

Introduction/Background

Our ‘**Black Lives Matter: What Can You Do?**’ webinar was our best attended to-date, with the topic clearly hitting a nerve amongst our colleagues. We came away aware that the challenges, issues and resolutions discussed were opening up new areas of engagement and curiosity, amplifying frustration and igniting energy in our audience.

Although all our current work is essentially around inclusive workplaces, we think that there is a need in the current climate for a forum to support individuals who work in the social housing sector to address racism, discrimination and navigate micro-aggressions in the workplace. Hence the proposition of an HDN BME Action Learning Set.

What is a (BME) Learning Set?

Learning Sets are one of a range of personal development tools which can be used to learn **new ways of working, share experiences** and **help with problem solving**.

A Learning Set typically consists of a group of about 5-8 people normally who agree to meet together on a regular basis to discuss work-related issues or to develop skills in an area of common interest. Learning Sets give individuals time to explore issues that they need to resolve in an environment which is empowering and which helps the individual to find a solution – rather than be told what to do.

Our Learning Set will consist of colleagues from different organisations and different professional backgrounds and is for any staff member identifying with “Black & Minoritised Ethnic” (BME), especially those unable to access inhouse Black/BME Staff Networks regardless of their seniority.

The group will be supported by a facilitator, though over time we envisage that groups may become self-facilitating. We seek to fill a gap in and complement current provision

How does a Learning Set operate?

Learning Sets can operate in different ways – the approaches include:

- ‘Open’ sessions where individual members bid to discuss issues of concern to them.
- ‘Planned’ sessions where the topic is agreed in advance.
- ‘Combined’ approach where the meeting is divided between “planned” and “open” sessions, allowing both the structure of a planned approach with the opportunity for individuals to raise issues of current concern as well.

What is expected from Learning Set members?

Sets typically meet once a month for about a half day (this is negotiated with members). Members are expected to commit to attend all meetings – only in very exceptional circumstances should anyone miss a meeting. Issues such as confidentiality, trust, respect and so on are key to effective Learning Set working. The Set members will discuss these and agree their “ways of working” at an early stage.

Is there a cost?

HDN will make a small charge to employers - £200 per head - for 10 meetings to cover HDN’s staff time to organise, prepare, facilitate and evaluate the programme.

Next Steps and Selection

1. Depending on demand and to enable the pilot project to run smoothly, we will only accept a maximum of 2 individuals from the same organisation with the possibility of this being reduced to one. We could run the programme inhouse for an organisation but that would be a separate conversation
2. Those expressing interest in joining the pilot BME Action Learning Set will be invited to complete an application form and attend an **Information and Registration Session**. The new deadline for expressions of interest is **8th January 2021 – Please email: Moreen Pascal - moreen@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk**
3. Selection for the pilot programme will be determined by those first expressing interest, who have submitted their completed application and have the written support of their employers to attend 10 monthly set meetings. Employers will be invoiced in due course.
4. If oversubscribed, we will run a parallel programme later this year. The cost of this will be determined nearer the time.