



Supporting People Race Equality Catalyst Group

December 2021

Hello and welcome to Supporting People's first newsletter, which we'll be sending out every two months. Here is where we will be keeping you updated on our equalities work. We want this newsletter to be valuable for you, so please share any feedback and suggestions to help us improve by emailing Sandra.Soteriou@camden.gov.uk or Shabnam.Ahmed@camden.gov.uk



Supporting People Race Equality Catalyst Group

Race Equality Catalyst Groups have been established across the organisation's divisions to provide leadership promoting anti-racism, removing barriers to access, and eliminating race discrimination at work and in-service delivery. The Supporting People Race and Equalities Catalyst Group is doing this work in our directorate, and is represented by dynamic staff who provide the bridge between staff within the directorate and senior management.

The Supporting People representatives are listed below – please get in touch with them if you'd like to discuss their work further or have any questions or suggestions.

Meet the group

Education and Integrated Commissioning:

Sal Bryant (co- chair), and Sandra Soteriou

Early Intervention and Prevention: Becca Dove

Strategy: Sofia Bouceddour and Eve Avdoulos

OD: Jeffrey Kotei

CSSW: Dinishia Mitford, Mary Holder, Pal Jandu, Rejbinder Mandair and Patriche Bentick

Supporting People Share and Learn Session on Critical Race Theory with Louis Howell was held on 7 October 2021

Louis Howell is a Social Mobility and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Consultant/ Trainer with experience that spans the voluntary youth sector, education sector and commercial business sector.

Today, he co-runs an educational social enterprise, Revolution Hive, and his professional experience also led to him setting up 7PK, which helps charities, social enterprises education institutions and corporate organisations to improve their approaches to Youth and Community Development, Diversity and Inclusion and Social Mobility Initiatives.

Louis is also a proud member of the 100 Black Men of London.

You can view the session [here](#).

Some additional reading - [Critical Race Theory – Global Social Theory](#)

Women of Colour Progression Network

The aim of the Women of Colour Progression Network:

- To look at the specific challenges that women of colour face in terms of career progression and devising strategies to remove barriers.
- Support the internal progression of women of colour in the organisation.
- To provide a link with the other initiatives to increase the number of women of colour as leaders in Council.

If you would like to know more, please contact sandra.soteriou@camden.gov.uk



Men of Colour Progression Network meeting

We had our first Camden Men of Colour Progression Network on Wednesday 20 October 2021 where 67 men attended.

The aim of the Progression Network is to look at the specific challenges that men of colour face in terms of career progression.

We hope that you can join us on this journey towards making change and trying to enable a better future for men of colour within Camden.

If you're interested in joining our Men of Colour Progression network please email Jeffrey Kotei or Sandra Soteriou for an invite to the next meeting.

Some feedback from the session:

'Really excited to be part of the group. Very informative.'

'I already feel just a little more positive about things; let make this happen.'

'Very good session, totally enjoyed, very informative.'

'It was good listening, sharing ideas and experience.'

'Excellent session more of these need to feature regularly.'

'Very positive. There seems to be a lot to talk about.'

'This is really good. Thank you for getting the ball rolling on this.'

Supporting People Race & Equalities Forum

The first Supporting People Race & Equalities Forum meeting was on Wednesday 14 July. Over 140 colleagues attended – a great turnout which illustrates how important anti-racism is to staff across the directorate.

The forum provided an update on progress made against the Supporting People areas of the anti-racism and race equality action plan and shone a spotlight on work being done by teams within Supporting People to move beyond discussion and start taking action. Adult Social Care and Family Early Help presented and encouraged colleagues interested in applying this work to their areas to speak to them.

If you have a piece of work that your division/service has led on that you'd like to share at a future forum, please let your Catalyst Rep know.

The slides from our first Race & Equalities Forum can be accessed [here](#).

Thanks to everyone who took part. The Catalyst group will be reviewing the responses to identify themes to take forward and items to escalate to groups working on an organisational level. You can view the Jamboard responses [here](#).

The next Race Equality Forum will be held on 9 December, 1pm – 2pm.



Volunteer to help us effectively communicate

We'd like to improve on our reach and methods for providing updates to colleagues on our anti-racism work. If you're interested in helping us please email: sandra.soteriou@camden.gov.uk

Volunteer to be a Race Equality Sub-Forum Lead

We are seeking colleagues to volunteer to lead their division's Race Equality Sub-forums. The sub-forums will sit under the main Race Equality Forum and will support your division in developing its own Race Equality Plan. The sub-forum will also scrutinise each division's performance. If you would like to volunteer as a sub-forum lead, please contact your division representative.

Increasing our Camden Vocabulary



The long-standing debates around the correct terms relating to race have left many people confused, fearful and as a result silent at times. We want to try and shift that,

and whilst the supporting catalyst group believe that a shared language could be helpful to build confidence in our collective use of language relating to race and racism, we fully accept that there is "Diversity within our Diversity". We want to therefore encourage familiarisation with the language and the various different terms and terminology out there.

We will share one term / word with its definition through the newsletter and invite you to reflect and have a discussion through your team meetings to ensure topics relating to race, racism anti-racism and intersectionality remain part of the discourse.

Our word today is **Global Majority coined by Rosemary Campbell-Stephens** during a long career as an educator in the United Kingdom. Global majority is a collective term that encourages those of African, Asian, Latin American, and Arab descent to recognise that together they comprise the vast majority (around 80 per cent) of people in the world. Understanding the truth that whiteness is not the global norm has the power to disrupt and reframe our conversations on race.

Safe spaces

'Safe space' is a term used to describe areas in which groups have created an environment for themselves, where there is complete inclusivity and comfort for the individuals. This is a space where colleagues who have had similar life experiences based on their ethnicity can provide each other with a supportive, respectful environment. They offer colleagues a brief opportunity to be vulnerable and let down their guard without fear of discrimination, judgment, or being viewed through the lens of those who have not undergone their

experience. The spaces allow staff to truly speak their mind and build resilience so that when they are outside these spaces, they can be the strongest, most authentic versions of themselves. The opportunity for openness, strength, and confidence is what occurs within safe spaces.

We are providing support and guidance to facilitate these groups. Safe spaces could also be set up for other protected characteristics and for allyship.

If you're interested in creating a safe space, please contact Sandra (sandra.soteriou@camden.gov.uk) who will be able to advise you.

A day in the life

**Deputy Director Children and Young People's
Commissioning, North Central London CCG**

I'm responsible for...

strategic planning on how the NHS meets children and young people's needs in order to improve services. At the moment, there is a lot of work supporting the recovery of Health services following the pandemic.

I got the job after ...

years of working at Head of service level, wanting a new challenge and be part of shaping the future direction of the NHS.

Best part of my job:

As this is a new role, it's up to myself and my job-share partner to develop the role, I love building partnerships and a huge element of the role is reaching out across the multiple stakeholders across the region. The most rewarding part of my job is hearing about when things go right. Back before the pandemic, I would occasionally bump into young people who I'd created services for and hearing their stories of triumph and resilience would give me such a boost. One of the nice things about working across 5 north-central London boroughs is that now I get to hear about the good practice across the region and think about what can be shared and replicated to meet the needs of a much wider range of children and young people.

Bit about me: I'm a mother of two children (2yrs and 5yrs), a wife, a child of a Bajan teacher and a Jamaican reggae singer.

My typical day...

Starts with my 2 year old demanding breakfast at around 6am (it's as if he takes it personally that I've withheld food overnight). We have some time together until my husband and daughter emerge an hour later and then the house is a buzz of getting ready for school and nursery. The school and nursery are at the end of our road so we all walk up to do the staggered drop offs, as we live close by many people know us and we chat and catch up on our way up. Once the kids have been dropped-off, I usually rush down to start work, I set myself up at the dining table. Sometime during the day, my husband makes me a tea and we try to make a plan for what we will eat for dinner, as he works for an American media company on American time, I'm usually the one cooking during the week. But if he doesn't have many early meetings, he does some prep ease the pressure after work. I'll squeeze in some lunch (usually in a meeting with my camera off), this usually consists of leftovers from the night before.

After work...

I activate mum mode, play with the kids, cook dinner, get bedtime routine sorted, and eventually flop in front of some really mind-numbing tv (I wish I could say I read something intellectual but my brain simply cannot cope). Just before 5pm I'll run up to collect the children from nursery and afterschool club, they chat non-stop about their day and then play or barter for some screen time whilst I sort out dinner. After dinner there is just about time to sort out baths and my husband joins us for bedtime stories. After that I usually flop onto the sofa, eat dinner with my husband (if I didn't eat with the kids) and we have a bit of time to catch up before I turn on my computer and finish up a few tasks. At least once per week I think 'I really should do some exercise' but I haven't got around to adding that into my schedule yet!



of Dionne Usherwood

The worst part of my job:

The worst part of my job is knowing that we just don't have enough money for everyone to do all of the things we'd like to do – being a commissioner is fab when you have lots of resource but when funds are tight I need to make difficult decisions about what we can and cannot provide and it is hard knowing that this will impact some children and their families.

My first job:

I started my career working in frontline youth work, I worked part time as a participation officer on the Regents Park estate and the other half of the week working with children at risk of gang involvement within schools in Barnet. I always got a real buzz from working directly with children and families, but also remember the long hours juggling planning, delivery and writing monitoring returns or funding applications.

What has your career been like?

I have genuinely loved my career, I loved working in frontline youth work as I could see right before my eyes the impact that the work and services has had on children and young people. But I have always gained a real sense of satisfaction in the commissioning world where it can take years to see the impact but all the same you have those moments where you stand back and can celebrate the real difference that hard work has made in creating services that make a real difference when people need it most.



As a woman of colour, what barriers have you had to overcome?

As my roles became more senior, I've had lots of surprised faces when I've introduced myself and my job titles over the years (a few unkind comments – which hurt like hell but made me more determined to succeed). Working with inspirational people, having supportive management who allowed me the freedom to try innovative approaches and taking on new projects and challenges whenever things got too comfortable have been a very fulfilling experience.

My most memorable work moment...

So many, but to name a few - throwing a massive club night at the roundhouse to encourage young people to screen for chlamydia (which earned me the title of queen of chlamydia for a while), to sitting in a young parents supported accommodation unit convincing them not to throw dirty nappies from the upstairs windows, to securing the funds for and coproducing a nationally recognised approach to supporting adolescents suffering from mental illness. Working with Children, Young People and Families is fab because no two days are the same.

What's next? ...

Who knows, my current role is still very new so I've got to get to grips with the new role before I can think of the next one.

How to start conversations about race equality and inclusion

We want to become a truly inclusive organisation, and when it comes to race equality, we are determined to take radical action in order for meaningful and lasting change to take place across our organisation and beyond.

We are all responsible for this change and to make it happen we need to create spaces for open and honest conversations, to talk about our lived experiences, and reflect on the issues that prevent our Black, Asian and other ethnic colleagues and communities from accessing opportunities equally.



We know that many teams, services, and peer groups are continuing to have these conversations and we've used the feedback you've shared with us to develop some tips and guidance.

Please see the **guidance** to support you in opening up conversations about race equality and inclusion in your teams, services, and peer groups.

How to report racist or discriminatory incidents



We have a zero-tolerance approach to racism and discrimination in all its forms and clear routes for reporting racism that feel safe and that you can trust. There are currently two ways to report racist or discriminatory incidents:

Phone or email our dedicated reporting line on **02920 266787** or **reportline@alcumusgroup.com** – an independent third party will collect information from you and report back to HR colleagues to enable us to take appropriate action in response.

Phone HR Services direct on **ext: 6655**, option 2.

If you experience racism from a colleague, you can raise a grievance. For more information, please visit the [here](#).

Although we encourage people to report racism through the above channels, you can also reach out to a member from the catalyst group if you feel you want to speak to someone about your experience and talk things through before doing this.

