

Everyone's welcome

Our anti-racism action plan



Welcome

At Action for Children, we want everyone to feel safe, happy and included.

We're passionate about creating an inclusive organisation where we celebrate diversity and difference, and empower all colleagues to reach their full potential. We want the communities we support to be fully represented within our workforce, and to challenge anything that goes against these aims.

Inclusion has been at the heart of Action for Children since the charity was founded by the Reverend Thomas Bowman Stephenson in 1869. However, the events of 2020, including the Black Lives Matter protests, put a fresh spotlight on the urgent work that still needs to be done to address structural racism and injustice around the world. For Action for Children, this meant looking closely at our world too. It was clear that we needed to fully commit to becoming an anti-racist organisation, to reassess our charity from every angle, and commit to real change at all levels and across all areas of the organisation. Anti-racism is now a priority and is one of three pillars of our diversity and inclusion strategy.



In 2020-21, there was more discussion about diversity and inclusion at Action for Children than ever before. These conversations are driving actions, including the creation of our anti-racism action plan. The plan was jointly devised by our **Breakthrough Network** (our racial diversity and inclusion staff network) and our Executive Leadership Team, in consultation with directors and trustees and with input from external diversity consultants.

Left: Our diversity and inclusion strategy has three pillars

What does anti-racism mean?

To eliminate racism, we all need to be proactive and do our bit to help deliver real change. This includes fully embracing the actions in this plan, challenging problematic behaviours and joining our **Breakthrough Network**. As well as continuing to have important conversations with each other that will inspire change. We can build inclusive practice into everything we do through safe and open discussions. Together we can use this plan to make things better for the Action for Children family – this includes our staff and volunteers, along with the children and families we support.



Language: Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic

Throughout this plan we're using the term '*Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic*' instead of the acronym '*BAME*' which we have used in previous documents.

Terminology and acronyms that are often used to describe a group of people, based on their characteristic, can be extremely damaging. Often they're used to describe a very diverse group of people who may only have the discrimination they encounter in common.

There are UK-wide debates taking place about the most appropriate terms to use, with lots of different views. We consulted with **Breakthrough Network** and other Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff and listened to their preference.

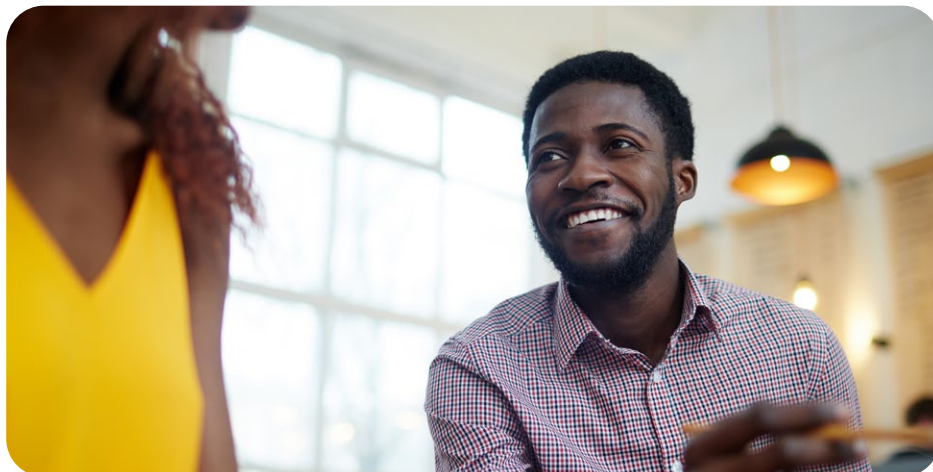
Based on their feedback we've decided to use '*Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic*' in all our communications, and no longer use the acronym '*BAME*'. We'd like you to please use Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic in your communications going forward too.

What's at the heart of the plan?

Some of the actions are ambitious and will take a long time to see meaningful change. We will prioritise actions that need urgent attention and those that will have the biggest positive impact on our workforce and our vision of *safe and happy childhoods*.

Over the next two years we aim to become:

- An organisation which is demonstrably anti-racist
- An organisation which challenges and eradicates structural racism, racist practice, and non-inclusive behaviours
- An organisation which actively seeks to further inclusive practice, behaviours and outcomes



To do this, we'll focus on four key areas (pillars):



- 1. Our organisation**
Eliminating structural racism which will include reviewing our critical policies and procedures.

- 2. Our people**
Working to become a fully inclusive employer of both current and future staff.



- 3. Our culture**
Driving inclusion across our workplace culture, focusing on the way we treat each other and our organisational work plan.

- 4. Our commitment**
Taking a stand against racism, both inside and outside of Action for Children.



What to expect

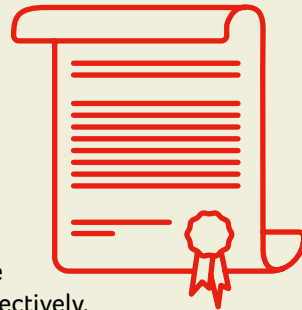
We've already begun making changes that help us become an anti-racist organisation, and below is a summary of some of the changes you can expect in each area.

These are on top of the action and activities that each nation or department wants to take. Some of these actions can happen relatively quickly, such as reviewing policies and procedures, but some will take longer to get off the ground.

Actions we all need to take:

Our organisation

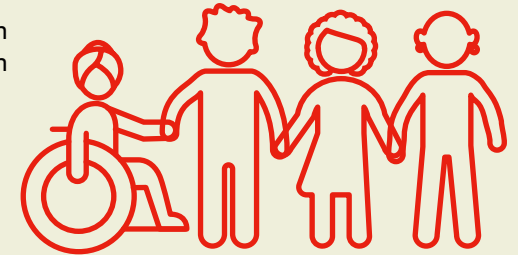
- As well as shaping an organisation-wide plan, we are asking all departments to put in place a local action plan.
- We will be reviewing our organisation's critical policies, guidance and procedures to ensure they support our aims, which includes our Dignity at Work Policy.
- Line Managers will have new guidance and receive diversity training to better support their teams effectively.
- We will continue to report on the progress of our anti-racism action plan.



Our people

- By moving our recruitment service in house, we will have greater control over how our recruitment practice can further our aim of increasing the diversity of our workforce. We've already identified immediate changes that we want to test out this year, including a training programme for line managers.

- We will improve the way we collect and monitor key staff data, so we can identify areas for improvement much more quickly.
- We will ensure our learning and development is fully inclusive of all our staff to help us retain staff and develop greater diversity across management and leadership teams.
- There will be more opportunities to engage with staff-led events, where we can come together to achieve our aims.
- We aspire to increase our workforce diversity, specifically for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff to 8% by 2022, with a target to represent the UK working population (14%) by 2025.



Our culture

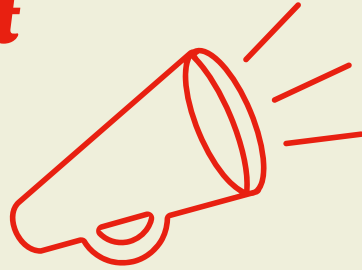
- We've already begun the process of reviewing our informal and formal processes to ensure there are no barriers to reporting inappropriate behaviour.
- We want to educate and raise awareness to staff, volunteers and trustees on how to become an anti-racist organisation. This has already begun with anti-racism training for trustee members and one of our trustee roles has responsibility for Diversity and Inclusion.
- We will continue to carry out regular engagement with staff and volunteers to assess how they feel within the organisation.
- We want to promote an inclusive culture where everyone can be their authentic selves by raising awareness, promoting a broad range of activities, and planning events.



What to expect cont...

Our commitment

- We will stand up to racism. We will help lift barriers by ensuring there is zero tolerance to racism in the workplace and actively inspiring all staff to take responsibility. We will listen to our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff, children and young people to learn and take action to challenge and eradicate structural racism.
- We will ensure our staff and service users understand what being anti-racist means, including by supporting them with anti-racism resources.
- We will be transparent and share our plans externally, with the hope that we can inspire others to play their part in eradicating racism.
- We will speak out publicly against racism, especially where it affects children and young people, as we did in response to the racism shown to the black members of the English football team.
- We will proactively reach into diverse communities to broaden our supporter base.



Here are some of the ways we're standing up against racism.

- **Black lives matter, black childhoods matter**
- **Action for Children's statement of intent on race equity**
- **Action For Children Statement on George Floyd Anniversary**





How will we know our plan is working?

We will fully evaluate the first year's results so we can modify our actions - or introduce new ones - to increase our plan's efficacy.

We will review our data along the way, and seek feedback from a range of staff, encouraging everybody to share their opinions. Please send your comments or ideas to: carys.jenkins@actionforchildren.org.uk

All our learnings will be used to develop the second year of the plan.

Let's all play our part!

This is a pivotal time at Action for Children – one where we can all work together to make real change, as we strive to become an organisation which is truly anti-racist and is even more effective in its vision to ensure safe and happy childhoods.





Safe and happy childhood



Action for Children protects and supports children and young people, providing practical and emotional care and support, ensuring their voices are heard, and campaigning to bring lasting improvements to their lives.

Action for Children

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