

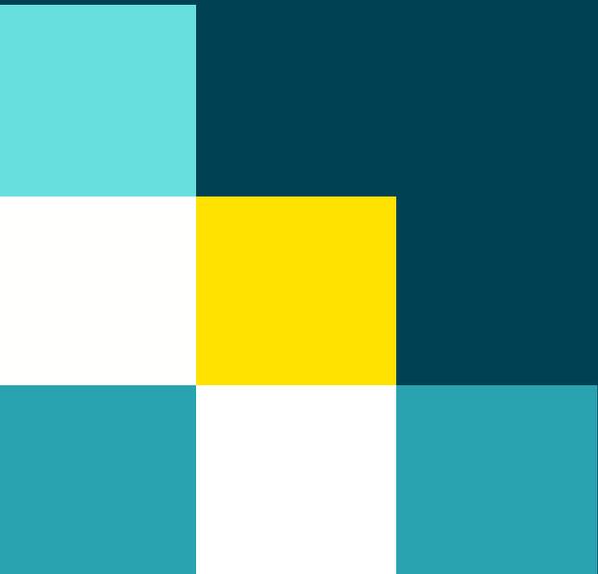


Wales Centre for Public Policy
Canolfan Polisi Cyhoeddus Cymru

Improving Race Equality in Leadership and Representation

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Summary

- This report is one of a series of six that provides independent evidence to inform the development of the Welsh Government's Race Equality Action Plan.
- As in the UK as a whole, people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds are currently underrepresented in leadership roles in the public and private sectors in Wales.
- This report analyses actions which can help to diversify leadership in Wales, as well as ways of encouraging all leaders to visibly commit and take action to tackling race inequalities in their organisations.
- Evidence suggests that a co-ordinated approach involving a combination of measures, including immediate operational interventions, as well as longer-term efforts to promote more inclusive leadership cultures, is necessary.
- Leaders must be held to account for their commitment to, and progress in, increasing racial diversity within their organisations, for example through regularly publishing data on key progress indicators, or through their performance reviews.
- Structured, accessible, and well communicated progression pathways; opportunities for mentoring and peer support; and more open promotion mechanisms could help more people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds move into leadership roles.
- Recruitment practices such as anonymous applications and more diverse interview panels can help to increase representation, particularly in less diverse organisations.
- Leaders should take steps to support and inspire the 'pipeline' of racially diverse future leaders through community, school, college and university level programmes.
- Steps to increase political representation for Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, including legal changes to allow 'BME-only shortlists', could increase engagement with the political system among minority ethnic people.
- More research is needed to determine which interventions are most effective. Initiatives that are implemented as a result of the Race Equality Action Plan should, therefore, be evaluated to increase understanding of what works, why, and for whom.

Background

The Welsh Government has made a commitment to publish a Race Equality Action Plan designed to tackle structural racial inequalities in Wales (Welsh Government, 2020a). This report is one of six produced by the Wales Centre for Public Policy to provide independent evidence to inform the development of the Action Plan (see Annex 1). It focuses on evidence and recommendations for action related to race equality in leadership and representation.

Introduction

This report identifies actions to tackle racial inequality in and through leadership in Wales which feature strongly in academic studies and policy reports. It covers actions related to senior organisational leaders, middle leaders and also future leaders, and focuses on actions related to:

- Leadership commitment and organisation culture;
- Career progression and support;
- Using recruitment to increase Black, Asian and minority ethnic representation; and
- Increasing political representation.

These actions were identified through four phases of analysis:

- First, we analysed the best available evidence, policy reports and reviews which make recommendations for reducing race inequality in Wales and the UK to identify recurring recommendations or 'types' of interventions (see Annex 2).
- We then tested and refined these with academic experts.
- Next, we conducted a further review of academic and grey literature evidence related to each of these interventions with the aim of establishing which of these recommendations are likely to have the greatest impact if they are included in the Race Equality Action Plan.
- Finally, the report was peer reviewed by an expert in the field: Professor Nelarine Cornelius (Queen Mary University).

The causes, consequences and solutions to race inequality are interconnected and so require change across a range of policy areas and public services and beyond the public sector. So this report should be read in conjunction with five related reports that focus on **employment and income, education, health and social care, crime and justice** and **housing and accommodation** (see Annex 1), and an overarching report (forthcoming) which pulls together cross-cutting findings and recommendations.

Terminology

In writing our review we actively avoid using the acronyms/terms ‘BAME’ or ‘BME’, except where this describes the name of an organisation or network, as we recognise that these are contested terms and can be experienced as stigmatising, depersonalising and ‘othering’. As such we seek to refer to specific people and communities of people wherever possible. Where this is not possible, and while any overarching category will be imperfect, we use the term ‘Black, Asian and minority ethnic’.

The Welsh Context

UK-wide data suggest that people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds occupy 4.7% of senior leadership roles across the public, private, and third sectors, and only 2% of FTSE 100 company CEOs, even though they account for 13% of the UK population (Green Park, 2020). We do not have equivalent data at an all-Wales level, but there are clear indications that people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds are underrepresented. For example, just 3% of those appointed to Welsh public bodies in 2018/19 were from Black, Asian or minority ethnic backgrounds, even though these groups comprise 5.8% of the population of Wales (Welsh Government, 2020b; Stats Wales, 2020).

The Welsh Government’s Strategic Equality Plan and Equality Objectives 2016-2020, published in November 2016, recognises the importance of tackling the inequalities in leadership roles and representation. Objective 5 is to ‘deliver a more diverse pool of decision makers in public life and public appointments by identifying and addressing barriers to engagement and participation for people from diverse backgrounds’ (Welsh Government, 2016). More recently, the Welsh Government’s public appointments strategy also identifies the need to increase the number of people appointed to the leadership of public bodies from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds (Welsh Government, 2020b).

While representation in leadership roles is important, there is also strong evidence to suggest that the commitment of all leaders is key to tackling race inequalities across policy areas, as we outline in the other five reports in this series, and especially in ‘Improving Race Equality in Employment and Income’ (see Annex 1). And it is vital that leaders from all backgrounds establish appropriate mechanisms for building alliances with the public as a whole and with specific communities to generate sustained engagement, and work with them to understand the need for, and bring about change.

Leadership commitment and organisational culture

Recommendations

- Ensure that leaders in the public sector publicly commit to, and are held accountable for, increasing diversity in their organisations, and encourage similar action in the private and voluntary sectors.
- Put in place interventions to increase leader and manager ‘buy-in’ for increasing diversity, potentially including a strategic framework; promoting diverse teams; organisation-wide or public reporting of race equality indicators, and linking targets to everyday challenges and experiences.
- Commit to creating more inclusive and diverse organisational cultures, recognising that this will take time; and building on the development of new values and models of leadership.

Research consistently shows that efforts to increase the diversity of leaders will wither on the vine of good intentions unless they are underpinned by visible and tangible actions from the top echelons of organisations, and a framework which allows for positive action. In practical terms, this means taking steps to:

- Make leaders accountable for increasing diversity;
- Ensure ‘buy-in’ for increasing and promoting diversity right across senior management teams;
- Change organisational cultures to promote diversity and inclusion;
- Facilitate more diverse leadership at all levels of the organisation; and

- Facilitate a diverse and able pipeline of future leaders.

A report evaluating NHS England's diversity and inclusion strategy concludes that:

“A holistic approach to tackling workplace inequality is needed; a dual focus on operational interventions and cultural transformation is required – these are two sides of the same coin.” (NHS England, 2019a, p.67)

It should be noted that shifting organisational culture will take significant time, effort, and buy-in, especially from organisational leaders. Buy-in is not achieved by means of a single initiative. It needs to be nurtured by a set of interventions, including changes to recruitment and progression (considered below). Management behaviours that foster a culture of appreciation of differences (such as cross-discipline, diverse teams working together) should also be encouraged (Dobbin and Kalev, 2016).

Dobbin and Kalev (2016) have drawn on over 30 years of organisational research on the topic of equality and diversity interventions, and show that managers will subvert such initiatives if they feel disempowered. So, it is important that targets for increasing diversity are linked to the everyday challenges faced by managers, to ensure that they are meaningful and relevant.

The collection of robust and relevant data is fundamental to understanding the inequalities that afflict under-represented communities. It facilitates deeper understanding of the issue; is important for setting objectives and targets for improved outcomes; and for holding managers accountable for achieving them. Leaders should, therefore, be required to ensure that organisations collect and publish accurate data, including in relation to the diversity of the leadership workforce. Company-wide reporting on race equality progress indicators helps to increase accountability. The Co-Operative Group, for example, has committed to reporting annually on its ethnicity pay gap, and sharing that information with all employees and stakeholders. It has also committed to doubling the representation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic people in leadership and management roles, and regularly reports on its progress (Co-Op, 2020). The English NHS Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) measures and reports on indicators such as (NHS England, 2019b):

- The relative likelihood of White applicants being appointed from shortlisting across all posts compared with 'BME' applicants
- Relative likelihood of 'BME' staff accessing non-mandatory training and CPD compared to White staff

- 'BME' board membership

In the context of Wales, institutions charged with developing leaders for the 21st century have a key role to play. Academi Wales (2017; 2018) has developed a leadership behaviours framework and a set of public service values intended to promote collaborative, cross- sector working. However, these frameworks are not mandatory within the Welsh public service, despite increasing take-up (Price et. al., 2020). An increased focus on leadership behaviours, rather than technical or managerial competencies, might challenge existing conventions, including those that (whether by design or effect) promote staff based on length of service. It will also allow for opportunity to be shared more widely, particularly as the Academi Wales framework prioritises shared, inclusive leadership (Academi Wales, 2017). Efforts to create more inclusive and diverse organisational cultures could therefore be woven into this ongoing re-conceptualisation of traditional leadership models.

What works is sustained, long-term exercises to change cultural ethos. As illustrated in the 2019 WRES report (NHS England, 2019a – see page 10 for further detail), the challenge is for leaders of organisations to commit systematically to goals that provide direction to the anti-racist practices to which the organisation as a whole will commit. Such commitments must span over the longer term and should also embed accountability and transparency within the organisation. A report by the Chartered Institute of Professional Development (2019), stresses throughout that initial and ongoing commitment, and support from the most senior leaders in the organisation, is required to shift culture.

Career progression and support

Recommendations

- Ensure that professional development opportunities and progression pathways are clear, formalised and well communicated across organisations.
- Endorse the use of mentoring, coaching and minority ethnic staff networks alongside more structured forms of support for career progression, including early talent identification and specific target-setting.
- Make leaders responsible for better representation through measures like board-level sponsorship, or diversity objectives in annual reviews.

- Collect, monitor and report data on recruitment, retention and progression of staff by race and ethnicity, as well as other protected characteristics.

Increasing the numbers of Black, Asian and minority ethnic leaders will require ongoing support for their career progression, as organisations tend to have internal succession management protocols in addition to external recruitment. This can include support for training and development, as well as peer learning, mentoring and networking. Ensuring that people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds are able to access progression pathways will increase their representation at management level and, over time, increase representation among senior leadership.

Black, Asian and minority ethnic people can experience unequal access to development opportunities, often due to a lack of clear information on development opportunities or progression routes (Joseph Rowntree, 2015). Research has highlighted the absence of formal progression pathways within the Welsh public service. This impacts on ambitions to create a cadre of 'home-grown' public service leaders comfortable with the Welsh context (Price et. al., 2020), which can create particular barriers for people who have been historically, and/or are still under-represented in management and leadership positions.

Since the McGregor-Smith Review (2017), which considered the issues affecting Black, Asian and minority ethnic people in the workplace, Business in the Community (BITC) has established a 'Race at Work Scorecard' (BITC, 2018). The BITC report, based on employer surveys and employee experiences, highlights the importance of mentoring, coaching, reverse mentoring, and structured career pathways in order to promote progression.

Mentoring and shadowing are increasingly common, offering opportunities for junior staff to understand the requirements for performing in more senior roles. These can be helpful where staff are unclear about the requirements of more senior roles, particularly if combined with testimony from senior leaders about how they reached their positions (McGregor-Smith, 2017). However, they are often informal, and sometimes used in place of more structured programmes, so should not be seen as a panacea.

Research on the UK Civil Service found that Black, Asian and minority ethnic employees do not feel that they have the same access to career development opportunities as their White peers (Ethnic Dimension Research & Consultancy, 2014) and recommended wider advertising of development opportunities and putting in place specific career development plans after training alongside specific steps to

increase diversity and inclusion as a part of talent management strategies (Ethnic Dimension Research & Consultancy, 2014).

NHS England has had some success with a more targeted approach. The Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES), established in 2015, put in place nine indicators to measure and close the gap between Black, Asian and minority ethnic and White staff (NHS England, 2019b). The 2019 report notes that all London NHS trusts now have at least one Black, Asian or minority ethnic member, compared with only three-fifths in 2014, and that 8.4% of board members are now from a minority ethnic background, compared with 7% in 2017 (NHS England, 2019a). This suggests that specific, measurable targets for action could help increase representation at senior leadership level.

Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff networks are seen as effective in supporting progress (e.g. NHS England, 2016). Their fundamental value is derived through constructive challenge of organisational practices which are perceived to be institutionally discriminatory in their outcomes. Organisations need to ensure that these networks feed into organisational decision-making and can make a practical difference.

Dobbin and Kalev (2016) argue that companies should put resources into career progression activities; make managers accountable; monitor and publish results for transparency; and give examples of how specific talent sourcing and mentoring has delivered sustained improvements in the career history of minorities, leading to increased representation of minority ethnic leaders and managers. This suggests that more use could be made of early talent identification programmes and ‘future leadership pathways’ that are already in place in Wales to support the progression of Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff.

Recruitment

Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure that recruitment practices encourage and enable diverse entry to organisations, for example through plain English application packs which are widely advertised; blind recruitment practices; diverse shortlists; and diverse interview panels.• Invest in supporting and inspiring a ‘pipeline’ of diverse applicants through community, school, college, and university level engagement; and encouraging

diversity at work experience level, including through stopping unpaid or unadvertised opportunities.

Changes in recruitment practices can be a valuable way to increase diversity within organisations. This can help to increase the 'pipeline' to senior leadership, but can also be used to recruit directly at senior levels. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) provides some examples (EHRC, 2014). For example, academic promotions panels that review applications to senior positions at Aberystwyth University have resulted in more women securing senior positions, who are then supported by mentoring. Such practices should be applied to redressing Black, Asian and minority ethnic under-representation.

The Senedd is committed to redressing inequalities in recruitment. In 2013, 70% of its Black, Asian and minority ethnic workers were concentrated in lower pay grades (EHRC, 2014). Since then, dedicated action plans and interventions, including redesigning candidate packs and using social media for recruitment, have helped recruit a more diverse range of candidates to more senior roles (Senedd Commission, 2020).

Outreach, including better advertising of roles to more diverse social networks, can help to increase the range of applicants; and there is evidence that the way in which job advertisements are phrased can affect application rates, so an explicit commitment to diversity could help to this end (Park et. al., 2020).

Bias – whether conscious or unconscious – can be mitigated at the shortlisting stage through strategies including anonymising applications, although there are drawbacks to this approach including the risk that panels 're-code' applications according to features on CVs (for instance, place of education) (Park et. al., 2020). This has led to the suggestion that other information, such as names of universities that candidates have attended, should also be removed.

Attention will need to be paid to how interviews are conducted. Expecting candidates to be familiar with organisational norms and culture could exclude some, including those from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds. Flexibility in interview format and more diversity on interview panels could also help, although these interventions have not yet been robustly evaluated (Park et. al., 2020). These measures will be applicable at all stages, particularly for outside appointments, but may have more impact for those who are early in their career and therefore help develop more diverse workforces in general.

Organisations also need to consider how they are supporting the 'pipeline' of potential applicants. For example, initiatives which engage local Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and young people, and connect them with role models within employing institutions has been suggested as a way of doing this. An especially relevant example to illustrate this is the work undertaken by Ali Abdi of Cardiff University, who won the 2019 Diversity and Inclusion Award for his work establishing the Grangetown Youth Forum¹ through which several individuals have progressed to study at the university. The key message here is that community engagement and role models are likely to have a positive, aspirational influence on young peoples' career trajectories when set in the context of other interventions designed to foster inclusion.

The Race at Work Scorecard (BITC, 2018, p.9), identifies six main interventions that organisations should adopt to improve recruitment and career advancement for Black, Asian and minority ethnic employees:

- **Reject non-diverse long and shortlists.** All employers should ensure proportional representation on long and shortlists, and reject lists that do not reflect the local working age population;
- **Challenge school and university selection bias.** All employers should critically examine entry requirements into their business, focusing on potential achievement and not simply which university or school the individual went to;
- **Use relevant and appropriate language in job specifications.** Job specifications should be drafted in plain English and provide an accurate reflection of essential and desirable skills to ensure applications from a wider set of individuals;
- **Diverse interview panels.** Larger employers should ensure that the selection and interview process is undertaken by more than one person, and should ideally include individuals from different backgrounds to help eliminate bias;
- **Diversity from work experience level.** Employers should seek out opportunities to provide work experience to a more diverse group of individuals, looking beyond their standard social demographic (this includes stopping the practice of unpaid or unadvertised internships);
- **Transparent and fair reward and recognition.** Employers should ensure that all elements of reward and recognition, from appraisals to bonuses, reflect the racial diversity of the organisation.

¹ <https://leadingwalesawards.wales/leadership-in-diversity-inclusion-2019/#ali>

Political representation and leadership

Recommendations

- Consider whether the Welsh Government are able to amend the Equality Act (2010) to permit political parties to put 'BME-only shortlists' in place, as an attempt to increase ethnically diverse representation in the Senedd.
- Ensure robust and adequate data collection and reporting related to all stages of the recruitment and selection process.
- Take action which addresses systemic/organisational level barriers to participation, as well as individual-level barriers, such as financial barriers.
- Put in place long-term engagement mechanisms, building on previous and existing practice, to address structural issues and increase participation in the political process.

Currently, two Members of the Senedd are from a Black, Asian or minority ethnic background, and no Black, Asian or minority ethnic woman has been elected to the Senedd (Cifuentes, 2020).² Proportionate representation of people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds helps ensure that policy concerns are heard and acted on, but will also help by providing a 'role model' effect, encouraging diverse democratic participation and aspiration.

For well over a decade, there have been calls for 'BME-only shortlists' (a term used by Sir Simon Woolley, Director of Operation Black Vote³). These are often compared to all-women shortlists, which are claimed to have dramatically increased the representation of women engaged in both parliamentary and local democratic processes (Kelly & White, 2016). Sir Simon Woolley, who campaigns for greater political representation for Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, argues that a lack of representation means that poorer economic and social outcomes will continue to blight the life chances of Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities.

² There were three MSs from a Black, Asian or minority ethnic background, representing 5% of the total (Cifuentes, 2020). The death of Mohammed Asghar MS in June 2020 reduced this number to two.

³ <https://www.obv.org.uk>

“[...] the lack of BME political representation alienates millions of people from engaging in the democratic process, not registering to vote and not voting. [...] The central solution to greater BME representation lies with the party leadership. It is simply not enough to desire better outcomes; actions must follow words.” (Woolley, 2018)

As part of his UK Labour leadership campaign, Sir Keir Starmer stated that for the Party to become ‘truly representative’, he will continue to push for changes to the law to permit the Party to select prospective MPs from a shortlist of only ‘ethnic minority candidates’ (Yorke, 2020). There is a clear belief, based on the success of all-women shortlists, that if legal changes permit ‘BME-only shortlists’ this would, over time, produce much greater political representation and engagement amongst Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities.

Race Alliance Wales calls for political leaders to collect and publish ethnicity data related to applications, as well as appointments to public and political positions (Race Alliance Wales, 2020). Similarly, the EHRC have recommended that the Welsh Government and the Senedd Commission should call on the UK Government to commence section 106 of the Equality Act 2010 (requiring political parties to publish diversity data on candidates) in relation to Senedd Cymru elections (EHRC, 2018). Improved data collection and reporting enhances transparency, builds trust, and improves confidence in the political process. It will also allow political parties to intervene at the appropriate stage, be that at the point of attracting candidates, or in candidate selection and support.

Barriers to engagement in political processes include a perception that racism is embedded in state structures, or that the state lacks the political will to change matters. If elected bodies are perceived as being ‘not for us’, this could exacerbate a feeling of exclusion and reduce willingness to act. Individual factors, such as a lack of confidence, or lack of financial support, or ability to campaign, also play a role (Cifuentes, 2020). Efforts to promote diversity of political leadership must address barriers at these levels.

In 2007, the National Assembly for Wales and Operation Black Vote worked in partnership to deliver the Assembly Member Shadowing Scheme.⁴ The scheme was publicised as a great success, winning the Channel 4/Hansard Society Political Award.⁵ Similar schemes have been used by the Senedd more recently (Senedd

⁴ <https://senedd.wales/en/newhome/Pages/newsitem.aspx?itemid=145>

⁵ <https://senedd.wales/en/newhome/Pages/newsitem.aspx?itemid=224>

Commission, 2020), and mentoring and shadowing are recommended as a way to increase understanding of what political roles entail (Cifuentes, 2020). These initiatives may, over time, increase representation and so create ‘role models’, encouraging more people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds into politics (Cifuentes, 2020).

Evaluating effectiveness

Recommendations

- Evaluate interventions to provide a better understanding of what works, for whom and why.

This paper has highlighted examples of approaches to increasing the diversity of leaders and their commitment to diversity and inclusion that could be implemented in Wales. However, there is currently a lack of robust evaluation of what works. It will be important to evaluate actions that are implemented as a result of the Welsh Government’s Race Equality Action Plan, to establish a better understanding of which strategies are or are not working in a particular context, and if not, why. It will also be important to establish between and within group differences in terms of what works, to ensure approaches are adequately tailored – for example, increasing the very low representation of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in leadership positions in Wales may require very different approaches than schemes aiming to increase representation amongst Black British individuals, due to the differing needs and types of discrimination faced by both groups.

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Annex 1:

References to the report series

This is one report of six, each focusing on a particular policy area to inform the Race Equality Action Plan. The series of report includes:

Arday, J. (2020). **Improving Race Equality in Education**. Cardiff: Wales Centre for Public Policy.

Hatch, S., Woodhead, C., Moriarty, J., Rhead, R., and Connor, L. (2020). **Improving Race Equality in Health and Social Care**. Cardiff: Wales Centre for Public Policy.

Hatch, S., Woodhead, C., Rhead, R., and Connor, L. (2020). **Improving Race Equality in Employment and Income**. Cardiff: Wales Centre for Public Policy.

Price, J. (2020). **Improving Race Equality in Housing and Accommodation**. Cardiff: Wales Centre for Public Policy.

Roberts, M. (2020). **Improving Race Equality in Crime and Justice**. Cardiff: Wales Centre for Public Policy.

Showunmi, V., and Price, J. (2020). **Improving Race Equality in Leadership and Representation**. Cardiff: Wales Centre for Public Policy.

Annex 2:

Recurring recommendations

Recurring recommendation	Area of focus
Positive action schemes to increase the proportion of Black, Asian and minority ethnic leaders, possibly including informal or formal mentoring / shadowing arrangements.	What works in helping Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff progress to leadership levels? How effective is formal or informal mentoring in enabling progress?
Consider the role organisational culture has in facilitating or holding back Black, Asian and minority ethnic participation in leadership	What works in developing anti-racist and inclusive organisational cultures?
Put in place commitments to inclusivity and representation at the senior levels of organisations	How can leaders best support Black, Asian and minority ethnic representation and opportunity within their organisation? What works to secure leaders' buy-in? ⁶
Ensure recruitment and progression practices are designed to be inclusive and enabling of Black, Asian and minority ethnic candidates.	What works in terms of fair and equitable recruitment? Which schemes have been shown to be effective at increasing Black, Asian and minority ethnic representation at senior management levels? (e.g. mentoring/shadowing/networking/shortlists)
Promote and provide role models for Black, Asian and minority ethnic people, especially young people, who can encourage and motivate them.	How effective are role models in increasing ambition and success for Black, Asian and minority ethnic young people?

⁶ This parallels a recommendation in the 'Race Equality in Employment and Income' report (Hatch et al., 2020).

Recurring recommendation	Area of focus
Increase political representation by legislating for all- Black, Asian and minority ethnic candidate shortlists, or at least one or more Black, Asian and minority ethnic people on short-lists, where appropriate.	<p>Would all- Black, Asian and minority ethnic shortlists increase political representation?</p> <p><i>n.b. it is unclear whether these are currently lawful</i></p>
Increase political engagement by collecting data on successful and unsuccessful candidates for office, enacting s106 of the Equality Act 2010.	How can improved data collection support increased Black, Asian and minority ethnic representation in political leadership?
Increase political engagement by evaluating existing practice and actively engaging with underrepresented or under-involved groups.	What barriers currently prevent Black, Asian and minority ethnic engagement in the political process, and how can they be overcome?
Extend the remit of current race equality schemes (e.g. Reflecting Wales in Running Wales) to more public bodies.	How far are current race equality schemes effective, and to which organisations should they be extended?

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