

ADASS Equity, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Top tips for supporting adult social care staff during times of unrest or when experiencing discrimination

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This guidance outlines practical steps that leaders in adult social care should consider taking to support their teams and commissioned providers to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the workforce.

When communities or staff experience discrimination, whether that is increases in the vocalisation of racist views, discriminatory behaviours, or public disorder, or through microaggression internally or externally to our councils, it is vital that our staff feel safe, supported, and confident in carrying out their roles. By listening to staff, responding to concerns, emerging risks, and modelling inclusive leadership, we can maintain a safe, supportive environment where colleagues feel valued, reassured, and confident in delivering high-quality care and support.

We encourage you to:

Create Safe Spaces and Opportunities for Staff to Talk:

- Provide dedicated safe spaces — physical or virtual — where staff can share concerns, reflect, or decompress, without fear of repercussions.
- Encourage open dialogue in team meetings, huddles, and supervision sessions recognising that the discussions may be difficult and challenging, or perceived as uncomfortable.
- Consider facilitated conversations for staff experiencing discrimination or racist incidents which may be heightened through community tensions.
- Promote and welcome discussions through mentoring, employee networks and through EEDI champions.

Promote Supportive Team Cultures and Allyship:

- Reinforce the importance of psychological safety and encourage allyship across the organisation — it means a great deal to colleagues who may be directly affected by racism and any form of discrimination.

- Foster a culture where staff feel able to have “clumsy and respectful” conversations as they learn and support one another.
- Encourage colleagues to be active bystanders that can influence situations in a positive way and support one another proactively.
- As leaders model curiosity, show courage, humility and humanity. Lead from the front in compassionate leadership, be visible and approachable.

Commit to Training and Learning:

- Promote a commitment to learning for yourselves and their workforce.
- Use frontline lived experiences to influence and drive change in corporate discussions and decision making.
- Identify and encourage participation in appropriate training and development opportunities for managers and staff.

Strengthen Risk Assessments and Support for Staff:

- All staff should have up-to-date risk assessments reflecting current community tensions or situations, which are reviewed and have mitigations in place to support individuals.
- Have guidance for managers on how and when to carry out dynamic risk assessments in times of rapid change and unpredictable situations.
- Include factors such as lone working, travel routes, local hotspots, and individual vulnerabilities.
- Work with partners to share intelligence to understand emerging risks.

Reject Racism and Discrimination:

- Make a clear organisational statement that rejects racism and all forms of discrimination towards staff with clear consequences and escalation of such crimes, incidents or behaviours.
- Ensure staff, managers, providers and partners understand what behaviours necessitate escalation and the support available, being cognisant of microaggression and the impact of this.
- Encourage staff to report incidents of discrimination, with strong frameworks and clear reporting pathways and actions.

Review Lone Working Policies and Safety Measures:

- Revisit lone-working procedures to ensure they are robust during times of unrest, or where there are concerns for safety.
- Support buddying systems, check-in protocols, and alternative visit arrangements, where needed, and flexibility for temporary working adjustments when necessary.

Be Responsive to Staff Feedback and Challenge:

- Create a culture where staff feel safe to raise concerns or challenge decisions about safety or wellbeing.
- Actively listen to feedback and respond with timely, transparent actions and solutions.
- Communicate changes when staff concerns lead to updates in practice or risk management.

Please also refer to the ADASS Top Tips for Allyship in Adult Social Care.