



# Route map towards greater ethnic diversity

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Creating conditions for minority ethnic people  
to join and thrive in the environment sector

# Contents

|   | Page               |
|---|--------------------|
| Foreword  | <a href="#">4</a>  |
| Executive summary   | <a href="#">6</a>  |
| 1 Introduction  | <a href="#">9</a>  |
| 2 What is a route map?  | <a href="#">11</a> |
| 3 Terms   | <a href="#">13</a> |
| 4 Why is the route map important?   | <a href="#">16</a> |
| 5 Who has prime responsibility to act?  | <a href="#">19</a> |
| 6 The route map – focus and long-term change  | <a href="#">21</a> |
| 7 The route map – milestones and journey of change  | <a href="#">24</a> |
| 8 The route map - actions to achieve first year's milestones  | <a href="#">27</a> |
| Appendix 1: Methodology and challenges  | <a href="#">33</a> |
| Appendix 2: What the data told us and the questions this raised in developing the route map (Summary of <i>Changing the world from within: understanding what is helping and hindering the environment sector from becoming more ethnically diverse</i> ) | <a href="#">36</a> |

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# Foreword

## Foreword



At Wildlife & Countryside Link, we have lots of well-attended coalition meetings, focused on every aspect of environmental policy, but few have been so packed as our all-coalition meetings on diversity and inclusion.

This research report, drawing on over 2000 responses, explains why. As a sector we are far behind society at large in terms of our ethnic diversity. There is an overriding recognition that change is needed, but great uncertainty about how to make progress. Some organisations have already made significant changes to become more inclusive but many, particularly smaller and less well-resourced organisations, are still in the starting blocks.

That's why we decided to take collective action. This route map is a statement of intent that, as a sector, we want to become more diverse and more inclusive. It is not prescriptive—so it won't hold anyone back—and it is far from a complete solution, but we hope it will open a new chapter in collective working to diversify the movement. We can learn from and support those organisations that are already taking a lead, offering strength and support that this is the right thing to do when they face opposition. At the same time, by working together, we can ensure that even the smallest organisations are able to take practical action.

Those who work in the environment sector overwhelmingly do so because they want to be part of a progressive movement, helping solve one of the great challenges of our time. Making sure that our movement is open and inclusive is surely part of that ethical work, and our chances of success will be all the greater if we can welcome everyone into our movement.

We are extremely grateful for all the time, expertise and dedication that lots of individuals, charities, funders and public bodies have given in the development of these reports and in our wider work on inclusion. It is one thing trying to change an organisation, quite another trying to encourage a sector forward.

The quiet intensity that greets us when we open the bird hide door can bring a sense of peace and belonging for some people, but represent an impenetrable "in crowd" force field for others. The same is true for our workplace, where the look, language, culture and ways of working established in environmental organisations can present a barrier to entry for many people.

It's time to "fling wide the hide" and take active steps to create a more diverse movement. Nature is for everyone. Nature needs everyone. Our environment movement should be for everyone too. We will try to make sure this research and route map enables the whole sector to become more diverse and inclusive. Our success as a sector depends on it.



# Executive Summary

# Executive summary

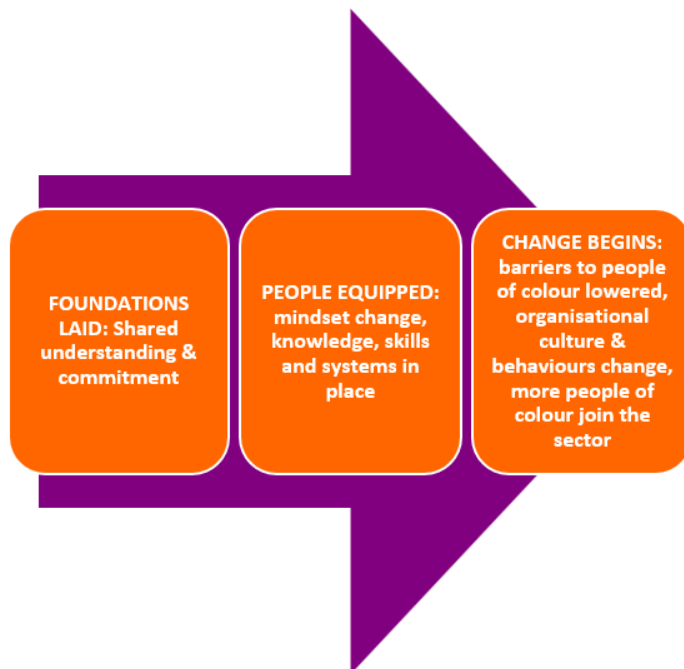
1. **The environment sector is one of the least ethnically diverse sectors in the UK.** Wildlife & Countryside Link (Link) partnered with Natural England to commission Full Colour to look at what is helping and hindering progress towards greater ethnic diversity, and to develop a route map of change for the sector.
2. The route map was developed with a Working Group of representatives from across the sector including people of colour, CEOs and EDI experts. The methodology is set out in Appendix 1.
3. The route map builds on the findings of research carried out by Full Colour on behalf of Link. A summary of this research is set out at Appendix 2. The research found that
  - 1% of organisations were at the start of their journey, and had not yet considered ethnic diversity issues
  - **84% of organisations had considered the issues or had taken some action, but did not have a specific action plan**
  - 11% of organisations had developed or were developing a plan but had not yet implemented it
  - 4% of organisations had an action plan and were consistently implementing it

## Organisational readiness scale



4. The research also found **overt and covert racism is endemic in the sector**, findings echoed by other research.
5. The Working Group agreed that the route map cannot cover every aspect of the change the sector needs as the issues are too wide ranging. To create the route map, the Working Group had to make choices, part of which involved defining a specific focus. **The Working Group decided that the route map will significantly contribute to:**
  - **Reducing barriers for people of colour joining, progressing and thriving in the sector**
  - **Cultivating a genuinely inclusive culture in each organisation and across the sector**
  - **Increasing ethnic diversity within the sector**
6. **The route map outlines what can be realistically accomplished by 2027 and the sequence of achievements along the way.** Chapter 6 sets out the focus and long-term change. Chapter 7 sets out the detailed milestones that need to be achieved by the sector as a whole and individual organisations to reach the long-term change.
7. The Working Group acknowledges that each organisation will be in a different place on its journey and recommends you **choose at the best point for you to jump into the route map.**

8. In summary the sequence of the route map is as follows:



- Organisations will employ more people of colour, and be contributing to increased sector ethnic diversity

- Organisations' recruitment and people development practices are rooted in knowledge/commitment to inclusion and anti-racism

- Genuinely inclusive cultures are deeply embedded in each organisation

- Sector target set and progress being made on increasing people of colour in leadership

And as a result:

- People of colour will want to join the sector and feel able to progress, thrive and develop within it

- Measurable progress achieved towards lowering the barriers to people of colour joining, thriving and progressing within the sector

- The sector will be more ethnically diverse

9. Chapter 8 sets out the actions that need to be taken by cross sector organisations (including but not exclusively by Link) and those that can be taken by individual organisations. A separate guidance document on how to implement the actions has been published alongside this route map.

10. The research phase of the work highlighted that terms which people believe are commonly understood are in fact interpreted differently by different organisations and individuals. Therefore, to aid comprehension, Full Colour's definitions of **key terms are included in this report at chapter 3.**

11. The Working Group was aware that different organisations are at different stages of thinking and evolution in their journey to greater ethnic diversity and in addressing the barriers that people of colour face. **For those that need it, chapter 4 sets out points for discussion on the reasons why this work is important.**

12. Chapter 5 sets out who the working group felt has **primary responsibility for taking action, namely: CEOs and senior executive leaders, EDI groups/officers, managers and HR/ Learning & Development leads. People of Colour must have a clear role in leading change, but the Working Group felt that they themselves should define that role, plus we need to guard against adding further burdens** on people of colour who are already having to navigate barriers within the sector and cope with the impact of racism.



# Introduction



# 1 Introduction

The environment sector is one of the least ethnically diverse in the UK. **Just 4.81% of professionals identify as Black, Asian or from other minority ethnic groups, compared to 12.64% across all UK professions.**<sup>i</sup>

There is also evidence that **people of colour within the sector experience racism** in the form of stereotyping, discrimination, exclusion from networking and mentorship and a lack of opportunity for progression.<sup>ii</sup>

While some organisations are working to address these issues, Full Colour research for Wildlife and Countryside Link (Link) shows that **84% of organisations, while willing to take action, lack direction. Only 4% of organisations have a plan and are regularly implementing it.**<sup>iii</sup> This research also showed that while 86% of leaders say increasing ethnic diversity *should* be a priority for the sector, only 22% say it currently is.

This is why Link commissioned Full Colour to work with colleagues in the sector to develop a route map for change. While the route map will not solve all the issues around lack of ethnic diversity or the presence of racism in the sector, **profound change is possible by working together.** The route map sets out how. A guidance document with practical advice sits alongside this document.

## Note on addressing racism

Racism is endemic in society and has deep rooted causes that go back centuries. Therefore, **it is not possible for this route map to fully address racism in the sector, given it is closely linked to racism in society as a whole. However, this route map can contribute to making things better.** Racism is unjust and should be addressed for this reason alone. It is also a key barrier to minority ethnic people joining the sector. Not to address it would be to miss an opportunity to improve the experience of minority ethnic people in the sector and address an injustice.

We are mindful that the term “racism” evokes images of people openly and aggressively expressing views and using language that most of us would find deeply offensive. However, this happens rarely within professional settings. The racism people of colour experience is usually much more subtle, but nonetheless damaging to their professional progress and to themselves as human beings.

The route map seeks to reduce this “every day”, subtle racism. While the route map cannot eliminate it, if organisations take up the actions we suggest, the sector can make real progress towards beginning the journey towards becoming anti-racist.

## Working Group

This route map was co-produced by a Working Group established by Link, and facilitated by Full Colour. The Working Group had nine members from environmental organisations representing a range of sizes and interests, and included people of colour, CEOs and EDI specialists.



**What is a  
route map?**

## 2 What is a route map?

**Theory of change methodology was used** to develop the route map (see below).

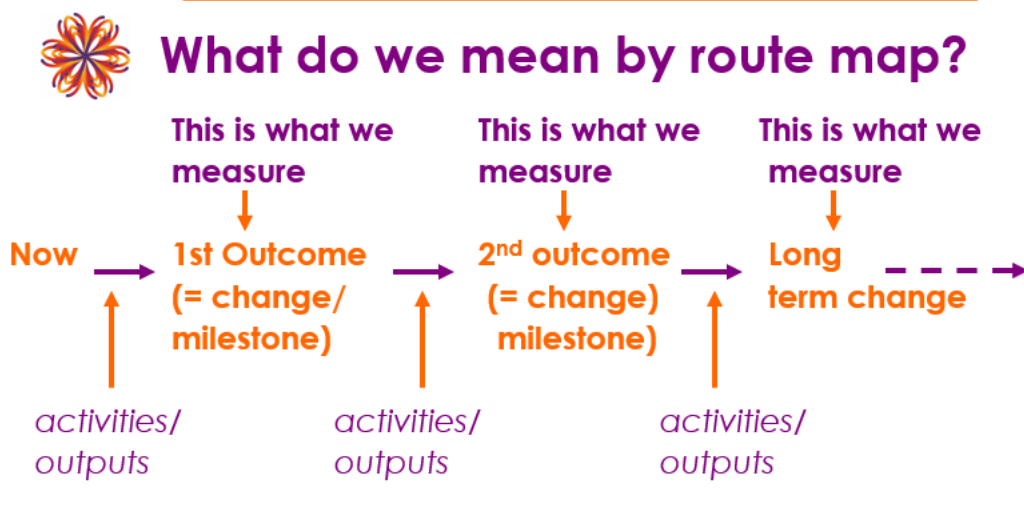
To ensure we could be as precise as possible, a specific **end point** for this route map was agreed, namely **December 2027**.

The Working Group articulated the changes that could be realistically achieved by December 2027 and then worked out the sequence of achievements or milestones that would be needed to accomplish those changes.

Only once the milestones had been defined did we work out what actions would be required to achieve the first set of milestones.

It was decided not to move beyond the first set of milestones in devising actions. This is because actions to achieve subsequent milestones would need to incorporate the learning from working towards the first set of milestones. Therefore, to devise actions now for future stages of the route map seemed premature.

## Theory of change model used to develop the route map



### Key terms

**Long-term change:** This is what will have been achieved by a specified point in time, in this case 2027. It is what can be realistically achieved rather than something aspirational or imprecise.

**Outcomes:** These are tangible and intangible achievements or milestones that will lead to the specific long-term change.

**Activities and outputs:** These are things to do or produce to achieve the milestones.



# Terms

## 3 Terms

One of the key barriers to progress is a lack of shared understanding of what the terms used in equality, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism work mean. Full Colour offers its definitions below as a starting point for organisations to develop their own, mission specific definitions of the terms.

### Diversity, equality, equity and inclusion

**Diversity** is about having different kinds of people, and the organisation “being” that difference. Genuinely diverse organisations create an environment where people from minoritized groups do not feel a need to assimilate or minimise those aspects of themselves which make them different.

**Equality** is about evening out how power works, not to undermine expertise, experience or organisational hierarchy, but to ensure power is not attached to that which does not add value, e.g. job titles, length of service.

**Equity** recognises that some people face more barriers than others and therefore need different support and resources to enable them to reach the same place as those who face fewer barriers.

**Inclusion** is far more than being friendly and welcoming. True inclusion involves bringing differences into decision-making, problem solving, the development of ideas and strategies. This is what creates a genuine sense of belonging.

### Racism

When people think of the term “racism” they often think of its more extreme forms. However, racism takes many forms, and people of colour often experience the more subtle forms of racism referred to below in their day to day lives, and at work.

**Anti-racism** is recognising that racism exists, identifying how it plays out in your organisation’s systems, attitudes and behaviours and taking specific action, the results of which can be measured. Anti-racism is more than simply not being racist; it involves the active dismantling of personal and institutional racism.

**Covert racism** is where people do not express openly racist views, but their behaviours and language are influenced by racist views they consciously hold in private.

**Every day racism** relates to behaviour or practices in everyday life which can be intentional or unintentional, but which perpetuate racism and racial stereotypes.

**Gaslighting** is a form of emotional or psychological manipulation where the perpetrator shares false narratives or dismisses the views, experiences and expertise of a person. This can lead that person to doubt their own judgement or their understanding of reality. It can also involve belittling that person in the eyes of others. **Racial gaslighting** is a form of psychological manipulation where people of colour are made to doubt their experience of racism, their experience is minimised or used against them by, for example, characterising them as aggressive for calling out racism. Racial gaslighting damages the person of colour and also enables systemic racism to continue.

**Institutional or systemic racism** is when racism is embedded into the rules, practices and ways of working within an organisation. It can also relate to how rules and practices are embedded in society.

**Microaggressions** are attitudes, behaviours and the use of language that intentionally or unintentionally diminishes people from minoritized groups. A term originally coined by Dr Chester Pierce, the three most common forms of microaggressions were identified by Derald Wing Sue as:

**Microinsults:** speaking and behaving in ways that denigrate people from minoritized groups, e.g. suggesting that people from certain groups lack morals, are less intelligent or only got a job because they were a “diversity hire”.

**Microinvalidations:** discrediting or minimising the experience of prejudice and discrimination of someone from a minoritized group, either verbally (e.g. saying the perpetrator didn’t mean to cause offence) or non-verbally (e.g. eye rolling).

**Microassaults:** intentional use of language or behaviour to denigrate or minimise someone from a minoritized group, e.g. using a slang term to refer to someone from a minoritized group; the perpetrator may explain it away as a “joke”.

**Overt racism** is where people are openly racist towards people from minority ethnic groups.

## **Bias and privilege**

The terms “unconscious bias” and “white privilege” are often misunderstood.

**Unconscious bias** involves patterns of thinking learned through life that affect the way we respond to people and situations.

**White privilege** is the absence of the obstacles people of colour experience in their daily lives ranging from the way society and organisations work to the way others view and interact with them.



**Why is the route map important?**

## 4 Why is the route map important?

Although there are some for whom the answer to this question is obvious, there remain those who accept the arguments for change on ethnic diversity but are yet to be convinced of the need to prioritise time for this work, be proactive and devote resources to it. Full Colour's **research for Link highlighted the lack of an organisational articulation of why greater ethnic diversity matters was believed to be one of the barriers to progress.**

The need to convince colleagues to "lean into" the journey and make what they describe as a "business case" for diversity work was particularly highlighted by people of colour during the final phase of testing the route map. The Link research also emphasises the fact that many organisations lack a clear understanding of why this work is important.

While morally we should not have to make the business case for doing the right thing, the reality of competing organisational priorities sometimes makes this necessary.

This section of the report aims to provide a **menu of reasons that can be used if readers need to create a clear "why" for their own organisation.** Not all reasons listed below will be relevant to each organisation, and it is not an exhaustive list. The menu below aims to support and stimulate people's thinking and give readers a place to start in articulating their organisational "why". If there is already a precise and commonly held understanding in your organisation of why this work is important, feel free to move to the next chapter.

### Some answers to the question "why does this route map matter to the sector?"

Please choose the reasons that most resonate with your organisation.

- Social justice is at the heart of the environmental movement. Becoming more representative of the ethnic diversity of the general population is part of being fair and equitable, which is at the heart of social justice, as is addressing racism.
- Creating inclusive cultures and beginning to tackle the systemic and behavioural challenges and racism people of colour face is critical to the wellbeing of people of colour in the sector, and to attracting more minority ethnic people to join.
- The conservation and climate justice movements aim to influence people to change their behaviours to achieve change for the environment. The sector therefore needs to be relevant to the whole of society or it will miss opportunities and limit its achievements. Becoming more ethnically diverse will support this aim.
- Issues around climate justice, inequitable access to nature and the need to engage all of society in tackling the nature crisis are closely linked with tackling the inequality and barriers faced by people from minority ethnic groups.
- The sector needs to include multiple perspectives and lived experiences to make the best decisions.



## Some answers to the question “why does this route map matter to my organisation?”

Please choose the reasons that most resonate with your organisation.

- Natural justice requires us to address the lack of equity for people of colour.
- There is significant evidence that people of colour lack the same access to nature as others and are more likely to be impacted by environmental issues such as climate change and pollution. Therefore, it is important to include and involve more people of colour in organisations working to address the nature and climate crises.
- The sector needs to include multiple perspectives to make the best decisions.
- There is significant evidence to show that a more inclusive and diverse workforce creates more successful organisations.
- It will enable our organisation to attract and retain the best talent to ensure the sustainability of the sector.
- Attracting ethnically diverse employees will open up a talent pool that the sector is currently missing.
- Evidence shows that younger people expect organisations to be diverse and inclusive, so we need to address these issues if we are to attract new talent.
- We should engage with the route map which offers us a good place to start and helps us respond to the pressure for change.
- The sector is coalescing around the route map, and it is important we play our part.
- Some of the barriers to attracting and retaining people of colour are to do with organisational culture, and the route map will help us address this.
- The charity sector as a whole is putting increased emphasis on diversity and inclusion, an example of which is the updated [Charity Code of Governance](#) which puts a significantly increased emphasis on equality, diversity and inclusion, including expectations of increased transparency on progress.
- Regulators and funders are requiring change.
- Inaction on these issues brings potential risk to organisational reputation; reputational damage to one organisation can impact the whole sector.
- Issues of racism and the lack of ethnic diversity are more mainstream in the public's mind, so we need to address these issues in our organisation and in the sector to remain relevant.



**Who has prime  
responsibility to act?**

## 5 Who has prime responsibility to act?

While everyone in the sector has a responsibility to act, **this route map focuses on key players who have the greatest ability to drive change**. We actively encourage others to contribute. However, for the purposes of devising this route map, the Working Group prioritised key agents of change.

| Change agents   | Reasons for prioritising them  |
|---|--|
| CEOs and senior executive leaders (typically those that report into CEOs) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They set organisational direction, strategy, budgets &amp; priorities</li> <li>• Power sits with leaders</li> <li>• Leaders shape and set organisational culture and behaviour</li> <li>• Link has ways to reach leaders directly</li> </ul>  |
| EDI groups/officers   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They will be key to implementation</li> <li>• They bring internal expertise to shape and support the journey of change on inclusion and ethnic diversity</li> <li>• They are motivated to drive change and can offer internal pressure to act where needed</li> </ul> <p><b>NOTE: We recognise not all organisations have dedicated EDI roles</b></p>   |
| Managers  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managers drive the culture and shape the day-to-day experience of teams/ employees</li> <li>• Managers are central to implementing organisational action plans</li> <li>• Managers are responsible for recruitment</li> <li>• Managers supervise, appraise and are responsible for staff and team development and wellbeing</li> </ul>  |
| People of colour  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We can't have a route map about people of colour without them</li> <li>• People of colour will be key to evaluating whether the route map is working as well as driving the development of solutions</li> <li>• The experience of people of colour within the sector should inform organisations' work to create change</li> </ul> <p><b>NOTE: People of colour should have the agency to choose what work they do and do not get involved in. With so few people of colour within the sector, it is important they are not overburdened.</b></p> |
| HR and Learning & Development leads                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HR colleagues have the overview of people issues in their organisations</li> <li>• EDI often sits with HR</li> <li>• Learning and development are key to the route map</li> </ul>   |

### Encouraging peer learning

The Working Group was aware that several organisations are already taking action on these issues, and the route map looks to find ways of sharing learning with those who are just starting out. (See chapter 8)



**Route map - focus  
& long-term change**

## 6 The route map - focus and long-term change

**For the route map to succeed it needs a specific focus:**

- Coalescing around a common focus will enable the sector to move forward together, learn from each other along the way and enable the sharing of good practice around common themes.
- Focusing on a common purpose will enable the sector to target initiatives and action
- Creating a focus for the route map enables a coordinated approach, a broad timetable and a framework of accountability

The Working Group arrived at the central focus through several discussions and testing our conclusions with colleagues in the sector.

### Chosen focus for the route map

The Working Group concluded that **the route map will significantly contribute to:**

- **Reducing barriers for people of colour joining, progressing and thriving in the sector**
- **Cultivating a genuinely inclusive culture within each organisation and across the sector**
- **Increasing ethnic diversity within the sector**

**The route map will focus on employees.**

We recognise that this route map in isolation cannot create anti-racist organisations but beginning the journey is essential, given the experience of racism faced by people of colour in the sector (see Appendix 2).

### Reasons for the chosen focus

- The Working Group chose to focus on things organisations can control and on which they can take specific action. This allows organisations and the sector to move forward at a greater and more consistent pace.
- Volunteers are important to the sector, however, organisations have a more direct influence on the experiences of employees. Individual organisations can always adapt some of the actions in the route map for volunteers if they wish.
- Having a clear focus will enable the route map to deliver measurable results in a way which would not have been possible if the focus had been too diffuse.
- The Working Group had extensive debate on the degree to which the route map should explicitly address racism. It was felt that we needed to focus on beginning to work towards becoming anti-racist by taking active steps to reduce the barriers minority ethnic people face and by proactively focusing on the culture of organisations and the sector. It was felt important to begin to address and change the experiences of minority ethnic people within the sector while not over-promising.
- Culture is at the heart of genuinely inclusive organisations and goes beyond simply being welcoming and friendly. (See Chapter 3). Therefore, it was felt important that a significant part of the focus of the route map should be on directly addressing

organisational and sector culture. This will help create the conditions for minority ethnic people to thrive.

- Changing the employee make-up of organisations and therefore the sector by increasing ethnic diversity will create a visible change that will attract even more minority ethnic people as they begin to see themselves represented within the sector.

## Long term change

The Working Group chose 2027 as the end point for this route map, by when the following will have been achieved:

- **Organisations will employ more people of colour, and be contributing to increased sector ethnic diversity**
- **Organisations' recruitment and people development practices are rooted in knowledge of and commitment to inclusion and anti-racism**
- **Genuinely inclusive cultures are deeply embedded in each organisation**
- **A sector target will be set and progress will be being made on increasing people of colour in leadership**

**And as a result:**

- **People of colour will want to join the sector and feel able to progress, thrive and develop within it**
- **Measurable progress will have been achieved towards lowering the barriers to people of colour joining, thriving and progressing within the sector**
- **The sector will be more ethnically diverse**






# Route map - journey of change

## 7 The route map – milestones and journey of change

The diagram below sets out the route map's long-term change and the outcomes or milestones that need to be achieved along the way. The actions needed to achieve these milestones and the long-term change are set out in the next chapter.

### Key

Long term change:  Sector milestones:  Organisational milestones: 

“AR” = anti-racism

“EDI” = equity/equality, diversity, inclusion

“HR” = used as a shorthand for HR and Learning & Development leads

“POC” = people of colour

### Note on using the route map

A separate guidance document is being produced alongside this route map. This will offer more practical tips on how to take the various actions set out in chapter 8.

Different organisations are at different stages of their EDI and anti-racism journey. If your organisation has already achieved milestones marked for completion in the early stages of the route map, please feel free to “jump into” the route map further down the line.

If your organisation is yet to start its journey of change in earnest, we recommend you start in year 1 and achieve the milestones here before moving onto further stages of the route map. The milestones build on each other. Having said that, ultimately your organisation will be the best judge of what is right for you, but the sequencing of the milestones aims to enable your organisation to create lasting change.



Y1:2022/23



Y2: 2023/24



Y3: 2024/25



Y4: 2025/26



Y5: 2026/27

### Change Journey

**FOUNDATIONS LAID:**  
Shared understanding & commitment

**PEOPLE EQUIPPED:** mindset change, knowledge, skills & systems in place

**CHANGE BEGINS:** barriers to people of colour lowered, organisational culture & behaviours change, more people of colour join sector

**Long term change achieved by December 2027**

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#### Evolving culture

EDI and AR definitions embraced | HR/leaders'/managers' "change agent" role defined | Inclusion learning opportunities established

HR/leaders/managers begin to adopt inclusion & AR practices | AR recruitment/people development practices created

HR/leaders/managers modelling inclusion and AR | AR recruitment people development practices embedded

Org culture more inclusive and moving towards AR

POC report experiencing inclusion

Orgs make public commitment to take action | EDI and AR terms understood

HR/leaders/managers equipped to support inclusion | POC have power/support to drive change

#### Beginning to address racism/ enabling POC to progress

POC's experience of racism widely understood | sector equity & empowerment program developed to support POC into leadership

Sector wide understanding on how to recognise/address racism | POC more confident to report racism | equity & empowerment programme in place

POC report fewer instances of racism, discrimination, isolation & voicelessness | More POC in the sector & in leadership

Orgs have racism reporting mechanisms developed & embedded

HR/leaders/managers can recognise and address racism in their orgs | Those to whom racism is reported know how to act

#### Increasing ethnic diversity

Benchmark data collected on ethnic diversity

Areas around which to set sector targets defined and target set

Regular reporting against sector target embedded | more orgs report being higher up org readiness scale

Progress towards target made | Plan for next stage developed

Organisations establish ways to collect/contribute data to sector benchmark

Orgs set/commit to their own targets

Orgs track/ make progress on ethnic diversity | Plan in place for next stage for org developed | Most orgs report "on the journey"

#### Embedding action

Ways to share sector learning set up

Team EDI plans developed based on org plan | Resources allocated | Leaders report on progress internally and publicly

Leaders report on progress internally and publicly

Leaders report on progress internally and publicly

Leaders report on progress internally & publicly | EDI & AR integrated into org mission/vision

Each org develops change plan and defines inclusion specific to them | leaders report on progress internally

**- Organisations will employ more people of colour, and be contributing to increased sector ethnic diversity**  
**- Organisations' recruitment and people development practices are rooted in knowledge/commitment to inclusion and anti-racism**  
**- Genuinely inclusive cultures are deeply embedded in each organisation**  
**- Sector target set and progress being made on increasing people of colour in leadership**  
**And as a result:**  
**- People of colour will want to join the sector and feel able to progress, thrive and develop within it**  
**- Measurable progress achieved towards lowering the barriers to people of colour joining, thriving and progressing within the sector**  
**- The sector will be more ethnically diverse**



# **Route map - first year actions**

## 8 The route map - Actions to achieve first year's milestones

Further work will be needed on future year's actions which would need to take account of progress in year 1.

Milestone category:

Sector milestones:

Organisational milestones:

|                         | Milestone summary descriptor  | Milestone descriptor in full   | Actions  |
|-------------------------|---|--|--|
| <b>Evolving culture</b> | EDI and AR definitions embraced  <br>HR/leaders'/managers' "change agent" roles defined  <br>Inclusion learning opportunities established | <p>Sector wide definitions of key terms understood and embraced in ways that lead to action</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>Inclusive and anti-racist behaviours expected of leaders, managers and HR professionals have been defined</p> <p>The proactive roles of leaders, HR professionals and managers in driving change have been defined</p> <p>Learning opportunities established</p> | <p>Link and/or other sector bodies to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop guidance on key terms/definitions, the roles of leaders, managers and HR practitioners in creating a change programme and driving change towards greater ethnic diversity, becoming genuinely inclusive in ways that acknowledge the racism experienced by people of colour and identify steps towards becoming anti-racist</li> <li>2. Develop guidance on inclusive behaviours at an organisational and personal level</li> <li>3. Work in partnership with sector-wide organisations to develop fundraising plans to secure long-term funding to support change</li> <li>4. Organise sector-wide event to               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Share route map</li> <li>b. Share research on experiences of POC</li> <li>c. Launch call to action for members</li> </ol> </li> </ol> <p>NB: Race report is collecting data on ethnicity</p> |

|  |                                  |  |   |
|--|----------------------------------|--|---|
|  |                                  | Learning opportunities to support leaders, managers and HR colleagues adopt inclusive behaviours and understand racism & anti-racism have been developed | <p>Link and/or other sector bodies to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Subject to funding, provide sector-wide training on: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Methods to debias recruitment and development</li> <li>b. Roles that leaders, managers and HR professionals need to play</li> <li>c. Developing genuinely inclusive cultures and behaviours</li> <li>d. Understanding racism and anti-racism</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Develop peer learning circles (see below)</li> <li>3. Develop and disseminate sector-wide guidance on how to review and revise structures for reporting and addressing racism</li> <li>4. Examples of existing good practice by Link members shared on increasing ethnic diversity, inclusive practice and anti-racist practice</li> </ol> |
|  | Public commitment to take action | Public commitment made by Link members to take action and implement this route map   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Each organisation to sign up to Link call to action and take part in sector-wide opportunities to develop and implement change</li> <li>2. Cascade training and guidance within organisations on key terms, roles and responsibilities based on sector-wide training (see above)</li> <li>3. Cascade training and guidance on inclusion and anti-racism based on sector-wide training (see above)</li> <li>4. People of colour already within organisations are supported to identify the role they want to play in driving change, including identifying resources/ support they need and the influence and decision-making power they will have</li> </ol>  |

|   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| <b>Beginning to address racism/ enabling people of colour to progress</b> | POC's experience of racism widely understood   sector equity & empowerment program developed to support POC into leadership | Sector-wide research on the experience of people of colour and how racism in all its forms plays out is widely understood                                     | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. This to form part of sector-wide training set out above</li> <li>2. (Subject to approval by IES) provide podcast on key findings of their report on minority ethnic environment professionals' experiences</li> </ol>                          |
|   |   | A sector-wide equity & empowerment programme is developed to progress the careers of colleagues of colour including supporting their journeys into leadership | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provider for sector-wide equity and empowerment programme for people of colour is commissioned, programme developed and pilot run</li> </ol>   |
|   | Organisations have racism reporting mechanisms developed & embedded   | Ways to report and address racism in all its forms developed, understood and embedded in each organisation  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop clear ways within organisations to report and address racism, ensuring that people of colour have support in place in raising concerns</li> <li>2. Provide training to managers on implementing the racism reporting system</li> </ol> |

|                         |   |  |  |
|-------------------------|---|--|--|
| <b>Ethnic diversity</b> | Benchmark data collected on ethnic diversity                                | Benchmark data collected on ethnic diversity   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Race Report</li> </ol> |
|                         | Organisations establish ways to collect/contribute data to sector benchmark | Each organisation has an established system to contribute to sector-wide data collection | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Race Report</li> </ol> |

|                         |   |  |   |
|-------------------------|---|--|---|
| <b>Embedding action</b> | Ways to share sector learning set up  | Ways to share sector-wide learning set up  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Link to devise temperature check surveys to report on sector progress on developing and implementing change plans on ethnic diversity, inclusion and anti-racism for use annually from 2023/4 onwards. To include collection of good practice examples</li> <li>2. Learning circles established, grouping organisations with similar traits for leaders, HR professionals and managers to share learning</li> <li>3. Link to agree online “expert” webinars on key concepts such as inclusion and anti-racism and practical topics such as data gathering and usage</li> </ol>  |
|                         | Each organisation develops change plan and defines inclusion specific to them   leaders report on progress internally | Each organisation develops a change plan to increase ethnic diversity, reduce barriers to entry and progression for people of colour and embed this work into their overall strategic plan. This will include inclusive and anti-racist recruitment and development practices. It will also include each organisation defining what an inclusive culture looks like and how they will work towards creating that culture<br>NOTE: this section links with the Evolving Culture section above | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Organisations to review route map and decide which actions they will adopt, how these will be resourced, how to approach setting internal targets on ethnic diversity and how leaders will regularly report on progress internally. Based on this, develop change plan*</li> <li>2. Organisations to set up internal and external reporting, ready for sharing progress from 2023/4 onwards</li> <li>3. Establish senior leader and board champions to drive change on EDI and AR and hold colleagues to account for implementing change in policies, practice and behaviours</li> <li>4. Organisations to develop definitions of equality, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism specific to them</li> <li>5. Organisations to audit how staff currently experience the organisation's culture and the</li> </ol> |

|  |  |   |   |
|--|--|---|---|
|  |  | Leaders report on progress within their organisations | <p>degree to which it is inclusive, based on their definition.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Organisations to develop an inclusive behaviours framework to drive change on culture, and integrate the framework into staff objective setting and performance appraisals</li> <li>7. Organisations to review and amend policies and practices which most impact on their ability to become more ethnically diverse, particularly focusing on inclusive and anti-racist recruitment, development, retention and pay policies and practices</li> <li>8. Organisations to develop an anti-racism policy and approach</li> <li>9. Organisations to develop ways to conduct equality impact assessments of their programmes of work</li> <li>10. Leaders develop ways appropriate to their organisation to report internally on progress</li> </ol> |
|--|--|---|---|

\* Areas of work that could be included in change plan:

- Identifying organisation specific barriers to greater ethnic diversity
- Absorbing and acting on advice already available to the sector
- Commissioning specialist advice on how to reduce barriers to greater ethnic diversity
- Collecting monitoring data on ethnicity, e.g. in job applications, who gets shortlisted, who gets appointed
- Analysing monitoring data on ethnicity e.g. in job applications
- Consulting with ethnically diverse staff and/or stakeholders on their lived experience of your organisation
- Setting up staff networks for people of colour or where there are too few staff, supporting engagement with Link's People of Colour Group
- Defining the terms "equality", "diversity", "inclusion" and "anti-racism" in relation to their organisation and what this means for day-to-day practice
- Creating a specific budget or funding for diversity, inclusion and anti-racism initiatives
- Including increasing ethnic diversity as an organisational objective
- Appointing a senior executive to lead and drive change on equality, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism
- Appointing a Board member to lead and drive change on equality, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism
- Commissioning in-house training on EDI and anti-racism
- Identifying budget for the work



# Methodology and challenges



# Appendix 1: Methodology and challenges

The route map was developed through a series of workshops, which were structured and facilitated by Full Colour's Srabani Sen and attended by the Working Group. Discussions at these workshops created the content of the route map. The workshops were structured around answering core questions broadly as follows:

| Workshop   | Topic  |
|------------|--|
| Workshop 1 | Ensure a joint understanding of what a route map is. Begin to answer the question of who has prime responsibility to act.  |
| Workshop 2 | Finalise answers to the "who" question following testing. Define central focus for the route map.  |
| Workshop 3 | Finalise the central focus following testing. Begin to answer the question of why the route map matters for the sector and for individual organisations.                 |
| Workshop 4 | Finalise answer to "why" question following testing. Begin to define long-term change we are seeking to achieve through the route map, based on the agreed central focus |
| Workshop 5 | Finalise the long-term change we are seeking to achieve. Begin to map milestones to achieve on the journey towards the long-term change                                  |
| Workshop 6 | Finalise milestones  |
| Workshop 7 | Begin to work on action plan for first year's milestones   |
| Workshop 8 | Finalise action plan to achieve the first year's milestones  |

Between sessions, Working Group members tested workshop conclusions and content with colleagues from across the sector, including people of colour, CEOs and staff in the sector. The Working Group reached out through their networks to find people with whom to test the conclusions of each workshop, and collectively the Working Group sought to ensure that as wide a range of people were involved in testing as was practicable. Feedback received through testing was used to amend and evolve the Working Group's ideas and conclusions.

In testing, Link worked with its Equality and Diversity Working Group to test the route map with people of colour in the sector, in addition to the people of colour whom the Working Group tested with. Given the overall low numbers of people of colour in the sector, testing with them was not as extensive as we aspired to.

Further testing was conducted by Full Colour at the end of the process, and used to finalise the contents of this document.

As part of this project, Link commissioned Full Colour to undertake research to inform the development of the route map. The findings of this research are set out in Appendix 2. The research informed the development of the route map.

A draft of this report was reviewed by the Working Group, and the final report signed off by Link.

## What is the sector?

For the purposes of this report the "environment sector" is defined as Link members and organisations with which it works closely. The remit of Link covers England.

## Challenges we faced

### Breadth of sector

The sector includes organisations with a broad range of sizes, areas of focus, geographical footprint and levels of understanding and progress on equality, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism. Every organisation needs something different from the route map. Creating a route map that meets the needs of every individual organisation in the sector is therefore impossible. However, the Link research showed that there were common issues many organisations face, and these formed the basis of developing the route map.

### Choices

Through testing each element of the route map as we went along, the Working Group was able to understand better the differing views across the sector. This highlighted, early in the process, that it would be difficult to reach consensus across the sector of what the route map is for and what its contents should be. Therefore, in developing the route map, choices had to be made in order to develop something coherent and meaningful. This inevitably means some issues, such as how we encourage more minority ethnic people to take up university subjects that lead to careers in the sector, are not addressed by the route map.

### Testing

The people we tested with offered invaluable input into analysing problems we are trying to address, although people sometimes found it harder to offer alternative solutions when presented with Working Group ideas. The Working Group had to make judgement calls where this was the case to arrive at the route map. The Working Group did a sterling job in testing, however we would not claim to have reached all people and organisations in the sector.

Although the Working Group worked hard to reach and include people of colour in developing the route map, the low number of people of colour in the sector led to a tricky balance of not overburdening people while seeking their input. We accept that we may not always have got this balance right.



**What the data  
told us**

## Appendix 2: What the data told us and the questions this raised in developing the route map

As part of this project, Link commissioned Full Colour to undertake research to inform the development of the route map. The findings of this research are set out in a separate document titled *Changing the world from within: understanding what is helping and hindering the environment sector from becoming more ethnically diverse*. Below are some of the key findings that drove and shaped the development of the route map. The research covered England and sought to understand what is helping and hindering the environment sector from becoming more ethnically diverse, and where the sector is on actions and plans to drive change.

### About the research

Quantitative research consisted of a survey which was sent to all Link members. The qualitative research consisted of semi-structured interviews and small focus groups.

A total of 2004 people took part in the survey, most from Link member organisations. Most organisations were not-for-profits, although a small number of public bodies took part too. A total of 36 people took part in the qualitative research, all from Link member organisations. There was an even split between large members (defined as those with a turnover of more than £10m) and small Link members (defined as those with a turnover of less than £10m).

### What the research tells us

On organisational readiness for change towards greater ethnic diversity:

- 1% were at the start of their journey, and had not yet considered ethnic diversity issues
- **84% had considered the issues or had taken some action, but did not have a specific action plan**
- 11% had developed or were developing a plan but had not yet implemented it
- 4% had an action plan and were consistently implementing it

Most leaders who responded to the survey (86%) felt that increasing ethnic diversity should be a top or high priority for the environment sector, but only 22% of leaders felt increasing ethnic diversity currently is a priority for the sector. A total of 62% of leaders from the survey felt increasing ethnic diversity should be a higher priority than it currently is.

Most leaders who responded to the survey believed increasing ethnic diversity in the sector would have either a “strong positive impact” or a “positive impact”.

**Leaders' belief in and commitment to the positive impact of increasing ethnic diversity provides a clear foundation for sector and organisational change.**

Leaders had a clear sense of their own role in driving change, particularly in signalling the importance of ethnic diversity within their own organisation.

**The willingness of leaders to drive change will be key to the success of the route map.**

Through the qualitative research, executive and trustee leaders were asked what they understood by the term “ethnic minority”. Every participant gave a slightly different answer. Some struggled with the question.

**If leaders don't have a common language and understanding of key terms, how can they plan? If they can't describe the change they are aiming for, how can they achieve it?**

When asked what the impact of increasing ethnic diversity would be during the qualitative research, leaders offered broad suggestions which lacked detail or specificity.

In reflecting on what would change if the sector were more ethnically diverse, many leaders seemed to expect minority ethnic people to catalyse and create change within their organisations.

While it is vital for minority ethnic people to be partners in shaping the journey ahead, it is important leaders understand how power works in their organisations and therefore whether people of colour will be able to exert influence over decisions, actions and resources in ways that lead to change. Many efforts to increase ethnic diversity focus on bringing people in at the early stages of the career pipeline. How much power to drive change do early career people have?

**Leaders' assumptions that once recruited, minority ethnic people would drive change fail to take account of the powerful drive minority ethnic people can feel to assimilate in order to survive and/or thrive; Even if minority ethnic people could bring about the scale of change some leaders expect of them, are those leaders ready for the level of change required of them in how they lead and how their organisations are run?**

Leaders were asked through the qualitative research about the barriers to change on ethnic diversity. The most frequently mentioned were the lack of capacity and resources, competing priorities, the lack of minority ethnic people studying relevant subjects limiting the pool of candidates and the lack of a clear organisational articulation of why improved ethnic diversity matters.

Only a quarter of CEOs stated that their organisation has set aside financial resources for actions to improve ethnic diversity.

**If organisations do not prioritise time, budget and brain space to achieving what is a profound change for many organisations, how will progress be made?**

The survey asked leaders what actions their organisation had taken to increase ethnic diversity. There was a wide variation in responses, and no consensus even between leaders in the same organisation. This suggests that there is no common understanding within many organisations about the actions currently being taken on this agenda. This finding was explored further in the qualitative research. Leaders were asked how visible

actions to increase ethnic diversity were within their own organisations. Responses varied from “quite visible” to “not visible”. Some leaders did not know.

**If there is little clarity within organisations about what actions are being taken, how can progress be achieved or measured? Given one of the core roles of leaders is to set and communicate organisational vision and progress towards it, how can we equip leaders to play this role in relation to efforts to increase ethnic diversity?**

The Link research showed there is a lot of activity going on in some organisations to address the lack of ethnic diversity. This is to be commended. However, is it the right activity that will lead to change?

**How much of current activity is “busy” work which distracts from addressing the deep rooted systemic, cultural and mindset issues that can be the biggest barriers to change? Given 84% surveyed did not have clear plans, how can progress be made?**

The qualitative research explored the experience of minority ethnic people already within the sector. Most had joined the sector for reasons similar to their white colleagues, namely a passion for the environment and tackling climate change. Some of this passion for nature was rooted in their cultural heritage.

**For the people from minority ethnic backgrounds already interested in nature, what else is stopping them choosing a career in the environment sector?**

Minority ethnic participants were asked whether there is racism in the sector. All participants said yes. A small number gave examples of overt racism, most gave examples of unconscious bias and covert racism. By covert racism we mean racism which is subtle but where the person exhibiting this behaviour is aware of what they are doing, even though they may not admit this. Concerns were outlined about behaviour with racist undertones being dismissed by those to whom it was reported, and there being a lack of repercussions for those who behaved in overtly or covertly racist ways. (See the definition “microinvalidations” in chapter 3.)

**If minority ethnic people already in the sector are experiencing overt and covert racism, why would others wish to join? How will the sector retain the minority ethnic people they have, given their experience of racism?**

Unconscious bias is a high-profile issue on the EDI agenda and is often highlighted as the basis of behaviours and mindsets that disadvantage minoritized groups. Yet according to survey responses:

- 59% of executive leaders, 54% of trustees and 56% of staff had not taken a recognised unconscious bias test
- Use of recognised unconscious bias tests was noticeable higher in organisations already on the journey towards greater ethnic diversity (just under 50%); just over 10% of respondents had taken a recognised unconscious bias test in organisations starting the journey towards greater ethnic diversity

While unconscious bias tests are imperfect, they provide one lens for people to examine their own mindset and behaviours, something which is central to change.

When minority ethnic colleagues were asked what advice they would have for other minority ethnic people thinking of joining the sector, the overwhelming response related to the need to be resilient and persistent.

**How can organisations change minority ethnic people's experience within the sector in ways which would reshape the narrative they tell others thinking of joining the sector to a more positive one?**

One of the practical issues explored with leaders was that of data. Surprisingly, 50% said they either did not collect or did not know if they collected data on job applicants. Given the emphasis many organisations have on attracting diverse candidates, this result is notable. Only a quarter of CEOs whose organisations collect ethnicity data use it regularly to inform decision-making.

**Without data how can organisations plan? If organisations do not use the data they collect, how can their plans and decisions be effective?**

On inclusive behaviours, leaders were asked to score their own behaviour, and the degree to which their organisations' culture demonstrated these behaviours. On average, leaders consistently scored themselves more highly than they rated their organisations in demonstrating inclusive behaviours. Staff rated their organisation's culture consistently lower on inclusive behaviours than their leaders did. The inclusive behaviours explored were drawn from Full Colour's [Inclusion Framework](#).

**If the perceived presence of inclusive behaviour is variable, how will organisations create the consistent culture that will attract and retain minority ethnic people?**

Leaders expressed a high degree of confidence in talking about and taking action on ethnic diversity. At the same time, they and their staff consistently rate learning on EDI lowest in terms of their and their organisations' inclusive behaviours.

**How can leaders be confident taking action on ethnic diversity given their organisations are not prioritising learning? And if leaders are confident in taking action, why are 84% of organisations surveyed lacking a clear plan?**

On their confidence in talking about and taking action on ethnic diversity, leaders rated themselves highest on recruitment, yet staff rated organisations lowest in terms of "actively looks for ways to bring in diverse people".

**What is accounting for the discrepancies between leaders and staff views on diversity? If colleagues do not have a shared understanding of the issues their organisations face, on what foundations are they building for change?**

Staff were asked about their organisations' approaches to EDI. While the overall number of minority ethnic responses to the survey was small, it is worth noting that their rating of their organisations' approaches to EDI were consistently lower than those of their white colleagues. The biggest differences in scores between minority ethnic and white colleagues' scores were on there being equal opportunities for all and on understanding their organisations' approaches on EDI.

**If minority ethnic people already in the sector have less faith than their colleagues in their organisations' approach to EDI, what does that mean for the trust that is central to inclusive cultures, which in turn is key to attracting minority ethnic people to organisations and the sector?**



<sup>i</sup> Racial diversity in environment professionals, SOS, 2022

<sup>ii</sup> A challenging environment: experiences of ethnic minority environment professions, IES 2022

<sup>iii</sup> Changing the world from within: understanding what is helping and hindering the environment sector from becoming more ethnically diverse, Wildlife & Countryside Link, 2022

## Route map commitments:

The following organisations are committed to achieving the outcomes of this route map to create a more ethnically diverse and inclusive environment movement. The steps identified in the route map are to illustrate a possible route—organisations may take different paths to achieve the changes outlined, but we are united in our conviction that change is necessary. We intend to create a more inclusive culture and more inclusive ways of working, to address racism and barriers to progress for people of colour, and to increase our ethnic diversity. We are determined to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to be part of our vital environmental mission.

