

GUIDE

TACKLING BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

Make every workplace safe,
valued and inclusive.

Executive Summary

This toolkit makes a clear case for urgent, sustained action to eliminate racial harassment and bullying from UK workplaces. Grounded in Race at Work insights and aligned with the Race at Work Charter commitment to zero tolerance, it provides employers with a practical framework to move beyond policy statements and create cultures where every employee feels safe, valued and able to belong.

Across six action areas, the guide calls on organisations to strengthen policies, engage leaders, equip managers and employees, communicate expectations clearly, simplify reporting, and use data transparently to drive accountability. Its

central message is direct: racial harassment must not simply be condemned; it must be confronted, dismantled and prevented through visible leadership, measurable action and collective responsibility.

About the Race at Work 2025 Survey

The Race at Work 2025 Survey was conducted online by YouGov Plc between 4 August and 11 September 2025, with 5,526 adults in the UK taking part. Results were weighted to be representative of the relevant UK population by ethnicity, business size, working status and region. YouGov provided the survey data, with analysis and interpretation undertaken by Business in the Community.



Introduction

This toolkit is designed to empower organisations across the business, public, and charitable sectors to foster a workplace culture rooted in fairness, inclusion, and respect. It offers practical guidance to deepen understanding and strengthen responses to racial harassment and bullying in the workplace.

As we mark the 30th anniversary of the race campaign, the Race at Work Charter has been reset to reflect today's challenges and opportunities. It calls on inclusive leaders and employers to support young people's pathways into work and enterprise.

We believe that when a young person enters the workplace, they should be welcomed into an environment where they feel safe, valued, and have a true sense of belonging. This toolkit has been refreshed and updated with the latest Race at Work 2025 insights to support employers to deliver Charter Commitment Three: commit at board level to zero tolerance of harassment and bullying.

The case for action

Over the past decade, consistent data has revealed a stubborn and persistent pattern: racial harassment and bullying continue to affect employees across the UK. Every Race at Work survey from 2015 to 2025 has highlighted this issue. It is time for employers to stamp it out of workplaces.

Meaningful change demands more than policy: it requires inclusive leadership, visible commitment from the top, and sustained action. This resource provides a framework for employers to:

- Evaluate and strengthen their policies and practices.
- Promote a culture of zero tolerance.
- Equip leaders and teams to recognise, prevent, and respond to racial harassment and bullying.

None of us chose our race, colour, ethnicity or nationality at birth, so let's embrace the fact that we share this planet, our workplaces and our teams. Let's create workplaces where every team member, manager, and leader feels valued and safe, and empowered to contribute in an environment free from harassment and bullying in all its forms.

Together, we can build organisations that succeed and say clearly: we don't just condemn racial harassment; we confront it, we dismantle it, and we prevent it.



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Race Equality Director
Business in the Community

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1. Create a policy

Overview

To create a truly inclusive workplace, organisations must develop a comprehensive Anti-Bullying and Dignity at Work Policy that clearly defines and actively addresses racial discrimination, harassment, and bullying. This policy should serve as a cornerstone of your organisational culture, reinforcing that racism in any form will not be tolerated, regardless of who the perpetrator is.

The policy must:

- Provide **clear definitions** of racial discrimination, harassment, and bullying.
- Include **real-life examples** to illustrate unacceptable behaviours.
- Align with the **Equality Act 2010**, explicitly referencing all protected characteristics.
- Be **accessible, actionable**, and embedded across all levels of the organisation.



It seems everything is only on paper and in policies; when it comes to the real world, nothing changes. Organisations really struggle to implement the policies on ground level. Also, there are a lot of nuances in every organisation that are beyond its control.

Race at Work 2025 survey respondent



Actions to bring your policy to life

Transform your policy from words on a page into a living, breathing commitment through these practical steps:

Embed zero tolerance in core values

- Integrate a zero-tolerance stance on racial harassment and bullying into your employer values, employee handbooks, onboarding materials, and internal communications.
- Reinforce this message regularly through leadership statements, training, and visible signage.

Monitor impact through staff surveys

- Include specific, direct questions on racial harassment and bullying in your employee engagement surveys to assess the policy's effectiveness and uncover hidden issues.
- Use the data to inform continuous improvement and targeted interventions.

Extend accountability beyond your walls

- Share your policy with external stakeholders, including contractors, suppliers, clients, and customers.
- Make it clear that respectful conduct is expected from everyone who interacts with your organisation.

Provide clear, relatable examples

- Include examples such as:
 - Racially charged jokes or "banter"
 - Derogatory comments like "go home" or mocking accents
 - Exclusion from opportunities based on race or ethnicity
- Help employees recognise subtle and overt forms of racial bullying and harassment.

Create a cross-race dialogue group

- Establish a dedicated project group that includes both White and Black, Asian, Mixed Race and ethnically diverse employees.
- Use this space to foster open conversations about race, share lived experiences and co-create strategies to bring the policy to life.

Align with the Equality Act 2010

- Ensure your policy explicitly references all protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, reinforcing your legal and ethical commitment to fairness and equality.

Advanced actions to consider

Strengthen Accountability: understand the true cost of inaction

To drive meaningful change and ensure your policies are not just symbolic but effective, organisations must commit to ongoing evaluation and transparency in addressing racial harassment and bullying.

Complete an annual policy review and include data-driven monitoring

- Conduct a formal annual review of your racial harassment and bullying policies.
- Monitor and analyse complaint trends by demographic groups to identify patterns, disparities, and areas requiring targeted intervention.
- Use this data to inform policy updates, training needs, and leadership accountability.

Insight-driven reviews ensure your policies remain responsive, relevant, and rooted in lived experiences.

Understand the business impact of racial harassment and bullying

Racial harassment and bullying are not only moral and legal failures; they also carry a significant cost to your organisation. Make these impacts visible and measurable:

Cost Factor	Impact on Business
Increased sick leave	Absenteeism due to stress, anxiety, and trauma reduces workforce availability.
Higher staff turnover	Loss of talent leads to recruitment costs and disruption to team continuity.
Reduced productivity	Stress and low morale diminish focus, creativity, and performance.
Team dysfunction	Toxic environments erode collaboration and trust, affecting overall team output.
Cost of formal mediation	Time and resources are spent resolving conflicts through HR or legal channels.
Reputational risk	Public exposure of racial incidents can damage brand trust and stakeholder confidence.

Quantifying these costs helps build a compelling case for proactive investment in inclusion, wellbeing, and culture change.

By embedding regular reviews and articulating the tangible costs of racial harassment and bullying, your organisation demonstrates **strategic leadership, ethical responsibility, and a commitment to sustainable success.**

2. Engage leaders and stakeholders

Overview

Leadership Commitment: turning policy into action

Visible, sustained leadership from the top is essential to transform anti-racism policies into meaningful, everyday practice. Without senior-level ownership, even the most well-crafted policies risk becoming symbolic gestures rather than catalysts for change.

Race at Work 2025 found that overall, the proportion who say they have witnessed and/or experienced racial harassment or bullying at work over the last two years has remained consistent, but **there has been a rise in 18 to 24-year-olds reporting racial harassment or bullying.**

Over half of employees (**58%**) state their organisations provide information and/or support to encourage employees to call out racial or sexual harassment or bullying in the workplace.

Ethnically diverse employees report higher levels of witnessing and/or experiencing sexual harassment or bullying, including from colleagues (18% vs 14% of White employees) and customers or clients (17% vs 12%).

Young people aged 18 to 24 are also more likely than all other age groups to say they have witnessed or experienced racist or sexual harassment or bullying in the last two years.



"Diversity in all forms is visible and championed by senior management. Staff networks are regularly invited to participate in monthly staff calls hosted by senior management. I would like them to hold lower/middle management accountable."

Race at Work 2025 survey respondent

Lead from the front

- Senior leaders must set the tone by taking decisive, visible action when incidents of racial harassment and bullying occur.
- Respond swiftly and transparently, demonstrating the organisation's zero-tolerance stance.
- Model the behaviours expected across the organisation, empowering managers at all levels to call out negative behaviours rather than remain passive bystanders.

Cascade commitment across all levels

- Ensure senior buy-in is cascaded throughout the organisation, reaching every manager, supervisor, and team lead.
- Equip leaders with the tools, training, and confidence to recognise, challenge, and respond to racial harassment and bullying.
- Embed expectations into performance reviews, leadership development, and cultural metrics.

The Danger of Denial

- Some employers may deny the existence of racial harassment and bullying due to fear of reputational damage or punitive consequences (Giga et al., 2008).ⁱ
- Denial perpetuates a toxic culture of silence, where employees, especially those from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, feel unsafe and unsupported.
- Acknowledging the issue is the first step toward building trust and psychological safety.

Recognise all perpetrators

- Research shows that ethnically diverse employees are more likely to report clients as perpetrators of bullying than their White counterparts (Hoel, 2002).ⁱⁱ
- Organisations must ensure that external actors, including clients, customers, and contractors, are held to the same behavioural standards as employees.

Ensure equal attention to all forms of harassment

- Incidents of racial harassment and bullying must be treated with the same seriousness as any other form of misconduct.
- A consistent, well-communicated response, backed by meaningful follow-up actions, helps guard against perceptions of tokenism or lip service.

Youth Futures Foundation's Discrimination and Work report (2024) found that **discrimination undermines the confidence of ethnically diverse young people**, with women experiencing particularly acute effects.ⁱⁱⁱ

Race at Work 2025 found that one in four respondents had experienced or witnessed sexual harassment or bullying at work in the previous two years.

By demonstrating courageous leadership, fostering open dialogue, and enforcing accountability at every level, organisations can **build a culture where respect is the standard and silence is no longer an option.**

Actions to take

Leadership accountability and structural action against racial harassment and bullying

Creating a workplace free from racial harassment and bullying requires bold leadership, clear messaging, and systemic safeguards. These actions ensure that anti-racism is not just a value but a lived reality across all levels of the organisation.

Deliver clear, consistent messages from leadership

- Ensure leaders fully understand the nature, impact, and consequences of racial harassment and bullying.
- Communicate a zero-tolerance stance through consistent, visible messaging in leadership briefings, internal communications, and public statements.
- Reinforce that non-inclusive behaviour will not be excused or overlooked, regardless of role or seniority.

Appoint a board-level champion to review bullying and harassment trends and cases

- Designate an anti-harassment and bullying champion at board level, with explicit backing from the Chief Executive.
- This role must have the authority to:
 - Escalate complaints directly to the board
 - Monitor trends and outcomes
 - Influence policy and culture across the organisation
- This visibility sends a powerful message: every complaint matters, and accountability reaches the highest levels.

Knowing that complaints are escalated to board level may deter harmful behaviours and encourage a culture of respect.

Ensure senior-level investigations

- Investigations into racial harassment or bullying must be conducted by individuals of appropriate seniority—especially when the accused is a senior manager or leader.



- If no suitable HR leader is available, consider appointing a senior leader from another business unit to ensure:
 - Impartiality
 - Empowerment to act
 - Credibility of the process
- A junior investigator may feel unable to challenge senior figures, undermining the integrity of the investigation.

Engage Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) and Networks

- Actively consult Employee Network Groups (ERGs) and Business Resource Groups on policy development, implementation, and review.
- These groups offer lived experience, insight, and credibility, helping shape policies that resonate and protect.

Protect employees from external abuse

- Address manager disempowerment by ensuring customers and clients are held to behavioural standards.
- Publish a Customer Code of Conduct that outlines expectations for respectful behaviour and procedures for managing breaches.
- Make it clear in leadership communications: the customer is not always right – especially when they are racially abusive to staff or others.

Embed respect in Procurement Agreements

- Ensure all procurement contracts with external contractors include a clause committing to:
 - Treat their own employees and yours with dignity and respect
 - Uphold anti-harassment and anti-bullying standards

- This extends your values beyond your walls and reinforces a culture of accountability across your supply chain.

By taking these actions, organisations demonstrate that **anti-racism is not optional; it is operational**. Leadership must not only speak out, but **build systems that protect, empower, and transform**.

Advanced actions to consider

Empower employees, drive accountability, and foster inclusive dialogue

Creating a workplace free from racial harassment and bullying requires active allyship and solidarity, measurable leadership accountability, and open communication. These actions help build a culture where every employee feels safe, heard, and supported.

Build a solidarity network of trusted colleagues

- Encourage employees to volunteer as trained allies who will stand with colleagues in solidarity, acting as trusted individuals who are available to listen, support and guide colleagues who have experienced or witnessed racial harassment or bullying.
- Allies should be equipped with basic training in active listening, confidentiality, and signposting to formal support channels.
- Promote the programme visibly to ensure employees know where to turn when they need someone to talk to.

Solidarity partners create a bridge between informal support and formal reporting, helping foster psychological safety.

Embed accountability through KPIs

- Require Heads of Units and Department Leaders to include Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) focused on reducing racial harassment and bullying.
- Use employee opinion survey results and complaint trends as measurable indicators of progress.
- Link these KPIs to performance reviews and leadership development to reinforce their importance.

What gets measured gets managed, and what gets managed improves.

Report data transparently to leadership

- Regularly report data on:
 - The nature and frequency of complaints
 - The demographic diversity of employees raising concerns
- Share this data with the Board, Executive Committee and HR Director to ensure:
 - Strategic oversight
 - Targeted interventions
 - Accountability at the highest levels
- Transparency drives trust and enables leaders to respond with informed action.

Navigate multilingual workplaces with sensitivity

- Collaborate with employees and wider staff groups to co-create a respectful, inclusive policy on speaking languages other than English in the workplace.
- Acknowledge the complexity of this issue in global and multicultural environments, balancing:
 - Inclusion and belonging
 - Operational clarity
 - Cultural respect

A thoughtful, co-created policy helps avoid misunderstandings and fosters mutual respect.

Equip employees to call out inappropriate behaviour

- Provide training, guidance, and practical tools to empower employees to safely challenge inappropriate words or behaviours when they witness them.
- Reinforce that calling out racism is not confrontational; it's courageous.
- Create a culture where bystanders become upstanders, and silence is no longer the default.

Empowered employees are the frontline of cultural change. Together, these actions build a workplace where **solidarity is active, accountability is measurable, and inclusion is intentional.**

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“It would also be great if the organisation supported cultural awareness events and encouraged staff from all backgrounds to get involved in shaping inclusive policies”

Race at Work 2025 survey respondent



3. Training and support

Overview

Equip managers to lead with fairness, dignity, and inclusion

Effective implementation of your organisation's Anti-Bullying and Dignity at Work Policy hinges on how well managers are trained to recognise, prevent, and respond to racial harassment and bullying. Managers are not just operational leaders; their actions shape the daily experiences of employees.

Train managers to be inclusive leaders

Deliver targeted training programmes that equip managers with the skills to:

- Implement anti-bullying policies with confidence and consistency
- Recognise the signs of racial harassment and bullying
- Respond appropriately and sensitively to complaints
- Create psychologically safe environments for all team members

Training should be regularly refreshed and tailored to reflect the diverse lived experiences of employees.

Address the challenge of performance management

One of the most complex areas for middle managers is managing poor performance. Managers must ensure that they uphold standards fairly and consistently, without disproportionately scrutinising employees from ethnically diverse backgrounds compared to White employees. Voices from the Race at Work Surveys 2024 identified this as an issue.^{iv}

To prevent this, provide a clear, standardised checklist of management responsibilities that:

- Outlines fair and consistent performance management practices
- Applies equally to all team members
- Is transparent and accessible to employees, so they can understand how they are being managed and hold leadership accountable to organisational standards
- Transparency builds trust and helps to break down perceptions of bias or unfair treatment.

Recognise intersectional experiences

- Different ethnic minority groups experience distinct forms of bullying (Hoel, 2002), and Black, Asian, Mixed Race and ethnically diverse women and older ethnically diverse employees often face a 'double jeopardy' – experiencing compounded discrimination based on race, gender, and age.
- Training programmes must reflect these intersectional realities, ensuring managers understand how identity shapes experience and risk.

Embed Public Sector Duty awareness

- For public sector organisations, training must include awareness of the Public Sector Equality Duty, including:
 - The importance of Equality Impact Assessments
 - How policies on harassment and bullying align with broader commitments to fairness and inclusion

This ensures compliance and reinforces the organisation's role as a leader in public accountability.

Encourage a culture of transparency and challenge

- Create an environment where employees feel safe to challenge inconsistency in management practices without fear of being labelled as difficult or disruptive.
- Encourage open dialogue and constructive questioning, especially around:
 - Access to training and development opportunities
 - Fairness in performance reviews and promotions

Use these questions as opportunities to review internal processes, identify gaps, and communicate clearly how opportunities are shared equitably.

By investing in inclusive leadership training, transparent management standards, and open dialogue, organisations can build a culture where **fairness is the norm, and every employee feels seen, respected, and empowered.**

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We have training and workshops to raise awareness and reduce unconscious bias, employee resource groups and networks that offer community and support. Also, Mentorship programmes to help underrepresented employees grow and advance.

Race at Work 2025 survey respondent

Actions to take

Equip managers to lead fairly, inclusively, and responsively

To build a workplace where racial harassment and bullying are actively prevented, organisations must ensure that managers are trained, supported, and held accountable for creating environments rooted in respect and appreciation of difference.

Bias-free performance management

- Provide clear, structured guidance for managers on conducting appraisals, performance reviews, and personal development planning.
- Include explicit reminders to guard against conscious and unconscious bias related to an employee's ethnicity, culture, or religious identity.
- Challenge harmful assumptions, for example:
 - Assuming Asian women with children or religious dress are not interested in high-profile projects
 - Using stereotypical language in appraisals, such as labelling Black women as "aggressive" when they are simply assertive, engaged, and contributing ideas

Fair and inclusive evaluations are essential to retaining talent and building trust.

Train managers to lead diverse teams effectively

- Deliver training that helps managers understand their responsibility to lead with respect, and how diverse perspectives enhance team performance.

- Emphasise the value of cultural competence, empathy, and inclusive communication in day-to-day leadership.

Responding to racial harassment and bullying

- Integrate training on how to recognise, respond to, and report racial harassment and bullying into:
 - New manager induction and onboarding
 - Line management
 - Appraisal guidance
 - Customer service and engagement training

Training should cover:

- What constitutes bullying and harassment
- How to identify subtle and overt behaviours that may lead to racial incidents
- How to stand up for team members and intervene appropriately

Managers must be equipped to act and intervene, not just observe.

Training for all employees

It is your organisation and your values. You must set the tone for both existing employees and new employees joining the organisation. Receiving such training as part of their induction will help the new starters feel they are joining a great organisation that respects and values all its employees.

- Provide mandatory training and awareness materials for all staff to reinforce expectations around acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

- Include interactive group activities using business-related scenarios to develop practical responses and recommended actions.
 - Spotlight the history of racism in the UK.
 - Explain why legislation was necessary to protect ethnically diverse employees' rights and ensure workplace equality and fairness.
 - Share real stories and survey data to humanise the issue and reaffirm your organisation's commitment.

Reflect different experiences in training content

- Ensure training reflects the varied experiences of different ethnically diverse groups, including intersectional challenges faced by ethnically diverse women, older workers, and religious minorities. Misogynoir 2024, published by the Runnymede Trust, is a powerful summary of the experiences of many Black women in the workplace.^v
- Use real case studies and employee quotes to bring the issue to life and deepen empathy.

Establish a racial harassment and bullying advisor network

- Create and train an internal network of Racial Harassment and Bullying Advisors who:
 - Provide informal support, guidance and a listening ear to peers
 - Act as trusted points of contact for concerns and questions
 - Report insights and emerging trends to the Board-level champion and executive sponsor to inform strategic action.

This network can strengthen early intervention and mediation and build a culture of peer support. Education,

awareness and conversation are key to dismantling defensiveness and building shared understanding.

By embedding these practices, organisations send a clear message: **we are committed to equality, respect, fairness, accountability and action, not just intention.**

Advanced actions to take

Humanise the issue, strengthen leadership, and build fair performance cultures

To truly embed anti-racism and dignity at work, organisations must go beyond policy and create immersive, emotionally resonant experiences that shift mindsets, build empathy, and equip managers to lead inclusively and fairly.

Share real voices from your workforce

- Use anonymous quotes and testimonials from employees who have experienced racial harassment or bullying to highlight the real-life impact.
- Consider using audio recordings to bring these stories to life, allowing listeners to hear tone, emotion, and authenticity.
- These voices can be shared in training sessions, internal campaigns, or leadership briefings to deepen understanding and urgency.

Real stories build empathy and make the invisible visible.

- Use video and drama to illustrate impact
- Develop or source short films, role plays, or dramatic reenactments that show how racial harassment and bullying affect:
 - Individual performance
 - Mental and physical health
 - Team morale and productivity

- Use these tools in training to spark discussion, reflection, and action.
- Drama can powerfully convey the emotional toll and ripple effects of workplace racism.

Embed inclusive leadership in training

- Ensure all inclusive leadership training includes modules on:
 - Leading teams free from racial harassment and bullying
 - Creating psychologically safe environments
 - Addressing bias and microaggressions
- Reinforce that inclusive leadership is essential to team success and organisational integrity.

Support managers in fair performance management

Provide line managers with structured support to manage performance fairly and effectively:

- Use SMART objectives to set clear expectations.
- Offer ongoing, timely feedback on tasks and progress.

- Ensure employees are aware of training and development opportunities.
- Establish transparent standards, measurable milestones, and agreed timelines for all team members.

Guard against stereotypes in performance perceptions

- Develop guidance for managers and leaders to help them:
 - Recognise and challenge stereotypes that may influence perceptions of performance.
 - Avoid biased assumptions based on ethnicity, culture, gender or religion.
 - Align this guidance with appraisal and review protocols to ensure consistency and fairness.

Stereotypes can silently shape decisions; training must help managers see and stop this.

By combining **emotional storytelling, practical tools, and leadership accountability**, organisations can create a culture where **performance is judged fairly, voices are heard, and inclusion is actively lived.**



4. Communicate commitment to employees

Overview

Zero Tolerance must be more than words. Creating an inclusive workplace begins with unambiguous, consistent messaging from the top, but it must be backed by visible action at every level of the organisation.

Set the Tone from the Top

- Senior leaders must deliver clear, unwavering messages that racial harassment, bullying, and all forms of discrimination are not tolerated under any circumstances.
- These messages must be frequent, visible, and embedded in organisational values, not just policy documents.
- Crucially, leaders must model the behaviour they expect by challenging unacceptable conduct, supporting victims, and holding perpetrators accountable.

Culture is shaped by what leaders walk past and what they stand up for.

Everyone must walk the talk

- Zero tolerance is not just a leadership mantra; it must be actively upheld by managers and employees alike.
- Equip teams with the confidence and tools to challenge inappropriate behaviour, intervene safely, and support colleagues.

- Celebrate examples of positive intervention to reinforce a culture of courage and allyship.

Silence in the face of discrimination is complicity. **Empower everyone to speak up.**



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“They host events to promote learning about other people’s cultures, and senior management take part, which makes it nice to know that they make an effort to show interest.”

Race at Work 2025 survey respondent

Ensure policies are inclusive and promote fairness

- Policies must be explicitly inclusive, ensuring that all employees – regardless of ethnicity – feel safe to report concerns.
- Reinforce that dignity at work is a right for all
- Provide safe, confidential reporting channels for everyone.

Respond to social context and legislative gaps

- Recognise the impact of external events – such as the 2024 riots and recall the powerful role of allies acting in solidarity, coming out onto streets across the UK saying, no more, not in our name.
- Ensure strong adherence to current legislation and reinforce existing equality duties to protect employees and uphold justice.
- Use data and lived experience insights to inform policy updates and training.

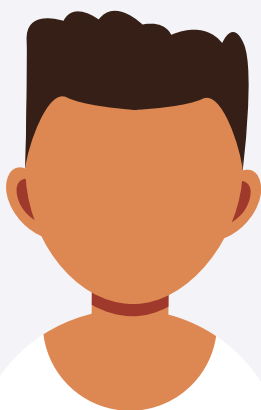
Empower employees to speak out

- Ensure all employees understand that witnessing bullying or harassment is not neutral; it can cause real psychological harm both to those experiencing it and those who witness it.
- Create a culture where bystanders feel safe and supported to report incidents, even if they are not directly affected.
- Train teams on active bystander strategies and provide clear reporting pathways.

By combining **bold leadership, inclusive policy development** and implementation and **collective responsibility**, organisations can move beyond performative statements and build workplaces and teams where everyone feels they are valued and belong.

Race at Work 2025 found that nearly three-fifths (**58%**) of employees said their employer provides information, advice and/or support to encourage employees to call out racial harassment and bullying in the workplace, **up from 48%** in 2021.

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A good portion of the senior leadership team are people of colour or immigrants to the UK, we have open conversations in the office and in meetings about race and ethnicity

Race at Work 2025 survey respondent

Actions to take

Communicating commitment and driving change

Creating a workplace free from racial harassment and bullying requires visible leadership, transparent reporting and a culture of shared responsibility. These practical actions will help embed your commitment into the fabric of your organisation.

1. Embed Values from Day One

- Include your organisation's anti-racism values and zero-tolerance policy in all induction materials for new employees.
- Reinforce that inclusion is not a slogan; it is a standard.

2. Promote Individual Responsibility

- Empower every employee to be a guardian of inclusion.
- Make it clear that everyone has a duty to challenge inappropriate behaviour, not ignore it.

3. Communicate reporting pathways clearly

- Provide accessible, multi-channel reporting mechanisms, formal and informal.
- Ensure employees know how to raise concerns safely and confidently.

4. Report annually with transparency

- Publish an annual report detailing bullying and harassment complaints, with a specific breakdown of racial harassment incidents.

- Depending on scale, this can be a standalone report or integrated into broader HR reporting.
- This should be done carefully so as not to expose victims, but where strong sanctions have been applied to perpetrators, this should be reported.

5. Use visual reminders

- Display posters, digital signage, and computer pop-ups to reinforce your organisation's values to employees and customers alike.

6. Share case outcomes responsibly

- Communicate examples of upheld complaints and successful resolutions.
- Emphasise that resolution means addressing the perpetrator, not relocating the victim.
- Transparency builds trust and shows that your organisation follows through.

7. Acknowledge challenges and commit to action

- Be honest about persistent issues and outline your plan for improvement.
- This motivates affected employees and acts as a deterrent to harmful behaviour.

Advanced actions to deepen impact

1. Publish data with context

- Share complaint data alongside written summaries and anonymised case studies.
- This helps track trends and reinforces your commitment to transparency and accountability.

2. Respond if incidents increase

If racial harassment and bullying incidents increase:

- Introduce performance objectives and KPIs for business unit leaders and managers to reduce incidents.
- Convene focus groups and include ethnically diverse employees to co-create solutions.
- Set clear reduction targets and commit to regular reviews until progress is achieved.

3. Evaluate and share what works

- Continually assess which interventions are driving positive change.
- Share successful strategies across the organisation to scale impact.

4. Embed good practice into training

- Integrate proven anti-harassment behaviours and approaches into all manager training programmes.
- Make inclusive leadership and accountability a core competency.

Words matter, but action transforms. By combining bold communication with transparent reporting and strategic interventions, your organisation can build a culture where racial harassment and bullying behaviours are not just condemned; they are eliminated.



Advanced actions to drive systemic change

To eradicate racial harassment and bullying, organisations must go beyond policy and take bold, data-driven action. These advanced measures signal a deep commitment to transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement.

Publish data with context and sensitivity

- Report annually on the number and nature of complaints, accompanied by a written summary that provides insight into underlying issues.
- Include anonymised case studies that are handled with care to protect confidentiality while illustrating real-world impact.
- Year-on-year reporting enables your organisation to track progress, identify patterns, and respond proactively to emerging concerns and recognise where negative behaviours have been eliminated.

Use the report not only to inform, but to **reaffirm your zero-tolerance stance** and your commitment to stamping out all forms of bullying and harassment in your organisation.

Respond decisively to rising incidents

If data reveals an increase in racial harassment and bullying, it is essential to act swiftly and strategically. Consider implementing the following:



“The equality stats are expressed with pride to our full workplace. This is most beneficial to the continued positive attitudes to all.”

Race at Work 2025 survey respondent

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- Include anonymised case studies that are handled with care to protect confidentiality while illustrating real-world impact.
- Year-on-year reporting enables your organisation to track progress, identify patterns, and respond proactively to emerging concerns and celebrate where certain negative behaviours are no longer happening.

Use the report not only to inform, but to **reaffirm your zero-tolerance stance** and your commitment to stamping out all forms of bullying and harassment behaviours in your organisation.

Respond decisively to rising incidents

If data reveals an increase in racial harassment and bullying, it is essential to act swiftly and strategically. Consider implementing the following:

1. Introduce accountability metrics

- Set performance objectives and KPIs for Heads of Business Units and managers to actively reduce incidents.
- Make inclusion and safety a measurable leadership priority.

2. Engage diverse voices

- Convene focus groups of employees from underrepresented backgrounds to gather insights and co-create solutions.
- Ensure these voices are not just heard but acted upon.

3. Set and monitor reduction targets

- Establish clear, time-bound targets for reducing incidents.
- Commit to regular reviews and transparent reporting until meaningful progress is achieved.

4. Evaluate and scale what works

- Continuously assess which interventions are delivering results.
- Share successful practices across departments to amplify impact and foster a culture of learning.

5. Institutionalise good practice

- Embed proven strategies and behaviours into manager training programmes.
- Make anti-racism and inclusive leadership core competencies across your organisation.

Lead with purpose, act with integrity

These advanced actions are not just operational; they are transformational. By publishing data, listening to employees, and holding leaders accountable, your organisation sends a powerful message: *'We don't just condemn racial harassment; we confront it, we dismantle it, and we prevent it.'*

5. Ensure there is a simple and transparent reporting process

Overview

Break the silence: make reporting clear, accessible, and empowering

One of the most significant barriers to addressing racial harassment and bullying is uncertainty around how to report an incident. When employees don't know where to turn or feel the process is unclear, they are far less likely to speak up – allowing harmful behaviours to persist unchecked.

Clarify the reporting process across multiple channels

- Ensure the complaints procedure is clearly defined, easy to understand, and widely communicated across the organisation.
- Publish guidance through a range of accessible formats, including:
 - Employee handbooks
 - Intranet portals
 - Posters in communal areas
 - Induction and onboarding materials
 - Manager briefings
 - Digital pop-ups and newsletters

Every employee should know exactly **how to report, where to report** and **what to expect** – without having to ask.



A strategic opportunity to build trust

Clarifying the reporting process is a powerful opportunity to:

- Demonstrate your organisation's commitment to transparency and accountability
- Empower employees to speak out safely and confidently
- Reinforce your zero-tolerance stance on racial harassment and bullying
- Build a culture of trust, where concerns are met with action and not avoidance

When employees know the process and trust it, they are more likely to use it, and that is how change begins.

Defining roles in the complaints process: HR, trade unions, line managers, heads of units

A robust and fair complaints process requires clear roles, coordinated action, and unwavering commitment from all key

stakeholders. From initial reporting to resolution and follow-up, each party must understand their responsibilities and act with integrity and urgency.

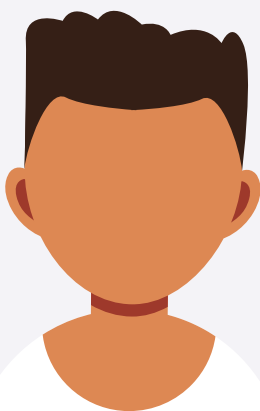
Policy clarity and process transparency

Clearly outline your organisation's policy during an active investigation, including:

- Expectations for confidentiality and non-retaliation
- Temporary adjustments such as transferring the alleged perpetrator to another team, unit, or location
- Defined timelines for appeals, including escalation to a tribunal if necessary

Race at Work 2025 found that 69% of employees knew the process to report a racial bullying or harassment incident in their organisation and 54% stated they were more likely to report an incident if they could do so anonymously.

“



“I reported [the harassment] to line managers as the colleague themselves was too scared to speak up. They know they couldn't trust management.”

Race at Work 2025 survey respondent

Actions to build trust through structure and support

1. Visualise the process

- Create and distribute a clear, easy-to-follow flowchart showing:
 - Key steps from complaint to resolution
 - Roles of HR, trade unions, line managers, and heads of units
 - Estimated timelines and decision points
- This builds confidence and ensures transparency for all involved.

2. Follow up with purpose

- After resolution, whether through apology, mediation, or transfer, conduct quarterly, six-monthly, or annual check-ins with the affected employee.
- This proactive approach helps prevent backlash and dispels the perception that issues are being ignored or "swept under the carpet."

3. Equip line managers with knowledge

- Provide preventing harassment and bullying guidance and training for managers.
- Include clear definitions, examples, and guidance on how to respond to complaints.
- Empower managers to act confidently and consistently.

4. Ensure confidential and accessible reporting

- Offer anonymous reporting options, such as:
 - A secure post box
 - A confidential telephone hotline
- These channels encourage reporting and protect vulnerable employees.

5. Align complaints with disciplinary procedures

- Ensure your complaints process is fully integrated with your disciplinary framework.
- This guarantees consistency, fairness, and legal compliance.

6. Train Investigators Thoroughly

- Provide specialised training for all individuals involved in:
 - Investigating complaints
 - Sitting on resolution panels
- Focus on understanding the specific nature and impact of racial harassment and bullying, including trauma-informed approaches.

7. Diversify decision-making panels

·Wherever possible, ensure diverse representation on panels and teams managing complaints. This enhances credibility, reduces bias, and reflects your commitment to equality.

Engage leadership at every level

- HR: Owns the process, ensures compliance, and drives cultural change.
- Trade Unions: Advocate for fairness, support affected employees, and help shape policy.
- Line Managers: Must be trained, vigilant, and proactive to support early resolution before formal action is considered.
- Heads of Units: Set the tone, model inclusive leadership, and are accountable for outcomes.

When each stakeholder understands their role and acts with purpose, your organisation sends a powerful message:

We take racial harassment seriously, and we are committed to protecting every employee's dignity and safety.



6. Monitor and share vital statistics

Overview

Uncovering the hidden realities of racial harassment at work

Effective monitoring of complaints by ethnicity is essential. Without it, organisations risk overlooking the very issues policies and laws aim to address. Tracking complaints allows us to measure progress, identify patterns, and hold employers accountable for creating truly inclusive environments.

Our Race at Work surveys have been pivotal in revealing the lived experiences of ethnically diverse employees across the UK. Through carefully crafted questions, we've gained deep insight into the prevalence and nature of racial harassment and bullying, insight that often remains hidden in traditional reporting mechanisms.

Progress must be visible, measurable, and sustained. Monitoring is a great way to track progress or identify where there is stagnation or deterioration.

Actions to take

Confronting racial harassment and bullying at work: turning insight into action

Despite the introduction of equalities legislation and diversity training, racism and inequality persist in the UK workplace. Promotional activities and policy statements must not be mistaken for proof that racial harassment no longer exists. The reality is far more complex and often hidden.



"I think it would be beneficial to have more regular check-ins and feedback mechanisms to ensure that all employees feel heard and valued. This could be in the form of anonymous surveys or focus groups to gather insights on how to improve our diversity and inclusion efforts."

**Race at Work 2025
survey respondent**

To uncover and address these issues, organisations must ask the right questions and act on the answers. Consider including the following in your employee surveys:

Key survey questions

- Have you experienced or witnessed racist harassment or bullying in the last two years from any of the following: managers, colleagues, contractors, customers, clients, or service users?
- Can you describe what happened? Did you take any action or report the incident?
- When did the incident occur? Within the last year or 1–2 years ago?

These questions are designed to surface experiences that may otherwise go unreported. They help organisations understand not just the prevalence, but the context and impact of racial harassment.

Regional and ethnic monitoring

- If your workforce spans multiple regions, review local trends. Experiences of racism can vary significantly by location; one size does not fit all.
- Monitor survey responses by ethnicity to identify where targeted interventions or additional support may be needed.

BITC has produced [Regional Insight Papers](#) which provide insights to every region in the UK. They use insights from ONS, HESA and other key data sources to help you identify the demographic profile of people living in the different UK regions.

Strengthening accountability

- Encourage full participation in anonymous staff surveys to ensure a representative snapshot of the experiences of ethnically diverse employees.
- Introduce annual reporting on racial harassment and bullying to signal that this issue is a priority for leadership.
- Use the data to drive meaningful change, not just compliance.

Insight is powerful when paired with action. Let your data be the catalyst for a safer, fairer, and more inclusive workplace.

Further action to deepen impact

Driving accountability and action on racial harassment in the workplace

Visible, measurable action is key, starting with how data is collected, shared and acted upon.

Transparency and data-driven leadership

- Publish annual data on complaints by ethnic group and other diversity characteristics. Sharing this with managers reinforces accountability and highlights areas requiring attention.
- Respect confidentiality, but wherever possible, share evidence of the actions taken to swiftly investigate and resolve complaints. Transparency builds trust and signals a zero-tolerance approach.

Understanding the cost of inaction

- Conduct a cost analysis of:
 - HR time diverted to investigate complaints and mediate disputes
 - Recruitment and onboarding costs for staff who leave due to racial harassment or bullying
 - Productivity losses and reputational damage

These figures can be powerful in demonstrating the business case for proactive intervention.

Demonstrate commitment through action

- Share outcomes of resolved cases across the organisation. Where resolution has been achieved without relocating the individual who experienced harassment, it sends a strong message: the organisation protects its people, not its perpetrators.

- This approach reinforces your commitment to justice, fairness and a safe working environment.

Employee Voice and continuous improvement

- Ensure equality and diversity reviews include direct input from employees. Focus on:
 - Satisfaction with training and resources on identifying and reporting racial harassment
 - Perceptions of how effectively employers respond to racism
 - Suggestions for improvement in policy, culture, and support mechanisms

Real change happens when leadership listens, acts, and holds itself accountable.

Let your data, decisions, and dialogue reflect your commitment to fairness in principle and in practice.



Further reading

UK legislation to protect ethnic minorities from racial harassment and bullying has been in place since 1948:

The 1948 British Nationality Act made migrants from the Commonwealth more than just citizens of the Commonwealth by conferring a new status of Citizens of the United Kingdom and Colonies (CUKC) which meant people from the Commonwealth countries could be recruited by the Civil Service and government officials with no insurmountable barriers.

In 1965, the first Race Relations Act was put in place, making racial discrimination unlawful in public places.

The Race Relations Act 1976 made racial discrimination unlawful in employment, the provision of goods and services, education and public functions. The Act also established the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE).

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 notably included a statutory duty on public bodies to promote race equality and work against racism.

The Equality Act 2010 replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act, making the law easier to understand and strengthening protection in some situations. It sets out the different ways in which it is unlawful to treat someone because of a protected characteristic.



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Business in the Community (BITC) champions responsible business as essential for long term economic growth and resilience. We convene, campaign, and consult with business to tackle society's most pressing challenges—from climate change and place-based regeneration to inequality, workplace wellbeing, and inclusive growth.

Founded by His Majesty King Charles III in 1982, BITC has over four decades of experience in engaging business and delivering measurable impact in both business and in communities through evidence-based interventions. As a trusted partner to business and government, BITC convenes leadership, influences policy, and accelerates action—helping shape a future-ready economy that works for everyone.

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