

Report into workplace racism calls for employers to take urgent action

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Credit: University of Manchester

A hard-hitting new report commissioned by Business in the Community,

using survey data collected by YouGov and examined by researchers at The University of Manchester, is calling for employers to take urgent action to identify and stamp out racist behaviour in the workplace.

The report, which builds on the 2015 Race at Work survey, investigated accounts from 24,457 workers of racist harassment or bullying at work, and how their employers promote equality, diversity and fairness.

Dr Stephen Ashe and Professor James Nazroo from The University of Manchester reviewed thousands of comments, and their findings have highlighted that [ethnic minority](#) workers are frequently subjected to racism by their colleagues, managers, customers, clients and service users, which can also have a severe impact on their emotional and psychological wellbeing. Racism was also reported to have a negative impact on their careers in terms of recruitment and reducing opportunities for additional training and promotion.

The report also finds that some White British employees suggested that activities promoting equality and diversity provide ethnic minority employees with preferential treatment, suggesting that there is still much to be done to demonstrate the longstanding nature of [racial inequality](#), how this is reinforced by racism and why Race Relations legislation and associated equality and diversity duties are still necessary. Indeed, the report also finds that the promotion of equality and diversity is at best inconsistent, and in some cases non-existent.

The report's authors are calling for employers across all sectors to deliver an unequivocal zero-tolerance approach to racism in both policy and practice. The report also calls on government to deliver ring-fenced funding to support the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and scrap financial legal costs for employees seeking to challenge racism through employment tribunals.

"On many occasions, I have had individuals contact me asking what they should do about racial harassment they are experiencing at work as they have no access to robust support at work, or externally. I support the recommendation that the EHRC should receive 'ring-fenced' funding to enable it to address this issue so that individuals are not left isolated and unable to speak out. If we are to stamp out racial bullying and harassment, a clear mechanism of support must be in place for individuals."

"The 2015 Race at Work further reinforces the need for employers to take immediate action against the entrenched nature of [racism](#) and racial inequality" said Stephen Ashe from The University of Manchester.

"It is also worth noting that it is almost 50 years since the Race Relations Act was amended to outlaw racial discrimination in employment. Once again we are asking a question that has been asked many times before: Does the current government have the political will to ensure that employers comply with existing legislation and equality duties, and to apply heavy sanctions against employers in cases of non-compliance?"

More information: Race at Work Report: race.bitc.org.uk/all-resources...les/race-work-report

Provided by University of Manchester

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