



# IMPROVEMENT EAST

## Eastern Region Anti-Racist Practice Conference

16<sup>th</sup> May 2025

10:00 – 15:30

Essex  
Luton  
Suffolk  
Thurrock  
Cambridgeshire  
Bedford Borough  
Central Bedfordshire  
Peterborough  
Hertfordshire  
Southend  
Norfolk



# Welcome



**Host**

**Antonia Ogundayisi,**

**Service Manager - Anti-Racist Practice  
Essex County Council**



# Housekeeping



# Today's Agenda



09:30	Refreshments, Networking & Signing In	
10:00	Welcome	Antonia Ogundayisi ( <i>Service Manager – Anti-Racist Practice, Essex County Council</i> )
10:10	Opening address	Helen Lincoln ( <i>Executive Director Children, Families and Education, Essex County Council</i> )
10:30	Keynote	Teresa Hills ( <i>Director of Operations, Luton Borough Council</i> )
11:00	Refreshment Break	
11:15	Keynote Speech	Jeffrey Wotherspoon ( <i>Executive and Career Coach &amp; Organisation Relationship and Systems Coach</i> )
12:45	Lunch & Networking	
13:45	Implementation of the Pledge	Tapiwa Julius ( <i>Principal Social Worker, Cambridge County Council</i> ) & Olga Staicu ( <i>Head of Assessment Service, Hertfordshire County Council</i> )
14:45	Close & Next Steps	Harmesh Bhogal ( <i>Director Childrens Services, Bedford Borough Council</i> )

# Ice Breaker



**What is a song that always  
makes you feel empowered  
or seen – and why?**

# Introduction



**Today, we are not talking about Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) broadly, though important we are centring Race, Racism & Anti-Racism**

- What emotions arise for you when you anticipate conversations about race and racism?
- How do you typically respond, internally and externally?
- What helps you feel emotionally and physically safe when engaging in conversations about race and racism?
- What practices help you to stay grounded and connected to your own power in these spaces?

# Opening Address



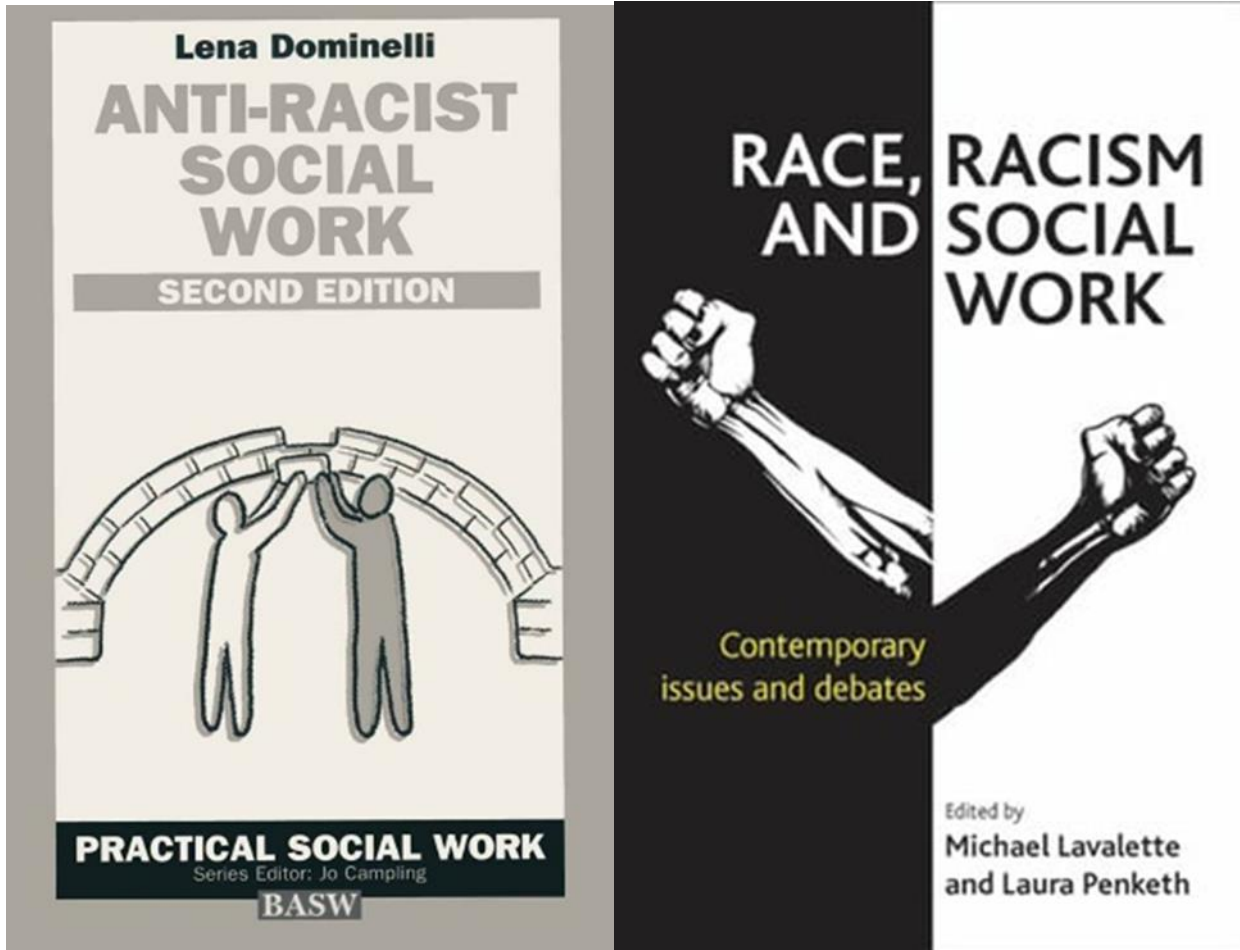
**Helen Lincoln,**

Executive Director, Children Families & Education  
Essex County Council and Eastern Region Sector  
Led Improvement DCS Lead





# My Anti-Racist Journey





# Changing Populations of the Eastern Region

- Eastern region ethnicity data – 22% in school
- Paul Dryden –n map of global majority population, map form, percentage, massively diverse – collectively together

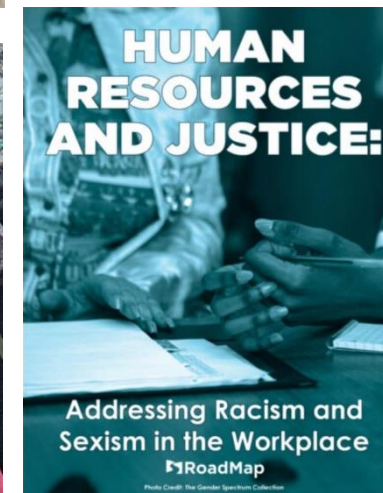
## Will Trumps EDI plans Impact UK Workplace?



## We need to talk about racism in the UK education system

Studies show that racial inequality is one of the biggest barriers to pupils attaining success at school. In this post, we investigate the key areas that Teach First and the wider education sector need to focus on to help every pupil reach their potential.

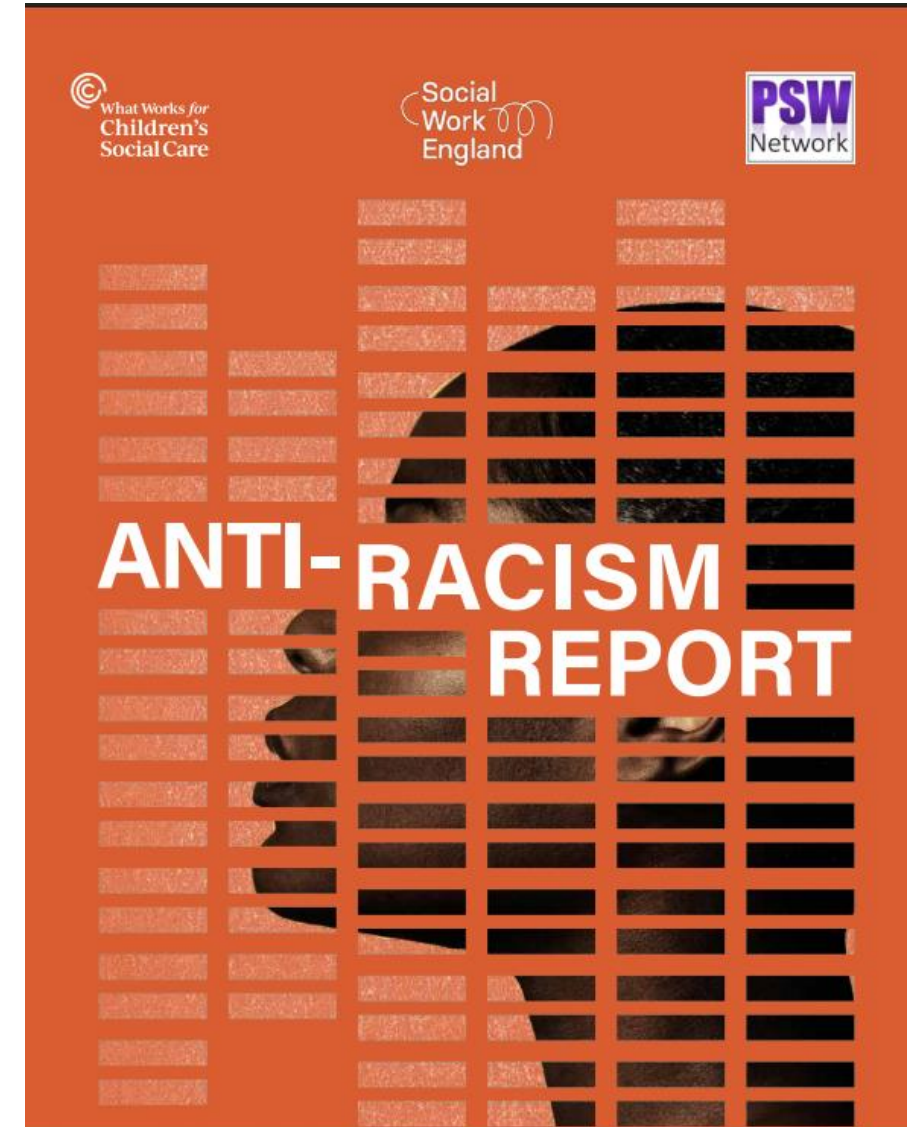
# The Race, Racism & Anti-Racism Landscape



# Racism within Social Care Institutions

The report highlights that global majority social workers experience:

- Higher workloads and great scrutiny
  - Racial abuse and discrimination
  - Microaggressions and bias
  - Lack of support networks and forums
  - Lack of organisational strategy and planning
- (What Works for Social Care, 2022)





# Key Messages from Social Work Practice

- Systemic silence about racism
- Inadequate consideration of race and culture in all aspects of the system
- Missed opportunities for learning
- Barriers to service engagement

(Department of Education, It's Silent, 2025)

THE CHILD  
**SAFEGUARDING**  
PRACTICE REVIEW PANEL

## **“It’s Silent”: Race, racism and safeguarding children**

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Panel Briefing 4

# What Children in the Eastern Region are Saying



"We didn't celebrate Black History Month in my school"

"Schools are awful with racism. How do you challenge a teacher? It will always come back to you."

"I was put in isolation for wearing a durag"

"Different races may have different views. Someone who is white might not have the measure of racism"

"Please do look after our well-being; our hair, our skin"

Essex  
Luton  
Suffolk  
Thurrock  
Cambridgeshire  
Bedford Borough  
Central Bedfordshire  
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# The Experiences of Global Majority Social Workers

- This is a clear issue when you look at senior management. I am often in a room full of White middle class women.”
- “I have been ‘commended’ for my ‘gentle and articulate’ approach to my practice. I wondered whether a White colleague would have those qualities highlighted. It was further compounded by the commentator highlighting that if she hadn’t seen me online, she wouldn’t have believed I was Black because of my accent.”
- “I have seen several incidents where Black and Asian colleagues including myself seem to be treated unfairly compared to White colleagues. For example, Black colleagues have been rejected for promotion when they appear to have as much or more experience than White colleagues who have been promoted.”
- “As a Black sw I have been allocated more complex cases and compared to a White sw. It has been difficult to progress as a Black worker and have had to work ten times harder to prove that I am more than capable to execute my duties despite being Black worker.” (What Works for Social Care, 2022)





# **The criticality of systems leadership & anti-racism**

## **It's urgent**

# Directors have Committed to Anti-Racism as a Regional Priority



There has been anti-racist activism across the region in individual local authorities.

However, the Eastern Region DCS Network recognised this as an area for continued work, that could be strengthened through strategic and regional collaboration

We have established Anti-Racist Practice as a regional priority.

It was agreed that an Eastern Region Anti-Racist Practice Pledge should be developed

A regional task & finish group with representatives from across the region formed to develop the pledge.

# The Experiences of Global Majority Social Workers

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# The Eastern Region Anti-Racist Practice Pledge

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Central Bedfordshire  
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## Eastern Region Anti-Racist Practice Pledge

Racism affects Black, Asian, Mixed-Heritage and ethnically diverse communities. In all of its forms, it is a persistent and systemic issue requiring proactive and sustained efforts.

In the Eastern Region, we are committed to demonstrating allyship in action. We will foster an anti-racist and diverse environment where all individuals, staff, and the communities that we serve are respected and valued.

We, as members of the Eastern region, are committed to leading with integrity in the fight against racism.

We pledge to:

1. **Demonstrate Anti-Racist Leadership:** Actively promote and model anti-racist behaviours and attitudes within our workforce and communities, setting a positive example for others to follow.
2. **Promote Anti-Racism :** Actively encourage and support Black, Asian, Mixed-Heritage and ethnically diverse people within our communities and workforce, ensuring that their voices are heard and valued.
3. **Educate and Raise Awareness:** Promote understanding and awareness of racism and its impacts through continuous education and dialogue.
4. **Create Safe Spaces:** Establish environments where Black, Asian, Mixed-Heritage and ethnically diverse people and anyone who witnesses racism feels safe to express themselves and report incidents of racism without fear of negative consequences.
5. **Review and Revise Policies:** We will evaluate and update our policies on an annual basis to ensure they promote racial equity and do not uphold systemic racism.
6. **Engage with the Community:** Collaborate with community members and organisations to address racism and promote inclusivity.
7. **Hold Ourselves and our Partners Accountable:** Set clear, measurable goals to track our progress in promoting racial equity and hold ourselves accountable to these standards.
8. **Support Affected Individuals:** Ensure that systems, procedures, and support mechanisms are in place to prevent racism and assist those affected by racism to actively promote allyship.

Together, we believe that our collaborative efforts will lead to a racially just and equitable society in the Eastern Region where everyone is valued and respected.

# Keynote



**Teresa Hills,**

Director of Operations  
Luton Borough Council







**"None of us are white..."**



# System Leaders: Key Takeaways to get us there!

## 1. Include Global Majority colleagues at your top table

- Not as a token and truly engage with difference as you will see the ripple effect in your organisation.
- You will see problems and solutions from a varied lens.
- Remember the golden thread of disproportionality in outcomes for our children.

## 2. Pound the table for Global Majority colleagues

- Use your social networks and name drop for them or agencies will.
- The real need for a thriving permanent workforce that is valued and elicit loyalty.

## 3. Walk the difficult path

- Be authentic, credible and intentional about inclusion and equity (its not just about shoes for all, but shoes that fit- for all).
- Racism is real. (Please don't let the fear of getting it wrong get in the way). Clumsiness will happen, allow for vulnerability and allow the same for your global majority colleagues as this provides psychological safety in organisations.

# System Leaders: Key Takeaways to get us there!

## 4. Share your good examples

- Use critical friends like the Leadership in Colour reference group as your critical friends, let's learn together.
- Please go above and beyond coaching and mentoring- start sponsoring!
- The link to reshaping the system, challenge the status quo rather than locating it in individuals - especially Global Majority to fit into the system.

## 5. Starting with Self

- How I embrace all the different parts of me?
- Making room for courageous conversations



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*“To love. To be loved. To never forget your own insignificance. To never get used to the unspeakable violence and the vulgar disparity of life around you. To seek joy in the saddest places. To pursue beauty to its lair. To never simplify what is complicated or complicate what is simple. To respect strength, never power. Above all, to watch. To try and understand. To never look away. And never, never to forget.”*

- Arundhati Roy, *The Cost of Living*





# Break

## 11:00- 11:15

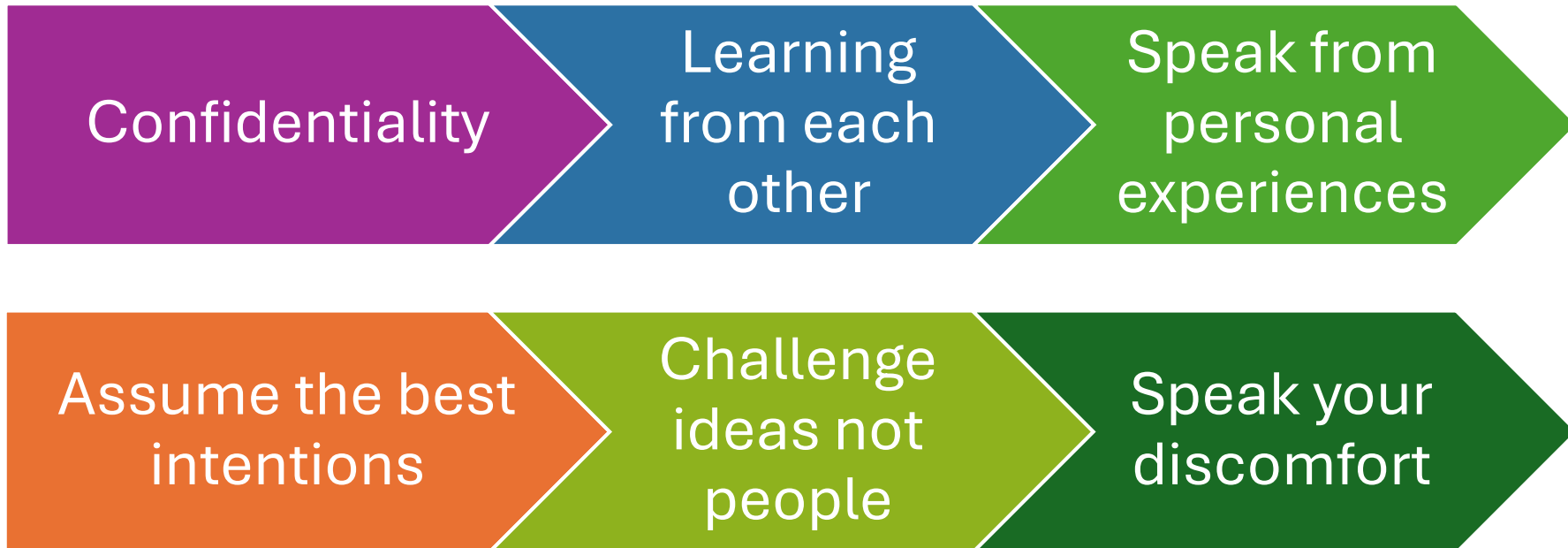
# Keynote



**Jeffrey Wotherspoon,**  
Executive and Career Coach and  
Organisation Relationship and  
Systems Coach



# Learning Together



“

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# A Story about Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody





# **What is Diversity?**



**Diversity means taking account of the differences between people and groups of people, and placing a positive value on those differences.**

# What is Equity?



**Equity is about giving people what they need in order to make things fair to achieve ‘equality’.**

# What is Inclusion?



**Inclusion is a universal human right. The aim of inclusion is to embrace all people irrespective of race, gender, disability, medical or other need. It is about giving equal access and opportunities, getting rid of discrimination and intolerance (removal of barriers). It affects all aspects of public life.**

# **White Privilege**

**“**

**An unearned, almost randomly assigned head start...**

**White privilege doesn't mean you don't have any hurdles, it just means you have fewer of them**

**Peggy McIntosh**



# Anti-Racist?

**“I am not racist, why would I need to be anti-racist?”**

# What are the statistics?

## Brown et al (2021)

44%

Did not think that there are fair and equal opportunities available to them in their organisation

Almost  
2 in 3

Felt that their ethnicity resulted in barriers being imposed on them in their career

Only  
23%

Agreed that they are provided with fair and equal progression opportunities

## Fairlough et al (2014)

Black and ethnic minority students progress more slowly on social work programmes

## Samuel (2020)

Black and ethnic minority social workers are over-represented in fitness to practice cases

Panels are disproportionately white compared to the social work profession as a whole

152 Upper tier Local Authorities – 94 (62%) of completed ethnicity data 2022:

4% Identified as Black

1% Black African

1 % Black Caribbean

2% mixed white and Black (African/ Caribbean)

Ethnicity Facts and Figures 2022:

- 12.9 % of SW identified as Black African/ Caribbean or other
- 2.1% of SW identified as Mixed Black and White

# **Data from association of directors of children services**

# Impact on children and families...

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## Barnardo's (2020)

Across the UK, Black children were over four times more likely than white children to be arrested. Overall stop-and-search rates between 2018 and 2019 show that Black people are now nearly 10 times more likely to be stopped and searched by police than white people.

## Staffordshire University, 2020

The teenagers in our study reported.....that friends with "foreign-sounding" surnames had struggled to gain part-time employment until they changed their surnames on application forms and got straight through to interview

## *This is Black Gen Z,* 2022

45 per cent of young Black women avoided wearing their natural Afro locks at work due to the unwelcome scrutiny it often brings. By contrast, 76 per cent of White Gen Z workers feel comfortable with their natural hair.



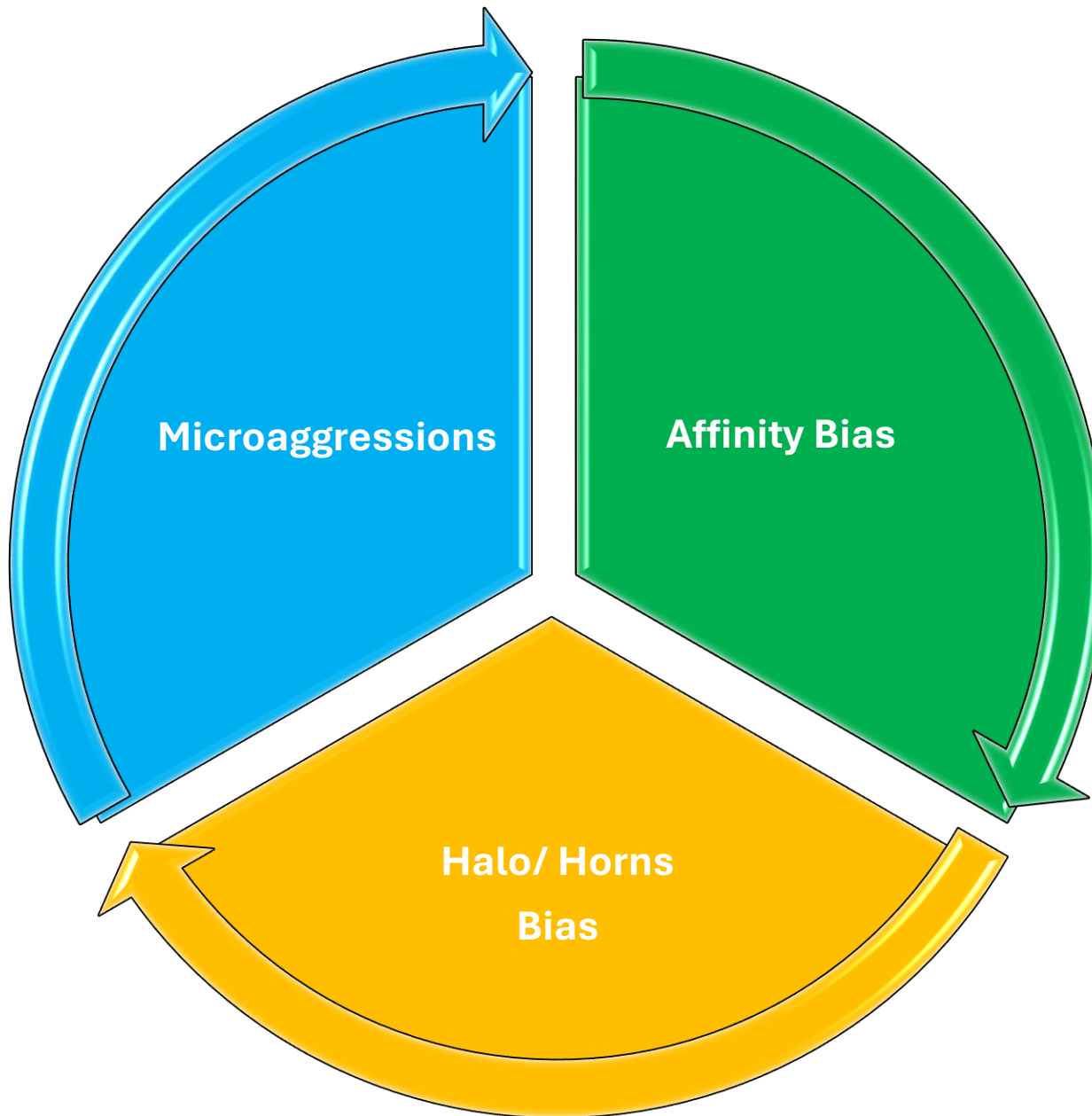
# **Why be Anti-Racist?**



**An Anti-Racist culture creates an  
environment  
where EVERYONE can thrive and feel a  
sense of belonging**



“Belonging is a wildly undervalued condition  
required for human performance”  
– Owen Eastwood



# Types of Racial Bias

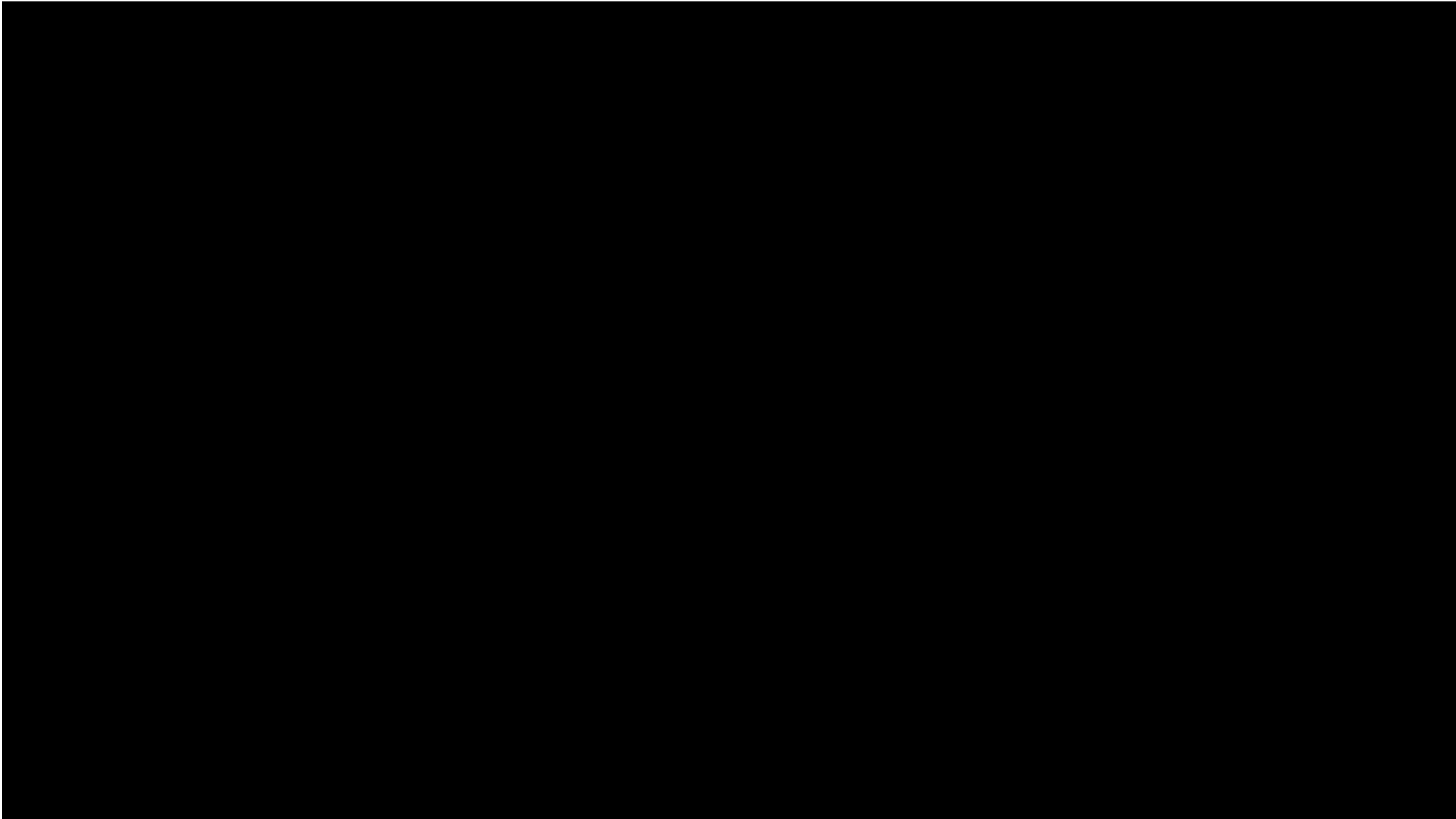


# **Microaggressions**



**Offensive comments and dismissive behaviour endured by marginalised groups.**

**Coined by Dr Chester Middlebrook Pierce (1970)**



## Discussion



Considering what we have covered on microaggressions and bias, what comes to mind when you reflect on your unique context and challenges within your local authority?

# Three takeaways from Bias

1

We all have  
them

2

There are  
many  
different  
types

3

They can be  
recognised  
and  
addressed

# 5D Model

1

Direct

2

Distract

3

Delegate

4

Delay

5

Document

# **Why Challenge?**

**“**

**What you permit, you promote.**

**What you allow, you encourage.**

**What you condone, you own.**



# How To Respond If Challenged

## Triple P Method (Jeffrey Wotherspoon©)

**1**

Pause

**2**

Ponder

**3**

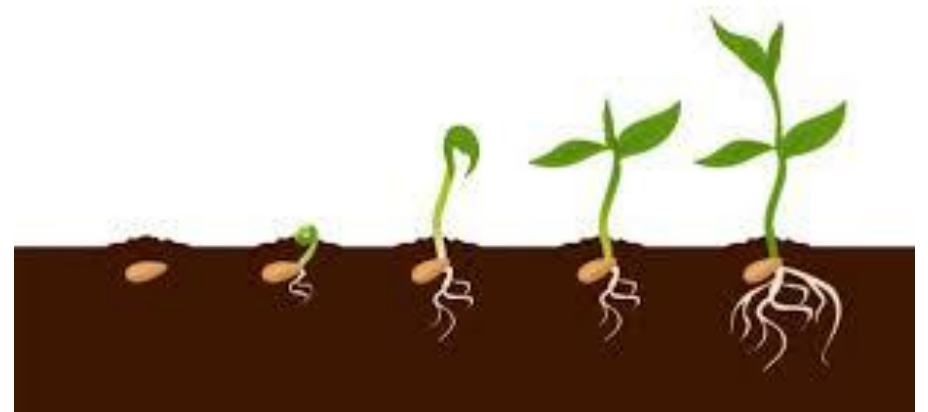
Proceed

## Commitment



As a result of this session, what is one specific, tangible action you can personally commit to implementing or advocating for within the next three to six months that would contribute to fostering an anti-racist environment for both your colleagues and the children and families you serve?"

# Which Seed Are You?





[Linkedin: Jeffrey Wotherspoon](#)

[Info@jeffreywotherspoon.com](mailto:Info@jeffreywotherspoon.com)

[www.jeffreywotherspoon.com](http://www.jeffreywotherspoon.com)





# **Lunch & Networking**

## **12:45 – 13:45**

# Implementation



## **Tapiwa Julius,**

Principal Social Worker and Co-Chair of National  
Children and Families Principal Social Worker Network  
Cambridgeshire County Council



## **Olga Staicu,**

Head of Assessment  
Hertfordshire County Council







# **World Café Conversation Eastern Region Conference**

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# 1. Context

## Overview:

- World Café is a metaphor enabling us to see new ways to make a difference in our lives and work. The power of conversation is so invisible and natural that we usually overlook it.
- Today, in your groups around the table, you are asked to enquire into one of the statements in the *Anti-Racist Practice Pledge*, using “questions that matter.”
- The World Café method enables us to explore this topic from multiple perspectives with everyone in the room contributing to it in a conversational style.



## 2.1 Anti-Racist Practice Pledge Statements

We pledge to:

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1. **Promote Anti-Racism :** Actively encourage and support Black, Asian, Mixed-Heritage and ethnically diverse people within our communities and workforce, ensuring that their voices are heard and valued.
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3. **Create Safe Spaces:** Establish environments where Black, Asian, Mixed-Heritage and ethnically diverse people and anyone who witnesses racism feels safe to express themselves and report incidents of racism without fear of negative consequences.

## 2.2 Anti-Racist Practice Pledge Statements

We pledge to:

- 5. Review and Revise Policies:** We will evaluate and update our policies on an annual basis to ensure they promote racial equity and do not uphold systemic racism.
- 6. Engage with the Community:** Collaborate with community members and organisations to address racism and promote inclusivity.
- 7. Hold Ourselves and our Partners Accountable:** Set clear, measurable goals to track our progress in promoting racial equity and hold ourselves accountable to these standards.
- 8. Support Affected Individuals:** Ensure that systems, procedures, and support mechanisms are in place to prevent racism and assist those affected by racism to actively promote allyship.

## 3 Activity Steps

The questions we will work on include:

- **One statement from the pledge** to delve deeper into this statement. (Check the copy of the Pledge statement on your table) **What does this statement mean to you?**
- **What is currently being done around this in your organisation? What are the gaps?**
- **What actions will you take to ensure this is implemented / adhered to in your organisation?**

(See brief on your tables for details of this activity and guidance for table hosts)



## 4. Call to Action

- **Reflection:**
  - What will you take away from today's session?
  - What will you commit to do?
  - How will you measure progress?





## 5. Further Materials

- [What is Allyship?](#)
- [Microaggressions \(Clean\)](#)
- [New film cuts to the heart of racist micro-aggressions | shots](#)
- [John Lewis Partnership - It's Not OK – Subtitled](#)
- [Download Leading in colour: the fierce urgency of NOW! | Staff College](#)
- [Courageous Conversations about Race | Staff College](#)
- [JUST FAIR: Leading in Colour | Staff College](#)
- [Just Home: Leading in Colour | Staff College](#)
- [CULTURAL COMPETENCE. PROMOTING LEADERSHIP & ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE - Includes Toolkit | Staff College](#)
- [Anti-racist systems leadership | Research in Practice](#)





# Next Steps and Closing Address



**Harmesh Bhogal**

Executive Director of Children's Services

Bedford Borough Council





# What are the next steps for the Eastern Region?

# LAUNCH:

## Eastern Region Anti-Racist Leadership Forum

- The purpose of this forum will be a strategic platform for **system-wide racial equity work** in children's services as follows:
- Provide a **consistent and collaborative space** for share best practice around anti-racism
- Support **accountability and transparency in anti-racist work** across children's services
- Engage **ongoing learning, challenge and reflection**
- **Build regional capacity** and leadership in this space





# Closing Remarks

# Tell Us What You Think!



Eastern Region Anti-Racist Practice  
Conference 16/05/25



We would like to get your feedback about today to help us improve future events.

Please scan the QR code and complete the short online form.





# IMPROVEMENT EAST

## Thank you for committing to the Eastern Region Anti-Racist Practice Pledge

Eastern Region Anti-Racist Practice  
Conference 16/05/25



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