



The London Workforce Race Equality Strategy in Primary Care



Skyline by Michael Tompsett

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Endorsements

Lizzie Smith

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The first ever pan-London survey of the primary care workforce has allowed people to share difficult, painful experiences. More than half of the respondents had personally experienced discrimination. For many the discrimination was not overt, but subtle and underhand, such as frequent microaggressions culminating in a hostile work environment.

The survey tells us that most of these experiences go unreported, and only 1 in 10 of those who had raised a concern felt that it was dealt with well. It now rests with us all to act on what we have learned.

The London Workforce Race Strategy (LWRS) in Primary Care lays out initiatives to address racial discrimination and harassment in Primary Care. We will continue to invest in this work in HEE (Health Education England) but recognise for the work to succeed there will need to be a huge amount of engagement with a broad range of stakeholders.

We are working to address health inequalities for patients and create services that are free from discrimination, yet we continue to tolerate a working environment where many regularly endure the effects of racism. We ask ourselves why attrition from the workforce is high and continue to invest heavily in training and recruiting staff, but do not tackle the issues which are driving people out.

We need to get smarter about what is causing people to leave a job they love and focus on supporting systems to change for the better. We need to show our Primary Care colleagues that we value them and stand alongside them.

Dr Nnenna Osuji

Chair of London Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Steering Group
Chief Executive - North Middlesex University Hospital NHS Trust



Anyone who has read the pan-London Discrimination and Racism in Primary Care survey will have been saddened, like I was, by the experiences of racial discrimination and harassment reported by so many colleagues in primary care.

I am encouraged by the coming together of key stakeholders around a framework for action, initiating programmes to transform the culture in primary care and create environments where colleagues feel supported to speak up, with the confidence that they will be heard.

I commend this strategy and will work with primary care accountable officers in Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) to ensure that employees and their employers receive our full support.

Background

Everyone in the NHS deserves to work in an environment that is safe, welcoming, and free of discrimination. 90 per cent of NHS consultations take place in primary care¹, and, post pandemic, the workforce is under more pressure than ever before. It is essential that we support the workforce because a motivated and valued workforce helps deliver higher quality patient care and more sustainable services². Part of feeling valued is working in a supportive environment free from discrimination and harassment.

The London Primary Care School Workforce Priorities (2020)³ have been jointly agreed between HEE, NHS England (NHSE) and the partners of the Primary Care School Board.

A key priority is to ensure equality and diversity is fully supported in education and workforce development and to implement the London Workforce Race Equality Standard⁴ in primary care; this will be instrumental in providing a better working environment and reducing discrimination for people working in the NHS and have a positive impact on retention, staff wellbeing and patient care.

The London Workforce Race Equality Strategy in Primary Care

The London Workforce Race Strategy in Primary Care Working Group was established in March 2021. Working with regional primary care leaders and stakeholders, the group agreed 8 workstreams from the London Workforce Race Strategy Standards (2020) to implement in Primary Care. These form the basis of the **London Workforce Race Equality Strategy in Primary Care** (table 1) launched in September 2021.

The Strategy was further informed by the first ever London-wide survey of discrimination and harassment in primary care⁵ which provided quantitative evidence of staff experiences as well as asking respondents for their suggestions for changes that they felt would make a difference in primary care. The existing priorities and workstreams were reviewed in the light of the survey findings to ensure that they remain pertinent and to incorporate suggested changes as appropriate.

The London region NHSE and HEE teams are committed to the delivery of this strategy and the underpinning change management approach. The Primary Care Board (NHSE) and Primary Care School Board (HEE) will provide the necessary direction and oversight.

Enabling meaningful cultural change is challenging and takes time and requires collaboration and engagement from all local employers. The London Workforce Race Strategy in Primary Care Working Group will continue to work closely with the Regional EDI Delivery Board, the EDI Reference Group, ICSs, Training Hubs, GP Federations, and local employers as well as national

¹ Primary care - NHS Digital

² <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/We-Are-The-NHS-Action-For-All-Of-Us-FINAL-March-21.pdf>

³ NHS England and NHS Improvement and Health Education England Primary Care Workforce Priorities for London, HEE Primary Care School Board for London, 2020

⁴ London Workforce Race Equality Standards, NHS England and NHS Improvement, 2020, [LWRS.pdf \(mcusercontent.com\)](https://www.mcusercontent.com)

partners, to ensure plans are aligned, and support is provided where needed to ensure maximum impact as well as sustainability of interventions. A post survey pan-London workshop took place in March 2022 to provide system partners the opportunity to respond to the survey and discuss ways to address the suggestions made in it.

Going forward:

Key Aims*	Progress	Next Steps
<p>The London Workforce Race in Primary Care Strategy Working Group will continue to support Training Hubs in the development of the Primary Care Workforce Race Equality Strategy (WRES) Multi-Professional Leadership Networks.</p> <p>Survey Suggestion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe spaces • Standardised policies and protocols 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICS Training Hubs leading on the development of networks • ICS sighted on activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for sustainability • Regional team to continue to provide support and energy to Training Hubs • ICS to support moving forward
<p>Primary Care colleagues will have access to Speak up Guardians and staff networks in all ICS areas.</p> <p>Survey Suggestion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An independent body, task force or group to investigate concerns raised and support workers to speak up • Safe spaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICS Training Hubs leading on Speak up Guardians in Primary Care • ICS sighted on activity • Currently, NHSE Primary Care Speak up Guardian programme supporting South East London (SEL) and North East London (NEL) • Further monies to be identified to support work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for sustainability • Link Speak up Guardians to WRES Multi-Professional Leadership Networks • Regional team to continue to provide support and energy to Training Hubs • ICS to support moving forward
<p>All primary care colleagues have access to EDI training in all ICS areas.</p> <p>Survey Suggestion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training on diversity and unconscious bias enabling confidence to raise and deal with issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICS Training Hubs leading on training and development for all Primary Care workforce • HEE London Professional Development Team offer of bespoke EDI training for GP trainees and educators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for sustainability • Identify gaps and further training needs • Regional team to continue to provide support and energy to Training Hubs • ICS to support moving forward

⁵ HEE Corporate Website, HEE London, May 2022 [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion | Health Education England \(hee.nhs.uk\)](https://www.hee.nhs.uk/equality-diversity-and-inclusion)

<p>A regional task and finish group will be established to develop the 'Primary Care WRES Gold Standards Framework'.</p> <p>Survey Suggestion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A zero-tolerance campaign and policies • Standardised policies and protocols 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A task and finish group has been established to lead on the development of the framework and identify levers that will support the development of more effective policy, promote cultural change, and serve as a retention and recruitment tool for employers in Primary Care • Trust Midwifery anti-racism framework to be used as model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of framework • London wide Local Medical Committees (LMC) to provide reference group to support work • WRES Champions established in all areas to champion the framework for employers – a voice from local communities to influence local communities. • Communication strategy of framework • Collaboration of system partners and stakeholders to influence and lever success of framework
<p>The London Workforce Race Strategy in Primary Care Working Group will continue to work collaboratively with the Equality and Inclusion Workforce NHS England and NHS Improvement team providing support where needed in relation to the Core Managers Programme, White Allies Programme, WRES Experts Programme, NHS Debias and Selections toolkit as well as programmes to help close the ethnicity gap in relation to disciplinary procedures.</p> <p>Survey Suggestion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A primary care leadership and workforce that reflects the diversity of local communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong relationships with Equality and Inclusion Workforce NHS England and NHS Improvement team • Core Managers Programme, White Allies Programme, and WRES Experts Programme – Primary Care is now sighted • NHS debias toolkit to be made relevant for Primary Care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To connect with NHSE programmes to help close the ethnicity gap in relation to disciplinary procedures • Communication strategy of opportunities developed
<p>The London Workforce Race Strategy in Primary Care Working Group will continue to connect with the LWRS - Nursing and Midwifery Steering Group providing support in development and training opportunities for nurses and Allied Health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong relationships with the NHSE LWRS - Nursing and Midwifery Steering Group • Nursing opportunities in development for General Practice Nursing (GPN) and AHPs in Primary Care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication strategy of opportunities developed • Identify any gaps and further needs

<p>Professions (AHPs) in Primary Care.</p> <p>Survey Suggestion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A primary care leadership and workforce that reflects the diversity of local communities 		
<p>The London Workforce Race Strategy in Primary Care Working Group will work closely with Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) to establish current provision of education and training in undergraduate and postgraduate courses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HEIs have reported back on WRES provision within under/post graduate courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify any needed next steps with HEIs
<p>The London Workforce Race Strategy in Primary Care Working Group will map current provision of EDI networks ensuring workforce and learners have access to networks and will support systems to develop further networks where needed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHSE Transforming Primary Care team are in process of mapping • Currently supporting Local Pharmaceutical Committee to develop network as well as Northeast London • NHSE supporting development of GPN networks in Primary Care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share mapping of networks to systems • Identify gaps and where further support is needed to support development of networks or access for Primary Care colleagues to already existing networks
<p>The London Workforce Race Strategy in Primary Care Working Group will support systems to develop Primary Care WRES Improvement Plans.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong links made with ICS workforce, Primary Care and EDI leads • ICSs sighted on strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICS People Boards to be engaged and strategy shared • System Primary Care WRES Improvement plans to be developed • NHSE Primary Care Board to endorse strategy committing to supporting all workstreams. • Resource requirements to be highlighted to NHSE Primary Care Board.

* Suggestions made in the survey by respondents are highlighted in the first column to reflect how agreed key aims of the strategy address the survey findings.

“The main issue is to listen and support our colleagues as the hurt and offence that we all experience can only be healed by the support we receive from our peers” - a survey respondent.

The impact of interventions will be carefully evaluated, and progress will be monitored by the planned national primary care workforce survey which, like the NHS staff survey used by NHS Trusts, contains questions that will allow us to monitor changes in the experience of discrimination and harassment in the primary care workforce.

We will continue working in partnership with stakeholders and employers in primary and community care, applying the principles of the London Workforce Race Equality Strategy, to build a valued and inclusive primary care workforce in London.

“All NHS staff deserve to work in an environment that is safe, welcoming, and free of discrimination.

90 per cent of all patient consultations take place in primary care. Yet despite over 5 years of NHS WRES data, we do not know what our staff in primary care experience because we have not asked them.”

Dr Navina Evans CBE
Chief Workforce Officer, HEE



Acknowledgements and Stakeholders

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We would like to thank and acknowledge all our stakeholders.

Dr Naureen Bhatti, Primary Care Strategic Lead for WRES and DA, HEE London
Jonathan Sampson, Senior Programme Manager, Transforming Primary Care, NHSE
Sarah Swinfin, Associate Workforce Transformation Lead, HEE London
Carrienne Green, Project Manager, Primary Care School, HEE London
Dr Rachel Roberts Primary Care Dean and Primary School Board Chair, HEE London

Table 1:
London Workforce Race Equality Strategy in Primary Care

Enabling Workstream	WRES Recommendations			
<p>London Workforce Race Strategy in Primary Care Working Group – including HEE, NHSE, Primary Care Networks, Training Hubs, ICS Reps, National Rep, GP Federations, Multi-professional Reps</p>	<p>Cultural Transformation</p>	<p>WRES Multi-professional Leadership Networks</p>	<p>Competency framework and development programme for all core managers, supervisors and line managers</p>	<p>London Nursing Plans</p>
<p>Aligning plans with ICS System</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pan-London Racism and Discrimination survey • Develop system improvement plans • Workforce training and development • Employer incentive – ‘Gold Standards WRES Framework’ • All trainees have access to Black, Asian and minority Ethnic (BAME) networks • Influence under / post graduate training and education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training Hubs to lead and develop • Multi-professional, cross sector and organisational as well as all levels of leadership • Sustainability – cultural transformation and primary care WRES work to sit in networks • Align with ICS plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHSE Core Managers Programme • Primary Care sighted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discipline Agile (DA) toolkit for nursing • Linked in with NHSE WRES Nursing London Plans • Reverse / reciprocal Mentoring
<p>Survey across ICSs to target all clinical and non-clinical workforce – questions regarding bullying and harassment, support, career and solutions – to establish current picture across London</p>	<p>Speak Up Guardians</p>	<p>WRES Experts Programme</p>	<p>Allies Programme</p>	<p>Modernising HR Processes</p>
<p>Development of WRES Multi-professional Leadership Groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHSE programme for Primary Care • Primary Care Speak up Guardians in all ICS areas • Guardians to represent London race demographic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHSE programme • EDI leads • Evaluation to be completed of programme 1 • Primary Care sighted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHSE programme • Senior Leads • Evaluation to be completed of programme 1 • Primary Care sighted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disciplinary referral data collated • Debias NHS toolkit – Primary Care sighted • NHSE Closing the Ethnicity Gap
<p>Establishing employer buy in</p>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch of London WRES Strategy in Primary Care was in 21 September 				