**“The NHS recognises the importance for staff, at all levels and from all backgrounds”

Zainab Garba-Sani is a first-year policy and strategy trainee on the Graduate Management Trainee Scheme (GMTS). In her blog, Zainab reflects on a recent Eid reception she attended at number 10 Downing Street with Ali Mohammed, director of GMTS.**

What has a black door, a cat named Larry and rhymes with pen? No. 10.
Here is another fact, this one however you may not know. On Tuesday 11 June, the director of the NHS Graduate Management Training Scheme and a first-year policy and strategy trainee had the privilege of attending an Eid Reception at Downing Street after being invited on behalf of the Prime Minister. The event connected numerous members of the Muslim community who are doing their part to support society.

The diversity in the room was remarkable, ranging from army medics and boxers to young social media influencers and community leaders. Although coming from one community, people varied in all sorts of characteristics such as background, social status, race, gender and age and that made it even more exciting. Hearing about different people’s journeys, motivations and ambitions was not only insightful but inspiring. It was a reminder that, as with the NHS, people’s differences are what makes communities great but ultimately, they are still just that - one community sharing something important in common. Amongst the laughs and great canapés, what struck those two lucky invitees was the impact diversity has. Everyone has their part to play in the NHS and as leaders, they strive to ensure that the NHS not only empowers patients and the public in improving their own health, but also their staff in bringing innovation and enthusiasm with them to work. The NHS recognises the importance for staff, at all levels and from all backgrounds, to speak up against poor practice and push for excellence.

Also emphasising the importance of collective leadership responsibility within health were conversations with colleagues from across the NHS at a pre-reception meet-up, held at the Department of Health and Social Care under the beautiful backdrop that is Westminster. Those in attendance included clinical and non-clinical staff who all work tirelessly to ensure that the best care is provided to patients. No one could help but smile, seeing the passion in the room!

So, what is the take home message? In today’s busy world, it is often easy to get caught up in your own little bubble, oblivious to the wider world around you. But in order to create a better tomorrow, we need to recognise the incredible talent around us and work together to ensure we achieve the best results. On that sunny day at number 10, for those few hours, people stopped being consumed by their own worlds and instead enjoyed sharing their perspectives and celebrating with strangers. Strangers who shared the same values and visions but translated them in different ways. Therefore, every once in a while, remember to stop, reflect, and speak to others within and outside the health system. Try and learn from others and make potential links. We can only really make a difference if we all do it together. That is what those two NHS employees were reminded on the 11 June. And yes, we are those two lucky people – Zainab Garba-Sani and Ali Mohammed.