



Rethink
Mental
Illness

Advancing Mental Health Equalities

Plan

We are committed

We live in a diverse society where each individual's background, culture, and experiences shape their mental health journey. Unfortunately, disparities in mental health access to care, outcomes for Black and marginalised communities have persisted for too long and leave many underserved and overlooked.

This Advancing Mental Health Equalities Plan is Rethink's response to these inequities and a reflection of our commitment to meaningful change by tackling the barriers that prevent the equitable access to our mental health services by underserved communities.

The plan also expresses our commitment to meaningful change. It aims to identify and dismantle the barriers preventing equitable access to mental health services, ensuring that every individual, regardless of their background, has the opportunity to thrive. It will be informed by the voices of those with lived experience of mental illness, the dedication of our staff and the insights of our community partners and stakeholders as we collectively advance mental health equalities in our service provision.

As you read this plan, you will see that it lays out our roadmap on mental health equity, which will require sustained effort, partnership working and accountability in taking forward the measures that will ensure our objectives translate into meaningful action and impact.

We will rise to this challenge, united in this purpose to advancing mental health equalities as we continue our journey to becoming a truly anti-racist organisation.



Peter Alleyne
Director of EDI
and Involvement



Nisa Chisipochinyi
Head of Equity
and Racial Justice

Who we are

Rethink Mental Illness ('Rethink') is the national charity for people severely affected by mental illness. No matter who a person is or how challenging their situation has become, we are here to help them get the information and support they need to live a better life. We work tirelessly to ensure people living with mental illness and their carers, family and friends are listened to, treated fairly, and have easy access to services that meet their mental and physical health, financial, housing, work and volunteering needs.

Involvement and coproduction

People with experience of mental illness are at the heart of everything we do. They actively shape the design and delivery of our services, ensuring that people severely affected by mental illness receive the right support at the right time. The knowledge and expertise of people with lived and caring experience underpins the shaping and delivery of our plans to advance mental health equity in our services for ethnically diverse and marginalised communities.

Patient and Carer Race Equality Framework

NHS England launched its anti-racism framework for mental health trusts and services, the **Patient and Carer Race Equality Framework (PCREF)** in November 2023. This is a core part of the Advancing Mental Health Equalities strategy¹ aimed at improving services and support in mental health access, experience, and outcomes for people from racialised, marginalised and neurodiverse communities.

It also seeks to ensure equitable workplace practices which are psychologically safe with representation at all levels to reflect the diverse communities we serve. All mental health trusts and mental health service providers must have their PCREF Plans in place by March 2025 and PCREF will be included in the CQC (Care Quality Commission) inspections.

1. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/00159-advancing-mental-health-equalities-strategy.pdf>

Communities that Care Corporate Strategy

2023-28

Here at Rethink, PCREF will support the delivery of our **Communities that Care Corporate Strategy 2023-2028** with its regional model at its core. This will help us work alongside people at a regional and local level, transparently and in partnership with a range of people and organisations to support everyone affected by mental illness.

Objective 1

Sustain and grow our policy influencing and campaigning activity aligned with Communities that Care, creating system-level change for people severely affected by mental illness.

We will...

Launch a coordinated programme of work to tackle the links between racial injustice and mental illness, with a focus on addressing disparities particularly around the disproportionate use of the Mental Health Act.

Objective 2

Sustain and improve our existing services whilst expanding our offer aligned with Communities that Care, so that we meet the needs of more people severely affected by mental illness.

We will...

Improve the quality of our existing services ensuring that they remain viable, meet the needs of local ethnically diverse and marginalised communities, and deliver outcomes aligned with Communities that Care.

Objective 3

Increase the number of areas in which we play a leading role in supporting community mental health transformation which reflects Communities that Care, meaning that more people severely affected by mental illness get the care and support they deserve.

We will...

Build long-term, sustainable relationships with local health and social care systems ensuring that mental health transformation plans are focused on the priorities of racially marginalised people with lived experience of mental illness and help create and sustain Communities that Care.

Communities that Care model consists of these six pillars



Access to health and social care



Physical health



Employment, education, training and volunteering



Housing



Social connections



Money

Rethink's *Advancing Mental Health Equalities Plan*

At Rethink Mental Illness we named our PCREF plan 'Rethink Mental Illness: Advancing Mental Health Equalities Plan' to reflect the language we use in relation to our equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and involvement work.

Our Advancing Mental Health Equalities (AMHE) Plan will allow us to build on the foundational changes we have made through our **Race Equality Action Plan** and highlighted in our **Anti-Racism Progress Report**. These documents are foundations which enable us to continue our journey to become a truly anti-racist and inclusive employer, campaigning organisation and service provider.

Our Plan complements the PCREF by addressing the disparities experienced by racialised groups in mental health outcomes. This plan is embedded in our organisation's broader anti-racism framework and draws on evidence-based approaches to deliver culturally appropriate and equitable care.

“

Being a part of Rethink Mental Illness' Social Inclusion Service means **there's always a place I can go.**”

Lucy, Rethink service user



Accountability

We know through the delivery of our AMHE Plan that robust governance is crucial to anti-racism work; we will therefore commit to continuously review our accountability to ensure there is diverse racial and intersecting representation. Our AMHE Plan will be delivered across the charity in the spirit of coproduction, partnership-working and collaboration with our Equity and Inclusion Practice Forum, staff networks and the Advancing Mental Equalities Practice Forum, facilitated by the Director of EDI and Involvement and the Head of Racial Justice and Equity.

It will be comprised of Rethink staff and Experts by Experience to help shape, influence and implement the plan and we will proactively seek insight from our Lived Experience Advisory Board; Carers Advisory Board and Regional Forums. The Rethink AMHE Plan will have sponsorship and strategic oversight from our Board of Trustees and the Equity and Inclusion Board, chaired by our Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Sponsor for Race.

Accountability Structure



Delivery

Our AMHE Plan is intentionally adaptable to ensure meaningful delivery and ownership at every level. Regional and local plans will be developed by regional leads and stakeholders with support from national leads.

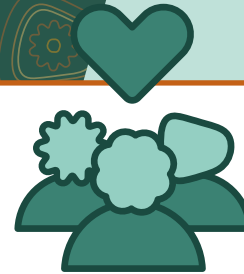
Through coproduction and sustained partnership work, delivering NHS PCREF through our AMHE Plan works effectively in three parts:



Part 1

Leadership and governance:

Having a robust governance structure to support the implementation of PCREF through our Advancing Mental Health Equalities Plan. This includes legislative and regulatory obligations so that core pieces of legislation which apply are being followed.



Part 2

Organisational competencies (what we will do):

Through a coproduction process we will work with marginalised people who have lived experience of mental illness, their carers and stakeholders to assess progress and co-develop improvement plans.



Part 3

Patient and carers feedback mechanism:

To embed the patient and carer voice at the heart of the planning, implementation and learning cycles. People with lived experience and carers must be actively involved at every level of the Plan's governance structures, including in decision making.

Figure 1 captures PCREF in its 3 parts

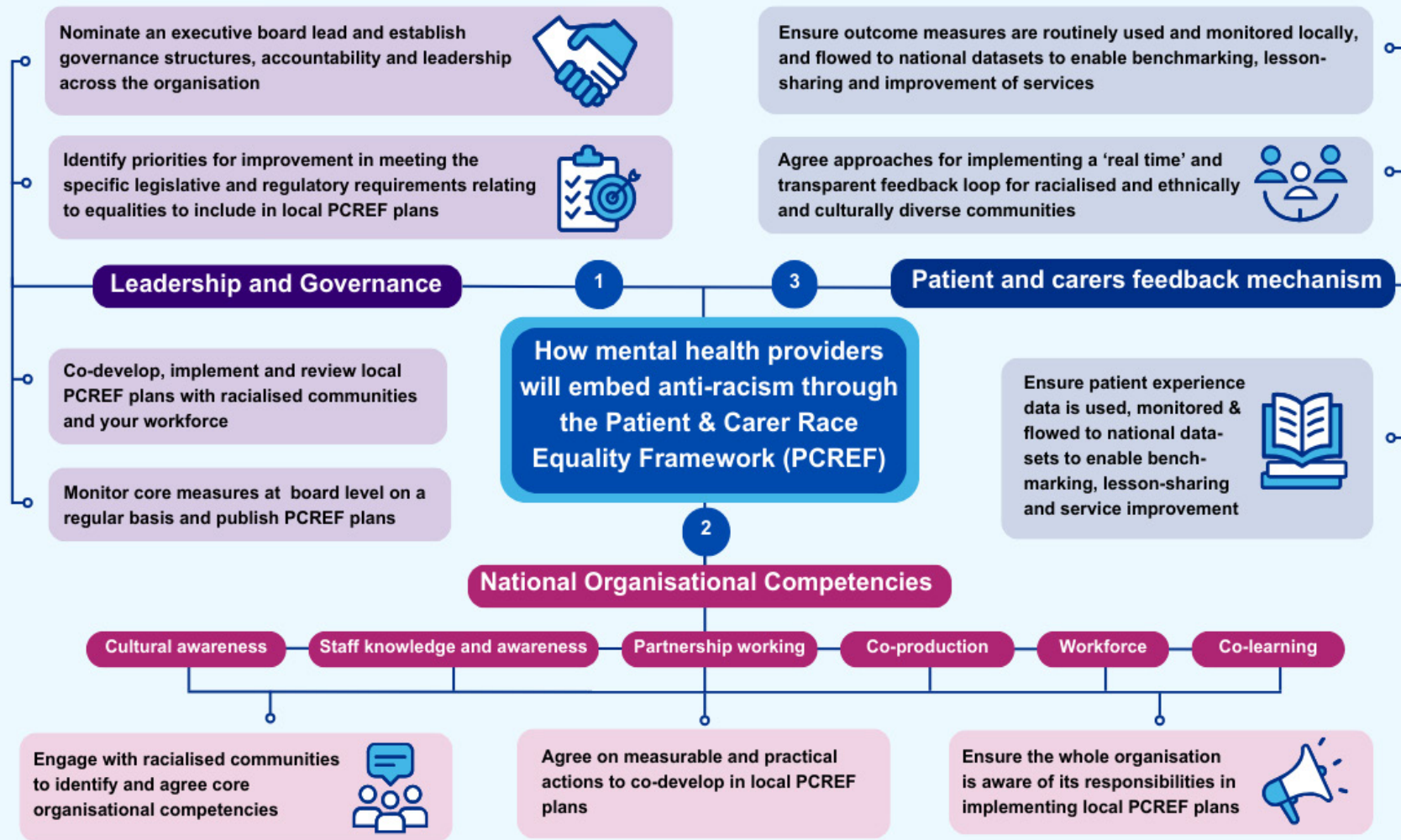


Image from: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/mental-health/advancing-mental-health-equalities/pcref/>

Terminology

Cultural awareness: recognising and understanding the diverse cultural backgrounds of the communities we serve; this should include an awareness of different generational experiences and perspectives and being sensitive to those in providing care.

Coproduction: working with people with lived experience of mental health issues and carers, together with staff and stakeholders as equal partners in a way that is meaningful and effective from the outset. It follows a process of co-creation and shared decision making that is reciprocal and jointly owned by all involved. Achieving a shared vision that transforms the balance of power and resources to a position of equal ownership.

Staff knowledge and awareness: recognising and understanding racialised and marginalised experiences of the communities we serve and overcoming biases and prejudices by acting upon them. Taking into consideration how our training standards, our policies and practices help staff respond to the diverse needs in communities to make improvements.



“

I have personally found volunteering has proven itself beneficial to everyone involved. **More people need to have this experience.**”

Sue, Rethink volunteer



98%
of people who
use our services
said they got
the right level of
support from us.

Partnership working: collaborating closely with leaders who represent ethnically diverse and marginalised communities and other organisations beyond the NHS, such as ethnically led voluntary and community sector organisations, social care, faith groups, and others to support wellness and embed anti-oppressive practices².

Workforce: a culturally competent and diverse workforce that has a positive impact on people with lived experience and carers from ethnically diverse and marginalised communities, creating a safe space where the workforce champions inclusive leadership, shares learning and intentionally embeds anti-racism and culturally competent and inclusive approaches while tracking progress.

Co-learning: a two-way process that strengthens collaborative knowledge sharing beyond coproduction principles. It focuses on raising awareness of early intervention support among ethnically diverse and marginalised communities, while also learning more about community concerns and barriers.

2. https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Practice_Tool_9%20Anti-oppressive_practice%20WEB.pdf

*At its core,
our AMHE Plan aims to:*



Further our commitment
to advancing mental
health equalities.



Improve your governance
structures, to include
better representation
of racialised and
marginalised people.



Improve data collection
around ethnicity and other
demographics.



Use our demographic **data**
to coproduce plans to
improve access to services
and outcomes **for racialised**
groups and make them
publicly available.



Act on feedback and provide
timely updates to improve
services **to better meet our**
local population needs.







Commit to **improving**
interactions with
racialised and
marginalised people and
partners.

Monitoring

Our Advancing Mental Health Equalities Plan will be monitored through locally coproduced metrics focusing on cultural awareness, staff knowledge and awareness, partnership working, co-production, workforce and co-learning. The pages to follow show the key areas we will focus on to start with. We will build on these with local people with lived experience and partners to ensure our activity is relevant to the different areas.

KEY

Each item will aim to achieve the following:

-  Cultural Awareness
-  Staff Knowledge and Awareness
-  Partnership Working
-  Coproduction
-  Workforce
-  Co-learning

Leadership and governance

Actions to improve organisational competencies

Rethink will have an Advancing Mental Health Equalities champion at Board level who has appropriate oversight of the delivery of our AMHE Plan. The Rethink Racial Justice and Equity team will provide verbal and written updates on the delivery of the AMHE Plan to the Board of Trustees and Race Equality Programme Board and other Rethink forums and groups.



Establish a Rethink Advancing Mental Health Equalities Practice Forum

facilitated by the Director of EDI and Involvement and the Head of Racial Justice and Equity and comprised of Rethink staff and Experts by Experience, i.e. people with direct experience of mental illness and carers to support the delivery of our AMHE Plan.



Work with our diverse **Lived Experience Advisory Board and Carers Advisory Board and other expert by Experience** working groups **to shape and influence the delivery of our AMHE Plan.**



Support our Regional Forums, consisting of local community representatives, service users, Rethink staff and voluntary sector organisations, to contribute to shaping and influencing the delivery of our AMHE Plan at a local level within regions where Rethink provides mental health services.







Continue to strengthen our Race Equality Action Leaders (REAL) staff networks and our other networks to enable them to provide constructive challenge and feedback on the delivery of the AMHE Plan. Our Equity and Inclusion Practice Forum will also play a vital role in supporting the Plan's delivery.





KEY

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-  Workforce
-  Co-learning

Staff training

Actions to improve organisational competencies

Cultural awareness sessions with Rethink staff in partnership with organisations and representatives that understand the intersectional experiences of ethnically diverse, marginalised and neurodiverse communities and living with mental illness or being a carer.



Embed specific goals relating to race equality training in staff's personal development plans. This training will be completed by attending workshops, conferences, events, brunch and learns and team discussions to support shared learning and understanding on advancing mental health equalities.



Partnership working

Actions to improve organisational competencies

Share best practices on delivery and race equity from our external partners to strengthen the design and delivery of our mental health services and support to Black and other underserved communities.



Implement a partnership framework with good practice guidance on what is anti-racism and anti-oppressive partnership working with community organisations.





Workforce

Actions to improve organisational competencies

Build on our mutual mentoring programme and co-design and implement activities that focus on improving staff understanding of cultural differences to further anti-racism and cultural competency within Rethink.



Report on our Ethnicity Pay Gap to identify and address pay disparities amongst our ethnic minority workforce and embed an ethnically diverse workforce.



Publish our Equity, Diversity, Inclusion Strategic Plan, and Staff Networks Action Plan. The actions within the Staff Networks Action Plan will underpin the delivery of the EDI Strategic Plan to embed diversity and inclusive behaviours at all levels within our workplace practices.



Ensure employee lifecycles are monitored and evaluated with the completion of exit interviews to help gather feedback on workplace culture and implement measurable improvements in our workplace practices.






Continue to improve the collection and reporting of our diversity workforce data to design, deliver and monitor evidence-based interventions to increase ethnic diversity at all levels within the charity.



KEY

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-  Cultural Awareness
-  Staff Knowledge and Awareness
-  Partnership Working
-  Coproduction
-  Workforce
-  Co-learning



Mental health services

Actions to improve organisational competencies

Identify and support community champion roles to inform Rethink service development and community partners of the availability of early intervention services and support for ethnically diverse and marginalised communities.



Implement our advancing mental health plan within Rethink Operations local development and delivery plans. We will improve our data information on our service users; train Operations staff around cultural awareness and advancing mental health equalities to deliver equitable outcomes in our mental health service provision. We will make demonstrable progress on implementing our AMHE Plan by working with all parts of the organisation - national, regional and local - to implement our AMHE Plan and by delivering at least three 'community engagement' place-based projects.



Coproduce service plans and care plans with ethnically diverse and marginalised communities, faith leaders, and ethnically led voluntary, community, social enterprise (VCSE) partners to address:

- Language translation service needs and or other accessibility requirements.
- Cultural food requirements.
- Religious and faith requirements, such as access to prayer spaces and spiritual support.
- Varied and appropriate types of aftercare offered by mental health provisions.
- Use of trauma informed approaches.



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Service user and carer data and feedback

Actions to improve organisational competencies

Continue to improve the collection of our service user diversity data with an emphasis on the importance of the collection of this data by service managers to enable us to coproduce evidence-led interventions to address mental health inequalities in Rethink services. We will support our operations with guidance on collecting and monitoring service user diversity data.



Evaluate the impact of partnership working on establishing equitable relationships that provide mutual benefit and shared decision-making with ethnically diverse and marginalised communities. This will include monitoring satisfaction levels with partner organisations, service users, carers and Rethink staff.



Work closely with local authority partners, Integrated Care Boards, Integrated Care Systems and use the feedback from culturally appropriate advocacy services to improve our mental health service ethnically diverse and marginalised communities.



Conduct bi-annual reviews and independent evaluation on the implementation of the Rethink AMHE Plan at a local level with service users, carers, voluntary sector organisations, marginalised communities, and Rethink staff. We will publish findings annually and share good practice on advancing mental health equalities.



Through our Service User Experience Survey, **we will identify disparities in our mental health services to address inequalities** in service user experience and coproduce tailored actions to address them.







Use our Impact Framework to measure service user outcomes for marginalised communities. We will use our service user diversity data collection to compare data across the protected characteristics to ensure Rethink mental health services deliver equitable outcomes for service users and carers.



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-  Workforce
-  Co-learning



Rethink Mental Illness

We are the charity for people severely affected by mental illness, no matter what they're going through.

For further information on Rethink Mental Illness
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rethink.org



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