



Birth Companions statement: Anti-racism

At Birth Companions, we strive to be an inclusive, diverse, culturally competent and anti-racist organisation. That means we are committed to acknowledging and taking action against structural, institutional and interpersonal racism in all its forms, including islamophobia and antisemitism. More specifically in the context of our work, we are committed to addressing racism in the maternity, criminal justice, social care and immigration systems, the voluntary sector, and in our own organisation.

Recent evidence tells us that Black women are three times as likely to die during pregnancy, birth and the postnatal year as white women, while women from Asian backgrounds and those of mixed ethnicity are twice as likely to die ([MBRRACE-UK 2025](#)). Stark disparities like these highlight the need for sustained anti-racist work to ensure the safety and improve the health outcomes of women who experience racism.

We want Birth Companions to be a safe and supportive organisation for women from all racially marginalised groups, in which to work, volunteer or receive support

We recognise our commitment needs to be rooted in action within our organisation and across every area of our work. This requires a continual process of active learning and improvement.

This anti-racism statement is a working document, which represents not just a public statement of intent, but also a point of reference to which we will return regularly in order to hold ourselves accountable and continue to prioritise this work.

At Birth Companions we:

- Recognise that structural, institutional, and interpersonal racism negatively impacts the experiences and outcomes of all women from racially marginalised groups.
- Acknowledge experiences of racism, both overt and subtle, as a form of trauma. We are working to reflect and address this in our organisation's trauma-informed approach, policy and procedures.
- Regularly review our internal policies, practice and training to ensure these reflect our position as an organisation that strives to be anti-racist.
- Support our staff and volunteers to develop a better understanding of racism and cultural competency through regular training and discussion.
- Challenge language or behaviour that may be racist, or discriminatory, whether intentional or otherwise.
- Ensure that all reports of racist behaviour are taken seriously and dealt with appropriately.
- Engage experts to help us ensure we are following best practice.
- Aim to amplify the voices of women from racially marginalised groups through the work of our Lived Experience Team.

- Are committed to using our position as experts working with women experiencing severe disadvantage and inequity during pregnancy and early motherhood to challenge policies and systems that perpetuate structural and institutional racism. In particular, though not exclusively, we are committed to doing this within the context of the maternity, criminal justice, social care and immigration systems in which our work is primarily located.
- Engage in partnership working with organisations led by and for Black women, and women from all other racially marginalised groups.
- Actively consider representation and diversity when organising our own events, or attending or participating in events organised by others, including scrutinising speaker panels and other visible roles. Where we have concerns about diversity in others' events, we raise these proactively with organisers and seek to help improve practice and raise awareness

We know that change doesn't happen without action. We are committed to:

- Mandatory anti-racism training for all our staff and volunteers.
- A Code of Conduct and ground rules for our meetings that clearly articulate our expectations the use of culturally appropriate language and behaviour.
- Ensuring our recruitment practices are non-discriminatory and protect all candidates from unconscious bias through:
 - Ensuring staff are trained to understand and carry out best practice in selection and interview processes using our standardised scoring on all aspects of selection.
 - Anonymised shortlisting.
 - Reviewing the language used on adverts and recruitment to ensure that candidates from ethnic minorities are attracted to our roles.
 - Using new channels to ensure that our job adverts and recruitment reach as wide and as diverse audience as possible.
 - The use of positive action to improve the diversity of our staff and volunteer team.
- Regularly reviewing practice and procedures to ensure we are a psychologically safe working environment for staff and volunteers who are Black women and women from other racially marginalised groups. These comprise:
 - Ensuring that staff and volunteers have clear processes to follow in order to feel safe and comfortable to report racist behaviour they experience or witness; and that such reports will be taken seriously and acted on in a timely way.
 - Specialist therapeutic support and reflective practice for Black staff/volunteers, and those from other racially marginalised groups, who may find witnessing, hearing about or experiencing racism in the course of their work harmful.
 - Recognising the need for and importance of a separate and safe space for black women and women of colour on our staff team to come together as group should they wish during their allocated work hours.
- Regularly convening our anti-racist working group made up of trustees, staff, volunteers and women from our Lived Experience Team, to lead our anti-racism work.
- Annually reviewing any incidents of racism reported that are experienced or witnessed by our staff, volunteers and the women we work with, including a review of our response.
- Providing resources on our website on health inequalities and structural racism within healthcare systems, to help contribute to wider learning.

For more information, or to discuss anything mentioned in this statement, please get in touch with us at info@birthcompanions.org.uk.