



Discrimination & racism in primary care



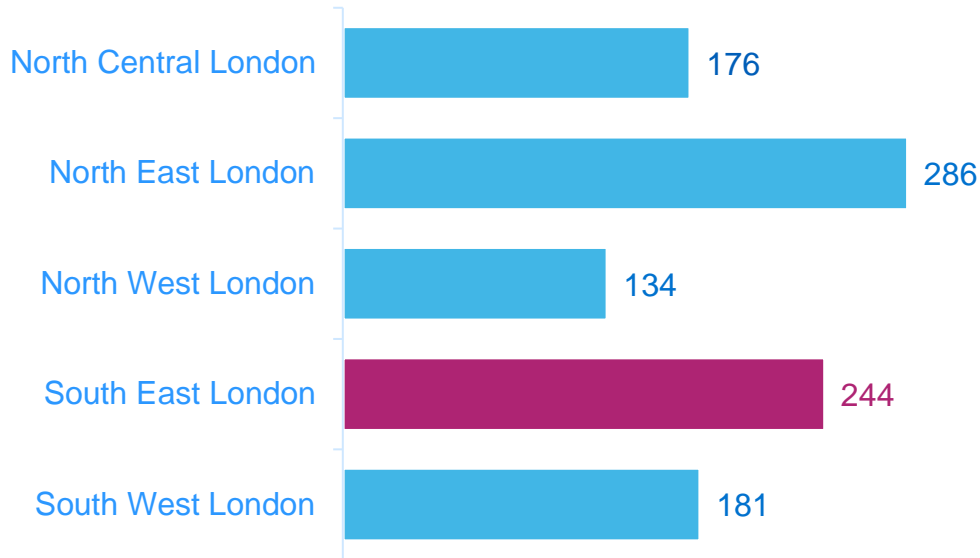
Experiences of primary care staff working in South East London

Pioneering pan-London survey

- All NHS staff deserve to work in an environment that is safe, welcoming and free of discrimination.
- In November/December 2021 all primary care staff in London were invited to complete a short anonymous online survey to say whether or not they had experienced discrimination at work over the past 12 months.
- The survey was advertised in meetings, newsletters, social media, mailing lists and through HEE, NHSEI, Primary Care School, LMC, LPC, LDC, ICSs, PCNs, Training Hubs, EDI leads, PM Fora and networks.
- **This document sets out the feedback from South East London.**

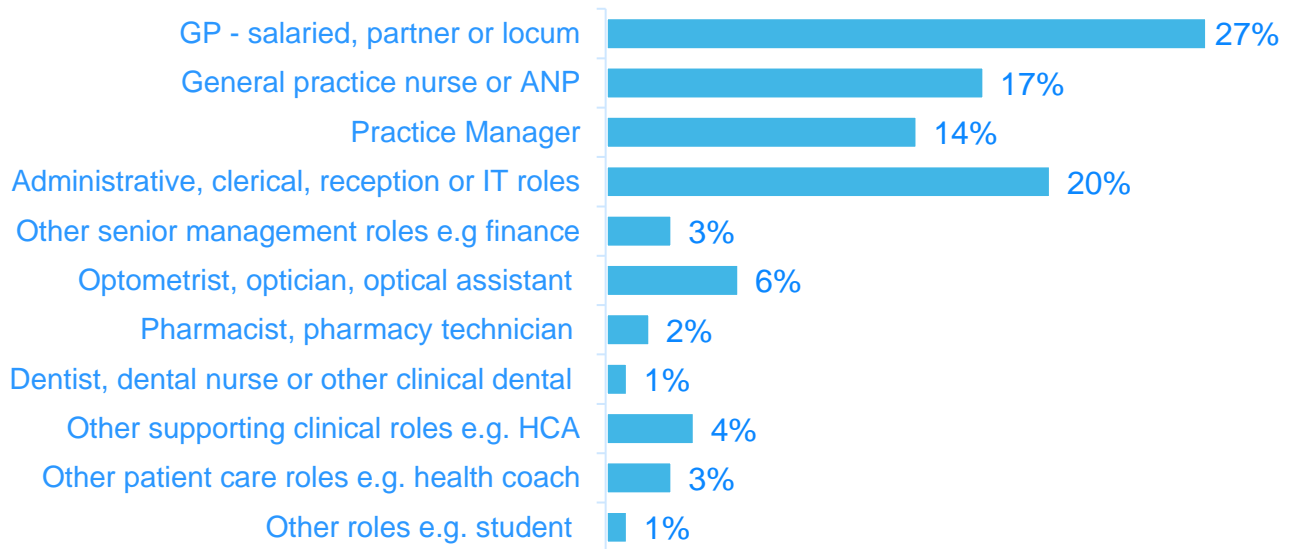
Who shared their experiences?

- 1025 primary care team members from across London took part.
- 244 people worked in South East London.



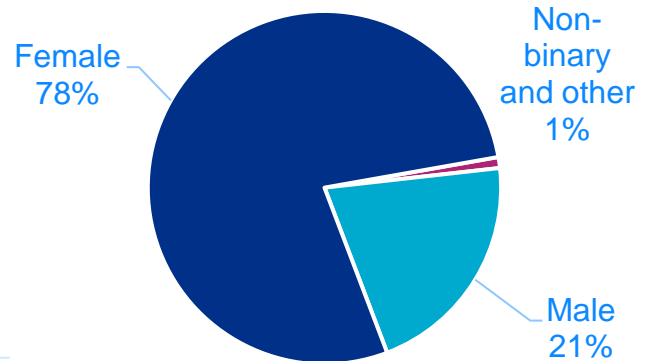
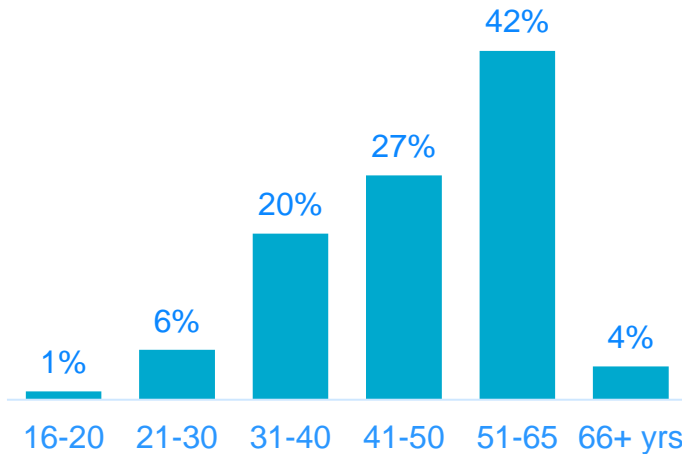
Who shared their experiences?

The roles of the 244 people responding from South East London are below. This represents about 6% of the primary care workforce in South East London.

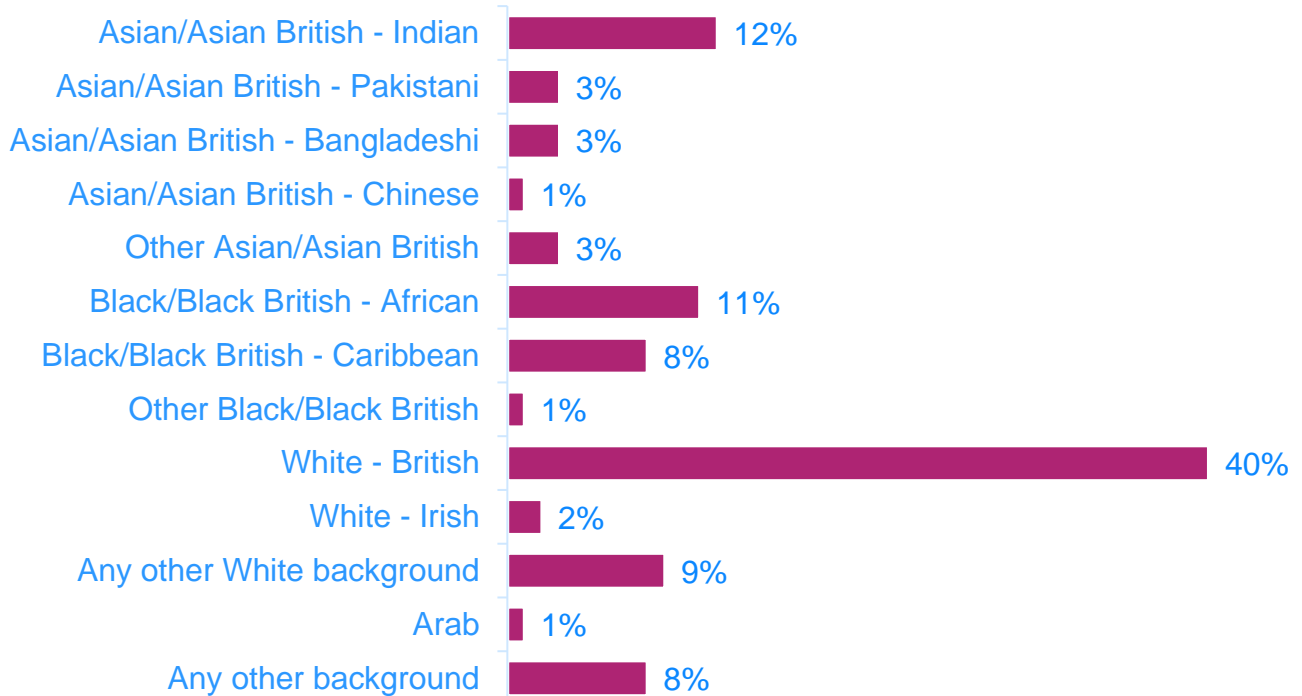


Who shared their experiences?

The age, gender and ethnicity profile of the 244 people who took part in South East London was broadly representative of the primary care workforce in the area.

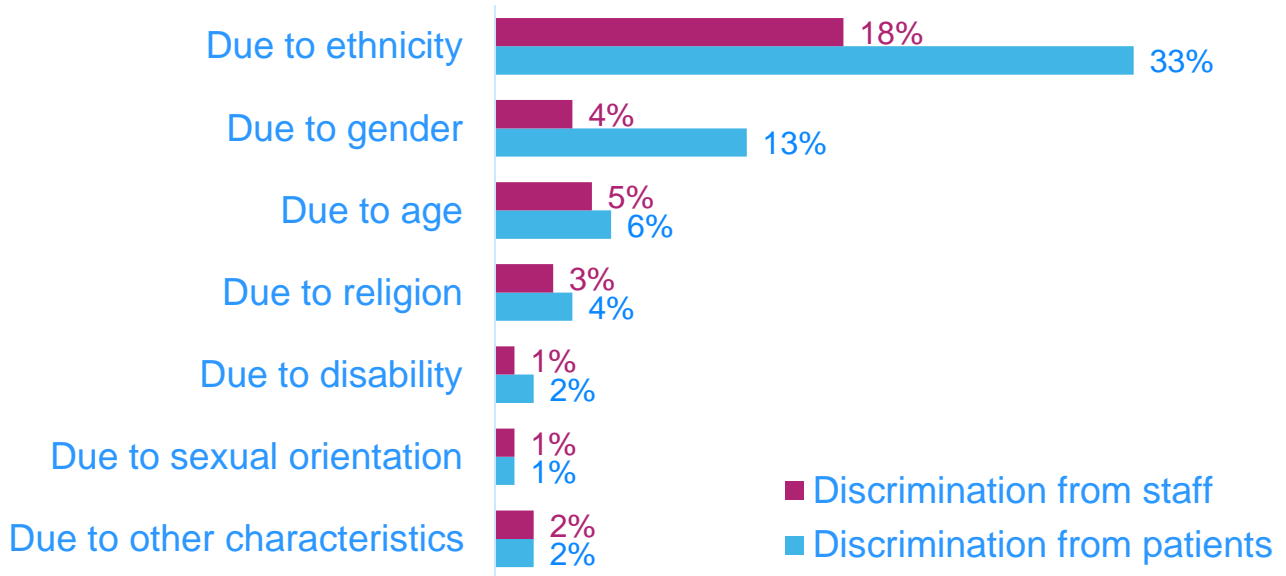


Who shared their experiences?



Discrimination and harassment

Below are the proportions who said they had experienced discrimination or harassment due to their personal characteristics in their primary care work in the past 12 months. 47% said they experienced some type of discrimination.



Perceived racial discrimination

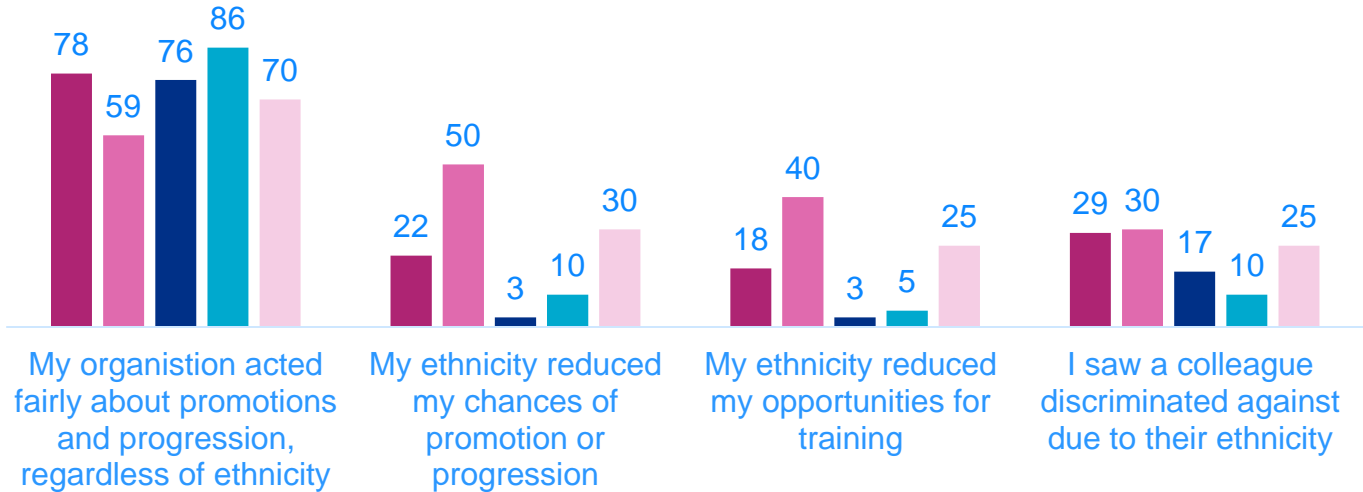
Below are the proportions of people from different ethnic backgrounds who said they had personally experienced racial discrimination or harassment at work in the last 12 months.

Ethnic background	Discriminated against by patients	Discriminated against by staff
Total, all ethnic groups	33%	18%
Asian or Asian British	55%	20%
Black or Black British	60%	40%
White British or Irish	11%	6%
Any other White background	33%	10%
Any other background	30%	35%

Racial discrimination - past year

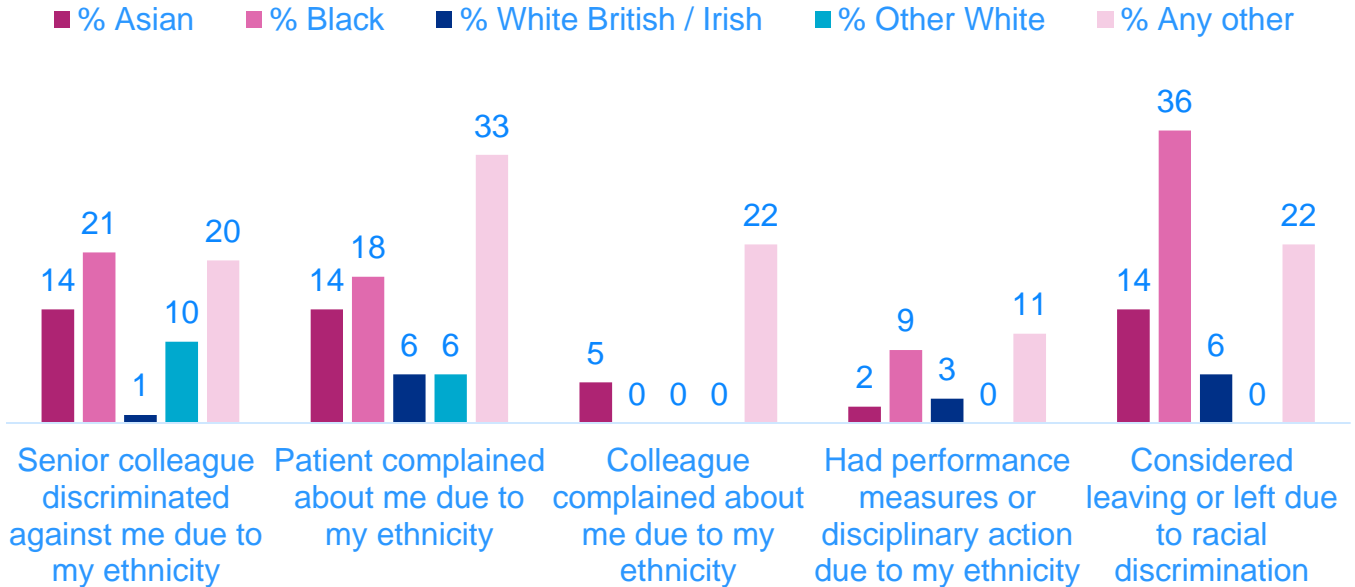
People from minority ethnic backgrounds were more likely to feel their ethnicity had reduced their career progression and training opportunities in the past year.

■ % Asian ■ % Black ■ % White British / Irish ■ % Other White ■ % Any other



Racial discrimination – past year

People from minority ethnic backgrounds were more likely to say that they considered leaving their role due to racial discrimination in the past year.



Impacts of racial discrimination

91 people shared a recent experience of perceived discrimination or harassment based on their ethnic background. Most said that the most recent instance involved subtle or underhanded comments or actions.

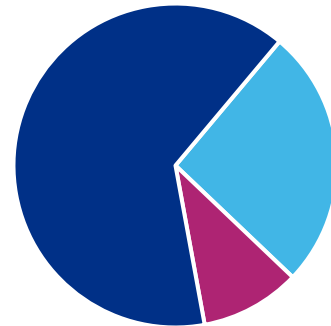
Examples of perceived discrimination included:

- racial slurs / stereotyping
- being undermined or put down
- not being listened to, treated with respect or promoted
- patients wanting to see someone else

People said this led them to:

- feel undervalued, unsupported, demoralised
- have significant mental health concerns
- leave the job or go on sick leave

Subtle or underhanded comments or actions, 64%



Direct comments or actions, 26%

Aggressive or threatening behaviour, 10%

Examples of discrimination

“Worked through the whole COVID crisis, only to be called for disciplinary action for breach of COVID rules 3 months after the event. Just used me to keep offering services. I won my case but I have never felt so demoralised and unappreciated in my life. I would rather go drive a HGV than do this job right now.”

“Seeing that I was being treated differently compared to my colleagues made me feel as if my feelings and opinions were not worthy. Discrimination makes me feel worthless and sad that I have given so much yet not appreciated. White bureaucrats discriminate and they harass you into feeling that you are not doing a good job.”

“Colleagues say things and act towards you in a discriminative way. You do not feel like interacting with that person anymore or even speaking to them. This does not help team morale nor does it lighten the atmosphere to make the work an enjoyable experience.”

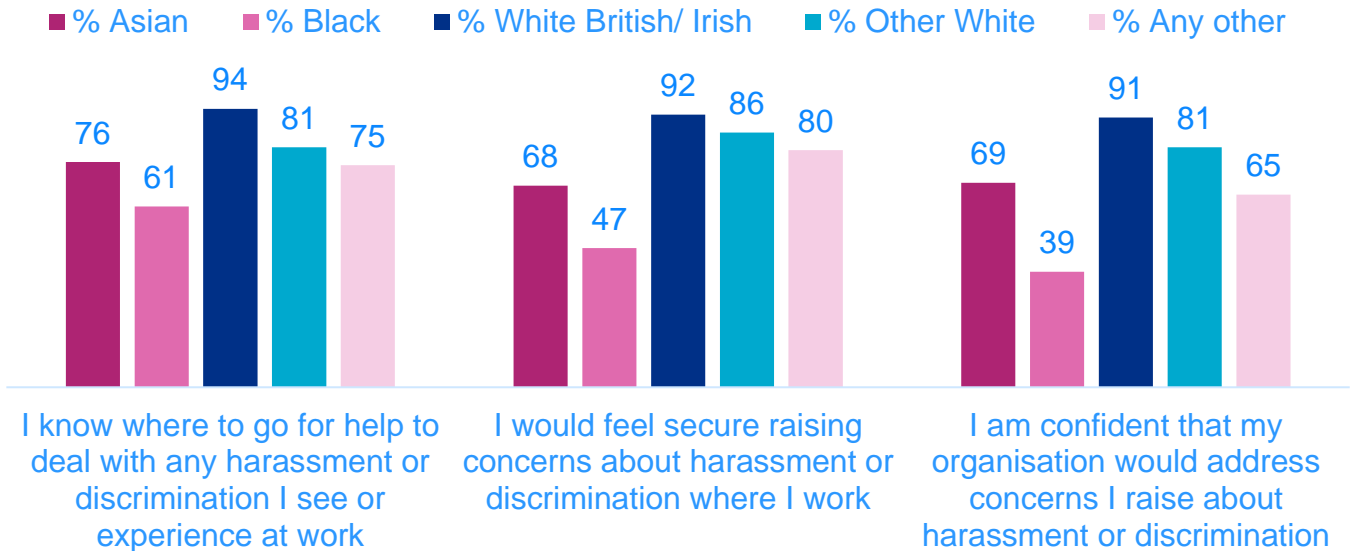
Reporting racial discrimination

- Of the 91 people who described their experiences of racial discrimination, 41% said they or someone else reported the most recent incident.
- About 1 in 7 said they reported it and it was dealt with well.



Do people know what to do?

Regardless of whether they experienced discrimination, we asked if people knew where to get help with ANY harassment or discrimination at work. Many said they knew where to go for help, but people from minority ethnic backgrounds were least likely to feel confident that anything would be done.



What are the top priorities?

61 people suggested practical things to tackle racial discrimination or harassment (regardless of whether they had experienced any):

- **Training** for all staff about diversity and unconscious bias (33%) and helping people feel confident to raise and deal with issues (7%)
- **Zero tolerance campaign**, informing patients about what is unacceptable and making it easy to remove patients from the register (25%)
- **Independent body** to investigate and support, including advice helpline and anonymous reporting (18%)
- **Safe spaces** to discuss and report issues, including meetings, website forum and regular surveys like this (16%)
- **Recruiting** diverse people to (senior) roles and setting diversity targets (13%)
- **Standardised policy** and protocols for responding (10%) and more promotion of the process for reporting and getting support (7%)

What are the top priorities?

“I think the current political culture has worsened the situation as the rhetoric is so hostile to anyone who isn't viewed as being ‘British.’ I think a change of culture needs to come from the top - RCGP, BMA etc & be publicised repeatedly in the media. 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.”

“Minorities to be empowered to call out racism, discrimination, harassment and bias via a government led agency who can feed back to companies then we would know the true scale of the problem. Minorities don't often report or log racial offences because they are afraid of losing their job. White staff to acknowledge that they have a culture and to explore what it is and realise the word is not exclusively for minorities.”

“Having an easy way of staff doing anonymous surveys which could then be fed back to us by an independent body anonymously so we pick up issues that have not surfaced.”

What have we learnt?

- 47% of people responding from South East London said they had experienced **some type of discrimination** or harassment due to their personal characteristics at work last year.
- 33% said they experienced **racial harassment** or discrimination from patients and 18% from colleagues or managers.
- 41% of recent instances of racial discrimination were reported, but only 15% said they reported it and the issue was dealt with well.
- **Black people were more likely than others to say they had experienced racial discrimination, but were less likely to know where to get help and less likely to feel confident about raising issues.**
- The most common suggestions to help address racism at work were training for all team members, a zero tolerance campaign targeting patients and an independent group to give advice and investigate.