

Sense is a national disability charity that supports people with complex communication needs to be understood, connected and valued. Flexible and personalised services empower people to communicate and express themselves – whether through speech or sign, touch or movement, gesture or sound, art or dance.

What did Sense hope to achieve from the Moving Up BAME programme?

Developing current and future leaders has always been important at Sense. Their Equality and Diversity Board was flagging up that empowering staff from BAME communities to develop and progress was an important part of the overall organisational strategy.

Other organisations had been sponsoring staff on this programme and had been delighted with the results, so Sense decided to launch an internal selection process to initially sponsor three people in 2015 and have continued to undertake the process in subsequent years.

Were there any unexpected benefits from the Moving Up BAME programme?

All the participants have experienced positive outcomes for themselves, both professionally and personally. Sense has worked hard to harness this passion, enthusiasm, knowledge and new-found confidence that the participants had gained to understand more about what it could do to be a more diverse employer and embed this into organisational learning.

Finally, as an organisation, would you recommend the Moving Up BAME programme to others?

The programme has increased participants' confidence in their current roles and their roles as ambassadors for BAME issues. We have a greater understanding of the issues faced by some staff from BAME communities.

“We have no hesitation in recommending the programme to others.”

Case studies



Marcia Lawrence, completed in 2016

Starting position: Qualifications Manager

Present position: Apprenticeships Manager

What were the main benefits from the programme?

- An increased appreciation of her history and culture.
- It was a motivational experience allowing her to identify with other people's experiences and issues.

“I am unique and come with qualities that I haven't used to my advantage. I ask questions now, I make contributions and I am more comfortable with networking.”

Errol Cumberbatch, completed in 2016

Starting position: Deputy Manager

Present position: Registered Care Manager

What were the main benefits from the programme?

- Finding and using existing skills and meeting other BAME colleagues.
- Feeling inspired and proud to be a member of the BAME community.

“I feel that I have made the move from can't to can.”

Mandeep Kooner, completed in 2016

Starting position: Policy Standards and Compliance Officer

Present position: Quality, Policy and Complaints Officer

What were the main benefits from the programme?

- It was an opportunity to think about things in a different way and gave her a much better sense of her career and what comes next.
- The programme made Mandeep consider her role as a BAME employee and the value and diversity she could bring to the organisation.

“I now have real life expectations about what it's possible to change.”

Ravinder Sangha, completed in 2017

Present position: Ledger and Contracts Manager

What were the main benefits from the programme?

- Appreciation and awareness of her own strength and weaknesses, making her more proactive in her personal and professional development.

“I learned more about myself politically, culturally and about the organisation.”