

Positive Actions in Recruitment Guidance

Introduction

Diversity, inclusion and equity are a crucial element of any successful business or organisation. Managing diversity, inclusion and equity in the workplace requires organisational systems, processes and policies that are inclusive and that the culture of the organisation and ways of working that reflect a desire for fairness is embedded throughout. It's about creating a work environment for individuals, including Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic community members to achieve their full potential and this is about valuing, recognising, respecting, embracing the whole person.

At the Race Equality Hub our aim is to support employers, partners and stakeholders to build diversity, inclusion and equity into their roles as an employer and as a service deliverer and to drive change to support the economic advancement of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic community members.

There are a number of positive actions that employers can take to create inclusive organisations and to embed and make visible their commitment to offer opportunities for growth, development and advancement for all employees.

1. What are Positive Actions in employment?

Positive actions are important tools that can be deployed by organisations in the fight against discrimination and disadvantage. It involves the use of deliberate and intentional interventions to enable organisations to overcome the structural discrimination that limit opportunities in employment for Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic communities. At the Race Equality Hub, we are aware that there are many issues that may impact on an individual's employability journey including health and wellbeing, housing, hate crimes or education, therefore racial justice within this context is paramount to the overall vision of the hub.

2. Why do we need Positive Actions in Employment

Positive actions enable evidence based and targeted interventions to be provided for but not limited to Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic Communities to level the playing field within employment. Proportionate action can be taken that aims to reduce disadvantage, meet different needs and increase participation. The Combined Authority (CA) embarked on an extensive evidence-gathering exercise to better understand the key features of racial inequality and to provide an evidence base to inform our approach. The finding highlighted decades of persistent racial discrimination have caused significant disadvantage to many of the LCR's residents based on their race and ethnicity (ONS Annual Population Survey, 2018).

It suggested that people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds are less likely to:

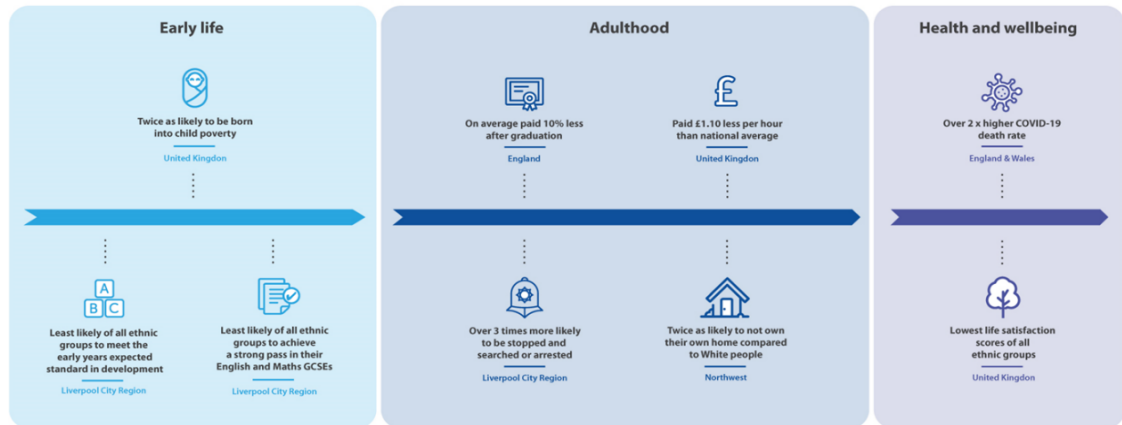
- Work in highly paid, senior jobs. For example, while 14% of the national population is from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, only 6% held

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top management positions (Race in the workplace: The McGregor-Smith Review, 2017).

- Hold wealth or assets (ONS Annual Population Survey, 2018).
- Have lower educational attainment than their White counterparts at GCSE, A and degree level (Revise Sociology, K. Thompson, 2020).

Life chances of a black person living in LCR



3. Benefits of delivering Positive Actions in Employment

Organisations increasingly understand the value of recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce. Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Community members, as employees, play a critical role in an organisation's ability to adapt, grow and sustain a competitive advantage in the modern business landscape. Businesses across the UK could be missing out on around £4.5 billion in revenue every year because they are failing to serve the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Community consumers (Times, Jan 2022).

Understanding the experiences of, and responding to the challenges faced by Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic employees lead to a more motivated workforce and prevents a range of issues arising which can often also have legal consequences including bullying, harassment and discrimination.

Positive Actions are about taking specific steps to improve diversity, inclusion and equity within organisations, and an opportunity to enhance recruitment and promotion of under-represented groups within the workplace. Therefore, it is an important tool to address disadvantage, tackle under-representation and deliver lasting change. There are a wide range of benefits to inclusion including:

- Wider pool of talent
- Greater innovation, creativity and problem solving.
- More dynamic workforce.



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- Better understanding of your own customers, improved accessibility to new and inclusive customer markets.
- Smarter decision-making.
- Increased profits and productivity and the development of new products and services.
- Reduced rates of employee turnover.
- Improved reputation for your business

4. What is the Race Equality Hub & what we will do?

Following the Mayor Rotherham's Declaration of Intent, the Race Equality Programme for the CA has invested £2.3m into the Race Equality Hub (REH) to encourage and support organisations to prioritise race equality with the ambition to address inequalities faced by the Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic communities in the city region.

The Race Equality Hub will contribute to the economic advancement of Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic in a Racial Justice context, becoming a One Stop Shop for co-ordinating Business Support Services, Employability Programmes, Leadership Development, and associated opportunities across the city region.

The Race Equality Hub will support organisations to review their systems, structures, policies and procedures to ensure equity is embedded and co-designing to ensure they are fit for purpose.

The Race Equality Hub will commission a range of services to provide business support to Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic organisations to: enable them to set up, grow and be sustainable; support Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic individuals in their leadership journey; and provide practical support on gaining and maintaining employment.

One of the ways that the Race Equality Hub will drive change in relation to the employability of Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic community members across the City Region is to develop and support organisations to develop 'Positive Action Programmes'

5. Range of Positive Actions the Race Equality Hub can support your organisation with.

The Race Equality Hub will work with organisations across the LCR to help them to understand their current position and context, and to individually and collectively with other organisations to provide discrete interventions to support change. This will include working with organisations to assess their current position and working together to understand the positive actions they can take in supporting their priority objectives and achieving an inclusive workforce.

Prior to implementing Positive Actions there are several things to consider maximising the opportunity and to achieve the desired outcome of creating a more inclusive workforce.

An indicative outline of the steps an organisation might take includes:

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Step 1 – Organisational Culture.

Reviewing organisational systems, processes and policies and organisational culture to ensure they are promoting diversity inclusion and equity.

Step 2 – Tracking and monitoring data.

This is a significant step to identify the current employee population in relation to diversity. This information can be used to develop initiatives to improve recruitment, retention and promote a more inclusive workplace culture.

Step 3 – Training and Development

Training and development that focuses on building an inclusive workplace culture is essential. There are different training programmes that can be implemented bespoke to the needs of the organisation including:

- Anti-Racist Training
- Unconscious Bias Training
- Diversity and Inclusion Training
- Recruitment and Hiring

A good way to encourage an inclusive workplace is to implement a suite of mandatory and voluntary training programmes designed to address racism unconscious bias, cultural insensitivity.

Successful Positive Actions Programme fundamentally depends on the capacity of staff to successfully engage in open communication and challenge.

An organisation could form a network of Allies within organisation and create safe spaces for allies to share challenges ideas and have courageous conversations.

Step 4 – Job Description and Person Specification

Review your job description to ensure there is no biased language. Consider the qualifications required for each post and assess whether if they are real requirements necessary to the role, including recognising that unnecessary qualifications can lead to a lack of diversity at the recruitment stage

Step 5 – Advert

Remove biased language from job adverts and include statements in employment opportunities to encourage applications from under-represented groups, such as “we welcome applicants from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic communities. This demonstrates the organisation is striving for an inclusive workforce.

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Using diverse images on promotional material and job adverts may encourage people from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic communities to apply for the position. If diverse people can see themselves reflected in your job adverts and they hear that you care about inclusivity, they will be more likely to apply for roles within your organisation.

Step 6 – Candidate attraction

Targeted recruitment, ensuring employment opportunities are advertised within Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic community organisations' newsletters, websites etc. and targeted community engagement, including working with voluntary and community sector including targeted careers fairs will increase the number of applications from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic community members.

Step 7 – Shortlisting for interview.

Support the organisation in monitoring applicants from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic communities at every stage of recruitment process. Assess which stage they are not successful then consider the actions that can be taken to mitigate this in future.

Consider 'blind recruitment' to remove identifying information from job applications and CVs before they are reviewed by employers or hiring managers. By removing identifying information, recruiters can focus on the candidate's qualifications and skills which can eliminate unconscious bias and promote diversity and inclusion. Clear selection criteria detailing the skills, experience, abilities, and expertise required to carry out the job effectively will enable recruitment panels to evaluate and select candidates objectively, consistently, and transparently to reduce the possibility of unfair discrimination.

Step 8 – Interviewing

Promote diverse interview panels when interviewing, having interviewers from different backgrounds and perspectives can mitigate unconscious bias and lead to a more comprehensive evaluation of candidates. It can also demonstrate the organisations commitment to inclusion.

Step 9 – Onboarding

Offering training and development opportunities to help equip Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic employees to apply for promotion in areas where there is under-representation.