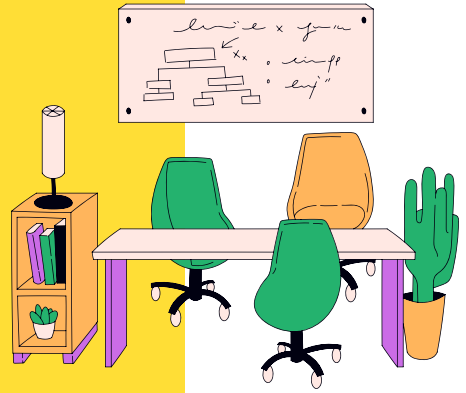


championing change

for Ethnically Diverse
Leadership in Social Housing



BOOST



CONTENTS

- 03 All about BOOST
- 05 The BOOST Model
- 07 Our Approach to Learning & Mentoring
- 08 A Movement of Change
- 20 Our Movement Meetings at a Glance
- 21 BOOST Partnerships
- 23 How can I get involved?

In collaboration with



all about BOOST

BOOST is about creating positive change and a supportive culture, with the aim to enable ethnically diverse leaders to progress and thrive. This innovative programme is a collaboration with Greater Manchester Housing Providers (GMHP), Innovate UK, Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) and Aston University.

75%

of UK housing
sector executive
teams exclusively
white

McCabe, 2018



BOOST in a nutshell

BUILDING A MOVEMENT

BOOST is a community of allies who meet regularly to learn how to reshape housing associations so that ethnically diverse leaders can thrive.

DISRUPTIVE MENTORING

BOOST uses disruptive mentoring to create leadership pathways for ethnically diverse colleagues, and helps mentors grow as allies. Insights are shared with BOOST Change Groups to drive innovation.

CULTURE & SYSTEMS CHANGE

BOOST's Change Champions and Change Groups are changing cultures and systems within their housing associations.

INNOVATION FOR SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

BOOST seeks to pioneer new approaches to service development, ensuring solutions meet the diverse needs of communities.

EVALUATION & LEARNING

BOOST focuses on evaluating outcomes, sharing insights, and finding effective strategies for continuous improvement. We're a learning community committed to accountability!

the GROW model

At **BOOST**, we're all about practical approaches to personal and professional development. That's why we've adopted the GROW model as a central tool in our mentoring programme.

Here's why it's such a great fit:

CLEAR GOALS

The GROW model helps mentees set clear and achievable goals, backed by mentors who help raise aspirations or find pathways to progress, giving mentees a fresh roadmap to success.

REALITY CHECK

We have adapted the GROW Model's process of realistically assessing a mentee's current circumstances with guidance from their mentor. Senior leaders can provide new opportunities or help ethnically diverse staff see new ways of progressing or provide new opportunities.

EXPLORE OPTIONS

We love that the GROW model encourages brainstorming and exploring different solutions, empowering mentees to find the best path forward. Our mentors share their experience and networks to increase the mentees' options.

TAKE ACTION

The GROW model is all about turning plans into action, helping mentees break down big goals into manageable steps and stay accountable. Mentors open up their networks and take their own steps to support mentees, shining a light on their talent.



By adapting the GROW model, we're giving mentees a practical framework for growth and success, supported by networks and opportunities that they may have previously been denied. It's all about empowerment, one step at a time. Our mentors also learn about barriers to progression faced by ethnically diverse colleagues and reflect on how to promote the good practice we're developing in their own organisations.



our approach to Learning & mentoring

1

MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

Disruptive mentoring relationships are at the heart of BOOST. Mentees are matched with a senior leader from another organisation, helping them grow their networks and influence. Mentors learn about mentees' experiences and their role as allies for cultural change. They meet monthly, focusing on the mentee's career development and personal growth using the GROW model.

2

PEER LEARNING

We encourage the **BOOST** network to learn and share knowledge. Mentors improve their skills as mentors and allies, while mentees use their network for support in their career journeys. Change Champions meet regularly to share better practice and insights from their change projects.

3

MOVEMENT MEETINGS

To promote peer learning and drive cultural change, quarterly Movement Meetings are held with past and current cohorts. These sessions help **BOOST** create a movement for change beyond mentorship. With guest speakers, career development workshops, and group discussions, these meetings provide a space for the **BOOST** network to come together and foster real change.

a movement of change

the Change Projects

In this section, we'll highlight the innovative change projects initiated by each housing provider, highlighting their commitment to creating positive change and addressing key challenges within their organisations.

Through these stories from our first cohort, you'll see how **BOOST** is transforming cultures, systems, and practices across housing associations in Greater Manchester to create a brighter future for all. From innovative approaches to tangible outcomes, these case studies provide valuable insights into the progress and successes of our programme.



FIRST CHOICE HOMES OLDHAM



Overview

Our Change Project focused on the full recruitment and retention process, addressing the following key areas:

- Onboarding Process
- Training
- Retention Practices
- Offboarding Process
- EDI Champion
- EDI Forum
- Communication of EDI

PROGRESS & ACHIEVEMENTS

Data Update: In Q4 of 2023, a major exercise was undertaken to update all colleague EDI data, achieving a 98% completion rate.

EDI Champions: The role of EDI Champion was relaunched, resulting in a highly engaged and motivated group driving the EDI agenda. Additionally, a customer EDI champion group was established, providing valuable input to shape EDI priorities.



Mentee

I learnt that everyone's experience is different relating to career opportunities: having technical ability and excelling at that does not automatically translate into being promoted to a leader. Mentors can offer insight into next-level thinking that prepares mentees for progression should they have the desire to do so.



Mentor

I wanted to gain a greater insight into the challenges individuals from ethnically diverse backgrounds face both within and outside of the work place. I learnt more about barriers faced by individuals, gained a deeper understanding of privilege and how I can influence in my role to remove barriers that are in place. I also met a large group of colleagues who I will stay in touch with and assist in the future.

Overview

In partnership with Johnnie Johnson Housing and Inclusive Employers, we developed a training programme to boost Cultural Intelligence. Although we're still in the initial phase of the programme, feedback has been positive.

PROGRESS & ACHIEVEMENTS

- Participants report a greater appreciation and curiosity for other cultures
- Ethnically diverse colleagues feel more supported discussing their norms
- All front-line job descriptions now include the requirement for 'a commitment to understand the challenges and opportunities that exist in the communities in which we work, and a passion to advocate on behalf of people and communities.'



Mentee

BOOST has been a very positive experience for me.

My expectation was to have, not just a mentor, but someone that would be ready for us to stretch the relationship beyond the life span of BOOST and I achieved that!

The Mentees stayed strong and connected with one another and that provided an important avenue to for support. I have made some good connections that will last for a long time.



Mentor

I appreciated the opportunity to support someone in their career and I had a real sense of giving something back. Being able to share some of my experience, knowledge and insights felt great and very empowering. I was able to open up a new way of thinking and different approach to accrediting the expertise my mentee has. It also opened my eyes to the experiences of people who are not white. I realised that I take some things for granted and that day to day life experiences are not the same for everyone.

Overview

The intervention we chose was to review recruitment process to ensure there are no barriers to increasing diversity based on data outcomes. Over the next 12 months, we aim to understand our qualitative data to ensure all barriers to appointment and progression within the business are removed. As this is a 3 year project, we understand seeing really results may happen further into the project term.



Mentor

The act of mentoring and applying the GROW model helped me to reflect on my own motivations and challenges – providing me with greater clarity about my own career. I gained a good professional contact in my mentee and we are planning to continue our mentee/mentor relationship outside of the BOOST programme.

I learned more about white fragility and became more comfortable in talking about issues of race through the programme. I also have a better appreciation of some of the cultural differences between ethnicities and how these might impact on career progression.



MOSSCARE ST VINCENT'S

Overview

We focused our change project on reviewing our recruitment and selection process with an aim to recruit colleagues from ethnically diverse backgrounds into more senior roles.

THE INTERVENTIONS WE'VE INTRODUCED INCLUDE:

- Introduction of the "Rooney Rule" for senior roles.
- Interview questions/themes issued in advance of interviews
- Members of EDI Forum or Customer Scrutiny Group are now part of the recruitment panel at senior level interviews
- Review of recruitment policy and procedures and associated training rolled out.
- Attendance at more job fairs, specifically in the communities we operate to raise the profile of MSV and a career in housing.
- More use of socials and community groups to advertise posts
- Use of EDI job boards.

We have included our commitment to recruit and develop more colleagues from ethnically diverse backgrounds into our recently launched EDI Strategy.



Overview

Following extensive engagement with colleagues and other stakeholders, we agreed to develop a new set of Values and Competencies. We took the opportunity to ensure that a value focusing on Inclusion was one of the three that was chosen.

This allowed us to communicate to all employees what their role was in building an inclusive workplace, particularly managers. We embedded the values and competencies through a framework that consists of: Recruitment, Induction, Probation period, Reward & Recognition, Training & Development. The vision for the next 12 months is to continue to embed the values and monitor how well colleagues relate to them and feel Salix Homes live them.



Mentee

BOOST has increased my awareness of nationwide networking groups. The networking opportunities have been particularly beneficial for me in my role, I was fortunate to have a mentor within my own area of work and who was passionate about providing advice and guidance and exposure to her organisation, helping me think about my own career and explore different initiatives that I could bring back to my own organisation within my area of work.

It's also been great to build some great peer mentee relationships that will continue for years to come and help forge further relationships within the sector going forward.



Mentor

The open, honest and transparent relationship I developed with my mentee enabled me to also walk the extra miles in her shoes (a very humbling and inspiring experience). My mentee is amazing and she made me see that I cannot fix it all but what I can do is play my part in the bigger picture and movement of change. I have watched my mentee blossom into a much more confident individual as a result of our journey together, she has taught me so much, it is ok to not have all the answers and sometimes small changes and improvements can lead to bigger long lasting changes.

Overview

Our goal was to try and solve the lack of minority ethnic staff at management level. We implemented a guaranteed interview scheme (GIS) for minority ethnic applicants who met the minimum criteria for the post. SHG will continue with the GIS but will look to modify it by trying to ensure a reduction in speculative applications by making clearer within the application process that applicants must meet the minimum criteria to get an interview. We will also try to get more feedback from those who were interviewed but not successful, to find out if they felt the interview was a worthwhile experience that will help them in the future to be successful in gaining a management role.



Mentee

"I gained confidence for the most part. Having a mentor that is so well matched to my own career journey has been such a wonderful and insightful experience. She has filled me with confidence and has showed me what the next steps into the next role are likely to be like for someone like me.

I am so grateful for having had exposure to someone like my mentor who is so open and transparent. I think for the most part it gave me a safe space where I could think about my experience in the UK as a migrant. In the 20 years I have lived and worked here I don't think I ever did take the time to talk about some of the negatives and even identify some of the things that I hadn't ever processed."



Overview

As well as bring our recruitment policy up to date, we have made a number of significant changes to our processes:

- Introduced JDAT (Job Description Artificial Intelligence) by Be Applied.
- Extended our guaranteed interview scheme to include ethnically diverse applicants as well as disabled, and ex armed forces applicants.
- All our application forms and CVs are now anonymised before sending to the shortlisting panel.

We are still evaluating the current interventions through monitoring job board activity and introducing feedback questionnaires to unsuccessful candidates



Mentee

BOOST is a great peer network, we are all seeking our next opportunity that will consolidate our capabilities and potential.

I own my self-limiting beliefs and that glass ceiling is to be broken through more hard work and dedication.

Network and opportunity work hand in hand, and opportunity works off luck and hard work.



Mentor

Being part of a movement for change also attracted me as a long-term journey for our own organisation and for the wider GMHP.

I have a better understanding of how race can affect confidence in the workplace and the additional challenges this can create.

My confidence in dealing with and being more direct and proactive with bias has also grown. I have not always felt comfortable talking about race and am much more confident now in how I both approach and respond.

Overview

Our overarching objective is to improve representation of ethnic minority colleagues in mid and senior level leadership roles within the L&Q workforce.

As part of our journey to do this, we have already introduced various initiatives such as ethnicity pay gap reporting, the Rooney Plus Rule, and the involvement of the chairs of our four colleague diversity networks in recruitment for executive directors and their direct reports, and key roles such as managers within our ED&I team.

Whilst our diversity is very good up to and including mid-management level positions, we still have under-representation at the more senior levels within the organisation.

We chose the Fair Recruitment Advocate scheme to help us to improve the diversity of our recruitment and selection panels for levels of role within the organisation where ethnic minority colleagues are under-represented.



WYTHENSHAW COMMUNITY HOUSING GROUP



Overview

After consulting with colleagues, we identified key interventions:

- **Space and Place:** Improving bathroom facilities for prayer, including updates to accessible bathrooms with hoses for easier washing.
- **Knowledge:** Enhancing colleagues' understanding for progression, with guidance for managers on Ramadan and plans for other religious holidays.
- **Support:** Offering interview preparation and confidence-building for colleagues seeking advancement, addressing past applications with supportive measures.

We learnt that in order to make these changes that there was a lot of push back internally. We learnt that we need to clearly communicate with those who are doing the 'doing' why the work is important and the impact it can have on colleagues.



Mentee

I had started to feel like I had hit a ceiling in my career, but BOOST has made me challenge this mindset and has made me want to move forward and smash that ceiling. I gained insight into my mentors' journey in housing, although not around race or ethnicity it was about a female facing challenges in a male dominated role. This inspired me. One of my key goals was to learn to 'speak leadership', having attended the group sessions and the 121 with my mentor I realised this isn't necessary, a diverse voice brings more value. I am one of a huge number of colleagues who is not being recognised, who already has the key skills and experience and I now want to understand and challenge why...



Mentor

I wanted to gain a deeper understanding of how a person of colour experiences navigating the working environment and a sharper focus on how I, as a senior white male executive, can recognise the conditions necessary to equalise the journey for people of colour into leadership positions. I believe my mentee has found it useful to be supported in believing they can bring their authentic self to work without having to behave in a way that conforms to the expectations that result from white business cultures.

Overview

We firstly supported our BOOST mentee in setting up a colleague-led Race Inclusion Network, giving the group access to support and resources. We have also created an internal EDI resource team with colleagues from key areas across the organisation. They each have dedicated time to undertake EDI activity as part of their day-to-day roles, as well as being a point of contact for other staff. Another important action was to design and roll out Inclusive Recruitment... The design of this training was focussed on identifying bias, providing a high-quality candidate experience, and bringing consistency to our process, in line with best practice. We aimed to get people thinking and suggested new ways to make hiring more inclusive. We have now developed a comprehensive recruitment data dashboard.



Mentor

My mentee and I struck up a really good relationship right from the start. We created a safe environment and talked openly about our feelings, challenges and thoughts. It was fascinating hearing about the experiences that he had been through throughout his life not just his career.

I was also able to share openly with him too and we were able to challenge each other's thoughts, experiences and understand what had shaped us as the individuals we have become. I strongly feel that we have built a

very positive relationship over the last year that he knows he can continue to remain in contact with me and draw on my advice and assistance whenever needed.

I certainly learnt a lot about the challenges he has faced and one of the reflections I have that I will take forward as an individual is to ensure that I don't avoid something if I fear I might get my approach wrong.

SOME MORE QUOTES



Mentee

I have been able to take part in open discussions around several issues facing the housing sector and shared any learning with other mentees.

I have achieved personal satisfaction of having been involved in an inspiring programme and used this platform to develop awareness of various issues within housing. The mentoring programme helped me to put certain things/challenges within my career into perspective while also setting a plan of action on how I can overcome challenges previously faced. I feel my input as a mentee was very much acknowledged and appreciated from my mentor and potentially helped my mentor to reflect on what he can do to help ensure individuals like me are given the fair opportunities to develop and have a positive impact within organisations.

IRWELL
VALLEY

RBH



Mentor

I learnt how difficult it can be for someone from an ethnic minority to 'fit in'. Confidence is a barrier, and this came across strongly in the group sessions. It made me realise that culture needs to embrace diversity and must lead to an increased understanding and awareness. I found some of the training sessions informative and challenging, especially around the concept of white privilege. It made me think about my position and how I can use this to make my organisation more culturally aware. I also felt that there was a wealth of talent in the group that should be built on.



our movement

meetings at a glance

September 2023

Building a shared language

- Discussed race and ethnicity language
- BOOST's approach to psychological safety and resilience
- Sharon Amesu spoke about leading courageously

November 2023

Networking for career growth

- Importance of networking for career development
- Using BOOST to develop networks
- Assessing network diversity
- Discussed BOOST's legacy and inspiring career stories

March 2024

Leadership for change

- Leadership needed for change movements
- Julia spoke on adaptive and enabling leadership
- Discussed leadership training implications

June 2024

Graduation at Manchester Metropolitan University

- Sharon Amesu spoke about the value of BOOST
- Presented the BOOST model
- Testimonials from mentees and mentors
- Change projects on inclusive recruitment
- Reflections from the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter

September 2024

Launch of Cohort 2

- Launched second cohort of the mentoring programme
- Discussed principles of allyship
- Addressed racist riots, myths about housing, and responses to civil unrest

November 2024

BOOST update and evaluation

- Update on BOOST and introduction to evaluation
- Kal Kay shared their career journey
- Discussed barriers to progression

BOOST partnerships

Organisations we've collaborated with

SHE LEADS FOR LEGACY

She Leads for Legacy is a social enterprise, co-founded by a mother-daughter duo dedicated to promoting the advancement of Black female professionals into senior leadership and Board positions within organisations and their communities.

We recently had the pleasure of supporting their 'Empowered to Lead' conference in October 2024, which many of our mentees, mentors and Change Champions from across cohorts attended.

Additionally, Founder Sharon Amesu has been a speaker at several BOOST events, including the graduation event for Cohort 1 in June 2024.



GREATER MANCHESTER GOOD
EMPLOYMENT CHARTER

BOOST played a key role in helping Southway Housing Trust win ‘Best for Inclusion’ at the 2023 Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter Awards. BOOST was also the focus of a ;Charter ‘Explore Day’, and the Charter supported our mentee graduation event in 2024. Our collaboration contributed to Manchester Metropolitan University being named the Charter’s Partner of the Year 2024.



INCLUSIVE EMPLOYERS

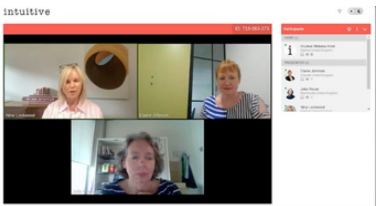
In Cohort 1, we collaborated closely with Inclusive Employers to support the development of our inclusive recruitment Change Projects, focusing on embedding better practice into our recruitment processes.



INTUITIVE TALENT SOLUTIONS

Facing a similar challenges to the housing sector, BOOST took part in a webinar last May hosted by Intuitive Talent Solutions for the rail industry.

Watch the full webinar here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ztB-qWFaMMU>



Next steps

How can I get involved?



Become a mentor or mentee

If your organisation is part of BOOST, apply to be a mentor or mentee for Cohort 3! Applications open in April for a September 2025 start. You can also join your organisation's BOOST Change Group.

Join us

If you're not yet part of BOOST, encourage your organisation to join our growing movement to create change in housing.

Become a guest speaker

Share your story and inspire our mentors and mentees by speaking at one of our Movement Meetings. Contact us at: boost@southwayhousing.co.uk

Share BOOST's message

Spread the word about BOOST within your organisation and join our movement for change.

Find out more

Want to learn more?

Visit

<https://gmhousing.co.uk/projects/boost-programme/>
or contact us at boost@southwayhousing.co.uk

Fund a Change Project

Interested in funding a project like BOOST in your sector or organisation? Contact Professor Julia Rouse at Manchester Metropolitan University at j.rouse@mmu.ac.uk



get in touch

Email

boost@southwayhousing.co.uk

Webpage

<https://gmhousing.co.uk/projects/boost-programme/>



LinkedIn

<https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/gmhp-boost/>

