

**BLACK
HISTORY
MONTH**

**Colleague
Toolkit**



“It’s great to be celebrating Black History Month together this October. Along with the rest of the UK we’re taking time to reflect on the diverse histories and achievements of Black people - and their extraordinary contributions to society, even in the face of long-standing challenges and injustices.

We’ve all got so much to learn, and this is a great moment to take focussed time to do just that. We’ve packed the month full of resources and events to help you along your way, and I’d encourage you to start a conversation in your teams. As a Co-op we’re taking a bold stand this year to get behind the Black Lives Matters movement and start to use our influence to make a change, both internally and externally.

It’s started with the launch of [Our Commitment to Racial Equality and Inclusion](#) which I hope you’ve seen by now. This set of commitments, from right across the Co-op, are going to kick start a real shift in the way we lead and do business. The hard work starts now in delivering on them. But I’m confident that as we do so, we can make a profound difference in co-operating for a Fairer World.”

Steve Murrells

Contents of the toolkit

Creating an inclusive culture starts with all of us role modelling inclusive behaviours and bringing 'endless inclusion' to life. This means being culturally aware and curious of our colleagues differences. This is the reason we've created this toolkit to help get your conversations started for Black History Month, and support our BAME colleagues:

- How to role model endless inclusion
- What will the month look and feel like?
- What is Black History Month?
- Co-op History
- Co-op today
- Join our Rise colleague network
- What leaders can do to support their teams
- Recommended resources
- Get involved via social



Endless Inclusion

“I am inclusive in my thoughts and actions by showing an active interest in the views, backgrounds and ways of being of my colleagues and the wider community.”

“How can I role model endless inclusion during the month?”

- 1) Update your diversity data in [MyHR](#) by clicking on My Details > Update personal information > Complete diversity monitoring questions
- 2) Attend sessions during the month and explore the new resources available on MyHR > MyLearning under ‘endless inclusion’
- 3) Post your commitment to being more inclusive on Yammer / colleague facebook / twitter and tag at least 1 more colleague to get them to do the same.

What will the month look and feel like?

We'll be running a series of online sessions and providing you with supporting resources. We'll focus on a different theme each week:

Week 1

We'll take a look at Black History and the influence this has on society today.

Week 2

Understanding today's culture and the issues and barriers Black people face.

Week 3

Transition from knowledge into action –
What can we all do to be proactively
Anti-Racist?

Week 4

Celebration of black culture,
highlighting internal role models at Co-
op.

What is Black History Month?

October is Black History Month in the UK and it's been celebrated nationwide every year for nearly 40 years.

The month was originally founded by American historian Carter G Woodson in 1925 to recognise the contributions that people of African and Caribbean backgrounds have made to over many generations.

Now, Black History Month has expanded to include the history of not just Afro-Caribbean Black people, but all Black people in general. It's a time to reflect on the diverse histories taking note of the achievements and contributions to our society today.



Carter G Woodson
(1875 – 1950)

Co-op History - Anti Slavery

Co-op ethics go right back to the cotton boycott of the southern states of America during the American Civil War, around 1862/1863. The founders of CWS publicly supported the boycott even though it affected them financially.

The Rochdale mill workers were among the few in Lancashire to take a stand against the pro-slavery South during the American civil war along with the CWS, despite the impact this had on their livelihoods. The Anti Slavery Society of England also met regularly in the Co-op's meeting rooms.



The sheaf of wheat with the motto 'labor and wait', was the first registered trademark of the CWS.

The slogan appears on the Cooperative Wholesale Society building. You may have noticed this engraved near Federation House.

Co-op Today

Our Commitment to Racial Equality and Inclusion

This document sets out Co-op's commitments to tackling racial inequalities for our colleagues, members, customers and suppliers.

Tackling modern slavery and supporting victims

We have a long history of addressing social injustice and supporting workers' rights. At our 2017 AGM, our members voted overwhelmingly in support of us campaigning on modern slavery and better victim support, and that's what we've been doing ever since.

In April 2017 we launched our Bright Future programme, which offers the opportunity of a paid work placement and a job in our food business to those who have been rescued from modern slavery.

Modern Slavery Report 2019

Our modern slavery and human trafficking statement explains what we did during our 2019 financial year to prevent modern slavery taking place in our business and supply chains.



Rise are a colleague network who build a supportive community for colleagues from Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds.

“Since launching in September 2018 we’ve hosted a BAME themed Hackathon, celebrated Black History Month at the Co-op, promoted empathy and cultural understanding through a series of events. We’ve also work with the Diversity & Inclusion central team as part of a BAME Working Party to improve BAME colleague experiences.”

What we are aiming to achieve

- Enhance cultural empathy across the organisation
- Promote benefits of diversity
- Educate colleagues about cultural and religious experiences

Why we're needed

- Organisations that are diverse and inclusive make more profit.
- Support and encourage all colleagues to bring their whole selves to work
- We want to help the Co-op to move toward being a fully diverse and inclusive organisation



Get in touch with us

[signing up](#) to join us

Emailing us at rise@coop.co.uk

Joining our [Facebook group](#)

What Leaders can do to support their teams:

- Have open conversations with your team and let them know you're aware that October is Black History Month and you support it.
- Familiarise yourself with the new commitments to equality and inclusion and share these with your team.
- Help to educate your team about Black History using the recommended resources in this toolkit. Add this to weekly updates, team briefings etc.
- Encourage participation from your team in the sessions, encourage Ally-ship.
- Encourage your team to share their commitments on social media using #beingcoop

RISE recommended resources:

READ ONLINE:

[Navigating Difficult Conversations About Race and Injustice](#) - Tips to help you have productive and calm discussions with your loved ones.

[Black Lives Matter: If You're White, Pass The Mic](#) – a Forbes article

[Black Lives Matter](#) – web site

[Revealed: the stark evidence of everyday racial bias in Britain](#) – a Guardian article

[Black History Walks – Courses and Resources](#)

[Why I'm no longer talking to white people about race](#) – a Guardian article (audio version also available)

[It's Not About the Burqa review – courageous essays](#) – a Guardian review of this book. An impressive collection looks at Muslim women's lives in modern Britain

[A Love Letter to All the Overwhelmed White People Who Are Trying](#) - article

[How can we get BAME workers to climb the leadership ladder?](#) – article by RSA

[Barriers to BAME employee career progression to the top](#) – CIPD

[Jane Elliott website](#) - internationally known teacher, lecturer, diversity trainer, and recipient of the National Mental Health Association Award for Excellence in Education, exposes prejudice and bigotry for what it is, an irrational class system based upon purely arbitrary factors.

[Windrush – The Passengers](#)

[Windrush and the hostile environment: all you need to know](#)

WATCH:

[From the block to the bank – Jamala Osman](#) (2018)

Jamala Osman tells her life story: overcoming challenging circumstances to take action and charge of her future. She describes her journey of 'spiralling into control' and how music helped her pursue and find her alternative life. Jamala is a 24-year-old social entrepreneur and former Bank Manager at Barclays plc. She was one of the youngest ever bank managers in the country and was tasked with running her first branch at the age of 21. Growing up in Ilford (east London), Jamala grew up surrounded by gang culture and violence. Her mother died when she was 14 and she was thrown out of her father's house. Soon after, depression and anxiety kicked in. Jamala eventually took back control and was compelled to make a change. The dramatic turnaround in her life has inspired her to create pathways and programmes for other individuals struggling with their starts in life and works with educational institutions and corporations to help break down barriers. In her spare time, she mentors young people through her two greatest passions - sport and music. Jamala writes and performs spoken word and rap.

[Not all superheros wear capes-how you have the power to change the world](#) – Nova Reid (2020)

Often described as a force to be reckoned with, Nova Reid is a diversity and anti-racism campaigner and consultant who uses her professional background in mental wellbeing to focus on mindset change, working with organisations and individuals to improve diversity and systems of discrimination from the inside-out. Micro-aggressions

[How to get serious about diversity and inclusion in the workplace](#) – Janet Stovall (2018)

Imagine a workplace where people of all colours and races are able to climb every rung of the corporate ladder -- and where the lessons we learn about diversity at work actually transform the things we do, think and say outside the office. How do we get there? In this candid talk, inclusion advocate Janet Stovall shares a three-part action plan for creating workplaces where people feel safe and expected to be their unassimilated, authentic selves.

[What it takes to be racially literate](#) – Priya Vulchi and Winona Guo (2017)

Over the last year, Priya Vulchi and Winona Guo travelled to all 50 US states, collecting personal stories about race and intersectionality. Now they're on a mission to equip every American with the tools to understand, navigate and improve a world structured by racial division. In a dynamic talk, Vulchi and Guo pair the personal stories they've collected with research and statistics to reveal two fundamental gaps in our racial literacy -- and how we can overcome them.

13th – Ava DuVernay – [available on Netflix](#) (2016) **Black history**

When the 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution was ratified in 1865, former slaves expected freedom for the rest of their lives, as it ruled slavery of any kind unlawful. However, Ava Duvernay explores a loophole, which deems a form of slavery acceptable in the legal form of criminal punishment. Duvernay's documentary "13th" takes a well-informed look at this loophole and administers a researched look at the American incarceration system and how it contributes to systemic racism today.

LISTEN:

Racism at work – podcast Inclusion

Racism at Work, the podcast where Professor Binna Kandola OBE, and a panel of expert guests explore the evolution of modern racism, how that manifests in the workplace and how we can all address it.

FURTHER READING:

I feel you, by Cris Beam (empathy)

Days of decision, Mandela and Truth and Reconciliation

The Speed of Trust, Stephen Covey

Diversity Inclusion and Belonging, by Leila Mckenzie Delis

Speak Up, by Meghan Reitz & John Higgins

Blessed Unrest, by Paul Hawkin

How to be Anti-racist, by Ibram X kendi

Born a Crime, by Trevor Noah

Inspirational Black Biographies, by Michael Henderson

White fragility, by Robin Diangelo

Race,Work, Leadership, by Laura Morgan Roberts

Get involved via Social

Share all the great ways you and your colleagues are celebrating Black History Month and helping realise our commitments using #beingcoop



#beingcoop