

**Welcome to our
#EQW2025 webinar**

**Tackling bullying and
harassment in the NHS**

Tuesday 20 May 2025

Our speakers:

- **Prof. Doyin Atewologun** - CEO and Founder, delta
- **Deepa Pappu** - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead, University Hospitals Dorset
- **Jon Harding** - Head of Organisational Development, University Hospitals Dorset
- **Becky Tasker** - Diversity and Inclusion Programme Manager, NHS Employers



Making measurable change to address bullying and harassment – a research perspective



Prof. Doyin Atewologun
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20 May 2025

delta

About Delta

A leadership and inclusion consultancy

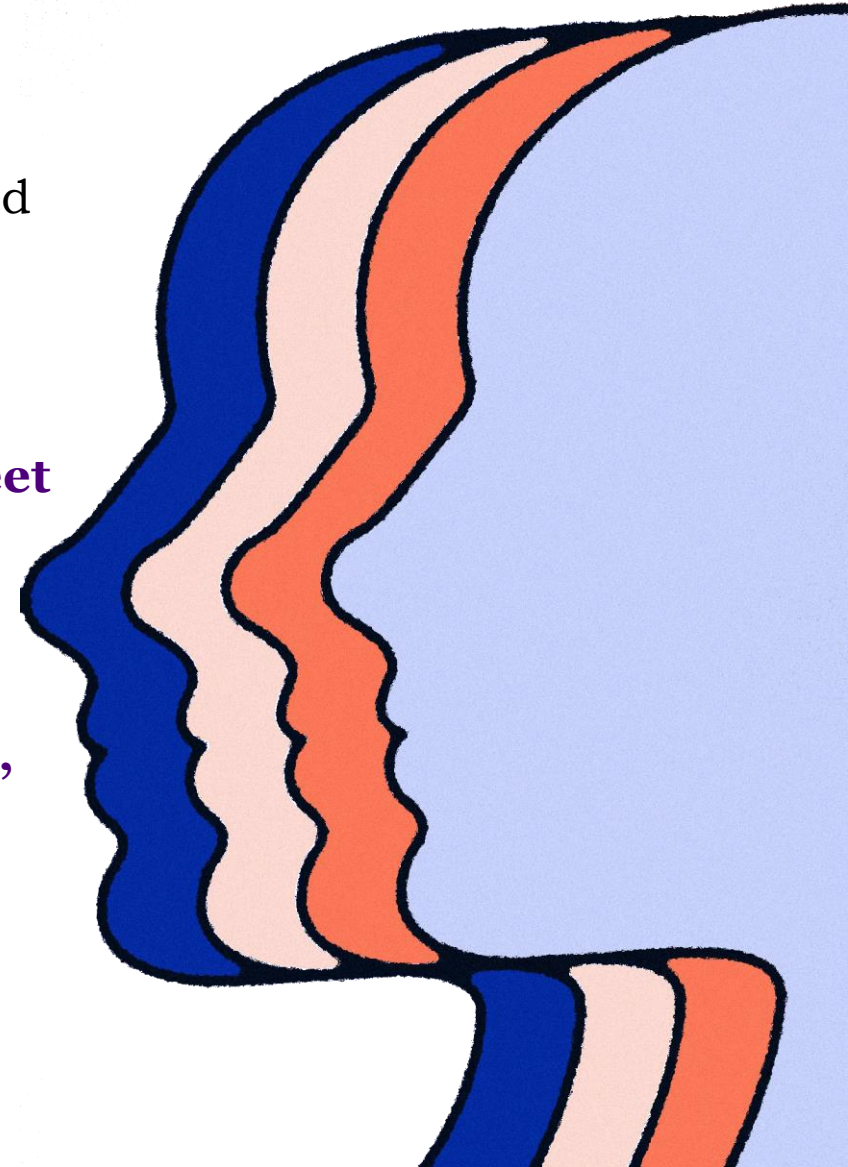
We are business psychologists, skilled facilitators, change experts, and executive coaches with a wide portfolio of satisfied clients across sectors.

We collaborate with clients to develop leadership and change programmes, workshops, coaching and other interventions, to meet your equity and performance goals, in a sustainable way.

We leverage the power of leadership, allyship and lived experiences, using evidence from people and behavioural science, to develop solutions that work.

We work with multiple stakeholder groups across the Inclusion Ecosystem© to ensure systemic change.

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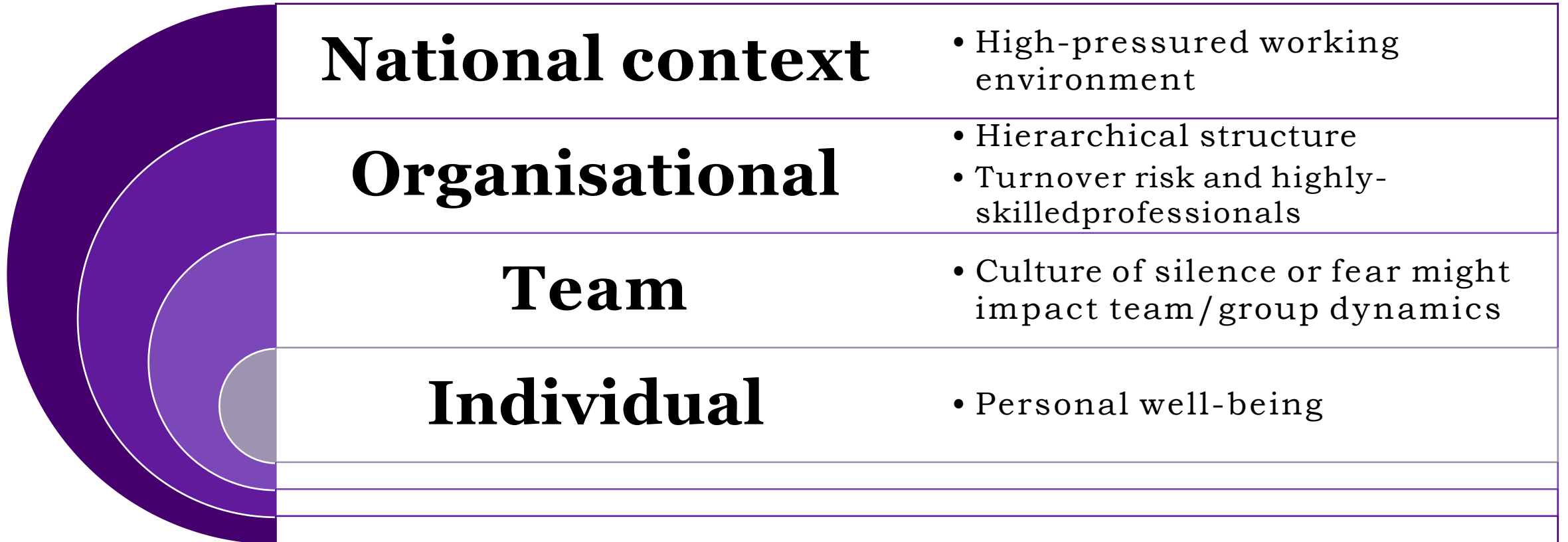


Today

What are some evidence-based actions to disrupt bullying and harassment at work?

How can I expand my toolkit (build confidence and knowledge) to make a positive change in bullying and harassment at work?

Why does this matter in healthcare?



Defining Harassment & Bullying

Harassment

“Unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual” (Equality Act)

Bullying

- “Unwanted behaviour from a person or group that is either:
- offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting
 - an abuse or misuse of power that undermines, humiliates, or causes physical or emotional harm to someone” (ACAS)

Bullying

“The systematic mistreatment of a subordinate or colleague by one or more individuals from the same group, over a frequent (at least once a week) and long period (at least six months) of time that can cause severe social, psychological, and psychosomatic problems in the victim... its continuous nature makes it pernicious and distinguishes bullying from harassment, which can be a single action or event”. (Quinlan et al, 2014)

What does this look, sound, or feel like?

How it might look



- Public humiliation (e.g. a senior doctor mocking a junior in front of patients or colleagues)
- Deliberate exclusion from meetings, training, or team activities
- Micromanaging or undermining someone's clinical decisions or judgment.
- Unfair allocation of shifts (e.g. constantly assigning someone the least desirable or most difficult work)
- Eye-rolling, sneering, or hostile body language in response to questions or contributions
- Sabotage of work —withholding information, delaying signatures, or removing essential equipment or resources.

What does this look, sound, or feel like?

How it might sound



- “You should’ve known that already. Maybe this job’s not for you.”
- “I don’t have time to explain this to you again.”
- “Everyone else manages. Why are you so slow?”
- “Stop being so sensitive —this is how we do things here.”
- “You’d get further if you smiled more.”
- “Maybe you’re too emotional for surgery.”
- “You’re imagining things.”
- “It was just a joke. Don’t take it personally.”

What does this look, sound, or feel like?

How it might feel



- Constant anxiety or dread about going to work or speaking up during rounds
- Isolation and powerlessness, particularly in hierarchical settings like hospitals
- Hypervigilance or second-guessing every clinical or professional move
- Low self-worth —feeling incompetent despite strong performance
- Fear of retaliation for reporting or even naming inappropriate behaviour
- Burnout, emotional exhaustion, or physical symptoms (e.g. insomnia, headaches).

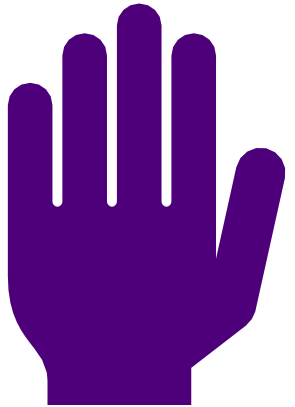
Why is fixing bullying or harassment not so easy?

- **It can be difficult to spot** – it can be explicit or implicit, conscious or subconscious actions
- **It can be lodged into the culture:** Not necessarily “bad people doing bad things” – sometimes systemic issues influenced by power and hierarchy
- **Doing nothing sustains it:** It can be reinforced by silence, culture and normalisation
- May be unintentional but still harmful

It's about impact,
not intention

What stops us from disrupting bullying?

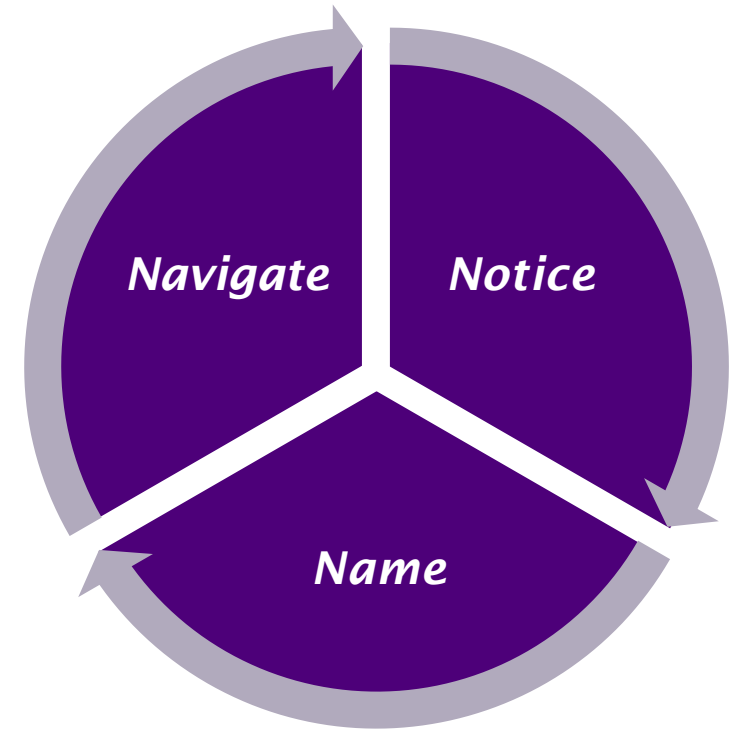
- Fear of retaliation or not being believed
- Lack of trust in reporting systems - inadequate reporting systems and poor follow-up
- Lack of accountability – those in positions of power are rarely held accountable
- Cultural barriers – “Don’t be a trouble-maker” “It’s just how it is here”



We are all part of the system.

Some questions to ask to disrupt the cycle

1. How can colleagues know to **trust me** if they raise concerns?
2. Even if the system is currently broken, **what is within my control to change or influence** right now?
3. How can I use my voice or platform—no matter how small—to create ripple effects of **accountability**?
4. What would a healthier, more respectful workplace culture look like—and how can I embody that even in small ways?



Evidence-based ways forward

Understand that
silence is often
perceived as
endorsement

Focus on learning
rather than blame in
addressing issues

Establish and clearly
communicate
acceptable behaviour
standards

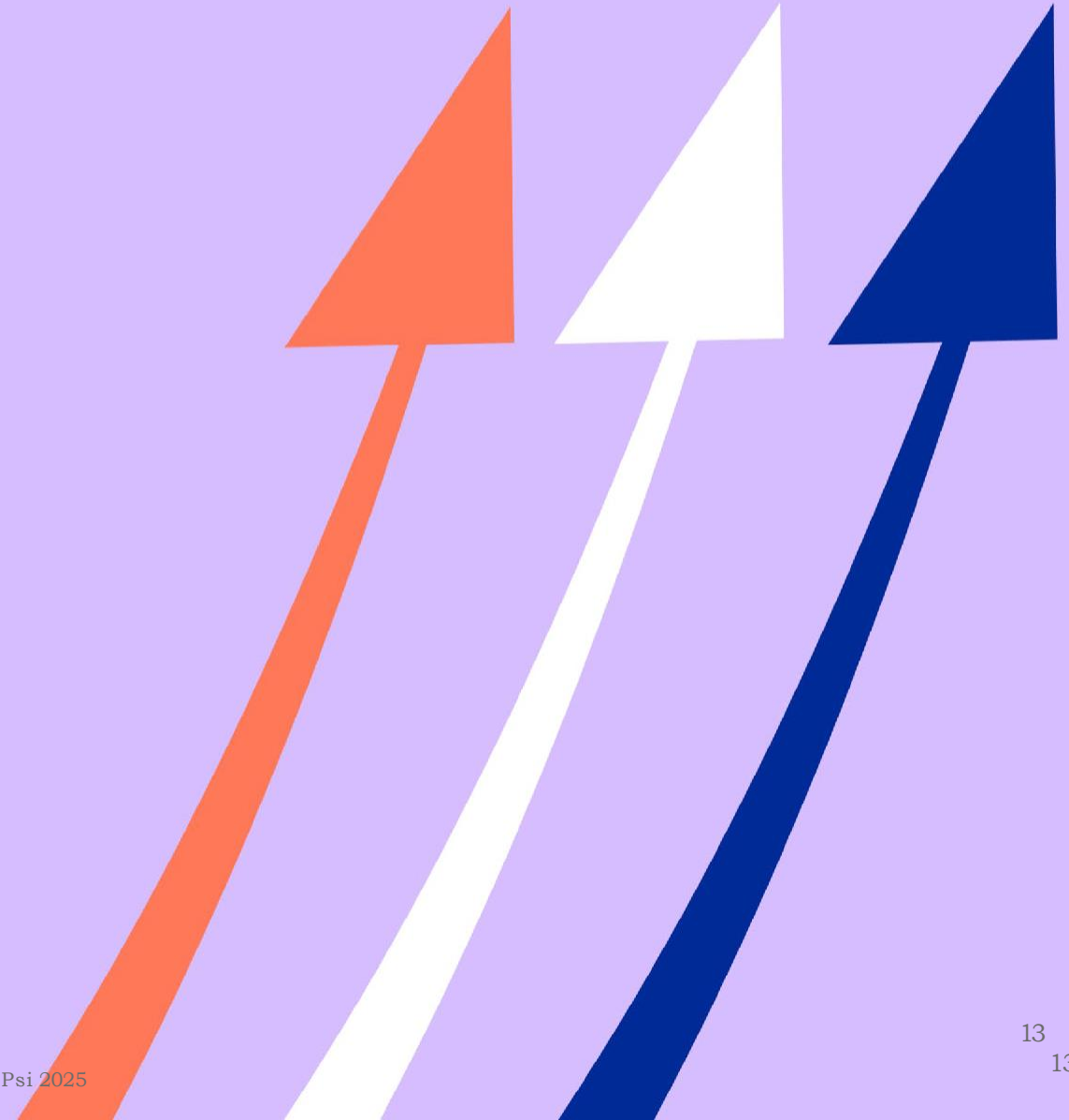
Empower 'upstanders'
with clear roles and
protections

Bring multiple
stakeholders together
to design interventions
that work best in your
context: How do we
solve this problem
collectively?

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Reference list

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Thank you

Prof. Doyin Atewologun

CEO and Founder

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Be who you are. Be recognised. Be valued. Be all you can be.

Addressing Racism and Discrimination in UHD

Jon Harding - Head of Organisational Development

Deepa Pappu - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead

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Drivers for Anti-racism action

- Inspirational leadership - Chief Executive Officer, Director of OD, Chief People Officer and colleagues
- NHS National Staff Survey
- Workforce Race Equality Standard [WRES]
- Disparity ratios [career progression]
- Lived experience from staff and focus groups
- NHS EDI Improvement Plan 6 High Impact Actions
- 'Too hot to handle' report
- Voice of our staff networks, Diverse Ethnicity Network
- Feedback from the International Educated Forum [IEN]
- Preferred term – Global Majority [BME, BAME]

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Racism makes me feel...shared by UHD staff

Embarrassed
Tired of ignorance
Injustice
Unjustifiable
Prejudiced
Incompetent
Invisible
Unequal
Dehumanised
Ignored
Disregarded
Tiring
Unrealistic expectations
Marginalised
Unrecognised
Useless
Marginalised
Inferior
Devalued
Unheard
Unfair
Limitation
Anxious
Blamed
Small
Exploited
Worthless
Inclined
Undervalued
Tired
Denied opportunities
Overbearing
Side-lined
Discriminated
Partial
Powerless
Pre-judged
Denied access
Less
Condescending
Treated differently
Not listened to
Untrusted

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Workforce Race Equality Standard, University Hospitals Dorset

WRES indicator		2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	National 2024
1. Percentage of black and minority (BME) staff	Overall %	16.8	18.7	21.5	23.87	26.08	26.4
5. Percentage of staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from patients, relatives or the public in the last 12 months	BME %	27.0	30.0	34.1	30.0	27.36	30.5
	White %	25.0	26.3	27.9	26.0	21.86	26.9
6. Percentage of staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from staff in the last 12 months	BME %	29.0	31.1	31.7	25.0	23.92	27.5
	White %	22.0	23.9	22.5	18.0	17.74	21.7
8. Percentage of staff personally experiencing discrimination at work from a manager/team leader or other colleague	BME %	17.0	16.8	20.3	16.0	15.21	16.4
	White %	6.0	7.4	5.4	5.0	5.14	6.6

Statement from the UHD board of directors



“University Hospitals Dorset will not tolerate racism, discrimination or abuse. We celebrate the diversity of our staff and community. We treat all our staff with dignity and respect, irrespective of their race, gender, religion, age, disability or sexual orientation.”

Our journey ...

Focus groups

- **Yvonne Coghill**, Director of Race Equality at NHSI 2022
- **‘Let’s Talk about Race’** in EDI Group meetings, in 2023
- Deputy Chief Nursing Officer with the IEN team 2023
- **Habib Naqvi**, the CEO of Race Observatory, in 2024

Infrastructure

- **Amended DATIX/LERN** reporting to capture discrimination/Race 2023
- Active **IEN forum** to support career progression and tackle workplace issues
- **Board Statement and Anti-Racism guides** developed & deployed in 2024

Culture

- **‘Understanding the differences to make a difference!’** -2023
- **UHD ‘Conscious Inclusion’** workshop in collaboration with Dorset ICS in 2024. 3rd module for managers’ induction programme in 2025
- **Living library** - stories like **‘In search of Daffodils’**
- A new UHD behaviour charter is being developed

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Our journey ...

Events

- The '**See ME First**' Campaign launched in June 2023, refreshed with events in April 2025
- **1st and 2nd UHD Cultural celebration** in 2023,2024, and a plan is in progress for the 3rd event on 15th July 2025
- **Annual Black History** celebration across different departments

Leadership

- **Listening events** for Diverse Ethnicity Network and International Doctors' Network
- Listening events during **civil unrest** in July 2024 by the CEO/CPO
- **Reverse Mentoring programme**- 3rd cohort completed
- Referrals and mediation requests from HR

Improvements

- UHD received the **NHS Pastoral Care Quality award** for best practice in 2024
- **EDS** from Developing to **Achieving in 2024-2025**
- Consistent improvement in WRES & WDES bullying and harassment data

People should “not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character”

Martin Luther King Jr
- August 1963



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See ME First



#UHDSeeMEFirst

What is it?

See ME First is a staff-led initiative to promote equality, diversity, and inclusivity. It requires colleagues to challenge and work together towards ending racism and discrimination in the workplace.

The initiative aims to change our organisation's culture, creating a more inclusive, open, and non-judgmental work environment where all staff are treated with dignity and respect.




Will you pledge to support any colleagues who experience discrimination?

The See ME First initiative was first launched in October 2020 by Whittington Health NHS Trust.



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What can YOU do?

- **LISTEN**  Listen non-judgementally, be an open ear for any colleagues experiencing racism or discrimination and who may need advice or information for support.
- **SPEAK UP**  Speak up and encourage others to also do so using the UHD channels.
- **SUPPORT**  Support colleagues by learning from each other's cultures and being aware of where to signpost.
- **CHALLENGE**  Challenge where you observe inappropriate behaviour linked to racism and discrimination, if safe to do so. Foster a culture where all experiences, skills and ideas are valued.



See ME First

As part of my commitment to wearing the See Me First badge, I pledge to...

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Online pledge form - [See ME First pledge form](#)

Where are we now?

Through our Patient First methodology, we have identified one key objective for UHD. Our new equality objective for 2024 – 2026 will be:

To have a representative workforce at all levels of the Trust.

As outlined in our One Team EDI Plan, to achieve this we will:

- Strengthen our staff networks to work more closely with the UHD strategic needs and provide project support for engagement activity
- Introduce clear guidance and requirements relating to inclusive recruitment with support from our Dorset Partners and our UHD Recruitment Team
- Develop a one-stop shop approach to accessing reasonable adjustments
- Increase cultural awareness and reduce prejudice through the introduction of Conscious Inclusion workshops

Governance – EDI centre to our core work

- Community of Practice – Staff Network Leads
- People and Culture Committee and Board
- Culture Steering Group



Any questions/suggestions



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Equality, Diversity & Human Rights Week 2025 19-23 May

#EQW2025



What's happening during #EQW2025?

Monday 19 May - Neurodiversity

Published a new guide on embracing neurodiversity in the workplace

Tuesday 20 May – Tackling bullying and harassment in the NHS

Access our EQW webpage to find more resources on this topic

Wednesday 21 May – Celebrating cultural diversity

- Watch out for a new blog on cultural diversity
- Applications open for our Diversity in Health and Care Partners Programme 2025/26 and Tackling Inequalities Leadership Programme

Thursday 22 May – Navigating EDI legal changes

Join our webinar with legal experts Capsticks, taking place 10:30-11:30am

Friday 23 May – Sexual safety

Access guidance and resources to help you support your workforce