

Statement of intent for Black History Month 2024

At the John Lewis Partnership we have continued to make progress in supporting and encouraging our Black Partners to proudly be themselves. We are constantly challenging ourselves to understand what more we can do. It runs through everything we do. So much so, that 'Inclusion and Belonging' is now a key metric in our business scorecard, which we are using to track the progress of our strategic plan and ultimately our Purpose of working in Partnership for a Happier World.

Although our work takes place throughout the entire year, Black History Month feels like the right time for us to share what we've been continuing to do at John Lewis and Waitrose to elevate the voices of our Black Partners.

We are proud to be one of the sponsors at this year's UK Black Business Show, the largest business event for Black entrepreneurs, business owners, start-ups and early career professionals in Europe. Here we will showcase the range of career opportunities we have and offer support and advice to attendees who wish to join our business.

Membership of the UNITY network, our Partnership network for Black, Asian and ethnically diverse Partners and allies is growing weekly. As well as providing a safe space to share their experiences, the views of members are represented and raised through our democratic channels by a formal forum of eight elected representatives. This supports the business to engage effectively with UNITY's diverse members, ensuring their voices are heard at the most senior level.

We have also been working with Partners to continue to shape our Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) strategy that will drive our ambition to be the UK's most inclusive business for our Partners, customers, suppliers and wider community. To help us improve experiences and develop a greater sense of belonging in the Partnership, we have been supporting our Partners to share their personal information with us, where they've felt comfortable to do so. Combined with the results of our engagement survey, this information has helped us build a much clearer picture of our Partner demographic and how we can support them better.

One outcome of this has been the launch of our new 'Elevate' progression programme, which aims to support ethnically diverse Partners to progress their careers and increase representation in our senior roles.

In the past year we have also run a Career Confidence workshop, a 15 week programme aimed at developing the self-belief and skills of ethnically diverse people managers who manage our operational Partners. Going forward we are also exploring how we can increase the diversity of our central teams through apprenticeships.

We recognise the importance of allyship and the role this plays in supporting Partners from under-represented groups. We have launched a new learning programme to support all Partners to become an effective and authentic ally. We know that our leadership and people managers have an important role to play in creating a sense of belonging, and so we are embedding content to improve their cultural competence into our existing leadership learning programmes.

We have also launched a network of 35 voluntary D&I champions across the business to enable a culture of inclusion and belonging, and promote and celebrate the richness of our differences. Their role is to share ideas and drive awareness of Diversity and Inclusion in their respective business areas.

We're working hard to improve what we offer to our Black customers too. We set up a D&I Customer Accountability Group in October 2023 made up of colleagues from across the business, whose role is to agree inclusive, customer facing propositions across our three key priorities: representation, celebration and inclusive product ranges. They meet every two months to focus on specific priorities such as Black History Month, and gather insight from external guests and key stakeholders.

Even though we are making great progress, we know there is still so much more to do and this is going to take relentless focus over time. This Black History Month we are supporting the theme of 'Reclaiming Narratives' as we truly believe that we're at our best when we're free to be ourselves, with all our wonderful differences.

[Previous statement of intent from 2020](#)