

**Anti-Racism, Justice, Equity,
Diversity and Inclusion at
YoungMinds: a report on
progress made and where we're
heading**

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YOUNGMiNDS

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Purpose of this Report

In addition to the AJEDI action plan, this report has been created as an opportunity give context, history and sense of the journey travelled to get us here. This report is to be used as a guide for all YoungMinds staff and volunteers to have a shared sense of where we are coming from as an organisation, as well as a clear vision of where we are aiming to get to.

It is important to note here that we originally produced this report for an internal audience, so when we say 'you', we are referring to the staff at YoungMinds. We are sharing this externally for transparency and context, but we want to be clear that some sections may not feel as relevant to our external readers.

Centering Blackness in AJEDI work

Anti-Racism is a term used to define the work of confronting all forms of racism. We have chosen to position our anti-racism work to centre the experience of Blackness and the harm of anti-Black racism in particular, because there is a specific and tangible difference in the discrimination and levels of violence Black people experience in UK society. We understand that anti-Black racism can be traced to the core of oppressive systems in the UK, and is often rooted in the legacy of the history of enslavement and colonisation (particularly in the UK, US and Europe).

We [capitalise the B in Black](#) to recognise that '[Black' is a political identity](#) that describes a racial/cultural group or individuals with a [shared history and lived experience](#) which is more than a colour.

We take an intersectional approach to our anti-racism work, using the definition coined by Dr Kimberlé Crenshaw in response to the specific and distinct forms of discrimination and exclusion experienced by Black women and femmes. This means that we recognise that oppressions interact and **overlap with racism** to create specific forms of discrimination, exclusion and harm.

This does not mean that in our AJEDI work we do not tackle all forms of racism or oppression (for example sinophobia, ableism or homophobia), but that alongside this we are always aware that there will be an imbalance of harm that happens when we do not acknowledge the role and impact anti-Blackness has on all of our experiences.

"When we remove Blackness from the bottom, everybody gets to be seen" - Alicia Walters

At the heart of all forms of discrimination is a historic link to anti-Blackness. By tackling the root causes of anti-Black racism, we unlock better outcomes for all marginalised and minoritised people, and create a more equitable society for all. This takes a shift in thinking to understand that all of our lives are intrinsically linked, and that one person's struggle will be tied to our own.

"If Black women were free, it would mean that everyone else would have to be free since our freedom would necessitate the destruction of all the systems of oppression" - Combahee River Collective

Notes on language

1. In this report and our AJEDI action plan we will use language and terms that you may not have come across before. Where possible, we have added links or a brief explanation below but it is likely there will be parts that don't make sense to you yet, but will do in time and with further learning. As part of our action plan you will see that training, a decolonised dictionary, and a reference/reading list will be part of the resources made available to the organisation to support your learning and understanding. You may also want to note down terms and words that do not make sense yet as part of your own self-directed learning.

2. In both this report and the action plan we use the terms **Black and minoritised**, and **racialised** people in place of the acronym BAME. This is to better recognise that people are not passively statistical "minorities", but are actively experiencing minoritisation by the systems and society around them today. This is a very broad term, and in our day to day work at YoungMinds we always seek to be as specific as possible about which communities, identities and cultures we are talking about. We also respect and support individuals to self-identify and define themselves to honour their identities, experiences and heritage. Language frequently changes and it is like that in time, this definition may develop too.

3. We differentiate between **minoritised** (as above) and **marginalised** people. When we refer to marginalisation, we are talking about the aspects of identity (class, sex, gender, age etc.) which are protected characteristics, and regularly experience discrimination and violence within society. We still include the experiences and needs of all marginalised people at the heart of AJEDI work, but we separate this out to recognise that there is something specific that happens when you experience racism on top of any other marginalisation (intersectionality).

4. When we use the acronym **AJEDI** we refer to five key concepts that are vital to our organisational work. These are built upon the JEDI model created by [Precious Sithole at Social Practice ENT and the Beyond Suffrage Programme](#):

Anti-racism and Justice: the knowledge and culture of learning about the structures and oppressions that show up in our society, and therefore our workplace. This includes an understanding of [critical race theory](#) and [accountability/restorative justice](#).

Equity: equality relies on the flawed assumption that everyone will benefit from the same support, [equity acknowledges that we must tailor support](#) to offer people comparable experiences and opportunities. Equity is turning our Anti-Racism and Justice knowledge into action. This looks like channelling our resources (time, budget, staffing, influence, relationships and expertise) into the way we work (our programmes, policies and procedures that underpin our governance, our operations and service delivery, as well as our external facing policy and influencing work) to help make sure that everyone gets the support, services and access they need to thrive, and to challenge and tackle the barriers to inclusion and justice.

Diversity: the makeup and representation of our staff, volunteers, leadership, trustee board and programme participants. Our aim is to bring diversity of thinking, experience and life perspective to increase effectiveness of our work. This is often measured quantitatively (i.e. through figures and statistics).

Inclusion: the culture and working environment of our organisation, where everyone regardless of their identity can be their authentic selves, feel safe, welcome, valued and respected. This is often measured qualitatively (i.e. through the experiences of different people).

Diversity asks, "Who's in the room?" Equity responds: "Who is trying to get in the room but can't? Whose presence in the room is under constant threat of erasure?"

Inclusion asks, "Has everyone's ideas been heard?" Justice responds, "Whose ideas won't be taken as seriously because they aren't in the majority?"

Diversity asks, "How many more of [pick any minoritised identity] group do we have this year than last?" Equity responds, "What conditions have we created that maintain certain groups as the perpetual majority here?"

Inclusion asks, "Is this environment safe for everyone to feel like they belong?" Justice challenges, "Whose safety is being sacrificed and minimised to allow others to be comfortable maintaining dehumanising views?" - [Dr D-L Stewart](#)

5. In both the report and the action plan you will see references to **calling in and calling out**. This is in reference to the action a person or people can take to ask someone to take accountability for their words or actions when they have made a mistake or have caused harm. The difference is often between a private interaction (a call in) and a public interaction (call out). The difference in approach will often depend on the power dynamics in the situation, previous conversations about accountability, the intention of the words or actions and the immediate risk of harm.

A note on our external consultant and critical friend

Alongside our external consultant, we came to the decision to intentionally keep their name out of our report and action plan. We are acutely aware of the risk of harm they may face as a mixed Black person, given the tumultuous climate around these issues. Having to consider the media or public reaction to our consultant's reflections is an unfortunate reality and prioritising their mental wellbeing is of the utmost importance to us.

Introductory note from our Chief Executive

At YoungMinds, our mission is clear: for all young people to get the mental health support they need, when they need it, no matter what.

There is a very important word in that statement that for many years we had been guilty of neglecting – that word is ‘all’.

Black and minoritised young people face racism, prejudice, discrimination and systemic barriers to support which mean they are more likely to struggle with their mental health. From public data we know that:

- Black and mixed-raced children accounted for 36 per cent of young people detained in the highest-level units, despite representing just 11 per cent of the population. These children also made up only 5 per cent of general CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) lists, and just one per cent of those accessing community eating disorder services. ([NHS Benchmarking report 2022 England](#))
- Young people from Black and minoritised backgrounds were more likely to be referred to mental health services through routes such as youth justice and social services, than they were through perceived ‘voluntary’ routes such as primary care. ([Edbrooke-Childs, J. and Patalay, P. \(2019\) Ethnic Differences in Referral Routes to Youth Mental Health Services UK](#))
- People from Black Asian and Minority Ethnic communities are at higher risk of developing a mental health problem in adulthood but are less likely to receive support for their mental health. ([NHS Digital \(2016\) Mental Health and Wellbeing in England, Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey 2014 England](#))
- Black people are [four times more likely to be detained under the Mental Health Act](#) than white people, and four times more likely than white people to have force used against them while in a mental health hospital. ([UK Government: Detentions Under the Mental Health Act published March 2021](#))

And yet, from the limited data we can currently draw upon, we know that our services do not do nearly enough to engage Black and minoritised young people or the adults around them and we know that our campaigning voice often hasn’t centred the young people who are most minoritised by the mental health system and wider society.

We have always been driven by the impact we can have for young people – but we have not been good enough at asking ourselves which young people we are serving and why, and where our attention and effort is most needed.

As you will see when you explore this report, we also know that we have a long way to go to make sure that our workplace, and the staff and volunteers who make it, reflects the make-up of society out in the world that we aspire to serve. In line with our core value, ‘*We celebrate what makes you you*’, we want and need a workforce that brings different perspectives and lived experiences, at all levels of our charity, to help us make better decisions and do better work – and crucially, to serve the young people we’re currently neglecting.

We can't hope to attract and retain that kind of workforce unless we are working each and every day to create an organisation where everyone has a genuinely equitable experience and feels safe to be their true selves at work. Sadly, from our inclusion report, we know that staff *do* experience racist and discriminatory behaviour here. We know we *haven't* created an environment that is safe and equitable for all. And we know it is absolutely critical that we do.

The process of writing this report and our Action Plan, alongside the brilliant team of staff and expert consultants directly involved, has prompted a lot of reflection. Alongside the Senior Leadership Team, I have reflected on how we found ourselves neglecting the work we've so clearly needed to do. We have reflected on ourselves and our own privileges, and in many cases on our whiteness and the impact of the white lens through which we have led our charity. And we have had to reflect on the enormity of the task ahead – a task that never ends – to become the organisation we want to be, knowing that there will be no point at which this work will be “done”.

The Action Plan we have written is something that we feel proud of, but know it has taken a long time, and we regret not moving into action as an organisation earlier. We will publish our Action Plan, which will include a public declaration of our aspirations and a thorough and detailed roadmap of how we intend to achieve them over the next three to five years. But aspirations mean nothing unless they are fulfilled, so while we are committed to holding ourselves to account, we are publishing this so that whoever is reading it can also hold us accountable.

This is genuine, long term work that we are truly committed to and we sincerely hope that it makes the difference it is intended to make.

Who we are

Our Vision is of a world where no young person feels alone with their mental health.

We know that Black and minoritised young people are more likely to struggle with their mental health, more likely to experience racism, stigma and discrimination if they reach out for help and more likely to face systemic barriers to accessing support. If we want no young person to feel alone with their mental health, we have to be better at reaching and representing racialised young people, and the adults around them, who have been marginalised by the system.

Our Mission is for **all young people to get the mental health support they need, when they need it no matter what**. This aligns to our Purpose to **stop young people reaching crisis point with their mental health**.

We know that Black and minoritised young people are far less likely to be able to access support through charities and services, and when they do, more likely to experience discrimination and racism. We know that [racialised young people are under-represented in community mental health services](#), but significantly over-represented in crisis and inpatient services. Racialised young people are also over represented in school sanction and [exclusion figures](#) and more likely to have contact with the youth justice system, where mental health is a significant and/or contributing factor. The young people who are most likely to be reaching that crisis point, and least likely to get timely or safe support, are those racialised young people we are least adequately serving through our programmes.

Our Values are:

We're not afraid to speak up for what's right.

We know what needs to change because young people tell us. If they raise their voices, so do we.

We're optimistic.

Things get tough, but we never forget to celebrate progress and never stop looking for practical ways to make things better.

Kindness is our strength.

Everything we do, we do with love, care and compassion.

We celebrate what makes you, you.

Whoever you are, we welcome you and encourage you to always be true to yourself.

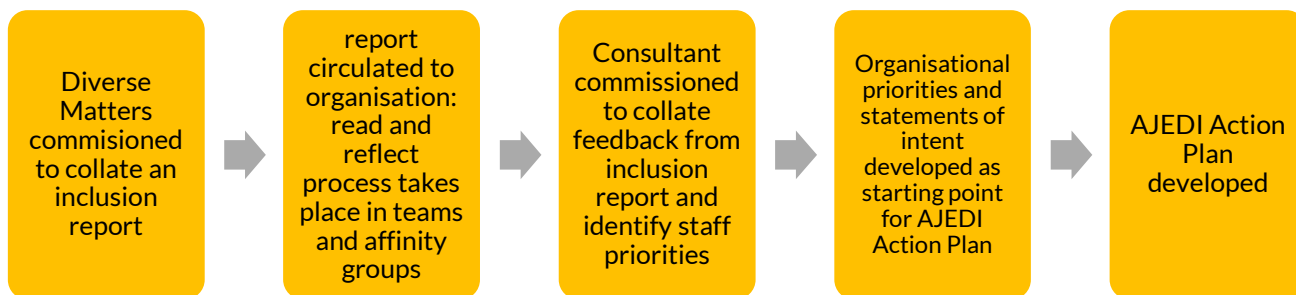
While we are truly committed to living by our values at YoungMinds, it is true to say that we have a lot more work to do for Black and minoritised people to truly feel them. We often haven't spoken out strongly enough about what's right on issues of inequality and justice. Our staff often haven't felt celebrated for being their true selves. We often haven't acted with enough kindness and compassion to everyone.

These can only be values we are proud of when they are experienced equitably by everyone.

Research, exploration and reflection

Beginnings

To truly make the changes we wanted to see we needed to know more about where we were starting from. We wanted to make sure this exercise was a true reflection of YoungMinds as a charity and the experiences and priorities of our staff and volunteers.



Diverse Matters Inclusion Report

In December 2020, we commissioned the diversity and inclusion consultancy firm, Diverse Matters, with the brief of gathering insights and experiences of staff and volunteers to get a richer understanding of the breadth of diversity at YoungMinds, and the tensions present in the organisation that intersected with protected characteristics such as race, ethnicity or disability.

Through a series of one-to-one interviews, focus groups and surveys in the Spring of 2021, the Diverse Matters team worked to understand what it was really like to work or at YoungMinds, in particular for staff with protected characteristics and the specific intersection of also being Black or Minoritised. Their research also served to gain an understanding of how staff perceived our commitment to the AJEDI agenda and where they saw the problems that we most acutely needed to address.

Here is a summary of what we heard back:

Where it's going well
For some people our organisational culture can feel like a safe space for listening and raising issues, and that we are an organisation that is challenging itself to do better
Our culture of inclusion and belonging is continuously improving, and we are actively working on embedding inclusive practice that has been missing. In particular staff feel confident that they can manage mental and physical illness with no fear of job risk.
There has been more learning and AJEDI awareness in the organisation than ever before; for some staff this is their first experience of a work environment that has explicit and open conversations around race, diversity and inclusion, including spaces to critique and call out harmful behaviour.
Our learning and experience in providing excellent services to young people and their families needs to be translated into our own (internal) organisational Wellbeing and Mental Health approach.

Where and how issues are showing up

Everyday microaggressions are a part of our **organisational culture**, with gender and race as common factors. There are inconsistencies in organisational responses to racism and microaggressions; outcomes often depending on who raises or observes problematic behaviour.

Inclusion and belonging often isn't considered in our everyday work. Our inclusive practices sometimes feel like trend-following rather than the authentic direction of the organisation, and often we don't engage with internal experts to support more inclusive practice.

Learning and AJEDI awareness is experienced by some staff as tokenistic and inauthentic – at worst it is seen as woke-washing and white saviourism. AJEDI work is often felt to be moving too slowly.

YoungMinds has not centred racial and structural inequalities in the mental health system when considering our **service delivery & outward facing work**. We have a lack of representation and diversity for outward facing teams and are not confident around cultural competence and psychological safety of racialised people accessing our services.

There is inconsistency in transparency and accountability from **Leadership and Line Management**. Inconsistency in Leadership styles and approaches can mean AJEDI work is seen as a tick box exercise.

Our **recruitment, retention and staff diversity** need significant improvement. Difficulties with retention of Black and minoritised and marginalised staff are linked to lack of support, inconsistent induction processes and exhaustion/burnout. Our fear of getting it wrong can hold us back from tackling the lack of diversity and representation in our staff.

We need greater focus on **organisational wellbeing and mental health**, and to take concerns around burnout and workload more seriously, not once crisis point or burnout is happening. Across the organisation we juggle high expectations for service demand, quality of work, scale of delivery while often being under resourced or at frequent risk of burnout.

Findings from Staff Priorities Survey

In Autumn 2021, all staff were invited to take part in a survey to prioritise key actions from a list generated from the findings of the Diverse Matters report. The same four actions were consistently prioritised throughout this process. They are presented below in the priority order that came through from Black staff, whose needs we centre throughout this work.

1. Anti-racism, whiteness and inclusion training provided for all staff, starting with SLT and line managers.
2. Creating toolkits for SLT and line managers to support their capability to hold safe spaces for everyone, to improve their day to day work and the support they are able to give.
3. Develop clear KPIs for the AJEDI plan, which SLT are required to report against to the whole organisation that are regularly reviewed and discussed in senior meetings.

4. Review our three strategic programmes through an AJEDI lens and make changes to our campaigning and service delivery work to ensure:
 - a. We are reaching proportionate numbers of Black and minoritised young people and adults through our services
 - b. We are properly representing the needs of Black and minoritised young people through our policy, public affairs, media and campaigns work
 - c. Our services are culturally relevant and appropriate to Black and minoritised young people and trusted adults.

Our AJEDI Statements of Intent

Using the insight from the Diverse Matters report and the staff prioritisation exercise, our last stage of consultation was to establish a set of statements that captured our starting point in our AJEDI journey and our ambitions for the future.

These statements were developed with the support of a staff working group, our staff, volunteers, our Board of Trustees and our Youth Panel, and formed the structure of our action plan.

Where we've started from	Where we want to get to
<p>1) We are a predominantly white-led organisation - this extends to our trustees.</p> <p>We can be neglectful of the effect that having white leadership can have on our staff team – such as the impact of non-diverse representation and the influence of white culture/white feminism in the charity sector.</p> <p>This disproportionately impacts Black and minoritised staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Racially diverse representation is lacking • This lack of representation in our staff acts as a barrier to progression • A majority white led team affects the way we work and the expectations put on us 	<p>We want to be a diverse-led organisation that consistently interrogates the role of and power of whiteness in its operating structures, work ethic expectations and wellbeing of staff.</p> <p>We want to build a team of leaders and trustees that represents the communities we serve and aim to serve better.</p> <p>We want our staff teams and volunteers to call in/out ongoing issues in our organisation without fear of defensiveness, retaliation or further exclusion.</p> <p>We want the public to feel that our representation is more than a set of diverse stock images and that our strategic plan and transformative culture is more than just a tick box exercise.</p>
<p>2) We are an organisation where the leadership and line managers demonstrate varying levels of engagement with and accountability for how they engage with their work with an AJEDI lens,</p>	<p>We want to be an organisation that holds our leadership and line managers accountable, monitoring and evaluating the ways in which they engage AJEDI lensed work.</p>

<p>which often feels inauthentic or performative to some staff.</p> <p>This inconsistent form of leadership affects the way some of us are able to work, flourish and progress in our roles. Some staff feel well supported and that work is productive where as others recognise that that same commitment isn't represented in their teams in the same way.</p> <p>The differences in the way some leaders operate can also make it seem like when changes are made they are through force and as opposed to a genuine recognition that changes being made are the right for the organisation.</p>	<p>We want leadership and line managers to know the difference between restorative and preventative work, where and when to apply it but also to confidently justify those choices to their teams as a top down effort towards change that their team can adopt and also advocate for.</p> <p>We want to be an organisation that values equity in our decision making processes and how we manage our teams.</p> <p>We want our leaders be able to engage staff at all levels and communicate clearly and efficiently regardless of their identity and/or positionality.</p>
<p>3) We have a working culture that does not prioritise or centre the importance of understanding power dynamics, exclusion and white-centred working cultures. We have relied on small acts or tepid efforts towards change.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversations about power and privilege at work do not happen • This lack of conversations leads to some staff feeling left out and some of our procedures leaving certain staff members needs out of the equation • There has been low level work from some leaders to change this culture, but this seems to be perceived as more positive than it is in reality, as we have a culture that tolerates people being left out at times 	<p>We want a working culture where, at all levels, we recognise that a lack of understanding of issues regarding power dynamics and exclusion in the workplace can leave staff feeling exhausted and undervalued.</p> <p>We want to be an organisation that is alive to this impact and works to eradicate these feelings among our staff, each and every day.</p> <p>We want to be an organisation that recognises that perfection isn't the goal but an ongoing commitment to learning, development and improvement is possible. We want our staff to feel that they can work in a culture that represents this ideology at all levels and that each year they see and feel the changes happening.</p> <p>We want to be an organisation that sees Diversity, Equity & Inclusion work, holding safe and compassionate spaces and anti-oppressive practice as a skill set rather than a passion project for people with certain identities in our workplace.</p>
<p>4) We are an organisation where fragility and defensiveness hold a lot of space and power in our working spaces. This results in acts of silencing, gas-lighting and micro-aggressions among staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some staff are unable to have conversations about race, inequality, exclusion etc. without feeling attacked • These feelings of fragility force other staff to tolerate uncomfortable and 	<p>We want to have a working culture that takes great steps to call out and call in members of staff who resort to tactics such as fragility and defensiveness. We want this culture to be consistently guided and demonstrated by the organisation's leaders.</p> <p>We want to be an organisation that takes responsibility for instances of defensiveness and fragility by addressing these issues head on but</p>

<p>difficult working spaces that ignore their feelings over those of someone else</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minoritised and marginalised staff are left to cope with feelings of doubt, paranoia, fear and stress due to not being able to speak freely and openly about their experiences 	<p>ensuring that this labour is not left to our most marginalised staff members.</p> <p>We want to be an organisation that recognises the emotional labour in every scenario and has the structure to deal with these issues and reduce harm in the moment and afterwards.</p>
<p>5) We are an organisation with ambitions to become anti-racist and inclusive, but we are inconsistent in our approaches towards those goals. Our efforts have at times been seen as being panic-filled or 'too little too late'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-racist work is not at the centre of the organisation's activities • This leads to attempts to make people feel included that are not successful • Due to the rise of Black Lives Matter, staff have felt that some of the changes made inside the organisation came too late and were a result of social pressure rather than the team wanting to make real change 	<p>We want to be an organisation that acknowledges that it is in the process of becoming anti-racist and inclusive.</p> <p>We want to be an organisation that prioritises AJEDI in all of its work and consistently advocates for inclusivity.</p> <p>We want to be an organisation that takes brave and bold steps towards change. In a move away from being a 'tick box' organisation we want our leaders to feel confident and equipped when making decisions.</p> <p>Throughout our journey we will consistently recognise the need for external guidance and consulting from experts but we will not rely on this input for action.</p>
<p>6) We are an organisation that tolerates poor and inconsistent managing structures and a general lack of management guidance. As a result, a lot of staff experience burnout.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear and accessible working structures are lacking • This creates barriers to progression and feelings of stress and being 'overworked' • Staff are asking for stronger guidance from leaders to be able to manage their workloads better and feel confident in their performance <p>We have an organisational/operational policy framework that lacks focus and intention on a range of issues; clarity on policy and processes, service assessment and on boarding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies around service assessment and on boarding are poor • Our performance assessments need to be better reviewed and monitored • The lack of focused policy and process reviews acts as a barrier to staff progression and negatively impacts their confidence in their performance 	<p>We want to be an organisation that addresses and challenges the causes of burnout in its working environment.</p> <p>We want to be an organisation with an open an ongoing conversation around boundaries and wellbeing amongst our staff.</p> <p>We want to create a culture and a structure where staff feel empowered to manage their wellbeing but are continually supported by their line managers where additional adjustments or considerations may be needed.</p> <p>We want an internal policy framework that reviews developments across all policy and organisational processes with a particular focus on keeping Anti racism, Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at the centre.</p>

<p>7) We have a working culture with a limited understanding of, and action towards, mental health and wellbeing access for Black members of the team at YoungMinds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health services and mental wellbeing support and education are not a priority • There are gaps in the ways staff are given the support they need, particularly Black staff • There is a limited understanding of how these lack of services create preventable issues and negative feelings for Black staff 	<p>We want a working culture that consistently assesses the impact of internal and external factors on Black staff at Young Minds and finds holistic solutions to these, seeking input from staff and external experts where necessary.</p> <p>We want to create working spaces that handle individual issues in an equitable way; equity will remain at the centre of our decision making and our approaches.</p> <p>We want to build a space where Black people feel comfortable and valued and where they can bring their whole selves to the workplace.</p> <p>We want to work towards building a staff community that actively challenges itself with regards to instances of racism and anti-Blackness that they engage themselves in and no longer see things as isolated issues over 'there' but ones that all staff who don't identify as Black must engage in.</p>
<p>8) We are an organisation with a limited understanding of issues relating to identity, exclusion and oppression for our staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversations around identity in the workplace need to be better. Without open conversations about identity this creates feelings of exclusion but also leads to neglecting certain staff members' needs. This also leads to some staff having to do the double labour of ensuring their needs are met and having to constantly protect their own psychological safety. 	<p>We want to be an organisation that sets clear expectations for our leadership, as well as all staff and volunteers, of the importance of regular, meaningful conversations on inclusion, respect and dignity.</p> <p>We want our staff and volunteers from marginalised backgrounds to be able to call in/out their colleagues and feel both physically and psychologically safe when doing so.</p> <p>We want our staff team who occupy multiple spaces of privilege to recognise that there are a number of material and social consequences for calling a colleague 'out' or 'in' and respond in these instances in a conscientious and humble manner.</p> <p>We want to make sure staff are able to recognise and respond to issues happening outside of YoungMinds that may be affecting Black and minoritised staff, and to form an appropriate response, including taking active responsibility for the culture of support and care for team members.</p>
<p>[9] We are an organisation that lacks a tangible, human approach to mistake culture, including how we are taught to recover from mistakes and to reduce harm when we make mistakes.</p>	<p>We want to be an organisation that implements AJEDI mistake culture into our work at all levels. We want a working culture where staff are supported and equipped and confident to confront these challenges.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open and comfortable conversations about making mistakes do not form part of the day to day working culture • Staff feel pressure to consistently work to levels of perfection and don't feel there is space to ask for help or support • This leads to a working environment where pressure is very high, people feel overworked, limited in their ability to progress and lack confidence in their performance 	<p>We want our staff teams to confidently understand how to approach mistake culture; to not see it as an excuse or a form of defence, to actively embrace opportunities for development, to invite personal spaces for self-reflection.</p> <p>We want to be an organisation where mistake culture is continuously interrogated in regards to our progress.</p> <p>In recognition of the subjective nature of progress, leaders inside YoungMinds will support our teams to strike the balance between accepting that mistakes are inevitable, progress takes time but in doing so our colleagues are exposed to harm and are likely required to engage in non-compensated [emotional] labour.</p>
<p>[10] We are an organisation that can neglect the reach of our campaigns and services.</p> <p>There is a lack recognition of the needs of Black and minoritised young people in our outward facing work and our platform does not speak up for minority issues effectively enough.</p> <p>We recognise that given the number of marginalised young people who suffer from poor mental health and other related issues we are not reaching enough of them with our services.</p>	<p>We want to be an organisation that actively seeks to engage with communities that experience racism and minoritisation and to be anti-racist in the delivery of services, our engagement with young people and our policy and campaigns work.</p> <p>We want to bring together sector peers and service providers to share best practice, align strategies and collaborate regularly.</p> <p>We want to make a conscious effort to meet gaps in our reach, with a particular focus on Black and minoritised young people, ensuring they feel seen and represented through our work, and that their accessibility and cultural needs are met through our service design.</p> <p>We want to routinely consider the impact of our services, activities and partnerships on Black and minoritised young people. We want to take a participative approach to make assessments of the appropriateness of our relationships and our content/activities for these communities.</p> <p>We want to make sure we are centring the experience of Black and minoritised young people in our campaigning, acknowledging that their voices and their needs are often ignored in the mental health conversation and policy development, and their needs are greater.</p>

	We want to make sure leadership is able to recognise and respond to issues affecting the young people we support and are able to have an active and appropriate response.
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The work we've already done

Summer 2020, conversations and initial plans

The events of summer 2020 accelerated conversations within YoungMinds around race, justice, equity, diversity and inclusion. As these cross-organisation conversations progressed, an informal working group of staff came together to help hold the momentum of translating words into action.

From this group emerged our first public AJEDI statement of intent from our Chief Executive, and an initial plan to organise the emerging needs of our organisation into five priority areas.

1. Creating safe support spaces for Black and minoritised staff at YoungMinds.
2. Creating safe and transparent structures for organisational listening, learning and accountability.
3. Creating a more inclusive, anti-racist and culturally sensitive culture at YoungMinds.
4. Increasing the diversity of our workforce and Board of Trustees.
5. Developing YoungMinds so that Black and minoritised young are a genuine focus for our strategy, engagement, services and campaigns.

Accountability Network Group

In July 2020 the informal staff working group transitioned into an Accountability Network Group (ANG) with an open invitation for staff and volunteers to join. Since its inception, ANG has provided a number of different functions; a learning space, a programme board, a staff representative network and an accountability space. It has a current membership of 26 staff and volunteers from across the organisation, and meets fortnightly, joined once a month by SLT & SMT sponsors.

A big and heartfelt thank you goes to past and present ANG members for all of their time, support, challenge and knowledge in keeping the ANG space going.

Following a process of evaluation, the format of the ANG will be transitioning in 2022 to refine its purpose and scope to focus on the delivery and accountability of the AJEDI Action Plan.

Progress against our original plan

While we have an enormous amount of work to do, we are pleased with the significant progress we have made against that 2020 plan.

1. Creating safe support spaces for Black and Minoritised staff at YoungMinds

Staff consultation has identified appetite and need for externally facilitated Affinity Groups, which are closed spaces for staff with a shared aspect of their identity or lived experience to meet. We have used

closed affinity spaces in all our AJEDI staff consultation work, and are including the provision of Affinity groups in the Action Plan.

2. Creating safe and transparent structures for organisational listening, learning and accountability

A staff-led Accountability Network Group (ANG) has been established with representation across every department of the organisation, including SLT and SMT and Leadership Group.

We worked with external equality, diversity and inclusion consultants Diverse Matters to produce an organisational Inclusion Report (January-June 2021). This process included creating a number of channels for staff and volunteers to contribute safely and anonymously, to understand the extent of issues of racism and discrimination at YoungMinds.

We structured a whole-organisation read>reflect>action approach to share the findings of the Diverse Matters Inclusion report (June 2021). This process was designed to give the time, space and tools for staff and volunteers (inclusive of Trustee Board & Youth Panel) to **read** and digest the report; before opening up spaces to **reflect** on learnings from colleague's experiences within the culture at YoungMinds; as well as space to ask questions in team, departmental and all-staff meetings and **plan** for action in supported and facilitated spaces.

YoungMinds People & Governance Committee of the Board of Trustees took formal responsibility for the governance of organisational AJEDI work and progress. This includes regular reporting to the committee with updates on work to date, which will continue with the launch of the Action Plan.

Staff and volunteers were invited to take part in open action planning workshops and surveys to generate ideas and priorities for our final AJEDI plan (September/October 2021). This included establishing a staff working group to input into the planning process of the Action Plan.

3. Creating a more inclusive, anti-racist and culturally sensitive culture at YoungMinds

We committed to an externally run and assessed Inclusion Report of working culture at YoungMinds in order to be clear, honest and transparent on our starting point as an organisation (June 2021).

We appointed an external consultant and critical friend (June 2021- present) to work in collaboration with the organisation to use the evidence and insights from our Inclusion Report to create a clear understanding of where we are, articulate the vision for the organisation and create clear plan of action.

We included an AJEDI-focused objective in our 2021-22 annual objective setting exercise to identify how staff would lead or support self-directed learning and demonstrate AJEDI focused practice-change in their day-to-day work. A further developed AJEDI-focused objective is being included in our 2022-23 annual objective setting, aligned to the Action Plan.

We adopted the Halo code as part of a sector-wide commitment to prevent race-based hair discrimination in the workplace.

Introduction (July 2020) of 'One Thing Friday' resources (with over 30 editions created), circulated regularly to all staff and volunteers with materials and prompts for action and learning on a number of AJEDI associated themes.

Introduction of all-staff emails to mark holidays, celebrations and moments of cultural importance throughout the year, as well as acknowledgement statements for wider societal events that may impact staff.

An all-staff session, video and slide resource to equip the organisation with aligned language when discussing AJEDI-related matters. This furthered awareness and learning on key AJEDI terms such as intersectionality, diversity/Inclusion, Anti Blackness, BAME/POC, the A in AJEDI, Black (capital B), Power, Privilege, Minoritised, Equity/Equality, Microaggressions, Gaslighting & Whiteness.

SLT has established a regular learning circle around anti-racist books (such as Layla F Saad's *Me and White Supremacy* and David Baddiel's *Jews Don't Count*) to support and challenge individual and collective learning and application as leaders of the organisation.

We commissioned a review of our HR policies and practices, to audit them with an AJEDI lens, and identify key policies that need to be introduced.

We adopted a working practice of engaging third-party, EDI specialist HR consultants to support employee relations cases (e.g. investigations).

Reviewed our on boarding practices, to assess how equitable they are.

We updated our induction process, with fuller focus on wellbeing, signposting to employee and workplace support our AJEDI work, and expectations of behaviour from day one.

We are currently reviewing our Safeguarding Policy, Safeguarding Framework (Standards) and Code of Conduct with the aim of strengthening the references to AJEDI practice such as being clearer about what safe spaces are and how to create them, and placing greater emphasis on the expectation to call out racist and discriminatory conduct

We updated our Safeguarding induction training to include more reflective conversations on anti-racist and equitable safeguarding practices.

We are currently updating our external safeguarding audit process to include AJEDI safeguarding practice as a priority focus.

We are currently reviewing our finance and processes for more equitable approaches to procurement and supplier selection processes, and embedding our AJEDI values within this.

4. Increasing the diversity of our workforce and board

We appointed Inclusive Recruiting to audit current recruitment practices and introduce new, more equitable recruitment approaches and processes and hired a Recruitment Manager to enable us to continue to develop our recruitment practices to be more inclusive.

An initial group of hiring Managers have attended a three-stage training on understanding key concepts linked to bias and non-inclusive processes that commonly occur during recruitment, and how to disrupt them in interview and shortlisting processes. The second cohort of training taking place in May 2022.

Our Trustee Board conducted a self-audit on Board diversity & gaps in representation, inclusive of feedback from both the ANG and our Youth Panel, as part of planning for Board recruitment.

We developed a trustee recruitment campaign, #MadeForThis, to attract candidates who might not normally consider applying for trustee roles, leading to 61 applications from a diverse range of people. This led to the recruitment of five new trustees, including two who are Black and two who are under the age of 35.

We recruited two new Trustees as graduates from our Youth Panel, both under-25 and one is Asian.

The Board of Trustees has undertaken an external effectiveness review focused on inclusive working culture. Board members attended a training session in November 2021 focussed on creating equitable spaces which value different voices and experiences within the board.

Recruitment to SLT position (Director of Finance & Business Services) required our recruiters to deliver a shortlist with minimum 40% representation of Black and minoritised candidates to disrupt historic underrepresentation in previous recruitment drives. This led to appointment of a dual heritage candidate onto our SLT.

We signed up to the Show the Salary Pledge, and the 'ACEVO 8 Principles to address the diversity deficit in charity leadership'.

5. Developing YoungMinds so that Black and minoritised young people are a genuine focus for our strategy, engagement, services and campaigns

We developed a focused audience approach to align with our current organisational strategy to support young people who experience racism, particularly young people who identify as Black in our outward facing work.

The Training & Services Department have embedded an accountability function, to audit all training and helpline work commissioned and developed in the future. This is to make sure there is an inclusive lens being applied and that it is explicit whose needs are being met with our provision of services.

We evolved our Youth Engagement & Influence strategy to focus on diversifying young people's participation. This included funding commitments for a new local partnerships approach with organisations who work predominantly with Black and minoritised young people.

We committed funding towards development work focussing on young Muslim people's lived experiences of mental health and mental illness, including funding for a partner organisation to work in collaboration alongside us.

Work has been ongoing to review our user data for our services in order to establish a baseline and set targets for Black and minoritised audiences

We completed a recruitment drive to increase diversity of the volunteers on the Parents Helpline.

We have worked consistently with the mental health sector to increasingly hold government to account on addressing inequalities of support for Black and minoritised young people, including being signatories to letters to the Prime Minister and relevant Ministers on race-related issues:

- Letter to the Minister for Mental Health calling on them to ensure a strong government focus on reducing racial disparities in Mental Health
- Joint letter to Secretary of State on Mental Health Act
- Signatory on letter from Runnymede Trust and MHFA England calling on the Prime Minister to reject the Race report published in April 2021

Our Chief Executive is an active member of the Advancing Equalities Taskforce for the NHS England equalities strategy.

Our Media & Campaigns team have identified benchmarking targets to ensure:

- 50% of our young spokespeople are from minoritised groups
- 50% of parliamentary or public engagement activities that young people take part in done by those from minoritised groups
- 20 inclusions of young spokespeople in key outlets for minoritised groups
- 25% of YoungMinds media mentions accompanied by a key message on Anti-racism, Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion e.g. on racism, homophobia, Islamophobia, ableism in relation to mental health etc.
- 10% of YoungMinds mentions in target media for minoritised groups

Our Policy team have adopted an AJEDI approach for all external policy positioning, this has included:

- assessing current Bills and calls for evidence with an inclusion lens and building insights and evidence around the experience of minoritised young people
- prioritising inequalities in our work on behaviour in schools and our campaigning for early access solutions
- standardising inclusive language in our submissions to government, especially where it is lacking in invitations for evidence and consultation questions from the government itself

Our Training and Service Design Teams are trialling a number of new approaches, including:

- a new Departmental induction and CPD programme based on our 'involving young people facing marginalisation and barriers' participation training course
- auditing the models and research we use as the evidence base for our training
- updating our consultancy model to make sure we review and take active steps to refer, recommend and partner with organisations which are better placed to lead.
- Partnering with other organisations for insight work on Stepping Up and wider Service Design work.
- Developing a services impact assessment which addresses whether our services offer equitable support or act as a barrier for Black and minoritised communities.

Our Parents Helpline & Service Development Teams are developing approaches for:

- Culturally competent service approaches and ongoing CPD for helpline staff and volunteers
- Raising awareness of our services in Black and minoritised communities, including working with ROTA (Race on the Agenda – which is a social policy organisation focused on issues impacting on Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities) to promote our services to their membership
- Dedicated focus groups with parents and carers from Black and minoritised communities, to inform our Helpline service review project and to shape our ongoing specialist information and advice development plans

Looking forward: a note from our new Senior AJEDI Manager

To conclude, this is the beginning. In an ideal world, I wouldn't have this job. But the world isn't ideal, what makes it better is pieces of work like this. Plans with clear commitments, rooted in evidence and driven by equitable action.

For some context, I am new to YoungMinds and have recently started as the Senior Anti-racism, Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Manager. After joining and reading the statements of intent, I immediately knew what kind of organisation we want to be.

My initial thoughts are to say that our goals are ambitious- and they are, but they are also just levelling the playing field. We are acknowledging that to be from a Black, minoritised, and racialized community means that our starting point isn't the same as it is for our white and more privileged counterparts. Our vision is clear, and we know that staff, managers, leaders, and volunteers at YoungMinds need to be invigorated by this vision to make a fair future a reality- after all, we are optimistic.

None of us are experts in anything but our own experiences. However, by starting this journey, we are demonstrating that we are ok with making mistakes, growing from them and have a willingness to educate ourselves on the things we don't yet know.

As a new staff member myself, I am impressed and inspired by the work that has been done to get where we are today. I am motivated by the strength of my colleagues, the young people we work for and by my own personal lived experience to do this work. I pledge to continue to hold myself and others to account for the obligations we have to Black and minoritised communities, be kind and stand up for what's right.

Nicole Alleyne-West, Senior AJEDI Manager