



British Red Cross

# RECRUITING, SUPPORTING AND DEVELOPING BLACK, ASIAN AND MINORITY ETHNIC (BAME) STAFF: **FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE BRITISH RED CROSS**

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June 2017



Refusing to ignore people in crisis

**“The British Red Cross is committed to creating a more inclusive and diverse workforce. Our Inclusion and Diversity strategy will build on the recommendations from this review, and outline how we will mainstream inclusion and diversity considerations into all areas of our work, and subsequently make smarter decisions and improve our ability to reach people in crisis.”**

**Michael Adamson, Chief Executive, British Red Cross**

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# Executive Summary

## INTRODUCTION

This project explores how the British Red Cross (BRC) can better recruit, support and develop Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) staff, in order to address the under-representation of people from ethnic minority backgrounds in our workforce. One of the British Red Cross corporate diversity targets, as part of the 2015 – 2019 ‘Refusing to Ignore People in Crisis’ corporate strategy, involves increasing the percentage of BAME staff to 12% by the end of 2019. This has been identified as a key priority by our Chief Executive. Currently, 8% of staff at the BRC identify as BAME compared to 14% of the UK population, 12% of the UK labour market and 40% of people in London (Census, 2011). This report presents four key recommendations and six additional recommendations relating to the aims above, which are based on significant evidence derived through the course of this investigation.

## METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research was conducted involving a review of literature relating to ethnic diversity; 1:1 interviews with over 50 staff/volunteers; and 3 focus groups with over 20 staff/volunteers. Participants were drawn from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, directorates, pay levels, and geographic locations. Meetings with leadership, including a number of Executive Directors and key stakeholders, were also held. Monitoring and reporting data, where available, was also gathered.

Analysis of this data resulted in the identification of several major themes (outlined below) and subsequently several issues and resultant recommendations relating to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) – specifically ethnic diversity – at the BRC.

## KEY FINDINGS

**Leadership** – There is a clear under-representation of BAME staff in the leadership of the BRC, specifically in the Leadership Group (the most senior 110 staff). Only 7% of people in the Leadership Group identify as BAME. There is no BAME representation on the Board of Trustees or the Executive Leadership Team (ELT). The implications of this reveal a lack of diverse perspectives in top level decision making. Furthermore, the lack of visible BAME role models has led some BAME staff to question whether they can become a leader at the BRC. Fundamentally, it questions our credibility as an international humanitarian organisation and our ability to best respond to people in crisis. Subsequently, inclusion and diversity has been identified as a key organisational priority by ELT and the Board.

**Ethnic diversity across the BRC** – Ethnic diversity varies considerably across the organisation – across services, directorates and geographical areas. Refugee Services and Restoring

Family Links (RSRFL) is consistently highlighted as having an ethnically diverse workforce; almost 30% of RSRFL staff identify as BAME. However, only 5.5% of staff in UK Services excluding RSRFL identify as BAME. Offices in London, including the UK Head Office, (15% BAME) are not representative of the ethnic diversity of London (40% BAME). There is a higher turnover of Black staff than all other ethnic groups. This collectively has implications for service delivery – specifically accessing and supporting diverse communities – our decision making, and our desire to be a truly diverse and inclusive organisation which retains and nurtures the best talent.

**Communications and Engagement** – The BRC eschews the negative and harmful clichés around imagery in the International Development sector, and receives significant praise as a result. However, there is a need for greater representation of BAME people in positions of responsibility in the BRC's images. This under-representation risks undervaluing BAME staff contributions and impedes our ambitions in relation to creating an inclusive culture. The BRC is perceived as a Christian and British organisation by many people partly due to the Cross emblem; the fact that many other International Development organisations are faith-based; and potentially the under-representation of BAME staff and volunteers in our communications. This has consequences for attracting supporters, staff, volunteers and service users, and in achieving a truly inclusive culture. The 2015 First Aid Rapped Up campaign is highlighted by many as offensive and alienating, with high potential for reputational risk.

**Personal Development and Career Progression** – External research identifies that BAME people rate career progression as highly important. At the BRC, BAME staff/volunteers report mixed attitudes regarding their potential to develop and progress their career at the BRC, with structural, attitudinal (including their relationship with their line manager) and organisational cultural issues identified as key enablers and barriers. The strategic change programme has been a significant negative factor, as supported by findings of the BRC Pulse Survey 2016. A lack of visible BAME role models in leadership positions is also reported as a significant barrier to the development/progression of BAME staff. Conversely, the enabling work of Organisation Development and Learning, and the level of support available, was highly praised.

**Inclusion and Culture** – There is a persistent question as to whether the BRC is living up to its key value of being inclusive, given the under-representation of BAME people at staff/volunteer level and most notably at leadership level. There is acknowledgement among staff, including ELT, that significant changes are required to achieve an inclusive culture. A key barrier towards inclusivity was the perception of a bureaucratic and conservative culture at the BRC – an environment often seen at large establishment organisations in the sector. An organisation which is not inclusive can result in the existence of overt and unconscious discrimination, which has a negative impact on the wellbeing of all staff, and specifically BAME staff through a sense of isolation and feeling undervalued.

However, staff/volunteers across the organisation reported many positive experiences of inclusion.

**Perceptions of the Voluntary Sector** – BAME people generally have a low awareness of the voluntary sector and the career paths available in the sector. This can aggravate negative misconceptions of the sector. 8.8% of staff in the voluntary sector identify themselves as BAME (NCVO, 2015) and the sector can thus be perceived as elitist and exclusive. Unhelpful and inaccurate stereotypes about BAME people pursuing careers solely for financial reward, may incorrectly be used to justify the lack of ethnic diversity in the voluntary sector. Data indicates that in 2016, 1 in 4 BRC applicants were from a BAME background.

**Volunteering** – 8.5% of volunteers at the BRC identify as BAME. However, almost 1 in 4 volunteers have not disclosed their ethnicity on the HR reporting system (SAVi) making it difficult to truly assess whether the BRC's volunteer base is representative of the ethnic diversity of the UK population. The hierarchy of volunteers – the volunteer councils – are certainly unrepresentative of the volunteer base and the UK population. There is a concerning issue – reported across the UK – where prospective volunteers from BAME backgrounds are often seen as unsuitable for volunteering in services outside of RSRFL, representing a major barrier for BAME people engaging with the BRC. Staff/volunteers report how volunteering with the BRC is undoubtedly an immensely valuable experience which can – and has – led to opportunities to contribute to society, self-development and employment.

**Unpaid Internships** – Extended periods of unpaid work are often seen as a prerequisite for passage into the voluntary sector at paid entry level. Unpaid internships disadvantage all ethnic groups from low socio-economic backgrounds, and disabled people, and people based away from large cities. Furthermore, at the BRC, you are less likely to be invited to an internship assessment if you are BAME. This can all lead to a biased pool of interns. Much recruitment to entry level positions is conducted internally; unpaid internships bias our staff intake at entry-level and our wider workforce. Unpaid internships are widely employed across the Voluntary Sector and have received significant criticism from MP's and organisations concerned with social mobility.

**Other protected characteristics** – Diversity disparities at the BRC are not limited to ethnicity, and extend to gender, disability, and potentially social class, LGBT+ and religion. Recently, advances have been made in gender diversity in leadership; this is widely acknowledged and praised. The low level of disclosure around many protected characteristics, including disability and LGBT+ status, make it difficult to draw conclusions around representation. There is a significant intersection between BAME identity and religion and social class.

**Resourcing at the BRC** – In 2016, 1 in 4 applicants to BRC staff roles were from BAME backgrounds. However, only 8% of appointments made – fewer than 1 in 10 –were BAME

(this statistic should be understood in the context that of those appointed, 25% did not disclose their ethnicity.) The BRC disproportionately attracts BAME candidates, although they appear significantly less likely to be appointed than white candidates. This suggests unconscious bias and potentially discrimination in the current resourcing process. Monitoring and reporting of candidate profiles and journeys through the application process require improvement.

## **KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Effective systems, data and reporting structures embedded into HR processes
- A central resourcing (recruitment and selection) structure which adheres to best practice in equality, diversity and inclusion and addresses unconscious bias
- The creation of a diversity training portfolio
- The Executive Leadership Team and the Board of Trustees to act as visible and proactive champions of diversity

## **ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

- A funded internship scheme, or access fund, for interns who identify themselves as from a low socio-economic background, and/or BAME and/or as disabled
- In-house employability skills training specifically targeted to migrant volunteers, including refugees
- Equality Impact Assessments to be mandatory for decisions involving external communications campaigns
- Maintenance and development of the BAME staff/volunteers diversity network
- Consistently recording the ethnicity (and other protected characteristics) of service users through the BRM
- A version of this report to be externally published to fulfil our commitments to transparency and accountability, to share best practice within the sector, and to highlight the unique work of the BRC

# Introduction

## Introduction from Michael Adamson, Chief Executive, British Red Cross

Inclusion and diversity are everyone's responsibility at the British Red Cross and they are intrinsic to who we are as a Red Cross society – we cannot live up to our fundamental principles unless we embrace them.

The recommendations in this review outline how we can truly embody our organisational values and create a more inclusive and dynamic organisation.

I want to see our organisation harness the benefits of having a diverse workforce, and to become truly representative of the UK population. A more diverse workforce will give us the ability to better understand the needs of the different communities we work in, enabling us to serve them better.

I'm keen to see teams across the organisation work together to implement these recommendations, so we can continue to reach a diverse range of people in crisis.

Michael Adamson

Chief Executive, British Red Cross



## Introduction from Karen Sheldon, Diversity and Inclusion Manager, British Red Cross

The recommendations in this review outline how we can create a more diverse and inclusive organisation which will benefit all staff, volunteers and – most importantly – service users at the British Red Cross.

Currently, (June 2017), 8% of the staff at the BRC identify themselves as Black, Asian or minority ethnic (BAME). However, 12% of the UK labour market, 14% of the UK population and 40% of people in London are BAME. I'm keen to see us become more representative of our diverse society



– at all levels of the organisation – so we can create a more dynamic workplace, and one which is better equipped to reach people in crisis.

The findings in this report indicate that there are a number of barriers people from ethnic minority backgrounds face in the UK labour market, and at the BRC. Particularly interesting to me is the high potential for unconscious bias in our current recruitment and selection processes, which can disadvantage people from number of protected groups, and prevent the best candidate from being appointed.

Furthermore, I'm keen to see us create an organisation where staff from all backgrounds can see themselves as able to develop themselves personally and professionally and become a leader.

Diversity and Inclusion at the British Red Cross is gaining momentum. I'm looking forward to the implementation of these recommendations and the move towards a more diverse and inclusive workplace.

Karen Sheldon

Diversity and Inclusion Manager, British Red Cross

## Introduction

The British Red Cross (BRC) helps millions of people in the UK and around the world to prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies, disasters and conflicts. We aim to put people in crisis at the heart of all that we do. We aim to ensure our workforce consists of the best people drawn from the widest possible variety of backgrounds, and that we are truly representative of the diversity in society.

The BRC has a commitment to increasing the ethnic diversity of its workforce. One of our corporate diversity targets – as part of our ‘Refusing to Ignore People in Crisis’ 2015 – 2019 strategy – involves increasing the percentage of BAME staff to 12% by the end of 2019. Currently, (June 2017), 8% of staff at the BRC identify themselves as BAME, compared to 12% of the UK labour market (ONS, 2016).

This report presents recommendations on how the British Red Cross can better recruit, support and develop BAME staff, and subsequently address the under-representation of BAME staff in the organisation.

The recommendations presented will additionally outline how we can create a more inclusive workplace, and will subsequently complement the wider work of the Diversity team around supporting those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act (2010), and individuals from low socio-economic backgrounds.

Every organisation faces diversity and inclusion challenges. The BRC is however taking a proactive approach. These recommendations aim to ensure we become truly representative of the UK labour market, our communities, and our service users. A more diverse workforce will ensure we are able to benefit from the widest possible range of perspectives, continue to fulfil our value of being an inclusive organisation, and – crucially – be better equipped to reach a diversity of people in crisis.

## Project Background

### Research Method

This project involved a literature analysis of publications relating to ethnic diversity in the workplace, the barriers and challenges BAME people can face in the labour market, and best practice in equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). The EDI practices of comparable organisations were also examined.

Qualitative research was undertaken comprising: semi-structured 1:1 interviews with over 50 staff/volunteers; 3 focus groups with over 20 staff/volunteers including one in Manchester; one in Leeds and a focus group in London with a group of young people. Staff/volunteers for the 1:1 interviews and focus groups were drawn from a variety of ethnic backgrounds (Black, Asian, Mixed, White and other backgrounds) directorates, geographic locations (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) and, pay levels. 1:1 meetings with Leadership figures, including a number of Executive Directors and key internal stakeholders, were conducted. Monitoring and reporting data, where available, was also gathered.

Analysis involved thematic content analysis of interview and focus group data, and the subsequent identification of key themes relating to ethnic diversity. Monitoring and reporting data was subject to quantitative analysis, where the data was available.

These analyses, led to the identification of a number of issues relating to EDI at the BRC, and subsequently the creation of 10 recommendations to address them and outline how the BRC could better recruit, support and develop BAME staff.

### Definitions

Diversity – In the current report, the term diversity is used to highlight differences between individuals which can be disclosed by an individual or observed through a set of demographic characteristics; specifically, ethnicity.

Inclusion – A sense of belonging: feeling respected and valued for who you are. Feeling a level of supportive energy and commitment from others so that you can do your best (Miller and Katz, 2010). ‘Inclusive’ is also one of the BRC’s four values.

BAME – Black, Asian and minority ethnic. This includes individuals who self-identify as Asian or Asian British, Black or Black British, Mixed or as ‘any other ethnic group’, and subsequently identify as non-white. In this report, the term ‘BAME’ is used interchangeably with ‘ethnic minorities’.

Disabled People – The British Red Cross adopts the Social Model of Disability, which states that disability is caused by society rather than by the person’s impairment or difference. Therefore, in this report the term ‘disabled people’ is used, consistent with the Social Model of Disability.

LGBT+ - Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, plus. The term may also be used to describe anyone that isn’t cisgender. Cisgender is when an individual's experience of their own gender matches the sex they were assigned at birth. Although categorised together, each identify is different, and will have different needs and concerns. LGBT is the most widely-used term; however there are other variants such as LGBTIQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and questioning or queer). These exist to be inclusive of additional identities.

Economically Active – The fraction of a population that is either employed or seeking employment.

## A Note on Quotes

Direct quotes from interview and focus group participants are used throughout this report. These quotes are used with the consent of the participants. Beneath the quotes, the participants have themselves indicated how they wish to be identified.

## The UK Labour Market and Ethnic Diversity

Black Asian and minority ethnic people are underrepresented at every management level in the workplace. Currently, 12% of the working-age population is from a BAME background, however only 10% are in the workplace and only 6% of top management positions are held by an ethnic minority person (Race at Work, 2015).

The Voluntary Sector appears to be particularly unrepresentative of the ethnic diversity of the labour market. Only 8.8% of staff working in the Voluntary Sector classify themselves as BAME, compared to 10.8% in the public sector, 11.2% in the private sector (NCVO, 2015), and 14% of the UK population. Indeed, the Chief Executive of the National Council of Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), Sir Stuart Etherington, recently remarked how the voluntary sector has ‘gone backwards’ on equality and diversity, stating that charities have not done enough to encourage ethnic minorities into leadership positions.

The Government has stated that organisations must do more to support BAME people access the labour market and develop their careers. The Government’s BME 2020 Plan aims

to increase BAME employment by 20% by 2020. The BME 2020 Plan involves conducting a review of the issues faced by businesses in developing BAME talent from recruitment through to executive level to achieve these goals.

The McGregor-Smith Review (2017), commissioned by UK Government, considered the issues affecting BAME groups in the workplace, and presented numerous recommendations relating to how Government and organisations could address under-representation, remove barriers, and support BAME people access the labour market and develop their careers.

The UK population is becoming increasingly diverse. 1 in 4 schoolchildren in primary and secondary school today in England are from a BAME background (Department for Education, 2015). The BRC must keep pace with our changing population dynamics, look to the future, and ensure that our workplace is an inclusive place, representative of society, free from implicit and explicit discrimination, and able to harness the best diverse talent to respond to people facing crisis.

## **The Barriers Ethnic Minorities Face**

### Why are ethnic minorities underrepresented at every management level in the workplace?

Ethnic minorities face significant barriers in accessing employment, and, once in employment, can continue to face disadvantage. The disadvantages that ethnic minorities experience in the labour market, compared with British whites of the same age and qualifications/experience, are called 'ethnic penalties' (Heath and Cheung, 2006). Ethnic penalties are distinct from the concept of discrimination, although discrimination is likely to be a major component of the ethnic penalty.

Heath and Cheung (2006) report that both BAME men and women experience considerable disadvantages in the British labour market. This includes higher unemployment rates, greater concentrations in routine and semi-routine work and lower hourly earnings than White groups.

These differentials cannot be explained by the age, education or foreign qualifications and foreign work experience of ethnic minority groups. These ethnic penalties also extend to second generation immigrants, born and educated in Britain.

Indeed, the Trades Union Congress (2016) reports that BAME workers with degrees are two and a half times more likely to be unemployed than white workers with degrees, and Boliver (2015) reports that BAME university applicants are significantly less likely to be offered a place at Russell Group universities than equally-qualified white counterparts.

Aside from discrimination, there are a number of other plausible explanations for the presence of significant ethnic penalties, which explain the underrepresentation of ethnic minorities in the workplace and in leadership positions.

Ethnic minorities are more likely to lack information about possible job opportunities, live in areas where there are relatively few openings with poor public transportation, or may lack the work experience or training necessary for the available jobs. Educational disadvantage – including living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods with poor schooling – is also a significant factor. A lack of social capital and subsequent access to people who can offer advice, mentoring, intelligence about vacancies, recruitment processes, internships and work experience is also a significant factor. (Heath and Cheung, 2006).

Nevertheless, discrimination has been found to be a major factor in explaining these occupational disadvantages. A study by the Department for Work and Pensions reported that ethnic minority applicants had to send 74% more applications to receive a response than white applicants – when these applications were completely identical, apart from having an ethnic minority or a white sounding name (Wood, 2009). BAME applicants received a response for every 16 applications submitted, compared to white applicants who only had to submit 9 applications for a response. Candidates are denied access to a range of jobs in a range of sectors across British cities as a result of having a name associated with an ethnic minority background. There are no plausible explanations for the difference in treatment between applications, other than racial discrimination. This discrimination is consistent with the high levels of discrimination found in comparable studies in other countries over recent years.

However, racial discrimination in the labour market extends beyond just the recruitment and selection stage. A YouGov survey of almost 25,000 UK workers (2015) revealed that more than a quarter (28%) of all BAME employees reported witnessing or experiencing racial harassment or bullying from managers in the last 5 years. This figure rises to 32% of BAME employees who have witnessed/experienced racial harassment or bullying from a colleague in the last 5 years. Another Open Survey poll (2015) reports that the scale of racial harassment or bullying from managers may be even worse – with nearly half (45%) of all BAME employees and a fifth (20%) of white employees stating they have experienced or witnessed racial harassment from managers in the last five years.

Worryingly, workplace discrimination appears to be on rise. In Business in the Community's 2010 Aspiration and Frustration report, 22% of respondents from a BAME background reported having being offended by a racial remark; this rose to 28% in 2015. Indeed, the Home Office Citizenship Survey (HOCS) 2003 reported that short-term increases in prejudice may be fuelled by adverse media publicity over immigration and asylum seekers. Such an effect is likely to be exacerbated following Brexit, Trump, and the rise in incidences of racial discrimination (e.g. IPPR, 'Post referendum racism and xenophobia, 2016).

Furthermore, religion, which often intersects with ethnicity, has also been found to impact on workplace penalties. Heath and Martin (2013) reported a consistent pattern for Muslim men and women to experience greater labour market penalties than workers from similar ethnic groups who belong to other or no religions. Indeed, a recent report by the House of

Commons Women and Equalities Committee (2016) reported that Muslim people suffer the greatest economic disadvantages of any group in society, with reasons for this including discrimination and Islamophobia – as well as insufficient role models across education and employment.

Racial discrimination is certainly prevalent in the UK workplace, and acts as a significant barrier for BAME populations. Ethnic minorities face difficulties in gaining employment, regardless of their level of education, and then if appointed, almost half will face racial discrimination in the workplace.

Barriers faced by people from low socio-economic groups, who by definition lack in economic and social capital, overlap significantly with those faced by many BAME people – who are disproportionately drawn from these groups, indeed, it is estimated that up to 45% of Black children are growing up in poverty, (Office for National Statistics, 2016). This includes unpaid internships. Unpaid internships have been criticised by the Social Mobility Foundation as damaging to social mobility and for denying people from low socio-economic groups access to certain careers. (Social Mobility Foundation, 2015).

### What is Unconscious Bias and how is it a Barrier to Diversity?

Bias is defined as “prejudice for or against one person or group, especially in a way considered to be unfair” (OED, 2016). Unconscious bias refers to a bias that we are unaware of, and which happens outside of our control. It is an automatic bias, triggered by our brain making quick judgments and assessments of people and situations. Unconscious bias is influenced by our background, cultural environment and personal experiences. Many of our everyday judgements and decisions – without our awareness – are influenced by unconscious bias – this includes judgements and decisions in the workplace, specifically those relating to recruitment and selection, and the way we interact with colleagues and who we deem worthy of praise / promotion.

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) and the Government’s Behavioural Insights Team recommend that to reduce unconscious bias, CV’s should be anonymised to avoid pre-judgements of a person’s suitability of the role based on limited characteristics such as ethnicity and/or gender, and that assessment processes are regularly evaluated.

The table below outlines different forms of unconscious bias. Many of these exist in the workplace and can harm an organisation’s diversity efforts.

Type of Unconscious Bias	Explanation
Affinity bias	Disproportionately favouring candidates with characteristics most like oneself.
Status quo bias	The tendency to look for candidates who are like current staff, to

	avoid perceived risk of going against the norms already established.
<b>Endowment effect</b>	Linked to status quo bias, recruiters may value skills and characteristics of current staff disproportionately and so miss out on the potential benefits of hiring people with other characteristics.
<b>Mere exposure effect</b>	This causes recruiters to like certain individuals more simply because they have already been exposed to similar individuals.
<b>Confirmation bias</b>	Looking for ways to justify one's biased preconceptions. For example, if one perceives a person who attended a less prestigious university as being unsuitable for a role, one might unconsciously look for ways to prove/confirm this.
<b>Intuition bias</b>	Making a judgement of a candidate based on a 'sixth sense' or 'gut feeling' rather than the evidence they present.
<b>Effective heuristic</b>	Judging the suitability of a candidate based on superficial factors e.g. Thinking a candidate is unsuitable if they have a tattoo or are overweight.
<b>Expectation anchor</b>	When favouritism of one candidate causes a mental block, stopping you from properly investigating and considering other candidates for the job.

Forms of unconscious bias outlined above which might be especially relevant to the BRC and comparable organisations include affinity bias – colloquially known as 'recruiting in one's image.' Furthermore, status quo bias may also play a significant role. These forms of bias are likely to be highly prevalent in organisations with an absence of mandatory recruitment and selection and unconscious bias training.

While unconscious bias can result in a lack of diversity in an organisation, we should be cautious of endlessly using it to justify or explain a lack of diversity – it is rarely the sole cause. Indeed, attributing an organisation's lack of diversity solely to unconscious bias can result in ignoring other causes and issues within an organisation. Specifically, it can distract from the existence of overt, conscious discrimination based on ethnicity – i.e. racial discrimination.

These significant disadvantages and barriers ethnic minorities face in the labour market illustrate that measures and initiatives are required to essentially level the playing field, and to ensure that ethnic minority candidates are able to access employment without facing disadvantage and discrimination, and benefit from an inclusive work environment.

## The Case for Ethnic Diversity

### The Legal Case

The Equality Act (2010) ensures, among other things, that it is unlawful for organisations to discriminate on the grounds of gender, gender identity, marital status, pregnancy and maternity, age race, religion and belief, sexual orientation and disability in employment and

training and in the provision of goods, facilities and services. While the Human Rights Act (1998) ensures that organisations must treat everyone equally, with fairness, dignity and respect. Organisations must therefore implement policies and processes to ensure that they are compliant with existing equality legislation.

The costs associated with bad practice in relation to equality legislation far outweigh the costs of implementing good practice. Research by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) shows that the average cost to an employer associated with an employee successfully bringing a case to an employment tribunal is £7,484.

Furthermore, an article in Third Sector in 2006 reported that there was anecdotal evidence that third sector employees are more likely than employees of other sectors to take their former employers to court where they feel they have been unfairly dismissed.

### Business Case

Research has illustrated numerous associations between diversity and positive workplace outcomes. Research into diversity in the workplace has traditionally tended to focus on gender diversity; comparatively little attention was paid to ethnic/racial diversity specifically, although government focus did shift to the barriers experienced by BAME groups around early 2000 following the MacPherson investigation (Feb, 1999).

In a review of research into ethnic diversity in the workplace, Herring (2009) reported that as the ethnic (and gender) diversity in establishments increased, the number of customers, relative market share and profitability also significantly increased. Furthermore, ethnic diversity was found to account for roughly 6% of the variance in sales revenue. It was concluded that not only is racial (and gender) diversity significantly related to positive business outcomes, but they are among the most important predictors.

Research has also illustrated the benefits of ethnic diversity in the leadership of organisations on financial performance. In their influential publication, *Diversity Matters*, McKinsey (2014) reported a positive relationship between financial performance and greater ethnic (and gender) diversity in leadership. Organisations in the top quartile of racial/ethnic diversity were 30 percent more likely to have financial returns above their national industry median – companies which commit to diverse leadership are more successful.

Why are organisations with ethnically diverse workforces, and leadership, more successful? McKinsey (2014) report that diverse companies perform better primarily because of their advantages in recruiting the best talent, stronger customer orientation, increased employee satisfaction and improved decision making. These factors subsequently lead to a cycle of increasing returns. Furthermore, it has been suggested that when diverse groups work together they are able to benefit from a range of perspectives, harness each member's individuality, and are subsequently more creative (Page, 2007; McLeod 1996).

Additionally, with regards to service delivery, a number of articles in human resource literature highlight that a broader workforce may potentially broaden the appeal of an organisation to service users (Leopold & Harris, 2009).

Indeed, it is intuitive to conclude that due to the nature of international humanitarian work, and our work with diverse communities in the UK and overseas, the BRC, together with many other Voluntary Sector organisations, would benefit greatly from a deeper understanding and knowledge of our service users' socio-economic context. It is important to recognise the life experiences of ethnic minorities, and how these subsequently result in unique perspectives which can enable a diverse workforce to significantly add value to our work.

### Moral Case

Organisations have a duty to society – a corporate social responsibility. This includes the responsibility to create a society where everyone is treated with respect and dignity, regardless of their background. One way in which this can be achieved is through excellence in equality, diversity and inclusion.

The British Red Cross is in the unique position of supporting a vast range of people in crisis, and subsequently improving the lives of many people from diverse backgrounds, including ethnic minorities. We have the opportunity to further support these communities through actively incorporating equality, diversity and inclusion considerations into our policy making processes which will enhance and uphold our values of being compassionate, courageous, inclusive and dynamic.

As a result of our inclusion and diversity work, we will be able to further demonstrate our values and principles in our work towards creating a fairer and more equal society. Fulfilling our inclusion and diversity obligations will not only benefit the BRC by recruiting and retaining the best diverse talent with a variety of perspectives, but it will also help us contribute towards developing greater social cohesion, tolerance, stability and prosperity in the wider society. This seems especially critical in our current climate of political polarisation.

## Ethnic Diversity at the British Red Cross – Current Landscape

The British Red Cross' corporate strategy – 'Refusing to Ignore People in Crisis' (2015 – 2019) – contains two corporate targets relating to diversity:

- To increase the percentage of disabled staff from 4% to 8%
- To increase the percentage of BAME staff from 7% to 12%

These targets were created to proactively address our diversity challenges with transparency and accountability, and to formally and openly acknowledge that we are not

representative of the diversity of the UK labour market. We were also strongly motivated by our desire to create a more diverse and inclusive workplace, to enable us to make smarter decisions and to improve our ability to respond to people facing crisis.

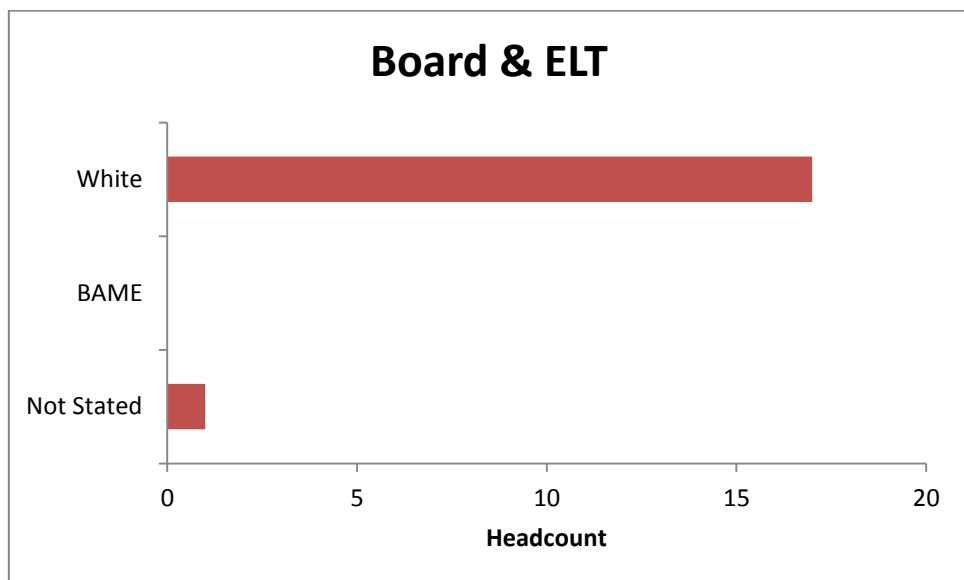
The table below outlines ethnic diversity across the British Red Cross on 30/09/2016. For the majority of this report, ‘BAME’ will be used as an amalgamation of the ethnic categories listed below, for more information see the ‘definitions’ section. 8.1% of staff at the British Red Cross identify as BAME. The high non-disclosure rate of ethnicity – 10.8% - should be noted.

Table 1 - Ethnic composition of BRC staff, Q3 2016

BRC Diversity Headcount Q3 2016	Headcount	Percentage	UK Economically Active 2016
Asian or Asian British	112	3.0%	5.1%
Black or Black British	99	2.7%	3.0%
Mixed	56	1.5%	1.2%
White	3,028	81.1%	88.1%
Other Ethnic Groups	35	0.9%	2.6%
Not Stated	403	10.8%	N/A
<hr/>			
Total White	3,028	81.1%	88.10%
Total BAME	302	8.1%	11.90%
Total Not Stated	403	10.8%	N/A
<hr/>			
Total All	3733	100.0%	N/A

*Staff headcount and percentages across BRC by ethnicity on 30/09/2016 and percentages of each economically active group, 2016*

The graph below outlines ethnic diversity in the Board of Trustees and the Executive Leadership Team (ELT), on 30/09/2016.



*Board and ELT headcount by ethnicity on 30/09/2016*

## Findings and Themes

### Leadership

(Note – “Leadership” in this report refers to the Board of Trustees, Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and the Leadership Group – approximately 110 staff at and above the Level 6 pay band).

#### Current Landscape

The lack of ethnic diversity within the leadership of the British Red Cross is evident, and clearly illustrated through monitoring and reporting data, and the attitudes of staff/volunteers in interviews/focus groups. The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and the Board of Trustees are acutely aware of the lack of ethnic diversity within the organisation and at Leadership levels. Leadership homogeneity at the BRC extends beyond ELT and the Board of Trustees.

Indeed, many staff/volunteers mention the lack of ethnic diversity in the Volunteer Councils, Presidents and specifically in the Leadership Group, which is supported by monitoring data below.

Table 2 - Ethnic composition of BRC Leadership Group (Level 6 and above), Q3 2016

Leadership Group Diversity Q3 2016	Headcount	Percentage	UK Economically Active 2016
Asian or Asian British	4	3.7%	5.1%
Black or Black British	1	0.9%	3.0%
Mixed	2	1.9%	1.2%
White	87	81.3%	88.1%
Other Ethnic Groups	1	0.9%	2.6%
Not Stated	12	11.2%	N/A
<hr/>			
Total White	87	81.3%	88.10%
Total BAME	8	7.5%	11.90%
Total Not Stated	12	11.2%	N/A
<hr/>			
Total All	107	100.0%	N/A

*Leadership Group headcount and percentages by ethnicity on 30/09/2016 and percentages of each economically active group, 2016*

The table illustrates that with 7.5% of BAME staff in the Leadership Group, the leadership of the BRC is not representative of the UK labour market. Indeed, external research has revealed that ethnic diversity at the very top of voluntary sector organisations is poor. In 2016, campaign group Inclusive Boards revealed that over half the charities in England and Wales do not have trustees from a BAME background. Furthermore, of the 500 largest charities in England and Wales by annual income, only 6.3% of Trustees were from BAME backgrounds, compared with 8 per cent among FTSE 100 companies. Of the 500 charities surveyed, 287 (57%) had no identifiable BAME trustee. At the time of writing (June 2017), the British Red Cross does not have a Trustee from a BAME background.

***"The higher you go, the less diversity there is"***

- Focus group participant, UK Operations, North West England

Many staff/volunteers at the BRC report being pleased with what appears to be a conscious appreciation of gender diversity at leadership, evidenced by the appointment of three women as directors in the past three years. Staff/volunteers regularly report that recent advances in gender diversity, have illustrated how, in relation to diversity, actions speak louder than words.

While the organisation has made laudable advances in gender diversity in leadership, with the aforementioned appointment of white women to Executive Director positions, tangible evidence for advances in BAME diversity in leadership is lacking.

***"We had a vision to appoint more women in leadership positions...we can repeat this with BAME people."***

- Black female, UK Office

Many staff at the BRC – BAME and non BAME – report hearing more about diversity from ELT recently, particularly from our Chief Executive. There seems to be an understanding amongst staff and volunteers that the Chief Executive and ELT are keen to increase ethnic diversity across the organisation.

A number of staff/volunteers mention the lack of accountability regarding diversity at mid-management levels – the level at which much recruitment and staff management takes place. While Executive Directors are generally perceived to support diversity across the BRC, the same view was seldom reported for staff at mid-management levels.

### Reasons for Current Landscape

Why the lack of ethnic diversity in the Leadership of the British Red Cross? Several reasons have been proposed. Those which relate *specifically* to leadership are presented here. Many of which are broader and applicable to the all levels of the workforce are explored throughout in the report, and under the 'The Barriers Ethnic Minorities Face' section.

The BRC, and many other organisations in the voluntary sector, is understood to have a stable largely white, middle class, and, to a lesser extent, male, leadership. Many leadership figures have been in post for 10 – 20 years. High stability in leadership staff is, of course, a good thing. However, the stability of the BRC's leadership means that there is less room for talented candidates of all backgrounds, and talented BAME candidates specifically, to be appointed to leadership positions. The culmination of a less diverse labour market 10 – 20 years ago, coupled with a lack of diversity consideration at the BRC, has left us with a leadership demographic which is significantly unrepresentative of the current labour market.

A lack of ethnic diversity in leadership is certainly not an issue exclusive to the British Red Cross. It is reported as an issue across the voluntary sector, particularly among large, established charities, in addition to in the public and private sectors.

### Consequences

One of the most frequently reported consequences of a homogeneous leadership relates to the career development of BAME staff and volunteers, and the subsequent attraction and retention of talented current or future BAME leaders.

The lack of visible BAME representation in the organisation's leadership makes many BAME people question whether they themselves can progress into a leadership position with the BRC, with some questioning whether they are valued enough to. Inevitable questions over

whether the BRC appreciates the skills, talents and experiences of BAME staff have been raised by interview and focus group participants. Several staff/volunteers have reached the conclusion that they may have to look elsewhere to enter a leadership position.

***“Until we see evidence of BAME people in those [leadership] positions, I wouldn’t be able to say ‘yes’” [to feeling I can become a leader at the BRC]***

- Asian Male, UK Office

Many BAME staff expressed disappointment at the lack of visible role models in leadership with shared backgrounds, which might serve to boost BAME staff morale and inspire. Several longer serving staff mentioned how former Director of Finance, Planning and Resources, who was visibly BAME, had served as a positive role model to BAME staff.

Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that a number of staff acknowledge that despite the lack of ethnic diversity in the leadership of the British Red Cross, it does not affect their view on whether they could become a leader in the BRC.

In addition to the development and retention of talented BAME staff, there are also implications for attraction. One staff member mentioned examining the diversity profile of leadership in organisations when considering whether to apply. Furthermore, an ethnically homogeneous leadership may contribute to the BRC’s perception as a white, middle class organisation. This perception is further explored in the “Perceptions of the Voluntary Sector” section.

The impact of a homogeneous leadership on our success as an organisation – our ability to reach people in crisis – was frequently mentioned. Many staff and volunteers question the discrepancy between leadership figures, often white, middle class and male, and our diverse service users.

Leaders drawn from a wider cross section of society with unique lived experience of diversity and subsequently different perspectives may provide a more nuanced understanding of our diverse service users and how to reach people in crisis. A diverse group of leaders can make better decisions. The risk of groupthink – the practice of thinking or making decisions as a group, resulting typically in unchallenged, poor-quality decision-making – and similar discourse among homogeneous leadership, and our inability to consider a range of perspectives with regards to decision making was frequently highlighted as a consequence of a homogeneous leadership.

***“There is a domination of white British men in the BRC at management level. There is a lack of diverse voices, narratives, experiences. The consequence of this is that decisions are made by white British men, therefore limited perspectives in all areas of business; there is no inclusive approach.”***

- White Female, International Directorate, UK Office

A homogeneous BRC leadership has led several staff to question the genuineness of ELT and the Board's messaging around diversity, the credibility of our 'inclusive' value, and, for some, has led them to express their belief in the existence of a 'glass ceiling.' These views seem likely to persist and proliferate if tangible actions to achieve ethnic diversity representation in leadership are not taken.

### Summary

The consequences of a homogeneous leadership make for uncomfortable reading. Many BAME staff report that the lack of ethnic diversity in leadership negatively impacts on their attitudes around progression and development in the organisation, and potentially questions their value as an employee, thus impacting on staff retention. Staff also question our ability to benefit from a variety of perspectives in top level decision making. Questions about the organisation's genuine commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion are inevitably raised. Fundamentally, it calls into question our credibility as an international humanitarian organisation and our ability to best respond to people in crisis. Without meaningful change, the above consequences seem likely to worsen.

Nevertheless, there is acknowledgement among many staff/volunteers that diversity and ethnic diversity is being taken seriously by members of ELT and the Board at the BRC. This is evidenced by the appointment of the BAME Development Officer, the increased organisational presence of the Diversity team and the significant increase around Diversity messaging from members of ELT, particularly the Chief Executive. Moreover, the recent development of the Inclusion and Diversity strategy has been significant in driving positive attitudes around diversity. Diversity in the British Red Cross is gaining momentum.

***"There was a good example of Leadership being inclusive when Mike [Adamson] was speaking to the International Directorate and corrected himself: 'Mankind, sorry, Humankind.' These words can be powerful coming from leadership."***

- White Female, International Directorate, UK Office

***"This is the only organisation I have worked at which is taking BAME issues seriously."***

- Black Female, UK Office

## Ethnic Diversity Across the British Red Cross

This section concerns itself with ethnic diversity across the BRC – who works where. Ethnic diversity is explored across directorates, services, and geographical regions. Historical trends are also examined. This area warrants discussion as monitoring and reporting data, in addition to interviews and focus groups, indicate widespread variation and 'patchiness' of ethnic diversity across the British Red Cross.

## Services and directorates

Some services are more ethnically diverse than others. Refugee Support and Restoring Family Links (RSRFL) is consistently praised by staff/volunteers for its understanding of the business and service delivery benefits of ethnic diversity. This understanding is loudly evidenced by the ethnic diversity of the RSRFL staff and volunteers who work with our ethnically diverse service users.

Almost 30% of staff in RSRFL are from BAME backgrounds. This emphasis on ensuring ethnic diversity among the staff and volunteer base seems driven also by a desire to be reflective of our diverse service users, and – in the case of volunteers – can be driven by funding requirements too.

***"In Refugee Services, diversity is part of business decisions."***

- Asian female, Refugee Services and Restoring Family Links, North England

Nevertheless, staff in RSRFL report how there is little ethnic diversity in the leadership positions in the service, which is consistent with leadership across the BRC. The table below outlines the ethnic diversity in RSRFL.

Table 3 - Ethnic composition of RSRFL staff, 2016

RSRFL Staff Diversity 2016	Headcount	Percentage	UK Economically Active 2016
Not Stated	23	8.7%	n/a
BAME	78	29.4%	11.9%
White	164	61.9%	88.1%
Total	265	100.0%	100.0%

*RSRFL headcount and percentages by ethnicity on 30/09/2016 and percentages of each economically active group, 2016*

Data indicates that while teams in RSRFL benefit from ethnic diversity, other UK services can often be entirely homogenous, and this consensus is strongly supported by staff/volunteers in UK Operations teams. As table 4 below indicates, only 5.5% of staff in UK Services, excluding RSRFL, identify as BAME.

***"There is a perception of BRC as a white middle class organisation. But the people at the receiving end of our services aren't like that."***

- White Male, Red Cross Training, North West England

A consequence of these homogeneous service delivery teams includes reported difficulties in accessing minority communities. Furthermore, staff have raised issues around cultural

sensitivity – including the perpetuation of a ‘white saviour’ complex, particularly in our International work – and whether the abilities of talented BAME applicants to the BRC are as valued as White applicants. Furthermore, a lack of ethnic diversity in other services has led staff to question the ability of a homogeneous group of staff to understand some of the nuances involved in service delivery.

***“The BRC is nowhere near as diverse as it could be. We have no access to certain communities.”***

- Focus group participant, People, Learning and Strategic Change, Yorkshire

***“I feel like some diversity training would help us access certain communities which are currently difficult to engage with.”***

- White male, People Learning and Strategic Change, Northern Ireland

Table 4 - Ethnic composition of UK Services (excluding RSRFL) staff, 2016

UK Services (excluding RSRFL) Staff Diversity 2016	Headcount	Percentage	UK Economically Active 2016
<b>Not Stated</b>	306	13.9%	n/a
<b>BAME</b>	121	5.5%	11.9%
<b>White</b>	1767	80.5%	88.1%
<b>Total</b>	2194	100.0%	100.0%

*UK Services (excluding RSRFL) headcount and percentages by ethnicity on 30/09/2016 and percentages of each economically active group, 2016*

These patterns, and their consequences, also apply to the International Directorate. While the International Directorate benefits from diversity in the form of different nationalities, languages and cultures, there is nevertheless an underrepresentation of staff from BAME backgrounds, with staff/volunteers reporting that the majority of staff are drawn disproportionately from White British and White European backgrounds. This is also supported by the table below.

Table 5 - Ethnic composition of International Directorate staff, 2016

International Directorate Staff Diversity 2016	Headcount	Percentage	UK Economically Active 2016
<b>Not Stated</b>	11	9.8%	n/a
<b>BAME</b>	11	9.8%	11.9%
<b>White</b>	90	80.4%	88.1%
<b>Total</b>	112	100.0%	100.0%

*International Directorate headcount and percentages by ethnicity on 30/09/2016 and percentages of each economically active group, 2016*

This homogeneity extends to directorates not involved in direct service delivery. Away from UK Operations, diversity in other directorates is also variable. However, staff have praised the ethnic diversity – and recent increases in gender diversity – in the Information and Digital Technology directorate.

*"Our floor is very diverse, in terms of ethnicity... there's been a massive change in gender diversity once Rosie (Slater) became CIO (Chief Information Officer). It creates a nice dynamic... it's a bit of a family here."*

- Black male, Information and Digital Technology, UK Office

There is however a tendency for staff to report that at the BRC, and across the voluntary sector and wider labour market, BAME staff tend to generally be employed in technical occupations, such as Information and Digital Technology, and how there are few BAME staff in more outward-facing directorates and positions of ‘influence’.

### Geography

Diversity tends to vary given the region in which a BRC office is based. The lack of ethnic diversity in some regions and offices, may, understandably, be reflective of the lack of diversity in the local population. This can go some way to explaining the homogeneity of some offices.

Many staff/volunteers, particularly those from outside UK Office and London, have praised the visible BAME diversity at UK Office. However, questions over whether the UK Office workforce is truly representative of the labour market in London as a whole persist. Indeed, while 40% of people in London identify as BAME (Census, 2011), only 15% of BRC staff based in London offices (including UK Office) identify themselves as BAME. All ethnic minority groups are underrepresented in London, as table 6 below illustrates.

Table 6 - Ethnic composition of London office based staff (including UK Office), 2016

Diversity London offices (including UKO)	Headcount	Percentage	UK Census 2011 (London)
<b>Asian or Asian British</b>	54	6.6%	18.5%
<b>Black or Black British</b>	38	4.6%	13.3%
<b>Mixed</b>	19	2.3%	5.0%
<b>White</b>	556	67.9%	59.8%
<b>Other Ethnic Groups</b>	15	1.8%	3.4%
<b>Not Stated</b>	137	16.7%	N/A
<b> </b>			
<b>Total White</b>	556	67.9%	59.9%
<b>Total BAME</b>	126	15.4%	40.1%
<b>Total Not Stated</b>	137	16.7%	N/A
<b> </b>			
<b>Total All</b>	819	100.0%	N/A

*London offices headcount and percentages by ethnicity on 30/09/2016 and percentages of each group, 2011*

The majority of staff/volunteers report that outside of London ethnic diversity in offices is poor, and many offices are not representative of the communities in which they are based. Indeed, several staff mention that regional offices without RSRFL can have a complete lack of ethnic diversity, even if they are based in ethnically diverse regions. The fact that only 5.5% of staff in UK Services, excluding RSRFL, identify as BAME supports this view. This can subsequently have an impact on the dynamics and inclusiveness of individual areas and offices.

***"If I bring up race in (area outside London) everyone gets quiet. They have no exposure to different people. There are occasionally inappropriate comments."***

- Black Female (staff)

Staff/volunteers based in regional offices report how their towns, cities and regions have differing attitudes to race and culture, and how the distinct cultural attitudes of a region will inevitably have an effect on staff, volunteers and service users.

***"There was an article in the Guardian calling Plymouth the 'City of Hate' because of its attitudes towards refugees and asylum seekers."***

- White male, Refugee Services and Restoring Family Links, South West England

## Historical Trends

The ethnic diversity of the BRC workforce over time is difficult to analyse – given the change from the PeopleSoft reporting system to the SAVi reporting system in 2014 – long term monitoring data is not available. This highlights a challenge with monitoring and reporting. As a result, interview/focus group data alone was analysed to understand trends over time.

Several long-serving staff explain how ethnic diversity at the BRC has improved over the past 10 – 20 years and as the labour market has become more ethnically diverse, the BRC has too, albeit to a limited extent. While there is better representation of ethnic diversity today, staff nevertheless admit that the BRC still has a long way to go to be truly representative of the labour market and society, and highlight the necessity of taking a proactive and forward looking approach to understanding the ever-changing labour market.

***"In 2009, when I joined, the BAME staff percentage was 7%. In 2016 it's 7%. We have a constant cycle of collecting data, identifying problems and then not actually doing anything about them."***

- Asian Female, Scotland (early 2016)

The perceptions of ethnic – and other forms – of diversity at the British Red Cross, and indeed any other organisation, tend to be influenced by two main factors – the experiences of staff/volunteers' previous workplace, and their own perceptions regarding the diversity in the population of the local area (very few staff/volunteers have access to the conclusive monitoring data presented here). This might explain the range of attitudes towards the representation of BAME staff at the BRC. Some staff/volunteers even reported the BRC as being one of the most ethnically diverse places they have worked, while others regarded ethnic diversity at BRC as exceptionally poor.

## Turnover

In 2015, there was a higher turnover of Black British staff compared to all other ethnic groups. (Staff turnover percentage is calculated by dividing the number of employees who left the organisation during a specified time period by the average number of employees employed during the same period of time. The lower the percentage, the better an organisation is at retaining employees.)

Table 7 - Ethnic composition of staff by turnover, 2015

BRC Staff Turnover 2015	Turnover
<b>Asian or Asian British</b>	25.7%
<b>Black or Black British</b>	36.1%
<b>Mixed</b>	20.1%
<b>White</b>	25.0%
<b>Other Ethnic Groups</b>	15.9%
<b>Not Stated</b>	39.7%
<b>Average</b>	27.0%

This is a concerning issue. In addition to negatively affecting our desire to retain Black staff, it has the arguably more significant implication of alluding to a culture which may not be accommodating to Black staff specifically.

But why are Black staff more likely to leave the organisation than any other ethnic group? Reasons for this are explored throughout the report in detail. They include the existence of overt and subtle discrimination, a culture which is not inclusive and welcoming, the view that they might not be able to fulfil their ambitions at the organisation, the existing under-representation of Black staff and subsequent feelings of isolation, etc. This report attempts to illustrate the differences between the experiences of people within the BAME group where possible and particularly relevant.

The following case study provides a poignant insight into the experiences of one BAME staff member working in the International Directorate.

### Arbie Baguios – Regional Officer for Asia, International Directorate, UK Office

#### Why did you decide to work with the British Red Cross?

I've always wanted to work in International Development. I had been building up my experience in the sector – mostly through unpaid internships – and in 2014 I saw an opening for a Philippines Country Support Officer within BRC and thought I that I could really add value to the organisation's work, as I'm from the Philippines myself. So I applied!



**Could you describe your career journey within the British Red Cross?**

I started out as Philippines Country Support Officer (CSO) in January 2015. Later on my role evolved into the Philippines and Nepal Country Support Officer, providing support to the Nepal Earthquake recovery programme. In April 2016 I applied to be the Regional Officer for Asia (which is one grade above CSO) and was successful.

BRCA has provided me with more than adequate learning and development opportunities, and supported my career progression. I also observe that many colleagues who started out on the same level as I did have now progressed onto other roles.

**How do you feel about Diversity at the British Red Cross?**

Within the International Division, I think the organisation is doing fairly well. There are, for instance, people from Asian backgrounds who are part of the Asia team and people with Middle-Eastern backgrounds who are part of the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) team. I'd like to think that through their unique contextual knowledge and perspectives, they are able to add value to our work in those regions.

In terms of International Delegates we deploy overseas, I feel that BRC value skills and experience regardless of a candidate's background – which means we have a relatively diverse group of colleagues, including those from the Global South. We should continue with this good practice and ensure equal opportunity is available to all, including to BRC staff we employ locally in-country.

**Why is diversity important to you?**

The nature of international development/humanitarian work means that we need to work with people and communities to improve their lives in their own terms. If organisations such as the BRC want to improve the effectiveness of our support to target populations and service-users, then we must recognise that the perspectives and 'lived experiences' from a diverse workforce could add so much value to our programmes and interventions.

Furthermore, diversity is important because it is morally right. As an international humanitarian organisation, I imagine that we'd like to contribute to positive systemic changes within our society which will result into fewer crises and improved lives for people and communities.

**Is there anything else you would like to say?**

Two characteristics that have been identified within our corporate culture are "courageous" and "inclusive". If we are to truly live up to these traits, then we must be courageous enough to say that diversity and inclusion is not just a minimum standard we would like to meet, but an ideal that we strive for. As impartial and neutral humanitarian workers, I believe we should ensure the safety, security and dignity of vulnerable groups; and I believe

this means taking a braver stance for diversity and inclusion, particularly in this time of socio-political and economic polarisation.

### Summary

Ethnic diversity varies considerably across the organisation. There are Services (Refugee Support and Restoring Family Links) and Directorates (Information and Digital Technology) which are frequently singled out for benefiting from ethnic diversity and being representative of our diverse service users and the UK labour market. And long-serving staff have highlighted positive trends which have seen the BRC moving towards a more ethnically diverse workforce over the past 10 – 20 years, although this is likely due to the increasing diversity of the labour market.

Nevertheless, the majority of the responses from staff/volunteers indicate that the average worker at the British Red Cross is conclusively seen as white and middle class. This is supported by the available monitoring data which clearly demonstrates that the BRC workforce is not representative of the UK labour market or many of the communities in which we are based. This under-representation is widespread across the BRC, although in some areas of our work – such as UK services excluding RSRFL – and in some regions, it is particularly pronounced. It is particularly concerning that Black British staff are more likely to leave the organisation than any other ethnic group, this warrants further attention.

## Communications and Engagement

This section of the report is concerned with the communications and engagement strategies of the British Red Cross and how they relate to ethnic diversity.

### Imagery

Criticism of the imagery used by the International Development sector is persistent. The entire sector has faced criticism for portraying international service users – who are overwhelmingly BAME – as powerless and without dignity. These images are often seen in contrast to those used to portray UK-based service users – often white – which are presented with more humanity and dignity. While this may be an effective awareness raising and fundraising approach for the sector, it is ethically questionable and can have severe consequences.

***“When I see my people portrayed like that, it breaks my heart”***

- Black female, UK Office

Across the International Development sector, staff/volunteers, BAME and white, report how portraying BAME people in images as without dignity can offend and alienate, and subsequently deter people from working with, remaining with, and/or supporting the

organisation in question. Furthermore, the use of these stereotypical images by the sector – particularly those where white staff/aid workers are seen to be helping powerless BAME service users – can lead to the creation and perpetuation of a harmful ‘white saviour’ complex.

Several staff/volunteers comment on how this can offend and harm the credibility of the organisation in question, and the sector. Another consequence involves the presentation of service users – and by extension BAME people – as helpless, many speculate how these images portraying BAME people without respect and dignity may influence the public’s perception – including those responsible for recruitment, selection and management decisions – of BAME people in a negative light.

Put simply, there is a strong consensus that the use of International Development images which portray service users, particularly BAME service users, as powerless and without dignity, is grossly offensive and does more harm than good.

However, staff/volunteers are in general consensus that the BRC does not pander to aid clichés and use such imagery. Staff/volunteers were far more positive in their assessment of the BRC’s imagery than they were of the International Development sector as a whole. This view was particularly strong in the London-based focus group with young people. Indeed, analysis of the BRC’s audio/visual library, external images and images placed around offices illustrates BRC’s positive portrayal of BAME people relative to other International Development organisations.

***“Comms have a good understanding of aid clichés and how to avoid them.”***

- Karen Sheldon, Diversity and Inclusion Manager

Where BAME people are presented as service users in the BRC’s images, they are generally presented with dignity. However, staff/volunteers report how when BAME people are presented in images, they are overwhelmingly seen to be recipients of help rather than providing help. This may well – to an extent – be an accurate representation of our service users; nevertheless, there could be greater scope for the representation of BAME people in positions of responsibility/authority in order to positively portray and encourage more BAME people to engage with the BRC.

Staff/volunteers also point to an underrepresentation of BAME people in our images. Furthermore, many staff/volunteers mention that where non-BAME (i.e. White) service users are used in images, they are either older people or in wheelchairs. People report the need for a greater diversity of staff, volunteers *and* service users in our images. There is a general consensus that the BRC audio/visual library would benefit from greater representation of people from diverse backgrounds.

The implications of this under-representation relate to positive portrayal of BAME people, in addition to attraction and retention. This under-representation can have implications for our desire to be an inclusive organisation. We may be ignoring the contributions of BAME staff/volunteers, or failing to present an inclusive workplace where a diversity of staff/volunteers are welcomed and embraced. Furthermore, the perpetuation of specific images e.g. BAME service users only, can create an inaccurate impression of the BRC's work.

***"We've had four recent trafficking raids. All involved people of Eastern European origin, but all the images around trafficking are of Black people."***

- Black Female, Staff

***"Service users have asked me why our Refugee Services leaflets are so afro-centric."***

- Black male, Refugee Services and Restoring Family Links, South West England

#### The British Red Cross as a British, Christian Organisation

A significant proportion of staff/volunteers mentioned how the BRC is often perceived as a Christian organisation, with the implication that it only supports and employs Christian people, or at the very least, has a preference for employing and supporting those of the Christian faith. A similar view was reported – albeit less frequently – relating to the BRC as being a 'British' organisation, which for some suggested that the BRC only employed British Nationals, or was more inclined to employ British Nationals than people from overseas.

***"I originally thought the BRC was a Christian organisation, so do many others. There are people who think the Red Cross is Christian and the Red Crescent is Muslim."***

- Asian male, Volunteer, North England

The perception of the BRC as a Christian organisation was a consistent theme reported throughout interviews/focus groups. What exactly has given rise to this perception? The Cross emblem appears to be a significant factor, with many associating it with the Cross of the Christian faith, rather than the colour inverted Cross depicted on the Swiss flag. The use of the Red Crescent emblem by National Societies in countries where Islam is the majority faith can further reinforce the incorrect view that the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement has religious affiliations, rather than being neutral.

Another factor contributing to this inaccurate perception may be that many International Development organisations are indeed associated with a particular religion, such as Christian Aid, CAFOD, Muslim Aid, and Islamic Relief. This can give rise to the perception that the majority of International Development organisations or voluntary sector organisations are associated with a religion. This view may then be incorrectly generalised to the BRC.

The “British” in the British Red Cross can be misleading, and give the impression of the BRC as an exclusively British organisation, instead of one of many National Societies of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

Moreover, the lack of diverse representation in the BRC, the outward image of the BRC as a white, middle-class establishment organisation, coupled with the lack of visible BAME staff and volunteers in some of our communications and throughout our workforce, can also contribute to the incorrect perception of the BRC as a Christian and exclusively ‘British’ organisation.

***“Some refugee services service users are reluctant to volunteer for us as they see the cross and see us as a Christian organisation, which is misleading... even some white British people think we are a Christian organisation.”***

- Black male, Refugee Services and Restoring Family Links, South West England

Like many of the issues outlined here, this inaccurate yet persistent perception of the BRC as a Christian organisation, and to a lesser extent a British one, has implications for the attraction of staff from diverse backgrounds. Talented candidates may see the BRC as an organisation which hires or prefers to employ only Christians/British nationals, or only assists those of the Christian faith, and may therefore be dissuaded from applying to the BRC, potentially losing a wide variety of diverse talent. There are also similar implications for people facing crisis and potential donors, and for our desire to project an inclusive culture.

#### First Aid Rapped Up

A significant number of staff/volunteers made explicit reference to a past communications campaign. The First Aid Rapped Up campaign was used to promote child safety and featured rapping babies and toddlers wearing ‘urban’ clothing and gold jewellery, portrayed as ‘gangster babies’. Many staff mentioned how this campaign made them feel uncomfortable. Their reactions ranged from finding the campaign inappropriate to offensive.

***“The rapping babies campaign was not good – it was offensive and there was no message.”***

- Mixed race female, UK Office

The 2015 campaign appeared on social media, posters and internal publications. The campaign received media coverage and was commended by external agencies and featured positively in various media outlets, including the Huffington Post and the Daily Mail. Some staff mentioned the refreshing approach taken by the BRC in using innovative and edgy engagement, a move away from more traditional and conservative communications associated with the voluntary sector.

However, many reported how the campaign was seen to reinforce negative stereotypes relating to Black culture, and to exploit these stereotypes for the benefit of the organisation. Many staff reported finding the campaign alienating. Several staff raised this directly with the Diversity and Inclusion Manager.

***"I can see how the rapping babies could be offensive. There were a few times I'd go to lunch, come back see it and cringe. I did hear a few people say 'what is that'?"***

- Black male, Information and Digital Technology, UK Office

Specifically, staff/volunteers speculated how this campaign, while raising the profile of our work, may have had the unintended implication of alienating and offending audiences, including BAME people. This may negatively impact our efforts to create an inclusive culture internally, and externally our desire to engage with audiences from BAME backgrounds. There was significant potential for reputational risk with this campaign, as the case study of the 'racist' American Red Cross below illustrates.

What led the BRC to promote a communications campaign which offended many staff/volunteers and created significant potential for reputational risk? Staff speculate that the lack of ethnic diversity in the Communications and Engagement directorate may have resulted in a lack of diverse perspectives and consideration of how minority groups may perceive the campaign (even though minority and majority groups reported finding the campaign offensive). It presents a sound case for greater collaboration between the teams in Communications and Engagement and the Diversity team, especially regarding the 'equality proofing' of communications campaigns. This is elaborated on in the 'Recommendations' section of this report.

### Case Study – The 'racist' American Red Cross

In June 2016, an American Red Cross water safety poster appeared to offend several members of the public who subsequently posted on social media, referring to the poster as 'racist'. The issue was then reported by international media and led to reputational damage for the American Red Cross who subsequently released an apology.



The poster, titled 'Be Cool, Follow the Rules', depicted young people playing in a swimming pool. On the poster the majority of white children were seen to be obeying the rules and were subsequently labelled 'cool,' whilst ethnic minority children were depicted as behaving mischievously and

subsequently labelled ‘not cool’. The poster was displayed on the American Red Cross website, on their app and within partner aquatic facilities.

In addition to arguably reinforcing the negative stereotype that Black people are more deviant than white people, critics noted how the poster discouraged Black children from swimming, playing into the ‘legacy of discrimination’ that surrounds African Americans and swimming (Holley, 2016). Historically, black swimmers were denied swimming lessons and barred from public pools during the period of racial segregation in America. Today, white Americans are twice more likely to know how to swim than black Americans (Hackman, 2015).

After complaints of the poster on social media, significant negative media coverage in the US and UK, including in the Washington Post and the Independent, and several complaints to the British Red Cross about the poster, the American Red Cross issued an official apology, pledging to remove the posters and discontinue production explaining ‘we deeply apologise for any misunderstanding as it was absolutely not our intent to offend anyone’ (American Red Cross, 2016).

This water safety poster case highlights the reputational risk and offence we can cause when we do not equality-proof and consider the unintended impact of our communications and marketing.

### Summary

The International Development sector has faced significant criticism for the use of images which portray BAME services users as powerless and without dignity. This practice is fairly widespread in the sector and has numerous negative implications. The BRC does not employ these stereotypical images, and is subsequently widely praised. However, BAME staff could be better represented in the images used by the BRC. The implications of under-representation include the potential undervaluing of BAME staff and their contributions and presenting an inaccurate picture of the BRC’s work and the demographics we support.

The BRC is perceived as a Christian and British organisation by many. This is potentially due to the Cross emblem, the fact that many other International Development organisations are faith-based, and the lack of BAME staff and volunteers depicted in our communications. This has implications for attraction of donors, staff, volunteers and service users, and the creation of an inclusive culture.

The First Aid Rapped Up campaign exploited negative Black stereotypes, was offensive and carried with it significant reputational risk. Something like this can easily be picked up by the media and cause significant reputational damage, as in the case of the American Red Cross. Equality-proofing of our communications and marketing materials to alleviate this risk is required.

## **Personal Development and Career Progression**

Staff/volunteers’ views on whether they considered the BRC to be a place where they could develop themselves – personally and professionally – and progress their careers were

explored. The majority of staff/volunteers' comments in relation to development/progression at the BRC made specific references to structures, attitudes and organisation culture at the BRC. All of these can, to a significant degree, inhibit or promote opportunities for development and progression, independent of ethnicity.

However, it should be noted that differing attitudes towards development and career progression have been found across ethnicities. Business in the Community's Race at Work (2015) report found that 64% of BAME employees agree it is important that they progress compared to 41% of white employees.

These findings, in addition to attitudes revealed in the "Perceptions of the Voluntary Sector" section of the report indicate that the ability to develop oneself and progress one's career are especially important to BAME people, and organisations which are able to fulfil this may benefit from a greater success in recruiting and retaining talented BAME candidates, thus highlighting the link between personal development and career progression and creating a diverse and inclusive organisation.

### Line Manager Relationship

Staff/volunteers overwhelmingly identify how their own development and progression is largely dependent on their line manager. A variety of relationships between line manager and the managed were identified through this research.

***"I feel encouraged by my line manager; she always flags training."***

- Mixed race female, UK Office

***"I have little encouragement from management; there is little consideration of training opportunities."***

- White female, Fundraising, UK Office

The relationship with one's line manager and behaviour of one's line manager seems intrinsically linked to one's views regarding their potential to develop and progress at the BRC.

This relationship is, of course, advantageous for staff who have supportive line managers. Indeed, it is encouraging that the BRC Pulse Survey 2016 concluded that staff have high levels of trust in their line managers.

However, staff with a poor relationship with their line manager may – in addition to suffering the consequences of a poor relationship – suffer in terms of their development and progression. Ideally, it would be beneficial to have less emphasis placed on the line manager relationship in influencing development and progression of staff, which might also reduce some of the pressure on the relationship in the process. This might be achieved

through pre-identified formalised and enforced learning and development processes, based on an individual's role.

### Strategic Change Programme

The Strategic Change Programme has negatively influenced staff/volunteer attitudes to development and progression. Indeed, the Pulse Survey 2016 reports that organisational change has also impacted staff and volunteer engagement levels.

Instability throughout the organisation, and the loss of long time colleagues and friends, has led many staff – independent of their ethnicity – to regard their potential to develop and progress at the BRC with pessimism.

***“Because it’s been a very fast-paced, constantly changing environment, I’ve had about 7 managers in the space of 2 years – the support has been inconsistent.”***

- Asian Female, People, Learning and Strategic Change, UK Office

This instability is likely to impact negatively on progression and development.

### Role Models

The majority of barriers to development/progression identified generally apply independent of ethnicity. Nevertheless, staff/volunteers offered some points which specifically related to BAME people when considering personal development and career progression.

Of the BAME staff/volunteers who were negative about their potential to develop / progress in the organisation, the main reason offered for this attitude the lack of visible role models in leadership positions, together with a lack of evidence of BAME staff having progressed in the organisation. This crucial observation and the various implications are explored in further detail in the ‘Leadership’ section of the report.

***“It’s a long time since I’ve seen a BAME person at Director Level in any organisation. Seeing it would change my thinking, it makes leadership seem possible.”***

- Black male, Information and Digital Technology, UK Office

The Organisation Development and Learning department, much like the Diversity team, are considered to have a relatively low profile across the organisation. Nevertheless, the team is praised for the development opportunities available, and the potential for these opportunities to contribute to staff personal and professional development, and subsequent career progression.

***“There is a good L&D team in place for my career development.”***

- Asian male, Communications and Engagement, UK Office

Another barrier to development/progression relates to how information about interesting work and other opportunities in the BRC might be revealed in spaces where certain groups are not present, for example at after-work events involving alcohol. This can relate to the intersection of BAME and religious identities and is covered in further detail in the ‘Other Protected Characteristics’ section.

Further barriers to development/progression for BAME people in wider society, and subsequently barriers to ethnic diversity at the BRC, are explored throughout this report and specifically under ‘The Barriers Ethnic Minorities Face’ section.

### Summary

Staff/volunteers report mixed attitudes with regards to whether they feel they can develop their personal/professional skills and progress their career at the BRC, predominantly citing structural, attitudinal and organisation cultural issues as potential barriers. This includes the relationship with their line manager as being a significant determiner of development/progression. The change programme is a significant negative factor too. Overwhelmingly, a lack of visible BAME role models in leadership positions is reported as a significant barrier relating to personal development / career progression. Many positives are reported however, including the work of Organisation Development and Learning, in addition to many staff reporting their belief that they can and have developed and progressed at the BRC.

## **Inclusion and Culture**

Does the BRC live up to its key value of ‘inclusive’? Is the BRC a place where BAME staff/volunteers feel they can achieve the extraordinary together with their colleagues? And does the BRC embrace diverse perspectives?

***One of our values is ‘inclusive’; significant change and bold recommendations to achieve this are justified.***

- Rosie Slater, Chief Information Officer

Many staff question whether the BRC is in fact living up to its value of being inclusive given that we are not reflective of the ethnic demographics of the UK labour market and population. An inclusive organisation is one where a diverse range of perspectives are considered in decision making, particularly at leadership levels. As covered in the ‘leadership’ section, the lack of ethnic diversity in the Leadership of the BRC alludes to a decision making process which is not inclusive.

Diversity and inclusion go hand in hand, and many report the need for a cultural shift in the organisation, towards greater inclusivity, which will, in part, be achieved through establishing greater diversity. An increase in the ethnic diversity in our staff/volunteers is

one way through which we can become more inclusive, although in it is insufficient to create a truly inclusive culture. In addition to being drawn from diverse backgrounds, staff/volunteers must feel welcomed, be able to contribute, and find themselves in an environment where they can thrive and succeed.

The move towards the creation of a more inclusive culture requires the courage to make significant changes. There is awareness across the BRC, including among leadership, that the organisation can be risk-adverse, which can act as a barrier towards achieving a more ethnically diverse workforce. This view is echoed by staff/volunteers generally, who can describe the BRC as a bureaucratic and a small ‘c’ conservative organisation.

***“The organisational culture is one which is resistant to change”.***

- Asian male, UK Office

This organisational context can potentially impede our collective efforts to create a diverse and inclusive organisation.

The consequences of not being inclusive are outlined throughout this report. Briefly, these include, failing to benefit from a variety of perspectives in decision making, missing out on the best talent, staff/volunteers not being able to fulfil their full potential and a lack of engagement. The case study below illustrates some of these implications.

When attitudes like those outlined below, caused in part by a lack of ethnic diversity and inclusiveness, exist and persist, they are likely to further corrode our ability to be an inclusive organisation, and subsequently impact the welfare of our staff/volunteers and our ability to adequately respond to people in crisis.

### **Case Study – Mia Dawson – Education Manager, UK Operations – Education, South West England**

#### **Why did you decide to work with the British Red Cross?**

I was previously a secondary school teacher of Citizenship and Spanish. The role with the BRC was advertised as a similar role, a Youth Education Project Manager. It was a leap of faith and, in April 2010, I secured the position working in the Exeter office in Devon.



#### **Could you describe your career journey within the British Red Cross?**

With Reshaping Our Work UK, I had to re-apply for my role, along with 3 other colleagues in my area. I was confident that I would succeed – why not, I was excellent at my job; well respected and, there was a need for diverse perspectives – it was a no brainer to me.

I did get offered a new position – that of Education Manager. However, there was no extra pay, an increased geographical area to cover and more staff to manage. Then, another year into the role, there was another reorganisation and, I successfully re-applied again. The more senior roles that I had hoped to apply for however were lost to other staff, there was no way for me to apply – no talent spotting either!

### **How do you feel about Diversity at the British Red Cross?**

Look, it's pretty obvious to all staff and volunteers that most BAME people work within refugee services and restoring family links, where the skills of the 'other' are much needed.

Of course diversity should and could be much better and everybody knows that. Maybe there is something around unconscious bias. Maybe people are afraid of being courageous and making that leap of faith, which involves appointing someone 'different'. Can I see someone from the BAME community in a leadership position? The answer is no, not at this time. The BRC is a very white middle-class hierachal organisation and it will take a massive shift to change this.

### **Why is diversity important to you?**

Diversity matters to me because it is about social progression. It's about saying it's okay to be me, to be unique and different and to bring this to the workplace for all to see and benefit from. It's about the organisation being comfortable with my religion, my hair choice and my food choices. Organisations which embrace diversity flourish.

### **Is there anything else you would like to say?**

I do not think that the BRC is currently doing enough to encourage the recruitment and support of BAME staff. This is evidenced by the fact that in my view, the percentage of BAME staff has not grown over the last 8 years. Also, there is no-one for me to aspire to within the organisation from a BAME background. All of these things are important to me and could stop very talented people from the BAME community from applying for job roles within the organisation.

### Discrimination

Discrimination in the workplace represents a significant barrier towards creating and maintaining an inclusive workplace culture. As previously mentioned, research indicates discrimination in the UK at work is common, with Business in the Community (2015) reporting that 32% of BAME employees have witnessed or experienced racial harassment or bullying from a colleague in the last 5 years. Like any other organisation, discrimination

occurs at the British Red Cross, in overt and subtle forms. Several staff/volunteers reported this in interviews/focus groups.

***"There was an incident with a staff member from a partner organisation. We were discussing the refugee crisis and he said 'your people need to stop this,' in an obvious reference to Muslims. I was shocked. My manager didn't know how to respond."***

- Asian Muslim Female Intern, Refugee Services and Restoring Family Links, North East

***"In our exit interview, my report [a white female from overseas] explained she felt marginalised as a foreigner."***

- White Female, Fundraising, UK Office

***"I've heard Health and Social Care volunteers ask things like 'why do we even help refugees?' This is common... Volunteers and staff can show obvious dislike to people who are different – subtle things, like talking to people with different accents in a louder volume."***

- Black Male, Refugee Services and Restoring Family Links, South West England

Interviews and focus groups indicate that at the BRC overt cases of discrimination are very rare. However, it is impossible to state the prevalence and severity of discrimination at the BRC as there is currently no centralised recording of discrimination and complaints, or mandatory exit interviews. Therefore, we must rely on interview/focus group data, and the Diversity Team's Observation Spreadsheet which records experiences shared with the team. Essentially, other than highlighting specific examples, it is difficult to offer an accurate picture of discrimination at the BRC – until a centralised grievance reporting system is introduced. This is explored further under the 'Recommendations' section.

Other forms of discrimination can be subtler, and are often borne out of cultural insensitivity.

***"Some of the language used to describe the other National Societies' staff can make me uncomfortable. Like referring to them as 'young and inexperienced' – a potentially condescending tone."***

- Male, International Directorate

***"When I was a teacher in schools it was very diverse, staff, teachers and pupils. At the BRC, I've never worked somewhere where I've felt so isolated at times... people appear scared of the 'other' i.e. me"***

- Black Female (staff), outside of London

Issues around cultural sensitivity can also impede our ability to create an inclusive culture. These issues can be addressed through education, in the form of diversity training. Such instances, whilst not as striking as examples of overt discrimination, are reported more often than overt discrimination.

There is the risk that cultural insensitivity (or micro-inequities) can continue undetected, and eventually lead to overt discrimination or a form of institutional racism. Therefore, these micro-inequities are potentially just as harmful as overt discrimination to individuals, the organisation and our subsequent diversity and inclusion efforts.

Reporting of micro-inequities also leaves the individual at risk of not being taken seriously, given that the discrimination may not appear overt or resemble ‘traditional’ concepts of discrimination. This can further impact on the wellbeing of the individual reporting the discrimination.

While these instances of overt and subtle discrimination are troubling, it is encouraging to note that the vast majority of staff/volunteers in interviews and focus groups report never having witnessed or experienced discrimination at the BRC. It should be stressed once again that every organisation faces issues relating to discrimination. The BRC is however taking a proactive and transparent approach to addressing these isolated incidents.

### Positive Experiences

Many staff/volunteers report the BRC as being a welcoming place to work where they feel engaged and part of an inclusive environment. The following are examples of a positive inclusive culture.

***“I had an immediate sense of the BRC being an inclusive place with friendly people. It’s nice that I see people conversing in different languages; little phrases in Punjabi and French. People feel comfortable doing that.”***

- Asian Male, Fundraising Intern, UK Office

***“When I first started, my boss took great strides to make me feel part of the team... I joined just before Christmas and my boss went onto a website and got me a card in braille which the whole of the team signed... that made me feel part of the team straight away.***

***“Since then, every person I've worked with at the Red Cross has bent over backwards to make the office environment inclusive and accessible to me.”***

- Mixed Race Male, visually impaired, Communications and Engagement, North England

***“I feel very well supported in my role; the Operations Director has even previously shadowed me... I've never felt any discrimination, I look forward to work.”***

- Asian Female, Refugee Services and Restoring Family Links, North England

Our desire is to achieve a more inclusive culture where the positive examples outlined in this report become ever more frequent.

### Summary

Many staff/volunteers question whether the BRC is living up to its key value of being inclusive, given the lack of ethnic diversity in the organisation, most notably at leadership levels, in addition to the fact that the organisation is unrepresentative of the UK population and it's service users. There is acknowledgement among staff, including ELT and the Chief Executive, that significant changes are required to achieve an inclusive culture. There are however barriers towards the creation of an inclusive culture, including what is perceived to be a bureaucratic and conservative culture at the BRC.

There are many consequences of not having an inclusive culture, which impacts on the wellbeing and engagement of BAME staff in particular. This is related to the existence of racial discrimination, which, when reported, can be overt (though very rare) and is more often subtle. This also impacts on our desire to create an inclusive culture. Later, two key recommendations are outlined which explicitly look to address the existence of discrimination (racial or otherwise) at the BRC. Nonetheless, staff/volunteers across the organisation report many positive experiences of inclusion.

## Volunteering

The British Red Cross is a volunteer-led humanitarian organisation. Volunteers comprise the greatest proportion of the British Red Cross' membership; almost 20,000 volunteers are registered with the BRC.

### Current Landscape

On SAVi, 8.5% of volunteers are categorised as BAME (relatively consistent with the percentage of staff who are BAME), 23% of volunteers are however listed as 'not stated' and 14% of young volunteers (aged under 26) are categorised as BAME. It is difficult to draw conclusions on whether the volunteer base is truly representative of the UK population (14% BAME, Census 2011) given the fact that over 1 in 4 volunteers have not disclosed their ethnicity on SAVi.

As with our staff demographics, long-serving staff/volunteers have applauded what they see as an increase in the diversity of our volunteers over the last 20 years. Historically, like much of the charity sector, our volunteer base has been described by some as largely white, middle class and middle aged. Long-serving staff explained how our current volunteer base is far more representative of the population and service users, while still including dedicated and talented volunteers from the aforementioned demographic.

Part of the increase in the diversity of our volunteer base can be attributed to population demographic changes over time, targeted recruitment and specific projects. For example, Refugee Services and Restoring Family Links (RSRFL) has been highly praised for the ethnic diversity of its volunteer base, and part of this ethnic diversity can be attributed to funder stipulations.

However, staff/volunteers report how the hierarchy of the volunteering structure parallels the staff leadership of the BRC, with the Chairs of the Volunteer Councils largely drawn from the same white middle-class demographic.

### BAME Volunteers

A number of staff reported a concerning issue: service staff outside of RSRFL often appear reluctant to recruit volunteers from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds, and prospective BAME volunteers who do not speak English as a first language. It is reported that when these groups enquire to volunteer with the BRC, they are often shepherded towards volunteering in RSRFL, without the consideration that their skills and interests might be better aligned to other services.

Indeed, this observation was reported by a number of staff working in a number of UK regions – including in Manchester, Plymouth and Wales.

***“Whenever a BAME person comes to the office they [colleagues] always think it’s someone for me.”***

- Black female, Refugee Services

There appears to be a sense of awkwardness or discomfort with recruiting some volunteers from BAME backgrounds to work in services outside RSRFL. This clearly represents a significant barrier to securing greater ethnic diversity in our volunteer base, and can be interpreted as a discriminatory practise. What is especially concerning is that this issue does not appear to be an isolated incident.

On a positive note though, a number of staff from BAME backgrounds report how volunteering with the BRC has aided their development and led to them securing a full time staff role with the BRC, within RSRFL. It seems that for those who see unpaid internships as unviable, volunteering may provide an alternative stepping stone to securing employment with the BRC.

***“When I arrived at the BRC as a volunteer, I was greeted with a cup of tea – I then knew it would be an inclusive place.”***

- William Nonge, African (Bantu ethnic group) male, (current staff and former volunteer), Refugee Services and Restoring Family Links, north west England

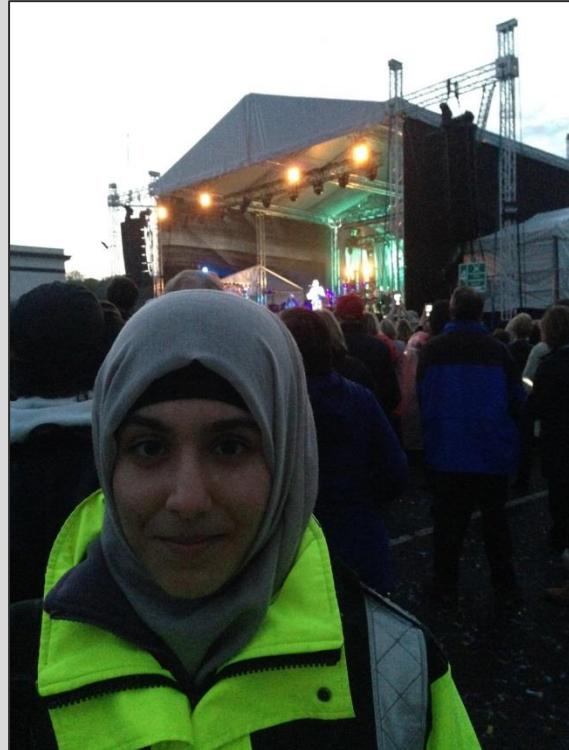
## **Case Study – Sumayah Hussain – Event First Aid Young Volunteer, Cardiff, Wales**

### **Why did you decide to volunteer with the British Red Cross?**

I wanted a new experience and the role sounded really interesting. I also wanted to work as part of a team and I was especially interested in getting out and about to different events and places. I was keen to improve my CV too, and to have something to put on my personal statement, as I knew I would be applying to university soon.

### **Could you describe your role?**

I was initially based in Cardiff and worked on small events. As I gained experience and increased my knowledge, I was able to attend larger events – this included a Will Young concert at the Chepstow Racecourse and the 2016 Wireless Festival in London! I'm also now a qualified first aider, I've been with the Red Cross for nearly one year but I have already learnt so much.



### **How do you feel about Diversity at the British Red Cross?**

I think the work the BRC are doing around diversity is a good sign. However, I think that there can always be more done to get more people involved from different backgrounds, and I think the BRC could do more to highlight their work around supporting BAME people.

Nevertheless, the BRC have realised the potential benefits of recruiting staff from various backgrounds, this includes religion. This has given me a lot of hope. I've also spread the word to many of my own family members and friends, to encourage them to join and get involved with the British Red Cross. This is one of the key reasons why I am so passionate as a volunteer.

### **What are your plans for the future?**

My degree course is called "Education and International Development." Many topics covered on my course relate to the Red Cross. It would be great if I could have a placement period with the Red Cross, either abroad or within the UK. After my degree, working as a member of the Red Cross team would be a great position to have.

At my university right now in Aberystwyth, I would like to set up an active British Red Cross group, and having members from different backgrounds would be a huge positive – it will encourage people and will also give the Red Cross a great image to stand by.

### **Why is diversity important to you?**

I think diversity can only be a good thing. There is so much which separates us and so much conflict in this world. Diversity not only breaks stereotypes but it can break barriers as well as many misconceptions about people which we all have without subconsciously thinking about it.

### Summary

In summary, it is difficult to truly assess whether the BRC's volunteer base is representative of the ethnic diversity of the UK population, due to low disclosure rates. The hierarchy of the volunteers – the Volunteer Councils – lack ethnic diversity. There is a concerning issue, reported across the UK, where prospective volunteers from BAME backgrounds may be seen as unsuitable for volunteering in services outside of RSRFL. This potentially constitutes discrimination and represents an obvious barrier for BAME people joining the BRC. This is especially concerning when volunteering with the BRC can represent an opening to securing a paid staff position. Several staff in RSRFL have travelled through this route; volunteering with the BRC is undoubtedly an immensely valuable experience which can lead to opportunities to contribute to society, self-development and employment.

## **Unpaid Internships**

Unpaid internships are becoming an increasingly popular entry route to paid work in the voluntary sector. At the BRC, unpaid internships provide people with valuable experiences, learning and development opportunities and the chance to network and attain social capital.

Many, if not all, staff under 30 years of age interviewed reported undertaking unpaid work – often unpaid internships – at the BRC or elsewhere, before securing paid employment with the BRC and other voluntary sector organisations.

***"I graduated from university and after that I undertook unpaid internships for different organisations, such as Save the Children and UNICEF. I've also done some volunteer work ...the unpaid internships and volunteer work, I did that for a span of two years..."***

- Male, International Directorate

Staff/volunteers report how internships are perceived as being the preserve of the middle class, and while internships are encouraged at elite universities and schools, they are rarely discussed in the universities or schools people from low socio-economic backgrounds attend, which disproportionately includes BAME people. Unpaid internships were therefore

widely reported as being a barrier to achieving socio-economic and ethnic diversity at the BRC.

***"BAME people are not aware of internships because of poor schools. I wasn't aware of internships."***

- Black female (identifies as working class), People, Learning and Strategic Change, UK Office

In addition to a lack of knowledge about internships, people from lower socio-economic backgrounds, and by extension many BAME people, are less likely to have the means to support themselves financially during a period of unpaid work. This can leave the BRC with an exceptionally narrow internship pool. This is an issue which is reported by staff involved in recruiting and supporting interns:

***"There's probably still a strong bias towards white middle class backgrounds. You can see that in particular when interns are recruited... awful lot of young females from the Home Counties... not a deliberate thing but due to the nature of internships and being unpaid, it wouldn't encourage people from poorer backgrounds. BAME communities generally fall into a poorer segment of society..."***

- Asian male, UK Office

In 2016, almost half of internships at the BRC were London-based. This adds an additional barrier for candidates from lower socio-economic backgrounds based away from London, who are less likely to be able to rent expensive accommodation in London for the duration of their internship, or may not have the social capital which might permit them to stay with family/friends in London.

***"I was very very fortunate that my cousin lived nearby in Old Street as a property guardian. He was able to offer me a space on his floor. This meant that I could live in London and come to my internship for 3 days a week... even then I had work to fit around my internship... I was lucky my existing job allowed me to do that... I was essentially having to work 6 days a week with a 7th day of travel to and from London in order to undertake the internship... I don't think it would have been affordable if I had to pay normal London rates..."***

- White male, (identifies as working class), Fundraising (staff), UK Office

### Unpaid internships at the BRC

In 2016, the BRC recruited 99 interns, an increase on 2015 when 95 interns were recruited. Of these, almost half (40) were London-based. Furthermore, almost half of internships were based in the Fundraising Directorate. In 2015, 18 temporary contract job descriptions were

shared with interns and 19% of interns went on to secure temporary/permanent staff roles with the BRC.

Of the 99 BRC interns appointed in 2016, 77.5% of interns were white, 19.5% BAME and 3% listed as ‘prefer not to say’. It appears that our internship intake is more diverse than our staff intake. However, there is no monitoring and reporting data available on the socio-economic background of interns, evidence from interviews/focus groups suggest that the internship intake is dominated by those from middle-class and more affluent backgrounds.

Furthermore, with regards to ethnicity, data indicates that at the BRC a candidate is much more likely to be rejected at application stage if they are from a BAME background. In 2016, 16% of BAME compared to 30% of white internship applicants were invited to interviews.

While the importance of diversity in unpaid internships is strongly emphasised by the Diversity and Youth Engagement team, and especially the Placements co-ordinator and Humanitarian action and engagement manager, Recruiting Managers for unpaid internships are often left to their own devices – and potential biases – during recruitment and selection. There is little structure or policy in place to ensure best practice and the promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion in the internship programme.

### Consequences

Unpaid internships are certainly not exclusive to the BRC. However, at the BRC, much recruitment to permanent entry level and temporary positions is conducted internally, with the internship pool a key target. Fishing in a homogeneous pool however is a barrier to diversity and while it saves time in the short term, it prevents us from casting a wider net to source a greater variety of promising candidates, with long term implications for securing a diversity of perspectives and meeting our diversity goals. We are left with a skewed entry-level intake which filters into a skewed wider workforce over time.

In addition to disadvantaging people from low socio-economic backgrounds and BAME people, unpaid internships extend to disadvantaging disabled people. Unpaid internships are not covered by employment law; the same regulations as normal paid work do not apply. As an unpaid intern, disabled people are not entitled to reasonable adjustments.

Unpaid internships in the UK labour market have been criticised for preventing social mobility by MP’s. Furthermore, the Government’s social mobility watchdog, the Social Mobility Foundation has recommended unpaid internships should be made illegal because they deny careers in the professions to young people from modest backgrounds. (The Social Mobility Foundation is a charity which aims to make a practical improvement in social mobility for young people from low-income backgrounds.)

*"The damaging impact of unpaid internships on social mobility cannot be overstated. Young people without financial support from their parents are effectively excluded due to means not merit and potentially locked out from sought-after careers entirely."*

- The Social Mobility Foundation

### Summary

In summary, unpaid internships are a popular source for work experience in the voluntary sector and at the BRC. Extended periods of unpaid work are therefore often seen as a prerequisite before entering the voluntary sector as a staff member in an entry-level position.

While unpaid internships are certainly not exclusive to the BRC, staff/volunteers report how unpaid internships represent a barrier to achieving diversity in the workforce at the BRC. Staff/volunteers reported how unpaid internships extend to disadvantaging all ethnic groups from lower socio-economic backgrounds, disabled people, and people based away from large cities, where the majority of unpaid internships are based.

This all leaves us with a biased pool lacking in various forms of diversity for internal recruitment. Many managers understandably use internal recruitment to fill entry-level and temporary positions, thus sourcing applicants from a biased pool which further inhibits diversity at the BRC.

*"It's not the fault of the BRC, but it something they don't necessarily work to counter... missing out on different views is possibly one of the reasons the org is stuck in its ways, it recruits people who are similar to the majority of the people already here."*

- Asian male, UK Office

## Perceptions of the Voluntary Sector

What do BAME people think about the voluntary sector and the BRC specifically? BAME perceptions of the voluntary sector are unique and are therefore explored to identify how the BRC can respond to these perceptions to better recruit, support and develop BAME staff.

### Lack of Awareness & Elitism

Many BAME staff/volunteers report that working in the voluntary sector is considered a specific ambition, rather than a mainstream occupation like working in the private or public sector.

*"People who apply are from good unis, familiar with the possibility of working with charities. It's a niche ambition."*

- Black female, Fundraising

Explanations for this perception included a lack of knowledge regarding careers in the voluntary sector, a lack of social capital (i.e. who you know), little information concerning careers information and available job opportunities, and poor information and advice among some local school and university career services about pursuing a career in the voluntary sector. Therefore, knowledge about the voluntary sector as a potential career destination and what it may involve is often inherited through social networks.

This is a significant finding as those with social networks, comprising links to voluntary sector employees, will be aware of the voluntary sector as a potential career destination. Conversely, those lacking in such networks – which includes many BAME people – will lack such awareness, and are subsequently unlikely to experience a ‘pull factor’ towards the voluntary sector.

***“The BRC has a low profile, especially in the black community. The BRC is not present in the black community.”***

- Black female, Communications and Engagement, UK Office

Does the voluntary sector appear inclusive? BAME people are far more likely to seek work in a sector or industry which gives the impression of being inclusive – somewhere free from discrimination, welcoming, and with a solid diversity and inclusion ethos. BAME people generally look to work in sectors and industries which have informal reputations for diversity and inclusion.

The voluntary sector as a whole is lacking in ethnic diversity – only 8.8% (NCVO, 2015) of workers in the sector identify themselves as BAME, compared to 14% of the UK population, 12% of the UK labour market and 40% of people in London (census, 2011) – where many major voluntary organisations have HQs. Given a similar level of under-representation in the BRC (8% BAME staff), collectively, the evidence showing a lack of ethnic diversity does not lend itself to the voluntary sector being perceived as particularly diverse, inclusive or accommodating. This perception can be extended to the BRC.

Large establishment voluntary sector organisations are perceived with a significant level of prestige and authority. This can be a deterrent for some BAME people, particularly those who may not be familiar with the concept of working for such an organisation and do not have anyone in their social networks who do.

***“British Red Cross – its title conveys status. In the same way when you think ‘Royal Albert Hall’, it conveys that class of people... the name carries authority, this can deter people from it.”***

- Black Female, Communications and Engagement, UK Office

Projecting this image can dissuade BAME people from considering the BRC as a career destination. It may, unintentionally and implicitly, imply that the BRC is seeking a particular class or brand of people to employ and to act as leaders. This, coupled with low awareness of the voluntary sector in BAME groups, can convey a sense of elitism, which is then reinforced when the staff base, and especially the leaders, are themselves seen as unrepresentative of society.

Respondents additionally reported several misconceptions relating to the voluntary sector and work within the sector.

***"My parents thought I would be shaking a bucket."***

- Mixed race female, UK Office

These misconceptions include the persistent and incorrect view that staff in the voluntary sector do not receive a salary, these incorrect views are often the result of a lack of awareness of the sector. Such views are potentially compounded by the fact that the majority of the communications from the voluntary sector can relate to fundraising.

Furthermore, as explored in greater detail under 'Communications and Engagement', the BRC is often mistakenly perceived as a Christian, British organisation.

Some BAME people reported how their communities held negative views of the voluntary sector. This is a result of various factors. These factors include media reports around Chief Executive pay, which are not specific to ethnicity. However, in addition to perceiving the sector as somewhat elitist, BAME groups also held the view that voluntary sector organisations can perpetuate negative stereotypes of BAME people through the images they use. As mentioned previously, the implications of the use of these images are severe and are further explored in the 'Communications and Engagement' section.

Interviews/focus groups indicate that the idea of pursuing a career in the voluntary sector is simply not considered by many BAME people, precisely because they are unaware of the opportunity and what it may involve. Raising awareness of career paths within the BRC, and actively promoting our inclusive environment, should encourage a greater number of BAME applications.

### BAME and career intentions

Staff/volunteers report how there can be an increased desire among BAME people, especially BAME males, to pursue careers which are more financially rewarding and/or will lead to professional qualifications. This is attributed to cultural issues and the fact that many BAME people, as second generation immigrants, feel a duty to their families with regards to income generation. Furthermore, a sense of prestige and focus on self-development are also identified as being important to BAME people and within their communities. These goals are considered by some to be unobtainable through a career in the voluntary sector.

***"Generally, BAME people are encouraged to pursue professional careers. For prestige, financial gain. There's especially pressure on BAME males to be ambitious, breadwinners."***

- Black female, People, Learning and Strategic Change, UK Office

***"There is a longstanding problem of remuneration at the BRC. We don't even currently pay the living wage - how can we talk about 'economic insecurity'?"***

- White male, Fundraising, UK Office (early 2016)

Wages in the private and public sectors are indeed on average higher than the voluntary sector. However, according to the BRC Pulse Survey 2016, two-thirds of staff at the BRC report being less favourably rewarded in comparison to others doing similar roles.

Moreover, a troubling finding is the perception of the voluntary sector, and potentially the BRC by extension, as a place which lacks development opportunities.

***"Perhaps class mobility is not possible in the charity sector? It might not be seen as the best place to develop oneself."***

- Asian male, Communications and Engagement, UK Office

The positive views many staff/volunteers hold towards development opportunities and career progression at the BRC are presented in the 'Personal Development and Career Progression' section. Nevertheless, the voluntary sector seems to be perceived as a place where development/progression is not possible, or at the least, less possible in the voluntary sector than in the public or private sectors. This perception about the voluntary sector as a whole, risks being generalised to the BRC and dissuading talented BAME candidates.

Indeed, if the voluntary sector, and the BRC wishes to attract the best diverse talent, it must take steps to present itself as a place where staff can progress and develop their careers and themselves.

Importantly, it should be noted that the perception of BAME people as being inclined towards attaining financial reward above all else is a pervasive and unhelpful stereotype, which may be used as a justification for the lack of ethnic diversity in the voluntary sector, while masking other, often institutional, barriers to employment.

Interestingly, data presented later under 'Resourcing at the BRC' will show the exceptionally high percentage of BAME applicants to the BRC (1 in 4 applicants in 2016 were BAME), compared to their representation in the UK labour market. Furthermore, BAME people expressed much admiration for the work of the voluntary sector. With many attracted to the sector, specifically because of the work voluntary sector organisations do with BAME communities.

***"My BAME friends and family think I have the best job ever; they would definitely consider working for the BRC."***

- Black Female, Education, South West England

***"My father donated to the BRC for 20 years back when I was a child growing up in Zambia; I've always had an awareness of BRC."***

- Asian male, Finance Planning and Resources, UK Office

### Summary

Staff/volunteers report that BAME people have a low awareness of the voluntary sector, and by extension the BRC. This can lead to the rise of misconceptions of work in the voluntary sector, such as the idea that one cannot sufficiently develop/progress in the sector, which can dissuade talented BAME applicants. The main avenue through which people hear about work in the voluntary sector is through their social networks. The sector can thus be perceived as elitist and exclusive.

However, BAME people are generally attracted to working in the voluntary sector. Unhelpful and inaccurate stereotypes about BAME people only being interested in financial reward, can, incorrectly, be used to justify the lack of ethnic diversity in the voluntary sector. Evidence of a genuine desire in the work of the voluntary sector is further exemplified by data which indicates that the percentage of BAME applicants to the BRC is disproportionately high.

## The Diversity Team

The Diversity team is currently comprised of 3 staff members. The Diversity and Inclusion Manager, Diversity Projects Assistant (both permanent) and the BAME Development Officer / Diversity Development Officer (fixed-term until August 2017). The Diversity team is included under the BRC's strategic change programme.

The work of Diversity team is highly regarded and considered essential by many staff/volunteers. The team receives particular praise from staff/volunteers for some of its work around events and initiatives which have run in 2016, including developing the Ramadan Guidance for line managers, the monthly diversity e-bulletin and the annual work around Black History Month. Furthermore, many see the team as an essential source of support.

***"The Ramadan guidance shows a real effort is being made towards diversity and inclusion. But not a lot of people know about the Diversity team; my team didn't know about the Ramadan guidance – and they are HR!"***

- Asian Female, People Learning and Strategic Change, UK Office

Many staff/volunteers report that the team suffers from a low profile. This attitude is particularly pronounced for staff/volunteers based outside of the UK Office. Many staff/volunteers report not being aware as to the existence of the Diversity team. Those who are aware of the work of the Diversity team, however, offer much praise, while suggesting the team could greatly benefit from an increased profile across the organisation.

***"I've not heard anything about diversity; it would have been nice to hear about it."***

- Asian Female, Intern, North East

The low profile of the diversity team subsequently means that the work of the team and support available is underutilised. This low profile is attributed to various factors. This includes the lack of resources available to the team which consists of 2 permanent staff, 1 fixed term and part-time role and 12 Youth Engagement and Diversity Managers (YEDM's) whose key role is concerned with Youth Engagement activities, and is currently under review. This places clear limitations on the team's ability to reach an organisation of just under 4,000 staff and 20,000 volunteers.

***"I wasn't aware of the Diversity e-bulletin. I feel like unless you know someone in the diversity team, you don't know what they do... It's really good that there is a team though."***

- White Female, International Directorate, UK Office

More appealing methods of engaging with staff across the organisation are suggested. Several staff/volunteers mention how the BAME research project, recent lunchtime events, increased communications surrounding the work of the team, the monthly diversity e-bulletin, the Leadership Conference, which had a significant focus on inclusion and diversity, and the recent development of the organisation-wide Inclusion and Diversity Strategy have all contributed to significantly raising the profile of the Diversity team. Many report how the work of the diversity team is gaining momentum.

***"I think the diversity e-bulletin is great. Everyone should read it."***

- Focus group participant, UK Operations, Yorkshire

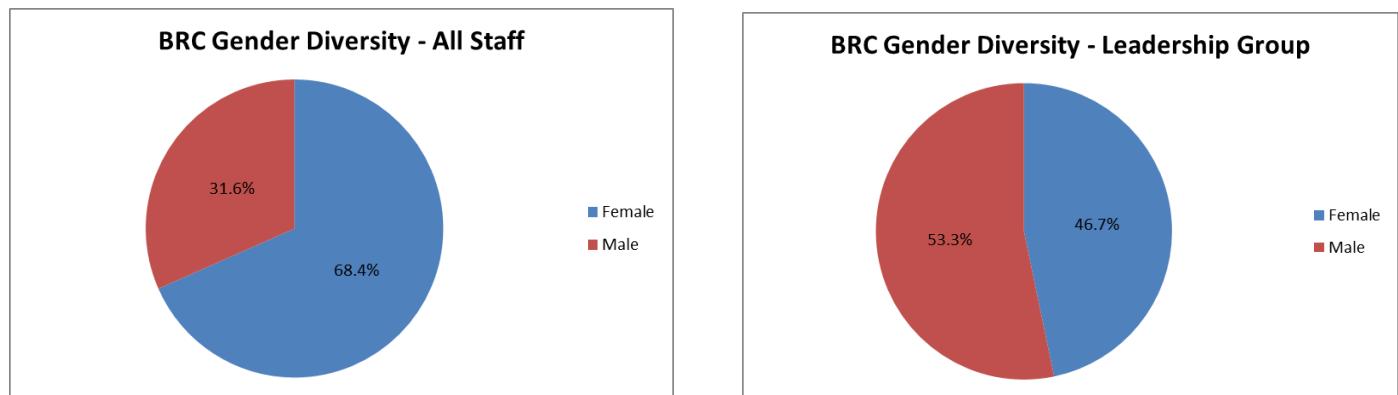
## Other Protected Characteristics

While this report is concerned with ethnic diversity at the British Red Cross, it would be reductive to ignore the position of individuals with other characteristics identified as protected under the Equality Act (2010), in addition to social class, at the BRC. It would also be reductive to ignore how the intersection of identities – for example, how being Black *and* female, or Asian *and* disabled – can lead individuals to experience multiple penalties and greater disadvantage.

## Gender

Staff/volunteers are aware of gender disparities in the organisation. The 2016 gender pay gap analysis revealed a gender pay gap (in favour of men) across all pay levels. The BRC is generally viewed as predominantly white, middle class and female, much like the majority of voluntary sector organisations. Although, as the charts indicate, while the organisation is majority female, there is an underrepresentation of females in the Leadership Group.

### Charts displaying BRC staff gender diversity across organisation and in leadership group



Nevertheless, a number of staff/volunteers praise the BRC leadership for the recent drive towards appointing more women in senior level positions, specifically at ELT, which has involved the appointment of 3 women directors in the past 3 years. Furthermore, staff/volunteers are pleased that many women hold positions at Head of Department role, while acknowledging that this recent increase in gender diversity is overdue and insisting that more needs to be done to increase the representation of women in leadership roles. Importantly though, people felt that BAME women appear to not have benefited from these recent advances in leadership appointments; a finding echoed in wider research examining this intersection of gender and race in the workplace (e.g. Race, Gender and Authority in the workplace: Theory and Research, Smith, 2002).

## Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Plus (LGBT+)

Staff/volunteers speculate over the prevalence of LGBT+ diversity at the BRC. This is difficult to accurately interpret, given the lack of disclosure of LGBT+ status on SAVi, and that our systems do not include the option to disclose non-binary identities, such as 'transgender.' Almost half (46%) of staff have not disclosed their LGBT+ status on SAVi (this figure excludes those who have listed 'prefer not to say'). There may well be a disparity in LGBT+ diversity, and the BRC may not be representative of the wider labour market LGBT+ demographics, however, this is difficult to explore in the absence of reliable monitoring data.

## Disability

The BRC has made commitments to disability through the Government's Disability Confident scheme and the BRC's disability policy. In the BRC's corporate strategy, there is a

commitment to increasing the percentage of disabled staff from 4% to 8% by the end of 2019. (In the UK, there are over 6.9 million disabled people of working age, which represents 19% of the working population, Papworth Trust 2016). However, disability confidence across the organisation remains patchy.

Besides unconscious bias, one of the major issues around disability involves the failure to make reasonable adjustments. There is a perception that it is costly, and many staff are not aware of the Access to Work scheme, which can cover some, if not all, of reasonable adjustment costs.

Furthermore, it is difficult to obtain an accurate figure of our current disabled workforce, as the data on disability on SAVI is patchy. Also some disabilities can be hidden, such as dyslexia and mental health issues; people may not even be aware that they have a disability, or identify as being disabled.

### Religion

As previously stated, Muslims suffer the greatest economic disadvantages of any group in society. Reasons for this include discrimination and Islamophobia (House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee, 2016). Indeed, recent research (Khattab 2014) argues that Religion now causes more prejudice than ethnicity in workplace discrimination – research reports that Muslims are perceived as disloyal and as a threat, rather than as a disadvantaged minority. Within this climate, many employers will be discouraged from employing qualified Muslims. There is significant intersection between Muslim and BAME identities, where 4.5% of the UK population are Muslim (Census, 2011), within this 4.5%, 97% identify themselves as BAME (Muslim Council of Britain, 2015).

In addition to discrimination, cultural issues can directly and indirectly discriminate against faith groups in the workplace and reduce inclusivity and/or inhibit career progression. For example, in cases where career progression and access to interesting opportunities are linked to interpersonal relationships with staff/managers, much of that positive relationship may have been established through socialising in ways that not all faith groups might be comfortable with e.g. evenings in the pub after work, etc.

These workplace cultural practises, while appearing innocuous, can preclude certain faith groups – and by extension BAME staff – from participating, feeling included and subsequently disadvantage them in gaining access to meaningful opportunities.

### Social Class

***“I think class is potentially more of a barrier than skin colour.”***

- Karen Sheldon, Diversity and Inclusion Manager

The BRC, much like the voluntary sector, appears to be disproportionately represented by staff/volunteers from middle class backgrounds. As this information is not recorded as part of equality monitoring, this statement is based purely on interviews/focus groups with staff, where there is a wide acknowledgement of the underrepresentation of working class backgrounds, from both white and BAME employees. There is likely to be considerable intersection / overlap between the barriers faced by working class people and BAME people. Indeed, as many as 45% of all Black children in the UK thought to be growing up in poverty, according to government statistics (ONS, 2016).

Unpaid internships, which are increasingly seen as a prerequisite for entry into the voluntary sector, are highlighted as a barrier for people from working class backgrounds who may lack the economic capital to undertake prolonged periods of unpaid work. Unpaid internships are explored in greater detail in the ‘Unpaid Internships’ section. The specific barriers BAME and people from working class backgrounds face are numerous are explored throughout this report, and in ‘The Barriers Ethnic Minorities Face’ section.

### Summary

Diversity disparities at the BRC are not limited to ethnicity, and extend to a number of protected characteristics, including gender, disability, social class, and potentially LGBT+ and religion. Recently, positive advances have been made in gender diversity, but the current position of LGBT+, disabled and staff/volunteers from low socio-economic backgrounds merits further attention given the lack of available monitoring data. The recommendations in this report have potential to positively impact the attainment of diversity across the organisation, to the benefit of all protected groups, not just BAME staff/volunteers.

## Resourcing at the British Red Cross

The recruitment and selection processes of any organisation are likely to have a significant impact on the diversity and inclusiveness of the organisation. Every organisation must strive to ensure fairness and best practice in recruitment and selection procedures, to ensure that the most talented people are recruited, and that those from ethnic minorities and other diverse backgrounds are not disadvantaged. Subsequently, the resourcing processes at the British Red Cross warrant exploration.

### Pre-assessment stage

Does the BRC advertise through a variety of recruitment channels, to ensure that our staff vacancies are seen by the widest pool of talented diverse candidates? When a role is advertised at the BRC, it is uploaded onto the BRC website jobs board and Charity Job (charityjob.co.uk). Recently, other diversity-specific job boards have been trialled. It is at the behest of the recruiting manager as to whether the role is then advertised through any

additional recruitment channels, such as national newspapers, additional diversity job boards, etc. In the past recruitment agencies were frequently utilised, though our dependence on them recently has reduced somewhat.

A recent survey of 50 BRC recruiting managers illustrated that roles are predominantly advertised on the BRC website, Charity Job, and to a lesser extent in national/local newspapers and job centres. These processes question whether our role advertisements are reaching a diverse cross section of society.

Recruitment agencies are often used by the BRC, for recruitment across job levels. The practices of these agencies are often opaque. There remain questions as to whether recruitment agencies represent value for money and whether they are able to reflect and demonstrate the BRC's commitment to ethnic diversity, and provide the BRC with talented BAME candidates – particularly for recruitment to senior leadership posts.

Very recently, the BRC has begun utilising social media as part of its resourcing, including Twitter and LinkedIn, with the hope this will increase our ability to attract the best talent. The impact of this on the diversity of candidates attracted is being monitored.

Perhaps beyond the scope of resourcing, yet crucial in understanding what attracts people to the BRC, is the reported lack of awareness BAME people and communities have of careers in the voluntary sector. This is covered in greater depth in the 'Perceptions of the Voluntary Sector' section.

## Assessment Stage

Simply attracting talented BAME applicants to apply to roles at the BRC isn't enough to ensure ethnic diversity. The table below illustrates applicants to the BRC between 01/10/2015 & 30/09/2016, and shows that 25% (1 in 4) applicants to BRC staff roles during this period were from BAME backgrounds. However, only 8% of appointments (fewer than 1 in 10) made were from BAME backgrounds – (the actual appointments figure may be slightly higher given that 25% of 'appointments' did not disclose their ethnicity).

Table 8 - Ethnic composition of staff applicants and appointments to BRC, between 01/10/2015 & 30/09/2016

BRC Applicants vs Appointments Q3 2016	Applicants	Percentage	Appointments	Percentage	"Success Rate"
<b>Asian or Asian British</b>	1,442	9.4%	32	3.2%	2.2%
<b>Black or Black British</b>	1,304	8.5%	24	2.4%	1.8%
<b>Mixed</b>	545	3.6%	14	1.4%	2.6%
<b>White</b>	10,955	71.7%	660	66.8%	6.0%
<b>Other Ethnic Groups</b>	460	3.0%	11	1.1%	2.4%
<b>Not Stated</b>	577	3.8%	247	25.0%	42.8%
<b>Total</b>	15,283	100.0%	988	100.0%	100.0%

The figures allude to the fact that BAME people are indeed able to see our advertisements and subsequently apply to the BRC, in relatively high numbers. However, following the submission of their applications, BAME people are far less likely than white people to be appointed to the BRC.

Why is this? Instances of overt racial discrimination, unconscious bias, the quality of applicants and visa status of applicants may offer explanations. These areas warrant further investigation, although this is difficult given the lack of monitoring and reporting around the resourcing process. The implementation of recommendations designed to address these potential discriminatory practises are necessary to identify, address and eliminate such barriers.

For example, overt racial discrimination and unconscious bias at the recruitment assessment stage has been reported in research. Wood (2009) illustrated significant name-based racial discrimination in the UK labour market, as mentioned in the ‘Barriers ethnic minorities face’ section.

Furthermore, the lack of disclosure of ethnicity for staff appointments presents an inaccurate picture of our staff demographics, and we cannot with certainty calculate the ‘success rate’ of different ethnic groups in the recruitment and selection process. The resourcing process cannot currently track the progress of candidates through the application process and subsequently identify any discriminatory practise. For example, it would be beneficial to see, of those shortlisted, who is eventually appointed, by diversity profile.

Is best practice ensured in the assessment, which predominantly involves interviews, of candidates? The vast differences in success rates of applicants by ethnic group suggest that perhaps not. Due to the size and spread of the organisation, providing an accurate picture of the assessment process involved in recruitment and selection is difficult. Generally, assessment is at the BRC is somewhat unregulated and lacks transparency. Currently, recruitment and selection training – which will include significant diversity considerations – is being developed. However, within the BRC a culture of not completing optional or even mandatory training persists. Recruitment and selection training is currently not mandatory for recruitment managers or staff involved in assessment.

Without robust training, an assessor is ill-equipped and left to their own biases and judgements to decide on whether a candidate is suitable for a post; there is significant potential for unconscious bias. This includes, affinity bias – the tendency to like people who remind us of ourselves. Affinity bias can influence assessment by increasing the likelihood that an assessor will recruit someone similar to themselves (in terms of gender, sexuality and ethnicity). This phenomenon is colloquially known as ‘recruiting in one’s image.’ There is a widespread understanding that this can go some way to explaining the lack of ethnic diversity at the BRC. Furthermore, the prevalence of conscious racial discrimination as a

contributing factor to the lack of ethnic diversity at the BRC – and indeed any organisation – should not be ruled out either.

### Positive Action

What is Positive Action? Positive action is when an employer takes steps to help or encourage certain groups of people with different needs, or who may be disadvantaged in some way, access work or training.

Positive action is lawful under the Equality Act (2010). For example, an employer could organise an open day for people from a particular ethnic background if they're under-represented in the employer's workforce. This wouldn't be unlawful discrimination under the Act.

Moreover, positive action does not mitigate a sense of equity in recruitment as it only involves recruiting or promoting a candidate with a protected characteristic (currently underrepresented in the workforce) who is of *equal* merit to another candidate.

However, positive discrimination where an employer recruits a person because he or she has a relevant protected characteristic rather than being the best candidate (often related to setting quotas) is unlawful.

Positive action is occasionally practised at the BRC.

### **Post-assessment Stage**

One of the issues highlighted in this report is the lack of disclosure of ethnicity, in addition to other protected characteristics, on the HR reporting system (SAVi). While candidates who apply through the BRC website are asked to disclose their ethnicity and protected characteristics, this does not transfer onto their SAVi sensitive information record once appointed. During their HR induction, staff are encouraged to disclose this information on SAVi, but it is not mandatory. Staff have the option to choose 'prefer not to say'. Quarterly demographic monitoring reports indicate that the percentage of staff joining the organisation and not disclosing their ethnicity is increasing every quarter. In total, 25% of joiners in 2016 did not disclose their ethnicity on SAVi.

This low level of disclosure – which appears to predominantly be the result of staff/volunteers lack of awareness of the importance of disclosing such information on SAVi, leads to difficulty in assessing our staff demographics accurately, understanding whether we are representative of the UK labour market, and in assessing our progress towards our diversity targets. Additionally, as previously mentioned, the lack of disclosure and monitoring prevents us from identifying and addressing any potential discriminatory practice.

# Recommendations

The findings in this report have highlighted a number of challenges relating to ethnic diversity at the British Red Cross. Here, we present the specific issues identified and the actions / recommendations to address them.

These ten recommendations aim to ensure we fulfil our corporate target of increasing the percentage of BAME staff to 12% by the end of 2019. Furthermore, they will see us become truly representative of the UK labour market, our communities and service users, and ensure we are able to benefit from the widest possible range of perspectives, continue to fulfil our value of being an inclusive organisation, and – crucially – be better equipped to reach a diversity of people in crisis.

## Recommendation 1

### Issue

The BRC faces increasing external pressures around monitoring and reporting. This includes the NHS Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) and Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES), gender pay gap reporting and the IFRC's Organisational Capacity Assessment and Certification (OCAC) reporting standards. Our ability to assess the progress of our corporate diversity goals in relation to ethnicity and disability and determine success is linked to our monitoring and reporting.

There is currently no centralised collection of key monitoring and reporting data, such as staff grievances. Without robust and effective reporting structures in place, we risk being unable to understand staff experiences and are hampered in addressing any potential discriminatory practice.

Furthermore, disclosure is problematic; 10.8% of staff have not completed ethnicity monitoring data requirements on SAVi and reporting of other protected characteristics is also inconsistent, (this includes staff not even disclosing whether they 'prefer not to say'). Quarter by quarter, we are witnessing a decrease in staff disclosure of protected characteristics. In 2016, 25% of staff joiners did not disclose their ethnicity.

### **Effective systems, data and reporting structures embedded into HR processes**

A centralised reporting system which records monitoring information including grievances, disciplinary action, sickness, absence, appraisal ratings, promotions, take up of secondments and interim roles, exit interview feedback, training and turnover.

A drive to achieve 100% completion of diversity monitoring data (including 'prefer not to say') on the HR system.

## Recommendation 2

### Issue

The current resourcing process does not ensure we attract a wide variety of talented candidates. It does not robustly monitor the diversity profile of applicants, their journey throughout the application process, nor does it ensure those involved in assessment have been trained and are competent in their assessments. Moreover, the application process is not very user friendly, inclusive or specifically encouraging to BAME and diverse applicants. Crucially, there is a high potential for unconscious bias in the process.

These issues are likely to have contributed to the lower success rates of BAME compared to white candidates in recruitment and selection, and subsequently the low percentage of BAME staff at the BRC.

**A central resourcing structure which adheres to best practice in equality, diversity and inclusion and addresses unconscious bias. This will involve:**

- **Effective systems, data and reporting structures incorporated into the resourcing process.** We recommend that the system identifies any differences between the experiences of candidates based on their diversity profile during the application and appointment process, enabling us to identify and address any potential discriminatory issues. For example, recording the diversity profile of people rejected at interview, the shortlisting stage, etc.
- **Name-blind applications.** We recommend the names of applicants to all roles at the BRC remain anonymous until they have been invited to formal assessment. This could initially be piloted. There is a strong argument for implementing this given that names are no indication of competency and it offers the BRC an immediate opportunity to reduce unconscious bias via a relatively straightforward approach.
- **Unconscious bias training** incorporated into mandatory recruitment and selection training. Training will be mandatory for all staff/volunteers involved in recruitment and selection. There should be a robust session on unconscious bias as part of this training.
- **Recruiting managers encouraged to be proactive and consider the diversity of their teams, including utilising recruitment channels which reach a diverse pool of applicants.** Advertising in a greater variety of media outlets should ensure vacancies are viewed by more BAME people. Ensuring that recruitment agencies used are aware of our diversity goals and can provide evidence of a strong commitment to diversity. This will widen our talent pool.

- An application process which incorporates our key value of ‘inclusive’. This will be achieved through explicitly highlighting our equality and diversity statement, the use of diverse imagery (portraying BAME people in positions of responsibility), and presenting case studies of BAME staff in the recruitment portal. There should be a commitment to achieving diversity on assessment panels, in terms of age, ethnicity and gender, where feasible.

## Recommendation 3

### Issue

Research has identified that unconscious bias is a significant barrier towards achieving a diverse workforce and creating an inclusive culture. Unconscious bias refers to a bias that we are unaware of, and which happens automatically triggering our brain to make quick judgments and assessments of people and situations, influenced by our background, cultural environment and personal experiences. These forms of bias have obvious implications in the workplace.

Furthermore, staff/volunteers often report a lack of cultural awareness, awkwardness around the issue of diversity, a low level of understanding of the BRC’s diversity goals/context, some difficulty in accessing and engaging with diverse communities, and express a strong desire to improve their knowledge of diversity and inclusion at the BRC.

## Diversity training portfolio

We recommend robust diversity training available is to all staff/volunteers in the organisation. All staff/volunteers are strongly encouraged to complete diversity training. The training can include an outline of unconscious bias, issues around cultural awareness (such as terminology), the Equality Act (2010), the benefits of diversity, the barriers protected groups face, working with diverse service users and the BRC’s diversity targets/context.

We further recommend diversity training be mainstreamed and therefore incorporated into existing training courses where necessary. As previously mentioned, unconscious bias training should be mandatory for all staff/volunteers involved in recruitment and selection. Indeed, research and evidence from external organisations indicate that diversity training is one of the most effective tools in creating an inclusive workplace and addressing the additional issues outlined above.

## Recommendation 4

### Issue

A significant number of staff/volunteers report the lack of visible ethnic diversity at leadership level, including the wider Leadership Group (top 110 staff). This was perhaps the most consistent theme throughout the interviews/focus groups. As a consequence, staff/volunteers questioned whether the leadership of the BRC see the true value of ethnic diversity and the contributions of BAME staff. Furthermore, many BAME staff reported not seeing a route to leadership in the organisation, due to the lack of BAME role models. Many staff questioned our ability to utilise diverse perspectives during decision making at leadership level, and our subsequent ability to reach people in crisis as effectively as possible. Staff/volunteers further reported a lack of accountability for diversity and inclusion at mid-management levels.

## **The Executive Leadership Team and the Board of Trustees act as visible and proactive champions of diversity**

This will involve messaging around the benefits of having an ethnically diverse workforce and the barriers people from BAME backgrounds can face. This messaging should take place in 1:1's with line reports and during conversations around recruitment and selection.

We recommend Executive Directors actively consider the demographics of their directorates, especially at senior levels, and identify talented BAME staff and encourage their development through take up of personal development opportunities.

We further recommend the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) consider setting a target relating to BAME representation in the Leadership Group (currently 7% BAME).

## **Additional Recommendations**

### Issue

Evidence indicates that the voluntary sector, and the BRC, appears to be becoming increasingly inaccessible to people from low socio-economic backgrounds, which disproportionately includes BAME people. This is a consistent theme presented in interviews/focus groups and through external research; the Social Mobility Foundation reports that the damaging impact of unpaid internships on social mobility cannot be overstated, and MP's have discussed the idea of implementing a ban on unpaid internships.

People from these groups can lack the economic and social capital to take up unpaid positions, especially in large cities. Furthermore, people with disabilities are not entitled to reasonable adjustments as unpaid interns. This biases the internship intake, the internal talent pool for entry-level positions, and ultimately our workforce.

### Recommendation

A funded internship scheme, or access fund, for interns who identify as being from a low socio-economic background, and/or BAME and/or disabled.

#### Issue

The BRC has a number of talented volunteers with a variety of valuable skills. Many of these volunteers are BAME migrants and refugees who have applied to staff positions with the BRC. However, while highly skilled, these groups often report experiencing specific difficulties in navigating the largely unfamiliar UK job application process. Specifically, talented BAME migrant and refugee volunteers report difficulty in demonstrating their skills during the application process and subsequently miss out on invitations to assessment, or appointments, while the BRC also miss out on talented candidates.

#### Recommendation

In-house employability skills training specifically targeted to migrant volunteers, including refugees. This training will specifically address the unique barriers these groups have in accessing employment.

#### Issue

Many staff/volunteers reported feeling uncomfortable and/or offended by the First Aid Rapped Up communications campaign. The campaign alienated staff and volunteers – it may well have had a similar effect on members of the public, specifically BAME people.

Moreover, the nature of the campaign carried with it a significant potential for reputational risk to the British Red Cross – in a climate where voluntary sector organisations, particularly those in the International Development sector, are facing increasing criticism from politicians, the media and public.

The BRC is reported as having a low profile in BAME communities. There are questions as to whether our communications specifically engage with / appeal to people from ethnic minorities.

#### Recommendation

Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) to be mandatory for decisions involving external communications campaigns. This process will ensure that protected groups (under the Equality Act, 2010) are not discriminated against as a result of any communications campaigns.

There is also the option for further equality-proofing our communications campaigns by using our various diversity networks – the LGBT+, Disabled and BAME networks – as consultative bodies.

These processes will give greater consideration to the impact of our communications and will help the BRC's communications campaigns to engage with and not offend/alienate people from protected groups.

#### Issue

The BRC has a strong desire to build a workplace culture where we maintain our core value of being inclusive. Staff/volunteers – especially those based outside of London in areas with low BAME diversity – have expressed desire for a space where they might meet people with shared backgrounds and experiences, to network and hear about opportunities. Furthermore, the organisation would benefit from a consultative body which can offer feedback on BAME issues.

#### Recommendation

Maintenance and development of the BAME staff/volunteers diversity network on Red Room. Membership of the group is open to all. The direction of the group will be guided by the membership.

#### Issue

The BRC desires to be representative of the UK population, UK labour market and our diverse service users. Having a staff and volunteer base which is reflective of our service users will ensure we are best equipped to help people facing crisis, and to reach diverse populations of people in crisis.

The collection of demographic information, including ethnicity, of our service users is inconsistent. The Beneficiary Relationship Management system (BRM) collects this information for some services, but not others. This inhibits our ability to gain an accurate understanding of the diversity of our service users, and subsequently our efforts to understand whether our staff and volunteer base are representative of our service users.

#### Recommendation

Consistently recording the ethnicity (and other protected characteristics) of service users through the BRM. BRM systems across all services will have the option to record this information. Staff in services should encourage service users to disclose this information, and explain the benefits of doing so. This information should link into the main BRM system and the main BRM system should have the ability to run reports detailing the demographics of service users across services.

#### Issue

The BRC wishes to demonstrate greater transparency, evidenced through our transparency and accountability policy. Moreover, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 provides public access to information held by public authorities.

Colleagues in the voluntary sector have expressed interest in reviewing our findings and recommendations. It appears that within the sector, the work of the BRC on ethnic diversity is unique and pioneering. The BRC is leading in addressing an issue which affects the entire sector – only 8.8% of staff in the voluntary sector identify as BAME. The BRC has the potential to inspire other voluntary sector organisations and demonstrate our proactive approach to diversity and inclusion.

### Recommendation

A version of this report to be externally published to fulfil our commitments to transparency and accountability, share best practice within the sector, and highlight the unique work of the BRC.

## Future Considerations

Develop a mentoring programme for talented staff from groups which are currently underrepresented within the organisation, particularly at Leadership level. This may include staff from low socio-economic backgrounds, BAME, LGBT+, disabled staff and under-represented genders. Mentors will be volunteers from the Leadership Group.

Develop an internal communications strategy to promote role models in leadership positions, who are from groups which are currently underrepresented within the organisation. This may include staff from low socio-economic backgrounds, BAME, LGBT+, disabled staff and under-represented genders.

Perform further research and continue to monitor the organisation's diversity position, to ensure good practise models of inclusive working, and replicate these more widely across the organisation.

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