

Measures to consider

1. Communication

Communication to the whole organisation is vital.

Consider releasing an organisational statement acknowledging what is happening in the external environment and demonstrating empathy regarding the impact this will be having on colleagues, customers and our wider communities. Is it important that this initial communication is timely – this could be in response to an alert that unrest is likely or immediately following an incident.

A statement from your CEO, board members or exec sponsors, or a Race Champion can convey a powerful message, but this should always be authentic and reflect a genuine commitment to support colleagues and tackle systemic inequities to drive positive change.

When drafting your statement consider the following key points:

- Acknowledge what is occurring, discuss what is happening and acknowledge the racist nature of any unrest. Ignoring this fact could feel disingenuous and colleagues may feel unseen or unheard.

Example: <https://nhsrho.org/news/open-statement-in-response-to-racist-and-violent-protests/>

- Make it clear that your organisation will not tolerate racism within the workplace from colleagues, contractors or members of the public. Linking to any internal policies
- Convey the measures which your organisation is taking to keep colleagues safe.

Example: <https://www.lewissilkin.com/insights/2024/08/08/far-right-riots-how-you-can-support-your-employees>

- Provide guidance to people managers and signpost them regarding support options.
- Outline the process for raising concerns and information on relevant policies that are in place such as anti-bullying and harassment and diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Provide information on what to do if you witness racism at work, including any confidential mechanisms for colleagues to raise concerns, for example, whistleblowing and speak up lines. Consider including messages that encourage reporting to the Police when thresholds are met.
- Signpost any specific measures that provide additional support to colleagues, such as listening through colleague networks or a dedicated help line to support those affected.

- Provide links to relevant support and resources both inside and outside of the organisation (employee assistance programmes, colleague networks, wellbeing resources).
- Reference that your organisation continues to monitor the situation and that the safety of colleagues is paramount.

Where possible, work in collaboration with your employee resource groups, colleague forums and trade union representatives to listen to their concerns and to gain feedback on the content and tone of any draft communications, to ensure that it effectively addresses colleague concerns.

Ensure a regular flow of communication to reiterate key messages and provide updates to colleagues.

Case study from 2024 Riots

NHS England were commended on releasing a quick statement which was developed in collaboration with their employee network and backed by their senior team. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/nhs-response-to-2024-riots/>