

Guide

Inclusive Recruitment



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Introduction

Welcome to the Inclusive Recruitment Guide!

This resource supports you and your organisation in building workplace practices that are welcoming to diverse talent.



Why inclusive recruitment?

- Inclusive practices are crucial in today's increasingly global workplaces
- Helps meet legal obligations (Equality Act 2010)
- Creates fair and equitable workplaces
- Promotes innovation & enhances problem-solving
- Attracts top talent

Representation matters

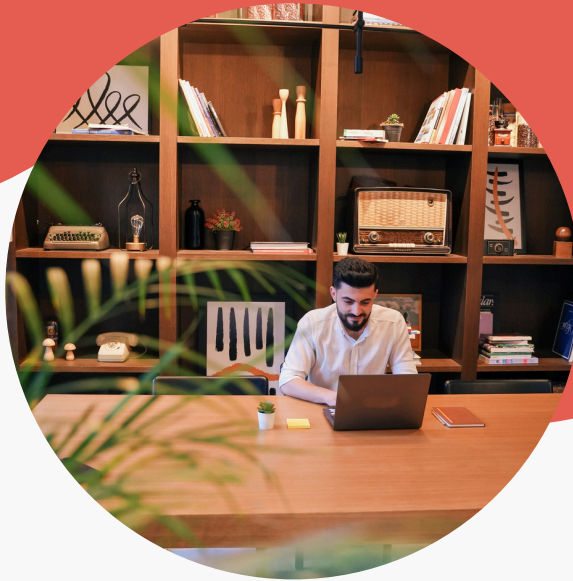
- Vital for building trust and connections
- Employees who see themselves represented feel valued and engaged
- Boosts productivity and job satisfaction
- Diverse workforce ensure products and services cater to a wide range of service users



Role Design

Effective role design can enhance productivity and efficiency, as well as promote inclusivity and diversity by accommodating a wide range of skills and abilities.

- Defines the specific tasks, responsibilities, and expectations for a position
- Typically handled by human resources professionals, managers, and sometimes organisational development specialists
- Ensures roles align with the organisation's goals
- Maximises the strengths and expertise of workforce



How to design inclusive roles?

- **Think about inclusivity from the start** – How can the role be structured to be inclusive of diverse skills?
- **Balance responsibilities effectively** – Some may thrive in areas others find challenging
- **Consider alternative job structures** – Can tasks like admin or logistics be separated into specialist roles?
- **Design in opportunities** – Traditional roles may exclude some candidates. Flexible roles break down barriers and create new opportunities.

Creating positions that focus on skill sets allows everyone to play to their strengths more. Considering these approaches could open up previously inaccessible positions to candidates, ensuring a more inclusive and diverse workplace.

Job Advertisements and Attracting Diverse Candidates

Creating an inclusive job advert is essential for attracting a diverse range of talent. This involves being transparent about your organisation's commitment to inclusivity, using culturally competent and gender-inclusive language, and being transparent about reasonable adjustments.

Commitment to Diversity Statement and Equal Opportunity Employer (EOE) Statement

Include a clear statement about the organisation's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. This reassures potential candidates that DEI is a priority for the company. Clearly state that the organisation is an equal opportunity employer and welcomes applicants from all backgrounds.

Highlight Benefits

Highlight inclusive benefits such as parental leave, flexible working hours, health and wellness programmes, and employee resource groups (ERGs).

Inclusive Job Titles

Ensure job titles are inclusive and avoid any terminology that might be gender-specific or exclusive, for example:

- salesperson/sales representative instead of salesman
- supervisor instead of foreman
- server instead of waiter/waitress

Cultural Competency and Gender Inclusion

Research shows that job descriptions with inclusive language attract significantly more applications from diverse candidates... →

Job Advertisements and Attracting Diverse Candidates

Cultural Competency and Gender Inclusion

“ Job descriptions with inclusive language get on average



41%

more applications from women

&

29%

more applications from underrepresented minorities.

”

TEXTIO

To attract more applications from diverse candidates:

- **Use gender-neutral pronouns** like ‘they/them’ instead of ‘he/she’ to be inclusive of all gender identities. “You” could also be used, for example “In this role, you will work with a team of...”
- **Avoid gendered terms** like ‘strong and aggressive negotiator’ and opt for inclusive language such as ‘skilled and assertive negotiator’.
- **Avoid using terms like ‘competitive salary,’** which may be a barrier for those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and with disproportionate financial responsibilities, e.g., caring or parenting and disability support. Specify salary ranges or provide clear compensation information.

Job Advertisements and Attracting Diverse Candidates

Respecting Religious Practices

Be transparent about your organisation's commitment to creating an inclusive and accessible experience. In practice, this may include:

- Explicitly stating you offer prayer spaces, e.g., for in-person interviews.
- Including a statement that the company is keen to be flexible to accommodate religious holidays and prayer times.
- Paying due regard to any requests for single-sex spaces.

There are over

14 million

disabled people in the UK.

In 2022, over

52.6%

of disabled people were employed.

Gov.uk

Reasonable Adjustments

Reasonable adjustments, also known as workplace adjustments, support marginalised candidates and employees to access the workplace equitably.

It is best practice to explicitly communicate that your organisation is welcoming of adjustment requests in job ads and candidate communications.

Adjustments may include:

- Flexible working hours
- Hybrid working and working from home
- Providing assistive technology
- Role/Job restructuring
- Quiet or sensory spaces
- Training and coaching
- Ergonomic support
- Relocation support

Application Process

Traditionally, application processes assume that one size fits all, but we know that is not the case! To enhance the accessibility of job opportunities, where possible, provide access to a variety of mediums accepted for application.

This may include:



Video application



Audio recording



Guided online form



Written cover letter

Where this isn't possible, it's good practice to support candidates by providing an application guideline to help candidates give you the information that you need to make an informed decision.

Provide information on how to request accommodations during the application process, ensuring that candidates with disabilities can apply easily.



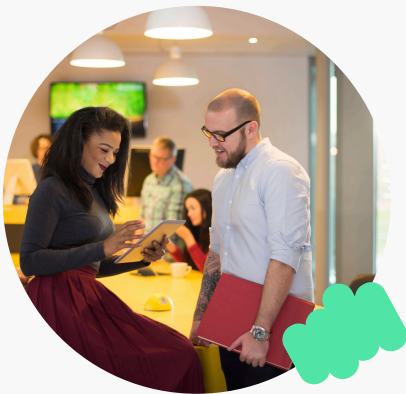
Shortlisting

Educating Decision-Makers about Diversity and Inclusion

It is important that those who have any influence in the decision-making process have a strong understanding of how bias, exclusion, and discrimination can manifest in the interviewing and selection process.

Assessing the suitability of candidates shouldn't be left to one person. By using a diverse panel of people to shortlist, you can mitigate the risk of bias sneaking into the decision-making process.

Panellists should have the knowledge and skills to understand the impact of bias, have awareness of their own biases, and know how to be consciously inclusive in their decision-making. This may mean introducing mandatory Unconscious Bias in recruitment training.



Common biases to be aware of:

- **Similarity** – when people are naturally drawn to, and ultimately prefer, people who are like them.
- **Confirmation** – a tendency to process information by looking for, or interpreting, information that is consistent with our existing beliefs.
- **Anchoring** – when people give disproportionate weight to the first piece of information they receive (positive or negative).
- **Bias Blind Spots** – when people tend to be unaware of their biases and believe they are less biased than others.
- **Halo** – when one trait of a person or thing positively influences the overall judgment of that person or thing.
- **Horns** – when one trait of a person or thing negatively influences the overall judgment of that person or thing.
- **Gender** – when a person faces unfair disadvantages (or benefits from unearned advantages) because of their gender.

Note on AI in hiring

Artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming our workplaces. While AI-powered tools are streamlining recruitment, businesses should balance automation with human judgement to avoid reinforcing biases to ensure fair and effective hiring decisions.

Interviewing

Inclusive interviewing practices ensure that all candidates are evaluated fairly and equitably, creating a positive experience for everyone.

Here are some key strategies to implement:

Structured Interviews

To ensure a fair comparison, use a consistent set of questions for all candidates. Develop interview questions that focus on skills, experience, and competencies relevant to the job, while avoiding personal or cultural bias.

Examples

Instead of asking,

“What sports do you like?”

“How would you handle working with a difficult colleague?”

Ask



Use



“Can you tell me about a team project you worked on and what role you played?”

“Describe a challenging situation at work and how you managed it.”

Diverse Interview Panels

Assemble interview panels that reflect the diversity of your organisation and the broader community. This can help to reduce individual biases and provides a more balanced assessment of candidates.

Ensure that interview panels include members from various departments and levels of seniority. Including different perspectives allows for a more comprehensive evaluation of candidates and ensures that various aspects of their potential contributions are considered. This diversity in perspectives can help in making more informed and well-rounded hiring decisions.



Examples

- If interviewing for a technical role, include a team member from a non-technical department to provide a different perspective.
- For a managerial position, have a mix of senior managers and junior employees on the panel to gauge leadership style.

Interviewing



Training Interviewers

Provide training for interviewers on unconscious bias, cultural competency, and inclusive interviewing techniques. Training sessions can include workshops and practical exercises to deepen understanding and application.

Encourage interviewers to focus on objective criteria and evidence-based assessments rather than subjective impressions. Using standardised scoring sheets and structured interview questions can help maintain this objectivity.

Examples

- Conduct workshops on recognising and addressing biases such as affinity bias (favouring people like us) and halo effect (allowing one positive trait to influence overall judgment).
- Use tools like standardised scoring sheets / matrices to objectively assess candidates' responses.

Accessible Interviews

Ensure that interview locations are accessible to candidates with disabilities. This includes providing physical accessibility features such as ramps and elevators, as well as assistive technology if needed.

Offer flexible interview formats, such as virtual interviews, to accommodate candidates who may have mobility issues, caregiving responsibilities, or other constraints. By providing various options, you can ensure that all candidates have an equal opportunity to participate in the interview process.



Examples

- Provide sign language interpreters for candidates who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- Offer virtual interview options for candidates who cannot travel due to disability or other commitments.

Interviewing

Creating a Welcoming Environment

Begin interviews with a brief introduction to the organisation's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. This sets a positive tone and reassures candidates about the company culture.

Building rapport can help candidates feel more comfortable and confident, which can lead to a more accurate assessment of their abilities. However, it's important to be aware of affinity bias, where shared interests or similarities (e.g., both the hiring manager and candidate are male and enjoy football) can influence the hiring decision. To mitigate this, focus on the candidate's skills and experiences and use standardised evaluation criteria, and use diverse interview panels.

Allow candidates to express their identities and experiences freely and be respectful of their backgrounds and perspectives. Creating a respectful and inclusive atmosphere during the interview encourages candidates to be authentic and provides a more accurate representation of how welcomed they will feel in the company.

Examples

Start with:

“ Our company values diversity and strives to create an inclusive environment. We encourage you to share your unique experiences and perspectives during this interview. ”

Use inclusive language throughout the interview, such as referring to personal experiences as:

“ Your journey ”

...rather than making assumptions based on cultural norms.

Feedback and Continuous Improvement

After each interview, gather feedback from both candidates and interviewers to identify areas for improvement in the interview process. This helps to pinpoint specific issues and opportunities for enhancing the inclusivity and effectiveness of your interviewing practices.

Regularly review and update interview practices to ensure they remain inclusive and effective. By continually assessing and refining your methods, you can adapt to new insights and best practices.

Examples

- Implement post-interview surveys for candidates to provide feedback on their experience.
- Hold a debrief with interviewers to discuss what went well and what could be improved.

Conclusion and Next Steps

It is essential to reflect on the inclusivity and accessibility of your practices with the intention of finding opportunities for continuous learning and improvement. This reflective practice helps identify strengths and areas for enhancement, ensuring that the recruitment process remains effective and inclusive.



Collecting and Analysing Data

Collecting data on the recruitment process is crucial for assessing its effectiveness in attracting and retaining a diverse pipeline of candidates.

Analyse data related to:

- The diversity of applicants at each stage of the recruitment process.
- The success rates of different demographic groups.
- The retention rates of diverse hires.
- Feedback themes from candidates and interviewers.

This data-driven approach allows you to:

- Identify trends and patterns that may indicate biases or barriers.
- Measure the impact of changes and initiatives aimed at improving diversity and inclusion.
- Make informed decisions on future improvements to the recruitment process.

Regular Review and Continuous Improvement

Regularly review and update your recruitment practices based on feedback and data analysis. This ongoing process ensures that your methods remain current and effective.

Steps to consider include:

- Conducting periodic audits of recruitment materials and processes.
- Implementing changes based on feedback and data insights.
- Training interviewers and recruitment teams on new best practices.
- Setting diversity and inclusion goals and tracking progress against these targets.

By embracing a culture of continuous improvement and data-driven decision-making, your organisation can create a more inclusive and welcoming recruitment process that attracts and retains a diverse talent pool.

Checklist

Role Design	Yes	No	N/A	Comments & Actions	Responsible Party
Review existing job roles for inclusivity					
Identify opportunities to make roles more accessible					
Discuss inclusive role design with hiring managers					

Job Advertisements and Attracting Diverse Candidates	Yes	No	N/A	Comments & Actions	Responsible Party
Include a clear commitment to diversity in job ads					
Use inclusive language in job descriptions					
Be transparent about salary and benefits					
Highlight support available/offer examples					
Clearly state that reasonable adjustments are available					
Train hiring teams on handling adjustment requests					

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Checklist

Application Process	Yes	No	N/A	Comments & Actions	Responsible Party
Offer different ways to apply where possible					
Provide clear guidance for applicants					
Make it easy for candidates to request adjustments					

Shortlisting	Yes	No	N/A	Comments & Actions	Responsible Party
Use a diverse panel to shortlist candidates					
Train decision-makers on bias and inclusion					
Apply consistent, structured criteria to assessments					

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Checklist

Interviewing	Yes	No	N/A	Comments & Actions	Responsible Party
Use structured and consistent interview questions					
Have a diverse interview panel					
Ensure accessibility for all candidates					
Start interviews with a commitment to EDI					
Collect feedback to improve future interviews					

Continuous Improvement	Yes	No	N/A	Comments & Actions	Responsible Party
Collect data on diversity at each hiring stage					
Identify and remove any barriers to inclusion					
Regularly review and update hiring practices					
Set and track EDI goals					

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