



Leadership in Colour Programme

Two years in: A review of 2021/22 and the plan for 2022/23

The Leadership in Colour Programme was created in August 2020 at the request of ALDCS to help address the under-representation of Global Majority staff in senior leadership positions within London's Children's Services. It is currently in its second year, with annual funding of £50,000 from the London Innovation and Improvement Alliance (LIIA) programme.

The programme is designed and overseen by a Reference Group consisting of Global Majority managers from across London's Children's Services and currently numbers 65 people. It is chaired by Merlin Joseph (LIIA Anti-Racism Strategic Lead and former Lambeth DCS) and operates through LIIA. Previous initiatives to address under-representation had not been successful and the involvement of affected staff was considered critical to bringing about real change. There was frank acknowledgement that systemic racism has been a factor in workforce disproportionality and that both developmental opportunities for staff and organisational change were needed. Staff College are commissioned to run elements of the programme and work with the Reference Group on programme design.

The development of the Leadership in Colour Reference Group should be seen as a significant moment in its own right. This brought together a highly talented group of managers from across London, who have shared experiences and learning, planned and driven the programme, and provided strategic advice on race and disproportionality. This has been particularly notable in the development of an ALDCS Pan London Workforce Strategy, but also in other areas such as youth justice and the ALDCS response to the Child Q search.

Leadership in Colour 2021-22

The 21/22 programme had four complimentary elements:

- Two cohorts of the BALI (Black and Asian Leadership Initiative) were funded for London Children's Services staff, with a place offered to all London boroughs and some boroughs electing to purchase additional spaces.
- Two Cultural Competence workshops for DCSs and LA senior leaders
- A Pan-London Staff Conference
- The development of the Reference Group as a Critical Friend resource on racism/disproportionality across policy development in children's services

The London Innovation and Improvement Alliance (LIIA) is the Association of London Directors of Children's Services (ALDCS) sector-led improvement partnership.

Impact

Resource limitations meant it was not possible to undertake a specific data gathering exercise in year 1 to measure change (or absence thereof) in the racial profile of children's services senior leadership, something which is further complicated by the varying LA approaches in collating such data. Evaluation of the 21/22 programme was therefore weighted towards stakeholders' qualitative experiences, which have generally been outstanding. However, LinC has close links with the CELC Tackling Racial Inequality programme, which has done a data snapshot on the composition of LA services by pay and ethnicity. The results of the first year's data comparison can be seen here ([Issue 6: Ethnicity and Pay](#), one year on); it shows some positive progress, but also a note of caution in how to interpret this:

Leadership in Colour 2022-23

The 22/23 programme has five complimentary elements and has secured a £26.3k uplift in funding from the DfE Covid-19 Recovery Fund:

- Three cohorts of BALI funded for London Children's Services Staff. We are also undertaking a longitudinal study of the career pathways of BALI alumni (along with other metrics)
- A series of workshops for London's Practice Leaders, looking at their operational leadership and anti-racist practice in the services they run and children's outcomes
- A series of 'twilight' workshops for DCSs looking at the deep narratives and structures underlying disproportionality and approaches they can adopt as systems leaders
- A continuation of the 'critical friend role'. This will include further input to the Children's Workforce Strategy around workforce support/professional development and race as a factor in agency working.
- Staff Conference - A repeat of last year's successful annual conference with a brief to widen attendance to senior leadership and parallel work programmes.

Wider Ambitions

ALDCS wishes to look more widely at its role around anti-racist practice and tackling disproportionality, which continues to impact on the workforce and children/families, for example in the recent case of Child Q. This includes consideration of a governance group to oversee strategy/planning/delivery, building links with other programmes such as Tackling Racial Inequality and GLA equivalents, and working on a national scale through ADCS.

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