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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

**Women Together Network &
Minority Ethnic Staff Network**

Running Against the Wind

**Report on Black Lives Matter &
staff experiences of race, gender &
intersectionality in the Welsh Government**



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The authors would like to note that this report has been developed and published in a voluntary capacity. As such, work on this report is not connected to their substantive jobs and rather reflects their roles as steering group members of the Women Together Network as well as, for [REDACTED] a member of the Minority Ethnic Staff Network.



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Foreword



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Fiona Whyte
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Our Networks share the Welsh Government’s vision to be an exemplar employer by creating equality of opportunity for all. We want everyone in the organisation, from all backgrounds to achieve their potential.

Inequality is not inevitable, it is the result of unfair systems, practices and attitudes that do not take into account differences or disadvantages on the basis of gender, race or other protected characteristics. To change this we need to understand and remove the barriers that get in the way of our vision and ambition.

This summer the killing of George Floyd and the resulting Black Lives Matter protests in the summer were a reminder to us all of the barriers that people of colour are still facing and that must be addressed.

This report seeks to understand the experiences of colleagues in Welsh Government and suggests how the organisation and diversity staff networks could better support Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues and specifically women of colour during these challenging times. It is the result of engagement with women across the organisation who have shared their insights and experiences.

We want to thank April-Louise and Iona for recognising the need for this evidence and all their hard work in leading this project. As chairs for the Women Together Network and Minority Ethnic Staff Network we are pleased to have supported this project.

We welcome the findings and the feedback on how the networks can themselves improve to better support staff. We encourage everyone to read this report to raise their awareness and better understand colleagues’ lived experiences of race and gender and we ask Welsh Government to consider the conclusions and adopt the recommendations within it. By implementing the changes recommended in this report, we hope that the Welsh Government can move closer to becoming, in the Permanent Secretary’s words, a ‘fully diverse organisation’ which is “truly representative of the communities we serve”.

Executive Summary

Overview

In response to the issues brought to light by the Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests in summer 2020, the Minority Ethnic Staff Network (MESN) and Women Together Network (WTN) identified a need to understand staff experiences of race and gender in the Welsh Government. Three focus groups were held with Welsh Government employees between August and September 2020, one with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women, one with White women, and one mixed group. In all groups participants shared their views and experiences, and identified ways in which diversity staff networks and the organisation can better foster a culture of diversity, inclusion and respect.

Knowledge and Perception of Black Lives Matter

While there was a strong level of awareness of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement reported by all focus group participants, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic participants were more likely to report having been aware of the movement prior to the events of summer 2020. Some participants noted that they had initially been uncertain as to whether the movement was relevant outside of the US. Others were more confident in understanding the relevance of the movement to Wales and the UK, drawing links to local issues such as the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities. Several participants noted that they had felt empowered by the recent re-emergence of BLM to contribute to positive changes in response to the inequalities highlighted by the movement.

Experiences of race, gender and intersectionality

There was a marked difference between the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic group and White group in terms of participants' experiences of race. Participants in the White group noted that they generally didn't feel the impact of their race, and largely spoke of their experience of race in relation to privilege. One participant likened the experience of racial privilege to "running with the wind" and imagined that for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people, it may be like "running against the wind". By contrast, participants in the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic group spoke overwhelmingly of feeling they stood out in the workplace, in part due to the small numbers of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic employees in the organisation. Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic participants also reported several unwelcome remarks that they had received during the course of their time at the Welsh Government, from colleagues voicing surprise that they were articulate, to silencing around conversations on race, Blackness or Black Lives Matter, which made Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues feel even more alienated and isolated.

Both Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic and White participants felt that gender had impacted their experiences, with participants in both groups reporting that they had experienced instances of unwelcome behaviour, both within and outside of the workplace. However, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic participants generally felt that gender had not impacted their experiences as much as other aspects of their identity, such as race or religion¹.

Participants reported a mixed level of awareness of the meaning of 'intersectionality', with slightly more awareness of the concept reported by Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic participants. Some participants spoke of the personal relevance of the term, with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic participants noting that they sometimes felt pressure to foreground one aspect of their identities (e.g. their gender) over another (e.g. their race).

¹ Please note that participants' references to religion highlight how religions can become racialised which is "a process that begins where certain phenotypical features associated with a group and attached to race in popular discourse become associated with a particular religion or religions and also are imbued meaning based on ideologies of inferiority and superiority," (Joshi, 2016) available at: www.link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057/978-1-137-58629-2_5

Diversity staff networks

Diversity staff networks were praised for offering support and effecting positive change in the workplace for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff, especially considering the relatively small size of MESN's core organising team. However, several participants felt that networks in general could have responded more quickly to Black Lives Matter, and offered more support to those affected by the issues. Some felt that there had been a general silence in the workplace around Black Lives Matter, which led to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic participants feeling even more alienated and isolated from colleagues.

Suggestions

Participants offered several suggestions for improvement for diversity staff networks to better support staff, including:

- for networks to improve visibility within the organisation;
- for networks to establish new sub-groups to support staff around issues of race and gender;
- for networks to facilitate open and honest conversations between staff on issues of race and gender
- for the Welsh Government to better support Diversity staff networks, and MESN in particular, to achieve positive outcomes for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues

Welsh Government

Focus group participants also offered suggestions for improvements for the organisation as a whole. These were grouped across three themes: evidence, structural change, and learning.

On the matter of evidence:

- Participants felt that there needed to be more available data on progression routes for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff in general, and in particular Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic female staff.
- An audit of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff was suggested, in order for the organisation to set evidence-based targets against which to measure improvement – particularly on the matter of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic representation across grades.

On the theme of structural change:

- It was felt that more needed to be done to improve Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic representation across all grades.
- Recruitment processes could be reviewed, and more could be done in terms of outreach to encourage those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities to apply for jobs in the Civil Service.
- Mentoring was also recommended as a way to help Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff reach their potential at work.

The final theme was that of learning:

- Several participants felt the training offer around race awareness and unconscious bias could be improved, noting that hearing peoples' lived experiences was often more powerful than theory or policy-based training alone.
- It was felt that informal learning opportunities could add value to training offers, and participants suggested starting book clubs or groups for peer-learning around the issues raised by BLM.
- Welsh Government could do more to engage with its Arm's Length Bodies such as the National Museum of Wales, and develop outputs or campaigns which celebrate the contribution of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities in Wales.

The authors hope that the evidence and recommendations contained in this report contribute to changes to policy and practice, and help create an organisation which is diverse, inclusive, and truly represents the communities we serve.

Background

Context

The murder of George Floyd on 25 May 2020 in the US sent shockwaves across the world. This overt display of violence brought to light the structural and systemic racial inequalities that are endured by Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, in Wales as in the US. These events came on top of the COVID-19 pandemic which disproportionately impacts Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities in general²,³, and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women in particular⁴. The issues sparked calls for action globally and within the Welsh Government. The Permanent Secretary Shan Morgan affirmed her “commitment to becoming a fully diverse organisation”, to increase her understanding of “the lived experiences of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues”, and to “address any barriers – whether systemic or societal – that may be preventing [Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues] from reaching [their] goals”.⁵

Inspired by these responses, the authors queried how the organisation and diversity staff networks could better support Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues during these challenging times. Drawing on conversations with senior leaders, diversity staff network chairs, and colleagues in relevant policy areas, the authors identified a need for comprehensive qualitative data around the experiences of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues in the Welsh Government. In particular, and as this work is a collaboration between the Women Together Network and the Minority Ethnic Staff Network, as well as noting the dual barriers of race and gender on progression outcomes in the workplace⁶, the authors and networks highlighted a particular need to develop evidence around the experiences of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women in the organisation. With network support they devised a project plan for a series of focus groups to address this evidence gap, which were held with members and allies of WTN and MESN throughout August and September 2020.

Three focus groups were held in total – the first with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women, the second with White women, and a third, mixed Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic and White women group. Participants were asked how they felt the issues of race and gender impacted their experiences in the workplace, as well as their experience of the issues raised by the Black Lives Matter Movement.

The key themes from these focus groups are summarised in this report. While the authors offer some interpretation of participants’ comments, the participants themselves offered such a wealth of insight during the groups that the decision was made to, for the most part, ‘let the data speak for itself’. This report therefore includes direct quotations from the focus group participants themselves, for which we obtained participant permission.

The aim of this work is to inform policy and action planning to improve the experiences of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues in the Welsh Government, and female Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues in particular. This report also sits within the context of work around the Welsh Government’s Strategic Equality Plan⁷, Advancing Gender Equality in Wales Plan⁸ and the Race Equality Action Plan⁹, three pieces of work to which we hope this evidence speaks to.

As this was a small-scale information-gathering exercise, we are aware that the views of focus group participants are not necessarily representative of the views of all Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic or White women in the organisation – nor did we intend them to be. Instead, we hope that this report ignites the further discussions needed, deepens understandings about racial and gender inequality and outlines positive actions that result in a diverse organisation which is inclusive of all. By implementing the changes recommended in this report, it is hoped that the Welsh Government can move closer to becoming, in the Permanent Secretary’s words, a ‘fully diverse organisation’ which is “truly representative of the communities we serve”.

2 As noted in the First Ministers’ BAME Covid-19 Health Advisory Socio-economic Sub-group report gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-06/first-ministers-bame-covid-19-advisory-group-report-of-the-socioeconomic-subgroup.pdf, Accessed 29 October 2020

3 gov.wales/covid-19-bame-socio-economic-subgroup-report-welsh-government-response-html, Accessed 7 February 2021

4 www.bitc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/bitc-factsheet-bame-women-mentalhealthandcovid-19-may2020.pdf, Accessed 5 November 2020

5 www.documents.hf.wales.gov.uk/id:A30387967/document/versions/published, Accessed 3 November 2020

6 Chwarae Teg report, chwaraeteg.com/research/triple-glazed-ceiling/, Accessed 7 February 2021

7 gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-04/strategic-equality-plan-equality-aims-objectives-actions-2020-2024.pdf, Accessed on 12 November 2020

8 gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-03/advancing-gender-equality-plan.pdf, Accessed 17 November 2020

9 gov.wales/now-time-action-racial-inequality-welsh-government-lays-out-route-systemic-and-sustainable-change, Accessed 4 November 2020

Black Lives Matter (BLM)

As the Black Lives Matter movement is the inspiration for this work, it is appropriate to briefly summarise the history and aims of Black Lives Matter. Black Lives Matter began as a grassroots social movement, formed in 2013 by Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi as a result of the unjust acquittal of Trayvon Martin's murderer, George Zimmerman. As the murder of Black civilians via state-sanctioned violence continued, the movement grew from strength to strength and branches emerged across the US, the UK and around the world. This is evident with the existence of Black Lives Matter Wales which was set up under Race Council Cymru (RCC) and "is a movement led by individuals who stand together against racial injustices experienced by Black people in Wales and globally"¹⁰. Black Lives Matter Wales has regional protest leaders and a manifesto outlining 8 key demands that they wish to be met by the Welsh Government¹¹.

Since its grassroots origins, Black Lives Matter has established itself as a global organisation: Black Lives Matter Foundation, Inc. with the following mission:

- **We are expansive.** We are a collective of liberators who believe in an inclusive and spacious movement. We also believe that in order to win and bring as many people with us along the way, we must move beyond the narrow nationalism that is all too prevalent in Black communities. We must ensure we are building a movement that brings all of us to the front.
- **We affirm the lives** of Black queer and trans folks, disabled folks, undocumented folks, folks with records, women, and all Black lives along the gender spectrum. Our network centres those who have been marginalized within Black liberation movements.
- **We are working** for a world where Black lives are no longer systematically targeted for demise.
- **We affirm our humanity**, our contributions to this society, and our resilience in the face of deadly oppression.
- The call for Black lives to matter is a rallying cry for ALL Black lives striving for liberation¹².

While there are many Black Lives Matter chapters across the world, not all are affiliated to the US branch. For example, the official Black Lives Matter Movement UK¹³ website has a disclaimer that states: "we are not affiliated with either Black Lives Matter USA or the political arm of the Black Lives Matter Coalition UK." Yet despite the differing, regionally specific affiliations and aims of the Black Lives Matter chapters around the world, all chapters have been inspired and have taken forward the mission outlined previously.

It is also important to note that the essence of Black Lives Matter is to tackle anti-Black racism experienced by individuals and communities of African descent in the US and globally. This focus on anti-Black racism does not take away the effects of other, specific forms of racism experienced by other racially minoritised communities. Nonetheless, Black Lives Matter calls for a racially and socially just world for all, centring the lived experiences of Black people globally.

Intersectionality

Across this work we make reference to the concept of 'intersectionality'. During the focus groups it became apparent that not all colleagues are familiar with this term or the concept, so this section provides a brief explanation of the term and its history.

This term was first introduced by Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989; 1991) to articulate the ways in which multiple, disadvantaged identities— particularly race and gender — simultaneously converge and impact upon people's lived experiences. The concept has been widely used in many areas and it has expanded to include and consider how additional identities such as class, sexuality, disability, age, religion, nationality etc. also converge and result in different experiences. In fact, as stated in the Black Lives Matter mission above, intersectionality is integral as the movement was started by three Black women and it aims to represent all Black people regardless of sexuality, gender identity, nationality status etc. However, more recently Black Lives Matter has been criticised for centring the plight of Black men and this prompted Crenshaw to create the #SayHerName¹⁴ campaign, an offshoot of Black Lives Matter, to address the imbalance and invisibility of Black women victims of state-sanctioned violence.

10 www.racecouncilcymru.org.uk/+Black-Lives-Matter-Wales Accessed 4 November 2020

11 See appendix VII on page 36, Available at: www.blm.wales/manifesto/ Accessed 17 November 2020

12 www.blacklivesmatter.com/about/ Accessed 25 October 2020

13 www.blacklivesmatter.uk/ Accessed on 10 November 2020

14 www.aapf.org/sayhername Accessed 25 October 2020

Understandings of intersectionality have particular relevance within the workplace as Crenshaw (1989) used the court cases of Black women in the workplace to provide examples about how work policies can fail to take into account their intersectional, raced and gendered identities. For example, in the case of DeGraffenreid v General motors in 1976, five Black women sued their employers stipulating that a particular policy unfairly discriminated against them. However, the courts dismissed their case because the judgement stated that as the company hired White women, there were no grounds of it being sexist, and as the company hired Black men, they believed that there was no basis for racism. Based on this verdict, Crenshaw summarised that:

“The boundaries of sex and race discrimination doctrine are defined respectively by White women’s and Black men’s experiences. Under this view, Black women are protected only to the extent that their experiences coincide with those of either of the two groups. Where their experiences are distinct, Black women can expect little protection as long as approaches, such as that in DeGraffenreid, which completely obscure problems of intersectionality prevail.”¹⁵

These understandings about the importance of intersectionality within the workplace have been highlighted more recently and within a Welsh context by Chwarae Teg’s report aptly titled Triple Glazed ceiling: Barriers to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) women participating in the Economy¹⁶. Within it, the report highlights that “BAME women experience disadvantage in the labour market due to their exposure to both gender and race inequalities, and the way this affects their career advancement and progression,”(Turkmen, 2019: 8). This report provides useful insights that connect with some of the findings within Chwarae Teg’s report and illustrates that there is a need to provide dedicated support to this group.



15 Crenshaw (1989):143

16 Turkmen 2019: 8. Available at: www.chwaraeteg.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/TGC-Barriers-to-BAME-Women_full-report.pdf
Accessed on 10 November 2020

Methodology

In order to define the need, scope, and research questions for this work, the authors conducted a literature search looking into evidence around barriers to progression for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities and women in the workplace. They also conducted meetings with diversity staff network Chairs, senior leaders, and policy colleagues in the Welsh Government to understand the specific policy context and evidence needs in the Welsh Government. The methodology and questions were developed in collaboration with the Chairs of the Women Together Network (WTN) and the Minority Ethnic Staff Network (MESN).

All members of the WTN and MESN were invited to participate in the focus groups¹⁷. In order to ensure that all participants were provided with enough space to participate fully in the focus groups, focus group numbers were restricted to 9 participants per group, though there was substantial interest in all the sessions, all of which had waiting lists. Participants were selected to ensure an equal balance of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic and White staff in the sample. Moreover, the use of focus groups has historically been beneficial when conducting and developing feminist research which is why it was appropriate for this information gathering exercise. In particular, Wilkinson (1998) outlines that focus groups address feminist ethical concerns about power and the imposition of meaning; they generate high quality, interactive data; and they offer the possibility for the co-construction of meaning between people.

During the project development stage, the authors sought advice from WTN and MESN members as well as Knowledge and Analytical Services (KAS) to develop a topic guide, principles of participation for focus group attendees, and a privacy notice covering the use of the data. A copy of the question sets, topic guide and privacy notice are included as appendices to this report.

Three focus groups were held in total. Focus groups were held on Microsoft Teams due to COVID-19 restrictions. The sensitive subject matter at hand, coupled with the fact that participants were identified by their names on Microsoft Teams, brought up ethical complexities relating to maintaining confidentiality. In order to participate, focus group attendees were required to agree to the principles of participation, including that they would maintain the anonymity of other participants and confidentiality relating to the content of the focus groups.

The decision was made to first run separate focus groups for the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic and White women groups in order to provide a safe space where participants felt free to discuss their personal experiences. The rationale for this method was to help participants to feel at ease when continuing discussions in the final focus group, which had a mix of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic and White participants. Previous studies such as Sudman and Bradburn (1982) emphasise the importance of having an interviewer (or facilitator in this case) that has a similar identity to those they are conducting interviews with. They found that different responses were gained when for example, Black respondents had a White interviewer as they were more likely to provide socially acceptable answers. Due to the topics of the focus groups, it was decided that the focus group facilitators would be Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic or White to match the separate focus groups.

Anonymised notes were taken during the focus group, and no names or identifying details were recorded. The notes were analysed thematically to identify key themes, which are summarised in this report.

The notes, and all documents relating to the project are stored in secure restricted access folders, and all data will be deleted upon the publication of this report.

Participants were provided the opportunity, as part of their participation, to read and provide feedback on the first draft of the report before it was made available to wider audiences. This was an important feature of the project as the authors valued co-construction and wanted to ensure that participants' insights were accurately captured.

¹⁷ See Appendix II for Participant invitations pg. 29

Knowledge and understanding of Black Lives Matter

Participants were asked what they knew of the Black Lives Matter movement prior to the May 2020 events. They were also asked what their understanding was of the issues raised by the movement. Participants' comments are summarised below.

Knowledge of Black Lives Matter

There was strong awareness of the Black Lives Matter movement across both groups, however participants reported that they had had varying levels of awareness of the movement prior to May 2020. While some participants had some knowledge about Black Lives Matter and were aware of the movement before its re-emergence after the murder of George Floyd, others noted that while they had heard of the movement prior to May 2020, they had only started to look more deeply into the movement since the May events.

"I had heard about it before May but not too much detail – only since post May did I start to look a bit more into it. It's still relatively new to me. [I am] still learning a lot about the movement."

"2015-16 is when I first noticed the Black Lives Matter movement, I don't know if that was when it started but that was the first I heard of it, but [it's a] completely different vibe this time round. Last time it was just us [Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people] going on about it rather than everyone else joining in and being a part of the movement as well."

"From a personal perspective, I was kind of familiar with the movement before May – but [there were] discussions taking place at home as well around BLM."

There was generally more awareness of Black Lives Matter from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic participants, as well as those involved in other forms of activism and those who were/had relatives from younger generations. Participants felt that the prominence of Black Lives Matter's on social media contributed to a higher level of awareness of the movement among younger generations, compared with older generations.

"[I knew] a lot [about Black Lives Matter], if you are an activist in any sort of space, you tend to know about other areas and there tends to be intersections and cross overs."

"What is happening in the media – really opens their [young people's] eyes and [they are] having really difficult conversations. I wouldn't be having the same conversations with my parents at their age. It's really encouraging that the future generation is so up to speed with what is happening and have a voice. It's giving them a safe place to say "this is my opinion, this is how I feel", rather than (us) imposing our opinions on to them."

On the other hand, some participants reported having limited knowledge about Black Lives Matter and expressed that they were open to learning more about the movement, and the issues it raises:

"I didn't [know about BLM] at all. But I learned a lot through listening to well the news, when actually my children who are in a much younger generation in their early twenties knew a lot more about it than me. I learned a lot from them."

"Well the thing is –not enough really – that is to say I looked around – my daughter said "what are you doing about this?" and I thought "yes, what am I doing about it?" and I looked around and in my work it is very wide and very White orientated, it's like something people don't think about enough in my opinion in my role and part of that is representation, I think."

"That's the whole idea about BLM, there's an ignorance, we've all got it, I've got it, but I am willing to learn and open my ears."

Understanding of Black Lives Matter

Within the focus groups participants shared how they understood the movement and what it meant to them. For some participants, their initial perception of Black Lives Matter was the belief that it was only relevant within the US and not so much within Wales or the UK:

“For me I did know about it on the periphery but I thought very much [that] it was something that very much happened in U.S. – nothing to do with us – I thought it had nothing to do with me and I think for me the journey since May – has been “what’s it got to do with us or me?””

“I agree, I thought very much that U.S. is a very racist place or can be and we don’t have that issue here – how wrong was I?!”

This was further echoed by a participant who made a distinction about the different agendas of Black Lives Matter as an organisation, as well as its chapters in the U.S. and the U.K.:

“Are you talking about BLM as an organisation? In my mind, my confusion – [we] spoke about BLM in U.S. and [there] seem[s] to be slightly different agendas for different parts of the organisation, so the UK BLM seemed to have a different agenda to the American one – and I think issues like that create confusion in my mind. So especially are we talking about the organisation or principles?”

This is notable because, as previously mentioned, there are a number of Black Lives Matter chapters that formed around the world with variations of affiliations and aims, many of which are regionally specific. However despite this variety, the core message of the movement is to create a racially and socially just world, by centring the lived experiences of Black people globally. This was echoed in one of the focus groups when a participant expressed that:

“If you look at it from its core basis, I think for the younger generation – Black Lives Matter – Black people are being killed at a higher proportion at a higher rate – therefore [we] should all support [the movement to stop this].”

For other participants, Black Lives Matter stimulated their understandings about wider systemic and structural racial inequalities. These participants were able to locate its relevance within Wales and the UK, foregrounding the core message of Black Lives Matter, drawing upon examples of COVID-19, their own identities and previous education:

“I was not even thinking about the BLM movement, I was thinking about the fact that Black Lives Matter and I was thinking and I do, some stuff very small things about COVID and it struck me, I mean, you couldn’t have a starker representation of why Black Lives Matter than the differential impact of COVID on different communities in my opinion in Wales, not in the world or UK, or in theory, but really in Wales, people living in Wales. That is why it matters. That to me [shows] what I do is important and what we all do contributes as much towards those things. I don’t care about statues, if someone else cares I want them to be happy. It doesn’t hurt me statues. But the fact that people are dying of a disease because of the colour of their skin or ethnicity that – I care a hell of a lot more about that.”

“I am aware through the BLM movement that I do have privileges being a White person, there are privileges where I think lots of White people never realised because they have never been in those situations – never had to realise or come across it.”

“For me it has pretty much been on my radar and it’s always been a particular subject of interest for me – I studied a lot of Black history previously, so [I have] various specialisms along the way like how Black health inequalities rise throughout society in Britain as much as U.S. in terms of health, economics, well-being, education opportunities- the lot and we have a hugely long way to go.”

The recent re-emergence of Black Lives Matter also stimulated a sense of empowerment among focus group participants, as well as renewed calls to create positive changes to respond to the racial inequalities highlighted by the movement, as described below:

“[I was] thankful, I’ve been an anti-racist campaigner for years and it’s always been a struggle, [Black Lives Matter] empowered a lot of people to take action.”

“With BLM I felt “this is it”, this is the time we have to speak!”

The next section will discuss what the focus groups revealed about experiences of race, gender and intersectionality.

Experiences of race, gender and intersectionality

Participants' experiences of race and gender

There was a marked difference between the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic group and White group in terms of participants' experiences of race. Several participants in the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic group noted feeling that they 'stood out' in the workplace, in part due to the low numbers of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people in the Welsh Government. A participant expressed that it was difficult to balance 'being them' with being a Civil Servant.

"In [my team] I am the only ethnic minority person in that team, I am aware of that."

"First coming into WG I found it really difficult [...] I was looking for someone who looked like me. I couldn't find anyone. It was difficult for me I felt really, really anxious – I thought, should I be here?"

"[I am always thinking about] how to balance being a Civil Servant and balancing being me at the same time."

Within the White group, however, several participants remarked that they did not feel the impact of their race on their experiences in the workplace. Participants in this group largely spoke of their own race in relation to privilege. One participant likened the experience of Whiteness and racial privilege as 'running with the wind' – a force which can bestow a certain (but often imperceptible) advantage upon those who have it.

"I don't think about my race, I've never thought about it."

"I go running and the other day I thought I was running really well and I thought "this is great" and turned around to run home and I realised I had been running with the wind all the time and I hadn't noticed. And I think that's what my race means to me – we [White people] are all running with the wind and need to notice other [Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic] people are running the same distance but then the wind is against them and that's how I understand it and I only just realised [...] what it means to me, I have privilege and I haven't even been conscious of it."

"It kind of sums it up the advantage you've got that you don't realise you've got. White privilege in essence is what it is, I guess what I was going to say is it's always easy to not realise, it sounds weird because I guess you should realise but because where I live is probably 99% White, the work place is not 99% but it is up there, we are not particularly diverse at work. Well where I live isn't particularly diverse, the organisation I guess is not overall particularly diverse and so I think we lack the opportunities to be exposed to our White privilege and that is something that I wanted to raise [...] I understand that it exists and I understand that because of your ethnicity or colour of your skin or the way you look you are biased for and against in society. Personally, the less you are exposed to it, the less you feel it and the less you feel you have got a place in the biased society... it's easier to put your head down and pretend like it doesn't exist or avoid looking into it but it's by not being exposed [to it and] being in more diverse environments, society wise, it is easier not to acknowledge and not to do anything about it."

An organisation is made up of people, and many Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic participants shared their experiences with colleagues in the workplace in the aftermath of Black Lives Matter. An occurring theme was a sense that there was a 'loud silence' from colleagues around Black Lives Matter. Some noted that even in teams where news items were discussed regularly, there was a general silence on the topic of Black Lives Matter. Participants felt that this was, in part, due to a larger discomfort from colleagues around conversations relating to race, and a desire to stick with 'comfortable' topics. However, these silences contributed to feelings of isolation and alienation among Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff, feelings which were further compounded by the perceived absence of support during the Black Lives Matter events.

"My experience of WG – [there are] two types of people – people who want to acknowledge that you're not White British – then there are other people who want to overlook it for the sake of comfortability – their comfortability, your comfortability, ease things. I think judging by some of the experiences, often people want to make you feel included by treating you like everyone else. They don't want to acknowledge the fact that you are Black and Black Lives Matter is going on – I'm physically Black with different intersections. My team for example, we discuss everything on the news but Black Lives Matter happened and no-one said anything. Just shows the comfortability levels where people think that it's become a political thing now. Whereas for other people [like myself] it's obviously a big topic."

"From a work environment – I noticed that this was not a topic in work. No acknowledgement. No email, no comments on social media group chats etc. There was no acknowledgement. People [previously] asked "where are you from?" – I said, [place where family originates and place in Wales] – people would respond with [place she lives] having a deep rich history and some people want to learn more about it. Some people outright say that I am the first Black person they have met. Once people are comfortable to talk about those topics – the approach I take is that I'm casual/open so we can have those conversations. I'd rather that than have some people stare at you and you can see the curiosity on their face – you can tell that they don't want to offend you. People think the word 'Black' is still insulting in 2020 rather than a racial identity."

"We are all Civil Servants and shouldn't say anything offensive and we should have a level of political correctness but to not mention something at all shows the climate we are living in."

"People don't want to judge and the wider context of politics at the moment and the term "snowflake" – when people are easily offended who are on the left – when people see a person of colour they automatically assume you are on the left – automatically assume that you are working class – so they think you are highly offended hence they don't make any jokes, or comments around things like Black Lives Matter."

Interestingly, there was also awareness of the 'loud silence' among White focus group participants.

"Even if the majority [of White colleagues] are not overtly racist there are a lot of people who just stay silent, say nothing because [They feel] it has nothing to do with them."

For Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic participants, this silence contributed to a sense of alienation from colleagues that existed prior to the re-emergence of Black Lives Matter, which had been caused by a number of unwelcome remarks from colleagues. Examples of such unwelcome remarks included colleagues voicing surprise that participants were 'articulate', or the frustration that colleagues erroneously assumed Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues were accessing certain roles or opportunities out of 'tokenism', rather than merit. Another expressed frustration that issues to do with race or Blackness were seen as being 'too political'. For participants with lived experience of these issues, the issues raised by Black Lives Matter were matters of personal relevance, rather than abstract 'politics'. The silencing of conversations around these issues were therefore felt by participants to be tantamount to a denial of their ability to express themselves and issues which affected them in the workplace, thus contributing to a sense of isolation and alienation from Welsh Government colleagues and the organisation as a whole.

"I'm always vocal about these issues even before BLM. With me I just feel like having colleagues look on Facebook and stuff and knowing being a Civil Servant and the politics – these things don't blend really well – with this situation it has become political – I felt me being me is political. I remember being in a team meeting and my manager was looking at me saying – no politics – it was during election period. I was looking at her thinking "what?" because I hadn't done or said anything political – but anything I did voice can come across as being political. Anything about BLM – and this was before BLM before it started being a topic – was me being looked at as doing something wrong, by not even addressing it or talking about it. This is my example of a time I felt like I couldn't mix the two worlds. I felt that I was on the outside, always doing something wrong for just being [shares identity] I don't know it's hard to navigate that and you know not – I don't know – it's difficult."

"I [spoke with someone in the organisation and] gave them my background and said [job role] and this is where I have worked and this is what I have done etc., they said "you are not what I expected", well "what do you mean?", "[...] there is no reason why you couldn't be a senior CS – you're highly educated and articulate" [...] it made me feel really uncomfortable because I have never experienced that before, where someone had a preconceived idea about what I might be like before meeting me just based on the fact that I am [Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic]. I felt it was odd and that there might be some [more] of that within the organisation."

.....

"I think some people perceive women of colour in the workplace as hitting the jackpot, [I have] seen undertones/little comments. The reality is – do you know what a struggle it is to go through? Often people don't look at you for the work that you actually do or the qualifications that you have, [you are] often seen as a token – I feel tokenism is big in WG. I would say, you never know how to feel about it – in a way you want to climb the ranks etc. and you would like to climb the ranks because of your qualifications but you get an interview because this will look good on paper or on the intranet – then there is a conflict – do I want this bit of empathy? It's not the best feeling but this is something we have to deal with being a woman and from an ethnic minority."

Many of the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic participants shared that they did not feel able to discuss their experiences with colleagues due to fears they would not understand. It was suggested, in the White women focus group that the onus should not just be on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff to share their experiences but on the organisation to be active in this process towards improving inclusion and diversity:

"I think one of the key messages in terms of an organisation that has come from the BLM movement is that it is very very important for White people to increase their awareness – you hear a lot about hand the mic. to the Black person standing next to you. One of the challenges for us is looking at how we have a more reflective organisation – as part of our organisation – maybe which can extend to other teams, we have an advisory panel from that we have people from BAWSO, PRISM all over etc. lots of people from groups sit on our panel who can help us to reflect on what we are doing to be as inclusive as we can be."

Participants in both the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic and White groups felt that their gender had impacted their experiences. Some participants noted that they had experienced instances of discrimination or prejudice, both within and outside of the workplace. However, while participants in the White group tended to feel that their adverse experiences had been mainly related to their gender, participants in the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic group tended to feel more that they had not been as negatively affected by their gender as they had been by other facets of their identity (e.g. race or religion¹⁸).

"[Gender is] something that I have always been aware of and that matters to me intensely because I am affected by it."

.....

"Being a woman is in the background, but it hasn't affected me the same way as being [a member of a religion]."

¹⁸ Please note that participants' references to religion highlight how religions can become racialised which is "a process that begins where certain phenotypical features associated with a group and attached to race in popular discourse become associated with a particular religion or religions and also are imbued meaning based on ideologies of inferiority and superiority," (Joshi, 2016) available at: www.link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057/978-1-137-58629-2_5

Perceptions and relevance of intersectionality

There was a mixed awareness in both groups of the concept of intersectionality, with some participants feeling very familiar with the term and others less so. Overall, there was slightly more awareness in the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic group of the concept than in the White group. Some participants spoke of the importance of the BLM movement in bringing concepts like intersectionality to wider public awareness. In the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic group, participants spoke more of the personal relevance of the concept within their experiences. Some participants in the groups felt the intersectional nature of their identities were sometimes ignored in the workplace, and that they felt pressure to foreground one aspect of their identities.

“Personally, I obviously understand it and how it works from me. But, to discuss that with my White colleagues they wouldn’t understand what I was talking about – they don’t see you as all these things, they only see you as one thing – so for me – it’s [being a member of a religion].”

“Yes I am aware of the idea that everyone is not stuck into little boxes – you could be a woman, Black, gay you can be a whole range of things.”

“I think in the work place you have to choose a leading identity and I think my experience in WG etc. other than curiosity in terms of the odd question around when [a religious festival] is, how is [a religious festival] going etc. – which I think is to be expected and it is nice – a team should acknowledge things like that, but other than that there is always a lead identity you need to choose being a [religious identity] or a woman. I think everyone is different, my experience so far personally has been being a woman – people don’t acknowledge the colour of my skin [...] it’s mostly the comments and the banter are around being a woman. That is seen as a politically correct thing – to ignore the other identities or not to focus on them as that might be seen as being a negative thing.”

“When it comes to wearing different hats, people often forget that we also have a British hat, or a Welsh hat. I think it’s not appreciated when you are someone of colour. Because you will be asked where do you come from? I was born in Wales, I was brought up in Wales, I feel very much Welsh, but [...] those Welsh/British hats tend to be put to one side in the workplace, you need to pick a different hat almost.”

“Awareness around that is important ... I think understanding that generations are changing – people coming into work might be a person of colour, but may be second/third generation British and very much associate as being British – this is not always appreciated [and] having more training on that and understanding people’s cultures and differences is also an important issue.”

The experiences from the previous participants who felt that they had to choose a ‘leading identity’ in the workplace highlights the importance of developing a widespread understanding of concepts such as intersectionality within the workplace, a sentiment which was expressed well by a focus group participant:

“I guess on intersectionality, I wanted to point out that the lady who invented the term invented it because people were falling down a gap – she was doing research on the responses of organisations to the people who work in the organisation. Black men were given some attention in terms of bringing conditions towards White men, and White women were being brought towards men, but as soon as people started talking about Black women, instead of thinking they were part of both groups [they felt] they didn’t fit into either category properly – as a result they weren’t dealt with fairly.”

“I am familiar with the term, [it is a] subtle and important point. There is someone in WG who has responsibility for enabling more Welsh speakers to come through in training courses where we need more capacity, so I would be really interested [in] whether we can use that mechanism to bring more Black, Asian and Ethnic minority people through different training that we need, to expand that service in some way.”

The next section of this report explores more closely participants’ expectations and experiences of the Diversity staff networks within the organisation, and offers suggestions for ways in which the networks can better support Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues moving forward.

Diversity staff networks

Within the Welsh Government, there are a range of diversity staff networks that “give under-represented groups a voice” and “provide a different sort of support to colleagues than is normally available.¹⁹” These networks function to highlight ways in which the organisation can incorporate these principles into the everyday structure, culture and processes. These diversity staff networks represent the diversity in the organisation and work to create a more inclusive and diverse environment where all civil servants can feel adequately supported. To contextualise the following chapter, it is important to note that diversity staff networks vary in terms of membership and the size of their organising teams. While WTN, for example, has over four hundred members and twenty-six members on its core steering group, MESN has less than sixty members and has three co-chairs (and most recently only one chair). The authors of this report gratefully acknowledge that all the diversity staff networks are led by dedicated staff who give their time on a voluntary basis, in addition to the demands of their roles as civil servants.

Diversity staff networks’ response to Black Lives Matter

Some participants shared their disappointment at what was perceived to be a slow response to Black Lives Matter from diversity staff networks and allies. When participants challenged the networks on this, they acknowledged that this may have been due to limited staff capacity due to COVID-19:

“I expected all the staff networks to come out strong. It’s what we were doing outside work. The power of allies is one of our biggest strengths. I did ask the networks why they didn’t do anything, [the response was] “oh it’s COVID and we’re really busy.”

Due to the nature of Black Lives Matter where racism is the prominent focus, it is unsurprising that much of the focus group discussions centred on the role of the Minority Ethnic Staff Network (MESN) – particularly within the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women’s focus group. While there had been a response from MESN, which included a joint statement from the Permanent Secretary, some participants felt that a response could have been issued more quickly and more support could have been provided to members. Participants stated that they had been looking to MESN to “provide a different sort of support to colleagues than is normally available”, and felt that MESN’s response did not meet their needs.

“One thing they [MESN] could have done is to write to all the employees in the organisation to find out how it affected them and to consult them about what it is they could be doing. In addition to the statement, [I expected] more in terms of engagement than [just a] broadcast.”

“Personally, I don’t think MESN responded quickly enough. I was disappointed. I’m still reeling from it.”

“I wish as a network we were more leading the way rather than reacting, I feel we’re very reactive.”

“I was new, I haven’t really had anyone talking about it which is you know heart-breaking because I was already struggling. I don’t think enough was done.”

19 www.wales365uk.sharepoint.com/sites/Intranet-About-Us/SitePages/Diversity-Staff-Networks.aspx
Accessed on 16 November 2020

MESN and the wider organisation were praised for providing support and opportunities in the workplace for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff, and it was felt that there is *“more going on [in the Welsh Government] than any other workplace in terms of opportunities for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people”*. However, some participants expressed concern that some within the organisation were interpreting the existence of these schemes to mean that Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff were ‘in need of help’, rather than seeing them as positive actions to promote equality in the organisation. In academic circles, this is termed the ‘cultural deficit model’ – the impression that “minority group members are different because their culture is deficient in important ways from the dominant majority group”²⁰ and therefore that they need help:

“I’ve been here for a while now – there is more going on here than any other workplace in terms of opportunities for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people and organisations just having social networks which is a real positive, but I still think maybe some preconceptions – I think it might be a generational thing... because we have these networks and good leadership programmes and opportunities for people from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic background – but I think it is seen that anyone from that background is not able to do it and needs help, and I think they feel like we need help for the wrong reasons rather than the institution itself.”

Suggestions for diversity staff networks moving forward

To contextualise this section, the authors note the work that the diversity networks, and MESN in particular, has achieved towards anti-racism work and improving awareness of the issues raised by Black Lives Matter in the organisation. Recent examples include securing name-blind recruitment, securing an agreement that recruitment panels would include a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic representative, and delivering awareness sessions across Divisions.

What follows are suggestions for improvements for diversity staff networks moving forward, which are collated from focus group discussions.

More Visibility and Activity

Some participants felt that MESN could improve its visibility in the organisation, and offered suggestions for ways in which the networks could become more visible, including by collaborating among networks to develop campaigns, and increasing network visibility through banners and merchandise in order to put themselves ‘out there’:

“With pride and the LGBT+ community, there’s a huge campaign, you can’t miss it. I feel that’s the sort of level that we [MESN] want to reach. Maybe [we should be] collaborating in some way.”

“[I am] wondering whether we need an identification of our own, e.g. when [the] Union have a banner – a case of putting ourselves out there and maybe raise our own profile for those people to be able to join.”

However, alongside calls for MESN and other diversity staff networks to collaborate and respond more effectively to the issues raised by Black Lives Matter, participants also noted that the focus groups for this research were an example of these changes starting to happen.

The power of difficult and honest conversations leading to action

Many participants offered suggestions for ways in which diversity staff networks could engage within the workplace in order to become more effective in dealing with the issues raised by the Black Lives Matter movement. These included the need to have difficult and honest conversations in the workplace, and to openly discuss matters relating to racism, barriers, and problematic attitudes in the workplace.

“We need to start having difficult conversations, honest and difficult conversations”

“[In a] MESN meeting – people talked about their experiences of racism in [the] Cardiff office. We need to talk about it much more within WG. Talking about the barriers, challenging attitudes.”

“I was just thinking we are the last people we should be asking about how we deal with this, but at the same time, actually focus groups like this allows you to get an understanding across the organisation of the level of understanding about Black Lives Matter. But I think these uncomfortable conversations need to happen as well. White privilege and [being] complicit if you are silent on it from lack of understanding, those are difficult things to deal with. More and more of these conversations are needed.”

However, while many participants generally agreed regarding the need for and power of difficult conversations, others stressed that discussion was only a first step – that those with privilege need to stand aside and allow more space for others, and that that would not necessarily be a comfortable process.

“We need to ask people, but we need to go further than that we need to be prepared to be honest with what we are prepared to give up and those times we will stand aside – we are going to have to step aside and make space for Black women so it is going to be uncomfortable, the discussions are going to be uncomfortable, it is going to be uncomfortable to talk about these things, if it were comfortable and cosy it would’ve happened by now. It is going to be really hard to say “we have been racist” and “I shouldn’t have done that” and I am prepared to stand aside – it’s not going to be happy/niceness, so we are going to have to suck that up I’m afraid [...] We need to be honest and prepared to be uncomfortable.”

The power of conversation and the challenging of attitudes and preconceptions through action was a key theme in the focus groups. It was felt that, without conversations taking place, it is impossible to understand the real-life barriers and issues experienced by others.

“Until you make a conscious effort and try to imagine what it’s like to walk in the shoes of a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic person, that’s part of the issues that will need to be addressed.”

Yet, there must also be a willingness on the part of the individual to embark on the process of educating oneself about the issues as expressed by one participant:

“I know we are a primarily White organisation but there is no reason why we can’t google. My friends are predominantly White but that doesn’t stop me from educating/learning and being a powerful ally, I don’t think we can possibly articulate how it feels to be a Black woman but we can be powerful allies and listen to them.”

It is precisely because of the Black Lives Matter movement that such conversations have started to happen more widely. It is important for these conversations to continue, firstly to challenge individual and internal preconceptions about specific groups, and then secondly to use these conversations to create change in the everyday structure, culture and processes of the wider workplace. It is hoped that this report will contribute to doing this.

Creating safe spaces

Within focus groups, additional suggestions were shared by participants about the need to create spaces to learn, share, and support colleagues in the wake of issues raised by Black Lives Matter. Suggestions encompassed a new network that was focussed more on the social aspects, rather than the political. One participant suggested the formation of a sub-group where Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women could come together to have social events and form friendships. Another suggestion, drawing on examples from practice in other organisations, was to form a ‘Whiteness group’, where those who identify as White can support each other in sharing, learning and understanding the history and political context of Whiteness.

These suggestions about the creation of a ‘Whiteness group’, ‘social groups’ and a ‘sub-group for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women’ draw upon utilising allies, reframing the roles of diversity staff networks as a social space and addressing the intersectional needs of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women in the workplace. In many ways, these suggestions can be adapted into the existing structures of the diversity staff networks by for example, MESN creating a ‘Whiteness group’ consisting of their allies; all networks providing more social activities and events for their members; and the Women Together Network adding a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women sub-group – perhaps in collaboration with MESN.

“So my suggestion would be we need to engage in some educated processes some learning as a collective, and come together talk about it and learn about it and a number of the organisations across Wales and elsewhere are working with what they call Whiteness groups – a group of people who come together who are or do not identify themselves as black but identify themselves as White whether they like that or not – coming together to talk about and learn about what has happened previously and what is going on now. And what they can do about it to be the best allies they can be and think along the lines and are happy to get involved if that’s of interest to other people.”

.....
“Introducing staff networks that focus on the social side maybe rather than political.”

.....
“Holding on to the social side – a possible Sub-group for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women to come together to have social events, different ways for people to be able to form friendship groups. Having that safe space to meet up and have a coffee. Is there social group that could be formed?”

The next section of this report will share what participants expected and shared about their experiences of race and gender in the Welsh Government, and offers suggestions for ways in which the organisation can better support Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues.

The Welsh Government

While some focus group members welcomed the messaging and communications that had been released by the organisation during Black Lives Matter, several participants felt that more could have been done to provide assurance and support to staff, both during the Black Lives Matter protests and more generally. As mentioned in the earlier chapter on staff experiences of race, gender and intersectionality, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic participants reported receiving unwelcome comments and behaviour during their time working in the Welsh Government. Furthermore, for many participants the ‘loud silence’ around Black Lives Matter compounded feelings of isolation and alienation from colleagues. In order to better support Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues to feel welcome and progress within the organisation, participants highlighted the need for the organisation to commit to tangible goals and measurable actions. These recommendations are summarised below and are separated across three domains: ‘Evidence’, ‘Structural Change’, and ‘Learning’.

Evidence

Noting the lack of information on progression for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff in the organisation, respondents noted the need to have more and better data on employment outcomes for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff in the Welsh Government. Suggestions here included an audit of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff, and data which showed how long Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff were staying in the organisation, and to what extent Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff were progressing to the higher grades. It was also noted that the organisation needed to remain accountable for creating change, including setting evidence-based targets against which change can be measured.

“[We need an] audit of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff – where they are, how they came in, where they’re going. Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff are disappearing – or they’re overqualified and not going to progress.”

“We need to have tangible goals – having statistics available on the intranet for all to see.”

“[It’s the] chicken and egg, if you went into the Butetown community and you have a Black lad who said I wouldn’t mind working for WG, he’d rock up and there probably wasn’t a Black face in security, there’s probably not a Black face on reception, then his line manager would come and meet him and they probably had a White face, and he’d meet the perm who is White and exec board of all White faces, so it’s a bit chicken and egg, we need to get people in to reflect the community but unfortunately there is no-one reflecting the community across all grades.”

Structural change

Following the need for improved evidence was the need for structural change. Suggestions on this theme included the need for a review of recruitment processes, with the aim of increasing Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic representation at all grades. Participants particularly felt that more could be done on a practical level to encourage Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic applicants to apply for opportunities in the Welsh Government. One idea was to engage more with schools in multicultural areas to encourage young people to consider careers in the Civil Service. Mentoring was also suggested as a way to help Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff to feel able to reach their potential in the organisation.

“On a practical level our recruitment processes need looking at.”

.....

“Current WG race related policies don’t seem to work on the ground, particularly when members of staff are facing personal racist, unwelcome comments or jokes. Some WG managers lack basic understanding that so called banter or thoughtless racial comments are not always welcome and are often rather offensive towards an ethnic minority or person of colour. Racist comments might affect the recipient’s health as the person does not feel safe in the working environment. Several disability networks have been developing manager toolkits where various work related scenarios are explained and advice to managers is offered. This is a good practice example that we might want to learn from.”

.....

“We’ve got Butetown and other areas that have strong Black communities – we don’t seem to be engaging with or trying to bring in pupils from schools in that area to say this is what you could become – this is what you could do.” [WG] don’t seem to be offering that support – we don’t seem engaged, with our local community at all. I’ve worked for this organisation for many years, the Senedd and in Butetown, and I don’t understand how there is no representation from that community.”

Learning

Suggestions on this theme encompassed both formal and informal learning opportunities. In terms of formal learning, some participants felt that the training offer on issues of race awareness and unconscious bias could be improved. It was felt that the training did not sufficiently equip participants with the skills to recognise, examine and address their own unconscious biases. Another suggestion was to implement compulsory training for employees who repeatedly make unwelcome comments.

“I went to training on behalf of the network on unconscious bias. One thing I noticed however – the examples were so unrelated to real life biases [...] examples were around how to be sensitive and not to offend rather than addressing where unconscious bias actually comes from. Addressing those issues will be so much healthier for the organisation.”

Participants also noted that hearing a person’s direct experience can be more impactful than training which may be somewhat abstract or theoretical. Participants highlighted the need to have space in the organisation for more informal learning and sharing, in which colleagues could have conversations (including potentially difficult conversations) in a safe and supported way. Suggestions under this theme included book clubs and discussion groups. Finally, some participants suggested that the organisation collaborate with Arm’s Length Bodies such as the National Museum of Wales to develop outputs which recognise and celebrate the history, contribution, and achievements of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people in Wales.

“I can’t see why we can’t collaborate with our [Arm’s Length Bodies] – in Cardiff we’ve got National Museum of Wales to celebrate Black history.”

.....

“[There is a] need for conversations: There is so much that can be explored and more conversations such as [the focus groups] rather than mandated training is a better approach.”

The next chapter of this report will summarise the findings and offer recommendations.

Conclusion

This section summarises the findings from the report and the recommendations that emerged. Inspired by the protests in response to the murder of George Floyd on 25 May 2020 in the US which sent shockwaves across the world, this report sought to query how the organisation and diversity staff networks responded and the ways in which it could better support Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues moving forward. In particular, due to the awareness of the dual barriers of race and gender on progression outcomes in the workplace as well as this being a joint WTN and MESN project, the authors decided to make the report's focus on highlighting and developing evidence around the experience of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women in the organisation. Through a series of focus groups with diversity staff network support, participants shared their insights about how they felt the issues of race and gender impacted their experiences in the workplace, as well as their experiences of the issues raised by the Black Lives Matter Movement.

As a movement, Black Lives Matter highlighted the structural and systemic injustices that plague the lived experiences of many Black people around the world, evidenced in the manifestation of the state-sanctioned violence that murdered George Floyd. For many participants, this awareness and understanding of the movement's calls to highlight and end such inequalities were evident within focus groups. Interestingly, it also became apparent that its prominence on social media meant that participants from/or around younger generations had higher levels of awareness.

When it came to how race, gender and intersectionality were experienced and understood within the workplace, this report highlighted that where race was an integral factor for the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women participants, gender was more noticeable for the White women participants – though it also played a factor in the experiences of the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women participants. Moreover, White women participants identified that this was attributed to their 'White privilege' which was evidenced by not having to think about their Whiteness and the advantages it bestowed upon their lived experiences. This was referred to by one participant as "running with the wind" while she suggested that in contrast, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people are "running against the wind". Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women participants described how they experienced their raced identities in the workplace, commenting on the unwelcome remarks they sometimes received from colleagues, and the 'loud silence' from their colleagues about Black Lives Matter – despite its global coverage. While they understood that the 'loud silence' may be linked to discomfort from colleagues who may not want to offend or didn't think the movement had anything to do with them, it still resulted in them feeling shocked, isolated and alienated at a time when they would have benefitted from additional support.



Additionally, while there was mixed awareness of the concept of intersectionality, for the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women participants, they could speak more so about how it impacted upon their lived experiences and in particular, the fact that all of their simultaneous identities – race, gender and for some – religion, were not often recognised within the workplace. Such examples include having to choose a ‘leading identity’ and not being seen as British or Welsh due to their non-White racial identities. Notably, these feelings illustrated the importance of recognising intersectionality within the workplace, as well as the responsibility on the organisation to mainstream the concept of intersectionality into its ways of working.

While the existence of diversity staff networks were recognised as important by participants, they shared their dissatisfaction at what they perceived to be a lack of united support from the networks and their allies. Moreover, they felt the MESN response had been ‘reactive’ and not as supportive as they would have hoped in the aftermath of Black Lives Matter. Nevertheless, respondents noted the good work MESN has done in terms of the opportunities they have provided for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues. Moving forward, participants shared suggestions about how the diversity staff networks could create and provide safe spaces which would better support their members.

Lastly, some of the participants also shared that they believed more could be done by the organisation to support them such as through conducting an audit of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff to provide evidence, creating structural change, and facilitating more learning opportunities – all to be discussed further in the recommendations.

It is hoped that this report ignites the further discussions needed, deepens understandings about racial inequality and creates positive actions that result in a truly inclusive organisation for all civil servants. By implementing the changes recommended in this report, it is hoped that the Welsh Government can move closer to becoming, in the Permanent Secretary’s words, a “fully diverse organisation” which is “truly representative of the communities we serve”.



Recommendations

The following recommendations were gathered from the insights gained from the focus groups and an expectation is that this report can inform the deliverables and indicators for internal and national policies, including the Race Equality Action Plan 2021. These recommendations fit into four main areas of: representation, learning, diversity staff networks and Welsh Government policy. It must also be noted that many of these recommendations correspond with BLM Wales' Manifesto²¹. It is hoped that by accepting these recommendations, the Welsh Government will be a "fully diverse organisation".

Representation

At present there is limited internal data about the numbers of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff members in the organisation. This prevents from gaining a full picture in order to identify, prioritise, and track any necessary changes to improve diversity and inclusion. Suggestions arising from focus group discussions include:

- Conduct an audit of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff members in the organisation. This could encompass data on how long they have worked for the organisation and at what grades.
- Track progression outcomes for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff, including identifying barriers and addressing barriers to development.
- The Welsh Government need to improve Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic representation at all grades, particularly in its Cardiff offices.
- Welsh Government recruitment processes to be evaluated through the lens of improving Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic representation in the organisation.
- Use more targeted outreach, beyond apprenticeship level, to encourage and support underrepresented groups from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities to apply for jobs and work in the Welsh Government.
- Provide better and more intersectional support within the workplace to retain and help the development and progress of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women staff. This aspect to include tangible targets, for example, proportion of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women at a certain level by a certain time.

Learning

Focus group participants highlighted the importance of effective learning and education to foster a culture of inclusion in the organisation. While there is currently online civil service training available such as 'unconscious bias', 'diversity and inclusion' and 'race awareness', White participants reported that hearing directly from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic participants regarding their experiences was particularly powerful.

- Review and improve the current training offer to make diversity training more relevant and effective in tackling intersectionality in the workplace as well as the issues highlighted by Black Lives Matter such as the continued existence of structural and systemic racism.
- Training courses should include lived experiences and testimonials, as well as the histories of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities. Could also include learning around intersectionality and foreground concepts of allyship and the shared responsibility of White and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities in tackling racial inequality.
- Training should be sought from external organisations that are experts within these areas, to be made available to staff through the Learning Lab.
- Develop toolkits for managers that assist in making them actively aware of racial equality issues, and help them to incorporate positive practices to promote racial equality.
- Increase face-to-face training and workshops to engender interpersonal engagement and learning (though this is dependent on COVID-19 restrictions).
- Consider introducing compulsory training for civil servants that have been reported for unwelcome behaviour, particularly relating to racial insensitivity.
- Regularly promote employee participation in race awareness training by linking it to wider campaigns and initiatives, for example, during Black History Month.
- Promote personal, informal engagement and education about racial issues beyond the workplace, for example through appropriate book clubs, webinars, and social groups.

21 See Appendix VII for BLM Wales' Manifesto pg.36.

Diversity Staff Networks

The existence of diversity staff networks are crucial parts of the organisation. Moving forwards, networks need to make sure they are reaching their aims and providing the necessary support to members affected by the issues outlined above. Here we have collated suggestions for improvement from the focus groups, in addition to a few further points for consideration:

- All diversity staff networks should be supported by relevant departments within the Welsh Government to have visibility in the organisation through the creation of effective branding and profiles.
- Create a sub-group for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women in the workplace, focussed on providing a safe space and a social, peer-support network.
- Create a Whiteness network which will provide a safe space for White colleagues to discuss White privilege and to take responsibility to address racism²² and to create more awareness and to strengthen allyship. See 'Privilege Cafe'²³ as an example.
- Provide more organisational support to diversity staff networks, particularly MESN, to meet the above objectives.
- All the staff diversity network co-chairs should collaborate to develop tangible goals/plans to better support Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues in the organisation, to hear their thoughts on this report and what support they need from the organisation moving forward.

Welsh Government

The Welsh Government's overall equality objective, as set out in Welsh Government's current Strategic Equality Plan²⁴ is that **by 2025 the Welsh Government will be an exemplar employer by:**

- **Increasing diversity** by addressing in particular the underrepresentation of disabled people and people from minority ethnic communities at all levels of the organisation and the underrepresentation of women in senior roles.
- **Removing barriers** and
- **Supporting staff from all backgrounds to reach their potential, creating equality of opportunity for all.**

The authors are pleased to note that the Workforce Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2021-2026 (published in March 2021) outlines tangible actions and targets which address the issues highlighted in this report. However, there is still a long way to go and this is a good starting point. The authors suggest that the organisation continues to clearly promote its commitment to anti-racism and continues to hold itself accountable by regularly publishing audits and reports which measure progress against the targets set out in the Delivery Plan.

It is also recognised that more widely and externally, the Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024²⁵ for Wales aims to drive greater equality in Wales, and the Welsh Government supports a range of other important plans which also capture and guide work in this area. The Welsh Government has set up the Wales Race Forum²⁶, it has also established the 'Communities, contributions and cynefin Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic curriculum working group'²⁷; the Slave Trade and the British Empire: An Audit of Commemoration in Wales Tash and Finish Group²⁸ and it is also currently developing a Race Equality Action Plan²⁹. We recommend a thorough evaluation of the impact of existing Welsh Government internal and external policies to assess their effectiveness in improving outcomes for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women in particular.

It is hoped that this report and its recommendations will be helpful in informing the discussions and decisions about what the agreed actions are around the Welsh Government as an employer so that it will be a "fully diverse organisation".

22 See an example of what a Whiteness group could be like: www.zmm.org/our-programs/what-is-whiteness/ Accessed 7 December 2020

23 Privilege Cafe; www.twitter.com/privilegecafe_?lang=en

24 gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-04/strategic-equality-plan-equality-aims-objectives-actions-2020-2024.pdf Accessed on 15 December 2020

25 gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-04/strategic-equality-plan-equality-aims-objectives-actions-2020-2024.pdf Accessed 8 December 2020

26 gov.wales/wales-race-forum-guide Accessed on 9 December 2020

27 gov.wales/black-asian-and-minority-ethnic-communities-bame-contributions-and-cynefin-new-curriculum-working Accessed 17 December 2020

28 gov.wales/slave-trade-and-british-empire-audit-commemoration-wales-task-and-finish-group Accessed 17 December 2020

29 gov.wales/now-time-action-racial-inequality-welsh-government-lays-out-route-systemic-and-sustainable-change Accessed 17 December 2020

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Additional resources

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Appendices



Appendix I: Key terms

Anti-Black racism = also known as Afrophobia is a specific form of racism that refers to any act of violence and discrimination including racist speech, fueled by historical abuses and negative stereotyping, and leading to the exclusion and dehumanisation of people of African descent. It is the result of the social construction of race to which genetic and/or cultural specificities and stereotypes are attributed (racialisation). It can take many forms: dislike, bias, oppression, racism and structural and institutional discrimination, among others³⁰.

Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic = a widely contested term to describe and categorise mostly non-White groups³¹ by government and other official institutions.

Black = People of African descent.

BLM = Abbreviation of Black Lives Matter.

Intersectionality = a concept introduced by Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw that articulates the ways in which multiple, disadvantaged identities, namely race and gender, simultaneously converge, and negatively impact upon lived experiences.

Different forms of racism:

- **Historical racism** = has to do with the specific histories of domination and subordination of groups (i.e. the racialisation of their relationships) in any given society. Different societies have different histories of conquest and domination, and so patterns of racialisation are distinct, if overlapping. In the US, the specific history of people of African descent means that to this day African Americans experience a distinct form of racialisation from Native Americans, from Roma in Europe and from Asians in Britain, for example. These histories impact on the position of groups in societies today because they continue to be reflected in the structures and institutions of those societies, in their laws and legacies, and in the language and cultural attitudes which persist.

- **Individual/Interpersonal racism** = is the term which covers the forms of racism which most people commonly understand as racism because they are the most visible forms. It covers all interactions or behaviour between individuals that are racist or have racist content. The term interpersonal racism covers a range of types of racist incidents, from “microaggressions” to racist name-calling and racial bullying and harassment, to discrimination and racist hate crimes. Although incidents of interpersonal racism will be the most commonly recognised forms of racism, they happen because of the wider context of the historical, institutional and structural racism of society. The impacts they cause are magnified because they reinforce and are reinforced by the wider structures of racism.

- **Institutional racism** = refers to forms of racism expressed in the practice of social and political institutions; to the way, institutions discriminate against certain groups, whether intentionally or not, and to their failure to have in place policies that prevent discrimination or discriminatory behaviour. It can be found in processes, attitudes and behaviours which lead to discrimination through unintentional prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness, unconscious bias and racist stereotyping which disadvantages ethnic minority people. Institutional racism relates to the entire institution, including people.

- **Structural racism** = sometimes called societal racism, refers to the fact that society is structured in a way (including via cultural norms) that excludes large numbers of people from racialised backgrounds from having equal life outcomes in for example health, education, death rates, infant mortality rates, rates of being in prison, arrest rates, employment rates etc.

- **Systemic racism** = rooted in a racist foundation, systemic racism today is composed of intersecting, overlapping, and codependent racist institutions, policies, practices, ideas, and behaviors that give an unjust amount of resources, rights, and power to White people while denying them to people of colour³².

- **White privilege** = inherent advantages possessed by a White person on the basis of their race in a society characterised by racial inequality and injustice³³.

30 www.enar-eu.org/Introduction Accessed on 10 November 2020

31 See for reasons why the terms of contested: www.civilservice.blog.gov.uk/2019/07/08/please-dont-call-me-bame-or-bme/ Accessed on 7 December 2020

32 www.thoughtco.com/systemic-racism Accessed on 16 November 2020

33 As defined by www.lexico.com/definition/white_privilege Accessed on 16 November 2020

Appendix II: Project Proposal

Project Proposal: WTN + MESN Black Lives Matter Focus Groups

Background

The unjust and public murder of George Floyd on 25 May 2020 in the US sent shockwaves across the world. Yet, he was just another one of the countless other Black people to be killed by those paid to protect and serve. Such overt displays of violence bring to the surface the structural and systemic inequalities that are perpetrated on a daily basis, and endured by those of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities – further evidenced by the disproportionate rates of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic COVID-19 deaths. Together, it is our duty to reflect, discuss and make changes to rectify racial inequality which impacts us all, and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women in particular.

In light of the recent Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests, the Women Together Network (WTN) in collaboration with the Minority Ethnic Staff Network (MESN) is conducting focus groups. With the aim to find out more about how members and staff understand and feel about the issues raised by the movement. As well as how the WTN can best support and improve Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women's experiences within the workplace. We're particularly interested to know what participants feel the relevance of BLM is within the following settings:

- **Nationally (in a Wales/UK context).**
- **In the workplace and for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff.**
- **To the Diversity staff networks of the Welsh Government.**

We are looking to hold three focus groups: one for female Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues only; one for female White colleagues, and one all-female, multi ethnic group. Please note that all information shared during the course of these focus groups will be treated as confidential and your name as well as anything you share that might identify you will be changed to protect your anonymity.

The focus groups will take place on the following dates between 12:30 – 13:30: Tuesday 18 August for the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women's focus group; Wednesday 26 August for the White women's focus group and Wednesday 2 September for the mixed focus group. Please note that we strongly encourage those who participate in the separate focus groups to also participate in the mixed one, where possible.

We have a limit of 9 participants per group, so if many more people would like to take part then we may consider a selection process. There will be a note-taker at each session, who will transcribe the conversations. No names will be recorded as part of the transcription. Any other potentially identifying information will be removed prior to analysis.

From these focus groups, we will produce a snapshot report covering the key themes of the focus groups, for dissemination to members and stakeholders of the diversity networks and the wider organisation to strengthen its approaches to diversity, inclusion and equality, as well as highlighting and illustrating areas where more investment and commitment is needed.

Risks and mitigating strategies

1. In the case of a participant causing offence

To mitigate the risk of offensive behaviour, we will take action prior to the call, at the start of the call, and, if need be, during (or after) the call.

– **Prior to the call, in the invitation email:**

Co-ordinators will outline expectations and guidelines for behaviour during the call, including confidentiality, mutual respect, and operating according to the Civil Service Code.

If you are attending the call the expectation will be that you agree to adhere to the guidelines.

– **During the call:**

Co-ordinators will have a statement at the start to highlight guidelines. Let us know if you're offended please say so and we can agree what to do from there – either explore the topic, or end that thread of conversation.

Worst-case scenarios: three strikes. Warning (adhere to guidelines). Ask to leave call. End call and follow-up individually with participants.

If you have an issue with our behaviour you can contact the chair of the Women's Network.

If you have an issue come and speak to us confidentially and we can advise/sign post.

Invitation email to include links to the following:

- Mind Matters
- Employee Assistant Programme
- www.wales365uk.sharepoint.com/sites/Intranet-HR-Recruitment-Vacancies/SitePages/Stress-and-Mental-Wellbeing.aspx

How to make a complaint/raise a concern:

www.wales365uk.sharepoint.com/sites/Intranet-HR-Recruitment-Vacancies/SitePages/Raising-concerns.aspx

2. Data breaches – by participants

- We assume that by accepting you have read and agreed to the privacy notice
- Include guidelines in email invite.

3. Anonymity of participant data

all participant data will be anonymised, they can ask to have their details removed up to the point of publication. This will be included in privacy notice and circulated to participants prior to focus groups.

Appendix III: Participant Invitation

GRŴP FFOCWS BLM RhMY	WTN BLM FOCUS GROUPS
<p>A chymryd i ystyriaeth protestiadau Black Lives Matter (BLM) diweddar, mae Rhwydwaith Menywod Ynghyd (RhMY) yn cynnal grwpiau ffocws, gyda'r nod o gael gwybod mwy am y ffordd y mae aelodau a staff yn deall ac yn teimlo am y materion a godir gan y mudiad, yn ogystal â sut y gall y RhMY gefnogi a gwella profiadau menywod BAME yn y gweithle. Mae gennym ddiddordeb arbennig mewn deall beth mae'r cyfranogwyr yn teimlo yw perthnasedd BLM o fewn y gosodiadau canlynol:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yn genedlaethol (yng nghyd-destun Cymru/y DU). • Yn y gweithle ac ar gyfer staff BAME. • I rwydweithiau amrywiaeth staff Llywodraeth Cymru. 	<p>In light of the recent Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests, the Women Together Network (WTN) is conducting focus groups. With the aim to find out more about how members and staff understand and feel about the issues raised by the movement. As well as how the WTN can best support and improve Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women's experiences within the workplace. We're particularly interested to know what participants feel the relevance of BLM is within the following settings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nationally (in a Wales/UK context). • In the workplace and for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff. • To the Diversity staff networks of the Welsh Government.
<p>Rydym yn bwriadu cynnal tri grŵp ffocws: un ar gyfer cydweithwyr BAME benywaidd yn unig; un ar gyfer cydweithwyr gwyn benywaidd, ac un grŵp benywaidd aml-ethnig. Nodwch y bydd yr holl wybodaeth a rennir yn ystod y grwpiau ffocws hyn yn cael ei drin yn gyfrinachol ac y bydd eich enw, yn ogystal ag unrhyw beth yr ydych yn ei rannu a allai eich adnabod, yn cael ei newid i'ch cadw yn anhysbys.</p>	<p>We are looking to hold three focus groups: one for female Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues only; one for female White colleagues, and one all-female, multi ethnic group. Please note that all information shared during the course of these focus groups will be treated as confidential and your name as well as anything you share that might identify you will be changed to protect your anonymity.</p>
<p>Bydd y grwpiau ffocws yn cael eu cynnal ar y dyddiadau canlynol rhwng 12:30 – 13:30: Dydd Mawrth 18 Awst ar gyfer grŵp ffocws menywod BAME; Dydd Mercher 26 Awst ar gyfer grŵp ffocws menywod gwyn a Dydd Mercher 2 Medi ar gyfer y grŵp ffocws cymysg. Noder ein bod yn annog yn gryf i'r rhai sy'n cymryd rhan yn y grwpiau ffocws ar wahân i gymryd rhan yn yr un cymysg, lle bo hynny'n bosibl.</p>	<p>The focus groups will take place on the following dates between 12:30 – 13:30: Tuesday 18 August for the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women's focus group; Wednesday 26 August for the White women's focus group and Wednesday 2 September for the mixed focus group. Please note that we strongly encourage those who participate in the separate focus groups to also participate in the mixed one, where possible.</p>
<p>Rhowch wybod i ni os ydych yn awyddus i gymryd rhan, a pha grŵp/grwpiau yr hoffech gymryd rhan ynddynt erbyn Dydd Mawrth 11 Awst. Mae gennym derfyn nifer o 9 cyfranogwr fesul grŵp, felly os hoffai llawer mwy o bobl gymryd rhan, yna efallai y byddwn yn ystyried proses ddedhol.</p>	<p>Please let us know if you are keen to take part, and which group/s you would like to take part in by Tuesday 11 August. We have a limit of 9 participants per group, so if many more people would like to take part then we may consider a selection process.</p>
<p>Am ragor o wybodaeth, os oes gennych unrhyw gwestiynau ac i fynegi diddordeb mewn cymryd rhan, cysylltwch â Iona Hannagan-Lewis: Iona.Hannagan-lewis@gov.wales neu April-LouisePennant@gov.wales erbyn Dydd Mawrth 11 Awst.</p>	<p>For more information, if you have any questions and to express interest in participating, please contact Iona Hannagan-Lewis: Iona.Hannagan-lewis@gov.wales or April-Louise Pennant: April-LouisePennant@gov.wales by Tuesday 11 August.</p>

Appendix IV: Principles of Participation

1. Confidentiality

We ask that participants respect the confidentiality of the focus groups and other participants. Please do not share the names or any identifying details of those who are taking part in these focus groups. The abiding principle is: 'what is said in the focus group stays in the focus group'. The only exception to this is if a focus group participant acts in a way which may be interpreted as bullying or harassment (see point 2, below).

2. Mutual respect

We expect all focus group participants to treat one another with dignity and respect, regardless of race, gender, religion, or sexual orientation.

If a participant acts in a way deemed to be bullying or harassment of another participant, then we will first try to resolve this within the group discussion. If no resolution is found, we may terminate the discussion, remove the responsible participant from the group, and/or follow the procedures outlined here: www.wales365uk.sharepoint.com/sites/Intranet-HR-Recruitment-Vacancies/SitePages/Raising-concerns.aspx

If you are concerned about the behavior of a focus group participant, please raise your concerns to the facilitators as soon as possible (either during the focus group or afterwards), so that we are able to support you effectively. Any information or concerns you raise will be treated with the strictest confidence. If your concerns are regarding the behavior of the focus group facilitators themselves, then you are welcome to raise concerns directly with the relevant network chairs (names and contact details below).

3. Anonymity

We will be using the information you share in the group to inform a report looking at network members' experiences of race and intersectionality in the workplace. All your data will be anonymised, and all identifying details will be removed. For more information on how we will process your data, please take some time to read our privacy notice, which will be sent out prior to the focus group.

You have the right to request that all your data is removed from all records (including from any notes taken and from the body of the report) at any point up to circulation of the report. The report will be intended for internal use, although it may be circulated to stakeholders of the Welsh Government and Diversity staff networks.

Contact details

Co-facilitators:

April-Louise Pennant
April-Louise.Pennant@gov.wales

Iona Hannagan-Lewis
Iona.Hannagan-Lewis@gov.wales

Network Chairs

MESN:

Fiona Whyte
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WTN:

Sharon West
Sharon.West@gov.wales

Sarah Melkevik
Sarah.Melkevik@gov.wales

Appendix V: Privacy Notice

Women's Network and the Minority Ethnic Staff Network: Black Lives Matter Focus Groups

The Women Together Network (WTN) and Minority Ethnic Staff Network (MESN) are undertaking an information-gathering exercise looking at colleagues' responses to issues of gender, race and intersectionality in the wake of the Black Lives Matter protests. The aim of this exercise is to conduct focus groups to find out more about how members and staff understand and feel about the issues raised by the movement, as well as how the diversity staff networks can best support and improve Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women's experiences within the workplace. As part of this exercise, MESN and WTN will be gathering information through three focus groups.

The WTN and MESN are the data controllers for the research. The WTN and MESN will remove personal data before writing up the report and will not provide personally identifiable data to others in Welsh Government.

The information collected during the project will be included in a document that will be circulated to colleagues in the Welsh Government. It may also be circulated to stakeholders of the Welsh Government and its Diversity staff networks.

Your Participation in this exercise is completely voluntary. However your views and experiences are important in order to help inform how we, as networks, and the organisation can support our members and colleagues at this time and in the future.

Privacy Notice

What personal data do we hold and where do we get this information?

Personal data is defined under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) as 'any information relating to an identifiable person who can be directly or indirectly identified by reference to an identifier'.

You have been invited to take part in this exercise as a member of a staff diversity network. In order to organise and facilitate the focus groups we will be collecting the following personal information: names and email addresses. Some of the data we are collecting are called 'special category data' (for example: ethnicity). Though we will not gather information on ethnicity directly, participants should be aware that we will be holding three focus groups: one for White women, one for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women, and one multi-ethnic focus group. We ask that when you sign up, you let us know in which focus group you will be taking part. Your ethnicity may therefore be inferred from your choice of focus group, and the lawful basis for processing this information is that it is for research purposes.

Your participation is voluntary and if you do not wish to take part or be sent reminders then please reply to the invitation email and your details will be removed. WTN and MESN will only use your email address for the purposes of this information-gathering exercise.

If you choose to provide additional personal data as part of the exercise we will try not to identify you from, or link your identity to, the responses you provide. If you raise a query or complaint and provide personal data requesting a response, the researcher will forward the request only to the relevant official and subsequently delete it from the research data.

Notes will be taken during the focus groups. All notes will be anonymised and personal data will be removed.

We may need to record the focus groups for operational reasons. If this is the case, we will make this clear to you before the interview or focus group begins, and you will have the opportunity to tell us if you are not happy for the discussion to be recorded. A focus group will only be recorded if all members of the group are happy for this to happen. If focus groups are recorded, personal data will be removed during the process of transcribing. Recordings will be deleted as soon as this process is completed. If discussions are not recorded, personal data will not be included in written notes prepared following the focus group or interviews.

What is the lawful basis for using your data?

The lawful basis for processing information in this data collection exercise is that, by participating in the focus group, we have your consent to do so. Some of the data we are collecting are called 'special category data' (for example, ethnicity) and the lawful basis for processing this information is that it is for research purposes, as outlined above.

Participation is completely voluntary. Information-gathering exercises such as this are important for the Welsh Government to collect information and actionable evidence about its ability to deliver its priorities. The information collected in this research, for example, might be used to help us to understand how members and colleagues feel the intersecting issues of race and gender impact colleagues, and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues in particular.

How secure is your personal data?

Personal data provided to Welsh Government is held on secure servers, and for this project a folder has been created that has access restricted only to the immediate research team. Your contact details and any personal data you choose to provide will be stored in this restricted folder. The researchers will not provide any personal information when reporting findings to members and stakeholders of the diversity staff networks.

All data gathered through this research will be reported in an anonymised format. It will not contain your contact details and any identifiable information in open-ended answers will be removed. WTN and MESN will use the information gathered to produce a report that will be circulated to colleagues and, potentially, stakeholders of the Welsh Government and its Diversity staff networks. This report will not include any information that could be used to identify individual participants.

How long do we keep your personal data?

Any personal data not already removed during the anonymisation of transcripts or notes will be deleted by WTN and MESN three months after the final report is completed. This includes your contact details.

Individual rights

Under GDPR, you have the following rights in relation to the personal information you provide as part of this exercise, specifically you have the right:

- To access a copy of your own data;
- For us to rectify inaccuracies in that data;
- To object to or restrict processing (in certain circumstances);
- For your data to be 'erased' (in certain circumstances); and
- To lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) who is our independent regulator for data protection.

The contact details for the Information Commissioner's Office are: Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Phone: 01625 545 745 or 0303 123 1113. Website: www.ico.gov.uk

Further Information

If you have any further questions about how the data provided as part of this study will be used by the Welsh Government or wish to exercise your rights using the General Data Protection Regulation, please contact:

Name: Iona Hannagan-Lewis and April-Louise Pennant

E-mail address:

Iona.Hannagan-Lewis@gov.wales

April-Louise.Pennant@gov.wales

The Welsh Government's Data Protection Officer can be contacted at:

Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

Email: DataProtectionOfficer@gov.wales

Appendix VI: Focus group questions

Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic/ White focus group questions:

1. What (if anything) did you know of the BLM movement before May?
2. How do you think the BLM movement relates to the workplace?
3. What does **your** race mean to you and how would you say it impacts your experiences?
Please feel free to bring in experiences both from within work and outside of work.
Prompt: *Can you provide examples?*
4. What does your gender mean to you and would you say it impacts your experiences?
Please feel free to bring in experiences both from within work and outside of work
Prompt: *Can you provide examples?*
5. Are you familiar with the concept of 'intersectionality'?
 - a. *What does it mean for you?*
 - b. *Do you see it reflected in the workplace?***Prompt:** *Why? How?*
6. Do you have any suggestions for ways in which the work place can be made more intersectional to better accommodate the varying experiences and needs of different groups but specifically, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women?
7. We have now come to the end of our focus group, is there anything else you would like to add?

Mixed women focus group questions:

1. How did you feel about the recent re-emergence of the BLM movement
Prompt: What is your understanding of the issues raised?
2. Do you feel that the issues raised by BLM are relevant in the following contexts [if so, how? If not, why not?]
 - a. *Nationally, in Wales*
 - b. *In the workplace [both more generally and specifically to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff]*
 - c. *To the Diversity staff networks of the WG*
3. What did you expect the Welsh Government to deliver as a response to BLM? To what extent were your expectations met?
4. What did you expect the Diversity staff networks to deliver as a response to BLM? To what extent did they deliver what you were expecting?
5. Is there anything you would like to see on these issues from either the Welsh Government or from the Diversity staff networks?
6. We have now come to the end of our focus group, is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix VII: BLM Wales Manifesto



Please note that this was copied directly from their website³⁴.

The Statement

Demands

These are a list of 8 points that we have compiled from across Wales.

This statement is a list of recommendations to the Welsh Government that we believe will benefit the current generation and future generations of BAME citizens across Wales. The Welsh Government are in a unique position to set the example for all other European countries in regard to race and race relations. We hope that this statement can be the beginning of positive dialogue between the powers that be and BAME citizens in Wales. It's important to reiterate that whilst we believe these eight topics are all-encompassing and considerate of all facets of life in Wales, there is room for negotiation, alteration and conversation. We urge the Welsh Government to engage with these suggestions, and to keep an open mind and open heart in regard to the issues that have been flagged. We hope that this statement is the catalyst for the conversations that must be had not only between the people and the state but between all of us. The changes that we are fighting for cannot occur without the voices of the state and the people being heard. Although some of these conversations are difficult, they are absolutely crucial for us to better ourselves as people and as a nation.

1. Cultural Integration

we believe that the Welsh Government should publicly encourage and support BAME organisations to organise culturally relevant events in accordance with the law and local policy. This kind of support expressed by the Welsh Government will encourage cultural integration, introducing those to the different cultures that contribute to the Welsh identity. This is also a direct action against the UK Home Offices' Hostile Environment policy.

2. Heritage

It is an absolute necessity that museums across Wales safeguard the history and archival heritage of BAME communities in Wales.

We request permanent exhibitions on the heritage and history of BAME communities in pre-existing museums in Wales such as: Amgueddfa Cymru/National Museum of Wales, Saint Fagans Natural History Museum, Swansea Museum National Waterfront Museum. We submit that the Welsh Government should commission a public inquiry into why the Public Sector Equality Duty has not been upheld in museums across Wales. The report should address how many, and the nature of, BAME exhibitions the have been displayed in Wales in the last 100 years.

We encourage the Welsh Government to actively document Black stories through the creation of exhibitions and events.

3. Assembly

We submit that it is in the public interest that the Welsh Government create a national BAME citizens assembly with young people (25 and under) at its core. This citizens assembly will work together with the Welsh Government to foster and encourage an authentic dialogue between policymakers and the general public. Furthermore, this citizens assembly should be tasked with ensuring that the interests of BAME communities in Wales are always considered and upheld.

4. Education

We propose that the Welsh Government commit to ensuring an accurate and authentic representations of the contributions of Black people and other ethnic minorities in the curriculum across all subjects, particularly History, English Literature, Art, Welsh Language, Religious Education and Music. This entails embedding a nuanced, all-encompassing and historically accurate account of Black figures and works that have been integral to the listed subjects with a specific focus on Black Welsh figures and works. Black culture has been, and continues to be, integral to the Welsh identity. We want this to be properly acknowledged within all of our educational systems.

We urge the Welsh Government to fully implement the Equality Act Public Sector Duty into education in Wales including; mandatory anti-racism training for all teachers and administrative staff, mandatory anti-racism for all trainee teachers (whether those undertaking a PGCE or an undergraduate course) and mandatory improvement in the monitoring and recording of hate incidents in schools and universities.

We believe that the Welsh Government should homogenize anti-racism policies across schools in Wales.

5. Policing & Prisons

We request an inquiry into institutional and systemic racism in Welsh police forces. The reasons for this can be demonstrated by but is not limited to the following:

Christopher Kepessa – 2019
The Cardiff 5 – 1988
Mahmood Hussein Mattan – 1952

This inquiry should review stop-and-searches and arrests in Wales which disproportionately effects Black communities and BAME citizens. We require further participation and understanding into any further militarization of our prison and policing systems.

6. Public Servants

We propose that the Welsh Government should implement compulsory racial bias, hate-crime and de-escalation training for every single person working in the public sector. It is in the public interest that workers in the public sector are effectively equipped and trained.

We propose that the Welsh Government should provide full transparency on what screening processes are currently in place for racist tendencies and bigotry in their recruitment of workers to the public sector.

The Welsh Government should ensure that they thoroughly screen every potential public servant for any racist tendencies or bigotry. Those that fail this screening should not be able to become a public sector worker of any kind.

7. Funding

We request that the Welsh Government commit to funding grassroots BAME organisations that evidence their engagement with BAME communities and young BAME citizens across the country.

We request full transparency of the way that BAME organisations in Wales are funded. This avoids a culture of favouritism.

8. Government Reviews

In accordance with All Black Lives UK (ABLUK), we urge the Welsh Government to consider the following reviews that extensively detail issues within BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) communities:

- Windrush Lessons Learned Review (30 recommendations);
- Lammy Review (35 recommendations);
- Timpson Review (30 recommendations);
- McGregor-Smith Review (26 recommendations);
- Angiolini Review (110 recommendations).

These recommendations are just fragments of the larger discourses surrounding the worldwide BLM movement. Many of the suggestions throughout this statement are already supported by petitions and campaigns across the country. This is an active and collective mobilisation of individuals and agencies who all want to see justice and equality enacted in Wales. Taking this into account, we believe that it is incredibly important that the Welsh Government are willing to discuss the matters above with BLM and other anti-racist activists across the country to ensure that the changes we need are actually made. To the general public; keep having candid conversations, keep signing petitions and keep the momentum going.

Working towards an anti-racist and
intersectional Welsh Government

