

TACKLING RACIAL INEQUALITY

Good Practice Case Studies

LB Camden
Zero Tolerance of Racist Abuse in
Adult Care Settings

In response to concerns raised by staff, Camden Council's adult social care service has articulated a zero tolerance approach to racism and any form of prejudicial behaviour - and developed a Memorandum of Understanding as a way of putting that approach that into practice.



Problem we were seeking to address

Racist, abusive and threatening behaviour remains a serious problem across the UK and can be experienced in a range of different settings, including the workplace. This type of abuse is one component of broader racial inequality, injustices and disparities that must be addressed in order to achieve greater fairness and inclusivity.

Local government workforces are often diverse and reflect the communities they serve, particularly in London and within frontline services, such as adult social care. Like many boroughs, Camden's adult social care workforce is ethnically diverse, is often working in isolated conditions and works for a large cross section of public, private and voluntary sector organisations. Adult Social Care staff may unfortunately be faced with racist abuse and/or threatening behaviour from either the people they provide care to, or from a colleague.

The solution or actions/proposed solution or actions

In response to concerns raised by staff, Camden Council's adult social care service has articulated a zero tolerance approach to racism and any form of prejudicial behaviour and developed a Memorandum of Understanding as a means to put the zero tolerance stance into practice. Their aim is to ensure social justice is a core value for all professional groups in adult social care and enable partners to demonstrate their commitment to eliminating racist prejudice and abuse in all adult social care workplaces.

Partners involved

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The purpose of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is to meet the legitimate expectation of staff that their employers will respond in a timely, visible and credible way to their reports of racist abuse and prejudicial behaviour

The MoU will:

- i. Set out a clear and shared statement to Camden residents regarding zero tolerance of racist abuse and expected standards of behaviour when in receipt of paid care and support.
- ii. Ensure that staff across Camden's adult social care landscape are empowered to:
 - Coordinate a response to any reported incident
 - Collaborate across organisational boundaries to a set of shared principles
 - Consistently respond to incidents in a timely and effective way that offers support to staff affected by racist abuse, whoever they work for
- iii. Complement the existing policies and procedures for all the relevant partner organisations.

In order to achieve the above, the MoU sets out a number of practice requirements for partners to follow to put the zero tolerance of racist abuse into practice:

Confidentiality

Ensuring staff feel confident that any abuse will be addressed in a confidential manner and that clear guidance is available and protocols are followed. Anonymised data should be collated as part of the organisation's Race Equality Action Plan.

Safe Spaces

Recommending that all partners provide a 'safe space' for colleagues sharing circumstances or characteristics to connect with others, share experiences and challenge organisational practices to create a more inclusive working environment. Managers should encourage Black, Asian & Ethnic Minority staff to have Safe Spaces within Supervision, Team meetings and where group sessions are facilitated. When setting up safe spaces, clarification on purpose and desired outcomes will be essential so that all parties involved do not feel that they are being 'set up'.

Management Support

Managers are responsible for ensuring that all racist incidents are reported and actioned in a timely, visible and credible way. Any staff member subject to racist abuse should be able to access support from their manager. Organisations should consider creating other formal and informal sources of support for staff affected by racist abuse.

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Threshold for Reporting Incidents to the Police

For more serious incidents, it may be necessary to report the abusive behaviour to the Police by calling 101 or via the Hate Crime Reporting website. All organisations should agree that the affected workers are offered all appropriate support such that:

- They feel confident to report incidents to the Police and to press charges
- Are supported to participate in the Police investigation
- Are supported to attend court if required
- They are paid to complete the report, to meet with the Police and attend court if required

Establishing a joint process seeks to ensure a person feels confident and assured if they have been subjected to or witnessed racist discrimination while at work

Joint Process for Reporting and Investigating Incidents of Racism

Establishing a joint process seeks to ensure a person feels confident and assured if they have been subjected to or witnessed racist discrimination while at work. All involved agencies should follow the protocol for Joint Process and Action Planning which provides agreed processes and guidance in those instances which involved abusive behaviours from Camden citizens and by a colleague.

All incidents of racist abuse should be reported to the line manager immediately and the manager should meet with the member of staff for a debriefing including obtaining an account of the incident. An alternative option should be available if a staff member is not comfortable reporting to their manager.

Outline of a Joint Process and Action Plan

The employer of the member of staff who has been subject to racist abuse should inform and work with the commissioner, the Social Work or Care coordination team and the Police or Safeguarding team to agree the appropriate shared response to the incident. The response should be proportionate to:

- The severity of the incident
- Any previous allegations of racist behaviour from the alleged abuser that are known to any of the partners
- The capacity of the alleged abuser to understand the consequences of their behaviour

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This includes guidance around possible appropriate responses to abuse that are person centred and based around individual and relevant circumstance. These are categorised around three stages:

- **Stage 1:** this might include a verbal or written warning or a multi-disciplinary or multi-agency meeting to discuss the consequence of the incident, followed by a record of agreed actions.
- **Stage 2:** this might include a second written warning outlining consequences of future abuse e.g. withdrawal of service provision.
- **Stage 3:** this might include withdrawal of support by any commissioned provider and disclosure of history of abusive to any potential future providers.

Further Guidance

To support front line staff and managers to make the ambitions of the MoU real we have also created new guidance on:

- Reporting and responding to incidents of Racist and other prejudicial abuse
- Managing persistently racist and abusive behaviour

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Desired outcomes/delivered outcomes

The desired outcome is to put Camden Council's Zero Tolerance of racist abuse into practice, driven by frontline staff from across all ethnic backgrounds and across all adult social care employers and sectors. Furthermore, the MoU should help all partners of Camden Council to actively work towards the elimination of racist prejudice and abuse in adult social care workplaces within the borough. This MoU is intended to help all agencies:

- Work together to more effectively meet their responsibilities for responding to racist abuse and the protection and safety of staff
- Provide guidance and resources to support staff and managers in all organisations
- Protect staff confidentiality
- Provide safe spaces in which staff feel safe to raise issues relating to racist abuse
- Ensure all are aware of particular statutory responsibilities, for example safeguarding
- Set out processes to enable the reporting of incidents or other prejudicial behaviours experienced or witnessed
- Prompt early decisions about the actions and investigation(s) thought to be necessary
- Provide an efficient and effective approach to the management of the investigations
- Develop and strengthen communications and partnership working
- Identify how we can learn from these situations and prevent instances of racist abuse and discrimination from happening in the future
- Ensure that the requirements of current data protection legislation is met by all involved agencies

Learning/evaluation

Evaluation of the impact of the MoU forms part of our Adult Social Care Equalities Action plan. Progress will be reported to our Corporate Director of Equalities.

Contact



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