

# Diversity in M25 institutions survey – report and recommendations

## Executive summary

This survey was produced and disseminated for the purpose of gaining more information about initiatives designed to address racial inequality within M25 consortium member libraries. The aim was to create a picture of the current situation in member libraries and create recommendations based on best practice examples. The survey was open to all staff within member libraries as, in addition to understanding ongoing initiatives, we also wanted to gain a picture of the levels of awareness of these initiatives across institutions.

Findings	Recommendations
<b>Active allying and networks</b>	
Six respondents had neither a BAME network nor an allies’ network. Ten respondents did not know if they had them.	All institutions have a BAME (or equivalent network) and that library workers advocate for this at the institutional level if needed.
Nine respondents had a joint BAME staff and allies’ network. One had a network solely for allies.	All institutions should also have an allies network, either joined with or separate to the BAME network. This should foster awareness and encourage engagement from all groups within the institution.
In follow-up interviews with some respondents, the labour of (often marginalised or minority) staff in running these networks was identified as a barrier to their success.	The labour involved in running and actively participating in networks should be acknowledged and accommodated within workloads. This will signal the importance of BAME networks and EDI work in general. Those who run these networks should not be expected to undertake this work outside of their normal working hours.
The names of networks and what they offered differed greatly across the responses, suggesting that the purpose and focus of networks needs to be clarified.	The purpose of BAME networks needs to be clearly communicated to all members and prospective members.
The names of networks and what they offered differed greatly across the responses, suggesting that the purpose and focus of networks needs to be clarified.	Networks should serve a different purpose to working groups. Support was the leading offering mentioned in responses and this should be the primary focus, as opposed to creating or implementing policy.

<b>Social media and representation</b>	
50% of respondents do not have a group or representative, or do not know if there is one.	Libraries should have a diversity champion/representative or a group. This should be advertised to the rest of the library so everyone knows who to approach if they have a question or require support.
17% of respondents disagree that library social media is representative and 21% do not know.	Library social media should aim to reach all its intended audience and efforts should be made to ensure all user groups feel included.
9% of respondents do not have any guidelines regarding tone/language for social media posts. 40% do not know if guidelines exist.	The library (or institution) should have guidelines on inclusive language in social media and how to respond to comments.
35% of respondents do not use a marketing strategy. 29% do not know if there is one.	Libraries should have a specific marketing strategy or adhere to their institution's strategy if there is one.
<b>Positive action and training</b>	
Topics of training varied greatly across institutions, with 13 topics identified in addition to those mentioned in the question.	A consistent and complete package of training should be put together that covers all topics and is adopted by all institutions.
Free-text responses suggested employing external trainers is one way in which institutions can improve training.	External trainers that are expert in providing diversity training and are diverse in their own workforce should be used wherever possible.
Suggestions were made around 10 key areas to improve training.	Best practice (supported by data on impact) is shared regularly with the M25 diversity group.
No respondents rated the training they had received as 'very effective'.	Training and evidence of impact is part of annual performance reviews so individuals are aware of their own skill/knowledge level.
Five respondents reported no positive action initiatives in place at their institutions. 25 respondents did not know. Several free-text responses mentioned recruitment processes.	Recruitment processes are reviewed and best practice on inclusive recruitment is adopted by all institutions. See the Fair Library Jobs manifesto for guidance on inclusive recruitment practices: <a href="https://sites.google.com/view/fairlibraryjobs/manifesto">https://sites.google.com/view/fairlibraryjobs/manifesto</a>
<b>Starting conversations</b>	
The majority of respondents did not have a named person	All M25 institutions commit to naming an EDI staff member within their libraries.

responsible for EDI within their library or did not know.	
Several responses noted limited confidence in their organisation's ability to react appropriately.	Training on supporting staff to raise and receive EDI complaints, possibly within a directors' briefing.
39 respondents did not know who they should speak to if wanting to raise an EDI issue.	Commit to publishing a policy/process for library staff to raise EDI issues and complaints. This should be regularly circulated to remind staff.
<b>Ideas and initiatives</b>	
This survey allowed for the capturing of ideas that may not have been shared elsewhere.	The M25 Diversity group should regularly survey members to find examples of best practice.
The survey did not allow for in-depth exploration of initiatives so events would be preferable for this kind of information sharing.	The M25 Diversity group should arrange regular events to allow members to share their experiences of successful EDI initiatives
This survey was a valuable first step but must be built upon as work across institutions progresses.	The M25 Diversity group should continue to find other ways to gather case studies and examples of best practice from member institutions.

## 1. Demographic information

What institution do you work at?

We received 58 responses from 25 distinct institutions (of 55 M25 consortium member institutions); two people declined to state their institution. 11 institutions had multiple respondents.

How would you describe your ethnicity?

There were 15 different descriptions of ethnicity, and one person who preferred not to say. Most people who gave an ethnicity gave it as 'White' or 'White British'.

How would you describe your ethnicity?	Number
Black	2
Black British	1
British	1

Caucasian	1
Chinese-White	1
Mixed - white/black caribbean	1
Mixed Race	1
Mixed white Asian	1
Non - White / mixed heritage	1
Other - Mauritian	1
South Asian	1
white english	1
White European	1
White Other - Eastern European	1
White other/Turkish Cypriot	1
White	19
White british	22
prefer not to say	1

What is your job title?

There were 42 job titles listed, and three people did not give a title. Job titles suggested respondents were from a range of different roles and levels within their libraries.

## 2. Active allying and networks

Does your institution or library have a BAME network and/or a BAME allies' network?

Nearly half (46.6%) of respondents were aware of a BAME network at their institution. 15.5% (9) had a joint BAME staff and allies' network, while only one had a network

specifically for allies. Six respondents said they had neither and 10 didn't know. The important role of BAME and/or allies' networks is clear as over half of respondents have them in their institution.

Other groups were mentioned here such as race equality or EDI (equality, diversity and inclusion) groups/committees. This raises the question of whether networks and groups are synonymous and serve the same purpose.

What is the network called?

The most common answer to this question was BAME network or BAME staff network (43%).

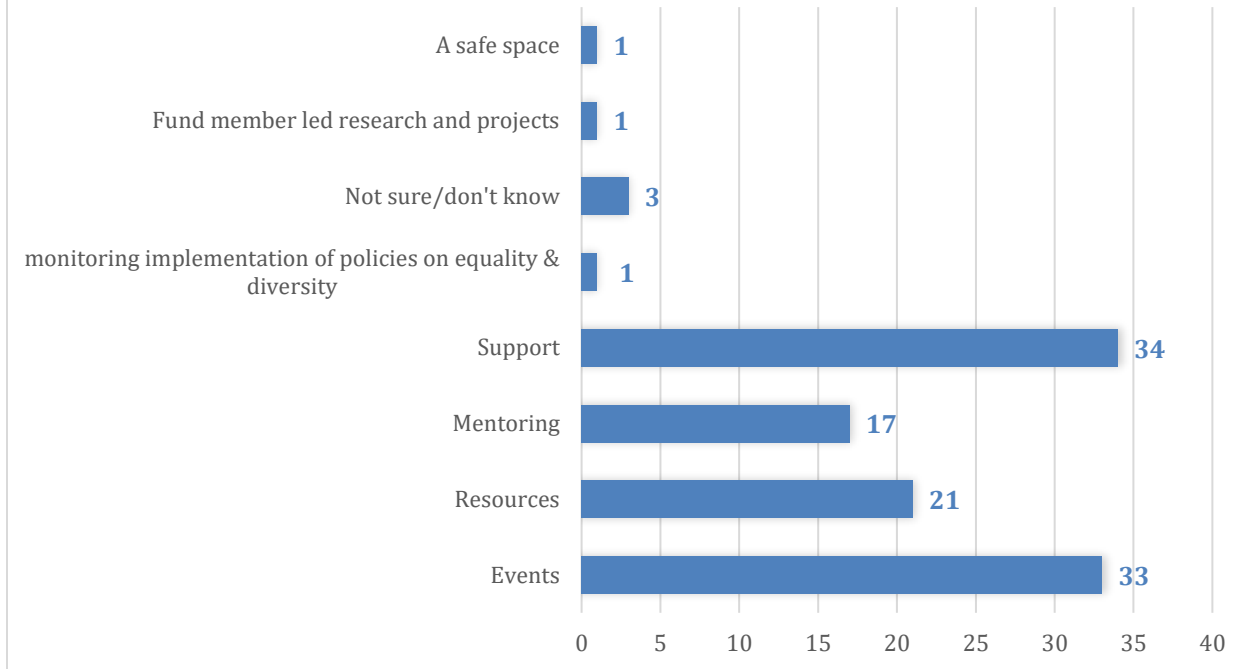
Three respondents didn't know the name of the network. Others were called:

- B-MEntor scheme,
- diversity and inclusion group,
- GEMS (Group for the Equality of Minority Staff),
- network for racial justice,
- REACH (Race, Ethnicity And Cultural Heritage) network,
- race and culture network,
- racial equality group,
- SEED (Surrey Embracing Ethnic Diversity) network,
- UKME (United Kingdom Minority Ethnic) network,
- global majority

As mentioned above, we might question whether mentoring schemes and groups with an EDI or racial equality focus serve the same purpose as networks.

What does the network offer for members?

## WHAT DOES THE NETWORK OFFER FOR MEMBERS?



Respondents were given four options to choose from: events, resources, support and mentoring. Respondents were able to select multiple options and were also given an 'other' option to write additional ideas. The two most common responses were events (84.6%) and support (87.2%). Resources (53.8%) and mentoring (43.6%) proved to be less common.

Other offerings mentioned were:

- monitoring implementation of policies,
- fund member-led research,
- providing a safe space

What is meant by a safe space in this context is unclear but the fact that it was mentioned suggests respondents view it as something different to 'support'. This could suggest it is a physical space or that it is a space (physical or otherwise) which is confidential and allows for anonymity. Further information would be needed to fully interpret this comment.

Overall, the names of networks and what they offered differed greatly across the responses, suggesting that the purpose and focus of networks needs to be clarified.

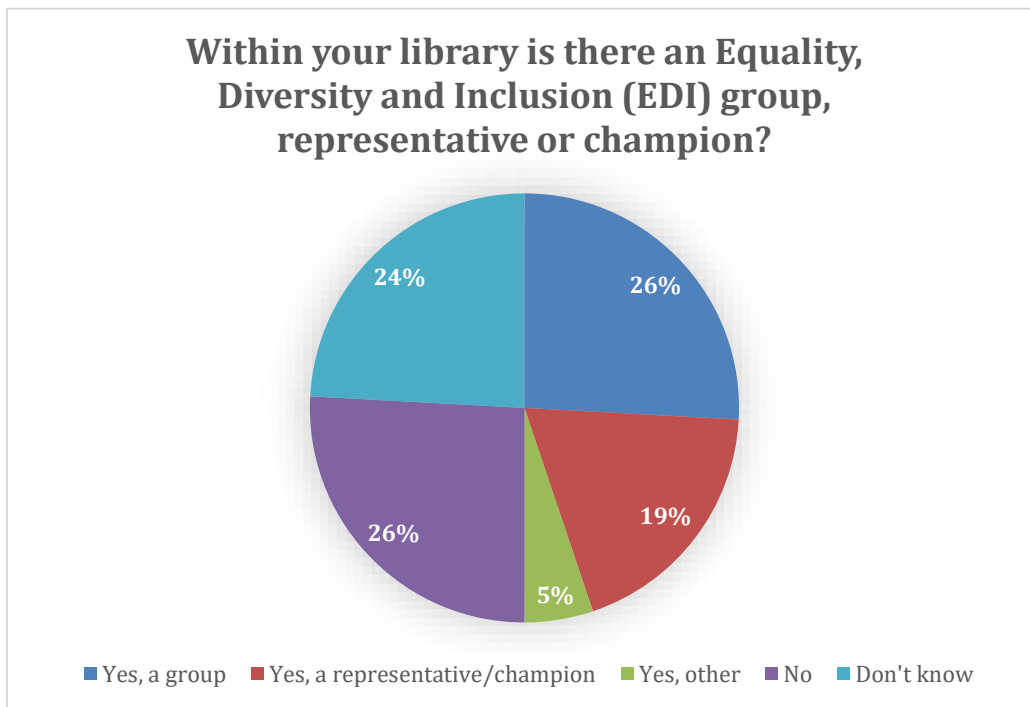
### Recommendations

- 2.1** All institutions have a BAME (or equivalent network) and that library workers advocate for this at the institutional level if needed.

- 2.2** All institutions should also have an allies' network, either joined with or separate to the BAME network. This should foster awareness and encourage engagement from all groups within the institution.
- 2.3** The labour involved in running and actively participating in networks should be acknowledged and accommodated within workloads. This will signal the importance of BAME networks and EDI work in general. Those who run these networks should not be expected to undertake this work outside of their normal working hours.
- 2.4** The purpose of BAME networks needs to be clearly communicated to all members and prospective members.
- 2.5** Networks should serve a different purpose to working groups. Support was the leading offering mentioned in responses and this should be the primary focus, as opposed to creating or implementing policy.

### 3. Social media and representation

Within your library is there an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) group, representative or champion?

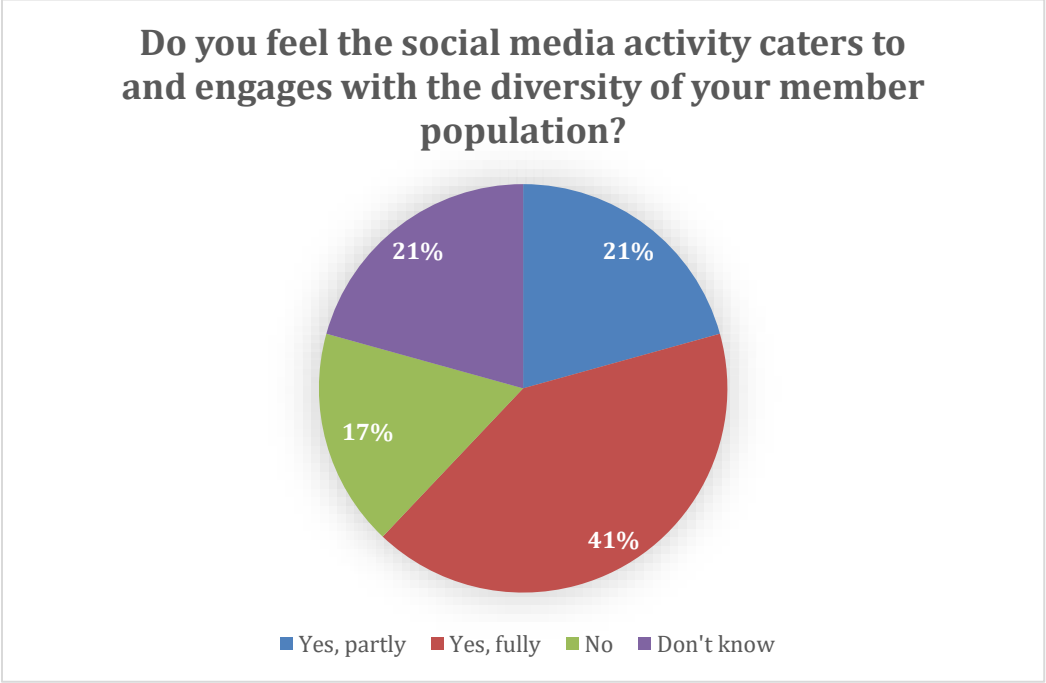


From 58 responses, 25.9% of respondents were aware of a group within the library responsible for EDI, while 19% had an individual representative and 5.2% had something 'other' than either of these. 50% either do not know or don't have a group or representative. This highlights how more work needs to be done to implement EDI group representatives/champions. If the staff members are unsure (don't know) whether there is a representative then this suggests more awareness and publicity needs to be implemented so that staff will know who to approach if an issue arises.

How is the library social media run?

The social media accounts are predominantly run by a group within the library (48.3%) rather than assigned individuals (6.9%). Nearly half of the libraries of respondents have independence and autonomously create social media posts. A quarter (24.1%) of respondents' library sites must follow guidance from their institution to ensure the terms of phrasing and content is deemed appropriate. 6.9% did not know how the library social media was run.

Do you feel the social media activity caters to and engages with the diversity of your member population?



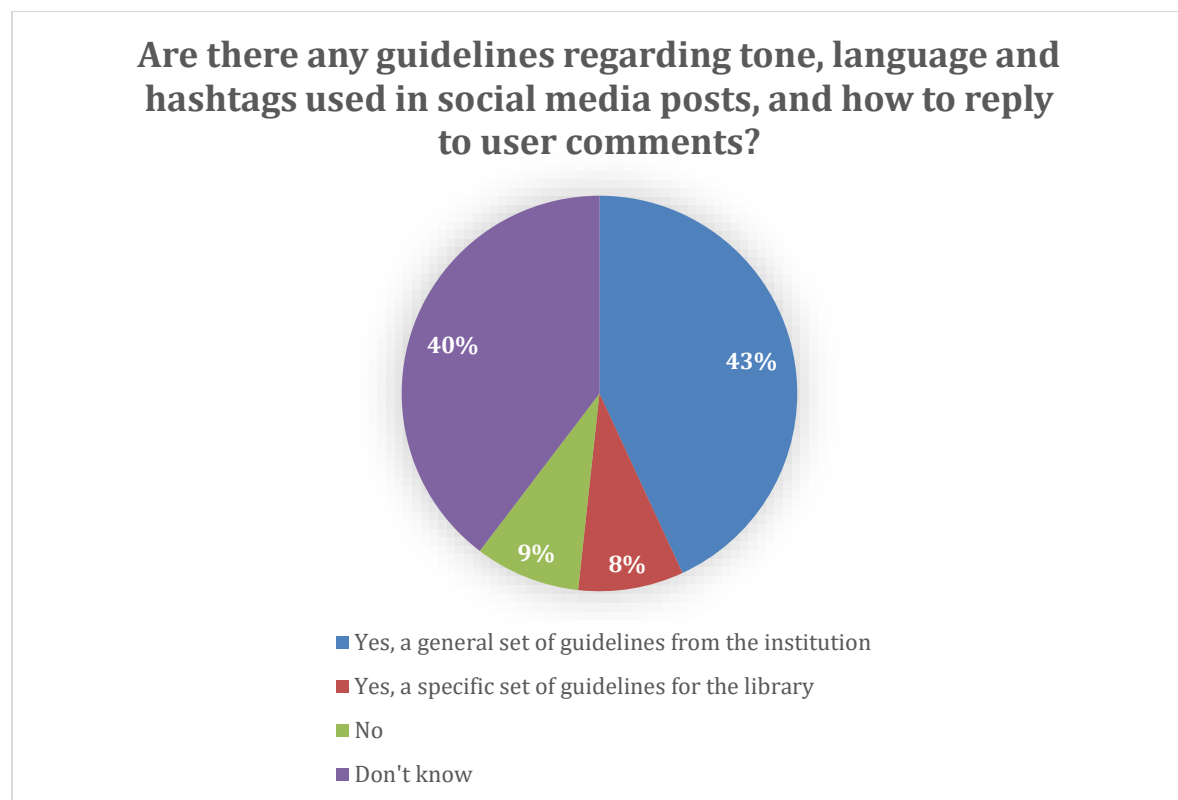
The majority of respondents (62%) feel social media is representative of the institution population diversity.



A fifth of respondents are unsure which suggests they either have not noticed any particularly diverse posts or they do not look at social media posts with this query in mind.

The findings therefore suggest that work needs to be done regarding creating guidelines to ensure diversity is an initiative that the social media content producers for the institution need to have in mind when creating posts and that posts need to target the wider audience and contain variety and inclusivity.

Are there any guidelines regarding tone, language and hashtags used in social media posts, and how to reply to user comments?

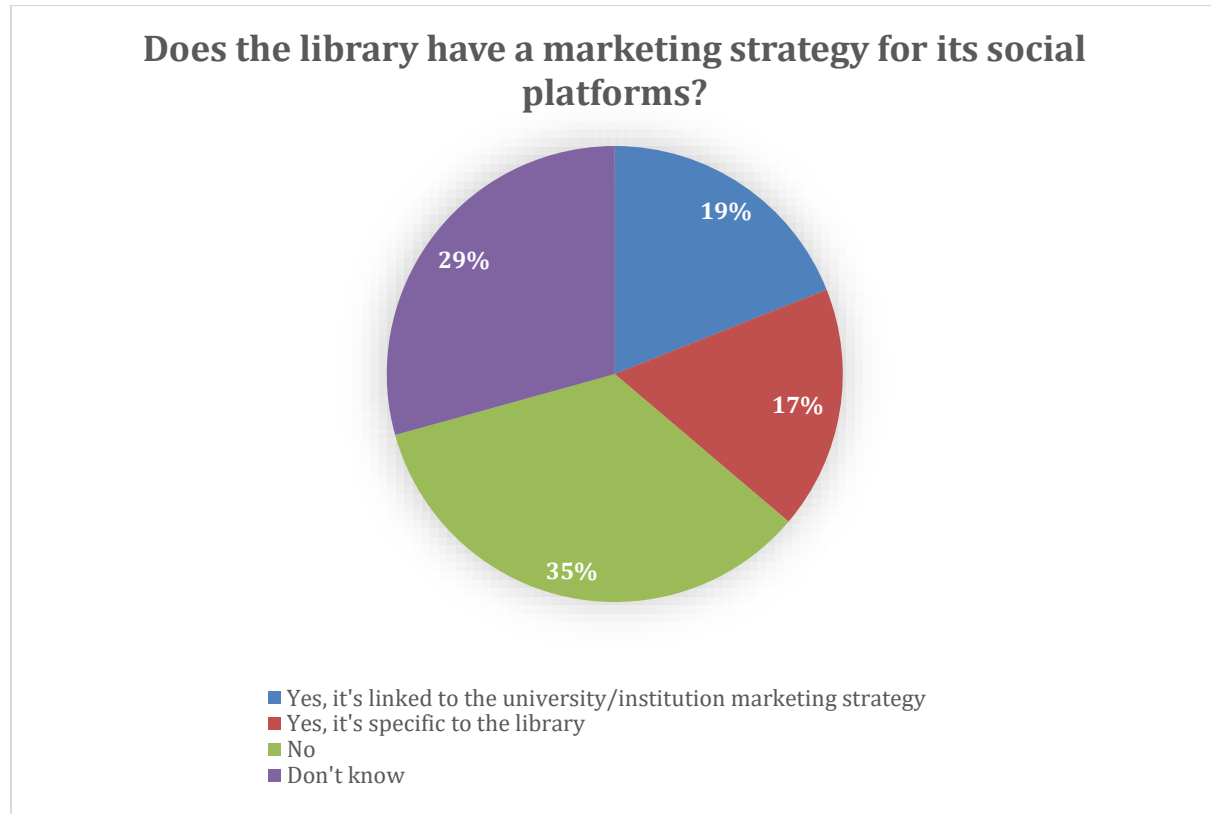


Just over half (51.7%) of the respondents stated that they were aware of guidelines that were meant to be followed to adhere to good practice when posting, with the majority using guidelines from the institution, rather than a specific set for the library.

A large percentage, (39.7%) did not know whether there were any guidelines. Evidence from these findings suggest that there needs to be more awareness in the institutions of what best practice is and the guidelines should be made more visible and easy to access.

Less than 10% said they did not have any guidelines; this is a very small proportion of respondents and suggests their institutions may benefit from the implementation of guidelines to avoid any backlash over inappropriate posts.

Does the library have a marketing strategy for its social platforms?



Over 50% of respondents either don't know or answered no to the library marketing strategy. 17.2% had a strategy specific to the library, while 19% had one linked to the overall university marketing strategy.

This suggests there is a lack of visible guidance in how social media is marketed. Although this gives individuals more flexibility in the way that they advertise and promote the library and events etc., this may lead to inconsistencies and therefore it would be best if more universities were provided with clear guidance.

### Recommendations

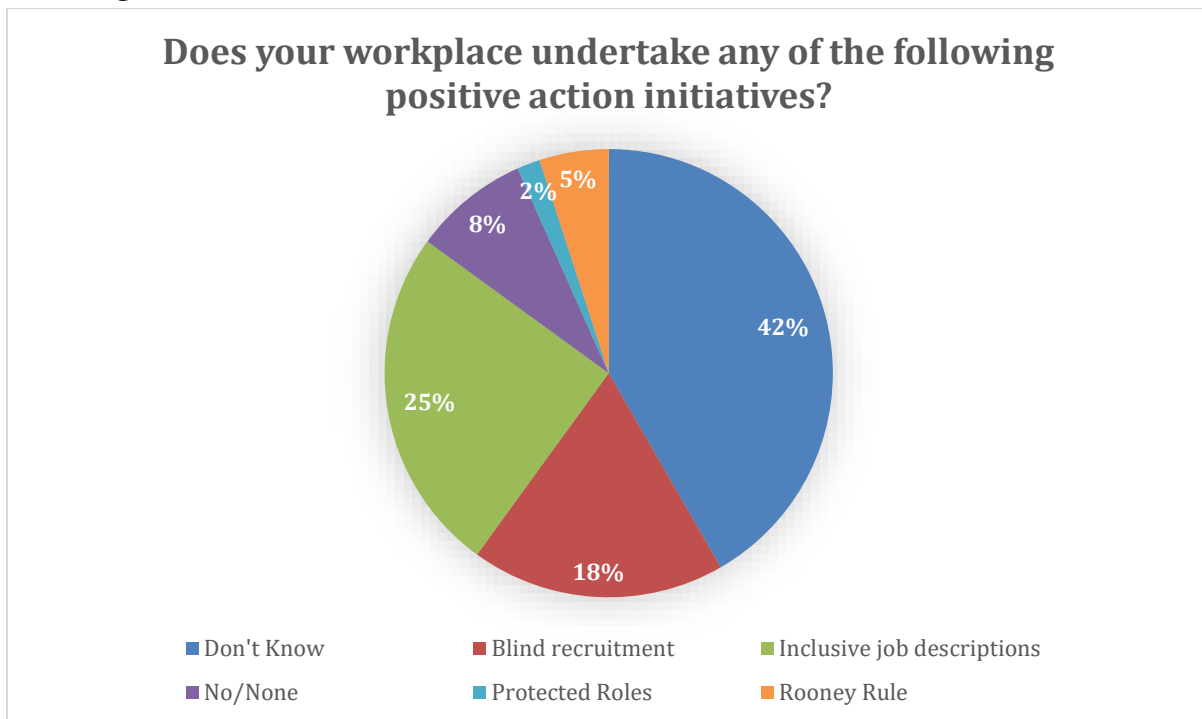
- 3.1** Libraries should have a diversity champion/representative or a group. This should be advertised to the rest of the library so everyone knows who to approach if they have a question or require support.

- 3.2 Library social media should aim to reach all its intended audience and efforts should be made to ensure all user groups feel included.
- 3.3 The library (or institution) should have guidelines on inclusive language in social media and how to respond to comments.
- 3.4 Libraries should have a specific marketing strategy or adhere to their institution's strategy if there is one.

## 4. Positive action and training

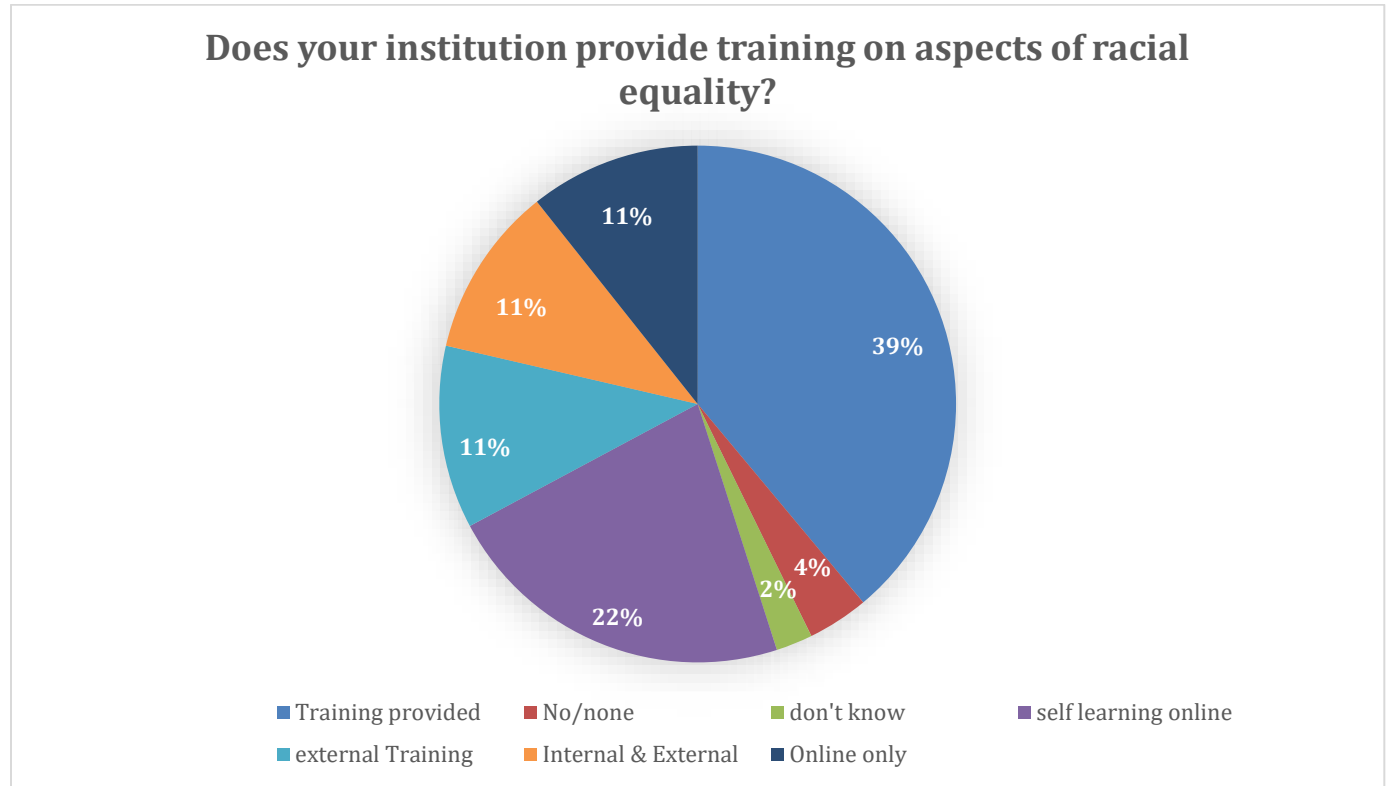
Does your workplace undertake any of the following positive action initiatives (tick all that apply)?

The majority of respondents (47%, 25 out of 58) did not know if their institution or library followed any positive action initiatives and 8% (five out of 58) had no positive action initiatives in place. Of those that did, it was actions in relation to recruitment – Blind recruitment (18%) and Inclusive Job descriptions (25%) that showed the highest incidence of being put into practice followed by the Rooney Rule (5%), where senior management posts must have a BAME candidate and protected roles for BAME candidates (2%) following.



Does your institution provide training on aspects of racial equality?

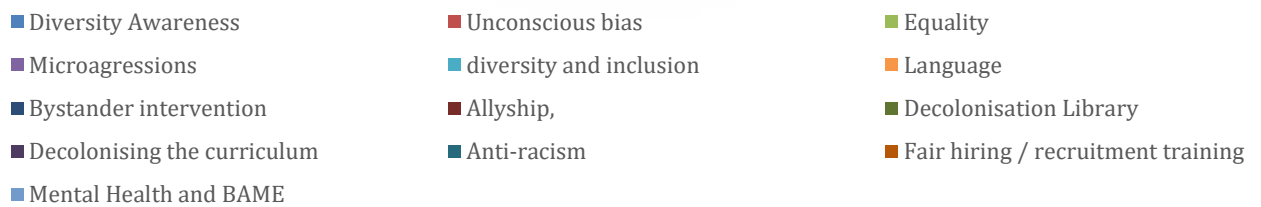
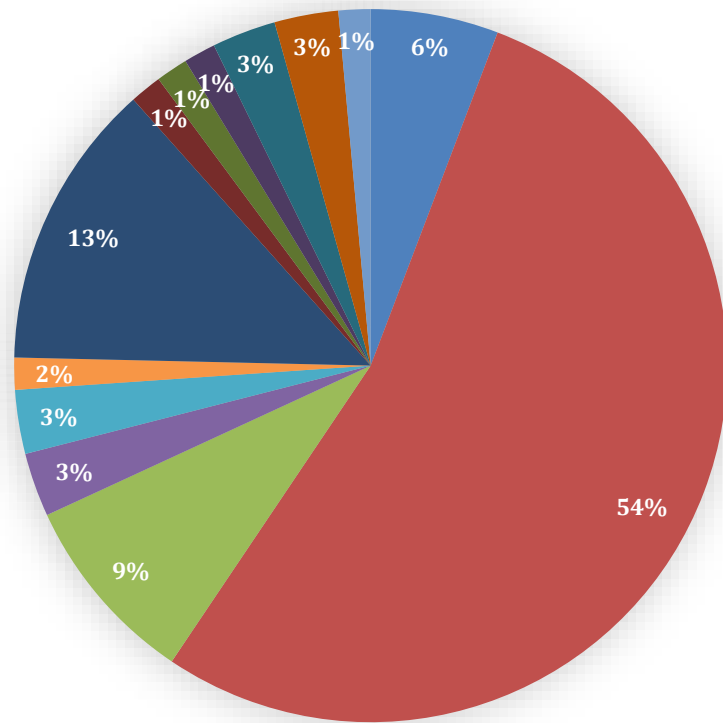
As expected, the majority of institutions did provide training for staff (39%) of this 22% was self-learning and online. Only 11% of institutes used external trainers. Only 4% responded that no training was offered and 2% where not aware of any training being offered.



What topic(s) does the training cover e.g. unconscious bias, bystander intervention?

Training on unconscious bias was the most covered subject (54%) followed by training on Bystander Intervention (13%). Equality (9%) and Diversity (6%) were also provided by a few. The Pie chart shows the other subjects (3% or less) that were covered by one or two of the institutions, such as courses on microaggressions and decolonisation of collections and curriculum.

## What topics does the training cover?



Courses that were reported as not being offered by individual institutions were on:

- Microaggressions
- Barriers to equality
- Intersectionality
- Supporting gifted and talented BAME students
- Allies
- BAME representation amongst academic colleagues
- Systemic racism
- The legacy of colonialism effects

Also, not all subjects were covered in the courses, some did not cover bystander intervention or microaggressions.

In one external course a person who identified as non-binary asked the trainer to suggest people introduce themselves with their pronouns, and was effectively told “no, and don't tell me what to do”. A few attendees did approach the person to ask them afterwards what this pronouns business was about.

Another response stated:

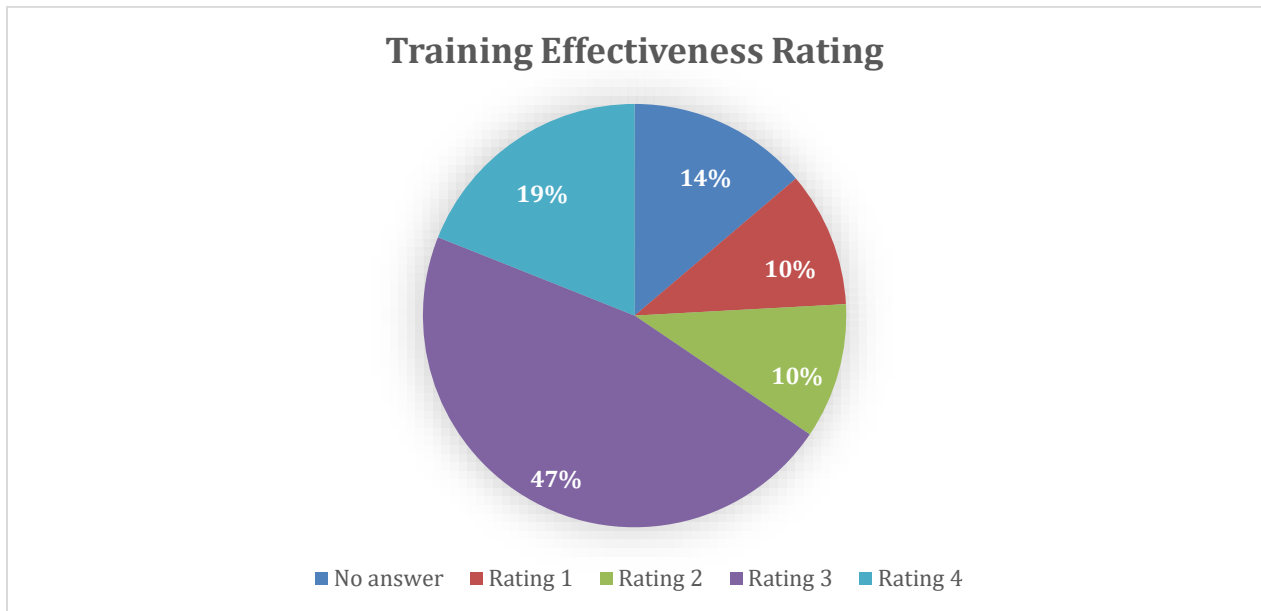
“In some ways, being mixed-raced adds another level of issues, like getting biased responses from people identifying with a clearly defined group and in some cases, not being recognized as being ethnically different or even having it denied.”

In interview/recruitment training one respondent said:

*“I brought up unconscious bias and it was disregarded.”*

For those for whom training was provided, we asked them to rate the effectiveness of the training at changing their work environment, on a scale of 1 (very ineffective) to 5 (very effective).

No one rated any training as very effective, 19% gave training a 4 rating and 47% gave a rating of 3, with 20% of the training given a 1 or 2 rating.



The following suggestions on how to improve the effectiveness of the training were given:

- Having set objectives either mandatory or optional included as part of the annual performance reviews, building training into staff development
- Regular catch-ups specifically on this training /practices

- Action plans and learning sets
- Knowing how to put theory into practice and workshops on shared experiences
- Employing external trainers
- Face to face rather than online
- Having multiple trainers identifying with different backgrounds so issues are tackled and addressed from a multiple perspective
- Regular platforms for discussion and sharing experiences
- Compulsory training for managers
- More comprehensive and embedded, ongoing EDI training

Further comments included:

*"I think training can only do so much: we need more BAME colleagues. Proactive hiring policies is the only way."*

With another response questioned the recruitment at senior levels, stating:

*"The principles of the training on unconscious bias is not acted out by senior management. We all have to do this training, but they keep on hiring white men for very senior roles, and it undermines the training and promotes a completely opposite agenda".*

Others stated:

*"I think probably far more frequent discussion of these topics would help more than one off training events. I'm still aware of the issues when I think about them but it's definitely faded compared to the fired up eager feeling right after the event."*

*"It [training] needs to be regular. Also the people who really need the training did not take part. Management did not make it compulsory"*

Overall, most of the institutions that replied did offer some form of training though it may not cover all topics or provide effective, practical steps and examples staff could use in their day-to-day work, communications and relationships.

As expected, there is a disparity in the practices and processes across the institutions, each showing a variety in impact.

## Recommendations

- 4.1** A consistent and complete package of training should be put together that covers all topics and is adopted by all institutions.

- 4.2** External trainers that are expert in providing diversity training and are diverse in their own workforce should be used wherever possible.
- 4.3** Best practice (supported by data on impact) is shared regularly with the M25 Diversity group.
- 4.4** Training and evidence of impact is part of annual performance reviews, so individuals are aware of their own skill/knowledge level.
- 4.5** Recruitment processes are reviewed and best practice on inclusive recruitment is adopted by all institutions. See the Fair Library Jobs manifesto for guidance on inclusive recruitment practices:  
<https://sites.google.com/view/fairlibraryjobs/manifesto>

## 5. Starting conversations

If you wanted to discuss racial equality in the workplace, would you know how to raise concerns or share ideas?

We had 58 responses to the question of who to speak to on EDI issues. There were 17 no respondents, of which nine responded only 'no'. The remaining eight comments included:

- limited confidence in their organisation's ability to react appropriately/meaningfully,
- that they would need union support to feel confident making a complaint
- that it would feel unsafe to report issues.

A few respondents made more in-depth comments which include:

'the [institution name redacted] EDI group, but I have raised concerns about outsourcing and the way this disproportionately disadvantages BAME staff repeatedly with both EDI and head of my department and have had little to no response from them, and no action. the VC backs outsourcing which I think is fundamentally racist, and he will not acknowledge that.'

'In the last few years, as BAME staff, I've become more vocal. I still don't trust the HR route, however I am part of a network and union, and I know who I could contact. I'm also aware of managers and colleagues who I would feel comfortable talking to about diversity and racism.'

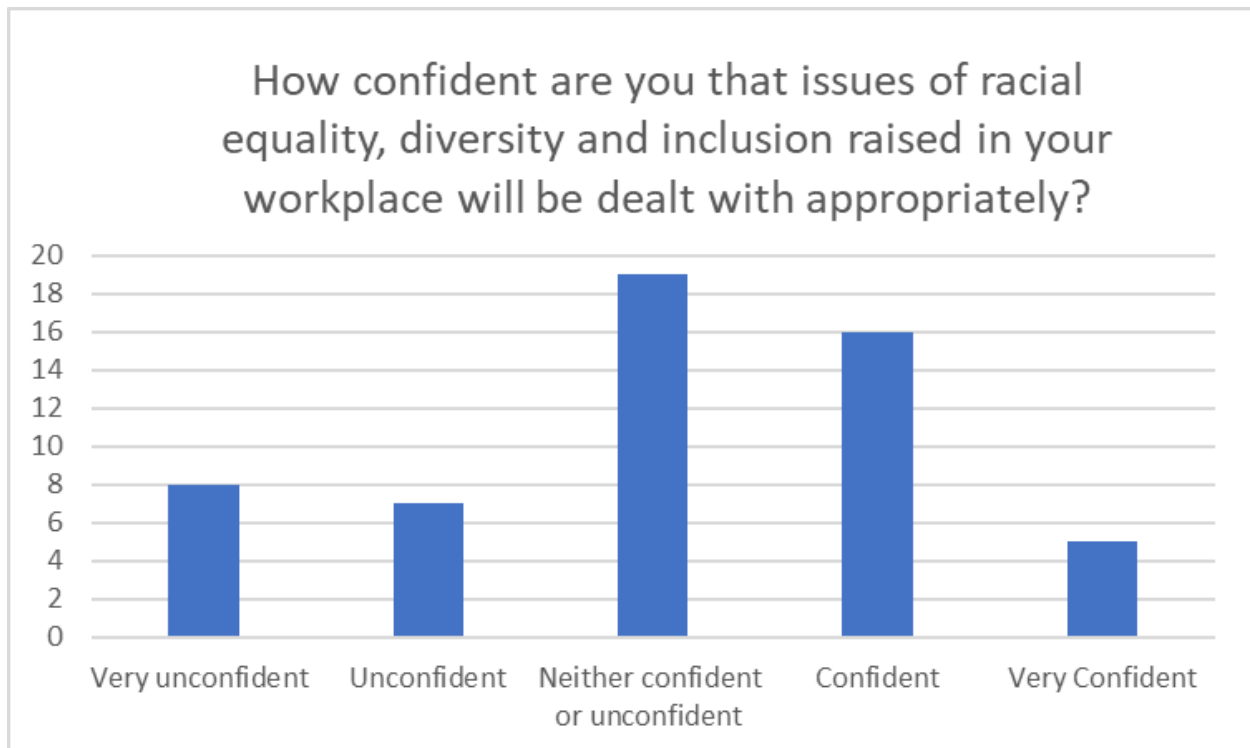


'There is a Belonging & Inclusion campaign with an email address, and a proliferation of Racial Justice groups, although I am not sure how well any of them are doing in actually making change.'

There were 39 respondents who did know who to speak to: seven respondents mentioned an EDI network at their institution who they could contact and a number stated that they could refer to their line manager or senior management team for support.

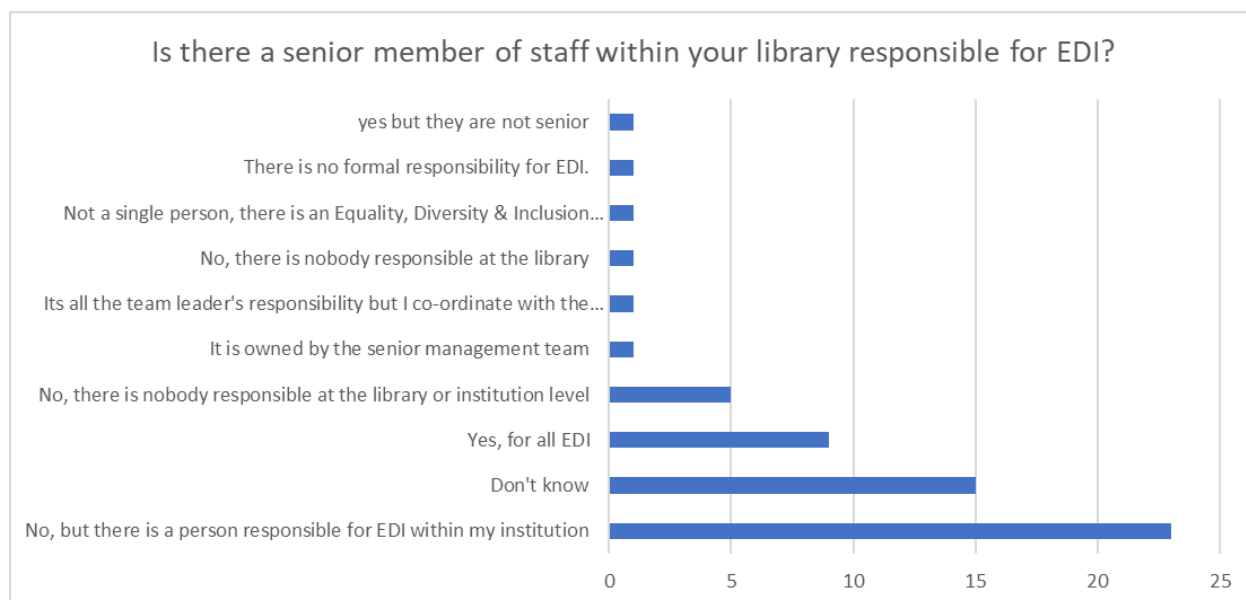
Two respondents made ambiguous comments; one was partly aware, the other would report but would be unsure of the positives.

How confident are you that issues of racial equality, diversity and inclusion raised in your workplace will be dealt with appropriately?



Respondents were not overwhelmingly confident that their institutions could deal with EDI issues with the most popular response being a 3, neither confident not unconfident.

Is there a senior member of staff within your library responsible for EDI?



Again, there was a lack of knowledge about who was responsible, though the most common answer was yes an EDI person who works across my organisation.

## Recommendations

- 5.1** All M25 institutions commit to naming an EDI staff member within their libraries.
- 5.2** Training on supporting staff to raise and receive EDI complaints, possibly within a directors' briefing.
- 5.3** Commit to publishing a policy/process for library staff to raise EDI issues and complaints. This should be regularly circulated to remind staff.

## 6. Ideas and initiatives

Are there any other initiatives or ideas within your institution that you would like to share?

Seven respondents mentioned groups or networks at their institutions. Networks mentioned covered different aspects of diversity such as gender, LGBTQIA+ and disability. Comments related to specific aspects of the groups (e.g. events facilitated by the group, funding) but also to the general impact of such groups on awareness levels

across institutions. However, one comment did allude to the fact that the presence of such groups is not, in itself, a sign of progress:

'No, there are at least four groups trying to change the institutional culture but no one with the power to act actually reads their reports. The committees were formed in order to appear to be doing something.'

Eight respondents mentioned various events and training opportunities taking place at their institutions. These ranged from informal workshop discussions around race to inclusive teaching and learning modules as part of qualifications. Events relating to culturally significant days were viewed positively and one respondent mentioned the importance of hearing lived experiences from guest speakers. One respondent mentioned a diversity day which covered all aspects of diversity and was not well attended by white people.

Four respondents mentioned decolonising or diversifying collections, reading lists and catalogue records. There was one example of a student-created video on what diverse literature means.

Other initiatives mentioned by individual respondents were:

- Race Equality Charter
- Inclusion café book club
- Inclusive trainee post

15 respondents said they were unsure, not aware of anything or left this question blank.

Are there any other initiatives or ideas that you've heard about elsewhere that you would like to share?

Six respondents mentioned specific institutions doing work in this area, with varying levels of detail. These were:

- SCONUL
- AdvanceHE
- University of Kent
- Wellcome Collection (social justice curriculum)
- Tate (Race Equality Taskforce, monthly Race Equality Conversations, Diversity and Inclusion lending library)

- Chatham House Library (decolonising library taxonomies)

Several themes from the previous question were mentioned again such as the importance of staff networks and decolonisation practices. Two respondents mentioned social media: one response centered on takeovers and one on activities by EDI groups such as daily updates and information sharing. On the topic of recruitment, more monitoring of employment practices and protected apprenticeships for BAME candidates were mentioned. One respondent called for a more active approach in general, while one simply stated 'I despair.'

18 respondents did not have anything to share or left this question blank.

## Recommendations

- 6.1** The M25 Diversity group should regularly survey members to find examples of best practice.
- 6.2** The M25 Diversity group should arrange regular events to allow members to share their experiences of successful EDI initiatives.
- 6.3** The M25 Diversity group should continue to find other ways to gather case studies and examples of best practice from member institutions.

## 7. Conclusion

This survey has achieved the intended aim by providing an overview of work on racial equality being undertaken at M25 consortium libraries. Based on the data collected, the M25 Diversity Group have made twenty recommendations for improving practice within consortium libraries.

While we have achieved the aim of the survey, we acknowledge the limitations of our data collection method. The sample size does not allow for findings to be generalised and we understand that multiple responses from institutions may have skewed the data. However, the free text responses allowed us to interpret the quantitative data more accurately.

For future iterations of the survey, we plan to streamline certain questions, taking on board feedback from participants and the challenges we faced in analysing the data. We also intend to use different survey software to allow for more detailed analysis.

We intend to circulate updated versions of this survey annually to ascertain how initiatives have progressed and to identify new areas of good practice to be shared with the wider community.