

## Sunshine, Chocolate Eggs and the Sewell Report

We hope you had a great Easter weekend, a break if you managed to get it and time to enjoy with family or friends, or just to have some peace.

The sun shone, before the snow returned for some of us on Tuesday, and the weekend presented a chance to sit outside, with five significant others, or to help the kids make inroads into their stockpile of Easter eggs as a convenient and genuine reason to eat a load of chocolate.



Last week, in the run up to the bank holiday the government released the long-awaited report into Racial Disparity in the UK. Here at HDN we have been asked for our response and we will put out our comprehensive analysis over the next couple of weeks.

In the meantime...

### The Sewell Report: Our initial thoughts

**Dr Sewell's report says racism is a real force to be taken seriously... and that's where he's right.**

A week after the dust has settled on Dr Tony Sewell's report on **Racial Disparity** in the UK we've had time to digest and absorb his findings.

The Sewell report doesn't change anything in terms of opinion. Those who have seen and experienced institutional racism in their working lives know that it is real; and a government enquiry can do nothing to refute that truth. But people who perceive that the systemic problem of inequality is exaggerated will feel exonerated.

While the Sewell Report alters none of the reality, it isn't exactly helpful in the way it could lead to complacency with its claim that the UK has a record on racial inequality which other nations should aspire to.

Try telling that to the Windrush generation.

Or tell it to anyone who has suffered a worse outcome in health, education or job opportunities, purely because of the colour of their skin.

But the danger we must guard against is a knee-jerk reaction here, by dismissing the report in its entirety. To simply call it government propaganda could risk widening the gap between those on the side of ED&I progress and those, in areas of influence, who just can't see a problem.

There is no real point in preaching to the converted if we want to affect real and lasting progress. That outcome necessitates the changing of minds, and we can't do that by simply improving the policies and practices of the already enlightened.

Dr Sewell did not deny that racism was a 'real force' in the UK which must be taken seriously, and in that pronouncement he is on the money. But tackling racism is a frustratingly slow process. It took almost a generation for racist language to become universally unacceptable.

In the battle to rid our country of racism, in any institution, we need allies, and resist the temptation to be embroiled in the 'us' versus 'them' scenario which invariably produces two losing sides. White working class people have become weary of the way they feel blamed for all of the world's ills; and most citizens believe they can be patriotic as well as being passionate about equality of opportunity and inclusion.

90 per cent of people in any organisation, or nation, can find common ground and an agreement. Let's leave the five per cent on either extreme to their own immovable ideology.

And let's tackle structural racism together, wherever it exists. A country cannot be racist, only the people who live in it. But while racism doesn't infect every operation in the UK, there are barriers for black and ethnic minority workers in far too many organisations for anyone to say institutional racism isn't a problem.

The debate over the use of the acronym BAME has resurfaced, Dr Sewell suggesting it is an unhelpful catch-all, and that may be the second point he got right.

So, okay Dr Sewell, the UK may not be as backward as some other nations, in terms of tackling racism, but that doesn't make us particularly good at it. If we really are to be world leaders in ED & I then we must become exemplars, and stop being happy with being 'not as bad as the others'.

More to come on this from HDN.

## 2021/2022 Staff Mentoring Programme



**The new programme opens on 12th April.** If you're not already booked in, or you know someone who would like to join the programme speak to your employer or colleague to discuss applying; or for more information contact:

[mentoring@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk](mailto:mentoring@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk)

And if you haven't yet booked for our **Annual Mentoring celebration** this year, virtual again on **10th June**, check your diary and we hope to see you there.

For past and present mentors and mentees we are gradually growing our database of **alumni contacts**. If you have any queries or information to pass on to us please contact:

[mentoring@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk](mailto:mentoring@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk)

## Upcoming Online Events

Webinar: ***How to be a Board Member by 35***  
13th April  
11am to 12:30pm

Learn how you can bring your skills and enthusiasm to a board near you; free event for members and tickets are selling fast.

[To book click here](#)

Webinar: ***Side by Side: The Power of Allyship***  
21st April  
2pm to 3:30pm

Join this webinar to understand how you can become an ally for your colleagues to promote diversity and inclusion within your organisation.

[To book click here](#)

[For details of all our events CLICK HERE](#)

## What We Do at HDN

### Contact us to see if we can help

We work with organisations on a range of equality, diversity and inclusion issues. These include management and leadership training, board and executive team discussions on Black Lives Matter and/or the pandemic, and reviewing and helping on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plans and Strategies.

Contact [Mushtaq Khan](#) for further details.

### What's the team been talking about?

In the run up to any holiday, the team chat inevitably turns to the question: 'how can we get everything done before the bank holiday weekend?' You know that feeling, but we get it done. And hopefully the Easter break has been fun and restful, in whichever ratio you prefer, for our team and all of you, our friends and colleagues.

No prizes for guessing what we'll be discussing when we get back together next week...and we won't be alone!

**Housing Diversity Network**  
30 Manor Row | Bradford | BD1 4QE



Email: [info@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk](mailto:info@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk)  
Phone: +44(0)1484 652606

You have received this email because your organisation is a member of HDN, you have attended one of our events or practitioner groups, are on one of our mentoring programmes or have come in to contact with us in some other way. If you no longer want to hear from us please unsubscribe using the link below.

[Unsubscribe here](#)

Sent by

 sendinblue

© 2021 Housing Diversity Network