

Black Lives Matter Statement of Support

Following the tragic death of George Floyd in Minneapolis a few weeks ago and the Black Lives Matter movement that ensued, I felt it was important for Mary Frances Trust (MFT) to show and reiterate our full support to the black community worldwide, and in our community of Surrey in particular.

We understand and share their anxiety, anger and pain, and our thoughts go to the families of all victims of racism. As the CEO of Mary Frances Trust, I wanted to take this opportunity to review and express our public and personal positions on this issue.

As a mental health and emotional wellbeing charity in Surrey, our purpose is to serve and support our local community to the highest standards, so everyone receiving our support can lead a fulfilling emotional life regardless of their background, wealth or mental health history. We encourage everyone – our staff, volunteers and clients alike – to actively support each other through difficult times by showing compassion and kindness to each other. We passionately believe in [our core values](#) of inclusion, mutual respect, equality, diversity and connection. We take time and care to educate our staff, Trustees and volunteers by regularly providing Equality & Diversity training to discuss, challenge and address any un-equality issues, secret biases and systemic racism we encounter within ourselves, our charity or externally.

We believe that a community is stronger and richer when all of its members can find a place and happiness within it. We want to keep playing an active part in ensuring that all people in Surrey are treated equally and fairly in terms of opportunities and inclusion, as we can all benefit from a multi-cultural society. Racism and prejudice have no place within our organisation.

At Mary Frances Trust, it has been part of our strategy for a few years to reach out to the Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) community so they can be better served by and represented within our organisation. While we have made some progress, we know we have much more to do to become a truly representative organisation where all communities can truly see themselves reflected in us at every level, from the clients we support, to our staff, volunteers and Board of Trustees.

As a charity leader, I have recently signed up to the [ACEVO principles to address the diversity deficit in charity leadership](#) as I believe part of my role is also to challenge the status quo and lead by example inside and outside the organisation I manage.

This is what I am committing to. As a leader I will:

1. Acknowledge that there is a problem with racial diversity in the charity sector and commit to working to change that.
2. Recognise the important role leaders have in creating change by modelling positive behaviour and taking action.
3. Learn about racial bias and how it impacts leadership decisions.
4. Commit to setting permanent and minimum targets for diversity that reflects the participants, donors, beneficiaries and the population of the area that my charity operates in.
5. Commit to action and invest resources, where necessary, in order to improve racial diversity in my charity.

6. View staff as the sum of many parts rather than a single entity and recruit to build a diverse group of talented people collectively working towards a shared vision.
7. Recruit for potential, not perfection.
8. Value lived experience, the ability to draw from one's lived experience and to bring insights to an organisation that can develop its work.

I know this is just the beginning of the transformational journey I am willing to take on behalf of my organisation. I invite all of you to help me achieve these goals by challenging me and MFT when we are not truly diverse and inclusive.

Patrick Wolter, CEO, Mary Frances Trust