



Race equity in health and care: Tackling the 'causes of the causes'

Prof Habib Naqvi
Chief Executive

WHAT IS THE NHS RACE AND HEALTH OBSERVATORY?



ETHNIC HEALTH INEQUALITIES IN THE UK



BLACK WOMEN ARE
4x MORE LIKELY
THAN WHITE

women to **DIE** in **PREGNANCY**
or childbirth in the UK.

Ref: <https://bit.ly/3ihDwcN>



IN BRITAIN,
SOUTH ASIANS HAVE A
40% HIGHER
DEATH RATE

from **CHD** than the
general population.

Ref: <https://bit.ly/3iifo9V>



24% OF ALL DEATHS
IN ENGLAND &
WALES, IN 2019,

were caused by **CARDIO
VASCULAR DISEASE** in Black
and minority ethnic groups.

Ref: <https://bit.ly/3CYz22P>



SOUTH ASIAN &
BLACK PEOPLE ARE
2-4x MORE LIKELY
TO DEVELOP

Type 2 diabetes than white people.

Ref: <https://bit.ly/3ulDy88>



BLACK AND
MINORITY
ETHNIC PEOPLE
HAVE UP TO

2x

the mortality risk from
COVID-19 than people from a
WHITE BRITISH BACKGROUND.

Ref: <https://bit.ly/3EZS2Qd>

ESTIMATES OF DISABILITY-FREE
LIFE EXPECTANCY ARE

10 YEARS

LOWER FOR BANGLADESHI MEN
living in England compared to their
White British counterparts.

Ref: <https://bit.ly/3urjmlt>



BLACK AFRICAN AND
BLACK CARIBBEAN
PEOPLE ARE OVER

8x

more likely to be subjected to
**COMMUNITY TREATMENT
ORDERS** than White people.

Ref: <https://bit.ly/3zK5lJL>



CONSENT RATES
FOR ORGAN
DONATION ARE AT **42%**

for Black and minority ethnic
communities and **71% FOR
WHITE ELIGIBLE DONORS**.

Ref: <https://bit.ly/3ogH3fm>



ACROSS THE COUNTRY,
FEWER THAN

5% OF BLOOD
DONORS

are from **BLACK AND MINORITY
ETHNIC** communities.

Ref: <https://bit.ly/3ulg17r>

IN THE UK,
AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN
MEN ARE UP TO

3x

more likely to **DEVELOP
PROSTATE CANCER** than
white men of the same age.

Ref: <https://bit.ly/39KWqEs>

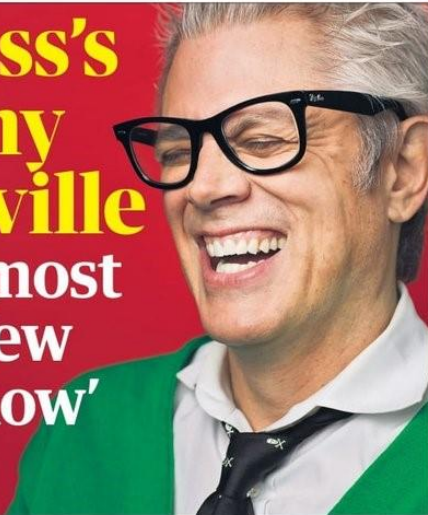


**NHS
RACE & HEALTH
OBSERVATORY**

RHO rapid evidence review

- Our review found experiences of racism on both health and healthcare inequalities is profound.
- Evidence suggested clear barriers to seeking help for mental health problems rooted in a distrust of both primary care and mental health care providers, as well as a fear of being discriminated against in healthcare.
- In maternity, a consistent theme was women's experiences of negative interactions, stereotyping, disrespect, discrimination and cultural insensitivity.
- The review found that ethnic minority people are not well represented in medical research and clinical trials.
- **The review found evidence of NHS ethnic minority staff enduring racist abuse from other staff and patients – this was particularly stark for Black groups.**





**Jackass's
Johnny
Knoxville**
'I've almost
died a few
times now'
→ G2

**How to put the fizz back
into your relationship** → G2



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Damning race report reveals vast inequalities across health service

Exclusive Call for radical action after review finds gross failings in the NHS

Andrew Gregory
Health editor

Radical action is needed urgently to tackle "overwhelming" minority ethnic health inequalities in the NHS, leading experts have said, after a damning study found the "vast" and "widespread" inequity in every aspect of healthcare it reviewed was

harming the health of millions of patients.

Racism, racial discrimination, barriers to accessing healthcare and woeful ethnicity data collection have "negatively impacted" the health of black, Asian and minority ethnic people in England for years, according to the review, commissioned by the NHS Race and Health Observatory, which reveals the true scale of health inequalities faced by ethnic minorities for the first time.

"Ethnic inequalities in health outcomes are evident at every stage throughout the life course, from birth to death," says the review,

the largest of its kind. Yet despite "clear", "convincing" and "persistent" evidence that ethnic minorities are being failed, and repeated pledges of action, no "significant change" has yet been made in the NHS, it adds.

The 166-page report, seen by the Guardian, is due to be published in full this week.

From mental health to maternity care, the sweeping review led by the University of Manchester paints a devastating picture of a healthcare system still failing minority ethnic patients despite concerns previously raised about the harm being caused.

"By drawing together the evidence,

**'Inequalities are
evident at every stage
from birth to death'**

**The findings in the 166-page
NHS race and health review**

and plugging the gaps where we find them, we have made a clear and overwhelming case for radical action on race inequity in our healthcare system," said Habib Naqvi, the director of the NHS Race and Health Observatory, an independent body

established by the NHS in 2020 to investigate health inequalities in England.

The Covid pandemic has taken a disproportionate toll on ethnic minorities, prompting fresh questions about inequalities that permeate the practice of medicine. The observatory ordered the review last year to synthesise the evidence, translate it into "actionable policy" and "challenge leaders to act".

Naqvi said: "This report is the first of its kind to analyse the overwhelming evidence of ethnic health inequality through the lens of racism."



THE RHO'S MODEL OF RACISM



Structural racism

- Socio-economic context
- Resource distribution and access.
- Legislation.
- Education.
- Employment.
- Cultural denigration



Institutional racism

- Policies.
- Practice.



Interpersonal racism

- Cultural assumptions.
- Behaviours.
- Stigma.
- Trauma.

The Cost of Inaction



EVERY YEAR

Health inequalities cost the NHS

£5.5 billion



**ESTIMATED
SAVINGS OF**

**£100
billion**

If racial health
disparities were eliminated.



30%

Of NHS staff are from Black, Asian, or
ethnic minority backgrounds



THE COST OF RACISM

How ethnic health inequalities
are standing in the way of growth



SAVINGS OF

£100 million

In mental health care if equitable care
were provided to Black individuals



Staff engagement leads to
better patient outcomes



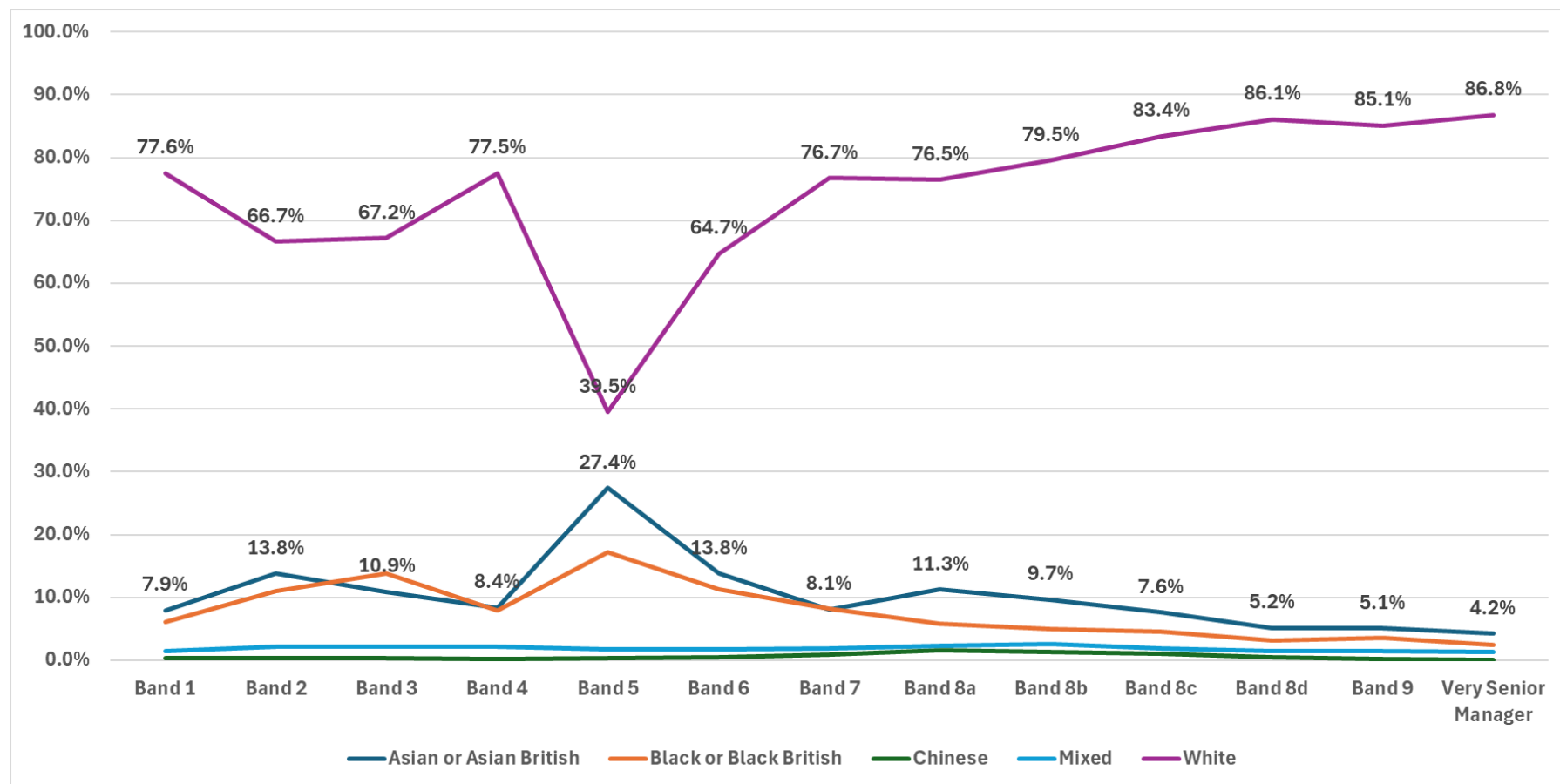
NHS workforce: Trend over time

	All ethnic groups	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British	Chinese	Mixed	White	Any Other Ethnic Group	Not Stated	Unknown
Sep-15	1151138	94741	59729	5956	16120	902622	21215	41898	8857
Mar-25	1544417	227125	145281	10412	35228	1014772	51864	45143	14592
Headcount increase	393279	132384	85552	4456	19108	112150	30649	3245	5735
% increase	34.2%	139.7%	143.2%	74.8%	118.5%	12.4%	144.5%	7.7%	64.8%

- There were 272,149 more ethnic minority staff in March 2025 compared to September 2015
- In 2015 ethnic minority staff made up 17.2% of the NHS workforce, today that figure is 30.4%



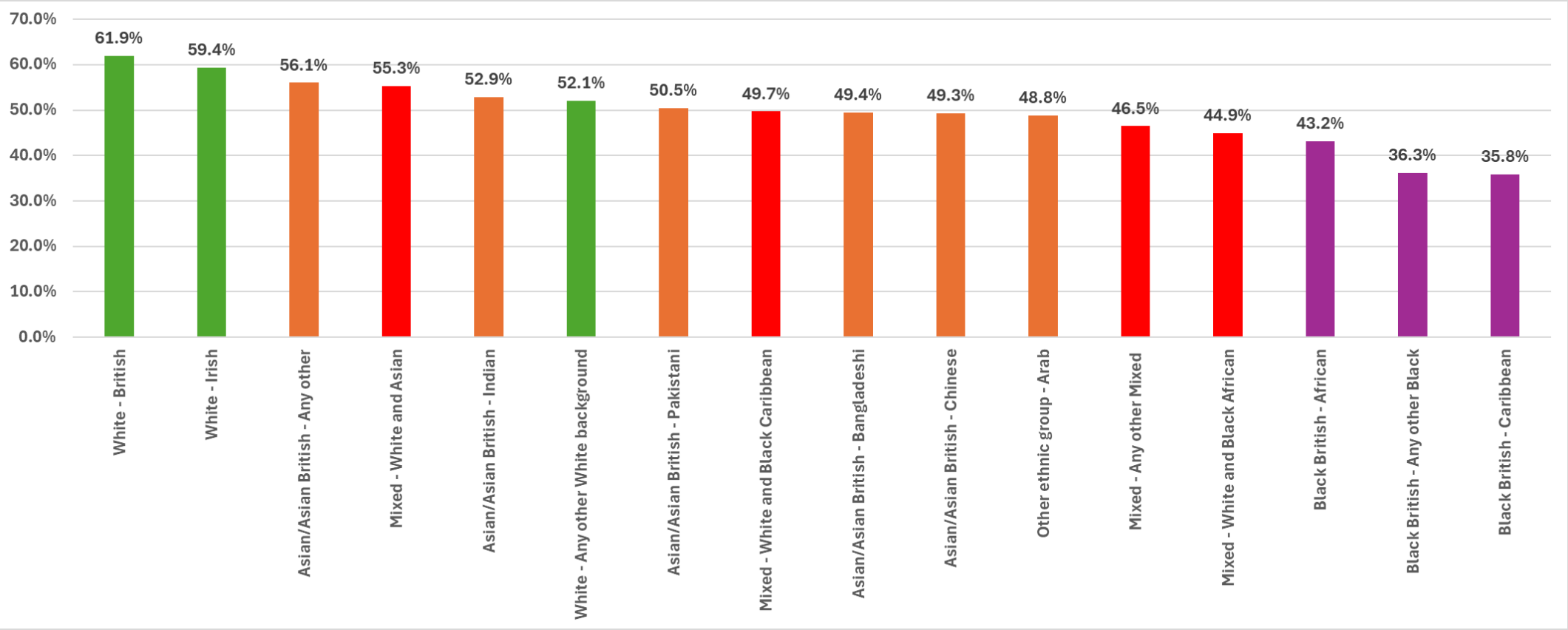
Ethnicity of NHS staff by pay bands March 2025



- The higher you go up the AfC pay bands, the lower the proportion of staff from an ethnic minority background.

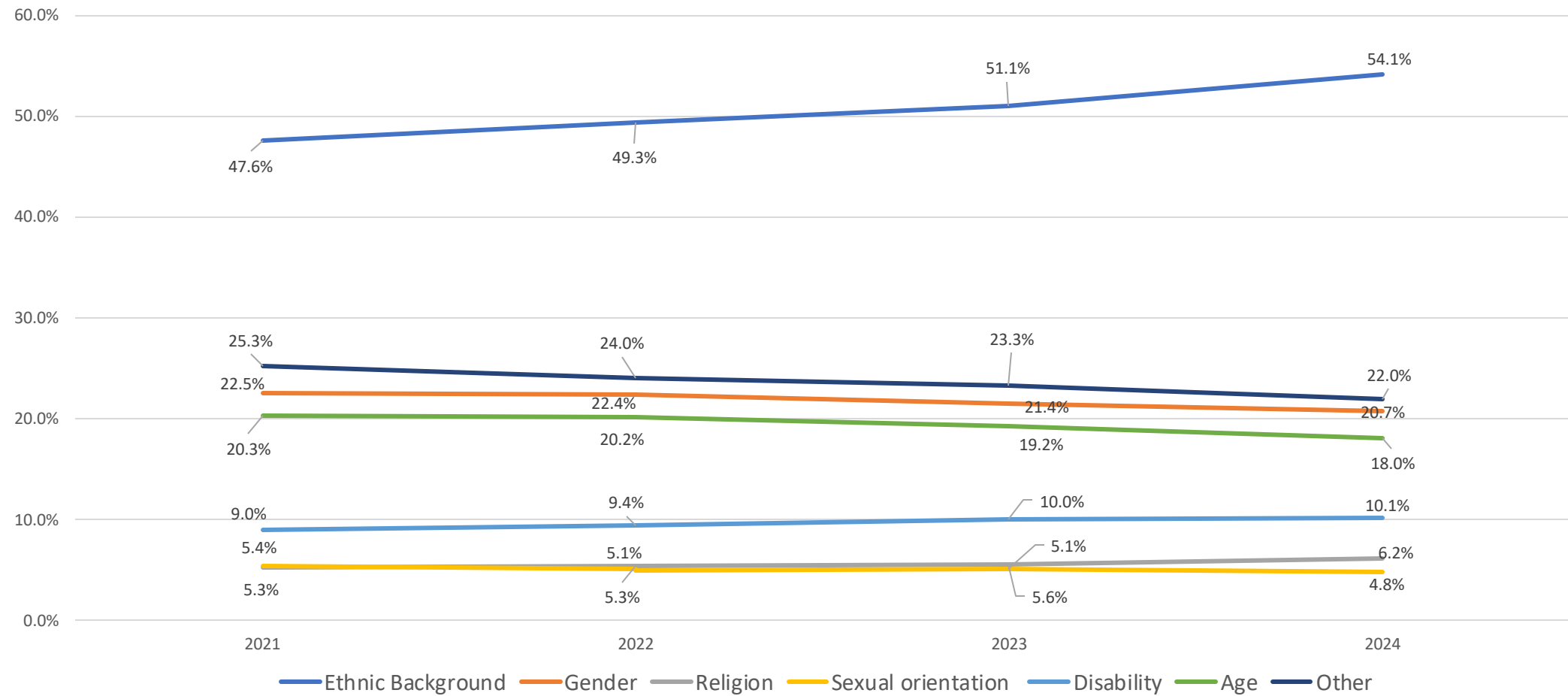
2024/25 NHS Staff Survey: Nurses

Question 15: Does your organisation act fairly with regard to career progression / promotion, regardless of ethnic background, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability or age?



2024/5 NHS Staff Survey: Q16c ‘In the last 12 months, what were the perceived reasons for discrimination at work?’

National-level findings from staff who indicated they had experienced discrimination (respondents could select more than one reason).



Source data: NHS National Staff Survey findings published 2025 (www.nhsstaffsurveys.com)

What can leaders do?

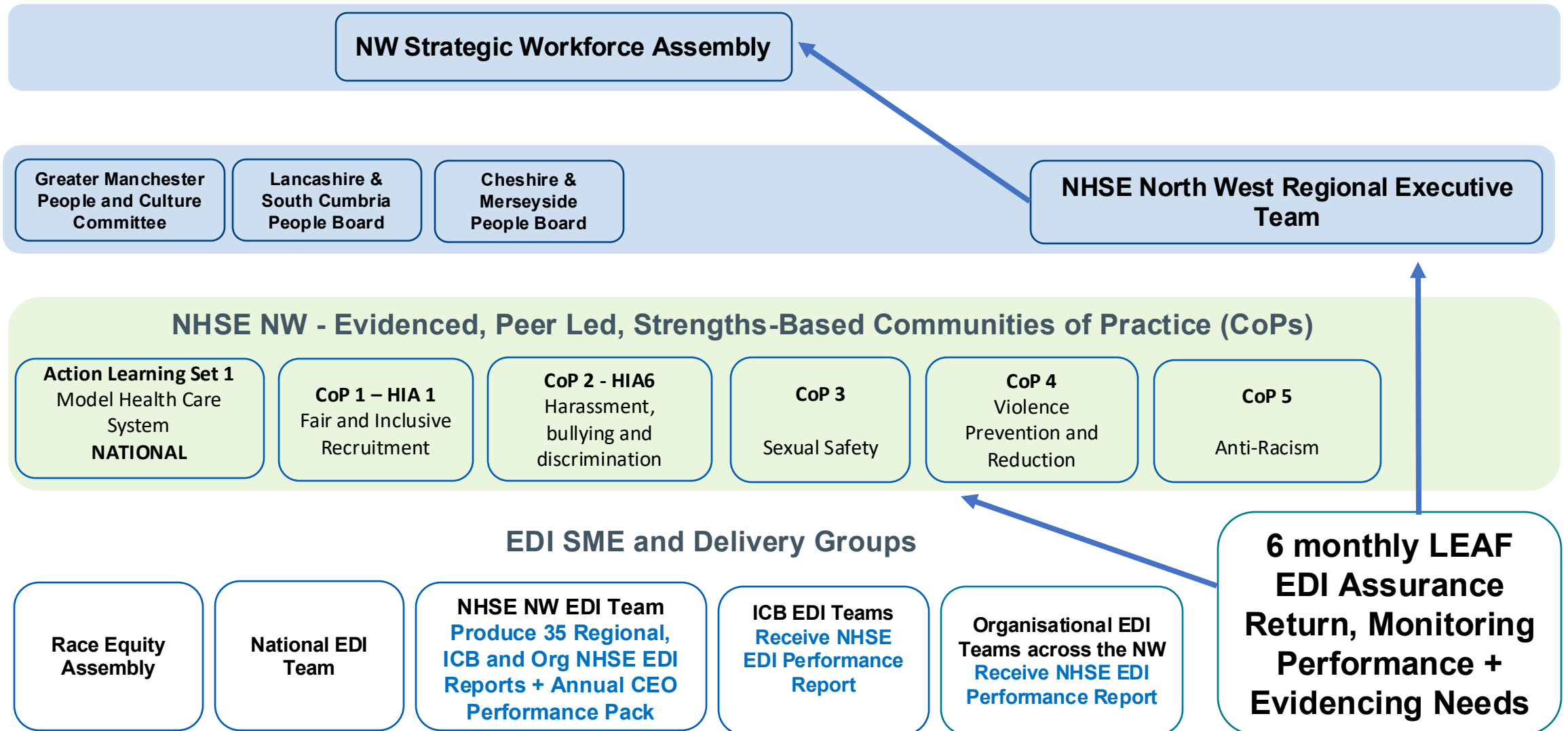
- Demonstrable leadership
- Evidence-driven accountability
- Sustained and meaningful engagement
- Robust data collection and usage
- Identifying and eliminating bias in policies and processes
- Reflection, evaluation and continuous improvement



NHSE NW EDI Governance and Best Practice Leadership Equality Assurance Framework (LEAF) 2026



NW FUTURES EDI WEBSITE



RHO 7 ANTI-RACISM PRINCIPLES



TOWARDS RACIAL AND ETHNIC EQUITY WITHIN NHS ORGANISATIONS

1 NAME RACISM

- Name racism explicitly and consistently to advance race equity across all staff and at all levels of the organisation
- Actively commit to sustained and multi-level work to address racism and its root causes establishing commitment on the agenda from all leaders and staff
- Articulate the evidence-base for the "why" and the "how" when it comes to tackling race inequality and promoting inclusion

2 DEMONSTRATE LEADERSHIP

- Embed equity into organisational governance, performance management, strategy, and everyday decision making
- Model the behaviours and actions that we expect from others, and have clear leadership accountability for developing work to tackle racism and advance equity
- Inspire a clear, equity-focused vision for equity – reinforce innovation, reward progress and celebrate success

3 FOCUS ON DATA AND EVIDENCE

- Strengthen the collection and use of data to generate insights and strategies to drive targeted, evidence-based action
- Enable assessment of the extent and impacts of racism and the effectiveness of work to address racism
- Focus on evaluation for continuous learning and development of interventions to tackle inequality

4 VALUE LIVED EXPERIENCE INSIGHT

- Listen to staff who experience racism and act upon what is heard
- Co-design and co-produce work with staff and centre focus on their experiences
- Balance technology and innovation with human insight and cultural context

7 PROMOTE WELL-BEING AND CULTURAL SAFETY

- Empower staff to achieve and maintain working environments where "everyone counts"
- Understand structural, institutional and inter-personal racism and other forms of discrimination through impactful education and learning approaches
- Promote evidence-based, culturally sensitive and safe approaches to staff health and well-being within the workplace

6 FOSTER TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- Set specific, measurable and timely indicators for work on addressing racism
- Evaluate and report on the impact of work to hold individual staff, and the organisation, to account for achieving measurable progress
- Foster 'do or explain' approach for decision-making, based upon evidence-based interventions

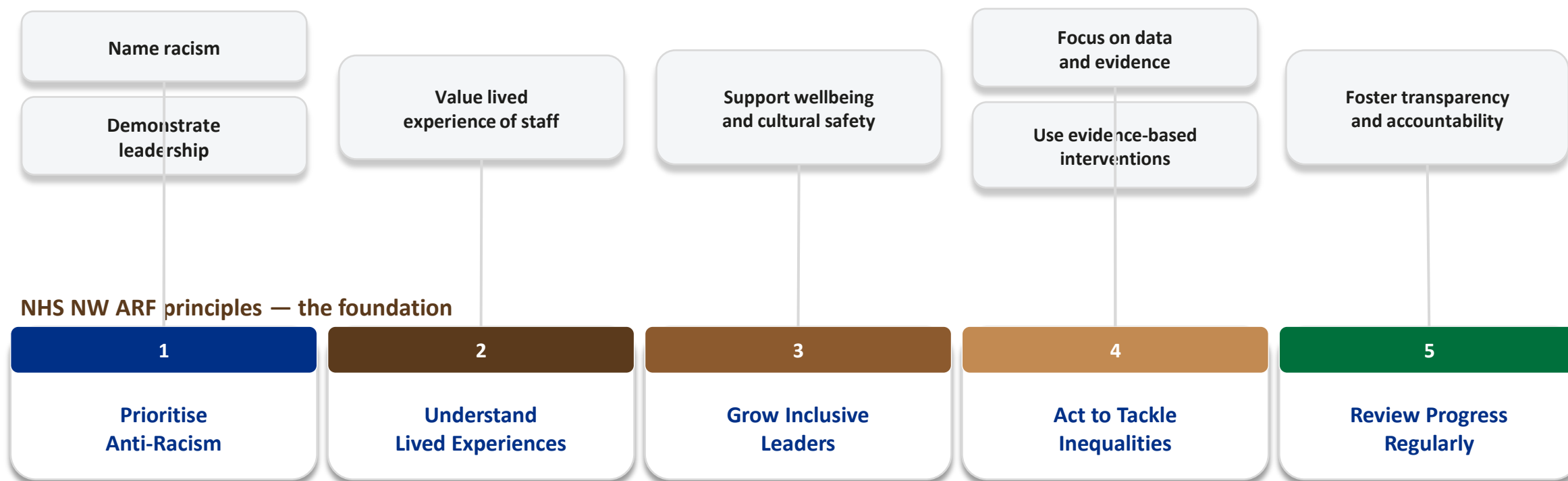
5 USE EVIDENCE-BASED INTERVENTIONS

- Consider how racism intersects with other inequalities and with health inequalities throughout work to address racism
- Develop emotionally resonant communication strategies that support structural understanding of racism and discrimination
- Support continuous improvement in performance and share replicable good practice, within and beyond the organisation

HOW THE 5 ARF PRINCIPLES DELIVER THE 7 NHSRHO PRINCIPLES

Using the five NHS NW Anti-Racist Framework principles as the foundation enables organisations to meet all seven NHSRHO anti-racist workforce principles.

NHSRHO anti-racist workforce principles



The Lord Mann Report



Independent report

Lord Mann review of antisemitism and other forms of racism in the NHS and healthcare regulatory system

Published 4 June 2026



- **Recommendation 1:** the Department of Health and Social Care and the NHS should adopt the 7 NHS Race and Health Observatory workforce principles and encourage wider NHS organisations to do so.
- **Recommendation 6:** NHS England should work with system partners, such as the NHS Race and Health Observatory, to strengthen how it supports and celebrates organisations that make positive progress in the anti-racism agenda.
- **Recommendation 7:** all NHS board members and senior leaders should have explicit, measurable equality, diversity and inclusion objectives embedded within their performance goals. Assessment against these objectives should reference the themes in the NHS Race and Health Observatory's 7 anti-racism principles as a framework for evidencing delivery.

Home > News > Health and social care regulators sign up to new anti-racism principles

Health and social care regulators sign up to new anti-racism principles



- **Recommendation 22:** on 13 May 2026 the national UK health and care professional regulators signed up to the NHS Race and Health Observatory principles of antiracism to help tackle racism. Each regulator should report back within 6 months of the publication of this report on how they propose applying and embedding these principles.



NHS Staff Standard on Tackling Racism



Guidance

NHS staff standards: detailed requirements for employers

Published 6 July 2026



- [The NHS Race and Health Observatory's 7 anti-racism principles](#) underpin the development of this staff standard in the NHS by providing a foundation for leaders to develop local action and/or plans that exemplify these.
- Enable systemwide collaboration and shared learning, requiring all organisations to contribute to a consistent national approach and benefit from collective intelligence, data, and interventions, building on the collaborative working principle within the [Race and Health Observatory's anti-racism principles](#)

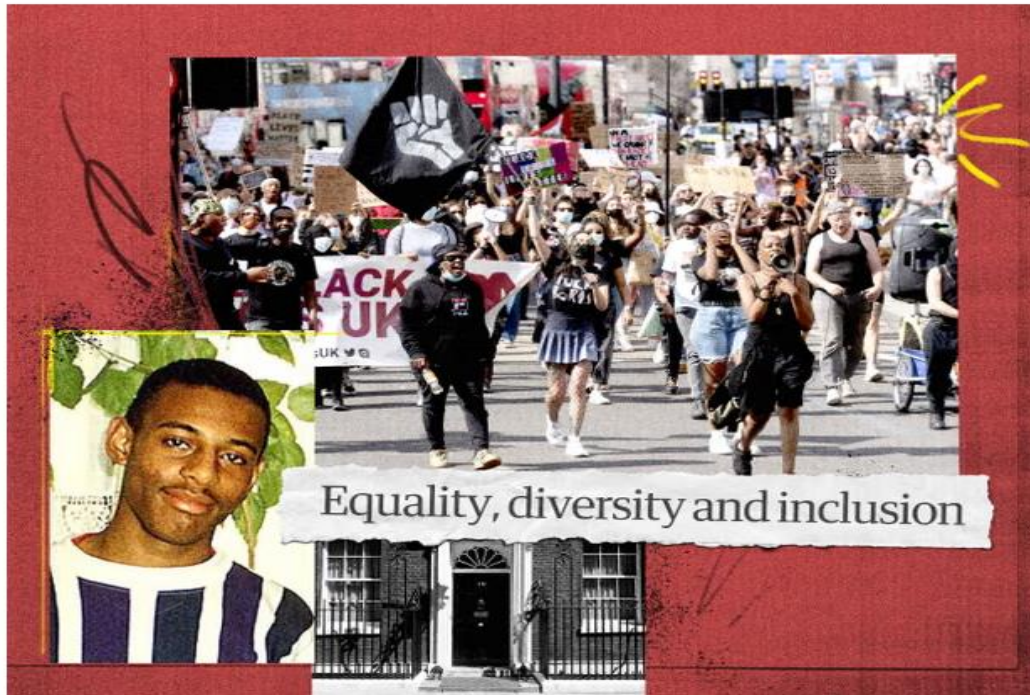


Implementation

Only a third of recommendations to tackle endemic racism in UK implemented

Guardian analysis exposes lack of action taken despite major reports published over the past 40 years

- **Five years on from Black Lives Matter, has the UK made progress on ethnic equalities?**



- Commit to implement organisational and national recommendations, plans, strategies



Implementation

- Timescales – As long as it takes, this is a journey and not necessarily a sprint
- Communication – Use all the same communications routes, media and tools you use to spread key messages in the organisation
- Measuring outcomes – Set ambitions and meaningful targets from the onset
- The RHO community of learning pilot – Join the journey...



RHO Health Action Resource Platform



[Data Platform](#) [Focus Areas](#) [FAQ](#) [Resources](#) [About](#) [Contact](#) [Search](#)

Driving **racial equity** in health and care

Developed by the NHS Race and Health Observatory (RHO), the Health Action Resource Platform (HARP) allows users to explore NHS performance data broken down by ethnicity across regions, systems, or providers. It aims to illustrate racial inequalities in health through data visualisation in an attempt to drive action in both policy and practice.

[Learn More](#)

Cardiovascular

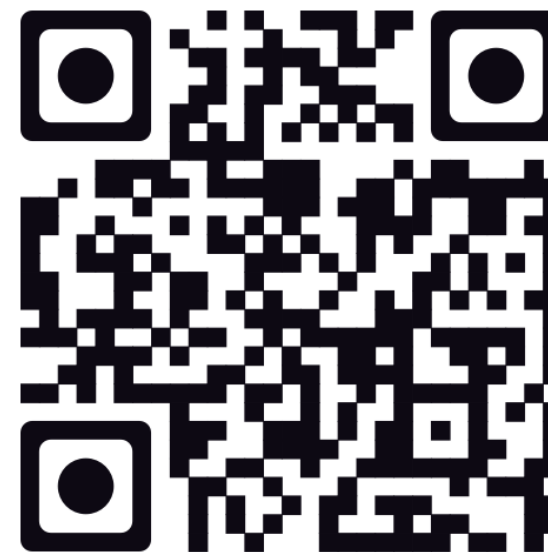
In 2023, 26% of all deaths in the UK were caused by cardiovascular disease in Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups.

Mental Health

Between 2021 and 2022 Black people were almost 5 times more likely than White people to be detained under the Mental Health Act.

Cancer

In the UK, African and Caribbean men are up to 3x more likely to develop prostate cancer than White men of the same age



Race and Health Matters

- NHS RHO podcast series launched June 2026
- Series One hosted by Dr Guddi Singh
- Available on:
 - YouTube (@nhsraceandhealthobservatory)
 - Spotify
 - Apple Podcasts



Compassionate leadership: Being comfortable with the uncomfortable





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