

# Press release: PM launches series of measures to tackle barriers facing ethnic minorities in the workplace

A series of measures to tackle ethnic disparities in the workplace will be announced by Prime Minister Theresa May today – exactly one year after the government published the findings of a world-first Race Disparity Audit on how people of different ethnic backgrounds are treated across society.

Developed jointly by the government and Business in the Community (BITC), the new Race at Work Charter announced by the Prime Minister today will commit businesses to a bold set of principles and actions designed to drive forward a step-change in the recruitment and progression of ethnic minority employees.

The government, which has named WPP UK Country Manager and Chairwoman of MediaCom UK & Ireland Karen Blackett OBE as its Race at Work Champion, has already secured a number of high-profile inaugural signatories to the Charter, including NHS England, Standard Life Aberdeen, Norton Rose Fulbright, Saatchi & Saatchi, KPMG, RBS, the Civil Service and the world leader in communications services, WPP.

In addition, financial services company Lloyds Banking Group, also among the Charter's signatories, is the first FTSE 100 company to set a goal to increase the representation of ethnic minority employees at senior levels.

Alongside the Race at Work Charter, the Prime Minister will also today launch a consultation on ethnicity pay reporting in response to the Race Disparity Audit's Ethnicity Facts and Figures website data, which reveals significant disparities in the pay and progression of ethnic minority employees compared to their white counterparts.

In the first consultation of its kind, the government will invite employers to share their views on a mandatory approach to ethnicity pay reporting, since the number of organisations publishing information on the pay gap for people from different ethnic backgrounds voluntarily remains low.

The consultation, open until January 2019, will set out in detail what information employers should publish to allow for decisive action to be taken while also asking employers how ethnicity data can be collected without placing undue burdens on businesses.

The government is also taking action to ensure the leaders of UK's key public services are representative of the communities they serve. Today, the NHS, Armed Forces, schools and police forces will set out plans to increase the proportion of public sector leaders from ethnic minority backgrounds. These include proposals from school leaders to address disparities in the teaching workforce, and publication of the National Police Chief Council's first

national Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Strategy, which pledges to support the priority government has given to tackling race disparity.

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

Every employee deserves the opportunity to progress and fulfil their potential in their chosen field, regardless of which background they are from, but too often ethnic minority employees feel they're hitting a brick wall when it comes to career progression.

That's why I'm delighted to launch the Race at Work Charter, which gives businesses a clear set of actions to work towards in helping to create greater opportunities for ethnic minority employees at work.

One year on from publishing the Race Disparity Audit, the government is delivering on its promise to explain or change ethnic disparities in all areas of society, taking action to support young people into work with funding of £90 million from dormant bank accounts, and acting on the recommendations of the Lammy review including by increasing diversity within prison officer recruitment.

Our focus is now on making sure the UK's organisations, boardrooms and senior management teams are truly reflective of the workplaces they manage, and the measures we are taking today will help employers identify the actions needed to create a fairer and more diverse workforce.

Sandra Kerr, Business in the Community race equality director said:

All organisations should recruit from the widest pool of talent and support progression. The race at work survey of over 24,000 employees showed that all too often ethnic minority staff are still encountering significant disparities at work. The race at work charter will support leaders and line managers to take practical steps to tackle the barriers, with five clear actions. By signing up, we can ensure the workplace is representative of British society today.

Karen Blackett OBE, WPP UK Country Manager and Chairwoman of MediaCom UK & Ireland said:

Embracing diversity and inclusion is not a choice, it's a business necessity. Clients choose WPP precisely because of the capability and creativity of our people; it's why we're focused on attracting, developing and promoting the best talent from across a range of

backgrounds. Creativity powers business growth and this only happens by having diversity of talent in the room and reflecting society in the content we create.

As the Government's Race at Work Champion, I'm committed to helping businesses address inequality at all levels by taking practical steps such as introducing apprenticeships, offering mentorships and capturing ethnicity data to create a more inclusive and representative workforce.

Baker McKenzie Diversity & Inclusion Partner, Sarah Gregory, said:

Huge progress has been made to improve the experience of ethnic minority colleagues in the workplace, but more still needs to be done. This is why, we are very excited today to be signing the Race at Work Charter and together with the Government and other businesses look at improving ethnic minority representation at all levels of seniority. The Charter builds on our ongoing commitment as a Firm to recognise and celebrate the talent of our diverse workforce and to ensure that everyone can be their authentic selves.