

## Time for Change: Action Not Words

1st to 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2022

Racially minoritized people are often given the double burden of experiencing racism and discrimination, and then being expected to fix it. Hopefully, by making the theme of this year's black history month time for change: action not words' we can put the anchors in place that facilitate real change for the better. To get to a better tomorrow, we can't just focus on the past. The past is in the past and so to improve the future we need actions that identify the problems, acknowledges the problems, learns from the problems, and then comes together around a set of shared common solutions and goals to address these problems.

It is time to move beyond short-term or performative gestures and take real, long-term action in the workplace, in places of education and learning, and in the public sphere. This means having policies in place that achieve real outcomes. As individuals, it means practising what we preach and resetting our mindsets for support with actions that go beyond BHM and words. Indeed, in the wake of 2020's Black Lives Matter protests, many organisations and individuals committed to tackling racism. This was done around the world by taking the time to learn about the black experience and additionally, in the UK, this included learning about the historical legacy of colonialism and slavery. That was an important step forward, but it won't fundamentally change institutional racism today. Several recent reports have called out racism across a range of sectors, from international aid and education to healthcare and policing. As a society, we all know there is a problem with institutional racism. Now we need to work together to tackle it.

*Official BHM 2022 Leeds11 Call to action with edits- [see original BHM 2022 promotional article written by Catherine Ross – BHM Editor 30/06/2022](#).*

### Leeds11 Racially Minoritised Staff Network, The University of Leeds

**'The Time for EDI Change is Now!'** Leeds11 does not want to be a passive bystander - we want action not words too... and we want to do our bit to facilitate this.

Our members need and should live and work in a world where EDI commitments go beyond the soundbites we hear today, tomorrow, in passing and yearly for each Black History Month as standard on loop, despite the genuineness of the acknowledgement and celebratory nature of the cause. Through constructive challenge, motivations borne out of respect, and collective responsibility, we can all better mobilise our reflections, behaviours, attitudes, and actions towards eliminating negative institutional EDI behaviours. We want EDI participation, advocacy, engagement, and action that is purposeful, productive, and positive.

As Leeds11, we fiercely champion our staff network as a space of safety for racially minoritized staff and all invited into our space. Supporting our Members with their real-life, work-based racial experiences, good and bad is paramount and ultimate. I truly believe it is within the gift of Leeds11 to act as a key catalyst for work-based change and within the gift of the University to be the EDI change it needs to be.

Moving forward, Leeds11 will continue to work beyond BHM to identify and articulate what unsuccessful EDI looks like in the everyday, at work and beyond, and then constructively lobby for a changed cultural climate of work-based EDI policies, practices, attitudes, behaviours, and actions that meet the basic intrinsic and extrinsic needs of all racially minoritized staff and students at the University. And if I make this approach sound simple and straightforward - that is because in my representation of Leeds11 and beyond, I believe it should be.....

[Brenda Phillips, Leeds11 Chair for BHM 2022](#)