

HERBERT SMITH FREEHILLS LAUNCHES 'REFLECTIONS OF A COMMUNITY' TO MARK BLACK HISTORY MONTH

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Firm news

Herbert Smith Freehills has published a collection of thoughts and expressions from internal and external black contributors to mark this year's Black History Month.

The publication, called 'Reflections of a Community', has been launched today (1 October, 2020) and been created by the firm's Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Committee. The firm's BAME Committee works with Herbert Smith Freehills' wider Multiculturalism Network, Graduate Recruitment and Diversity & Inclusion teams to improve the representation of ethnic minorities within the trainee population in the London Office.

The aim of the publication is to showcase and celebrate the thoughts, expressions and experiences of the black community, from both within the firm and externally.

"We invited people to put together short pieces on the topic of 'Community' and what that means to them. We have been struck by how open, vulnerable and honest the contributors have been," says Herbert Smith Freehills Associate [Tanisha Onyenaoha](#), who is Co-Chair of the BAME Committee and who has spearheaded the publication alongside fellow Co-Chair Trainee Solicitor Corinna Cherrie.

"It occurred to us how strange it is that over the past few months, despite feelings of isolation due to the COVID-19 lockdown measures, and despite feelings of heartbreak due to events that sparked another iteration of a civil rights movement this year, that this has also been a time in which we have been able to foster a greater sense of community; both inside and outside of work; both with other members of the black community, and with allies to that community," she added.

The publication covers a range of themes including: the importance of representation and positive role models, by Herbert Smith Freehills Head of Internal Audit Marvin Fihosy; investment in the next generation, by Citizenship Manager Honey Sanusi; and being an ally to the black community, by Associate [Olivia Odubanjo](#).

There have also been contributions from the wider Herbert Smith Freehills team including: Associate [Naomi Ofori](#); Senior HR Adviser Taj Foster; Trainee Solicitor Dammy Sokale; Head of Business Finance for Corporate Natasha Owoh; Strategic Insight Manager Melat Negash; and IT Training Manager and Author Ronke Joseph. The publication also features a note from Co-Chairs of the firm's Multiculturalism Network, Senior Associate [Nic Patmore](#) and Associate Naomi Ofori, as well as a note from the Partner Sponsor of the Multiculturalism Network, [Dinesh Banani](#).

Meanwhile, the publication also includes contributions from: Rare Recruitment's Senior Manager for Schools and Universities and Target Oxbridge Founder Naomi Kellman; Barrister Dr Tunde Okewale MBE; International poet, playwright and performer Inua Ellams; Rare Recruitment's Strategic Development Director Kura Dione-Warren; and Chartered Civil Engineer and Councillor for Caversham at Reading Borough Council, Ayo Sokale.

To read the full publication, please click [here](#).

Corinna commented: "One of the lessons that we may be able to take from some of the events of this year, if we give it enough thought, is that we don't have to wait for a certain month in the year to think about an issue affecting a certain community. We hope that this publication contributes to what has felt like an increasing effort to have open and honest conversations, as the preceding step to making concrete changes, both big and small in order for everyone to play their part in creating a community that is fair for all of its members."

"Self-education is crucial to the firm's continued work in improving ethnic diversity and building a supportive and respectful environment where everyone can thrive", commented [Alison Brown](#), who is a Herbert Smith Freehills Executive Partner.

"We are committed to doing more, and being better, to bring about much-needed change. Making the time and effort to understand each other's lived experiences is an important foundation to that work. Thank you to the BAME Committee and contributors for driving this very important publication and sharing your experiences."

Please click [here](#) for more information about the firm's diversity initiatives, including our [10 Actions for Change on ethnic diversity](#).

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