

# Cardiff University Response to the External Review of Progress on Issues of Race Equality

**October 2021**

Cardiff University is committed to becoming an actively anti-racist institution.

We will achieve this by building on established initiatives, those prompted by the emergence of Black Lives Matter, and more recent enterprises that have responded to the murder on 25 May 2020 of George Floyd.

The Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Vice-Chancellor have made clear statements addressing race equality. While responsibility lies with all staff and students to nurture a culture of tolerance, and to challenge and eradicate racism wherever it is found, the appointment of a new Deputy Vice-Chancellor (in whose portfolio EDI sits) and the University's commitment to clarifying and strengthening institutional leadership/oversight of and support for EDI will build on significant work to date to ensure that an anti-racist ethos – achieved through education, information, training and support – is mainstreamed across all Cardiff University's activities.

## **1. Context**

1.1 Cardiff University is pleased that Professor Dinesh Bhugra CBE, Emeritus Professor of Mental Health and Diversity at the Institute of Psychiatry at King's College, London, agreed to return to lead a review of our progress as a University on issues of race equality in the five years since the Independent Review he conducted in response to a racist incident in the Medical School. Professor Bhugra was joined by Vanessa Cameron MBE, Consultant with the World Psychiatric Association and former Chief Executive of the Royal College of Psychiatrists.

Their aims were:

- To identify what has changed by looking at policies, actions and other outcomes and how to communicate more effectively what has happened over the last five years;
- To identify areas that require further focus, including relevant policies and procedures, and to make recommendations, as appropriate, that will enhance the institution's commitment to race equality;
- To consider the achievements of the Vice-Chancellor's External Advisory Board and to examine with the Board how these can be built on.

1.2 The report was presented to and considered by the University Executive Board on 6—7 September 2021.

1.3 The University was pleased to be able to share with Professor Bhugra and Mrs Cameron – in online interviews during July and August 2021 and in written submissions – the range of race equality and anti-racist enterprises in which it is currently engaged, which are to be

viewed within the wider frameworks of the institutional *Strategic Equality Plan, 2020—2024* and our draft *Race Equality Action Plan*.

1.4 Acknowledging very clearly that there is more work to be done – and that the test of progress and success is meaningful cultural change that is driven by our *Strategic Equality Plan, 2020—2024* and our *Race Equality Action Plan* and felt in the lived experience of staff and students – the University was also pleased to note the following:

- i. That the review of progress was prompted in part by concerns that the University had not been given credit, as the report states, ‘for the amount of positive work it has carried out in the last five years’;
- ii. That certain of the recommendations of the independent review identified areas of enhancement that the University had itself identified as key to fulfilling our race equality responsibilities and aspirations.

## **2. The Report’s ‘General Observations and Findings’**

2.1 The University recognised the need for certain areas of the institution to ‘move the agenda forward’ and to secure the sustainability of our race equality culture by ensuring our efforts do not rely on the hard work of a few key individuals.

2.2 The University agrees with the observation that there are positive lessons to be learned from the progress we have made on LGBTQ+ and gender issues.

2.3 The report points to the opportunity to ensure clearer communication, both internal (in relation for example to EDI-related complaints processes) and with the wider community and the media. The University recognises this as key to securing an informed understanding of and active engagement with our EDI culture.

2.4 The University was pleased to see that the report concluded that significant progress had been made in terms of establishing fora for the strategic discussion of EDI matters and the implementation of EDI activities and actions. The University also acknowledges the need the report identifies to: establish greater consistency across Colleges, Schools and Directorates; ensure the sharing of good practice (with certain Schools being well in advance of others); and enhance training tools to ensure that staff do not regard EDI merely as a tickbox exercise.

## **3. The Report’s Recommendations**

3.1 The University is pleased to accept the helpful recommendations in full, acknowledging that they are key to achieving the greater coordination, clear governance and ownership, and further enhancements that underpin a mature and naturalised culture of equality and understanding in which racism is not tolerated.

3.2 The recommendations were helpfully grouped under headings. We respond below to the substantive recommendations under each:

- i. *Structures* (recommendations 1—4)  
The recommendation that the University appoint a Dedicated Director of EDI with operational responsibility, to work with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, and that the role be supported by a dedicated team whose work focused entirely on EDI was welcomed, as was the recommendation that an EDI Hub or Centrepoint be

established from which EDI activities could be impactfully coordinated and communicated. The University will carefully consider the optimal nature of such a 'hub', ensuring that it sits within an effective governance structure that links all levels of the institution, guaranteeing clarity, reach and consistency in EDI matters to fulfil the objectives of the *Strategic Equality Plan, 2020—2024*.

ii. *Communication* (recommendations 5—6)

We welcome the report's prompt to enhance the visibility of our EDI enterprises and be more vocal and proactive in surfacing and communicating our 'excellent achievements over the last five years regarding EDI', both to our own staff and students and in particular to journalists and the media. Enhancements to the University's website will be key to achieving this.

iii. *Collection of Data* (recommendations, 7—8)

The recommendations concern robust collection of EDI data on various EDI activities, and refer in particular to the need to collect and reflect on complaints-related EDI data, which we welcome. We plan to review the staff and student complaints processes with a view to ensuring greater clarity, increased speed and more timely communication; we will also carefully consider the need for expertise in dealing with EDI-related complaints. The aim is to ensure a more supportive experience for those engaging with the process.

iv. *Recruitment Practices* (recommendations 9—10)

The recommendation around increasing the diversity of interview panels will be taken forward as part of the institutional roll-out of successful pilots already conducted in Schools in May 2021. The recommendation around exit interviews points to good practice, with any EDI matters identified at those interviews to be appropriately considered by the institution in the service of enhancing its EDI culture.

v. *Training and the Curriculum* (recommendations 11—12)

We will review our training to ensure that it embeds a culture, rather than instrumentally rehearsing and eliciting compliance. The recommendation around decolonising the curriculum – a project already underway in many Schools – will be taken forward as a coordinated, consistent and appropriately supported process, as part of the institution's wider Inclusive Curriculum project (which also includes actions to address the BAME awarding gap), co-led by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Pro Vice-Chancellor-Education and Student Experience.

Ensuring the realisation of the recommendations in the most appropriate forms and in the most effective timescales will be a priority for Cardiff University's EDI efforts in the 2021—2 academic session. Outcomes of the implementation of the recommendations will include: a more informed understanding of and more active engagement with EDI values and behaviours across all our activities and processes, enabled by coordinated and consistent EDI structures that do not rely on volunteerism; a better experience of University processes for both staff and students based on dedicated EDI expertise and enhanced data collection; clearer communication of information, opportunities and experiences; and measureable positive change, as noted above, to the lived experience of all members of our academic community. These outcomes will be embedded in the delivery of our *Strategic Equality Plan*,

2020—2024 and the University will actively monitor and report on progress towards the achievement of these objectives.

Professor Damian Walford Davies  
*Deputy Vice-Chancellor*