

# Staff 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**

This document is intended as practical guidance to help you feel confident about raising concerns alongside UHD policies which are detailed below.

## 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.

## Support for you

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

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

### Never suffer in silence

You may find it helps to talk to someone. There are many people who can give you support and guidance on next steps:

- Your line manager
- A trusted colleague or friend
- [Freedom to Speak Up Team](#)
- [Diverse Ethnicity Network](#)
- [HR](#)
- [Occupational health](#)
- [Psychological Support and Counselling Service](#) (self-referral for wellbeing support)

*You can find this support and more on our [Thrive wellbeing](#) intranet pages.*

While this guidance focuses on speaking out and encourages managers and others to listen, understand and support you, **please be reassured that the UHD Policies stated above will address serious or repeated incidents of racism.** Such cases will be subject to investigation under the UHD policies and may result in action taken under the disciplinary process up to and including dismissal.

**Behaviour motivated by hostility or prejudice based on race is considered a Hate Crime.** This may be violence or abuse and may require reporting to the Police. **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/ human resources and looked at using the [UHD Violence Prevention and Reduction Policy](#).

## Handling racist behaviour at work - guidance

The correct approach to handling racist behaviour at work will depend on the situation. It will also depend on how confident you feel in addressing the inappropriate behaviour from colleagues or patients/visitors. The flow diagram on page 8 can help you to decide on your approach.

### Recognise

- Recognise that racist abuse or incidents are **unacceptable**.
- Appreciate that your colleague **may be unaware** of their mistake.
- Acknowledge your emotions and **be kind to yourself**.
- It is OK to **reflect and to consider** how you would like to handle the situation.

### Respond

- If there is an immediate threat or danger to you or your colleagues **dial 2222** as detailed in the [UHD Violence Prevention and Reduction Policy](#).
- Ensure your own **safety** and that of the people around you.
- All ward nursing stations have a silent alarm system – **press the emergency button** if necessary.
- Engage in the conversation **only if you feel safe** to do so.
- If you need immediate support – call for help from **your line manager, security manager** or if at night, the **clinical site team**.
- If you feel **confident and safe to do so** – speak to the individual at the time and address the inappropriate behaviour directly.

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**].

- **Remain calm.** The individual may want to understand more or want to know how to handle the situation differently in the future.
- Or you may wish to **plan the discussion** and address the incident shortly afterwards.
- Talk to a **trusted** manager or colleague if required.
- You may wish to **complete the online** [pink 'raise an issue' LERN form](#) to report a racist incident.

Managers have guidance on how to support you and on how to deal with a patient or visitor who may be demonstrating racist behaviour.

## Talk confidentially to someone about your experience

Talking to someone can help you process your emotions and make sense of the situation as well as help you agree next steps if needed.

### Step 1: Outline your perspective

- Ask for **confidentiality** so that you feel free to speak openly.
- Speak about what happened, how it made you **feel**, why you found the behaviour or actions offensive and what **impact** the incident had on you.
- Talk about **what happened next** and how the situation was left.
- It is understandable to feel emotional. **Take your time** to recall your experience.

### Step 2: Explore how you might want the situation to be dealt with

Once you have outlined your experience in sufficient detail, the next step is to consider whether you need further support and whether next steps are required.

There are several potential options:

#### a) Is talking informally about the situation enough support for now?

You may find that speaking about the situation is helpful and you do not wish to take any further action. It may be beneficial to agree to speak out again should this inappropriate behaviour occur in the future. Or you may want more time to reflect upon what has happened.

#### b) Are you seeking guidance on how to informally handle the situation yourself?

You may want to ask for some coaching in terms of how to initiate the conversation. If you feel safe to do so, arrange to speak to the individual in private after the event to talk about how the inappropriate behaviour made you feel. See point 4 onwards on page 4 for guidance.

Please be reassured that **you can raise a concern formally** should this informal approach not work.

#### c) Do you want your manager or someone else to take informal action on your behalf?

Be **specific** about what you wish to happen and the desired outcome. **Be clear of expectations** – do you want them to speak to human resources, the individual or someone else?

You are encouraged to **complete the online [pink 'raise an issue' LERN form](#)** to report a racist incident, your manager or someone else can help you do this if

required. This is optional and can include details of how you would like to handle the incident.

**d) Do you want to raise a concern formally?**

The flow diagram on page 8 is a useful start to consider getting advice on how to raise a concern formally.

You may want to **review the UHD Policies** supporting incidents of racism:

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

In addition, the [Diverse Ethnicity Network](#), [Freedom to Speak Up](#) team and [Trade Unions](#) may also be useful contacts.

**Don't forget to look after your own wellbeing**

See the 'Support for you' section on page 3.

## What happens after submitting a LERN form?

The online pink 'raise an issue' LERN form will be reviewed by the UHD quality and risk department. The **only individuals** who can access your LERN form will be the following individuals from the risk team:

- Natasha Sage
- Jo Sims
- Kelly Ambrose

**You can report the incident/concern anonymously if you wish to do so.**

The risk team will then review the form and decide the most appropriate person to deal with your concern and if any further investigation is required.

If there is anyone you would ideally like to review your concern/incident, please add this into the detail on the form.

## Additional hints and tips

- Try to **remain calm** and remember that the incident is **not** a reflection of your behaviour.
- **Keep a written record** of the incident and your plan of action. Keep a record of any relevant emails and meeting summaries.
- Remember, **you do not need perfect language** to keep a diary note.
- **Do not be hesitant** about seeking support with a racist experience. It is not an easy situation to deal with. Speak to a trusted colleague, friend or a manager.
- **Maintain confidentiality** as it may help you to manage the negative emotions.
- **Be kind to yourself** and take actions that will enhance your wellbeing. You can find a list of all available support on our [Thrive wellbeing](#) intranet pages.

