



LAW FIRMS JOIN FORCES TO ENSURE FIRMS ARE EQUIPPED TO HAVE CONVERSATIONS ABOUT RACE

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Firm news

As organisations across the UK continue efforts to improve ethnic diversity and promote better understanding of race, a number of the UK's leading law firms have joined forces to provide guidance that will enable effective conversations about race and racism in the workplace.

NOTICED, the UK's first inter-law firm diversity network which is comprised of thirteen City firms, is today launching a new toolkit offering a structured approach to conversations which many individuals otherwise feel is difficult to have.

The guide, which can be viewed [here](#) addresses a range of issues. It will help individuals identify and deal with micro-aggressions, understand what actions can help them be an effective ally and hold effective conversations in the workplace. The guide also offers a number of practical solutions that law firms can take to improve. These focus on hiring and promotion and how firms can expand support beyond the legal profession.

The launch of the guide follows member firms having individually taken a range of actions to address issues relating to race and ethnicity in the workplace*.

Law Society of England and Wales president David Greene said: *"We are pleased to contribute to NOTICED's toolkit and hope this provides a useful resource for firms. The events of 2020 and our recent research into the experiences of black, Asian and minority ethnic solicitors has shown that now more than ever it is important for firms and legal businesses to lead from the front and have frank conversations about how to create a more inclusive workforce."*

Siddhartha Shukla, senior associate at Herbert Smith Freehills and co-chair of NOTICED, says: *"Given the increasing focus on ethnic and cultural diversity following events of 2020, NOTICED was keen to provide something tangible for member firms and the wider legal community to use when trying to improve the quality of conversations about race in the workplace. It is important that firms continue with the momentum that has been generated. We hope the toolkit will prove to be a useful resource for improving firms' awareness and perspective when dealing with issues relating to racial and cultural diversity."*

Ramesh Pani, associate at Ashurst and co-chair of NOTICED, adds: *"Talking about race in the workplace may not be easy but it's a conversation that needs to be had - now more than ever. Open dialogue and discussion are critical to ensuring that our workplaces are truly diverse and inclusive. The toolkit aims to help facilitate this and we are confident that firms will find it a useful starting point for these discussions in advance of taking meaningful actions."*

[More on diversity and inclusion](#)

* Some of the actions already undertaken by member firms include:

- Herbert Smith Freehills' publication of its 10 Actions for Change, a framework and measure of accountability to address meaningful change
- the Ashurst Black Network which, along with the Race and Ethnicity Equality Group, seeks to address racial disparities and inequalities.
- Eversheds Sutherland committing to driving greater ethnic diversity and inclusion in its teams by using key metrics to ensure accountability, aiming for significant progress on its UK ethnicity targets and more transparency in its annual ethnicity pay report
- Allen & Overy being a founding signatory to the Charter for Black Talent in Finance and the Professions and, in summer 2020, becoming the first major law firm to publish its ethnicity Stay Gap, demonstrating a commitment to improving racial and ethnic diversity and real accountability.

ABOUT NOTICED

NOTICED is the UK's first inter-firm diversity network aimed at promoting networking opportunities to integrate, celebrate and educate on diversity across the legal sector. Its objectives are to encourage diversity in the legal profession and amongst member firms with a view to making the profession more accessible to individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds and to raise awareness about issues faced by ethnic minorities, not just in accessing the profession but also in their progression within the profession.

Current members are drawn from leading City law firms: Addleshaw Goddard, Allen & Overy, Ashurst, Baker & McKenzie, Eversheds Sutherland, Hebert Smith Freehills, Hogan Lovells, Mayer Brown, Ogletree Deakins, Squire Patton Boggs, Reed Smith, Simmons & Simmons and Stephenson Harwood.

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