ADSS Cymru

Yn arwain Gwasanaethau
Cymdeithasol yng Nghymru

Leading Social Services in Wales

Delivering social care in an anti-racist Wales

Eliminating racism in the workplace

Association of Directors of Social Services Wales

Delivering Transformation Grant Programme 2023-24

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Executive Summary

1. According to Social Care Wales research (2022), approximately 84,000 people work in social care. The ethnicity of the workforce broadly mirrored that of the population of Wales except for black (or black British) workers, which was around 2.5 times more when viewed proportionally. It also says the social care workforce in 2022 is less ethnically diverse than in 2021.

2. ADSS Cymru was commissioned by the Welsh Government to undertake this study into racism in the social care workforce. It is part of action to implement the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan.

3. Gathering evidence from the lived experience of people who work, or who have worked, in social care or who have sought work in social care was at the heart of the study. An anonymous online survey was developed and received 500 responses. There were 14 in-depth conversations with staff from ethnic minority backgrounds. Statistical and other data was also sought from local authorities to provide context.

4. Two groups – a Project Reference Group and an Employee Insight Group – were established to guide the work and to help engage the workforce.

5. This report recognises the use of terminology such as "ethnic minorities" is not always welcomed as words which describe a person's ethnicity and heritage. For the purposes of this report, we follow Welsh Government guidance on terminology. It not our intention to cause any offence and the need for an ongoing discussion regarding terminology is recognised.

The nature of racism and racist behaviours

6. The study shows racism happens in four main ways:

    *   Racist behaviour or comments by work colleagues.

    *   The way someone has been treated by colleagues or a manager.

    *   Racist behaviour or comments by clients or their family.

    *   Racist comments to clients by a member of the workforce.

7. While the aim of this study is to drive anti-racism action within the workforce, there is a clear need for more action to address racism wherever it occurs, including racism by people who use social care services and their families.

8. The study has identified many instances where staff from ethnic minority backgrounds have been subject to racism by colleagues. Racism manifests itself in many ways. The main ones are:

    Types of racist behaviour and comments identified in the lived experience of staff

    *   Comments on someone's appearance, including colour of skin, and hate speech about a nationality or nationalities

    *   Cultural stereotyping and the language – terminology and words - used

- Rudeness about other cultures and beliefs

- Insulting, mocking or derogatory comments e.g. staff copying someone's accent in a derogatory way

- Comments which appear to show a lack of understanding or acceptance of other cultures and nationalities, or are framed as "a joke", often as an attempt to deny racism or a racist attitude and/or to deflect criticism

- Issues relating to Wales/Welsh and England/English

- Spreading of racist and hate messages and information online and on social media

- Situations where someone is not treated well by colleagues or a manager or treated differently to their colleagues, or where others have been observed being subject to similar treatment, or where a client is treated differently.

- A refusal by clients to accept certain carers

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No national picture but evidence of gaps in action to tackle racism

9.   With responses from 12 of the 22 local authorities, the study has only been able to build a partial picture of information on racism. There are gaps in the monitoring of racism e.g. with staff who leave their job, and racism does not appear to be a topic which is explored in staff surveys. Examples of action to tackle racism were relatively few and far between.

Racism is still happening but is it challenged?

10.   The lived experience of individuals who contributed to the study shows the extent to which racism, including microaggressions, is happening in social care. Relatively small number of complaints or grievances by staff about racism were reported by the local authorities that responded to the request for information for 2022-23 and 2023-24.

11.   There is some evidence of racism being challenged when it arises within the workforce and when it happens with people who are receiving care or a member of their family. The challenge might be by the individual affected or by someone who has observed it happening e.g. a manager or colleague. However, much goes unchallenged.

12.   There is evidence to suggest that many incidents of racism are not reported, with one factor being a lack of confidence it will be dealt with. Unfortunately, some staff say they are now *"used to it"*, particularly microaggressions, and prefer to try and educate people rather than make a complaint.

Lack of confidence in policies and procedures

13.   Organisations have procedures in place for complaints and grievances. However, staff have questions on how they work in practice and their effectiveness. The key issue is poor handling, with specific aspects being:

- Failing to recognise and/or acknowledge racism has occurred.
- The issue is not understood or taken seriously.

- Confusion on the part of the HR Department on what policies and procedures are in place.
- Lack of the action by the organisation or manager to challenge the perpetrator.
- Systems which are discriminatory or lacking clarity.
- Lack of recognition of the impact on individuals and lack of support.

14. A lack of confidence in policies and procedures is a significant factor in racism not being reported. There is frustration with how racism is dealt with, or not as the case may be, with respondents citing instances of not being believed or listened to or being dissuaded from action. Some incidents are dismissed as "banter", which belies a lack of understanding about racism and the impact it has on a person.

15. There is also dissatisfaction with the outcome of complaints or grievances. Reasons include delays, feedback received or a lack of feedback, little or no effective reprimand for the perpetrator, and being expected to continue working with the perpetrator.

Risks of making a complaint or grievance

16. People are wary of and/or worried about reporting racism because of what might happen as a result e.g. being victimised by colleagues or labelled as a *"troublemaker"* and fear it could jeopardise their job or result in retribution from their organisation or colleagues.

Zero-tolerance

17. A zero-tolerance approach is a commitment in the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan. There were mixed views – positive and negative - on the extent to which organisations are adopting the zero-tolerance to racism goal of the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan. There is clearly much more to be done to make it a reality.

What more needs to be done?

18. The study identifies many common themes for action in respondents' comments (see paragraph 6.28) and has collated their suggestions for improvements and change (see paragraph 6.29).

Action by Directors of Social Services

19. This study is a springboard for even greater efforts to stamp out racism. Directors of Social Services will act on the findings by:

   a) Sharing the findings of this study with their CEO and fellow Directors to identify what more can be done corporately to eliminate racism across service areas.

   b) Arranging cultural awareness training for all their staff with the expectation that attendance is mandatory, with due consideration to how it is best delivered and by whom.

   c) Ensuring every member of staff in their department understands the meaning of racism and associated issues such as microaggressions, the seriousness of it and the impact it can have on colleagues, and the clear commitment to tackling it in all its forms and calling it out.

   d) Encourage the reporting of racist behaviours and comments and ensure every report of racist behaviour or comment is followed up.

e) Reviewing the arrangements for the provision of social care and support and associated documentation to ensure clients and their families understand a zero-tolerance approach and the potential consequences should racism or racist behaviours occur. The provision of information to aid cultural awareness will be considered as part of the review.

f) Reviewing commissioning arrangements and contracts with providers to ensure they reflect a zero-tolerance approach to racism for members of staff and for those who receive social care and support.

g) Using their annual report to demonstrate progress against the findings of the study.

Recommendations

20. While action will be taken by Directors in their own departments, progress on tackling racism and achieving a zero-tolerance approach depends heavily on a local authority's corporate approach and its department-wide systems. Therefore, it is recommended that all local authorities act corporately to:

    a) Ensure every member of staff understands racism and the impact it can have thus overcoming ignorance and preventing misunderstandings.

    b) State (or restate) the organisation's commitment to a zero-tolerance approach to racism, encouraging staff to call it out the very time it happens to them or if they see it happening to anyone else.

    c) Review the organisation's policies and procedures for reporting, investigating and monitoring reports of racism to ensure they are effective, with a clear and satisfactory conclusion for each case

    d) Pilot the evaluation framework for handling cases of racism which has been produced alongside this study.

    e) Consider whether sufficient support is available to anyone affected by racism and to support them in the process if a complaint or grievance is made and enhance the support if necessary.

    f) Work together with ADSS Cymru, Social Care Wales, Care Inspectorate Wales, the Welsh Local Government Association, and the Welsh Government to develop and implement a co-ordinated programme of learning to share experience and good practice between local authorities.

    g) One year on from the publication of this report and using their self-assessment process, each local authority should report on the progress made on implementing the recommendations of this report.

21. ADSS Cymru is committed to working with all local authorities, independent social care providers, Social Care Wales, Care Inspectorate Wales, the Welsh Local Government Association, and the Welsh Government to implement the above recommendations and to demonstrate continued progress towards the goal of an anti-racist Wales.

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Anti-racist Wales Action Plan[i] reflects the Welsh Government's commitment to make Wales an anti-racist nation, with a zero-tolerance policy on racism.

1.2 As part of the Plan's implementation, the Welsh Government commissioned the Association of Directors of Social Services Cymru ("ADSS Cymru") to capture the experiences of staff from ethnic minority backgrounds. The project comprised two workstreams.

- Workstream 1: to examine racist behaviours in the workplace, including the nature of behaviour, complaints and grievances about such behaviour, and what happened as a result.

- Workstream 2: to consider local authorities' selection and progression policies for middle management and leadership roles.

1.3 ADSS Cymru has published its report on Workstream 2 https://www.adss.cymru/en/blog/post/delivering-social-care-in-an-anti-racist-wales-report

1.4 This report presents the findings of Workstream 1. It considers the lived experiences of staff from ethnic minority backgrounds, identifying the problems they have encountered and making recommendations to drive improvement. It also highlights developments and practice which can be shared.

1.5 Jenny Williams, Strategic Director of Social Services and Education for Conwy County Borough Council, led the project on behalf of ADSS Cymru.

Approach

1.6 The study placed great emphasis on gathering evidence of racism from the lived experience of people who work, or who have worked, in social care or who have sought work in social care. The approach to the study and the way it was developed and implemented reflects this.

1.7 Four broad types of information were required for the project:

(i) Lived experience: what people are experiencing or have experienced in their working lives.

(ii) Stakeholders' views and perspectives.

(iii) Contextual data: levels of recruitment activity and statistics on the recruitment and selection of staff who have an ethnic minority background.

(iv) Policy documents and procedures for recruitment, selection, and promotion.

1.8 Contextual information was sought from local authorities. Directors of Social Services were asked to nominate one or more members of staff as liaison points to provide information to the project team and, importantly, to help promote and encourage individuals to share their lived experience.

1.9 Racism does not respect organisational boundaries. Therefore, a decision was made early in the project development to extend the capture of data to staff with ethnic minority backgrounds working in the independent sector to allow them to share their experiences.

1.10 Two groups were established early in the project development with a co-production approach to guide the work and to help engage the workforce.

Project Reference Group

1.11   The Project Reference Group was formed of representatives of stakeholder organisations, including local government, regulatory bodies, trade unions, and people who advocate for those with lived experience of racism and discrimination in social care. A full list of members is provided in Appendix 5. Members of the group helped define racism and ensure a shared understanding of what it entails and how is manifests itself in social care, which helped guide the research. Members also highlighted the issue of microaggression. Definitions are provided as a Glossary in Appendix 1.

1.12   Members of the Group were involved in designing the data collection instruments. They helped engage the workforce by promoting the study via their own networks. They also provided a valuable sounding board for the project team on matters relating to safeguarding and well-being of participants, thus contributing to the ethical and sensitive conduct of the research.

Employee Insight Group

1.13   The Employee Insight Group comprised 10 current or former members of the workforce of social care, the NHS, the third sector, and higher education institutions. Members were primarily from minority ethnic backgrounds and had lived experience of racism or were involved in addressing racism within the social care sector. They informed the design of research instruments and helped to promote the online survey and the confidential conversations. Importantly, they provided a deeper perspective of microaggressions through their lived experience, offering their explanations and valuable insights on how microaggressions manifest and impact social care workers from ethnic minority backgrounds. They also participated in a series of round table discussions which were held to explore, in a safe confidential environment, their personal experiences.

Terminology

1.14   The term "diverse workforce" which appears frequently in local authorities' plans, policies and procedures in the context of equality and workforces which better reflect local populations. In this report, and unless otherwise stated, the term is short for "ethnically diverse workforce" which is the focus of this study.

1.15   This report recognises the use of terminology such as Black and Asian Ethnic Minority and "ethnic minorities" is not welcomed and/or recognised by some sections of the community as words which describe their ethnicity and heritage. For the purposes of this report, we use guidance set out by the Welsh Government (revised 2023) on the use of Welsh Language, race and ethnicity terminology. We understand the views expressed by some respondents on the use of terminology and it is not our intention to cause offence. We recognise some alternative terms are emerging and may well come to the fore for use in future. We support the need for an ongoing conversation with the ongoing participation of the communities and groups affected by any terminology they consider inappropriate or ill-judged. https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2023-05/welsh-language-race-and-ethnicity-terminology.pdf

Safe to Share

1.16   The project team recognised the sensitivity of the subject and the impact, including personal trauma, it has had or could have had for those who have experienced and/or observed racism. This includes the possible impact of individuals having to relive what they have

been through to share their experience with the project team. Two ways were developed for individuals to share their lived experiences openly and honestly in a way in which they felt comfortable:

- A **confidential 1:1 conversation** with a member of the project team, undertaken face-to-face or via a virtual meeting online, whichever was preferred. The project team included members who have an ethnic minority background.

- A completely **anonymous online survey**.

1.17   More information on methodologies is provided in the relevant chapters later in this report.

This report

1.18   Racism is a complex and sensitive issue. The impact of racism may result in hurt and trauma that lasts a long time. The report does not hide the facts. While our analysis draws out the common themes and issues, the best way of understanding the nature and impact of racism is to hear it from the individuals affected. For this reason, individuals' own words are used throughout the report.

1.19   To preserve confidentiality, the reporting of lived experience does not identify individuals. Information and quotes have been redacted where necessary. Similarly, this report summarises data at the national level and does not name local authorities. Where appropriate, some words have been redacted to preserve the confidentiality and anonymity of responses. Some words have also been redacted to avoid perpetuating the use of racial stereotyping and racist terms.

1.20   The structure of the report reflects the main sources of data collected for the study. **Chapter 2** provides context for the study, drawing on information provided by local authorities. **Chapter 3** summarises feedback from the in-depth 1:1 conversations with 14 members of staff and **Chapter 4** does the same for discussions by members of the Employee Insight Group. **Chapter 5** reports the findings of the online survey of the workforce, to which 500 members of staff responded. **Chapter 6** draws conclusions from the evidence and makes a series of recommendations.

1.21   Copies of research tools developed for the project are provided in the appendices along with a glossary of terms.

Acknowledgements

1.22   The project team is grateful to all our contacts and their colleagues in local authorities and to members of the Project Reference and Employee Insight groups for their help in this study. Their contribution in providing information for the study and promoting the opportunities for staff to give their views was much appreciated and helped achieve a total of 500 responses to the online survey and 14 in-depth conversations, which is a significant body of evidence. The project team is also grateful to Jenny Williams as the lead Director for ADSS Cymru, to Dr Sondra Butterworth for her contribution to the initial project development, and to all other stakeholders, including Welsh Government officials.

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2. Context

2.1   According to the latest published data from Social Care Wales' workforce survey (2022)[ii], an estimated 84,134 people work in social care. This figure includes personal assistants and foster carers.

2.2   The report explained the ethnicity of the workforce broadly mirrored that of the population of Wales except for the proportion of black (or black British) workers, which was around 2.5 times more when viewed proportionally. It concluded that in 2022, with 94.5% reported as white compared to 89.1 in 2021, the social care workforce had become less ethnically diverse.

Local authority data on complaints and grievances

2.3   In this report, the term "complaints" is used in the context of the workforce e.g. an issue about racism raised informally by a member of staff about another member, or members, of the workforce to their line manager or any other manager, to the HR department, or to a Trade Union representative. Such complaints may or may not be termed a "grievance", which is the term commonly used in internal policies and procedures to address such matters. This report does not cover complaints about staff made by members of the public or people receiving social care

2.4   All 22 local authorities were asked to provided data and information as background to the study. A copy of the information requested is provided in Appendix 2. Twelve local authorities responded to the request.

2.5   Local authorities were asked how many formal or informal grievances or complaints have been made by members of the social care workforce where actual or alleged racist behaviour or comments were involved in the financial years 2022-23 and 2023-24. In the period, 7 were recorded, covering 5 local authorities. One authority said the information was not readily available.

2.6   The broad reasons behind the complaints or grievances were:

- An alleged inappropriate comment made by an employee to a co-worker about a service user which referenced their ethnic background and faith.
- Allegations of racist comments and/or language.
- Picture of an animal sent to a member of staff in a WhatsApp group with a comment about the recipient.
- Racial discrimination.
- Accessing confidential information linked to safeguarding.
- A member of staff dissatisfied with how they believed a matter had been treated.

2.7   Local authorities were asked if they had a referral system in place i.e. a system which may be part of an employee support or assistance scheme, or an internal team or external agency. The support or assistance might be specific to issues about race or be part of a broader support system which also covers issues about race.

2.8   Three of the twelve local authorities said they had a referral system in place for staff to access information, advice, and support related to issues about race. Two said "no" but referenced other means of support e.g. staff networks, and employee assistance programmes for general advice and support run by external providers. One local authority response did not know if it has a referral system.

2.9   The local authorities who reported a referral system could not say how many referrals were made in 2022-23 and 2023-24. They said due to its confidential nature, a member of staff can approach the service direct.

Exit interviews

2.10   For staff leaving a local authority, 2 of the 12 local authorities said they could identify an exit interview which referred to racist behaviour or comments. The remaining 8 said they could not or did not answer the question. Two said that while they do not have the data recorded in a way which allowed them to provide numbers, if such issues were mentioned at an exit interview, it would be escalated at that time.

2.11   One authority said that some racist behaviour had been observed and further information was sought, and procedures followed. Another authority went on to say that social care staff who leave are asked during the exit interview if they have left due to harassment or inappropriate behaviours of others relating to protected characteristics. Exiting staff are also asked about their relationships with management and peers and encouraged to talk about the positives and negatives of these.

Whistleblowing

2.12   Whistleblowing can happen in different ways and through a variety of reporting channels. Eight of the 12 authorities were not aware of any whistleblowing cases which happened in the two years covered by the study or did not answer the question. One authority was unable to say one way or the other. One authority said it was aware of a case where someone had witnessed/experienced discrimination or harassment where the nature was race related.

2.13   One authority clarified its approach on whistleblowing. They explained their Monitoring Officer's register of whistleblowing reports relating to social care staff confirms none have raised any complaints of racist behaviour or comments during the financial years 2022/23 and 2023/24. However, they went on to explain their whistleblowing policy is intended to cover serious issues of malpractice reported in the public interest and does not cover concerns which relate solely to an employee's own employment position as these types of concerns are properly dealt with under the Council's Resolution Policy.

Fitness-to-practice referrals

2.14   Of the 12 authorities who responded to the study, 6 reported fitness-to-practice referrals being made in the period 2022-23 and 2023-24, with a total of 58 between them. Note the figures for one authority were for calendar years as opposed to the two financial years 2022-23 and 2023-24, and therefore included data for 2022, 2023, and 2024 (to date). Of the fitness-to-practice referrals reported, 4 (7%) were for staff who were known to be from an ethnic minority background.

2.15   One authority said the information was not readily available and 4 others said they did not know how many fitness-to-practice referrals had been made. The remaining authority said a process has now been put in place to enable them to provide the information in future.

Staff surveys

2.16   Local authorities were asked if they had undertaken any staff surveys of their social care workforce in the two years which have produced information relevant to this project e.g.

ethnicity, racism, the views of staff with an ethnic minority background etc. There was a mixed response:

- 7 authorities did not answer the question.
- 3 authorities said no staff surveys had been undertaken or no surveys covering subjects relevant to this study.
- 1 authority had undertaken a staff survey, but it reported no relevant information in relation to this study.
- 1 authority said after an earlier survey in 2022, a diversity dashboard was created so results could be filtered by all protected characteristics, including ethnicity.

2.17   One of the authorities said an employee survey due to take place in 2024 will cover a host of council-wide questions although it did not elaborate on the specific topics which will be covered.

Tackling racism and racist behaviour

2.18   To understand how local authorities responded to racism and racist behaviours, local authorities were asked if their social care department has taken any action to address any identified issues of racism or racist behaviour and if so, to describe in broad terms the issues identified, and action taken in response. Eight authorities did not answer the question, with one saying the information was not readily available. Four authorities said no action had been undertaken, with two saying no issues had been identified.

2.19   One authority said a programme of training around anti-racism had been delivered, including anti-racism workshops for managers and staff, with more training scheduled this year to continue to drive an anti-racism approach. Another said its social services department has high expectations on appropriate and inclusive behaviour at all times, with staff obliged to conduct themselves in line with its code of conduct and, if registered professionals, in line with their professional body's code of conduct. Any incident of racism or racist behaviour is addressed through its HR policies and procedures.

2.20   While reporting no specific examples of action taken in respect of its workforce, one of the authorities who responded to the information request did give examples of broader action being taken with individuals receiving social care. One example relates to a case which was, at the time of writing, going through the disciplinary process. The other relates to a commissioned provider and the cultural needs of someone receiving social care. As will be seen later in this report, the online survey identified incidents of racism or related issues with people receiving social care as well as within the workforce. In this context, the example is provided as a case study below of action taken with a commissioned provider to address the issue identified so the potential for discriminatory behaviour by staff was averted by bespoke training.

Case studies:

A social worker in the Learning Disability Team identified a placement provider was not enabling a citizen who lacked capacity to make decisions regarding their faith and culture to follow their Muslim faith as noted on their care plan. Specifically, this was a halal diet and ensuring head scarfs and equipment for ablutions were available. The placement provider did not have in place any capacity assessments or evidence they had consulted with family on what was in the citizen's best interests.

> The social work team informed the provider that the support was unacceptable and worked with them to understand the importance of appropriate support around faith and culture and where the Mental Capacity Act {2005}, legal processes and anti-discriminatory practices interact with these needs. The placement provider was offered training, advice and unannounced visits were undertaken to ensure the citizen's faith and culture were being considered and actively supported. Family engagement was encouraged to support this.
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> The Complex Needs Day Services for adults with a learning disability worked proactively with the Social Care Training Team to source training for staff who are working with supported people who are members of the travelling community to educate staff and to head off any potential stereotypical thinking or prejudices that staff may have held, and which could impact on the support they provide.

"Complaints" and "grievances"

2.21   Both "complaints" and "grievances" featured in the specification for this study. As will be seen later in the report, the words are sometimes used interchangeably. In addition to this report, this project has prepared an evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness of the processes and procedures which address complaints and grievances about racism, to capture lessons learned, and to make improvements.

2.22   Five of the twelve local authorities who responded to the information request provided copies of relevant corporate documents. They included policy and procedure documents on equality, diversity and inclusion, dignity at work, bullying and harassment, and grievances. Some local authorities have separate documents on bullying and harassment while one, recognising it can be very difficult to distinguish between them, has combined the two in one document.

2.23   A detailed assessment of these polices was outside the scope of the resources available for the study. However, a rapid review of the documents was undertaken to clarify the use of the terms "complaints" and "grievance" in the context of dealing with matters involving racist behaviour and comments.

2.24   The documents provided by the different local authorities had much in common but vary on style and some aspects of content. For example, one of the policy documents provided more detail on types of discrimination and unconscious bias. Race, as a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 and other statutory guidance e.g. ACAS, was a prominent element of policies on harassment. The Dignity at Work and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policies might be described as umbrella policies which frame and provide context for the more specific documents which deal with bullying, harassment and grievances.

2.25   The following broad points can be drawn from the rapid review:

- The term "grievance" and the associated procedures tends to be focused on action an employer has taken or is planning to take which affects an individual or group of staff. Some of the grievance documents state the grievance procedure is not used for matters for which separate procedures exist e.g. bullying, harassment.

- The term "complaint" and "complainant" tend to be used in relation to the bullying and harassment procedures.

2.26   Even in the above there is a crossover between the two, particularly as the grievance documents refer to relationships with colleagues at work which, as will be seen in evidence later in this report, is where racism occurs. In one case, the words are also used in an interchangeable sense e.g. one documents states "The purpose of a grievance procedure is to enable individual employees to raise complaints (or a 'grievance')".

2.27   One local authority has in one of its policy documents a clear commitment to a zero-tolerance approach to racism and to delivering against the goals of the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan.

2.28   The evaluation framework (paragraph 2.21 refers) will be relevant to the procedures for staff to raise complaints or grievances which involve racism. The framework should be tested against all cases that arise and reviewed to identify the need for any refinement to ensure it is an effective tool for learning and helping to eliminate racism.

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3.   Lived experience: key themes from conversations

3.1   Members of the workforce were offered a confidential 1:1 conversation with a member of the project team. The project team included people from ethnic minority backgrounds with lived experience of racism and trauma-informed approaches who helped to ensure participants felt confident in the process and safe sharing their experiences. This method of collecting lived experience complemented the online survey. It provided opportunities for in-depth discussions. The main areas of discussion are listed in Appendix 3.

3.2   This chapter summarises the key points of 14 conversations, the notes of which were verified by each participant prior to analysis. Prior to each conversation, the participant was given a factsheet describing the project and protocols for gathering, storing, and sharing their information. Participants were asked to confirm they were happy to proceed.

3.3   At the start of the conversation, the data collection and safeguarding policy, and duty of care, were explained. Participants were also informed that support was available if needed after sharing their lived experience. This was arranged with Canopi, a provider of wellbeing service to individuals and a Social Care Wales nominated agency.

3.4   The length of participants' social care service ranged from 6 months to 40 years, with 11 of 14 participants employed more than 10 years in social care.

Analysis and reporting

3.5   The analysis is based on what participants said in discussions. Steps have been taken in reporting to preserve the confidence and anonymity of participants. No-one is identified by gender, nationality, local authority or organisation. It is important to note that the conversations attracted individuals from seldom-heard ethnic backgrounds. The theme of "hidden heritage" has also been captured. Hidden heritage is where someone has not disclosed their heritage to colleagues or clients for fear of reprisal or discrimination and has witnessed or heard racist comments, behaviours and slurs about their community. In some cases, this has negatively impacted their well-being or perceptions of themselves as members of this ethnic group.

3.6   Participants' personal experiences varied and therefore so did the views. However, there were many common themes. The following pages are structured around the key themes drawn out of the analysis of the conversations.

Lived experience of racism

3.7   Thirteen of the 14 participants said they had experienced or witnessed racism in some form. They described the impact of racism as they experienced it from colleagues, clients and/or from their organisation. They also spoke of institutional and structural racism.

3.8   Broadly speaking, participants believe their organisations lack the knowledge and systems to address racism and racism complaints, with no consistent process in place. They describe their frustrations with how racism is dealt with, or not as the case may be, by line managers and by their organisations. The majority cited instances of not being believed or listened to and being dissuaded from taking any further action.

- *"They either don't realise what they are doing, or they do realise but they have no respect for other people that are not British".*

Lack of cultural awareness and understanding

3.9   Participants gave examples of how staff from ethnic minority backgrounds drew criticism or comments on how they spoke, presented themselves or carried out their duties, suggesting to participants that incidents in which they were either professionally disciplined or criticised were due to cultural ignorance and understanding.

3.10   Where participants reported racism they faced from colleagues, typified by perpetrators mimicking accents or referring to someone as 'Black' or Asian as a factual comment, it was often dismissed as banter not racism. Participants felt there was a general lack of understanding of ethnic minorities' diverse backgrounds, which also led to perceived unfair treatment or disciplinary action when participants' professional practice was questioned.

- *"I'm a Black African – two of my colleagues are also Black African they heard comments made. I've also heard someone say to me you're Black. They say how come you can say you are Black, and we can't say you're Black. It's not what you say but the context in which you say it. They refer to me as the 'Black Carer'. I don't refer to my 'White colleagues. It's not in my job description – 'Black Carer".*

- *'The LA were undergoing reorganisation, and I went from a specialised to a more generalised role. I asked to be moved to the [- redacted -] of the area where there are a lot of Asian communities where I felt I would be more effective but was moved to the [- redacted -] area where there were more Black people. When I asked why I couldn't move to the Asian area I was told – well it's all the same. They felt we were all the same people and didn't understand.'*

- *'Throughout my career, I have had experiences where compliments given to me have been exaggerated, for example, colleagues will say "I write English very well', I speak English very well". These are disguised as compliments. However, when I raise issues around cultural engagement, the compliments vanish".*

3.11   Some participants also described the attitudes of organisations and companies in dealing with racism as lacking empathy and displaying or pleading ignorance on what racism is. They shared their frustrations in articulating how what is said or the way it is said has made them feel.

Unconscious bias, perceptions and assumptions

3.12   Unconscious bias is strongly reflected in participants' comments. Six of the 14 participants described what they perceived to be reasons why they were unfairly treated in the workplace or unsuccessful in securing higher roles as unconscious bias in the recruitment process. Some also felt the racism they experience is more subtle. However, they could identify and recognise it when directed at them or others from ethnic minority backgrounds or who shared their heritage.

- *"It's every day, and it's mostly due to ignorance. Mostly a white organisation and they don't see it's anything that needs to be addressed as they are in the majority. It's most always wrapped up with a smile towards me, it's exoticism e.g. have you been on holiday, have you permed your hair".*

- *"It's daily. Racial slurs are common, particularly if they are quoting something back that they've heard or mimicking an accent. It's difficult to explain to them why it's wrong as people just don't understand racism properly".*

- *"It's a repeated occurrence. How it manifests has changed over the years. But racism is racism. You can see it, feel it, taste it, smell it".*

- *"I applied for a senior post and didn't get it, at first I listened to the reasoning behind it - that I needed more experiencing managing staff. I got that experience, and the job came up again and I applied for it, and I didn't get it again. I was the most experienced person in the team. I took on board again what they asked me to do, but it happened a third time……".*

- *"I have illnesses, that I have had for a long time, but the symptoms have flared up. I have not had time off work, but they decided they needed to prolong my probation. Unconscious bias – it's supposedly about my work but I feel it is about my health and could be about my colour".*

- *"When you've been brown all your life, you know racism. My manager didn't trust me with my own budget and wouldn't let me have sight of it. I know how to manage budgets. I heard reference to her saying things like 'dodgy [-nationality redacted -]'. Other team members left within a year, including me".*

Hidden heritage

3.13   Three participants reported experiences of racism by colleagues who were unaware they belonged to a particular racial group. The participants described how they hid their ethnicity or cultural background for fear of ridicule, with one participant recalling a racist incident from over thirty years ago, which they have, up until now, not shared with anyone. In this case, the participant witnessed colleagues making discriminatory remarks about their heritage without knowing their background or culture. They did not complain; however, another colleague who witnessed the incident reported it.

- *"The colleague was saying the holocaust didn't happen and didn't know I was Jewish. Someone reported it to social services and was concerned it was a racist comment and felt they shouldn't work in social services with those attitudes".*

- *"As a student I wouldn't share my ethnicity as I didn't feel safe'… There's no time where I've not witnessed direct or indirect racism. Racism has become less overt against other racialised groups but not Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people".*

3.14   Two participants did not feel the need to acknowledge their heritage or colour until attempts they made to advance in their careers made them question the reasons why their applications were unsuccessful.

- *"Yes – I don't think I had my eyes open for most of my career, I just carried on working, I didn't even think I was being blocked for my colour"*

- *"I have come through the care system myself, and because of that I didn't accept my colour for a long time, I saw myself as white Welsh. But since doing this job I've had to face my colour".*

Microaggressions

3.15   Experiences of microaggressions featured strongly in participants' testimonies. While not all participants use the term microaggressions, they provided examples of incidents they consider to be racist that relate to recurring comments on how they speak, behave, or carry out their professional practice, which may differ from their White colleagues. These

experiences also extend to families who display discriminatory behaviour and comments when providing their in-home care service. Additionally, participants comment on how White colleagues have undermined them by criticising their practice or line managers not giving them credit for work undertaken.

3.16 Six of the 14 participants consider microaggressions to be a particular form of racism that organisations and colleagues fail to understand and consider. From their perspective, the act of commenting on someone's accent, appearance or character is intentional and openly racist. It is often disguised as a compliment or held up as a cultural ignorance or innocent remark.

3.17 Participants feel there is an awareness and knowledge gap between what organisations view as racist and what they consider is racist. There is a view that racism is more subtle and that ethnic minority social care staff face increased microaggressions - which essentially is racism.

3.18 Some participants believe definitions of microaggression and racism are needed for social care staff to have a better understanding of how comments relating to a person's ethnicity and heritage would be deemed inappropriate and upsetting to the person at the receiving end of such comments, or the act of not calling someone by their given name.

- *"The microaggressions are constant. In terms of anti-gypsyism, I've not seen that change".*

- *"We experience and witness daily incidences of racism and micro-aggression. Racial slurs and 'banter' have increased since returning to the office after covid, post-Brexit. The influence of the current government also has an impact. It's due to lack of awareness among the workforce, it's the last taboo area in the LA. We know there is a gap in the training pathway for social workers around racism".*

- *"Yes. I think the experience of micro-aggressions, flippant comments, racial slurs are experienced on a daily basis in one way of another. Sometimes, it is not directed at me – it may be colleagues' comments on the accent of an Indian doctor".*

- *'I work in a team that's aware of racism. However certain cultures may come on screen and white colleagues in other departments will go out of their way not to call people by their name, for example, a group of social workers were on a training call and called everyone by their name except for colleagues from Asian backgrounds as they couldn't say their names. All the male social care staff have changed their names on the call to English sounding names".*

- *"I would say it's all indirect from colleagues who make comments I consider to be racist or discriminatory. I consider racist behaviour can be indirect and not always directed at me. For example, I had a manager who considered that people who couldn't speak English can't access the service. It didn't go ahead as a colleague spoke up".*

- *"Microaggressions including name being consistently misspelt in work even in emails when my name is easily visible. Being mixed up with another colleague consistently who is also a POC, despite being from different backgrounds, different ages and evidently look different".*

Impact of racism

3.19 Six of the 14 participants said continual racism has impacted their mental health and wellbeing. They spoke of not being believed when raising issues and being dissuaded from

pursuing a complaint as being particularly upsetting. In some cases, because of making complaints about racism they had faced, they were victimised by colleagues or labelled as troublemakers. Some participants felt their organisations were ineffective in dealing with their racist complaints and as a result became unwell, eventually leaving the organisation.

- *"They weren't listening, so the organisation didn't take anything on board. It was very stressful. They justify their actions, and eventually, they wear you down".*

- *"It was a really shitty time. I suffered a breakdown and ended up with PTSD. It was a really difficult time. The LA didn't know what to do".*

- *"There should be support. No one asked about my mental health. Companies should include something on what to do if you experience racism in clients' houses. There should be psycho-social support when people go through racism".*

- *"We had to prove that the incident had happened even though it had been witnessed. It was an incredibly gruelling experience".*

- *"I know of a female Black social worker with [- redacted -] years' experience. She finds it hard to progress and off work for [- redacted -]. They changed her routine without consulting her and put her in a new team with no support. She found it so stressful she moved to another local authority".*

- *"Overwhelmingly – I had to leave the organisation. I had a breakdown; I lost my confidence in my ability to do the job which is only just returning 3 years on. I lost my job security – having worked for the local authority for 15+ years I lost my holiday allowance I was at the top = 33 days a year I'm now on 25, I lost my sickness allocation I was entitled to a year's full pay 6 months half pay – I now have statutory sick pay I'm not entitled to any if I have a long illness … they were glad that I went. They didn't want to address it or accept what was happening. I have never received any acknowledgement even to my breakdown".*

- *"I experience racism as a social worker where I've been told by service users, 'I don't want you'. I remember an elderly woman with dementia referring to me as [- redacted -]. My colleagues were really offended on my behalf and were so concerned for me. You get to a point though, where we brush things off and insist, we're ok to support your colleagues who are affected by what's happening to you".*

- *"The organisation is so limited in terms of their awareness and understanding of racism. They didn't even understand what the fuss is about. They can't make the link that racial abuse causes trauma and is so damaging and wounding. If it had been an issue around a different protected characteristic they would have been more comfortable".*

3.20 Participants who pursued their racism claims described the impact on their well-being. Four said their experience of racism and racist abuse was traumatic, with calls for psycho-social support. They feel there is not necessarily any consideration of how racism impacts on the person making a complaint.

- *"It's harder for people from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, and racism comes with trauma and psychological harm".*

- *"They can't make the link that racial abuse causes trauma and is so damaging and wounding. If it had been an issue".*

- *"Another family from [- redacted -] said they took her child away from the family because of a drawing the child did in school. They made out there was violence in the home and removed the children and put them with a foster family in the valley. They make vague assumptions and don't understand cultural differences. The children were 3 months away from the family which is traumatic".*

- *"There should be support. No one asked about my mental health. Companies should include something on what to do if you experience racism in clients' houses. There should be psycho-social support when people go through racism".*

Are complaints and grievance systems working?

3.21   Organisations have procedures in place for complaints and grievances. However, participants' comments raise questions about how they work and their effectiveness.

3.22   Eleven of the 14 participants had themselves raised complaints of racism, and thus were well-placed to comment on how systems and procedures work in practice. Participants who experienced racism were dissatisfied with how their organisations dealt with their complaints. They felt organisations are failing to recognise and/or acknowledge racism has occurred. Therefore, their policies and systems do not effectively deal with complaints when they arise or provide effective support to the person who makes a complaint.

3.23   Acknowledgement and validation of the racism experienced were recurring asks from the participants who had made complaints. They felt complaints raised by themselves or raised on behalf of other people were handled poorly, claiming the systems were discriminatory or lacking clarity. Additionally, participants felt there was little or no effective reprimand for the perpetrator, with examples of the perpetrator being moved to another department or promoted. Some participants gave examples of being expected to continue working with the perpetrator, with organisations having little or no regard for their well-being in this situation.

- *"No-one asked us how we were or pointed us to a policy or help or support. We were out in the cold, and it's where we've remained ever since".*

- *"This is the first case of its kind for this LA. The perpetrator went into the disciplinary procedure that we felt was very rushed, we didn't understand what was happening. This person remains working for the LA in her post and wasn't suspended until I asked for her to be so due to the evident safeguarding concern. The impact that the perpetrator had had wasn't understood".*

- *"I made a complaint twice. Once as a social worker in relation to experiencing racism myself and it went nowhere. They didn't know the term anti-gypsyism. I was invalidated".*

- *"If there are people in the system that can't be heard, for people who are outside of the system, how are they going to get justice if they complain? They don't know the rules of the game".*

- *"It was handled really badly. The issue of the person was instigated by the service user, who was racist. The investigating officer should have been from a different service department but wasn't. The report was full of untruths. I felt despondent and didn't escalate it. I was off work with anxiety and depression for about six months because of this".*

3.24 Overall, participants felt organisations or companies were ill-equipped to deal with racism and they do not have a clear understanding of racism or microaggressions, with the latter dismissed as misunderstandings or banter.

- *"Management has no idea where we or the people we support are coming from. The diversity should be around language, religion, sexuality, ethnicity, (all protective factors) but that diverse knowledge experience doesn't exist at a senior level…Complaints are heard by a white, British person – how are they going to truly understand the issues being raised by someone from an ethnic minority background?"*

3.25 Participants expressed frustration with the process and the eventual outcome. They were left feeling some issues were unresolved or swept aside. Some participants had sometimes been moved to leave their jobs and were compensated to keep quiet about their experiences. Concerns were expressed that procedures can sometimes serve to safeguard the organisation and, in some cases, the perpetrator.

- *"Another colleague who was dating someone black raised a whistleblowing concern against a colleague who said to them – 'what are you doing dating a [- redacted -]?' which resulted in the complaint not being properly addressed and them receiving a payout and signing an NDA".*

3.26 Participants also felt there was a lack of clarity about the complaints / grievance process. Participants were unsure of the social care complaint process and how to effectively monitor the progress of their complaints.   Dissatisfaction extended to the role of trade unions and how they had represented them during the complaint process. Four participants felt union representatives needed to be more empathetic; they lacked the cultural awareness needed to support them effectively. Two participants claimed their union representatives invalidated their complaints.

- *"I had a grievance meeting with [- redacted -]. The person I had the grievance with said she didn't know about the meeting so didn't turn up. This person is popular with the [redacted -] team and I was worried that there would be a backlash on me. The problem was no one took minutes. This was the first time I'd done anything like this and I didn't know about the procedure."*

- *"I felt the grievance was not worth it. The union representative said he didn't see this email saying I didn't speak English. The meeting with the union was not good and made me feel invalidated. It would be good for union reps to have more knowledge of micro-aggression".*

- *"I would have benefitted from being assigned someone who understood what I was going through. There was no human element – ask me what I need, tell me what's going on. Feel listened to, feel heard. Not having to chase".*

3.27 In discussions with participants, examples were given where individuals were not valued as a social care professional, their voice being unheard or claims of racism by colleagues or the organisation as a whole were invalidated.

- *"If you're in a local authority, that doesn't think anti-gypsyism is a real thing – if they don't know that experience - they've 'invisibilised' you".'*

- *'Validation, recognition and the support available. Managers should support the person making the complaint, say what support is available and for the person receiving the service. The process doesn't give you confidence to proceed with the complaint or that*

the person you raise "there were 3 of us from an ethnic minority background in the organisation, and they didn't value our opinions".

- *"I escalated this to my manager and the person's line manager. I also had a direct conversation with her. She was eventually fired – not necessarily because of me but for other recurring incidents. She made derogatory comments about the Traveller community and felt that they should have double-handed care because they were travellers. It was not received with an appropriate level of concern. There was no validation that those comments were not acceptable. The people who were there were disheartened that my manager appeared not to perceive this behaviour as important. She (my line manager) did eventually take action".*

3.28 One of the participants strongly asserted that the systems in place in their organisation to address racism were effective, open, and transparent. They said staff know what to do and managers know the seriousness of it. An example of a challenge to a possible racial-based decision by an independent care home was also mentioned. The team manager challenged the decision, and the matter was immediately escalated.

3.29 As another example of where process had worked well, a participant described how a staff member had raised a complaint of racism, which was investigated but not proven. In this case, the person who raised the complaint left the organisation.

- *"'The only incident [- redacted -] can bring to mind is that of a newly qualified social worker working in a health-dominated arena, and this person stated that some of the behaviours of her health colleagues had potentially had a racial undertone. It was escalated to [- redacted -] and [- redacted -] took it to HR, where it was discussed if the social worker wanted to raise it formally. The social worker was offered counselling. When [- redacted -] looked in to each of the incidents the challenge of decision-making was appropriate as the social worker wasn't following the correct protocol (she was inexperienced) and it was not related to racism. Two complaints processes were running concurrently (health and social care) and worked well together. The social worker did leave and didn't want to continue with allegations when she left. Just because there are confidence issues with practice raised this doesn't mean it's based on racism".*

Risks of raising complaints or grievances

3.30 Participants believe raising complaints jeopardises their job or causes fear of retribution from their organisation or colleagues. They say the type of overt racism they experienced is typified by stereotyping cultures, such as mimicking accents, behaviours, and critical observations by colleagues and clients on their professional practice or carrying out home care tasks.

- *"On my first day of work, I faced stereotypical comments about [-redacted -] straight away. One of my colleagues started sniffing his nose, and I challenged him about his comments and behaviour. Straight away, people saw me as the troublesome person".*

- *"It can be very demeaning for people when social workers do not understand or respect cultures. When conversations come up about intrinsic things that are present in the system - suddenly I'm seen as difficult or obstructive. The same colleagues will tell me how wonderful I am, will withdraw if I reflect on the we do anything deemed impactful to users".*

- *"When it's just you and you pull people up on things, it's not well accepted and the spotlight is then on you as you become the spokesperson for that issue/cause… But*

you get labelled as a troublemaker because you are defending yourself. All I was doing was spotlighting their behaviour. I became a target. They didn't change their behaviour or take on board anything highlighted in the report. No self-reflection or procedural reflection".

3.31 Three participants described a backlash they had experienced after making a complaint. Two reflected situations within the workforce while the other related to someone who was receiving social care support.

- *"In the [- redacted -] team, the service user racially abused me. He used to say – [- nationality redacted -] this, [- nationality redacted -]that. He had breached his order and when we spoke to him about this he leapt the table to attack me. I was really upset. I said to my manager 'this kid doesn't like [- nationality redacted -]. I put in a grievance about what he said – but managers said this is not racist".*

- *"We spoke to people in training. There must be something we can do. Racism happens all the time. There was a barrage of racial abuse because we raised an issue of training".*

- *"The worst time was during the killing of George Floyd. I was working in [- redacted -] at the time and there were lots of comments around the policeman defending himself. Colleagues sharing racist posts or saying things like 'if you're offended by the name 'n****r' you need to get over yourself… When I made a complaint, the perpetrator was suspended with full pay. My anonymity was not observed, and I was ostracised by the whole team. I raised a whistleblowing concern via [- redacted -] and nothing was done. They didn't know how to handle it".*

Colleagues' support for claims of racism

3.32 Four participants cited support from their line managers and colleagues in pursuing their complaints. Those who stressed the importance of acknowledging and validating their experiences keenly felt the role of colleagues willing to corroborate them.

- *"My team manager has been really supportive and was very attentive when this happened. But couldn't manage it as this person was nasty to her. My team manager is very good.*

- *"It was raised initially with line management who were very supportive, and they then raised with the perpetrators line management, but nothing appeared to happen for some time, just emails back and fore. I had to chase to get updates about how it was being dealt with. In the end we had to contact the Director as nothing was happening, it was protracted".'*

- *"I escalated this to my manager and the person's line manager. I also had a direct conversation with her. She was eventually fired – not necessarily because of me but for other recurring incidents".*

- *"I've made a formal complaint to the manager about something that happened at a service user's house. They withdrew the client's services. When I reported it, they asked my colleagues to corroborate my story. I suppose they didn't believe me. It's only then when they spoke to my colleagues, the complaint was sent to Social Care Wales".'*

How perpetrators of racism are treated

3.33   Dissatisfaction with the social care complaint system was coupled with dissatisfaction with the treatment of perpetrators. Participants who reported racist behaviours of colleagues felt the issue remained unresolved, which left them in a vulnerable or untenable position to the extent they thought they needed to leave the organisation.

- *"It feels all the protection is around the perpetrator, not around me as the person who has experienced this ordeal".*

- *"I can't go to corporate sites as I don't want to see the perpetrator. No-one else in the meeting has been made aware of what's gone on, it's like a dirty secret I have to keep".*

- *"It's incredibly frustrating there was no guidance. The excuse for that was that because the perpetrator was within HR we couldn't use HR for support. However, no other provision was made to support us. We have had to continue doing our day jobs during all this, it is almost impossible".*

- *"I complained about a social worker who was supporting a family who was racist and whose behaviour was impacting her decisions. We know the repercussions of racist social workers. We had the social worker removed from the family with disciplinary action taken and replaced with another one. With an anti-racist social worker, the family have gone from strength to strength. This case was also referred to the regulator based on this intervention".*

- *"This person remains working for the LA in her post and wasn't suspended until I asked for her to be so due to the evident safeguarding concern. The impact that the perpetrator had had wasn't understood".*

To what extent are organisations adopting a zero-tolerance approach?

3.34   Participants had mixed views – positive and negative - on the extent to which organisations are adopting the zero tolerance to racism goal of the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan. They reflected on the way they had been treated during and after making a complain about racism or how the organisation's complaint policies and procedures are reflected by the behaviours of line managers and colleagues.

3.35   One participant said their organisation's response to the racist behaviour of a client was to withdraw their care services, which indicated a zero-tolerance approach. However, ongoing comments by staff on someone's skin colour or heritage were considered "banter", or a misunderstanding, or cultural ignorance.

- *'I see in my [- redacted -] office 'Show Racism the Red Card' signs and posters and I laugh because I hear comments about unaccompanied asylum seeker children that shouldn't come from social workers. I don't' see anything. That's why when the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan came – I said, yes!"*

- *'In my experience, I haven't had zero tolerance in actions. I don't know of experiences from other ethnic minority backgrounds. If there was a zero tolerance in my case it would have been better handled. It would look like – acknowledgement of my experience and how I felt. Saying to this person this was felt in this way".*

3.36   Another participant said they had no doubt their authority has a zero-tolerance approach. they said everyone knows it is zero-tolerance, and it is very clear.

3.37   A zero-tolerance approach is recognised as being challenging. To achieve it, organisations need to have in place mechanisms to actively challenge racism. Underpinning this is the need for clear definitions of racism and racist behaviours so no-one can claim ignorance that their actions, behaviours or comments were racist. This should be accompanied by all staff understanding how racism impacts on the individuals who experience it.

- *"It's hard to have zero tolerance. We should look why the extent of the racism continues. We all aspire to have a zero-tolerance approach but we need to have mechanisms to challenge. There must be support for the individual or group who has faced racism. There must be someone well-trained and in place to document it and advocate for them".*

- *"The organisation needs to think about what zero-tolerance means, as my experience is that the organisation is incredibly tolerant of racism. There's a long way to go".*

- *"Zero-tolerance would be for anyone in the organisation to say that it's not ok. To call it out. That would be the core thing. It gets more complicated when HR gets involved as they don't know about racism. It starts from the top down. All the senior managers need to understand the various manifestations of racism and for them to say this is not what we want in our organisation".*

3.38   Some of the participants acknowledged progress in addressing racism. There is more awareness but there also needs to be more openness to talk about it.

- *'There has been a shift and openness and celebration of having a diverse workforce. I feel confident telling people about my heritage, which has improved in the last 10 years. Zero tolerance should be if you hear a colleague saying racist things then call it out. I've not experienced any racist abuse in 20 years. We know about sexual abuse but not racism".*

- *"Zero-tolerance means I don't see, feel, taste racism in the workplace and that staff feel confident to report racism…Organisations would ensure anti-racism is embedded and spoken openly about racism where uncomfortable conversations would happen".*

Individuals' efforts to drive anti-racist practice

3.39   Some of the participants mentioned action and developments they had initiated, and which were driven by them. This included the development of a cultural competency framework for social care staff, action to encourage more people from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities into higher education, and anti-racism activities with students so they can consider needs from cultural or religious perspectives.

3.40   Four participants are developing measures to address specific knowledge deficits in their communities around the social care complaint system or encourage them into the sector. It is challenging however, as illustrated by the comment of one participant.

- *"In my previous employment in a secure children's home, we were looking at raising complaints or compliments, and I was about to set up a multi-disciplinary setting for young people to have a voice – we managed to have someone from each of the protected factors on the group. This meant we were going to get a diverse input when we were addressing/implementing change. It would mirror diverse perspectives and views. During this process I uncovered that the organisations cultural policy hadn't been reviewed for 5 years. The group never got off the ground after that".*

What more needs to be done?

3.41 Participants offered suggestions for strengthening or creating measures for organisations and staff to understand racism better, and improvements to complaints systems. The suggestions included:

- Interactive, mandatory, anti-racism and cultural awareness training.
- Specific training on antisemitism and anti-gypsyism.
- An understanding of the impact of racism as a traumatic experience.
- More racially diverse social care management teams.
- The recruitment process, including onboarding, should include definitions of racism and microaggressions.
- The complaints process to be more humanistic in approach and the fear of making a complaint needs to be removed.
- Better awareness of the complaints system and communications on how someone can make a complaint.
- Faith-based counselling offered as an enhancement to enhance existing well-being services

3.42 Clear guidance on the social care complaints and grievance system and definitions of racism or racist behaviours were notable asks. One participant suggested having a specific individual or organisational "champion" who could help people through the complaints process.

- *"It's incredibly frustrating there was no guidance. The excuse for that was that because the perpetrator was within HR we couldn't use HR for support. However, no other provision was made to support us".*

- *"Adequate support during the complaint / grievance process. Clear guidance for everyone that is or might be involved e.g. line managers. Guidance for managers around what racism is and how serious it is".*

- *"There needs to be appointed a Champion person, if people feel any racial abuse of harassment, there should be guidance to help people make a complaint – For example Race Equality First, the Council and Community Organisation. Where would people go? We need to signpost".*

3.43 Participants felt action to drive the changes described above should involve people with lived experience.

- *'I still feel there is unconscious bias which isn't being addressed. This has become deep routed as a result this needs to become a mandatory training course so that it remains at the forefront of people's minds. And an interactive course so that people are put into situations where they actively have to say what would they do and then this can be picked apart so people can see how their deep routed beliefs are impacting on their decision making and their daily actions.'*

- *'There needs to be a clear anti-racism policy. Not EDI where everything is amalgamated into one. Where the policy grades the severity of the complaints and where people understand the severity of their actions.'*

- *'Whole cultures need to change before the system has any effectiveness. We have the ARWAP but they're not speaking about anti-gypsyism. This needs to be a specialised approach - spell -it out loud and clear. There is no definition of anti-gypsyism'*

- *'If people reading the complaints are unconsciously biased then there needs to be education about the systemic forces that impact their decisions. Making complaints and understanding the impact of the person with lived experience is needed. For example, if I were a white person they would have a different experience.'*

- *When systems become under pressure that's when it becomes overt. It can't be invisible anymore. The structures support it to be invisible. The lived experience is relevant and feeds the system. We must be aware of their structural disadvantage or potential for it. It feeds into healthcare particularly and feeds into the type of service you get.'*

- *Practitioners should understand anti-racism and do some reflective piece in terms of what they should do if it happens again. If it is happening to colleagues, it's definitely happening to service users.*

- *The top tier of management needs to reflect society – where is the cultural difference in management? This the same of the next tier down. How are we ever going to understand diversity if there isn't any in the management structure.*

3.44   On a positive note, one participant commented on their current manager.

- *"My current manager has spoken openly and clearly about ensuring the staff reflect the community we care for. That can be seen in recent people being employed. He's talking about it and actioning it".*

3.45   Some participants mentioned the use of regulatory levers to address racism and felt that, in some cases, organisations were sidestepping their responsibilities. Some felt local authorities in particularly were failing in their statutory duties, with 2 participants calling for the use of sanctions on perpetrators of racism to bring about change. Four participants said they trust the Anti-racism Wales Action Plan would effectively address racism.

- *"Until we have sanctions in place on those local authorities who fail in their statutory duties, to provide assessed site provisions and create transit provision, I won't have confidence. We can't have statutory duties breached where the Welsh Government don't do anything to the local authorities".*

- *"We take things to the Welsh Government but nothing changes. That's why with the AWRAP something will change. You go to the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) meetings and to the Equalities meetings but there was no Black organisations being represented".*

- *"'There should be positive outcomes for social work practitioners and made part of our competencies as well as legislation. Practitioners should understand anti-racism and do some reflective piece in terms of what they should do if it happens again. If it is happening to colleagues, it's definitely happening to service users. It would be in conjunction with Social Care Wales (SCW) so they know that this is regulated and reviewed with the SCW systems".*

- *"The National Occupational Standards talks about discrimination but always focuses on gender, disability, LGBTQI+ and racism tends to be pushed back. The ball was rolling with anti-racism and the gender agenda came through but not talked of in terms of the Black female experience".*

3.46   Some participants gave examples of what they considered to be good practice or positive actions that have been developed or initiated by the organisation or colleagues or created

and driven by themselves and then adopted by the organisation. Six of the 14 participants felt their employers were not demonstrating good practice or were not aware of any good practice taking place.

3.47   Actions considered to be positive included:

- Policy changes.
- Recruitment campaigns to increase the racial diversity of social care teams.
- Support given to participants following their complaints of racism.
- Diversity and anti-racism training which was proactive and emphasised the need to call out racism and challenge.

3.48   In commenting on good practice within their organisation, one participant gave an example of where action has taken place because of a complaint.

- *"There isn't anything. But as a consequence of the complaint CEO is changing their objectives, basically the organisation is now doing things they should have been doing in the first place…They are planning to recruit a full-time EDI officer, but there also needs to be a separate project on anti-racism as EDI includes all protected characteristics and there has been no work done in the anti-racist arena".*

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4. Employee Insight Group

4.1 The role of the Employee Insight Group was described at the start of this report (paragraph 1.13 refers). Members participated in round table discussions, which captured their lived experiences. This included discussion guided by the broad themes which emerged from the in-depth 1:1 conversations. Discussions also provided helpful suggestions on what more needs to be done to tackle racism. The following is a summary of individuals' comments.

Microaggressions

4.2 Microaggressions are common. Some people disguise microaggression by using nice words so they can plead ignorance. Comments are now becoming less overt and more subtle but are still meant negatively. They are unwanted behaviours which would not necessarily happen to a person without a protected characteristic. They are often backhanded compliments. Microaggressions can be very subtle, insidious and difficult to prove.

4.3 The impact of recurring microaggressions featured prominently in discussions, leading some participants to consider that racism, particularly microaggressions, leads to trauma. One member of the group called for trauma to be defined as psychological injury. It is not currently recognised as such.

- *"Thinking of the intentions – they all mount up. The impact is inter-generational trauma, and this has a physical expression, e.g. higher blood pressure, there is an impact of micro-aggression".*

4.4 Some professional people who understand the system regularly make racist comments. These are microaggression, almost like gaslighting and instead of supporting the people who make the complaints they challenge whether it is really racism and are dismissive. Some people describe it as banter or a joke e.g. a person's accent, nationality, stereotyping, or "people in your country". They are comments which can make someone from an ethnic minority background feel uncomfortable. They are the kind of behaviours that some people don't think are racist which is why there needs to be greater awareness of how damaging these comments can be. There can be an attitude of "If I didn't mean what I said, I can't be reported for it".

4.5 The link between intention and offence needs to be broken. People need to call it out. People should not simply be expected to develop a thicker skin.

Under-reporting of racist behaviours and comments

4.6 There are concerns about the under-reporting of racism by staff. There are several reasons for this. Not all staff know how to complain, particularly the many care workers from overseas who may not fully understand policies and procedures for dealing with racism and how they can report and talk about their experience. Some may also be scared to complain in case their visas are not renewed

4.7 Some carers might not complain about racist comments made by clients because they fear if they do they will lose income. There have been incidences where someone has complained but these complaints had been used to make the person who was complaining look inadequate and unable to carry out their role e.g. a domiciliary care worker was made to feel they did not know how to lift and carry correctly which is why the client said what they did.

4.8   Some complaints of racism might be dismissed e.g. staff are told that it cannot be racism as there is an "Equality Policy" in place, and because organisations worry about their reputation, they might dissuade or divert people away from making a complaint

4.9   Systems should be more encouraging for someone making a complaint about racism and support should be available for them to help them through the process. If the person receiving the complaint does not see the complaint through the eye of the person making it and does not react sensitively, it can retraumatise the person making the complaint. This means they are less likely to complain in future if another incident occurs. Individuals must often build themselves up to have the confidence to make a complaint and if they are made to feel they are in the wrong for raising the matter, it impacts greatly on them. Sometimes, a victim can feel like it is their fault, feeling that leaving their post might be the only solution to the problem. There is a need to move away from the scenario that someone has to change their career or leave the organisation just because they have complained. When a Black person who has complained leaves a post, this is sometimes seen as a solution, but the problem still exists internally.

Dealing with racism

4.10   Action to address racism is taking place in some local authorities. Some provide excellent courses and training to help identify racism. There are examples of good tools e.g. the all-Wales Induction Framework for Social Care is a good, comprehensive, model. That said, there is a view that progress has been very slow. More needs to be done. Who is doing well and where are the failings? Progress has been very slow. Be very clear about concrete actions that need to be taken, not just talking about the problems. Serious action is needed, not just "tweaking" and involving people from minority ethnic backgrounds in the changes is imperative.

- *"There have been many projects in my workplace to address racism but even now if you asked the question 'how do you report racism?' there would be many different answers".*

4.11   It is surprising when organisations in Health or Social Care still do not understand what racism is. There is an example of best practice from the 1990s when the first person from an ethnic minority background was appointed. All managers were trained to understand about racism and to spot when this happened and take action.

4.12   Regulatory bodies could do more. They are leaders and should lead by example, demonstrating they are serious about being anti-racist'. One participant questions the level of understanding of being anti-racist in many regulatory bodies.

4.13   Participants felt there is a need to look at the causes and reasons why current systems do not work for people of colour. There is a view that racism and discrimination is still not taken seriously. It is so engrained in society it has become the norm.

4.14   The level of understanding of what discrimination means for people of colour was also questioned. There is a feeling the systems work if a complaint is made against a person of colour because the complaint is followed through, However, it does not necessarily happen the other way around. People need to be assured that serious action will take place if racism is reported. The points made above in relation to the under-reporting of racism are particularly relevant. There is a view that perpetrators of racist incidents are often moved aside or promoted and that White people in power protect one another.

4.15 It should be accepted racism is everyone's problem. Everyone needs to take responsibility for anti- racism, in a similar way as safeguarding. People must make it their business and challenge racist behaviour and comments. There needs to be training and support so that everyone takes responsibility. Also, more thought is needed about recognising biases. It is not just about calling people out when they are racist but understanding that everyone has biases.

4.16 One participant suggested complaints should be dealt with by an independent body, not someone in an organisation who is thinking about the organisation's reputation. If it cannot be independent body, there must be a trusted individual within the organisation who supports the complainant, someone who understands the issues and is aware of the damage microaggression can do.

4.17 Other suggestions made by participants in the Group were:

- Produce clear, easy-to-read complaints policies, readily available for all employees, especially those from ethnic minority backgrounds.

- Establish an independent body or trusted individual from within the organisation identified who will support those making a complaint. This person must understand the issues and be fully aware of micro-aggressive behaviours

- Make trauma-informed training available and delivered by a trusted individual/provider

- Deliver leadership/ management training to support those who complain

- Encouragement to all staff to call out racisms and support for those who make complaints or raise grievances.

- Clarification on the language/terminology use, e.g. microaggression

- Accountability for actions (perpetrators seen to be challenged) -If no action taken, need to understand why not.

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5. Lived experience: evidence from the online survey

5.1 A completely anonymous online survey was developed to encourage responses and to assure respondents it was a safe way for them to speak freely and honestly. A small amount of information on respondents was collected to describe the make-up of the sample. This information does not identify individuals. A copy of the survey is provided in Appendix 4.

5.2 The online survey was launched on 12 December 2023 and closed on 19 January 2024. It attracted 500 responses, of which 2 used the Welsh language version.
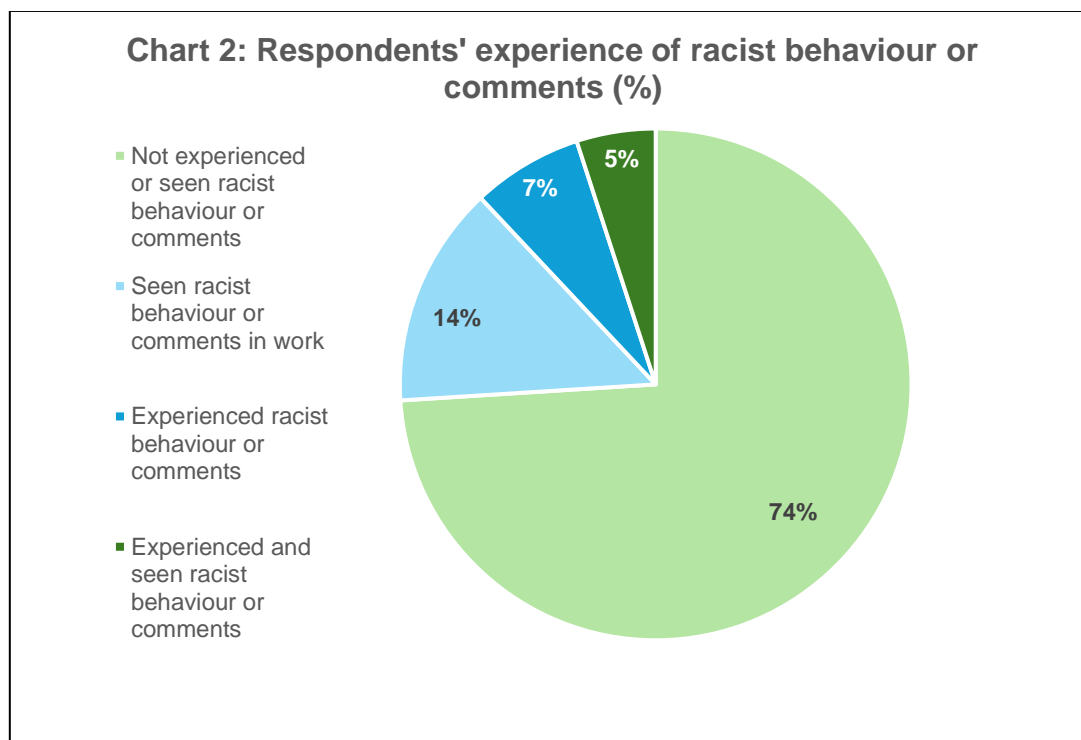
Survey response

5.3 Nine out of 10 respondents (90%) (n=449) work in social care. Just under one in 10 respondents (9%) (n=45) work for organisations that work with social care departments e.g. the NHS. Of the remaining respondents, 3 used to work in social care or in an organisation which worked with social care and 3 respondents worked in another local authority department e.g. housing and education.

5.4 Of those currently working in social care who stated their current employer, three out of four (78%) are employed by a local authority.

Chart 1: Respondents currently working in social care, by employer (number)
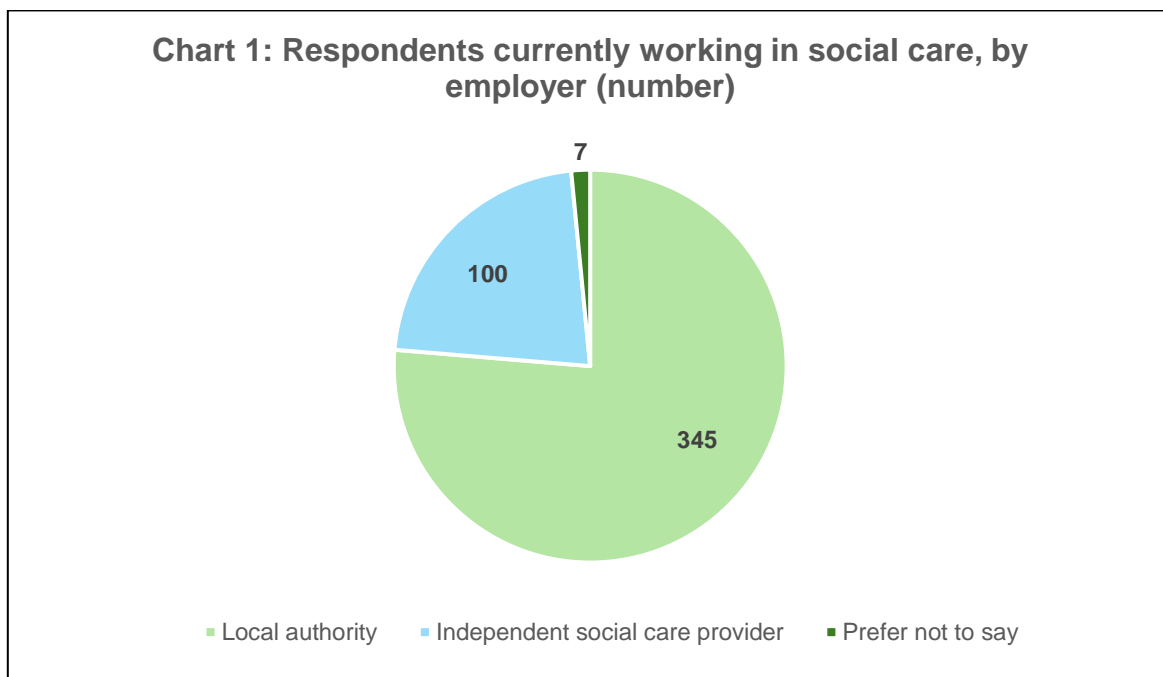
ADSS Cymru, 2024

5.5 The survey asked respondents about racist behaviour and comments. Approximately 1 in 4 respondents (26%) had experienced racist behaviour in work or seen or heard colleagues subjected to racist comments. 74% of respondents (n=368) had not experienced racists behaviour or seen or heard racist comments.

Chart 2: Respondents' experience of racist behaviour or comments (%)

- Not experienced or seen racist behaviour or comments
- Seen racist behaviour or comments in work
- Experienced racist behaviour or comments
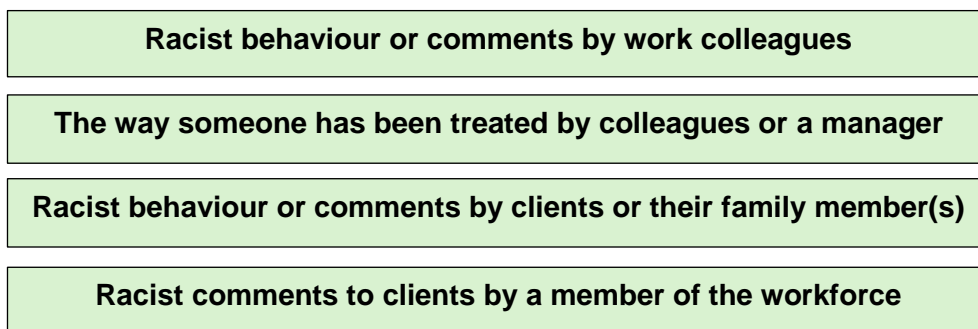- Experienced and seen racist behaviour or comments

74%
14%
7%
5%

ADSS Cymru, 2024

5.6 Of 132 people who had experienced or heard racist comments, 37 experienced it themselves; 71 had seen or heard colleagues subjected to racist behaviours or comments, and 24 had experienced both. All commented on their experiences.

5.7 The aim of the survey was to attract as much feedback as possible and thus the sample was self-selecting. This means the sample is not statistically representative of the whole workforce and therefore caution is required e.g. the precise percentages of the workforce who have experienced or seen racism cannot be applied to the whole workforce. However, it is a relatively large sample for a project of this type (n=500) and therefore lessons can be learned from their lived experience. The fact 368 members of the workforce had not experienced or observed racism, but still responded to the survey reflects the importance of the subject to the workforce, irrespective of ethnicity. It is a robust body of evidence on the nature of racism and what needs to be done to end it.

Types of racist behaviour

5.8 Respondents' experience of racist behaviours or comments fell into two broad categories. First, racism or racist comments by someone within the workforce e.g. another member of a team or department. Second, racism or racist comments by a client of the social care provider or a member of the client's family. While the project was commissioned to examine racism in work within the social care workforce, this has been interpreted, and quite reasonably interpreted, as racism by work colleagues and racism by clients of social care. Both are being experienced by members of the workforce. Both are of concern, and both are seen as being important to address.

5.9 Action to tackle racism and racist comments by people who use public services and in some cases by their family members does not figure prominently in the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan. The feedback from the social care workforce via this survey is a clear statement that this must be addressed in parallel with efforts to stamp out racism and racist comments by fellow workers within social care organisations.

5.10 The analysis on the following pages is based on the 132 respondents who reported lived experience of racist behaviour themselves or who observed colleagues who were subject to racist behaviour or comments. The comments of other respondents, including feedback on developments and good practice, are featured later in the report. The survey response is rich source of information on, and a powerful insight into, the nature and type of racist behaviours and circumstances in which they occur.

5.11 The racist behaviours or comments reported can be grouped under four themes:

Diagram 1: Broad themes of racist behaviours and comments in social care

Racist behaviour or comments by work colleagues

The way someone has been treated by colleagues or a manager

Racist behaviour or comments by clients or their family member(s)

Racist comments to clients by a member of the workforce

Source: ADSS Cymru Online Survey 2024

5.12 The following pages expand on each of the above, with examples of quotes. Inevitably, it is not possible to reproduce every quote. The samples selected illustrate well the nature of racist behaviours and comments. Some quotes are specific and detailed while others are broader in their descriptions. In some cases, insulting words have been omitted or redacted and where appropriate, details to maintain anonymity or to avoid perpetuating stereotyping e.g. comments about certain nationalities.

Racism within organisations

5.13 This theme has several dimensions, which reflect the different ways in which racism manifests itself within the working environment.

5.14 Racist comments reported include comments on **someone's appearance**, including **colour of skin,** and **hate speech** about a specific nationality or nationalities. The latter includes **cultural stereotyping** and the **language – terminology and words** - used. It also includes **rudeness** about other cultures and beliefs.

5.15 Some of the more common comments referred to staff using the "N" word, a word used to describe traveller communities,", or stereotypical abbreviated references to businesses owned or run by someone from an ethic minority background e.g. the [-*nationality-]* takeaway and "the [-*nationality-]* corner shop". In NHS settings, mention was made of specific words used when referring to Asian doctors.

5.16 Examples of individual comments from lived experience are:

- *"You black [-redacted-], go back to where you come from".*

- *"Her niece who worked for us, extremely racist, called one of the carers a [-insulting/derogatory term-]".*

- *"I have been in a meeting where a person said that they "hated the [- nationality -]. I should know I lived there". I put in a complaint. On hearing that my ethnicity was [-ethnicity-], I was told "I didn't look it".*

- *"One incident was a member of Agency staff say to other staff she won't eat from an Indian as they wash their bottoms with their hands. Saying [-nationality-] are dirty".*

- *"Eraser of culture and ethnicity i.e. comments such as you're not this you're that, you can't believe this because you are from there... people from your country all believe or act like this etc".*

- *"I have been subject to racist comments making judgement on my character based on the country I am from".*

- *"I've heard detrimental comments about Refugees and asylum seekers. Or 'I'm not just going to let them live near me and my children".*

- *"A colleague in a children's residential setting (that I did not work in) told me another colleague was speaking to her about another person they worked with. The other lady was of [-nationality-] descent. The colleague was unhappy about how the lady worked and referred to her as "the [-insulting words-]". My friend/colleague was angry and upset by this and asked for my advice. I advised she report the colleague to her manager".*

- *"I have witnessed discriminatory language being used about two people, in their presence. This was not in any of my work or study settings but was in a public place at a seasonal event in [- location redacted -]. Not only was the language discriminatory and distressing to the individuals to whom it was aimed, it was inaccurate i.e. not based on fact, rather media speculation".*

5.17 In some cases, comments are **insulting, mocking** or **derogatory** e.g. staff copying someone's accent in a derogatory way.

- *"I have experienced ppl speaking in a degrading manner using an exaggerated Indian accent when copying me, even though I am born and bred in the uk and have no such accent".*

- *"Mostly colleagues and relatives talk rudely about overseas staff, mocking about their culture, food etc".*

- *"Mimicking the accent of a person from a different cultural then themselves to talk down the person".*

- *"A colleague mimicked a foreign accent when telling a story".*

- *"By staff: quoting of or use of racial slurs, mimicking of accents, blatant Islamophobia, Islamophobic discussion around terrorism and CSE, use of derogatory terminology for people from different ethnicities, mocking use of racial stereotypes, both antisemitism and Islamophobia in discussions around Israel / Palestine".*

- *"People often talk and raise issues on behaviour i.e. can so (and) so actually do the job, smelly food. There are things said about you, not directly to you, based on assumption. Often a feeling of isolation rather than oneness in workplace or team".*

5.18 Some comments or forms of comment appear to show a **lack of understanding or acceptance** (of other cultures and nationalities) or are framed by perpetrators as **"a joke"**, often as an attempt to deny racism or a racist attitude and/or to deflect criticism.

- *"Comments made about certain specific racist terms not being so bad".*

- *"Other staff making racist slurs against people with different cultural and ethnic backgrounds to their own and them thinking it was ok to do so. Complete lack of understanding of peoples backgrounds and the value everyone brings".*

- *"A member of staff in my service asked a [-religion-] colleague whether the area of a [redacted] where worshippers leave their shoes smells. She was not intending to be offensive, and absolutely would not have seen herself as racist however this comment was clearly discriminatory and had potential (and did) offend the colleague who was asked".*

- *"During my time with a previous team, some co-workers expressed quite adamantly that [-racist term-] are not racist and that minstrels were just entertainment".*

- *"Reluctance of staff to work with certain people because of their ethnicity".*

- *"If a person is not of British origin I heard quite often comments like the language is the barrier and they struggle to explain where the English language skills of people in question were very good".*

- *I have highlighted ……to colleagues/supervisors/managers; and they listen and that's it. I do advise majority of people who make such comments that these are not appropriate - the majority then laugh. It is not taken seriously.*

5.19 While there is no excuse for the behaviours described above, some respondents said they believe at the root of some comments is a **lack of understanding**, particularly of cultural values and beliefs, or an **insensitivity** to matters of ethnicity which can affect or impact colleagues and which can **cause offence**. In some cases, people are **dismissive** of others' cultures and beliefs and the fact their comments or behaviour is challenged.

- *"I hear comments regarding race said in front of myself without people realising my husband is black and my children are mixed race".*

- *"Competitions where people bring in baby pictures and you guess who they are...we had 3 staff at the time who were black - no consideration that this excludes people".*

- *"Some level of ignorance about race ethnicity ranging from assumptions about our population to more recent concerns about attitudes to allegations of racism and how HR respond".*

- *"Working with a gentleman of [-nationality-] who said it was against his religion to clean up faeces leaving all this task to white carers."*

- *"I interviewed a lady from [-nationality-] once, she stated she must love the people she cares for even white people. which I found interesting had this been the other way around would have been racist."*

- *"Colleagues can be dismissive of discussion around issues affecting black colleagues out of fear of saying the wrong thing. This means that when the member is experiencing racism inside the workplace or within their working duties they are unsupported".*

5.20 **Perceptions** about immigration appear to be behind a small number of the comments overheard in work:

- *"At [- office location redacted -], overheard other staff saying "these foreign people are taking our jobs and the government needs to stop them coming in".*

- *"One comment referred to minority ethnic people having priority over British applicants to jobs".*

- *"Comments re too many immigrants and asylum seekers".*

- *"I overheard a member of staff referring to overseas workers using language which could be considered offensive".*

- *"Racist comments towards recruiting overseas workers".*

5.21   Examples of other **racist behaviour** experienced or observed included:

- *"I have personally experienced casual racism throughout my [- redacted -] local authority career and also witnessed the use of inappropriate language and cultural stereotyping within the workplace. I have also recently experienced an incident of direct racial harassment".*

- *"She also made reference to [-nationality-] people smelling and would spray fresh air spray around them".*

- *"I have seen racist behaviours from a [- job title redacted -] in the way he described the scheme manager, referring to him as the black man and making a gesture around his face. I've also heard a member of staff using racist language towards and about our manager'.*

- *"I witnessed racist comments and behaviour towards a previous male colleague, his name was made fun of, there were jokes that he 'stank' and at one point he was sprayed with air freshener. "I was told that I was not Welsh because I was born in [-nationality-] even though I have lived in this country since I was 9".*

- *"A white lady saying she doesn't want to be on shift with the blacks".*

5.22   Examples of racist behaviours and comments include those of peer work colleagues but also **managers and, in some cases, senior managers**. They reflect several of the types of the comments reported above.

- *"A comment was made in a team building day by senior manager who said all [-nationality redacted -] taxi drivers are rapists."*

- *"I am not recruiting [- nationality redacted -], they are all liars, I want a flow chart of their DNA on my wall"*

- *"A manager who expressed indirect racist views about [– nationality and nationality-] people",*

- *"One particular incidence of racist harassment by a member of senior management resulting in a finding of gross misconduct. The perpetrator remains in work in a position of seniority and power".*

5.23   Another common theme is evident in respondents' comments. Over and above direct behaviours and comments in work, some respondents gave examples of behaviours involving the spreading of **racist and hate messages and information**. This includes colleagues' comments online and on social media.

- *"I experienced close hand a member of staff spreading racist hate online".*

- *A member of staff shared an image on the staff chat room at the time of [- details redacted -]. The image was a [- details redacted -]".*

- *"A colleague working on [- redacted -] posted a photo of a [-racist image-] asking "are we allowed in".*

- *"As a manager, two instances of racism spring to mind from hearings that I have chaired. One was a meme being sent around a staff group. It was of a [-racist image-] in the place of [- details redacted -] child. I dismissed the employee".*

- *"I have also observed conversations around people of colour which have had racist undertones such as discussions around the skin colour of [-nationality-]. I have also witnessed social media posts from staff members which would be viewed as racist, despite all staff openly saying, "I am not racist".*

5.24 Several respondents said they had not experienced or observed racism in their organisation or had experienced racism or observed it very occasionally as isolated incidents. Their comments referred to working in a multi-racial environment where all staff are welcomed and respected. Some also went on the say that their organisation's culture and/or their manager's approach means racism is not tolerated and if it occurred, action would be taken.

5.25 One respondent said although they have not been targeted by racist comment or behaviour but as an ethnic minority person, they always expect it and that sadly, they almost accept there are some people will say or do harmful things towards them. They criticised what they say is the UK Government's hostile environment towards immigrants because it does not improve the behaviour of some people and, even worse, can encourage racist behaviour. They feel the Welsh Government has better ways to deal with social issues, and they are grateful for the opportunity provided by the survey as part of the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan.

5.26 Eleven respondents referred specifically to experiences about **Wales/Welsh and England/English**. Experiences reported concerned negative comments about being English or being derogatory towards English clients, 'anti-English" remarks at times of rugby matches, and non-Welsh speakers feeling excluded. One comment referred to clients of social care and the fact [in the respondent's organisation] there is not always recognition with partner organisations how important the Welsh language can be, especially at times of vulnerability. Another felt training they had attended was inappropriate as it did not discuss the importance of bilingualism but highlighted supposed "English" wrongs that had happened historically, vilifying English people.

5.27 More specific comments about respondents' experiences are:

- *"Horrible things said to me about being English e.g. go back home - we don't want you here, you're taking jobs from locals, 'posh, entitled English' (btw I've lived in Wales since [year!])"*

- *"I have been told that I am "not Welsh" and "shouldn't be speaking Welsh" because I have English parents. I was on a course where I discussed being abused by Welsh people for being English and the person running the course laughed and thought it was funny. I was told on the same course that the fact I had learnt Welsh was not good enough and that Welsh culture was being diluted because of people like myself. If the same person had said that English culture was being diluted by immigrants who didn't take on board English culture she would have been labelled as an extremist. Anti-*

English sentiment is rife amongst some Welsh people and is deemed acceptable by them".

- *"The person was referencing to the fact I was Welsh and said, "I know your education system is terrible and you're all twp (meaning stupid) from over there, but you need to look this again". They were referring to a piece of work I had completed"*.

- *"Comments from non-Welsh speaking staff about the use of the Welsh language in the office, querying why posts are Welsh essential. I have not heard otherwise any racist comments made in relation to race / ethnicity"*.

- *"I have had colleagues and services users/families/Next of kin/etc make negative and/or inappropriate comments about my name. i.e. whether they can call me by another name, what is its origin and provide evidence of this, not believing me and advising that I am another nationality, making comments about the way it sounds/spelling, then acting out these sounds i.e. roaring like a lion, spitting on floor, etc"*.

- *"When speaking Welsh (second language) being ridiculed by first Welsh language speakers for wrong pronunciation of a Welsh word. Same people making me say this word in meetings to ridicule me in front of colleagues"*.

5.28   Positive views were also expressed. For example, one person said they liked the interaction in work between both Welsh and English-speaking people, noting instances where Welsh people ask English speakers if they are happy for them to continue their current conversation in Welsh or would they rather them speak in English out of respect.

Treatment by colleagues and/or manager

5.29   Over and above racist behaviours and comments, approximately 20 respondents said they have experienced situations where they have not been treated well by colleagues or a manager or treated differently to their colleagues, or observed others being subject to similar treatment. Comments related to a range of nationalities and ethnic minority groups including gypsy and traveller communities. Several respondents reported microaggressions. Examples of such lived experiences are:

- *"As a [-nationality-], I was not treated well by a previous manager. The way she spoke to me was not ok she was mean and would treat me different to others. Other staff complained to her and another manager about this and she eventually apologised saying she thought I was a racist because I'm a [-nationality-].*

- *"I have experienced being ignored when making suggestions, only for the same thing to be said later in the meeting by a white person, and then it's credited as their idea. I have led a big piece of project work and put a lot of time into it, which has subsequently been credited to a white male colleague, who took the work to a meeting and presented it as his own"*.

- *"I spoke with my manager to ask about reducing my working hours to enable me to have Fridays off for religious purposes and was told this was not possible but that I could go part-time if I chose to. I am aware of other employees who have reduced their working hours by one day a week for family commitments"*.

- *"I have observed a black social worker being discriminated against in the workplace by colleagues. Microaggressions such as leaving the individual out of conversations or not including them day to day"*.

- *"We have had some workers join us from overseas, and I have observed teams outside of our own treat those members of staff differently to those who have been recruited in the UK".*

- *"I have also noticed that people from outside of Wales or UK will be offered lower-level roles in compare to the British citizens, even though they have better qualifications and experiences".*

- *"I have been invisibilised due to my ethnicity".*

- *"In the first example I was moved from the team, I did not pursue the complaint at the time as I did not feel ready to do this. In the second example I talked it through with my manager and the individual concerned."*

- *"A manager who expressed indirect racist views about [-nationality-] people refused to trust me with budgets for a reason she wouldn't specify (I have a great deal of competence with budgets and currently manage several large ones). She also treated me with suspicion and made it clear that she didn't trust [-nationality-] people".*

- *"One member of the staff was picking up on me and was nasty towards me".*

- *"Staff being allocated cases based on 'similar cultures' when it was entirely different religion".*

- *"Sexualising of black male colleague by older white female colleagues".*

- *"The use of a term to describe the traveller community by a senior officer."*

- *"A junior staff member made comments about another staff member being like a dirty stinking [- ethnic minority group -] when leaving a dirty cup on her desk. This witnessed by a different Senior manager stood with another colleague laughing along at the junior colleague's comments".*

5.30   The individual nature of respondents' lived experiences highlights the different ways in which racist behaviours and comments manifest themselves within the workforce. One respondent said a lot of racist behaviour is covert and subtle and difficult to pinpoint as such. For them as a black person, it is about perceptions and how one is made to feel as opposed to people being overtly racist. Examples of how this affected them include excluded from social events or their position not being recognised and looking elsewhere or to other managers for responses.

5.31   Some respondents spoke of the impact of racism:

- *"The casual racism I witness both in the office by colleagues and in the community from the individuals we support is an almost daily occurrence. There is no specific training available in relation to racism or anti-racism and there is a culture of turning a blind eye and fear of discussing racism within the authority which exists from the top levels of management."*

- *"The drip, drip effect of racism can be traumatic and shouldn't be underestimated in terms of impact upon mental health. Living with racism becomes part of your life and thus subtle forms can almost be dismissed or become the norm."*

- *"I am not visually from a different ethic group, but these comments were very hurtful and upsetting and used repeatedly for a long period in my workplace and although they*

happened years ago, I can still feel the impact of them now and still don't openly mention that I am English even though I have lived in Wales for most of my adult life."

- *"It isn't what people say but often what people do that makes you feel unwanted, unappreciated, and often undermined. Racism is often hidden and thereby difficult to proof or dis-proof. In majority of cases I would hope it is unintentional and so awareness and education rather than attack is often needed. However, I cannot also deny that there is still intentional racism, sadly."*

5.32   Another respondent said social care is not completely racist, but they think there is a great deal of structural racism which is frequently denied by white colleagues. They explained that despite their qualifications, competence, and experience, they have had to work incredibly hard to progress their career but hear some of their white, male, colleagues say "…it just kind of fell into their laps". They also said they have heard both sides of that story often from other brown and black women, and other white men, and therefore feel it cannot be a coincidence. They conclude it is the unspoken manifestation of pervasive structural racism and sexism in social care.

5.33   One respondent said they had encountered more racism in the third sector than in local authority social care and another, said they have never seen anything in social care like the "casual" racism in another "old school" local authority department where it was almost accepted as the norm, and which became worse after Brexit.

5.34   A respondent who worked for the NHS but in a role working with social care said:

- "This happens in NHS settings and happens so frequently I would be reporting almost every week. Also, as it's in mental health settings and with older people we generally give people the benefit of the doubt that they are only being racist because of their mental health, although these comments probably reflect their true beliefs."

5.35   On the theme of career progression, a respondent felt they experienced victimisation within their workplace and as a result was stopped from being able to progress in their role.

Racist behaviour and comments by clients or family members

5.36   The study was commissioned to examine racism in work within the workforce. However, more than 50 respondents reported racist behaviour or comments by clients of social care and/or members of their families. Over and above racism within the workforce, this is also clearly of concern and impacted the individuals who experienced it. The findings about this client dimension are also reported. Racist behaviours and comments straddle the two main domains of social care - the people who deliver social care and those who receive it.

5.37   The broad nature of racist behaviours and comments by clients and/or their families are broadly the same as those reported in paragraphs 2.15. 2.18 and 2.19. They include:

- **Racist comments** including hate speech, slurs, name calling, comments on colour of skin, and language, including offensive language and the use of racists words.

- **Refusal to accept certain carers** because of race and/or skin colour.

- **Cultural stereotyping** e.g. comments that certain people are lazy.

- A **lack of understanding** e.g. why people of different nationalities are recruited.

- **Racist behaviour** influenced by racist attitudes.

- **Lack of sensitivity** to racism and ethnic minority communities, including subtle forms of racism e.g. where a person's skin colour is subconsciously seen as the first and most identifiable trait.

5.38 Several examples referred to clients citing **difficulties in understanding accents**.

- *"I have worked with one resident who refuses to work with support workers from abroad, who are generally of African origin. One resident is reluctant to work with staff from foreign countries, they often say its down to not being able to understand there accent."*

- *"When people don't understand my accent, it's best to ask again for me to repeat what I've said and if it doesn't work be patient and ask what I meant - don't assume nor show impatience."*

5.39 A common theme was racist comments from older people receiving care or people with dementia. Another was clients or their family members saying they did not want care and support from certain carers because of their race or their skin colour.

- *"It was service users who were racist and refused people of colour to enter their home".*

- *"I work with psychiatrists who are from different countries and have experienced many times where people have made racist comments towards the Dr. Questions like "where are you really from?" or nastier comments like "I don't want to be seen by that **** Dr" or "couldn't you get me a British Dr?"*

- *"Racist comments towards colleagues and refusal to work with professionals. This has been through families I work with in the wider community".*

- *"Citizens (not colleagues) stipulating they don't want any black carers".*

- *"I have observed both my [-nationality-] colleagues and black colleagues being racially targeted. Members of the public have refused to work with them. (Very rare I should add), though it does come up now and again".*

- *"We have a resident that will refuse to be supported by staff that are not white and will shout if he finds out that he has been assigned somebody who is not white to support him".*

5.40 The comments made in the survey cover the above with several examples on each type. Some are general in nature e.g. racist comments made. Others are more specific. A small number of examples refer to experience in the NHS and past (social care) work in England. There are too many individual comments to replicate here but the more specific examples are:

- *"It has happened to me several times for instance, I entered into the service users house, greeted her and she shouted at me, she told my other colleagues that she doesn't want to see me again in her house and I tried to explain myself, introduce myself to her as her carer but it was effortless then I left with tears rolling out of my eyes".*

- *"Earlier on in my career, and this was in England, I had a violent service user who repeatedly said he hated [-nationality-] and eventually threatened to kill me. I had asked several times for him to be taken off my caseload, but my manager felt this wasn't a credible reason to do this, as she didn't believe anti-[-nationality-] racism 'was a thing'".*

- *"We had a Service User who would use words like B****y [-nationality-]. You're Revolting, Repulsive foolish black people".*

- *"I have experienced two occasions whereby a resident had declined support and one commented that they "would not be helped by these people'" Another resident stated that it was below their self-respect to be looked after by "someone like that".*

- *"Racist behaviour due to the fact that I am Welsh - This has been directed at me from citizens that we work with / support".*

- *"Service user walked some staff out of her house. asked by service user why I didn't go back to my home country".*

- *"In my work, there have been some Vulnerable adults that have been clear, that because of my Race, they don't like you. One can tell, the way people look down at you or spit".*

- *"I have had a service user (parent) call me a "[-nationality plus extreme expletive-]. I am in fact from [-nationality-]"*

- *"I witnessed a family member of a service user discussing with a member of care staff, who is black, the behaviour of home carers who he said he would "send back on the boat they came in on". The staff member was shocked by this, and when she challenged him he laughed it off."*

- *"I have worked with one resident who refuses to work with support workers from abroad, who are generally of [-nationality-] origin. One resident is reluctant to work with staff from foreign countries, they often say it's down to not being able to understand their accent."*

Racist behaviour and comments to, or about, clients

5.41   Less frequently mentioned but still evidence of racism is racist behaviour or comments by social care staff about clients. The key themes, which broadly reflect those reported under other headings in this report are:

- Mocking a nationality, mimicking an accent, or using derogatory language.
- Being treated differently e.g. offered less service(s).
- Lack of understanding / lack of cultural sensitivity or being dismissive of race.

5.42   Comments by respondents which illustrate the above include:

- *"I have heard 2 professionals individually talk in disdain about local parents/ residents in local community."*

- *"Systematically I feel we fail non-English or Welsh speaking individuals within the service. The provision of effective translation is poor and cost managed. as such I feel many none first language English or Welsh individuals are offered less in the way of preventative services and only really provided once in the court arenas. working in preventative services this unmet need has become apparent to myself."*

- *"Clients of mine have been discriminated, not given their rights such as interpreters/ language line, their cultural and religious rights not understood nor met. They feel that due to what they look like, the way they dress and the lack of English and accents, they have been cared for much less. They have witnessed white, English-speaking patients treated much better and with smiles."*

- *"There was an assessment done that included the child's race as part of the analysis and decision-making and this was considered biased as the assessor was of the same race. It seemed to me that the point the assessor was making regarding the importance of race was minimized."*

- *"Staff member refusing to remove shoes when entering the house of a Hindi family and being unsympathetic to their religious and cultural background in the family's home."*

- *"Comments made in regard to requests for Halal meat by a young person and an ignorance or view that disregards the importance of this being an essential part of the Muslim Faith."*

Action, challenge and support within teams and departments

5.43   There were several examples of racist behaviours being directly challenged. In some cases, it was the manager who, having heard it, raised it directly with the perpetrator. In other cases, it was the victim themselves or a colleague who spoke up on their behalf e.g. corrected another colleague on their language. One member of staff said they addressed it directly with the colleague who subsequently took it upon themselves to self-educate about structural racism and another did the same and felt the colleague had taken the challenge on board.

5.44   On some occasions, a direct challenge had been followed up by the matter being reported e.g. to a line manager or HR, with disciplinary action taken as a result. However, in other cases, no action to report the individuals was taken after the challenge.

5.45   One respondent felt the incident was not serious enough to warrant reporting and their colleague took the criticism well. This reflects a theme which emerged from some members of staff with ethnic minority backgrounds about continually trying to educate others, a belief that naivety and insensitivity was behind the issue and not malice. Another respondent said knowing the person, they believe that while it was insensitive, it was done naively with no malice, but was still insensitive.

5.46   Over and above the small number of examples where behaviours were directly challenged by others on behalf of their colleague, there were also a few examples where the victim was supported by their manager or a colleague. In one case, they had been comforted by a colleague after the meeting at which an incident had occurred. In another, they had been supported with training on how to deal with uncomfortable situations in a positive way.

5.47   Challenging someone is not always straightforward. A member of staff asked a colleague not to use a word as they found it offensive. They found it difficult to resolve as the person in question cried and said they had made them feel bad. They feel in majority white organisations in majority white rural areas, there is a general lack of concern around anti-racist practice. Other examples of difficulties experienced in relation to reporting racism are:

- *"…. it is difficult to raise this as is the senior team involved. It is passed off as joking. I have raised it with the staff member who made the comments and made to feel I was in the wrong for doing so. Whispering in corners – "who does he think he is."*

- *"As it was out of our jurisdiction (another directorate) it was difficult to resolve, but eventually was. However, this does not take away the experience of those individuals."*

- *"Parties were spoken to by their manager, and this was corrected. There is no mandatory training available [for perpetrators]. It is very much down to the individual if they wish to do so or not."*

- *"I discussed it with HR and addressed it directly with the member of staff who made the comment and the member of staff to whom the comment was made. The member of staff who made the comment was horrified to have been accused of racism and extremely hurt that it had been raised formally, the colleague raising the grievance with me was happy with the outcome (it was ultimately addressed informally but within the grievance process)."*

- *"I only raised the [-subject-] as an issue with a manager...she said nothing. This is not a work environment I feel comfortable raising these issues."*

- *"Heard a racist comment and when challenged was told they thought it was their safe place and the wrong audience".*

- *"There has been a clear commitment from the Director to embed anti racist practice within the authority who has personally provided me with support throughout my own experience of racial harassment in the workplace. The wider organisation does not appear ready to accept accountability or responsibility through recognising that there is a fundamental problem to address."*

5.48   Comments suggest that to challenge someone, the circumstances must also be right. For example, one respondent said they would ordinarily have challenged the perpetrator(s) in a calm and respectful manner. However, being in sole charge of a group of small children, it was neither practical nor appropriate to have moved away from the children to challenge the person.

5.49   In a couple of cases and, it must be said, unfortunately, members of staff said they were now "used to it" and prefer to try and educate people rather than make a complaint. This indicates the ongoing nature of racism and racist comments and the importance of more action to stamp it out.

5.50   It is encouraging to see some behaviours and comments being challenged and action being taken, including colleagues actively supporting a colleague who has been the subject of such behaviours. However, this was reported in a relatively small number of examples of lived experience. Comments also reflect reasons why behaviour or comments are not always challenged. This features later in this report.

Action and challenge with clients

5.51   Where respondents' experiences related to people being supported, the matter was either ignored by the member of staff at the receiving end, or action was taken. Some respondents reported experience of racism from clients and not from within the workforce.

5.52   One respondent said they dismissed it as an isolated incident as they considered the individual to have right wing views and to be somewhat intellectually challenged. In other cases. Another said that when telephoning to make appointments, they sometimes have the feeling a client is not over-friendly due to their accent, on the visit itself they are very friendly as soon as they hear where they are from. On one occasion when a client used racist words to try and make them feel bad, they just ignored it and they change the subject if a client starts discussing politics.

5.53   Examples of action taken include:

- Discussion with the client and/or their family to persuade them such behaviour is unacceptable.

- One respondent said they have worked closely with individuals to understand why they do not want certain carers. They said the results and analysis have been positive and the issues have been worked through.

- Racial abuse aimed at a young person was managed by the staff on shift and reported. Action was then taken to move young people, so the abuse stopped.

- A Team Manager witnessed members of their team being subjected to racist behaviour from service users. It was challenged and the suitability of allocation and risk of this behaviour not being stopped was reviewed. A violence in work form was also completed.

- The matter was discussed with the care provider who dealt with the issue by explaining (to the client) it was inappropriate and by supporting the staff member involved.

5.54 One respondent said it is difficult to address the issue under the remit of the formal complaints process but believes a clearer message needs to be conveyed to the public in general that the authority will not tolerate racism and abuse to staff and there should be consequences. Others said:

- *"In the first instance it was known within the service of the resident's dislike of staff from abroad, we would not allocate staff from abroad with them to prevent any incidents. With the second resident and saying he did not understand them, I would speak to the resident and explain the need to get to know new staff and to give them a chance. In time with familiarity communication should become easier to understand."*

- *"All concerns raised to the Social Services Complaints department are brought to the attention of the relevant manager to be addressed. The difficulty is, even if the complainant is making subtlety racist comments, everyone has the right to make a complaint and for their concerns to be taken seriously, as outlined in regulations and the guidance that governs our complaints process. It is extremely difficult to challenge racism when you must also provide a resolution to their complaint and inform them of their rights to progress their complaint if they remain dissatisfied. I do not believe social care staff are supported enough in their roles and safeguarded from abuse from the public. It is not tolerated in other professions, however, societal factors such as stigma and the emotional nature of social work leave professionals vulnerable to abuse, and unfortunately, I have witnessed members of the public being subtly racist or having unconscious bias through their complaints and some have used the complaints process to be abusive/antagonistic to people in the social work profession. We have a vexatious policy, however, this is usually only implemented as a last resort and does not provide sufficient safeguards to staff."*

- *"Unfortunately if a customer is racist then you are limited on what action you can take. It can be addressed with the individual and a service can be terminated if the behaviour continues but this does not change their behaviour or attitude."*

Complaints and grievances

5.55 Of the 132 respondents who have experienced or seen or heard racist behaviours and comments, 59 (45%) made a complaint or grievance to their employer. Sixty respondents (45%) did not make a complaint or raise a grievance. Thirteen respondents (10%) said they don't know or cannot remember.

5.56   Respondents who said they had raised a complaint or grievance were asked about the outcome. Responses were received from managers and from individuals who were the victims. The action and the outcomes of complaints and grievances varied, reflecting the circumstances within which they arose. The key themes where the racist behaviour of comments was **within the workforce** were:

- Action taken by manager to address the issue, to discuss unacceptable behaviour and/or to educate the perpetrator, including training.

- Investigation by internal or external persons and disciplinary action, the outcome of which included verbal warnings, findings of gross misconduct (but without dismissal) and dismissal.

5.57   Where the behaviours or comments were **from clients or their family members**, action taken included:

- Writing to, or speaking with, the client and their family to challenge attitudes, to explain it was unacceptable behaviour and/or to increase awareness and understanding.

- Staff supporting the individual were made aware of the possibility of the behaviour and a strategy for dealing with it was agreed.

- Case allocation was changed so the victim did not have to support the client. These included cases involving older people and individuals with dementia where it was felt to be difficult to change attitudes and behaviour.

5.58   In one case, the matter was reported to the police as a hate crime with additional action taken by the department including risk-assessments and a reporting mechanism, a "violence at work" report to the organisation's Health and Safety team and a warning marker put on the case file.

5.59   Several respondents admitted they did not know the outcome of raising the matter as they had not been informed or given feedback. Two respondents said no action was taken or the matter was discussed with managers but then nothing happened.

5.60   One other respondent said when clients have been racist to care staff, they have asked that the organisation writes and makes it very clear racist behaviour will not be tolerated. However, they were told there was no point in doing that. The respondent also felt some other concerns they raised had been ignored by managers yet had subsequently been proven to be correct.

5.61   One or two comments reflect experiences of working in England. One respondent feels institutional racism is not as bad here as it is in England.

Outcomes of complaints and grievances

5.62   Staff were asked to consider whether they were satisfied or dissatisfied with the outcome of their formal or informal complaint or grievance.

5.63   Just under half of the 59 individuals who made a complaint or grievance (45%) said they were fully satisfied with the action taken and outcome. Fourteen respondents said they were "mostly satisfied"; 10 respondents said they were "mostly dissatisfied" and 9 respondents (15%) were "totally dissatisfied".

5.64   Respondents who they were not fully satisfied with the outcome i.e. where they said they were only mostly satisfied or were mostly dissatisfied or totally dissatisfied, were asked to say why.

5.65   Fourteen respondents said they were **"mostly satisfied"** after making a complaint or raising a grievance. Most comments reflected individuals' thoughts on the incidents that had occurred and how they had arisen as opposed to the outcome. The incidents included work colleagues and people receiving social care and support.

- *"I don't blame the Council I work for, it is certain people who are narrow minded".*

- *"A defensive apology or excuse, like 'thought it was my safe space' is not acceptable. There is no safe space for racism".*

- *"The Individual apologize to the one they had talked in a discriminatory way to".*

- *"It should not have happened in the first place".*

- *"On reflection, I am querying whether this should have been raised with senior management".*

- *"I think there remains an undertone of racist thinking which leads to terminology being adopted that with education could be avoided".*

- *"Don't feel more could be done but we will continue to monitor the situation".*

5.66   One respondent asked for help. They said they would like a clearer process on how staff deal with materials with racial connotations such as swastikas or anti-European materials which are seen in a property they visit. They would also like greater support from management to challenge racist comments. They feel within public services, staff are expected to just accept it and not take offence, and not question the service user. The member of staff said they would feel some anxiety around challenging a service user who makes a racist comment of their colleague e.g. skin colour. They feel that if that service user complained then they feel they would be in trouble and the service user would be given an apology, as if the member of staff is the "bad guy" in such a situation.

5.67   The comments of 2 respondents suggest gaps in what is available to support staff who experience racism or perhaps a lack of awareness of what support is in place. One asked for the creation of a supportive environment; an environment where individuals feel safe reporting incidents of racism and where appropriate action is taken. The other said there should be a formal procedure in place for this kind of situation.

5.68   Ten respondents said they were **"mostly dissatisfied"** with the outcome of the grievance or complaint. Reasons included confusion on the part of the HR Department on what policies and procedures are in place for such incidents internally, a lack of action where the behaviour or comment is from a client or matters not being taken seriously. This raises questions about the existence, awareness and/or use of policies and procedures for reporting and tackling racism. Two respondents criticised the feedback received or a lack of feedback.

- *"I have had no feedback or the feedback I had was "They are now aware".*

- *"I was not advised of the outcome so i am not aware if any action was taken in regard to my concern".*

- *"Change the culture and racism that happens in [- location -] EVERY SINGLE DAY! Some of our customers won't have "black" carers – it's astounding. Described as "generational racism", it's definitely not so bad in [- location -] itself".*

- *"It would have been useful to not to [- details redacted -] …. this in itself shows a lack of understanding and has racist traits in itself. This person acted as a gatekeeper which impacted me and the whole situation extremely negatively, which impacted further on my wellbeing and mental health".*

5.69 For the 9 members of staff who said they were "**totally dissatisfied"** with the outcome of their grievance or complaint, the common theme was lack of the action taken by the organisation or the manager(s) concerned, or a delay in addressing the matters. For one respondent, the issue was still unresolved. The following quotes illustrate what we were told:

- *"Staff members who displayed the racist behaviours were not spoken to by managers".*

- *"There were significant delays in recognising what happened as racism and in addressing the incident".*

- *"No action was taken to safeguard the victim until the report was received with a finding that racist harassment had occurred - approximately 4 months later. Following a finding of gross misconduct the individual remains in a senior management position. The process, when the issue was recognised as racism, felt extremely punitive for the victim and myself as a witness. Given the outcome I would not feel confident advising anyone who had been a victim of racist harassment in my place of work to raise it with the organisation".*

- *"The grievance was mismanaged from the start and was progressed through a clearly defensive stance. No clear or transparent pathway with outdated policy utilised and demonstrated lack of understanding of the impact and implications of racism within the workplace. Evident lack of cultural competency and local authority shortcomings/failings reported through the investigation".*

No complaint or grievance

5.70 Respondents who said they did not make a complaint, raise a grievance, or bring the matter to the attention of their manager were asked to say what prevented or did not encourage them to do so.

5.71 One person was simply told the matter would not be considered. Another said at first nothing happened, just a chat where the perpetrator thought it was an overreaction. When a further complaint was made, it was then dealt with more appropriately. However, by far the most common reasons were a lack of confidence in whether action would be taken, or anything would be done as a result, and concern about the possible implications for the person making the complaint or grievance.

Lack of confidence

5.72 The comments of most respondents (19) show a lack of confidence in the system i.e. the policies and procedures for dealing with racism, is the main reason for not raising a complaint or grievance. The main dimensions of this are:

- The matter would not be acknowledged.

- The issue would not be understood or taken seriously.

- Who the perpetrator is, including in some cases, their seniority.

- Experience that nothing is done if the abuse is from a client, notably an older person or someone with dementia.

- Lack of confidence any action would be taken or anything would change as a result.

- Lack of confidence in the manager taking up the matter and challenging a perpetrator.

5.73   The above are best illustrated by the following examples of respondents' comments:

- *"The person/individuals making the comments were held in high regard by their employer, I didn't feel that I would be taken seriously."*

- *"Didn't see the point. [ ] had already been warned about her behaviour to other people but no action was ever taken."*

- *"Another member of staff had already made the complaint to our manager, although I would like to point out it was never taken any further and many staff were and still left astounded by managements decisions."*

- *"People think it's funny when others make fun of your "accent" so it doesn't feel like it would be taken seriously."*

- *"I do not have any faith in senior managers challenging the individuals I have heard making racist comments as they are also in senior positions."*

- *"I told my manager ………. but I didn't make an official complaint as I know that people do not take seriously discrimination against people with English backgrounds in Wales."*

- *"I don't believe Manager would consider it to be offensive to English staff, it would be played down, dismissed as me being OTT/ silly and potentially would only cause bad feeling in the team."*

- *"Not being believed/acknowledged even when raised with managers. Made to feel like you have a 'chip on your shoulder' - 'black people always use racism to get what they want' comments."*

5.74   The decision not to complain by one member of staff was influenced by their experience in England. They said they have complained in the past but know all too well that a grievance based in racism in social care/local authority will not succeed. Their experience suggested all it will bring is more stress and eventually having to leave their job. They felt their manager would not understand the issue and it would turn into a complex misunderstanding with unintended consequences and a lot of personal pain and stress.

Potential implications of complaining

5.75   While most respondents reported a lack of confidence in action being taken as the reason for not raising a complaint or grievance, for eleven respondents, their decision was influenced by the potential implications of such action. The main reasons were:

- How reporting it might affect their ongoing working relationship with colleagues, particularly in small teams.

- Being new to the organisation and needing to stay in the job to support a family.

- Fear of being seen as "someone who complaints about everything that's said" or a "troublemaker", particularly if having previously complained about the quality of care being given to clients.

- Where the perpetrator was in a senior role, which in one case included worry about how funding decisions for their cases might be affected.

- Where a manager does not have the ability to deal with such a matter sensitively, which could have implications for the working relationship between co-workers.

5.76 One respondent said they were used to people making comments and it does not bother them anymore and it would make more of a hassle raising it. At the other extreme, another respondent said they couldn't argue with the manager concerned as they "*were vicious and would make your life hell if you reported her or stood up to her".*

5.77 Another respondent believes there are pockets of good practice where there are individuals who either have experience with marginalised communities or are from the wider community themselves. However, their view is that when these individuals challenge discrimination, they are seen as being awkward or politically correct, which they feel is a situation that needs to change.

Developments and good practice

5.78 While the survey aimed to capture lived experience of racism, it also sought to capture what has been done e.g. developments, initiatives, and what individuals considered be good practice. There were responses from 146 individuals. Some highlighted their own perspectives and their views on their team, department, or organisation while others point to what they feel helps to tackle racism.

5.79 Many respondents had not experienced racism or heard racist comments but emphasised that if they did, they would not put up with it and would immediately call it out or the same would be done by team members. Some others highlighted managers who they know would act if necessary. Overall, staff may be more knowledgeable about what is and isn't acceptable but there is a clear message about the need to do more, including awareness-raising and training to improve understanding, and policies and procedures to ensure staff know what to do in the event racism happens.

5.80 Common themes on developments, good practice and what can help were:

- The importance of cultural understanding, and values and principles based on equality, treating everyone in the workforce with respect, and clear acknowledgement of the importance of diversity and inclusion.

- Challenge by managers or colleagues if racism or racist comments are observed, and clear policies and procedures for action.

- Ethnically diverse teams where people chat openly about their religion, culture, and backgrounds. They provide a foundation for mutual respect and understanding, where differences are valued and celebrated, and where colleagues feel comfortable with challenging one another.

- Mandatory induction training and regular e.g. annual, training on equality issues, cultural competence, discrimination, and awareness to keep it at the forefront of current working practice.

- Regular, effective, supervision with line managers to allow individuals with an ethnic minority background to explore any worries or concerns around anti-discriminatory practice – a "*safe space*".

- An agenda item at team meetings around inclusion and case scenarios around different protected characteristics, thus creating a safe space to discuss and learn.

- For clients of social care, the manager of a care home worked with a resident to produce an easy-read document to explain what was wrong with their behaviour toward some members of staff. One respondent pointed to good examples of using the "*Show racism the red card"* approach in schools.

- Policies which do not discriminate. An example given was where someone who had obtained a driving licence while living in another country was told they had to do a driving assessment before being able to drive a pool car, yet the DVLA allows such individuals to drive any category of small vehicle on their original, full, driving licence for 12 months.

- A minority ethnic staff network which has a voice, power, and influence, and if a Head of Equalities post exists, the post holder should have the same.

- A residential home held a "World Values" day where staff from different cultural backgrounds cooked food. Both staff and residents are reported to have enjoyed it.

- Updating strategic plans e.g. a Strategic Equality Plan as an opportunity to reflect on approach, to trigger more discussions on tacking racism to identify more action.

5.81 Some concerns were also expressed about developments being a *"tick box"* exercise e.g. an organisation signing up to an anti-racist charter when there is dialogue but no follow up action after signing up. Another respondent said no organisations in Wales are close to achieving good practice in relation to anti-Gypsy and Traveller racism.

5.82 There were some mixed views on a "*zero tolerance*" approach. Its usefulness as a clear statement of intent on equality and diversity which is demonstrated in practice at all levels as a means of preventing racism was mentioned by several respondents. However, the approach, or the use of the approach on its own, was questioned by four respondents. Comments put forward suggested zero tolerance approaches or policies:

- Can be counterproductive at worst and ineffective at best because they can alienate and lead to a culture of intolerance, ignorance, and fear.

- Are welcomed but are best complimented by public education. Prevention is better than a response after an event has occurred with harm for those faced with it.

- Carry a real risk of an unintended consequence of creating a culture of blame, continued ignorance, and fear, with a far better approach being restorative and rooted in respect and dignity to address the nuances and complexities of racism.

- Might encourage environments where claims of racism are treated as true until disproven, rather than treating both parties equally. A respondents' experience suggested there could be a risk if a vexatious grievance is given greater credibility than it deserves with the result a member of staff could encounter an extended period of anxiety.

5.83 One respondent suggested a policy of curiosity aimed at increasing understanding would be far more effective at addressing racism than zero tolerance approaches.

What more needs to be done

5.84 There was a variety of suggestions on what more could be done to tackle racism and, preferably, to prevent it from happening in the first place. While action already taken by some local authorities, departments, and/or teams was acknowledged, there is call for a more proactive approach and more action.

5.85 The most common theme for more action was education and learning, with mandatory training at induction, and regular, possibly annual, refresher training which stimulates discussion and reflection. There were many calls for annual training to be mandatory too. Specific themes put forward included (in no specific order):

- Greater awareness among staff and the public (which includes clients of social care and their families) of Wales' ambitions to become anti-racist and to promote cultural understanding and acceptance.

- Promote the sharing of good practice between local authorities, learning from those who have been proactive in seeking a more diverse workforce.

- The importance of effective training at induction to clearly set out expectations and consequences of any racist behaviour.

- Training to show members of staff how to handle incidents of racist behaviours or comments and the confidence to directly challenge it so racism is never ignored. Ignoring racist comments because someone is "used to hearing them" is wrong; racism must not be normalised.

- Training which covers among other things, the following: cultural, ethnic, and religious awareness; unconscious bias; anti-oppressive and anti-discriminative practice; microaggressions; history of racism; equality and diversity from an anti-racist stance.

- Training led by people of non-white race to help white people to learn how to unpack their racism and experience of privilege, with white and non-white colleagues working so the difference in experiences can be seen.

- Racism to be understood as a safeguarding concern thus leaving staff from ethnic minority backgrounds open to the possibility of ongoing abuse and discrimination.

- Awareness-raising for clients and their families to promote cultural understanding and acceptance, with the possibility of sanction if such action fails to prevent racist behaviours and comments.

5.86 There is a call for top-down action i.e. leaders and managers demonstrating they are fully behind anti-racism and challenging any that occurs as a means of influencing the behaviour of the whole workforce. Calls for other action are:

- The use of Employee Resource Groups to provide a platform for underrepresented employees to connect and share experiences.

- More inclusive recruitment practices to attract candidates from different backgrounds and thus achieve a more diverse workforce, particularly in rural areas.

- The use of digital systems such as the Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS) to record warning markers which can show and define emotional risks such as racist and unacceptable behaviour by a client as well as physical risks.

- In various ways, recognising and celebrating cultures and all multi-faith holidays e.g. Hannukah, Divali, Christmas, Easter.

- Updated policies and procedures, and improvements to systems for reporting racism within organisations so individuals feel they can report any incidents easily and without fear, with support available if needed.

5.87 The last point is particularly important. Organisations need to have clear processes and procedures for departments and managers at all levels to deal with racism, with good staff awareness of all staff to encourage reporting by those who are affected or by colleagues on their behalf. This won't necessarily overcome problems reported earlier around the possible implications of reporting an incident, but it might help increase confidence that appropriate action will be taken.

5.88 Action is also needed to tackle matters which, while not racist in themselves, could potentially lead to incident. For example, with increasing numbers of staff recruited internationally, some family members highlighting that older adults or adults with learning disabilities have led quite sheltered lives and say they are struggling with some language barriers and understanding different cultures.

Other comments

5.89 At end of the survey, respondents were given an opportunity to make additional comment on any matter relevant to the subject of the survey. Many comments expanded upon or in some cases, repeated themes captured earlier in the survey. For consistency, these comments have been incorporated under headings earlier in this report. The following reflects the contents of additional points made by respondents.

- The importance of equality of opportunity not equality of outcome, which is sometimes the focus. There is concern people are only seen as their disability or their colour, which is dehumanising. There should be no guarantee of equality of outcome, which is felt to do a disservice to people of colour who should know they are where they are on merit, not because the law means they must be.

- Over and above racism within the social care workforce, racism by elected members needs to be addressed. Ways of doing this include training and awareness-raising similar to that reported under the heading of "What more needs to be done" (paragraphs 2.85-2.89 refer).

- Local authorities to be challenged and scrutinised to ensure they respond to the anti-racist Wales action plan with serious intent.

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6. Conclusions and recommendations

6.1. The lived experience of staff was at the heart of this study. Using a variety of methods, it has successfully gathered a large body of information from current and past social care staff who have an ethnic minority background, and staff without an ethnic minority background working in or with social care e.g. Human Resources and representatives of stakeholder organisations. It has obtained views from people working for local authorities and for independent social care providers.

6.2. This chapter summarises key points and common themes from the data and makes a series of recommendations for action towards the goal of an anti-racist Wales. It should be said at the outset that while the study has uncovered many examples of racists behaviour and racists comments, thus highlighting the need for more action, there are a few examples of managers and individual members of staff – colleagues of staff from ethnic minority backgrounds – being supportive and being prepared to call out racism and take appropriate action.

The nature of racism and racist behaviours

6.3. Analysis of the considerable body of information collected by the study shows racism happens in four main ways:

- Racist behaviour or comments by work colleagues.

- The way someone has been treated by colleagues or a manager.

- Racist behaviour or comments by clients or their family.

- Racist comments to clients by a member of the workforce.

6.4. While the focus of this study was racism within the social care workforce of local authorities, the data shows it happens across the social care workforce i.e. in local authorities and in independent social care providers, and in the interface between commissioners, providers and people who are receiving social care and their families. Racism and racist behaviours do not respect organisational boundaries and while the aim of this study was to drive action within the workforce, there is a clear need for more action to address racism wherever it occurs.

6.5. While the study identified some signs of action towards eliminating racism e.g. a clear "zero-tolerance" commitment in one local authority's policy, there is clearly some way to go in social care before the goal of an anti-racist Wales is realised. There is no reason to suggest it is any different in other public services.

6.6. The study has identified many instances where staff from ethnic minority backgrounds have been subject to racism and racist comments by colleagues.

6.7. Racism manifests itself in many ways. The study has brought these to the fore, which can inform what more needs to be done to call it out when it happens and to address it and, importantly, to prevent it from happening in the first place. The following paragraphs summarise the main types of racism and racist behaviours which occur.

6.8. There were some differences between each of the 4 groups set out in paragraph 6.3 above in terms of the frequency with which types of racist behaviour and comments feature. However, there were many commonalities. The main types of racisms identified by the study are listed in the table below (in no specific order):

Types of racist behaviour and comments identified in the lived experience of staff

Comments on someone's appearance, including colour of skin, and hate speech about a nationality or nationalities

Cultural stereotyping and the language – terminology and words - used

Rudeness about other cultures and beliefs

Insulting, mocking or derogatory comments e.g. staff copying someone's accent in a derogatory way

Comments which appear to show a lack of understanding or acceptance of other cultures and nationalities, or are framed as "a joke", often as an attempt to deny racism or a racist attitude and/or to deflect criticism

Issues relating to Wales/Welsh and England/English

Spreading of racist and hate messages and information online and on social media

Situations where someone is not treated well by colleagues or a manager or treated differently to their colleagues, or where others have been observed being subject to similar treatment, or where a client is treated differently.

A refusal by clients to accept certain carers

ADSS Cymru, 2024

6.9. Examples of racist behaviours and comments include those by colleagues and managers and, in some cases, senior managers.

6.10. Some respondents said they believe the underlying reasons for some comments is a lack of understanding, particularly of cultural values and beliefs, or an insensitivity to matters of ethnicity which can affect colleagues and/or cause offence. In some cases, people are dismissive of others' cultures and beliefs and the fact their comments or behaviour might be challenged. Perceptions of immigration appear to be behind some comments.

6.11. The study was commissioned to examine racism within the workforce. However, staff reported many instances of racist behaviour or comments by people to whom they were providing social care services and/or members of their families. The degree to which this was reported in this study shows it is clearly of concern and impacted on the individuals who experienced it, and thus must be addressed.

No national picture but evidence of gaps in action to tackle racism

6.12. With responses from 12 of the 22 local authorities, the study has only been able to build a partial picture of information related or relevant to tackling racism:

- Relatively few formal or informal grievances or complaints involving racist behaviours or comments (7 in 5 local authorities) have been made in the financial years 2022-23 and 2023-24.

- Three of the 12 local authorities said they had a referral system in place for staff to access information, advice, and support related to issues about race. They said they could not say how many referrals were made due to its confidential nature.

- Relatively few local authorities can identify racism in exit interviews.

- To date, racism does not appear to be a topic which is explored in staff surveys.

- In this sample of local authorities, examples of action to tackle racism were relatively few and far between. Six of the 12 authorities did not answer this question and another four said no action had been taken, with two saying no issues had been identified.

6.13. While Employee Assistance Programmes are confidential, depending on the arrangements for the service, it may well be possible for a local authority to request a breakdown on the broad subjects of self-referrals by employees. This could identify any problems with racism and thus inform further development of the organisation's approach to equality, diversity and inclusion.

Racism is still happening but is it challenged?

6.14. The lived experience of individuals who contributed to this study shows the extent to which racism is happening in social care. There was much common ground between what emerged from the online survey and from the more in-depth conversations offered by the 1:1 discussions. Many individuals shared their experience of the types of racism summarised at the beginning of this chapter. Microaggressions emerged as a key theme as did the impacts of racism on individuals' mental health and wellbeing, with the latter not being recognised to the extent it should be.

6.15. Is racism challenged? The short answer is "sometimes, but nowhere near enough". There is some evidence of action being taken when the incident arises within the workforce and when it happens with people who are receiving care or a member of their family. In some cases, a perpetrator is challenged by the individual affected or by someone e.g. a manager or colleague, who has observed it happening

6.16. When issues are raised, action might be taken by a manager to address the issue or via corporate systems and procedures e.g. complaints or grievance procedures which might lead to further investigation and disciplinary action. However, there is evidence to suggest action does not always take place. There are also reports of a member of staff being dissuaded from reporting an incident.

6.17. There is evidence to suggest much goes unreported with one factor being a lack of confidence it will be dealt with. Unfortunately, some staff say they are now "used to it" i.e. racist behaviours and comments, particularly microaggressions, and prefer to try and educate people rather than make a complaint. Others do not complain because they worry about what can happen because they raise the issue and report it e.g. a backlash on them personally. Some staff even hide their ethnicity or cultural background for fear of ridicule.

6.18. It was not possible to compare local authorities' data on complaints and grievances raised in 2022-23 and 2023-24 with lived experience data for two reasons. First, there are gaps in the data. Responses were received from 12 of the 22 local authorities and of those who responded, some were unable to provide figures. Second, to gather as much lived experience as possible, there was no time limit on reporting by members of the workforce. Therefore, while some reports of racist behaviours and comments report will be within this 2-year period, some of it extends across individual's whole careers in social care, some of which will cover decades.

Lack of confidence in policies and procedures

6.19.   Organisations have procedures in place for complaints and grievances. However, there are questions on how they work in practice and their effectiveness. The key issue is poor handling with specific aspects being:

- Failing to recognise and/or acknowledge racism has occurred, which sometimes stems from a lack of understanding of racism and the impacts it can have.
- The issue is not understood or taken seriously.
- Confusion on the part of the HR Department on what policies and procedures are in place for such incidents.
- A lack of the action taken by the organisation, or the relevant manager(s), to challenge the perpetrator.
- Systems which are discriminatory or lacking clarity.
- Lack of recognition of the impact on the person making the complaint or raising the grievance and support for that person.

6.20.   A lack of confidence in organisations, their policies and procedures is a significant factor in racism not being reported. It stems from views that organisations lack the knowledge and systems to address racism and racism complaints, with inconsistencies. There is frustration with how racism is dealt with, or not as the case may be, by line managers and by their organisations, with respondents citing instances of not being believed or listened to or being dissuaded from taking any further action. Some incidents are dismissed as "banter", which belies a lack of understanding about racism and the impact it has on a person.

6.21.   There is also dissatisfaction with the outcome of complaints or grievances. Reasons include:

- A delay in addressing the matters.
- The feedback received or a lack of feedback.
- Little or no effective reprimand for the perpetrator.
- Being expected to continue working with the perpetrator.

6.22.   Some participants felt their organisations were ineffective in dealing with their racist complaints and as a result became unwell, eventually leaving the organisation.

Risks of making a complaint or grievance

6.23.   Behind the under-reporting of racisms or action to call it out, and in addition to the lack of confidence in organisations; policies and procedures, is one other factor. People are wary of and/or worried about raising it because of what might happen as a result i.e. a backlash. There were reports of being victimised by colleagues or labelled as *"troublemakers"*. They fear it could jeopardise their job or result in retribution from their organisation or colleagues. If an issue remained unresolved, it can leave an individual in a vulnerable or untenable position to the extent they might consider they need to leave the organisation.

Zero-tolerance

6.24.   A zero-tolerance approach is a commitment in the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan. There were mixed views – positive and negative - on the extent to which organisations are adopting the zero tolerance to racism goal of the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan. One local authority submitted evidence which shows a clear corporate commitment to a zero-tolerance approach to racism.

6.25. Overall, there is clearly much more to be done to make it a reality. All organisations need to ensure racism is not ignored or dismissed and is actively challenged whenever and wherever it occurs. Underpinning this is the need for clear definitions of racism and racist behaviours and understanding, so no-one can claim ignorance that their actions, behaviours or comments were racist. The impact of racism on individuals who experience it also need to be understood.

6.26. Concerns about the zero-tolerance approach, particularly such an approach without any accompanying action, should also be noted. It must be complemented by education and training where prevention is better than a response after an event has occurred, and a culture rooted in and respect and understanding is developed and intolerance, ignorance, blame and fear avoided.

What more needs to be done?

6.27. Accompanying the considerable body of comments from people with lived experience of racism were examples of good action by organisations. This is a base on which local authorities can build by sharing experience and knowledge of what works. There were also suggestions for more action, including improvements to systems for dealing with racism and action to help staff better understand racism.

6.28. There are too many developments and suggestions to reproduce in this chapter but chapters 3 and 4 provide ample material to inform the local authorities' consideration of what more they can do and what they can learn from others. By way of a summary, **common themes for action** are:

- Defining racism more clearly, including microaggressions, to address a lack of understanding, ignorance, and to prevent misunderstandings.

- Training: anti-racism and cultural awareness training, specific training on antisemitism and anti-gypsyism, the impact of racism and trauma it can cause.

- Training which enables staff to feel more confident to challenge and call out racism whether within the workforce or where it involves clients and their families.

- More racially diverse social care management teams.

- Racism taken seriously and acted upon. Action to challenge and call out, and not ignore or dismiss, racist behaviour or comments.

- Awareness-raising for clients and their families to promote cultural understanding and acceptance, with the possibility of sanctions if such action fails to prevent racist behaviour and comments.

- The use of employee resource groups and networks as a means for under-represented employees to connect, share experiences and provide mutual support.

- Sharing of experience and practice between local authorities, learning from those who have been proactive in seeking a more diverse workforce.

6.29. Suggestions for **improving organisations' policies and procedures** for dealing with racism are:

- Better information and a greater level of understanding among staff on complaints and grievance policies system.

- Clearer information on how someone can make a complaint.

- Clear guidance for those who manage and/or act upon cases to ensure proper and fair procedures for all involved.

- Procedures which have a clear conclusion, which ensure feedback to the complainant, and which, if proven, result in perpetrators being held accountable for their actions.

- A more humanistic approach which removes the fear of making a complaint or raising a grievance.

- Dedicated information, advice and support for staff who encounter racism in any form, and support if they take a complaint or grievance through the organisation's procedures.

6.30. There is a call for top-down action i.e. leaders and managers, to demonstrate they are fully behind anti-racism and are prepared to challenge such behaviour. This is seen as a means of influencing the behaviour of the whole workforce.

Action by Directors of Social Services

6.31. To effectively tackle racism and to achieve a zero-tolerance approach, a concerted, corporate, approach across all local authority departments is required. While this study by the Association of Directors of Social Services Cymru has focused on social care, its findings are relevant across public services. The nature of racism, the way it is experienced, will undoubtedly happen in other sectors.

6.32. This study is a springboard for even greater efforts to stamp out racism. Directors of Social Services will act on the findings by:

a) Sharing the findings of this study with their CEO and fellow Directors to identify what more can be done corporately to eliminate racism across service areas.

b) Arranging cultural awareness training for all their staff with the expectation that attendance is mandatory, with due consideration to how it is best delivered and by whom.

c) Ensuring every member of staff in their department understands the meaning of racism and associated issues such as microaggressions, the seriousness of it and the impact it can have on colleagues, and the clear commitment to tackling it in all its forms and calling it out.

d) Encourage the reporting of racist behaviours and comments and ensure every report of racist behaviour or comment is followed up.

e) Reviewing the arrangements for the provision of social care and support and associated documentation to ensure clients and their families understand a zero-tolerance approach and the potential consequences should racism or racist behaviours occur. The provision of information to aid cultural awareness will be considered as part of the review.

f) Reviewing commissioning arrangements and contracts with providers to ensure they reflect a zero-tolerance approach to racism for members of staff and for those who receive social care and support.

g) Using their annual report to demonstrate progress against the findings of the study.

Recommendations

6.33. While action will be taken by Directors in their own departments, progress on tackling racism and achieving a zero-tolerance approach depends heavily on a local authority's corporate approach and its department-wide systems. Therefore, it is recommended that all local authorities act corporately to:

a) Ensure every member of staff understands racism and the impact it can have thus overcoming ignorance and preventing misunderstandings.

b) State (or restate) the organisation's commitment to a zero-tolerance approach to racism, encouraging staff to call it out very time it happens to them or if they see it happening to anyone else.

c) Review the organisation's policies and procedures for reporting, investigating and monitoring reports of racism to ensure they are effective, with a clear and satisfactory conclusion for each case

d) Pilot the evaluation framework for handling cases of racism which has been produced alongside this study.

e) Consider whether sufficient support is available to anyone affected by racism and to support them in the process if a complaint or grievance is made and enhance the support if necessary.

f) Work together with ADSS Cymru, Social Care Wales, Care Inspectorate Wales, the Welsh Local Government Association, and the Welsh Government to develop and implement a co-ordinated programme of learning to share experience and good practice between local authorities.

g) One year on from the publication of this report and using their self-assessment process, each local authority should report on the progress made on implementing the recommendations of this report.

6.34. ADSS Cymru is committed to working with all local authorities, independent social care providers, Social Care Wales, Care Inspectorate Wales, the Welsh Local Government Association, and the Welsh Government to implement the above recommendations and to demonstrate continued progress towards the goal of an anti-racist Wales.

Appendix 1: Glossary

Racism   [Definition of racism agreed by the Project Reference Group]

For this study, we consider racism to be prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism by an employee in the workforce against another social care employee on the basis of their membership of a particular racial or ethnic group, typically one that is in a minority or marginalised. This includes microaggression, which can be verbal, nonverbal and environmental slights, snubs or insults, whether intentional or unintentional. A racial incident is any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or by any other person.

Microaggression   Prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism by an employee of the workforce against another social care employee based on their membership of a particular racial or ethnic group, typically one that is in the minority or marginalised. This includes verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, intentional or unintentional. While the term has its origins in African American race commentary, it is also typically applied to socially marginalised groups such as the LGBTQ+ community, disabled people and economically disadvantaged groups that regularly face casual disparagement of their ability, ethnicity, colour or gender identity.

Ethnic minorities In this project, the term "ethnic minorities" is used to refer to all ethnic groups except the white British group. Ethnic minorities include white minorities, such as Gypsy, Roma, and Irish Traveller groups

Antigypsyism   According to the Council of Europe, "Antigypsyism" is a historically constructed, persistent complex of customary racism against social groups identified under the stigma 'Gypsy' or other related terms, and incorporates:

1. Homogenising and essentialising perception and description of these groups.

2. The attribution of specific characteristics to them.

3. Discriminating social structures and violent practices that emerge against that background, which have a degrading and ostracising effect, and which reproduce structural disadvantages.

Positive action   "Positive action" is additional help for groups of people who share a protected characteristic such as race, to reduce disadvantage, meet different needs and increase participation e.g. a leadership scheme to help an underrepresented group achieve more senior position; hiring one candidate over another equally qualified one because the former has a certain protected characteristic that is underrepresented in the workforce; jobs fairs targeted at ethnic minority groups.

Hidden heritage   Where someone has not disclosed their heritage to colleagues or clients for fear of reprisal or discrimination and has witnessed or heard racist comments, behaviours and slurs about their community. In some cases, this has negatively impacted their well-being or perceptions of themselves as members of this ethnic group.

Appendix 2: Information requested from local authorities

The following lists information requested from local authorities. Other text e.g. introductory text to explain the survey and arrangements around it is not included.

1. **Name of local authority** *(required only to confirm you have responded to the information request*).

Workstream 1 – complaints and grievance

2. **In your authority in the financial years 2022-23 and 2023-24, how many formal or informal grievances or complaints have been made by members of the social care workforce where actual or alleged racist behaviour or comments were involved***? (Note: a "complaint" is defined as any concern raised informally by a member of staff to their line manager or any other manager, to the HR department, or to a Trade Union representative) (Please write number in box. If none, please write "nil")*

    Total number of formal or informal grievances or complaints involving racist behaviour(s) or comments by members of the social care workforce in 2022-23 and 2023-24

3. **What were the themes or reasons behind the grievances, complaints, or referrals?** (*Please summarise or list the different themes or reasons. Please do not provide names or other information which could identify an individual).*

4. **Do you have a referral system in place for staff to *access information, advice, and support related to issues about race? (Please tick one box) (A referral system may be part of an employee support or assistance scheme, to an internal team or external agency. The support or assistance might be specific to issues about race or be part of a broader support system which also covers issues about race).*

    - Yes
    - No
    - Don't know

5. If **you have a referral system in place, how many referrals were made in the financial years 2022-23 and 2023-24***? (Please write number in box. If none, please write "nil")*

    Total number of referrals made by members of your social care workforce in the financial years 2022-23 and 2023-24

6. **For staff who left the workforce in 2022-23 or 2023-24, are you able to identify information in any exit interviews which referred to racist behaviour or comments?** (*Please tick one box)*

    - Yes

- No
- Don't know

7. **If you answered "Yes' to Q6, please summarise comments made or issued raised in exit interviews about racism, racist behaviour, or racist comments** (*Please do not provide names or other information which could identify an individual).*

8. **Are you able to give any examples of action taken because of comments made or issued raised about racism or racist behaviour in any exit interviews? If so, please describe what action was taken** *(Please do not provide names or other information which could identify an individual).*

9. **Whistleblowing can happen in different ways and through a variety of reporting channels. Are you aware of any whistleblowing cases in 2022-23 or 2023-24 which involved racist behaviour or comments?** (*Please tick one box*)

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

10. **If you answered "Yes" to Q9, please summarise the issue(s) involved (***Please do not provide names or other information which could identify an individual).*

11. **Please provide the total number on fitness-to-practice referrals made for social care in your authority in 2022-23 and 2023-24** *(Please write the total number for both years combined in the space provided, or "nil" or "don't know" as appropriate).*

    Total number of fitness-to-practice referrals made for social care in the financial years 2022-23 and 2023-24

12. **Please provide the number on fitness-to-practice referrals made for social care in your authority where the member of staff was known to be from an ethnic minority background for the 2022-23 and 2023-24 financial years** *(Please write the total number for both years combined in the space provided, or "nil" or "don't know" as appropriate).*

    Total number of fitness-to-practice referrals made for social care in the financial years 2022-23 and 2023-24 where the member of staff was known to have an ethnic minority background

13. **If you have undertaken any staff surveys with your social care workforce in the last two years which have produced information relevant to this project e.g. ethnicity, racism, the views of staff with an ethnic minority background etc., please summarise the relevant survey results / findings** *(please email copies of any relevant survey results / findings to [ ])*

14. **Has your Authority's social care department taken any action to address any identified issues of racism or racist behaviour and if so, please describe in broad terms the issues identified and what action was taken in response.**

15. **Please list the policy and procedures documents the Authority has on formal and informal grievances, complaints, and referrals. Please send a copy of each to [ ].**

Appendix 3: Discussion topics for in-depth conversations

The main questions and discussion areas on lived experience of racism and associated matters are listed below. The list was supplemented with prompts, which were used as necessary to achieve an in-depth discussion.

1. Current or former employment in social care and role(s).

2. Experience(s) of racist behaviour or comments at work or seen or heard any colleagues who were subject to such behaviour or comments; reasons and views on why it happened; feelings and impact; views on the organisation.

3. Whether a formal or informal complaint or grievance was raised and what happened as a result; whether satisfied with how it was handled and any action.

4. Reasons if no complaint was made or grievance raised.

5. Improvements needed for complaints and grievance systems, how matters about racism can be raised, and the support available to anyone who experiences or observes racism.

6. Good practice or developments to tackle racism by employers.

7. Extent to which their employer demonstrates a zero-tolerance approach.

Appendix 4: Online survey

The following lists the survey questions. Other text e.g. introductory text to explain the survey and arrangements around it are not included. Filters and branching were used to guide respondents through relevant questions.

1. **Which of the following best describes your current position?**
   [please tick one box only]

   - I work in social care.
   - I do not work in social care, but my role involves working with organisations in social care.
   - I used to work in social care or in a role which involved working with organisations in social care.
   - Other *[please give more information in the box below]*

2. **If you currently work in social care, do you work for a local authority or an independent provider?** *[please tick one box only]*

   - Local authority.
   - Independent social care provider.
   - Prefer not to say.

3. **Have you at any time, experienced racist behaviour or comments in work or seen or heard any colleagues who were subject to such behaviour or comments?** *[please tick one box only]*

   - I have experienced racist behaviour or comments in work.
   - I have seen racist behaviours or heard racist comments in work.
   - Both.
   - I have not experienced racist behaviour or seen or heard racist comments

4. **In your own words, please describe the racist behaviour(s) or comment(s) you have either experienced yourself or seen or heard in work.**

5. **Did you make a complaint or grievance to your employer or bring it to the attention of a manager or anyone else?** *[please tick one box only]*

   - Yes
   - No
   - Unsure - do not know or can't remember.

6. **If you raised a complaint or grievance with your organisation or brought it to the attention of a manager or anyone else, please tell us what happened as a result? What was the outcome?**

7. **Were you satisfied with the action taken and the outcome of your complaint or grievance?** *[please tick one box only]*

    - Yes – fully satisfied.
    - Yes – mostly satisfied.
    - No – mostly dissatisfied.
    - No – totally dissatisfied.

8. **If you were dissatisfied in any way or not fully satisfied, please tell us why. Is there any more your organisation could have done, or could or should have been done differently or better?**

9. **If you didn't make a complaint or grievance with your organisation or bring it to the attention of one of your managers, please say why. For example, what prevented or did not encourage you to do so?**

10. **While this survey has focused on what should not be happening, we are also keen to learn about good practice. If you are aware of any good practice in achieving an anti-racist organisation, please give brief details in the following box.**

11. **The following space is provided for any other comments you would like to make about any racist behaviours or comments you have experienced or have seen or heard, and/or the changes and improvements you believe are needed.**

Appendix 5: Project Reference Group Membership

- Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS) Cymru
- Welsh Local Government Association
- Care Inspectorate Wales
- Unison
- British Association of Social Workers
- Social Care Wales
- Race Equality First
- Ethnic Minority Research Advisory Group
- Equality and Human Rights Commission
- Travelling Ahead: The Gypsy Roma and Traveller Advice and Advocacy Service
- Ethnic Minorities and Youth Support Team
- Social Care Fair Work Forum

Appendix 6: References

1. Social Care Wales (2022) Workforce Survey. Cardiff: Social Care Wales