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Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Citation for published version (Harvard):
Bhopal, K & Pitkin, C 2018, *Investigating higher education institutions and their views on the race equality charter*. University and College Union (UCU). <https://www.ucu.org.uk/HEIs-and-the-Race-Equality-Charter>

[Link to publication on Research at Birmingham portal](#)

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM | CENTRE for RESEARCH in RACE and EDUCATION

UCU University and College Union

Investigating higher education institutions and their views on the Race Equality Charter

Kalwant Bhopal and Clare Pitkin

September 2018

Foreword

I am delighted to welcome this report by Professor Kalwant Bhopal and Clare Pitkin as part of our work to challenge and improve the sector's record on race equality. Whilst it has been encouraging to see improvements in black[1] staff and student representation, the disparity in student attainment, staff retention and progression remain unconscionably poor when compared with the same outcomes for their white counterparts.

The work of the Equality Challenge Unit, now Advance HE, in developing the Race Equality Charter (REC) has been unique in its twofold approach towards tackling the inequalities faced by both staff and students.

The REC provides a framework which supports institutions to identify and self-reflect on institutional and cultural barriers that impede black staff and students. It covers: rofessional and support staff; academic staff; student progression and attainment; and diversity of the curriculum. Members of the REC work to develop initiatives and solutions to target the these areas, and can apply for a Bronze or Silver REC award, according to the level of their progress. This is immediately of interest because these aims mirror those of my union and are in parallel with the tireless work with our Black Members Standing Committee and Education Committee.

Bhopal and Pitkin have skilfully reported on the experiences of the individuals who have responsibility for the REC in their institutions. As such, this unique research gives an insight into the change that can be fostered whilst pursuing the REC. The findings, based on case-study information point to seven direct examples of how we can further challenge race inequality, even within institutions that are pursing the REC or have received an award.

The recommendations also provide important steps for the wider sector, and I believe the call for linking the REC to UKRI funding; senior staff member responsibility; and annual statements on how institutions are tackling representation across senior levels, in particular, provide a useful vision and framework that will call the sector to action whilst empowering UCU members professionally.

Sally Hunt
General secretary
University and College Union

Acknowledgements

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study is based on a project funded by the University and College Union that explored the impact of the race equality charter mark (REC) on equality policy and inclusion in higher education institutions (HEIs) in England. Very little is known about the impact of the REC, this project therefore, represents a unique perspective on existing and emergent work around the impact of equality policy making in HEIs. This study focuses on interviews with individuals involved with the REC and those working in diversity and equality departments (with a specific focus on race) in HEIs. The study aims were: to identify aspects of good practice on race equality in institutions awarded the REC; to explore views of member and non-member institutions towards the REC and race equality and to contribute to UCU policy making on race equality and inclusion in HEIs. The research for this report was conducted between eptember 2017 and June 2018 and is based on 45 in-depth interviews with individuals from a range of different roles working in HEIs (see Appendix 1 and 2).

KEY FINDINGS

Implications of resources for participation/non-participation

All institutions that participated in the study (regardless of whether they were award holders, members or non-members), mentioned access to resources as being a key factor which affected whether they would participate in the REC application process or decisions on becoming a member. These resources include funding of staff time and supporting activities to advance the REC.

Investment from senior management

Award holders specifically highlighted the significance of support from senior management in the application and submission process. In particular, staff[2] who had demonstrated a personal commitment to and interest in ongoing work around race equality played a vital role in highlighting the importance of such work to all staff in the institution.

A clear framework for focus

Award holder institutions and member institutions consistently discussed a belief that the process of applying for the REC mark was just as important as achieving the mark itself. Participants indicated that the REC process offered a framework to enable them to focus their work around race equality.

Addressing the BME attainment gap and understanding the lived experiences of BME students

All of the institutions in the study had either conducted research on the BME attainment gap or expressed a desire to do so. They recognised the importance of addressing the issue as well as the need to understand the lived experiences of BME students at their own institution. They discussed this in relation to the types of support available for students, curriculum and resources, extra-curricular opportunities, living arrangements and additional responsibilities (such as caring).

Recruitment, retention and progression of BME staff

All participants mentioned using the REC as part of a long term process to address the lack of representation of BME staff at all levels, but particularly at senior levels (both for academic and professional staff). In relation to initial recruitment of BME staff, work to address and ensure fairer recruitment processes was highlighted, as well as career progression.

Cultural and behavioural change

Participants highlighted the importance of the REC and its principles being linked to real institutional change; particularly the importance of the principles being embedded in the whole culture and structure of the organisation for long-term impact on the experiences of all BME staff and students. However, there were some concerns that the REC would be used for 'gaming' purposes for competitive advantage over other institutions in the sector, rather than to address racial inequalities.

Addressing the 'fear of race'

Participants emphasised the REC enabled all staff to address and confront the culture which encouraged a 'fear of race' which existed in HEIs. Discussions about the REC encouraged dialogue about how to address racial inequalities in HEIs at all levels, for both staff and students.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Linking REC to funding

Linking the REC to UKRI[3] funding which will ensure that all HEIs seriously consider investing in the REC (for example applications for biomedical are expected to have achieved a silver Athena Swan award , see https://www.nihr.ac.uk/about-us/how-we-are-managed/our-structure/infrastructure/collaborations-for-leadership-in-applied-health-research-and-care.htm).

Mandatory unconscious bias training

Formalising and making unconscious bias training mandatory for all senior staff in HEIs (level 6 or equivalent). We particularly recommend mandatory unconscious bias training for all staff involved in recruitment and promotion panels, in addition to it being embedded in all training activities provided by HEIs. In addition, this should include training on the awareness of white privilege.

Senior staff championing Equality and Diversity

All HEIs have a senior member of staff (such as a pro-vice chancellor) whose main responsibility it is to ensure that race equality policy is implemented – this role should be separate and different from that of Equality and Diversity officers.

Annual reviews of how HEIs have addressed the BME attainment gap

All HEIs (regardless of whether they are award holders or members of the REC) must be required to provide annual reviews which show how they have addressed the BME attainment gap, and the strategies they have used to improve it. We suggest UCAS[4] re-evaluate name blind applications for student admissions to counter bias in the application process to ensure greater representation of BME groups in Russell Group and elite HEIs, and introduce a series of aspiration targets for the number of BME students attending elite and Russell group institutions. We also suggest that the OfS[5] ring fence funding for targets in their Access and Participation Plans to address the BME attainment gap (see https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/1093/ofs2018_03.pdf).

Annual reviews of how HEIs have addressed the under representation of BME staff

All HEIs (regardless of whether they are award holders or members of the REC) must be required to provide annual statements and reviews of how they have addressed the under representation of BME academics in senior managerial roles. We suggest a target system to ensure that universities address this specific issue.

Improving professional development for BME staff

A specific focus on the professional development of staff in relation to the availability of opportunities (such as secondments, temporary promotions and training) and greater support for BME staff on temporary short term research only contracts to ensure continuity of employment and transfer to research and teaching contracts (there is evidence to suggest that some BME groups are more likely to be on short term research only contracts compared to their white colleagues (ECU, 2017a).

THE INTRODUCTION OF NATIONAL POLICIES TO ADDRESS THE ABOVE

Changes in REC award applications

AdvanceHE[6] reassess the requirements for applying for the REC (data sources, questionnaires, statistics) and consider introducing a gradation/scale of application stages. In order to achieve the REC institutions must pass/address the requirements of one stage before passing on to the next. This would ensure that institutions are only collecting data relevant to a specific stage in the application process, hence this will ensure the REC is not seen as too burdensome or onerous and may encourage more institutions to become members and ultimately apply for the REC. We also suggest this process is linked to a sharing of good practice by AdvanceHE to members, to enable HEIs to learn from each other.

Reaching each milestone would be clearly focussed on one issue, which would need to be addressed before progressing to the next stage. The gradation could include:

Grade/stage/year 1 – addressing REC in relation to staff

Grade/stage/year 2 – addressing REC in relation to students

Grade/stage/year 3 – addressing cultural and institutional change (resulting in REC award).

We also recommend AdvanceHE consider department/faculty REC awards in order that individual departments/faculties can claim ownership of the award (as is the case with Athena SWAN), particularly in cases where they are already involved in good practice work with BME staff and students.

Encouraging and developing safe environments to discuss racism

Finally HEIs must encourage safe approaches to developing conversations which address racism and white privilege, in which racial inequality is seen as a priority to be addressed rather than its legitimacy questioned. In order to address the 'fear of race' the REC should allow individuals to be encouraged to have open debate that is seen as legitimate in order to address inequalities in practices and outcomes for BME staff and students.

This research has led to a better understanding of the impact of the REC and the report and its recommendations will be a useful resource for all those working in HEIs.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In England since the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000) and the Equality Act (2010) there have been many significant advances in race equality in HEIs; the numbers of students from Black and minority ethnic (BME)[7] backgrounds attending universities has significantly increased (HESA, 2018) and universities are required to have equality policies in place and demonstrate their commitment to race equality (The Equality Act, 2010). Equality legislation such as the Athena SWAN charter was introduced 11 years ago by the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) to advance the position of women in STEMM[8] subjects. Institutions (or departments/faculties) are awarded a bronze, silver or gold award based on evidencing the progress of women in STEMM areas. In May 2015 the charter was expanded to include the Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, Business and Law subjects (https://www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charters/athena-swan/about-athena-swan/). There is evidence to suggest that since its introduction, the Athena SWAN charter has made a significant difference to women's position in STEMM subjects (Gregory-Smith, 2015; Ovseiko et al, 2017). However, recent evidence suggests that the main beneficiaries of the Athena SWAN charter have been white middle class women (see Bhopal, 2018). This also echoes findings in the USA which suggest that white women have been the main beneficiaries of affirmative action (Ladson Billings, 1998; 2005).

The Race Equality Charter mark (REC) was introduced in 2014 and works in a similar way to the Athena SWAN charter but its main focus is on race equality, particularly in relation to improving the representation and progression of minority ethnic staff and students in HEIs The REC aims to provide a framework through which institutions are encouraged to identify and reflect on institutional and cultural barriers impacting upon staff and students. There are 48 REC members, once members join they are expected to make an application within three years. In 2015, a total of 21 institutions applied for the award of which eight were awarded a bronze award. Last year, this number increased to nine. Since then this number has increased to 10 award holders, the most recent institution to receive the Bronze award was the University of Oxford (February 2018).

The ECU state the REC, '...provides a framework through which institutions work to identify and self-reflect on institutional and cultural barriers standing in the way of minority ethnic staff and students. Member institutions develop initiatives and solutions for action, and can apply for a Bronze or Silver REC award, depending on their level of progress' (http://www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charters/race-equality-charter/). The REC is underpinned by five key principles; recognising that racism is part of everyday life and racial inequalities manifest themselves in everyday situations, processes and behaviours; individuals from all ethnic backgrounds should benefit equally from the opportunities available to them; solutions to racial inequality should have a long term impact through institutional culture change; recognising that those from minority ethnic backgrounds are not a homogenous group and such complexity must be recognised when exploring race equality; and intersectional identities should be considered when discussing race equality. The REC covers academic staff; professional and support staff; student progression and attainment and diversity in the curriculum (http://www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charters/race-equality-charter/).

BME REPRESENTATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION: STAFF

In 2015/2016, 8.9% of staff identified as BME. Between 2003/2004 and 2015/2016 there has been a significant increase in the numbers of BME staff working in HEIs. The numbers of staff who were UK BME increased from 4.8% to 7.2% and the increase of staff was most pronounced for professional and support staff (4.8% in 2003/2004 to 7.9% in 2015/2016). The proportion of BME academic staff increased from 4.8% to 6.5% (ECU, 2017a) (see Table 1).

Table 1 All BME staff in UK HEIs by ethnic group 2015-2016 (UK nationals)

ETHNIC GROUP	NO.	%
Black (total)	5920	21.5
Caribbean	2960	10.7
African	2545	9.2
Other	415	1.5
Asian (total)	11740	42.6
Indian	6445	23.4
Pakistani	2080	7.5
Bangladeshi	955	3.5
Other	2270	8.2
Chinese	2940	10.7
Mixed (total)	4735	17.2
Black Caribbean/White	915	3.3
Black African/White	430	1.6
Asian/White	1510	5.5
Other	1880	6.8
Other (total)	2215	8.0
Arab	275	1.0
Other	1940	7.0
All BME	27555	100

Source: Equality in higher education: staff statistical report (ECU, 2017a)

During the same period UK BME staff were more likely to be on fixed term academic contracts compared to white groups (33.7% compared to 29.1% white) and this was also the case for professional and support staff (ECU, 2017a) (Table 2 - see overleaf).

In 2015/2016, UK BME staff were also more likely to be underrepresented in the highest contract levels and overrepresented in the lowest contract levels, for example only 1.6% of heads of institutions were BME, and 2.9% worked as managers and directors. UK BME staff were more likely to be on research only contracts compared to white staff (17.4% and 35.5%). However, higher proportions of white staff were on teaching only contracts than BME staff. A larger proportion of white academics were on the highest pay range of £58,754 or more compared to BME staff (19.7% white staff compared to 18.1% BME). Furthermore, there were only 80 Black professors in the UK compared to 13295 who were white (Table 3).

Table 3 UK Professors in HEIs by ethnicity (2015-2016)

ETHNICITY	NO.	%
White	13295	92.0
BME (total)	1150	8.0
Black	80	0.6
Asian	465	3.2
Chinese	275	1.9
Mixed	150	1.0
Other	180	1.3
Total	14445	100

Source: Equality in higher education: staff statistical report (ECU, 2017a)

Table 2 BME UK staff in HEIs by type of contract (2015-2016)

TYPE OF CONTRACT	WHITE (NO.)	WHITE (%)	BME (NO.)	BME (%)
Academic – open ended/permanent	84800	70.9	7910	66.3
Academic- fixed term	34725	29.1	4015	33.7
Total	119525	100	11925	100
Professional and support staff – open-ended/permanent	142350	87.7	12990	83.1
Professional and support staff – fixed term	19970	12.3	2640	16.9
Total	162315	100	15630	100

Source: Equality in higher education: staff statistical report (ECU, 2017a).

The data suggests that BME groups continue to be marginalised in HEIs; they are less likely to occupy senior managerial positions, less likely to be professors and less likely to be on the highest pay range compared to their white colleagues.

BME REPRESENTATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION: STUDENTS

In 2015/2016, 98.2% of all UK students disclosed their ethnicity of which 21.8% identified as BME. A total of 395,690 students identified as BME, a 51.1% increase from 2003/2004. The proportion of students who have seen the most growth has been black students with an increase from 4.4% from 2003/2004 to 6.7 percentage points in 2015/2016. A total of 42.4% of students identified as Asian (the majority of who were Indian and Pakistani, with only 5.1% from Bangladeshi backgrounds). A total of 30.9% identified as Black (the majority from black African background, 22.5% and 6.8% from black Caribbean backgrounds), 16.3% identified as Chinese and 3.9% as other (Table 4).

Table 4 BME UK students in HEIs by ethnicity (2015-2016)

ETHNICITY	NO.	%
White	1417300	78.2
BME (total)	395690	21.8
Black (total)	122150	6.7
Caribbean	26780	1.5
African	89010	4.9
Other	6360	0.4
Asian (total)	167935	9.3
Indian	61480	3.4
Pakistani	51285	2.8
Bangladeshi	20345	1.1
Other	34820	1.9
Chinese	15575	0.9
Mixed [9]	64350	3.5
Other (total)	25680	1.4
Arab	8230	0.5
Other	17450	1.0
Total	1812990	100

Source: Equality in higher education: students statistical report (ECU, 2017b)

In 2015/2016, white students were more likely to qualify for their first degree compared to BME students (91.3% compared to 87.6% BME). Black other students (80.6%) and black Caribbean (85.2%) students were less likely to qualify compared to Chinese (93.7%) and Indian (91.5%) students. White students were more likely to receive a first or 2.1 degree (78.4%) compared to BME groups (63.4%) which is a gap of 15.0 percentage points. Black students were less likely than white and other groups to receive a first or 2.1 degree (Table 5).

Table 5 UK students' first degree by ethnicity (first or 2:1) (2015-2016)

ETHNICITY	NO.	%
White	188600	78.4
BME (total)	41430	63.4
Black (total)	10415	531
Caribbean	2425	55.9
African	7530	52.4
Other	460	50.5
Asian (total)	18710	66.0
Indian	7620	70.7
Pakistani	5435	61.8
Bangladeshi	2360	64.6
Other	3295	64.0
Chinese	1855	72.2
Mixed	7980	72.6
Other (total)	2470	64.7
Arab	715	67.8
Other	1755	63.6
All qualifiers	230030	75.2

White students were more likely than BME students to study part-time (28.4% compared to 20.3%), this was the case for all degree levels except for research postgraduates. A total of 23% of BME students were studying for first degrees compared to 20.5% who were studying for taught postgraduate degrees. BME students were less likely to be studying for research postgraduate degrees (16.9%). White leavers (60.1%) were more likely to be in full-time employment six months after graduating compared to 53.3% of BME leavers.

The data suggests that BME students are less likely to leave higher education with a first class or 2:1 degree and they are less likely to be employed six months after graduating compared to their white peers. White students were more likely than other students to continue or complete their degrees (91.3%) compared to BME students (87.6). Black students were the least likely to continue with their undergraduate degrees (85.2% Black Caribbean) compared to 93.7% of Chinese and 91.5% of Indian entrants who continued or qualified for their degrees (Table 6).

Table 6 UK first degree entrants continuation/qualification by ethnicity (2015-2016)

ETHNICITY	NO.	%
White	268595	76.1
BME (total)	84235	23.9
Black (total)	25650	7.3
Caribbean	5570	1.6
African	18880	5.4
Other	1200	0.3
Asian (total)	36240	10.3
Indian	12375	3.5
Pakistani	11545	3.3
Bangladeshi	4890	1.4
Other	7435	2.1
Chinese	3245	0.9
Mixed	14025	4.0
Other (total)	5075	1.4
Arab	1740	0.5
Other	3335	0.9
All entrants	352830	100

Source: Equality in higher education: students statistical report (ECU, 2017b).

INEQUALITIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Institutional racism is defined as, 'The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people (MacPherson, 1999: 6.24).

Research has explored the existence and prevalence of institutional racism in HEIs (Ahmed, 2007; Bhopal, 2016; Bhopal, Brown and Jackson, 2015; Law et al, 2004)

and has pointed to the positioning of BME academics in HEIs as 'outsiders' in white spaces reserved for an elite, male middle class (Bhopal, 2016). A recent report carried out the by UCU (2016) focussed specifically on the experiences of black academics in higher education and found that the majority of respondents working in HEIs felt they had experienced some form of bullying and harassment from managers (72%). This was also the case in relation to experiencing bullying and harassment from colleagues; 69% of respondents said this. UCU argue that their survey, '…suggests that racism is present in our colleges and universities. It warns that there is a persistent glass ceiling for black employees across post-16 education and also that too many have experienced bullying at work. They have also found themselves excluded from decision-making and subject to cultural insensitivity. According to this survey, the barriers to progression are stronger in higher education than in further education' (2016: 12). A recent report published by the Trade Unions Congress (TUC, 2017) found that racism in the workplace is commonplace for BME workers with one in three workers reporting they have been bullied or harassed at work. The TUC state, 'BME workers too often experience racism at work, which is part of their everyday life. And more times than not it's hidden. There are more obvious racist incidents that take place. But also the more hidden types such as micro-aggressions, implicit bias and prejudice'. The TUC goes on to say, 'Due to racism in the labour market, BME workers are disproportionately concentrated in low paid jobs and sectors. They are often seen as poorly educated, inexperienced and aggressive if they speak up. So instead they choose to suffer in silence and feel isolated at work' (https://www.tuc.org.uk/blogs/ shining-spotlight-structural-racism-britain-today).

Furthermore, recent research suggests that BME academics are more likely to consider a move overseas compared to their White colleagues due to experiences of racism, exclusion and marginalisation in UK HEIs (Bhopal, Brown and Jackson, 2015; ECU, 2015).

Whilst equality and diversity policies are in place in many universities, there is evidence to suggest that such policies have little or no effect in challenging the under representation of BME academics at senior levels, or indeed the processes of marginalisation and discrimination they face (Bhopal, 2018; Pilkington, 2013). Furthermore, such policies have made little difference to the persistence of inequalities in universities for BME staff, particularly in relation to recruitment, promotion and addressing racist practices (Bhopal, 2016; Bhopal, Brown and Jackson, 2015; UCU, 2016). Recent research suggests significant change is needed in HEIs in which senior managers must consider strategically how they can move forward for greater inclusion of BME groups, particularly in senior and professorial roles (Bhopal, 2014; 2018).

BME students also continue to experience disadvantages in HEIs. Whilst there has been a significant increase in the numbers of BME students attending HEIs, inequalities continue to persist in terms of access to elite and Russell Group universities (Sundorph et al, 2017), degree outcomes (ECU, 2017b) and retention (SMF/UPP, 2018). Furthermore, this increase is not reflected in the representation of BME academic staff. Recent evidence suggests that as many as 16 Oxbridge colleges failed to offer any places to Black British applicants in 2015 (Guardian, 2017). Black students are also one and a half times more likely to drop out of university compared to their white

peers, the reasons many cite for this is racism, a bias towards white students and a lack of cultural connection to the curriculum. This has a further knock on effect in which Black students have worse labour market outcomes compared to those who go on to graduate (SMF/UPP, 2018).

As part of the Equality Act (2010) the Public Sector Equality Duty places a general duty on HEIs to have due regard in order to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations (Government Equalities Office, 2011). In order to be able to demonstrate due regard, HEIs must consider these aims when making decisions as employers and education providers, particularly when; 'developing, evaluating and reviewing policies; designing, delivering and evaluating services (including education provisions) and commissioning and procuring services from others (ECU, 2017c: 3). The ECU suggest that staff and students should be involved in these processes in order to, '...further aid institutions in prioritising and understanding the impact of the actions they take to meet the equality duty, as well as promoting an inclusive and responsive culture' (ECU, 2017c: 4). However, despite significant advances in equality policy making BME students and staff continue to experience racism, discrimination and exclusion in HEIs. In this report, we explore how the REC can address such inequalities.

RESEARCH AIMS

This study focuses on interviews with individuals involved with the REC and those working on diversity and equality (with a specific focus on race) in HEIs. It specifically explores their views on the REC, and the impact it has had on their approach to issues of equity and diversity, as well as whether it has contributed to good practice in their organisations. We found no research which has specifically explored the impact of the REC and the views of HEIs on such policy making. This project, therefore, is the first of its kind and represents a unique perspective on existing and emergent work on policy making on race equality in UK HEIs. Very little is known about the impact of such policy making and its effect on practices in higher education institutions.

The project aims were:

- to identify and examine aspects of good practice on race equality in awarded REC HEIs.

- to explore views of member and non-member institutions towards the REC and race equality

- to contribute to UCU policy making and future strategy on race equality in HEIs.

RESEARCH METHODS

This project utilised qualitative research methods designed to explore the impact of the REC in HEIs in England. We wanted to explore the different impact and effects of the REC in HEIs that had been successfully awarded the REC, those who were members (and expected to apply in the next three years) and gain an insight into HEIs who were not members of the REC but were working on diversity and equality (with a specific focus on race). We conducted 12 interviews with REC award holders, 22 interviews with members and 11 interviews with non-members. A total of 45 interviews were conducted. We were also interested in exploring whether type of institution had an effect on race equality, hence our sample consisted of universities which were Russell Group (research intensive), post-1992 and non-affiliated institutions.[10]

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Potential participants were initially identified by researching public information through each institution's web pages via the equality and diversity departments. Once initial contact was made with a relevant staff member, we contacted them with information about the research study and requested the contact details of staff members who had been involved in work on the REC (if applicable) or who focussed on race equality in the institution. Participants were given the opportunity to ask questions regarding the nature of the research and its intended outcomes. Once respondents agreed to participate, they were provided with the participant information sheet and a copy of the consent form. A mutually convenient time was established to conduct either a face to face or telephone interview.

ETHICS

Ethical approval was obtained from the University of Birmingham ethics committee. Interview participants were invited to take part via email correspondence and informed consent was obtained prior to all data collection. An information sheet and a consent form were attached to the email invitation (see Appendix 3). Participants returned copies of consent forms and the research was conducted in compliance with the Data Protection Act and University of Birmingham research policy. Electronic data

was stored on password protected computers only accessible by the researchers. All data has been treated as confidential and participants have remained anonymous. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

DATA ANALYSIS

Thirty four interviews took place via telephone and eleven face to face. All of the interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. The interview data was analysed by using a process of thematic analysis from which to generate themes which were categorised under particular topics and headings we were interested in (Roulston, 2001). We examined and focussed on the ways in which respondents spoke about their experiences in HEIs and analysed the meanings attributed to their experience of the REC. The codes and themes were cross checked by both researchers to enhance reliability and validity of the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). In the following sections we present the key findings to emerge from the data; each theme is explored using multiple direct quotations so that the voices and concerns of participants are clear and undiluted.

KEY FINDINGS

1. IMPLICATIONS OF RESOURCES FOR PARTICIPATION/ NON-PARTICIPATION

All institutions that participated in the study (regardless of whether they were award holders, members or non-members), said access to resources was a determining factor of whether they would participate in the REC application process or become a member. Non-member institutions were more likely to mention other areas of equality work they were participating in across the

institution. Many specifically referred to Athena Swan which took up a great deal of their time and resources which was unrecognised in staffing and workload calculations.

At the moment we have an institutional Athena Swan and we have three departments now that have their own awards or are renewing. [...] what I think has really delayed us in signing up for the REC is that the workload for Athena Swan is quite heavy, so we have actually somebody employed part-time just concentrating on Athena Swan, plus our data analyst does a lot of the work for Athena Swan and so really the delay in getting involved in the Race Equality Charter is whether we can manage the workload...where it would be a similar workload, if not higher. It's about managing the workload associated with it, because you know the workload for Athena Swan is quite extensive (Respondent 45, Non-member, Non-affiliated, Female, Black Caribbean).

For those institutions where both charter marks were a priority, the REC was often seen as secondary in terms of its importance and value to the university.

I think that...it has been a question of timing... with my post extra resource went in, but that has coincided with Athena Swan expanding and with us coming to a point where we have got to reapply in [XXX] and so the resource time has mainly gone into that, so I would say my time has mainly been eighty percent Athena Swan, maybe ten percent around race and race equality and the REC and ten percent other bits and pieces... (Respondent 39, Non-member, Post-1992, Female, White).

We are very resource-led at the university, we're not very cash rich at all [...] we

struggle at a basic level to do work around Athena Swan and therefore that's why the Race Equality Charter is not even on our radar, even though we understand its importance; it's us, it's not a lack of desire, it's purely a resource issue for all of these things. And as I said, we actually struggle to apply and submit for Athena Swan, so to add another thing on to that is just not possible (Respondent 43, Non-member, Post-1992, Female, British).

The data collection process and application for the REC (gathering data, conducting research and sourcing information such as data and statistics) was identified as a particular challenge and an area which required specific investment such as salaried staff to conduct the role or recognised allocated time deducted from a main role.

I would say that the data collection has been the most challenging aspect of what is required for the Race Equality Charter...it's been very time-consuming to collate the data and to get it in the way that is required for the submission. It's been challenging (Respondent 20, Member, Post-1992, Female, Asian Pakistani).

It was difficult internally to get data that we needed and partially that was because... probably on the student side it was to do with resource within the team who needed to mine for that information. So we capture a huge amount of data about students and again that's kind of got better, but at the time it was...accessing that data meant a lot of bespoke report writing and only a few people who could do it and they were being asked to do reports for all kinds of things, not just for this project (Respondent 9, Award Holder, Post-1992, Female, White British).

It is a lot of work [...] you've got to have the

people to crunch the numbers, so it's just sheer volume of work. Filling in the forms is okay, but then you need a team who are dedicated to it and they've got competing demands on their time. So there is a package of work that you just have to get done. We're lucky that we had some structures in place where we have an annual performance review system for our faculties and across the professional services across the institution...part of that is our HR annual performance review and we had a lot of that data in terms of promotions, in terms of student attainment, in terms of success of BME staff, so there was a bit of the jigsaw we already had, but it is work (Respondent 5, Award Holder, Russell Group, Male, White British).

There was an indication that whilst some progress was being made regarding the processes linked to applying for the REC, the onerous task of data collection often overshadowed the opportunity for staff to be creative and innovative with practical ideas and solutions for addressing race equality issues.

[...]there are a lot of good things that have come out in the questions of monitoring, evaluating, collecting data, which we never did in the past, so that's a big step forward. But what do we do with that data? So you monitor and evaluate, but what are the systems? Are you creating innovative, new things to address those issues and that's a big gap. You know people are building processes [...] but there is a vacuum on leadership, a vacuum on ideas (Respondent 12, Award Holder, Non-affiliated, Female, Indian Asian).

One particular issue that was often raised was staffing. If institutions were to invest in the REC this was an issue that needed serious consideration. Furthermore, changes in

staffing - either a reduction in staffing and/or a turnover in staffing - were identified as posing another difficulty in the process which often disrupted the impetus when applying for the REC.

I think when the charter programme was first started here there were a number of staff within equality and diversity and then it moved to a single person...so there has been a chequered history, I guess, in terms of who has been involved and who has been in the post...so without the dedicated resource to drive the action plan forward, that alongside a lot of other significant changes at the university I think have conflated and I am not clear about how far the action plan has been implemented (Respondent 10, Award Holder, Post-1992, Female, White other).

Key changes in staffing in relation to the self-assessment team often had a significant impact on the application and submission process.

[...] there are other issues that are arising all of the time, so you can't keep your eye on that ball all of the time and actually since our pro-vice chancellor left who was chairing that SAT to begin with it's been very very difficult because people have lost interest, they've left the university, we've had loads of people leave who were on hat team, so I have had to reconstruct a new team because we are going to be re-submitting in 2019 (Respondent 10, Award Holder, Post-1992, Female, White other).

We did meet regularly until a whole bunch of people started to leave, and then other things arose, so we had to write a new strategy, so that's the problem, I've got a really under resourced team and we just can't do everything here, so that's

really hard (Respondent 8, Award Holder, Post-1992, Female, White European).

Respondents emphasised the need for a dedicated staff team whose primary role was to work on issues of equality, diversity and inclusion across the institution, which was written as part of their job description and salaried role. Many mentioned the increase in the amount of data required to complete a REC application, there was an indication that institutions must invest in additional resources to provide adequate provision and support when applying for the REC.

We've just gone through a massive cost reduction exercise where we have actually made twenty percent of our support staff redundant, and we just don't have any flex in any of our structure, so we have absolutely nobody dedicated full-stop to equality and diversity, let alone to add on somebody who can take an active role in preparation of Athena Swan information [for example] (Respondent 43, Non-member, Post-1992, Female, British).

Overall, participants consistently identified that the investment of the REC was based on a commitment to race equality but also emphasised that they did not want the practical implications of completing a sub-mission to detract from the principles of the charter mark itself; and that the application process did not detract from the outcomes of the REC – specifically to address inequalities for staff and students

I think sometimes the application form itself becomes so much of a big job that it takes away from actually doing the doing. We spend a lot of time preparing for the self-assessment team meetings, you know getting them to get together and to discuss...

but we need to be mindful of the fact that the exercise itself... applying for the charter mark... isn't bigger than the outcome in terms of what you are trying to achieve. Are you making a difference to people on the ground? Are you changing their perceptions and the outcomes for them? Whereas it is very onerous when going through the application process (Respondent 20, Member, Post-1992, Female, Asian Pakistani).

2. INVESTMENT FROM SENIOR MANAGEMENT

Award holders specifically highlighted the significance of support from senior management in the application and submission process. In particular, staff who had demonstrated a personal commitment to and interest in ongoing work around race equality played a vital role in highlighting the importance of such work to staff in the whole institution.

I think one of the things I'd made a note of was about making the application and getting the agreement from the senior leadership team, from the vice chancellor...one of the key things was the first meeting we had, or prior to the first meeting, was the vice chancellor inviting all of the members to lunch and actually talking about this commitment and her personal commitment to the agenda. I think that was really important in terms of setting that marker and showing her commitment from the very beginning. That was a really good starting place for us in terms of moving forward, because then the rest of the university saw how important it was (Respondent 6, Award Holder, Russell Group, Male, Black British Caribbean).

I think it's really clear that the Vice Chancellor is absolutely clear on the importance of this and sees it as a matter of concern when

there are issues of poor success in promotions or lack of senior BME staff, so [they] really get that issue and is therefore driven and said this is something we're all committed to. So [the president] was really important and I think across the wider senior leadership team there's a consensus and then in our professional support services there's been a really strong commitment to this area as well (Respondent 5, Award Holder, Russell Group, Male, White British).

Institutions that had a dedicated member of staff and/or champions across the institution demonstrated the importance of a race equality agenda which was addressed openly with specific aims and outcomes.

[The decision] was very much driven by our head of equality and the senior sponsor by the time of the project who was the pro-vice chancellor who's not here anymore. But he was the sponsor for all things equality at that level and very committed to that agenda in particular, so it feels like it was kind of predominantly driven by a couple of very strong champions (Respondent 9, Award Holder, Post-1992, Female, White British).

Respondents also suggested that a recognition of the importance of race equality from senior management was vital in order that such work was not allocated to, or seen as the responsibility of BME staff – just because they were from a minority background.

The key thing that is making me anxious is making BAME[11] staff, particularly, lead the charge in tackling racial discrimination. I think that is not appropriate...for me it is the people in authority...so it's the Vice Chancellor, it's the executive and the board of governors... they are responsible for it and they are responsible for ensuring that the voices of BAME staff and students are heard by them-

selves and that action is taken (Respondent 10, Award Holder, Post-1992, Female, White other).

All I can say is, if the Race Equality Charter is not seen as a priority that is championed from the top level...I mean from Vice Chancellor level in my opinion...then I think if there isn't a champion from that level then I think it is very difficult to get the resources that you need (Respondent 44, Non-member, Female, Black Caribbean).

3. A CLEAR FRAMEWORK FOR FOCUS

Award holder institutions and member institutions consistently discussed a belief that the process of applying for the REC mark is just as important as achieving the mark itself. Participants indicated that the REC process offered a framework to enable them to focus their work around race equality.

Well firstly we need to do the work here because we want to be an excellent organisation in terms of inclusion, so that's our ambition and what we're going for, but in terms of getting the charter mark, the process of getting it will help us to focus, it will give us something to bring people together around, rather than something very specific. It's measurable, it's time-bound...we can actually concretely then measure what we have done when we have done it and we will be engaging with people, but the charter is a vehicle for achieving what we need to do, rather than the other way round (Respondent 10, Award Holder, Post-1992, Female, White other).

We were sort of doing a lot of ground work [...] and working with the PVC for equalities we developed a set of objectives, and it was very much evidence-based and we said we really do need to make a step change in terms of race equality. We've done this work so far, this is where we are, we need an approach that is more strategic and so we set objectives for staff and for students within that strategic framework and we said that it would be really great to have some kind of vehicle to drive forward the delivery of these objectives. We talked about the Race Equality Charter as a means of bringing all of this work together and having the strategic long-term view of race equality going forward, rather having a number of initiatives across different areas, but with sort of unifying framework and that very much influenced our decision to finally sign up to the Race Equality Charter (Respondent 28, Member, Post-1992, Female, White British and Black African Mixed Race).

Participants discussed how the REC could be used as a framework for long-term institutional change. The process of drawing up an action plan and a consistent cycle of evaluation against objectives and action points would offer a systematic approach to attitudinal and cultural change.

For me the biggest asset of working towards an application is actually doing systematic work where there is a framework that allows us to look at certain data, scrutinise the data, get the survey...so I think that, for me, is the biggest thing I am hoping to achieve. Applying for the REC comes as a result of all of this work, so I think it is important because the preparation for the application is the best way of changing the culture [...] it's not just the preparation, there is an action plan and there will be a renewal cycle, so we look at the actions and when we come to renew we have to look at the actions that we have achieved. So it is a systematic way of changing the culture of the institution (Respondent 18, Member, Russell Group, Female, Mixed Heritage background).

Well as I said I'm not hung up about the badge particularly, and I don't think any of us are...it's simply something that gives us a nice focus for a set of work that we would like to do, but which we might not have done in such a systematic way if we didn't have the discipline of having to apply for something. [...] it was very helpful to have an external impetus and also the notion that there is some support out there with people going through the same processes (Respondent 33, Member, Non-affiliated, Male, White British).

The framework for the REC itself was seen as a positive enabler of change – one that gave individuals the legitimacy to have difficult conversations about race and racism to address the 'fear of race'. This was also part of the process of forming a self-assessment team to discuss openly ways in which institutions could address such inequalities.

I mentioned before about having that framework...and everyone has a sense of what we're trying to do...it's easier to have that conversation about things and then in terms of that commitment we can say these are our actions, this is what people are going to be looking at and working towards achieving it. I think it brings it together really well, so I think in terms of showing people we are engaging, we are interested in doing something is really important (Respondent 6, Award Holder, Russell Group, Male, Black British Caribbean).

Non-member institutions could also see the potential benefits of engaging in the process of applying for the REC.

It's that idea of being strategic, giving it some really strong leadership from the top and actually embedding and drawing people together...if we don't use the REC as a frame-

work, I don't know how you would...and the challenges as such...for this university, you know, no different to any other HE institution... it's a challenge across the board...and things are not organically getting better, so if you are going to address the attainment gap, if you are going to address the incredibly low numbers of BME staff in any position, let alone in positions of seniority, I think it just seems to me that you have no alternative. That's how I feel about it (Respondent 39, Non-member, Post-1992, Female, White).

4. ADDRESSING THE BME ATTAINMENT GAP AND UNDERSTANDING THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF BME STUDENTS

All of the institutions in the study had either conducted research on the BME attainment gap or expressed a desire to do so. They recognised the importance of addressing the issue as well as the need to understand the lived experiences of BME students at their own institutions. They discussed this as being linked to a range of aspects; types of support available for students, curriculum and resources; extra-curricular opportunities, living arrangements and additional responsibilities (such as caring); as well as the diversity of the city or town where the institution was located. Some examples of the different work institutions were engaged in included:

We've looking at the student experience, but particularly from a BAME student perspective and development of curriculum materials in line with inclusive practice. Personal tutor programme...looking at the uptake of academic skills support for different groups...one of the things is that BAME students very often have the intellectual aptitude to do extremely well, but often grammar is something that lets people down, but in subjects like Law which is

quite popular with BAME students that can be a significant issue. So putting in place... we have study skills support obviously... but making it very subject specific as well to give people that support. Networking, again...the opportunity to get real world business experience and make networks. Clubs and societies through the students' union, so as you can see there is a really broad range of stuff **(Respondent 8, Award Holder, Post-1992, Female, White European).**

We have done some work around the attainment gap where we had a summit where we gathered all of the key stakeholders together to talk about it. This resulted in us getting some HEFCE money and we are using that HEFCE[12] money now to train staff to make them aware of the problem to engage them in ways to help alleviate the problem across the university **(Respondent 1, Award Holder, Russell Group, Female, Black African).**

One practical step included setting up a BME student success group.

On the student side we have got a BME student success group, which is a staff student committee, which is 50% staff, 50% students that reports into our student educational experience committee and that gives a very strong voice in the right direction in all kinds of aspects of the university life, but is specifically around student experience and achievement. That's going really well. My colleague chairs that group from learning and teaching **(Respondent 9, Award Holder, Post-1992, Female, White British).**

Respondents also mentioned specific issues to address teaching and curriculum content in relation to the lack of BME staff. This may be related to the 'Why is my Curriculum White' campaign which was introduced by University College London (UCL) in 2015 to address the lack of diversity on reading lists and course content (see https://www.nus.org.uk/en/news/why-is-my-curriculum-white/).

Talking specifically about students [...] how much our culture at the moment...you know looking at the makeup of our staff...is absolutely delivered through a particular lens and the impact of white privilege. So that's something that we're very very conscious, you know that our workforce is 94 percent White British, so that does impact [...] on how we design the curriculum, how we deliver the curriculum. It impacts on day to day interactions with students and staff and so culture is a big factor that we need to address, but also some practical things that we need to bear in mind as well...making sure that the experience of ethnic minority students is considered when we're designing our curriculum so that they can actually see a diverse range of people cited in terms of academic literature, that the literature itself is looking at a subject area through an ethnically diverse lens where appropriate and where possible, so that when our BAME students go into a lecture theatre or a seminar session there's somebody teaching them that they can relate to, that can be a role model for them and who they can aspire to be **(Respondent 28, Member, Post-1992, Female, White British and Black African Mixed Race).**

Specifically addressing the BME attainment gap was a key factor that needed to be addressed for all institutions, particularly in relation to practical measures with key outcomes.

We have quite a well-funded widening participation action team, which is heavily focused on the BME student attainment issue, and so there is a lot of activity around

that with Heads of Schools represented on that group and there's a lot of initiatives at school level sort of coming out, focusing on race equality and attainment issues. And there's a lot of money that is coming through for training academic staff later in the year and having that as an ongoing programme of training that is building on support...it will be focused on race equality and its relationship to the curriculum and the experience of those students. There is also investment in race equality initiatives [that we didn't have before] in relation to the widening participation team and investment in the equality and diversity team, which isn't massive, but it's bigger than it has been before (Respondent 25, Member, Post-1992, Female, White).

We did look at the attainment figures from our equality and diversity stats and that's where we thought we would look at the retention and progression of BME students. So that has been picked up as an action for a group that sits outside equality and diversity, so that definitely has been identified. There's not been any work done yet, but I think the aim is for that to be there this year (Respondent 42, Non-member, Female, British).

However, despite HEIs being proactive in positively addressing the BME attainment gap, participants highlighted the negative attitudes of staff towards BME students. This was also related to a lack of understanding of particular issues that may impact on their experiences at HEIs, as well as the impact of intersecting identities (such as gender and class).

I think there are attitudinal issues between academics and what they believe their black and minority ethnic students can achieve and I think that might have an impact. I think there needs to be a better consideration of the lives of the students of colour in that they may have or they are more likely to have a part-time job whilst studying, they are more likely to have family responsibilities, they are more likely to commute, so if that's the case what are we doing to engage with those students? If they haven't got...and again I don't think this is just about BME students, I think this is about students full-stop... if their academic skills are not up to standard that more care should be taken about developing those academic skills (Respondent 10, Award Holder, Post-1992, Female, White other).

So the point in the REC and the principles is about intersectionality...so I am a big advocate for this because I think it's something we fail to recognise...the intersectionality of the problem. So class and race. If you don't look at that, you're missing the point. Different racial communities, different racial backgrounds change the sort of attainment struggles that people have. Different experiences of higher education within your family and the neighbourhoods that you come from, so I think once you look at some of those things, you then you work out how to provide support to enable those students (Respondent 5, Award Holder, Russell Group, Male, White British).

5. RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND PROGRESSION OF BME STAFF

All participants mentioned using the REC as part of a long term process to address the lack of representation of BME staff at all levels, but particularly at senior levels (for academic and professional staff). In relation to the initial recruitment of BME staff, work to address and ensure fairer recruitment processes was highlighted. This included the introduction of unconscious bias training and/or work to reduce bias throughout the recruitment process.

We have been going quite heavily on a number of things - reducing bias in recruitment, for example. So we have literally put virtually every member of staff through unconscious bias training, we've rolled out cultural and racial awareness, we are working with the different academic schools and other professional services in relation to those different aspects (Respondent 10, Award Holder, Post-1992, Female, White other).

I think we can do a lot more in terms of training staff...we've done some unconscious bias training with the governors and with senior staff it's quite interesting how some take it. I think better equality and diversity training that doesn't entrench people's perceptions would be helpful (Respondent 41, Non-member, Post-1992, Female, White).

One key area that was identified was support for BME staff when applying for jobs to increase their chances of being shortlisted, as well as ensuring that BME staff were aware of different opportunities for training in their HEIs which would also increase their chances of promotion and career progression.

We have looked at our recruitment and see that actually in terms of our application rates within our professional support services a fifth of our applications are from BME communities, but it's actually the shortlisting stage where there's been a real issue and we've been looking at that and wondering what's going on there? So we put in a pilot looking at offering additional support, so put in an application and they put that they are from an ethnic minority and then we have a box that says if you want to talk to an HR adviser about how to present yourself in terms of the application form and finding out more, then you can do. So we're just trialling that at the moment (Respondent 6,

Award Holder, Russell Group, Male, Black British Caribbean).

Staff promotion and progression were also identified as a key issue that needed to be addressed for BME staff.

Yeah, I think there are differences, you know in staff progression there are differences and I think many BME staff, particularly in universities do feel that they have to prove themselves more or work harder to get to different levels. It's very hard to form those networks and promotion committees are still quite biased in the way they see things and there is still a lot of work to be done on those levels I think. I just don't think...you know you're just scratching the surface and there's a lot to be done in the sense of how these processes can manifest themselves in creating discrimination. They're still not as open as we would like them to be (Respondent 12, Award Holder, Non-affiliated, Female, Indian Asian).

[...] the approach that we have taken is not just looking at one particular area of best practice, it is much more about taking a whole student and staff life-cycle approach... The same with staff, we're looking at the pipeline and looking at putting in place specific interventions, not just looking at recruiting staff, but also retention, at why people leave, looking at exit interview information, so we can address any retention issues; looking at career progression and looking at academic and professional services staff from ethnic minority backgrounds compared to white British colleagues. So it is very much that whole life-cycle, that whole pipeline approach, and I think it is that that will be one of our critical achievements by the time we submit (Respondent 28, Member, Post-1992, Female, White British and Black African Mixed Race).

Other practical steps that were identified by research participants included examining how staff diversity could be embedded within all the HEIs practices and policy making.

We have introduced an equality objective, which is to increase the number of minority ethnic staff at senior levels and we are starting to see some movement on that; even increasing the proportion of minority ethnic staff. That's definitely moved over the past three years since 2015, so actually we're starting to see there have been things where we have used data to inform what we needed to do, but it has made incremental changes for the positive (Respondent 10, Award Holder, Post-1992, Female, White other).

6. CULTURAL AND BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE

Participants highlighted the importance of the REC and its principles being linked to real institutional change; the importance of the principles being embedded in the whole culture and structure of the organisation in order to have long-term impact on the experiences of BME staff and students. However, there were some concerns that the REC could be used for 'gaming' purposes for competitive advantage over other institutions in the sector, rather than addressing racial inequalities.

The danger becomes that it is either a stick used to beat us or a box ticked that allows us to take the foot off the gas in terms of thinking about race equality. So I don't mean to sound negative, because I think it has been a good galvanizing award and it's made us go "okay, we've got the race charter", but let's make this meaningful and make sure we're doing everything the action plan says we should be doing. So I think it's been really

helpful and I think the institution is really pleased with it. But we have to make sure it doesn't mean complacency and also allow people to go "how come you've got the race equality charter mark, but how come you're still doing this?"....for us to go absolutely, you're right...do you know what I mean? It shouldn't close down conversations (Respondent 5, Award Holder, Russell Group, Male, White British).

[...] we want to create a culture that is inclusive for all staff and students and we feel that looking at some of the outcomes that link to race equality that isn't the case at the moment. So we very much see it as a way to help to transform our culture and our university and also to position us for the future because obviously demographic change is going to mean that people from ethnic minority groups are going to form a larger proportion of our student and staff populations and we need to ensure we are a university that is welcoming of ethnic diversity and we need to ensure [...] in terms of our staff ensure that we can recruit and develop the best talent and we can only do that by recruiting people from a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds (Respondent 28, Member, Post-1992, Female, White British and Black African Mixed Race).

There was also an emphasis on the positive work taking place across different institutions and geographical locations and the importance of sharing good practice in order that the sector itself could be at the forefront of instigating change. The REC was identified as a fundamental move in this direction.

I think we've got a good story to tell about the fact that we've been bold in saying right our equality objectives are going to be really SMART; we're going to say we're not just

going to address the attainment gap, but we want to, through a strategic objective say that we are going to address the under representation of black and minority ethnic staff at senior level, because that means we are pushing everybody across the institution to think about what it is that they're doing about recruitment, but also about career development and advancement and I think that's really good (Respondent 10, Award Holder, Post-1992, Female, White other).

I think it's beyond the charter mark. I think one of the things we have talked about a lot is that this isn't an 'award', this is about all of the work we will do to get the award and the benefit of undertaking that work for our staff, students and a broader culture. And I think that it is really...our aim is that we do see improvements in our outcomes, we do see a positive change in behaviours and culture. The award is great because it recognises that change, that transformation over time, but I suppose signing up to the charter and participating in the submission is going a step further than doing that work internally, it sends out that external message about our commitment (Respondent 28, Member, Post-1992, Female, White British and Black African Mixed Race).

I think the REC is really significant and I think it's probably one of the best frameworks I've seen and that is across all sectors. [...] I like the fact that there is an emphasis on whole-university change, that we're not just looking at students; we're looking at students, staff, culture, academic staff, professional services staff; we're looking at the university's relationship with the local community, those are really great areas that we should be looking at because I think if we don't take that holistic approach then we can only ever deliver sort of incremental change. But I think the emphasis with the

REC is absolutely on transformational change that is needed to improve some of the outcomes that we've seen when analysing our data - both at [the institution] but also at sector level, it is an essential programme that I really hope Advance HE will encourage in its current form going forward (Respondent 28, Member, Post-1992, Female, White British and Black African Mixed Race).

7. ADDRESSING THE 'FEAR OF RACE'

Many respondents from BME backgrounds mentioned that they felt the REC would enable individuals to discuss issues of race and racism openly. A culture which encouraged a 'fear of race' was paramount in HEIs and discussing race was seen as a taboo subject. Furthermore, when addressing issues of equality and diversity there was an assumption from staff that this was the responsibility of BME staff, rather than all staff.

I think also the thing that I find when it comes to things about race...it's seen as an ethnic minority issue, so people who are of the majority groups who are white don't see race as something they necessarily champion. So if you see things to do with race or that sort of thing, it's always the ethnic minority people who are really involved in it and I don't think it kind of reaches to the wider white population that race is also something that is their responsibility. You know race isn't just about black people or Asian people or Chinese people, everybody is sort of racialised in one way or the other. But it's kind of left to people of the ethnic minorities to sort of champion race issues (Respondent 44, Non-member, Post-1992, Female, Black Caribbean).

Respondents also discussed their own lived experiences of being a minority in predom-

inantly white institutions which was key to how issues of race and racism needed to be addressed.

It's the experience. It's walking into the room being the only non-white person in one hundred and fifty people. So it's not just about the numbers on the page, it's about the lived experience. I know, we talked a lot about this in terms of gender and women, and being the only woman in the room and the feeling that that impacts on your performance and your ability to influence decision making - I think that is equally felt when you are the only person from an ethnic minority background of over one hundred and fifty people. Yeah, it's an important area that we need to be concerned with **(Respondent 28, Member, Post-1992, Female, White British and Black African Mixed Race).**

Individuals who worked in institutions where they had already submitted their REC applications and/or had been awarded discussed the positive outcomes of this process. The process had encouraged dialogue about challenges of race equality that were not often addressed in day to day discussions of equality and diversity. They highlighted that the process of applying for the REC mark was key in relation to foregrounding race in order to making significant changes to achieve impact at their institutions.

I think what will be really interesting will be the actions that come out of the data...that show what the key things we should be focusing on over the next couple of years...and you know engaging with lots of different stakeholders; making sure that this isn't a one-off thing and 'oh, I've done that'...looking at a new way of working and making sure race is taken into account, whereas previously in years gone by it has

been hidden and not talked about. So one of the really good things about the Race Equality Charter is that we're having a discussion about race that we have never really had before... as openly and as honestly **(Respondent 20, Member, Post-1992, Female, Asian Pakistani).**

CONCLUSIONS

Our research highlights a widespread recognition in HEIs that applying for the REC was an exercise and activity that could not be seen in isolation, rather it is an attitude something that should be embedded within the cultural organisation of the institution which is identified and accepted as a key objective by all staff (from senior management to professional and support staff). All respondents in member and non-members institutions stressed their concerns around resources and funding allocated to staff who were involved with the REC – often this burden fell on the shoulders of the Diversity and Equality staff who were already inundated in their day to day roles. Consequently, all respondents (regardless of their institution) emphasised the importance of having a dedicated staff member whose main role was identified as one which championed race and race equality. This indicated a recognition and allocation of specific time as part of their workload which focussed on undertaking the task (which was sometimes onerous and very time consuming) of applying for the REC. Award holders specifically mentioned the importance of the commitment (both in terms of time and resource allocation) from senior managers and leaders in the HEIs, in championing and applying for the REC. Without this commitment, award holding institutions felt they would not have been successful in achieving the REC.

Some HEIs, particularly award holders and

members, indicated that the REC provided them with an opportunity to formalise and highlight the already important work they were doing regarding race and equality in HEIs. At the same time, it included some evaluation of their work in areas for improvement and ways forward which were part of their REC re-application for the award. Even those HEIs who were not successful in achieving the REC still recognised the value of having developed an action plan which included specific outcomes and objectives addressing race inequality in their institutions.

The main barriers mentioned by non-members in relation to applying for the REC or becoming a member of the REC was staff time and resources including the loss of key individuals. All respondents were aware and keen to stress that they were working on acknowledging and finding innovative ways in which to address the BME student attainment gap. In terms of BME staff experience, respondents mentioned that greater attention was needed to address the diversity (or lack of) of recruitment, retention and promotion panels, with some suggesting a target system. Others suggested that mentoring for BME staff was also a factor that could contribute to greater support for BME academics in HEIs in order that they could be supported for promotion in their career trajectories.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing on our findings, we suggest the following recommendations. However, we are aware that what is primarily needed is a significant cultural and attitudinal shift in HEIs regarding the contribution BME academics make to HEIs, and an acknowledgment and recognition of institutional racism and structural disadvantages in HEIs. The following recommendations are a way

forward, but pose significant challenges for HEIs, particularly in relation to how such changes can be implemented. However, in our optimism we envisage the introduction of the REC will significantly affect how HEIs address equity, diversity and inequalities in their organisations. We recommend the following:

1. Linking the REC to UKRI[13] funding which will ensure that all HEIs seriously consider investing in the REC.

2. Formalising and making unconscious bias training mandatory for all senior staff in HEIs (level 6 or equivalent). We particularly recommend mandatory unconscious bias training for all staff involved in recruitment and promotion panels. In addition, this should include training on the recognition and awareness of white privilege. We also suggest that unconscious bias training is filtered through and embedded in all training provided by HEIs (e.g. in relation to the Research Excellence Framework and continued professional staff development) rather than in isolation. Furthermore, staff should receive regular, updated annual unconscious bias training (it should not be seen as a one off or tick box exercise).

3. All HEIs have a senior member of staff (such as a pro-vice chancellor) whose main responsibility it is to ensure that race equality policy is implemented – this role should be separate and different from that of Equality and Diversity officers. This would demonstrate a clear commitment from HEIs in their investment in race equality (both financially and staff allocation).

4. All HEIs (regardless of whether they are award holders or members of the REC)

must be required to provide annual reviews which show how they have addressed the BME attainment gap, and the strategies they have used to improve it. We suggest UCAS[14] re-evaluate name blind applications for student admissions to counter bias in the application process to ensure greater representation of BME groups in Russell Group and elite HEIs, and a target system for the numbers of BME students attending elite and Russell group institutions. We also suggest that the OfS ring fence funding in their access agreements to address the BME attainment gap.

5. All HEIs (regardless of whether they are award holders or members of the REC) must be required to provide annual statements and reviews of how they have addressed the under representation of BME academics in senior managerial roles. We suggest a target system to ensure that universities address this specific issue.

6. A specific focus on the professional development of staff in relation to the availability of opportunities (such as secondments, temporary promotions and other training opportunities which would advance their careers) greater support for BME staff on temporary short term research only contracts to ensure continuity of employment and transfer to research and teaching contracts (there is evidence to suggest that some BME groups are more likely to be on short term research only contracts compared to their white colleagues (ECU, 2017a).

7. All HEIs to recognise that the category BME is a crude composition that needs to be broken down when HEIs are considering targeted action. Different minoritized groups experience very different patterns of success and failure (as identified in this report). Therefore, the most useful and necessary approaches will be different for individual groups who are part of the BME category, in different HEIs.

8. National governmental (rather than individual HEIs making their own decisions) policies be introduced in line with our recommendations above, in order that all HEIs are held accountable to their actions when addressing race inequality in their organisations – rather than simply those who are interested and passionate about equality.

9. AdvanceHE[15] reassess the requirements for applying for the REC (data sources, questionnaires, statistics) and consider introducing a gradation/scale of application stages. In order to achieve the REC institutions must pass/address the requirements of one stage before passing on to the next. This would ensure that institutions are only collecting data relevant to a specific stage in the application, in order that the REC is not seen as too burdensome or onerous and may encourage more institutions to become members and ultimately apply for the REC. This should also include an automatic sharing of good practice by AdvanceHE to members when it is identified.

Reaching each milestone would be clearly focussed on one issue, which would need to be addressed before progressing to the next stage. The gradation could include:

Grade/stage/year1 – addressing REC in relation to staff

Grade/stage/year 2 – addressing REC in relation to students

Grade/stage/year 3 – addressing cultural and institutional change (awarded REC)

We also recommend AdvanceHE consider department/faculty REC awards in order that individual departments/ faculties can claim ownership of the award, particularly in cases where they are already involved in good practice and equality work with BME staff and students.

10. One key recommendation from respondents was the development of a good practice guide that can be used across institutions and regions to ensure that good practice is shared. In Appendix 4 we have included examples of good practice as outlined by respondents.

11. Finally HEIs must encourage safe approaches in starting and developing conversations about race which address racism and white privilege, in which racial inequality is seen as a priority to be addressed rather than challenged. In order to address the 'fear of race' the REC should allow staff to be encouraged to have open debate to change practices and outcomes for the inclusion of BME staff.

NOTES

[1] In UCU the word black is used in a political sense to describe people who self-identify as being from a visible minority (more usually from an Asian or African heritage) with a shared experience or understanding of discrimination

[2] In this report when we refer to staff this includes academic and professional staff unless otherwise stated.

[3] UK Research and Innovation is the main funding body in the UK and has a budget of £60 billion to fund research in HEIs (see https://www.ukri.org/).

[4] Service is the central organisation which operates the university admissions system in Britain. In a 2015 trial of 6 universities using name-blind applications, UCAS decided that it would not go ahead and introduce this as the evidence did not suggest that making names increases the admissions process for marginalised groups (UCAS, 2017).

[5] The Office for Students are an independent public body that reports to parliament through the Department of Education (DfE). They regulate HEI providers in England on behalf of students (see https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/about/what-we-do/).

[6] AdvanceHE was introduced in March 2018, it brings together the work of the ECU, Leadership Foundation and the Higher Education Academy into one organisation to address issues of inclusion and equality (https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/about-us)

[7] For this study the term Black and Minority ethnic (BME) is used to describe those from Black British, Black African, British Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi, Chinese and those from other non-White backgrounds, as used in the 2011 Census. We are aware of the limitations of the term, particularly that BME individuals are not a homogenous group.

[8] Science, technology, engineering, maths and medicine.

[9] The ECU statistical report does not break down the mixed category for students, as it does for staff.

[10] The Russell Group consists of 24 member institutions of UK research-intensive universities. Post-1992 institutions are former polytechnics awarded university status after 1992. Non-affiliated institutions did not fall under either of the two categories above and/or do not align themselves with any formal groupings of HEIs in the UK.

[11] Black, Asian and minority ethnic.

[12] The Higher Education Funding Council for England created and sustained the conditions for a leading education sector by providing specific funding and guidance. It closed in March 2018 and has been subsumed under the Office for Students and UKRI.

[13] UK Research and Innovation operates across the UK with a budget of £60 billion to fund research in UK HEIs (see https://www.ukri.org/).

[14] Universities and Colleges Admissions Service is the central organisation which operates the university admissions system in Britain. In a 2015 trial of six universities using name-blind applications, UCAS

decided that it would not introduce this as the evidence did not suggest that name blinding applications affected the admissions process for marginalised groups (UCAS, 2017).

[15] AdvanceHE was introduced in March 2018, it brings together the work of the ECU, Leadership Foundation and the Higher Education Academy into one organisation to address issues of inclusion and equality (https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/about-us).

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APPENDIX 1: HEI DETAILS

UNI ID	REC STATUS	ASC STATUS	TYPE OF INSTITUTION	NO. OF INTERVIEWS	TYPE OF INTERVIEWS
RG1	Award Holder - Bronze	Silver (institutional)	Russell Group	2	2 in person
RG2	Award Holder - Bronze	Bronze (institutional)	Russell Group	2	2 in person
RG3	Award Holder - Bronze	Bronze (institutional)	Russell Group	2	2 in person
P1	Award Holder - Bronze	Bronze (institutional)	Post-1992	1	1 phone
P2	Award Holder - Bronze	Bronze (institutional)	Post-1992	1	1 phone
P3	Award Holder - Bronze	Bronze (institutional)	Post-1992	2	2 in person
NA1	Award Holder - Bronze	Bronze (institutional)	Non-affiliated	2	1 in person 1 phone
RG4	Member	Silver (institutional)	Russell Group	1	1 phone
P4	Member	Silver (institutional)	Post-1992	2	2 phone
RG5	Member	Bronze (institutional)	Russell Group	2	2 phone
RG6	Member	Bronze (institutional)	Russell Group	2	2 phone
P5	Member	Bronze (institutional)	Post-1992	2	2 phone
P6	Member	Bronze (institutional)	Post-1992	2	2 phone
P7	Member	Bronze (institutional)	Post-1992	1	1 phone
P8	Member	Bronze (institutional)	Post-1992	3	3 phone
P9	Member	Bronze (institutional)	Post-1992	3	3 phone
RG7	Member	Member – not awarded	Russell Group	2	2 phone
NA2	Member	Non-member	Non-affiliated	2	2 phone
RG8	Non-member	Bronze (institutional)	Russell Group	1	1 phone
RG9	Non-member	Bronze (institutional)	Russell Group	3	3 phone
P10	Non-member	Bronze (institutional)	Post-1992	2	2 in person
P11	Non-member	Bronze (institutional)	Post-1992	2	2 phone
NA3	Non-member	Bronze (institutional)	Non-affiliated	1	1 phone
P12	Non-member	Non-member	Post-1992	2	2 phone

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW DETAILS

UNIQUE ID (EG NUMBER OR ANONYMISED NAME)	UNI ID	REC STATUS (AWARD HOLDER/ MEMBER/ NON-MEMBER)	TYPE OF INSTITUTION	ROLE	ETHNICITY	GENDER
Respondent 1	RG1	Award Holder	Russell Group	Co-chair of Race Equality Steering Group	Black African	Female
Respondent 2	RG1	Award Holder	Russell Group	Co-chair of Race Equality Steering Group	Black British Caribbean	Female
Respondent 3	RG2	Award Holder	Russell Group	Diversity and Inclusion Project Officer	British Pakistani	Female
Respondent 4	RG2	Award Holder	Russell Group	Diversity and Inclusion Consultant	White British	Male
Respondent 5	RG3	Award Holder	Russell Group	Pro Vice Chancellor	White British	Male
Respondent 6	RG3	Award Holder	Russell Group	Head of Equality Diversity and Inclusion	Black British Caribbean	Male
Respondent 7	P1	Award Holder	Post-1992	Self-Assessment Team Chair	Mixed race dual heritage	Female
Respondent 8	P2	Award Holder	Post -1992	Head of Equality & Diversity	European White	Female
Respondent 9	P3	Award Holder	Post -1992	Associate Director for Learning & Teaching	White British	Female
Respondent 10	P3	Award Holder	Post -1992	Head of Equality Diversity & Inclusion	White other	Female
Respondent 11	NA1	Award Holder	Non-affiliated	Equality & Diversity Officer	Chinese	Female
Respondent 12	NA1	Award Holder	Non-affiliated	Senior Lecturer	Indian Asian	Female
Respondent 13	RG4	Member	Russell Group	Equality & Diversity Consultant REC Coordinator	White – other Polish	Female
Respondent 14	RG5	Member	Russell Group	Deputy Pro Vice Chancellor for Equalities	White Irish	Female
Respondent 15	RG5	Member	Russell Group	Equality & Diversity Adviser	Chinese	Male

Respondent 16	RG6	Member	Russell Group	Head of Assurance	White Welsh	Female
Respondent 17	RG6	Member	Russell Group	Organisational and Staff Development Manager	White	Female
Respondent 18	RG7	Member	Russell Group	Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Manager	Mixed heritage background	Female
Respondent 19	RG7	Member	Russell Group	Co-Director of Faculty Development	White	Male
Respondent 20	P4	Member	Post-1992	Equality Lead	Asian Pakistani	Female
Respondent 21	P4	Member	Post -1992	Deputy Chair of the REC SAT	White British	Male
Respondent 22	P5	Member	Post-1992	Equality and Diversity Manager	White British	Female
Respondent 23	P5	Member	Post-1992	Senior Research Delivery Support Partner	Black Caribbean	Female
Respondent 24	P7	Member	Post-1992	Equality & Diversity Officer	White	Female
Respondent 25	P8	Member	Post-1992	Equality & Diversity Manager	White	Female
Respondent 26	P8	Member	Post-1992	Associate Pro Vice Chancellor	White British	Male
Respondent 27	P8	Member	Post-1992	Equality Charters Adviser	Asian British	Female
Respondent 28	P9	Member	Post-1992	Head of Equality & Diversity	White British & BlackAfrican Mixed Race	Female
Respondent 29	P9	Member	Post-1992	Head of Research	White British	Female
Respondent 30	P9	Member	Post-1992	Head of Student Research and Evaluation	White	Female
Respondent 31	P6	Member	Post-1992	Equality & Diversity Adviser	White	Male
Respondent 32	P6	Member	Post-1992	Deputy Chair of self-assessment team	Black	Female
Respondent 33	NA2	Member	Non-affiliated	Deputy Vice Chancellor	White British	Male
Respondent 34	NA2	Member	Non-affiliated	Associate Head of School – Learning and Teaching	White British	Male

Respondent 35	RG8	Non-member	Russell Group	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager	White	Female
Respondent 36	RG9	Non-member	Russell Group	Head of Equality & Diversity	British Pakistani	Female
Respondent 37	RG9	Non-member	Russell Group	Deputy Chair Staff Race Equality Forum	British Asian	Male
Respondent 38	RG9	Non-member	Russell Group	Chair of Staff Race Equality Forum	Asian– Sri Lankan	Female
Respondent 39	P10	Non-member	Post-1992	Equality & Diversity Adviser	White	Female
Respondent 40	P10	Non-member	Post-1992	Equality Manager	White British	Male
Respondent 41	P12	Non-member	Post-1992	Chief Compliance Officer	White	Female
Respondent 42	P12	Non-member	Post-1992	HR Manager	Asian	Female
Respondent 43	P11	Non-member	Post-1992	Head of HR	British	Female
Respondent 44	P11	Non-member	Post-1992	Equality Officer for	Black Caribbean	Female
Respondent 45	NA3	Non-member	Non-affiliated	Equality & Diversity Manager	Black Caribbean	Female

APPENDIX 3: ETHICS DOCUMENTS

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET FOR INTERVIEW RESPONDENTS

Study Title: Investigating higher education institutions and their views on the Race Equality Charter (REC)

Researchers: Professor Kalwant Bhopal and Clare Pitkin

Please read this information carefully before deciding to take part in this research. If you are happy to participate you will be asked to sign a consent form before participating in an interview.

What is the research about?
This study is about exploring your views on the Race Equality Charter. It is particularly interested in examining aspects of good practice in higher education institutions. It will use interviews to explore what can be learnt in relation to policy making regarding race in higher education, as well as contribute to inclusive policy making in this area.

Why am I being asked to take part?
We have approached you because you are part of the Diversity and Equality team/self-assessment team and your institution either applied for the Race Equality Charter or is intending to apply in the next 3 years. Your participation is entirely voluntary.

What will I have to do if I take part?
We would like you to take part in a short interview about your experiences of the Race Equality Charter. The interview will be digitally recorded and the data transcribed by the researcher who will be conducting the interview. Only the principal researcher and research assistant will have access to the data and the data will be used (with your consent) for future publications from the study.

Are there any benefits in my taking part?
By taking part you will become more aware of your perspectives on the Race Equality Charter.

Collectively, all information gathered will be of benefit to universities as the information will help to provide a better understanding of how universities tackle issues of diversity and equality.

Are there any risks involved?
In taking part there is no risk greater than those risks faced in everyday life. As only a small number of universities are taking part in this study, it may be possible your university could be identified, however we will endeavour to ensure we anonymise your university.

Will my participation be confidential?
We comply with the Data Protection Act and our own University policy on data management and storage. All information will remain confidential as no participant names will be attached to it. All data will be stored on a password protected computer only accessible to the researchers. Your details will not be shared with any third parties.

What happens if I change my mind?
You have the right to withdraw at any time up to one month after you have participated without your legal rights being affected. There is no penalty for withdrawing and there will be no ill feeling. You may email the research team if you decide to withdraw.

What happens if something goes wrong?
In the unlikely case of concern or complaint, you should contact the chair of our ethics committee.

Where can I get more information?
If you would like to ask any questions about this research please get in touch with the principal investigator of the study:

Professor Kalwant Bhopal, School of Education, University of Birmingham K.Bhopal@bham.ac.uk

CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEW PARTICIPATION

STUDY TITLE: Investigating higher education institutions and their views on the Race Equality Charter (REC)

NAME OF RESEARCHERS: Professor Kalwant Bhopal and Clare Pitkin

Please sign next to each box to indicate that you have read and understood the statement

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and that I have had an opportunity to ask questions.	
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without my legal rights being affected. Should I wish to withdraw from the interview and/or survey I can do so within one month of taking part.	
3. I agree to take part in the above study.	
4. I agree to my voice being digitally recorded and understand this sound file will be deleted after transcription.	

Data Protection Act

I understand that data collected about me during my participation in this study will be stored on computer, and that any files containing information about me will be made anonymous.

_____   _____   _____
Name of Participant   Date   Signature

_____   _____   _____
Researcher   Date   Signature

APPENDIX 4: GOOD PRACTICE GUIDANCE FOR INSTITUTIONS APPLYING FOR THE REC

Throughout our study, interview participants identified areas that they considered good practice that they had either previously included in an application for the REC mark or were collating examples of in preparation for their submission. Non-member institutions were also able to identify activities they considered to be good practice. These examples ranged from areas of work around addressing staffing issues, including within recruitment and retention, to work addressing student attainment and the lived experiences of students at their institution. We have collated and summarised some of those examples below, grouping them into good practice focussing on staff, students and institutional strategy and policy. We are not suggesting that this is a tick box exercise and one that will guarantee the REC award, rather it is sharing of good practice that has been successful for some institutions.

Examples of good practice: staffing

1. Institution wide-mentoring scheme with objectives and outcomes (BME mentors and training to apply for promotion resulting in increases in the numbers of BME academics who have been successful).
We've just reintroduced an institution-wide mentoring scheme and it will be online and it will be self-driven in the sense that we will have profiles of our academics and coaches online and people who are interested can actually go and register online and choose their mentor. And the reasoning behind that is that we can make sure we have actually got mentors who have communicated an interest in mentoring BME staff or the disabled staff, but it's actually having to recruit those BME staff and we will be targeting some of the people that have been saying we should have this to be BME mentors. So that's what we're proposing and I think is a good solution because it gets over targeting people. People who want a mentor who is BME because they're BME themselves can go through

and choose and search for their preference. And that is the way I think we are going to move forward and that will help with the career progression issues in a more holistic way (Award Holder, London, Non-affiliated).

2. Linking professional development reviews to clear outcomes (promotions and career progression)
What we tried to do as well, and something that has been really positive actually, in terms of the main data areas...you know some of the other work streams that we've got, say for example in promotions, in PDR...at the university we've got 99 percent completion rate of professional development reviews, which as far as we know is sector-leading, and what we've done is incorporate this into the PDR stats...we have looked at success rates in terms of promotions, so we've incorporated the ethnicity element into the promotions figures, so increasing the visibility, whereas before it might have been hidden (Member, Wales, Post-1992).

3. Sponsors and advocates to support BME career progression
This is pioneered by HR...the advocacy scheme where Black and Minority Ethnic staff will have a sponsor and this sponsor's job is to make sure they are ready and prepared for promotion within a two year time period. It's not just about preparing their CV, it's about making sure they have the right experiences to populate their CV...'yes, I've been told they are looking for speakers at this particular conference, I've given your name'... you know it's that sort of thing. It's active and proactive. That's for staff attainment and encouraging them to apply for and go for promotions (Award Holder, London, Russell Group).

So we're developing a paper about sponsorship for *staff. There's a lot of projects on mentoring...there's Stellar HE which is a training programme for BME staff who are interested in taking on management and leadership positions and that's been fantastic. I mean it's an external organisation that run it, but it's been really good for our staff. So that is really positive. But the sponsorship thing we're looking at is a more active engagement with mentoring, so it's not just mentoring meetings, it's the idea that you take responsibility to*

sponsor support. I mean there's been a lot of opposition to it because people say it's nepotistic or showing favouritism or things like that, but our point is that it happens anyway, but with the networks you tend to know about and it tends to recreate white privilege, so why should it not be deliberate for BME staff? [...] that would be more deliberate sponsoring of staff who wouldn't normally be retained or progress (Award Holder, North West England, Russell Group).

4. Unconscious bias training

We have been going quite heavily on a number of things - reducing bias in recruitment, for example. So we have literally put virtually every member of staff through unconscious bias training, we've rolled out cultural and racial awareness, we are working with the different academic schools and other professional services in relation to those different aspects. We have introduced an equality objective, which is to increase the number of minority ethnic staff at senior levels and we are starting to see some movement on that; even increasing the proportion of minority ethnic staff. That's definitely moved over the past three years since 2015, so actually we're starting to see there have been things where we have used data to inform what we needed to do, but it has made incremental changes for the positive (Award Holder, South East, Post-1992).

We know we have had a recruitment issue for a number of years. Over the past four years we started looking at unconscious bias training as a lot of institutions have, but we've taken a slightly more nuanced approach in looking at the whole candidate experience, with a particular focus on ethnic minority staff and applicants. And we have introduced mandatory chairs training, which goes beyond looking at unconscious bias, it incorporates that a bit, but it looks more broadly at the various stages of the recruitment process and at the role of the chair in maintaining fairness throughout. But we have the statement, we have mandatory unconscious bias training for all members of the panel, we have policies around the make-up in terms of ensuring we have a good gender balance, but also a good ethnic balance on panels. We are looking at how we word our job

descriptions and person specifications, we're looking at where we can advertise, so that we can be more targeted and focused in our approach. More recently, we're going to be looking at our approach with our range of applicants and that we are particularly interested in candidates who are from ethnic minority backgrounds. I think we have got the evidence base to support that from a positive action perspective and justify why we would do that and so we've got a suite of different interventions that we have put together to not only enhance the candidate experience, but to ensure that we are attracting and recruiting a more diverse candidate (Member, Northern England, Post-1992).

5. Addressing recruitment and promotion at application stage

We have looked at our recruitment and see that actually in terms of our application rates within our professional support services a fifth of our applications are from BME communities, but it's actually the shortlisting stage where there's been a real issue and we've been looking at that and wondering what's going on there?

So we put in a pilot looking at offering additional support, so put in an application and they put that they are from an ethnic minority and then we have a box that says if you want to talk to an HR adviser about how to present yourself in terms of the application form and finding out more, then you can do. So we're just trialling that at the moment (Award Holder, North West England, Russell Group).

The same with staff, we're looking at the pipeline and looking at putting in place specific interventions, not just looking at recruiting staff, but also retention, at why people leave, looking at exit interview information, so we can address any retention issues; looking at career progression and looking at academic and professional services staff from ethnic minority backgrounds compared to white British colleagues. So it is very much that whole life-cycle, that whole pipeline approach, and I think it is that that will be one of our critical achievements by the time we submit (Member, Northern England, Post-1992).

Examples of good practice: students

1. Specific support to meet the needs of BME students

   Last year we had a big project called XX and although it's not linked to the REC in particular, we realised that we needed to look at the student experience. So the project is looking at the pathways for students, so looking at admissions for students, the experience when they are here and some of the processes. So a lot of change has been made.

   So some of the changes are about how the student facing services work. So we've put in a training programme...a customer services training programme for all of the student facing staff, so that's in progress now. And then as a result of that as well we've got focus groups of students that we call [names project], so last year we recruited 100 students who then will represent anything that we want to consult on. So one of the things with the REC is that we can make use of these students. And they can recruit, or they are sometimes asked to go and get people who we want to come and talk about the experience. So it's worked out well, because that group has been giving quite a lot of feedback about the student experience, about accommodation, about their experience of dealing with student recruitment services... so they have given a lot of feedback and a lot of the processes have been changed as a result. So that's trying to get the students' involvement.

   Also as a result of [the project] we have also now got student Curriculum Consultants. So the first one has been English, so the student consultant sits with the curriculum group and has actually contributed a lot. And they are going to repeat it with other areas (Award Holder, London, Non-affiliated).

2. Student support groups

   On the student side we have got a BME student success group, which is a staff student committee, which is 50% staff, 50% students that reports into our student educational experience committee and that gives a very strong voice in the right direction in all kinds of aspects of the university life, but is specifically around student experience and achievement. That's going really well. My colleague chairs that group from learning and teaching (Award Holder, South East, Post-1992).

3. Access to careers education and support

   And I have to say on the student success side our careers and employment team who I do a huge amount of work with now, from everything, you know they've got diversity information, they proactively delve for diversity positive schemes, the students who work for them they try to make sure that there is everything from people who do ambassador type roles to people who do placements with them that they reflect the student body and that they're capturing their positive experiences. They've got standard text, you know for when employers come in to sit on panels, so that they're told about the student diversity body and that they send somebody along that the students can connect with (Award Holder, South East, Post-1992).

4. Social networks

   And I think if you think about student mobility, student mobility is produced and progressed by things like your social networks and class, race and intersectionality are important, so as an institution we have something called [project name], so this is a small scheme to boost the social networks of graduates who wouldn't normally have social networks and it's absolutely racially-oriented. So it's for students from widening participation backgrounds. You know if you are lucky enough to have a parent who has very good social networks you tend to do well and we've seen the success rates of people who come from certain backgrounds and students from other backgrounds and it's absolutely class, racially-oriented or you can generate it back to WP background, so we're doing something around WP students. A lot of it is funded by our donors....getting those students out to have those opportunities...to go and work in Hong Kong for a week...go and work elsewhere. And I think that kind of work is really important (Award Holder, North West England, Russell Group).

5. Outreach programmes

The approach that we have taken is not just looking at one particular area of best practice, it is much more about taking a whole student and staff life-cycle approach. So when we were looking at the evidence base for change we were very much looking at our outreach and recruitment. And we said we want to increase ethnic diversity in our student body by 4 per cent over three years. And so we are doing some great work to actually facilitate that in terms of outreach activities with the community, looking at role models and that's building on a project that we actually did with ECU around paramedic science and practice and it's actually taking the outcomes from an initial pilot project that we did with ECU and [another HEI] and actually applying that across courses that we have identified as having particularly low numbers of students. So we're doing some work in that area, but equally we're doing work around the attainment gap, we're doing work around graduate employment outcomes for ethnic minority students, we're looking at the link between attainment and placements and graduate employment. So I think that might be the areas of best practice, but we're not just looking at just one aspect of the experience and creating best practice in that area, we're looking holistically at the experience, because we recognise that there will be dependencies across the different stages of the life cycle in terms of our students being successful and achieving what they want to achieve and going on to a successful graduate job or going on to further study (Member, Northern England, Post-1992).

6. Promoting positive BME role models

And actually a good thing that the students' union suggested this year...we've been interested in having somewhere on our website where we celebrate women achievers at the university and I think could do that for BME as well. And something that was a good move that the students' union did this black history month was that they had these big posters over the two campuses showing BME achievement. So there was a poster with a student who had got a distinction in electronics and....promoting students with their achievements...and I was the first black female

professor at my university, so my poster was up there. So I think promoting achievement to kind of have that...I don't want to say role model... because I'm not sure if I am a role model...but to have those to show that it can be achieved and to have more coaching for underrepresented groups I think is really important and would go some way to showing well this is what you can do to get there (Non-member, North East England, Post-1992).

Examples of good practice: institutional strategy, policy and practice

1. Having effective equality strategies with clear objectives and outcomes

So our equality strategy has been developed and it was signed off by our university executive council literally this month, so it's pretty hot off the press. It is a strategy designed really to provide an institutional vision which we didn't have previously. So just going back to my previous comment that we've really got stages of engagement with the equality agenda across different departments. We can almost see that there is going to be inequality of experience and of outcome. So the strategy provides a university-wide vision around equality and there are four objectives within our strategy and those focus loosely around people and that's students and staff; culture and this cultural aspect is quite important when we talk about the race equality agenda; there's our campus, considering that we are investing millions in and around campus, but it's more than that it's the services we provide; and finally our practices, which also taps on the race equality agenda (Non-member, North East England, Russell Group).

2. Embedding equality within the whole culture of the HEI

What we're doing now is trying to make sure that the practices that we think are going to promote race equality are actually embedded in all of the departments... we are actually have a tour of the faculties where we'll be interviewing some of the Deans and we'll be providing them [with the practices], because actually a lot of the time when you present the data

a lot of people are horrified and they want to do something, but they don't know what to do, so we have devised a tool kit to help those Deans who are really keen to progress race equality (Award Holder, London, Russell Group).

3. **Clear reporting mechanisms for data collection so that gaps can be identified and addressed**

We have much better reporting mechanisms in place now and data mechanisms. I think a lot of that was pushed as a result of investing in the REC with people saying oh well there's no use in having the attainment gap data by school, we have 14 different programmes, we need to know that and we have that information now. We've also been doing workshops to go with that data, so every programme has a workshop to look at their data and to be really clear about what that is and we've got a tableau product now that allows people to look at and play with the data by themselves. So we've seen a real culture shift in terms of gatekeeping of data and a lot more transparency and openness about who can see data and who wants to do what with it (Award Holder, South East, Post-1992).

One thing I think that we've got now is a much better system across the institution is in terms of data collection and holding that data to account. So I think it was there to a degree, but we now know that every faculty has an equality and inclusion committee, it has a lead, most do. There is a structure where we can hold people accountable in a better way (Award Holder, North West England, Russell Group).