

# AN ETHNICITY ALLIES GUIDE TO GETTING IT RIGHT

## FOR THE ENTIRE ORGANISATION



INVESTING  
ETHNICITY

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## EXTRA RESOURCES THE ALLIES TOOLKIT

Resources link:

[The Allies Toolkit: Videos, reading, resources...](#)

# INTRODUCTION

***“We don’t see things as they are, we see them as we are.”***

This toolkit was created on the premise that every person throughout an organisation should be working towards being an ethnicity ally, and accountable for inclusion and culture within your organisation. Whether you are a board or executive member, line manager, hiring manager or responsible for Human Resources. Lasting and meaningful change can only truly take place when the whole team is focused on the same goal: an inclusive and diverse workplace where everyone can thrive equally.

Until very recently it would have been rare to hear people talking openly about race in the workplace. Discussing race and ethnicity can be an uncomfortable subject through fear of saying something wrong, thus it often prevents people from trying.

Often, the lack of discussion around race and bias can create the illusion that there is no problem. Unfortunately, this creates an atmosphere where those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds feel less able to talk openly about the bias they face, and fear being labelled an agitator if they do.

Truly inclusive companies can be difficult to find as the majority of organisations cannot yet claim to be representative of visible minorities. However, creating an inclusive workplace is possible, and it starts with you.

This toolkit focuses on being a workplace ethnicity ally to Ethnic Minority communities, including how to stand up to racism and be actively anti-racist in the workplace.

Similarly, there is an ongoing conversation about whether the word ‘ally’ is still a relevant and

appropriate term to use when the goal should be to dismantle racism completely. However, it will be used throughout this guide for ease of use.

The toolkit aims to support you in understanding the intersections of being an ally in everyday workplace situations, communications and settings. It is by no means comprehensive or exhaustive, but it should give you a good understanding and starting point.

Throughout the toolkit, words highlighted in **bold** will have a superscript number, which refers to a short explanation or description of the word. The list of these words can be found in the Glossary of Terms on Page 23.

The toolkit forms part of a series of videos and virtual workshops. Please get in touch if you would like further information.

# WHAT IS RACISM?

The Modern Racism Scale<sup>1</sup> characterises modern forms of racism as covert, centring around the belief that discrimination is no longer an issue. Modern racism is therefore perpetrated by people who do not believe themselves to be racist.

Although racism presents itself in different forms. It's widely recognised that there are four main levels:

## *MACRO: Structural Racism.*

This is the most pervasive form of racism, embedded throughout our society and negatively affecting Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people across education, employment, wealth, politics and government, healthcare, policing, law, media coverage, entertainment, and every societal institution you can think of. The power structure of these institutions works in favour of the race and ethnicity of those historically in power, putting

them in a position of **privilege**<sup>1</sup> over other groups. This is also referred to as **systemic**<sup>2</sup> racism.

## *MACRO: Institutional Racism.*

This refers to institutions, such as large organisations or entities (e.g. Governments and workplaces) which create unfair and discriminatory policies for ethnic minorities, or advantages for those in power to make decisions within these entities.

## *MICRO: Interpersonal Racism.*

This type of racism occurs between individuals and can present as racist assumptions, beliefs or behaviours (e.g. public expressions of racial prejudice, microaggressions).

## *MICRO: Internalised Racism.*

This happens within individuals, and occurs when a person consciously or subconsciously accepts the dominant cultural stereotypes and racist beliefs about ethnic minorities. This

can include internalised ideas of superiority by those in power and is often based on systems and historic stereotypes.

This toolkit will mainly focus on interpersonal and internalised racism, but as an ally it's important to recognise that racism exists at each of these levels. Due to the pervasive nature of Structural Racism, the majority of this material is written in response to existing power structures within Western society.

It's important to note that while there is a lack of research in the UK, studies in the USA have shown that inter-minority racism exists between African Americans, Asian Americans and Mexican Americans. Therefore, the checklists and suggestions given in this guide are aimed at everyone and can be used by anyone wishing to become a better ally.

# THE FOUR DIMENSIONS

Racism is Power (linked to privilege) plus Prejudice. Interrogate the four dimensions and ask yourself where does the power lie? And how is prejudice exhibited in these areas?

## MICRO

### SYSTEMIC

**What:** History, economics, healthcare

**Example:** Pakistani & Bangladeshi women experience the largest aggregate pay gap with white men at 26.2% (Fawcett Society data)

**Who:** The whole of society

**What next:** Interrogate systems and stereotypes and challenge them to be reflective of modern society

### INSTITUTIONAL

**What:** Laws, policies, practices, standards

**Example:** A predominantly white, male construction company has a policy to prioritise referrals over other recruitment options

**Who:** Governments, workplaces, schools

**What next:** Examine existing policies and question if they are reflective and inclusive

## MACRO

### INTERNALISED

**What:** (un)conscious bias

**Example:** You feel an over animated black interviewee comes across as aggressive and is not a cultural fit

**Who:** the individual

**What next:** Identify your own bias and how that plays into other areas

### INTERPERSONAL

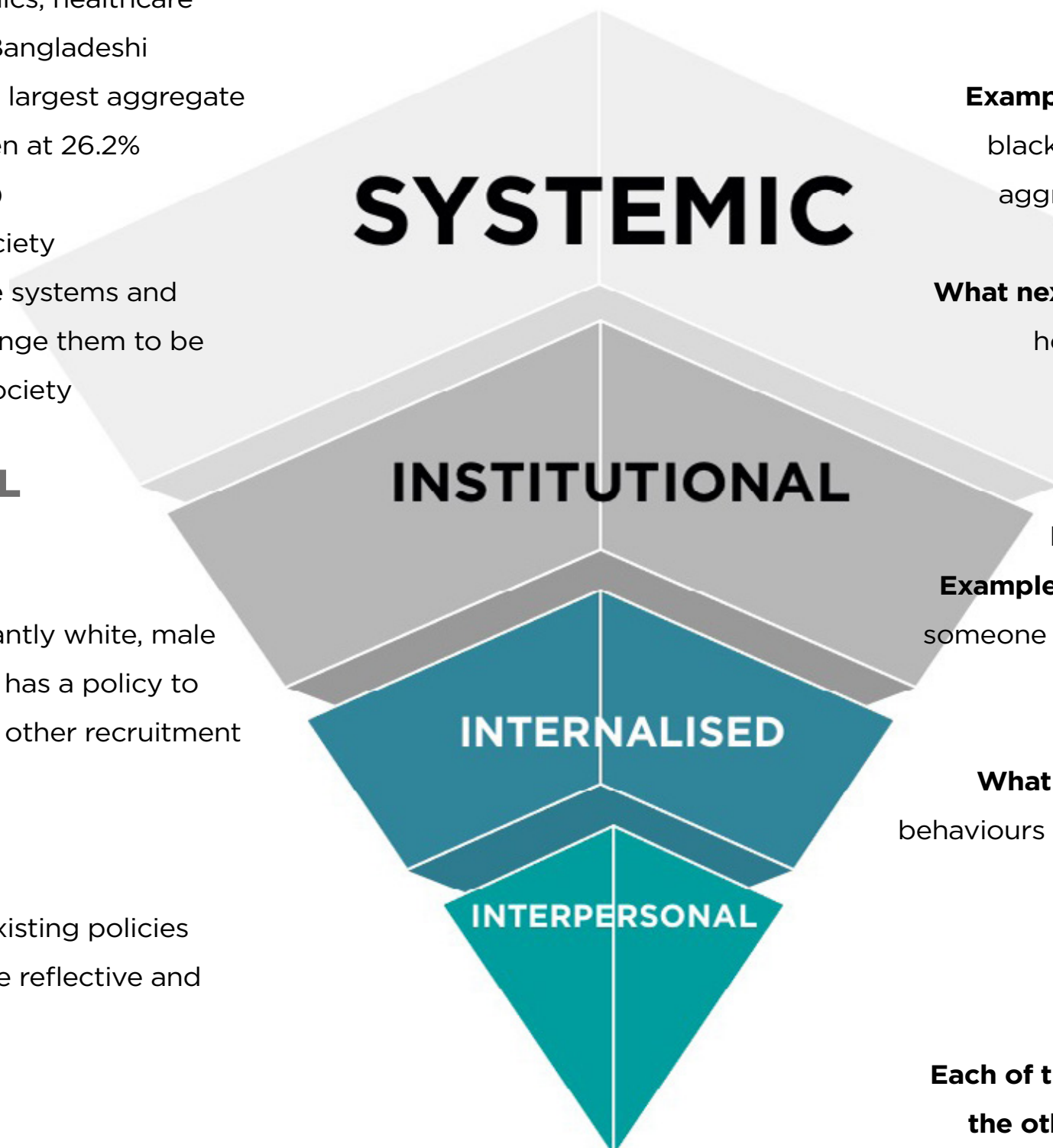
**What:** Racist acts, behaviours, microaggressions

**Example:** You show your surprise that someone from Asian background has a good English accent

**Who:** Person to person

**What next:** Understand what these behaviours look like and how to interrupt them

**Each of the four dimensions influence the other in different ways, i.e. bias influences decision making and therefor impacts on systems**



# WHAT IS ALLYSHIP?

Allyship means using your position of privilege to advocate for, support, or stand in solidarity with a **marginalised**<sup>3</sup> group. The first step to becoming an ally is to recognise the various systemic barriers that exist for marginalised groups, but do not exist for you.

In order to be an ally, you must not only recognise those barriers, but actively use your position of privilege to challenge and overcome them. To do this you must first acknowledge that racism is systemic, permeating society so widely that most of the time we don't even notice it.

On the following pages you'll find some common examples of systemic racism in the workplace and everyday life, which tend to benefit those who have historically been in power and therefore dictated the systems. These are just a few of the many commonplace examples where people from minority ethnic backgrounds face unfair treatment and prejudice.

## AWARENESS: SYSTEMIC & INSTITUTIONAL BARRIERS DO EXIST

### IN THE WORKPLACE

When you have a job interview, it's highly likely that the recruitment panel will look like you. Since people tend to employ others in their own image, this automatically puts Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic people at a disadvantage.

*In a study conducted by University of Oxford, 24% of job applicants from white Western backgrounds received a call back from employers, but only 15% of applicants from a minority ethnic background had a positive response.*

When you arrive to a meeting, it's unlikely that you'll be mistaken as someone in a more junior position.

*The McGregor-Smith Review found that Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic workers were often overqualified for their jobs and only one in 16 top management positions are held by an ethnic minority person. White people therefore often automatically assume that an ethnic minority person is more junior.<sup>1</sup>*

When your payslip arrives, it's likely that you're being paid a similar amount to other people doing the same job.

*Research suggests that on average Black workers with degrees earn 23.1% less than White workers with degrees (TUC, 2016).*

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/inequality/2017/sep/26/employees-on-workplace-racism-under-representation-bame>

## OUTSIDE OF THE WORKPLACE

When you enter a shop, you're unlikely to be followed by the security guard or be accused of shoplifting.

*In a 2018 ICM poll, 38% of people from ethnic minorities said they had been wrongly suspected of shoplifting in the last five years, compared with 14% of white people.*

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If you went into that shop to buy plasters, foundation, underwear, or tights that matched your skin tone, you would have no problem doing so.

*Tesco - one of the UK's biggest supermarket chains - began stocking plasters in dark/medium shades in February 2020 .*

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If you visit a national gallery, the collections of art is representative of your ethnicity, and is created by White artists, so you will constantly find yourself represented.

*Both the National Portrait Gallery and the Tate Gallery have admitted significant under-representation of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people in their artists and collections.*

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If you applied for university, you were likely to be offered a place if you had the grades.

*A 2014 study by LSE showed that applications from Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic backgrounds were less likely to result in the offer of a place at university.<sup>2</sup>*

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If you were admitted to university, the professors teaching you were likely to be White.

*Fewer than 1% of the professors employed at UK universities are Black and few British universities employ more than one or two Black professors.*

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When you return home from holiday, it's unlikely that border security guards will question you.

*Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people are 42 times more likely than White people to be stopped by police under counter-terrorism powers, the Guardian newspaper reported.*

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2020/feb/27/fewer-than-1-of-uk-university-professors-are-black-figures-show>

# WHAT IS PRIVILEGE?

Privilege can be a difficult word to swallow, but can be used in a positive way to link to parts of our identities, and help us understand where we can help ally for others. In the context of ethnicity, those who have historically been in positions of power and the majority, often don't face the same barriers or experiences as marginalised groups. Privilege helps us recognise areas we can help under-represented groups and understand how we can become more inclusive.

The term **White privilege**<sup>4</sup> does not intend to erase the existence of a White person's struggles, or imply that all White people are better off. It is merely meant to highlight the fact that a person's race or ethnicity hasn't been a contributing factor in any of the problems they have faced. Understanding privilege means acknowledging that people from an ethnic minority background would have experienced the same struggles more severely than a White person as a result of their skin colour.

In a workplace context, White privilege can be seen in the lack of representation of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups at senior levels. Of course, privilege is not exclusively limited to White people. We all experience privilege in some form, whether that be down to race, skin colour, gender, sexuality, age, ability, religion, socioeconomic, nationality, appearance, weight... the list goes on! Can you think of any privileges you might hold?

**“Allyship gives us all an opportunity to offer our own influence in encouraging difference to be explored and understood by others. Every day we can make positive, supportive change by listening and understanding the value difference brings and showing that we care. This can give vital energy to helping empower those that need it most in delivering their particular message.”**

Fran Goble, MTVH



**CORAL TAYLOR**

Head of Diversity & Inclusion,  
HSBC UK

**“As an ally, I don't just listen to my colleagues from diverse backgrounds, I open doors so that their voices can be heard and influence the future of our business. Because we will only be inclusive and diverse if we all play our role.”**



## EXTRA RESOURCES PRIVILEGE

Video link:  
[What is Privilege](#)



# NOT ALL DISCRIMINATION IS CREATED EQUAL

Discrimination does not affect all ethnic minority groups in the same way. For instance, according to a 2018 *Guardian/ICM* survey, Black people were more likely to feel they had been unfairly overlooked for a promotion or job application than people from Asian backgrounds. The same survey also found that Muslims were more likely to have encountered racist experiences than other religious groups. Microaggressions experienced by different ethnic communities can vary quite dramatically.

That's why referring to all Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic people as one homogeneous group, particularly with the acronym "B.A.M.E." trivialises and belittles each individual group's experiences with racism.

An English-Pakistani man will not have experienced the same types of discrimination as a Scottish-Chinese woman, for instance. Each ethnic minority community's experience of racism is unique, and thus each has its own unique battle for equality.

In addition to racism perpetrated by White people, the concept of 'whiteness' as being more preferable than other skin tones is also present within ethnic minority communities. According to a report undertaken in the USA, darker-skinned people consistently report higher levels of discrimination from people of their own ethnicity. This is called **colourism**<sup>5</sup> and is a result of lighter skin tones being valued more than darker skin tones. People with lighter skin

tend to receive preferential treatment than those with darker skin due to historical (and ongoing) colonial mentality, which positioned White people as 'superior'. Colourism particularly affects dark-skinned women.<sup>3</sup>

When multiple layers of discrimination overlap, like racism and gender, this is called **intersectionality**.<sup>6</sup> Discrimination is compounded for people at the intersection of multiple marginalised identities. For example, someone who is South Asian and straight is likely to experience *less* discrimination than a person who is South Asian and LGBT+, and will therefore encounter both racism and homophobia.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://theconversation.com/colourism-how-shade-bias-perpetuates-prejudice-against-people-with-dark-skin-97149>

# INTERNAL: UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

**Unconscious bias**<sup>4</sup> (also known as implicit bias) is an unconscious form of discrimination and stereotyping based on race, gender, age, ability, sexuality or any other characteristic. Unconscious bias influences our behaviours and everyday decision-making processes in a way that we're not necessarily aware of. Although it's something that everyone has, you will probably be unaware of your unconscious biases unless they are pointed out.

Unconscious biases are learned from a young age and are heavily influenced by the messages, attitudes and stereotypes we are exposed to as we grow up. For example, if you have grown up watching television shows that only feature East Asian people with a foreign accent, you may develop an unconscious bias towards British East Asians, and have an unconscious reaction to them speaking with an English accent. An example of unconscious bias within the workplace, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic is that jobseekers

are more likely to be interviewed if they have a traditionally 'British' sounding name.

The everyday language we use also conveys our unconscious biases. This can be as simple as a reference to the colour "nude" or "flesh-coloured", which is often used in fashion to refer to a light, Caucasian skin tone. Another example of this is the duality of the terms "blacklisting" and "whitelisting." Blacklisting is the process of compiling a list of people or entities to be avoided or distrusted, whereas whitelisting is the opposite. If you consider the racial connotations of Black vs White being used in this way, you can begin to see how racial unconscious bias is entrenched in everyday language.

Unconscious racial bias leads to discriminatory behaviours that often don't align with our personal beliefs (see Page 11 for how these often present as microaggressions). As adults, we often find ourselves in a cultural bubble where everyone thinks

in the same way. That's why challenging your unconscious bias is a long-term commitment. Be patient with yourself and remember that everyone holds unconscious biases which they have built up from a young age. Question why you made an immediate decision about a person. Was it based on a stereotype? Where did you learn about that stereotype and why? What impact does having this bias mean for the person it was directed towards?

If someone calls you out on something you've said, apologise, greet it with empathy and seek to understand where you went wrong. If you don't quite understand why a specific term or word holds bias, you should research or have an open conversation with another ally to learn more.



## EXTRA RESOURCES THE BIAS TEST

Resource link:

[The Harvard Review Implicit Bias Test](#)

# INTERPERSONAL: MICROAGGRESSIONS

The American psychiatrist Chester M. Pierce coined the term 'microaggression' in 1970. Like 'modern racism', microaggressions are often



**NAISON CHITIYO**

Grafton PLC

**“ For me, Diversity and Inclusion is not about giving people a ‘free pass’ in life, nor is it about viewing or treating them as victims. It is about striving to create an environment in which everyone, from any walk of life, may reach their fullest potential, by being willing to identify and eliminate any hindrances that may prevent some from being able to do so.”**



## EXTRA RESOURCES MICROAGGRESSIONS

Video link:

[Common microaggressions](#)

Video link:

[The effects of microaggressions](#)

committed by people who believe themselves to be fair and well-intentioned. Often, the perpetrator is unaware that they've said anything offensive, and may have even intended their interaction to be a compliment.

If left unchecked, microaggressions lead to a hostile work environment for the victim, who is likely to feel invalidated and disempowered. Studies have shown that, over time, these interactions have a huge impact on mental health and wellbeing.

Three different types of microaggressions have been identified:

**Microinvalidations** are the subtle denial or exclusion of the thoughts, feelings, or

experiences of a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic person.

**Microinsults** are verbal or non-verbal comments which demean or insult a person's racial heritage or identity.

**Microassaults** are the most overt type of microaggression. They are explicitly intentional actions or verbal slurs, which are more deliberate. For instance, telling a joke that is obviously racist.

## 1. FLIP THE SCRIPT

Would you say/do that to a White person? i.e. Touching a Black person's hair, would you touch a bald man's head?

## 2. AVOID STEREOTYPING

Educate yourself on stereotypes and historical trauma that different cultures have faced. Try to avoid assumptive comments.

## 3. AID BELONGING

Use people's names and if you're not sure then ask. Don't dismiss what someone tells you, i.e. asking "but where are you really from?"

**Remember! We all make mistakes, they are an opportunity to learn.**

| MICROAGGRESSION   | EXPLANATION   |
|---|---|
| <p>“Where are you from originally?”</p> <p>“Why do ____ people always...?”</p> <p>“Your English is great.”</p>  | <p>This challenges a person’s identity and feeling of belonging. It implies that someone is a foreigner in their own country and presupposes that being Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic is inconsistent with being British.</p> |
| <p>“I don’t see colour.”</p> <p>“I don’t see race.”</p> <p>“I’m colour blind.”</p>  | <p>While well intentioned, saying you don’t see colour or race is essentially a denial that racial discrimination exists.</p>   |
| <p>“You’re so well-spoken.”</p> <p>“Your English is so good for a ____ person.”</p>   | <p>This microaggression suggests that a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic person is lower class, and therefore shouldn’t be well-spoken.</p>  |
| <p>“All lives matter.”</p> <p>“Not all White people.”</p> <p>“I have Black / Asian / East Asian friends.”</p> <p>“Everyone’s entitled to their own opinion.”</p> <p>“Not everything is about race.”</p> <p>“Political correctness gone wrong”</p> <p>“I was just joking, don’t overthink it.”</p> | <p>This is another, more severe, not well-intentioned form of denial that racism exists, which belittles or gaslights a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic person’s experience.</p>  |
| <p>“There are lots of successful _____ people.”</p>   | <p>This microaggression is based on the myth of meritocracy and suggests that race plays no role in success because some Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic people have leadership positions.</p>                                  |
| <p>“He/she/they’ll get the promotion because they’re _____.”</p> <p>“He/she/they’re playing the race card.”</p> <p>“It’s positive discriminaton”</p>  | <p>This microaggression suggests that Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic people receive positive discrimination and are able to take unfair advantage of it, perpetuating the ‘myth of meritocracy’.</p>                           |
| <p><i>[In response to a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic person is talking about racism]</i> “If you could calm down, I’d understand your point more”.</p> <p><i>[To a Black person]</i> “Why are you always so emotional/angry/aggressive?”</p>   | <p>This is called tone-policing. It invalidates and belittles a person’s experience.</p>  |

| MICROAGGRESSION   | EXPLANATION   |
|---|---|
| <p>Telling a Muslim woman that they must feel oppressed by their hijab, or asking why they are wearing it.</p> <p>Asking a South Asian person whether their parents tried to force them into an arranged marriage.</p>  | <p>This suggests that someone's religion or culture is oppressive in your opinion, and is therefore likely to be backwards.</p>   |
| <p>"You're pretty for a Black girl"</p> <p>"You're so interesting looking!"</p> <p>"S/he's so exotic looking"</p> <p>"You don't look _____."</p> <p>"I'm almost as dark as you." (After being in the sun)</p> <p>[To a Black woman] "Are you wearing a weave?"</p> <p>[To an East Asian person] "You must be good at maths."</p> <p>[To a South Asian person] "Don't you all love cricket?"</p> | <p>These microaggressions are based on stereotypes and are often followed by "I'm only joking!".</p>  |
| <p>Touching a Black person's hair without being invited.</p>  | <p>This is an unacceptable boundary to cross within the workplace regardless of ethnicity. However, specifically touching a Black person's hair signals that they are on display and different. It also taps into a history of Black people not having ownership over their own bodies.</p> |
| <p>Asking a colleague whether they think a Black person's natural hair is distracting or unprofessional.</p>  | <p>This suggests that a Black person's natural hair is somehow unacceptable for the workplace.</p>  |
| <p>Mixing up Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic names, saying they're hard to pronounce or repeatedly pronouncing them wrongly after being told them several times.</p>  | <p>This implies that a non-English name is inconsistent with being British and creates an unwelcome atmosphere for the victim.</p>  |
| <p>Avoiding a lift that has a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic person in it.</p>   | <p>This implies an assumption of criminality based on race.</p>   |
| <p>Don't use the term B.A.M.E. if you mean Black.</p> <p>Don't use the term B.A.M.E. if you mean South Asian.</p> <p>Don't use the term B.A.M.E. if you mean East Asian.      Don't use the term B.A.M.E. if you mean _____.</p>  | <p>This suggests that all ethnic minorities can be grouped together, even though each has vastly different experiences.</p>   |

# HOW TO RESPOND TO MICROAGGRESSIONS

The aim is to educate and engage, not to name and shame

As an ally, it's important to recognise when a microaggression has taken place, and be able to confront it. In 2019, Dr Derald Wing Sue and colleagues used the term **micro-intervention**<sup>8</sup> to describe the act of calling out a microaggression. Dr Sue and his colleagues suggest that the intervention of allies can have a profoundly positive effect in creating an inclusive and welcoming environment.

When confronting a microaggression, bear in mind that the person committing it is unlikely to be aware and maybe showing positive intent, although the resulting impact on the recipient may still be detrimental. By highlighting the comment, you're helping the perpetrator understand that their language is inappropriate for future interactions.

How you confront the microaggression will be

determined by your relationship to the person who has committed it. It's important that the aggressor does not feel under attack for their comment. Think of it as an open conversation, rather than an argument. This could mean taking someone to one side after a meeting to address something they have said, rather than holding them to account in front of everyone to make a point.

The following general examples are appropriate micro-interventions to use in the workplace.

**Ask the perpetrator to further clarify what they meant by that phrase.**

*"Could you please explain that more fully?"*

*"I don't understand. What do you mean by that?"*

*"Could you please repeat that?"*

**Separate the intent of the phrase from the impact.**

*"When you said \_\_\_\_\_, you probably didn't realise it was offensive. Saying \_\_\_\_\_ can make someone feel \_\_\_\_\_."*

**Empathise and humanise by comparing the situation to your own learning process.**

*"I noticed you said \_\_\_\_\_. I used to say \_\_\_\_\_ too, until I learned \_\_\_\_\_."*

It might be that the microaggression you've witnessed has been committed by a person in a more senior position and you feel uncomfortable calling it out directly. In this situation, you could interrupt and redirect the conversation. At a later point, you could discuss your observation of the microaggression with another ally and form an approach to tackling it together.

# HOW TO RESPOND TO BEING CORRECTED

Even after you've accepted your privilege, done the research, recognised your internal bias and attended educational events, it's still likely that at some point you will do or say something unintentionally racist. It may be the case that another ally will call you out, or it may be a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic person directly.

If a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic person tells you have said or done something racist, even when you don't feel you have, you should always believe them. It's normal to feel affronted and defensive in this situation, but, as an ally, you'll know to separate intent from impact.

The following steps may help you to understand where you went wrong:

**1. Accept:** Take ownership of your mistake. Apologise, and accept the correction.

**2. Review:** Listen to the reason why you are being corrected. If

one is not given, take the time to think about your words or actions and how they could be racist. Do not expect a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic person to have to defend themselves by explaining why your behaviour was racist. If you are still unable to pinpoint why you were corrected, turn to another ally for peer support.

**3. Resolve:** Resolve not to make the same mistake in the future, and continue to learn about your own unconscious biases.

Here are some examples of replies you could use if someone corrects you:

*"I didn't realise that was racist, I'm really sorry."*

*"I didn't know that before. Thank you for telling me."*

*"I'm still learning about my unconscious bias. I'm sorry for assuming that, I'll do better in the future."*



**FIONA CANNON OBE**

Group Director, Responsible Business and Inclusion, Lloyds Banking Group

**“ We all have a role to play in creating an inclusive culture. As allies, we recognise and champion the value of people and thought diversity, standing up, challenging and acting when we see inappropriate behaviour. We need to take the time to understand the issues and build our cultural awareness and encourage others to do the same. We demonstrate our commitment, visibly and proudly, making cultural inclusion an integral part of how we do business every day.”**



**WINCIE KNIGHT**

ViacomCBS

**It is not good enough just to say ‘I am an ally!’ anymore. An ally needs to be comfortable with being uncomfortable. A good ally must have intent and be curious to educate themselves on other peoples lived experiences, as well as advocate for people less privileged than themselves! Most importantly an ally must want to make a conscious effort to act upon inequalities. We need to be allies to one another to create an inclusive environment, starting with kindness.”**

# HOW TO BE AN ETHNICITY ALLY

The word ‘ally’ should be thought of as a verb rather than a noun, as it’s something everyone must do rather than be, and is a lifelong journey of learning.

You should not self-define as an ally unless you’re able to confidently state that you’re putting in the necessary work and are also acting on it.

Being an ally means being in a constant state of learning. As was mentioned previously in this guide, you’ll need to become used to feeling uncomfortable because you’re bound to get something wrong at some point.

Discomfort is normal when discussing an issue in which you have the position of privilege. This feeling is often what prevents people from stepping up.

The root of this discomfort is likely to come from never having to seriously discuss the issue of racial injustice, or that Western

colonialism is ultimately the cause of that injustice. Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people have carried the **burden**<sup>9</sup> of racism and inequality for hundreds of years; now is the time for White allies to ensure that future generations don’t have to.

Part of being an ally is recognising that it’s not about you. Often, people can feel overwhelmed with guilt or shame for being unaware of how systemic racism is. This sometimes leads to derailing the conversation, comparing it to your own personal experience, or talking about a time you were a good ally. If you’re recounting a time that you were a good ally, you’re asking to be thanked, rewarded or acknowledged. These are examples of **centring**<sup>10</sup> yourself.

Centring yourself doesn’t help to progress equality, accountability or highlight issues of racism,



“What if I don’t know enough?”

“What if I say something wrong?”

“What if people think I’m just jumping on the bandwagon?”

instead it frames you as the victim or the saviour, and centres your privilege.

Centring is similar to **performative allyship**”.

Performative allyship is when a person’s support of a marginalised group revolves around being rewarded. A common example of this is when someone is vocal about the issues surrounding racism, but stops doing so when it’s no longer a popular topic.

It’s important to note that you won’t necessarily be noticed for your efforts at being a good ally, but that should not be your

reason for carrying out the role in the first place.

Instead of defaulting to centring or performing during conversations about race and racism, you should try to approach them in an empathetic way. It may take a conscious effort in self-awareness to prevent yourself from automatically falling into a defensive or dismissive response.

The more you engage with conversations about racism in a receptive manner, the more frequent they’ll become, and the more comfortable you’ll feel allying in this space.



**REUEL ABRAMS**

Director, Arcadis

“A race ally for me is someone that does not give me any special treatment, someone who treats me just like someone else. I want anything I achieve to only ever be on merit. To be an advocate all you have to do is be respectfully curious and try to understand your colleagues who may not be like you - actually that is something we should all do anyway. If you see talent in someone who hasn’t promoted themselves and you’re in a position to highlight their ability or their potential then do so.”

# THE ALLY CHECKLIST

## The word 'Ally' is a verb.

Angela Y. Davis said: "It's not enough to be non-racist, be actively anti-racist." Doing nothing makes you complicit. Consider your role within your

organisation and how you can actively support.

## 1. ACKNOWLEDGE

Listen and educate yourself on different perspectives, cultures and identities.

## 2. ACTIONS

Arm yourself with the tools to interrogate and interrupt.

## 3. ACCOUNTABILITY

Hold yourself, others and your organisation to account.

### THE ALLY CHECKLIST

It's time to get on the same page. Everyone within an organisation should be an ally.

#### AWARENESS

The start of your journey may be uncomfortable, but the more you learn and understand, the more confident you'll feel when approaching conversations and situations.

|  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| Recognise the various areas where you benefit from privilege   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do the research yourself. Don't ask a Black, Asian or minority ethnic person to teach you. (See Further Reading, Page 21, or on our <a href="#">website</a> )  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Learn how to feel comfortable talking about race by engaging in conversations about it. If you are talking with a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic person about racism, acknowledge the toll that the discussion may take on them | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Learn how to be okay with being uncomfortable. Getting it wrong, apologising and accepting criticism is not easy   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Accept that you are an active participant in a systemically racist society, which means that we are all unconsciously racist   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Take the time to understand your own unconscious bias . See Page 10  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Learn what microaggressions are, and how to challenge them. See Page 11 - 14   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Believe and value the lived experience of minority ethnic people   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Recognise when you are centring yourself in a conversation about race  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Understand that reading and research alone doesn't make you anti-racist  | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## THE ALLY CHECKLIST

It's time to get on the same page. Everyone within an organisation should be an ally.

### ACTIONS

Once you've reached a basic level of understanding around allyship, you can begin to take actions which will further your growth as an ally in the workplace.

|   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| Join your organisation's multicultural network and donate your time or resources to furthering its goals  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Check which resources on ethnicity your organisation has made available, and give feedback if they aren't adequate                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Attend company learning, story-telling or network group events on ethnicity and race  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| If you haven't had unconscious bias training, ask your organisation to consider implementing it   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| If you have already taken part in unconscious bias training, ask to revisit it and get support on how to interrupt your biases in a workplace setting | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Practice inclusive behaviours and connect with colleagues whom you might not ordinarily engage  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Actively ensure that all colleagues have an opportunity to give their opinions in meetings  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Speak up and support colleagues in situations where you see wrongdoing or problematic behaviour. See Page 14  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| If you are allowed a volunteer day, donate it to a charity or initiative that supports Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic people                         | <input type="checkbox"/> |



### SARAH FENNELL

Head of EMEA Diversity & Inclusion (SVP), Macquarie

**“Being an anti-racist ally isn't an end point that you can get to or a badge to be won - we all need to continually strive to be an ally. Good allies know that they will never stop needing to challenge their own unconscious biases, nor stop listening to the needs of the people that they are trying to be allies to and stand in solidarity with. Most importantly, they take opportunities to mentor or sponsor people from an ethnic minority, who are less likely to be offered such relationships.”**



**AMY KEIRL**  
TSSA



**To be an effective ethnicity ally**

**you need to actively listen to other people’s experiences and take time to read books and other literature that covers issues such as racism, so you can be part of the solution and not part of the problem. Don’t leave it to the people who are directly impacted by racism and discriminatory behaviours to have to constantly call it out, own your ability to challenge, and set a firm example that certain types of language and behaviour are not acceptable. Look out for subtler ways that your friends and colleagues may experience additional barriers and work to dismantle those barriers. .”**

## THE ALLY CHECKLIST

It’s time to get on the same page. Everyone within an organisation should be an ally.

### ADVOCATE ACTIONS

As an advocate, you recognise that utilising your position in your organisation can help to create culture change.

Give peer support to other allies

If you encounter unfair practices or processes within your organisation, challenge them. This could be done individually, with another ally, or through your organisation’s ethnicity network

If you have the opportunity to speak at a company event, discuss your ally journey and how others can be a better ally

As a White person, don’t sit on a panel discussion, forum or group (on any topic) if there’s no Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic representation

## QUICK LINKS

**Check out our other resources and articles to find out more about how your organisation can create sustainable change.**

- [The Maturity Matrix](#) - The Matrix has been developed with the input of over 200 organisations to help implement sustainable change within the following areas: Board and Organisation; Policy and Data; Culture & Inclusion; Network Group; Employee Life Cycle, and; External Impact.
- [Ethnicity leaders & Allyship programmes](#) - Find out about our programmes for the entire organisation.
- [Membership](#) - Join supporting organisations. Get access to resources, sessions and training.

## THE ALLY CHECKLIST

It's time to get on the same page. Everyone within an organisation should be an ally.

### LINE MANAGERS & RECRUITERS: ADVOCATE ACTIONS

Being in a line manager or recruitment role has its own set of responsibilities. Read our article on being a [better people leader](#).

Convey that you are an approachable manager who empathetically listens, and check in with members of staff

Learn more about what your organisation is doing on the ethnicity agenda and find ways to align and embed inclusive strategy within your particular area of business

Role model inclusive behaviours and language

Ensure you stamp out unwanted behaviour or microaggressions when you see them or they are reported.

Question your biases when offering stretch assignments, doing appraisals or putting members of the team forward for training or promotions

Seek out or request training to educate yourself around leading diverse teams

Speak at a company event, discuss your ally journey and how others can be a better ally

Ensure you are involving diverse voices in the decision making process. If you haven't got good representation on your team, try using your network group.

If you are a recruiter or hiring manager, interrogate each step of the recruitment process to ensure that it lends itself to having diverse representation within the candidate pool at every stage

If you are a recruiter or hiring manager, challenge your bias in the recruitment process



**LIAM FOGARTY**

Diversity & Inclusion Consultant,  
Natwest Group

**“For me personally, great allyship is actively involving yourself in including others, going beyond just not excluding individuals, listening to, and understanding the lived experiences of others and being an approachable and knowledgeable colleague and friend to those who come from a marginalised group. Ensuring that you're personally prepared to stand up for what you believe is right, consciously challenging when something doesn't feel right and understanding your privilege. Being an ally is about being true to who you are, and what you believe in.”**

## THE ALLY CHECKLIST

It's time to get on the same page. Everyone within an organisation should be an ally.

### LEADERSHIP: ADVANCED ADVOCATE ACTIONS

As an advanced advocate, you are in a senior position of power. The actions you undertake can create real and lasting change within your organisation.

|  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| Make a company-wide pledge to use your influence to help drive change  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Write a company-wide article about why equality and inclusion matters, what you've learned on your journey and what you plan to do in the future   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Sponsor your organisation's ethnicity network (with budget or resources)   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Formally or informally sponsor a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic member of staff   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| If you are Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic, be transparent about your journey to leadership, including the opportunities and the challenges so that others can learn from your experiences | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| If you play a part in developing policy, use your influence to ensure they are fair and inclusive  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Form a committee task force with other stakeholders to tackle race issues. Hold regular meetings and form a strategy   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do not allow policy decisions to be made without input from minority voices  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Encourage transparency through ethnicity data and help the executive team reference the steps they are taking around the ethnicity agenda in your annual report (or similar)               | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Sign up to, or request that your organisation initiates a reverse mentoring programme between managers, executives and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff                              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Hold listening sessions with ethnic minority employees and the leadership team   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Ensure that your organisation completes the annual <a href="#">Investing in Ethnicity Maturity Matrix</a> , a tool which aims to help companies with their ethnicity agenda                | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## CONCLUSION

As an ally, you should always question whether systems and structures in place are fair and inclusive. Unlearning your privilege and accepting your unconscious bias is a lifelong commitment. Creating change will not be easy and will take time and effort, but each step taken is a step in the right direction - towards a fairer, more equal and more tolerant society.

# FURTHER READING

- *Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race*, Renni Eddo Lodge
- *How to Be an Antiracist*, Ibram X. Kendi
- *So You Want to Talk About Race*, Ijeoma Oluo
- *Rebel Ideas*, Matthew Syed
- *Me and White Supremacy*, Layla F. Saad
- *Natives: Race and Class in the Ruins of Empire*, Akala
- *How to Be Less Stupid About Race*, Crystal M. Fleming
- *Don't Touch My Hair*, Emma Dabiri
- *Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People*, Mahzarin R. Banaji and Anthony G. Greenwald
- *Brit(ish): On Race, Identity and Belonging*, Afua Hirsh
- *Think Like A White Man – Conquering the World... While Black*, Nels Abbey
- *Girl, Woman, Other*, Bernadine Evaristo
- *We Have Always Been Here: A Queer and Muslim Memoir*, Samra Habib
- *Between the World and Me*, Ta-Nehisi Coates
- *It's Not About the Burqa*, edited by Mariam Khan
- *White Fragility*, Robin J. DiAngelo
- *Policing the Planet: Why the Policing Crisis Led to Black Lives Matter*, multiple authors
- *Essay: White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack*, Peggy McIntosh. *(It's worth noting that this is written from the view of a middle class White woman)*



**LORAINÉ MARTINS MBE FRSA**

Director of Diversity and Inclusion Human Resources, Network Rail



**A great ally provides HELP by having:**

**Humility and respect for people - typically, they are not the expert, but they are open to the experiences of different people/communities.**

**Empathy - the ability to put themselves in the shoes of others and understand feelings and perspectives. Listening and learning - are positively curious, seek people out, do the homework by reading articles and books and listening to podcasts and are continually improving their knowledge.**

**Proactive - take opportunities to promote and challenge. They will step-up and step-in and not allow others to discriminate or be derogatory in any situation."**

# FURTHER READING

Go one step further, and purchase these books from Black or Minority Ethnic-owned bookshops.

- New Beacon Books. [newbeaconbooks.com](http://newbeaconbooks.com)
- Round Table Books. [roundtablebooks.co.uk](http://roundtablebooks.co.uk)
- No Ordinary Book Shop. [noordinarybookshop.co.uk](http://noordinarybookshop.co.uk)
- Pepukayi Books. [pepukayisbooks.com](http://pepukayisbooks.com)
- Pempamsi Books. [pempamsie.com](http://pempamsie.com)
- Happy to BME. [happytobme.co.uk](http://happytobme.co.uk)
- Books of Africa. [booksofafrica.com](http://booksofafrica.com)
- Sevenoaks Bookshop. [sevenoaksbookshop.co.uk](http://sevenoaksbookshop.co.uk)
- African Book Collective. [africanbookscollective.com](http://africanbookscollective.com)
- Just Like Me Books. [justlikemebooks.co.uk](http://justlikemebooks.co.uk)
- Book Love. [thisisbooklove.com](http://thisisbooklove.com)
- Hansib Publications. [hansib-books.com](http://hansib-books.com)
- Black Star Books. [blackstarbooks.co.uk](http://blackstarbooks.co.uk)
- Jacaranda Books Arts & Music. [jacarandabooksartmusic.co.uk](http://jacarandabooksartmusic.co.uk)
- Merky Books. [instagram.com/merkybooks](https://www.instagram.com/merkybooks)

## Suggested podcasts

- *Racism at Work (series)*, Binna Kandola OBE
- *Let's Talk About Race (series)*, Kamran Rosen
- *Brene with Ibram X. Kendi on How to Be an Antiracist* (single episode), Brene Brown
- *About Race*, Reni Eddo-Lodge

Further resource suggestions can be found online at [investinginethnicity.com](http://investinginethnicity.com)



## LATISHA MCKENZIE

Procurement and Finance Assistant, National Grid

**“In my experience, a good Ally is someone who is able to recognise that there are differences in society, paying particular emphasis to communities that individuals are not necessarily members of, but being bold and brave enough to speak up and out against the injustices that they see.**

**Being an Ally is difficult and very much a long journey of self-awareness, constant learning and dedication; therefore, a good Ally is someone who is persistent in raising awareness and stepping outside of their comfort zone to further the conversation and help somebody else.”**



# GLOSSARY OF TERMS & TERMINOLOGY

**1 Privilege** – The automatic benefits or right of one particular group over others based on a social characteristic. E.g. Age, gender, race, sexual orientation, physical ability, education etc.

**2 Systemic racism** – The racism that is present and runs throughout institutions and society. This racism is so ingrained that it is seen as ‘normal’.

**3 Marginalisation** – When a group is excluded or treated in a way that gives them less importance than other groups.

**4 White privilege** – The inherent privilege that comes with having a White ethnicity.

**5 Colourism** – The prejudice against darker skin tones, often within an ethnic minority community.

**6 Intersectionality** – A term coined by American civil rights

advocate Kimberle Crenshaw, which describes how different characteristics “intersect” with one another and overlap.

**7 Unconscious bias** – The automatic and unintentional assumptions we make about people based on stereotypes learned from birth. Everyone possesses unconscious biases.

**8 Micro-intervention** – A term coined by Dr Derald Wing Sue and colleagues to describe the act of calling out a microaggression.

**9 Burden** – The additional labour (mental, emotional, physical) often left to the very people who experience inequity, to then educate others, share their experiences and advocate for change.

**10 Centring** – (In relation to race) The act of putting your own feelings, experiences and expectations above those of the



**DARREN KETTERINGHAM**  
Banking and Capital Markets  
Consulting Leader, PwC

“ I have found that my colleagues’ courageous storytelling, relaying their often horrific and shocking experiences has been incredibly powerful in my business: the catalyst for changing attitudes to diversity and inclusion. Such openness about these experiences has changed the dynamic and has allowed me to empower my colleagues to shape and take specific actions that have led to tangible change including fair access to work and progression coaching that is starting to break down structural barriers that get in the way of a fairer workplace and society.”

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS & TERMINOLOGY

person you're in conversation with (most commonly with White people to ethnic minorities).

## **11 Performative Allyship -**

When a person's support of a marginalised group revolves around being rewarded or recognised for their efforts.

**12 Microaggressions** - A term coined by American psychiatrist, Chester M. Pierce to describe the everyday verbal and nonverbal slights (conscious or unconscious), that communicate derogatory, negative, dismissive or hostile attitudes. Microaggressions are subtle and therefore often go unnoticed by witnesses around the victim.

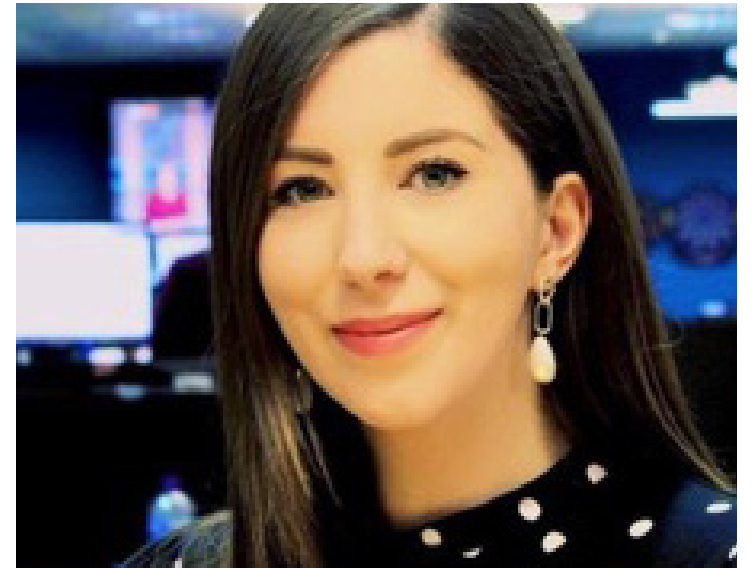
## **A Note on Terminology**

Throughout our time working within equality, diversity and inclusion we have found issues with almost every term used in social justice. This is heightened within ethnicity and race, where

there is no agreed consensus on wording used to describe ethnic minorities. We have used the extended form of B.A.M.E., "Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic" to describe non-White ethnic minorities. We understand that Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities are not one homogeneous group, but as the term is commonly known and recognised in the UK we have used it in this starter guide to being an ally.

Similarly, the word "ally" has been recognised to be problematic, for good reason. However, for context in this guide, we have used it to describe any person wishing to combat racism towards any ethnic group.

We believe that the more comfortable people feel in discussing ethnicity, the more language can evolve and help to build awareness against all forms of racism.



**KARIMA GREEN**

Global Diversity, Inclusion & Engagement Partner, SThree

**“A key part of allyship is listening to people from historically excluded groups. It's about recognising and understanding their experiences and holding ourselves and others accountable for biases and microaggressions. We need to get comfortable with being uncomfortable. Take the time to educate yourself and be willing to show up and challenge the status quo. Allyship isn't a badge or permission to speak on behalf of historically excluded groups - it's about building trust, relationships and amplifying voices.”**

# THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS



Content written by Eilidh Macleod, with contributions from Rachel Chorley, Sarah Garrett MBE and Ellen Muthu.

Designed by Ryan Beal

