

# Managers' guidance

for dealing with a  
racist incident

We are **inclusive**

At UHD we are committed to creating a work environment where everyone can flourish and no one is subjected to racism or discrimination.

“As the trust board of University Hospital Dorset, we affirm that the trust is an open, non-judgemental and inclusive organisation that will not tolerate racism or discrimination. We celebrate the diversity of our staff and community. We will treat all our staff with dignity and respect, irrespective of their race, gender, religion, age disability or sexual orientation.”

**Statement from the UHD board of directors**

Take the opportunity to share this anti-racist approach in team meetings so that staff are aware that you will deal sensitively with racist behaviour.

## What is racism?

**Racism is being treated differently** by someone because of **skin colour, nationality, ethnic origin, language or accent**. Incidents can be intentional or unintentional, but the key is it may cause harm and distress to the victim.

Racism can take many forms such as:

- **Demeaning or insulting verbal or non-verbal behaviour** from colleagues or patients relating to ethnicity, race, colour or nationality.
- **Calling someone by a demeaning or insulting name** based on ethnicity, race, colour or nationality.
- **Threatened or actual physical assault** motivated by ethnicity, race, colour or nationality.
- **Offensive or derogatory language** relating to ethnicity, race, colour or nationality. This can be written or spoken.
- **Deliberate isolation** of someone at work or non-cooperation on the grounds of ethnicity, race, colour or nationality.
- **Online abuse by text, message or email** relating to ethnicity, race, colour or nationality.
- **Patients refusing to be treated** by someone based on their ethnicity, race, colour or nationality.
- **Use of racist gestures** including hand gestures.

Racial discrimination is when someone is treated differently because of their race in one of the situations covered [by the Equality Act](#).

Conversations on race can connect us as people and sharing our experiences can help us to grow together.

As a manager, it is important for you to have a good understanding of race and racism. You can educate yourself by reading articles and books, viewing webinars, listening to podcasts and by doing your own research. We have included some

suggestions on page 9. Further information can also be found in our '[Anti-racism toolkit](#)'. It is important to understand unconscious bias and be aware of how it can affect your decision making. Watch these videos on [understanding unconscious bias](#) and [bias in healthcare](#).

## Manager's responsibilities as an anti-racist

- **Be curious and open about different cultures.** [Watch this video](#) on what it is like to be a member of staff from an ethnically diverse background in the NHS.
- **Increase personal awareness and understanding of racism.** [Read this article](#) on the difference between 'not racist' and 'anti-racist'.
- **Learn from proactive curious conversations.**
- **Lead by example.**
- **Be an active ally for inclusion.** Use Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust's '[Being an ally](#)' toolkit to help you.
- **Protecting staff from harmful behaviour.**
- **Proactively challenging inappropriate behaviour.** Refer to page 3-4 of the [Staff guidance for dealing with a racist incident](#).
- **Challenging racist patients.** Refer to the [Managers' guidance for dealing with a racist incident by a patient or visitor](#).

Take a look at our UHD '[Anti-racism toolkit](#)' to help you understand how you can be an active ally to your colleagues from an ethnically diverse background and support your staff. We all have a part to play to eradicate racism.

## Important points to note

You are **not expected** to be an **expert on racism**. You **are expected** to **create a safe workspace** where staff can talk to you about their concerns regarding racist behaviour and rely on you to **provide guidance and support** for next steps.

You may feel awkward or worried about saying the wrong thing. This should not deter you from supporting staff. Use **active listening skills** to understand the perspective of the individual using the guidance below. If you need additional support, contact your **Human Resources Business Partner (HRBP)**. They are also here to support you with cases of repeated or deliberate acts of racism. Such cases will be subject to investigation under the policies below and may result in action taken under the disciplinary process up to and including dismissal.

Deliberate cases of racist behaviour prompted by prejudice may be deemed a hate incident and may require Police involvement. **Evidence of the hate element is not a requirement.** The individual need not personally perceive the incident to be hate related. It would be enough if another person, for example, a witness thought that the incident was hate related. Not all hate incidents will amount to criminal offences, but it is **important that these are reported** to the security manager/HR.

**The following UHD Policies support incidents of racism:**

- [Violence Prevention and Reduction Policy](#)
- [Civility, Respect and Dignity at Work Policy](#)

### Responding to a racist incident raised by a member of staff

If an individual tells you that they have experienced racism, taking the time to listen to them can make all the difference. **Find a confidential and safe space** for the individual to talk. You don't have to know exactly the right thing to say or what to do – just listen. Try to keep your own reactions muted and allow space for their feelings without judgement.

#### Step 1: Listen non-judgementally

Your role is to provide a confidential ear to listen to their concerns and establish the facts. You should then work together to decide next steps. [Watch this video](#) to help you understand the importance of empathy.

**When you are dealing with a race discrimination concern, it's important to understand that:**

- Something that seems like nothing to you, or only a small thing, can feel very different to the individual experiencing it.
- It may be very hard for the individual to talk about what has happened.
- They may be worried about whom to trust, that their concern will be ignored or that they will be seen as a troublemaker.
- Individuals can be affected in different ways and incidents can potentially affect their physical and mental wellbeing.

**It's important that you:**

- Ask the individual to share how the incident made them feel and what impact it had on them.
- Listen to what the individual says.
- Leave any personal feelings you have to one side.
- Look at how it has made them feel or how it has affected them.
- Do not make any assumptions.
- Consider the individual's specific circumstances.
- If they do not want to share with you, then ask whether they want to talk to someone else.

## Step 2: Ask how they would like to deal with the situation

Find out what the individual would like to have happen as a result of their discussion with you. It is really important to **accept their choices** even if it is not what you think you might do in their situation.

**Do they just want to be listened to? If so:**

- **Respect their decision and agree next steps** for if it happens again or if they change their mind and want to take action.
- **Signpost them to additional support** including [wellbeing support](#) such as the UHD [Psychological Support and Counselling service](#), [Diverse Ethnicity Network](#), [Freedom to Speak Up](#), their trade unions or their GP.
- Agree **to check-in with them again** in the near future and provide the option to meet them at their request.

**Are they seeking guidance on how they can informally handle the situation themselves?**

Guidance for staff on how to informally handle the situation themselves is available in the [Staff guidance for handling racist incident](#).

They may want some coaching on how to initiate the conversation. Talk through the below example with them and encourage them to find somewhere private for the discussion when they have it.

The **B**ehaviour, **E**ffect, **E**xpectation, **R**esult ([B.E.E.R](#)) [feedback model](#) can be useful to help structure an informal conversation.

Example:

"I find this [insert comment] **behaviour** inappropriate. This is the **effect** it had on me [insert why you find it offensive or demeaning]. Please could you stop that behaviour / action [this is your **expectation**]. This would be helpful to both of us [this is your **result**].

The instigator of the behaviour may want to understand more information or be guided on how to handle the situation differently in the future. Our '[Anti-racism toolkit](#)' can help them with this.

If the individual wants to handle the situation informally, you should:

- **Be clear that they still have the option to raise a concern formally** should this approach not work.
- **Signpost them to additional support** including [wellbeing support](#) such as the UHD [Psychological Support and Counselling service](#), [Diverse Ethnicity Network](#), [Freedom to Speak Up](#), their trade unions or their GP.

- **Encourage the individual to complete the online [pink 'raise an issue' LERN form](#)** to report a racist incident or offer to help them complete it. This is optional and can include details of how they would like to handle the incident.

### **Do they want you to take action on their behalf?**

- Ask how they would like you to support them and clarify your role so everyone is **clear of expectations**.
- **Review the relevant human resources policies** (see below) and seek guidance if needed from your human resources business partner.
- **Signpost them to additional support** including [wellbeing support](#) such as the UHD [Psychological Support and Counselling service](#), [Diverse Ethnicity Network](#), [Freedom to Speak Up](#), their trade unions or their GP.
- **Encourage the individual to complete the online [pink 'raise an issue' LERN form](#)** to report a racist incident or offer to help them complete it. This is optional and can include details of how they would like to handle the incident.
- With cases of alleged hate crime agree with the individual that these should be **discussed with HR** or the **trust security manager** for further advice. **A LERN form should also be submitted.**

### **Step 3: Make brief notes and seek support as required**

In all instances, **keep a confidential record** of what was discussed including specific words used, who said what to whom, when, whether there were any witnesses and what you agreed will happen next. Tell the individual raising the concern that you are doing this and that you can share this with them.

**Keep the record stored safely close to your work area** – i.e. in a locked cabinet which only you can access. Once the note is no longer needed to be referenced locally, this should be emailed to: [HR.Filing@uhd.nhs.uk](mailto:HR.Filing@uhd.nhs.uk) where it will be stored on the central personnel file of the individual raising the concern.

#### **For further information please refer to:**

- [Freedom to Speak Up Team](#)
- [LERN process for reporting](#) (Pink 'raise an issue' form)
- [Diverse Ethnicity Network](#)
- [HR](#)
- [Violence Prevention and Reduction Policy](#)
- [Civility, Respect and Dignity at Work Policy](#)
- [Psychological Support and Counselling service](#)
- [Occupational health](#)

Use the experience for your own cultural personal learning and development.

### **Step 4: Staff reporting an incident via LERN**

Encourage the individual to complete the online [pink 'raise an issue' LERN form](#) to report a racist incident. The LERN form will be reviewed by the risk and governance team

and forwarded to the most appropriate person for information. Managers may use their discretion to also complete a LERN form if required.

## Step 5 –Seeking additional support

If you are finding the conversation extremely challenging and emotive, and you are unsure on how to continue the conversation, explain the difficulty and ask for help from **your senior leader, HR business partner, [FTSU team](#), EDI lead or [Diverse Ethnicity Network](#) co-leads** who will be able to support you. If there are any incidents of violence or aggression, please **call for security** and refer to the [UHD Violence Prevention and Reduction policy](#).

**If it really isn't the right time** for the conversation, arrange a different time and a suitable place to continue the conversation. If for some reason you are not able to listen, explain this and offer to help support them in finding support elsewhere.

**You don't need to try to solve the problem.** Your role is to support them while they manage their feelings, explore their options and decide what to do.

## Additional hints and tips

**When a staff member raises a concern with you:**

### Set the scene

- Find somewhere quiet away from busy noisy areas
- Always maintain confidentiality
- Introduce yourself, you are here to listen
- Allow time for an unhurried conversation
- Create trust and confidence in you
- Acknowledge emotions
- Display empathy

### Actively Listen

- Encourage the individual to verbalise
- Listen without any judgement
- Never make the conversation about you, even when you strongly want to share your similar experiences. Simply listen!
- Be mindful of your own potential unconscious bias
- Consider your pitch, tone and body language

### Acknowledge emotions and feelings



- Allow the person to express themselves
- Never minimise their experiences
- Acknowledge their fear as some individuals worry about theirs and others' reactions and responses
- Suspend judgement and do not rush to give meaning to what is shared. Seek clarification.
- Know when to pause to reflect and learn

## For your own consideration as a manager

There are many ways you can create an inclusive work environment and tackle racism in your role as a line manager:

### Don't let fear of saying the wrong thing keep you silent

If you say something harmful or hurtful, even unintentionally, **immediately issue a genuine apology** and explain your intention and commitment to combatting discrimination.

### Be aware that silence can feel like violence

Saying nothing builds on those acts of violence. Underrepresented groups and communities need concerns to be listened to and harms addressed. As a manager, **you have a responsibility to address concerns** as they are raised with you in a timely manner.

### Keep learning

Think about your own use of language. **Keep listening. Keep learning.** Language is always changing and evolving, be led by the younger generation. To say to an ethnically diverse colleague that 'you don't see colour' may dismiss their experience of racism. Terms such as BAME may be insulting to some members of staff and be acceptable to others.

### Lead by example

As a manager or team leader, lead by example and **create a safe space** for people to be their authentic self. **Encourage a 'speak up' culture.**

### Be an active ally for inclusion

Ally is an action, not an identity. An ally is someone who **champions underrepresented groups** even though they are not a member of the group they are supporting. By being an ally, you bring your backing and voice to the movement towards equality for all. Joining one of the [UHD Staff Networks](#) as an ally is a good starting point to develop your understanding of the needs of others and will be welcomed by the networks.



## Have proactive curious conversations about race

Talking about race at work with colleagues can be uncomfortable for some managers. However, holding regular informal discussions about race provides an opportunity for increasing **cultural awareness and improved support**. Guidance to help with these discussions can be found in our '[Anti-racism toolkit](#)'.

## Understanding racism: Self-development resources

### Videos:

- [UHD See Me First launch](#) – Siobhan Harrington
- [Inclusion starts with I](#) – a video highlighting how our differences can make us feel excluded and/or misunderstood – Accenture
- [What's it like being a member of staff from an ethnic minority background in the NHS?](#) – Kings Fund
- [BAME Video 2019](#) – UHD Diverse Ethnicity Network
- [What is White Privilege?](#) – Psychologist John Amaechi explains the implications of white privilege – BBC Bitesize
- [Unconscious Bias](#) – an overview of the key concepts
- [Bias in healthcare](#) – learn how implicit bias can affect treatment decisions
- [Microaggressions](#) – an overview of the impact of microaggressions
- [The Importance of Empathy](#) – a video on the science of empathy and understand how others experience the world – Life Hacker
- [Non-racist vs anti-racist](#) – Jon Amaechi also explains the differences – BBC Bitesize

### Books:

- **Why I'm no longer talking to white people about race** – Reni Eddo-Lodge
- **White Fragility: Why it is so hard for white people to talk about racism** – Robin DiAngelo
- **Don't touch my hair** – Emma Dabiri
- **Anti-Racist Ally** – Sophie Williams
- **How to Be an Ally: Actions You Can Take for a Stronger, Happier Workplace** – Melinda Briana Epler

These books are available in [our libraries](#) at RBH and Poole Hospital.