



Eastern Region Anti-Racist Practice Conference

The 16th May marks the official launch of the Eastern Region Anti-Racist Practice Pledge!

This conference will bring together Children's Services Leaders from across the 11 local authorities in the Eastern Region to celebrate the work around anti-racism that has been done so far, commit to the pledge and collectively drive forward the work still needs to be done. The conference will reflect on how as individuals, local authorities and a region, we can embed the Eastern Region Anti-Racist Practice Pledge to create cultures and systems in which Black, Asian, Mixed-Heritage and ethnically diverse people and communities can thrive.

The conference aims to:

- Promote systems leadership, with a deeper understanding of key issues relating to anti-racism
- Challenge individual's thinking and leadership
- Share key developments in anti-racism initiatives across the region
- Reaffirm the region's commitment to anti-racism and consider how the regional pledge can be put into practice and sustained.

We are delighted to be joined by colleagues from across the region, Jeffrey Wotherspoon, an Executive Coach, trainer, and conflict resolution specialist, and Teresa Hills, the Director of Children's Operations at Luton Borough Council who will be delivering keynote speeches during the event.

Agenda		
Date:	Friday, 16 th May 2025	
Time:	09:30 -15:00	
Venue:	Hertfordshire Development Centre, Robertson House, Six Hills Way, Stevenage SG1 2FQ	
09:30	Refreshments, Networking & Signing In	
10:00	Welcome	Antonia Ogundayisi (Service Manager – Anti-Racist Practice, Essex County Council)
10:10	Opening address	Helen Lincoln (Executive Director Children, Families and Education, Essex County Council)
10:30	Keynote	Teresa Hills (Director of Operations, Luton Borough Council)
11:00	Refreshment Break	
11:15	Keynote	Jeffery Wotherspoon (Executive and Career Coach & Organisation Relationship and Systems Coach)
12:45	Lunch	
13:45	Implementation of the Pledge	Tapiwa Julius (Principal Social Worker, Cambridge County Council) Olga Staicu (Head of Assessment Service, Hertfordshire County Council)
14:45	Close & Next Steps	Harmesh Bhogal (Executive Director Childrens Services, Bedford Borough Council)
15:00	Conference Closes	



Meet the Speakers



Antonia Ogundayisi

Antonia is the Service Manager for Anti-Racist Practice in Essex County Council. She has been leading the Eastern Region Anti-Racist Practice Task & Finish Group to plan and deliver today's conference.



Helen Lincoln

Helen has been the Executive Director for Children and Families, and Education in Essex County Council since 2011 and is the region's Director of Children's Social Care (DCS) Lead for Sector Led Improvement. Helen is also the elected Chair of the Association of Directors Children's Services (ADCS) Families, Communities & Young People Policy Committee.



Teresa Hills

Teresa has been the Service Director of Children's Operations in Luton Borough Council since October 2023 and is a member of the Eastern Region Children's Social Care Sector Led Improvement Network.



Jeffrey Wotherspoon

Jeffrey is an Executive and Career Coach and an Organisation Relationship and Systems Coach. His work centres around providing solutions for individuals, organisations and systems that bridge the gap from where they are to where they want to be. Jeffrey's approach focuses on creating inclusive environments where every voice is valued, fostering meaningful dialogue, and promoting effective teamwork. By cultivating a culture of openness and trust, he empowers teams to embrace diversity, driving better working relationships and enhancing wellbeing.



Olga Staicu

Until recently when Olga took up the Head of Assessment Service role in Hertfordshire County Council, she was the Co-Chair of Eastern Region's Principal Children and Family Social Worker's Forum.



Tapiwa Julius

Tapiwa is the Principal Children's Social Worker in Cambridgeshire County Council and was nominated as Co-Chair of the National Children and Families Principal Social Worker Network.



Harmesh Bhogal

Harmesh has worked in Bedford Borough Council for over a decade and has been in post as their Director of Children's Services since July 2023.

Parking

Parking is available on site, please display the attached in your vehicle. There is an underground car park which has additional parking. Please email EasternRegionCIB@norfolk.gov.uk with any additional questions or access requirements. [HDC-Parking-Permit.pdf](#)

Refreshments

Refreshments & lunch will be provided. Please email EasternRegionCIB@norfolk.gov.uk with any specific dietary requirements and we will aim to accommodate.

Tickets

No need to print your tickets, please bring your phone with the barcode or just your name will suffice.