BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY

8 September 2026

# A PRACTICAL PATH TO ACTIVE ALLYSHIP

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# INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP EMBEDED ACROSS ALL COMMITMENTS

**Race at Work 2025** survey found that **61%** of **large UK employers** have at least one senior leader or champion actively promoting equality, fairness and Inclusion.

**Inclusive leadership embedded** into each Charter commitment.

# COMMITMENT 6: FROM ALLYSHIP TO SOLIDARITY

**69%**
**of 18–24-year-olds want support to show solidarity**

**52%**
**of all employees said they would like help to progress from allyship to solidarity**

**36%**
**of employers include allies in selection processes**

# ACTIVE ALLYSHIP: FROM AWARENESS TO ACTION

**Active allyship means noticing exclusion, interrupting harmful behaviour and using influence to create safer and fairer working environments.**

The Race at Work Charter calls on employers to:

- **Progress employees from allyship to solidarity** – recognising that allyship must be visible, consistent and connected to accountability.

- **Commit at board level to zero tolerance of harassment and bullying** – recognising that microaggressions and bias are not minor issues, but issues of workplace culture and safety.

**Allyship is a learned practice, not a fixed identity.**

# WHAT DOES ACTIVE ALLYSHIP LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE?

**Active allyship means:**

- Listening without defensiveness
- Naming inappropriate behaviour
- Supporting colleagues who experience bias
- Using your influence to create safer and fairer working environments
- Ensuring managers are equipped to act consistently

# POLL 1 | WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

**You witness a colleague experience a microaggression in a meeting. What are you most likely to do?**

A. Address it in the moment

B. Speak to the person affected afterwards and offer support

C. Raise it privately with the person responsible or a manager

D. Stay silent because I am unsure what to say

# REPRESENTATION, VOICE AND PROGRESSION

**Representation is about more than who is in the room, it is about whose voice is heard, valued and able to influence decisions, opportunities and leadership pathways.**

BITC insight and evidence

- Persistent disparities remain in progression and opportunity.
- Race at Work evidence shows that while employer action on **leadership, progression** and **recruitment** is increasing, **barriers remain**.
- Employees continue to report their **ethnicity can affect career progression**.

# FROM REPRESENTATION TO INFLUENCE

**Organisations should:**

- Test whether **decision-making forums, succession plans, talent reviews** and **stretch opportunities** are genuinely inclusive.
- Measure representation at every level, particularly across **leadership pipelines** and **high-visibility projects**.

Whose voices shape important decisions?

Whose perspectives are present in the room but not yet influencing the outcomes?

# ASSESSING ORGANISATIONAL PRACTICES TO ADDRESS INEQUALITY

**Understanding where inequality exists requires organisations to look at their systems, processes and outcomes, not individual confidence or capability**

BITC insight and evidence:

- The Race at Work Charter calls on employers to **capture ethnicity data** and **publicise progress**, recognising that transparency is essential for identifying gaps and tracking change.

- BITC links race equality to **accountability**, **accessibility** and **transparency**, encouraging employers to use evidence to understand where employees experience unequal outcomes.

# TURNING INSIGHT INTO ACTION

**Leaders should ask:**

- **What does our data tell us** about where gaps or unequal outcomes exist?
- **Where does employee experience differ**, and what can we learn from those differences?
- **Are our policies working in practice**, as well as on paper?
- **Who owns the action** needed to address the issues identified?
- **What measurable goals** will demonstrate progress?
- **How will we ensure visible follow-through** and accountability

**Organisational assessment should lead to clear ownership, measurable goals and visible follow-through**

# POLL 2 | WHAT ARE EMPLOYERS DOING?

**How is your organisation currently using data and employee insight to identify and address racial inequality?**

A. We regularly analyse ethnicity data and employee experiences and use the findings to drive action

B. We collect data and employee feedback, but are still developing how we turn the findings into action

C. We are at an earlier stage and are building our approach to data, employee insight and measurement

D. We don't currently have a structured approach / I'm not sure

# STRUCTURED DEI STRATEGIES AND MENTORING PROGRAMMES

**Mentoring can support progression, build networks and strengthen understanding of lived experience and should be embedded into wider organisational strategy.**

BITC insight and evidence:

- identifies **mentoring and reverse mentoring as practical mechanisms** for supporting ethnically diverse employees and helping senior leaders better understand barriers to progression.

- BITC's **Cross-organisational Mentoring Circles** have provided development, networking and peer learning opportunities for **Black, Asian** and **other ethnically diverse mentees** through a six-month programme.

# MAKING MENTORING MEANINGFUL

**Effective mentoring programmes should:**

- Have **clear objectives** and intended outcomes
- Have **visible senior sponsorship**
- Equip and support **skilled mentors**
- Focus on **progression outcomes**, not simply participation
- Include **evaluation** to understand their impact
- Connect to **promotion pathways**, **talent planning** and **leadership accountability**

**Mentoring should support people to navigate opportunities while also helping organisations understand and address barriers to progression.**

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# POLL 3| MENTORING AND DEVELOPMENT

**Which best describes mentoring and development in your organisation?**

A. We have a structured mentoring and/or sponsorship programme with clear progression objectives

B. We offer mentoring, but it is not yet clearly connected to progression or wider DEI objectives

C. We don't currently have a structured mentoring programme

D. We have participated in BITC's Cross-organisational Mentoring Circles

# TURNING COMMITMENT TO ACTION

**Be an active ally -** Move from awareness to visible, consistent action.

**Create voice and opportunity -** Ensure representation leads to influence, progression and opportunity.

**Use evidence to drive change -** Use data and employee experience to identify gaps, take action and measure progress.

**Embed development into strategy -** Connect mentoring and development to progression and wider organisational change.

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09/09/2026