BOARD RACIAL DIVERSITY UK

OUR IMPACT IN 2025/26

Boards shape lives.

We help build inclusive boards where trustees thrive.



What stands out most about Board Racial Diversity UK's approach is the combination of practical support and genuine commitment to long-term change.

The focus is not simply on filling vacancies but on helping organisations build more inclusive governance cultures and creating pathways for diverse talent to thrive at board level.

Lauren Osman
Group Head of Governance, Audit & Procurement
Avenues Group

ABOUT BOARD RACIAL DIVERSITY UK

Board Racial Diversity UK exists to transform who leads organisations in the UK.

We want every not-for-profit board in the UK to reflect the racial diversity of the communities they serve. We see representation as the starting point; and inclusive governance as the catalyst for sustained change.

Black and Asian trustees must not only be recruited, but retained and empowered to thrive. That requires boardrooms where challenge is welcomed, power is acknowledged and trustees can lead with confidence. We work with organisations and communities to promote inclusive board cultures, so that leadership becomes more representative and effective.

HOW WE WORK

We support boards at all stages of the trustee lifecycle, from board readiness, to inclusive recruitment and retention strategies.

We create pathways into trusteeship for Black and Asian communities, providing them with access to opportunities, networks and support.

Our work centres the lived experience of Black and Asian trustees. Their insights shape our guidance for organisations.

We take an intersectional approach, recognising how overlapping identities and experiences can shape a trustee's experience. This ensures our recommendations are practical and respond to the challenges trustees face.

WHY NOW?

Black and Asian people remain severely underrepresented and underserved for leadership opportunities.

Only 8% of trustees in the UK are from Black and Asian backgrounds, compared to 17% of the population.

For those who do manage to enter trustee roles, power dynamics, exclusionary cultures and a lack of psychological safety can make it hard to contribute fully, and harder to stay in their position. Black and Asian trustees often report feeling isolated, unheard or tokenised. Many leave before they have had the chance to influence change. It shouldn't be this way.

We are working to change this. Together with organisations and communities, we are building boardrooms where everyone can thrive.

INTRO

Board Racial Diversity UK is officially 2 years old. Although our work actually began seven years ago, becoming a charity has transformed our ability to influence and support the sector.

Board Racial Diversity UK remains driven by a simple goal: to transform who leads organisations in the UK. In just two years, we have strengthened trustee pipelines, supported boards to embed inclusive governance, and championed the skills and lived experience of Black and Asian trustees across the UK in all our work. We have grown from a small campaign, to an authoritative and influential voice on racial equity and inclusive governance, trusted and supported by organisations, funders and community leaders.

Our first impact report demonstrates our progress to date, but it is deeper than the numbers and quotes. For me, it symbolises the shift we are seeing in boardrooms themselves. Organisations are recognising that representation is only the start. As more trustees step into leadership roles, Boards have a responsibility to commit to embedding inclusive cultures where trustees can actually stay and thrive in their roles.

We are so proud of what we have achieved, and excited for what comes next.

Yeme Onoabhagbe
CEO



“We have grown from a small campaign, to an authoritative and influential voice on racial equity and inclusive governance, trusted and supported by organisations, funders and community leaders.

OUR JOURNEY SO FAR

2019 Malcom John founded the campaign Action for Trustee Racial Diversity

2020 The BANOs database (Black and Asian Network Organisations) was launched to directly challenge the idea that diverse candidates for trustee roles could not be found.

2021 The From Here to Diversity: A Practical Guide to Recruiting Black and Asian Charity Trustees guide was launched

2022 Board Connects Network launched as an online peer support network for Black and Asian trustees

2023 Pathways to Trusteeship and Black and Future Chairs Academy programmes launched

2024 Board Racial Diversity UK was formally registered as a charity

2025 During our 2025 launch, we increased our long-term sector recruitment target to 60,000 Black and Asian trustees, based on new research from the Charity Commission and Pro Bono Economics report

2026 Board Racial Diversity UK wins the Breaking Barriers Award at the 2026 Black Excellence in Governance Awards.

YEAR IN NUMBERS

84,000

Impressions on our LinkedIn page

85

Trustees supported

45

Business Partners

151

Organisations supported

300

Members in our network of aspiring and current trustees

19

Boards supported

PROGRAMMES

We empowered Black and Asian leaders to apply for and secure trustees roles.

Action Not Words

We deliver programmes that provide learning development opportunities for aspiring Black and Asian trustees

Our annual mentoring scheme, Action Not Words, delivered in partnership with Eastside People is a 6 month programme. The programme matches aspiring trustees (mentees) with experienced trustees (mentors) to provide support on how to step into a trustee role. Topics include guidance on the role, CV and interview coaching, and mentoring around solving real-time challenges for trustees.

> “My experience on the programme has allowed me to carve out time to work with an experienced trustee to figure out my goals, the types of organisations I would like to support as a trustee and what to look out for in new opportunities.
>
> I valued my mentor’s honesty, generosity in connecting me up with opportunities that would further enhance my preparation for my second trustee role.
>
> – Mandi Maripise, Action Not Words participant 2025

2026 cohort

93%

said they would recommend the programme to others

Cohorts highlight increased confidence, improved understanding of governance and trusteeship, stronger applications for trustee roles, and the value of having a trusted sounding board to discuss applications and opportunities. Several mentees reported feeling better equipped to identify suitable trustee opportunities, articulate their skills and experience, and navigate application and interview processes.



What feels most distinctive about Action Not Words is that it turns a commitment to racial diversity into practical action.

Its personalised, relationship-based approach helps build confidence, connections and clearer pathways into governance for talented Black and Asian professionals.

Mona Vadher
Founder and Principal Consultant; Eastside People Associate

RESOURCES AND EVENTS

We developed resources and events to equip aspiring trustees with guidance and support.

RESOURCES

In 2021 we released our first guide From Here to Diversity, which provided organisations with practical advice into how to deliver inclusive recruitment campaigns. The guide continues to be downloaded daily by organisations unsure where to begin.

Through our capacity building work with organisations, we often use the guide as a useful framework to discuss priorities for organisations.



EVENTS

Since 2021 we have delivered a number of webinars to complement the guide looking at topics like addressing myths about trustee roles and advice on how to recruit openly and accessibly.

In 2026 we held our third in-person event, **Beyond Representation: Building Inclusive Leadership and Governance**, supported by PwC. We brought together trustees, sector leaders and EDI practitioners to explore what inclusive governance looks like in practice.

Through a panel discussion led by Srabani Sen OBE, speakers explored how power operates within boards, including who speaks most, whose views influence decisions and whether trustees feel psychologically safe to challenge.

This year we also launched our monthly webinar series '**Ask A Trustee**' where Black and Asian trustees share insights with aspiring trustees. Each session is designed to support applying for, securing and thriving in trustee positions.

My time volunteering with Board Racial Diversity UK left a lasting impression on me.

It is that voluntary experience and continuing to review the resources provided by this organisation that encouraged me to apply for and secure my first Trustee role at an organisation I am very passionate about supporting.

— **Board Racial Diversity UK volunteer**

CONSULTANCY

We supported 19 organisations to build more inclusive Board cultures through tailored governance advice, and practical hands on support.

Youth Hostels Association

Youth Hostels Association were keen to recruit new trustees from a diverse range of backgrounds in an inclusive way. Board Racial Diversity UK provided support and guidance, with a focus on broadening their reach and attracting high-quality candidates. We supported the development of recruitment materials with advice on language and tone, provided access to the BANOs database with advice on how best to contact Black and Asian led organisations, and supported during their interview process.

The result was **the largest most diverse number of applications they had seen at 140,** and the recruitment of excellent new trustees for their Board and Committees.

Cooking Up

Cooking Up knew that they needed to strengthen their EDI culture before they could recruit new trustees. They asked Board Racial Diversity UK to help them build internal confidence. We delivered a light-touch EDI review, surfacing gaps in boundaries and opportunities to embed EDI principles into everyday practice. We followed this with targeted EDI training, giving trustees practical tools to promote an inclusive Board culture.

80% of trustees reported increased confidence in applying EDI principles to governance after the session. Now with a clear roadmap, we aim support Cooking Up as they prepare for their trustee recruitment campaign in 2027.

> “
>
> Board Racial Diversity UK reviewed our EDI culture and board effectiveness by looking at documents, surveying staff and interviewing trustees. They also delivered leadership training.
>
> Board Racial Diversity UK completed all of this extremely efficiently within two months, and we now know what we need to do.
>
> We are very impressed with Board Racial Diversity UK's professionalism and support. Yeme has shown sympathy and understanding of concerns raised as we embarked on this process. We would recommend BRDuk to anyone looking to widen representation in their organisation.
>
> – Janet Hilton, Chair of Cooking Up



A LOOK TO THE FUTURE

The past two years as a charity have shown us what is achievable when lived experience is central to our work and when we proactively partner with organisations committed to improving representation and creating inclusive board environments.

We've seen the impact this has had for our board at Board Racial Diversity UK, and we are delighted to see the benefits for Boards we work with across the country.

As we reflect on the progress shown in our first Impact Report, we are both proud of what's been accomplished already. We commit to deepening our impact by

- Expanding our opportunities for aspiring trustees
- Strengthening our evidence base
- Ensuring we are resilient enough to continue delivering high-quality services

For this to happen, we are committed to developing a diversified and future-focused income generation model to ensure we meet the rising demands of our service users. Our work is no longer just 'nice to have'; it is essential for organisations recognising how diverse Boards support their strategic intentions.

Our journey from a small campaign to a national charity has been extremely motivating to be a part of and observe. Along with our dedicated Board of Trustees and small team brilliantly led by our Chief Executive, Yeme, we are excited to support Board Racial Diversity UK through its next chapter.

We look forward to sharing even more progress in our next Impact Report in 2027.



Dalton Leong & Lena Bheeroo, Co-Chairs

THANK YOU

A big thank you to all of our partners, supporters and donors.

None of our work is possible without the generosity of our partners, funders and donors.

Association of Chairs

Anderson Quigley

Black on Board

Boards for Education

Charity People

Co-Op Foundation

Directory of Social Change

Eastside People

Full Colour Consultancy

Henry Smith Foundation

PWC

Tall Roots

Reach Volunteering

Young Trustees Movement

BOARD RACIAL DIVERSITY UK

If you'd like to find out more, partner with us, volunteer or donate, please get in touch: info@boardracialdiversity.org.uk

"What stood out to me was not only the ambition to shift the racial diversity of charity boards, but the way Board Racial Diversity UK is doing this – building genuine pipelines, equipping organisations with practical tools, and investing in future chairs and trustees.

That **focus on lasting change** not surface solutions, strongly resonates…with me."