

TENSE, NERVOUS, HEADACHE...?

# THE EQUALITY TONIC



**brap**  
making equality work for **everyone**



# **EQUALITY INITIATIVES IN THE NHS ARE A LOT LIKE BUSES. THEY'RE BIG, AIM TO GET A LOT OF PEOPLE ON BOARD, AND RARELY GO WHERE YOU WANT THEM TO.**

And, of course, there are lots of them. When a new initiative is announced, the temptation is to respond to it without seeing how it aligns with your existing must do's. But this can lead to spreading yourself too thinly.

Over the last five years, we've worked with over 40 NHS trusts. In that time, we've learnt how to align organisations' equalities practice with their core work.

But this is about more than just identifying common activities. The right equality approach can help your organisation deliver great patient care. Our support can:

- help you have more insightful conversations with patients and carers
- invigorate and motivate staff
- help staff understand the precise actions they need to take to deliver great services
- help you recruit, retain and promote the best talent

Many organisations have asked us to work on particular issues. Where we're best, though, is when we can take a holistic approach to understanding and addressing your needs.

Give us a call for a free diagnostic or to see how we can work with you.

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# BRILLIANT BOARDS

## WORKING WITH BOARDS TO CHANGE ORGANISATIONS

Boards are the foundation of organisations. They set the tone for what's important. It's important, then, that boards understand how to use their authority to endorse things that improve outcomes for staff and patients. But that's easier said than done given the lack of good quality strategic support on this topic.

### HOW WE CAN SUPPORT YOU

brap have been supporting leaders to better appreciate the impact of leadership in areas like inclusion, service delivery, and staff support and development. We challenge what doesn't work, and help boards to think more critically about how they can improve performance in this area.

### WHAT THIS SUPPORT MIGHT INVOLVE

- **cultural audits** – understand the impact of previous inclusion work and where to focus your efforts to engage and motivate staff
- **strategic sessions** – a bespoke session to help your board respond strategically to the WRES, your engagement strategy, and broader inclusion issues
- **leadership development** – individual and team coaching or group sessions to improve leadership effectiveness and explore topics like team work, managing diversity, bias, and bullying and harassment.

### WHY DO THIS

Boards want to see progress, but don't always recognise their role in making this happen. Often, inclusion is seen as a stand-alone area and is not well-integrated into areas that can drive it forward. Understanding what levers to pull will not only make things happen, but will sustain progress in the long run.

“brap’s style supports senior board members to engage in challenging views and beliefs and to develop new ways of leading the trust”

**WENDY BREWER, DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES,  
ST GEORGE’S UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL NHSFT AND ST  
GEORGE’S UNIVERSITY OF LONDON**

# STAFF ENGAGEMENT

## CREATING 'SAFE' AND MEANINGFUL SPACES

Support networks are popular with staff. They give people a chance to talk to management about their experience of the workplace: and by sharing their experiences with each other, staff get a feeling of solidarity and support. In fact, guidance on the Workforce Race Equality Standard encourages organisations to set up these kinds of networks. All pretty straightforward, right? Well...

### HOW WE CAN SUPPORT YOU

Setting up staff support networks can be tricky. It's important to get the basics right straight from the get go. Who will lead it? What support do they need? Who does the group represent? And how can it avoid becoming a negative talking shop? Done right, establishing and nurturing a support group will create a safe space where all voices can be heard.

### WHAT THIS SUPPORT MIGHT INVOLVE

brap can support you by:

- helping groups establish terms of reference and ensuring group members and organisers have **the right support to use their skills well**
- helping groups **navigate challenges** around membership and ensuring discussions are purposeful
- providing **intensive support in the group's early days** to get it off the ground
- helping groups and managers have a **constructive dialogue**

And for the really inventive – we've even set up inter-ethnic groups at the request of Black and minority ethnic (BME) and White staff who want to work together to address issues of inclusion.

### WHY DO THIS

If staff support networks are clearly and fairly established they can help leaders understand the experiences of Black and minority ethnic (BME) staff and provide ideas on how to enhance inclusion. And of course, it will also help improve other staff networks you may want to set up or provide further support to.

# TECHNICAL ADVICE

## USING EVIDENCE TO RESPOND TO INCLUSION

What's the evidence base behind what you do on equality and inclusion? Most organisations collect data, but many have gaps that can inhibit progress. Even when data isn't the issue, it's still useful to have another pair of eyes helping you understand the story the data tells and what actions will provide the most effective results.

### HOW WE CAN SUPPORT YOU

Some organisations work with us on an annual basis to help them to compile their statistics, complete their analysis (for processes like EDS2), and support them to develop action plans. We have access to best practice in this area, and so can put you in touch with the most relevant concepts and ideas for furthering your ambitions on this topic.

### WHAT THIS SUPPORT MIGHT INVOLVE

Our support includes research and analysis in a variety of areas such as:

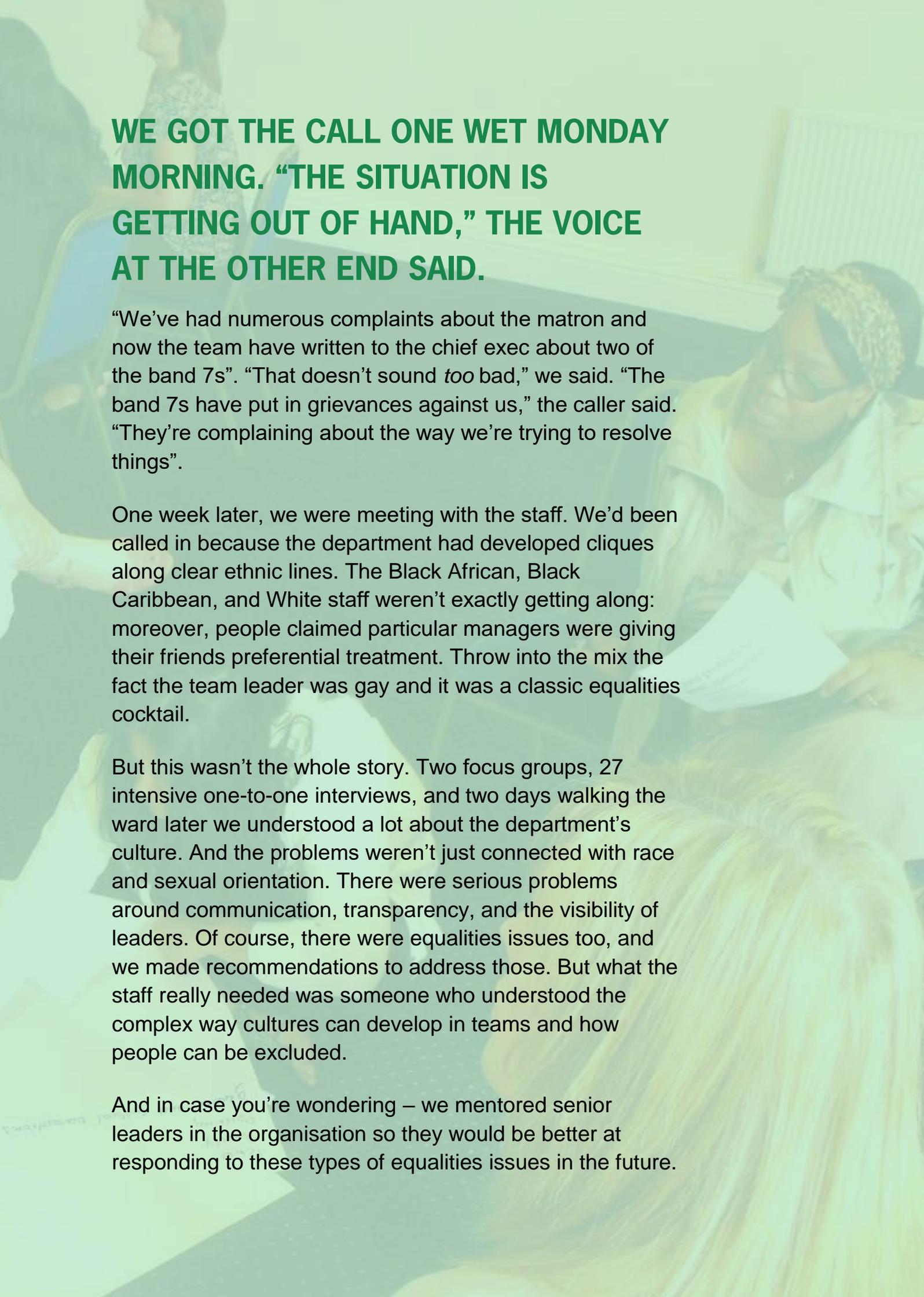
- **crunching data and analysis** in relation to EDS2, the WRES, or any other equality impact assessment process
- **identifying evidence gaps** and advising on how to fill them
- conducting **qualitative research** to explore what the data really means
- **helping write reports**, such as those required by the Equality Act
- undertake **equality impact assessments**

### WHY DO THIS

This isn't just about having a critical friend or an extra pair of hands. Yes, there is an element of us holding you to account for your progress, but this is packaged to help you make the best choices for enhancing inclusivity in your organisation. And, alongside technical support, we can also help put you in touch with committed individuals in other NHS trusts who are interested in sharing best practice on this topic.

"I thought the report brap produced was a great piece of work and was amazed that so much could have come from so little"

**SIMON REDWOOD, LEARNING, DEVELOPMENT & EQUALITIES MANAGER, ROYAL ORTHOPAEDIC HOSPITAL NHSFT**



## **WE GOT THE CALL ONE WET MONDAY MORNING. “THE SITUATION IS GETTING OUT OF HAND,” THE VOICE AT THE OTHER END SAID.**

“We’ve had numerous complaints about the matron and now the team have written to the chief exec about two of the band 7s”. “That doesn’t sound *too bad*,” we said. “The band 7s have put in grievances against us,” the caller said. “They’re complaining about the way we’re trying to resolve things”.

One week later, we were meeting with the staff. We’d been called in because the department had developed cliques along clear ethnic lines. The Black African, Black Caribbean, and White staff weren’t exactly getting along: moreover, people claimed particular managers were giving their friends preferential treatment. Throw into the mix the fact the team leader was gay and it was a classic equalities cocktail.

But this wasn’t the whole story. Two focus groups, 27 intensive one-to-one interviews, and two days walking the ward later we understood a lot about the department’s culture. And the problems weren’t just connected with race and sexual orientation. There were serious problems around communication, transparency, and the visibility of leaders. Of course, there were equalities issues too, and we made recommendations to address those. But what the staff really needed was someone who understood the complex way cultures can develop in teams and how people can be excluded.

And in case you’re wondering – we mentored senior leaders in the organisation so they would be better at responding to these types of equalities issues in the future.

# RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

## GETTING IN AND GETTING ON

How familiar does this sound – you’ve spent ages on your policies and you’ve ensured all staff are trained on their contents. But staff survey results show marginalised groups are still less likely to be promoted, more likely to be bullied, more likely to be disciplined, less likely to be recruited...

### HOW WE CAN SUPPORT YOU

Trusts often think if their policies are well-thought through equal outcomes will automatically follow. But all too often the issue is not about the quality of written policies. The main challenge lies in the implementation of processes, informal practices within teams, and unconscious judgements that are made. We can help you address these issues head-on.

### WHAT THIS SUPPORT MIGHT INVOLVE

brap can bring a fresh pair of eyes to your recruitment process, helping to **assess the effectiveness** of its implementation. We can also provide **unconscious bias training** to help individuals recognise the hidden biases in their decision making. We also work with boards and senior leaders in trusts so they can understand how to create more inclusive workplaces.

### WHY DO THIS

By improving the effectiveness and fairness of your recruitment practice you are more likely to address underperforming targets. More importantly, however, you can enhance the skill levels of those engaged in the recruitment process. Improving the credibility of people making staffing decisions will not only improve the confidence people have in those decisions, but it will result in a more equitable distribution of recruitment and promotion opportunities.

“brap are extremely knowledgeable about the complex issues facing organisations today, and they know how to come up with forward-thinking and practical solutions in response. I’ve been impressed with their understanding of equality and workplace relationships”

**ROGER KLINE, MIDDLESEX UNIVERSITY, AUTHOR OF ‘THE SNOWY WHITE PEAKS OF THE NHS’**

# PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

## CREATING HAPPIER WORKPLACES

BME staff are more likely than their White colleagues to face disciplinary proceedings. At the same time, there's evidence they're less likely to raise concerns about other people's conduct due to a fear of victimisation. Many leaders and managers have asked us for help responding to these types of challenges.

### HOW WE CAN SUPPORT YOU

Sometimes – without people wanting them to – barriers in communication, different management styles, and organisational culture can create tensions and problems. In particular, tensions can arise between managers and the staff from marginalised groups.

### WHAT THIS SUPPORT MIGHT INVOLVE

These services aren't just about dealing with conflict - many will help prevent it:

- **cultural audits** – understanding the rituals, narratives, and informal practices in your workplace that challenge workforce relations
- **specific support for managers and HR staff** in responding to issues of diversity in the context of performance management (role-play, mentoring, etc.)
- help to establish **clearer codes of conduct** for staff and improve people's sense of their workplace rights and responsibilities
- tailor-made, confidential **investigation service**

### WHY DO THIS

Investigations and disciplinary proceedings are a common part of the landscape in many NHS trusts and they can be costly, distressing, and damaging to workforce relations. This support can help staff feel more confident about their response to performance management of diverse teams.



## **EVERY YEAR WE HELP HEALTHCARE ORGANISATIONS MEET THEIR LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS BY PRODUCING EQUALITIES REPORTS ON THEIR BEHALF.**

In fact, for one trust we do this on an annual basis. Here's what usually happens in four easy steps.

STEP 1: we decide on suitable indicators. We usually identify data that will help demonstrate compliance with things like the WRES or EDS2. But we also pore over board papers to understand the clinical targets the trust wants to improve on. This way we can see if services are being delivered fairly to all equality groups.

STEP 2: we liaise with key people in the organisation to collect the data, all of which results in an accessible report containing trend analyses, easy-to-read graphs, and snippets of contextual information from the wider health sector.

STEP 3: the boring stuff done, we chat with the trust about what the data shows. A couple of years ago, for example, the trust wanted to set up a BME staff group as a result of some of our findings. We helped out by acting as the secretariat for the group, providing ideas for what should be on the agenda, and delivering some quick training on bullying and harassment so members knew what to look out for.

STEP 4: everybody parties like its 2010 (the year the Equality Act was passed, obviously).

All our work in the NHS is underpinned by the following principles:

- **rights-based**: our work is centred on the rights and responsibilities of both staff and patients
- **inclusive**: we believe that everyone can play a part in delivering high-quality care, and that we all have equal responsibility to do this
- **knowledge and skills-based**: we believe equality and human rights competences can be acquired through learning and development
- **progressive**: our work moves away from what has been always done to what is evidence-based, innovative, and effective
- **empowering and applicable**: we believe in enjoyable learning that stimulates new energy and enthusiasm for equality, inclusion, and human rights

brap is transforming the way we think and do equality. We support organisations, communities, and cities with meaningful approaches to learning, change, research, and engagement. We are a partner and friend to anyone who believes in the rights and potential of all human beings.

# brap

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