

Neil's annual progress update on Race

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I wrote a blog last year reflecting on the second anniversary of George Floyd's murder: Moving forward with our Race plans. Today marks the third anniversary of George Floyd's tragic death and I thought it would be a good time to update you on the Race-related activity that has taken place over the past year.

The Race Programme Board has been up and running since 2022 with its overarching purpose to ensure DWP is a fully inclusive and supportive workplace for ethnic minorities to work in. Since June 2020 we have seen an increase in ethnic minority representation across DWP. Currently our data shows that we are achieving our ethnic minority representation success measure of 13.2%, which is broadly representative of the UK's ethnic minority working population, across grades AA-HEO and are approaching this level at SEO. However, we still have work to do to improve representation at G7 and above. Although ambitious, we are doing our best to strive towards the target.

Recently, the Board agreed our aims for the next year across three key areas: Joining Our Workforce, Developing In Our Workforce and Colleague and Leadership Behaviours. There are actions to improve outcomes against each of these, and we are measuring carefully to ensure we are being effective.

If you would like to find out more about the key areas of the plan and see what we will be doing over the coming year, here is the refreshed Race Programme Plan for 2023/2024. Delivery of the new plan is already underway, so keep an eye out for opportunities to get involved in this important work. Going forward, there will be collaboration across the three main priority areas to continue a joined-up approach. There is only so far we can get without your involvement and engagement. Whether you have been passionate about this work for a long time, or are only just beginning to get drawn in, we need your support. Reaching out to your local Director General area Race Action Group Lead with an offer of help is a great way to start!

As the DWP Race Champion, I believe that Race is everyone's issue. We all have unconscious bias, that's unavoidable, but unchecked it leads to the racial disparities we see today in the under representation of ethnic minorities, particularly at senior grades. So, if we want to tackle that, then we all need to be conscious of these biases when making decisions so we can avoid acting on them. Our strategy is to develop processes and activities that keep us all conscious so we can take steps to act in ways that promote inclusion and diversity whenever we are making decisions. If we can all do that then we will be able to transform the DWP landscape over the coming years.

The more diverse our workforce is, the more opportunity people have to grow and develop as individuals therefore resulting in better outcomes for DWP. Being immersed in a diverse workplace can help people to develop their own views and become more confident in their own unique talents, qualities, and ideas. We recognise the importance of having a workforce that represents and understands the needs of our customers. Teams with colleagues from multiple backgrounds and with different lived experiences help to diversify our thinking and boost the quality of decisions.

George Floyd anniversary event

The National Race Network (NRN) commemorated the 3rd Anniversary of the death of George Floyd on Thursday 25 May. The NRN was joined by Nagesh Reddy, Director in Charge and Resilience Group, for his reflections on how the death of George Floyd kickstarted the activity taking place in the Department to combat racism and achieve equity for ethnic minorities.

Neil