

# ETHNICITY PAY GAP STRATEGY 2021

# FOREWORD FROM THE LEADER AND DEPUTY LEADER

**The diversity of our workplace and seeing the Council becoming more and more reflective of the communities we serve is something to be really proud of.**

Everyone, no matter their background or ethnicity, should be able to fulfil their potential at work and we want the Council to be a workplace where people from all backgrounds feel included. We are absolutely committed to improving diversity and inclusion in the Council and for the organisation to be open about the areas where we need to make changes and improve. Creating more diverse and inclusive workplaces is something we all need help with.

Although all staff are paid equally for doing the same work at the Council, we have an ethnicity pay gap. We have already undertaken work to make the Council a more inclusive and representative organisation, but we have a long way to go. We know that to significantly narrow the pay gap we need to do more than measure it. We need to acknowledge, understand and address the underlying issues that are preventing equality and inclusion within the Council and tackle the barriers that many people of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage experience within the workplace.

We want our ethnicity pay gap reporting to act as a catalyst to work toward creating a more diverse and inclusive Council. This strategy, and our action plan, set out work we will complete to make the Council fairer and more inclusive. To develop and design this strategy and form clear, targeted actions, we have worked collaboratively.

We have listened to employees, encouraging people from diverse and ethnic minority backgrounds to help inform our response. We have run focus groups and workshops with people from across our service areas and worked to make sure that the strategy reflects the diversity of our organisation.

We know that at times these have been really difficult conversations that have evoked a variety of emotions and we want to thank everyone who has taken part, it is a vital first step. While these conversations recognise progress is being made, they have highlighted the challenges we need to address to improve experiences and opportunities at work.

We want to keep encouraging and facilitating open, honest, and brave conversations about race and racism, intersectionality, diversity and inclusion.

This means we must identify whether employees feel they are able to voice issues about inequality and the need for change, take responsibility for when we are told that is not so, and create safe spaces for these conversations to be held. We have work to do to build an inclusive culture, to actively celebrate and encourage differences and to close our ethnicity pay gap.

Transparency drives accountability and we are committed to reporting progress, refining our approach and making sure everyone can monitor the benefits of this strategy. The data in this report and our ethnicity pay gap is based on those who have chosen to report their ethnicity. We respect the wishes of anyone who chooses not to provide personal information, but if you are uncomfortable providing this data we would like to hear why and to encourage you to share your reasons to help us understand your concerns.

We are incredibly grateful to everyone who has helped to shape this strategy and we want to encourage everyone to now think about what they can do to help the Council become more inclusive, all the time holding ourselves and one another to account. Working together, we can continue to make the Council a great place to work for all and help everyone to be the best they can be.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Clare Coghill'.

**Cllr Clare Coghill**  
Leader of Waltham Forest Council



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Clyde Loakes'.

**Cllr Clyde Loakes**  
Deputy Leader of  
Waltham Forest Council

# SUPPORTING STATEMENT FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

**We know from our work with our communities to develop our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and our State of the Borough report that we need to address inequalities.**

We developed our Gender Pay Gap Strategy in late 2019, we know many of our lower paid staff are both female and of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage, and that intersectionality was likely to give rise to similar factors in our ethnicity pay gap.

To develop this strategy, we have looked at our data, but know that alone is not enough and so we also sought insights from our workforce through engagement via surveys, crowdsourcing and workshops to show us the lived experiences behind the pay gap data.

The data clearly shows that we must address underrepresentation at the senior levels of the Council, be this through programmes to develop our own senior managers of the future or the way in which we recruit.

I was very much affected by the insights from our workforce and the difference of experience expressed. I truly want all staff to feel able to be their authentic self at work, to feel empowered to raise microaggression and bias practices without fear, to have access to opportunities and to realise their ambitions in a working environment that values and celebrates diversity.

Year one of the Strategy is all about improving experience and opportunities at work through a targeted action plan, coupled with our continued focus on ensuring we provide a truly inclusive culture where everyone can reach their potential. We will continue to talk to staff and listen to their experiences to make sure what we are doing is working.

We will review our strategy with staff after one year and work together with staff to create the next set of recommendations and actions for year two of the strategy.

I am incredibly proud of how our staff have come forward to give us their insights, I do not think this would have been easy. Management Board and I are absolutely committed to delivering the change staff have asked for and we know we must hold ourselves and one another to account for making sure this positive change occurs.

I give my personal assurance that I will do what I can to make the Council a great place to work for everyone and enable our people to be the best they can be.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M Esom".

**Martin Esom**  
Chief Executive  
of Waltham Forest Council

# SUMMARY

## What is our ethnicity pay gap?



The median ethnicity pay gap at Waltham Forest is **11.72%**. This equates to **£2.17** per hour.



Our analysis is based on self-reported data. **13.6%** of all staff have chosen not to report their ethnicity.

According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2019), the median ethnicity pay gap for hourly pay in the UK is **2.3%**. On average, employees from 'ethnic minority backgrounds' earned **£12.11** to every **£12.40** that 'White British' employees were paid.

The ethnicity pay gap differs across regions and is largest in London (**23.8%**).



**An ethnicity pay gap is not the same as unequal pay. A pay gap, on whatever grounds, does not necessarily signify unequal pay for equal work.**

The ethnicity pay gap shows the difference in the median pay between employees of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage and a reference group, either employees of White British, Irish or Other White heritage or White British employees, in an organisation.

There is currently no mandatory requirement to report ethnicity pay gaps in the UK, but we believe we should publish in advance of any requirement.



## What is the data behind our gap?

Our ethnicity pay gap is primarily driven by underrepresentation of people of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage at senior levels.

- Representation of people of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage decreases progressively up the pay scale while representation of White people of British, Irish or Other White heritage increases.



- Staff of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage make up **49.6%** of our people, but only account for **36.6%** at PO5-PO8, **29.2%** at PO9-PO12, and **14.1%** Chief Officers.



People of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage make up **49.6%** of our staff



But only account for **36.6%** at PO5-PO8



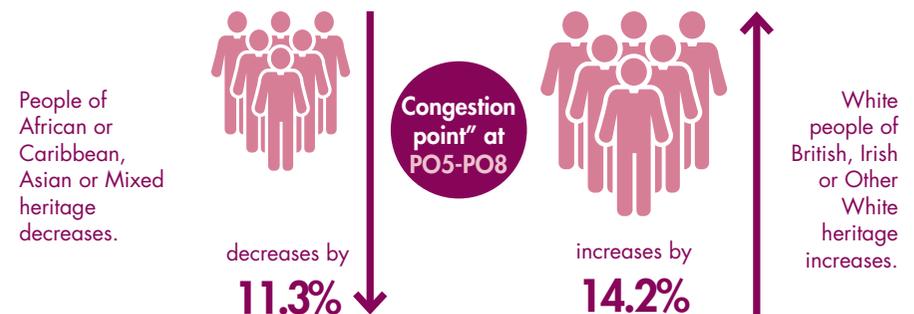
**29.2%** at PO9-PO12



**14.1%** Chief Officers

## Equalising hiring rates would have the single largest impact on equalising representation in senior levels.

- Employees of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage reach a "congestion point" at PO5-PO8 where representation decreases by **11.3%**, whereas representation of White people of British, Irish or Other White heritage increases by **14.2%**.



- From levels PO1-PO6, White people of British, Irish or Other White heritage experience more permanent promotions through reorganisations, redeployment, internal recruitment and transfers than people of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage.



## Staff insights

We have held a series of sessions through which staff across the organisation have been engaged to explore their experiences of working at the Council and to understand what the ethnicity pay gap means to our staff.

This has included workshops and focus groups to ensure that staff of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage have had direct input into this strategy. This has identified where progress has been made, but also highlighted the difficult and nuanced challenges that need to be addressed.

**THROUGH SUSTAINED COLLABORATIVE WORK, RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS HAVE BEEN CO-DEVELOPED AND GROUPED AS THREE AREAS OF INITIAL FOCUS FOR YEAR ONE:**



### Opportunities and progression

Staff say they want to see more diversity in senior management, as well as more inclusive and accessible recruitment, and learning and development opportunities.



### Employee experience and wellbeing

Staff say they need better support mechanisms in place for dealing with biased practice and microaggression, and that more should be done to prevent these occurring.



### Policy and communications

Staff say equality and diversity should be prioritised, with transparency on progress. Internal communication needs to be accessible to all, particularly on development opportunities.

Ethnicity	Waltham Forest Residents (ONS data)	Waltham Forest Council Workforce	Up to Scale 6 £28,725	SO1-SO2 £29,766 to £33,291	PO1-PO4 £32,430 to £42,684	PO5-PO8 £42,684 to £52,482	PO9-PO12 £53,544 to £72,438	Chief Officers £81,190 to £206,956
People of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage	50.6%	49.6%	58.9%	52.8%	47.9%	36.6%	29.2%	14.1%
White people of British, Irish or Other White heritage	49.4%	36.8%	27.6%	35.6%	37.5%	51.7%	55.8%	59.6%
Unknown	-	13.6%	13.5%	11.6%	14.6%	11.7%	15.0%	26.3%
People of South, East, or South East Asian heritage	23.8%	12.8%	14.0%	13.1%	13.4%	10.0%	10.9%	3.5%
Black people of African, Caribbean or Other Black heritage	19.6%	29.9%	37.9%	33.2%	26.7%	20.4%	13.6%	3.5%

# INTRODUCTION

**At the London Borough of Waltham Forest, we are committed to closing the ethnicity pay gap and ensuring we provide a truly inclusive culture. We want to improve the experiences of our staff, make sure that everyone has fair opportunities to work, to develop and to progress, and help everyone to reach their potential.**

After reporting on and publishing our ethnicity pay gap, we are committed to action. Data-driven ethnicity pay gap reporting is essential; however, we have moved beyond analysing employee data so we can better understand the ways people experience inequalities in their everyday working lives and devise action plans together with our staff.

This has helped to understand the causes of our pay gap and what actions would help reduce it, as well as what we can do to help break down the barriers preventing people from meeting their full potential. It will take time, but our focus is now on taking action and making change happen.

We heard from over 600 members of staff in our all-staff survey, ran a crowd sourcing session joined by 300 members of staff, completed in-depth focus groups with staff, including a focus group for staff of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage in front line roles and a focus group for staff of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage working in roles up to PO3 (£37,722 - £40,869).

We have also run three co-design workshops – collaborative spaces where staff have worked together to draft and prioritise recommendations and develop the action plan. Those involved represented different ethnicities and backgrounds, work areas and levels of seniority.

The different methods and the collaborative work have ensured a range of insights were available to codevelop and codesign the strategy which will be implemented alongside and driven by the organisation’s brand new People Strategy.

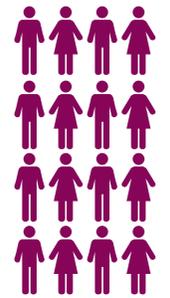
**600**  
members  
of staff

responded to an  
all-staff survey



**300**  
members  
of staff

took part in online  
crowdsourcing



## Focus groups

for staff of African or Caribbean,  
Asian or Mixed heritage



**3 Co-design  
Staff  
Workshops**

**THE RESULT OF THIS COLLABORATIVE  
EFFORT IS WALTHAM FOREST'S FIRST  
ETHNICITY PAY GAP STRATEGY**

# Reporting the ethnicity pay gap and the use of language

Language and terminology are very important to how well we can describe and understand inequalities and the experiences of our staff.

For our data and information to be relevant and useful, we have moved away from broad and inaccurate groupings and adopted terms that more appropriately express the heritage of individuals.

For this strategy we have used the following:

**People of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage** for anyone who identified in one of multiple Black/Black British, Asian/Asian British or Mixed heritage categories in the data.

**White people of British, Irish or Other White heritage** for anyone who identified in one of the multiple White categories in the data.

**People of South, East, or South East Asian heritage** for anyone who identified in one of multiple Asian/Asian British categories in the data.

**Black people of African, Caribbean or Other Black heritage** for anyone who identified in one of the multiple Black/Black British categories in the data.

More information on the categories and groups covered by each of these terms can be found in the Annex (Definitions of groups).

Where in this strategy we use 'ethnic minority', and 'White British', we do so to ensure consistency with how other public bodies describe their data. However, we are aware of the limitations of this and try wherever possible to put information in context or disaggregate the data.

As the Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and data collection evolves and improves, we will further revise the terms we use. We want to make sure our content reflects changes in language usage and acceptability, and we welcome discussions about the use of terms to ensure they recognise the identity and background of our staff.

**There are a number of words and phrases that are used when talking about ethnicity pay gaps:**

**ALLYSHIP:** building relationships of trust, consistency and accountability with marginalised individuals or groups of people. A person of privilege works in solidarity and partnership with a marginalised group to support them and make the effort to understand their struggle and help take down the systems that challenge that group's basic rights, equal access, and the chance to thrive in society.

**ANTI-RACIST:** involves fighting against racism as someone who is supporting racial equality through actions. It refers to forms of action against racial hatred, bias, systemic racism, and the oppression of marginalised groups.

**DISCRIMINATION:** the unequal treatment of members of various groups based on race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, physical ability, religion and other categories.

**MICROAGGRESSION:** a comment or action that negatively targets a marginalised group of people. A microaggression is a form of discrimination that can be intentional or accidental.

**MEDIAN HOURLY PAY:** the hourly rate of pay of the 'middle' employee, when the rate of pay for each employee is ordered from lowest to highest. This can be calculated for different employee groups (for example by gender or ethnicity) in order to identify the 'pay gap' between the groups.

**UNDERREPRESENTATION:** insufficient or disproportionately low representation of a group in an organisation than would be predicted by their proportion in the population.

**UNCONSCIOUS BIAS:** unknowingly held attitudes, perceptions and stereotypes that influence understanding, actions, and behaviour when interacting with various individuals and groups.

## What is the ethnicity pay gap?

The ethnicity pay gap shows the difference in the median pay between employees of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage and a reference group, either employees of White British, Irish or Other White heritage or White British employees, in an organisation.

This includes all of those who are directly employed by the organisation, across different job roles and contract types. It also takes into account the number of hours worked by looking at the hourly pay rate.

The ethnicity pay gap is different from equal pay. It is a legal requirement that individuals in the same employment, performing the same roles at the same grade must receive equal pay. At Waltham Forest, there are policies in place to ensure that all staff receive equal pay.

In ethnicity pay gap reporting, it is acknowledged that comparisons between White People of British, Irish or Other White heritage and

people of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage mask disparity across the pay of different ethnic groups and also workplace experiences. In the UK, most ethnic minority groups continue to earn less than White British employees.

In the UK, the ethnicity pay gap is larger for men than women (though for most ethnic groups, men continue to earn more than women) and the size of the ethnicity pay gap for those aged **30 years and over** is larger than for those aged **16 to 29 years**.

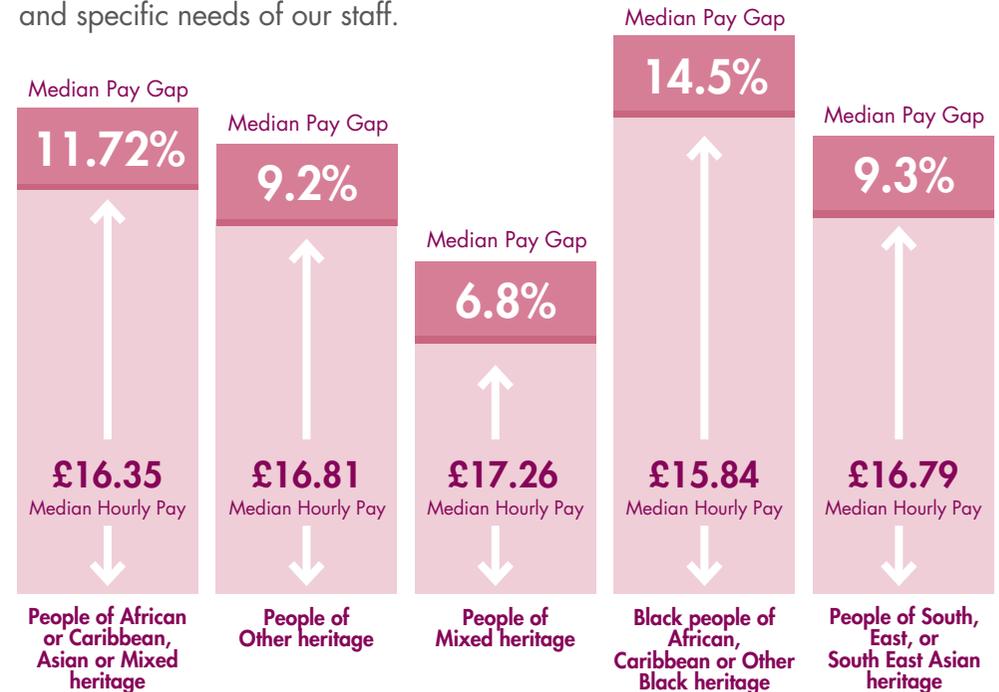
The median ethnicity pay gap for hourly pay in the UK currently stands at **2.3%**. On average, employees from 'ethnic minority backgrounds' earned **£12.11** to every **£12.40** that White British employees were paid. By region, the biggest ethnicity pay gap is in London at **23.8%**.

## Our ethnicity pay gap at waltham forest

The ethnicity pay gap at Waltham Forest is **11.72%**. This means that the median hourly pay of people of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage is **11.72%** less than the median hourly pay for White people of British, Irish or Other White heritage. This equates to **£2.17** per hour.

Breaking our ethnicity pay gap data down further helps us better understand and address the complex and specific needs of our staff.

By better understanding these figures, we can identify and unpack different issues and address barriers. The pay gap is at its widest for Black people of African, Caribbean or Other Black heritage. The median hourly pay of Black people of African, Caribbean or Other Black heritage is **14.5%** less than the median hourly pay of White people of British, Irish or Other White heritage. This equates to **£2.68** per hour.



### At the London Borough of Waltham Forest, the ethnicity pay gap is worse for female staff of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage.

On average, White female staff of British, Irish or Other White heritage earn **£18.07** per hour in comparison to **£15.29** female staff of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage, equating to a pay gap of **15.4%** (**£2.78** per hour).

A lower pay gap exists for male staff of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage in comparison to White male staff of British, Irish or Other White heritage. On average White male staff of British, Irish or Other White heritage earn **£19.54** per hour in comparison to the **£17.72** male staff of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage earn, equating to a pay gap of **9.3%** (**£1.82** per hour).

The ethnicity pay gap differs by age. At Waltham Forest, the gap is larger for those aged 30 years and over than for those aged under 30 years. Staff of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage under 30 years earn **£** less per hour than White staff

of British, Irish or Other White heritage, a median pay gap of **6.3%**. A larger pay gap exists for staff of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage aged over 30 years, who earn **£16.35** per hour in comparison to **£18.52** earned by White staff of British, Irish or Other White heritage aged over 30 years, equating to a pay gap of **11.7%** (**£2.17** per hour).

**Whether staff choose to self-report their ethnicity is a personal matter and is entirely voluntary. We know that some staff are unaware that we do not have their data and would be happy to provide it and that for others there are reasons why they do not wish to share this information.**

**At the end of this strategy there is a short guide on how to check your self-reported information and a link to a form on which you can anonymously let us know of any concerns you have about sharing your information to help us understand why this is.**

## What we've done already

**Alongside developing this strategy, Waltham Forest has already begun to take action to tackle our ethnicity pay gap, to improve diversity and inclusion and the experiences of staff across the organisation.**

Together we have introduced various initiatives:

- Established a series of strong staff networks, including our Race Equality Network
- Launched a Community of Inclusive Practice which brings together an informal collective of people who are interested in improving inclusivity in the way we do things as a Council
- Delivering unconscious-bias, brave conversations and microaggression webinar sessions for up to 250 managers, microaggression workshops for up to 45 senior managers and ally and anti-racist allyship workshops for up to 75 senior managers
- Staff from our Race Equality Network have developed Safe Spaces Clinic Champions
- Development of our new People Strategy, including a diversity and inclusivity workstream
- Recruiting for Difference pilots have been undertaken for filling three senior posts
- The anonymisation of applications forms is live for all application forms at shortlisting stage, which can help to design out bias. This is limited and other changes are needed to address potential bias for all applicants at all stages hence taking it further in the recruiting for difference pilots.

## STAFF STORY

### Pauline Campbell Co-Chair of the Race Equality Network and Senior Litigation Lawyer for Waltham Forest



***No one has ever looked at me and guessed that I'm a lawyer. People just don't expect a black cockney girl to be in a position of power, and that is an issue I want to resolve.***

**Waltham Forest is working towards innovative change and it's good to see the work that the organisation has been doing to drive forward inclusive practices and develop this Ethnicity Pay Gap Strategy.**

I am proud to be co-chair of the Race Equality Network. Our main concern is a lack of diversity at the top of the hierarchy – both among councillors and senior management. But I'm really happy that senior managers are sponsoring the work of the Race Equality Network in the wake of George Floyd's murder - a lot of us have been down this road before so the fact that six members of the network are being trained to set up and run a Safe Space Clinic where we can provide emotional support, signposting and referrals is brilliant.

We've also been given the opportunity to scrutinise the new mentoring scheme, appraisal process and unconscious bias training to ensure all these initiatives are making real impact. I hope we can continue to make space for difficult, heart to heart conversations between our diverse colleagues up and down the organisation so we can continue to make meaningful change, because there are still those colleagues who are content to sit on the fence, in the belief this does not affect them, when equality and the right to it is everyone's responsibility.

As for me – at school I got used to teachers telling me I wasn't good enough. It was the time of Enoch Powell's River of Blood speech, the National Front's increased prominence, black boys being excluded left, right and centre and a significant amount of teachers actually thinking that black pupils were not naturally bright. But it wasn't until my late twenties that I first got called the N word.

The level of disdain at first frightened me, and then it made me mad. It happens to millions of people every day and when it happens, you feel absolutely alone - it doesn't matter what I do or where I go, you can call me the N word and in that moment I feel like nothing - it dispels my very being.

I have come a long way since my first job as a Housing Benefits Officer which I did for 14 years - I really enjoyed it but I didn't feel stretched enough, so in my 30s I decided I wanted to do a law degree. My manager at the time was so supportive, letting me work my 25 hour job flexibly around full time study.

After finishing my degree, I found a Solicitor traineeship in Kent. Every day, I would drive from Tottenham to various courts all over Kent – if I ever see that Blackwall Tunnel again I will scream!

I made some great connections and built a solid foundation, but as the only black woman in the courts, I put up with public undermining by senior colleagues; humiliation, jokes and digs at my expense, not just in front of my peers but clients too.

It's funny because, as soon as you decide you want to change your life, that's when you start to see the barriers. There was no issue with me being a housing benefit officer, it was a good job and a worthy one, but from the moment you say you want to be a lawyer, it's not an easy ride.

I do so hope that this strategy will help to bring about and sustain the change and opportunity it envisages. With commitment from all, I believe it can.

# WHY WE HAVE A PAY GAP

By listening to our staff and analysing both quantitative and qualitative data, we found that there are a number of factors contributing to our ethnicity pay gap.

## WHAT THE DATA HAS TOLD US

Analysing our ethnicity pay data helps us better understand and address the complex and specific needs of our colleagues. This information and understanding this data provides evidence of the barriers that people face and the areas that the council needs to focus on to improve.



We do not hold staff ethnicity data for all employees. We need to encourage employees to self-report this information to improve ethnicity pay gap analysis and reporting and to design our actions.

- **13.6%** of all staff have not declared their ethnicity
- **21.2%** of top **5%** earners have not declared their ethnicity

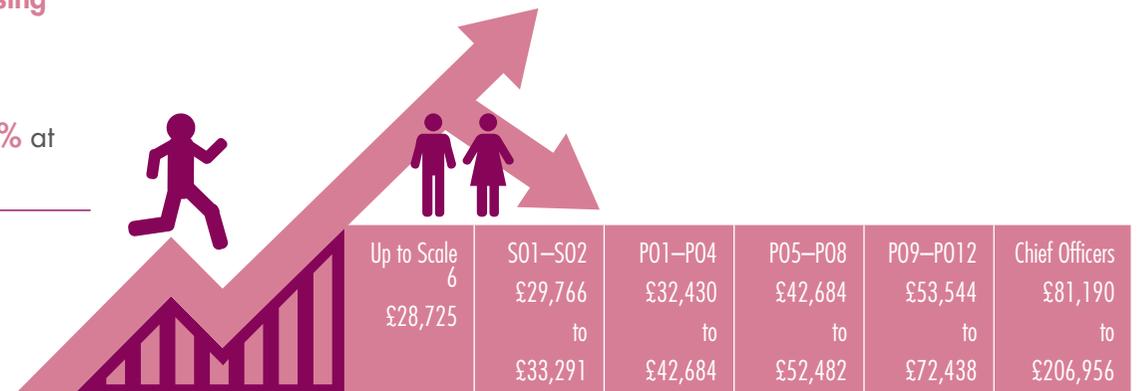
Equalising hiring rates would have the single largest impact on equalising representation in senior levels.

- People of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage make up **49.6%** of our staff, but only account for **36.6%** at PO5-PO8, **29.2%** at PO9-PO12, and **14.1%** Chief Officers

- Representation of people of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage decreases progressively up the pay scale while representation of White people of British, Irish or Other White heritage increases.
- Staff of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage reach a “congestion point” at PO5-PO8 where representation decreases by **11.3%**, whereas representation of White people of British, Irish or Other White heritage increases by **14.2%**.

Moving away from buying talent and focusing on building talent through the development of existing staff, particularly people of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage, and succession planning at leadership levels.

- From levels PO1-PO6, White staff of British, Irish or Other White heritage experience more permanent promotions through reorganisations, redeployment, internal recruitment and transfers than staff of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage
- Staff of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage are particularly more likely to be promoted from levels “Apprentices up to SO2”



## Involuntary exits from the organisation

Our analysis has included investigating information on employees who have left the Council, including on an involuntary basis. Over two years, 159 employees left the organisation involuntarily (18% of all leavers). Whilst those leaving due to restructures is broadly proportionate to the workforce as a whole, those leaving as a result of formal processes are disproportionately people of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage.

The numbers are low but it is important to continue to monitor and analyse information on dismissals and leavers, and ensure staff have the opportunity to share their experiences through appropriately facilitated exit interviews. Those leaving the Council may have an impact on the overall pay gap.

Ethnicity	TUPE	Restructure and involuntary retirement	Dismissal	Waltham Forest as a whole
Unknown	6 (10%)	12 (18%)	2 (6%)	13.6%
People of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage	35 (59%)	32 (48%)	20 (61%)	49.6%
White people of British, Irish or Other White heritage	18 (31%)	23 (34%)	11 (33%)	36.8%
<b>Total Involuntary Exits</b>	<b>59 (37%)</b>	<b>67 (42%)</b>	<b>33 (21%)</b>	<b>159 (100%)</b>

## Progression and performance

Our job grading system includes incremental progression for each grade up to a maximum, linked to annual performance appraisals. Using scoring of 1-5, Chief Officers need to score 1 or 2 and non-chief officers a 1, 2 or 3 to achieve an increment.

### Appraisal scores from 2019 and 2020 show that:

- The percentage of staff receiving a rating of 1-3 (successful and above) on our performance management system, was proportionate between staff of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage and White staff of British, Irish or Other White heritage and **97%-98%** of all those being scored obtained satisfactory performance or above.
- The percentage of those scoring 1-3 is proportionate to those on Clear Review.
- The percentage of those scoring 1 or 2 is not representative of those on Clear Review. Those on higher grades tend to score proportionality more 1 and 2 and staff at higher levels are disproportionately White people of British, Irish or Other White heritage.

	People of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage	White people of British, Irish or Other White heritage	Unknown
Overall percentage of those receiving a score 1-3	47%	39%	14%
Overall percentage of those receiving a score of 1 and 2	36%	48%	16%

A snapshot of data (March 2021) of staff receiving opportunities through acting up and temporary secondment opportunities shows a representative outcome of **49%** staff of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage and **34%** White staff of British, Irish or Other White heritage.

Acting Up/ Secondments	People of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage	Unknown	White people of British, Irish or Other White heritage	Total
Total	43	15	30	88

## WHAT STAFF HAVE TOLD US

When we discussed the ethnicity pay gap with employees across the Council and heard about their experiences at work, staff members told us what they thought were the most relevant issues and what actions would make the biggest difference. We grouped these into three areas of focus, highlighting the challenges we need to continue to address:

1



### Opportunities and progression

2



### Employee experience and wellbeing

3



### Policy and communications

## Opportunities and progression

Staff believe the following two factors are contributing to our pay gap:

- Black, Asian and minority ethnic employees are underrepresented in senior leadership roles and staff feel that fair recruitment processes are not always followed.
- Staff feel that learning and development opportunities are not well communicated or equally accessible to all employees and do not always adequately support progression or development.

### Key findings:



- **8%** of Black staff of African, Caribbean or Other Black heritage feel promotions generally go to the best qualified employees (**14%** staff of South, East, or South East Asian heritage, **35%** White staff of British, Irish or Other White heritage)
- **78%** of respondents of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage are interested in a more senior role (**61%** White staff of British, Irish or Other White heritage)
- **20%** of staff of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage believe that they are given the same progression opportunities as White staff of British, Irish or Other White heritage (**54%** White staff of British, Irish or Other White heritage)
- **77%** of respondents of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage feel a mentoring scheme for staff of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage would be effective (**76%** White staff of British, Irish or Other White heritage)
- **73%** of staff agreed that “mixing with the right people” was an unspoken rule for getting ahead at the Council

## Areas of action recommended by our staff:

Through our focus groups and workshops we explored the actions staff felt would make a difference to opportunities and progression.

**They told us that the key priority actions they would wish the Council to commit to in our delivery plan are:**

- Enhance communication of all opportunities
- More inclusive recruitment and progression processes, focused on skills and knowledge
- Application and interview skills training, for interviewees and interviewers

**They also told us that they felt we could make a difference by taking action to:**

- Improve recruitment practices by ensuring job profiles and adverts clarify skills and qualification requirements, ensuring greater transparency and accessibility to vacancies for all potential internal candidates and designing in processes to enable two-way feedback between applicants and interview panels so that both could learn from the process
- Improving our appraisals process to ensure consistency and quality (for managers and staff), to include more employee-centred training needs assessment and better governance and moderation on appraisals
- As well as ensuring all staff had an opportunity to discuss their training needs, it was felt that access to training opportunities was not necessarily equal across the Council and that there should be a more transparent application process for how to access schemes such as apprenticeships.



**Ramesh Dhokia,**  
Contract Monitoring  
Officer:

**“When I see that everyone senior to me is white, it can be intimidating, like a lack of confidence in my ability to have a place at that level. When I do see others like me in senior positions, I’m encouraged, I really hope that will begin to happen more and more at Waltham Forest.”**

## STAFF STORY

### Gregory Omeonga Friends and Neighbours Project Co-ordinator



*But it wasn't plain-sailing to get to where I am now. I was brought up in Waltham forest and came to the UK seeking asylum from Congo.*

**When I finished a degree in Business and International Relations in 2014 I initially fell into some sales jobs which I quickly realised I didn't want to do. It took a while for me to figure out my skillset and interests, but before too long I came across project management which was the perfect fit for me. One of my life mottos is 'there's always a solution' – I think that's a result of my responsibilities as an older sibling in my household and needing to solve problems constantly.**

But it wasn't plain-sailing to get to where I am now. I was brought up in Waltham forest and came to the UK seeking asylum from Congo. The statistics show that men who look like me are more likely to be in prison than be doing what I'm doing now.

Racism and prejudice at school or in the workplace are not something that are easy to put your finger on as they are not necessarily overt and are often more of a systemic issue. But how do you get 'up there' without cultural capital? People from my background generally don't have access to the knowledge areas, resources or networks that are essential to career progression.

At points through my career I have asked myself why I didn't attain certain roles – it's difficult to believe you can progress when you don't see people who look like yourself.

That's why completing my degree and project management qualifications has been invaluable to my development, providing me with the confidence to succeed. Equally, my recent experience of redeployment opened new doors for me.

From March to July 2020 I worked first as a volunteer coordinator and then as Relationship Manager for the Resilience Centre, working with people across the borough to deliver essential supplies and support to our residents.

Working with five community hubs and charities was one of the most enjoyable experiences I've had - I met so many colleagues from across the organisation, made new connections with charities and gained more insight into hard-to-access communities – all of which have been extremely useful for my substantive role as Friends and Neighbours Project Co-ordinator.

## Employee experience and wellbeing

### Staff believe the following three factors are contributing to our pay gap:

- Staff of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage reported experiencing more microaggressions or biased practices than White staff of British, Irish or Other White heritage and were less likely to feel comfortable or confident reporting them.
- Employees feel that managers' training on diversity and inclusion matters, is insufficient to support the wellbeing and progression of People of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage.
- Flexible working is valued but policies need to be updated to embrace ongoing virtual working post 2020 and to support front line staff to work flexibly in different ways.

### Key findings:



- **44%** of respondents of Black African, Caribbean or Other Black heritage and **57%** of respondents of South, East, or South East Asian heritage feel that they can be their authentic self at work (**74%** White respondents of British, Irish or Other White heritage)
- **57%** of respondents agree the Council has a diverse workforce
- **54%** of respondents of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage had seen and known of or experienced discrimination in the Council (**21%** White respondents of British, Irish or Other White heritage)
- **38%** of respondents of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage feel comfortable reporting discrimination (**80%** White respondents of British, Irish or Other White heritage)
- **88%** of all respondents agree their manager is flexible when they have a personal situation to take care of

## Areas of action recommended by our staff:

Through our focus groups and workshops we explored the actions staff felt would make a difference to experience and wellbeing.

### Staff said: The key priority actions they would wish the Council to commit to in our delivery plan are:

- Develop a diverse group of champions, independently facilitated, for providing signposting, support and advice, where staff can safely raise concerns about microaggressions and biased practises
- Raise awareness of formal and informal procedures and the support available when reporting discrimination or biased practices, monitor trends
- Include employee wellbeing support and signposting in management training and monitor its impact and effectiveness

### Staff said: They felt we could make a difference by taking action to:

- Develop managers guidance on matters such as employee pandemic office working, inclusive management and manager communication
- Include a movement to increased permanent contracts, particularly for front line staff or invest equally in temporary staff
- Refine and improve employee recognition culture, process and communication
- Implement mandatory and high quality training on diversity and inclusion for all staff, but particularly for those involved in hiring staff and on recruitment panels

## STAFF STORY

### **Maddie Gilford** Executive Support Officer to the Leader

*I've spent most of my life in areas where people were mostly white Christians; Rumsha is the first Muslim woman I've really got to know. I'm from a very non-judgmental family that's led me to see people as people but I guess I still had a misconception about what a young Muslim woman's lifestyle was really like.*

When Rumsha joined our team, we had really thought-provoking conversations, I quickly learnt lots about her faith and background and loved the common ground we had in our belief and hope in God, our love and commitment to our families and our value on treating others with kindness above all else.

Rumsha is a similar age to my sons; I hadn't expected her to have the same freedoms as them to choose her career path and follow her passions. I was struck that, unlike them, she'd grown up with a daily fear of gang crime on her doorstep and had developed a certain resilience that they wouldn't have had to experience.

I was amazed by Rumsha's dedication to fasting, how she would deny herself food and water and how this deepened her connection with God. I was in awe that Rumsha and her family would be happily starting their fast together in the middle of the night while I was fast asleep.

It's so important to look beyond what we see – the influences and experiences that shape us – this is what builds inclusivity



*It's so important to look beyond what we see - the influences and experiences that shape us.*

### Rumsha Khan PMO Analyst

When I joined the Leadership Office I was very aware that I was the only person of colour in the team. I'm always conscious of that when I'm in an all-white environment but chatting about our differences in a relaxed, natural way really helps to make me feel at ease about it.

I am an independent Muslim woman but I am conscious of what misconceptions people might have when they see my hijab and so I tend to go out of my way (sometimes against my default introvert nature) to show people that I am not timid or oppressed.

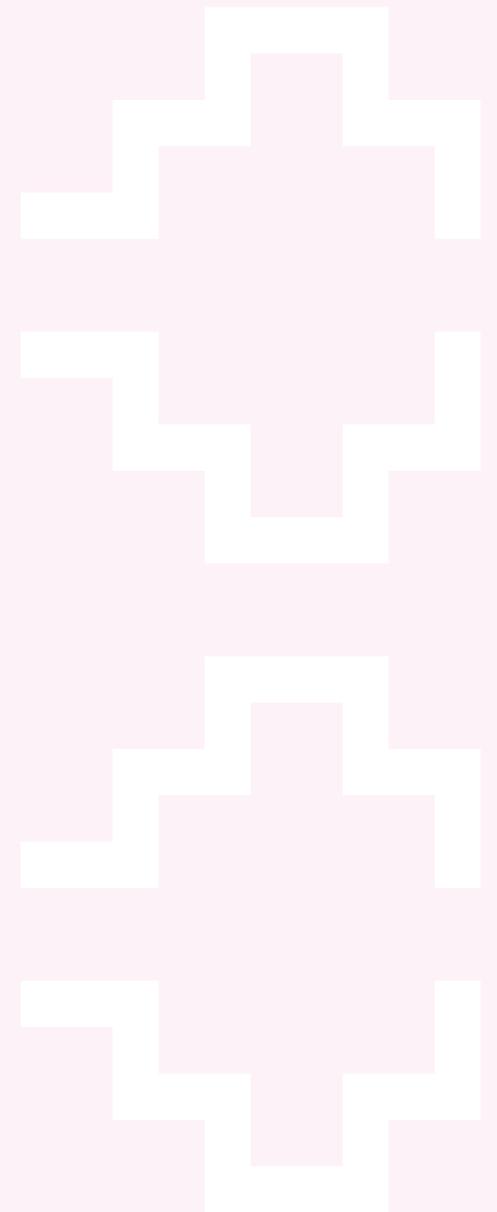
I didn't feel like I had to do that with Maddie, I loved how she was so interested in who I was and how honest she was about not knowing any other Muslims.

As I've got older, the faith I watched my parents live by has become my own and my love for God has deepened. The impact practising Islam has on my inner peace and state of mind is like the greatest medicine.

I want to do my bit to change misconceptions about women in Islam but I can only represent me, not every other Muslim woman. We all have a voice and a story that deserves to be heard.



*I want to do my bit to change misconceptions about women in Islam but I can only represent me, not every other Muslim woman*



## Policy and communications

Staff believe the following four factors are contributing to our pay gap:

- Waltham Forest's employer policies are clear on respecting diversity but not on celebrating diversity.
- Some employees feel senior leaders are not sufficiently voicing commitments on matters of diversity and inclusion.
- Most employees asked were not clear on how best to report incidents of microaggression or biased practise.
- There is lack of clarity amongst employees on what the organisation's ethnicity pay gap is and the approach to tackling it.

### Key findings:

- **64%** of all respondents valued the diversity events the Council offered to staff and residents
- **37%** of all respondents did not feel they could raise microaggressions or biased practices without fear of retaliation (**27%** People of South, East, or South East Asian heritage, **23%** Black people of African, Caribbean or Other Black heritage, **44%** White people of British, Irish or Other White heritage)
- **73%** of all respondents agreed that having a diversity and inclusion strategy was a priority
- **66%** of all respondents felt that the Council should be doing more specifically about our ethnicity pay gap



## Areas of action recommended by our staff:

Through our focus groups and workshops we explored the actions staff felt would make a difference to policy and communications.

**Staff said: The key priority actions they would wish the Council to commit to in our delivery plan are:**

- Develop and communicate a zero tolerance policy on bullying and harassment and build into all relevant policies
- Raise awareness of the different experiences within the terms 'ethnic minority, 'Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic' and 'B.A.M.E.'
- Enhance and expand communication and engagement methods with front line staff
- Senior management, and possibly external, sponsorship of equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives

**Staff said: They felt we could make a difference by taking action to:**

- Intertwine equality, diversity and inclusion into all policies, including the benefits of equality, diversity and inclusion, an implementation plan for our revised policies and clear definition of how employees are held accountable for following policies
- Provide more access to buddies and mentors
- Develop and clearly communicate policies for training and development
- Enhance communication of HR representatives, contacts, vacancies and training
- Communicate how equality, diversity and inclusion will be measured and the impact of actions

# OUR DELIVERY PLAN

## Year one of our ethnicity pay gap strategy

Working collaboratively with staff to explore the reasons and lived experiences behind our ethnicity pay gap we have co-designed a set of actions to address it.

The actions put forward have been developed with staff and reflect what they feel will have the biggest impact. Many of these actions will be delivered through the wider workforce programme developed to deliver this strategy and the People Strategy so that all training, development and action is clearly aligned with action that will tackle our pay gap.

**Our three areas for focused action in Year One are:**

- **Opportunities and progression**
- **Employee experience and wellbeing**
- **Policy and communications**

## Opportunities and progression

Staff say they want to see more diversity in senior management, as well as more inclusive and accessible recruitment, and learning and development opportunities.

**To tackle this, we will:**

### Staff Learning

- Develop training for staff on application and interview skills and make these accessible to all staff

### Manager Development

- Pilot a programme to develop our future middle managers of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage that, builds their strategic management skills and provides them with senior representative mentors and target training where succession planning shows it is needed

- Improve the appraisals process through mandatory training for all managers on enriching and personalising appraisals, to build consistency and quality across the organisation and to ensure a focus on training needs assessments which are employee-led, include skills and progression pathways and improve the governance and moderation processes around appraisals

### Enabling Change

- Make the experience of applying for jobs more inclusive and enabling for more people by:
  - Use of clear language job in profiles and adverts, with specific requirements made clear;
  - Focusing on the skills and knowledge of applicants and not just performance at interview;
  - Providing helpful feedback to unsuccessful applicants
- Ensure recruitment panels have a broad collective perspective and are equipped to facilitate interviews that give applicants the best chance to succeed by:
  - Mandatory diversity and inclusion training for all staff on recruitment panels;
  - Clear standards and expectations for facilitation;
  - Minimum requirements for representation on every recruitment panel;
  - Inviting, and learning from, interviewees' feedback

## Early progress made

- Recruiting for Difference pilots trialled for three senior posts
- All application forms are now anonymous at shortlisting stage
- When Directorate Management Teams are sent indicative appraisal scores for moderation they will receive covering anonymized demographic data too
- Management teams are being encouraged to discuss what sort of performance warrants higher or lower than successful score (or 3) to bring some consistency before moderation
- Mentoring and reverse mentoring schemes enlisted 50 staff members as mentees and 50 staff members as mentors



**Zaheed Hansa,**  
Business Support Officer:

**“I think there needs to be more opportunities that act as stepping stones to new roles, such as secondments and shadowing, so that people like me can build the skills we need to continue progressing and learning.”**

## Employee experience and wellbeing

Staff say they need better support mechanisms in place for dealing with biased practice and microaggression, and that more should be done to prevent these occurring. To tackle this, we will:

### Staff Learning

- Raise awareness of our formal and informal procedures, being clear about explaining what these are, and the support available when reporting discrimination and biased practices,
- Develop and roll out a suite of high quality training on equality, diversity and inclusion for all staff, including bystander intervention training and allyship and raising awareness of the different experiences between people of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage

### Manager Development

- Provide additional training for managers on their role in supporting employee wellbeing, creating safe spaces for courageous conversations, awareness of what amounts to microaggression and its consequences and how to ensure inclusive management and communication

### Enabling Change

- Develop a diverse group of champions and advocates (independently facilitated or supported) for providing signposting, support and advice, where staff can safely raise concerns about microaggressions and biased practises
- Increase take-up of buddies and mentors, offering either or both to all those that wish to have one and encourage manager commitment to being buddies or mentors to others
- Improve exit interviews and the feedback process so all leavers can safely and openly share their experiences, through anonymised questionnaires or one-to-one conversations depending on employee preference

## Early progress made

- Unconscious-bias and microaggression webinars for up to 150 middle and senior managers
- Microaggression workshops for up to 45 senior managers
- Ally and anti-racist allyship workshop for up to 75 middle and senior managers
- Safe Spaces Clinic Champions developed by staff from the Race Equality Network

## Policy and communications

Staff say equality and diversity should be prioritised, with transparency on progress. Internal communication needs to be accessible to all, particularly on development opportunities. To tackle this, we will:

### Staff Learning

- Provide clearer communication of key HR contacts, how to access managers who are trained as advocates and allies, job opportunities and related policies.
- Communication of policies and processes to be more transparent, prominent, and widely accessible to all staff, regardless of role or contract type, specifically expanding communication and engagement methods with front line staff, particularly those who are digitally excluded (email, SAP, Clear Review)



**Mandy Holland-Martin,**  
Head of Placements and  
Supplier Quality:

**"I am a manager of a very diverse team. I once challenged the fact that a recruitment panel I was sitting on was all white. I was a bit nervous about doing that but it led to change and I'm proud of that. We all have a responsibility to speak up to encourage more inclusivity."**

### Manager development

- Intertwine equality, diversity and inclusion into all policies and develop an implementation plan, working with Trade Unions to promote across workforce
- Create and ensure awareness of safe spaces for honest and open discussion about different experiences of staff of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage

### Enabling Change

- Independent assessment of the effectiveness of our actions through a recognised scheme such as the Equalities Framework for Local Government and communicate the progress and gaps in progress, on equality, diversity and inclusion, and the ethnicity pay gap, and the impact of actions against the agreed assessment criteria
- Senior management sponsorship of, and vocal commitment to, equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives
- Implement a zero tolerance policy on bullying and harassment, including protecting our staff from third party bullying and harassment, with clarity on consequences for perpetrators
- Develop and implement specific guidance within whistleblowing policy and other related policies, such as FAW and Conduct, for raising concerns of racial discrimination
- Review effectiveness of Equality Impact Assessments, ensuring they mitigate against unconscious bias and discrimination
- Refine and improve employee recognition policies

### Early progress made

- Ethnicity data and staff insights evidence base
- Monthly newsletter sent to all staff without a Waltham Forest email

# MAKING SURE WE GET IT RIGHT

**We are committed to change, to tackle our ethnicity pay gap, to improve experiences for People of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage in the organisation and do more to embed diversity and inclusion into our culture.**

This strategy, which will be delivered as a critical part of our broader People Strategy, represents a significant opportunity to positively impact on the experience of our staff and address our ethnicity pay gap. We recognise that getting the delivery right and instituting these actions is critical. Each of our actions will be refined through implementation and by monitoring and review, we will ensure accountability. We will monitor, analyse and report on our employee statistics to ensure we are making progress. We will be reporting on a council wide and directorate basis to staff networks and Cabinet every six months.

**For Year One, we will measure and report against the following data and insights:**

-  **Workforce make up**
-  **Appraisals**
-  **Sickness**
-  **Formal procedures**
-  **Progression opportunities**
-  **Recruitment and leavers**
-  **Equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives**
-  **Qualitative data (such as pulse surveys)**

We will build on and develop this strategy after Year One. We will review the strategy and the action plan and work with a representative staff group drawn from our Race Equalities Network and front line staff to evaluate progress on the actions from Year One, to ensure we continue to make progress and hold ourselves accountable to our goals.

We will identify what is and is not working, collaborate with staff to design recommendations and set appropriate priority actions for Year Two.



## STAFF STORY

### Vanna Changlee Principal Social Worker



***Carrying the mantle of race is a huge responsibility, but it's also exhausting. With the murder of George Floyd and the increased profile of the Black Lives Matter Movement, these issues have been escalated in all people's consciousness, not just black people. It's about time!***

***I've been in social work since 2007 and came to Waltham Forest in 2018. Initially I was a manager in the Safeguarding Team supervising and managing staff but in 2019 I was asked to apply for the role of Principal Social Worker.***

I wasn't totally convinced at the time as I thought it might distance me from practice, but when I read the job description I realised how much the role would continue to resonate with the values and principles of social work - developing relationships, respect and trust, acting with integrity and nurturing people. To me, my role is about being a visible leader that my workforce can approach, while also carrying our voices upwards to ensure senior managers can hear us - it's one of the best moves I've ever made.

I came to the UK with my mum in the 1960s as part of the Windrush Generation. We lived in very basic conditions with family members, but I was exposed to such diverse experiences in my community and at school and there was a really strong sense of community. Transitioning to secondary school was hard because black children, were not seen as those who would succeed and I was never provided with any guidance on how to start my career in social work.

When I went to university at 20 years old, I entered a white-dominated environment and naturally gravitated towards my black peers for friendship - the majority of whom lived in London like I did. These were the years of Thatcher, austerity, miner's strikes and black men dying in custody and I became politicised by the events happening around me.

When I graduated in 1982, I didn't want to do a 2 year course to become a social worker so instead I just kept on working directly with the communities I cared about, young people in particular, but my interests also grew around women's health, HIV and AIDS.

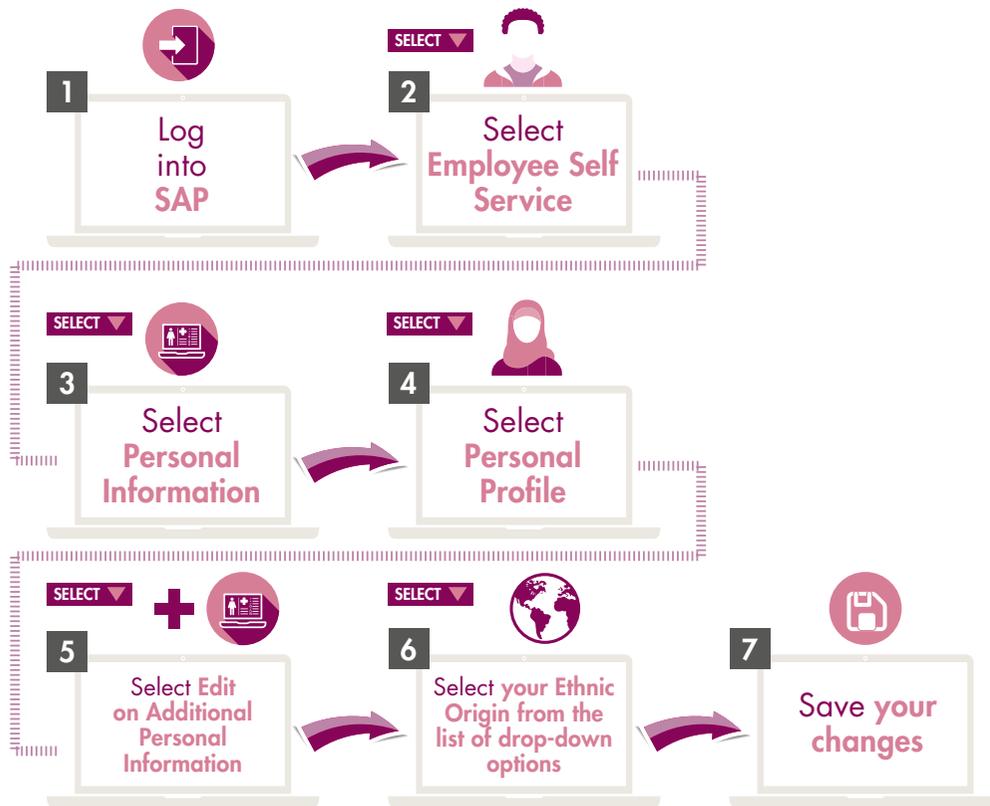
It would be more than 20 years until I found a graduate scheme that would support me financially to complete my formal social work qualification and progress my career to the next stage.

As a black woman, finding my place, my voice and people who reflect me in all positions of seniority in the workplace is really important - but this has generally not been my experience, making me feel lonely at times. But what has been really helpful over the past 6 months is the setting up of the Race Equality Network.

I believe it has such potential to change things for Black, Asian and other minority ethnic staff, as it not only provides a much needed space to share experiences and stories, but also gives us a platform to engender real change - beyond words.

# SELF REPORTING YOUR ETHNICITY

## How to self report your ethnicity



If you do not have access to SAP, you can email [hr@walthamforest.gov.uk](mailto:hr@walthamforest.gov.uk) and request they update your employee information to include your ethnicity.

Any personal data staff share with us is treated sensitively and in line with data protection legislation. Where it is used in analysis or for reports, self-reported data is aggregated to ensure anonymity.

The data in this report is based on information from those who have chosen to self-report their ethnicity.

It is impossible to report our ethnicity pay gap without data on the profile of our staff and this information is vital for us to embed equality, diversity and inclusion in organisational culture and change.

It is important to remember that it is your choice whether to self report your ethnicity, any information provided is voluntary. We are pleased that a growing proportion of our workforce are happy to share their ethnicity and we will continue to work hard on improving this.

## Anonymously share concerns with self reporting your ethnicity

You do not have to self-report your ethnicity, it is your choice. If you feel uncomfortable about self-reporting, we would really like to understand why this is so we can help with your concerns. **Please consider sharing your thoughts with us**

**By using your smartphone camera to scan the QR code.**



# ANNEX – DEFINITIONS OF GROUPS

In the Ethnicity Pay Gap Strategy, when talking about the findings from staff insights and workforce data analysis we have used the following descriptions. Listed under each description are all the related categories that staff may have selected when taking part in insight gathering exercises, and that are existing categories in workforce data collection.

## People of African or Caribbean, Asian or Mixed heritage

Asian/Asian British – Indian  
Asian/Asian British – Pakistani  
Asian/Asian British – Bangladeshi  
Asian/Asian British - Chinese  
Any other Asian background  
Black/Black British – African  
Black/Black British – Caribbean  
Any other Black / African / Caribbean background  
Other ethnic group – Arab  
Other ethnic group  
White and Black Caribbean  
White and Black African  
White and Asian  
Any other Mixed / multiple ethnic background

## White people of British, Irish or Other White heritage

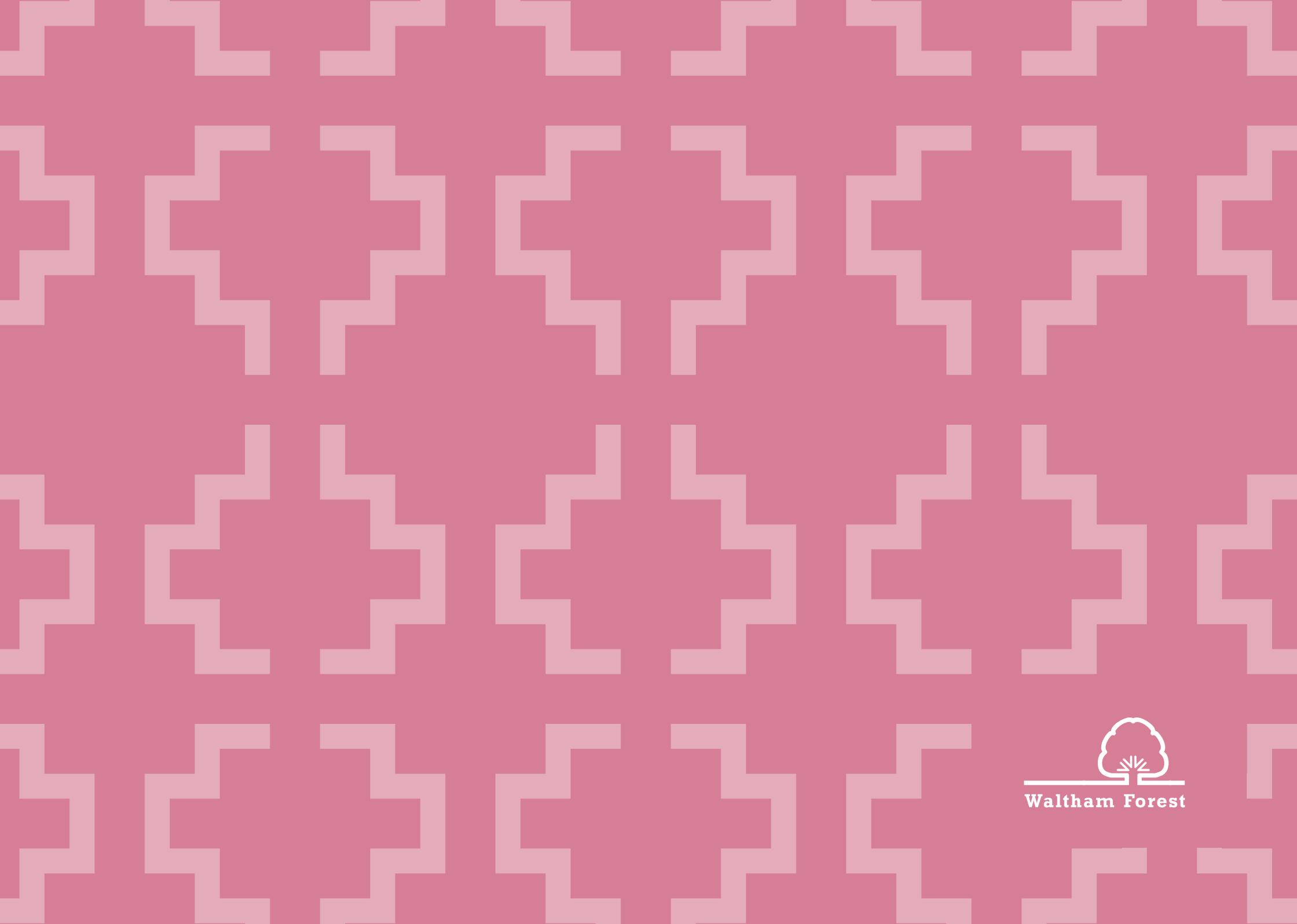
White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British  
White Irish  
White Central or Eastern European  
White Western European  
Any other White background

## People of South, East, or South East Asian heritage

Asian/Asian British – Indian  
Asian/Asian British – Pakistani  
Asian/Asian British – Bangladeshi  
Asian/Asian British - Chinese  
Any other Asian background

## Black people of African, Caribbean or Other Black heritage

Black British – African  
Black British – Caribbean  
Any other Black / African / Caribbean background



Waltham Forest