



# HM Courts & Tribunals Service

Amanda Pinto  
Chair, Bar Council

**Kevin Sadler CBE**  
Acting Chief Executive  
HM Courts & Tribunals Service  
5.13, 5th Floor  
102 Petty France  
London SW1H 9AJ

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***Sent by email***

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Dear Amanda

Thank you for taking the time to meet on 25 September and discuss the unacceptable experience of Alexandra Wilson that week. I particularly appreciated our shared vital commitment to work collaboratively in bringing about improvements for all of our BAME colleagues, partners and users of the courts.

In HMCTS we are committed to doing everything possible to tackle discrimination in any form and promote positive change. We have been working hard to challenge all unacceptable behaviours. I have set out what we are doing below.

Recent events have shown us again how essential it is to continue to actively address these issues, and why the work underway is so important to improve the experiences of all those working in, and using, the justice system.

HMCTS has a diverse workforce and I am proud to say that BAME employees represent 20% of the workforce within HMCTS, this is in comparison to 12.7% across the Civil Service and is significantly higher than the 12.6% of the working population of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people in the UK.

We are a better organisation because we reflect the people we serve. In line with the rest of the Civil Service and many other organisations we still have a lot to do before that diversity is reflected at all levels - but we have strong foundations on which to build. However, diversity of workforce is not enough. We must also live our values.

Over recent months, we updated our diversity and inclusion plans. We're currently developing a longer-term and even more comprehensive strategy working with our race and other networks in order to do so. We have focused on these key areas:

- Civil service eLearning diversity and inclusion training forms part of HMCTS induction for all new starters. This includes employees who are recruited permanently, through fixed term contracts and who are employed through temporary recruitment agencies. In addition:
  - Unconscious bias training is already a mandatory requirement for those involved in recruitment and selection, and available to all staff.
  - We have already decided to add this to our annual mandatory training package for all employees by the end of December 2020 and further supported by more detailed learning over the next calendar year.

- As part of *Learning at Work Week* this week, we are actively promoting all our diversity learning products to the whole organisation and I did so personally today.

We will continue to review our training to see if there are other learning interventions that will further improve inclusivity.

- We have created a dedicated HMCTS platform for BAME colleagues and those who wish to offer support. This is called the Racial Inclusion and Striving for Equality (RISE) network.
- RISE listening events have helped improve our understanding of the challenges faced by BAME individuals in their personal and work lives. We're also exploring opportunities where we can make improvements - such as recruitment and career progression, visibility of diverse senior leadership and increasing confidence in sharing views around issues relating to diversity topics.
- *Let's Talk About Race* conversations have taken place across the organisation. These are designed to create unity, openness and understanding by sharing experiences and culture. We developed a practical package to help delivery of this remotely, along with guidance to support line managers in these conversations.
- We're launching coaching and refresher training on our Bullying Harassment and Discrimination policy as part of an all-encompassing line manager training package that will be available to all staff by the end of December 2020. This will include areas such as micro-aggressions, privilege, and cultural intelligence. We are also continuing to raise awareness of our 'zero tolerance' policy - which helps define bullying, harassment and discrimination, victimisation or any other breach of conduct. This policy ensures that where complaints have been raised, investigations take place to understand cause and facilitate work to improve culture and create unity.
- We have played a key part in the development of the *MOJ Race Action Plan* which was launched today.

More generally, our Diversity and Inclusion and Race champions continue to play active roles across HMCTS. We developed activities and events for National Inclusion Week, including high profile speakers on race issues and we are actively supporting Black History Month.

We also work closely with our suppliers on these issues. As part of the on-boarding process last year for OCS, the new supplier of security officers, we provided an overview of our different court and tribunal users. Our material covered unconscious bias and avoiding discrimination, protected characteristics under the Equality Act, an outline of HMCTS values and learning around reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities. These were all with the aim of providing a fair and consistent service to all our users.

I have spoken with the CEO of OCS who has also expressed his serious concern at Alexandra Wilson's reported experience. He has committed to learning from this and improving the service provided. In particular:

- Conscious and unconscious bias training is already part of the syllabus for new security officers.
- A case study specific to this situation has been added to ensure further learning..
- OCS is developing a 20 min '*Tool Box*' talk that specifically covers conscious and unconscious bias and will roll this out to all security officers by the end of October.
- A laminated crib sheet is being produced to ensure the greeting all court users receive on arriving at court is consistent, comprehensive and appropriate.
- OCS is also reviewing their equality and diversity training. OCS will align it with HMCTS training and ensure every security officer has completed it. OCS will also ensure sub-contractors who provide guarding services have access to their learning or provide equivalent learning of the same standard on race and diversity.

As I hope you can see, we are committed to working hard to improve the experiences of all those involved in the courts. We want to continue to work with you and other organisations to make the justice system a fully inclusive environment.

Yours sincerely



**Kevin Sadler CBE**

Acting Chief Executive, HM Courts & Tribunals Service