

Black heritage advisory group (BHAG) forum

A forum to represent the black and black heritage workforce and provide feedback in the delivery of West Yorkshire Police's policies.

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Key details

Stage of practice	Untested
Purpose	Organisational
Topic	Community engagement Diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI) Ethics and values
Organisation	West Yorkshire Police
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Region	North East
Partners	Police
Stage of implementation	The practice is implemented.
Start date	October 2022
Scale of initiative	Local

Key details

Target group	General public Race/ethnicity Workforce
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Aim

The aim of the black heritage advisory group (BHAG) forum is to:

- provide a platform for the black and black heritage community within West Yorkshire Police
- provide feedback around issues impacting the black and black heritage workforce within West Yorkshire Police now or in the future
- provide an insight into the issues the black and black heritage workforce face in their ranks and roles
- assess data regarding the Police Race Action Plan and offer insight into how it is being delivered
- provide an accessibly network within West Yorkshire Police for individual and group scrutiny

Intended outcome

The intended outcomes of the BHAG forum are to:

- increase opportunities for discussion on current and emerging themes within West Yorkshire Police
- increase the confidence of the black and black heritage community to share the issues impacting the workforce
- improve the representation of the black and black heritage community within West Yorkshire Police

Description

In 2022, West Yorkshire Police's black workforce development sessions identified a need for a black community network. During the sessions, feedback was obtained from officers and staff that there were no specific forums considering the voices of the black workforce. Further feedback indicated that individuals were keen to contribute towards the future of policing and share their own

lived experience to help influence change.

Black heritage advisory group (BHAG)

In February 2023, the BHAG forum was implemented and initially chaired by the Police Race Action Plan lead. Once established, their role was phased out allowing the group to identify their own chair. The group meet either every eight weeks or when there is a need to discuss an issue. The hybrid meetings are hosted in-person and on Microsoft Teams, to maximise the opportunities for members to attend.

To date, there are 38 members, however membership continues to grow each meeting. The purpose of the meetings is to use members' expertise, professional skills and lived experience to provide insight and to challenge organisational policies.

The meetings focus on the products and services for the Police Race Action Plan within the force as well as across West Yorkshire. Prior to each meeting, the chair sets the agenda. Any officer or staff within West Yorkshire Police can submit requests for topics to be discussed. Feedback from each meeting is captured in the group minutes and sessions are recorded for members unable to attend. The meetings run for one to two hours but can be extended when needed.

BHAG forum chair and membership

The BHAG forum consists of members and a chair who leads the forum. An individual can be nominated for the chair role by BHAG forum members. Initial membership was circulated within West Yorkshire Police via the Police Race Action Plan lead. Those wishing to join after the black workforce development sessions were re-contacted and initial meetings took place to ascertain how members wanted the forum to operate. Individuals can apply for membership which is then reviewed by the BHAG forum prior to acceptance.

Funding and resources

There is no cost to the development and implementation of the BHAG forum. All members are entitled to attend the meetings during work time.

A chief inspector supported the establishment of the BHAG forum.

Overall impact

- The BHAG forum has provided feedback on the Police Race Action Plan's internal and external communications. By working with the diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI) communication team, this has enabled them to frame messages from a black and black heritage perspective. The purpose of the message is to enhance trust and confidence from black communities.
- West Yorkshire Police uses the BHAG forum to discuss feedback on any matter and asks for wider consultation during the initial phases of change delivery.
- The BHAG have conducted a review of data from the Our Black Workforce Survey to identify priorities and develop an action plan to address issues. By reviewing the survey results, there has been positive progress in the lived experiences of the black and black heritage workforce.
- Current membership represents 30% of black and black heritage workforce of West Yorkshire Police.
- The BHAG forum continues to be a platform for the black and black heritage workforce to raise any concerns around West Yorkshire Police policies.

Learning

- The implementation of the BHAG forum was straightforward due to members actively volunteering to take on responsibilities.
- A challenge for the force has been recruiting black and black heritage individuals. Prior to implementation, there had been several ideas for a forum, however these were never formalised. Some individuals were reluctant to join due to feeling that their voices were not heard in previous associations.
- It is essential to have buy-in from the senior leadership team (SLT) to support the establishment of the forum.
- It is important that feedback from meetings is captured in an effective manner to allow for data to be utilised during any consultation phases. This can be time consuming for a member to produce, therefore it is recommended that a member of the senior leadership team attends the meetings to ascertain key points.

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