKS AND TOGETHERNESS

It's a sunny Thursday morning and Abdul Rob is on a Zoom call with Rob Neil OBE - his friend and mentor for over 20 years. They are both also part of the organising committee for The National Day for Staff Networks. Here they discuss intersectionality, networks and togetherness.

The Oxford dictionary defines Intersectionality as: "the interconnected nature of social categorisations such as race, class, and gender, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage".

**AR: As a well respected and recognised D&I professional, what is your view and understanding of 'Intersectionality'?**

**RN:** I acknowledge that we are all more than one thing. For example, you and I are both; men, fathers, husbands, sons, nephews and various other roles. Just as water can be ice, liquid and steam i.e. solid, liquid and gas, so too there are multiple identities that each of us embrace and, therefore, different ways in which we all exist, function and present. Let's take our combined multi-dimensions even further, I am a Christian, you are a Muslim, we are both people that walk-in faith and we believe in a higher being, a living GOD. We know that at the centre of us is not us, at our centre is the spirit of our creator. We both enjoy and benefit from a rich diversity of friendships and wider networks which, beyond their beautiful difference, there is an edifying togetherness we both focus on. So, like a Venn- diagram, we intersect, we embrace and engage with a synergy when all these elements come together to present a whole. That is where intersectionality offers us the greatest reward...

I am learning all the time about intersectionality and I continue to learn from Kimberly Crenshaw who invented the term. Whether leaning on her various TED-Talks, or her podcasts or, indeed, her writings, we can all elevate our understanding as people with more than one identity. It is how organisations and employers see us and frame intersectionality which often presents the deepest challenge. For example, consider the Black Woman who is "othered" in at least two aspects i.e. her Race and her gender. There are, for many organisations, traditional challenges in seeing the intersection of being both Black and female. Consider the recent attention and reaction to the experience endured by Megan Markel?

A lot of this myopic lack of framing happens in organisations because the cultural norm, or what Verna Myers calls 'organisational preference' is and remains both white and male. In essence if you are not white and not male, your behaviour is automatically assumed as less than normal and, in some cases abnormal. Many Black employees, men and women, respond to this cultural norm by adapting their behaviour to fit the status quo. In short, difference often colludes in order to avoid emotional labour of being challenged by their intersectionality. Some become weathered by this daily requirement to collude and they end up feeling awkward by their own difference, they deny their intersectionality. Yet, as Alice Walker teaches us in *Possessing the Secret of Joy*, "the secret of joy is resistance" and it is in knowing that deepest of ironies, which is that many organisations seek only to include difference if that difference is prepared to behave as tradition demands when strategic decisions need to be made.

The intersectionality challenge becomes a deeper one when the organisation is ill prepared and refuses to build frames that encourage, support and include that intersectionality.

**AR: It sounds like you're saying that there is a hierarchy of isms?**

**RN:** There is a hierarchy of diversity issues in my experience. I have personally experienced it and so that makes it very real indeed. The COVID19 pandemic has laid bare the wider inequalities and deeper disparities faced by specific sections of the population. It has revealed for us a pandemic within

a pandemic. Specifically, the lockdown has presented us with further empirical evidence of systemic disproportionality amongst different groups of people in employment, housing and health care. Whilst we are not all doctors, we can safely conclude that the COVID19 virus is not racist and yet BAME communities are disproportionality affected by COVID19 and at a greater rate. The question is, why? Is the greater rate of contagion amongst ethnic minorities due in part to their living conditions, is it a result of their proximity to the virus at work as front-line staff or essential services or do more of our ethnic minorities have less choice about where and how they work. All these factors reveal a deeper truth about inequalities and our lived experience.

**AR: You clearly understand about race equality but tell me about your journey on gender equality?**

**RN:** I have been influenced by so many talented, positive and strong women, starting with those in my own family! What I also continue to do consciously to accelerate my learning and deepen my understanding, is read more. Authors like Caroline Perez who wrote the fantastic 'Invisible Women' in which she talks about there being more statues in Britain with the name John and David, than there are all female statues added together. Caroline also explains why the queues for public toilets are longer for women than they are for men [you will have to buy the book for that answer] 😊. The book offers a range of sobering reminders about the world we live in, this world designed, made and, for the most part, run by, men. It is only in recent times that we have started to turn a corner in appreciating more about intersectionality and the rewarding challenges that exist in providing frames of our differences to thrive, together, particularly in the workplace.

**AR: Are we really turning a corner, then?**

**RN:** I am positive, I am optimistic, and I believe we are, especially when we look at the number of women securing leadership positions e.g. Jacinda Arden, 30% Club and FOTSE 100. There has also been a range of positive outcomes delivered in organisations across all sectors since publication of the Gender Equality Pay Gap. However, I do think we still have a significant way to go in respect of other equalities. Specifically in the race space where recently published reports tasked with reviewing disparities have left me to conclude that we don't even know where the corner is yet when it comes to appreciating the intersections of race, ethnicity and all other dimensions of diversity. There are still too many who are trapped in culture of denial, even fearful of difference. Some are, at times, complicit in remaining ignorant about essential academia e.g. critical race theory and, therefore, ignore intersectionality and thus miss out on a journey in enlightenment that could help navigate, co-ordinate and plot where that corner for race equality is located. As the author and civil rights campaigner James Baldwin said: "Not every challenge that is faced can be changed, but no challenge can be solved until it is faced"

**AR: Let's turn to networks. As we celebrate the 5th year of The National Day for Staff Networks, what reflections do you have, particularly with the challenges over the last year?**

**RN:** I must start with the establishment of The National Day for Staff Networks itself. This second Wednesday in May is now an established part of our wonderfully expanding diversity diary and so we embrace the actual engagement with staff networks in organisations across all sectors - public, private, and civil society (voluntary/Charity) sector. Many have really connected with the day and its themes over the years. The core message of "making work better" and this year's theme of "Togetherness" has really resonated with people.

This fantastic engagement has been inspired by an incremental build of the infrastructure to deliver the day over the past five years. It's not only about the organising team coming together to explore thoughts, ideas and plans for the day itself, it's also about an ever expanding ambition to take it to the next level each successive year. So, for example, this year for the first time we have commissioned a piece of work for an organisation to help with the social media, and research.

We have record numbers of involvement from the aforementioned sectors which will add to the ripple effect and a nice international continuity from last year will remain this year. So, any advances we have made from last year has to be seen in the context of the challenges from the lockdown we are living through. I am proud that despite lockdown we have grown, we have met the exciting challenges and delivered as a team. This is to be credited to the vision and leadership of Cherron Inko-Tariah MBE who we are so proud of. She encapsulates all the wonderful and positive aspects of intersectionality that we seek to promote and champion.

**AR: ...and Togetherness?**

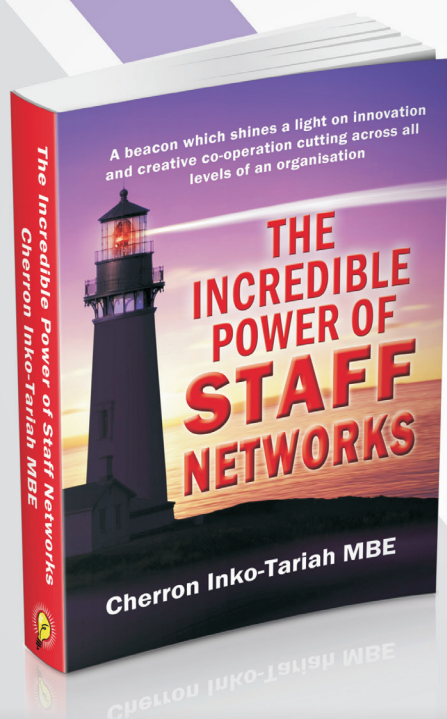
**RN:** This 5th anniversary is a wonderful celebration which gives active permission to all people, in glorious intersection, to really turn up the volume in their organisations and generate a deeper positive impact within beyond their own organisation. This is what I think "Togetherness" is all about. It underpins the real value of intersectionality by bringing together different people to deliver positive outcomes. So, my intersecting dream is that we engage, support and participate in this year's 5th National Day for Staff Networks and we do that in a festival of togetherness.



**ABDUL  
ROB**



# THE POWER OF STAFF NETWORKS GROUP SPONSORS THE NATIONAL DAY FOR STAFF NETWORKS



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## SENIOR NETWORK CHAMPION



**Rupert McNeil**  
Chief People Officer  
Carers Champion

"I am hugely impressed with the time and effort put in by the volunteers who run our networks to work with us on building an inclusive civil service. The Civil Service Carers Network have made a significant contribution towards the development of the Civil Service Carers Strategy.

What's most impressive is that these contributions are often delivered alongside a busy day job and a caring role."



HM Government



**STAFFNETWORKS**  
#Togetherness



SIMON TSE

# WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT RACE. AND DO BETTER.

When I was asked if I would become Cabinet Office Race Champion by the previous Permanent Secretary Sir John Manzoni in October 2019, I didn't hesitate to say yes. I was honoured to be asked, and being the first person from an ethnic minority to fill the role was even more poignant for me. I also joined the Race Leadership team at Business in the Community (BITC), to ensure that we can work together and that the Civil Service and the private sector can learn from each other and share good practice.

I was born in Swansea back in the early 1960s to a Welsh mother and a father born in Hong Kong, and I was brought up on my mother's side of the family. Other than my siblings, there was only one other non-White child at our primary school and I often felt conflicted, like I didn't fit in - asking if I'm Welsh, British, Asian, or mixed race? In truth I am all of these, but it has taken me many years to reconcile this and feel comfortable about it. I even disliked my surname, and having to explain how to pronounce it. Nowadays I'm proud of it, even making it into a lighthearted joke - "Tse pronounced as Chair, as in table and Tse"!

In the Cabinet Office, we have made significant progress in terms of ethnic minority representation across the organisation. In the past 8 years we have increased our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (B.A.M.E) representation from 11% to 18%. We are proud to be finalists for our work on our representation efforts in the 2020 Employers for Equality and Inclusion awards. But there is more to do to ensure that our BAME representation is reflected evenly across the whole of our talent pipeline especially in the Senior Civil Service.

Within our organisation we are working together to promote a culture of inclusion through the Cabinet Office Values; Respect, Trust and Collaborate, which are important both in terms of learning from different points of view, and embedding thinking on ethnicity and inclusivity into our daily work.

I want everyone in the Cabinet Office to talk about ethnicity and race, as it's not until we remove barriers and have these conversations that we will make changes in how race is seen and how we truly become a fully inclusive Cabinet Office and Civil Service. This has always been important, but the Public Health England report into the significant impact of Covid-19 on people from ethnic minority backgrounds, and the death of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter protests, has brought a sense of urgency and a sharper focus to the issue. What's really important is that we start talking about race equality, and the lived experience of colleagues from an ethnic minority background in the Cabinet Office.

There is positive change happening across the Civil Service. We have had a strategy in place for a number of years, and more recently have underpinned that with clear minimum expectations for our work on D&I. 2020 was our Year of Inclusion in the Civil Service, and we saw a range of events designed to bring people together and learn from one another on how we're making our organisation the UK's most inclusive employer. But when you look at the statistics for BAME representation, especially across the most senior levels of the Civil Service, it is clear that there is still a lot of work to do - currently only 6% of Senior Civil Servants across the Civil Service have identified as BAME. I understand that I am only 1 of fewer than 10 non-White Director Generals in the whole of the Civil Service, which shows we still have a long way to go.

## What are we doing about it?

In my role as Race Champion, I am ensuring that I am asking difficult questions of my colleagues both in Cabinet Office and across the Civil Service. Can we be even more ambitious in our mission to ensure that Civil Service is the most inclusive employer in the UK? We must ensure that we do everything we can to try to reverse racial inequalities. But how?

As newly appointed Civil Service D&I Champion, Cabinet Office Permanent Secretary and Chief Operating Officer of the Civil Service, **Alex Chisholm** and I are working together to ensure that these discussions are being had across our organisation. Alex has made hearing from BAME colleagues a priority, attending sessions with our networks in his first days in the role, and we are agreed that clear and decisive leadership is needed to make the changes that we want to see happen. Alex told me:

"I'm taking the reins as Civil Service D&I Champion at a time when we have a more diverse Senior Civil Service than ever before. But at a time when we know we have so much more to do. It's an enormous responsibility. We have an opportunity to really embed the minimum standard we have set ourselves, both at an individual and collective level - but this won't happen without clear and decisive leadership. And while we know we need to accelerate diversity across our organisation (including on boards, recruitment panels and in our top jobs) a huge part of this is going to be about creating more inclusive cultures. Voice, authenticity and belonging are at the heart of the Civil Service inclusion model and embedding these principles will provide us with firm foundations on which to build."





ALEX CHISHOLM

# PRACTICAL ACTIONS TO TAKE

One thing that we can do is to accelerate progression and to increase representation of BAME people in the workplace at all levels. This will mean getting better at succession planning and developing talent, particularly from under-represented communities. We also need to ensure that we are hearing diverse voices in all of our decision making, especially at the current time in light of Covid-19. When decisions need to be made quickly, it is easy for 'group-think' decisions to be made, which runs the risk of the potentially devastating impact on the most vulnerable and underrepresented groups in society, whose input has not been included. It is also easy for unconscious and unintended bias to sneak into selection processes, including when redeploying colleagues across the Civil Service and I want to ensure that all colleagues are being given equal opportunities to be involved in the government response.

Additionally, we are running sponsorship schemes in the Cabinet Office and other departments. The role of sponsors is to be openly advocating for the person they sponsor, connecting them with contacts, opening doors and recommending them for projects and/or career opportunities, with the aim of allowing colleagues from ethnic minority backgrounds to access career development opportunities that may not otherwise have been available to them.

We designed a Let's Talk About Race programme with Cherron Inko-Tariah (The Power of Staff Networks). We are taking an intelligence based approach towards these sessions. We focused on running sessions within business areas that have the greatest need and the Senior Leadership Group were the first delegates. The aspiration is that if we can equip our Senior Leadership Group in starting those conversations, that might feel uncomfortable to them, with their wider teams we can then really shift the dial across the wider organisation. We had this planned before Covid-19, but the Black Lives Matter protests has meant greater engagement across the department. At these sessions, colleagues hear examples of the lived experiences of colleagues from an ethnic minority background of the subtle, covert, and sometimes not so subtle, overt racism, that is still happening, and these stories have a profound impact on all who hear them. In response to the recent events, I wrote an article calling on White allies to engage more in the conversations about race in the department, and I am so pleased with the overwhelming response the article received.

I am also working closely with the Cabinet Office D&I team and Cabinet Office Race Equality Network to establish a Race Board, which will set and drive the strategy for the work we do on race and ethnicity across the Cabinet Office. I want to use the Race Board to ensure that all the good work that is being done across the Cabinet Office by really committed individuals and networks has as much impact as possible.

Finally, I hope to encourage and inspire BAME colleagues to realise their potential - reaching the highest ranks of the Civil Service which will not be an 'If' but a 'When'. But first we need to get better at recognising the intersectionality of identities, so that everyone is able to bring their 'whole selves' to work, in an environment where they can flourish. I really encourage colleagues to expand their personal networks - collaboration and the interaction will be key.

## **I'd like to leave you with some tips, for other Race Champions and for all colleagues, as to how we can really look to make the step change that is so needed to really address racial inequalities in organisations:**

- Ensure that you are asking yourselves the following questions when decision making:
  - Do we have any BAME people around the table?
  - If not, how are we going to hear and learn from the lived experiences from Britons from diverse backgrounds?
  - How can we include their voices?
  - Do we have employees from BAME backgrounds that can join our team?
  - How can we consult with BAME communities to hear their lived experiences and challenges?
- Ask your colleagues from ethnic minority backgrounds, and in particular your Black colleagues, how they are feeling - create safe spaces for discussing these issues, and really listen to their answers.
- Educate yourself. Do not expect people from ethnic minority backgrounds to educate you on racism, but do listen to their lived experiences. There is so much material available, whether articles, books, podcasts, videos, and documentaries. Look at the books on your bookshelf, how many are from Black authors? Look at the books you read to your children - how diverse are the characters in the books? Self-reflect.
- Don't be afraid to speak out about racism for fear of getting it wrong. When you see something, do something. Model this to others. Don't avoid the vital, if uncomfortable, conversations.
- Ask senior leaders what they are doing to drive race equality in the workplace at all levels.
- Don't keep quiet for fear of being seen as 'tokenistic' or 'jumping on the bandwagon'. This is not just a hashtag, a trend or a passing phase, and we ALL need to continue these conversations.
- Be conscious of how you are using your voice and be reflective of your own actions. This is about words and actions.
- Volunteer as a mentor to a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleague, or become a Senior Sponsor.
- Join a staff network.
- Donate your time to causes working to create race equality.



## Cabinet Office



# DAVID BAROFKA

## Border Force Race Champion

I became Race Champion for Border Force in January 2018. I have a strong moral compass and hold values and positive behaviours in high regard. Doing the right thing is important.

I have worked in the Home Office for 35 years so I know well how it operates and at times it very much feels like an extended family (of over 30,000 employees).

I created the Border Force Race Advisory Group; a group of volunteers who I meet with regularly to guide, encourage and challenge me to be the best I can be – for our BAME colleagues and for Border Force.

Representing our society – and being seen to represent our society – is incredibly important. It is not acceptable

to have a narrow range of views when setting our policies and operating our front-line activity. We need to tune into diverse views and opinions, and to actively seek them out and listen to them.

We are continuing our efforts to ensure our BAME representation is proportionate across all the grades throughout Border Force.

We created the Border Force Race Action Plan in July 2019 and it commits us to strive and improve the working lives and progression of our BAME colleagues and the organisation in general. The range of activity is broad - whether it is visible leadership; BAME representation at all grades; improved outreach and recruitment; better development for our talent and supporting colleagues' progression; having a zero tolerance approach to bullying harassment and discrimination; or levelling up performance management ratings.

I have learned that this is an area which requires perseverance and sustained commitment. I have provided that through my passion and conviction to do the right thing.

I have committed to mentoring colleagues across a variety of grades and backgrounds, and that includes some healthy 'reverse mentoring'. It is powerful to hear what others think about the decisions you take, the reasoning behind those and the impact that it has. I know I do not own the intellectual property over what is right or wrong, so remaining open to the views and challenges from others is crucial.

We must listen to our BAME colleagues to ensure that their concerns are addressed and we continue to do the right things. The hurdles and obstacles that seem to appear to prevent us moving forward at sufficient pace just need to be overcome – there is no sense in giving in just because things become difficult.

I have learned that you have to be absolutely determined and resilient if you want to achieve something – whether that is for yourself or for others. It can be surprising what you can achieve, even if at the outset you thought it was unlikely. Your self respect is vital in being true to yourself.

If you have passion about something then invest your time and energy in it. Life is short so put your very best into everything you do – you might not have another chance to take the opportunity.

I think it is important to be generous with your time and energy especially in helping others. I often find that simply offering to help someone is fondly remembered – whether the offer is accepted or not. It builds a positive image of you, and there might just be an instance when you need someone else's help in return. Being a positive role model is a powerful thing!



# LEADERSHIP TIPS TO GET STARTED WITH RACIAL EQUALITY

The shifting focus on diversity and inclusion has meant that racial inequality and systemic racism, has been brought to the forefront of the world's consciousness. How to get started with promoting and embedding racial equity however, may not be as easy as it first appears.

With the eyes of employees firmly fixed on leaders to lead the agenda for their organisations, leadership must deliver strongly against the agenda.

The recent protests that have sparked the global debates around diversity and inclusion, and with institutional racism being a key focus of conversations, how can leaders develop and develop truly equitable workplace environments, whilst putting a better focus on increasing racial equity?

## Is Increasing Tolerance Enough?

Increasing tolerance around race is a start but Black employees don't merely want to be tolerated within the workplace or, within society! The constant, often subtle remarks and ridicule suffered by Black and Brown employees, have a negative impact on job satisfaction, personal development, mental health and personal life that perpetrators cannot begin to understand.

Since the death of George Floyd, the focus on race and racial inequality has been underlined as a key concern in the workplace, but how can the workplace be changed to develop an environment, where microaggressions are marginalised, systemic racism removed, and black employees are enabled to operate on an equal footing as their white counterparts?

## Leadership Responsibility

There has been a resurgence of the issue of race and race inequalities, and concerns have been raised around the reticence of organisation to consider race equality within workplace diversity and inclusion agenda.

Whilst many organisations have made statements around diversity and inclusion over recent months,

statements and rhetoric around race inequality and systemic racism, this is not enough to promote equality, and is certainly not going to rid organisations of it.

As leadership moves forward to address these concerns, it should be noted that many are using their Black employees in ways that make many feel uncomfortable with. We should be clear that this is not your Black employees issue to fix... it is yours!

Systemic racism rests at the heart of organisational process and functions and whilst it is perfectly proper to engage with Black employees to assist in developing inclusive processes, it is not their place to fix systemic racism.

The concerns and issues surrounding racial inequality are systemic and must be driven by leadership action. Compelling Black employees to drive the diversity and inclusion agenda, has long since been a tact for organisations to tick a box, and give the appear that progress is being made. It is leadership responsibility to drive workplace inclusion, and support equity within the workplace.

This includes ridding the workplace environment of microaggressions and other behaviours, both personal and systematic, that reinforce inequality.



**CARMEN MORRIS**

## Where to start

Starting your leadership journey on race equality and diversity and inclusion more generally, is going to take a strategic approach. Here are 5 tips that leadership can use to begin creating a racially inclusive, and supportive workplace environment.

### 1. Call On The Experts

Racial inequality didn't start overnight and it certainly did not begin with the death of George Floyd. Racism is systematic and pernicious and requires expert knowledge and help to build a strategy to combat it.

If you are going to take action on diversity and inclusion and racial equality, consider the merits of getting professional advice and support.

### 2. Advance your Own Learning

Leadership will require up to date and effective training on diversity and inclusion. If you are going to drive the agenda, it makes sense that you gain knowledge around what it is all about. Make sure that training includes instruction on leadership responsibilities around legislations as well as corporate governance. It's an important aspect of leadership roles!

### 3. Become More Inclusive

Inclusive leadership is a plus when it comes to getting it right. Organisations that are more inclusive at leadership level, benefit by having a more inclusive approach to decision making. It's not just about having people of colour on the leadership team, it's about enabling these leaders to have a voice. Inclusive leadership adds immense value, and helps to develop, and increase cultural competence.

## 4. Develop a Long-Term Strategy

This is not a tick box exercise. Your strategy needs to be long term and feature development for leadership, recruitment, human resources and talent management, amongst others. Your strategy must be about removing barriers where they are found, as well as developing organisational culture and behaviours. A quick fix approach to getting this right will not work.

## 5. Measure Monitor and Evaluate Progress

Just like other projects across the business, progress should be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis. Consider who is leading the agenda across the various functions of your organisation and schedule in time for them to updates regularly.

You may also consider making diversity and inclusion a standard part of your performance review structure so that you can measure how all employees are progressing.

These 5 tips can help leadership teams to begin to think about starting to build a more racially inclusive and equitable organisation. Failure to develop a racially inclusive workplace will, over the longer term, expose an organisation to challenges with brand image, recruitment and harm potential sales and market share.

***Getting it right is more important than tick boxing a way out of it.***

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**Carmen Morris is a diversity and inclusion practitioner with over 27 years. Her specialist area is race and racial equality. She delivers consultancy services to individuals and organisations, supporting them to increase positive outcomes around diversity and inclusion. Carmen also provides mentoring and coaching services to support the development of good practice within leadership.**

**Carmen's contribution to Forbes Magazine in the area of diversity and inclusion and leadership, have supported a global audience to cultivate an increased understanding of race and racial inequity, within organizational frameworks. She is the owner and Managing Director of Kenroi Consulting, a bespoke diversity consulting business that supports clients in the UK, Europe and the United States.**

**Learn more about Kenroi Consulting at [www.kenroi.com](http://www.kenroi.com)**





# "GET THE POLICE OUT OF PRIDE"



I am exhausted. Physically and mentally. I know the majority of the Met's officers and our amazing police staff are too. Never before in history have we faced so many converging life-changing events and never have we found ourselves in situations where we may be asked to impose almost unbelievably restrictive rules on people. Since March, the Met and its people have

been literally working flat out, perhaps harder than they ever have, in situations more dangerous than anyone of us could have anticipated. Even at the height of this unbelievable crisis, they did not falter, coming into work and donning their uniforms - heading out into the unknown to protect others. I am so proud of them.

I am also proud of the work our LGBT+ officers and staff have been doing too, throughout the Met. Emergency response cops, control room staff answering 999 calls, dog handlers, detectives, counter terrorism. I am fairly qualified to say that we have out and proud people almost everywhere in policing. Over the last few months, many of them helped organise and contribute to online Pride celebrations. Our new team of over 250 LGBT+ Advisers, introduced last year by our Network, with the support of the Commissioner, stepped forward to help.

Very senior people asked me how they could help demonstrate solidarity – there are only 12 frontline Chief Superintendents in the Met, delivering all the local policing to communities across all the 32 London boroughs and many of them arranged Pride flags to be flown across their police stations. They have also been setting up inclusion and diversity panels, inviting practitioners to advise them on how we can improve crime fighting, safety and work more effectively with the community – not just everyone but specifically those who might not have as loud a voice as others – LGBT+ people in particular.

LGBT+ officers have taken part in the first ever multi-disciplinary Criminal Justice Conference on Chem Sex and harmful sexual practices – asked by senior detectives to contribute their influence, community contacts and lived experiences to improve safeguarding, knowledge and understanding.

They have been contributing to organisational learning, helping the Met shape policies and procedures following the horrific murders of four young men by Stephen Port.

Supporting LGBT+ colleagues through the crisis has also been so important to us. Trans colleagues have been unable to access surgeries or appointments and had HRT cancelled. Some living with HIV have been worried about their role on the frontline during the pandemic.

During lockdown we have influenced the police approach on calls to enforce new laws on cruising grounds. Taking a measured, proportionate and evidenced based approach, working alongside other stakeholders has been the way forward. As the Commissioner reminded me recently,

***"Policing is too much for some, and not enough for others."***



When I heard from the Pride in London team that people were calling for us to be removed from the 2021 Pride Parade, against the backdrop of the BLM movement, I was hurt. In the 23 years I have been a cop I have learned not to take things personally. I know how hard so many of our LGBT+ officers, staff and allies have worked. I have seen the difference they make, and how much their involvement energises and gives them strength to make even more difference, which is why the calls to banish them is all the more poignant.

***"PRIDE IS A PROTEST"***

***"THE PRESENCE OF POLICE IS AN INSULT TO THE BLACK AND NON-BLACK PEOPLE OF COLOUR THAT ARE FORGOTTEN ABOUT AND IGNORED"***

***"CHANGE FROM WITHIN IS DEAD, WE ARE ABOLITIONISTS NOW"***

***"POLICE ARE A FORCE OF TERROR"***  
***"ACAB"***

It is an incredible privilege to lead our Met LGBT+ staff network committee, who in turn provide leadership for the rest of the Met regarding cultural competence for LGBT+ issues.

They are as diverse as London. Over half are black and non-black people of colour. We have every aspect of the LGBT and + represented, along with those with disabilities, with a broad mix of officer and staff, ranks and grades. They have been leading the conversations around intersectionality and the BLM movement, what this means to their loved ones and their role in the Met. They have helped me and others around me understand our privilege and what we need to do together to change. Their voices are heard at the highest levels of our organisation. Their presence – in the Met, at Pride, or anywhere else - will never be an insult.

Police have always had a part to play in protest, usually to facilitate it, keep the peace and prevent criminality. It was also a protest for the first officers who took part in

uniform. A protest against discrimination they experienced within their own organisation. Systemic homophobia exists in many institutions and for some this was a show of solidarity, a visible signal of change from within. For some it still is and they deserve their place.

Change from within certainly isn't dead at Scotland Yard. Nothing could be further from the truth. We are constantly changing, adapting, wanting to be the best. We ask Stonewall to inspect what we do and how we do it. We have an independent advisory group. We have relationships with LGBT+ community groups across London. We have a seat next to the Assistant Commissioner at our Strategic Diversity board. Don't get me wrong, change in the Met can be immensely slow and frustrating. Show me a public sector organisation of 40,000 people and an annual operating budget of over £3 billion that isn't.

We are as shocked and appalled as anyone at the death of George Floyd in the US. We want desperately to ensure something as horrifying as his death could never happen here. We are not complacent. From a London perspective, in my view, Police are an overwhelming force against terror. Terror at Pride to be exact. Last year, colleagues from our Counter Terrorism Command arrested and charged two people, one of whom was planning to attack Pride using a firearm, a sword and a van.

ACAB. It is true that a tiny minority very much fit this category. 'I bet anyone reading this can insert their own occupation into the C.

So, let me take you back to lockdown.

***Stay home. Save the NHS. Protect lives.***

On the 30th April London was deserted. Only the Police and medics were about on the streets. One of my West End Sergeants, Grieg, came to find me. He asked if I had chance to join him on some foot patrol. We put on our stab vests and off we went. We stopped at our local supermarket and I brought a bunch of flowers. A lady queuing outside made some assumptions, mumbling something whilst shooting me a dirty look.

We walked up with the flowers to Old Compton Street. We stopped outside the Admiral Duncan, and on behalf of all those people who couldn't, we lay the flowers at the door - and remembered.

We are by no means a perfect organisation. We make mistakes. We have a long way to go until we don't need a dedicated LGBT+ Network. But - I have never known a time such as now where I see a genuine willingness across the Met to learn, to grow, to listen and to act.

We have more than earned our right to walk with our community at Pride.

And we each have a right to be proud.

**By Daniel Ivey, Chief Inspector and Co-Chair:  
Met LGBT+ Network**





# krystalalliance

involve to evolve

Krystal Alliance is supporting the National Day for Staff Networks because it is a wonderful opportunity to involve, promote and celebrate difference.

We believe that all organisations do better when they involve their networks to evolve with the best solutions.



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[admin@krystalalliance.co.uk](mailto:admin@krystalalliance.co.uk)



[krystalalliance](https://www.instagram.com/krystalalliance)



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NATIONAL DAY FOR  
STAFF NETWORKS

## National Day for Staff Networks The 5 Cs

### CELEBRATION



Remember to celebrate small wins, big wins, key milestones and everything in between.

### COMPASSION



Take care of you, love what you do, and support others too.

### COVID 19



What have you learned? What needs to change? What role can your network play?

### COMMUNICATION



**Networks to MEMBERS:** Clear, concise and compelling  
**Networks to WIDER ORGANISATION:** Listen, learn and leverage.

### COLLABORATION



Working together to make work better.

# MakingWorkBetter

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## JEROME WILLIAMS

# THERE'S MORE THAN ONE STORY

**Jerome Williams is the head of diversity and inclusion for a housing association and shares his thoughts about the importance of knowing the full picture before making decisions.**

One of the stranger things that came out of the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities report (the report) published in April 2021 was the story it told on housing.

Housing, alongside socio-economic, education, income, health and employment is after all a key factor in assessing inequality and that has rightly been recognised by the report. What was strange is that the report chose to look at housing through the narrow lens of home ownership. In doing so, the report painted a picture of the UK as a progressive country, one that holds many advantages for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups and one in which operates systems that are not racist and do not disadvantage particular groups disproportionately.

In doing so, the report also showed the danger of the “single story”.

The report notes that 63% of all households own their own home with slightly more than two-thirds of White British households being homeowners compared with two-fifths for all other ethnic groups. It does acknowledge that there is significant variation between ethnic minority groups with the Indian ethnic group “way out in front” at 74% home ownership, with Mixed White and Asian on 70% and White British on 68%. It also goes on to say that Black Caribbean households have double the rate of home ownership as Black African households, at 40% compared with 20%, which the report says reflects their longer history in the UK. Further it goes on to say that Pakistani households have a rate of 58%, way ahead of Bangladeshi households on 46% and Chinese households on 45% which partly explains the latter group’s lowly rating on median wealth.

The problem with data being presented is the picture that’s being painted; that is to say it’s one picture, but the full picture. There is a fantastic [TED Talk by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie](#) which encapsulates why this is a problem. Adichie explains that if we only hear about a people, place or situation from one point of view, we risk accepting one experience as the whole truth.

So what does this report look like when we consider the full picture?

Data on home ownership does indeed show that Indian households appear to be doing well in terms of home ownership rates and that they are higher than the rates for white British households. However, what does need to be considered is that according to the 2011 Census, Indian households make up just 2.5 per cent of the population of England and Wales.

If we do consider housing and inequality through a wider lens (which surely we should want to do if we want to understand

and consider the best outcomes) then we must look at housing beyond home ownership. If we do then there is evidence that inequalities are exacerbated amongst certain minority groups.

**The English Housing Survey 2016 to 2017** shows that both Black Caribbean and Black African people are instead vastly overrepresented when it comes to private renting and social housing and it’s here where further inequality is likely to exist. The Government’s Race Disparity Audit in 2018 found that rents were less affordable for most ethnic minority groups than for White British households (those from Irish, Indian, and households from any Mixed background being the exceptions). Also, regardless of whether they rented from a social or private landlord, the audit found that ethnic minority households spent a higher proportion of their incomes on rent. The same audit found that overcrowding, which reflected both family sizes as well as the nature and affordability of the local housing stock, was more common among ethnic minority households in general.

The report notes that its Review found no evidence of systemic or institutional racism. Despite evidence to the contrary, the report cites causational factors such as sociological variables including differences between schools, poverty, and childhood trauma rather than discrimination or membership of a particular ethnic group. And yet when we consider the wider picture, it’s difficult to see how institutional racism has not played a continuing role in perpetuating racial disparities in housing.

The danger of the single story of course goes beyond considerations in housing inequality, but Covid-19 and Grenfell are terrible reminders of how dangerous a narrow focus can be. Studies of ‘race and housing’ issues go back to the 1960s. Racial disparities in housing have persisted for decades in that time and there is much evidence and data out there for us to draw from to help us progress towards equality.

Now is therefore not the time for semantics or the narrowing of our focus. Now is the time for us all to look at the whole picture, scrutinise performance in housing provision and to consider housing opportunities to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people through various means. E.g. through racism awareness training for employees, consideration of localised needs, assessments of fair housing policies, monitoring of minority ethnic people and the delivery of more culturally sensitive housing and services, racism awareness training for staff, and positive action aimed at helping Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people enter to management positions in the sector.

It’s only when we experience the full picture that we will experience the whole truth.



The Grey Area survey designed to capture the experience of ethnic minority men and women working in the public and private sector revealed that more than 50% of respondents have experienced unconscious or conscious bias at work. Many others suffer from impostor syndrome, stereotype threat, shadeism, minority stress, lack of confidence and self-esteem, perfectionism, fear of vulnerability, fear of failure, tokenism bias, accent bias, and other limiting mindsets.

**The Grey Area survey was launched in September 2019 until July 2020, revealed the following findings:**

- 50% of the Black, Asian Minority ethnic respondents did not believe that they had adequate avenues to communicate workplace challenges and barriers.
- In response to the following question: "If you wanted to, would you say that you have the opportunities to get to a senior level in your organisation?"
- Only 10.5% of white respondents disagree with this statement while a whopping 50% of Black, Asians and Minority Ethnic respondents either disagree or strongly disagree with the statement.
- Regarding discrimination, 43.3% of white respondents were aware/ knew of discrimination against colleagues of colour who missed out on key opportunities owing to ethnic backgrounds.
- 61.2% Blacks, Asians, minority ethnic respondents felt that their ethnic background had a role to play in missing out a pay raise, promotion, key assignment or chance to get ahead.
- 46.5% of Black, Asians, minority ethnic respondents have been made to feel uncomfortable because of their hair or head covering, their beard or anything that is part of their ethnicity or faith.
- In answering the question, how satisfied are you with career growth opportunities at your workplace?
- 56.2% of White respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with their career progression at workplace whereas only 19.3% Black, Asians & Ethnic Minority respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with their career progression.

**There was a stark difference in the lived experience and perceptions between white and ethnic minority respondents in their overall experience.**

**In summary, the Grey Area survey - which was specific to workplace experiences found:**

- More Black people felt there was no opportunity to communicate barriers to progression
- Compared to Black, Asian and minority ethnic respondents, nearly twice as many white respondents agreed that they have the opportunities to get to a senior level in their organisation
- Only Black, Asian and minority ethnic respondents cited micro-aggressions as an external challenge
- There were marked differences in the lived work experience as well as difference in perception of Blacks, Asian, minority ethnic respondents versus that of white respondents
- Majority of Black, Asians, minority ethnics believed that they missed out on a promotion, pay raise or chance to get ahead owing to their ethnic background.

**Following a webinar with some of the Grey Area respondents, the following solutions were identified:**

**Role Models:**

- People who are supportive and make employees feel comfortable about opening up
- Role Models from same ethnicities

**Visibility and Interaction:**

- Interaction with Senior Management
- Networking opportunities
- Staff Networks/ERGs
- Sponsors

**Training/Development:**

- Understanding and dealing with Conscious and Unconscious Bias
- Awareness of Microaggressions, Gaslighting and Tone policing
- Self-Leadership, Self-Empowerment, Confidence Building

**Coaching:**

- External and Internal Coaches
- Coaching Programs

The Grey Area team will be running the survey again in 2021 and will also be launching a series of tools and programmes for organisations and employees. To stay informed or to find out more, email: [info@thegreyarea.uk](mailto:info@thegreyarea.uk) or visit our website [www.thegreyarea.uk](http://www.thegreyarea.uk)

# Resilience

## the springboard to thrive!

Nichole McGill-Higgins is an independent belonging consultant at Changez. Life, and a growth mindset coach and an ED&I associate consultant for the CIPD. She talks to Yvonne D Dowie, a public sector senior manager with over 30 years experience, about resilience.

### **NMH: What has been your involvement in networks?**

**YDD:** I've always been a supporter of what networks can positively bring to the table, either by having a role within the Network myself or being part of the membership. I believe if one wants to see change happen then that needs to be done so from within. You need to be the change you want to see. You need to be involved for things to evolve!

### **NMH: What are the benefits of having Staff Networks?**

**YDD:** I would say a key benefit is that it's a safe space where individuals who share a common identity can meet to discuss issues, concerns that relate to their lived experiences particularly that take place in the working environment.

Effective networks should be working collaboratively with the organisation in shaping its strategic vision and policies; collegiately working with the business on the improvement of the employee experience on specific issues raised by the networks.

And let us not forget that Networks support the organisation in the area of recognising talent, creating opportunity for development and progression and hence having a positive impact on retention. Lastly, networks know the need to ensure that successes are celebrated, whether that be acknowledging the same from an individual perspective or that of the organisation

### **NMH: Do Networks make a difference?**

**YDD:** Networks make a difference in that they can act as a critical friend to the organisation highlighting both areas for improvement as well as the successes.

I think they play a pivotal role in creating psychological safety for individuals, which in turn for me hopefully means that the working environment is on a journey to being more inclusive and then allows for employees to thrive, be their best selves at work and have a sense of belonging

### **NMH: Being a part of a Network involves different skills and emotions, one of which is resilience. Tell us about what resilience means to you?**

**YDD:** Resilience is the ability to be able to or have the capacity to quickly, or maybe I should say, know how to recover from challenging/difficult situations. I've discovered this is not an easy ask! Nevertheless, it is about over time drawing on the reservoirs within oneself to create an element of self-preservation, being prepared and having purpose.

### **NMH: What advice would you give to a Network around fostering resilience?**

**YDD:** I just going to list a few things here, note though what I say is not exclusive!

- Continually engage social support and interaction both internally and externally
- Where networks can, treat issues and or challenges as learning opportunities and grow positively from them. Jamais Cascio says the goal of resilience is to thrive!

- Ensure the network has a clear purpose or vision and have realistic goals to achieve these.
- Avoid making a drama out of a crisis, easy to write I guess, however, harder to do. Nevertheless I think it's important to recognise the situation for what it is and deal with appropriately,

- Take action, lead by positive example and follow through.
- Nurture a positive view of the network.
- Communicate, communicate, communicate across the organisation!
- Dare I say again? Celebrate those successes.

### **NMH: What are your top 3 tips on keeping a Network motivated to remain resilient?**

**YDD:**

- Remain focussed and purposeful.
- Continue to communicate and be transparent.
- Remember to enjoy the journey

Check out [www.nationaldayforstaffnetworks.co.uk](http://www.nationaldayforstaffnetworks.co.uk) for fantastic resources that will help you with your staff network journey.



**YVONNE D DOWIE**



### **WHO are YOU beneath all your daily roles? Are you READY to take your mindset to the next level?**

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**NICHOLE MCGILL-HIGGINS**



# IS INTROVERT BIAS ON YOUR RADAR?



CAROL STEWART

You don't look like an introvert were words once said to me when I told someone I was introverted whilst networking, and I thought to myself what on earth is an introvert supposed to look like. There are many misconceptions about introversion that have shaped the way many people view introverts and how they treat them in the workplace. This conversation highlighted this. Because I was being social, it was assumed I couldn't be introverted.

The misconceptions include, all introverts are shy; introverts are aloof; socially anxious; social misfits; socially reclusive; don't like public speaking, and so on. Whilst these can be said of some introverts, they don't apply to all. They can also apply to people who are extroverted.

These misconceptions can create an unfavourable bias towards introversion. Not only this, many of our everyday work practices are better suited to extroverted types. Meetings, networking, selection interviews, open plan offices, brainstorming are some of the areas in which introverts are not necessarily at their best.

As leaders, an awareness of these biases and how they play out, enables you to review your practices to make sure that introverts in your organisation are not put at a disadvantage.

## Understanding introversion

Introversion and extroversion sit at opposite ends of a continuum and we all have a preference as to where we fit, depending on the situation and environment we are in. Although someone may have a preference towards introversion, there may be situations and environments where they display some of the typical extrovert behaviours.

Introverts find it mentally draining spending too long in overly stimulating environments. Afterwards they need time on their own to go inwards and re-energise. Whereas extroverts thrive from external stimulation and being around people. That is why networking events and other large social gatherings may drain the energy of someone who is introverted if they spend too long at them.

Because they feel drained, they may withdraw and appear less social. This can be mistaken for shyness or a lack of confidence. Additionally, introverts typically don't like making small talk, preferring depth of conversation over quantity.

## Workplace practices that are not favourable towards introversion

With a preference for thinking and reflecting before speaking, the way that networking events, meetings, brainstorming and selection interviews are conducted, does not allow for thinking and reflecting time. In these situations, there is an expectation that on the spot responses be given.

Many organisations have moved to large, open plan offices over recent years, but these can be a nightmare for introverts. The buzz from the noise and being surrounded by lots of people creates over stimulation which is draining. It does not allow introverts to be at their optimal.

When I first started publishing articles on LinkedIn about the challenges introverted women leaders face, I was inundated with comments and messages from introverted women and men from across the world. They shared with me their stories of the challenges they experienced because they are introverted.

This led to me creating an online community for introverted women who are senior leaders and resulted in me writing my book [Quietly Visible: Leading with Influence and Impact as an Introverted Woman](#). I also did a TEDx talk called Introverts Make Great Leaders Too.

## Some organisations are addressing the issue

Some organisations have recognised the bias that exists and to address this, have formed employee networks to support their introverted staff. One such organisation is the UK Civil Service that has a cross-government introverts' network. The aim of the network is to: -

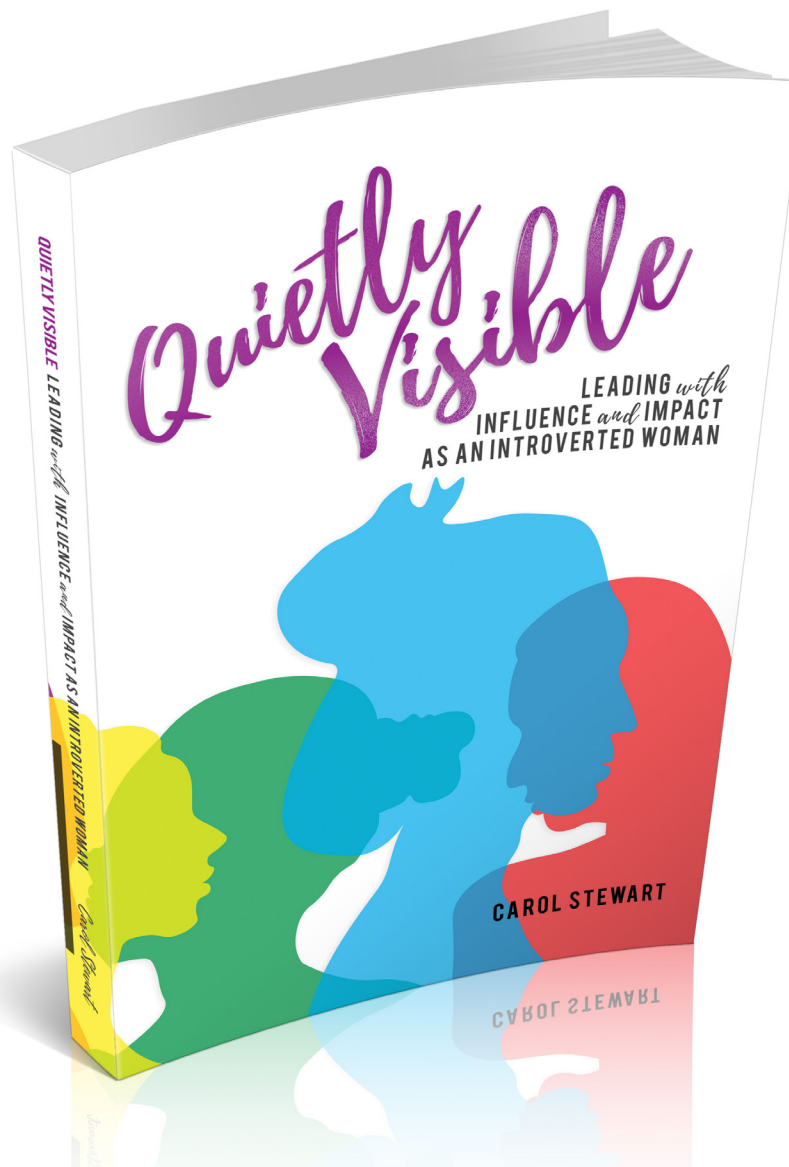
- raise awareness and understanding of introversion
- show the power of introverts, introverted leadership and introvert-friendly working
- foster better understanding between introverts and extroverts
- build a supportive community that helps develop introverts

There are some organisations putting practices in place that help remove unfavourable bias towards introverts such as letting interview candidates have questions beforehand, or changing the way meetings are conducted to allow for individual thinking time.

By leaders examining, questioning and challenging the decisions they make regarding both introverts and extroverts and why they made those decisions, it helps to increase their self awareness of any biases they may hold.

When looking at how to make sure their organisations are inclusive, many leaders only consider the traits that fall within the protected characteristics. Because of the unfavourable bias towards introverts, consideration needs to also be given to ensuring there is diversity of personality as well. They need to make sure that particular personality types are not viewed more favourably than another.

Carol Stewart is an Executive, Career and Business Coach, Speaker, Trainer and Facilitator. She is the founder of Abounding Solutions and author of *Quietly Visible: Leading with Influence and Impact as an Introverted Woman*. She was named a LinkedIn Top Voice UK in 2017, 2018 and 2019.





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