A Journey to Inclusion

YOUNG BLACK & TALENTED

A supplementary resource for the Inclusive Employers Toolkit for the construction, technology & digital sectors

MAYOR OF LONDON

ACTION FOR RACE EQUALITY

Contents

> *All Londoners deserve to have the chance to thrive and reach their potential. That's why I established the Workforce Integration Network in 2018 to help young Black men overcome the significant and disproportionate barriers they face when seeking employment and training. Ensuring more Londoners have the chance to make the most of their talents will help us to create a stronger, fairer, more dynamic London for everyone*

Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London

This resource is for every employer.

It's a source of ideas and advice for any organisation committed to workforce equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI).

Use it as a companion guide to both the GLA's **Inclusive Employers Toolkit (IET)**, and WIN best practice toolkits.

The **IET** was launched in September 2020. It provides step-by-step support to employers committed to taking action on workforce EDI. It aims to help employers improve the recruitment, retention and progression of young Black men within the workplace, and more broadly improve employment outcomes for young Black men and people from other underrepresented groups across London.[1]

Whether your organisation is just starting to introduce EDI interventions, or you feel you are already a proficient and competent practitioner of workforce diversity and equality, EDI is a continuous journey, not an end destination. Every employer, at whatever stage of their EDI evolution will find these case studies, insights and recommendations invaluable sources of inspiration and guidance for EDI progress.

While the contributors to this resource are all drawn from the construction and technology sectors, where young Black men and people from diverse backgrounds are markedly underrepresented, any organisation from any sector of the economy will benefit from the learning and good practice you'll read here.

WORKFORCE INTEGRATION NETWORK

Workforce Integration Network (WIN) aims to support and influence business leaders as they tackle inherent workplace structural and institutional barriers to success faced by people in underrepresented groups.

WIN takes an intersectional approach to diversity and inclusion. By this we mean we use both quantitative and qualitative evidence to understand how ethnicity interacts with other characteristics like, age, gender, education, and class in shaping people's experience of work. We also listen to the experience and voices of people from underrepresented groups.

This research gives us a sound footing on which to create tailored interventions that will have a positive impact on the employment and workplace progression for people disproportionately represented in our economy, notably young Black men, Black women, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women, and Black men over 50.[2]

The **IET**, **Design Lab**, Mayor's Skills Academies programme, and the **Mayor's Good Work Standard** are all initiatives that are part of WIN.

Workforce diversity: ethically right, economically right

Embedding EDI within your business doesn't just create a fairer workplace. If there was race equality across the UK labour market, forecasts suggest there would be a £24bn yearly uplift to the economy, representing 1.3% of gross domestic product (GDP).[3]

Research also shows that diverse and inclusive workplaces have happier and more productive employees who feel more engaged in their work and are better able to innovate.[4]

While many employers recognise the compelling case for diversity and reflect this in their rationale for diversifying their recruitment, this has not yet translated into real change. People from Black, Asian and Minoritised Communities are still underrepresented in management positions across all workplaces, and overrepresented in non-management roles in specific sectors, including retail, catering, textiles, and nursing.[5]

For example, the Chartered Institute of Building estimates just 1% or fewer construction employees from Black and minority ethnic groups are in senior roles.[6] Research shows us that while Black, Asian and Minoritised communities are overrepresented in some industries such as the Hospitality and Health sector, they remain significantly underrepresented in senior management roles.[7]

LLDC: BRIDGE BUILDERS FOR THE PARK

As custodians of the business and employment opportunities within the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park beyond 2012, the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) has guided and advised employers across the 2.5-kilometre site on fair employment and inclusive growth. By 2025 the LLDC will have supported 40,000 jobs, many of which have been taken by local people living in the four surrounding boroughs.

Consistently the LLDC approach has focused on positive communication, engaging with businesses in a dialogue that helps them understand how working in partnership with the public sector results in a diverse talent pipeline that will sustain them into the future.

Much of this work sees the LLDC take the role of 'bridge builder'. They connect employers with learning and skills providers who help hire and train staff, and with a focus on employing people from underrepresented communities. Intervention policies include setting and tracking hiring targets, regular reporting, corrective action to stay on goal, and a mandate for every employer to pay the London Living wage.

Labour market equality makes us all stronger

London's economic growth is being held back by labour shortages. And several key sectors, notably construction, has an ageing workforce that needs replacing with younger talent.

Recognising what support people from underrepresented groups need to get into the workforce, and progress within it, is therefore a win-win opportunity. Rebalancing the profile of the city's labour market ensures everyone gets equal access to employment, and helps drive broader economic growth, strength, and prosperity.

Employers have a key role in accessing, developing, and progressing untapped, latent talent. We know that Black men are underrepresented in the workforce because proportionately they experience higher rates of long-term unemployment. The Annual Population Survey (APS) for 2017-2019 shows 3.7% of Black men were long-term unemployed compared with 0.9% of White men.[8]

Despite good educational attainment, the trends are similar for Black university graduates. The Labour Force Survey (LFS) for 2021 found unemployment for Black graduates aged 16-64 was 7%, against a rate of 2.7% for white graduates of the same age.[9]

CLOUDREACH TAKES POSITIVE ACTION

Cloudreach is the world's leading independent multi-cloud services company, operating in eight different countries and working with global tech giants.

Commitment from senior leadership has been key in supporting a whole EDI culture shift within Cloudreach, particularly in recruitment. As part of its transformation, the company used the Inclusive Employers Toolkit and grew sufficiently confident to apply positive action in hiring and training new talent. A particular target for recruitment is young Black men aged 18-24, as this group presents highly in unemployment statistics.

Cloudreach has set up a Talent Academy in partnership with Amazon Web Services, helping to foster a more diverse and inclusive technical community. It offers a two-year programme of fast-track, hands-on learning to help candidates from diverse communities launch their technical career in cloud computing. Of the first Talent Academy intake, more than half identified as non-White.

Among encouraging results from Cloudreach's positive action approach is feedback from clients who happily receive the trainees on their projects, recognition of the complementary skills and experience they bring to the workplace, and trainees moving on to become billable members of the Cloudreach team.

Black graduates aged 21 to 30 were also finding it harder to gain traction in senior management and professional occupations – some 48.7% were in high skilled positions compared with 60.9% of white graduates of the same age group.[10]

In recent years the Covid pandemic and the surge of insecure 'gig economy' jobs have both negatively impacted on the representation of people from Black, Asian and Minoritised Communities in the workplace, making the need for inclusive employment practices more urgent. The 2021 APS found 9% of Black men in insecure employment, against a rate of 5.3% for White British men and women. For Black women the insecure employment rate was 11.2%.[11]

For young Black London men the divisions remain stark; in 2021 the APS found more than twice as many young male Black Londoners out of work - 37.4% - compared with 17.5% of male and female young White Londoners.[12]

Cloudreach Talent Academy

GLA: DIVERSITY TOPS THE AGENDA

As a leading advocate for diversity and inclusivity, not just for employment but every aspect of life and living in London, the GLA knows it must lead from the front.

Following discussions in 2020 between the corporate management team and the organisation's in-house Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Staff Network, the GLA commissioned an external review to gain an independent perspective on what it needed to do to change key practices and evolve as a fairer, more equal workplace.

The result was 42 recommended actions, which the leadership team accepted in full. There is a now a three-year plan to advance a diversity agenda that includes hosting open discussion about race and inequity, closing pay gaps between different groups of staff, offering improved pastoral care to Black employees, and evaluating recruitment and promotion practices so that the GLA, at all levels of its organisation, more closely reflects the demography of the London population.

It is a bold agenda that is reaping immediate results while laying firm future foundations for a more inclusive GLA workforce.

YOUR EDI JOURNEY

Employers contributing to this resource consistently emphasised that developing a workplace that truly supports EDI demands time, commitment and action.

The case studies in this resource affirm this view. Above all, employers told us that an organisation must show EDI leadership that inspires cultural change throughout the business.

We have grouped the experiences and reflections of our contributing employers into the following topic areas, to help focus the discussion of the approaches to reviewing and putting in place positive EDI interventions.

These are:

- Leadership
- Cultural change
- Data and targets
- Impact
- People
- Planning and strategy
- Processes
- Visibility
- Voice

CONSTRUCTION COMPANY BREAKS GROUND ON DIVERSITY

Named one of The Times Top 50 Employers for Women, UK inspirational STEM Employer of the year by UK Research and Innovation, and the best place to work for LGBTQ equality by the Human Rights Campaign – international engineering and construction giant Jacobs is an outstanding trailblazer for EDI leadership and company culture.

It is a corporate commitment that starts at the top: all senior leaders have signed a public inclusion and diversity commitment and accountability statement 'Together Beyond', and each sponsors and mentors two diverse employees, one of whom must be Black.

Jacobs has now launched an Advancing Justice and Equality charter, with actions and measurable objectives set to drive forward the company's continuing EDI efforts. Overseeing the action plan was a team of employees collaborating alongside Jacobs' board of directors and executive leadership team. Together they agreed three key commitments:

1. Amplify culture of belonging.

2. Recruit, retain and advance Black employees based on merit.

3. Contribute to structural change in the broader society.

LEADERSHIP

Your leadership philosophy must underline how EDI is not a 'nice to have', but a strategic imperative. Success can only come from senior leaders, board members and executive teams articulating, influencing and owning the EDI narrative for your business.

For example, at Jacobs, core values are embedded from the chief executive downwards. Senior leadership and board level commitment is shown through chairing and sponsorship of employee networks across the entire organisation, UK and internationally, and at different levels of the business.

Responsibility for EDI must rest with an identified senior person with resources and people power to drive change. It is not enough to expect or demand that staff carry out diversity and inclusion work on top of their existing roles. Where people volunteer to take on specific EDI responsibilities informally in working hours, it should be recognised formally.

DIVERSITY FOR PROFUSION: A MORAL IMPERATIVE AND COMMERCIAL NECESSITY

As a business-to-business consulting agency, Profusion helps clients increase their competitive edge by strategic use of data science to reach and retain customers.

A large proportion of their work rests on creating algorithms and artificial intelligence programming.

However, unintentional bias among programmers can subtly but importantly influence how they develop data science. Having a diverse workforce is therefore crucial to Profusion's success and product reliability; it helps reduce subconscious bias in their data science, and makes them a more successful, stronger business.

Profusion is growing its pipeline of talent through their own Data Academy, which trains the next generation of data scientists and engineers, and seeks to attract people currently underrepresented in the industry.

They've also overhaled their hiring procedures with more representative interview panels, targeted recruitment channels, and debiased selection methods.

Profusion recognises this is a long-term strategy, but their growing, diverse team now comprises people of 22 different nationalities speaking 30 languages and aged between 19 to 60, proof that they're working hard to make the right changes.

Profusion team

CULTURAL CHANGE

EDI needs to evolve and grow within your organisation so that it becomes natural practice. It should be a central, inherent part of every business strategy, ethos, and value, not something acted on as an afterthought or 'bolted-on' as a separate initiative or a series of reactive afterthoughts.

There is well-established evidence that diversity in teams improves cultural competency and leads to better decisions. Organisations need to aspire to a balanced representation of people that reflect the diversity of their local community, stakeholders, suppliers, customers, or service users.

Good business practice should also foster a culture of meritocracy where the right person for the right job is the one that gets chosen.

Think about…

An organisation's culture often remains unchanged for years, with accepted practices people are reluctant to question. Introducing EDI to your business may be uncomfortable for some staff, triggering discomfort and fear. Employees may worry that they'll say the wrong thing, be nervous about being challenged, or they may cite previous bad experiences. Others may lack confidence in, or understanding of, EDI, and express concerns about what it means for their job or those of their colleagues.

Realistically it may take years for your organisation to recruit and progress people from underrepresented groups and create a fully balanced senior management team. And those people who are promotion pioneers may feel they are 'the few', carrying a burden of representing all other people yet to follow them.

If this is the case for your business, you may wish to consider using neuroscience and behavioural science approaches like Diversity of Thought, making it part of your training, policy and programme development.

Diversity of thought creates neutral, safe and judgement-free space to share experiences and ask questions, drawing together people of different backgrounds, cultures, and personalities. Most importantly, you can use these times to encourage or suggest new and different ways of doing things that may challenge traditional practices and positively disrupt or interrupt long-standing company culture.

Diversity of Thought does not replace diverse representation, but it can be instrumental in your EDI journey. It can potentially:

- Alleviate the sense of burden on a person within a group or team who is from an underrepresented community.
- Prevent or avoid groupthink.
- Overcome subjective overconfidence and encourage intellectual curiosity.
- Help your organisation listen to underrepresented opinions.
- Increase awareness of unconscious biases and look beyond stereotypes.
- Prevent Confirmation Bias.
- Help decisions and actions to be considered through multiple views and positions.

DATA AND TARGETS

EDI data provides managers with insights on how well strategic changes are impacting on company culture, and for measuring progress and change over time. It also plays a critical part in retaining and progressing staff.

An essential part of a transparent EDI strategy is regularly collecting and publishing data on gender and ethnicity workforce pay gaps. And for this information to feed into actions that will help level the playing field where it is clear there are evident imbalances. Doing so will improve fairer representation and meritocratic progression within your workforce and help with staff satisfaction, leading to improved wellbeing and employee retention rates.

Managers should be able to use the data you gather on pay gaps to pinpoint employees who are underpaid against colleagues who have similar roles or responsibilities, whether that's within a team or in other parts of the business. If there are evident patterns of unfairness, senior leaders should investigate to expose the root cause of any underlying issues.

Keon Simms
project manager, Jacobs

photography ©Luke Agbaimoni

It is important to capture and analyse diversity data to learn what groups of people are underrepresented in your organisation, and why. You need to find out what types of jobs they hold and at what level, and their opportunities for progression and representation at senior management or board level. You will need to explore all areas of your business: recruitment and talent sourcing, employee life cycle, strategy, behaviours, governance, business processes, performance management, learning and development, leadership, and communication and marketing.

Collecting sensitive data can be difficult, especially with general data protection regulation (GDPR). However, by being transparent you can build trust in the purpose of the data, and this will also help gain the candid insights and reliable analytics you need to plan your organisation's EDI journey.

The Workforce Data Equality Guide (2018), commissioned by the Workforce Integration Network (WIN), emphasises the importance of data collection to help organisations act with confidence on the disparities facing underrepresented people

in recruitment, retention and progression, and experiences of racism, discrimination, bullying and harassment.

In creating this good practice resource, the employers who gave us their views spoke about the natural next step after collecting data - setting targets. Quality data gave them the foundations from which they could set out clearly and justifiably EDI targets that were stretching yet achievable for their business.

Setting targets also helps with assessing the resources and capacity needed to see the change required. Some of our employers also said that the IET has helped them focus and reinforce company EDI strategy by looking at data not only for young Black men, but also their company's intent for hiring Black talent.

'PREFER TO SAY' CAMPAIGN AIDS DATA

Canary Wharf Group (CWG), a property development and management company based in the regenerated docklands area of east London, is rolling out a holistic strategy to evolve the company as a respected, inclusive employer.

As an immediate priority the company is focusing on gaining the best quality data it can on the socio-economic backgrounds of its employees. These analytics will help develop interventions aimed at closing gaps on staff attraction, retention, and promotion rates between different ethnic groups. CWG has purposely reconfigured its ethnicity categories to match the GLA's definitions, and has benchmarked results against the last Census.

Aware that gathering personal characteristic data is often a sensitive issue, the company has developed a campaign called 'Prefer to Say'. This is helping foster trust among staff, explaining why the data and its accuracy is a crucial part of the company's future as a diverse and inclusive employer.

The success of 'Prefer to Say' has helped CWG generate more granular detail about employees' ethnicity, helping pinpoint the specific challenges some people encounter more acutely at certain points in their career lifecycle. CWG has used these insights to tailor customised management accelerator development programmes. Working with a specialist learning provider, CWG can now offer bespoke modules to support employee training, better meeting the needs of staff from Black, Asian and Hispanic backgrounds.

The management development topics include business leadership, adaptability, business strategy and self-leadership. They are also global in scope, meaning that staff have opportunities to network not only with peers within CWG but also outside organisations, sharing experiences and ideas. It was only through the very specific data captured through 'Prefer to Say', that it was possible to form such a reasoned, validated business case for a customised approach

WHAT IS POSITIVE ACTION (PA) AND WHEN CAN YOU USE IT?

Many leaders remain hesitant about PA, despite its legality.

PA comprises steps an employer can take to encourage people from groups with different needs, or with a past track record of disadvantage or low participation, to apply for jobs. The job is still given to the best candidate, regardless of whether they have a particular characteristic or not.

Using PA must always be proportionate to need. UK equality law allows PA in recruitment before or at the application stage. It is not the same as Positive Discrimination or Affirmative Action, which are both illegal.

An employer must demonstrate a need to make use of PA. To do this the employer must have at least twelve months' data showing how defined groups of people are underrepresented in a particular area of work. The purpose of, and the need for, PA must be clearly communicated.

PA can help encourage people from underrepresented groups to apply for jobs, or to support people with protected characteristics perform to the best of their ability.

Read the 'Positive Acton Guide for London's Chief Executives'.

Examples of positive action include:
- Targeted recruitment advertising perhaps by using specific media for job ads where that media has a known following among an underrepresented group of people.
- Using PA statements in recruitment adverts, for example stating that the employer welcomes applications from young Black men.
- Offering pre-application training where this meets a need. For example, CV development or pre-interview test practice workshops targeting young Black men.
- Offering mentoring schemes.
- Taking part in careers fairs that will attract attendance from your target underrepresented groups.
- Holding open days and promoting them to underrepresented communities.
- Signing up to initiatives like 10,000 Black interns.

IMPACT

Once your organisation has agreed clear and realistic qualitative and quantifiable targets, you need to be equally transparent about accountability and reporting. Who is responsible for putting in place change at every stage of the strategy or roadmap?

Being open means not only reporting on successful progress, but also explaining any shortfalls in reaching objectives and why and what will be done to get your business back on track. Honesty in accountability achieves a better positive impact than trying to dodge, hide or conveniently forget about missed milestones.

Consider using the RACI matrix approach – responsible, accountable, consulted and informed.

Think about…

Always be clear and transparent and speak openly about your organisation's EDI aims.

Speak to staff face-to-face and remove barriers. Make frank disclosure as easy as possible, so that staff feel confident in talking candidly. If you discover obstacles or sticking points, work with employees to find solutions. You will reap the most dependable data by prioritising and addressing head-on staff disquiet about surveys and personal information.

Using the Workforce Data Equality Guide will help you pinpoint key causes of inequality in your business, target and prioritise EDI initiatives, and measure their effectiveness.

Arinze David Nwanna
Student at Imperial College (AMOS Bursary)

photography ©Luke Agbaimoni

LLDC: HONESTY WITH INTERNAL CHALLENGES

One of the primary aims of the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) is to encourage employers and businesses at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in London's east end to be fair and equal employers, and offer job and training opportunities to people from underrepresented groups.

In March 2022, a gender and ethnicity pay gap report published as part of the Mayor's commitment to equalities and inclusion revealed that the LLDC itself had a lower proportion of employees from ethnic minority backgrounds at higher grades, and an issue with underrepresentation of women in the organisation's higher management. These findings showed that the LLDC had its own equality and inclusion shortfalls, and it needed to take immediate steps to start redressing these imbalances.

Paolo Nistri, the LLDC's Head of Inclusive Growth, Skills and Social Value, commented:

"As well as expecting high standards for equality and inclusion from our employers on the Park, we recognised that we too had a responsibility to lead and focus on these aims internally. Driven by the revealing data, we took steps to get our house in order."

The management team, led by the Chief Executive Officer Lyn Garner, strongly advocated for a formal series of action plans and a way to track progress.

The first proposal was to have flat diversity targets. For example, half the workforce to be women, and half the workforce to comprise people from Black, Asian and Minoritised backgrounds, and then map progression against grades up through the organisation.

However, because the LLDC is set to change from its current organisational structure in 2025, and arrangements for its successor body had yet to be finalised, it was clear that such ambitious targets, while desirable, could not be achieved in such a short space of time.

Instead, the LLDC made firm target commitments. Of the vacancies marketed, measures were put in place to maximise the number of jobs taken up by people from an underrepresented group, for example, either a woman, someone with a disability, or from a minority ethnic background.

The organisation commissioned Diversifying.io to review its recruitment procedures and ensure improved accessibility for diverse and underrepresented communities, and to provide training for hiring managers. There is now also a Black, Asian and Minoritised colleague group, and a representative sits on the exec management team to help shape and critique corporate policy and practice.

Think about…

How you can influence your suppliers to become more inclusive, both in their workforce profile and in the way they do business.

You can:

- Ask probing EDI questions of all your potential suppliers, right at the start of a tender process. Ensure responses are evaluated by someone in your business who is well informed about EDI, so they can measure and a score responses authoritatively and fairly.

- Make sure what you are asking for is appropriate to the size of the supplier's business, so that smaller organisations, often led by Black, Asian, or Minoritised Communities, are not excluded. If necessary, tailor your targets or goals so they are ambitious but achievable for different sizes of company. This will help make a more equal, fairer competitive tender process.

- Ensure that your potential suppliers show they understand your core values and principles – confidence that you share the same vision will result in a more fruitful working relationship.

If you want to appoint more diverse suppliers, but don't feel they are yet ready to work with you, then grow your future diverse supplier pipeline through training or good practice workshops that will help their development. You can do the same thing with potential suppliers who need to work on their EDI.

Think about…

How you will share your EDI strategy, and update people within and outside your organisation on progress towards targets. You can use:

- Annual EDI reports
- Reviews of EDI charters and statements – keep them fresh
- Equal pay gap reports
- Staff survey results
- Diversity monitoring reports
- Case studies
- Good practice platforms

TFL: ON TRACK FOR SUPPLIER DIVERSITY

Transport for London (TfL) runs the day-to-day operation of the city's public transport network and manages its main roads. It is one of the world's largest transport systems, with the Tube alone handling up to five million passenger journeys a day.

TfL works with hundreds of different providers, from those delivering large scale construction contracts, to training teams providing speed awareness courses. Many of their service providers will meet with customers, so are effectively also the face of TfL. Therefore it's important that every business hired shows understanding of EDI, and a commitment to the same ambitions of making the workplace fairer and more equal for everyone.

Throughout TfL's entire supply chain there is a strong focus on EDI. Every tender has EDI requirements, asking each competing business to provide information about their in-house diversity. Larger organisations seeking to secure contracts valued at £5m and above must show the greatest evidence, including an EDI Action Plan.

TfL acknowledges that EDI is a progressive, evolving journey for every business. It wants to see how potential supply partners plan to improve and develop their EDI plans over the course of a contract.

TfL will check and review progress against targets, and takes a supportive approach to help employers stay on track. For example, TfL has co-funded fairness, inclusion and respect training for 64 main suppliers.

While not mandatory, companies with TfL contracts, or who are seeking to tender, are encouraged to use the Mayor's Inclusive Employers Toolkit. It also recommends suppliers carry out regular ethnicity pay gap reporting, and gender pay gap reporting if this is not already a legal requirement because of company size.

Above all TfL is looking for genuine EDI commitment, and will look beneath EDI statements or pledges to discover what tangible work is in progress. So, if a tendering organisation not only states it is using the Inclusive Employer's Toolkit or has signed up to the Mayor's Good Work Standard, but also shows how it seeks to improve during the contract period, this will be seen as a good signal that EDI is a true strategic priority.

Always ask yourself how you will measure success, both for your own organisation and your suppliers. EDI is a continuous journey, and this means celebrating good achievements and progress, while constantly striving for improvement. Suggested ways to do this include:

- Asking for 360 feedback from your suppliers.
- Creating Awards, like Employers of Choice or Employees' Choice.
- Continuous engagement - keep communicating through events, seminars and training sessions
- Continuous sharing of good practice and EDI strategies, especially as they evolve and change with new thinking
- Promoting diversity on your company website - ensure this is authentic, and not simply generic statements of inclusion and diversity policy.
- Showing evidence of promotion of diverse people in leadership teams, both within your business and among your suppliers.

NO STOP ON DIVERSITY FOR HIGH SPEED TWO

High Speed Two (HS2) is Europe's largest infrastructure project, creating a new north-south railway for England. At peak construction, 34,000 people will be involved in its design and build. For HS2 Limited, the non-government body charged with overseeing the scheme, this presents a huge opportunity to influence primary suppliers and subcontractors using contractual leverage to achieve EDI goals.

At every stage of the procurement process, from pre-qualification questionnaires and invitations to tender through to onsite operations and regular reports on progress, EDI is an integral feature of HS2's development and each phase of the project has diversity recruitment targets.

It is an approach that will bring lasting EDI values and practices to the construction and engineering industries. To date 18% of the HS2 supply chain workforce comprises people from ethnic minority communities, compared to the construction industry average of 5%. And more than 2,200 previously unemployed people have secured employment for at least 26 weeks, while 950 new apprenticeships of a total project target of 2,000 have been created.

PEOPLE

Ensuring all staff are respected, included, and recognised is central to any EDI strategy. This approach starts from recruitment, through the hiring process, and continues when your selected candidates join your organisation and you want to keep them as part of your established workforce.

To do this you need to continually review the efforts your organisation is making. Do people from Black, Asian and Minoritised Communities agree that your business is an attractive potential employer? What preparations or changes will you make to ensure newly-recruited people from underrepresented groups feel they belong and are part of one team? And, once in post, what do you need to do to support their progress and promotion opportunities, or tackle any barriers that may prevent them realising their potential?

Tracking the diversity of your workforce, including who is moving up and through your organisation, plus measuring the sense of inclusion that your employees say they feel, are important indicators of how well your EDI strategy is achieving tangible change.

LENDLEASE: RECRUIT, RETAIN, PROGRESS

Global investment and real estate group Lendlease has some 1,000 UK employees. It has adopted strong diversity objectives, not just for recruitment, but for retention and progression of staff that will contribute to a more balanced and representative workforce.

To support Lendlease in these goals, the organisation has formed a supportive network of alliances with organisations like Black Professionals in Construction, Stonewall, Disability Confident and Women into Construction.

Above all, Lendlease believes an inclusive team culture rests on listening to staff and providing opportunities to share experiences. It also has a positive approach to testing social value programmes – starting small and finding out what works in different communities, with a willingness to learn through experience.

Many companies are now running regular surveys to measure the impact of diversity interventions. For example, Jacobs and Informatech are increasingly using staff polls to assess how teams are developing and progressing with EDI, and to help gauge employees' sense of inclusion. And Balfour Beatty is using diversity data collected for promotion pools to start conversations about the impact of decision-making and candidate selection.

In another approach to strengthening diversity and retaining staff, Jacobs has identified dedicated champions within the business. Their role it is to help foster a sense of 'belonging' among employees, and identify and support talented staff who can progress and realise their full potential. Similarly, Mace has embedded an inclusive, meritocratic culture where staff feel there are no limits to progression if they work hard.

> *"We made changes to our job advert, to make it more open and inclusive. Instead of looking for unicorns and very specific profiles, we opened up ourselves in terms of what we were looking for, what's really important. In all cases, our interview process was still at the same standard - everybody was judged on merit - we just tried to get applications from a broader group than we typically would."*
>
> POONAM FLAMMARION,
> HEAD OF TALENT ACADEMY,
> CLOUDREACH

PLANNING & STRATEGY

The employer case studies we've featured in this resource highlight the passion to create both a more representative workforce, and a more inclusive work environment. They will help you think about your own EDI journey.

While many employers recognise the business case for diversity and inclusion, EDI work often remains a series of reactive initiatives. This results in disjointed effort, rather than a single strategic mission that embeds EDI throughout the business, embracing client and staff relationships, service delivery, product innovation and wider engagement with local diverse communities.

Think about…

Is your EDI more a series of initiatives than strategic approach?

Create a roadmap - one that embeds EDI into the core of your business and includes:

- interactions with clients
- HR practices and staff relationships
- Service delivery
- Product designs and innovations
- stakeholder engagement
- Communication and marketing
- Engagement with the local diverse communities

PROCESSES

Creating a more diverse workforce is only one aspect of an employee's experience. True inclusion does not come from diversity alone – true inclusion is about feeling you belong.

Bias exists in all of us, and is a natural by-product of everything we have been exposed to throughout our lives. It starts with the messages we receive from our parents or guardians, family members and peers, images and narratives, social media and algorithms, our life and lived experiences, world events and politics, our education, and the places we've lived.

All this forms our socialisation, and plays a big part in how we think, react and behave. While many of us do not consciously or explicitly act out our biases, the ramifications of implicit or unconscious bias have been embedded into processes, team and organisational cultures and systems over time.

These unconscious biases, often played out through micro-slights or micro-behaviours, are often ignored and allowed to manifest. The result is 'unconscious' reactions.

Think about…

How you get feedback. The safer and more confidential you make the real or virtual space for staff to share their views, the better understanding you'll get of what's going on under the surface of your organisation. Consider running anonymous 'pulse surveys' across your workforce - it will help your senior managers make better informed decisions and reduce or eliminate any highlighted patterns of discrimination or bias within a particular branch or area of your business.

Senior managers need to help employees understand how individuals are affected by unconscious bias, and what actions continue to reinforce bias. One way to build awareness and address unconscious bias is to encourage every employee to review, question and analyse their own personal biases and assumptions.

Both leaders and employees should be trained and encouraged to keep a 'thought' journal to process their own bias. Recording instances of stereotyping as they occur help people become more aware as they start to make those biases more conscious. This will help each person observe when they begin to stereotype individuals, and to refute and replace bias.

> *"It [inclusive culture] is something that obviously is wider than race. It's about using an intersectional lens in everything that we do. That's the culture that we are going to try to put together. I don't know when exactly we're going to be in that position - we're not there yet."*
>
> CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYER

KEEP THE CONVERSATION FLOWING

Employers who helped develop this resource, while at different stages of their EDI journey, referred to external drivers as influencing them or being a dynamic catalyst for change. Notably, George Floyd's death in 2020 and the rise of the global Black Lives Matter movement were pivotal events that propelled EDI to the top of many boardroom agendas.

For some businesses, it reinforced the importance of their EDI mission, particularly those who'd already started their journey. For other organisations, it influenced and prioritised their commitment. For example, many construction companies signed up to the Audeliss and Involve Open Letter.

However, LinkedIn data shows that while companies still talk about diversity, the conversation has slowed and is faltering. Businesses need to continue their public dialogue, matched by impactful strategies for lasting culture, behaviour and mindset changes within their organisation.

Think about…

What processes does your organisation have in place to acknowledge and manage the impact of bias and micro-aggressions on employees from Black, Asian and Minoritised Communities? Repeated experiences of bias and micro-aggression over time can accumulate trauma, resulting in demotivation, low self-esteem and withdrawal from engagement.

Company policies and how they are acted on – especially those dealing with internal issues - can play a big part in perpetuating existing equity issues, often leading to poor staff retention. This is particularly so when policies have been in place for many years without review.

Senior managers should evaluate how policies might allow or perpetuate discrimination like racism or sexism. Rethinking policies and their accompanying procedures can tackle replace negative processes or interactions with more positive ones, helping an organisation develop a more equitable workplace culture.

Also consider how wellbeing is part of supervision and appraisal sessions. These are apt opportunities to talk about the importance of unconscious bias, giving employees the confidential space to raise instances where they feel they have received the effects of unconscious bias or witnessed its impact on a colleague.

Put processes in place to raise awareness of micro-aggressions and their impact on people, how to recognise these incidents when they happen, and how to raise and resolve them through talking.

Are all managers in your organisation clear and confident about the processes to follow when an employee shares an experience or exposure to implicit or unconscious bias?

VISIBILITY

There are multiple perspectives to think about when we reflect on visibility and EDI.

Internal communication and clear messaging are imperative. Regular updates must reach everyone in your organisation. Who takes responsibility for this and what channels do you use?

Often EDI work is progressing at different speeds or parts of the business. If you don't communicate effectively what is happening where, some employees may naturally feel that there isn't anything going on to advance the EDI journey. This may result in despondency, or an assumption that intention is not being matched by action.

It is also important to 'walk the talk' and lead by example. Every manager must promote EDI practice in all aspects of their work and conduct.

Companies may come under fire for promoting EDI while their senior leadership team lacks representation of their broader staff demographics. If this is the case, what arrangements do you have to ensure your governance committee hears the views of your staff from Black, Asian and Minoritised Communities? And what steps, like diversity of thought, do you take to address unconscious bias within your leadership circles?

How you present your business to the outside world is also important, from the neighbourhoods where you are based, to the international investment community. Does your marketing, branding and website content reflect your EDI values? How are you announcing your EDI commitment to your existing audiences and do your messages sound authentic?

The employers contributing to this resource placed a high importance on promoting their EDI commitment through education and outreach programmes. Initiatives include community contact with schools, colleges and careers advice services. These links are proving instrumental in starting to break down barriers and employee stereotypes for industries like construction and technology where many people from diverse groups are currently underrepresented.

Think about…

Starting young! Employers are recognising that their future growth and success depends not only on what the next generation knows about their industry but also what it *feels* about it.

Research has found young people are now making career choices at a much earlier age than previously. In response, and knowing they need to win both the hearts and minds of young people, many businesses have started earlier interventions with students. This includes working with primary schools to introduce their industry to young minds, and talk about the opportunities available.

This is an ideal way to bring positive messages and role models to young people before rigid, negative perceptions set in. For example, construction companies can talk about the different high skilled and well-paid jobs they have, and how these positions are open to everyone. Or digital businesses can go into schools and talk about tech careers, openly appealing to both boys and girls. This outreach work includes not only talking to young learners, but also those who inform and influence them, including parents, teachers and career advisers.

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY TRAINING BOARD (CITB) TACKLES AFFINITY BIAS

As a beacon of change, the industry-funded CITB helps construction companies attract new talent, create and fund opportunities for people's skills development, and encourage best practice in hiring and training.

One of the main EDI challenges for the industry is its historical dependence on informal recruiting. This persists because the dominant profile of the industry, particularly on site and at management levels, tends to be White and male. Informal recruiting practices leads to affinity bias – essentially 'more of the same', perpetuating a reliance on one group of people at the expense of those underrepresented in the industry.

CITB is working to broaden the way construction companies hire and attract talent from more diverse groups. It is an advocate for the Fairness, Inclusion and Respect (FIR) project, led by the Civil Engineering Contractors Association, and encourages industry members to become FIR Ambassadors. CITB also organises taster programmes and 'open door' schemes to engage potential employees and reshape negative perceptions about industry pay and conditions.

The organisation has also developed tools to support more diverse approaches to hiring people from underrepresented groups, including a Talent View portal and an inclusive recruitment course created to support employers remove potential bias within their hiring practices. Find out more.

VOICE

Almost all the organisations contributing to this resource have set up mechanisms to hear the experiences of underrepresented groups. These include listening sessions, and affinity or working groups.

To give these authority, they must be supported by a diversity champion or a senior executive team member. It also needs to be acknowledged publicly that these groups are valuable to the organisation, and that they take time and effort to support and nurture properly, especially when these are voluntary roles taken on informally.

Be mindful these groups do not become 'talking shops', with words failed by subsequent inaction. What emerges from listening sessions must feed into your strategy and overarching EDI Roadmap. Think about a co-production approach to gather and report on what comes out of these sessions; this will help ensure every participant has a stake in what is said.

REVERSE MENTORING

Property company Canary Wharf Group (CWG) has set up a junior board comprising employee representatives with different lived experiences including ethnicity, gender, disability, and social mobility characteristics. Each member of the junior board reverse mentors a member of the main management board. CWG sees the junior board as a great opportunity for the next generation to share their views with senior leaders, providing direct and frank first-hand accounts of current social issues and impacts.

REFERENCES

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[7]Workforce Integration Network, an analysis of intersectionality and underrepresentation within London's labour market, Work Advance and Institute for Employment Studies, 2022

[8]APS pooled dataset 2017-2019

[9]GOV.UK, 2021, Graduate Labour Market Statistics, 2020 (* unemployment data for graduates 21-30 was unavailable for Ethnicity Black this year)

[10]For info, High Skilled Employment – a job categorised within the Standard Occupation Classification (SOC) codes 1-3. SOC 1-3 includes managers, directors and senior officials; professional occupations and associate professional and technical occupations.

[11]Annual Population Survey; * As these estimates are derived from the Annual Population Survey in 2021, they should be treated with caution, as the labour market went through massive disruption because of the pandemic. The introduction of the 'furlough' scheme may have had knock-on effects on those in insecure employment.

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