



ADSS Cymru

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Leading Social Services in Wales

Delivering social care in an anti-racist Wales

**Recruitment and career progression for staff
from ethnic minority backgrounds**

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' workforce survey data (2022), an estimated 84,134 people work in social care. At that time, the ethnicity of the workforce broadly mirrored that of the Welsh population except for the proportion of 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. The Welsh Government commissioned ADSS Cymru to undertake this study into recruitment and progression for staff from ethnic minority backgrounds as part of action to implement the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan.
3. A mixed methods approach was used. People's lived experiences was the core element, with evidence collected via an anonymous online survey and confidential conversations. The methods used reflect the sensitivity of the subject and, for some people, the personal trauma racism causes. The survey and conversations were developed in a way which encouraged individuals to feel comfortable about sharing their lived experiences openly and honestly.
4. Project Reference and Employee Insight Groups were set up to guide the project and promote engagement. Members also contributed views from their lived experiences.
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.

External recruitment by local authorities

6. Given this is a sample not a census, the statistical data must be treated with some caution, and not everyone declares ethnicity in job applications. Overall, for the sample, the percentage of job applications from people with an ethnic minority background (19.2%) is greater than the percentage of appointments (7.1%). However, the data showed considerable variation across Wales. For example, in one local authority, the figures were 22.2% and 19.6% respectively.

Internal recruitment by local authorities

7. There was less variation than external recruitment in the percentage of job applications from individuals with an ethnic minority background compared to job appointments. However, five local authorities were unable to provide the information on internal recruitment and three provided only partial information. The situation was similar for promotion of staff, with eight authorities unable to provide data. This highlights gaps in the monitoring and reporting of recruitment and promotion data.

Lived experience

8. The survey received 128 responses. Most respondents (89) are employed by local authorities, while 33 worked for independent social care providers. This information was complemented by 14 in-depth conversations, and the views of staff who participated in the Employee Insight Group.

9. Survey respondents were asked if they experienced any barriers or difficulties in the recruitment process when they joined their current employer. Nineteen out of 20 (95%) respondents said they did not encounter any. There was no difference between respondents with and without ethnic minority backgrounds.
10. Approximately one in three respondents had at some time applied for a job in another organisation within the social care sector. This was the same for respondents with and without an ethnic minority background.
11. There was very little difference in the proportion of respondents in the sample with ethnic minority backgrounds who had applied internally for a job at a higher level (39%) compared to those without an ethnic minority background (41%).
12. There were mixed comments about applying for jobs elsewhere and internally. There were positives where individuals had secured a job, and negatives where applications had been unsuccessful. One theme was common recruitment issues such as personal performance in interviews, the quality of feedback or lack of it, and understanding how the interview process works. The difficulties of securing promotion to a job where someone is already acting in the role in a temporary capacity was also highlighted. However, some comments suggest reasons for rejection include issues relating to experience and qualifications, and ethnicity.
13. For a variety of reasons, some staff have made a conscious decision not to apply for promotion. Reasons included personal circumstances and preferences, or a lack of confidence about their English language skills or Welsh language skills. However, several comments gave reasons linked to ethnicity and racism.
14. Survey responses show there are some initiatives in place to support staff from ethnic minority backgrounds e.g. support networks for staff, proactive encouragement to report any discrimination or mistreatment. Several respondents mentioned having a supportive manager.
15. Racism and associated matters featured prominently in lived experience for the group of staff who participated in the confidential conversations and in discussions with members of the Employee Insight Group. Key themes were:
 - The need for organisations to demonstrate zero-tolerance of racism and to improve anti-racism practice, which is believed to contribute to the lack of progression for staff with ethnic minority backgrounds.
 - Bias in the recruitment system. There is a perception recruiters feel people from minority ethnic backgrounds are not good enough; lack or do not have the skills and experience to progress.
 - The need to improve organisational culture and policies, particularly around addressing racism and de-biasing the recruitment process, and cultural awareness.
 - Training for directors and managers so they understand what people from ethnic minority backgrounds are up against i.e. the challenges they face in their careers.
 - More support of various kinds was mentioned by several respondents, including training and qualifications, and English and Welsh language skills.
 - Addressing the negative perception of social care, which is seen as a barrier to recruiting more staff from ethnic minority backgrounds and thus representation within the workforce, including senior levels.

16. There is a clear message more needs to be done. There were suggestions from staff with and without ethnic minority backgrounds about the need for equal opportunities and being treated equally, along with encouragement for training and supporting opportunities for progression e.g., mentoring, were the most common themes across both groups. Some comments reflected the need for education and cultural understanding of the white workforce to avoid stereotyping.
17. Suggestions for ways of attracting people from ethnic minority backgrounds to work in social care included terms and conditions, cultural competence of recruitment teams, and action to tackle racist, prejudicial and derogatory behaviours.

Action by local authorities

18. Fourteen local authorities responded to the request for information. This means the study was unable to obtain a complete national picture of recruitment and promotion of staff.
19. The efforts of those who did respond are appreciated. Some could not provide all the statistical data requested. Either the data is not routinely collected and monitored, or it is collected but was not available at the time of the request. There are gaps in the collection and reporting of workforce data by local authorities to monitor patterns of recruitment and promotion of staff from ethnic minority backgrounds.
20. There is significant action in some areas to recruit and/or to support staff with ethnic minority backgrounds and little or none in others. The type of action and initiatives vary. Some local authorities have gained considerable experience of action to achieve a more diverse workforce and others can learn from this.
21. Several local authorities are in the process of preparing new Strategic Equality Plans, with a more ethnically diverse workforce being mentioned in this context. With one or two exceptions, corporate action across a whole authority was the norm as opposed to specific action in social care.

Bias in recruitment

22. A review of policies, procedures and guidance documents identified the presence of confirmation, in-group, and implicit biases. It suggests some job application candidates from ethnic minority backgrounds might be unintentionally disadvantaged during recruitment and progression processes. This is reinforced by the lived experiences of staff who contributed to the study.

Conclusions

23. Lived experience shows a mixed picture but raises concerns. Some recruitment and promotion opportunity difficulties are common to all staff e.g. personal performance at interview; understanding the recruitment process, and the difficulty of securing a job when someone is already undertaking the role on a temporary basis. However, feedback suggests racism and related issues, including potential bias in recruitment practices, are at the root of some difficulties.

24. The information gained from the study points to the need for a multi-faceted approach to achieve a social care workforce which better reflects local populations and to increase equality in career paths in social care.
- (i) More efforts to tackle racism, prejudicial and derogatory behaviours with effective reporting mechanisms and follow-up action with clear outcomes, which respond to, but which are not limited by, priorities in the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan. This underpins any action to improve recruitment and career progression.
 - (ii) Improving organisational culture, practices and behaviours.
 - (iii) Addressing the lack of cultural awareness and understanding of the challenges staff with ethnic minority backgrounds face in their careers, particularly among directors and managers.
 - (iv) Improving recruitment policies and processes, the reach of recruitment activities, and the make-up and cultural competence of panels to ensure there is no bias (unconscious or conscious), positive action, and recognition that some individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds might require support.
 - (v) Lack of diversity at senior levels and role models who can inspire others to a career in social care.
 - (vi) The need for more support for staff in work and for career progression including networks, mentors, and training.
25. There is a marked commonality in themes across the different sources of data, notably recruitment processes and procedures and potential bias, and the continuing need to effectively tackle racism and to improve organisational culture.
26. Action by local authorities varies. Some are active in achieving a more ethnically diverse workforce which is more reflective of their local populations and as a result, they have considerable experience of what can be done and what works. To varying degrees, others are less active, with some indications that action to support staff from ethnic minority backgrounds is not planned or seen as a priority. At the same time, there are signs, albeit it very few, of new action, including robust self-assessment to assess the current position on workforce recruitment and selection of individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds and to provide evidence to inform developments and improvements. This is encouraging.
27. Social care was the focus for this study, but the findings and the recommendations are relevant to all local authority departments. Social care departments alone cannot make the necessary changes. Corporate action is required, harnessing the skills and expertise of corporate Human Resource Departments and authority-wide commitment to improve recruitment and career progression arrangements.

Action by Directors of Social Services

28. Directors of Social Services will act on the findings of this study by:
- a) Sharing the findings of this study with their Chief Executives and Human Resources Departments as the basis for corporate action to make the necessary changes, which extend beyond social care.

- b) Ensuring every member of future recruitment and selection panels for vacancies in social care has undertaken cultural awareness training before shortlisting and interviewing candidates.
- c) Working with their Human Resources Departments to address any gaps in the data needed to monitor and compare recruitment and promotion statistics for candidates from ethnic minority backgrounds with those for all other staff.
- d) Arranging for all staff in social care to receive training on cultural awareness and other matters relevant to tackling racism.
- e) Ensuring arrangements are in place within their departments to review and, where necessary, increase the support provided to new and existing staff from ethnic minority backgrounds in the recruitment process and in work.
- f) Sharing their experience of recruiting and supporting staff from ethnic minority backgrounds with other local authorities and their intentions for further improvements in recruiting staff from ethnic minority backgrounds.
- g) Using their annual report to demonstrate progress against the findings of the study.

Recommendations

29. Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended all local authorities:
- a) Have in place robust reporting mechanisms to eradicate racism and to demonstrate organisational cultural change which supports an ethnically diverse workforce. This should be underpinned by regular mandatory training on cultural awareness and other matters relevant to tackling racism.
 - b) Undertake regular audits and reporting to compare external and internal recruitment / promotion patterns for staff with and without ethnic minority backgrounds.
 - c) Review their recruitment policies and procedures and, where necessary, make changes which demonstrates positive action towards the recruitment of people from ethnic minority backgrounds. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - (i) removing any potential biases in policies and procedures.
 - (ii) reaching out to ethnic minority communities with job opportunities.
 - (iii) the make-up of recruitment panels.
 - (iv) anonymised recruitment practices.
 - (v) consistent application rating/evaluation systems
 - (vi) the use of positive action.
 - (vii) recognition some candidates from ethnic minority backgrounds might require support with job applications and career progression.
 - (viii) proactively collecting feedback from successful and unsuccessful job applicants from ethnic minority backgrounds to inform continuous improvement.
 - d) Ensure all members of recruitment panels receive cultural awareness training before interviewing. Training for recruiters should be ongoing and in-person, not “one-off” and e-learning.

- e) 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 best practice between local authorities to stimulate more action to increase applications from people from ethnic minority backgrounds to support existing staff to progress their careers.
 - f) Have in place staff forums or networks to review and where necessary, to increase the support available to new and existing staff from ethnic minority backgrounds and to provide for open, safe and non-judgemental conversations, coaching, mentoring and training, including training in language skills.
 - 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.
30. ADSS Cymru is committed to working with all local authorities, 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. Directors of Social Services will share the findings of the study with their Chief Executives and Human Resources departments as the basis for corporate action to make the necessary changes, which extend beyond social care.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Welsh Government commissioned the Association of Directors of Social Services Cymru (“ADSS Cymru”) to work on an important element of the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan. The Plan aims to ensure people from ethnic minority backgrounds do not experience barriers to employment and a career in social care, and a zero-tolerance policy on racism.
- 1.2 The project has been delivered under the banner of ‘Social Care: Insights into the experiences of the workforce from ethnic minority backgrounds’ and has two distinct streams of work. One workstream examines racist behaviours in the workplace, including the nature of behaviour, complaints and grievances about such behaviour, and what happened as a result. The second workstream considers local authorities’ selection and progression policies for middle management and leadership roles.
- 1.3 This report covers the second workstream, the recruitment and career progression of staff with ethnic minority backgrounds. 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 good practice which can be shared.
- 1.4 Jenny Williams, Strategic Director of Social Services and Education for Conwy County Borough Council, led the project on behalf of ADSS Cymru.

Approach

- 1.5 The lived experience of people who work, or who have worked, in social care or who have sought work in social care is at the heart of the work. The project development and implementation reflect this.
- 1.6 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.
- 1.7 Directors of Social Services were asked to nominate one or more members of staff from their social care and/or their Human Resources Department as liaison points for the provision of information and to help promote and encourage individuals to share their lived experience.
- 1.8 A decision was made early in the project development to extend the data capture to allow staff with ethnic minority backgrounds working in the independent sector to share their lived experience. Racism cuts across organisational boundaries. The project covered recruitment in its broadest sense i.e. recruitment to any job in social care.
- 1.9 Two groups were established early in the project development to guide the work and to help engage the workforce.

Project Reference Group

- 1.10 The members of the Project Reference Group were from a wide range of stakeholder organisations, including representatives of 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 it manifests itself in social care, which helped guide the research (see Appendix 1 Glossary for definition). Members were involved in designing the data collection instruments and engaging the workforce, identifying ways of 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

- 1.11 The Employee Insight Group consisted of ten current or former members of the workforce of social care, the NHS, the third sector, and higher education institutions. The 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 participated in a series of round table discussions which were held to explore, in a safe confidential environment, their personal experiences.

Terminology

- 1.12 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 into recruitment and progression.
- 1.13 This report recognises the use of terminology such as Black Asian Ethnic Minority and “ethnic minorities” is not welcomed and 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

- 1.14 Two ways were developed to encourage individuals to share their lived experiences openly and honestly in a way in which they felt comfortable:
- A completely **anonymous online survey** for each workstream.
 - A **confidential 1:1 conversation** to explore recruitment and career progression in a social care setting with members of the project team, some members of which have an ethnic minority background.

- 1.15 The above methods reflect the sensitivity of the subject, and for some people, the personal trauma racism can cause. More information on methodologies is provided in the relevant chapters.
- 1.16 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.

This report

- 1.17 This report brings together information from different sources, which are reflected in its structure. **Chapter 2** provides background and contextual data. **Chapter 3** reports the findings of the online survey of the workforce and **Chapter 4** summarises feedback from the in-depth conversations.
- 1.18 **Chapter 5** summarises feedback from workforce stakeholders while **Chapters 6 and 7** summarise the views of local authorities and the results of a review of policy and procedures documents. **Chapter 8** draws out the conclusions of the study and makes a series of recommendations.
- 1.19 Copies of research tools developed for the project are provided in the appendices along with a glossary of terms.

Acknowledgements

- 1.20 The project team is grateful to all nominated contacts in local authorities for their help in progressing the work, to Jenny Williams as the lead Director for ADSS Cymru, and to members of the Project Reference and Employee Insight groups. Thanks are also due to Social Care Wales for sharing relevant data from its project and for a co-ordinated approach to information gathering, and to all other stakeholders, including Welsh Government officials.

2. Context

- 2.1 According to the latest published data from Social Care Wales' workforce survey (2022)ⁱ, 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.

Recruitment and selection activity

- 2.3 To provide context for this study of recruitment and career progression for staff with an ethnic minority background, local authorities were asked for a mix of quantitative and qualitative data. The statistical data was for the last two full financial years 2022-23 and 2023-24. The qualitative data were comments in response to questions about recruitment and action to achieve a more ethnically diverse workforce. Copies of relevant recruitment policy and procedures documents were also requested. The qualitative data and the results of the review of policy and procedures documents are summarised later in this report.
- 2.4 Fourteen local authorities responded to the request for information. A copy of the request is provided at Appendix 2. Two local authorities were able to provide all the data requested. Two were unable to provide any statistical data but responded to the other questions. Most of the local authorities who responded were able to provide some data, with varying numbers of gaps.
- 2.5 There were two main reasons why all the statistical data requested was not provided. Either the data is not routinely collected and monitored, or it is collected but was not available at the time of the request. The reasons why several local authorities did not respond to the non-statistical questions are unknown.
- 2.6 The following paragraphs provide an overview of recruitment activity. There are marked differences between local authorities. Two local authorities reported single figures for external and internal vacancies advertised over the two financial years. The figures for total numbers of staff promoted and number of staff with ethnic minority backgrounds is based on five local authorities who were able to provide the data.
- 2.7 The number of applications for external and internal advertised vacancies also varied considerably between local authorities. Each vacancy advertised externally typically attracted between 3-6 applicants although in two authorities, the figures were nine and 11. For internally advertised vacancies, the numbers were lower, with fewer applications than vacancies in one authority, and 1-4 applications for each vacancy in others.

External recruitment

- 2.8 The following table summarises external recruitment activity in the financial years 2022-23 and 2023-24 by the 14 local authorities who provided all or some data.

Table 2.1: External recruitment activity and appointments made, 2022-23 and 2023-24, in a sample of 14 local authorities

		No.	%
Vacancies and applicants	Total number of social care vacancies advertised externally in 2022-23 and 2023-24	3,535	
	Total number of applicants for all vacancies advertised externally	23,790	
	Total number of applicants with an ethnic minority background (where stated).	4,565	19.2
Appointments	Total number of new staff appointed as a result of external recruitment	2,936	
	Total number of new staff with an ethnic minority background appointed (where stated)	209	7.1

Source: ADSS Cymru 2024

- 2.9 Job applications from people with an ethnic minority background are 19.2% of all job applications in social care, compared to 7.1% of appointments. Caution is needed when considering these average figures. Some staff appointment figures might include other departments, and there is considerable variation in individual local authority's figures. For example, in one authority the figures were 22.2% and 19.6 % respectively.

Internal recruitment (career progression)

- 2.10 Table 2 summarises internal recruitment activity in the financial years 2022-23 and 2023-24 by the 14 local authorities who provided all or some data.

Table 2.2: Internal recruitment activity and appointments made, 2022-23 and 2023-24, in a sample of 14 local authorities

		No.	%
Vacancies and applicants	Total number of social care vacancies advertised internally only	1,392	
	Total number of applicants for vacancies advertised internally only	4,758	
	Total number of internal applicants with an ethnic minority background (where stated)	494	10.4
Appointments	Total number of staff appointed from an internal only recruitment process	414	
	Total number of staff with an ethnic minority background (where stated) appointed from an internal only recruitment process	40	9.7

Source: ADSS Cymru 2024

- 2.11 Caution is needed on the figures. One local authority explained external applicants can apply for jobs on its internal recruitment site. Five local authorities were unable to provide this information while three provided partial information.

Promotion

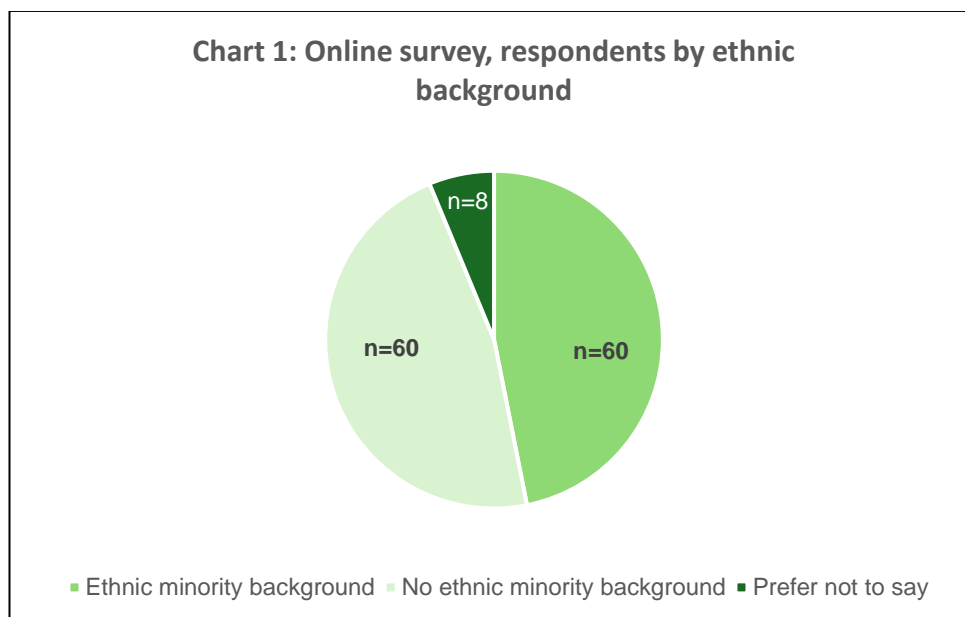
- 2.12 Local authorities were also asked how many staff in social care were promoted in 2022-23 and 2023-24. Of the total of 631 promoted and where ethnicity was stated, 66 (10.5%) had an ethnic minority background. Once again, there was variation between individual local authorities who provided the figures. Eight of the 14 local authorities were unable to provide this information, either because it is not collected, or it is collected but was not available.

3. Lived experience: online survey

- 3.1 To encourage responses and to assure respondents it was a safe way for them to speak freely and honestly, a completely anonymous online survey was developed. A small amount of information on respondents was collected to describe the make-up of the sample.
- 3.2 While the prime target audience was current or past social care staff from ethnic minority backgrounds, the survey was open to anyone who could offer lived experience or perspectives and observations on the subject. Given that staff from ethnic minority backgrounds work across the whole social care sector, the survey was open to staff who work for independent social care providers.
- 3.3 The online survey was launched on 11 March 2024 and closed on 10 May 2024. A copy of the survey is provided in Appendix 3. The survey was available in English and Welsh.
- 3.4 The survey reflects a co-ordinated approach with Social Care Wales, which was commissioned by the Welsh Government to consider leadership development and support for social care staff who have an ethnic minority background. This topic is closely related to recruitment and career progression, which is the focus of this study. Therefore, instead of two separate surveys covering similar ground at the same time, the survey incorporated three questions for Social Care Wales on barriers to leadership and the support needed. The data, which was also anonymous, was provided to Social Care Wales at the end of the survey.
- 3.5 Given the emphasis on lived experience as the key feature of the study, there is no better way to convey the key messages other than to read people's own words. For this reason, this report includes many quotes to supplement summaries analyses of findings.

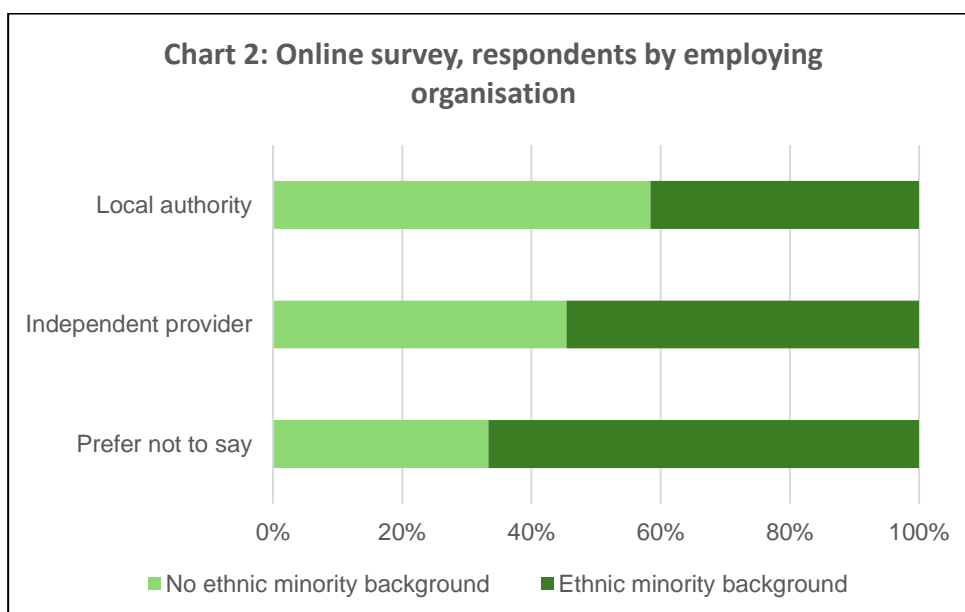
Response

- 3.6 The survey secured 128 responses of which 120 work in social care. No respondent used the Welsh language version. Four respondents do not work in social care, but their responses indicate they have worked in social care in the past. The remaining four respondents are in roles that work with social care.
- 3.7 The survey was targeted at social care staff with an ethnic minority background but given the subject matter and its relevance to other staff e.g. staff in Human Resource departments, it was open to anyone who wished to comment. The response was split almost equally, as shown in the following chart.



3.8 Sixty respondents have an ethnic minority background and 60 do not. Eight respondents declined to state their background,

3.9 Most respondents (89) are employed by local authorities, while 33 worked for independent social care providers. Six respondents preferred not to state their employer.



External recruitment

3.10 Respondents were asked if they experienced any barriers or difficulties in the recruitment process when they joined their current employer. 95% of the 124 respondents said they did not encounter any. There was no difference between respondents with or without ethnic minority backgrounds.

3.11 Of the 7 respondents who encountered difficulties or barriers, 2 referred to being from an ethnic minority background.

- *“As a minority, recruitment was hard.”*

- *“Information, training and communication withheld. Prejudicial assumptions made about me and shared openly as ‘fact’. My special category data abused and emailed to others without my knowledge or consent...”*

3.12 In response to being asked how such difficulties and barrier should be addressed, one of the respondents said there needs to be more people from ethnic minority backgrounds in high positions. The other said Welsh Ministers should require public bodies to uphold the law or face being reported to higher bodies so there is real redress for the individual.

3.13 Respondents were asked what more could be done to attract people from ethnic minority backgrounds to work in social care. Fifty-nine respondents answered the question of which 42 were suggestions. Of these, 14 were from respondents who did not have an ethnic minority background. The most frequent suggestion was promoting jobs in social care to people with ethnic minority backgrounds. The main points from feedback were:

- Promoting job opportunities to people with ethnic minority backgrounds, including the use of role models / examples of people working in the sector, reaching out to communities via grassroots organisations with existing employees as “ambassadors” to share their positive experiences.
- Terms and conditions e.g. job stability (e.g. regular hours) which are better than other sectors such as hospitality, overseas workers allowed to bring dependents, and enhanced induction and support to settle in and to develop.
- Greater diversity at senior levels.
- Cultural competence of the recruitment team and local authority staff in general.
- Fair treatment and reporting / action for racist, prejudicial and derogatory behaviours.

3.14 One respondent said Welsh language requirements can be a barrier. Examples of other suggestions from individual respondents are:

- *“I think there is quite a good amount of variety of people working in social care. Our ethnicity and experience draws to this type of work to enrich it. However what can be done is to stop using this word ethnic ‘minority’, the term in itself offends and can be a deterrent ”*
- *“Offer and advertise anonymous recruitment. Develop a presence of experienced staff with knowledge of working and promoting multi-ethnic environments even if it’s on a sessional basis. I had valuable half day open forums where equality trainers/peers/guests would facilitate and encourage all the seemingly ‘no go’ questions which was effective in fostering ”*
- *“I am a white British person working for an ethnic minority company, however I grew up elsewhere. If staff from ethnic minority backgrounds could be guaranteed that they would be treated the same by service users, their colleagues, etc., I think this would make it more attractive. They face a lot of direct and indirect discrimination due to ‘not being British’.”*
- *“Reassurance of support and appropriate measures and policies in place should a person experience any discrimination in their workplace or when working in the community.”*

Moving to another organisation

- 3.15 Approximately one in three respondents had at some time applied for a job in another organisation within the social care sector. This figure was the same for respondents with or without an ethnic minority background.
- 3.16 Comments from ethnic minority respondents were mixed. One respondent said they had not experienced any difficulties in finding a job as the care sector is always short of staff. There were positives where individuals had secured a job and negatives where applications had been unsuccessful:
- *“Yes, there is no understanding of the challenges that BAME people experience.”*
 - *“Several, dashed hopes at the end of the day. They request for having 1 year care experience, UK driving license. Not willing to grant 20 hours per week minimum working hours.”*
 - *“Rejection without reason, rejected because I did not have a driving licence, turned down because I did not have the minimum UK work experience.”*
 - *“I had difficulties in recognising my certificates so I can apply for a job as a qualified worker. No other issues.”*
 - *“I went to one interview and the director was disappointed to see me. The only reason was my colour as she didn't know me before. She left the interview saying she has got an email to send and never came back.”*
 - *“It is very difficult to be recruited to a new job because most companies don't want to incur the cost of sponsorship or relocation. Also most companies need you to have lived more than 3 years.”*
- 3.17 The comments of two respondents focused on their experience before they moved to another organisation, and indicates discriminatory behaviours for leaving:
- *“The work environment became really difficult. I was now allocated all the difficult cases, no team support. This had previously been present but became more pronounced when I declared my intention to leave.”*
 - *“The relationship with my manager became toxic. I was allocated the most difficult cases, there was no supervision for the last the months and by the time I had left the local authority I could not hand over my families properly because I could not even tell them who was taking over from me.”*

Internal recruitment - progression

- 3.18 There was very little difference in the proportion of respondents with ethnic minority backgrounds who had applied internally for a job at a higher level (39%) compared to those without an ethnic minority background (41%).
- 3.19 Twenty-two respondents who have an ethnic minority background gave information on the outcome of their applications. Comments included both successful and unsuccessful applications. Setting aside those which simply said “successful” or “unsuccessful”, the comments were broadly the same as those from staff who are not from an ethnic minority background.

3.20 Examples of comments from respondents with an ethnic minority background are:

- *"I have applied, however the person who got the job was better at presenting themselves in a better light. I still believe I was more suited for the role. Feedback received."*
- *"Not successful, but they did offer me other temporary role for me to gain experience."*
- *"I believe, from hearsay within the organisation, that some posts were "pre decided."*
- *"I was unsuccessful as I did not have the experience."*
- *"Unsuccessful, my answers were not sufficiently detailed."*
- *"Unfortunately, it was not successful because I did not speak well enough about my perceived values."*
- *"I did not get this position. I interviewed with for a job with another person who was already acting in the role. The moment I was aware of this I felt that I had no chance to get the position regardless of my performance. I was also made aware that one of the person on the interview panel knew the other person interviewing on a personal or professional capacity. I felt disadvantaged greatly and even when I got the feedback of my interview it was pretty mediocre because I know that I performed well. I do not think I will ever have the confidence to ever apply for a higher up position within the council. There is a lot of nepotism and recruitment processes feel like a tick box exercise."*
- *"I applied for a same level job but in another team. This experience was very positive as well, no barriers."*

3.21 In this question, no respondents referred specifically to matters relating to their ethnic minority background.

3.22 Respondents were also asked if there had been any job opportunities at a higher level for which they did not apply and the reasons why they did not apply. The themes were varied. In some cases, the comments were by one or two respondents:

- Happy at current level or work-life balance - balancing additional demands of the new job at a higher level and home life.
- Perceptions of a pre-determined outcome e.g. someone already in the job.
- Need for more qualifications and/or experience.
- Worry about English language skills.
- Welsh language skills required.

3.23 Comments from respondents with ethnic minority backgrounds included:

- *"I would not apply for any other higher paid jobs, because I and other colleagues have found that usually these jobs are already earmarked for favourites / face fits, rather than capability or competence, so one would be putting effort into the application process just to make up numbers of applicants / interviews only."*
- *"Working with local carers who feel intimidated and only treat you different as though you don't belong."*

- *“Yes, I thought because of my background it was a waste of time.”*
 - *“I have applied, but soon realised that these positions are kept for locals.”*
 - *“I was worried about my English which may not be up to the requirement or cannot compete with other applicants.”*
 - *“Yes, there was a higher role i did not apply for because I felt it would be a wasted effort because I would not be considered for the role.”*
 - *“Not apply due to feeling like I don't fit in and being the only one representing my ethnic group.”*
- 3.24 A follow-up question asked about people's positive and negative experiences of applying for jobs internally. Broadly speaking, there was a balance between positive and negative comments.
- 3.25 Examples of positive comments included a feeling of being treated equally, a considerate employer, support from manager and/or team to gain more experience and having a mentor. A few respondents made general remarks e.g. they had not experienced any difficulties in their job or in applying for jobs, or their experience was positive. One said their ethnic background had had no impact on any process.
- 3.26 Three respondents would like to improve their English language skills, which they feel is a barrier to their progress. One said they find it more difficult to express themselves effectively in an interview when they are nervous and when English is a second language.
- 3.27 There were, however, several negative comments, some of which indicated racism or other issues related to someone's ethnic minority background. They were largely individual experiences. However, three respondents referred to matters which suggest they are treated differently when it comes to the allocation of work. One made a direct statement of biases in task allocation. Another said they and colleagues from ethnic minority backgrounds are allocated “the difficult families”; ones that will not engage, and they often face abuse as a result.
- 3.28 Examples of other negative comments are:
- *“My communication and how I may problem solve can be seen as different and not what they are use to and I can then be mis judged and not engaged with as I feel treated as I don't understand, causes frustration and withdrawal which then impacts on doing work. Or am assigned what is better for me, and not using my full potential.”*
 - *“Your opinion is valued less than those of natives.”*
 - *“Sometimes we get sidelined by colleagues assuming you don't know how to your job ”*
 - *“Racism is a huge issue Cultural differences may bring about conflicts because of the way we do things and people aren't willing to understand.”*
 - *“Isolated, did not fit in, not 'one of us', too posh, strange accent”*
 - *“Low self-esteem and confidence. I felt hopeless and helpless. I do not trust that fairness exists in the recruitment process especially the council one to be honest. It is just not me but I have spoken to friends of mine who feel this way about the council. There is now a belief that there are no genuine opportunities so some have stopped to even apply.”*

- *“I don't think racism is far more covert today, it's how black people are made to feel or their views are not taken into account and when it is explained how one is feeling they are blamed for 'playing the victim' or the race card.”*
- *“I am often told that my personal traits are due to my heritage and am often told I am "typical" for my heritage. Most of the time I view this as a negative”*

3.29 One respondent specifically mentioned the grievance process. They cited poor management of it with no written minutes of meetings and the changes agreed. They said there is no support or acknowledgment of experiences of discrimination or racial micro aggressions. Another respondent said they would never progress in “racist Wales”.

3.30 A Team Manager with staff from ethnic minority backgrounds said:

- *“I have been shocked to witness the discrimination that they have had to endure. Measures I have put in include staff/team measures to build up a strong community within the team so that staff who are not of an ethnic minority background fully understand the issues that their colleagues are facing and stand shoulder to shoulder with them in challenging that discrimination in a positive, educational way. We developed a session where each staff member created a profile about themselves to include hobbies, interests, family background so that each person got to see their likenesses and differences that are regardless of ethnic origin. We have developed supportive and open discussions through peer supervision to help staff of all backgrounds feel confident to challenge discrimination.”*

3.31 Another respondent said that although they are white and British born, merely because they do not have a British accent, people assume they are foreign. They have been told to “go back to where you belong”. They say that if this is the kind of treatment they experience, they doubt whether there will ever be an understanding of what they (people from ethnic minority backgrounds) encounter daily.

Support for staff with ethnic minority backgrounds

3.32 The survey sought to capture positive developments and practice in addition to identifying the problems and difficulties faced by staff from an ethnic minority background. Seventy-one respondents with and without an ethnic minority background answered this question, of which half (35) said they were unaware of any specific initiatives. Another 11 made general comments e.g. referring to equal opportunities policies and training available to all staff.

3.33 Specific initiatives mentioned by individual respondents were support networks for staff, proactive encouragement to report any discrimination or mistreatment. The best example of an initiative was:

- *“I was recruited as an overseas qualified social worker in [-redacted-]. The LA had a very thorough and well put together support program which helped me and the other social workers settle in. The support program contained not only Induction, Shadowing etc but practical help as well such as finding rental properties, opening a bank account and driving lessons.”*

3.34 Several respondents mentioned having a supportive manager, including this example:

- *“When I first joined [-redacted-] my boss [-redacted-] was so supportive. When the first Ramadan came around, he called a meeting and asked if there was anything he could do to support me. He told me that he knew Muslims through [-redacted-] but had no idea*

of how Ramadan affects us. I found this particularly touching that he went to the trouble of reading up on Ramadan so that he could look at how to support me. He has taken on another team and spoken to the two Muslims there in the same manner. We don't need lunch breaks but legally have to take them and he is accommodating around adjusting hours and taking shorter weeks using flexi and annual leave."

What more can be done

- 3.35 Comments were made by staff with and without ethnic minority backgrounds. Equal opportunities and being treated equally, along with encouragement for training and supporting opportunities for progression e.g. mentoring, were the most common themes across both. Some comments also reflected the need for education and cultural understanding to avoid stereotyping.
- 3.36 There was also reference from a couple of respondents (from ethnic minority backgrounds) to two other subjects. First, the need for management to be more diverse. Second, the need to recruit the right person for a job irrespective of background. That said, some caution is needed to avoid bias in seeing ethnic minority individuals as only being able to work in certain communities or disadvantaged areas.
- *"I believe the LA I work for is already doing everything that can be done. All promotions are done on merit and performance regardless of ethnic background. It is a fair process and I have not personally experienced or are aware of anyone experiencing any barriers or discrimination."*
 - *"I would recruit the most qualified talented people for the roles which would include people from ethnic minorities."*
 - *"I have not heard or ever noticed any barriers to ethnic minorities. Right person for the right job. If there is racism, I have not experienced it or seen it."*
- 3.37 On a broader service delivery note, one respondent (no ethnic minority background) said they had seen discriminative attitudes working with the general population and struggle to deal with them. They do not always know if it is appropriate to challenge these ideologies when their role is to support the individuals expressing the opinions, and would feel uncomfortable if they had to warn a colleague about an individual when there is zero tolerance for abusive attitudes towards those with ethnic backgrounds. This suggests the need for help for staff on how to deal with such matters to, over time, bear down and halt such behaviours in their tracks.

Use of the term "ethnic minority"

- 3.38 Several respondents picked up on the use of the term "ethnic minority", with specific comments including the following examples:
- *"Please stop calling me an 'ethnic minority'. I have earned the right for a British passport and do not want to be treated any differently to my colleagues - I consider this form to be racist towards my colleagues who are predominately Welsh."*
 - *"I don't wish to be considered an 'ethnic minority' I am British."*
 - *"The word 'ethnic minority' is a big problem worldwide, why are we classing people as minority, it is a bad narrative to start. This already puts an individual down and impacts on where you want to go because of the way the word marginalises you. We already are*

battling with how we are made to feel different and then have a group name and all other else. It would be better to just use Ethnicity (although this still singles out but less discriminatory). Just some consideration for future surveys. Also providing me with someone from 'ethnic' group to help to get higher or to discuss this survey or concerns should not be the way, we all need to work together more so the ones who are classing themselves as non-ethnic. Thanks"

- 3.39 As stated at the outset (paragraph 1.13 refers), this report recognises the use of terminology such as “Black Asian Ethnic Minority” and “ethnic minorities” is not welcomed by some people as words which describe their ethnicity and heritage. We understand the views expressed above on terminology. It not our intention to cause any offence and the need for an ongoing discussion regarding terminology is recognised.

4. Lived experience: key themes of conversations

- 4.1 To complement the online survey and for greater in-depth discussion of lived experience, the opportunity of a confidential conversation was offered. The main areas of discussion are listed in Appendix 4. This chapter summarises the 14 conversations, the notes of which were verified by each participant prior to analysis. On average, participants had around 20 years employment in social care and thus considerable experience on which to draw.
- 4.2 Prior to each conversation, the participant was sent a factsheet detailing the project aims and outcomes and protocols for gathering, storing, and sharing their information. Participants were asked to confirm they were happy to proceed. The data collection and safeguarding policy, and duty of care, were explained prior to the conversation. 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.
- 4.3 Participants were also alerted to the support 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.

Analysis and reporting

- 4.4 The analysis is based on participants' responses to the conversation questions and is grouped into themes based on the frequency of words, phrases, and participants' common assertions. A wide range of perspectives were offered and discussed. Also, there were no time limits on participants experience. For example, one referenced an incident which took place more than 30 years ago. However, it was significant enough for them to recall it and refer to it as racism. Nearly all participants had personal stories about how racism had affected their careers, choice of career, progress within their chosen career, or confidence in seeing themselves in more senior roles.
- 4.5 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. A theme of "hidden heritage" has also been captured. This 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.
- 4.6 The following pages are structured around the common themes to emerge from the discussions. Their experiences and perspectives, and thus the focus of their comments, varied. The ongoing need to tackle racism accompanies comments about recruitment and career progression for people with ethnic minority backgrounds.

Policies, perceptions, and procedures

- 4.7 Demonstrating zero tolerance and a recognition of the need for organisations to address racism or improve their anti-racism practices was mentioned by eight participants. Four

participants said racism has contributed to the lack of progression into leadership roles. The lack of information on skill levels required to advance one's career was strongly felt.

- 4.8 There is a perception that some recruiters in social care feel people from minority ethnic backgrounds are not good enough. Participants feel people from ethnic minority backgrounds are perceived to lack or do not have the skills and experience to progress.
- *“They look at us and don't think we have the levels of education, experience. There needs to be a culture change.*
 - *“The selection is dressed up to reflect the type of people they want...The language used, such as ‘you need to work at pace’, excludes so many people. Why can't we take our time and deliver something meaningful?*
 - *“If you are a social worker from an ethnic minority background you are a target. For example, because of the way you talk. If you can't have a team manager or organisation that understands that challenge – it's difficult to do your job*
- 4.9 The need to improve organisational culture and policies was mentioned by six participants, particularly around addressing racism and de-biasing the recruitment process.

Training, qualifications and career progression

- 4.10 Participants' routes into social care varied. Several participants gained qualifications outside Wales and in some cases, outside the UK, needing help securing funds to progress in their careers. All participants cited the importance of training, particularly around developing leadership skills.
- 4.11 Financial situations are a significant factor in pursuing a career in social work, with 2 participants highlighting difficulties accessing funds for courses and further training, and how the cost-of-living crisis is impacting some ethnic minority communities.
- 4.12 Access to training and higher education was referenced by 2 participants who suggested bursaries and subsidised training should be offered to attract people from ethnic minority backgrounds who wanted to progress to social care leadership roles. Shadowing opportunities, line management support and pastoral care for the workforce were also deemed attractive elements of a recruitment offer.
- *“I think the sector is full of Black and ethnic minority people. They essentially work in social care as carers, cleaners, and ancillary workers. The problem is the training and progression opportunities are not there.”*
 - *“We need to establish “Bursary Grant for BAME” to attract more community member in the sector at Management Leadership Levels.”*
 - *“I want to move into a managerial position to Level 5 and become a Care Manager. Why – need more money to provide a competence-based Training service. So many want to become a role model for the communities we, serve.”*
- 4.13 The need for support for care workers was mentioned. For many, their first language is not English, so additional support is needed. One other suggestion was to waive the requirement for Welsh.

- *“When English is a second language it is much harder [-redacted-] gave the example of a friend with English as a second language and how this person struggled with coursework on social work degree courses and how there was little support with that.”*
- 4.14 There was evidence of self-development among participants. Three participants have self-funded their higher education courses or gained funding to pursue university courses. Five explained how they had carved their career path and opportunities to enhance their life choices and that of their communities. They outlined their different routes into senior positions, citing self-determination, peer support, mentoring, and individual skills, and expertise as beneficial to their career development.
- *“I had my important people around me and created my own opportunities. I have acquired some form of power and I use that. It took time.... I manoeuvred myself in my career and got the roles I wanted to get. I came to a point in my career where I established my credibility.”*
- 4.15 Two participants described their experience using the Welsh government's anti-racism agenda to challenge recruitment and policy, providing validation for their experience and opportunities to influence better outcomes for ethnic minority communities who have leadership aspirations. They had a clear vision on what they want to achieve.
- 4.16 There were comparisons of the opportunities and approaches in England and Wales in entering social care. One participant said they grew up in England and their local council paid for their training on the understanding they would work for them for three years.

Working environment

- 4.17 Overall, participants consider there is a negative perception of the social care sector which is a barrier to ethnic minorities' entry into the profession. Some participants consider the working environment is unsafe and unwelcoming, with a lack of representative role models to help attract more ethnic minorities to take up careers in social care.
- *“I couldn't honestly recommend to someone from a minority ethnic background to come and work in this LA as I don't think it's a safe environment for them.”*
 - *“Make those already there feel they are in a safe space.”*
- 4.18 Demonstrating cultural awareness featured strongly as a shortcoming that organisations should address. One participant said better awareness of the cultural barriers that hindered certain ethnic groups from entering social care would provide more informed recruitment campaigns, especially in attracting women into the sector.
- 4.19 Not feeling seen or valued for their cultural difference was expressed strongly by six participants. Four participants referred to the need for cultural awareness to address the negative stereotyping of certain ethnic groups to address racism in their recruitment and progression process.
- *“Management. If they don't understand what the challenges are. If you are a social worker from an ethnic minority background you are a target. For example, because of the way you talk. If you can't have a team manager or organisation that understands that challenge – it's difficult to do your job. For instance, if you're a social worker from an ethnic minority background working in rural Wales – if you don't have a good management to support you, it's difficult.”*

4.20 Two participants called for positive action, anti-racism, cultural awareness, and unconscious bias training to develop organisations and to address racism. Three participants called for more focus on organisation culture change, with the need to celebrate differences positively and have conversations on family values to bring a better understanding of how to support people from ethnic minority backgrounds in the workplace.

- *“Support is not about helping the person applying for the job, there should be way more training in the workplace on unconscious bias, that’s not done often enough. It should be done at least twice a year, and carried out by colleagues from minority ethnic background. Should also be done by a white person too to show they understand.”*
- *“Lack of celebration of differences. Seeing us for who we are. We’ve done so much positive work in the other arenas of other protected characteristics.”*
- *“Also, there needs to be a culture change so people are not discriminated by their accents. It shouldn’t be like that. We need the sector to accept suitability doesn’t look one way.”*
- *“Making them feel welcome – but how you as an organisation can understand the challenges that people face in this role. When people understand racism, discrimination, that you are aware, understand and take action to protect them.”*
- *“Annual leave allowance goes very quickly, as a newly qualified social worker it wouldn’t have been an option to request additional time off for Ramadan or Eid. Organisations could consider offering two faith days per year. This would attract more ethnic minority to the workforce, and also would send a message about what the culture of the organisation is like.”*
- *“I’d like to see a diversification of training in anti-racism. Mandatory and integrated training anti-gypsyism training repeated throughout social workers’ career.”*

Increasing representation

4.21 The current makeup of the social care leadership being dominated by white men was cited, with 2 participants stating this was a barrier for ethnic minority women entering the profession who did not see themselves represented by black or brown women in senior roles.

- *“Possibly that the sector is male dominated and white. Where I’m based there are few people from ethnic backgrounds.”*
- *“Seeing more strong, Black leadership... There’s a need to see more people that look like them. Fifty per cent of social workers are female. However, the majority of social care managers are white males. I’ve had 5 white male managers.”*
- *“The expectation culturally is for women not be the main breadwinner. You have to be strong as a minority ethnic woman wanting to progress.”*

4.22 More targeted recruitment campaigns to attract specific underrepresented groups featured strongly in discussions. Five participants described examples of how to use staff already in social care to attract others to the profession, emphasizing the skills people had to offer to strengthen the social care sector. Six participants emphasised the need to see people who looked like them in leadership roles.

- *“Recruitment campaigns have to be targeted to different ethnic groups. For example, Gypsy Roma and Traveller people work in social care, they are there, but hidden, why are they hidden?”*
- *“Representation – would like to see diversity at senior levels, but we have to bring in front-line staff first so that they can progress.”*
- *“Attracting ethnic minority women in to the workforce is about supporting better work-life balance, shorter working hours, term-time working. There are considerations to bear in mind however because it’s difficult to know what to do with your case load if term-time working.”*
- *“I know Gypsy Roma and Traveller people who work and love working in social care. We need to do more around myth-busting the stereotype of patriarchal traditional families. That’s not how it is anymore.”*

4.23 Two participants suggested stronger messaging to recruit people from ethnic minority backgrounds into care, with organisations highlighting their policies around creating safe and welcoming environments and being positive about celebrating diversity.

- *“Celebrate diversity. The organisation doesn’t understand why it needs to be anti-racist. Any training that we get is negative in connotation e.g. forced marriage, FGM. What about talking about the wonderful and positive things that minority ethnic groups can bring to an organisation. There is a deficit of positive things currently.”*

4.24 On a broader note, four participants suggested mistrust of social care workers and the sector is one of the main barriers to increasing representation. One said in some communities there is an inherent distrust of social workers as “agents of the state”. Several participants feel mandatory anti-racism and culture awareness training on topics such as antisemitism, Ramadan, and anti-gypsyism can help address mistrust and attract certain communities into social care.

- *“When people think of social workers, they think of child protection and being thought of as being ‘child snatchers.’ They don’t think of adult services.”*
- *“People seeing social workers as agents of the state as we do lots of work with the police.”*

4.25 Some participants cited the need to work with communities to help recruit people from ethnic minority backgrounds into social care roles. Three participants who came through the community social care route cited the voluntary sector in supporting their early career route and highlighting aspects of their recruitment and onboarding good practice.

- *“...use Gypsy Roma and Travellers in their recruitment campaigns. Put them in places where they will be seen i.e. Tik Tok, in schools, colleges. Have outreach, communication in schools, colleges where there are large populations of Gypsy Roma and Traveller people who may be thinking of roles in social care.”*
- *“Develop Positive Action community Training Scheme to attract, train and place members with providers.”*

Bias in the recruitment process

4.26 The makeup of recruitment panels featured strongly, with views expressed about bias during the recruitment process because of the lack of diversity and a perception that ethnic

minority applicants are unfairly marked at interviews. Five participants cited examples of bias because of a lack of understanding of certain ethnic minority cultures and not recognising of the challenges for some current and potential social care workers who had English as a second language was cited.

- *“Interviewing panels think differently to our communities and then mark differently.”*
- *“Recalibrate the access criteria. Reflect on the reality of black and ethnic minority people in the selection and see them as strengths.”*

4.27 Participants suggested areas for improvement, which centred on increasing the representation of people from ethnic minority backgrounds across the organisation and diversifying recruitment panels. A person’s name was viewed as a potential barrier with some participants citing measures to remove names from applications as a positive move. One participant said there was a need to recognise the strengths of ethnic minority applicants who may not always demonstrate their capabilities at interviews. There was also mention of the need to look at data on applications for jobs and who is not getting the jobs.

- *“Affirmative action – encouraging people in our strategic and management roles. Look at the HR data – looking at how we recruit and whose applying and whose not getting the jobs.”*
- *“Not seeing people who look like you so impact on the recruitment process. For instance, people who don’t know how to pronounce your name. We’re not all ‘John Smith’. LAs are removing people’s names from applications which helps”.*

Barriers to career progression

4.28 For 2 participants, a common thread in terms of deciding to move on and remain in their current roles was the feeling of imposter syndrome i.e. not feeling qualified or as good as their white counterparts, and feeling the system was stacked against them.

4.29 For those who expressed interest in moving on, two roles featured strongly, namely becoming a team manager or working for, or on behalf of, a regulatory body such as Social Care Wales, Public Health Wales or the Welsh Government. Conversely one participant believes ADSS Cymru’s All Wales Pledge, which aims to reduce the number of staff moving from permanent roles to agencies, has hindered their progression and desire to move on from their current role. While this is an isolated case in this study, it might have bearing on other ethnic minority staff either entering or progressing in social care.

- *“ADSS created a pledge where LAs agreed not to take on staff from agencies. With my experience, I can only move into a permanent role. If you have a staff member who experiences racism – if I ask the ADSS to free me from the pledge I may not get it because you’re perceived as difficult. I’ve been looking at roles with adults and other roles. Unless I go for another permanent role I’m stuck. It’s only for children and family social care roles.”*

4.30 Three participants said the ability to speak Welsh as an essential criterion was a particular barrier to progressing their careers. Three participants said some managerial roles have language barriers, which can affect career progression or when entering social care. One Welsh-speaking participant did not think it was a barrier to progression as they saw themselves represented but questioned their Welsh language skills in comparison to their white colleagues.

- *“I would have liked to progress to a more senior management role by this point in my career, but the opportunities are limited. Lots of positions are Welsh essential which is a very limiting factor.”*

Making change happen

- 4.31 Two participants feel the implementation of the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan needs more focus and attention from local authorities. It is seen as a potential lever for change. However, there is a feeling public sector organisations do not understand how to become anti-racist and were fearful of change.
- 4.32 The Equality Act 2010 was also mentioned as a vehicle for addressing racism, but it was suggested organisations need examples on how to implement its provisions.

5. Stakeholder perspectives – Individuals and organisations

5.1 This chapter summarises the key points from two sources; an Employee Insight Group and the relevant findings from focus groups run for Social Care Wales.

Employee Insight Group

5.2 Members of the group participated in a series of round-table discussions. The discussion topics broadly reflected those in the online survey, a copy of which is at Appendix 3.

5.3 The **advertising of vacancies** is seen as barrier for someone from an ethnic minority background finding a job in social care.

- *“Brochures advertising the organisation often show diverse members of staff in the photos but this is not the reality.”*
- *“Use more positive language in adverts, not just we welcome applications from members of minority ethnic backgrounds e.g. we actively want to recruit someone from an ethnic minority background.”*

5.4 **Navigating the recruitment process** is seen to be another barrier, with some individuals disadvantaged through not knowing how the recruitment process works and how to sell themselves.

- *“The processes we use don’t help people from minority ethnic backgrounds; there are little boxes to fill in. Many people have spent most of their time in UK trying to fit in and belong. You are often told you need to fit in. If you fit in too much, though, you have to change who you are, and then you are not able to sell yourself properly.”*
- *“People applying for roles from other countries such as Africa, have no idea how to sell themselves for a job. They don’t know about the language to use and the way the process works as they have never been told, so are immediately at a disadvantage. Many have been brought up not to boast, unlike the Old Boys network which do this well. It would be helpful for potential applicants to have access to training or mentoring to help them write an application or CV.”*

5.5 The dominant theme to emerge in discussions was the **recruitment process** and elements of it.

5.6 **Recruitment panels** were the subject of several comments, with members referring to a lack of representation (of people from ethnic minority backgrounds) on panels and the need for panel members to demonstrate they are competent in terms of equalities. Another person believes everyone who sits on a panel should have cultural appropriateness training. One member of the group said just because someone has an accent does not mean they cannot do the job. There were other comments about the selection of candidates for appointment:

- *“Recruitment and selection is not just about representation or external people on Panels or the right training for the recruiters, it is about getting the right person for the job who may not be the one who uses all the right buzz words, it’s about getting the best person to do the job. It shouldn’t be about whether someone has the right accent or speaks in*

the right tone. There is an inbuilt cultural appropriateness with recruiters, and this often excludes people of colour being appointed.”

- *“Systems need to be changed so that recruiters can’t appoint someone just because they use the ‘right’ language and terminology as this is superficial and can be learned. It’s about appointing the person who can actually do the job. This starts at the beginning of the process to make sure the job adverts and person specifications are recruiting for the right skillset and not unconsciously preventing some people applying.”*
- *“The people in positions of power often appoint people who are most like them. There needs to be a change in hearts and minds.”*
- *“Recruiters may be put off by someone’s strong accent, or if they can’t pronounce the name.”*
- *“The make up of the interview panel is important. In certain organisations, if the short list for the job is all male, they will advertise again but this isn’t done if no one from a minority ethnic background has applied.”*
- *“In some organisations, interview panels have to have a woman on them, but this isn’t the case for someone of colour.”*
- *“I applied for the same job as my job share partner with an almost identical application. The job share partner got it and I was not considered. When you have been turned down a number of times you start to doubt yourself and whether you are good enough. The effect, sadly is that you stop applying for roles.”*

5.7 There is a view people from ethnic minority backgrounds are not shortlisted for roles. It was said that when this view was challenged when people from ethnic minority backgrounds are long listed, they do not get appointed even when they perform best at the selection process. One member referred to racism in the processes of selection and progression in the NHS and said they had no reason to think it is not the same in social care. They went on to say that it happens at all levels, and nothing happens when complaints are made because *“...the same people are still in position of power and so nothing will change”*.

- *“Often no real reason is given to people from minority ethnic backgrounds when they are not successful in getting a post even when they are very well qualified for it.”*

5.8 Two participants highlighted problems with the notion of **challenging the process**.

- *“Feel that when I challenge the process or ask questions about why someone didn’t get a role that I am classed as a troublemaker. I’ve recently been sent details of a role in another sector and it has been suggested that I apply for it. I do feel like I am being pushed out.”*
- *“There were a lot of stereotyping carried out when support was given to families from Asia and I found this difficult to hear and wanted to challenge. Because I challenged things, I was thought of as a difficult person, and I never progressed.”*

5.9 The Group was asked to give points they thought would improve recruitment and progression for people from minority ethnic backgrounds in social care. The points raised can be summarised in five themes:

- **Training for directors and managers** so they can understand the challenges people from ethnic minority backgrounds face, during their careers.

- **People who carry our recruitment** - Training for people involved with recruitment and progression decisions, must be comprehensive. It is not enough to send someone on a half hour course. It must be interactive but not e-learning. There should be a series of ongoing discussions, seminars and awareness training. Mandatory cultural awareness training for all members of interview panels. People from ethnic backgrounds should be involved in the selection and recruitment process.
- **Diversity at higher levels** - people of colour need to be appointed to senior levels. Proactive support for people from ethnic minority backgrounds in leadership/management positions
- **Role of regulatory bodies** - Consider the role of regulatory bodies in driving anti-racism practice as part of social care progression standards
- **Review policies** – Review recruitment policies and processes for any bias against people from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Focus groups

- 5.10 As mentioned earlier in this report, joint working with Social Care Wales took place to avoid two surveys on a similar theme being in the field at the same time. The online survey for this study included questions for Social Care Wales. This was reciprocated by Social Care Wales sharing some broad messages on recruitment and career progression which had come to the fore in the focus groups it ran for its project on leadership.
- 5.11 The following are enablers for recruitment and career progression:
- Positive and inclusive workplace culture, including behaviours of leaders and staff, and respect for cultures.
 - Inclusive recruitment processes.
 - Successful and inspiring role models.
 - Mentors.
 - Networks which are safe for open and non-judgemental conversations.
 - Ethical and fair incentives for progression.
- 5.12 Barriers to recruitment and career progression for staff from ethnic minority backgrounds are seen as:
- Workplace cultures, practices and behaviours which are not inclusive, isolation and stigma, lack of trust in organisation.
 - Policies and procedures to raise concerns which have little impact.
 - Lack of diversity among senior leaders and in the workplace more generally.
 - “Broken rung” to first line manager posts
 - Bureaucracy e.g. qualifications.
-

6. Stakeholder perspectives – Local authorities

- 6.1. In addition to a request for contextual data and copies of policy and procedure documents, local authorities were also asked a series of questions about action to increase the diversity of their workforce and the outcome.
- 6.2. This chapter should be read in conjunction with the next chapter, which is based on a review of policy documents provided by some local authorities and in one case, a more detailed discussion of plans and action. Inevitably, there is some overlap in reporting.

Action to increase diversity on grounds of ethnicity

- 6.3. The feedback from the 14 local authorities who responded to the request shows a mixed picture, with significant action in some areas and little or none in others. The type of action and initiatives vary.
- 6.4. Three local authorities said no action has been taken in the two financial years covered by this project. They explained all recruitment is undertaken in line with their Recruitment and Selection protocols, with one restating the requirements of the Equalities Act and Human Rights Act. Another said "...they always appoint the best person for the job". The results of the review of the local authority policy and procedures documents submitted for this project are in the next chapter.
- 6.5. Actions to increase the diversity of the workforce vary between local authorities. Some action is common to several local authorities. Others are undertaken by one or two authorities. The actions are (in no specific order):
 - Careers Fairs / Job Fairs / Recruitment Days / Information Days / Meet the Employer Days / Festivals / Community employment events for people with ethnic minority backgrounds. Some events are tied to national initiatives e.g. National Apprenticeship Week. Some events are linked to local universities or colleges and cover volunteering as well as employment.
 - Social media posts about race equality and to promote jobs within the context of seeking a more diverse workforce.
 - Recruitment of, and assistance for, workers from overseas e.g. sponsorship, enhanced induction and ongoing support, including English language skills, bespoke mentoring.
 - Help to apply for jobs in social care including 1: 1 support.
 - Work experience schemes for people with ethnic minority backgrounds for care workers and administrative staff, and proactive initiatives to promote fostering.
 - Staff Equality and Diversity Networks; Race Equality Taskforce.
 - All managers trained in the same recruitment process with unconscious bias training to ensure all applicants are treated fairly and equalities factored in. The appointment is based on interview scaling and performance/ task on the day.
 - Discussions with recruitment teams to try to problem-solve issues that people from ethnic minority backgrounds are facing.
- 6.6. At the time of asking, several local authorities were in the process of preparing new Strategic Equality Plans, with a more diverse workforce being mentioned in this context.

One authority said its current Strategic Equality Plan does not include any specific actions in relation to 'increasing the ethnic diversity of the Council's social care workforce'. The difficulty of quantifying the impact of publishing the plan to increasing the ethnic diversity of the workforce was also mentioned.

- 6.7. With one or two exceptions, corporate action across a whole authority was the norm as opposed to specific action in social care. One authority mentioned inequality gaps following a comprehensive needs assessment (across the whole authority). Most responses referred to the recruitment of staff e.g., individuals with protected characteristics, including people from ethnic backgrounds, and staff with a particular language skill as opposed to support for career progression of existing staff. Action related to implementing the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan was also mentioned.
- 6.8. There was relatively little information on outcomes. However, after one event, which appears to have been a joint health and social care event, one authority reported registering 170 people with ethnic minority backgrounds looking for roles within care, health and support work. Another reported filling posts with applicants with valid visas. A third said it had revised its recruitment process for social care staff to make it less formal and more workshop based reported it has attracted a more diverse workforce e.g. several Ukrainian Refugees employed within care settings and opportunities being offered to more refugee groups it supports. One local authority reported publishing an annual (corporate) Employee Diversity report.
- 6.9. Another local authority said it was at the start of such work. It had drawn up an anti-racist action plan, an element of which has seen social care staff attending recruitment events targeted at refugees and asylum seekers.
- 6.10. On a similar note, one authority has been exploring the use of Value-Based Recruitment and is due to pilot it to see if there are any changes to recruitment. Job advertisements have already been amended to reflect Value-Based Recruitment and the sharing of the adverts within all different cultures/ communities across the area and overseas is reported.

Case study: International recruitment

An international recruitment project was initiated in April 2022 in response to an increasing level of vacancies and dependency on agency staff. The first two members of the cohort were welcomed in March 2023. To date (June 2024), 11 Social Workers are in post with two more undergoing pre-employment action. The local authority's offer includes sponsorship, visas for dependants, relocation allowance, and pastoral support while it asks for a minimum of 3 years post qualifying experience in statutory child protection settings through a rigorous and extended selection process. The appointed social workers are from Zimbabwe, South Africa, and the United States of America.

Some have chosen to relocate alone, and others with their families. The appointments have had a highly positive impact on vacancy levels as well as increasing diversity, bringing additional experience and perspectives, which have been well received and, in many cases, have been an asset to our teams and children and families locally. All have settled well into their respective teams, successfully completed their probation periods where applicable, and undertaken a programme of training to assimilate their practice to the Welsh context. It is anticipated the international social workers will achieve holding full caseloads (equivalent to other members of their respective teams) between 6 months to 1 year of being in post, evidenced by those who have already been employed for this

period. An independent survey conducted in January 2024, when 8 social workers were in post, concluded that “none of the Social Workers spoken to described having experienced direct discrimination or racism since moving to Wales and most of them spoke specifically about feeling welcomed into their local communities and the Local Authority”.

Due to this being the first project of this kind for the teams involved, there was initial difficulty understanding the varying levels of capability, learning, and experience each appointee brought. For example, team managers needed to adjust for each person the level of support available, the expectation put on each new starter, and the pace of their learning and progression. Similarly, each person presented varying pastoral needs and queries. While dealing with these differences presented challenges and impacted capacity for team managers and other members of the project workforce, they proved to be learning experiences for all, which helped improve the experience for future new practitioners. A quote from a team manager on their experience, “Whilst the first few weeks were very stressful, from my point of view, this process have been a success”. Our first two practitioners “are very settled in the team. They are key team members who are well thought of. Both are holding complex cases and whilst they still have things to learn this is no different to any social worker in the team”.

Career progression for staff from ethnic minority backgrounds

- 6.11. One authority provided a long list of action and initiatives for its workforce, which included induction training, ongoing support and developmental training for all staff. Some elements, which linked to equality networks and broader race equality action were specific to staff with an ethnic minority background. The authority also mentioned that work is in hand to ensure its training meets the objectives of the Welsh Government’s Anti-racist Wales Action Plan. The latter was reflected in the response of another authority, which said its regional colleagues had recently commissioned cultural competence training and an evaluation of its effectiveness was in hand at the time of its response.
- 6.12. One response mentioned an engagement session held about the development of a Social Services Leadership Programme for ethnic minority leaders but gave no further information.
- 6.13. Three responses were similar to those reported earlier in this chapter e.g. “...*everyone is given equal opportunity to progress..*”. Supervision meetings and annual development meetings with line managers were mentioned in the context of discussion development and support needs. This suggests in some authorities, no steps have been taken to consider help that staff from ethnic minority backgrounds might need to progress their career.

What more can be done to help career progression for ethnic minority staff

- 6.14. Two responses reiterated the earlier themes of equal opportunities for all, recruiting the best person for the job, and recruitment and career progression in accordance with recruitment and selection policies.
- 6.15. One authority referred to regional action to scope the need and to design an approach to respond to the Anti-racist Wales Action plan to ensure staff with ethnic minority backgrounds working in social care are treated fairly. Part of the scoping work will consider how this is

incorporated into their development offer, both in terms of awareness raising around the action plan and to ensure development is delivered consistently.

- 6.16. Two local authorities called for help from others with expertise in this field to build their knowledge. The benefits of sharing information on initiatives used successfully by other authorities including cases studies was mentioned and training on the use of positive action. One authority cited the language barrier as a common problem in recruiting and converting qualifications achieved in other countries to eligible qualifications in Wales and would welcome support.
- 6.17. The British Association of Social Workers (BASW) Overseas Qualified Social Workers Programme was mentioned by one local authority with a comment that similar is required for social care worker roles in Wales.

7. Local authorities – policies and action

7.1 While the initial focus of the project was on local authorities’ selection and progression policies for middle management and leadership roles, the scope of the work was extended to examine broader actions to achieve a more diverse workforce. This required consideration of whether local authorities have policies and procedures in place to support people from ethnic minority backgrounds to apply for and gain promotion within social care.

7.2 All 22 local authorities were asked to provide policies or procedures and related documentation to support the evidence gathering. Eleven authorities responded with a variety of documents (n=32). Between 1-9 documents were received from each local authority. The sample includes authorities in different regions and with differing population and workforce profiles.

7.3 The table describes the type of documents received:

Table 7.1: Types of documents reviewed

Type of document	No.	Notes
Policy documents		
Recruitment and selection policy, and procedure documents - guidance for managers, code of practice, guidance on safer recruitment	16	Date of documents vary e.g. 2017; 2020; 2021; 2022;
Equal Opportunities policy; Dignity at Work policy	3	
Other documents		
Strategic Equality Plan or associated documents	7	One plan is draft. Dates of Plans vary e.g. 2020-2-24; 2024-28; 2023-26.
Workforce strategy equality needs assessment; workforce planning guide	2	
Workforce monitoring reports	2	Latest is 2022
Equal opportunities statement	1	
Terms of Reference for an Equality Group	1	

7.4 Five local authorities provided more than one document on recruitment and selection.

7.5 The depth of review of documents was limited by the resources available for the project, and it was not possible to look beyond local authorities to the independent sector. However, it is possible to make key observations from the review, identifying what is similar, what is different and whether there are areas of good practice that could help all local authorities to build a more diverse workforce. This includes recruitment from outside a local authority and

recruitment from within, which includes opportunities for the promotion of existing staff with ethnic minority backgrounds to middle management and leadership roles.

Policies and procedures

- 7.6 Recruitment and Selection policies and/or guidance for managers seeking to recruit staff are common to all authorities. Unsurprisingly, these documents are fairly uniform in terms of content and coverage. They set out the expectations on managers on elements of the recruitment process e.g. advertising, processes for applications, selection, interviews etc. There are, however, relatively few attempts to incorporate measures which support the development of a more diverse workforce. The policies apply to the whole authority. There is little around promotion and the identification of those who could be attracted to roles within the organisations. Some local authorities include arrangements for guaranteed interviews for veterans and disabled people for example but not those who have an ethnic minority background. It appears therefore they have not made attempts to reflect the ambitions of the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan in policies and procedures, in a way that maximises the opportunities to address ethnic diversity not just in social care but across local authority departments.
- 7.7 There is some evidence of ambition by a few authorities who are attempting to reach diverse groups within the workforce who have traditionally faced challenges in advancing in the workplace. One authority's Recruitment and Selection policy states that where appropriate, the Council may decide to take positive action to target the recruitment of underrepresented groups. Another has the intention to achieve equal opportunities in recruitment, with positive action required to assist those who have historically suffered disadvantage. However, in its "Standards" document, the only reference to someone with a protected characteristic is that disabled candidates will be interviewed if they meet the essential criteria of the Person Specification.
- 7.8 Ambition to have a social care workforce more representative of the local community can be seen in local authorities largely those with higher proportions of people from ethnic minority backgrounds in their local population. This can be seen in their Strategic Equality Plans. One authority in particular has committed to look at:
- "better promotion of staff vacancies and apprenticeships to different groups, consider advertising these more carefully to promote representation of BME, disabled people, LGBT community, veterans and women in male dominated roles (and vice-versa)".*
- 7.9 One authority without a significant minority ethnic population has included in its Strategic Equality Plan the ambition of the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan around promoting opportunities for underrepresented groups and addressing barriers to employment for those groups. This includes the production and implementation of guidance on positive action, attempting to match the workforce to the makeup of the local community, and the development of awareness raising communications for managers.
- 7.10 Another authority in its draft Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28 includes an objective:
- "to attract applicants that represent the diversity of our communities, enriching our organisational capability to meet our ambitions"*
- 7.11 The Authority's plan sets out a range of actions to deliver against this objective:
- Improve the uptake of completion of workforce equality monitoring data.
 - Publish our pay gaps on Disability, Ethnicity and Gender.

- Improve the number of Black, Asian and ethnic minority candidates applying for jobs.
- Review our existing Recruitment and Selection policy and practices with the intention of removing any bias.
- Actively promote the positive benefits of working for the Council. Whilst policies benefit all employees, some will have a particular benefit to women e.g., flexible working, support for carers, shared parental leave, menopause guide.
- Offer initiatives such as mentoring programmes that benefit under-represented groups of staff.

What do local authorities know about their workforce

- 7.12 Assessing the extent to which local authorities are in tune with barriers experienced by their diverse members of the workforce is a key question. A large amount of data is routinely collected and published, including data on equalities, which describes diversity across a local authority. Whilst it could be argued all local authorities have access to rich data for analysis, and one authority reported a corporate anti-racism dashboard with workforce and recruitment information about staff from ethnic minority backgrounds, it seems there is relatively little evidence it has influenced the design of policies and procedures to support the career progression of those who traditionally have not succeeded in accessing new opportunities.
- 7.13 Difficulties in analysing and reporting data collected is also evidenced in the statistical returns asked of local authorities.
- 7.14 The attempt to weave into policies and procedures the ambition of the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan also varies and as referenced earlier, does not appear to be a consistent feature. Most of the authorities who responded were working off outdated documentation, whilst some included commitments to review and reform their policies in their draft Strategic Equality Plans. There appears to be inconsistencies in approaches, and authorities are clearly at different stages. This ranges from having done nothing or very little to incorporate what they know about their workforce and population to those where small steps have been taken e.g., to review the effectiveness of those policies, to those where significant work has been undertaken to engage their workforce and develop their thinking.
- 7.15 One authority shared examples which demonstrate its willingness to delve into the experiences of its ethnic minority workforce. In doing so, they have identified three key themes which emerged in field work and engagement with the workforce:
- **Culture** where there has been a lack of respect for diversity and an unfair treatment of people of colour. In assessing this, the conclusion that training on both diversity and inclusion was needed together with a review of the recruitment process.
 - **The role of leaders** where the lack of representation in senior roles was identified along with a lack of awareness of inclusion. The discussions concluded that training for managers on inclusive leadership was needed.
 - **Career aspirations** where a range of issues were identified e.g., a lack of sponsorship, a lack of accountability, unfair treatment of people of colour and not enough done to develop an inclusive approach. As a result, local authority staff recommended a clear pathway for progression, transparency, fair evaluation, fair assessment of performance, and a review of the recruitment procedure.

7.16 The authority has documented workforce data, including the numbers of applications, offers of interview, and success rates broken down by people who are white and people from an ethnic minority background. The document includes data up to 2023 demonstrating the number of people who have progressed within the authority, broken down by department, and a comparison between those who are white and staff who have an ethnic minority background. This is the only authority that has shared with the project an analysis at this level. It demonstrates:

- For job applications, when comparing applicants who are white with those from an ethnic minority background, a higher percentage of people from the ethnic minority groups are rejected on application, a lower percentage are successful at gaining a first and then second interview, and a lower percentage are offered the role at the end of the process.
- In the department responsible for social care overall, 23.10% of all employees have progressed in their careers compared to 10.34% of those from an ethnic minority background.
- Across the authority, white employees are more successful in gaining promotion (59.18%) compared to those who are from an ethnic minority (41.54%).
- In the department responsible for social care, overall, 59.42% of all employees have secured promotion; the figure for those with an ethnic minority background is 41.38%.

7.17 Data and analysis are key to understanding the picture. This is just one part of the equation. The other is relationships with diverse groups of the workforce and practical steps to change policy in a way that supports people to apply for roles and succeed.

What has been done to improve progression and promotion

7.18 A range of activities highlighted in the local authorities' responses demonstrate some attempt to address the lower number of applications and success rates for people from ethnic minority backgrounds. Some have clearly thought through the challenges and have engaged equalities groups in their workforce to help identify steps which should be taken to improve the chances of progression and promotion. One authority sets out a series of recommendations by its Scrutiny Panel on Equalities including the need to review training opportunities to ensure they are fit for purpose:

- Developing training with equality groups where possible.
- Ensure the opportunities to do this are repeated regularly particularly around unconscious bias, using alternative formats and making a reasonable adjustment.

7.19 In its Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28, another authority has committed to:

- Review recruitment procedures and practices, to level the playing field for all protected characteristics.
- Continue to produce an annual report with analysis that evidences any gaps whereby the community is not reflected in the workforce.
- Address by diversifying the campaigns to breakdown any barriers for protected characteristics and to consider whether any Positive Action in our Recruitment Strategy is required to address under representation.

- 7.20 An ambition in one local authority specifically for its adult social services workforce relates to the recruitment and promotion of people from ethnic minority communities with key actions to promote diversity and inclusivity and ensure the workforce is representative of their community, together with a set of actions to:
- Target recruitment from diverse local communities, working closely with community leaders and local organisations.
 - Review job adverts and specifications to ensure they attract candidates from ethnically diverse backgrounds.
 - Consider measures to make social work posts more attractive to men.
 - Learn from the experiences of staff to ensure Adult Services provides a positive working environment for minority ethnic staff.
 - Create an inclusive and supportive environment for all staff, working with the Council's Equality Networks including the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Network, the Disability Network, and the LGBT+ Network to promote equality and eliminate discrimination.
- 7.21 While there are examples of local authorities setting ambitions and developing policy approaches to address the challenge of career progression and promotion, the approach across Wales is inconsistent. There is also a lack of evidence to demonstrate what works.

What does good look like?

- 7.22 The evidence examined suggests there are three key elements to building an approach which improves the support to people from diverse communities to apply for opportunities to progress and be promoted within social care services.
- Firstly, understanding data and building an ambitious vision for recruitment and promotion in partnership with staff from minority ethnic communities would be a solid demonstration of intent on the part of local authorities. Local authorities collect a lot of data. Analysing and converting that data into action is key.
 - Secondly, review and re write their recruitment and selection policies that embed the principles of the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan, setting out the positive action needed to reach, attract, and support people to progress in social care.
 - Thirdly, practical steps to engage and support people through mentorship opportunities, talent identification, stronger and productive relationships with equalities networks, better and more targeted advertising, and promotion. These are some of the practical steps we identified but this is not exhaustive.
- 7.23 These three building blocks would go some way in developing an environment that builds a workforce reflective of local authority populations. Some of this is evidenced in local authorities' returns and discussions but it is limited, and the elements briefly referenced here are not there as best practice in one specific local authority. They are a collection of examples discovered with the sample of local authorities from different parts of Wales. There are good attempts by some but not on the scale needed to make the difference to Black, Asian and ethnic minority staff and indeed to professionals looking at a career in social care.

Assessing bias in recruitment policies

- 7.24 As stated at the start of this chapter, 11 local authorities provided a total of 32 policies, procedures, and other documents for review.
- 7.25 It is worth distinguishing between the types of documents as the potential for bias will manifest itself in different ways. Broadly speaking, strategies and strategic plans are designed to achieve the organisation's aspirations, goals and objectives and describe how it will do this. Some other documents e.g. workforce monitoring reports, terms of reference documents, look back to what has or has not been achieved by an organisation or frame local action to achieve a more diverse workforce. Policy documents provide a set of rules for decision-making and procedures/processes i.e. what should and should not be done.
- 7.26 To a greater or lesser extent, all documents contribute to the goal of achieving a more diverse and inclusive workforce. However, it is the policy documents where potential bias could have the greatest direct impact i.e. lessen the prospect of recruiting someone from an ethnic minority background. For this reason, the review of bias focused on 18 policy documents on recruitment and selection and equal opportunities. The Dignity at Work policy was not reviewed as it focuses on behaviours in the workplace.
- 7.27 The purpose of the review was to identify any potential for bias in recruitment and selection practice, which could disadvantage individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds. The focus was on identifying the following potential biases, which can hinder the ability of local authorities to build an ethnically diverse and inclusive workforce:
- **Implicit bias:** unconscious biases that influence behaviour and decision-making in recruitment and retention, affecting resume screening, interview evaluations, and promotion decisions e.g. by rating CVs or interview performances lower for minority candidates based on unconscious negative stereotypes.^{ii,iii}
 - **In-group bias:** favouring individuals perceived as being similar to oneself, which can lead to preferential treatment of candidates from the same racial background, and diverse candidates being overlooked.^{iv}
 - **Confirmation bias:** tendency to favour information that confirms existing beliefs, potentially leading to the preference for CVs with familiar names and overlooking equally qualified candidates of colour^v.
 - **Stereotyping:** generalising about a person based solely on race. Making assumptions about work ethic, leadership qualities, or cultural fit, disadvantaging qualified candidates.
- 7.28 The review also sought to identify examples of good practice.

Potential biases identified

- 7.29 The results below are from the sample of 18 policy documents.
- 7.30 **Implicit bias** was identified in 14 policies, reflecting a significant issue where unconscious biases may inadvertently influence recruitment and retention outcomes. Examples included an out-of-date policy which had not been reviewed and updated, and no mention of positive action to encourage more diversity in recruitment policy and practice. A more specific example is the statement "*All candidates must be assessed equally against the criteria contained in the person specification without exception or variation*".

- 7.31 **In-group bias** was identified in nine policy documents, suggesting a potential for bias among hiring managers to favour candidates who share their racial or cultural characteristics. An example is the absence of any mention of positive encouragement for people from ethnic minority communities when advertising a job.
- 7.32 **Confirmation bias** was detected in nine policies, indicating a recurring issue where recruitment processes may favour candidates who align with preconceived notions or familiar cultural backgrounds. Some documents had very little reference to ethnicity and approaches to attract a more diverse workforce.
- 7.33 None of the documents reviewed indicated clear examples of **stereotyping**. However, the definition of implicit bias should be noted because it refers to circumstances where stereotyping can impact in practice.

Good practice

- 7.34 While the review highlighted several areas for improvement, it also identified examples of good practices which promote inclusivity, and which can mitigate biases:
- **Anonymised recruitment processes:** policies that remove identifiable information from resumes during the initial screening stage to reduce confirmation and in-group biases.
 - **Structured interview protocols:** standardised interview questions and evaluation criteria that minimise the impact of implicit biases.
 - **Diversity training programs:** regular training for hiring managers and staff on recognising and countering unconscious biases.

Implications of biases

- 7.35 The review has highlighted the potential for biases in policy documents. Information collected on recruitment, retention and promotion, and from the reports of staff with ethnic minority backgrounds can confirm whether there is evidence of such biases in practice. This point reinforces the commentary earlier in this chapter on what local authorities know, and do not know, about their workforce.
- 7.36 The presence of confirmation, in-group, and implicit biases in the reviewed policies, procedures and guidance documents, suggests that some job application candidates from ethnic minority backgrounds might be unintentionally disadvantaged during recruitment and retention processes. These biases can hinder the ability of local authorities to build the diverse and inclusive workforce, which is needed for equitable service delivery and community representation.
- 7.37 The good practice described above, ongoing training on diversity and inclusion, and the collection and use of workforce data are ways in which unintentional bias can be identified and countered in policies and practice. There is also an opportunity share learning between local authorities.

8. Conclusions and recommendations

- 8.1. This project has successfully gathered evidence from different perspectives, namely, current and past social care staff who have an ethnic minority background, local authority staff without an ethnic minority background working in departments that support social care e.g. Human Resources, or which work with social care teams, stakeholder views, and statistical data and documents from local authorities.
- 8.2. This study has examined recruitment and career progression for staff with ethnic minority backgrounds using data from several different sources, including quantitative and qualitative data and, significantly, the lived experience of people with ethnic minority backgrounds.
- 8.3. The study majors on staff in local authorities but lived experience data also covers staff working for independent social care providers. It has obtained information on the positives and negatives, action and developments to make improvements and to tackle barriers faced by ethnic minority staff, and the extent to which data is used to inform the need for action.

Gaps in workforce data

- 8.4. It was possible to collate some quantitative data, but this is limited. Two authorities were unable to provide any statistical data but did give their perspectives on recruitment and progression for staff with ethnic minority backgrounds. Most local authorities were able to provide some data albeit with varying numbers of gaps. There were two main reasons why data was not provided. First, the data is not routinely collected and monitored. Second, it is collected but was not available at the time of the request.
- 8.5. The statistical data provides some context for qualitative lived experience data e.g. people with an ethnic minority background make up 16.6% of all applications for jobs advertised externally and 7.1% of appointments. However, this is sample-based and therefore, caution is required when considering average figures due to the considerable variation in individual local authorities. For example, in one authority the figures were 22.2% and 19.6 % respectively. Data on internal recruitment and the promotion of staff with an ethnic minority background is even less reliable as several local authorities were unable to provide the data for analysis. Better information is demonstrated by one local authority that has undertaken a detailed self-assessment with analysis of its recruitment data to show the differences in recruitment and promotion for staff with an ethnic minority background.
- 8.6. Overall, and with a couple of exceptions, the above points to weaknesses and gaps in the data required for effective monitoring of recruitment and career progression for all staff but particularly for ethnicity and diversity within the workforce.

Considerable variation in action

- 8.7. The goal of a more diverse workforce i.e. a workforce more representative of local communities, is a common goal. However, the extent of action to achieve this by local authorities varies considerably. It is a mixed picture. with significant action in some areas and little or none in others.
- 8.8. The type of action and initiatives, some which are linked the preparation of new Strategic Equality Plans, also varied. Some action is common to several local authorities. Some initiatives are limited to one or two authorities. There is clear opportunity for sharing experience and learning, and a couple of local authorities called for this.

- 8.9. The responses of three local authorities emphasise equality for all in the recruitment process and the best person is appointed to a job. This is not necessarily mutually exclusive of action they are undertaking to try and to attract applications from people with ethnic minority backgrounds to increase the diversity of the workforce but suggests a lack of recognition that such individuals might in some way be disadvantaged by their recruitment process.
- 8.10. All local authorities have recruitment and selection policies and/or guidance for managers. These are fairly uniform in terms of content and coverage. There are relatively few attempts to incorporate measures which support the development of a more diverse workforce. There is little around promotion and the identification of those who could be attracted to roles within the organisations. Some local authorities include arrangements for guaranteed interviews for veterans and disabled people for example but not those who have an ethnic minority background.
- 8.11. The presence of confirmation, in-group, and implicit biases in the reviewed policies, procedures and guidance documents, suggests job application candidates from ethnic minority backgrounds might be unintentionally disadvantaged during recruitment and retention processes. This is reinforced by the lived experiences of some of the staff who contributed to the study.

Lived experience shows a mixed picture but raises concerns

- 8.12. Staff who responded to the online survey were asked to think back to when they joined their current employer and if they experienced any barriers or difficulties in the recruitment process. Nineteen out of every 20 respondents (95%) said they did not encounter any. There was no difference between respondents with ethnic minority backgrounds and those without. This might be a characteristic of this sample
- 8.13. Internal recruitment shows greater variation in experiences. Some had been successful while others had not, and staff with ethnic minority backgrounds reported both positive and negative experiences, with support from their line manager being a common positive.
- 8.14. Some of the difficulties experienced are common to candidates irrespective of ethnicity e.g. personal performance at interview; understanding the recruitment process, the quality of feedback or lack of it, and the difficulty of securing a job when someone is already undertaking the role on a temporary basis. However, several comments suggested racism or other issues related to someone's ethnic minority background were at the root of some difficulties. The difficulties included worry about their English language and communication skills (which can also affect their confidence at interviews), rules on qualifications including driving qualifications, racism in their current job and being treated differently, and the same for a new job; and a lack of confidence in the recruitment process, including bias against staff from ethnic minority backgrounds. These difficulties and barriers were reinforced by the lived experiences of staff who participated in the in-depth conversations with action to raise cultural awareness and to tackle racism being emphasised.

Common perspectives from different sources

- 8.15. This study has collected data from the workforce from several different sources; an online survey, in-depth 1:1 conversations, round-table discussions, and focus groups. While it is possible some members of staff might have contributed their experience in more than one way, it is reasonable to assume that overall, the individuals who contributed to the study through the different routes were different.

- 8.16. There is a marked commonality in themes across the different sources of data. Recruitment and specific elements of recruitment processes and procedures is the dominant theme, supplemented by the need for more support for new and existing staff from ethnic minority backgrounds to establish their career in social care and to progress their career. Racism and the continuing need to tackle it effectively is another theme, together with improvements in organisational culture and cultural understanding.
- 8.17. Issues of bias or potential bias in recruitment and selection were raised in three of the ways which captured the views of members of the workforce but also featured in the response of some local authorities who have recognised the need to consider this and in the review of policies and procedures undertaken for this study.

Change needed

- 8.18. There are commonalities in the themes emerging from the different sources of information. It points to the need for a multi-faceted approach to achieve local social care workforces which better reflect local populations.
- More efforts to tackle racism, prejudicial and derogatory behaviours with effective mechanisms for reporting and action with clear outcomes which respond to, but which are not limited by, the priorities in the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan. This underpins any action to improve recruitment and career progression.
 - Improving organisational culture and cultural understanding, practices and behaviours
 - Addressing the lack of cultural awareness and understanding of the challenges staff with ethnic minority backgrounds face in their careers, particularly among directors and managers.
 - Improving recruitment policies and processes, the reach of recruitment activities, and the make-up and cultural competence of panels to ensure there is no bias (unconscious or conscious), positive action, and recognition that some individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds might require support.
 - Lack of diversity at senior levels and role models who can inspire others to work in social care and to existing staff to progress their careers.
 - The need for more support for staff in work and for career progression including networks, mentors, and training.
- 8.19. It should also be noted that several people criticised the use of the term “*ethnic minority*” as being unhelpful and in some cases, not wanted. This warrants further consideration.

Corporate action

- 8.20. This study of recruitment and career progression for staff from ethnic minority backgrounds was undertaken as part of action set out by the Welsh Government in its Anti-racist Wales action Plan. The action was specific to social care and the scope of this study, which reached staff in the social care departments of local authorities and independent providers, reflects this. However, racism crosses professional and organisational boundaries and so too must the action to address it.
- 8.21. Social care was the focus for this study but the findings and the recommendations to improve recruitment and career progression for staff from ethnic minority backgrounds are

relevant to all local authority departments. Social care departments alone cannot make the necessary changes. Corporate action by local authorities is required to implement the recommendations, guided by the findings of this study and harnessing the skills and expertise of corporate Human Resource Departments.

Action by Directors of Social Services

8.22. Directors of Social Services will act on the findings of this study by:

- a) Sharing the findings of this study with their Chief Executives and Human Resources Departments as the basis for corporate action to make the necessary changes, which extend beyond social care.
- b) Ensuring every member of future recruitment and selection panels for vacancies in social care has undertaken cultural awareness training before shortlisting and interviewing candidates.
- c) Working with their Human Resources Departments to address any gaps in the data needed to monitor and compare recruitment and promotion statistics for candidates from ethnic minority backgrounds with those for all other staff.
- d) Arranging for all staff in social care to receive training on cultural awareness and other matters relevant to tackling racism.
- e) Ensuring arrangements are in place within their departments to review and, where necessary, increase the support provided to new and existing staff from ethnic minority backgrounds in the recruitment process and in work.
- f) Sharing their experience of recruiting and supporting staff from ethnic minority backgrounds with other local authorities and their intentions for further improvements in recruiting staff from ethnic minority backgrounds.
- g) Using their annual report to demonstrate progress against the findings of the study.

Recommendations

8.23. Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended all local authorities:

- a) Have in place robust reporting mechanisms to eradicate racism and to demonstrate organisational cultural change which supports an ethnically diverse workforce. This should be underpinned by regular mandatory training on cultural awareness and other matters relevant to tackling racism.
- b) Undertake regular audits and reporting to compare external and internal recruitment / promotion patterns for staff with and without ethnic minority backgrounds.
- c) Review their recruitment policies and procedures and, where necessary, make changes which demonstrates positive action towards the recruitment of people from ethnic minority backgrounds. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - (i) removing any potential biases in policies and procedures.
 - (ii) reaching out to ethnic minority communities with job opportunities.
 - (iii) the make-up of recruitment panels.
 - (iv) anonymised recruitment practices.

- (v) consistent application rating/evaluation systems
 - (vi) the use of positive action.
 - (vii) recognition some candidates from ethnic minority backgrounds might require support with job applications and career progression.
 - (viii) proactively collecting feedback from successful and unsuccessful job applicants from ethnic minority backgrounds to inform continuous improvement.
- d) Ensure all members of recruitment panels receive cultural awareness training before interviewing. Training for recruiters should be ongoing and in-person, not “one-off” and e-learning.
 - e) 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 best practice between local authorities to stimulate more action to increase applications from people from ethnic minority background to support existing staff to progress their careers.
 - f) Have in place staff forums or networks to review and where necessary, to increase the support available to new and existing staff from ethnic minority backgrounds and to provide for open, safe and non-judgemental conversations, coaching, mentoring and training, including training in language skills.
 - 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.
- 8.24. ADSS Cymru is committed to working with all local authorities, 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	<p>[Definition of racism agreed by the Project Reference Group]</p> <p>For the purpose of 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.</p>
Ethnic minorities	<p>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</p>
Antigypsyism	<p>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:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">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	<p>“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.</p>
Hidden heritage	<p>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.</p>

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 are not included.

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

Workstream 2 - examining local authorities' selection and progression policies for middle management and leadership roles

2. **Looking back on your use of external recruitment for social care in 2022-23 and in this financial year to date, please provide the following information** (please use the relevant bullet letter to identify each figure. If a figure is none, please write "nil". If the information cannot be provided, please write "not collected" or "information collected but not available").
 - a) Total number of social care vacancies advertised externally in 2022-23 and 2023-24 to date.
 - b) Total number of applicants for all vacancies advertised externally.
 - c) Total number of applicants with an ethnic minority background (where stated).
 - d) Total number of new staff appointed in 2022-23 and 2023-24 to date.
 - e) Total number of new staff with a ethnic minority background appointed in 2022-23 and 2023-24 to date (where ethnicity is stated).
3. **Looking back on any use of internal only recruitment for social care in 2022-23 and in this financial year to date, please provide the following information** (please use the relevant bullet letter to identify each figure. If a figure is none, please write "nil". If the information cannot be provided, please write "not collected" or "information collected but not available").
 - a) Total number of social care vacancies advertised internally only in 2022-23 and 2023-24 to date.
 - b) Total number of applicants for vacancies advertised internally only.
 - c) Total number of internal applicants with an ethnic minority background (where stated).
 - d) Total number of staff appointed from an internal only recruitment process in 2022-23 and 2023-24 to date.
 - e) Total number of staff with an ethnic minority background appointed from an internal only recruitment process in 2022-23 and 2023-24 to date (where ethnicity is stated).
4. **This question asks about progression /promotion of staff in your social care workforce in 2022-23 and in this financial year to date. Please provide the following information** (in the text box below, please use the relevant bullet letter to identify each figure. If a figure is none, please write "nil". If the information cannot be provided, please write "not collected" or "information collected but not available").
 - a) Total number of staff in social care who were promoted in 2022-23 and 2023-24 to date.
 - b) Total number of staff with an ethnic minority background who were promoted in 2022-23 and 2023-24 to date.

5. **In the period covered by this request, has the social care department undertaken any positive action to increase the diversity of its workforce on grounds of ethnicity and if so, please summarise the action taken and give examples of what has been successful.** (*Note: “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*).
6. **Over and above positive action mentioned above, please describe any other good practice or successful action which has helped to increase the ethnic diversity of the Authority’s social care workforce.**
7. **Please describe any specific action or initiatives the Authority has taken to help individuals with an ethnic minority background to progress their careers in the Authority’s social care department or in the social care sector more generally.**
8. **What more could be done to help individuals with an ethnic minority background to secure employment in social care and/or to progress their careers in social care into middle management and leadership roles. What would help you to take more action?**

Strategic Equality Plan

9. **Has the Authority published its Strategic Equality Action Plan and is this available on its website?** (*please tick one box only*) (*if your Strategic Equality Plan is not available on your website, please email copies of documents to Jonathan Morgan using the following email address: jonathan@practicesolutions-ltd.co.uk*)
10. **Please describe what you consider to be the three main or most successful achievements of the Plan in increasing the ethnic diversity of the Authority’s social care workforce.**

Policy and procedures documents

11. **Please list your Authority’s policy and procedures documents for recruitment and selection, promotion/progression (internal and external) and provide a copy of each** (*please email copies of documents to Jonathan Morgan using the following email address: jonathan@practicesolutions-ltd.co.uk*)

Any other comments

12. **The box below is provided for any other comments you wish to make about selection and progression policies, practices, or initiatives for individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds.**

Appendix 3: Online survey for the social care workforce

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. Questions 17-19 were included as part of a joint approach which enabled Social Care Wales to gather data for its leadership support project thus reducing the need for two surveys to be in the field at the same time.

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.
 - 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. **To help with our analysis of the feedback we receive, please choose one of the following.** *[please tick one box only]* *[We use 'ethnic minorities' to refer to all ethnic groups except the white British group. Ethnic minorities include white minorities, such as Gypsy, Roma, and Irish Traveller groups]*
 - I have an ethnic minority background.
 - I do not have an ethnic minority background.
 - Prefer not to say.

Recruitment from outside an organisation

4. **Thinking back to when you joined your current employer as a new member of staff, did you experience any barriers or difficulties in the recruitment process?** *[please tick one box only]*
 - Yes
 - No
 - Unsure – don't know or can't remember.

5. **If “Yes”, please describe any barriers or difficulties you experienced.**

6. **In practical terms, how should such barriers and difficulties be addressed? What action is needed, and by whom?**

7. **Is there anything else which could be done to attract more people from ethnic minority communities to work in social care and if so, what?**
8. **Have you at any time applied to move to a job with another organisation within the social care sector? [please tick one box only]**
- Yes
 - No
 - Unsure – don't know or can't remember.
9. **If "Yes", please describe your experience, the outcome, any barriers, or difficulties you experienced.**

Recruitment from inside an organisation – internal progression

10. **Thinking about your time with your current employer, have you applied internally for any new jobs at a higher level; in other words, a promotion? [please tick one box only]**
- Yes
 - No
 - Unsure – don't know or can't remember.
11. **If you have applied for any job(s) at a higher level, please tell us about the outcome(s) of your application(s).**
12. **Have there been any job opportunities at a higher level for which you did not apply, and if so, why? What prevented you from applying or presented any difficulties in doing so?**
13. **Please describe the positive and negative aspects of your experience(s), any specific barriers, or difficulties you experienced, and any matters you feel affected your experience(s) in some shape or form.**
14. **Please describe any initiatives by your employer or specific support to help members of staff from an ethnic minority background who wish to progress their career to be able to do so.**
15. **What more could be done to improve the opportunities and/or support for staff from ethnic minority backgrounds to secure jobs at a higher level and/or jobs with more responsibility with the aim of promotion at some point.**

Action to increase opportunities and support

16. If you know of any initiatives, developments, or good practice which help individuals with ethnic minority backgrounds to secure a job in social care and/or to progress their career in social care, please describe them.

Leadership and support for personal development

17. Of the opportunities listed below please choose your top 3 that you feel would be most useful to support your progress towards management and leadership roles *[please tick up to 3 boxes]*

- Coaching.
- Career mentoring programme.
- Opportunities to shadow senior colleagues.
- Peer support groups.
- Access to role models from ethnic minority groups.
- Leadership workshops.
- Classroom-based training
- Local culture awareness and inclusion action to develop skills and confidence in building trusted relationships with colleagues.

18. Do you feel your current employer can support you to progress into management and leadership roles? *(please tick one box)*

- Yes
- No
- Unsure / don't know

19. If you answered “No” or “Unsure”, please say why you feel your employer cannot support you and give any suggestions for who could support you.

Any other comments

20. The following space is provided for any other comments you would like to make about the recruitment of new staff from ethnic minority backgrounds and the help, support, and opportunities for them to progress their careers to middle and senior management positions and leadership roles.

Appendix 4: Discussion topics for in-depth conversations

Each confidential 1:1 discussion covered both Workstream 1 of the project (lived experience of racism and associated matters) and the subject of this report, Workstream 2, which considered recruitment and career progression for staff who have ethnic minority backgrounds. The main questions and discussion areas on recruitment and career progression are listed below. The list was supplemented with prompts, which were used as necessary to achieve an in-depth discussion.

1. How did you start your career in social care?
2. Are there any other roles you'd like to move into and why?
3. What kind of support would you need to do this?
4. Are there any roles you would have liked to apply for but didn't, why was this?
5. What do you feel is needed to attract and support people from ethnic minority backgrounds to enter the social care sector?
6. What do you think is the biggest barrier for someone from an ethnic minority background to enter the social care sector?
7. Thinking about your own experience, what have you found to be particularly helpful?
8. And what would you like to see improved on?
9. Are you aware of any other good practices in relation to the recruitment of ethnic minorities into social care?

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

- ⁱ Social Care Wales (2022) Workforce Survey. Cardiff: Social Care Wales
- ⁱⁱ Greenwald, A. G., & Banaji, M. R. (2015). Implicit social cognition: Attitudes, self-esteem, and stereotypes. *Psychological Review*.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Banaji, M. R., & Greenwald, A. G. (2013). *Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People*. Delacorte Press.
- ^{iv} Singh, R., & Chokkar, J. S. (2019). In-group bias and intergroup relations: Effects of perceived group variability. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.
- ^v Bertrand, M., & Mullainathan, S. (2004). Are Emily and Greg More Employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A Field Experiment on Labor Market Discrimination. *American Economic Review*.