



## BRIEFING

# RACE AT WORK: COMMITMENT THREE

Commit at board level  
to zero tolerance of  
harassment and  
bullying





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## Race at Work Commitment Three

### Commit at board level to zero tolerance of harassment and bullying

Leaders at the top commit to tackling racial harassment and bullying with internal and external stakeholders. In Business in the Community's (BITC) Race at Work survey 2025, one in five Black, Asian, Mixed Race, and other ethnically diverse employees (20%) reported having witnessed or experienced racial harassment or bullying from managers and 22% reported it from customers, clients, service users, and contractors.

### Trends and insights

BITC's Race at Work survey 2025 found ethnically diverse employees are about twice as likely as White employees to have witnessed or experienced racial harassment or bullying at work in the last two years. This includes experiencing or witnessing it from managers (20% of ethnically diverse employees vs. 11% of White employees), colleagues (27% of ethnically diverse employees vs. 14% of White employees), and customers/clients (30% of ethnically diverse employees vs. 17% of White employees).

Ethnically diverse employees are also nearly three times more likely to have witnessed or experienced racial harassment or bullying from contractors (14% vs. 5% of White employees).

It is important that all organisations stand firm against **any form of racial harassment, bullying, or discrimination regardless of the perpetrator's seniority**. It should not be tolerated. This should apply to employees, contractors, and stakeholders, from entry-level staff to executive leadership.

- **Confidential reporting mechanisms** and clear procedures are really important. Employees should feel safe and supported when raising concerns. Messages about your commitment can be used to ensure all the employees in your organisation know that there is a **confidential and accessible reporting process**. Insights from BITC's Race at Work survey 2025 found that three in five (58%) say their employer provides information, advice, and/or support to encourage employees to call out racial or sexual harassment or bullying in the workplace.

- **Ensure sustained commitment and oversight with a dedicated Board-level or senior champion** appointed to lead efforts against racial harassment and bullying. This individual can monitor and review policy effectiveness, ensure practices remain responsive to emerging trends and employee feedback and advocate for an inclusive culture across all levels of the organisation. BITC's Race at Work insights found that from 2015 to 2025 the percentage of organisations that have at least one senior leader and/or champion who actively promotes equality and fairness has increased from 32% to 53%, further increasing to 61% for large employers.
- A quarter of England's future workforce come from ethnically diverse backgrounds, prioritising their employment not only ensures fair access to opportunity but also helps businesses address skills gaps and secure future talent pipelines. However, workplace discrimination remains a serious issue. Youth Futures Foundation found that many young people do not report incidents, with 79% choosing not to raise concerns, and almost three-quarters (73%) who experience discrimination seeking opportunities elsewhere or leaving their sector entirely.<sup>i</sup>
- The BITC Race at Work data also found that the 18-24 age group were the most likely to report experiencing or witnessing racial bullying and harassment (29%) and sexual harassment (23%). They were also less likely to know their organisations reporting process: 38% of 18-24-year-olds cited not knowing it, compared to 25% of those aged 55+.

## **Actions to stamp out bullying and racial harassment**

This briefing paper has 10 tips for employers to stamp out racial harassment and bullying in the workplace. It is important to not just comply with policy, but to foster a truly inclusive workplace environment.

### **1. Establish a zero-tolerance policy**

- Clearly define racial harassment and bullying in your anti-harassment policy.
- Make it known that such behaviour will result in disciplinary action, regardless of seniority.
- **Confidential reporting mechanisms** and clear procedures are vital. Employees must feel safe and supported when raising concerns. Research demonstrates that 81% of

employees in organisations that prioritise equity, diversity, and inclusion feel a sense of belonging and safety, compared with just 53% in less inclusive organisations. Continuously reaffirming your commitment ensures all employees in your organisation know that **these mechanisms are accessible and can be trusted.** <sup>ii</sup>

## 2. Train all employees, especially managers and leaders

- Provide training on racial bias, microaggressions, and inclusive behaviour. This can be a mixture of learning methods and from virtual online training to impactful drama. Act proportionate to the challenge in your organisation.
- Equip managers to recognise and respond to incidents effectively. Provide check in spaces for managers to obtain support to navigate any issues as they arise.
- **30%** of employees are aware that their manager has received formal training. These employees are significantly more likely to feel supported (**87% vs. 38% of employees who are not aware of any formal training**), fairly treated (**90% vs. 47% of those who are not aware of formal training**), and that they can be themselves at work (**91% vs. 55% of those who are not aware of training**). <sup>iii</sup>

## 3. Communicate your organisation's commitment

- Regularly reinforce your stance through internal communications, leadership messaging, and induction materials.
- Share real examples of action taken to build trust that your organisation will take complaints seriously.
- Engage multiple stakeholders to communicate your commitment. This can include Trade Unions and network chairs as well as executive sponsors.

## 4. Create safe reporting channels

- Offer anonymous and transparent ways for employees to report incidents. This could include an anonymous helpline. BITC's Race at Work survey 2025 discovered that over

half of employees (54%) say they would be more likely to report racial bullying and harassment if they could do so anonymously.

- Ensure complaints are handled swiftly and fairly. Be transparent about when someone who has made a complaint will know about the next steps. Ensure that new employees are aware of the processes for reporting an incident during their induction and in relevant induction materials. Line managers of young people should ensure an 'open door' policy is emphasised to encourage dialogue early if any concerns arise.

## **5. Monitor, review, and share data**

- Track complaints, resolution timelines, and demographic patterns.
- Use this data to identify trends and improve interventions. Identify units and teams with good practise who can share examples of how they are creating an inclusive culture of belonging.

## **6. Appoint senior champions**

- Designate senior leaders to advocate for racial inclusion and fairness and respond to concerns.
- Encourage and train staff to stand in solidarity and to be allies, ground-level, and local champions who support affected colleagues.
- Ensure sustained commitment and oversight with a dedicated board-level or senior champion appointed to lead efforts against racial harassment and bullying.

## **7. Talk openly about race**

- The BITC Race at Work 2025 survey found a disappointing reduction in employees feeling comfortable talking about race in the workplace. From 2021 to 2025, there was a large drop from 41% of employees agreeing with this statement to 33%.
- This reduction in comfort demonstrates that it is important to create spaces for employees to have conversations around race, identity, and belonging.
- Address inappropriate language or 'banter' that may cause harm and support employees to 'speak up' if they observe inappropriate language or behaviour.

## **8. Establish and support employee resource groups and networks**

- Support race-focused employee resource groups with time, funding, and leadership access so that stories or current challenges can be shared directly with leaders.
- Convene listening circles following employee survey results if any concerning insights emerge. Use these insights to shape policy and culture.

## 9. Embed Inclusion in performance metrics

- Make inclusive leadership part of manager KPIs. BITC's Race at Work survey 2025 insights found that half (50%) of employees say they have a performance objective to promote equality at work, an increase from the 34% in 2021 and, overall, the largest proportion of employees who said they have one since 2015.
- Recognise teams that demonstrate progress on inclusion and belonging. For example, feedback from employee surveys can be examined by demographic group to ensure there are no gaps in perception of feeling valued and included by individuals and in teams.

## 10. Prioritise wellbeing and support

- Offer counselling and wellbeing resources for those affected. If you have connection to an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) this should be clearly signposted and easy to access.
- Recognise the emotional toll, respond with empathy, and explore opportunities for mediation.

A full toolkit with best practice ideas on what action can be taken to build a strategy and how an anti-racial harassment policy can strengthen workplace culture, will be updated with Race at Work 2025 insights in 2026. It will be free to access and include insights that can provide further support.

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<sup>i</sup> [Youth Futures Annual Review 2024](#)

<sup>ii</sup> [Walking the Walk: Managers, Inclusivity and Organisational Success Report](#)

<sup>iii</sup> [Walking the Walk: Managers, Inclusivity and Organisational Success Infographic](#)



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