

A guide to: creating a more diverse workforce

Why it is important to have diversity in your workforce?

Diversity is fundamental to the success and growth of any organisation and it is no longer a 'nice to have' but is a core component of any talent acquisition strategy. Diversity of opinions, experiences, cultures, race, gender, and age within an organisation is critical, and can improve the generation of new ideas and innovation.

Diversity makes good business sense

92% of inclusive employers say employing ex-offenders enhances their reputation and often helps them win new contracts ¹



Increasing workplace diversity can boost the UK economy by £24 billion a year ²



Bilingual employees earn 10% more revenue than other colleagues who only speak one language ³



Limited diversity = limited access to talented individuals

Some organisations are relying on out-of-date recruitment practices with inherent biases which overlook great candidates with different backgrounds and life experiences.

Unconscious or implicit bias means forming a quick opinion about a situation or person without being consciously aware of it. When recruiting someone it is important to use your experience to assess applicants, but a problem arises when you are influenced too heavily by your assumptions, expectations, and preferences. This can lead to some employers overlooking talent.

Research by the Department of Work and Pensions revealed that job applications with a white-sounding name were **74% more likely** to receive a positive response than those with an ethnic minority sounding name.⁴

Meanwhile, a BBC investigation that submitted CVs, which had identical skills and experiences – 'from' two fictitious candidates, 'Adam' and 'Mohamed' to 100 job postings and found that the former was offered **three times more** interview invitations and was contacted by recruiters **twice as many** times.⁵

Stage 1 - eliminating bias

- **Ensure senior management understand the importance of diversity:** have a conversation with management and check they know the social, economic and creative benefits of having a more diverse workforce. Consider signposting them to learning materials like this one.
- **Move beyond HR:** Consider diversity and inclusion as not just a HR responsibility, but a wider organisational responsibility, including the operational manager undertaking recruitment and selection.
- **Create an environment that encourages and promotes inclusion:** consider implementing unconscious bias training for recruiting managers, regular refreshments of induction learning, and charitable giving or fundraising, for example.

Stage 2 – the recruitment process

- **Assess where you recruit:** look at where you advertise your opportunities, is this creating unconscious bias and restricting diversity?
- **Inclusive job specifications:** ensure the correct language is being used and it is likely to attract the right candidates, without being excessively restrictive or excluding a particular group. See legal guidance on this here: www.gov.uk/employer-preventing-discrimination/recruitment
- **Review your selection process:** do you need CVs, complicated application forms and long-winded assessments? Some employers use other techniques including video blogs (Vlogs) for example, which help break down the barriers to face-to-face contact that tend to disadvantage some people.
- **Interviewing:** consider using strength-based interviews that look for what candidates can do rather than can't, drawing on volunteering or work experience type activities, for example.
- **Feedback and offer:** give accurate timescales and feedback to both successful and unsuccessful candidates.
- **Work with the employability and training providers.** The Forward Trust work with diversity groups through the funded provision we deliver. Head to: www.forwardtrust.org.uk/our-services/employment-services/

Stage 3 – retaining talent

- **Review how you induct, onboard and develop candidates:** consider introducing a mentoring or coaching programme if you don't have one already.
- **Consider apprenticeship training for staff** to help them develop their skills and gain qualifications, or other programmes that have funding available through the Government's Adult Education Budget: www.gov.uk/guidance/adult-education-budget-aeb-funding-rules-2020-to-2021
- **Review the London Living Wage and Good Work Standards** now promoted by the London Mayor and in other areas across the UK, and check that your organisation is compliant.

For more information or support on any of the above contact: daniel.cook@forwardtrust.org.uk

1 <https://design102.blog.gov.uk/2019/08/02/designs-to-challenge-myths-about-hiring-ex-offenders/#:~:text=92%25%20of%20inclusive%20employers%20say,a%20positive%20contribution%20to%20society>

2 <https://www.market-inspector.co.uk/blog/2017/05/workplace-diversity-in-the-uk>

3 <https://blog.clearcompany.com/12-diversity-hiring-statistics-rethink-your-decisions#:~:text=Bilingual%20Employees%20Earn%2010%25%20More%20Revenue&text=When%20a%20customer%20who%20does,happen%20that%20much%20more%20smoothly>

4 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/594336/race-in-workplace-mcgregor-smith-review.pdf

5 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-38751307>