



Ethnic Minorities  
& Youth Support  
Team Wales

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## **All Wales Black Asian Minority Ethnic Engagement Programme**

*'Becoming an Anti-racist Wales – How can you play your part?'*

**Notes from Forum – 9<sup>th</sup> November 2022, 10am – 11.30am**

*Chaired by Selima Bahadur, Programme Manager.*

*Co-hosted and supported by Grainne Connolly, Policy Officer, Twahida Akbar, Policy Officer, and Judy Li, Marketing and Communications Officer.*

### Guest Speakers/Panellists

Jennifer Harding-Richards (*RVE and RSE Education Adviser, Swansea, Carmarthenshire, and Pembrokeshire Councils*)

Riaz Hassan (*Head of Implementation Team for Welsh Government Anti-racist Wales Action Plan*)

Lee Tiratira (*Strategic Youth Lead, EYST*)

### Attendees – (133 in total)

Abiola Adio (EYST Wales) | Abyd Quinn Aziz (Cardiff University) | Ameena Asad (Cardiff University) | Amira Assami | Angela Overment (Cwmpas Coop) | Anna Jones (Pembrokeshire Coast) | Anne Wood | Beth Thomas (Swansea Council) | Bets Ingram (Powys Council) | Bex Kentfield (Welsh Women's Aid) | Brigid Armstead | Carmen Newman (Swansea Council) | Carole Phillips (Kidscape) | Caroline Massey (EYST Wales) | Caroline Taylor (Children in Wales) | Carys Huntly (Ceredigion Council) | Cath Hicks (Adult Learning Wales) | Catherine Rowland (Business Wales) | Catherine Evans | Cathryn Morgan (Ceredigion Council) | Ceriann Williams | Charlotte Ajomale-Evans | Coleen Jones (Welsh Women's Aid) | David Rowlands (Tai Pawb) | Davy Cheema (Chwarae Teg) | Dean Pymble (Show Racism the Red Card) | Un-named Colleague, Show Racism the Red Card | Donald Mutale (Newport Council) | Donna McCarthy (St Joseph's Roman Catholic High School, Newport) | Ebed Akotia (C3SC) | Eiddan Harries (NHS Wales) | Elinor Matthey (Bevan Foundation) | Emily Bollington (Swansea Council) | Faith Walker | Fatiha Ali (EYST Wales) | Fatima Noor | Gail Woolen (Ministry of Justice) | Gemma Waite (Ministry of Justice) | Georgina Roberts (NHS Wales) |



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Gethin Jones (Museum Wales) | Halima Jama (Race Equality First) | Hanna Andersen | Hannah Norman (CCAWS) | Hasminder Aulakh | Hayley Bufton (Older People's Commissioner for Wales) | Hayley Davies (Diverse Cymru) | Heather Powell (Ministry of Justice) | Helen Gough (Scouts Cymru) | Helen Sullivan (NHS Wales) | Ingrid Wilson (Ideas UK) | Izhar Malik | Izzabella James (Homestart) | Jackie Hughes (NHS Wales) | Jade Williams (Welsh Women's Aid) | Jainaba Conteh (EYST Wales) | Jane Ryall (UnLtd) | Jason Tatton (GT Wales) | Jennie McClymont (NHS Wales) | Jennifer Dowell-Mulloy (NHS Wales) | Jessica Laimann (WEN Wales) | Jorna Ali (EYST Wales) | Julia David – (Open University in Wales) | Julian Nicholds (Partneriaeth Cymru) | Kate Gibbs (Swansea Community Farm) | Kath Griffiths (Cwmpas Coop) | Kathryn Robson (Adult Learning Wales) | Katy Barfoot (Time to Change Wales) | Kay Smith (Learning and Work) | Laura Dadic (BAVO) | Lisa Yokwe (The Care Collective) | Llinos Evans (Sir Gar Council) | Louisa Devonish (GT Wales) | Louise Tambini (Keep Wales Tidy) | Magdalena Thomas (C3SC) | Maire Greaney (Flintshire City of Sanctuary) | Marie-Andree Lachapelle (NHS Wales) | Un-named Colleague (NHS Wales) | Martine Smith (Hwb Cymru) | Maryna Avdzhy (EYST Wales) | Matt Parry (Youth Cymru) | Megan Price | Momena Ali (EYST Wales) | Mumtaz Aslam (EYST Wales) | Naheed Ashraf (NHS Wales) | Nick Such (NHS Wales) | Nicola Pulman (Size of Wales) | Norma Glass | Olli Rees (Victim Support) | Pam Cole (Swansea Council) | Pat Dunmore (Citizen's Advice NPT) | Paul Allchurch (Diverse Cymru) | Rahila Hamid | Rahma Noor | Friend of Rahma Noor | Friend of Rahma Noor | Rajmin Begum (EYST Wales) | Rhian Davies (Hwb Cymru) | Robert Moore (Liverpool University) | Rosie Barnes (Cwmpas Coop) | Ross Walmsley (NSPCC) | Sabiha Azad (Welsh Women's Aid) | Sakti Guha Niyogi | Sally Reay (NHS Wales) | Sally Thomas (NHS Wales) | Sam Ali | Samantha Williams (Learning Disability Wales) | Sam Worrall (GT Wales) | Samantha Carpenter (WCVA) | Sandy Clubb (Future Generations Wales) | Sarah Winter (Careers Wales) | Sarah Worby (Pembrokeshire Council) | Selina Moyo | Shaheen S | Sharmini Herath | Sheila Hendrickson-Brown (C3SC) | Shelagh Maher (Diverse Cymru) | Shirley Newbury | Sujatha Thaladi (The Mentor Ring) | Susan Hogan (NHS Wales) | Tammy Foley (EYST Wales) | Thanuja Hettiarachchi (Welsh Government) | Theresa Ogbekhiulu (Swansea University) | Therese Warwick (Cafod) | Tom McGeoch (BAVO) | Tsega Teweldy (EYST Wales) | Venice Cowper – (Cardiff University) | Vicki Foley (Tai Pawb) | Vicky Lang (Welsh Women's Aid) | Vina Patel (Social Firms Wales) | Zamzam Miyir | Zoe Gealy (Museum Wales) | Aderinola Omole (EYST Wales)

### **Opening Statement from Selima Bahadur**

As a Team we felt this discussion needs to take place as the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan was launched in June this year, with the overall aim of becoming an anti-racist nation by 2030, and from conversations we are having with partner organisations it seems unclear what has been happening in the 5 months since, or what each of us are supposed to be



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doing to contribute to anti-racism. At EYST, one of our 5 strands of work is Challenging racism in the Wider Society, and we are always happy to support partner organisations and individuals with their anti-racism work and through this work we have realised that even for people who are wanting to do more to contribute to becoming an anti-racist Wales, they do not know what the best way to proceed is.

We know horrific incidents of racism are still happening in Wales, this includes within schools and places of work, in shops, on the streets and there is so much work that still needs to be done in this area. One of our panel members, who is the EYST Senior Youth Lead, will be sharing some of these horrific incidents of racism that our Black Asian Minority Ethnic CYP (Children and Young People) are experiencing right now. Hearing these stories, sometimes makes me wonder if we're being too ambitious aiming for an anti-racist nation by 2030?

In this forum, we would like to start discussions of what more can be done in the coming months, not just through what Welsh Government has planned but also discuss what other public bodies and partner organisations, and Welsh society in general can do. What part can we all play?

It is stated within the Action Plan that 'racism is constantly mutating'. Many years ago, racism was overt, with many ethnic minority people told directly that they were not wanted. Growing up in Wales in the 80's, I was often told myself to "go back home". The irony is, when we did move to Pakistan, when I was 18, I wasn't happy there, and I was then told, if you're not happy here, why don't you go back home. It was a bit of a shock, having been told in Britain, go back home, and then in Pakistan, still being told 'go back home'. So the morphing referred to in the Action Plan is that racism has morphed into something more subtle. But these subtle everyday behaviours are no less harmful or damaging in their impacts.

There are people who are racists within our Welsh society, then there are non-racists and then there are also those who are living in their own little worlds, completely oblivious to the fact that racism exists here. I actually got asked last year by someone 'Does racism still exist.. in this day and age?' They sounded surprised. There needs to be a recognition by the whole of Wales that racism exists..... direct, indirect, institutional, all the ugly forms that are present, before a change will happen. What part can each of us play in this? This forum is really just the beginning for us all, we need to take away points from this forum for reflection, and start making changes that are needed now so that we have a good chance of being an anti-racist nation by 2030.

Remember the Action Plan puts an onus on organisations and individuals, so if we see racism we have to speak out about it, we can't be complacent anymore, it's not good enough to be non-racist. We have to be bold and we need to be brave and I know it is not



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always going to be easy but either we want anti-racism or we carry on being something else. Remember you are the one in the right if you are standing up against racism.

Despite the racism that people are still experiencing in Wales, I still feel we are lucky to be in Wales and to have the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan. Also in addition to Welsh Government's Action Plan which we are discussing today, the criminal justice system has launched their own CJIW (Criminal Justice in Wales) Action Plan which lines up with the aims of the Welsh Government Action Plan. It shows we are going in the right direction. However, the hard work starts now with the implementation. It is only if all of us in Wales make changes that are needed so that we move from racist or non-racist, neither of which are good enough, to anti-racist, will the nation get anywhere near its anti-racism goal by 2030. What part can you, in your professional and personal capacity, play?

I'm excited to hear what today's forum is going to bring. I will now pass over to Grainne to give us an introduction to the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan.

### **Opening Statement from Grainne Connolly**

In June of this year, Welsh Government published their 'Anti racist Wales Action Plan.' It's a ground-breaking and visionary plan, which aims for us to become the world's first Anti racist Nation by 2030.

So, what does anti-racist mean? The plan defines anti-racism as -

"Actively identifying and eradicating the systems, structures and processes that produce radically differential outcomes for ethnic minority groups. It involves acknowledging that even when we do not regard ourselves as 'racist', we can, by doing nothing, be complicit in allowing racism to continue. It is not about "fixing" ethnic minority people or communities, but rather about fixing systems that have not benefited and at times even damaged ethnic minority people. It is about working with the considerable strengths and leadership of ethnic minority people and using their lived experiences in how we, collectively, shape and deliver. It is about making a positive and lasting difference."

The plan recognises that racism will not be eradicated by 2030, but with a focused approach, we can start to create a culture with zero tolerance, and change our systems and institutions, to 'design out' racism.

The purpose of the action plan is clear – to make positive and measurable change to the lives of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people living in Wales.

There have been previous action plans that didn't achieve their goals, and the Welsh Government have recognised things need to be done differently. At the heart of this plan are the voices and lived experiences of Minority Ethnic people, who have been a major part in its design.

The plan sets out to tackle 6 areas where racism is experienced -

1. racism in every-day life.
2. racism when experiencing service delivery.
3. racism in being part of the workplace.
4. racism in gaining jobs and opportunities.
5. racism when you lack visible role models in positions of power.
6. racism as a refugee or asylum seeker.

And the plan is tackling this racism across 11 sectors where the Senedd have influence, such as within the Public Sector, Education, Health, Housing, and Employment.

Within the Co-chair's statement, Professor Emmanuel Ogbonna wrote that 'As a society, we are collectively perturbed by racism. However, for too long, we have believed that racial inequality will disappear without sustained efforts to challenge and eradicate it. In many respects, we have become conditioned to living with racial inequality in a way that has made it a self-perpetuating aspect of reality that has blighted the lives of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic members of our society.'

This paragraph strongly underlines the fact that being 'not racist' will never be enough. We must be actively Anti racist. So how can we do this? How can we all play our part in becoming a Wales which is Anti racist? Our forum today discusses this topic, and we welcome Guest speakers and panellists Jennifer Harding-Richards from Swansea Council, Riaz Hassan from Welsh Government, and Lee Tiratira from EYST, who will now be speaking with us about their own involvement in Becoming an Anti-racist Nation.

Just another reminder please, to ensure attendees are muted throughout this forum, and if you have questions you'd like to ask, please put them in the chat box, or if you'd prefer to ask in person, we will be opening up the Q&A session at the end to attendees.

Jennifer would you like to introduce yourself first, and talk about what part you play in tackling racism in Wales?



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**GC - Passing over to panellists for introductions.**

**Jennifer Harding-Richards - Religion, Values and Ethics, and Relationships and Sexuality Education Adviser for Swansea, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire Councils.**

Bore da, good morning.

Thank you for the opportunity to be with you today and share some of the work that we have undertaken within Swansea and the region.

Prior to this year, I worked as the head of a very large social studies department in a large inner city, multi-cultural and very diverse comprehensive school. My main responsibilities were to provide religious education for all of our 11-18 learners and I had a very large team of specialists working alongside me. All of our pupils would leave school at the age of 16 or 18 with some form of accreditation for their religious education, whether that would be GCSE or A level.

For the next two years, I'm seconded to the local authorities of Swansea, Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire as the adviser for Religion, Values and Ethics and Relationships and Sexuality Education. Probably two of the most controversial elements of the new curriculum for Wales, with no parental right to withdraw. My role involves providing professional learning and support for all schools across the three Local Authorities with their development of RSE and RVE in line with legislation and the new curriculum for Wales strategy.

My vision as a teacher and now as an advisor has always been simple. Social justice and equity have always been at the heart of everything that I have done. I genuinely believe that RVE within the curriculum for Wales can play a significant role in working to close the inequality gap by ensuring that all learners are able to encounter objective, critical and pluralistic RVE. For me, education is about life chances and ensuring that all learners have the opportunity to learn, to develop and to achieve, regardless of their social variables. I want our education system to fit the needs of our learners here in Wales, to provide them with the knowledge, skills and experiences that they need to achieve their goals, whatever they may be. I want curriculum design to be crafted carefully by teachers to ensure that all learners are able to see themselves within the curriculum. And I want schools to be safe spaces for pupils to be able to learn and achieve.

We all know that there are significant attainment gaps within our education system, impacted by gender, ethnicity, class and many other variables. Charles Bailey (1984) in his brilliant analysis of liberal education describes education as being a facilitator in liberating children from the 'present and the particular'. He talks about how a skilfully created curriculum will allow learners into a world of opportunities, experiences and real intellectual and moral autonomy. Beginning with the end in mind, I want our religiously and culturally literate learners to have deep, authentic knowledge of religions, cultures and worldviews. I want them to engage with the big questions, to think independently, to reflect and to



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evaluate not only on their own values but those of others too. I want them to leave school being ethically informed and being able to contribute to our diverse, multi religious, multi-cultural and multi secular world.

In order for that to happen, all barriers to them achieving this must be challenged, questioned and destroyed, whether those barriers are caused by their gender, ethnicity, class, sexuality, religion or disability. Ensuring that we, as educators, are not only not racist, but are anti-racist is a step towards achieving that goal.

### **Riaz Hassan – Head of Anti-racist Wales Action Plan Implementation Team, Welsh Government**

Thank you everyone, great to see so many people here. I just want to mention briefly, the Minister for Social Justice was meant to attend today, but she has had to attend another meeting. She has sent her apologies, and I will be updating you on the Action Plan.

My name is Riaz Hassan, and I'm heading the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan implementation team. I started in June, so I've been in this post for the last 5 months. The two key focuses for me are to establish my team, and once we have the full team in place, you will see more visibility from us on the ground. The second focus is to establish our governance and accountability structure. I will explain this in my presentation. So these are the two main areas of emphasis when discussing implementation.

The Welsh government is committed to creating an Anti-racist nation by 2030.

Our Anti-racist Action Plan which was launched on Tuesday 7th June, is built on the values of anti-racism and calls for zero tolerance of all racial inequalities. We have identified a vision for an anti-racist nation, where everyone is valued for who they are and the contribution they are making.

The work is continuing at a good pace to help us move from the rhetoric on racial equality to ensuring that we deliver meaningful actions. The Minister for Social Justice wrote on the 1st July to all Welsh Public Sector and third sector organisations, asking them to work with us in delivering the ARWAP and in building an Anti-racist Wales. A Wales in which we can all be proud to belong and in which everyone can thrive. Again, the Welsh Government, myself, and other colleagues are currently working to establish a governance structure. Included within it are a number of specific components, and I will cover how that looks later on.

We are also in the process of recruiting for the Race Disparity Unit. The idea of this unit is to have the evidence base around Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic communities. Previously, we didn't have the data to provide the evidence, so that unit was specifically established to work on the data side. Our recruitment plan focuses on recruiting members of Minority





Ethnic communities and recruiting experts by lived experience for the External Accountability Group. Hopefully, the process will be completed by the end of November.

We are also developing the internal communication plan. The idea behind that is that whatever we achieve or deliver within the plan, we want to inform the wider community about the delivery and implementation of the various goals and actions within the plan.

Again, we are in the process of establishing a new monitoring system, and that monitoring system is very important for us to see how we are delivering on our commitments. In addition to that, we are also looking to develop some training. Because the Welsh Government wants to be a role model, we have piloted a number of trainings on anti-racism, inclusive workplaces, identifying and understanding microaggressions, and safe space conversations on challenging discriminatory behaviour. They're the sessions we are currently delivering within WG. We have established a small task and finish group, looking at training mapping exercises on the needs of the wider public sector, in terms of raising awareness of the Anti-racist Action Plan, and what does that mean in how we will be achieving the vision of becoming an anti-racist nation by 2030.

In terms of the approach - why take a different approach? The way we have done it is to create and co-design the plan with Ethnic Minority people, based on their lived experiences. Again, the idea was that we need to tackle the root causes of racism in terms of when we're leading, when we're managing, and when we're co-delivering our public services. Something that has been a problem in the past is what we call the implementation gap. Many policies have previously been developed, but there was an implementation gap, and this is why WG have specifically given resources to the implementation team which I'm heading, to avoid that gap, and for us to be much more accountable and responsible to the people of Wales, but specifically people from the Black Asian Minority Ethnic communities. It is not about fixing ethnic minorities; rather, we want to change the systems, policies, and processes that govern how we work, and this will be our primary focus. We need to be establishing the external accountability group. Until we have a strong accountability group across the implementation of the plan, we will not be able to achieve anything, so we really want to be able to hold ourselves to account when we start the delivery of the plan.

In terms of 'where do we want to get by 2030', and 'how will we get there' we established a vision in the plan, and our vision is very clear: a Wales that is Anti-racist. We know that in 2030 Wales won't be completely anti-racist, but what it does mean is that we'll have started to build a culture with zero tolerance for racism, and we want to change our systems and institutions to design out racism. That's the focus for us. The goal is to collectively make a significant difference. The reason we add "collective" is because until every single part of the Welsh Public Services, 3rd sector, and private sector own this vision, we will not be able to fully achieve what we want to achieve. We will be tracking whether the actions in the plan are being implemented, and that is something we will be requesting evidence for, and



that evidence will be overseen by the accountability group. We want to be honest and transparent with people.

Where we can't deliver on our promised actions, we will explain why we faltered or didn't achieve them. The values for us are to take a rights-based approach and use the strength of lived experience when we're making any decisions across the different policy areas. So, what's the difference about this plan? When we wrote the plan, we tried to say what we would do in simple terms. If you read the plan, it's very bold, it has very visible and tangible goals, and we have built it on lived experience. We fully believe people are the experts based on their lived experience. We have co-designed each step of the plan with Ethnic Minority people and we also aim to co-deliver this plan with them.

Our processes are focused on holding ourselves accountable, and that is the process we will be taking when we are developing the actions and goals for June 2024. The current goals and actions are for 2 years, and we have done that intentionally, so that we can focus on the initial goals. They will likely offer us further challenges and insight, and that will feed into developing the next stage of goals. People from Ethnic Minority communities will also be involved in co-developing the next stage, as they have been throughout the whole process to date.

There is a high level of political commitment. The First Minister and the Minister for Social Justice have committed to making this work their highest priorities. They will be meeting with the accountability group regularly. It's not just the responsibility of the political leadership, it's the responsibility of all leaders, and everyone, including yourselves, has that leadership capacity. In terms of the external accountability group, that will be chaired by the Permanent Secretary, Welsh Government and Professor Emmanuel Ogbonna, and that shows the highest level of commitment within the Welsh Government. The Equality and Human Rights Commission is a member; the Wales TUC is a member; the WLGA and WCVA are members; and the commissioners and ministers, as appropriate, will be attending the Accountability Group meetings. Most importantly, there will be seven experts on anti-racism who will join this group, and there will be eight community representatives who will bring lived experience. They will be the people who will be holding sectors to account. Internal support and challenge group is the group for all the policy leads within the Welsh Government, and the idea for them is that they are the people who will be working to deliver those goals and actions. The Race Disparity Unit is there to establish new evidence base. We will also be establishing 4 regional forums. The idea behind these is that we want to capitalise on the experience of people from Ethnic Minority communities, and these forums will give us their lived experience. So, for instance, if we start the delivery of our goals and in a year's time we say we've delivered them, but people within the forums tell us their experience is completely different and their situation is actually worse, that is something we want to be closely monitoring. Hearing those experiences in material change and seeing if the delivery is making a difference.

The Welsh Government wants to be a good role model in how it leads this work, so whatever we do, we will be starting internally. We will be using our full influence in terms of grants, funding, and other influences to make these radical changes and deliver on goals within the plan. We want to do things differently, and the reason for this is because if you do things the way you've always done them, you will be achieving exactly the same results. So what does that mean? We need to see significant cultural change, and that cultural change is not just within the Welsh Government but across Welsh society. Again, we will be continually checking the progress, specifically listening to Ethnic Minority people's lived experiences, and this is how we will be co-delivering the plan.

### **Lee Tiratira – Strategic Youth Lead, EYST Wales**

Morning everyone, I'm the Youth Team Lead at EYST Wales, and really, I'm a youth and community worker. There is great movement within the sector, especially Welsh Government's response to a new implementation board, which took on board a former interim youth work board's recommendation, about how that sector can be more diverse and representative. So it's great to see some changes already happening in this sector that I'm in.

Going back to what Selima mentioned at the start and some of the racist incidents that we're finding more recently - I'm personally dealing with 9 incidents of racism spread across Wales, I will keep it anonymous, but we are noticing more rural incidents of racism, young people physically and verbally abused on the way to school, in school, in their communities, between peers and beyond. One of the common themes from family groups is that they are unsatisfied with how schools have treated these incidents. These have been ongoing and long standing, they've tried to complain in the past, young people themselves, but after nothing is done, they've lost trust and given up, and that's led to young people lashing out physically, which has then led to exclusions and expulsions. These trends are worrying because we often notice that it seems to be a lack of confidence and competence of workforces to respond to these incidents, and to really show integrity and devotion to stopping these incidents happening.

That's a worrying trend, but we do have upcoming support from Esme Fairburn foundation who are supporting a new worker to deal with schools and educational settings about these incidents. The negative outcomes we are now seeing are families moving away from areas, not letting their children play in certain areas, they're not letting them go to clubs, they don't feel welcomed in certain spaces outside of school, or amongst people in their own community, and that leads to lower levels of participation generally.

EYST Wales is very unique, as a former teacher myself, I feel very proud and privileged to be part of EYST, because we have over 70 employees working across Wales in many different ways and capacities, but all focused on race equality. Our teams are very well plugged in to

communities themselves, they hear about these issues happening. That's how people find their way to us, and how we hear about these levels of inequality. What I will say, is that these voices aren't heard without levels of trust being formed and established by workers themselves, and its ongoing, its visible and its tangible.

All these equality plans, anti-racist plans, criminal justice anti-racism plan etc. I see the topic is more visible, people are talking more about it, and in terms of our youth work offer at EYST, we have teams of Youth Workers in more built up areas such as Wrexham, Newport, Cardiff and Swansea, simply connecting more young people to youth work, to find those trusted adults to confide in. The more we look under stones, the more we find, but something I want to mention that is positive, we're finding some really great examples from different sectors, from education to youth offending institutes, prisons etc. They are more responsive to conversations around gaps in their own provision in their services. We're engaging with professionals that have been in careers over 20 years, now mentioning that they don't feel confident talking about certain topics, or responding to certain issues, they're not equipped, or don't know the correct words, to engage. It can be simple things sometimes, but we are noticing more of a shift towards that transparency and openness from colleagues, so that's a positive thing.

My role is about youth work, it's very interlinked to youth and community work, and what I'd really love to mention is this ambition for everybody to look at their own communities that they're serving. In about 20 days we've got the ethnicity data from the census being released. They've been critical about the audiences that they're reaching, the communities that they're within.

Are you being representative at your organisation? Does it have a representative workforce? Are you reaching the communities on your doorstep?

At EYST, our work is needed because there's a gap in services and provision. We work with young people who don't take part for various reasons, however, often, what is the biggest attraction to our work is that we offer welcoming warm spaces where people feel included, their differences are celebrated, they feel a part of something, and their identities are actually championed and celebrated. It's not to say that can't happen elsewhere, but it's often making these spaces more welcoming and inclusive.

So please have a look at what you do, the people you work with, be the change in the organisation. It's often challenging perspectives, and levels of repression in our staff rooms and workforces. So please be critical, be the change, you have lots of willing supporters, you have many allies in this cause.



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## **Questions for Panellists**

### **SB - Question for Riaz Hassan**

**Policies and action plans created by the Government can often fail to make an impression on the general public, but it feels important that becoming an Anti-racist Nation belongs to everyone. How do you plan to engage the public, and how do you think they can play their part?**

RH: "Thank you very much, Selima, in terms of the cultural change, we know that the delivery of goals and actions within the action plan is important, but we are more interested in seeing the material change on the ground. And that material change is only possible if you continue that engagement with people from ethnic minority communities because it's the lived experience of those people who will see the change. If they don't see that change, culturally and behaviourally, around those 7 listed areas of racism we are focused on, then the delivery is not working. Internally, we want the Welsh Government to be a role model, so there needs to be internal awareness; there is a need for some confidence building; we've recently piloted five different training modules that I mentioned in my presentation. After going through those awareness sessions, hopefully the staff will have the confidence and feel able to challenge unacceptable people and behaviours, both inside and outside of work. Until you give people that confidence to challenge unacceptable behaviour, nothing will change."

### **Question for Riaz Hassan from attendee**

**How do we engage with the plan? When talking about getting community members on board, how do we join these groups?**

RH – "With regards to the 2 groups that I've mentioned, the internal support and challenge group, that is, internal to the Welsh Government, and the second one, the external accountability group, we have followed a transparent process, advertised the positions for 3 weeks, received more applications than our expectations, and are going through sifting now. We received some really great applications, and the aim is to have inclusive representations across sectors, geography, and intersectionality. The third element I mentioned is the regional forums, and there will be opportunities for people to join those forums. We will advertise these opportunities via our bi-weekly anti-racism bulletin."

### **GC - Question for Lee Tiratira**

**What part do you think youth workers can play, in helping Wales become an Anti-racist Nation?**

LT – "Thanks Grainne. I'm a huge believer in youth work as a profession. It's an emerging profession, it's grown a lot over the last 2 years. Young people really open up to people and share their difficulties when they have built trust, therefore youth workers are quite uniquely placed to work informally on young people's terms, in their favour, in different settings and with respect to their own circumstances. Youth work is about raising critical



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consciousness in young people to understand their own circumstances, realise the rights, laws and legislations that govern their environments in their favour. To know what is right and wrong, to step up, stand out, speak out. That can start with advocacy and informal education to begin with, but can very quickly lead to increased aspirations, resiliency, through role modelling and mentoring. The youth worker sector itself, from different conversations I've had with different youth services across Wales's Local Authorities, isn't representative yet, but the sector itself is moving towards more diversity and representation. It's great to see the education minister welcoming recommendation 11 of 14 about equality, diversity, and inclusion within the sector. Local Authorities are already moving to try and work towards overcoming these gaps and disparities. The Wales youth work implementation board is really strong, I really believe in it, and their impact on the sector itself. The more young people we get to understand their own circumstances, the better."

**Comment from Attendee, for the attention of Welsh Government. Attendee highlights the Government's need to look at their own cultural competence, particularly around unequal treatment of refugees from different countries. Attendee notes Welsh Government has been incredibly welcoming of Ukrainian refugees, to a level that has not been seen for refugees coming from other war-torn countries. What message does that send out? Selima informs attendees that we ran a forum on this topic, and has shared the link in the chat, to the forum notes. - <https://eyst.org.uk/assets/everyone-has-a-right-to-seek-and-enjoy-asylum-forum-notes.pdf>**

**SB - Question for Jennifer Harding-Richards**

**We know that racism in schools is a big problem. 'Show Racism the Red Card' undertook research which showed 25% of teachers and TA's in Wales had observed racism, or had it reported to them by students. In Addition to this, 30% of pupils reported being racist or having used racist language. The true extent of racism in schools is hard to measure, as it's still not mandatory for schools to report racist incidents. Do you think it should be made mandatory to report racist incidents? And what are your experiences of how racism is currently being reported in the schools you cover?**

JHR – "That's a big question, and to start off, it's worth recognising that all schools will and should have an extensive bullying policy, with procedures regarding safeguarding, inclusivity, and diversity. That should be in place with all schools, and they should be public documents. All schools should have a nominated safeguarding lead, and that should be open to community members to be aware of. So those are the things which should be in place, but you are right, and we know that the evidence is suggesting that racism is actually increasing within education. Alongside the data that you've indicated, we also know, for example, antisemitic incidents have increased 300% over the last 5 years, and we know that there've been at least 79 incidents reported to the police. We've got similar pictures in universities with antisemitic incidents being triggered by conspiracy theorists linking Jews with the pandemic - very similar experiences to those experienced by children of islamophobia following Post 9/11. In reality of course we know that the data probably



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significantly underestimates and under-reports the extent of racism within education, as your data suggests. We can assume the picture is far bleaker, and we have no real way of knowing the true extent of racism within schools. That said, at our recent diversity and anti-racism conference which we held at the Liberty Stadium, it was really heart breaking to hear children, 10 and 11 year olds, talking about their own experiences of racism. It really made us think, with regard to what we are doing educationally, and how can we stop this. We had children openly and candidly telling us stories, describing in a way that young children do - very honestly - how racism had impacted on them, and how it made them feel. It was a light bulb moment for us. Ultimately, we had wanted that day to be about training these 120 children to become ambassadors in their own schools and communities, to become a voice of change, but it actually made us think as educators, what do we need to do, and how can we make a difference, and what do we need to put in place. It was really challenging for us, as adults and professionals, to listen to these children. It made me think we are not listening enough. I feel that needs to happen, and as a matter of urgency. So what do we need to do? We need to have clear direction educationally, we really need to have an understanding of what racism is, and what we understand by anti-racism. I think these are words that we use in education, but perhaps there isn't that full, collective, understanding. It can't be, as we are seeing, (and I'm not criticising this) but it can't be schools simply adopting an anti-racism week, or diversity days, or Islam week, that we are seeing across Wales. We need to see that actual anti racism and real inclusivity is at the heart of the whole educational infrastructure. So we really need to be challenging that, and we've got an opportunity to challenge that with the anti-racist action plan, and with the innovative Welsh curriculum that we have in place as well. However, this is something we need to recognise will take time, money, and effort, and as Riaz talked about, we need to have that vision. If we genuinely want our children and our learners to become ethically informed, which is one of the four purposes of the curriculum for Wales, then it's an investment that we, in education, need to make. So in answer to your question, yes of course it should become mandatory to report racist incidents, but we need to think proactively about how we do that. If I'm honest, I think all we are doing at the moment is reacting, and we need to be proactive, really look at what policies and protocols to put in place that are meaningful and purposeful, and obviously alongside that, a lot of support for school leaders, for governors, and for teachers as well. We're very much at the beginning of this with regards to the action plan Riaz has talked us through, and the curriculum for Wales, but I'm confident that we have that vision in Swansea to be moving forward with it."

**Selima raises her feelings on the fact bullying and racism are not the same thing, and racism in schools should be treated separately to create its own set of data.**

**Comment from Attendee – I have contact with refugee children through wellbeing sessions in Flintshire. On a weekly basis, these children are victims of racism in their schools, they're told that they're terrorists, and 'go back home', by other kids. They report it to the teachers, who tell the perpetrators to say sorry. They say sorry, and then it just carries on. During lunch breaks they have no friends, they walk around the playground alone. It's heart breaking. So it's really great that you have a plan in action, and hopefully**





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**by 2030, this won't be the case, but what do we do with the schools not supporting the children right now? They accept these children from refugee families but there doesn't seem to be any support for them at all.**

SB – "You are welcome to get in touch with us at EYST and we can have a separate conversation. I will share my email with you. Thank you for bringing it to our attention. It is heart breaking, going back to what I said in my introduction about racism morphing, sadly, this open racism is still happening - Being told to go back home, you don't belong here, but on top of that, we have the morphed subtle forms of racism too."

**GC - Question for Riaz Hassan**

**Gypsy Traveller communities, and refugees and asylum seekers, are some of the most marginalised of our Ethnic Minority groups. How will this action plan benefit them, and do you think it is enough?**

RH – "Thanks Grainne. Within the action plan, the goals are very bold, and these goals have resources attached for the very first time. We have some staffing challenges internally, but recruitment is underway to fill the vacant posts in the Gypsy Traveller policy areas. I'm very confident and positive that once we have the team in place, the goals within the plan are very robust, and you will see a positive change on the ground. So I'm personally confident that delivering those goals and taking those actions will make a visible and tangible difference on the ground."

**SB – Question for Lee Tiratira**

**What can we do to make young people from Ethnic Minority backgrounds in Wales feel like they belong here?**

LT – "Thanks Selima. To link to some of the other points raised, I think there could be tougher stances on racist incidents within schools. Often, young people tell us that they don't feel that the gravitas of the situation is taken seriously. I also think that we need to challenge the rhetoric of youth culture. Young people say the P word and N word is used by their peers in everyday language, on the playground etc. I think everybody can challenge those rhetorics. Thinking about refugee and asylum seeker young people arriving in Wales, they come from very different backgrounds with different understandings of laws and mannerisms. That often means we have to give more time and attention. I'd love to see services in all sectors really prioritising and praising that added effort that goes into including somebody. It can involve going above and beyond, taking more time, simply thinking outside of the box to include somebody. Often, we hear horrible stories of people behind a desk somewhere, just saying you'll have to book in again with us, passing people off. In terms of that culture change, that will be good to hear about, but I'd love to see that measured. Why can't we ask people who are accessing services about their experiences, measure it, and if there are improvements. People should be able to say if services are responding to their needs. There should be more impartial opportunities for people to disclose those incidents as well. Young people tell us they don't feel comfortable



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mentioning the issues they are facing in a group setting. Could there be external, long-lasting communication? Not, as Jennifer mentioned, a one-off day on diversity. It has to be ongoing; it has to be visible, in confident spaces where people build and form relationships that are really tangible, and built on integrity. Lots for everyone to consider!"

**Comment from attendee - As the North Wales Equality Body, we really need to be talking to the previous attendee about the issues she's encountering with refugee children. There are a significant number of initiatives in North Wales, these haven't been mentioned so far, but we have some schools producing some very good films and so on. If anyone would like to contact us, we can brief them on these activities.**

#### **GC – Question for Jennifer Harding Richards**

**In the Action plan, we are asked to all play our part in becoming an Anti-racist Nation. How do you think parents can help the schools in driving out racism?**

JHR – "I think we're on the cusp of massive radical curriculum change at the moment, and the expectation for all schools is that they all work together with their communities, with their parents, carers, and faith communities, with all stakeholders really, to support that co-construction of the curriculum. I know in Swansea, a number of schools are working really closely with their parent and carer forums, and there's some really excellent practice of how this is supporting with the development of anti-racism, and the inclusivity ethos of the school. I suppose where we are with the new curriculum, we are 6 weeks into it being implemented in primary schools. Some secondary schools haven't implemented, and won't until next year. But it's a really important time for the whole community to come together, and explore the four purposes – what it is we want the learners to achieve educationally. We want them to be capable, active citizens, ethically informed, and also to have an understanding of anti-racism. I do think that means there will need to be some really difficult conversations that happen. It's really interesting listening to everybody today, it's clear we need to think about how we are going to be challenging that inappropriate racist language and behaviour, which is often implicit. It's not easy for teachers, they're very stretched at the moment with designing their own curriculum. There's lots that can be happening, and there's lots that IS happening, and I think this is the beginning of a process for us, educationally, with the new curriculum for Wales. It's an exciting opportunity, but we need to get it right."

**Attendee Question for Riaz - Much of the policy, and indeed your excellent presentation, seems to focus on dealing with the impact of racism. What about dealing with racism directly? A colleague once put it as a memorable phrase – 'dealing with the bruise rather than the fist.'**

RH – "Thank you. Two things we need to look at are: first, the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan, which focuses on systems, structures, and processes. Secondly, we have other initiatives as well for example, the community cohesion programme supports initiatives such as reducing



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hate crime on the ground. What I would say is that there are other initiatives that directly deal with hate crimes, racism, bullying, etc.

The action plan is there to guide us through the journey to achieve our vision, but in addition to the action plan, there are other initiatives that complement and focus on racism directly and indirectly.”

#### **Attendee Question for Jennifer Harding-Richards**

**I'm hearing in the news about the struggles education/schools are having in providing services on the limited budget available to them. The financial difficulties means some are planning on reducing staff numbers. With these added burdens on schools, how will they overcome these sufficiently to be able to focus on the anti-racism plan?**

JHR - “Undoubtedly, there are pressures within schools with budget issues, staffing and sickness. However, as a local authority, we remain committed to the anti-racist action plan and endeavour to support our schools with their work. We have already delivered our anti racist/ diversity conference and are exploring how we can build on this in ensuring that lived experiences feed into our next stages of development. Via our link with Partneriaeth, all schools in Swansea have been invited to participate in anti-racist training with DARPL and the regional lead is working in conjunction with the local authority to set up a focus group to share ideas around the development of an anti-racist curriculum.

I have met with the WG anti-racist action plan lead and have explored the next steps for us as a local authority in ensuring that it remains priority and a focus for our schools”

RH – “Can I just quickly mention, with regards to the Action Plan, we were very clear with our policy leads to include only those goals and actions where they have identified resources for them? So if there were goals and actions that were not resourced, they were taken out. The respective policy areas are responsible and accountable for those goals and actions and will be resourcing them.”

#### **Attendee Question for Jennifer Harding-Richards**

**Children will also be following examples from their home experiences. How can this be addressed - by schools or as trickle down from other initiatives?**

JHR - Our priority will be in supporting schools, teachers and all those who work in schools, to have an understanding of anti-racism, unconscious bias and what needs to be done to ensure that our learners meet and achieve the four aims of the new curriculum for Wales. We are committed to ensuring that within the new curriculum, our learners receive the knowledge, skills and experiences to allow them to flourish as citizens of our diverse, multi-cultural world. Schools are supported with professional learning (via DARPL) and given training to support them with the development of an anti-racist curriculum. When writing the curriculum, the focus will be very much on all learners being able to see themselves within that curriculum and so it must be written with the principles of equity and equality.



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**Attendee Question for Riaz - Is there any scope within the plan to develop a tool kit for change makers who want to challenge racism? Regrettably we hear stories of people standing up to racism and then becoming the victims, or targets of violence themselves.**

RH – “Currently, within the WG, we have already developed some training, which we have piloted by delivering to our staff. The action plan is not just for the WG; it is for the wider public sector, third sector, and private sector, and we need to find out what their needs are. We've recently established a small task and finish group, which is currently looking to see what the training and development needs are for the wider public sector. For this purpose, we are currently undertaking a mapping exercise to better understand our external stakeholders' specific needs, identify gaps, and if the gaps show there is a need for the tools you mentioned or just the need for specific or generic training, then that will guide the work, which we will hopefully be completing by March next year. That's the work that's currently being undertaken. I'm more than happy to update you on the outcomes of the mapping exercise when we have the results.”

**Attendee Question for Riaz Hassan**

**what resources are there made for education to make a difference in lessons?**

RH - I think the question is probably more school-focused, but in FE, colleagues are supporting colleges to develop a set of blended learning modules to help embed anti-racism into the curriculum. These are due to be launched in spring 2023. I am still waiting for my colleagues to respond to me on the resources for schools.

**Attendee Question for Riaz Hassan**

**Has the anti-racist action plan been shared with all of Wales, all schools, all pupils e.g via a QR code?**

RH - I am not aware of this but will bring it to the attention of my education colleagues at the Welsh Government.

**Attendee Question for Riaz Hassan**

**Are you familiar with the work being done in the Further Education Sector in partnership with Colleges Wales and the Black Leadership Group and the 10 point plan? If so, is this aligning to your work outputs?**

RH - This work is reflected in the FE part of the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan. We are encouraging colleges to affiliate individually with the Black Leadership Group (BLG) and many have done or are doing so. The BLG is on our FE anti-racist steering group and last year carried out a scoping study for us, which is informing our work in FE. We have commissioned them to develop action planning guidance for the sector as well.

**Attendee Question for Riaz Hassan**



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**In terms of the implementation gap, have we identified what the 'pain points' are? At what point of the implementation are we experiencing problems?**

RH - Accountability, the data gap, and a strong governance structure were identified as critical components for achieving our goals and actions. We are also developing the cultural competencies of our staff and addressing the recruitment and progression of ethnic minority staff.

Several attendees ask about signing up to the Anti-racist Wales News Bulletin. Riaz Hassan has said that Sue Vincent-Jones is the correct contact, and if you would like to receive the bulletin, please email her at [sue.vincent-jones@gov.wales](mailto:sue.vincent-jones@gov.wales).

Attendee raises feeling of frustration that funding allocated to projects that aim to tackle racism and inequality is always short term. This isn't sustainable, and if WG is committed to becoming an Anti-racist Nation, there needs to also be a commitment to fund these projects long term.

RH – “Thank you, I share your frustration. I have experienced this myself on the community cohesion programme, and currently within my role, it is funded for 18 months, so this is not just a project externally; it is within WG as well.

One of the issues is the political cycle; the usual commitment that is given reflects that cycle. We will have funding for the co-production phase of the Anti-racist Action Plan, and we are hopeful that will get at least three years of funding.”

**SB, GC, TA - Thank you to everyone for attending and sharing experiences, to the guest speakers for joining, and the attendees for all their questions. Thank you for supporting our forums and the work we have been doing, it is hugely appreciated.**