

BLACK LIVES MATTER

Our pledge to tackle racism



As a membership body seeking to promote excellence in the adoption system, CVAA strives to uphold anti-racist values. The long-term sustained impact of institutionalised racism has sadly been entrenched in our society for many years, but the more recent realities of racism have been highlighted by the appalling death of George Floyd, the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement and the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on Black, Asian and other minority ethnic communities. This confronts us all with the reality of how much needs to change to achieve true social justice in the UK. We believe we all need to take action now to tackle the systemic inequalities across society which affect the lives of so many of our fellow citizens facing racism and discrimination.

Our specific remit is within the adoption sector and we know from data that inequalities are also evident in the adoption system, with Black and minority ethnic children and adopters waiting longer for matching, and a workforce which does not represent the full diversity of the communities with which we work. VAAs have a long and successful history of finding families for children from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds and are fully committed to anti-discriminatory practice. However, Black Lives Matter has caused us to pause and reflect and challenge ourselves to do more; to listen, learn and take action, acknowledging our individual and collective responsibility to tackle racism and discrimination wherever we find it.

VAAs are committed to building an adoption system which recognises the intrinsic worth of every child, family member and colleague, and the validity of their experience. We will work to ensure these values are translated into action to give all minority ethnic communities confidence in the respect, care and consideration they will receive from VAAs, to recognise the impact of racism on their lives and the validity of all the experiences and emotions they bring to adoption.

We will take the opportunity Black Lives Matter gives us to work with others across the adoption system and beyond to tackle assumptions, bias and prejudice, celebrating and respecting the contributions that people from many different values, beliefs and ethnic backgrounds can contribute to a more open, equal and inclusive adoption service.

We pledge to work together with VAAs across the UK to:

- Regularly review the data on the adoption of Black, Asian and minority ethnic children, and the recruitment and support of adopters for those children, sharing this data to take joint action to improve waiting times and services.
- Support the VAA workforce, increase our understanding of the impact of discrimination and address the lack of diversity in both the leadership and wider workforce so that adopters of all ethnicities can see their experiences reflected in those who support them through their adoption journey.
- Celebrate the success of Black and minority ethnic adoptions and learn from the experience of birth families, children, young people and adopters to improve services and support.
- Work with all Governments of the UK, the National Adopter Recruitment Campaign, Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board, Regional Adoption Agencies, Local Government, the National Adoption Service Wales and other partners to promote, support and deliver anti-discriminatory action across the adoption system, challenging racism and working for true equality.

The CVAA Board and staff team affirm our total commitment to anti-racist practice and agree the following actions to challenge ourselves and support CVAA members in their work to find forever homes for the children of all faiths and ethnic backgrounds who need them. We recognise these actions are small steps which need to be built on over time to create the equal and just society all adopted children and young people deserve.

- To review and amend the CVAA equality, diversity and inclusion policies to ensure they remain relevant and provide the right organisational challenge and protections for all who work for and with CVAA.
- To extend training on anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practice, unconscious bias and good practice in adoption support for Black and minority ethnic families through the CVAA Practice Programme.
- To work across the membership to improve the recruitment, support and advancement of Black and minority ethnic staff.
- To work with our sector to set, monitor and regularly report on the targets and actions we and the membership have taken and the plans we have for future action to eradicate racism and discrimination.