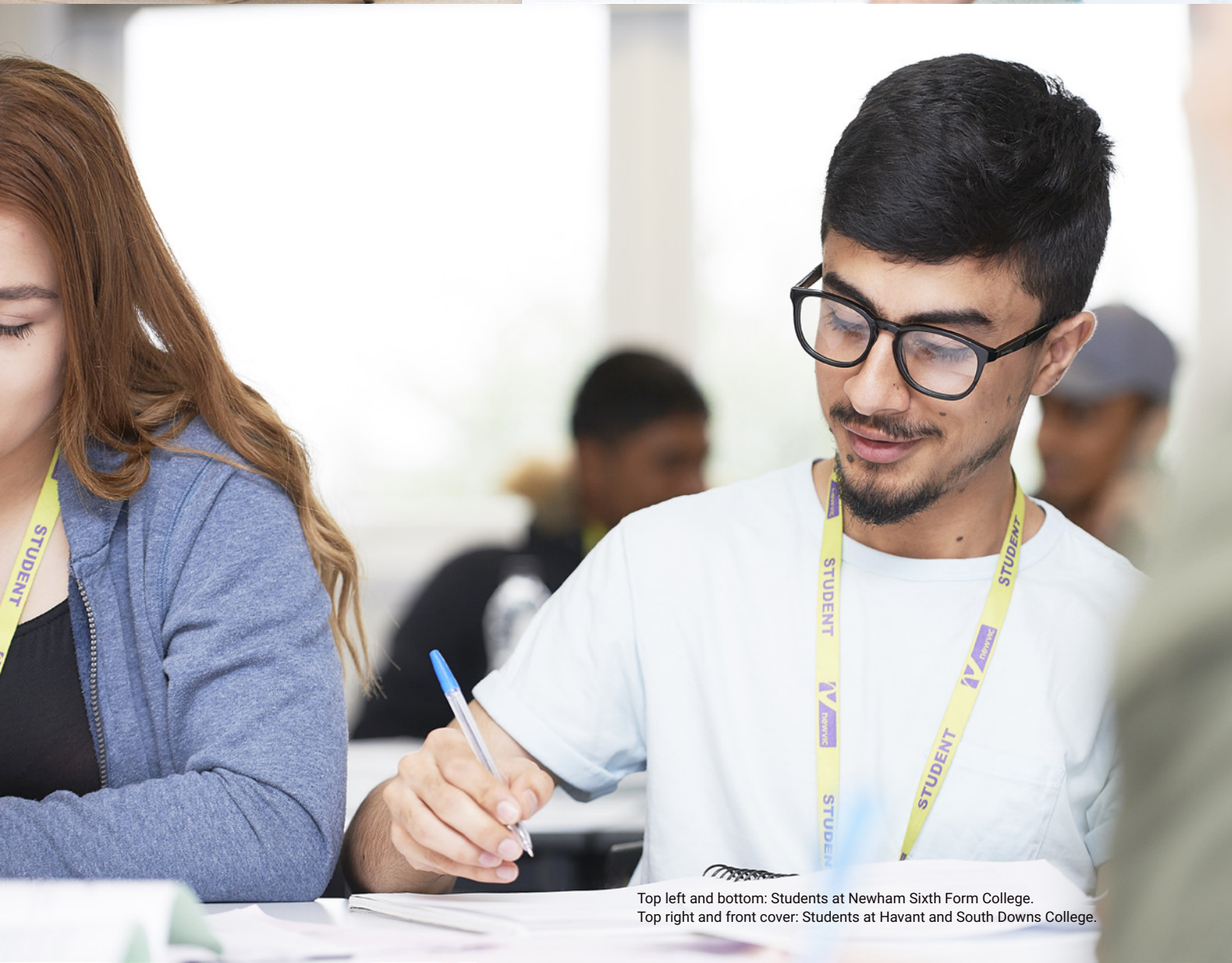


Using the Black Further Education Leadership Group 10 point plan

Institutional journeys towards
a culture of anti-racism

May 2021





Top left and bottom: Students at Newham Sixth Form College.
Top right and front cover: Students at Havant and South Downs College.

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This report offers an overview of the Black FE Leadership Group's online conference, 'Using the Black Further Education Leadership Group 10 point plan: institutional journeys towards a culture of anti-racism', held on 6 May 2021, hosted by Dr Marlene Ellis, BFELG member, and sponsored by Jisc.

10 POINT PLAN

Black FE
Leadership
Group



01 RADICAL REVISION OF FE CURRICULA & QUALIFICATIONS

Reflects contemporary British values, the influence of colonial history on society, and the contributions of *black people to the arts, sciences and technology, historically and now, and considers the impact of racism on communities.



02 ANTI-RACISM CENTRAL TO CPD

Include race equality as a central component across training and development programmes, and for teacher training, the inclusion of anti-racist pedagogy.



03 INSTITUTIONS PUBLISH DATA ANNUALLY

Publish college/training provider data on student performance, workforce, leadership and governance by ethnicity, including actions to address gaps.



04 ORGANISATIONS PUBLISH DATA ANNUALLY

Publish sector organisation data on workforce, leadership and governance by ethnicity, including actions to address gaps.



05 ADVISORY GROUPS LED BY EXPERTS

Ensure leaders of advisory boards/committees focusing on race equality possess insight and expertise in anti-racism.



06 RECRUITMENT PROCESSES REDRESS IMBALANCES

Implement recruitment processes that proactively address imbalances in the ethnicity profile of the workforce at all levels.



07 QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES SPOTLIGHT RACE EQUALITY

Evaluate the effectiveness of pedagogy, provision and leadership in relation to race equality.



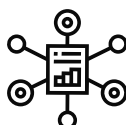
10 POSITIVE OPTICS AND MESSAGING

Ensure fair treatment and positive advocacy of black students, staff and communities through all internal and external communications.



08 FE COMMISSIONER (FEC) AND OTHER STATUTORY BODIES INCORPORATE RACE EQUALITY ASSESSMENTS

Incorporate race equality data and impact assessments in all FE Commissioner (FEC) and other statutory bodies reviews, reports and recommendations.



09 BEST PRACTICE ANTI-RACIST FRAMEWORKS

Collaborate to develop and cascade 'best practice anti-racist frameworks' across the FE sector.

Introduction



At Jisc we're delighted to be sponsoring the Black FE Leadership Group (BFELG) conference and this accompanying report.

We have a collective responsibility at Jisc to embed change within diversity and inclusion to create a sustainable, long-term change, not one-off interventions.

First and foremost, at Jisc we are placing emphasis on the commitment to belonging. In less than nine months, the BFELG has certainly managed to create a space for belonging, to create a space for Black and non-Black leaders, managers and practitioners to have a voice and to take action with a common purpose.

Within our plans at Jisc we are committed to the key themes of being an employer of choice for our Black community through access to opportunity and supporting their progress while at work. Within three years, the ambition is for us to be leading in this aspect of our operations and cultural norms and leading within the technology and education sectors.

Openness, transparency and readiness to learn and grow will be key to bring about the changes in this particular space. As an organisation, we shall be adopting aspects of the BFELG 10 point plan on how we educate our employees, from anti-racism education to our training and approaches to hiring staff.

We shall continue to communicate, communicate, communicate through all of our channels to ensure staff and stakeholders are aware of the commitments and actions and our progress against those. I urge you to commit to the same: listening, learning, actively participating and adopting BFELG 10 point plan.

Robin Ghurbhurun

Managing director, FE and skills, Jisc



The very first point in the BFELG 10 point plan calls for a radical review of FE curricular and qualifications. This creates a significant challenge for the FE system – and for sector

organisations across the UK – so we're delighted to be able to show an approach to curriculum review already in action. In her keynote presentation, summarised in this report, Professor Charlotte Williams showcases her work to address racial inequalities through curriculum change in schools.

It is significant that all 51 of the recommendations for schools in Professor Williams' report have been accepted by the Welsh government. The BFELG believes that most of these recommendations are equally applicable to FE, and that Professor Williams' work demonstrates the power of a system-wide approach – one that could be adopted in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Also in this report, three BFELG 10 point plan pilot colleges have shared their institutional journeys towards a culture of anti-racism. Diverse in terms of geographical location, the communities they serve and their starting points and approaches, their work was instrumental in developing the plan's diagnostic toolkit. The colleges' success at the institutional level – as well as the adoption of the plan by Jisc at the system-level – shows the versatility and applicability of the plan to a broad range of contexts.

The BFELG extends its thanks to Jisc for sponsoring the conference and this report, which we commend to you as a learning resource for system and sector organisations in FE and beyond.

Stella Ngozi Mbubaegbu CBE

Executive member, Black FE Leadership Group

Leaders, levers and learners: the Welsh journey to race equality in education

“My sense is that at the moment in Wales, there is an overwhelming and unprecedented optimism that change is afoot. That change is possible,” declared Professor Charlotte Williams.

In an inspiring keynote Professor Williams laid out the work of the working group she chaired – Communities, Contributions and Cynefin: Black Asian Minority Ethnicities in the New Curriculum – which reported in March 2021 and is set to have far-reaching impacts on the implementation of the new school curriculum in Wales.

What was the opportunity?

Wales is uniquely placed right now to address racial inequalities in education. Race equality is constitutionally embedded in the devolution settlement. As a cross-cutting theme, policy practitioners have been used to the idea of mainstreaming race equality across a range of social policy fields. Wales also has a receptive and listening government that is committed to action; in March 2021 it published its most recent race equality action plan, An Anti-racist Wales by 2030, making clear its determination to tackle institutional racism across a number of policy areas.

The background to Professor Williams’ working group was the new curriculum due to be rolled out in Wales in 2022. It already included diversity as cross-cutting theme but, following the murder of George Floyd and the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement, the working group was charged with looking right across the curriculum at what changes would be needed to address racial inequality in education. Professor Williams’ working group saw the issue as an opportunity for *all* children in Wales to be equipped to respond and acknowledge the diverse experiences and contributions of Black, Asian and minority ethnic people, past and present.

What was the need?

There is a very strong demographic, statutory and ethical case for engaging with these themes, Professor Williams explained.



Professor Charlotte Williams.

There is currently a known and evidenced attainment gap that particularly impacts on Black, Black Caribbean and mixed race groups. Groups such as Show Racism the Red Card and Race Alliance Wales have provided very detailed qualitative evidence of young people's experience in schools, showing that pupils from certain backgrounds were highly vulnerable to school exclusion, that children and young people were subject to racism, and that children and young people were calling for a more diverse curriculum that better represented them.

There is also evidence from the education workforce council in Wales, showing that 12% of pupils in both primary and secondary schools are from Black and minority backgrounds but only 3% of teachers are from those backgrounds (and of that 3%, only 1% are from Black or Black British backgrounds).

The findings

The working group was charged with investigating what resources would be required to enable teachers to develop these themes in their curricula; what kind of professional learning would be needed to upskill and develop them towards this ambition; and what were some of the wider issues that schools should take on board. It found that:

- > Where resources were available to support each of the six areas of learning and experience in the curriculum, they were heavily biased towards slavery history, which is known to have a negative impact on the self-esteem and sense of belonging of children from a Black background. Selection of resources was ad hoc. In some of the areas of learning, particularly in the STEM subjects, the resources were very poor or non-existent and this created access issues for practitioners.
- > It was clear that there was a very high need for ongoing and embedded professional learning at all levels: teachers, school governors and school leaders alike really needed an uplift in terms of their skills base. Enthusiasm was high, but confidence and competence was quite low.
- > There needs to be a whole school approach covering the total school environment, as well as the content of learning and pedagogy.

"This really maps well on to the BFELG 10 point plan in terms of a much more holistic approach to the school environment."

- > Schools need to have stronger stakeholder engagement: with their local communities, parents and pupils, digitally or face to face with Black non-governmental organisations in Wales – and engagement with each other, to learn from those schools that are much more advanced with this thinking and work.

Leaders, levers and learners

Professor Williams' working group identified three key aspects of success in the 51 recommendations it made in the report: leaders, levers and learners.

Leadership: not just leadership from the top, although that matters, but also a recognition of the many people who lead the field through their verve and commitment. It will be critical to identify those champions who will take the work forward.

Levers: there will need to be a carrot and stick approach to implementation, which includes financial levers, inspection levers and accountability levers in terms of the statutory quality duties of public bodies in Wales.

Learners: let schools be learners as well! To create an enabling environment, schools and practitioners must feel confident that they can take risks, they can make mistakes and they can learn. Chasing racism and race equality is a dynamic process.

Challenges

There are, of course, challenges to implementing the vision set out in the Communities, Contributions and Cynefin report.

A lack of school **leadership** buy in will stifle any teaching practitioner who wants to do innovative and imaginative work in this area. **Salience** is likely to be an issue in a country that is 95% white: how do you ensure the issues are salient for every school across Wales rather than being a 'special case' for those schools with a higher proportion of Black and minority pupils? Teacher competency and **confidence** will need to be increased; many teachers are very fearful of tackling issues to do with racism or tackling past histories that evoke the issues of racism. **Data** needs careful handling, especially with small datasets that risk making conspicuous particular families or individuals in certain areas of Wales. Follow through and a past lack of **monitoring** will need to improve. Finally, **siloed thinking** in policy matters is always problematic. It's critical that links are made between poverty, health and education and for that, different policy arenas must work together.

Conclusion

Despite the challenges, Professor Williams is positive that the time is ripe for taking forward the mix of leaders, levers and learners, supported by the Welsh government's clear lead, vision and actions in this area. The BFELG 10 point plan is also part of the mix.

"The challenge in securing the inclusion of Black, Asian and minority ethnic themes and experiences across the curriculum is not just a matter of creating and improving the content of teaching and learning resource but enabling access to resources, changing mindsets and practices and providing support via exemplars, prompts and guidance. That's why I think sharing this 10 point plan is going to be very, very important for us in Wales," concluded Professor Williams.

Professor Charlotte Williams OBE is an honorary professor in the School of History, Philosophy and Social Sciences, Bangor University. Over her thirty-year academic career, Charlotte has held a number of senior leadership roles including head of the School of Public Policy at Keele University and associate dean at RMIT University, Melbourne Australia. In 2007 she was awarded an OBE for services to ethnic minorities and equalities in Wales.

Case study

Newham Sixth Form College

Martin Rosner, chair of governors



"We would urge all colleges to adopt the 10 point plan as a practical and achievable way to support both diversity and anti-racism."

What's the college like?

Around 85-90% of Newham Sixth Form College's (NewVIc's) 2,500 students are from ethnic minorities. The three largest groups are Bangladeshi, African and Pakistani. Just over 50% of staff are from ethnic minorities along with half of the senior leadership team but the numbers are lower at middle management level.

How has Newham Sixth Form College worked with the 10 point plan and toolkit?

NewVIc is taking a board-led approach to implementing the 10 point plan, while identifying that the responsibilities of the board and the senior leadership team are quite different. While the vision must stem from the board, much of the practical implementation of the plan falls to the college's senior leadership team and teaching staff.

"By having a more diverse board, we can serve our communities and reflect their needs, their wishes far better."

NewVIc is taking the following actions:

- > **Board diversity:** the board search committee is reviewing the diversity of the board (currently 40% of governors are from ethnic minorities) to produce an action plan for filling vacancies. The committee will also consider and make recommendations about what data relating to the diversity of the board should be made publicly available.
- > **Strategy:** the college's strategic plan will include specific actions relating to both diversity and anti-racism.
- > **Diversity data:** reviewing the diversity data the college collects to ensure that it is fit for purpose and, where issues are identified, actions are defined.
- > **Conduits:** appointing a link governor for diversity to connect the board, executive and staff.
- > **Communication:** an annual report from the principal on actions they have taken to implement the 10 point plan, not only raising awareness but also celebrating equality and diversity.



In addition to those actions at board level, NewVIc has been taking action at executive and college level. It has discussed with the universities that train its staff about including non-racist pedagogy and expects changes to take place from next year onwards. The college has reviewed its equality and diversity policy to start an action plan, working with staff and students, so that everyone's understanding can be improved. The college's African Studies Centre is helping the college to move away from the idea of learning through the lens of European colonialism, along with changes to A Level history as part of the process of decolonising the curriculum.

What advice would Newham Sixth Form College offer to other colleges based on its experience?

Difficult but pressing issues of recruitment – for more ethnic minority governors and middle and senior managers – were highlighted in feedback to conference presentations by Martin Rosner and Newham's principal, Mandeep Gill. The presentations were made to the Sixth Form College Association's Clerks Annual Conference, in a webinar for governors and to individual colleges.

Martin suggests colleges should:

1. Identify the issues within governor recruitment that you need to address. If it's proving difficult, accept the current arrangements haven't worked and you need to do things differently.
2. Not all governors need to be professional experts in a field such as finance, human resources or estates and so on. Experts from the community are going to be equally important to a successful governing body.
3. Look at where your students come from rather than where the college is situated and try to recruit governors from those areas as a way of improving diversity.
4. Make use of the organisations, local and national, who can assist with the recruitment of governors.
5. In terms of senior managers, the number of ethnic minority staff within further education has been static and has even declined at principal level over the last 10 years. All aspects of the recruitment process need to be reviewed, from the advert through to the application form and shortlisting. The selection process should be based around the principle of 'show me what you can do rather than just tell me'. Finally, onboarding is increasingly important as a way of ensuring that new staff feel comfortable within the college, particularly during their induction period.

Case study

South Thames Colleges Group

Peter Mayhew-Smith, chief executive officer



"The challenge presented by BFELG, which is so pointed and powerful in our sector, really goes to the core of our values as public service organisations rooted in our communities. It challenges us in terms of practice, curriculum design, recruitment and operations – it sweeps across the whole landscape of our responsibilities. The challenge to culture and beliefs brings a whole host of really difficult questions and requires answers."

What's the college like?

South Thames Colleges Group is the largest provider of college-based higher education in London with four colleges: South Thames College, Kingston College, Merton College, and Carshalton College. The group has 20,000 students and about 1500 staff. Around 44% of students are from Black, Asian or ethnic minority backgrounds.

How has South Thames Colleges Group worked with the 10 point plan and toolkit?

"Everybody's got a responsibility and is equipped to tackle racism, to understand it, to see it when it presents itself and to be active in their responsibility for closing down on it and confronting it where it arises."

For Peter Mayhew-Smith, leadership and the accountability of leaders to staff, students and stakeholders, is at the heart of making the 10 point plan a rallying cry to generate the strong, challenging dialogue that is needed within the colleges.

The college group set out clear statements about its values, about how it operates and its unequivocal position against discrimination at any level in the organisation. Then it set about consulting and listening:

- > **Staff:** groups of staff and the race equalities forum were asked to be honest, open and authentic about what it was like to be them in the organisation, providing criticism and challenge back to the senior leadership team.
- > **Students:** there is a strong student voice, with space in forums and conference activities to talk through how they want the college to evolve and adapt.

"One of our student activities was led by a former student, Patrick Hutchinson, who became famous during a Black Lives Matter protest when he was photographed helping an injured far right counter-protester, supporting him back to his feet and making sure that he was cared for. Patrick became well known as somebody who was prepared to reach out, build bridges and make community relations as cohesive and positive as possible. His values absolutely mirror ours. He talked to our students about the things that matter fundamentally to him and his work as an activist. He really helped animate that discussion for our students and show what can be done."



- > **Board:** with its new race equality lead governor, South Thames has changed its governance, reshaping the board to have a subcommittee that has explicit responsibility for equalities right across the organisation.
- > **Police:** the college group has actively engaged with the police and is building up a relationship with its local borough commanders to make sure that there is a direct dialogue between the college, its students and the police: "to have those discussions with students directly on the ground and hear their anger and disappointment in the way in which they feel they're treated."

"There's a really direct challenge to take big messages and strong rhetoric and turn them into actual practical answers and that's exactly where the toolkit comes in."

South Thames Colleges Group has an action plan for future work, which includes examining its imagery, symbols, staff and leadership profiles to ensure they are inclusive and equitable. It is also rethinking the curriculum to mainstream and recognise the contribution of everyone in the history and development of the UK. Finally, it recognises the importance of data and the need for a 'race equality score card' to build an evidence base against which actions can be tested and measured.

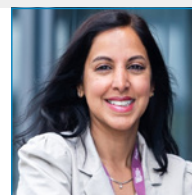
What advice would South Thames Colleges Group offer to other colleges based on its experience?

Peter Mayhew-Smith advises: "Never think the job is finished. Always ask yourself the question – what else could we do, what do we do next, how does that plan evolve from one activity to another, from one year to another, because that plan won't be finished in a year, it probably won't be finished in 10 years."

Case study

Havant and South Downs College (HSDC)

Suki Dhesi, vice-principal students, learning and quality, and Leona Berry, vice-principal organisational development and people



"The 10 point plan has been instrumental in our journey because it's helped us understand what it is that we need to do." – Suki Dhesi

What's the college like?

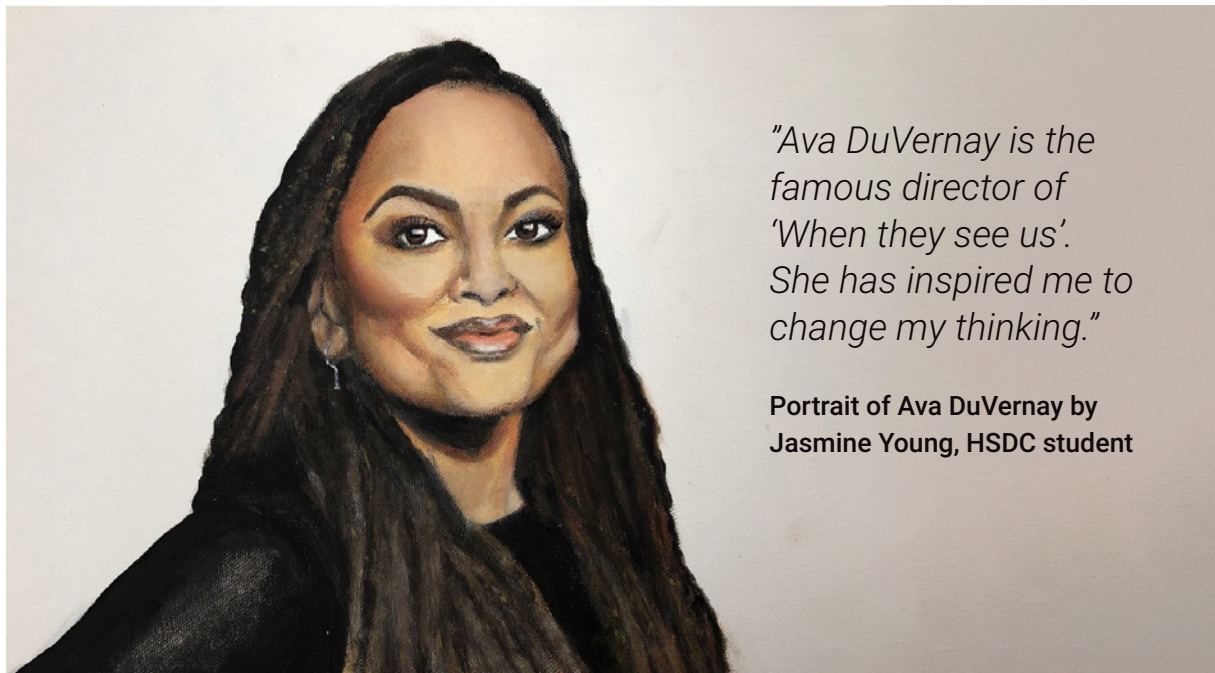
Havant and South Downs College (HSDC) is located across three campuses in Hampshire: South Downs, Havant and Alton. It has around 7,800 students. There are approximately 10% non-white students at HSDC, compared with around 12% in the local area.

How has HSDC worked with the 10 point plan and toolkit?

"We didn't just want our approach to be a social media post or a hashtag that gets forgotten about after the media storm passes. We wanted to take genuine action and not simply pay lip service. We wanted to really show our commitment to making a difference for the whole of our college community, looking at ways to involve and empower them in our journey and breaking down barriers." – Leona Berry

At HSDC, Suki Dhesi and Leona Berry are taking a whole college approach to implementing the 10 point plan, with both bottom-up and top-down activities and a strong emphasis on communication.

- > **Students:** a series of tutorial exercises began a detailed debriefing on the historical and political context, to encourage the entire student body to debate and discuss in an informed and educated way. This included tackling the 'all lives matter' response through strong messaging that rallying to support one group does not diminish any other group. Every student was invited to express their views through art, resulting in a BLM exhibition in September 2020.
- > **Leaders:** as a starting point, to ensure that racial justice was on the agenda from the start of the academic year, in September 2020 the entire senior leadership team engaged with unconscious bias training, while acknowledging that it could only be one component of a multi-faceted approach.
- > **Staff:** in October 2020, the college's all-staff development day was themed around racial injustice. The institutional impact was "incredible" with all teams working together to develop their quality improvement action plans, which include an ongoing measure around equality and diversity, putting those conversations at the forefront.



- > **Communication:** in addition to an article for FE News, sharing success following the all-staff development day, Suki and Leona began a newsletter for staff and students setting out steps taken, progress made and offering information sources to encourage the college community to be part of the solution. It also includes powerful real-life stories from staff and students about personal experiences of stereotyping and discrimination, "giving more opportunity to get greater clarity and understanding of the pain and suffering of others". HSDC is also taking every opportunity to share best practice and methodology, whether through podcasts, social media or students talking to others in the community about HSDC's proactive approach to race equality and anti-racism.
- > **Data:** HSDC is reviewing its data collection, identifying gaps and working on solutions, but also has a specific focus on creating a safe space for the entire college community to record any issues or concerns related to any aspects of race equality. It has created a dedicated equality email address anyone can use to raise questions or report incidents that occur in college.

What advice would HSDC offer to other colleges based on its experience?

Start with the BFELG's 10 point plan to ascertain where you are on the journey towards creating an anti-racist organisation. This is where we started and realised we were at the beginning. Now that we have the foundations ready, thanks to the 10 point plan, we build gradually every day – and not only us, our distributed leadership model at HSDC has ensured that all students, staff and governors make a significant contribution. This whole college approach has been facilitated by frequent updates from the principal and CEO Mike Gaston via video posts and updates in key meetings clarifying our ongoing progress. It is crucial that leaders make clear the urgency with which we must take actions towards becoming anti-racist organisations, then to share the responsibility far and wide. This collective investment in terms of time and effort from all will be rewarded through an inclusive and aspirational community that recognises the value of their own contribution to their local community and that of others.

Conclusion

In August 2020, the Black Further Education Leadership Group (BFELG) circulated its 'Open letter to address systemic racism in further education'. Through it, we invited all FE stakeholders to acknowledge the race inequality challenges prevalent in the post-16 education and skills sector, and to join with BFELG to "collectively address the barriers that our students, staff and communities face".

At the heart of our call to action was our promise to "play our full part, as leaders, as expert practitioners and as role models to enable the FE system to 'step up' to its responsibility for addressing race inequality." Our commitment to everyone invested in the future of further education is to support you to make the most of an ethnically diverse Britain by delivering a fair and equitable playing field for all.

Our 10 point plan, which draws on the deep insight, expertise and lived experiences of our membership and networks, presents a roadmap for achieving this.

The 10 point plan diagnostic toolkit provides the practical tools needed for organisations operating across the breadth of post-16 education and skills, enabling them to undertake a comprehensive audit of their anti-racist practice. Applied effectively and with support, the toolkit can act as a vehicle for deep and wide-ranging system change. This requires high-level leadership commitment, founded on the recognition that cultural change has to be led from the top. It also affirms that sustained action is more critical than statements of intent or simple adjustments in numbers.

The valuable work undertaken by Newham Sixth Form College, South Thames Colleges Group and Havant and South Downs College, in piloting the 10 point plan toolkit, shows the roadmap and toolkit in action and the difference it can make in even a short space of time.

BFELG urges all organisations to adopt the 10 point plan and to use the diagnostic toolkit to implement it.

But we also need action at a system level. The work of Professor Charlotte Williams – addressing racial equality in the new school curriculum in Wales – has shown how powerful it can be when a clear vision, real commitment and strong leadership come together. Wales is leading the way and we are confident that the other UK nations can and should follow its example.

BFELG calls for a systems approach to providing the national frameworks and support needed for a fundamental review of the FE curriculum.

To find out more about how BFELG can support you to tackle the race inequality challenges in further education, please get in touch using exec@blackfeleadership.com and via Twitter [@FeLeadership](https://twitter.com/FeLeadership).



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