**BOOST Movement Meeting Summary**

**Thursday 6th March 2025**

Location: *Great Places, 2A Derwent Avenue, East Didsbury, Manchester M21 7QS*

Time: *9:45 – 16:30 (Peer Learning 9:45-12:00, Movement Meeting 12:00-16:30)*

**Networking for Success: How do you make the BOOST Movement a part of your Network?**

We kicked off the morning with a networking workshop! Inspired by David Codner (L&Q’s former EDI lead), Elaine ran a session in homage to David’s networking activity from BOOST’s November 2023 Movement Meeting. This served as a refresher for those who were there, as well as providing this year’s cohort with the chance to think about their own networks – how diverse they are and who we have in our ‘personal boardroom’.

We also looked at the different roles people in our networks can play, such as inspirers, connectors, challengers and anchors – reflecting on who these are in our own lives, as well as thinking about some practical steps we can take to build this personal boardroom and diversify our networks. Mentors were encouraged to think about how they could both be part of and support mentees in building their personal boardrooms.

This session was being piloted as a workshop, which will be developed as part of the BOOST toolkit and shared with participated organisations to roll out across their managers, but also their aspiring ethnically diverse colleagues.

**Peer Learning: Networking**

Mentees and Mentors then split off into their break-out peer learning groups. In small groups they discussed:

* + How diverse are your networks?
	+ The diversity of leadership networks in housing?
	+ Practical steps that can be taken to diversify your networks

Time was given to individually reflect and note down new commitments on networking practices. They also reflected on what actions they took from their commitments in the November peer learning session on using the GROW model.

**Change Champions’ Session**

While the mentees and mentors were in their peer learning sessions, the Change Champions met to discuss how the Diversifying Networks workshop could be used in their organisations to promote progression. Suggestions included

* Ensuring the ‘Personal Boardroom’ conversation is part of the next mentoring discussions between Mentee and Mentors, with both parties thinking abut how they can diversify their networks
* Encouraging each organisation to purchase the Personal Boardroom book with those delivering the workshop to read it
* Making the book available to mentees and mentors as reading essential reading material
* Sharing the learning through a Train the Trainer session
* Integrating the thinking into 1-1 processes as part of career conversations
* Sharing the learning with the GAP Mentoring Programme

**Next Steps**

Elaine will develop the tool kit and share the material.

**Movement Meeting**

The groups came together for lunch (provided by one of Southway’s tenants who also manages Dahlia café at one of Southway’s extra care schemes). The café supports women with opportunities to develop their skills and confidence and the food got many compliments from those who were there! Packed lunches were also available for attendees who were observing Ramadan to take home with them.

John opened the Movement Meeting, introducing Abeer (Southway’s mentee) to share some thoughtful reflections on the meaning of Ramadan and how she observes the month.

John also shared that BOOST now has its own [Linkedin page](https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/gmhp-boost/) and encouraged people to follow for updates and to tag the page to share vacancies with the BOOST community. The [BOOST Resource Bank](https://wakelet.com/%40BOOST_Programme) was also launched, our new platform for sharing book and media recommendations, as well as materials that come out of the programme. We welcome suggestions so email Ros if you have any resources you’d like to share! The platform currently only allows us to share a limited amount of resources publicly, so we have put together a document with QR codes that take you to the full collection of resources! You can find this at the bottom of the meeting summary (you may need to zoom in on each QR code for the link to work!)

Jo Edwards also shared some information about Riverside’s involvement in HDN’s Board Training Programme, with Orina (Change Champion & Cohort 1 Mentee for Riverside) giving us an overview of a ‘Day in the Life of a Trainee Board Member’. She shared that she found the programme to be a real learning journey, being given the opportunity to meet with her mentor and an associate trainee board member regularly for support.

**Speed Networking!**

A change to the agenda meant we had the opportunity to do some speed networking! In 3 rounds, Mentees, Mentors and Change Champions moved around the room making new connections and were prompted to discuss the following questions:

* What advice would you give to someone aspiring to progress and thrive in the housing sector?
* How do you envision our industry evolving in the next 5 to 10 years, and what steps can I take to stay ahead of the curve?
* What skills do you think are essential for success in our field but often overlooked?
* When you’re interviewing for a leadership role, what skills or attributes are you most looking for?
* Who is a leader you really admire? (either in your own life or a well-known person)
* What kind of leader are you, or would you like to be?

This fast-paced activity provided a fun and informal opportunity to speak to people we haven’t spoken to before and dip our toes into diversifying our professional networks!

**Allyship in the Context of BOOST**

Julia then got us to reflect on allyship in the context of BOOST and what genuine allyship looks like. Allyship was something we covered in-depth during Cohort 1 and following feedback, we decided to look at this in more detail for this year’s cohort.

There was thought-provoking discussion on how we approach race and culture in the workplace and more widely. The group reflected on the idea of ‘colour-blindness’ and ‘treating everyone the same’ which was very much a part of 1990/2000’s thinking and how damaging this approach had been. In particular, leaders were encouraged to recognise and notice when diversity is lacking – especially within their senior leadership teams. Doing so makes us acknowledge difference which should then prompt us to take proactive action to address inequality

We approached the concept of [privilege](https://www.facebook.com/brenebrown/videos/1778878652127236) as not having to take other people’s response to your race, culture or ethnicity into account before carrying out certain actions or going about our daily lives. Taking racialised ideas or norms into account can lead to people hiding their heritage or discounting themselves, or adapting to painful experiences of being discriminated against or overlooked. Privilege can then be seen as a freedom from not having to take racial responses to you into account. This is an unearned freedom, that relates to not being from an ethnically diverse background, rather than hard work or effectiveness in the workplace.

This session also got us thinking about [intersectionality](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O1islM0ytkE) – how social relations, or different parts of our identity inter-relate with one another. In the context of race and gender in the workplace, Julia gave us the stark example that over 72,000 women face lose their jobs every year due to pregnancy discrimination, with ethnically diverse women being hugely overrepresented in this number.

In the context of allyship within the BOOST Change Groups, we were reminded that each organisation’s change group should involve the CEO, the current and past Mentees and Mentors, as well as the HR Lead. We also reflected on the change projects and their need to enable sustained learning within organisations, not just a one-off training course.

Roslyn closed the event, reminding everyone to please send over your consent forms as a matter of urgency as this is required for your continued participation in BOOST. Change Champions were also reminded to set up a meeting for her to check-in with their Change Group and send over their Statement of Commitment. Lastly, Ros will be setting up regular meetings for Cohort 2 mentees to establish their network and recirculating the link to join the Mentee Whatsapp group. Keep an eye out for an invite!

