



**COLLABORATIVE
CENTRE**

- ETHNIC INEQUALITIES
- SEVERE MENTAL ILLNESS
- MULTIPLE DISADVANTAGE



PRESS RELEASE

STRICTLY EMBARGOED UNTIL: 00.01am on Wednesday 5th August 2020

The UK's first national pledge for senior leaders in NHS mental health trusts, public bodies and commissioning to reduce ethnic inequalities in mental health care is launched today

30 inaugural signatories have declared their commitment to take action

The UK's first national pledge calling on senior leaders in NHS mental health trusts, public bodies and commissioning to declare their commitment to reduce ethnic inequalities in mental health care launches today (**Wednesday 5th August 2020**) with 30 inaugural signatories.

A 'Statement of Intent', the pledge is spearheaded by the Synergi Collaborative Centre in response to the lack of progress made over the past 30 years to tackle ethnic inequalities for those diagnosed with a severe mental illness, and the disproportionate risks Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities face in mental health services.

Against the backdrop of George Floyd's killing, the Black Lives Matter anti-racist protests worldwide, and the systemic inequalities highlighted by Covid-19, CEOs, medical and nursing directors of NHS Mental Health Trusts, commissioners and public bodies (as pledge signatories) will take action to:

1. Initiate fundamental service level changes to reduce ethnic inequalities in access, experience and outcomes.
2. Measure, monitor and report the nature and extent of ethnic inequalities and progress made.
3. Work in partnership with local BAME communities, service users and relevant community agencies.
4. Provide national leadership on this critical issue.
5. Ensure inclusive and sustainable change in our localities and communities.
6. Support timely and progressive research and policy development.
7. Contribute to a biannual progress update as part of this Statement of Intent.

Kamaldeep Bhui, Synergi's Director and Professor of Psychiatry, University of Oxford, said:

"I'm delighted as Director of the Synergi Collaborative Centre to launch this powerful alliance between the NHS, local government, charity providers and BAME community groups in a national movement to transform mental health systems to be less institutionally racist, more enabling, thoughtful and inclusive; one that respects the workforce and acknowledges that all people need health care in the NHS."

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Supported by Consultant Psychiatrist Professor Sashi Sashidharan, Malik Gul, Director of Wandsworth Community Empowerment Network, and a range of NGOs, BAME community and service user-led organisations, including the National Survivor User Network (NSUN), the pledge is facilitated by Synergi's Creative Spaces Network, which champions a systems approach to reduce ethnic inequalities in severe mental illness and improve experiences and outcomes.

Dr Sara Munro, Chief Executive, Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, and CEO Lead for the West Yorkshire and Harrogate Health and Care Partnership: Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and Autism Collaborative, said: "Now, more than ever, we must tackle ethnic inequalities in healthcare. I'm grateful to the Synergi Collaborative Centre for facilitating system-wide efforts to reduce mental health inequalities experienced by BAME groups, and I am proud to add my signature to this national statement of intent. I know that, together, we can make a meaningful difference to the lives of people from BAME communities who are experiencing mental health issues, and I join my health and care partners in pledging my commitment and support."

David Bradley, CEO, South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, said: "Having been involved in the work across south west London for many years, and seen at first hand the experience that BAME communities have in getting equal access to mental health services, I think that the seven commitments are what all leaders should be following. It is especially relevant at this time as Covid-19 has really shown that such communities are impacted harder, and we know that good mental health is a key factor in recovery."

Warren Heppolette, Executive Lead, Strategy and System Development, Greater Manchester Health & Social Care Partnership, said: "Greater Manchester Health & Social Care Partnership wish to send out an unequivocal message, through this pledge, that we fully commit to supporting the elimination of ethnic inequalities in our mental health system. It is important that everyone understands the importance of striving to deliver ethnic equality and how they can personally support the pledge."

Roisin Fallon-Williams, Chief Executive, and Dr Hilary Grant, Medical Director, Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust, said: "We already have plenty of information to evidence that discrimination and inequalities exist. We know our BAME colleagues are less likely to gain promotions, and our BAME service users are more likely to be subject to Mental Health Act detentions, restraint and seclusions. Discrimination is complex and multi-faceted, but this is not a reason not to act now to address it. We cannot be silent on this. Our silence is complicity. It's time for us to truly live up to our values, to act and make a change."

Professor Bhui added: "This is a moment in which the defensiveness and disguises for racism have fallen away. Yet this moment will pass, if we are not mindful, meaning that the usual practices will re-establish themselves to further compound and sustain racial disparities in health."

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CEOs, medical and nursing directors of NHS mental health trusts, commissioners and public bodies who are interested in signing up to the pledge, will be expected to indicate how they plan to meet the seven pledge objectives, be willing to be part of a collaborative national network, and share good practice, challenges and progress every six months.

More signatories and pledge supporters will be announced in the coming months.

Ends

Media contact

If you would like to arrange media interviews with any of the Synergi team, signatories or pledge supporters, contact Joy Francis, Words of Colour Productions.

Email: joy@wordsofcolour.co.uk **Mobile:** 0771 382 7372

Official hashtag: #ethnicinequalitiespledge **Twitter handle:** @SynergiCC

Press Folder: You can download the embargoed press release, the pledge and the supporting statements (*in full*) [here](https://bit.ly/PledgePressFolder). (Full link: <https://bit.ly/PledgePressFolder>)

The pledge's official web page: synergicollaborativecentre.co.uk/ethnic-inequalities-pledge is under embargo and will go live, at midday, on **Wednesday 5th August 2020**.

Notes to the Editor

The **National Statement of Intent: Pledge to reduce ethnic inequalities in mental health systems**, the first of its kind in the UK, has been launched by the Synergi Collaborative Centre in response to Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities facing disproportionate risks in mental health services that require urgent action, intent, shared vision and collaboration. BAME people have a higher risk of experiencing 'symptoms' of psychoses, an even higher risk for a diagnosis of a psychotic condition, are more likely to experience adverse pathways to and through care, are subject to coercion and restrictive care, compulsory admissions and treatments, and poorer outcomes and follow-up. Signatories will be part of a national network to improve outcomes and experiences in partnership with local BAME communities, service users and relevant community agencies to inspire whole systems change.

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The inaugural pledge signatories are:

Leeds

- Tom Riordan, CEO, Leeds City Council
- Tim Ryley, Chief Executive, NHS Leeds Clinical Commissioning Group
- Dr Sara Munro, Chief Executive, Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, and CEO Lead for the West Yorkshire and Harrogate Health and Care Partnership: Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and Autism Collaborative
- Cllr Rebecca Charlwood, Chair, Leeds Health and Wellbeing Board
- Victoria Eaton, Director of Public Health, Leeds City Council
- Jim Barwick, CEO, Leeds GP Confederation

Birmingham

- Roisin Fallon-Williams, CEO, Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust
- Dr Hilary Grant, Medical Director, Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust

London

- Dr Navina Evans, CEO, East London NHS Foundation Trust
- Dan Barrett, Director, Thrive LDN
- Sarah Blow, Accountable Officer, South West London Clinical Commissioning Group
- Vanessa Ford, Acting Chief Executive, South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust
- David Bradley, CEO, South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust

Greater Manchester

- Sir Richard Leese, Chair, Greater Manchester Health & Social Care Partnership
- Evelyn Asante-Mensah, Chair, Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust
- Clare Parker, Executive Director of Nursing, Healthcare Professionals and Quality Governance, Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust
- Dr Nihal Fernando, Medical Director, Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust
- Claire Molloy, Chief Executive, Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust
- Dr Tom Tasker, Chair, Salford Clinical Commissioning Group
- Dr Sandeep Ranote, Medical Director, North West Boroughs Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
- Helen Bellairs, Chairman, North West Boroughs Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
- Simon Barber, CEO, North West Boroughs Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
- Dr Alice Seabourne, Medical Director, Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust

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- Joanne Hiley, Executive Director of Nursing and Quality, North West Boroughs Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
- Joanne McDonnell, Executive Director of Nursing and Governance, North West Boroughs Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
- Neil Thwaite, CEO, Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust
- Gill Green, Director of Nursing and Governance, Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust
- Andrew Maloney, Director of Human Resources and Deputy Chief Executive, Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust
- Rupert Nichols, Chairman, Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust
- Warren Heppolette, Executive Lead, Strategy and System Development, Greater Manchester Health & Social Care Partnership

About the Synergi Collaborative Centre

The **Synergi Collaborative Centre** (synergicollaborativecentre.co.uk) is a national five year initiative focused on eradicating ethnic inequalities in severe mental illness through championing systems change, new science, creative inclusion, collaborative leadership and co-production/co-creation, while forging solutions with those experiencing mental distress, carers, commissioners, policymakers and politicians. Launched in 2017, the centre is funded by [Lankelly Chase](#) and is a partnership between the University of Manchester, University of Oxford and Words of Colour Productions.

About Creative Spaces

Synergi's **Creative Spaces** is a systems approach to reduce ethnic inequalities in severe mental illness and improve experiences and outcomes. It facilitates solution-focused dialogue, collaborations, and co-designed approaches, to enable health systems interventions to prevent or reduce ethnic inequalities and multiple disadvantages experienced by people with severe mental illnesses. This approach enables organisations to respond to longstanding concerns and issues in new ways by placing lived experience narratives at the heart of discussions, policies and strategies, using inclusive creative methods.

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