

In North Yorkshire Health and Adult Services (HAS), a working group formed organically last year, when like-minded people started discussing their concerns around racism. The diverse group, now called the Anti-Racist Practice Working Group, has representation from senior management, frontline social care practitioners, Human Resources, Participation & Engagement, Provider Services, Inclusion & Diversity, Quality Assurance & Contracting/Service Development and Public Health. All members have a passion to see the promotion of anti-racist practice and positive change within the organisation.

Last year, peer supervision sessions were held across the directorate about anti-racist practice. 19 sessions were held, attended by over 160 people. The sessions, which were coproduced with black and people of colour colleagues, were designed to start a conversation about anti-racist practice, and required honest reflection and discussion from attendees. We looked at an Anti-Racism Fear, Learning, Growth model, discussed white privilege and looked at a model developed by Dr Gurnam Singh on Supremacy, Indifference, Awareness and Allyship (both attached). There was excellent engagement within the sessions. Most people who attended were honest in their reflections, listened to their colleagues, shared their thoughts and communicated a passion in changing practice.

Following this, a report was written which highlighted key themes from the sessions and made recommendations on how to achieve positive change moving forward. The report was shared with the Directorate's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion group. It was then taken to our Leadership Forum, which is attended by managers and leaders from across HAS. We asked managers, in order to develop our anti-racist learning and practice, what support and tools do we need; as leaders and for our teams? We used this feedback to help guide our next steps.

In addition to the Anti-Racist Practice working group within the HAS Directorate, the Local Authority has started a network for black and people of colour employees called the Value in Racial Diversity Employee Network.

In October 2020, Dr Gurnam Singh did a session with HAS (via webinar) on Anti-Racist Social Work: History, Theory & Practice. In February 2021, Rebekah Pierre from BASW held a webinar with HAS on Anti-Racism in Social Work.

Work in progress:

The working group now has an action plan, which includes analysing complaints data relating to racism, reviewing the policy for reporting and responding to incidents of racism, and developing an approach to sharing of information, resources, reading matter linked to racism and anti-racist practice. We also aim to achieve better progression outcomes for black and people of colour practitioners and look to invest in meaningful comprehensive training. We intend to draw these actions together into a strategy to assist with communicating and embedding this work.

The group has initially drafted an anti-racism pledge which will guide the work we do. The pledge is currently in draft format as we want co-production from across HAS. The working group has developed a Resource Pack called Know Your Rights, Know Your Responsibilities. This pack is designed for managers to be able to continue having important conversations with their teams, ensure their practitioners understand the Local Authority's updated Third Party Harassment and Discrimination Procedure, and to coproduce the anti-racism pledge for HAS. The resource pack was launched at our Care & Support Managers Forum, will be shared next month at our Provider Managers Forum, and in June with our Public Health Team. Once all the managers from across HAS have been through the pack with their teams and we have collated the feedback, we will then be able to finalise our pledge.

Some colleagues in the working group are currently working on a video to mark the anniversary of George Floyd's murder. The video will highlight the need for action and reinforce the Local Authority's commitment to change, and build on the intranet blogposts from group members over the last year.

The group (which is growing in numbers) will continue to meet every two months to provide updates on the action plan and map our progress, bring new items to the agenda and plan the next steps.