



BFELG INAUGURAL SYMPOSIUM REPORT

# 'LEADING ANTI-RACISM IN FURTHER EDUCATION: FOR MOVEMENT NOT A MOMENT'

In partnership with



The sector, as is the rest of the nation, is emerging from a sustained period of lockdown. The pandemic and lockdown have presented our institutions, staff, students and communities with many challenges. As a sector we have risen to these challenges, but we know despite our efforts, many young people and adults have had their education, livelihoods and prospects adversely affected, particularly the \*Black community who have faced racial inequities arising from the pandemic alongside those that permeate every aspect of their lives in Britain.

Rightly, much of our focus over the past year has been on ensuring the communities we serve do not fall further behind and in creating safe learning and working environments within our institutions and organisations. Yet despite these immediate challenges, we have continued working towards our goals of delivering movement on the Anti-racism agenda; unleashing the talent and creativity of everyone in the sector; and unlocking sustainable systemic change in the FE system.

\*BFELG uses Black as an inclusive term for ethnically diverse people who share a lived experience of the effects of racism.

**Leading Anti-racism in further  
education: For movement not a  
moment**

# SYMPOSIUM REPORT

## OF THE PROCEEDINGS AND THEMES FROM

the Inaugural Symposium of the Black FE Leadership Group (BFELG)  
in partnership with the Education and Training Foundation (ETF)

HELD ON  
**11 May 2021**



Activist Authentic Authoritative

**EDUCATION & TRAINING  
FOUNDATION**



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# FOREWORD

We are one year on from the BFELG/ETF Symposium, **'Leading Anti-racism in further education: For movement not a moment'** and the challenge set to us by Lord Simon Woolley CBE: "In this time, in which the world is changing, in which these structural inequalities have been laid bare, and where the government is, in part in denial, the questions we have to ask ourselves when we look in the mirror are: **What is our role? What is my role? What can we do, to give hope, to give a pathway, to give a future, a bright future, for our communities?"**

The thought leadership conversations started by the BFELG in 2020 continued at the Symposium and gathered pace over the past year. One of the themes arising from the Symposium was collaboration - between institutions, and across and beyond the sector. Symposium participants saw the BFELG, ETF and Jisc having key roles, as enablers, in driving the Anti-racism agenda forward. And so, we must ask ourselves, where are we at this moment in time? What have we achieved and what do we need to do next?

2021 has seen the BFELG partner with a diverse range of groups within and beyond the sector in the UK to showcase Anti-racism in action and re-imagine a future which makes the most of an ethnically diverse Britain. Thought leadership activities include work with colleges and organisations on race equity projects and with affiliated colleges on using the 10-Point Plan

Diagnostic Toolkit; networks of specialists from within affiliated colleges and organisations; a national conference on using the 10-Point Plan Diagnostic Toolkit, input into sector-related conferences (e.g., for the NUS); and two seasons of livestreams with FE News. Livestream topics include educational, system and place-based leadership, recruitment and employment practices, apprenticeships through to national policy. By bringing together experts from diverse sectors, the livestreams provide thought leadership on racial justice issues of national importance for FE, higher education, schools, the voluntary sector, regional authorities, government bodies, business and industry. A BFELG mentoring programme was developed and piloted, guided by a diverse steering group and featuring 'giving back' by BFELG members in the role of mentors.

During the year, the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) took on a leading role by engaging the sector through its programmes where Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) play a prominent role. The Diversity in Leadership programme had four strands of activity that were intended to support sector leaders to look at their practice, reflect on the areas that needed to change and give direction on creating that change. The GameChangers were created to give sector practitioners the opportunity to implement projects in their organisations to drive forward organisational and cultural change. Forty



GameChangers took up the gauntlet and delivered projects that challenged current practices and thought, and made leaders take stock of their strategies. Through this process, leaders were supported to make a commitment to actively further infuse EDI into their everyday practices and into the fabric of their organisational culture.

Coaching and mentoring has played a large part in the Leadership programmes, where \*Black colleagues have been given the opportunity to participate in ETF Coaching and Mentoring, delivered by former FE sector CEOs and Principals to support the leadership talent pipeline.

These activities and projects showcase the diverse pool of highly effective current and future leaders which is essential for future success of the sector. It is so important that as leaders we are visible role models to our learners by creating a diverse, aspirational and inclusive society that supports the Anti-racism movement through collective responsibility and action.

Going forward, we need to build on our current work and the emerging themes and potential solutions arising from the Symposium, evaluating what we have done and what we have achieved to date. This means coming together to reflect on our individual and collective contribution and what more we must do, as Lord Woolley CBE said to us, to "...sew a golden thread through all these individuals that are here today. Sew a golden thread, the whole then becomes greater than the sum of its parts. We watch out for each other, we support each other, we help each other to get to a better place. When we are in a place, we bring other people up."

Thank you to all of you who gave up time to address, participate in and contribute to the Symposium. This was just the start of our journey together. There is so much potential for us to transform society - the curriculum and services we offer, the culture and climate we create in our institutions and the way in which we communicate within and without them. The BFELG and ETF are committed to working in partnership to enable further actions from the Symposium. We will share our next steps with you and seek your further support for amplification of Anti-racism in your spheres of influence. We will also widen the collection of voices contributing to the debate and to the achievement of our ambitions for collaborative leadership for change.

This Report reflects the richness of thought leadership within further education and allied sectors. We hope you enjoy reading the Report, that you will reflect on its messages and use it as a catalyst for further conversations and as a source of inspiration for your practice and that of your colleagues and teams.

**Stella Ngozi Mbubaegbu CBE, Executive Member, BFELG and Symposium director**

**David Russell, Chief Executive, Education and Training Foundation (ETF)**

# INTRODUCTION

The BFELG/ETF Inaugural Symposium brought together a diverse group of experts from the FE system including sector and other leaders and specialists, researchers, and wider social commentators on race and ethnicity. The BFELG's call to action 'Leading Anti-racism in further education: For movement not a moment' shaped dialogue at the Symposium, giving rise to frank conversations on how the FE system might be reformed and reimagined to better serve its diverse communities.

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Lord Woolley CBE, extract from message to the BFELG/ETF Symposium,  
11 May 2021.



Introducing the Symposium, Lord Simon Woolley CBE, a prominent respected political figure, highlighted the imperative of renewed political attention on Anti-racism and racial inequalities. Nazir Afzal OBE - whose pursuit of justice is exemplary - chaired the Symposium. Together, these influential figures and the experts at the Symposium generated further momentum and activity to address inequalities across FE and related sectors. The Symposium also highlighted the work of the BFELG, and its supporters and allies.

*“I have four key points [about]...how we ensure that 2020 was not just a moment. Number one is that the Anti-racism fight is constant. Number two, that the victims are typically bearing the brunt of that fight. Three, mass action only occurs after, unfortunately, a grotesque incident. And four...tackling racism cannot be a reactive event.”*

Dr Tiffany Holloman, Expert Panellist, BFELG/ETF Symposium, 11 May 2021.

The Symposium came at a seminal time. Ten years since the Equality Act 2010, just two weeks from the anniversary of George Floyd's death, over twenty years from the Macpherson inquiry into the murder of Stephen Lawrence and in the context of the controversial March 2021 Report of the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, the Symposium, a unique Thought Leadership event explored the challenge, charge and opportunity to push racial justice and equity forward in the FE system.

*We have talked about silence – anybody's silence, as Martin Luther King said – is consent. We need to turn up the volume, everybody. That is how we will make sure it does not pass as a moment rather than a movement, and we have got to hold people to account.*

Nazir Afzal OBE, Symposium Chair, BFELG/ETF Symposium, 11 May 2021.

*“What is really integral to race and educational inequality is how we, as educators and EDI practitioners, get racism from the political periphery where it has always been to the political centre. In doing so, we need to consider how we focus our efforts on the issues at play when we are discussing aspects of race. So, for me, one of the significant issues is complicity. How complicit are we in facilitating racist cultures? In terms of being an active bystander, what are we doing to disrupt racism when we actively see it?”*

Dr Jason Arday, Expert Panellist, BFELG/ETF Symposium, 11 May 2021.

## Context

The colliding pandemics of systemic racism and COVID 19 have laid bare the structural racial inequities that have and continue to adversely affect the life chances, prospects and very lives of \*Black people in Britain and across the globe. Outrage, anger and grief at the murder of George Floyd and of those who came before and after him have been channelled into global protests demanding racial justice and that Black Lives Matter.

*“Anti-racism is an active process – not a single event or a checklist of actions – to identify, challenge, and change the values, structures, and behaviours that perpetuate systemic racism wherever they are found.”*

Amnesty International, February 2021.

In the summer of 2020 and throughout 2021, many young people enjoined their schools, colleges and universities to tackle the racial inequities and disparities in outcomes that pervade the education system, with calls, for example, to: remove statues and other public memorials celebrating the purveyors and beneficiaries of racist systems; decolonise curricula, address achievement gaps and hold conversations about race and racism, including white privilege. Some educational institutions have begun to examine their role in an inequitable system and to envision how to build a better future for all the communities they serve. It is, however, now incumbent on the sector to translate policy and strategy into action, building a movement that

will dismantle the inequitable system not only in their institutions and across the sector but one that will put pressure on the national and devolved governments to act.

*“Organizations move ...through these stages sequentially, first establishing an understanding of the underlying condition, then developing genuine concern, and finally focussing on correcting the problem.”*

Robert Livingston, How to Promote Racial Equity in the Workplace, The Magazine, Harvard Business Review, October 2020.

*“For the NUS and the student movement, we are now talking about how we radically reimagine the system and structures of our education system to uproot the ways in which racism is sewn into the fabric of that rather than tinker around at the edges.”*

Larissa Kennedy, Expert Participant, BFELG/ETF Symposium, 11 May 2021.

As the Government seeks to level-up communities across the country, the Black attainment gap and the underrepresentation of Black leaders simply cannot persist. In a sector in which Black students make up 30% of the student body, failure to recognise the insidious nature of structural racism undermines our nation's ability to fully engage with all the constituent communities that FE serves.

The long awaited FE White Paper, Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth published in early 2021 firmly locates the government's ambitions within the context of dealing with the coronavirus pandemic, preparing to recover and rebuild in its aftermath, as well as seizing the opportunities arising from our exit from the European Union. Our best chance of success as a nation, at this critical juncture, is to ensure everyone has the skills which will allow them to get good jobs, both now and in the future.

*“The only way to undo racism is to consistently identify it and describe it—and then dismantle it.”*

Dr Ibram X. Kendi, How to Be an Antiracist, One World, Random House, 2019.

In February 2021, the BFELG's timely and solutions focused Inaugural Conference 'Making the most of an ethnically diverse Britain: the role of Further Education' presented hard-hitting BFELG Research revealing the full extent of the challenges in creating an Anti-Racist FE system and recommendations for actions to address and effect permanent change. The Conference Report launched in April 2021, captured the main themes and contributions of delegates to influence action, implementation of the White Paper and further debate. The Symposium explored the themes arising from the Inaugural Conference, asking of each individual and organisation, what will your contribution be to unlocking sustainable systemic change in the FE system?

*“The real challenge for organizations is not figuring out ‘What can we do?’ but rather ‘Are we willing to do it?’”*

Robert Livingston, How to Promote Racial Equity in the Workplace, The Magazine, Harvard Business Review, October 2020.

*“In this time, in which the world is changing, in which these structural inequalities have been laid bare, and where the government is, in part in denial, the questions we have to ask ourselves when we look in the mirror are: What is our role? What is my role? What can we do, to give hope, to give a pathway, to give a future, a bright future, for our communities?”*

Lord Woolley CBE, extract from message to the BFELG/ETF Symposium, 11 May 2021.

## Purpose

The overarching purpose of the Symposium was to deliberate, learn together and arrive at new solutions to address the root causes of the inequities in the FE system through honest and frank dialogue.

In particular, the Symposium sought to:

- Explore how, individually and collectively, leaders can drive forward Anti-racism and racial justice within their institutions, the FE system and the skills sector.
- Identify enabling structures and processes that will unleash the talent of everyone in the system, including staff, students and wider communities served.
- Generate inventive approaches to unlocking sustainable change in the FE system.

## Methodology

Grounded in principles of thought leadership and design thinking, the methodology underpinning the Symposium provided a framework for drawing on the expert knowledge and processes that support creative problem solving.

The methodology included:

Ensuring a range of experiences, knowledge and expertise:

- Bringing together a diverse group of experts to provide different perspectives and insights-voices of experience, leaders, researchers, social commentators and policy makers drawn from further and higher education, sector

and skills bodies, government departments, race equality organisations, health and social services, business and specialist think tanks.

- Drawing on research to inform dialogue, including that undertaken by experts (participants and panellists) and the Symposium's related pre-reading list of: [The BFELG, Making the most of an ethnically diverse Britain: The role of Further Education](#), Runnymede Perspectives: [Race and racism in English secondary schools](#) Dr Remi Joseph-Salisbury, [White Paper Skills for jobs: lifelong learning for opportunity and growth](#), [Report of the commission on race and ethnic disparities](#).

## Generating ideas and finding creative solutions

The Symposium prompted responses on the following three questions which were explored in Roundtable discussions and at the Plenary:

- ***How can we ensure that the events of summer 2020 are more than a moment and we deliver movement on the Anti-racism agenda?***
- ***What are the levers to unleash the talent and creativity of everyone in the FE system?***
- ***What do we need to do to unlock sustainable systemic change in the FE system?***

Each Roundtable was given one or more questions to consider with a time allocation for discussion of each, ensuring questions were explored in sufficient depth and enabling participants to: define opportunities and constraints, challenge assumptions, and begin to ideate solutions. Roundtables were chaired by expert practitioners who encouraged diverse perspectives, drawing

together conversational threads and reporting on emerging themes at the Plenary.

The Plenary identified the responses made for each question, and the experiences, evidence, potential solutions and/or recommendations emerging from the Symposium. The intent of the Plenary was to provide both the framework for future thought leadership inquiry and to identify actions for moving the Anti-racism agenda forward.

### Reporting on outcomes

This Report captures the themes and the 'golden thread' of individual and collaborative responsibility for dismantling systemic racism within the sector and reimagining a more equitable future. The composite voices of the Symposium tell the story of where the sector has been and where it is currently in the journey towards Anti-racism. It is a story of missed opportunities, successful initiatives and hopes and plans for a better future.

The voices echo:

- Anger, frustration & vulnerability
- Suffering
- Exclusion from spheres of influence
- Role model fatigue
- Fragility

with a belief in the power of:

- Kindness & forgiveness
- Allyship
- Co-production & co-creation

to forge the golden thread that will enable us to achieve our aspirations, ambitions and goals.

We now need to ask ourselves how we build on and take forward Anti-racist practice in the FE system, so it spreads to every institution, transforming the lived experience of Black students and staff, and that we do not, in forty years' time, find nothing has changed.

A number of Symposium participants gave examples of the ways in which they and their institutions or organisations are tackling issues around racism, inequity and disparity; these included:

- Conversations with students on systemic racism led by the sabbatical student union president.
- Dialogue with current students, recent graduates and past alumni through an Anti-racist project undertaken with an external agency.
- A group of white principals working on Layla Saad's *Me and White Supremacy*, exploring for example, white fragility and racism in their institutions.
- A CEO recognising that there were problems concerned with racial inequity in the college, including potentially his own role in these, and using external experts to diagnose problems. The college invested in research around quantitative and qualitative data. The extension of the project to another college and the local council will build city-wide momentum to interrogate and tackle issues around systemic racism.



- Initiatives supporting Anti-racist pedagogy and curriculum at Newham College. One example of this is the incorporation of Anti-racism and Anti-racist pedagogy in teacher training programmes for college staff who are trainee teachers through the college's successful negotiation with teacher training providers. Another, is the African Centre set up by the college to look at a range of issues around colonialism, bringing an objective rather than a one-sided view to, for example, curriculum content and pedagogical approaches.

Running throughout the Roundtable conversations was the need for radical change to the central enabling structure within the education system, i.e., the curriculum. Whilst a number of colleges provided examples of revising and developing tutorial programmes and subjects such as English and history, none were provided for vocational curricula. It is critical that we a) broaden our focus, particularly given that vocational curricula and qualifications are at the heart of what colleges do and b) undertake within our intuitions and across the system a radical review of vocational curricula and qualifications "to reflect contemporary values, incorporating the importance of colonial history and its influence on society, historically and now; The impact of racism on Black and white communities; the contributions made by Black people to society (Point 1, BFELG 10-Point Plan.

Along with examples of their own and their institution's practice, participants noted the role played by enabling structures such as the BFELG, ETF, Jisc and the AOC in driving forward the Anti-racism agenda. Investment in dismantling

inequities in the FE system is of critical importance and we cannot afford to repeat the mistakes of the past where the gains made, and momentum generated by organisations such as the Black Leadership Initiative and the Network for Black Professionals have been lost due to lack of funding. As one participant said:

"This takes me back to many years ago, when we had the enquiry into Black staff in further education. Actually, I am quite saddened that in many ways, it feels as if we've not even stood still, we've gone backwards. But on the other hand, I'm quite encouraged by what I see happening now. And what I always say is, if you get it right for me and people who look like me, then you're setting best practice for everyone else. It's also about empowerment as well as co-production and it's not about sitting back and asking black and brown people, 'what should we do?' Actually, you've been told for years what to do, and it has been said so strongly today. It's not about having action points; it's about living those action points and bringing those action points into being. I'm interested in going forward. It's about meaningful co-production, working together to move forward into sustainable change."

It is now incumbent on us to take our plans forward, ensuring they are translated into action and make the difference we want to see.

# MESSAGE FROM LORD SIMON WOOLLEY CBE



**This is a great Symposium. You have caught me in the Channel 4 studios waiting to do a podcast, actually about the Sewell Report. And you can imagine I will not have very complimentary things to say about a report that denies our lived experiences.**

But I want to talk about something that is much more positive in the next few minutes, because you will all know we have had a pretty wretched 15 months. I often describe it as a double pandemic, the way that Covid-19 has devastated our communities. If you are Black, you are four times more likely to die. Now, if you are Bangladeshi Pakistani, you are still four times more likely to die. And what Covid did was laid bare those structural inequalities in education, in health,

in housing, in the criminal justice system, and actually made it worse.

And then George Floyd's death.

So, we have had it tough. But I think that out of that, there was some great Black leadership. And when I say Black, I mean Black, Asian, minority ethnic communities. And even more is needed.

I would say the one thing that needs to come out of this symposium, is for all your guests, nearly 100 strong, coming to this symposium, is to ask themselves, really but one question. In this time, in which the world is changing, in which these structural inequalities have been laid bare, and where the government is, in part in denial, the questions we have to ask ourselves when we look in the mirror are: What is our role? What is my role? What can we do, to give hope, to give a pathway, to give a future, a bright future, for our communities?

And the reason why I ask these questions is this: it is as you will know – because you and I have trod this path, fighting relentlessly for social and racial justice – that there are big entities out there that have told you, that have told me, that have told all the participants on this Symposium, that we are not quite good enough, that we need to wait in line, that we need more training. And we have seen people who have come from behind and got ahead of us and gone into the top jobs and we thought to ourselves, how did that happen?

We know why it happened in the main. The structurally rigged institutions have never truly valued us, never seen our creativity, our ability, our dynamism – and even worse, we started to believe that too, afraid to put ourselves forward, afraid to stand up and be counted.

When we look in the mirror, Nazir, and say what is our role, the first step is to come out of the shadows, to come out of the shadows of leadership, and say, I can do it. Not only can I do it- I must do it. My society, my community, demands it. I demand it of myself.

I am taking on this role in Homerton College, at Cambridge University, the first Black man to hold such a post. I had moments of doubt. I had those moments of doubt because society told me that I could not do it. And yet my heart, my desire, my passion, tells me I can. People will doubt us, do not let it be you.

Second, the whole must be greater than the sum of its parts. You sew a golden thread through all these individuals that are here today: David, Jason, Dawn, Tiffany, Shakira, Simon. You see your participants today, Nazir, you tell them. You instigate it. You sew a golden thread, the whole then becomes greater than the sum of its parts. We watch out for each other, we support each other, we help each other to get to a better place. When we are in a place, we bring other people up.

Look, 2021 is our time, our time to come out of the shadows, and be the leaders we were meant to be. Thank you, my brother, have a great day. Be empowered, be empowered, be the leaders that we know that you all are.

# SYMPOSIUM CHAIR'S WELCOME



## **Good morning all and thank you for giving up your time.**

Firstly, thanks to the Black FE Leadership Group and to the ETF for hosting this symposium; we are going to discuss a subject that is close to my heart, and everybody's heart, about how we capture the diversity of experience and diversity of thought, given that we are now having to live in a post-Covid, post-Brexit world. Clearly FE has

always been important, now even more so.

Lord Woolley CBE was so motivating, and so inspiring. Thank you very much indeed, for sharing those words. And I am glad that you have asked of us, what is our role? What are we going to do? We can spend an enormous amount of time using anecdote and evidence to explain how we are treated, but what we should be focusing on during the next two-and-a-half hours is what we are going to do collectively, and individually. And

so, thank you so much for putting that challenge out to us. I appreciate everything you have said and done. I hope you have a good day. Thank you very much for joining us.

Some of us are tired of being a role model because there are so few of us and we need more of us to discuss how we can move this agenda forward. Absolutely, I am tired – I am sure you are – of being a role model. How many times have you been called a role model? We are only role models because there are so few of us in positions of responsibility. There are so few of us in positions of power and influence. And we would rather, would we not, have more and more of us in those positions? So that we are all role models.

How do we get there? Well, that is the conversation we are going to have over the next two hours or so.

# EXPERT PANEL PRESENTATIONS

## **Dr Jason Arday**

Higher Education/Researcher; Durham University

## **Dawn Ward CBE**

College and sector leader; Principal & CEO, Burton and South Derbyshire College

## **David Russell**

System leader; Chief Executive, Education and Training Foundation (ETF)

## **Dr Tiffany Holloman**

Researcher; Leeds Beckett University

## **Shakira Martin**

Leader; Former National Union of Students (NUS) President

## **Simon Blake OBE**

Employer; Mental Health First Aid England



## **Dr Jason Arday**

HIGHER EDUCATION/RESEARCHER: DURHAM  
UNIVERSITY

**The FE sector, for me personally, holds a place really dear in my heart. I worked in FE for four years, so I have always been really passionate about the great inequality in what I often call the forgotten sector.**

Being in this state of stillness, or reflectivity and imposed lockdown, has given people an opportunity to think about race and racism in a way that we historically have not done before and redefined what allyship looks like. So today, I want to focus on race and education, and the inequality that pervades education.

### **Complicity in facilitating racist cultures**

What is really integral to race and educational inequality is how we, as educators and EDI practitioners, get racism from the political periphery where it has always been to the political centre. In doing so, we need to consider how we focus our efforts on the issues at play when we are discussing aspects of race. So, for me, one of the significant issues is complicity. How complicit are we in facilitating racist cultures? In terms of being an active bystander, what are we doing to disrupt racism when we actively see it?

### **Suffering of Black staff**

There is a toll in all of this. There are a lot of Black and minority staff suffering at the moment. It is hard to trace the contours of that suffering on a day-to-day basis, when you think about the microaggressions, and the systemic racism in environments that people encounter. It is hard to really articulate what that is like.



I think we are beyond unconscious bias. There is a lot of research to suggest, and certainly, in the research I have undertaken, there is not really a premise for unconscious bias, and it is not particularly effective in terms of training. The actual training that we need to really focus on, in my opinion, is training around white privilege, and what that specifically looks like within the context of disadvantaging Black and minority ethnic groups.

I am always cognisant that when we talk about race and racism, it is often conflated against another kind of inequitable backdrop. So, as my dad always says, you can never just give racism the win – you can never just acknowledge the problem in its own right, we have to conflate it, most commonly with what is happening with the white working class, or another intersect [intersectional characteristic]. And for me, it is never to neutralise or dull the plight of the white working class, but they are not competing anecdotes, they are very separate. I think it is an important point that racism should not be conflated with anything else. And it is something that historically has always stood up on its own. When we talk about race, we have to bring that with it.

### **The burden on Black women**

Actually, there is a lot to suggest that when you map race against other intersects, for example, gender, class, disability, religion, these compound the discrimination and inequity for Black and ethnic minority people. It is particularly important, I think, to recognise the impact on Black and ethnic minority women in mobilising EDI work. Historically, the labour has always been with

Black and ethnic minority women. And it is really about a collective responsibility in terms of how we alleviate that particular burden. Often this labour is unremunerated, it is not considered in any kind of way, there is not any kind of fiscal or reputational reward for doing it. And I think it is really important that we all begin to collectively think about how we alleviate that burden. I think it is incredibly important.

### **The broken pipeline**

The disparity in pay of Black staff compared to white counterparts is one of many items that needs addressing in education. I think, as educators within our own spaces, there needs to be a really forensic interrogation of, for example, career progression pathways and of the types of diversification within our workspaces.

There needs to be an audit of why Black and ethnic minority people stagnate in education, particularly in further education. We need to ask ourselves, where is the broken pipeline? Why do we not see enough Black and ethnic minority leaders within further education? Why are we not seeing heads of department that are from a Black and ethnic minority background? Why are we not seeing them in the principalship or in our leadership teams or circles? In terms of decision makers why are Black and ethnic minority people within the sector in terms of FE – and HE, but particularly FE – why are they omitted often from those processes involving curriculum design and influencing the strategic direction of the college?

When we think about the precarious situation that FE has been in over the last 15 to 20 years, there is even more of a need to have a diverse

range of voices around the table, to ensure that the lifeblood, and that the trajectory of the sector remains in good health.

It is an absolute privilege to be here. I am really looking forward to learning from everyone. I do not proclaim in any way shape or form that I am an expert. I always come with the premise that I want to learn from other people.



## **Dawn Ward CBE**

COLLEGE AND SECTOR LEADER: CEO &  
PRINCIPAL, BURTON & SOUTH DERBYSHIRE  
COLLEGE

**I am thrilled to be joining you today. And I hope in the next seven minutes, I do not offend anyone, as we are living at a time when one missed or slipped word can have serious consequences, because people can be offended. I hope this also illustrates the challenges, and how our thoughtfulness, understanding and – as my parents instilled in me – kindness and forgiveness must be at the forefront, if we are truly to ensure that we deliver a movement, not a moment, on the Anti-racism agenda.**

When my sister friend from BFELG asked me to join you today, I asked her what should I say? And she replied, you will find the words. Well, I have reflected hard, and I believe what she meant was use my words and be myself. So, here goes.

### **Creating a culture of learning and sharing**

From a college and FE sector perspective, there are three areas I want to touch on: learning, sharing and the journey. For me, I see these as an outcome of a balanced scale. On one side, we have the values and behaviours that create the culture, and on the other side, the systems, processes and accountability measures. In my view, these have to be balanced if we are to learn and share. If we are to make the difference that is needed, we must get the culture right, both inside our organisations and as a sector. We need challenge and support to create the right culture where individuals, organisations and our sector thrives.

This culture will live through our values, behaviours and actions. We have to remember that behaviour breeds behaviour. So, as I have always said to staff, challenge is not about pinning someone against a wall. Challenge is about making a difference by helping others hear and see what will lead to improvement.

Over the past six years we have seen our sector riddled by fear. So, what we must do to really make the difference needed is to take people with us, otherwise the risk is people saying the right words, but not really meaning or believing what they say or do. Therefore, the system, processes and accountability measures put in place need to be challenging and supportive.

As a college, we use data to question ourselves, to seek ways of improving and therefore having access to data is critical. So, I support the BFELG in its call for the publication of data to help us improve. What must come from this is the learning, both from within the organisation and the sector. If we are truly to be a learning sector, then the competitiveness and the one-upmanship must end, and the sharing of learning must take place. This can only happen if the culture is open and transparent, not one of fear and blame.

## Investing in enabling structures and processes

I have always said the change to the single equality scheme was a retrograde step. I believe it was brought in to reduce bureaucracy, but it became a prohibitor rather than an enabler. So, should there be a recommendation for this to change? Personally, I would support this.

The historic investment in the Black Leadership Initiative, in the Network for Black and Asian Professionals, was hugely successful. But quite clearly since then, the sector has gone backwards. I would like to see diverse college boards, direct investment for Black staff through mentoring, coaching and the creation of opportunities. I was personally disappointed when Ofsted removed the limiting grade for equality and diversity and would welcome its return. However, I would want to see significant training for Ofsted inspectors to ensure that they know well what they are looking at, and for. I would also welcome a broader diversification of the Inspectorate.

## Collaboration and effecting change

I do not have time to theorise on learning. But equally, I am sure you are all well read on that subject. But my point is about working together, to learn and to recognise that we all learn differently. As a sector, we often shout out to government that 'one size does not fit all.' So, we must remember this in working with organisations on this journey. Context does need to be considered. However, I would urge leaders of colleges that have mainly white populations to look to the future demographics of our country, and act now.

When I led a mainly white college in a rural location, Janak Patel and I recognised that we needed to seek help from a city-based college. So, we brought our students and staff together and so much positive learning was achieved.

Leading people on cultural change is not easy, but neither should we shy away from it. I remember the words of the late Eddie McIntyre, Principal of Birmingham College of Food, now University

College Birmingham: “managing money is easy, but managing people is not. It is complex as they bring their unique self to work.”

I believe organisational cultural surveys rather than staff surveys tell us more about an organisation, and enable us to measure where we are, and I would recommend their use across the sector.

### **Our journey**

Hence, seeing through the eyes of others in our journey is important, recognising the context they are operating in and how they learn. Some are reflective, they like to digest and evolve. Others want to respond instantly. We are all different, but unique. We must all be on this journey. As I am sure we all want all our students, staff and our organisations to be highly successful. But we may be at different starting points, face roadblocks along the way, which in themselves will create learning. So, we will get there sooner.

But together this movement is about creating a better future for all our children, their children and their children. I am very excited about BSDC's affiliation with the BFELG, and I am looking forward to undertaking the training on their 10-Point Plan, and its adoption in college with the college management team, the strategic leadership team and our chairman of governors, Everton Burke.



## David Russell

SYSTEM LEADER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE,  
EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOUNDATION (ETF)

**The ETF is the professional development body for FE, as I am sure you know, but how we conceptualise our role, increasingly, is that we are here to support the creation of a self-improving system. That is where we want to be.**

We are not here to do things **to** people, or **for** people. We are here to do things **with** people. And even better, we are here to help people do things for themselves.

### **Racial justice and equity**

Part of our role – apart from delivering professional development and professional membership is to help the FE system respond positively to the big challenges of our time, the big issues of our day. Mega trends, if you like, the big underlying issues. And I think there are three big underlying issues that that affect all of us profoundly. One is automation, technology and how that is changing the role of work and changing education. The second is climate change. And the third is social justice and equity. And within that, the most striking and startling dimension, I think, for us, is racial justice. And, of course, that is what I am going to focus in on for the next few minutes.

I very much appreciated what has been said by Jason about alleviating the burden. And that this is the work for everyone. Not for a few. And I also much appreciated the comments from Dawn about sharing learning and the collaborative culture. I want to try and build on that again, and say, I think there are three ways in which we need to tackle racial justice: bottom up, middle out, and top down. See diagram on page 31 – *Creating an*

### *Enabling Environment for Racial Justice.*

What I mean by that is: when I am talking about bottom up, it is about individuals working together at grassroots, it is about staff, it is also about learners. When I talk about middle out, I am talking about institutions, in our sector: colleges, and other providers and institutions. And when I talk about top down, I am talking about national, I am talking about frameworks, policies, the kind of work that can be done there. And I think all of these three are vital.

### **Staff and learners as ambassadors**

To try and bring what I mean to life a bit, I have illustrated with some 'crunchy' examples:

When we are talking about bottom up, we are talking about staff adopting inclusive practices in their day-to-day work, but not just staff, learners as well. And that is my left-hand box there. But moving to the right, learner and staff champions and ambassadors, I think this is really important. Let us be realistic, not everybody is equally well informed. Not everyone is equally passionate about the Anti-racism agenda. So, we are going to need, certainly for the time being, champions and ambassadors that can help keep the temperature up, keep the momentum up, keep the conversations going, and inform those conversations as well. Because there is a spectrum here, I am sure you have all encountered this, just as I have. You have people at one end of the spectrum, very passionate and informed, making change happen. But people on the other end of the spectrum, in denial, digging in, saying it is not an issue, trying to deny it – actually, Lord Woolley referred to this in passing in his comments. But the vast majority of people are in

the middle. They want to do the right thing. They care, but they do not know what to do, necessarily. They do not know where to start. So, I think learner and staff champions and ambassadors are very important.

### **Professional networks and effective practice**

Looking over at the right-hand side of my slide, professional networks; the ETF supports a lot of professional networks through our membership body SET, but also through government-funded work. And I think the power of professional networks, leading effective practice, sharing effective practice, defining effective practice on Anti-racism and inclusive practices is very, very powerful. And, crucially, it is also sustainable.

I have put in individual change and learner influence as well. Because in the end, this has to be coming from individuals and the bottom up.

### **Whole-institutional approaches**

Moving up to my middle out; institutions like colleges have a very powerful role to play with leaders and governors embracing Anti-racism through whole-institution approaches. So, it is not just about how they think and behave in their leadership roles, it is also about the policies and practice that they put into place across their organisation that affect consistency, culture and local employer/education collaboration. This is an interesting one, I think. The recent government white paper was very strong on employers leading the work of colleges. So, let us see the employer take on a leadership role here as well. I think it is very important. Racial justice is an issue that is about everyone, not just education, but in life as employees.



## National policy and curriculum frameworks

Moving up to my top down, this is about national aspects, and ETF also has a role to play here as well. A previous presenter referenced the inspection framework. I think that is a very important angle, here. We talk about recognition in sector policy and in strategy. We are very pleased that there is a colleague from the DfE here today, who I know will be taking insights back into the department.

It is critical that Anti-racism is embedded in curriculum specifications, and occupational standards. Denise Brown, who is going to chair one of the symposium roundtables this morning, wrote a fantastic piece for the ETF membership magazine recently on decolonising the curriculum, which will be published next month. Talking about curriculum specifications is a very challenging, but sophisticated and vital topic. I know the awarding bodies are thinking about this as well, in the context of examinations.

Then finally, over on the right hand, top right of my slide, let us think about initial teacher training as well. Let us talk about cultural competencies being embedded in initial teacher education. I know there is a lot to fit in to initial teacher education, but we really need to be strengthening how we approach this. We need to be drawing more diverse people into our teaching workforce. Also, we need to be “tooling up” all our teachers to be informed, skilled operators in fields such as cultural competency, for the reasons that previous speakers have talked about – the changing demographic, but also because it is the right thing to do in the modern world.

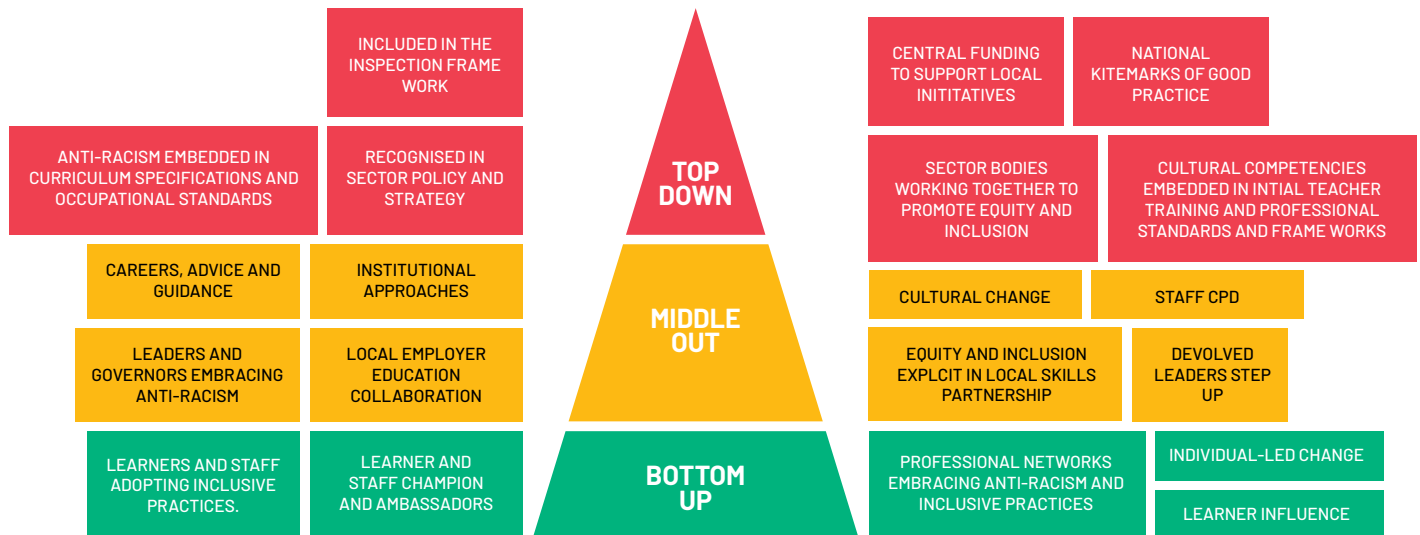
It is important that sector bodies work together. to promote equity and inclusion; I very much believe in the power of collaboration, we are seeing more and more of that, I am delighted to say.

National kite marks of good practice already exist, and I think can be important. And last, but by no means least, central funding to support local initiatives. And that is the right formulation for me. It is not about a central body designing a programme, saying “here it is, we are going to do this to you, grab it while it lasts.” It is about local initiatives that are sustainable, addressing issues in the right way, but gaining support from national bodies to get them off the ground to help them become sustainable. That is our role, I believe in helping to create a self-improving system. Thank you.

I just want to end by paying tribute the Black FE Leadership Group for the very impressive, prestigious line-up today, which is a testament really to their formidable convening power.

Thank you.

## CREATING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR RACIAL JUSTICE IN FE





## **Dr Tiffany Holloman**

RESEARCHER: LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY

**Just to start off, I have four key points that I want to speak on, that I believe will ensure that 2020 was not just a moment. Number one is that the Anti-racism fight is constant. Number two, that the victims are typically bearing the brunt of that fight and this should not be. Three, mass action only occurs after, unfortunately, a grotesque incident. And four would be that tackling racism cannot be a reactive event.**

### **The Anti-racism fight is constant**

If we look back in history, the victor writes the history. I know about the Trojan Horse, I know that it was the people of Troy, who did it, I have no clue what the other people's names are right now. And I say that because we, as victims of suppression and oppression, we typically have not been able to have a collective voice and write our stories, and that is something that is sorely missed and a mishap when it comes to fighting Anti-racism. And I think what is necessary to know is that, although you do not hear us or have not heard us collectively, we were always fighting.

### **The victims should not bear the brunt of the fight**

The victimhood of where we sit is ours to bear. But it is also – I do not want to say it is a curse, but it is a sort of a curse – it should not be, the fight cannot be left to us. James Baldwin said that we did not create the structure, we did not create racism and Negro, we should not have to try to fight constantly to dismantle it, because we

cannot do it. It is not our job. And unfortunately, it falls on us, century over century, time after time, to try to do this. This is a grave injustice.

### **Mass action only occurs after, unfortunately, a grotesque incident**

However, every so often, in history an event occurs where the change is made, where a shift is made, where the momentum grows, typically it is on grotesque actions. Historically, going back to the capturing of lynchings with photographs, the capturing of water hose cannons on Black people during the 1960s, all the way up until last summer with the murder of George Floyd – only then, and only when it is actually in – I am going to be honest – in white purview do we see massive action, not when it is being read. You have read about rebellions, you have read about John Brown, these are issues that are constantly being read, and part of history. However, there is something about actually seeing the body, seeing the Black body lose its life, that drives mass adoption. This is a travesty.

### **Tackling racism cannot be a reactive event**

I think the way that we tackle this cyclical event – where we have these waves of momentum, and then it dies down – is to start young. To start early, start talking about racism very early.

When I was lecturing at the University of Leeds, I taught a course called race and migration. One day, we had a talk about the racial experience. So, rather than just stand up in the front and lecture, I asked all the students to form a circle and we would talk about their experiences with racism.

And in my class, I had, of course, white British students, Polish, Italian, Black British, mixed race, Asian, and my white British students told me this was the first time that they were able to a) talk about racism, and b) feel safe talking about racism.

They were 20, 21 years old at the time, and listening to stories from their cohorts, who at the ages of four and five, saw their parents being spat on, seeing their brothers being harassed by cops, and it should not be that they are 21 years old when they start trying to dismantle and understand racism. This is where education comes in, not just further education, but primary and secondary education. And I know the pushback may be well, they should not be learning about racism at such young ages. I disagree. I knew. I was born in the 80s, and I remember watching Daffy Duck imitate Hitler. Hitler was bad. By the time I was 11 years old – and most of you all can agree, you knew who Hitler was, you knew he was bad. And I think that racism in general should be tackled in the same way.

There is no reason I should be talking to 21-year-old white students who have never discussed racism and see it as an embedded system. And I am going to close with this. I do not see 2020 as a moment. It is not. It is a movement, like I said in the beginning, it is constant. It is just that the momentum needs to be constant. And to me, it is almost like a tide. Typically, all the victims are fighting the normal tide, the normal rise of the tide, and the low tide, the high and low. However, again, unfortunately, you have bad events that create a tsunami. That's what, to me, the pipeline of having Anti-racism embedded in education

would be. It would be the constant tsunami, the constant flow, because –just like we have a broken pipeline when it comes to Black and other ethnic minority students in education, we will have a pipeline for all the white students to be able to understand racism through their pipeline and I think, again, it would be a shift of momentum in ensuring that our movement is constant.



## Shakira Martin

LEADER; FORMER NATIONAL UNION OF  
STUDENTS (NUS) PRESIDENT

**I just want to say firstly that several members of the Black FE Leadership Group have been my rock. They have really been there for me to coach me, and really encourage me to keep fighting at times when fighting racism is really difficult and traumatising.**

And when we talk about resilience, sometimes you are tired of being resilient, so I just want to thank colleagues, for the times when I felt like giving up, for really being my backbone to help me continue the long fight of tackling and eradicating racism, in all its forms.

So, when I saw the question how can we ensure that the events of summer 2020 are more than just a moment, and deliver on the movement of Anti-racism, I thought, this was not a moment. Racism, police brutality have happened prior to George Floyd; it was just captured on camera for the world to see and not deny what is happening to Black people. When I say their names, I do not just say them easily. ##these are people's parents, these are fathers, these are aunties, these are uncles. The list goes on and on and I do not want to list them out like they are just names because there are families picking up the brunt of this.

### Social capital

I have realised in my journey that social mobility has worked, and the NUS has given me a great platform to develop my skills, knowledge and experience and to be the strong Black woman that I was prior to being on a platform. But with that experience, coming from being a working-

class girl but being able to give my children a better upbringing than I had, what I have realised is when we talk about putting the reserved places in for Black and brown people, whether that is in recruitment, whether that is students, we need to remember that we need to prepare these Black students and staff. Once you get to the top, it is harder. It was much easier me being Sharika Nobody from Turnham on the block and experiencing racism, because I did not have the power of having a good job and good money. I feel vulnerable now I have these things.

### **Fear and vulnerability**

As a Black member of staff in the sector, in the higher education sector, I feel vulnerable. Yes, I smashed those triple glass ceilings and I have got to a place of substance, but every single day I feel at risk of losing my job because someone is going to say that I am being aggressive, or because I am being assertive, someone is saying I am being rude, because I am delegating to my team what needs to be done to align to strategy. And I feel like there is a big piece of work being missed when we are talking about smashing down the attainment gap, putting more Black people in leadership positions, we need to safeguard them for the rest of their career.

I am 32 years old; I have years left in me, but every single day I wake up in fear of losing my reputation. It has taken 32 years to build my name and it will just take one wrong assumption from somebody to shut that all down. There needs to be a support package and the Black FE Leadership Group is one of many examples, really fantastic, to support Black people

that have broken through barriers and got to somewhere of substance.

And that is about teaching people how to navigate the system and procedures: "Black girl from the endz", the system is always played against me. But colleagues have allowed me, taught me and encouraged me to navigate through these systems. As a Black woman, I just want to blend in most the time. Say to me 'Black don't crack', as much as it offends me, I am apprehensive to make a complaint about that because I do not trust the policies and processes or procedures. I do not know how to articulate this. As a senior member of staff, a Black senior member of staff, I do not feel that I can contact my trade union, because I am in a senior management position, and I just feel like it is for all staff. I know about trade unions, I have been NUS President, obviously I am not saying trade unions are not good – but there is a fear, for me, contacting my trade union as a senior member of staff saying, I am experiencing racism from colleagues at different levels in the organisation. So, understanding how to navigate the policies and procedures is vital.

This is what needs to be embedded in the curriculum, how to express yourself, how to say the things that you want to say in the right way, ask the right questions to be able to get people to expose themselves.

### **P.O.W.E.R**

As a Black woman, to make sure that I am on the top of my game, I am currently doing my MA in student engagement at the University of Winchester. I



came across The P.O.W.E.R Framework in the Power of Partnership. Its authors talk about positionality, openness, willingness to invest time, ethnocentricity and reflexivity. I think these are the fundamental pillars that we should be thinking about, across our institutions – power and how it plays a big part in how we tackle racism and build EDI strategies.

The people, your decision makers, your directorates, they hold this positionality. They need to have the ability to be able to recognise the positions and demographic and social locations.

They need to be open to addressing their privilege, and address that there is a problem. Racism exists in every single institution. It is like GDPR, you are never going to be compliant, you are always going to keep having to move.

You need to have the willingness to invest time, money. That means that if you say that you are committed to ‘tackling Anti-racism’, and you have a board meeting coming up that is emergent strategy, you need to figure out what your commitment actually is. Is it to do this Anti-racism training, or is there another way to do that?

And ethnocentricity – to not make assumptions about people, and about others.

The last thing is reflexivity, recognising how as individuals, we can shape the society that we want to be, and that would be my tip. We have a long way to go.

## **Fighting racism is long haul**

But going back to the question how can we ensure

that the events of last summer do not happen again? The fight is long, and I am angry, but that anger is what is driving me to eradicate racism, in all its forms, from London to Ferguson to Kingston Town. And that is my mission. When my daughters can sit here in 20 years’ time, not having to talk about the experiences that they are facing in school and in society, that is when I can, at least, close my eyes and lay at rest.



## **Simon Blake OBE**

EMPLOYER; MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID  
ENGLAND AND MEMBER OF THE CMI  
COMMITTEE ON RACE

**I think it is really important that we recognise the different relationships and the different roles and responsibilities that we have. As a white man, the white chief executive, I recognise the power that I have both within my organisation and more widely.**

### **Impact of racism on mental health and well being**

Right at the heart of any conversation about making sure that this is a movement, not a moment, is recognising the impact of racism and depression on people's wellbeing and on their mental health. Jason, you talked at the beginning about recognising the trauma or recognising the impact caused by racism and I think it's really important that we recognise the different relationships and the different roles and responsibilities that we have.

### **Workplace cultures**

I am going to talk specifically about workplace cultures and talk about them more generally because I think cultures are absolutely key in both facilitating change within workplaces and facilitating change which will impact on communities and on families as well.

We know that workplace cultures are absolutely critical. And we know that workplace cultures are a combination of systems, structures, resources, power, et cetera, and that managers and leaders play that absolutely vital role in creating a movement, not a moment. Even where managers do not believe that there is bias or racism or

prejudice within the system, we have learned over the last year – and I feel as if this is a change from previously – that even if you do not believe there is direct racism, if we accept that there is systemic racism, if we accept that there is systemic bias, then we all go into the work recognising that this problem is much bigger than any individual.

It is about being courageous, not perfect. It is about building a culture that is trying new things, and then learning things that we can build on and that we share with each other. It is built on a premise of allyship, collaboration, and the recognition that institutional and systemic racism is pervasive across society. And so, if we start by recognising that, then we do not have to feel worried about naming our own institution as institutionally racist, we do not have to go in with the fear.

Another presenter talked about the fear that stops people or can stop people from acting. I think we have to really name and talk about racism if we are going to encourage everybody and make sure everybody plays their role.

So, confidence and courage are critical, for people to be bold, for people to be open and to learn to change. I have learned as a white chief executive, both within my own organisation and with other organisations, that we have significant power and privilege to continually ask questions about all of our systems and processes, to make safe learning environments for others to be able to step into place and change things, try things, do things differently.

And if we are constantly asking the questions

ourselves about what we need to do differently, and asking those questions of others, they will then feel confident to ask the questions of the people they work with. This builds and takes time.

We published an 'Anti-racist' action plan last year. And we have noticed in the last three or four months, whereas before there may have been questions like 'What does this mean for racism?' and 'Have we looked at this through an Anti-racist lens?', now, people are proactively coming to us and saying, we have done this, this and this, and when you think about this through an Anti-racist lens or through an equity lens, it means X, Y and Z.

So, in building that culture, people are thinking about what they need to do in everyday life, as well as taking action. I worry sometimes that if it just becomes about a set of actions, when the spotlight turns on to something else, then people may stop following them through. So, this is about creating those cultures where everybody is asking these questions of themselves throughout their practice.

At MHFA England, I think we have learned the following: people need to learn that allyship is a 'doing word', it is not a state of being, and it is a set of actions which we can all do, however big or small, in every scenario that we are in.

We have also learned that we have to have a robust understanding of race and racism, as well as privilege, and what it means to dismantle racism in organisations. I genuinely believe one of the most important things we can do as white colleagues, is to understand privilege and feel comfortable with the concept of privilege and recognise its

impact. We have to understand direct racism, so that people do not classify themselves as 'good' and 'anti-racist' or 'not good', but actually try to really understand the privileges that we all have in different situations and different scenarios.

We have learned that you have to learn to understand what a zero-tolerance approach means, and we have defined it as 'never walking on by'. And again, as a previous speaker said it is not always punitive, if people are learning, if people are trying to change or people are being courageous in their actions, we have to make sure that we are never walking on by and that we are addressing issues at every single level.

Actions are easy to complete, but building true change requires good data, it requires time, and it requires money. It requires everybody, and as a previous presenter said, this is an ongoing movement, it has been a movement, and if we want to make sure it is not a moment, we have to recognise that we need the money, the time, the consistency and the change, all the way through.

This year, within my organisation, everybody has an objective to be Anti-racist, and in the performance review, there is a conversation about what that will mean, so that people are recognising that this is from me as the chief executive, the chair, the board of directors, right through to people who are working on the front line. And asking the question again, starting to embed it, so it is not a set of instructions, but a set of conversations in which people can start to understand their own learning.

And we have also been talking about the fact that

this is a different journey for everybody. We need to be conscious of both the opportunities and challenges of becoming Anti-racist.

Whilst many organisations might be waking up to the realities, for lots of Symposium participants, and in many organisations, racism is nothing new. It is an everyday experience. Therefore, when you start talking about racism in the context of an organisational culture, you are also reliving trauma, at the point at which you are trying to make positive change.

## Support and Challenge

How do we make sure we provide the right support for people who are experiencing racism? How do we manage both white people on their learning journey and Black people and people of colour in an organisation that is committed to doing things differently and to creating equity, where experiences of privilege and racism exist within the organisation? Holding, acknowledging and understanding both, feels incredibly important so that we can make progress as we move forward.

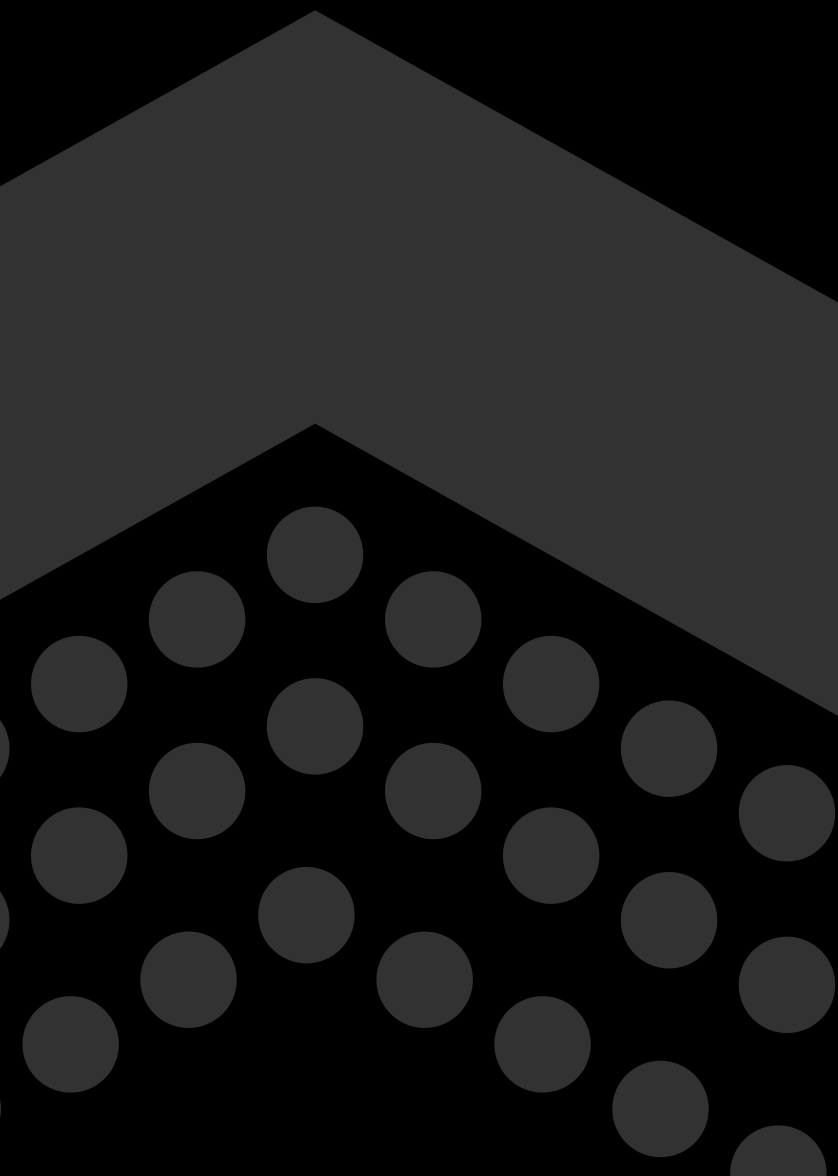
Finally, thinking about how we provide the right support and challenge to different people, at MHFA England we have published guidance – which is public guidance which I will put in the chat – about supporting people of colour and Black people and their wellbeing when doing the work to make sure that that is something that is absolutely at the heart of any change, any initiatives, any organisational cultural change.

Finally, my colleagues at MHFA England have said to us: there has to be an ongoing direct conversation between the board, the chief

executive and staff at all levels to make sure that you really understand how it feels, so that the conversation is about how it feels, and what the experiences are and how those are changing, not just about the actions that are being completed.

I hope that I have contributed a different perspective which could be useful.

# COMPOSITE VOICES FROM THE ROUNDTABLES



**Q1.** *How can we ensure that the events of summer 2020 are more than a moment and we deliver movement on the Anti-racism agenda?*

**Anti-racism – whose responsibility is it – individual, collective, the governing body, the system, employers, the Government?**

*I would like to ask a question of the question. So, whose responsibility is it to ensure that the events of summer 2020 are more than a moment? Whose responsibility is that? And where's the accountability within the educational system? And is it for each headteacher, principal, CEO to say, OK, yes, I'll take up the mantle, and, I suppose, is that a fair enough response?*

*You know, there are things in education that we can't get away from, that we have a moral obligation to adhere to: safeguarding, high quality education experience for all, to ensure that there's provision for the most disadvantaged, to ensure that there's financial regularity. These are not things that we can opt into or opt out of.*

*If there is no mandate to ensure that this is something that we all have very high on our priority list and on our agendas, that's the more fundamental question.*

The question is valid, and it's right. The fact that

we can opt in, or opt out, or choose to ignore, choose not to be a party to, suggests that there is something more fundamental that we need to address.

This is for everybody and the implicit motive behind your question is, if you've no mandate to do this, why would you, why should you?

*And is it a risk for it to be a Black leader who takes on tackling racism when you could be accused of bias, or judged unfairly? I was asked by my group of governors, you know, is the school doing anything in response to the BLM movement? And I tell you, I took a deep breath before I made my response, because I was really acutely aware in that moment, that here I was a Black school leader telling them how important it was that we didn't allow the events of the summer to just dwindle, and I was quite proud about the work we'd started at our school.*

*My board of governors is all white, but I was really intrigued at that moment. I wonder what they were hearing, I wonder what they were seeing, and I wonder what they were experiencing as I was sharing this. Did they see my colour at that point? And think, yes, well,*

*it made sense that we have this Black principal here, so it makes sense that she's championing this cause.*

*Or did they see the validity in the work of ensuring that we have equality in our school? And, I will never know, because I'm not in their heads, but that was something that rushed over me in that moment, that here I was telling them about the work that we were doing, but I wondered what the purpose of that was. And was there any real rigour in their questioning?*

*So, for example, if I had said, our response was that we put posters up all around the school saying to students, don't be racist, would I have been challenged on that? Would that have been a good enough response?*

*It's okay to ask the question, I suppose - or is it okay to ask the question? But there needs to be, again it comes back to my point, it comes back to the mandate, to what end? To what purpose? And why are we trying to do this? And who's responsible for this? And do we see that we have joint responsibility and accountability? And if we do, what's the*



*standard, what's the gold mark, what's the benchmark, what are we aiming for? And is that clearly understood, and can that be clearly articulated by all?*

So, my response about whose responsibility is it- it's yours. Because you're the Chief Executive. How you do it depends on your ability to influence the thinking of your board, and your style. Because if you don't do it, it won't be done. And I think that's part of the challenge. What I'm not saying, is, it's easy, but for us to have sustainable change, it is that question about whose role is it, what's our role, what can we do?

The system is faulty. Yes. We can't change the system, but how can we work better to make the system work better for our students, both the young students and older students, who equally find it harder to engage with the system? I think it's in our gifts to do that, no-one can do it for us. We're the ones who can make those changes ourselves. We need to look at how we can work better with each other.

*What the three questions allude to, is how do we capitalise on the momentum that was generated from last year? A couple of things for me; There is absolutely a role for government in all of this – I'm trying desperately not to stray into politics here. You'll get different reactions from different governments.*

Anti-racism is an issue that concerns government. And yet the Sewell report sought

to demonstrate actually there's no problem at all – guys, get on with it. When you look at who supports government, if you look at the advisers, at the heart of government, they are all of an ilk. I had the 'privilege' of shadowing a government minister under the Black Leadership Initiative years ago and I was absolutely blown away by the homogenous nature of everybody surrounding that minister, there was no diversity at all. There was no diversity in terms of age; they were all young, Oxbridge graduates, white, living in London, enjoying the London life, and had gone straight from school seamlessly to university, without a challenge on the highway. And now they were advisers to government. I think government is silent on this, and I am not surprised because they surround themselves with the same kind of people, and I would put that down as one of my areas where I would really like to see some change.

*I would agree with you about government. Just reading what the body language says, just saying, well, that agenda, it was just the moment, it has gone away from the government.*

I think there has been an issue about lack of leadership at board level, at organisational level, at representative organisation level. This has never been a top priority for the AOC. It has always been something which has been an optional extra. And that's, I think, what we would want to change.

*I wouldn't disagree with you. You've heard me make a speech about the ways*

*in which we do see that gap. I think my point is that we have to start somewhere and if last year is not to be a moment, then there are some things that we can put in place to help us to become a movement, and the stuff you and other colleagues have outlined will help with that tremendously.*

What I can't crack at the moment is the governing board, so that's where I have real issues. We will crack it, we're getting a new chair, so we'll work from there onwards.

*Why do you think there are issues with the board? Is there resistance? Is there a lack of understanding of the issues?*

I think it's a combination of lack of understanding of where our students are coming from and wanting to keep the town for its residents and young people, not wanting others to come in, even though only 10% of our students come from the town itself. We have students from three counties. I'm not saying all the governors are like that, but there are a few, and they can become more powerful. Our governing board used to be 10% \*Black but is now 100% white middle-class, predominantly men. So, we're changing that mixture.

I'm chair of a college with a very, very large ethnic minority population. Our student population is roughly 85-90%, our staff are over 50% from ethnic minorities, our board is about 40%, our senior leadership team is 50/50 between whites

and ethnic minorities, and that puts us in a very different position from many of the colleagues and people participating in this event today.

And what that has done, is enable us to identify and carry out things now, which many other colleges in further education will need to carry out in the future.

When Mandeep (my Principal) and myself spoke at sixth form college events - the first one involving clerks and the second one involving governors, over 80% of the people who attended those events hadn't heard of the BFELG 10-Point Plan. So, whilst we're actually getting through to ourselves, we may not actually be getting through to the wider audience that we need to communicate with.

*And, just one final point, if I may, we also spoke, on the back of those events, at three meetings with governors and there were two overriding issues which are important in terms of gaining momentum.*

*First: how to get a more diverse board, and second - perhaps not surprisingly - how to get a more diverse middle management and senior management team.*

*In response to what was said, we spoke to boards where in one, it was an area where 97% of the population was white, but about, I think it was 16% of the col-*

*lege's students were \*Black. In the other college, it was over 20% \*Black students, and increasing, in an area which was predominantly white, and both of those boards had said they had the same difficulty, encouraging governors from ethnic minorities to join the board and diversify the governing body.*

*The type of solutions that we suggested, were, first of all, if you're not encouraging \*Black governors to come forward in your present way of doing things, then you have to change the way that you're doing things. And actually, it's the same message for staff recruitment, as well.*

*And so, we said, go to the areas where your students come from for your board members, not where your college is based. Go to various organisations that may have access to information to encourage Black governors to come forward. Don't always just rely on the traditional idea that you have to be an expert in finance, and so on. Actually, an expert in the community and what the community brings can be just as important, if not more important to your board than having a load of specialists.*

*So, there are ways that you can change, and certainly, if there's one thing the BFELG can do, it is actually to promote that type of change.*

*And that's directed at white boards, predominantly white boards, who actually express a willingness to change. Both of these boards were really willing. They wanted to change, but they just didn't know how. So, actually, to give them the 'how', to support the willingness is a great way forward.*

Yes, and the work I did with one college was around that. So, fish in a pool that you're not fishing in at the moment for new governors and look broader than your immediate vicinity. The recommendations from your existing board are likely to be the people that they associate with.

*Get to the boards who aren't actually yet receiving the message. Don't speak to the converted.*

I was really interested in two aspects of this. One is whose responsibility is it? Well, in the capacity that I'm here today, as board chair of a large college group, I think, it's my responsibility not the chief executive's. With all due respect to colleagues or officers, I don't see it is their responsibility. Equality, diversity and inclusion need to sit at board level. They need to be driven by the board. So, I would see that my board team are the leaders in this space. The fact that we have an

executive team and a senior management team that are behind that philosophy and approach is fantastic. But if not, we'll recruit ones that are.

I think it's relatively straightforward for me because I think I see the board's role as shifting culture and ensuring that the right policies are there to reinforce and facilitate that systemic change. That has to be driven at board level really.

*Well, I'm not going to disagree that it's the board's responsibility, but I believe it's everyone's responsibility. I still am taken by this notion of the systems that have been built up, and, hence, who's responsible for actually rebuilding those systems. I also think there's something very much about educating yourself. It's a bit like me talking to you about the politics of Northern Ireland or Ireland and trying to understand the interactions that happen. Half of you wouldn't have a baldie, as they would say at home.*

*But actually, I need to educate myself on me and white supremacy and actually working in safe conversational cells if you like. I understand, we should be challenging ourselves. It's only then that I think that I can begin to understand and challenge within myself, but also with my board, with my senior team,*

*the values within the organisation. So, I think there's joint responsibility.*

Can I maybe just go back to my first point and in reference to everything that's been said so far: being the board's responsibility, being everybody's responsibility and educating yourself, how does that stack up against an organisation where maybe the people on the board, the people in leadership don't believe racism exists? Responses like, I don't believe racism exists, it's not real. Or, even worse, we don't have racism here, so therefore we're okay, we don't need to engage in this debate, we don't need to engage in this thinking because it's something that happens over there, it doesn't happen to us. My point is that when it's devolved and left to individuals and groups of individuals to decide that this is something that's important enough to take on board, we're always going to be coming against this tide. It has to be something that's seen as so important, so integral that we don't have an option.

I suppose what I'm saying is that responsibility needs to be at national level and we need to be mandated to ensure that we are in organisations and have organisations that really have EDI at their heart.

*On your question, I guess, it's a really interesting one, isn't it, about whether this is optional? It may not be in Ofsted's guidelines, it may not be on the safeguarding criteria, but once you understand the scale of the issue, the idea that it is anything but absolutely obliga-*

*tory, and at the heart of safeguarding, at the heart of performance, at the heart of teaching and learning becomes impossible, and that feels like the job to me, and I was really struck by this.*

*We published our Anti-racism statement as an organisation when I was in between chairs, I had a white man who was the chair who signed off the statement, and a Black woman who was chair by the time we were starting implementation. And both were committed to the actual actions. But the view about how you implement those, and make them real, were a million, million miles apart.*

*I think one of the things about last year and the response to the murder of George Floyd was the context it happened in. You know, the Trumpian United States, under Trump, it was ignored, it didn't happen. We had a president, who actually said everything was fine and, what has happened subsequently under the Biden administration, there has been some change, whether it's more a movement, not a moment, is moot. The challenge for us in the United Kingdom is that we also have an administration which has sought to try and turn it into*

*a moment, rather than a movement.*

So, we don't have the luxury of leadership from the very top or acknowledgement from the very top. I think you're right in the sense that our challenge is greater to make it a movement but that doesn't mean it's not a challenge we should rise to. I think it's part of the challenge to actually engage with those doubters and explain, whether it's with the heart or with the data. But that is our challenge, and it's not going to be easy. That's why being a movement will take the leadership that Lord Woolley was talking about.

*Watch out though for detractors. It's one thing to have overt detractors but it's the covert detractors that you need to look out for when you're trying to be a true ally. I've figured out how to do this a bit more.*

It is interesting to me that I left working for the NUS in 2018, and this feels like a conversation which was happening in the student movement for a while. It feels like actually the FE sector was further advanced in some of these conversations than some parts of the HE sector. Just two things strike me: what does 'at the very top' mean, for the FE sector? Who does provide that leadership, and is there anything more that those bodies – the Association of Colleges or ETF – can do, is one question? Because you're right, this government is not going to provide that leadership in the way we like. And I just wonder whether there is an ability on the back of this government's political denial of some of the issues, whether that's the moment that your leadership bodies, whoever



those are, can really be asked to step into that space. Who do boards of governors listen to?

*I guess I would say, and the Sewell report has been frustrating. When I was doing the age of consent and repeal of Section 28 work about 28 years ago, the best thing that ever happened was when Brian Sewell took it to another level in terms of denying the realities of the impact of Section 28 and of the age of consent, and the groundswell of response to that.*

I'd like to make 2 or 3 points, I think politicians come and go; what we have now, we might not have in five years' time, or in 10 years' time. We've experienced that. I've been living in this country since 1966, so I've experienced that coming and going all that time, and we've made some great strides in that time. And then there has been periods when we've gone backwards.

If I'm honest, my first interest is that I'm accountable to the learners in the group, and my board is. So, the accountability rests with me and my board. And that's what I can do. The difference I can make, is to develop and train and pull together a team of non-executive directors at board level, that help us to deliver really important cultural change across our organisation. And then recruit the exec managers that will drive the teams below that to make a difference. So, I see the accountability sat with me and my board.

The responsibility can be devolved in all the ways

that have been described, but you have to set that standard somewhere, so our approach has very much been about creating a movement across the college Group that gives people access to real life experiences of people from culturally diverse communities, in the communities that we serve and in the staffing cohort. So those people who think that racism doesn't exist are able to be persuaded that, through those stories, we can shift things to enable us to make a difference.

For those that are closed, I try not to spend too much time thinking about those individuals, because they've been a gradually reducing number over the six years that I've been chair of the group. Because, once you start shifting the culture, there's a set of behaviours and values behind it, and people can either choose to be part of that arrangement going forward, or they choose not to be part of that arrangement.

But you have to set standards, you do give people the opportunity to come on board, and be influenced, and experience those stories, but ultimately, we have to make those differences at institutional level, irrespective of government, whatever persuasion with government we have, and whatever role they may or may not wish to play.

*Reflecting on what David said about bottom up, middle out and top down, and at every level. How do you ensure movement? It has to be on the agenda, at the top of the agenda, all the time. So, how are you using that within those dif-*

*ferent levels? How are you ensuring that it is at the top of the agenda? How am I using my staff? If I have staff that are part-time Ofsted inspectors, how am I using their access to that platform to make sure it's high on the agenda? If I have people within various sections of AOC, how am I, as a member of AOC, making sure that I'm reflecting the mood of my staff? Those that may have more political clout are in the room with the right people at the right time. So, for me, it's about whether it be at board or senior level, or the membership organisation, how do we keep sure that Anti-racism is high on the agenda, because I think that's when it does become a movement.*

In the equality and diversity field, the organisation that stands out as an exemplar for me is Stonewall. Stonewall has existed and kept the area of its interest, sexuality, at the top of the agenda. So, when things have been ebbing and flowing around it, there has been an organisation well-funded through various means that has been able to keep the issue at the top of the agenda which has not been the case for race. And that's something we need to change, so that when things have ebbed and flowed, we can still keep it strong.

My personal view is there's a forest of twigs. What you need is a strong tree. Something which is going to be there through storms. I think that's part of the Black condition. There are lots of little,

tiny organisations, which do what they do well. But actually, at the national level, we haven't had that strong voice. And I think that's what is missing. It's really important, because, yes, there have been changes, and there have been improvements. But many people are still isolated. They have to take the big decisions at their level and often they do it unsupported. And that's what we need to change.

*I only became chair just over six months ago, so I'm fairly new in that role, but I knew the borough before that. We hadn't thought about Anti-racism from a strategic board perspective. So, our principal and myself brought in Anti-racism at board level, in terms of the board taking the lead in further developments around influencing others – I mentioned about universities and teacher training programmes – to say, this is what's needed, this is the evidence that demonstrates that you need to change the way that you deliver your programmes, so that there is a strong Anti-racist pedagogy within it.*

*But what we hadn't actually done, which is surprising and perhaps because Anti-racism is almost implicit in what we do, we hadn't looked at our strategic plan, for example, and identified within that specifically what can be done to address*

*issues around Anti-racism. So, there was almost this kind of gap between the day-to-day activity – which has, I’m sure, led to the pretty outstanding results that we get from Black students in the main – and how we develop strategy going forward and bringing it all together.*

*It has just been really, really thought-provoking listening to everybody reflecting on this question. Maybe this might sound a bit reductive – but for me, what I was thinking was, it’s about understanding where you are in the system, understanding what your impact might be and your sources of power and, keeping things at the top of the agenda. So, it’s understanding where your impact can be, your role in the system, and then activating as much as you can around your sources of power. That is a kind of reflection, really, of what many people were saying, from different perspectives.*

Something that has been interesting for us, as the Black FE Leadership Group, has been the difference between the number of people who have chosen to sign our open letter, and those people who have taken it further, and done something active. And there’s a gap, almost a credibility gap between the two, which really lends itself to this narrative that people are waiting for the agenda just to dwindle away, when everything

will go back to normal. And that is always the risk, that people make the grand gesture, but they are actually not following up with action. So, hopefully, coming out of this Symposium, we will keep Anti-racism on the agenda. And we will make it part of the thought leadership challenge for leaders, that they will actually think about what their role is, as per Mike’s question.

*What is that gap? Why is that gap there? Because there was an absolute flurry to engage, to sign the open letter. Are you saying that is the norm or is there a cycle of activity where in any of these things, you’ll have those that you might class as early adopters and evangelists, and you’ll have another 20% at the bottom that you’re never going to change their opinion? And so, our focus has to be on that 60% in the middle to make sure that they’re joining a movement and actually making the case for change, no matter who’s involved.*

There’s also something in what BFELG is doing right now, in bringing different bits of the system together, to potentially reshape things. So, there’s us with our individual roles and places in our regular lives. But these initiatives where the convening and the collaborative system work, I think, is another element in that sustainable system change. I think the fact that we’re here now, having this conversation, is part of that.



*I suppose what I would say in response is we've developed into a sector that only really responds to what the FE Commissioner does, and Ofsted does. We seem to have lost the confidence to do things because that's the way our organisation wants to do it. We are unprepared then, to stand up to the scrutiny of an Ofsted inspection. It's not to do what Ofsted tells us to do, it's to actually say, this is our philosophy, and this is how we're translating it into action, and we can defend it. I think that what's interesting to me, is that we've had engagement from Ofsted, and the noises have been positive. We haven't had any engagement at all from the former further education commissioner, and there's a shift happening because we have a new commissioner coming in, and I believe that there's going to be change in culture. Hopefully, fingers and toes crossed,*

think about, never mind large ones.

*I think there is something about trying to get to a position where we are more sure-footed and confident as a sector, about taking things into our own hands. That was probably the case I was making around EDI. If you wait around for government to come up with something, you'll be waiting a long time. So, should we just kind of get on with it? But what do we need to do to work together? The work that the BFELG have started is absolutely speaking to that, as well. I've just heard that the Queen's speech will include the Secretary of State for Education taking on additional powers around intervention, so there's going to be more of it.*

*At some point, we have to think about how we turn, perhaps a little bit internally, as a sector and support each other to enable us to become more sure-footed and confident on a range of matters, not just EDI. I would just say that if you are thinking that there has to be another body, it may be worth thinking about where there are bodies that are established, and whilst the Black Health Agency, for example, doesn't have edu-*

I was going to come in on the point about sustainability, but I think, Robin, you just made that point, about that confidence. Going back to my original point, about sure-footedness, whatever space we're operating in as an education sector or individual organisations - the whole sector has been battered in the last decade from inspections in this place and that place, interventions from X person or Y person. That has really given small to medium sized colleges, particularly, quite a lot to

*cation expertise, there could well be a conversation about building education expertise.*

*One thing we've learned about this government is that they U-turn with remarkable regularity and what it needs is a bit of strength of character for us to stand up and say, "No, that's not right". Sometimes that's what we need to do.*

I think you've probably answered my question, that I need more strength of character. I certainly have been feeling the levels of scrutiny in interventions, whether it be from the FEC, or Ofsted, or wherever, which I do think creates a nervousness in terms of how you are meant to respond. I'm also interested in this gap that you talk about between those who signed the letter to begin with, and then consequently what happens and what creates that insecurity – if it is that – so, they don't know what to do and what direction to take, is it a nervousness or is it insecurity? It was an interesting question. What's the reason for that? I think I need to ask that of colleagues to understand that. But 'strength of character' I have picked up on.

I see the potential for a more collegiate approach because there is a question about the board being the place where the buck stops. My experience in the sector is that at present, if things go wrong, it's the CEO who carries the can.

*Two things that seem to be making a*

*difference, in terms of where I am, in terms of my location is more system leadership taking place. We have the combined authority. We also have the LEP. I'm really pleased to say that in Liverpool, we have our first Black woman as mayor. So, there is a bigger conversation taking place. It is a really powerful conversation. To come up and stand up against the systemic nature of racism, you need that systemic dialogue, as well, that takes place in a bigger conversation. And, as anchor institutions, we have a duty to make sure that we're part of that and leading it wherever possible.*

*But it's an interesting point, picking up on the latest point. If we're talking about systemic, which is the direction of travel of government policy, linking chambers of commerce, local authorities, mayoral regions, and colleges, in a big sort of system, then we're going to have to tackle the wider issue, aren't we, at some point? And we need to know how we actually raise this agenda, without – as you say – it being seen as some sort of special interest that individuals who happen to be from that background are obsessed with and are pushing. So that is a real challenge.*

The point about the systemic response – my perception is that, in general, local authorities are pretty good and supportive. No? I can see some shaking heads. Maybe I've been luckier, certainly in Bristol, that's the case for sure, but employers, as you say, are quite mixed in their response. Some of them are very good. Some of them are just not on the agenda at all.

*The annual Colour of Power report shows that \*Black representation and progression in local authorities looks even worse than for FE by level and pipeline. In 19 years of being principal, working within a unitary authority, I never saw once across the table, in all our local authority committees, education, economic development, whatever, any other Black person, and I use \*Black in that widest sense. Not one.*

I'm in Bristol with a Black mayor and very high representation of BME councillors, and I was in London, North London, so I haven't had, possibly, a typical experience in the last few years. So, it looks to me as if what's coming across is mixed, like employers, very mixed. Maybe I was over-optimistic in assuming that local authorities are more on the ball.

*It has been big for us because obviously it's the wider council, so we're engaging with lots of departments that have nothing to do with education. And the*

*experiences in my particular council, that's been known for National Front and EDL, have been quite amazing, actually, quite remarkable.*

So, it's just kind of having the right people around the table that helps you as well. But I think, you have a huge challenge on your hands, considering how many organisations you've been working with, but at least you know what you need to do next, that's the main thing.

*We are going to take the BFELG 10-Point Plan and drive it into our strategic plan. We have a very supportive set of governors; and have 30% BAME college students of 35,000 enrolments. We have worked really hard to ensure our governing body is a diverse group.*

Another aspect is the role of employers, because obviously we are a vocational sector. We do pride ourselves on our work with employers. What's your perception of the appetite, or if you like, the readiness for employers to take this agenda on board?

*I'll answer that. I think, from my perspective, it's very mixed, but largely quite poor. But I think there's another aspect about how are we also supporting those Black-owned businesses as well? I know in my own city-region, they do not get access to the right support. It's about*

*questions like, would they use an organisation like mine to support their own businesses?*

I think there are two sides to employer involvement: one, how do we support those employers of Black-owned businesses? And how do we help, especially on the issue of apprenticeships, as well? How do we help to change the conversation around our employers?

*The thing with employers, it's in some way similar to colleges, but with employers, if there's no financial incentive to do it, or they can't see it, then they often won't do it.*

*Many employers are becoming more enlightened and actually seeing that there is a value in having a greater diversity of people around, and a greater talent pool of people around, so they are making those decisions to do it. But, if you're in a small organisation, which is led by an individual, and it's that person's personality which runs the organisation, it'll be very dependent upon what that person's individual views are. And if they choose to be moral, and follow this fight, then they will do. If they're quite traditional, and think it's just a load of baloney, then the organisation won't.*

*What you'll also find is when organisations are financially strong and they're not having to go hand-to-mouth, they are far more likely to start looking at some of these areas and issues. When they're literally broke and fighting for survival, training is one of the first things which goes. They don't have time or energy or the will to do those things. So, it is dependent upon the financial situation. Maybe chambers of commerce and other organisations such as banks should make them aware of some of the opportunities.*

*But certainly, some of the big players like the Apples and the Googles of this world have realised the value of diversity and very consciously try to do something about it.*

When it comes down to employers and other third-party partnerships, it needs to be written into procurement that we're not going to partner with any organisation that does not have policies or procedures to tackle issues of race and racism. And that they need to be equality and diversity trained to what level? That's debatable – but I think that should be written into tenders, written into contracts the same way we do with due diligence, with compliance and GDPR and all the other stuff.

And that is a way that FE institutions can almost take a stand in the type of people that they want

to associate with. I'm just hearing a thing that my grandmother used to say when I was little: "Shakira, birds of a feather flock together. Show me your friends, and I will tell you who you are." And I think that is a prime example, in this situation, that if you're going to fall for less, then those are the types of people you are going to attract. But if you stand for what you actually believe in, then you're going to attract those types of people, and they're going to come to you prepared, because they know they're not going to be able to get away with it.

*And despite the challenge, and this leads to the employer side, because even within that authority and in our business leaders' fora, I would ask about including Black businesses in our area to the point where it was a broken record but there was zilch response. I am sure they were thinking she's asking these questions because she is Black, because she's minority.*

I would like to add the context of the locale, for example Barnsley, which had a very high Brexit vote and walking around you are unlikely to see many European people. So, what does this mean? What was the vote all about? It was something else than the trade relations with Europe. Understanding the context and locale gives us as leaders understanding when approaching locality. I have done a huge amount of work diversifying the board but if my board was representative of my locale, it would be all white men! It was about diversity of thought. As soon as we were

supporting BLM, I had people complaining to me that we were supporting defunding the police or the more 'negative' movement people perceived it to be. There is a level of education that needs to go together with whatever we decide as leaders. We must grasp the movement, but we also need to challenge others. For example, we had a session with governors when we discussed the term 'nitty-gritty' and where this comes from. We need to challenge the 'normal' language that we have been conditioned to use. The term meant nothing to them until they realised what it meant. So, a lot of action, development sessions, diversification, understanding of context and locale in which we are operating and a real commitment.

## A clear Vision and plan for Anti-Racism in FE

*I think ensuring sustained movement on the agenda is partly about having a clear vision of what we are trying to achieve and clear objectives. I'm confronted with phrases that I don't really understand, lived experiences that I have not had and a problem in a sense that all the people who I know who are \*Black are successful.*

*For example, the people on the shop floor I worked with would be regarded as successful- home owners, doing well, retiring as upper middle class to put a*



*label on it. I'm using the BFELG and the 10 Point Plan and training as I am pretty sure there is racism around in my area, but I have no idea how to tackle it! So that is why I am seeking help. What is the vision of what we are trying to achieve? Probably not a utopia but something we can all get our heads around, i.e., objectives of where we want to get to and an action plan on how to get there.*

I think we have to be clear about what we want to change. That might just sound ridiculous, but in actual fact, I'll put my cards on the table. Sometimes it's about white and Black, well, that's about colour. Sometimes it's about minority ethnic. Sometimes it's about social justice, sometimes it's about Anti-racism and if we're not very simple and consistent in our message, I don't think we're going to get any change.

*I just keep thinking about why did we lose what we had five, six years ago in our sector in terms of impetus and focus and engagement? And how can we make sure that we don't lose that again? And every time I come on one of these calls, I learn and reflect even more. What we've lost, and why we lost it, and how we can make sure that that never happens again. What gives me more anxiety than anything around all of this, is why we all let it go? And why we're now all*

*immersed in a recovery situation? It has become a crisis, I think, nationally, and probably locally for many of us as well.*

And how do we, in a self-managed system ... and I think that's why it's so brilliant that the BFELG is taking a lead on this, none of us can let these balls drop, none of us should have let the balls drop, but yet we did.

On pure meritocracy, self-belief, self-support, and personal motivation, people like Shakira and others have risen to become spokespeople, continually reminding us about this issue.

*I invited the chair of a national organisation in an allied sector to talk at my college about Black Lives Matter, including at a session with my entire staff. And I never received more complaints than from his presentation because he said that we're not as racist as America and that you have to see this agenda within the framework of competitive advantage. People really took offense at the message.*

*I know that the individual absolutely, passionately cares for addressing these issues we're talking about. He wasn't saying we weren't racist. Everybody locked on these individual things, but many of our staff actually took offence*

*at what he said and felt that he was actually denying the agenda.*

*And that's why really focusing on the simple definition of what we're trying to achieve here and change, as Mandeep was articulating earlier, is important. Because, like everything, none of us share all the same opinions. We all have different backgrounds and different experiences. That's why it's so important now to quantify what we want out of it, what progress would really look like. Otherwise, I think all those anecdotal stories get lost, depending on your personality or your background or whether you can really tell the story correctly.*

I think that's interesting, and I think it plays into that kind of piece, that if we talk about race, in an almost gentle way, people can hear the message coming from a moral imperative. People can say 'oh, yeah, that talks to me'. But, if you then try and use it in a business sense, in a commercial sense, then people take exception. I think it's something about the message. People hear what they're prepared to hear, not what they are not prepared to hear. I think it is a really important point.

*I'll put my cards on the table. I do not associate myself with Black or white, and we keep making it about colour.*

*And it's not about colour; not for me. It is about equality, and for me, that's a different thing altogether. It is about treating people fairly, and that's a different thing. We have to be very clear on what that change is, and what's the simple definition of what we're trying to achieve here.*

It's interesting that you said that, because one of the things that I wrote down when I was reflecting on this is: do we know what Anti-racism looks like? Identification and definition of the journey, the actions that we're seeking, are really important. You're right, we do flip between different terminology, different groups. Consistent and clear language is an important part of unlocking the systemic issues in further education.

*I partly agree consistency of language is important, and I think language, like equity and inclusion and diversity – so DE&I, which we're using – is really, really crucial, and that crosses lots of different demographics and the broad church that exists within society. I think, though, it would be naive for us to think it's just about those three words because we know that we promote that, but actually, we still have inequality and underrepresentation in the sector and society at large. So, I think you can have DE&I, but you also need to under-*

*pin it with data. And data provide the evidence, and you need to ask yourself, are they reflective of your learners? Are they reflective of the communities that you serve or the areas that you are in? If they aren't, then what is it about your DE&I that isn't working or is working? So, I think you can't take race out of it at the moment. Because we know that there's underrepresentation when it comes to race. But data are what inform the picture about race, social, economic, disability, whatever. It has to be DE&I, but it also has to be about data as well.*

*I kind of agree. I think one of the things that I struggle with is that once you start looking at data, then actions start getting concentrated in areas that are highly populated with Black and minority ethnic people.*

*What does success look like? It's so important to try and frame what success would look like. I think in the same way we would with our strategic planning - 20 years from now, six months from now, three years and five years from now, and probably that's missing a little bit from the discussion and from all of our efforts to date. We probably have to*

*have a much more broken-down plan.*

*We can't afford to do nothing or do the same thing and then 40 years on find the situation is very difficult to change. So, it does take a radical approach for everyone to buy into it, in terms of the sense of respect and aspiration for everybody.*

*Collectively we have to take responsibility for keeping this at the top of our agendas now, and we need to do things, don't we? We need to act, within our organisations, and across our organisations. Using our power and influence, we have to keep this agenda where it needs to be.*

## Student agency

To introduce myself, I am the National President of NUS UK, and it was interesting to reflect on the previous question about 'what are we trying to get to?' It is interesting to think of the students and the student movement being five or ten years down the line in terms of conversations. We are exhausted by conversations about EDI and racism. What is happening right now is that we see things happen, we see mass movements spring to light and then we see the bureaucratisation of that anger filter into workforces and taskforces and working groups. What has spoken to me throughout this conversation is- where is the



student agency in this? I have spoken to a lot of students in FE who know exactly what needs to happen and have their heads screwed on. Rather than going round and talking about people who feel they have expertise in this space, what about talking to the people who do have expertise and want to have their voices heard? How can they get in touch with you and tell you what to do next? I do not understand why we are not going to students and asking them for their expertise? One action would be to see this and acknowledge the rightful student anger that is present in FE. Many education spaces or institutions reproduce racism because, of course, they are a product of their society. How do we make sure black and brown students can have their voices heard? We know the issues. We know young black men on free school meals with special educational needs are 168% more likely to be excluded from school than white female counterparts. We are then able to track this exclusion to prison pipeline. So, what is the role of FE in that? We know these things; the statistics have been around for years, and the issues continue to be reproduced. For NUS and the student movement, we are now talking about how we radically reimagine the system and structures of our education system to uproot the ways in which racism is sewn into the fabric of that rather than tinker around at the edges and add someone into the board here or there. These conversations are important and making small changes are important but fundamentally when you have a bedrock of racism, there is only so much we can do. So, 'what are we trying to get to' is important and to see the gap between where students are, and others are. It is a gap easily closed.

*Thank you, colleagues, for sharing from a personal angle. The BFELG has been working with institutions using a combination of empirical evidence (lived experience) and data analysis. When Larissa said 'exhausted', I'd like to couple that with the conclusions and phrases we are getting i.e., when people really engage and open themselves up and have the confidence to display their vulnerability, people feel sad at an individual, organisational and systemic level. That is exhausting. It's really hard to open up, and that includes leaders. But it is time worthy as it will move you on. In many cases, there are a multitude of intersectional priorities. If you get through that, individually or organisationally, what comes out (and this is demonstrated in the data) is real collective resolve. The openness of leadership to show vulnerability and channel that constructively, and not see it as a deficit model, is fundamental. We have been evolving in the context of a framework to carry out these discussions. We believe we have a framework that can support people to go there.*

*After nine months of this work, the heaviest lifting so far is at system level. We have*

*a problem; the guardians of the system are not moving this agenda along. We are having great conversations from the bottom up - but how can we really challenge and put the system in a position where they believe there is movement, and leverage to be had? There is deep denial and a lack of courageousness at a system level.*

On that point, I would say you can only change the system from within. External pressure has come in waves at different times. If the reaction from the system is to put up defences, then it makes the wave harder. If you say as an individual leader, this is my work then it becomes the systems work. I thought Larissa's point about 'bureaucratisation' of the passion is interesting. We do need bureaucracy to address the challenge, but not just that or the life goes out of it. You need both. You need an engineering solution but also an organic solution, the engine and the organic. We need to hold both metaphors in our mind as we do this work.

*One colleague used the phrase 'something needs to be done'. This is telling. When do we move to 'this is what I did'? When this language changes, this is the journey that an individual makes.*

In the college I worked in, there were 60 languages spoken and I thought I got it. But I put my hands up and say I need help. Larissa's point about the student perspective is actually spot on. Ofsted

and the FE commissioner are saying that the system is working. How do we use the advocacy of the student voice alongside that of the business community to get the gatekeepers and government to change?

The student union needs to be at the heart of everybody's plan and the pressure that the students will make in this area. In our action plan, we have a sabbatical student union president who is leading work around these conversations. We need everybody to be talking about it. This is a powerful lever for certain staff who see this topic as a big passion.

*At the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts, I am working with an external group on Anti-racism and students have featured heavily in our action plan- graduates and alumni as well- we need the student voice. How can we ensure this?*

There's a huge amount of power if you just look at the people that are at this symposium. Just bear in mind, there are about 67 of us at last count, I noticed. If, on average, we have a thousand people in our organisations, as some of us have far more and some of us have far less, but there are 67,000 people we can affect.

*The movement is around how you do things that you know will be taken forward by the people who you can influence, who you have access to, who you can help develop that positive mind-*

*set towards equality, justice, all those things that we're saying. So, for me, the movement really should be focusing on, what can I do as a leader in my organisation? It's great to hear about, 'we should get employees involved, and we should get the government involved'. I can't have an impact on those things.*

*And while I would like to have a huge impact there, maybe the way that I'm going to have an impact, and make sure that I keep moving is – actually – it's not just one small thing – it's consistency. I have to review it every year. I'll have a new set of students every year, maybe some new staff, and every year, I can do something that will really have an impact on them, that they can get the movement, the momentum going and keep it going. That's something really useful for my organisation to be working on and we are working on it.*

The number that you gave is actually incredibly powerful, isn't it? If we're in the ballpark of 67,000 people by virtue of our individual reach, then that quickly escalates to millions of people. Your idea of influencing the parts of the jigsaw that we can on an individual basis, is incredibly powerful.

But the other thing that I wanted to add – I've been thinking about this a lot since last summer, and

really challenging myself and others about why we haven't made more progress and what's within our gift as well as what we need to influence.

We need others to be allies, and change, and drive the change, and all that stuff about privilege. But the thing we need to do more of, is those people that we can influence, we need to influence them, and we need to pull people up more, and we need to really support each other as a collective more and champion each other.

*I agree with what has been said about the power of our own impact, as individuals but also as a collective. And there are two things, really, that I wanted to say on this, in terms of, how do you make sure it's not a moment in time, but a proper movement and sustainable?*

*I think you can only do that if you put things in place within organisations, within sectors, within society. And some of that is best practice about talent, which I know you have as a strand, but also around data but also holding each other to account.*

*So, I love the CBI led Change the Race Ratio campaign, because it's big corporates coming together, saying, we commit to this and there's an element of holding to account.*

*I think, one of the things that we don't do well, is pulling each other up, and pulling people up, and pulling others up. Women suffered from this quite considerably, before the 30% Club and all of that kind of stuff. These are powerful comments about what we can do and should be doing and be mindful as well as the other stuff that we need to be doing around talent and the like.*

That's also really powerful. What I've always reflected on with my friends and family is that it is incumbent upon us to keep the ladder there and help other people up the ladder. I think that's what you're referring to when you say pull each other up, because if we just sit back and think, 'well, that was a tough journey, but thank God, I made it', it's just an individual success, usually brought about by the help and support of others, and it is incumbent upon us to pay it forward, isn't it? To make sure that we're bringing our communities up, as well as ourselves as individuals. So, thank you for that.

*Because we've all seen, we all know the fear that has gone on in the sector with media. And something that has just been said in terms of supporting each other, because together, the power of standing together and speaking out. I'm talking about when the press is having a go really, because I've supported colleagues that have faced and been vilified by the*

*media. Do we speak out, do we actually say, 'you're doing that because of their colour, and actually, if they were white, you wouldn't be doing it'? So, there is something about the power of that collective, working together. We are stronger together, aren't we, and it's only by doing so, that we're going to push things out, because I think the media has such a big, big, influential role.*

I liked the bit about – wasn't Tiffany the speaker that talked about Daffy Duck and Hitler? Thinking about the influence of the media, we need to be doing something collectively.

*I absolutely agree as somebody who's gone through that process and fought back and rebuilt my career. I certainly appreciate the support that I received but I also experienced the feeling of being silenced, and I think, when you silence victims and you silence individuals, you take away their power. You take away the power of the community, and the power of the people supporting them, and I do often feel, as a Black woman in a senior position, I do feel exposed and vulnerable to challenging what I see as being blatant wrongs. So yes, thank you for that.*



Good morning, everyone, and Jason thank you particularly for a really coherent story, especially that part about not joining up other wrongs with the focus on getting this right. I think if that could be articulated the way you said it this morning and broadened out, that constant noise would go away.

## Understanding Privilege

*My group has seven further education colleges, seven schools through training providers. After the incidents over a year ago, I was very clear that I didn't want to write a letter and put it on the front of our website saying this should never have happened. I either wanted to do something meaningfully that would go on and actually unleash that talent or in a way not bother, because I've been around too long.*

*Across our colleges, we have a large number of staff, who are from a Black or ethnic minority background. I brought all of those individuals together. They said very similar things to what we heard this morning: they were exhausted, they are tired of educating white people like me (although I will say, I have a mixed-*

*race child, because my partner is not white) and that I needed to go away and educate myself, and once I'd educated myself, to come back and they would have a conversation with me, which is what I've done. I've done loads of podcasts, books, et cetera.*

*And as a result of that work, and we're still meeting, we have formed five groups. And that's the reason I'm doing this, and that it's going on for so long. The first group is a mentoring group. It is up and running, and it is where people of colour mentor senior managers, and our senior managers are mentoring the people of colour to go through some of what colleagues were talking about, which is "I don't understand these systems, how do you get to the top? It all seems alien and not very friendly to me."*

*And that is having a really good impact, both on our leaders, who are now coming back, going "Oh my God". The other thing we forget is that if you are white and if you choose to read, which we've also done and I'm working with a group of senior white principals on Layla Saad's *Me and White Supremacy*. If you read that book, it's a real eye opener. I*

*would have said, I tick everything. White fragility, absolutely, Listening to the stories my colleagues told me about the college, the organisation I have responsibility for, where I would have said “Oh, God, there’s no racism here”. Well, there absolutely is.*

*It was a shock to my system. And I had white fragility in bucketloads. And I have a group of friends, who are people of colour. And that’s the other thing, is, who do you mix with? If you mix with people like you all the time, how are you ever going to change anything?*

Responding to Shakira’s point, I’ve really learned over the last year that whilst there is a lot of support to tackle racism, there’s so little understanding of privilege and that actually, most people do not understand the scale of the issue at an institutional and systemic level. And so, there is a really important piece of work to do, which is for people to really learn, to understand it, because I don’t believe you can actually tackle racism unless you understand the scale of the issue.

The point, I think, that has come through very strongly today, is, engaging white communities with the Anti-racism agenda. And so, alongside existing programmes, I think there has to be this educating of white people, the white population, about what the structural inequalities for Black people mean for them as white people, in terms of white privilege, and how that privilege plays

out to the disadvantage of other communities.

However, from a practical point of view, I want to unpick the idea of ‘white privilege’ not in a defensive way but in a constructive way to ask what do you see is ‘available to’ and ‘not available to’? How can we spell that out to understand what it means? For example, I am a white man from a council estate, but I am not sure what white privilege really means. As a strategic leader, it would help me being able to articulate that to my students and staff so we can change things in a tangible way at a grassroots level.

I find that there is a huge difference in starting points when we have these discussions. These conversations can be difficult, awkward, or embarrassing. You might feel awkward about what you do or do not know, you might be shocked to hear people’s stories and people might make assumptions about each other’s starting points.

In my organisation, I have had white staff saying to me ‘I don’t see colour, I just don’t see this as a big issue, and I treat all people the same.’ We have a lot of work to do. White privilege is a great example, are you saying that everything is great for me, that I haven’t had a tough life or bad experience such as poverty? No, this means when you have a bad experience it is not because of the colour of your skin e.g., you can be poor, but you are not poor because you are white. This unpacking takes time and people must believe it is time worth spending. If you spend enough time with like-minded people, you might end up thinking it is a marginalised issue. But it is work for everybody to do because Anti-racism benefits everybody. Although it might not feel

like that at first, it is about living in a society you would want to live in. You need external expertise to come in and help you have these discussions. The commitment needs to come from the senior leadership, but the external expertise is a vital ingredient.

*I agree wholeheartedly and thinking about the issue of people being in their late teens or early twenties when they were first given an opportunity to talk about racism in the UK- I've experienced that with members of staff in their thirties, forties, or fifties! And that was brought about in an environment when external expertise was invited in.*

## Leadership Development

I almost don't know where to begin. and I've been kind of reflecting that on an individual basis I was really struck by what Tiffany and Nazir said about unlearning as well as learning. I feel I have a role to unlearn, and to listen and to really be on a kind of educational journey myself. And unlearning is as important as learning. And I think that's a kind of personal responsibility.

Then in my more institutional role, I'm really privileged to be working as an educator, and a lot of the work that we are doing is with leaders across FE. I think that there is very important work to be done in that space, which is about -

and I don't have solutions at all at this point - but it's absolutely about a commitment to helping to make change happen and supporting those who are in the business of educating and making that change happen. And so, I think, that's not something I will do in isolation. It's absolutely about partnership, collaboration, listening, and putting it at the forefront in the way that we're planning forward.

So, I think I'm probably just going to focus on a particular aspect of those two contributions. The reason for that is because when I read that question, which talks about more than a moment, the real focus, I think, is on delivering movement, isn't it? So, I think we can spend a lot of time thinking about whether we had a moment, whether it was the right moment, or the Black Lives Matters as an organisation, or as a movement in itself, is the right or the wrong thing to do. There are all sorts of things going on around that. But if the focus is on delivering movement, certainly from my experience, a focus on - and this probably speaks to the point about the work that we need to do - but perhaps a focus on helping colleagues and I think there are many colleagues who want to do the right thing, I think you've heard me say that before. In my experience, I've met more people who are behind the principles of what we're seeking to achieve and wanting to move forward. Perhaps they lack a level of sure-footedness and confidence in being able to do that.

*Yes, the point to make is that I know nothing about some of the equality and diversity issues I work with, but I've had to learn, to be able to operate in that*

*space. I've spent a lot of time apologising and learning the language, because I struggle with certain words because I was growing up in the generation when those were really bad words to use about people. So, I think that there's an element here about what can we do to help people to get confidence in this space, so that they can really lead the agenda around delivering that movement. And I see a gap there.*

I was very taken with what Jason and Tiffany said; the point that Jason made about 'are we complicit?' And about focusing on unconscious bias in this, rather than thinking about training around white privilege.

*Could we discuss ideas for levers to stimulate the talent and creativity of the sector? As the first generation going into university from my family, I did not know the career path. The first half a dozen appointments up my career ladder were the metaphor of a 'hand on the shoulder' – people saying to me there is something within you that you need to harness through training or secondments or opportunities. Is there something about a systematic hand on shoulder effort? Not just mentoring or coaching but I am talking about positive*

*interventions that really provide opportunities in and across our organisations and systems?*

We could do that as leaders in FE! We could simply offer the opportunity for people who would want to come and work in Wales or Scotland to get involved in the senior leadership teams to see what is going on and take the learning back to their own organisation. What a great idea!

*I agree. My success is largely due to the people who saw something in me and gave me a step up. I think it is about actively looking for those opportunities to pull people up. It is great to have a programme for \*Black groups, but you need everyone in the college to look at the people below them and give people an opportunity to develop. It does not matter if you are black or white, it is about the process of developing people. Did this get lost in the FE system? There is a huge gap. I know the ETF is starting to fill this gap- but where is the personal development? Why are we not doing that?*

Ladders of progression have fallen away in our sector. We need to create pathways and career progression, so people are not in a random/hostile environment career wise. ETF are working on this over the coming years with our sector and with our SET membership. I do want to underline the



previous point 'I'm only addressing this now as a leader'-that is powerful testimony to the risk of insular development programmes that create a safe haven and one singular pathway to the top. The risk is that it lets the system off the hook.

*This is quite prevalent in the anecdotal discourse we are having across the sector. Some \*Black staff put forward for funded programmes feel like 'I'm only here because it does not cost anything.' If you really mean it, you invest in me. You do not wait for the funding which is artificially asking me to do something.*

I would like to counter that point. I think there is a lot of leadership development in the sector. We are having these conversations with David and ETF. As a college Group, we have four levels of internal leadership development that we've had for many years. We are in the second year of running a mentoring programme. I do not want us to think we have to reinvent the wheel and disregard the work we are doing. We are part of a national group of colleges, and as a group we're now in the second year of running a mentoring programme. I'm mentoring three or four people from different colleges, as there are other colleges involved.

*I also have been watching this process for decades, of people trying to manage to progress within a system that is not enabling for them. I think that we can't afford... we can see what doing nothing*

*or doing the same thing has achieved, and 40 years on, in my view, the situation is very difficult to change.*

*So, it does take a radical approach for everyone to buy into it, in terms of the sense of respect and aspiration for everybody.*

Every time you come to one of these events, it's really good. I think there are a couple of points I'd like to comment on. I really agree with the two comments about leadership training and development, having been through a lot throughout my career. I do not feel training and development have been good enough in terms of Anti-racism and leadership in relation to Anti-racism. That leads me to the crucial role of governing bodies. I don't think we talk about that enough in this leadership space, and where they're coming from, and how they're trained and supported. I don't know, for example, whether the Oxford Saïd Business School programme includes senior governors or not in the training. I don't know where that happens, or what's happening with that. So that's one issue, I think, that that's really important.

What you need to do is look at some of the senior leadership training by ETF and others to make sure Anti-racism is actually a clear component and a topic.

*Saïd Business School is part of the University of Oxford, and we, in partnership with ETF and many principals,*

*designed the Preparing for CEO/Chairs programmes and the Heads of Governance programme for FE and now about 460 people have been through that. So, it's interesting to hear the comment about 'make it a topic'. Actually, I don't agree with that, because I think you end up compartmentalising it, and if I think about the assumptions that happen in the design process of that, it then becomes a kind of, "oh, yeah, we've done that diversity thing". I think we have to make it much more integrated.*

Coming on the back of the exchanges above, about embedding or stand-alone topics. I think we need both. And I would say make sure the training of principals actually includes some element of awareness about this issue. Because if people aren't made aware or educated that this is an issue, and they're in a predominantly white organisation or a predominantly white area, they don't even know it's an issue. The news, it doesn't touch them, doesn't affect them. And it's only, if you are either more consciously aware, like some principals are, or, if you're in a predominantly non-white area, you start to realise these things.

*I've been on the Oxford Said programme, and yeah, I think it is wonderful to try and embed it in everything. But when it gets embedded in everything, it gets missed. I've done the programme, it wasn't an issue of the programme, as far*

*as I was concerned as a Black principal. So that is the dilemma, if you like, or a point. Is it a topic, or is it embedded?*

And I think this is a similar issue, isn't it, to the one about the single equality scheme. Does race remain as something prominent within that, or does it just get diluted into something if it's alongside all the other equality issues? And this has been a consistent dilemma, that I think people have faced over the last decade or so. Any thoughts from anyone else on this issue?

**Q 2.** *What are the levers to unleash the talent and creativity of everyone in the FE system?*

### Organisation and management of FE

*It's a huge question, but I actually think that releasing that creativity and talent resides in the way that FE is organised and managed which is actually driven by managerialism. If I just look at one subgroup, educators in further education. there was a sense that before the shift to marketisation, you had the beginnings of mobility for increasing numbers of \*Black staff within the further education system. But I actually think that the shift to managerialism, in a sense, pretty much put paid to it.*

*So, I think that we actually need to revolutionise FE. I think we need to move away from markets and managerialism, and I would say that we need to return the management of further education to local education authorities. I know that people might say that that's a backward-looking step, but I actually think that when you have these institutions under local, democratic control, that provides a better framework for pursuing social justice equity issues, than the present managerialist, market-driven system.*

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\*BFELG uses Black as an inclusive term for ethnically diverse people who share a lived experience of the effects of racism.

## Building momentum from current practice, examples, enablers

I think there's something about building on this current momentum, and we've seen this morning, some interesting things taking place in organisations. It's the potential to build on those, and to support that activity that's taking place, so that we have many more examples, many more case studies, many more bits of evidence to show, and then these things will accumulate. They will grow, they will develop, and then it becomes just something that we do.

That's a long way in the future, I know, but it's about starting somewhere, and I think it's also about accepting that there are some things taking place in organisations.

*So how do we build on those things, and how do we use the enablers out there, such as the BFELG, such as the ETF, such as Jisc, such as the AOC? How can those enablers support the practitioners within organisations to deliver what they've just begun to do?*

This practice, I wouldn't go so far as to say it's good practice, look I'm not saying that it's not good practice - I'm just saying that there is practice because sometimes, to say that there's good practice, we exalt things to a point where we then can knock them down. I'm saying that there's

practice out there and that practice is making change. So how can we build on the practice that's making change and continually use the enablers to amplify that practice.

*I sense that there has been a moment, and, if I reflect on the experience and the journey of my own college, which is in South Wales, I think we have gone through something which has provoked far more open conversation as a result of the period we've gone through. I'm talking both about the really profound impact of the global pandemic, but also the events around the protests against the murder of George Floyd. And my own experience has been that I have learners and staff who want to take part in the discussion in a way that is more open than it has been in the past. So, I think it is a journey, but I think it is about harnessing the practice that we currently have, and as Jeff was saying, I'm not saying that is best practice or good practice, but it is about building upon what we're already doing.*

And in my own institution, that means repeatedly - and this is a theme that came out from some of the speakers - this is repeatedly asking my colleagues around the senior leadership table, what it is that we are going to do? I think it was David, who said that there are many, many staff

who care, but who don't know what to do, and I think as senior leaders, it's incumbent upon us to start that journey of helping all of those staff who do care, to find out what we collectively have to do.

*I absolutely agree, just from a personal experience; I've realised – we, obviously are revisiting our whole EDI agenda in my own organisation – that since we started to do that, people are coming forward. They want to come forward and take on the lead on different working groups, not wanting anything in return, but just wanting to be able to contribute and communicate. So, I think that's a really strong point.*

## Leadership and action

We've talked about leadership quite a lot, and it's not just about words, it's about action, and it's about saying, I have a problem here – I don't know what it is, but I know I have a problem here, but I'm going to find out what this problem is, and I'm going to do something about it. And if you can say to yourself, I have a problem that's a good starting point. I'll give you an example: a principal who attended our BFELG inaugural conference way back in February contacted us and said 'I have a problem, I don't know what it is, but I know I have a problem. Help me'. The problem could be me. He actually said, 'it could be me'. So since then, he invested in a piece of research, which

we conducted, one which is around data, one which is around qualitative data, which involved interviewing staff and students. Since then, another college came on board, so it's citywide research now and the local council has become involved. And the idea is to find out what the issues are.

Then, it's up to the colleges and the council to say, what are we going to do about it? And to work together to solve a problem that is within that city.

We seem to look to the victims to solve the problem. And that really struck me. If this was child abuse we were talking about, we wouldn't be looking for the abused to solve the problem. If it was domestic violence, we wouldn't just look to those on the receiving end of domestic violence to solve the problem.

And I think why it struck me is because I've recognised in the last few months in particular, that I don't feel well equipped as the chief executive of a leading organisation to take full ownership and accountability. I don't feel equipped, because I don't have enough of an understanding of the issues and the challenges and what I might be able to do about it personally and organisationally. I just haven't understood these issues well enough to teach ownership and accountability.

And it really struck me that if we expect the victims to solve the problem, well, we won't solve it. So, how do people like me get the understanding to take true ownership and accountability? It's really hard, isn't it, because how do you do that in a well-informed way where it isn't just a tokenistic gesture, it's deep, it's meaningful and purposeful



with an understanding of the issues – even though you don't have the lived experience. You can never truly look at the world through somebody else's eyes – but you can really try to do that, I believe.

So, that really stuck out, for me, and I think to turn this from a moment to have movement, requires the likes of me, to take our share of ownership and accountability in solving these problems, alongside others who have that relevant experience.

*It's the analogy of, you know, sometimes with bullying, you focus on the victim and move the victim out and leave the bully to actually carry on almost, and it becomes the victim's problem.*

## Culture

We have to look at Anti-racism through the lens of culture and behavioural change inside an organisation and across society.

It's about diversity, inclusion and belonging. Because we know it's when you create belonging across all groups, particularly, in the case of Black communities, that we know that we've actually started to make sure this has become about our sustainable culture, as opposed to a moment in time because of an atrocity that happened that reminded us that we still have an issue. We should never have had to be reminded in the way we were. But now, we've had that awful reminder, what has that done to us to make us really think deep and hard about our organisational cultures and what we can do.

*I was reflecting on what some of the speakers said earlier about actions. What actions can we take, and what can we do? We need to crack on with it. I know that we're talking about culture, and we don't just want a tick box list, and we've done the following 10 things, so we're all fine. I'm interested in people's perspectives about how those two things link together. Because actually sometimes, just taking some actions can prompt people to think you can start to change a culture.*

But sometimes you need the culture in order to get the right sort of actions, and not just be ticking the boxes. So, I'm interested in that. I was reflecting on last summer when the Black Lives Matters marches were taking place, and all of this was starting to get going, some of our team just took the initiative and said, well, I want this. They asked if they could call a staff meeting and I said, of course. So, they called a staff meeting, and said, what can we do to be more inclusive and diverse, and what sort of things should we be looking at in terms of our employment, recruitment, support for progression, and how we do the work that we're doing, and all these sorts of things. It's amazing that they just took responsibility for doing that and we have a set of actions out of it, which was great. I'm interested in the interaction between culture and actions because it feels like you need both, and they feed off each other.

*I've been doing some work to support the use of the BFELG 10-Point Plan Anti-racism Toolkit which provides an opportunity for you to understand where you are as an organisation and to take action for deep cultural change. And there are colleges now signing up to do that, to take that more strategic approach.*

*I've also been doing some work around inclusive recruitment. So, there are some colleges that are picking off actions like we identify there's a problem, or something we have to deal with, we're not as diverse as we should be in terms of our recruitment. What do we need to do? So, I am asked to come in and do an audit and in doing that, other stuff gets uncovered. And also, in that organisation, I've been doing some coaching and mentoring. What I've tried to do is connect the dots, and I think this is what we're doing as the BFELG, taking those small steps, working with organisations in whatever way they want to work, gets you an 'in' to look at whatever else is going on.*

*I use the Trojan horse approach – not just me, but others – to get into the organisation because they've identi-*

*fied something they want to work on. And the other is taking the big picture, strategic approach. I'm working with a headteacher from the primary sector, and we've been talking about, okay, let's take Leeds, for example. What would we need to do with the schools in the area? How could we work? Who could we approach? How would it be taken? You know because there's this palatability - I have all these Ps from Shakira, about the pillars. But there is something about palatability because you can just turn people off.*

*And I'm not about making it comfortable. I talk about being 'comfortable with being uncomfortable' in a lot of the training and development I do. But, if you can't get through the door – and there are some of my colleagues who say, okay, if you can't get through the door, then don't bother – but, actually, I do keep trying to batter the door down a bit, and get in to talk about what needs to happen, say, in a primary school, or a multi-academy trust, that's working from primary all the way through, because you could have a real effect, if you start at that young age, and go right the way through.*



We're starting from a different position because there's a huge amount of cultural day-to-day activity going on in any case, so it wasn't a question of introducing the discussions around Anti-racism. Those discussions have been taking place for many years. And the way that the ratio of Black staff to white staff has grown over the years, is an indication of the type of environment we're creating within the college.

*For me, moment to movement, being in a very middle-class white town, I really believe I thought it was actually a movement last year. But in fact, I feel it was a moment. Our young people still remember. It was a moment in time. The over 40s have forgotten.*

*However, we are teaching our students about racism in the curriculum. We're changing our curriculum, embedding the rich heritage through history and English. And we also have rugby players, nearly 150, coming from West London. They've never been to a town where it's predominantly white. And it's getting that culture right in the town, which is why I'm trying to gear up our mayor to have a festival, an equality and diversity festival to celebrate the diversity, but sometimes our students feel hostility in town. I'm not equipped, really, to chal-*

*lenge the town on my own.*

*I feel it is similar to what the Labour party and Conservatives are going through, in the big towns and cities. It is very different than what it is here in Henley.*

And, for so long education has been driven – all organisations – have been driven by compliance and tick boxes. But this work requires us to re-understand humanity, and to connect with that, in a way which really drives change. Because otherwise, it becomes actions, not cultures.

I'm not going to keep saying that there is a lack of \*Black leadership within FE or that middle managers are not breaking through, because the succession planning is around a whole range of things that work against \*Black staff. So, you know, the data are the data, and the BFELG has produced very powerful pieces of evidence and data.

*Well, it's really interesting. We're doing a lot around our curriculum and our tutorials and the diversity of our student body and staff. It's easier to do it with people who are already committed and passionate and coming through. It is much harder with people who are actually standers-by.*

I would just like to say, and I'm using the words of Martin Luther King, silence is consent. If you're unsure, don't be silent. Because you might be unsure about yourself or how to go about change, but you do know and you should know that no matter what, your silence is a hindrance. So please just don't do that. If you can speak out in any way possible, that's what you should do when you're uncertain about what to do.

## Black people giving back through formal and informal mentoring

*I have been working in HE for up to probably 19 years, at different levels and I share the frustration that Dalia described. I think I've always tried to ensure that whatever position I've been in, working in the academy, inputting into any strategies that are going on, Black and minority ethnic staff network, sitting on race equality groups. I've always tried to get involved in that work and I continue to do some of that. I'm getting older and tired and thinking about where best my energy is served. What I've tried to do is - while still looking at how we can contribute at the organisational level - also feed into some of those FSE groups that are going on.*

*A lot of my work has been targeted at working with Black and minority ethnic PGRs, supporting them in ways that I wish I'd been supported, and sharing my knowledge and my experience with them. I wouldn't call it a formal mentoring role, but it's a role where I'm trying to bring our postgraduates together in their work and ensure that they are aware of mechanisms so their voices can be heard throughout the institution; supporting other people that may be sitting on university-wide committees.*

## Black people too have dreams and aspirations

I think many people of colour have had this conversation in private, and it's really great that we have this opportunity now to share our thoughts and people want to listen.

But I think what we've been coming up against, I believe, is more about surprise that a person of colour is capable of doing something that is not usual. So, for example, it's okay if we're athletes, entertainers, that sort of area, but once we step into the regions of wanting to be management, to be doctors, lawyers, it becomes remarkable, and that becomes a challenge. I just think it's about an understanding; somebody talked about the training of teachers, newly qualified teachers, the fact that they could understand that young

people have aspirations, that they're all the same.

I've seen it happen. For example, my brother, doing well in primary school. When they get to secondary school, something happens. Their white friends are copying their homework in primary school, and the first few years of secondary school, then later on, somehow, they seem to fall behind, and it's not a lack of intelligence. So, I just feel like one of the things to understand is to expect great things from people of colour

*This takes me back to many years ago, when we had the enquiry into Black staff in further education. Actually, I am quite saddened that in many ways, it feels as if we've not even stood still, we've gone backwards. But on the other hand, I'm quite encouraged by what I see happening now. And what I always say is, if you get it right for me and people who look like me, then you're setting best practice for everyone else. It's also about empowerment as well as co-production and it's not about sitting back and asking Black and brown people, "what should we do?" Actually, you've been told for years what to do, and it has been said so strongly today.*

*It's not about having action points; it's about living those action points and bringing those action points into being.*

*I'm interested in going forward. It's about meaningful co-production, working together to move forward into sustainable change.*

*My niece contacted me to say that she was having to go off to her daughter's school because the students had all taken part in a sit-down and a protest. And then when I realised what this child had done, I felt so proud, because actually she was saying I'm not going to have this racism anymore in this school. I'm going to join the protests about wanting to see change. I think I'm hopeful that there's a young generation that's actually coming up who will not put up with the slow progress that the people of my generation have put up with.*

The other powerful thing I heard this morning was actually about what happens when people smash through the glass ceiling and how isolated and lonely they are, and how important it is for us all to come together to support those people, in terms of coaching and mentoring and the support that we give to our brothers and sisters, regardless of what sectors they are in, whether it's social care, whether it's further education, whether it's in primary or secondary school, but it's important that we don't just say, oh well, they got through and then leave them. We have to walk with them, support them.

*Colleagues in my institution said very similar things to the things we heard this morning, that I needed to go away and educate myself, and once I'd educated myself, to come back and they would have a conversation with me, which is what I've done. I've done loads of podcasts, books, et cetera.*

## Recruitment and Talent Management (Career Development and Progression)

I don't think the levers that we thought were making a difference were adequate. There is a need for stronger approaches to supporting colleagues to develop both the confidence and skills to step forward and take on new roles. I also think it will very much a question of recruiting organisations, making decisions about the strategies they employ to make sure that Black colleagues are accessing promotion and are accessing senior posts, because there is a real imbalance in the FE workforce that's being highlighted through a lot of these conversations. And it just keeps coming back to us right between the eyes as a persistent problem. We're overlooking, we're papering over the cracks.

The sector has to change. It really does have to change its employment practices. And, as everybody has said, we can't turn a blind eye to

this. This is a metric for the sector to account for and there needs to be good oversight, good accountability, good governance. The challenge is on us, on the potential failures, on the historic failures that we've seen happen, in terms of creating an equitable workforce.

There should be accountability. When you go for a senior management position in FE, continuous personal development should be 'essential' and not 'desirable' on the specification. Once these senior leaders are trained, they are accountable for not dealing with any issues of racism wherever and whenever these manifest in their organisation, and they have a duty to translate that down.

*In my 30 years in FE, I have been on numerous interview panels, and to Shakira's point, there is always this mandatory question about equality of opportunity or equality and diversity. It's the worst answered, and people still get appointed. The poor response is totally ignored.*

*Are we serious when we ask that question and is there a different way of approaching this at interview? Could candidates be asked to present a case study? Or is there a case study that they have to respond to demonstrate a real understanding. And if you are going to appoint a poor performing person, when it's an 'essential' criteria, and they obvi-*

*ously don't meet it, shouldn't there be a programme put in place, that brings the individual up to speed in what the organisation believes in, that is if the organisation truly believes in equity?*

I think part of the discussion needs to be about how, historically in FE, and I've been part of this, we've fallen into the trap of 'best fit'. When we've interviewed candidates, there are sometimes a number of occasions where the best candidate has been Black, but the team we're looking at appointing them to head up is mainly white. Then you get into this within the panel: Are they – although they are the best candidate of the day – are they going to be the 'best fit'? I say that, unashamedly, because I've been part of that, regrettably now. Though I've argued in the past that we should always go for that particular candidate, I have then fallen back on the 'comfort' of the best fit and gone along with the system. So, I think part of the solution now has to be, to really begin to appoint people on merit, and get rid of this fit thing because the fit is alive and kicking. No matter what anybody will want to argue against it.

*Is the pipeline of credible candidates for leadership positions coming up through the FE sector? I don't think the sector at the moment has a very high or attractive profile for BME communities. Ambitious young people wanting to get on in their career - does FE come across as the place where they can really get into. This is an*

*issue for me and an anxiety.*

We have to start looking at the data to tell us exactly what you have just said, about the talent pipeline, and yet there are so many opportunities and places to go see that talent, and make FE, as you say, a really attractive place to come and be a leader in. That will also then, in turn, attract more students into it, as well. Because we know it will create that sense of 'FE is a place where you can come and belong, and you can be who you need to be to succeed'. So, I think that's a piece we can do work on.

*In Bristol, we're 5% Black leadership, in a college where a third of all students are BME. Well, Bristol is 16 % BME as a city, so there's no explanation for the underrepresentation of Black leaders.*

Can I just make two points on that? Firstly, about the succession. There is actually an issue, generally, around people becoming or wanting to become principals in FE. Partly, because of what's happened to some of them. I would say that is possibly magnified with Black principals in that they do feel particularly vulnerable. But there's definitely an issue about anybody wanting to become a principal in FE. There's definitely a succession planning crisis, almost. We are having a discussion with the AOC about it, right at this time.

Secondly though, I've been in the sector for ages, I know, in part, how to resolve this. I attended a programme funded by the then FEFC and FEDA with the Network for Black Professionals. The



programme put me in touch with a whole load of \*Black individuals who I realised could run a college, something I'd never seen before, even as a deputy principal in London, 20 years ago I was the only \*Black person, ever, in any of the TEC meetings, or the Solotec meetings, or the FEFC meetings.

I suddenly realised there were enough \*Black people who knew about finance, who knew about curriculum, who knew about all the different elements of running a college. And that made me stay in the sector, because I was right on the verge of leaving. Interestingly, and I make this story public, I wasn't allowed to go on that course by my principal. He told me, no, you can't go on it, because there's somebody else who needs to go on that course. It was only the funding, which came from the FEFC via the Network, which put me in a position to go on that course. So, even then, there were barriers, but that funding allowed me to see those people, and allowed me to stay in the sector.

And simply having a situation where there is guaranteed funding for ethnic minority, or global majority candidates in the sector, to allow them to see what the opportunities are, that alone would change the situation.

**|** *Yes, it certainly did it for me, as well.*

And for me. We were on the same course, and the money, came from the FEFC at that time.

Hello! I'm here, I can be your succession plan in 10 years' time! Everyone knows that my ambition was to be, is to still be, a principal. Ideally Lewisham

Southwark College because I come from there, but that's not on, obviously. But I am willing to be a case study, it might be a long case study, but to see... you lot know that I've grown up in the sector, so, it would be really interesting to see, to map my journey over the next 10 years and see where it leads up to, and I'm willing to take part in something like that if you're willing.

*I just wanted to make a point around teacher training, and the pipeline into teaching. Anecdotally, \*Black people are significantly over-represented on teacher training programmes including PGCEs. But they don't get into teaching positions after completing their programme. We are looking at a teacher shortage, and we need that pipeline. So, maybe colleges and those in HE who run initial teacher training, CPD, and trainer programmes, should look into why we are training so many teachers from Black communities and they do not progress into employment? And yet there is a need.*

As an HR professional by background and a sociologist, I'd just like to make a plug for the role of HR in all of this, and the fact that we're not investing enough in HR as a profession in FE. We need to do that more, because these are our organisational consciences, these are the people that challenge all of us. Just like the finance director can challenge you, the HR one can too. I



think we need to invest in those people more as well.

*I think I said before you were able to join us, about not recognising some of that, because in south-east London, we have staff numbers that are representative of our student numbers, and probably exceeding the local population, because more of our Black students come into FE than stay in schools, and consequently, our staffing levels there are broadly split 50/50.*

*So, I think some of what you see, and experience elsewhere, actually, is the reverse in London, and we talked about the fact that some cities now are becoming 'majority minority'. There have been some quite seismic shifts.*

I just have two suggestions, having listened to everyone this morning. I wonder whether it would be possible for us, as a group of colleges across the country, to have an emerging leaders list, because as we were discussing succession planning, I was thinking of five or six people in my organisation who have come to me and said, you know, I didn't get that job. I went for it, I thought I was ready for it, vice principal or principal, and the reasons given back to me, just didn't satisfy me.

And I wondered whether or not, if we had a list, and we pooled that list, and we put our power behind

it, and we also put the reference in, with a much more detailed weight. So, what I'm essentially suggesting is a very practical thing that would be to help those we know are completely qualified, are ready for the next job, to limit whatever those barriers are in the interview process, because we put our weight behind them in a positive way, not in a "blackmail" way.

And I'm thinking particularly of the roles of principal, chief executives and board members, because I know, I would certainly welcome a list of board members put together by the group. Specifically, in my organisation, I know people that could be principals tomorrow and, in the last three roles they've gone for, they haven't been appointed, and yet, as the system currently works, I'm limited in how I can influence that. So, it's just a suggestion.

*This is a really interesting one, because we've always 'blind recruited' in the belief that we were doing the right thing and that would not prejudice anybody. Certainly, from all the research I'm doing, that is now considered unacceptable. Stand up. Be clear who you want, and don't blind interview. So, we've changed it.*

In my piece, when I talked about the system, one of the things that I meant is a lack of a career structure in further education. You have it in schools. You have it in universities, and you have it in government. You don't have it in FE. It is very much about somebody deciding that somebody

is ready for the next level. There is no, if you want, marker, that somebody is at a level of good competence for managing curriculum or level of good competence for managing FE finance, for example. And I think that lack of structure makes it difficult to break through.

Because it's down to persuasion, and if a panel is dominated by people of the same type, then they're going to look at candidates in a way that isn't helpful sometimes; the whole conversation about white privilege, about unconscious bias, comes into play. When I've been for interviews, I find myself constantly battling with the competence issue. I'm still called young – I'm nearly 60. And I just think it's a perception, it's like, 'you're Black, you come in for a job, you must be young'. Actually, have 30 odd years' experience in FE education, my experience should be beyond doubt. So, I think you're right about careers, and I think you're absolutely right about boards because I think the two go hand in glove.

*I have a lot of friends who work in FE, and obviously, a lot of them are people of colour. Some of the experiences they speak to, and how they've experienced these things, are really traumatic. This has been really difficult over the years.*

I remember when the FE commissioner was on one of the area reviews, and I think it was two Black college principals that lost their jobs. That made me think, oh, my gosh. I knew the area review process was rubbish, anyway, but at the end of it, was that 2 of the 17 online team at the time that lost their jobs? Anger.

In primary, secondary, and higher education, there are clear parameters/barometers, particularly on the academic side of things, or the teaching side of the things about where you need to progress to. But in FE it has been so kind of laissez faire that's been really difficult to pin down. And, actually, a lot of it is based on subjectivity and nepotism.

I think that's kind of the worst-kept secret and the people who haven't benefited from that nepotism, not that I would ever want anyone to, but the people who definitely haven't, are people of colour. And you can see that in disparities in pay, employment gaps, all of those kind of things. There was this documentary a couple of months ago on Channel 4: The Talk – something about talking about race, and Lennie James made a really fantastic point at the end. He just turned around and said, there are so many people that invest and waste so much energy and time trying to make it an equal space, if things were just fair, just imagine how people would be? Just imagine if everyone started at the same starting point, rather than 200 metres back, a thousand metres in front, imagine how it would be.

To triumph in all of that adversity, really speaks to your exceptional brilliance. You are testament to that kind of fortitude, that kind of brilliance, but, in essence, it doesn't actually really need to be that hard. And it's just amazing that, as a society, we create these structures that prohibit people from flourishing in a way that, in many respects, they should be able to, or they are destined to.

So, I think there's a very strong, concerted effort needed to make sure that we gather up all of

the best practice around the sector and outside the sector to learn from what a proactive talent management program looks like, that has the interests of \*Black colleagues, really at its heart, that's focused on making sure that opportunity is genuinely equal, and the outcomes for \*Black colleagues are absolutely, as equal, as we can make them. They are not at the moment and it's very clear that that's not working well enough.

Certainly, I think that some of the mentoring programs - one of the predecessor bodies to the BFELG had a very strong mentoring and coaching program that helped support colleagues through to good promotion, to governorships, to vice principal roles. I've seen a number of people come through that, and I'd call for a national effort to replicate some of that work, because I think this is going to be a series of reconstructed levers, to use the framework of the question there, to make sure that those opportunities are not only created but are properly realised for the people who benefit from them.

So, the answers, I think, are probably around effective support, good talent management, much longer recruitment practice, sharing the practice and better accountability in governance on these issues: much more transparency, much better data,

From leadership going through an interview process and saying, so what are you doing to encourage internal Black staff to apply for this? When you can see you haven't had any applications from your Black staff, what have you done, through to listening to students and their challenge?

I was very taken by Shakira talking about how she feels, in her words, having got through to that senior role, but also, being prepared for how you navigate the system. Because I certainly know anyone in the leadership role knows how lonely it can be. I can only imagine, then, as a Black leader, the challenge that is on top of that, because the networks and support systems maybe aren't there in the same way, or the tools have not been built up.

We need to find mechanisms, give people voices, wherever they may be, look for different approaches, and try to be creative.

*So, levers to unleash the talent and creativity of everyone in the FE system. I've tried to think of this in terms of what I'd do, when I was a CEO, and I think I've always been somebody who has tried to lead from my perspective. So, I have an identity, I have a story. I have things that I can share, which demonstrate how it was for me, even though people might have seen that I was successful. And I thought Shakira's very passionate words around the fear everyday - I carried that fear, and some of that fear resulted in me leaving the sector.*

*Because there were forces at play, but you don't talk about those things, you put them down to something else. It's not because of the colour of my skin. It's not*

*because of my ethnicity. It's not because of... but, actually, at the end of the day, some of that bias is there, and some of that prejudice is there, and as Shakira said, the power to do something was there.*

## *Q 3. What do we need to do to unlock sustainable systemic change in the FE system?*

I think we've already, in some ways, touched on that with this idea of momentum and movement instead of moments. But that is the tough question. Certainly, my perception is that we haven't managed to do this sustainably over the last 20 or 30 years. We've been on, and we've been off. And I certainly think for the last 10 years, we've been more off than on, I'm afraid.

*I think this question absolutely puts us on the spot in a very direct and challenging way, because what we thought were effective solutions to tackling racism, breaking those glass ceilings that were talked about earlier on, and making the sector a beacon of equality were not sustained. We are in a place where there's a lot of disappointment and frustration that we're asking people to put up with. I don't think the levers that we thought were making a difference were adequate.*

## **Accountability measures**

Mandated Staff Individualised Record (SIR), wasn't it in your contract? Because unless you mandate those things, you are going to have issues and challenges. People can get round things if they want to.

*Years ago, you remember, we used to benchmark, didn't we, when we had it, but then if nobody is completing the SIR, it's not worth it... you can't benchmark really can you? So, I think those things would really help, because we'd be held to account for those things.*

Absolutely, and I think back in the eighties, when we first had multi-ethnic, Anti-racist movements and actions, we said, number one priority was to collect data, because that brings transparency. Once you have transparency, you can challenge; I too lament the loss of mandated staff data collection, which was the SIR data and then the reporting against different categories, because we don't do that anymore. So, I absolutely agree with that, and then you can build the accountability measures from the baseline, as opposed to perception.

*It's never going to be one measure. It's going to be a collection of measures, isn't it? And certainly, alongside data, I would like to see this whole issue drawing communities into the conversation - communities who can pretty much go a large part of their life without engaging in that conversation. And they need those conversations.*

That point is, so, so important. If I go back to when I was at Royal Forest of Dean College, all of those students had the opportunity to go off to university. Many of them might move out of that

rural location, or try to, and yet, their experience, their lived experience was in a totally white community, which I have to say when I moved in there from Birmingham, it felt quite alien.

So, I think if we're looking at accountability measures, and it's not just going to be about data, then reflecting, are you reflective of your communities and students?

*It is really, really important to look at diverse boards in the sector. I would guess there are not that many. There will be some, but not many. I think that's really, really important. I don't know whether there has been an audit done. That has to happen.*

*It has to be much more, which is why, I think, going back to how Ofsted can make the difference to DE&I is really, really important. What are you doing to prepare your students for life, for the world that we live in, wherever they might be?*

I'll go back to 2008, quite a few years ago, I can remember, and the biggest thing, for me was not only about data trends. If you look at the biggest growth in mixed heritage, for example, if we can't inspire people to work in the college, and have the right culture, we're not going to attract people in the future. We won't have people coming in to do the jobs. And so, I think there's a real thing about,



you can't just reflect on the data, it's about what you do, because of society.

Find a way now to get people on that Anti-racist journey. What you don't want to do is push people whereby they say and do the right thing. So, getting that balance right is important.

*I have worked loosely on this agenda since last summer. What I've learned from the BFELG, is the importance of culture alongside the accountability measures and persuading the right people that what you are doing is correct. There is no point in having accountability measures without people being onside with what you are trying to do.*

## Ethnicity pay gap publication duty

An ethnicity pay gap publication duty just, as we have one for gender would shame a number of organisations into action. It's just as important that the changes have to be seen quickly and effectively to benefit the sector, and work needs to get underway.

*You've actually expanded the discussion further by talking about some national policies, and, in particular, the ethnicity pay gap, which is something that I think came through in the much-criticised*

*recent government report on racism.*

Some of you might know that we are due to release or start the FE workforce data collection in July this year. I think that will be a good tool, and there are ways in which we can use that to our advantage.

## Ofsted and limiting grades

*Removing equality and diversity as a limiting grade in the Ofsted inspection framework was a retrograde step that meant that this agenda went off the radar of the leadership. Being blunt about it, it's only the stick that changes everything. Because if you have a leader who doesn't believe in this, nothing's going to happen. Unfortunately, it's what gets measured that stays on the radar and gets done.*

Yes, absolutely, and the Ofsted point is not lost on me. When I think about it, how 'British values' were a missed opportunity for Anti-racism, and how you have a whole suite of British values that, in effect, missed this whole thing. But also, the power of Ofsted to drive behaviours in colleges. Because, as principals and senior leaders, we ran out, and we implemented British values. So, if you had Anti-racism as part of the Ofsted framework, then that would drive the behaviours of the sector. And yes, QAA as well. So, it is about driving those

behaviours.

## Legislation

*So, you have to implement either legislation or rules so that these things are actually looked at. This would affect the people who are in charge. So, I would say, simply, make sure some of the legislation or the rules say that these are things which are looked at in Ofsted, and that will affect the way principals act. There should be consequences for people not engaging in this agenda. Second thing is, people are not using disciplines like equality and diversity impact measures and assessments when they look at change, whether it's a policy change, whether it's political change, whether it's institutional change. I think we should formalise these disciplines.*

### Enabling infrastructure and supporting policies and datasets for sustainable systemic change

*I really recognise that it's so helpful to have a framework, or system, a process. We need data. They are invaluable and certainly, I think that's one of the really strong things coming from the*

*BFELG. So, I think that's absolutely critical. Data being king in all of this. For me, it's about that journey as well to getting there.*

Interestingly enough, we recently hosted a Black FE Leadership Group event on using the BFELG diagnostic toolkit. I think it provides structure – certainly at an organisational level – for considering how you build an infrastructure that provides systemic change and adoption of some of the challenges we are facing.

It's not the most exciting thing in the world to talk about process and policy, but actually, these allow us to revert back to any conditions or parameters that we're setting as an executive team as we look to rise to the challenge and learn from historic experiences. Where process and policy may be well meaning, they always appear to be more of a moment in time, a dipstick approach to diversity and inclusion as a whole, but particularly on this agenda.

Therefore, I think building the structure and the challenge around data, building the confidence that there is no hiding place for data and a narrative that accompanies them, and providing, across the organisation, those intersectional conversations where staff of any creed and colour feel they have a safe space within which to converse in terms of standing in those shoes and having those conversations – that's not going to happen overnight. We're not looking for quick wins, although there are many, data being one of them.

And then, I think, regularly communicating across

the business, as to what we are doing in this space. But I think, for me, it is building the infrastructure and the supporting policies and datasets that allow us to have meaningful conversations. I'll stop there.

*Data are key to knowing what you are talking about and that's the stage where we are at the minute. It's all good and well having the conversations, having those safe spaces, but, actually, now, you need data, and data need to be fully analysed in order to say what is going on.*

Now, data being king, just as cash is king in terms of finance. If you don't measure your data, you don't know what the issues are. You don't know what the problems are, therefore, you don't know what to change. And if you don't know what to change, you effectively go around theorising and navel gazing for no reason. And nothing will happen. And I think that's key.

*To change is to find out what the issues are, measure, measure, measure, analyse, and then do something about it. We have the technology, and what we need is support going to experts to get that help in order to do it.*

I've been working on equality and diversity, and specifically on race, for the last year or so. It has been frustrating, if I'm honest, in terms of we've had a pandemic and it has been difficult to allocate resource towards this area. What I'd

say in terms of the relationship we have with the sector is this – as things like these events and good practice continue to develop, it will be very difficult for us as a Department to ignore what's going on. So, I guess there's something there in terms of making sure that we champion what's going on in the sector, and evidence that to the Department.

As someone who has never worked in a college and looks high-level at the sector, I guess data are important. So, I think there's potentially something we can do in terms of the role of the Department, to evidence where there may be issues, in terms of not much diversity in leadership and in terms of what the sector is doing. If you continue to do this, and I'm happy to link up where appropriate, if you can evidence that this work is continuing and it is helping the sector and it's producing results, then it will be difficult for us to ignore it and not allocate resources to further champion the work.

I can see now that the momentum is there in a number of different ways, that it won't dwindle, and in terms of the vested interests of a range of organisations, institutions, I think, there is commitment to make this agenda a high priority.

*Some organisations are doing a great job in terms of collating data, and we are actually learning from them too. For example, the National Health Service has some really robust data in one of the aspects that we need for our development team. It is getting that evidence as well, which is, data, data, data. I think*

*councils find it a little bit more challenging, as you described yourself. You are dealing with so many different organisations, not just one organisation.*

Our local authority is looking at the pay gap for different groups of staff, and not everybody has the right infrastructure in place to be able to provide those data, but there are some organisations who are doing it really well.

*Where do we need to swing the pendulum? Sometimes you do have to set targets. Sometimes you do have to swing the pendulum to a particular extreme in order for balance to come back. so where are the particular areas we might want to set targets and hold ourselves to account? I'm not talking quotas; I'm just talking targets about things that we're going to do. And then we must hold ourselves to account about how we are going to do them and how well we're doing them and publish that. Because I do think data are going to be a very rich source of making sure there is systemic change and movement.*

Let us make sure we use data and insights to keep measuring that we're making progress. Real progress. I think we do need to push on data. I do think we can get better at using the richness of data now that we have the access that we've never had before.

It is really, really important to look at diverse boards in the sector. I would guess there are not that many. There will be some, but not many. I think that's really, really important. I don't know whether there has been an audit done. That has to happen.

## An Anti-racist Curriculum

Something that struck me during that part of the conversation, was: where in the FE curriculum, do we give learners that opportunity to learn about racism, how it affects others, but also how, maybe, their own behaviours and actions might be racist? I was thinking about an entitlement and enrichment curriculum, and whether the sector should start to build an anti-racist personal development curriculum that we teach teachers to deliver and start where we can. And that is at the age of 16, sometimes 14, and then we can teach primary sectors how to do it, as well.

We have spoken before about a curriculum that teaches all learners about the impacts of racism. I'm on the Opportunity Area Board for my city and every single action around social mobility is about getting to primary schools and getting to parents. And so, learning from that in terms of social mobility then, Anti-racism must surely be about getting to young people as young as possible, but also getting into the family situation, to help families understand, and start to bring up their children from an Anti-racist perspective as well.

The fact is that in recent times people have been campaigning and asking for the curriculum to be changed, and there seemed to be a lack of will to do so, because it keeps the status quo, the lies. It keeps perpetuating the lies, of savages, of brutes, et cetera. There are very few white privileged who don't have the system working in their favour. Why would they want to give that up? I think as a group, we cannot wait, which is what's going on now- for the privileged to want to give up and relinquish their privilege.

*We have to do it. We have to pass on the truth, find out the history. And I love the saying, 'we have to unlearn to relearn.'*

How do we teach our children? In our homes, but also in schools, to go and seek out the truth, because after all, isn't that what education is about? Equipping people to go and research, find out for yourself. And we have to be the ones to change the narrative and not wait for that privileged few to want to do anything. Because they're not. So, I think it's about what we can do collectively and also ensuring that this sort of 'divide and conquer' doesn't continue to happen. We tell history in light of what it is, rather than from that point of view.

*So, I think it's about us unlearning to relearn ourselves, owning up to us sometimes living in that reality, and that we've been conditioned in a certain way, to behave in a certain way, think in a certain way, and sometimes, we have to even challenge ourselves as to, 'this is*

*not what it is'. My suspicion of one group over another shouldn't be happening.*

And we all need to learn our own history, as in our immediate history, as in my Gujarati Indian history, but also history of Britain, the connection between Britain and India, and Britain and Africa, and the slave trade.

*I'll recommend something to you, that will change your lives, because I thought I knew about \*Black history, and I watched this documentary on Sky, and it's called Execute the Brutes. I'll say it again, Execute the Brutes, and it's on Sky documentaries channel. Although I've spent all my life learning about Black history and the connections between the West and all the other Black countries, I have never seen it in one place, and it has changed my resolve in what I want to achieve, given me an impetus in terms of effecting change.*

*And that gave me the history of white supremacy throughout history and what the West did to America, Africa, the Middle East, Asian countries. But not only that, the last programme talks about what's happening today.*

*And what we have to remember is, we,*



*\*Black and white people, have systemised racism. It's almost in our genes; it has taken us 400 years to get to where we are, it's going to take 400 years to get to where we want to be. And if we don't teach our children – and before that, our staff – about the effects of racism and the history of racism, and how it affects \*Black and white people, we will never change what we are, how we do things, and why we do things, and that is crucial. The curriculum has to be the centre of all this, because the impact of racism on \*Black and white people is destroying civilisation as we know it.*

*Even the other day, somebody said to me, “we can't do Anti-racist maths and science or any other subjects.” I'm a maths and science teacher and I've been doing Anti-racist maths and science since 1986. And I will tell you this. Nothing much has changed. From my perspective, nothing much has changed in reality. Black people have progressed more to do with their own hard work, than systemic change within society, including education.*

*Forging a new reality of what life could be and should be, I definitely think we*

*have to do it ourselves, and I agree, it took 400 years. We're very much at the start of this journey in rewriting the narrative, but it's about learning and what does that look like for us going forward? And for our children?*

*Definitely, and it starts, as well, with us modelling the behaviour that we want to see with our staff and with those around us, we have to model the behaviours that we want to see.*

Just briefly picking up on that point about the curriculum, again, I think it's actually within our gift to – we can't change the examination system, but we can change the content of what we teach, and how we teach it.

*I just wanted to go back, off the back of what was said, in terms of history. The curriculum has been what it is, told a lot of lies. I remember it wasn't until I saw Alex Haley's Roots back in the seventies or eighties, whenever it was, that I realised a little bit of the truth. And history is told through the eyes of the victor, as someone said earlier, I'm sure, the conqueror.*

I was one of those students, back in 1976, when Roots was on television, And I was shocked that I was a slave, good grief, and that hits you



really quite hard, that your whole life is... but I also did Latin, and my Latin tutors were really quite clever. They said, you know what, Jeff? – Jeffrey, they called me in those days – a lot of Roman emperors were Black, and most of the slaves were white Welsh people. That completely shifted my perspective on life. And that's a fact. Lots of Roman emperors were Black.

So, we have that gift with us to shift the curriculum to give a much more rounded view of history. That's just one example, but it had a great impact on me as an individual.

*I'll come back on the point about not being able to change the system or working around it or with it. I completely disagree. The system does need to change. A good example of where a system change made a massive difference is if we look at the old days when we had 100 per cent exams, women did a lot worse than men. And when we introduced coursework and those sorts of things, that system – it wasn't done, at least I don't think so, because women were doing less well than men in that system. It was done to get the best out of young people.*

*That's something else that bothers me about this whole pushback against decolonisation and institutional racism.*

*To me, it's not necessarily about decolonising the curriculum as much as it is about an accurate curriculum. And I say that because we are in 2021. There's no way our curriculum should be limited to knowing that concentration camps existed in World War II without knowing about the British concentration camps in Tasmania. This should be widespread knowledge. We have the capability and the technology to introduce these ideas and concepts to students, and just to narrow them down to certain aspects, that's an injustice to our being, our humanity, our wealth of knowledge.*

*I feel that it's time that if we can circumvent that, if we can change that, impacting students while they are young, we really have a shot at this not just being an ebb and flow type of event. So that again in 10 years, we're not going to come back to this Roundtable, a little greyer and talking about the same thing. Again, it's systemic.*

*And so, it's almost as if we are focused on 'un-development'. And this is something I touch on in my research. Racism is an 'under development' of the human race. And that alone, to me, is a travesty.*

It's about making an inclusive curriculum in terms of the history, not just exclusive to certain parts of history, because that could actually be more of a 'them and us' rather than saying actually there were atrocities, there were 'not great' things done across the world, by a whole range and groups of people. We need to understand that as human beings.

*So, I think what you're raising there, is, what you said earlier on is, your learners were saying the curriculum is not reflective of the community. So, that's a really strong point because, again, from personal experience, learners want to be able to see role models, people that they can associate themselves with. And then you went beyond it and you looked at teaching, learning, and assessment as well. I think that's something we all probably need to be looking at, like I am, we all are actually, to make sure, how can we make our curriculum inclusive, how can we make our teaching, learning and assessment practices more inclusive?*

We are starting from a slightly different perspective from many people as there is a large amount of cultural activities going on day-to-day in our college, but what I would say is, encourage that discussion within your college, encourage the opportunities for people to talk about their experiences, their history, their learning, and actually then bring that in some way into, not only

the formal curriculum, but more importantly, the informal curriculum, the tutorial stuff that goes on and to develop people in that way, so you can actually develop confidence, develop their skills, develop their ability to proceed.

So, we work with Oxford University, we work with Cambridge University, I'm not saying that they're necessarily the only places, but actually it helps, by working with those groups, we helped to develop the confidence in the young people so that they can move on, to the next stage in their career, or in terms of moving onto higher education.

*The other issue is the power of the curriculum to influence learning is really key to our discussion as educators, and that starts really at primary level through secondary to further education. And I think within further education, we need to look at, not only the syllabuses, which the exam boards need to deal with, because they're ethnocentric, but we also need to look at how we deliver the curriculum, both in terms of pedagogy and the wider context.*

*We've taken the lead in terms of the History A Level curriculum in terms of looking at colonialisation in a very different way from the traditional way of looking at it. So, it's that type of example,*

*which is where progress can be made.*

*So, we have discussed and negotiated and agreed with teacher training providers how we will bring Anti-racism and Anti-racist pedagogy into the agenda for our staff who are going through teacher training. And we've been very successful in that. We have set up an African Centre to look at a range of issues around colonialism, bringing an objective rather than a one-sided view.*

I have an article in my head: "Would education have saved George Floyd and others?" There's an image on BBC news of the people watching, and it's quite interesting, the different ages, the ethnicity, et cetera, et cetera, of those people. And to think about, you know, what would have made the difference there in terms of education, as well as the education of the police in that scenario and a whole range of other people who were not visible bystanders but were bystanders in that case.

## **Expansive conversations to build confidence within institutions**

*So, then we have the start of a conversation. But more importantly, if you look at the pragmatism, we're looking at solutions here. Going back to Janak's point, there were some really fascinating insights into what was happening in the*

*classroom. Black learners would say to me that when they gave a response to a teacher, a non-Black teacher, or white teacher, that their responses were dismissed, all their responses – and this is talking to the college CEO at the time – were either dismissed or not paid as much attention to or explored. I'd say as a teacher – this is an ETF supported event after all – there was no exploration of where that line of thinking was going using that Socratic method of the Q and A. And that perhaps the same questions were asked of the same white learners who'd always be asked to respond.*

I think there is something about using your personal experience and naming that experience in those rooms, if it feels safe to be able to do so and encouraging white colleagues to be able to name and understand that which enables this to become a conversation, which is about lives, not tick boxes.

*Above all, learner voice is really powerful. Because very often it's your point of – we think our job is done. Your approach has been quite powerful, in terms of going and speaking with students to find out, actually what the real issues were.*

We talked earlier about listening to staff voice and student voice, about their lived experience, which can be powerful in changing people's attitudes. And although I'm not into doing unconscious bias training and things like that, what I am interested in, is people changing their own attitudes by learning themselves. And one of the ways that we can do this is through the curriculum.

*I think that's very powerful, having open conversations because, as has been said many times, and from personal experience, people are fearful, in a way, of using the wrong terminology. And it's giving people confidence that it's okay to ask the question, as long as it's asked in a professional setting. So, I think your approach sounds quite a robust approach, you are encouraging participation and conversations,*

I think there's definitely something around conversations and developing a common language that people can use right across our organisation. We decided to have those courageous conversations, it wasn't just the adult college, I'm chair of the \*Black group in the local authority, and they've actually given me the space to be able to explore a little bit.

It's about starting the brave and courageous conversations, calling things out, giving people the space to express themselves, as you said. When this whole thing happened, we had what we call 'cuppa mornings' where we gave people that

safe space to speak about their lived experiences and what it was like for them growing up. What we found is that this whole George Floyd thing actually triggered what we have termed – and I'm sure it has been all over the place – 'post-traumatic slave syndrome'. So, we turned PTSD into slave syndrome. And for a lot of people, it triggered for them, growing up in this country, what it was like growing up as a child, back in the seventies, and eighties, and even the nineties. For a lot of people, it was traumatic, actually, and we gave them that safe space to talk about it.

It has been a bit of a journey because many white colleagues who were on the same platform with me didn't realise and actually, some of our \*Black groups, didn't realise the experiences that people had gone through, and were going through, and how this triggered that whole experience for them.

So, that has led us on a journey to having the conversations, exposing what was said in the talk earlier, that unconscious bias just doesn't do it because we have that training across the council. Where does it go? It triggers some emotions, yes, at the time, but then that's the end of that. There is no action, and I think, for me, it's about the journey of conversation that will then lead to the actions later on.

*The power of conversation, I couldn't endorse it more than what you've just said; critical - the leadership team that creates a culture that allows those conversations to happen is paramount.*

There is something about opening up and having space to talk about racism – the point that Tiffany made about ‘you can’t start early enough’, and you have to bring white people into the conversation. And the point that she made about it being the first opportunity for white people to talk about their experience of racism; witnessing it and not knowing what to do. And there’s something about getting into that, about the humanity of it, because there are people that will deny that there’s an issue.

It’s a timely reminder that there’s still a conversation to be had, isn’t there? Not everybody is on the same page, and I think it was Dawn’s points about people starting from different journeys. And, Dawn, you talked about when you ran an all-white college and how you had to create networks to develop your Anti-racist agenda in that institution. So, it’s absolutely the case that not everybody is at the same starting point. It’s how do we get them on the journey? Just take your first step.

*It would be cool to not have these conversations in years to come, but I do think change is slow, there is a poor trajectory. My dad has always said that I’m an idealist and naïve, but I do think something’s happening, because we’re having these conversations, and I think it’s about forgiveness which people have had since time immemorial, it’s a tenet they’ve always had, because there are people that will deny that there’s an issue.*

There is something about – and it could really play into allyship – something very practical in opening up conversations so that people can talk about what their experiences are, what they witnessed, so we know how better to support each other. So, I just wanted to say thank you to Jason for mentioning those things.

*But I think one of the most important things is this: difficult conversations. It was fascinating having the conversations, it wasn’t that the \*Black colleagues didn’t believe they wouldn’t get jobs, it was a bit like Shakira, they were worried they would get it, and fail due to lack of support. Then everybody goes, “Well, I knew they wouldn’t make it.” And again, a real eye-opener for me because it never dawned on me that people weren’t going for promotion because of the lack of support when they got it. I couldn’t understand why they weren’t going for it. So, I think one of the big issues for me is we need to have difficult and protected conversations. We’re all prejudiced. You need to put your prejudice on the table and discuss it.*

The biggest part of our work is talking about these issues. I was inspired by one of the speakers earlier and agree there is not enough talk about it. Personally, I feel ashamed that prior to the George Floyd issue, I had not addressed this very well.



We have the D&I policy, a glossy newsletter every year, and other things but not specifically around Anti-racism. For me, there is a wider issue around the diversity and how we support each individual to succeed. It is about pulling together an action plan, and, yes, we do a whole load of things, but not specifically around Anti-racism, and I think there's a wider issue about diversity of our board and then the way we support every individual to succeed. So, for me, it's pulling together an action plan and as a couple of people in the room will report, I've already joined discussions, as part of a small group in the AOC.

*In practical terms, how do we go about talking about issues in an organisation in a large college or university?*

Well, for us, first of all, I've led the discussion for us, because I do CEO presentations every term. And secondly, I've pulled together a working party; this is all pretty traditional and not particularly ground-breaking. And thirdly, built it into development centres - a development session so that we have all-staff development sessions, where we're going to come together and talk about it, and then also using that allyship and champion aspect.

We've done it around a general ED & I, as opposed to just specifically race, because I think it's a bigger issue ensuring everybody has that opportunity. I don't know its impact, we have to put the measures in place, and what difference we have made. I think it's really tricky to measure; I know from just talking to individual staff that there are some race issues around the college group. I'm in a very rural, white community in one

location, but much more mixed in another.

So, I don't have all the answers, but I think that's how you start the conversation.

*The last point that you've made, though, about having difficult conversations, I think, also resonates with the idea of allyship as well. There needs to be a genuineness in the conversation, to my mind, perhaps, a genuineness and an openness that we haven't had before.*

## Building Allyship

We know that we have genuine friends who are white, and professional colleagues who are white, who also believe in the same principles as we do. We need allies, as many as possible, so that the message is going out far and wide in order to move this agenda forward because we're not going to do it on our own as \*Black people.

We release thousands and thousands of students every year, as further education, into society. We have a duty and could do more to educate every single one of those students to be good allies. I know what it means to be a good ally, and I think that would do a lot to help with the systemic challenge. There's an onus on all of us.

And I think that leads in, as well, to what Tiffany said, that we should not leave the fight to Black and brown people, minority ethnic people.



*The thing that was coming into my mind, other than what I said earlier, is about allies speaking out. I just wanted to make a brief comment on the nature of allyship and thank you for all of those inspirational addresses earlier this morning. I'm a fairly recent joiner to the sector here in Northern Ireland. I run the biggest FE college; there are six of us over here. A number of months ago, Stella reached out to me and said, can I talk to you? And we had a great conversation, very inspiring, and I said look, I'll be a conduit into my fellow principals here in Northern Ireland, as I said, there are half a dozen of us. Now, we're on the journey.*

In order to get true allyship, where you're prepared to give something up – how do people really get equality and diversity? How did women get the vote? They had to use men in power to help them.

Levelling up is great, but let's be clear, if there are only 163 general further education colleges, we're not doubling the number of CEOs. It means that white people won't be getting the job, people of colour will, and therefore, you have to have those difficult conversations. And we never had them before.

*I could give some examples about changing support and allyship from HE. I'm currently working on a research bid, and it's a really big bid, to the National*

*Archive, for hundreds of thousands of pounds, and I'm leading it with one of my African colleagues. We had a discussion with a professor, who is a white woman, about the bid, and they were really keen, for us to go forward and work together and lead the application. That doesn't happen very often in some of our institutions. Within HE, we're talking with our colleagues about leading research bids, we're talking about being first author on publications, we're talking about leading modules, we're talking about creating opportunities for Black staff to lead in areas where sometimes we just don't get the opportunities even though we have a wealth of experiences.*

*I liked the earlier point about giving things up, because I think for that to happen, people do sometimes need to be willing to give things up.*

*So, I think within HE, we can see, within my department and some of the research centres, we're having these difficult conversations where, as we're developing things with our white colleagues, we're looking at the possibility of where we can lead, we do lead, supported proactively, to be able to do that.*

*And that's really important because - going back to the point about marketisation and all these metrics that we need to be hitting within the Academy to get our progressions in the first place. They are all problematic in so many different ways; Black and minority ethnic staff, we experience it, we experience barriers getting our work into certain journals. At each stage, sometimes, there can be these real challenges. If we are working in synergy with our white colleagues, it will be recognised that we've done our learning, we will start to develop an allyship that people feel relaxed and open, to give things up and provide the support needed. It's getting us to be at the forefront of doing things that we're more than capable of doing.*

From my readings, allyship is also about how many Black organisations do you actually support? When you're buying products, do you try and buy from burgeoning Black companies or do you say, "Oh, I'll go and help this person who is Black?" But you're not actually helping them, it's almost creating a dependency: So, I think we have to be very clear, what do we mean by allyship?

*I think John Amaechi said something about, you should know better, or you should know to learn and inform yourself. So, I think it's that bit around*

*building allyship and understanding and accountability, bringing people on the journey, and I guess, holding each other to account around the learning.*

## Allied sector perspectives and partnerships

I'm currently a social worker in a South London local authority, and prior to that role, I worked in an organisation providing advocacy for children and young people in a range of different settings, including education settings, in fact. One of the things that struck a chord with me in terms of the conversations today is that sense of, I suppose, the things that transfer over from my previous practices into my practice at the moment. For example, this concept of anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory practice in social work.

It's a deep thread in the learning and practice of social work. And there are reams and reams of tracts of literature on the topic, and I wondered, to what degree that is utilised and engaged with, in education settings? Some of the talk, and people who have spoken have touched on ways in which it's thought about, but how explicitly is that done? I think someone talked about learning observations and the ways in which some students are engaged in learning differently to the way other students are, and the ways in which I'm sure that transfers in staffing bodies as well.

And I suppose one of the questions for me was, are there ways in which this thinking, that exists in different spaces around anti-oppressive practice and anti-discriminatory practice, are there ways in which that thinking can be transferred more deeply into the ways in which further education structures and bodies are managed and run, and the ways in which learning takes place in those spaces?

Then, following from that, I suppose, the other aspect of that was the way in which – we’ve talked about learning for students – the ways in which students are sustained and nurtured, especially those who are from ethnic minority groups. In my work in education advocacy – advocacy being that process by which marginalised groups and voices are included in the heteronormative conversations, the ways in which those groups are supported effectively.

I know that school exclusions, and exclusions more broadly from education, massively and disproportionately affect marginalised groups. And so, is there something to think about in terms of the ways that those exclusion structures work, for example? Are there ways in which education bodies can scaffold the support elsewhere in society?

I think I might have worked with some of you in terms of my previous role, actually in terms of are there ways in which further education bodies can work across other agencies to support those students who otherwise are vulnerable to marginalisation, to be better stabilised in their

circumstances, so that they can engage in the learning, so that they can be empowered, and supported, more broadly, to achieve the things that everyone should be able to achieve?

I would also say in my experience there are some really fantastic practices, for example, we’ve been contacted by a range of different South London colleges about homelessness, for example, and they would reach out to us to support children that they were working with, who were homeless and on their own.

And we would work with them to ensure they were stabilised in the college setting, and in the community, more broadly. And then further to that, similarly, we would come into colleges and work with the looked-after children’s co-ordinators in colleges to ensure an awareness of ways in which children who have other agencies involved in their lives can better access the support they need to engage effectively in learning. would say.

*I’d be interested in some comments and feedback from colleagues from the FE sector. You raise a good point there. Are there any ways FE colleges can work with other bodies to make sure that we engage these groups of people who are disadvantaged or at risk of being marginalised? Those of us who’ve been in the FE sector, anyone would like to come forward and respond to this point?*

The concern there is around exclusion, isn't it? Because it's an issue where we are as well, and the exclusion rate seems to be high in some of the schools even though they've gone down over the years. And very often people knock at FE colleges' door to say, how can you support our learners? That's why I was interested in my colleagues' feedback on this aspect because, this year, we've only had one exclusion in our college so far, because we are very committed to supporting students, and that was linked to some serious breaches in code of conduct.

But we do not let learners go because obviously the further education sector is kind of a second chance for learners anyway. So, you are absolutely right, but I think it seems to be quite a big issue for the school sector at the moment, because I've worked in a number of London boroughs, and each one of them seems to be having issues in terms of how to tackle and improve the situation.

*For me, in terms of working with other organisations, I think it is absolutely crucial to not see the senior leader in your organisation in isolation, and I think I've mentioned this in the example I gave before, about working with other organisations, because it is about strategy, and you cannot deliver what you want to deliver on your own. And, actually, it's more powerful if you were to work with other people, because it's about sharing good practice, it's about learning from*

*each other and seeing things from different perspectives.*

I was actually responding to Mark's comments about working together. There's something around organisations really understanding what their strengths are, and actually understanding what the strengths of complementary organisations are as well. I see it personally within careers advice and guidance, and how you engage individuals into the education system.

*But there are some organisations, especially in the community, who are much better placed to support learners at that initial stage into education. Colleges, yes, they can take them through and work with them, but some community organisations are much better placed to support them and, actually, when the youngsters are beginning to fail, those organisations, again, are well placed to support them, to give them that leg up in terms of equity, to get them back on track.*

## Political ramifications and personal responsibility

I just wanted to add a point, a bit different, but

in relation to leadership, what Anthony and someone else just said. In the questions, it says how to deliver on the movement of Anti-racism. I remember when the George Floyd incident happened, we were having meetings about whether to use Black Lives Matter with a capital or a little 'L'. political ramifications of being associated to the movement that has actually really brought this to the agenda. I'm not necessarily advocating for Black Lives Matter, but this issue about tackling racism is political, and you're either on the side to change it or not on the side at all.

Toeing the line, in this kind of environment, is a position. Sitting on the fence is a position and that's the position not to do anything about it. So, I do feel like the leadership having the commitment and the awareness to do it but having the guts to liaise with your local council and the political elements of it to say actually, yes, Black lives do matter. Black Lives Matter as the campaign has been leading the way or bringing it to the agenda. There is an association, but you can't separate the two, I personally don't think. I just feel like it requires some gutsiness, and it is political.

## Emotional connection through story telling

*You move emotions through storytelling. I think that the place we start is, keep telling the stories. The stories happen in the*

*Oxford Said programme. They happen at the colleges. They happen at board meetings. It has to be the emotionality and, Shakira, you do that fantastically well, so, I want to just challenge this quite technical response we're making to this. It has to be a 'hearts and minds' thing through storytelling. We might want to use some other methods of transaction to roll it out and create storytellers. But storytelling is my vote for what we need to do. But we do need to get better at the storytelling. We need to be able to flush those successes out, as well as those ones that aren't successes. We shouldn't do that thing where we're trying to hide, or in some way be embarrassed about talking about, or pushing down some of the 'not good' stories that we hear, where there is still racial inequality in a way that there shouldn't be.*

This links back to the point the last speaker made in the initial presentations, that you're also dealing with feelings. So, you have the structure, and the process work that needs to be there, and then there's a whole other type of thing going on, with how people feel. I guess it's when those things are working in a close alignment that we normally see sustained, impactful change, and move beyond a moment in time that we look back on. Hopefully, we're not looking back and thinking it was a missed moment and, actually, it was a



turning point moment that had huge impact.

*Just coming back to feelings; I work in a very diverse organisation. When the riots were happening with regards to George Floyd, it had a real impact on some of my staff, who came and spoke to me about it. I must say, I was really shocked. It was just shocking to hear some of the stories. Coming from an Asian background myself, to hear the stories of what people have gone through, and the impact this has had on those individuals. So, we actually tried to pick up on feelings. It's very important to address them because everybody is at a different stage in this journey.*

It is not just about policies and procedures. It is about that emotional connection. And for a few weeks or months, I think we have had a real emotional connection around issues of race and race equality. The danger is that, as time goes by, that sort of gets lost. And I think that is an emotional connection that's not just within BME communities, but with white people, including young white students at my college who have suddenly become really electrified by this issue in a way which hasn't happened before. So, I think there's something about how we maintain that emotional connection to this issue without becoming over sensational. I think it's something, perhaps, we've missed out on.

It's not all about big lengthy policies and protected characteristics. It's about actually sharing the experiences and being prepared to tell stories and listening to each other around the impacts of some of these things, which as human beings, we can all share.

*Again, I'll have to say, the momentum starts with education. And, again, start with the young' education. As I said, I wish I could transport you all to that class to see my white, British students saying that this was the first time they felt safe talking about racism, and it was the first time they talked about racism. And at the same time, they heard stories from the Black British students talking about their siblings being stopped by the police. They also heard in that session the Polish student, who talked about how she left England and went back to Poland because of the bullying she received because of her speech.*

*It's the education and learning about these differences - and to me, that's how you keep the momentum. The learning stays with them as they grow, as they manoeuvre into jobs, and it will increase the knowledge.*

I'm from the Learning and Work Institute. We're



a research and development organisation so it is a bit different to a college. For example, we're an awarding body, but we're a relatively small organisation with about 50 people. So, I'm coming from a slightly different perspective. I have to say that I've picked up and thought about something from every person who has spoken so far actually. It's quite rare to say that in an event, isn't it, and to be honest, including the ones that we've run. Although don't quote me on that.

I guess, the perspective I was coming from was, in terms of where I grew up, not too far off what David was talking about in terms of demography and background and stuff like that. And actually, I was really struck by the class that Tiffany was describing. I suspect I would have been in the same sort of boat if I'm honest with you. So actually, today is kind of a learning experience as well as you go along, and as an undergraduate (a few years ago now, I'll be honest with you) I would have been in the same sort of boat I think, there.

*I just want to pick up on the point on feelings, and just cast your mind back to recent history. Whilst we talk about the changes in 2020 and George Floyd, we have to remember that we've had our own incidences, particularly where it has been crime, police crime, or police antagonism, shooting Black people in our own country. I'll cast your mind back; I remember, I was a college prin-*

*icipal / CEO at the time, and I was on holiday and, I saw the news, and I saw my beloved country, and parts of my city burning. Tottenham on fire, Croydon on fire, Nottingham on fire, Salford and Moss Side. It was horrific. A lot of young people, angry young people, I'm sure you will remember.*

*I remember thinking, I have been in this sector for – at the time – 25 years, and I turned around to a friend and said, 'I don't think I've achieved anything as an educator. I don't think we as a college sector have achieved anything, because our young people are still as angry as they used to be, and they still have less hope, we've not been able to make a difference'.*

*I felt bitterly disappointed in myself as a leader of education; I thought I haven't made a difference, and I thought I joined the sector to make a difference. And therefore, I remember coming back into the college, at the start of term, and I wanted to speak to and have those conversations with my learners – in a college in London. Over 50 per cent of them were BME, and I remember listening to them, and they spoke to me. They*

*used to speak to me anyway, in corridors. They felt they could speak to me, as they saw me as a Black leader that they hadn't seen in colleges before. But at the same time, they couldn't necessarily speak to their tutors or their teachers. When I listened to them, I got more out of them, more regularly, than we ever got in any student survey, because the things in the student survey were asking the wrong questions, so, guess what, we could put up 'you said, we did' posters in the canteen, great. I mean, really?*

*So, the reality was that, when I listened to them, they'd already spoken about the curriculum not reflecting communities that they could relate to. I remember doing something, as a twilight slot. There were sport sessions and whatever, and I just said, to facilities, I want to take over the theatre, and I want to start showing some films.*

*I probably was one of the first Black college leaders to do that about 4 or 5 years ago, and I showed films like Hidden Figures. We got as many learners as could fit into that theatre to watch, and then we'd have a discussion. Some of them were blown away, some of them*

*had never even realised that these films ever existed.*

*That may surprise and or not surprise you, but I had to do something about that; and therein lies the challenge, when you, then, as a college leader, regardless of your colour, have to pay attention to that, and have discussions about the observation process, have discussions about learning, be challenged by union members, perhaps, about why you were doing that and why you're thinking this is an issue.*

*And as far as I'm concerned, it's not just one or two voices – which is one or two too many – it's a group of learners. Then challenging, at the time, my director of student and learning experience as to why we weren't picking up on this in learning walks, observations, student surveys, councils, forums. Why weren't their voices being heard? Because they felt that either: one, no-one would listen, or secondly, that their voice wouldn't matter.*

*So, I just wanted to bring that experience that I had as a response to something, and this all happened in this country. So,*

*I don't even think it's as tragic as what happened last summer. We're talking about things that have been going on for a very long time, but it takes a brave college leader to tackle those issues in a way. I's not because I felt like I could tackle it because of my colour, I tackled it because it's my duty, and to really pay attention to learner voice.*

*Whilst I'm not in a college environment now, I support colleges around the UK. It's something that I found very emotive and powerful at the time, and I wanted to do something about it. The key question is, how do you sustain it?*

There is another side to storytelling. People are fearful of having a finger pointed at them as the ones responsible for the suffering of racism, homophobia, et cetera. I do wonder whether we've done enough to think through the impacts of some of this on people who may start feeling defensive and threatened. I wonder if that's why we struggle to sustain this?

My personal point that I took from Simon's contribution is the impact of racism, that grinding impact through the lives of Black people, and how that affects their performance, whether it's at school, at higher education, further education, and later careers. That's pretty personal for me, because having been born in South Africa, the

impact of racism on the mental health of \*Black people in South Africa, and white people actually, has been profound.

## Equality and diversity approaches

*I feel like I'm a dinosaur in what I'm about to say here. Back in the day, we had equal opportunity officers for gender, race and disability, and I felt it was doing a fairly good job, and then it changed to diversity, I remember the expression that was floating around at the time: "diversity is a distraction" or something of that nature, because all of a sudden, we're being told that this is everybody's responsibility. And therefore, it started to fall off the agenda, there was no one single person responsible for looking at the three strands, which in time has become nine strands with the protected characteristics. So, I'm almost thinking, maybe we need to get back to those days? You can have your EDI, but maybe we need to have the accountable champion, who is responsible for looking at data, looking at the curriculum, looking at the practices, looking at everything that they*

*can actually begin to hold – not just the Chief Accounting Officer, the principal and chief executive – but everybody else to account.*

That's really interesting, thank you. My comment, my observation, would be that I think there is an issue about a competitive model, almost, of equality in which those with the loudest voice, get the best attention. So, I think there is a danger that if you have lots of competing groups you have the gay, lesbian, you have disability, you have gender, that if you're not careful – and I don't know how you manage this – the one who shouts the loudest is the one that gets the attention. And it's how to actually moderate that and make sure that everybody's stories are being properly listened to, without it becoming a soup of nothing, almost. That, I think, is a real issue.

## The journey of society; shared journeys, education and forgiveness

*I hate the J-word but everybody's on different journeys and trajectories with this kind of dialogue. I think there's something really powerful in terms of forgiveness and giving people the opportunity to equip themselves with the education to*

*then make an informed choice. My dad would say you can have an ignorant past, but once you have the education to inform yourself, then it's a choice, really, you're choosing whether to be ignorant or not. And, I think, once people have that education, there's a dialogue that happens.*

You talk with people, right? When people talk at people, I don't think people respond to that too well. When you talk with people, you bring people on the journey with you, and that takes a lot of grace and a lot of tolerance, a lot of patience, and it's something that people have had, as I said, since time immemorial. Asking them to continue to do that, in itself, is taxing. But I think at this time, at least in my 36 years of life, I think this is the closest we've come to actually having a meaningful conversation about it. I just think, it's difficult, but if we don't believe that we'll get there, and things will change, then what's the point?

*I think what you landed on there was the powerful message about the power of partnership, and I think we've touched on that quite a lot in our roundtable discussion, in terms of joining communities together.*

FE, as a sector, has a lot to answer for, but it's like you said, government are the orchestrators of society. They very much conduct what we do as a society, and for FE to have been the 'forgotten'

sector, when you think about how many people traverse that as a journey; we have Michael Gove to thank for that.

So, I think that's really important, and we need to keep extolling the importance of the FE sector. And, more importantly, mobilising Black and ethnic minority people. I think we'll get there. I'm quietly confident.

*It's a shared journey, it's not the journey of Black people, Black and brown people, it's the journey of society, and I think that's really important.*

# PLENARY

In the Plenary, each of the seven Symposium Roundtable Chairs presented an overview of the topics explored in their session and the themes arising through dialogue and debate. The questions allocated to each Roundtable, a summary of the topics covered, and points made in response to the questions are included on pages 112 to 125.



# Expert Roundtable 1



**Paul Cook**

PRINCIPAL/CEO, HEReward COLLEGE

## The group considered:

*Q1. How can we ensure that the events of summer 2020 are more than a moment and we deliver movement on the Anti-racism agenda?*

*Q2. What are the levers to unleash the talent and creativity of everyone in the FE system?*

progression pathways.

- Personal accounts of disablers such as group think.
- How attractive environments enable everyone, not just Black people.
- Allyship, its importance but also the need for caution that it is not tokenism or creating dependence instead of independence; and clarity on how to help in the right way and listen empathetically with genuine interest.
- The energy and passion of young people, and the idea that a lot of them will not tolerate the slow progress made in the past.
- One college group's journey in addressing racism and creative solutions to rectify problems.

## The conversation covered:

- The notion of mentorship and effective models for mentoring and support, including Black staff mentoring senior leadership to address system and policy challenges.
- Pro-active talent management and the need for: recruiting organisations to review their processes and procedures to empower Black people in FE; individual organisations and the sector learning what a proactive talent management programme looks like that has Black people at its heart so there is racial equity; good accountability and good governance to challenge the sector on current practices; greater transparency and better data, e.g., such as those for the ethnicity pay gap; immediacy to address underrepresentation and lack of

# Expert Roundtable 2



**Robin Landman OBE**

BFELG EXECUTIVE MEMBER

## The group considered:

*Q1. How can we ensure that the events of summer 2020 are more than a moment and we deliver movement on the Anti-racism agenda?*

*Q3. What do we need to do to unlock sustainable systemic change in the FE system?*

need to be brought together and that a strong organisation, along the line of Stonewall, is critical to keeping Anti-racism at the top of the national agenda. Collaborative system work was seen as another essential element in sustainable system change.

- Restoration of self-confidence in the system and doing the right thing because it is the right thing to do, not because the government, Ofsted or the FE commissioner have said so, and becoming a more confident, assertive system.
- Enabling people to tackle the 'how to' rather than 'what to do'.

## The conversation covered:

- Leadership within individual institutions, across the sector and in Government and the extent to which systemic racism is interrogated, tackled and dismantled.
- Responsibility and accountability for unlocking systemic change within institutions. The group discussed whether this begins at CEO or Board level, as the Board has responsibility for setting the culture of the institution. There was general agreement that tackling racism is everyone's responsibility, and that individuals had a personal responsibility to educate themselves, for example, about racism and white privilege. Leadership from the Board and CEO was critical and if systemic racism is to be dismantled, it needs to be high on an institution's agenda. The group noted that different parts of the system

# Expert Roundtable 3



**Dr Maxine Room CBE**  
MANAGING DIRECTOR MG CONSULTANCY  
(LONDON) LTD

## The group considered:

*Q1. How can we ensure that the events of summer 2020 are more than a moment and we deliver movement on the Anti-racism agenda?*

*Q2. What are the levers to unleash the talent and creativity of everyone in the FE system?*

- A strategic whole-organisational approach to Anti-racism through use of the BFELG 10-Point Plan Diagnostic Toolkit, involving leaders, managers, staff and students to secure lasting, sustainable change. It was noted that some parts of the sector (e.g., sixth form colleges) have not heard of the 10-Point Plan, so greater work is required to get voices heard.
- Strategies for increasing the diversity of Board members.
- The difficulties that there have been through the pandemic to allocate resources; this was a particular point made by the representative from the DfE, who suggested working in partnership with the BFELG to review data and issues. The upcoming ESFA comprehensive review of staff data collection might contribute to this story.

## The conversation covered:

- The imperative to speak up –silence is consent.
- Leadership, culture change and the persuasion and influencing skills needed by leaders at all levels.
- Strategies for a) maintaining movement and momentum and b) encouraging discussions to get a groundswell. Working collaboratively, the sector can do so much more.
- The difference education can make right through the system and the importance of an inclusive, accurate curriculum which does not perpetuate a ‘them and us’ model.
- Support for those CEOs who may not be or do not feel equipped to tackle inequities within the system and their institutions.



# Expert Roundtable 4



**Andy Forbes**

PRINCIPAL/CEO, CITY OF BRISTOL COLLEGE

## The group considered:

*Q1. How can we ensure that the events of summer 2020 are more than a moment and we deliver movement on the Anti-racism agenda?*

*Q3. What do we need to do to unlock sustainable systemic change in the FE system?*

## The conversation covered:

- The need for high-level training and development, including that for governors, on Anti-racism and leadership. The views as to whether race equality should be integrated into programmes or be a separate module of training. There was, however, a consensus that race should be given more prominence whatever the delivery model.
- Storytelling and data, with the need to include lived experience, emotions, and feelings alongside more quantitative measures to get across the experience of racism. The group felt both were needed in a judicious mix.
- Collaboration between FE colleges and, for example local authorities and chambers of commerce and how colleges, as anchor institutions, can influence the Anti-racist

agenda locally and regionally.

- Strategies for getting a good pipeline of Black leaders in FE, including how to increase the number of Black people entering FE at teaching and lower levels. Currently, 23% of the sector's students are Black compared to 8% of staff.
- The need to tackle the inadequacy of the recruitment process, e.g., the way in which people are assessed, the questions asked at interview, the token question about equality and diversity that carries no weight, and how seriously competence is taken by the governing body when assessing suitability. The issue of whether – even if someone is competent – people start saying things like, 'well, they might not fit into the rest of the organisation' with all its implications, in terms of racial equity.
- The importance of, as gatekeepers, HR professionals – organisational consciences – and the need to invest in their development to support Anti-racism.

# Expert Roundtable 5



## **Neelam Khosla-Stevens**

INTERIM REGISTRAR AND SECRETARY, ROYAL  
ACADEMY OF DRAMATIC ARTS

## The group considered:

*Q1. How can we ensure that the events of summer 2020 are more than a moment and we deliver movement on the Anti-racism agenda?*

*Q2. What are the levers to unleash the talent and creativity of everyone in the FE system?*

## The conversation covered:

- People's stories and their vulnerability.
- The importance of the Anti-racism agenda and the need for it to be led from the top, rather than by an EDI officer or an HR professional, so that staff take the agenda seriously and embrace change and Anti-racism is embedded. It was noted that leaders need to address their own prejudices first before they can lead organisational change.
- What language conveys – the change from 'I will do' to 'I have done' conveys a powerful message about how seriously Anti-racism is being taken and how it is being implemented.
- Effective allyship and support for staff and leaders. The group discussed how

acknowledgement that there is a problem with racism in the organisation may lead to senior staff feeling vulnerable, perhaps not knowing how to begin the change process. Using external advisors and experts is one way of providing support for leading change. The group considered in more detail how change is brought about- this may be by simply having discussions about issues, whatever shape that might take, whether they are focus groups or book clubs, just starting to talk about it and people feeling secure talking about it.

- The diversity of governing bodies with colleagues sharing examples of how they have managed to achieve diversity. The group recognised the importance of the context, of the environment, of the locale; these are all very relevant. One colleague gave an example of a college in an area where the Brexit vote was very high. Their approach is obviously going to be different, perhaps, to an area that is politically different.
- The importance of unpicking white privilege and deconstructing the curriculum to address racism.
- That people are on different points of the racial literacy journey. The group also noted that it is exhausting to deal with ongoing racism. There is still defensiveness and denial at systems level –organic and systemic change is required to address this.
- A 'hand on the shoulder' approach to promote further advancement of Black staff, as well as training, secondment et cetera. There is a need to look out for talent and take active steps to support career progression. The ETF are working on ladders of progression.

# Expert Roundtable 6



**Denise Brown**

PRINCIPAL/CEO, STOKE-ON-TRENT COLLEGE

## The group considered:

*Q1. How can we ensure that the events of summer 2020 are more than a moment and we deliver movement on the Anti-racism agenda?*

*Q3. What do we need to do to unlock sustainable systemic change in the FE system?*

## The conversation covered:

- What each individual in the group was going to do as a leader. It was noted that as a group, Symposium participants are incredibly powerful and must use their own spheres of influence. One colleague calculated that if each participant were multiplied by the size of their organisations, the potential reach of the group was about 67,000 people. The group also noted the importance and power of collective action and holding each other to account.
- That a race charter might be helpful for the sector.
- The need to identify the leaders of tomorrow and providing an emerging leaders list for boards and senior leaders.
- The imperative of allyship for progress. It was noted that the media has played a role in vilifying individuals and groups and a collective fight against this is an imperative if the Anti-racist agenda is to work. The Chair added to this point stating that there must be an open space where discussion can take place.
- That Anti-racism is a fight for all society, not only for Black people to fight for – white people must be involved as well.
- Decolonisation of the curriculum and providing personal development programmes that allow young people to have discourse, particularly the importance of enabling young white people to have discourse around their own privilege, and how that affects other communities.
- That not everyone is on the same page, it is a journey and people have different starting points.
- The importance of collecting, interrogating and reporting on ethnicity data. The group noted the lack of transparency in data showing how people are affected by racism. The loss of mandated staff collection data, (SIR data) adversely affects, not only understanding of the issues but accountability for addressing systemic racism.
- The need for clarity about both what needs to be changed and how the success of actions taken will be measured.
- How best to address people in racial isolation, such as predominantly white areas of the population. The group talked about drawing the white population into the conversation, and into accountability measures; if you focus solely on what data are demonstrating about the impact on minority communities, you leave behind the conversation about and with localities that are all or predominately white.
- Ofsted – the need for diversity in the inspectorate, the framework and the need for change (including a greater focus on Anti-racism) if it is to contribute to driving the agenda forward.



# Expert Roundtable 7



**Asfa Sohail**

PRINCIPAL, LEWISHAM COLLEGE

## The group considered:

*Q1. How can we ensure that the events of summer 2020 are more than a moment and we deliver movement on the Anti-racism agenda?*

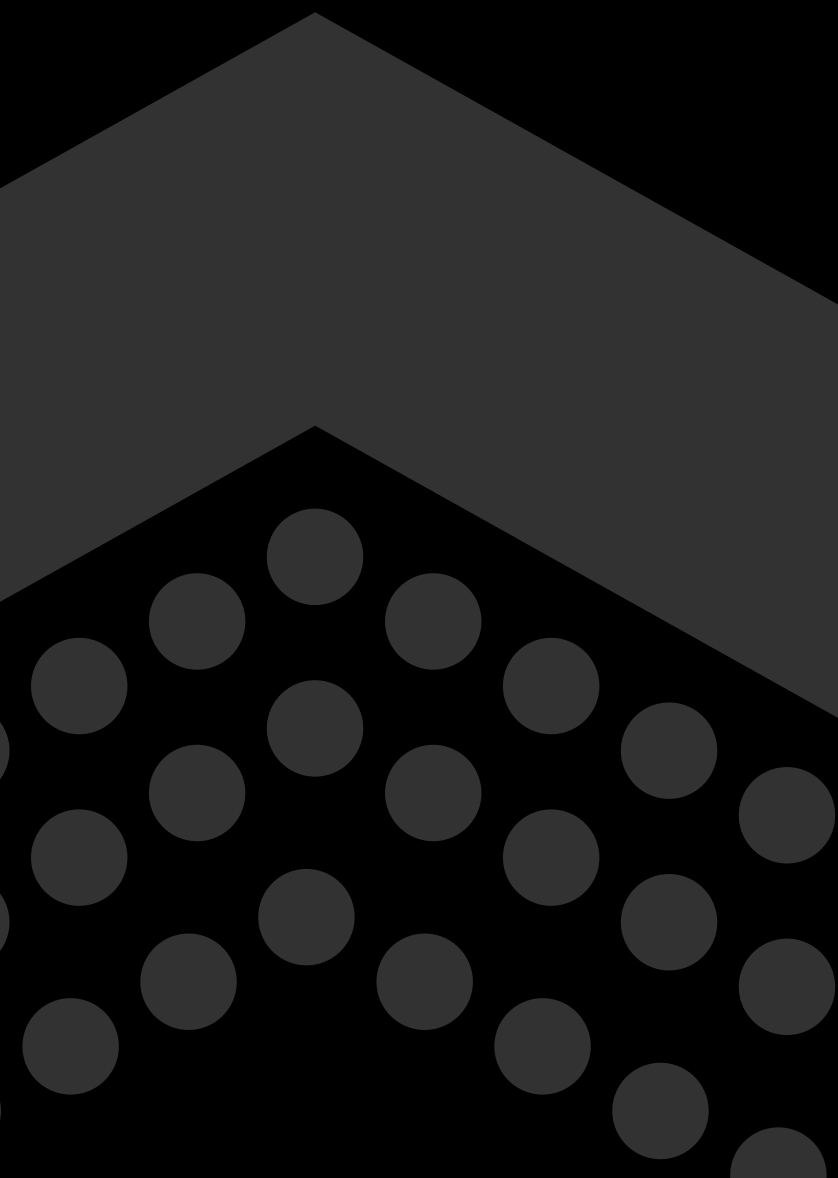
## The conversation covered:

- The right infrastructure, having the right policies and procedures was critical to taking forward the anti-racist agenda. Linked to this is confidence in data and the importance of accurate and robust data to avoid 'guessing.' The group stressed the importance of having the right data in the first place and then interrogating data to determine the underlying issues that needed tackling, taking action and then measuring progress.
- How to build on existing practice and use the enablers of the ETF/AOC/BFELG to help the sector move forward.
- The importance of having open conversations and providing safe spaces for these.
- Collaboration and partnership and learning from allied sectors, e.g., social work and social care have guidance concerning anti-oppression and anti-discriminatory practice and the extent to which these can be transferred into education settings.
- Use of the BFELG 10-Point Plan Diagnostic

Toolkit throughout the sector to leverage change.

- The need to review the curriculum and ensure teaching, learning and assessment are more inclusive. The curriculum should give a much more rounded view of history and enable young people to find their own evidence and tell their stories rather than seeing history, for example, from the perspective of the 'victor/conqueror'.
- The responsibility of senior leaders to start the journey and to really listen to the lived experiences of Black staff and learners, and the need for leaders to be more inclusive.

# SYMPOSIUM CHAIR'S SUMMARY



It falls to me to draw the Symposium to a close. It has been extraordinary. After two-and-a-half hours, I am sure you will agree, we have really explored and examined this, and got as much as we possibly can in the short time that we have. Obviously not in ideal circumstances, as we would love to be able to meet in person, and God willing, we will be able to do that soon.

Everything that has happened today is being recorded, and we will capture it and we will work with it. The BFELG has committed to taking on various things that have been identified and seeing what we can do moving forward, because this is the beginning of the conversation. Let me make that abundantly clear: by no means are we out of the woods, by no means are we saying that we have the answers. In fact, far from it. We have some of the questions.

I think one of the things that people have said over and over again is that it is about being everybody's responsibility. Like you, I am tired of the number of times I was asked, in a white-only board, 'could you tell us what the diversity view of this is?' As if somehow, I am the one that speaks for diversity, rather than everybody else around that board. And that is key to us. We have to make sure that everybody accepts their responsibility for sharing what needs to be happening.

And also, the other thing I wanted to be able to say, really, is that we do not need permission to have this conversation. Somehow or other, people seem to think – I think it was said earlier on – that we are fearful, that we are scared in some way. I will give you a good example: somebody who used to work for me as my diversity manager is now

the mayor of Liverpool, Joanne Anderson. And Joanne never asked permission to become the first Black female elected mayor of a metropolitan city, and she will undoubtedly – she is already making changes – she will undoubtedly ensure diversity is reflected in the way that Liverpool moves forward.

You do not need to ask permission. Rosa Parks never asked permission when she sat on that seat. We should not be asking permission for having this conversation, and we should not have to keep shouting outside of the room. I am Chair of various bodies; you all are involved in things. We should be at the centre of decision making, in order for us to move forward, and we should not wait for it to be 'our turn.'

I remember that 16 years ago when I got my OBE, another chief prosecutor – a white one – said to me, 'it was not your turn', and I have never forgotten that. We will get where we want through talent and through achievement, and not because somebody thinks we need to be waiting for them.

It does not happen by chance- we have said that over and over again this morning.

We have talked about silence – anybody's silence, as Martin Luther King said – is consent. We need to turn up the volume, everybody. That is how we will make sure it does not pass as a moment rather than a movement, and we have to hold people to account.

There is another announcement next week of another new role that I have taken on, and when you read it, you'll be quite stunned at how this

particular institution has put a Muslim in charge of it, but that is my point –we do not wait.

And neither should we stay in our comfort zones. We should be looking beyond that. It has been said earlier on about data collection: it only happens if you measure things, and we are not measuring what is happening.

We have changed culture; we have changed the environment. Again, some of you will know that my first book, *The Prosecutor*, has happened and I'm writing my second book, which is called *Race to the Top*. It is about racism in senior leadership across institutions, across the country, and I am talking to leaders of health, education, of politics, of arts and culture, private and public sector, because there are people of colour in those roles, who will tell you that they did not get there without a battle. They are still going through a battle, and they want to make it so much easier for our children and our next generation to not have to go through what we go through.

My son said to me 'I will be what I see.' And if he does not see leaders from our colours, or from our backgrounds, or from our diversity, then he does not think that he can be that. You will be what you will see, and we have to ensure that we get rid of all the obstacles that we face. And I can assure you that the conversation we have had over the last two-and-a-half hours has given us enormous momentum, enormous inspiration. It has taught me tons, undoubtedly will have taught all of us tons.

We will go away from this, we will listen, we will act, and more importantly, we will get others to

act too.

When somebody said to me, they were scared, let me tell you this, I have had fire right outside of my house. I am on a death list to this day. I am not scared, because I have you on my side. And that is the benefit, the strength of networks – we support each other as we move forward.

I wish you well. Thank you to everyone who has worked behind the scenes to make this event possible, including ensuring the technology worked for such a large group.

Thank you to the BFELG, the ETF and all of you. Thank you for the work that you do, day in and day out, and I wish you well. I hope to see you all in the very near future. Thank you very much indeed.

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- ▶ Readings and Media Referred to in the Symposium Report
- ▶ Readings and Media about Anti-racist and Culturally Inclusive Curriculum Initiatives
- ▶ Related Readings on Governmental Reviews and Plans
- ▶ Related Readings on Design Thinking



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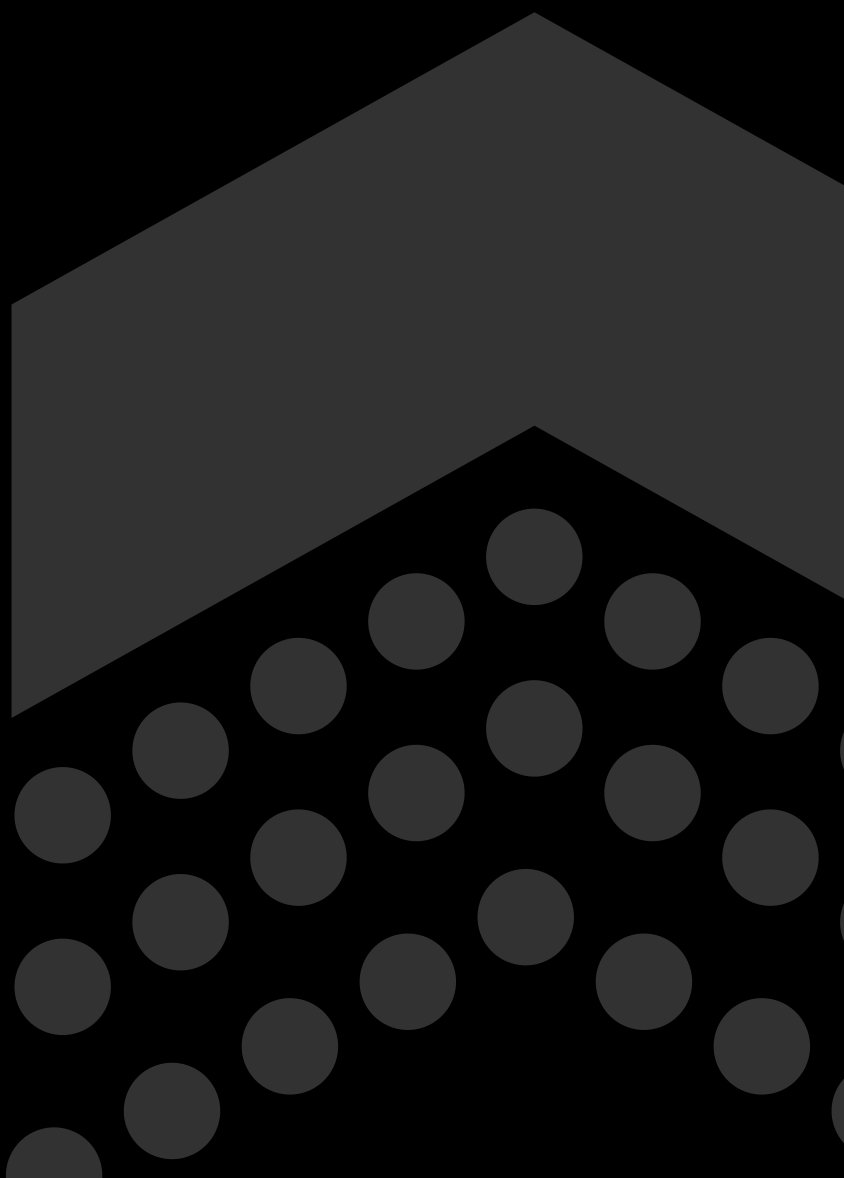
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# LIST OF EXPERT PARTICIPANTS



	Expert	Role	Organisation
	<b>Political figure/Influencer Chair</b>		
1	Nazir Afzal OBE	Chair of Governors	Hopwood Hall College
2	Lord Simon Woolley CBE		House of Lords
	<b>System leaders (Policy):</b>		
3	Luke Clarke	FE Workforce Policy Officer	Department for Education
	<b>System leaders (organisations)</b>		
4	David Russell	Chief Executive	ETF
5	Robin Ghurbhurun	Managing Director UK (Further Education and Skills)	Jisc
6	Dr Neil Bentley-Gockmann OBE	CEO	WorldSkills UK
7	Sally Dicketts CBE	CEO/President	Activate Learning and AoC
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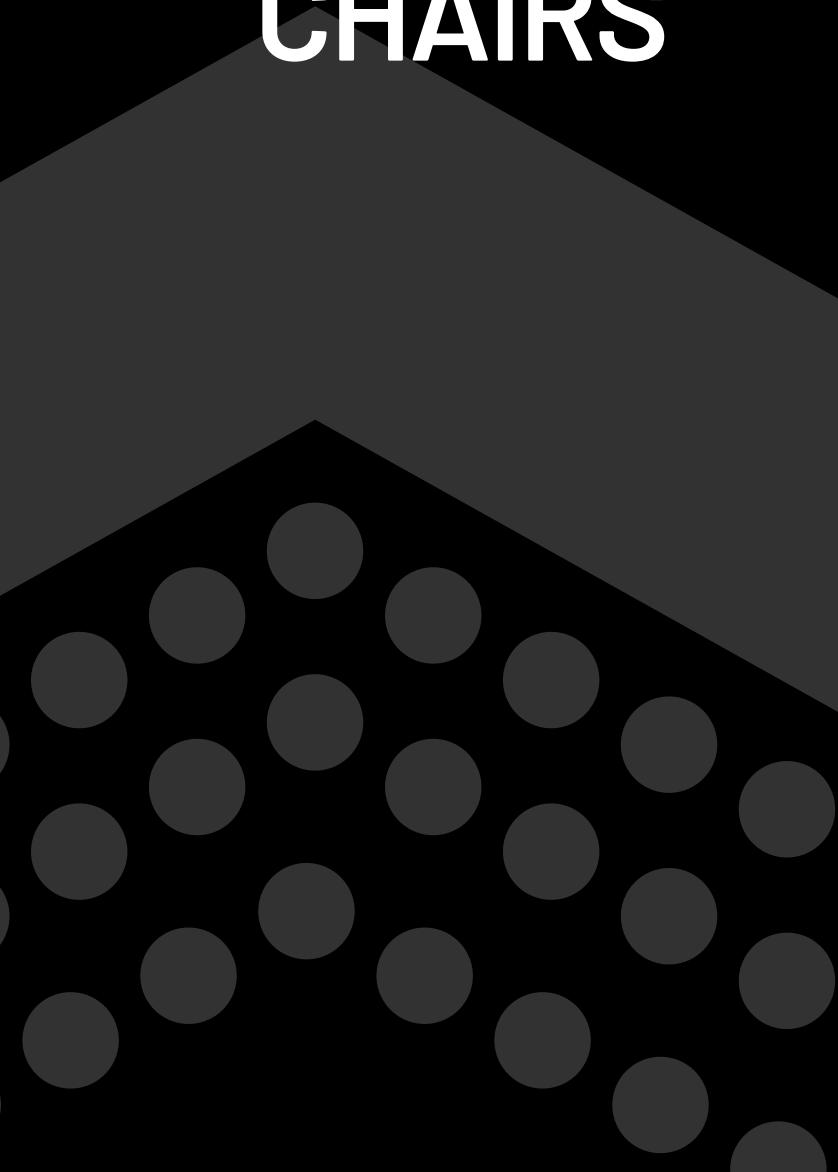
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25	Andy Forbes	Principal & CEO	City of Bristol College
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69	Dahlia Parkinson	Employment Adviser	London Borough of Lewisham
70	Mark McDonald	Social Work Officer	London Borough of Southwark
71	Luke O'Neill	Board Director	Morgan Hunt
72	Deborah See	Education Consultant	Deborah See
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74	Shereka James	Principal	Skinner's Academy

**BIOGRAPHIES  
OF LORD SIMON  
WOOLLEY CBE,  
NAZIR AFZAL OBE,  
PANELLISTS AND  
ROUND TABLE  
CHAIRS**



## Lord Simon Woolley CBE

Lord Woolley is the Director and Co-founder of Operation Black Vote, a national and internationally renowned race equality organisation. In 2017 Operation Black Vote, launched the ground-breaking *The Colour of Power*, the most in-depth look at the racial make-up of Britain's top jobs across 28 sectors that dominate British society.

In the last 25 years Lord Woolley has helped transform political and civic institutions, ensuring they are inclusive and representative. He is seen as the inspiration and one of the architects for the United Kingdom's Race Disparity Unit and served as the Advisory Chair of Prime Minister May's Race Unit.

Lord Woolley received a Knighthood in the 2019 Birthday Honours for his services to race equality and was nominated for a life peerage in the United Kingdom House of Lords where he sits as a Crossbench peer.

In April 2021, Lord Woolley was elected Principal of Homerton College, Cambridge University, the first Black man to hold such a post at either Oxford or Cambridge University.

## Nazir Afzal OBE

Nazir is Chair of Hopwood Hall College. He was Chief Crown Prosecutor for NW England and formerly Director in London. Most recently, he was Chief Executive of the country's Police & Crime Commissioners.

During a 24 year career, he has prosecuted the highest profile cases in the country, advised on many others, and led nationally on several legal topics. He sits on the Independent Press Standards Organisation. His memoirs *"The Prosecutor"* were published in 2020. Nazir is a tutor for several leadership programmes, trustee and Patron of several NGOs, an Honorary Fellow of the University of Central Lancashire and Glyndwr University and was awarded Honorary Doctorates in Law by the University of Birmingham, Manchester University and Bradford & Leicester University.

Nazir has received numerous accolades, and in 2005, he was awarded an OBE by the Queen for his work. He has also had the honour of being the only lawyer to ever prosecute a case before the Queen.

## Expert Panellists

### Dr Jason Arday

Jason is an Associate Professor in Sociology at Durham University in the Department of Sociology and the Deputy Executive Dean for People and Culture in the Faculty of Social Science and Health. He is a Visiting Research Fellow at The Ohio State University in the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, an Adjunct Professor at Nelson Mandela University in the Centre for Critical Studies in Higher Education Transformation and a Trustee of the Runnymede Trust, the UK's leading Race Equality Thinktank.

Jason is also a Trustee of the British Sociological Association (BSA) and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts (RSA). He sits on the Centre for Labour and Social Studies (CLASS) National Advisory Panel and the NHS Race and Health Observatory Academic Reference Group.

### Dawn Ward CBE

Dawn is CEO & Principal of Burton & South Derbyshire College and Deputy Chair Europe for the World Federation of Colleges and Polytechnics. She is also Deputy Chair of the Chartered Institution for Further Education.

She has extensive experience in senior positions at Board level (both as a NED and Chair). Dawn has received numerous awards throughout her extensive career in technical and professional education including Principal of the year from the Centre for Excellence in Leadership, and leadership in race equality award from the Network for Black and Asian Professionals.

## Expert Panellists

### David Russell

David was appointed as the first permanent Chief Executive of the ETF in January 2014. He has grown the ETF from start-up to become a trusted, effective improvement agency working with Government and the FE sector to support quality and standards. He previously served in the Department for Education under Labour and then the Conservative/Lib-Dem Coalition Government, latterly as national policy director for Vocational Education.

Previous senior policy roles included leading the Open Academies programme and managing the cross-government Skills Strategy. David was educated in Scotland at Crieff High School, St Andrews University and Moray House Institute of Education, Edinburgh. He is a member of the judging panel for the annual TES FE awards, and an assessor for the Queen's Anniversary Trust Awards in Higher and Further Education. He is also an experienced school and College governor.

### Dr Tiffany R. Holloman

Tiffany is a Research Fellow at the Centre for Race, Education and Decoloniality at Leeds Beckett University. She is also Co-Director of Same Skies Think Tank in West Yorkshire. As a historian and sociologist, her research is interdisciplinary covering race, education, and academic prestige in the UK and US as well as gender and power in Early Modern Scotland. Her activism stems from a framework of societal failures based on the exploitation of capitalism and underdevelopment caused by racism.



## Expert Panellists

### Shakira Martin

Shakira is former president of the National Union of students 2017-19 being the elected first black woman to hold the role and the second to study at a Further Education College. Shakira is currently the Head of Student Experience at Rose Bruford College and Founder of The Class of 2020 #Digiprom which hosted the first digital student celebration event, celebrating the achievements of students across the country who were unable to graduate due to Covid-19. Shakira is passionate about social justice, social mobility and uses her experience of overcoming adversity to inspire, empower and motivate students and young people.

### Simon Blake OBE

Simon joined MHFA England as Chief Executive in October 2018, leading the organisation to achieve its vision of normalising society's attitudes and behaviours around mental health, through training one in ten of the population in mental health skills and awareness. He is Vice Chair of Stonewall, the UK's leading LGBT Charity and a Companion of the Chartered Management Institute. He was recognised as a 2020 Global Diversity Leader. David is a writer, campaigner, trainer and was awarded an OBE for services to the voluntary sector and young people in 2011. He enjoys running, equestrian eventing and walks with his dog.

## Expert Roundtable Chairs

### Paul Cook

Paul is a chemistry graduate and spent his early career in the police service eventually becoming a training officer specialising in conflict resolution. He made the transition to Further Education over twenty years ago and he has served in some of the country's highest performing colleges as a teacher, advanced teaching practitioner, head of facility and in a variety of senior management roles.

Paul then spent three years working for the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) managing the financial and quality recovery of further education providers in the northeast of England. As part of this role, he piloted the country's first Structure and Prospects Appraisal methodology with a further education college.

Over the last eight years he has served enabling structures as a college principal and chief executive in the northeast of England and the West Midlands.

Paul has research interests in the effective methods of securing sustainable employment for learners with disabilities and is the director for employment for Natspec, a national membership organisation supporting one hundred specialist and general further education colleges throughout England and Wales. He also served as an Additional Inspector for five years where he inspected both general and specialist further education examining teaching learning and assessment and leadership and management.

### Robin Landman OBE

Robin is a co-founder and member of the Executive Team of the Black FE Leadership Group, like all team members, working in a voluntary capacity. In addition, he is Vice Chair of Governors at Lewisham College and a member of the CMI Race Advisory Committee. Prior to that he was co-founder and former CEO of the Network for Black Professionals. Robin was a schoolteacher for ten years before a 30-year career in further education management, working in four colleges, the FEFC and for the British Council in South Africa.

## Expert Roundtable Chairs

### Dr Maxine Room CBE

A highly experienced, well respected and motivated education strategic leader and consultant, previously a CEO /Principal in several FE colleges across the UK, Maxine was recognised with a CBE in 2012 for work on equality, diversity and leadership in education. Committed to improving the quality and sustainability of organisations through use of new technologies, business development, effective strategy and leadership success, she has a track record of organisational improvement through use of quality success indicators, effective change management and digital transformation.

Maxine chairs an Independent Training Provider Board and is a non-exec on several creative and performing arts boards.

She is an active member, facilitator and trainer for the Black FE Leadership Group and a founder of an Equality Diversity Inclusion social media start-up [www.allofus.social](http://www.allofus.social). She founded two consultancies MG Consultancy London Ltd and Medacrii Associates Ltd both committed to education and educating through inclusive diversity and approaches to coaching and mentoring. She is marrying this work with recent interests include online learning platforms, developments in blockchain, digital ledger technology and cryptocurrency. She has published several articles and is presently engaged in a collaboration writing about the disparity and lack of equality for women in this area.

### Andy Forbes

Brought up in Birmingham, Andy did his teacher training at Manchester University and began his career as a secondary school teacher of English and Drama, before making the transition to further education by joining Manchester College. Since 2019 Andy has been Principal of City of Bristol College. He is part of the Bristol City Leader's Group and a member of the West of England Skills Advisory Panel. He had previously served as Principal of three colleges: City & Islington College, the College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London, and Hertford Regional College. He is currently a Trustee of UCAS and Chair of the Board of UCAS Media Limited. Andy has a degree in English, an MA from Cambridge University, and a PGCE and Diploma in Management Sciences from the University of Manchester.

## Expert Roundtable Chairs

### Neelam Khosla-Stevens

Neelam is Registrar & Secretary, Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts. She has 25+ years' experience in institutions spanning both the HE and AO sectors encompassing organisational change management, strategic direction setting, policy writing and implementation, curriculum and qualification design, effective performance management, self-assessment and quality improvement strategy. She is particularly interested in organisational success having led change management projects across curricula, people, processes, systems and operating models.

Her latest project is setting up an institution-wide Anti-racism project to tackle structural racism.

### Asfa Sohail

Asfa is the Principal for Lewisham College. She has more than twenty-two years' experience of working in the further education and skills sector, leading and managing a broad range of cross college remits including English and maths, additional learning support, higher education, and further education programmes. Asfa's subject specialisms are in mathematics, business management, information technology and computing programmes. She is an experienced and active education and training practitioner, a qualified teacher and holds a Master's in Business Administration. Asfa has a wealth of experience in working with employers, stakeholders and communities.

## Expert Roundtable Chairs

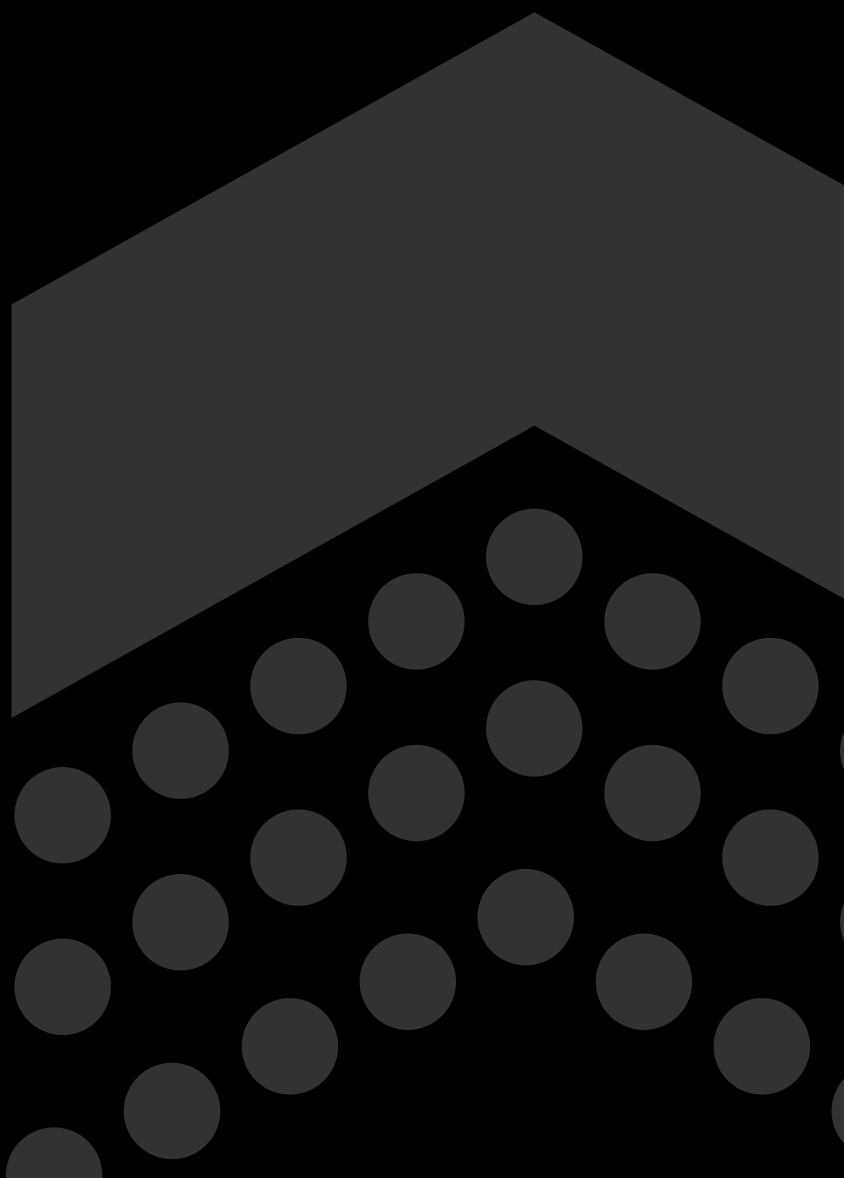
# Denise Brown

With over 30 years' senior executive experience in Further Education management, Denise is passionate about inclusion and open access to life-long learning. She has used this passion, commitment and her undoubted creativity to build a reputation as a seasoned and successful leader of curriculum, quality, and teaching and learning.

Denise is currently Principal and CEO at Stoke on Trent College in the West Midlands. She took the helm at a time when the College required emergency funding to support its ongoing viability. It is currently financial health Outstanding with an improved Ofsted grade profile, and the transformation journey is on the cusp of being achieved.

Denise has held roles in colleges in London, including as Principal. At the same time as starting her career as a volunteer basic skills teacher in adult education, Denise completed a Master of Social Science – Race and Education. Smitten by the value that the Adult and Further Education sectors brought to society, she decided to dedicate her career to these sectors.

# ABOUT THE BFELG AND THE ETF







Activist Authentic Authoritative

## About the BFELG

The BFELG was formed in July 2020 as a UK wide organisation. We exist to challenge systemic racism in Further Education (FE) for the benefit of all Black communities and the wider UK society as a whole, to be the authoritative voice of Anti-racism in the FE sector, and to further the interests of Black students, staff and leaders. Our mission is to eradicate all forms of racism in FE. **Our vision is an Anti-racist culture at the core of all aspects of FE life and work and equity of access to the employment market.**

We have continued to highlight the systemic nature of racism in FE, the lack of progress in the sector, and in some quarters regression. We are playing our part in collaboration with key stakeholders to place Anti-racism at the heart of FE.

The logo for the Education & Training Foundation. It consists of a solid red rectangle. The top half of the rectangle is empty. The bottom half contains the text "EDUCATION & TRAINING FOUNDATION" in white, bold, uppercase letters. The text is arranged in three lines: "EDUCATION & TRAINING" on the first line, "FOUNDATION" on the second line, and "FOUNDATION" on the third line.

## EDUCATION & TRAINING FOUNDATION

## About the ETF

Established in 2013 by the main representative bodies in FE and funded by the DfE, the **Education and Training Foundation (ETF)** has grown to become the expert body for professional development and standards in Further Education (FE) and Training in England. Our charitable purpose is to improve education and training for learners aged 14 and over.

Our membership body, the Society for Education and Training (SET), has over 21,000 individual members across a wide range of teaching and training settings, and is as diverse in its membership as it is united in its commitment to professionalism.

The ETF exists to grow the capacity and develop the capability of the FE workforce; influence debate and decision-making; and lead the sector's own self-improvement activity. A key part of this mission is raising the awareness, the capability and the level of action in the sector on inclusive practices and harnessing diversity. For this reason, we are proud to partner with the BFELG, who give a clear lead to the sector and its leaders on issues of race equality and the urgent need for action.

