

# DIVERSITY IN NHS LEADERSHIP

## White allyship

With only 4% of trusts responding to an NHS Providers survey saying they have fully embedded race equality, we know how much more progress is needed to truly tackle the impact of racial injustice. This includes addressing the double burden still faced by ethnic minority leaders who both experience discrimination whilst also feeling pressure to lead on race.

Real change requires race equality to be championed by all chairs and chief executives, with all board members taking shared responsibility and seeing this as a core part of their role.

We have heard across our membership that the biggest steps forward are made when white board members are active white allies. When they take the lead in educating themselves on race, foster a culture where people can talk openly about their experience, focus on personal values and behaviours, and challenge discrimination as a priority.



*“For me, white allyship is really about making things happen and doing things myself. Being out there front and centre and calling it out personally if I need to. It’s the difference between being someone who comments and someone who does.”*

KATH LAVERY, CHAIR  
YORKSHIRE AMBULANCE SERVICE NHS TRUST



*“Important components of white allyship for me are listening to hear, not just listening. It’s about actually doing something. And it’s about education. It’s certainly led me to do a lot more reading on the subject matter to make sure I understand it better.”*

STEVE ERKSINE, CHAIR  
HAMPSHIRE HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

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## Questions for white allies

A key element of our race equality programme is focussed on equipping boards to ask challenging questions of themselves and each other, to encourage self-reflection, continuous education and catalyse action.

- 1 What does white allyship mean to you?
- 2 What is your understanding of white privilege and how it impacts your experience of the world?
- 3 When was the last time you initiated a discussion on race and racism in your trust?
- 4 How do you support your ethnic minority leaders?
- 5 How have you ensured your board is embedding anti-racism as part of its core business?
- 6 How do you hold yourself and colleagues on your board to account on progress against your commitments on race equality?
- 7 How have you sought to deepen your understanding of racism and allyship through your own self-learning?
- 8 When were you last challenged on your views on race equality? What feelings did this evoke and how did you respond?
- 9 Would you challenge a board colleague about something they said that was racist? If not what would prevent you from doing this?
- 10 How have you used your white privilege to challenge the processes and structures that perpetuate racism?

## Further information

Our race equality programme supports boards to effectively identify and challenge race inequality as a core part of the board's business by:

- building personal awareness and understanding of racial justice and anti-racism
- increasing confidence and capability to proactively challenge the impact of structural racism and seek out opportunities to advance race equality
- sharing learning on accountability mechanisms to ensure progress is made and sustained with a focus on outcomes.

For further details about our race equality programme, as well as details of upcoming events and resources, please visit [nhsproviders.org/programmes/race-equality](https://www.nhsproviders.org/programmes/race-equality) or contact [asmina.islamchowdhury@nhsproviders.org](mailto:asmina.islamchowdhury@nhsproviders.org)