

# Summary of the discussion paper ‘Benefits of recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce: Rapid Evidence Review’

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## **Title**

Benefits of recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce: Rapid evidence review

## **Authors names**

Undertaken by ICF on behalf of Skills for Care

## **Date of submission to Skills for Care**

10 May 2022

## **Obtaining the full discussion paper**

The discussion paper is an internal document, which presents the findings of a rapid evidence review on the benefits of recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce and can be used as a basis for discussions going forwards.

Please email [evidence@skillsforcare.org.uk](mailto:evidence@skillsforcare.org.uk) if you would like a copy of the full discussion paper.

## **Executive summary**

This discussion paper sets out the findings of the rapid evidence review on the benefits of recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce that was undertaken by ICF on behalf of Skills for Care from March to May 2022. There were two elements to the primary research:

- A literature review of 168 shortlisted sources provided a broad sweep of the academic and related literature on the benefits of diversity and inclusion in the workplace, as well as approaches to implementing change.
- An organisational web search provided a complementary review identifying 62 resources to support employers.

## **The business case for diversity**

There is a huge body of literature on what might loosely be termed the ‘business case’ for diversity. The scale of material is partly explained by different disciplines being applied to explain or measure the benefits of diversity (organisational performance, human resources management; equalities perspectives etc). The literature is quite

'generic' in that it boils down to similar benefits being described in slightly different forms. There are three groups of benefits:

- **'Bottom line' business benefits for performance and productivity (including measurable Return on Investment).** It has been argued that there is a positive (and significant) relationship between firm performance and the percentage of women and ethnic minorities on boards and in the workforce. Furthermore, diverse leadership is identified as a key lever for delivering the benefits associated with diversity. There are debates about the transferability of benefits relating to productivity and competitiveness across different sectors, although reducing HR/workforce costs is a more applicable benefit to the bottom line (reducing staff turnover and associated costs; reduced staff absenteeism). In an NHS setting, the benefits of workforce diversity have additionally been framed in terms of improving quality of care, compliance with statutory requirements and service efficiency. Tools for measuring Return on Investment (ROI) in supporting workforce diversity are quite resource-intensive to use in practice because of the volume of data that needs to be collected in order to calculate returns.
- **Societal benefits:** Societal benefits, which might be termed the 'ethical case' for diversity, consider businesses/organisations as rooted in a particular environment for which they bear responsibility. The ethical case sees investment in supporting diversity as the 'right thing to do' and, in effect, collapses benefits for staff and customers into positive effects for the business itself. There is a credible link between this focus on the 'greater good' and potential positive employee outcomes in terms of improved employee commitment, morale and satisfaction.
- **Reputational and related benefits:** The third group of benefits can be understood as a combination of the first two groups, signalling that societal benefits lead to business benefits by way of improved brand and reputation among customers.

### **Implementing change**

There are common challenges faced by employers in implementing changes to improve equality and diversity in their workforce. These relate to time and capacity to act. It is especially challenging for smaller organisations that lack the HR infrastructure that underpins recruitment and retention initiatives. There is also the specific challenge of needing to generate 'buy-in' for any activity undertaken, especially in terms of training/organisational development.

The literature identifies various critical success factors to recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce:

- **The importance of treating it as a proactive and ongoing process:** This includes reflecting on needs and on ‘what works’ for the organisation, highlighting that ‘making the case’ is not a one-off exercise but something that progresses through stages and needs to be reinforced over time.
- **Having policies to underpin the commitment to diversity.** Policies to reduce discrimination can improve employee engagement and are linked to lower absenteeism. Several studies have shown that flexible working conditions support the successful implementation of diversity policies.
- **Leadership buy-in and commitment:** One of the most widely reported points in the literature is that engagement and support from senior staff is critical to ensuring the benefits of any workplace diversity initiative. Research suggests that the benefits of diversity also depend on the organisational culture in which any initiative is undertaken and, as such, there is a connection to wider values and behaviours within the organisation.
- **Committing to staff/team development:** Staff development is a central part of any initiative to support workplace diversity and inclusion. It can take many forms, but there is evidence that piecemeal approaches are not effective.

### **Tools, resources and support**

There is no definitive classification of ‘support’ for efforts to recruit and retain a diverse workforce, although it is important to have some way of meaningfully grouping different types of resource. It is possible to distinguish between:

- Knowledge resources that generally have a focus on legal compliance or providing employers with information about workforce diversity.
- Resources for making the case for action to employers, including research reports on ‘what works’ and benchmarking tools.
- Resources for implementing change, including those specifically focusing on inclusive recruitment and retention/development activities. It is possible to draw a distinction between resources on one hand and more active support on the other. The former includes a wide range of guides and toolkits that can be consumed by organisations and used to inform practice. The latter is more of a service and includes the delivery of training.

Support is provided by a wide range of organisations. Government and statutory bodies provide a substantial volume of useful resources, especially in terms legal guidance and related good practice material. Employer or business groups are a source of good practice toolkits, case studies, and initiatives that employers can sign up to. Charity, third sector and equalities bodies often provide information related to specific protected groups. Most resources – and the most useful resources – are cross-sector in nature. They are, therefore, in principle applicable to the social care sector.

## Conclusions

The benefits to employers of recruiting, retaining and developing a diverse workforce can be categorised in a number of ways. The critical overarching point from the literature is that the benefits of diversity are not accrued just by having a diverse workforce. Much of the most useful literature focuses on how to *unlock the potential* of having a diverse workforce.

Attributing any measurable business performance benefit to workforce composition is very difficult to do in any event. However, this is not to say that benefits associated with workforce diversity are completely unquantifiable. A lot of this comes down to reduced recruitment costs from it being quicker and easier to recruit high quality staff from a broader labour pool. The logic of having a broad pool to recruit from reducing the time or effort involved in recruitment is plausible. How it specifically translates to the social care sector is a more open question – i.e. the extent to which non-diverse approaches are the limiting factor to effective staff recruitment (as opposed to other factors such as pay and job attractiveness).

There are challenges encountered by employers seeking to recruit, retain, develop, and include a diverse workforce. In particular, the difficulty in sustaining efforts can be a real barrier to affecting change. It is logical for organisations to think of any initiative to support change as being a process with a starting point and an endpoint. The literature on diversity and inclusion is clear that the process is ongoing, that it requires regular reinforcement and ongoing reflection from those within the organisation in order to maintain culture.

There is a wide array of resources available to employers. There is a wealth of information, advice and practical tools for supporting change. Most resources and support are not sector-specific. They are cross cutting in nature. The social care sector has some sector-specific resources, from the CQC and others. There may be a gap in terms of training and development focused specifically on social care.

## List of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion resources

Name of resource	Description of resource	Link
<b>Knowledge resources</b>		
Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) – Improving equality, diversity and inclusion in your workplace	Repository for information on the need for an equality, diversity and inclusion policy and how to put a policy into practice, with reference to specific areas of work that should be considered in relation to diversity, equality and inclusion.	<a href="https://www.acas.org.uk/improving-equality-diversity-and-inclusion">https://www.acas.org.uk/improving-equality-diversity-and-inclusion</a>
Business in the Community (BITC) – Diversity and inclusion archive	Repository of blogs, case studies, fact sheets, impact stories, news, podcasts, reports, toolkits and videos from decades of work supporting employers on age, gender equality and race equality.	<a href="https://www.bitc.org.uk/post_tag/diversity-and-inclusion/">https://www.bitc.org.uk/post_tag/diversity-and-inclusion/</a>
Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) – Inclusion and diversity in the workplace	Repository including reports alongside links to factsheets providing information that helps employers to understand ‘what inclusion and diversity mean in the workplace’ and the implications for an effective diversity and inclusion strategy for organisations, as well as guides, podcasts, fact sheets, an inclusion calendar, and to links to other CIPD webpages that explore its perspective on key inclusion and diversity issues (relating to specified protected groups).	<a href="https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/fundamentals/reports/diversity?msclkid=fc49f627b58911ecbf0b633f1e65c2f9">https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/fundamentals/reports/diversity?msclkid=fc49f627b58911ecbf0b633f1e65c2f9</a>
Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) – Advice and guidance	Repository providing support for employers through a range of guides surrounding adjustments for disabled people, discrimination and rights, diversity, equal pay, Equality Act guidance, equality law at work, fair financial decisions (through using the Equality Act), fair	<a href="https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance?who=organisation">https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance?who=organisation</a>

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	procurement, human rights, marriage and civil partnership rights, pay gaps, pregnancy and discrimination at work, and public sector service providers (regarding how equality law applies to them).	
EHRC – Employment: Statutory Code of Practice	Very detailed guidance for organisations on how to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010.	<a href="https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/employment-statutory-code-practice">https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/employment-statutory-code-practice</a>
EHRC – Your responsibilities if your employee is expecting a baby	One-stop shop collection of information relating to responsibilities if your employee is expecting a baby, including: pre-pregnancy and pregnancy employer toolkit, maternity paternity or shared parental leave and pay employer toolkit, after maternity or adoption leave employer toolkit, adoption, paternity or shared parental leave for adoptive parents and pay employer toolkit.	<a href="https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/managing-pregnancy-and-maternity-workplace/help-and-support-employers">https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/managing-pregnancy-and-maternity-workplace/help-and-support-employers</a>
Skills for Care – Supporting a diverse workforce: Understanding racism*	This resource brings together an overview of current thinking and understanding about racism. It aims to raise awareness about the history of racism and show some of the forms that racism takes, provide a model that examines systematic racism, and encourage reflection and discussion	<a href="https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/resources/documents/Support-for-leaders-and-managers/Supporting-a-diverse-workforce/Supporting-a-diverse-workforce-Understanding-racism.pdf">https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/resources/documents/Support-for-leaders-and-managers/Supporting-a-diverse-workforce/Supporting-a-diverse-workforce-Understanding-racism.pdf</a>
<b>Tools for making the case for action</b>		
<i>Research on ‘what works’</i>		
CIPD – Building inclusive workplaces: Assessing the evidence	Research report published in 2019 that explores scientific literature relating to inclusion to define what it is and its impact on workplace outcomes, and how	<a href="https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/building-inclusive-workplaces-report-sept-2019_tcm18-64154.pdf">https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/building-inclusive-workplaces-report-sept-2019_tcm18-64154.pdf</a>

	people can continue to create more inclusive workplaces.	
Chartered Management Institute (CMI) – A Blueprint for Balance: Time to fix the broken windows	Research report from 2018 that ‘charts employers’ current approaches to achieving gender balance and showcases the best-in-class practices that are starting to achieve real change.’	<a href="https://www.managers.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Blueprint-for-Balance-Broken-Windows-Full-Report.pdf">https://www.managers.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Blueprint-for-Balance-Broken-Windows-Full-Report.pdf</a>
Stonewall – LGBT in Britain	Research report published in 2018 illustrating the findings from an online survey of 3,000+ LGBT people across England, Scotland and Wales. The report displays what LGBT people relayed about their experiences in employment and, based on this, provides evidence-led recommendations to employers to encourage inclusive workplaces.	<a href="https://www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/lgbt_in_britain_work_report.pdf">https://www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/lgbt_in_britain_work_report.pdf</a>
<i>Benchmarking tools</i>		
Centre for Global Inclusion – Global Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Benchmarks (GDEIB)	Benchmarking tool covering elements that should be included in an effective diversity, equality and inclusion initiative. It is strongly evidence-led, although its international nature makes it slightly removed from the social care sector.	<a href="https://centreforglobalinclusion.org/what-we-do/the-gdeib/">https://centreforglobalinclusion.org/what-we-do/the-gdeib/</a>
Skills for Care – Social Care Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES)*	Tool to measure improvements in the workforce with respect to the experiences of black & minority ethnic staff. Organisations who complete the SC-WRES can then transparently demonstrate measurable change year-on-year based on how well they're doing.	<a href="https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Support-for-leaders-and-managers/Supporting-a-diverse-workforce/Workforce-Race-Equality-Standard.aspx">https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Support-for-leaders-and-managers/Supporting-a-diverse-workforce/Workforce-Race-Equality-Standard.aspx</a>

Stonewall – UK Workplace Equality Index	Stonewall UK’s well-established benchmarking-as-a-service offer. Employers “demonstrate their work in eight areas of employment policy and practice”, and staff provide feedback that Stonewall UK uses to score the organisations and report back on what is working well and how the organisation could improve. The tool allows organisations to compare their diversity and inclusion work with other organisations.	<a href="https://www.stonewall.org.uk/creating-inclusive-workplaces/workplace-equality-indices/uk-workplace-equality-index">https://www.stonewall.org.uk/creating-inclusive-workplaces/workplace-equality-indices/uk-workplace-equality-index</a>
<b>Tools and support for implementing change</b>		
ACAS – Equality, diversity and inclusion policy template	Free template employers can adapt to their organisation to help employers make public statements regarding inclusion, which can support recruitment marketing.	<a href="https://www.acas.org.uk/equality-policy-template">https://www.acas.org.uk/equality-policy-template</a>
ACAS - Managing your employee's maternity leave and pay	Guidance for employers surrounding how to manage an employee’s maternity leave and pay legally.	<a href="https://www.acas.org.uk/managing-your-employees-maternity-leave-and-pay/discrimination-because-of-pregnancy-and-maternity">https://www.acas.org.uk/managing-your-employees-maternity-leave-and-pay/discrimination-because-of-pregnancy-and-maternity</a>
Behavioural Insight Team (BIT) - How to improve gender equality in the workplace – evidence-based actions for employers	One of five guides in BITs ‘how to improve gender equality’ series, presenting evidenced-based actions across four areas: leadership and accountability; hiring and selection; talent management, learning and development; and workplace flexibility.	<a href="https://www.bi.team/publications/how-to-improve-gender-equality-in-the-workplace-evidence-based-actions-for-employers/">https://www.bi.team/publications/how-to-improve-gender-equality-in-the-workplace-evidence-based-actions-for-employers/</a>
BIT – How to run structured interviews	Guide on how to run structured interviews produced as part of their series on ‘how to improve gender equality.’ It covers all steps of the process (developing questions, scoring criteria, interview preparation and conduct etc).	<a href="https://www.bi.team/publications/how-to-run-structured-interviews/">https://www.bi.team/publications/how-to-run-structured-interviews/</a>



BITC – How to inspire, hire and grow diverse talent	Practical guide to help businesses inspire future talent, recruit inclusively and provide an enabling work environment to help employees thrive.	<a href="https://www.bitc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/bitc-toolkit-employmentandskills-howtoinspirehireandgrowdiversetalent-february2022.pdf">https://www.bitc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/bitc-toolkit-employmentandskills-howtoinspirehireandgrowdiversetalent-february2022.pdf</a>
BITC - Mental Health and Wellbeing for Ethnically Diverse Women: a practical guide for managers	A 2021 guide for managers wanting to be culturally aware and who recognise ‘the necessity to create and provide a system of support for black, Asian and ethnic minority employees built on intentional connections and relationship-building.	<a href="https://www.bitc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/bitc-race-toolkit-mentalhealthwellbeingethnicallydiversewomenguidemanagers-jun20.pdf">https://www.bitc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/bitc-race-toolkit-mentalhealthwellbeingethnicallydiversewomenguidemanagers-jun20.pdf</a>
BITC – Race at Work Charter	A public commitment that businesses can make to take action to improve equality.	<a href="https://www.bitc.org.uk/race/#raceatworkcharter">https://www.bitc.org.uk/race/#raceatworkcharter</a>
CIPD – Addressing the barriers to BAME employee career progression to the top	Report on addressing the barriers to black, Asian and minority ethnic employee career progressions, with recommendations that touch on the fundamentals of self-reflection, organisational culture and trying to stimulate change.	<a href="https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/addressing-the-barriers-to-BAME-employee-career-progression-to-the-top_tcm18-33336.pdf">https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/addressing-the-barriers-to-BAME-employee-career-progression-to-the-top_tcm18-33336.pdf</a>
Disability Rights UK - Building for success in recruiting and supporting disabled people in the workplace	Toolkit providing guidance around recruiting and supporting disabled people in the workplace. The tool provides facts and legal information about disabilities, explains what organisations can do, describes the importance of measuring disability and concludes with six steps to encourage disability diversity in the workplace and an example of good practice.	<a href="https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/news/2018/february/new-guide-recruiting-and-supporting-disabled-people-workplace">https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/news/2018/february/new-guide-recruiting-and-supporting-disabled-people-workplace</a>

East Riding Social Care Academy – Self Study Guide: Equality and diversity awareness for adult social care	Self-study guide including topics such as legislation in the UK, the Public Sector Equality Duty, discrimination, victimisation, whistle blowing etc.	<a href="https://www.ascleader.co.uk/pluginfile.php/1402/mod_resource/content/2/Equality%20and%20Diversity%20Awareness%20for%20Adult%20Care%20Workers%20-%20AB0040%20-%20v4-10-2020.pdf">https://www.ascleader.co.uk/pluginfile.php/1402/mod_resource/content/2/Equality%20and%20Diversity%20Awareness%20for%20Adult%20Care%20Workers%20-%20AB0040%20-%20v4-10-2020.pdf</a>
EHRC – A quick guide to being a gender champion in your workplace	List of practical actions to support those working on shifting organisational culture, including identifying role models within the organisation and evaluating the situation.	<a href="https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/quick-guide-being-gender-champion-your-workplace">https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/quick-guide-being-gender-champion-your-workplace</a>
EHRC – Housing and disabled people: a toolkit for local authorities in England	Series of PDF guides on service delivery rather than employment, including ‘information, checklists, questionnaires and best practice examples’ for housing, health and social care leaders and practitioners on of topics including: housing adaptations, allocating housing, planning for accessible homes, strategic planning and support tenants.	<a href="https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/housing-and-disabled-people-toolkit-local-authorities-england">https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/housing-and-disabled-people-toolkit-local-authorities-england</a>
Equally Ours – Employing people	Resource providing a strategy surrounding how to ‘create a workplace culture that is characterised by equality and human rights values’ through providing information surrounding how to ‘recruit and retain a diversity of people’, create and embed a Dignity at Work policy and create an inclusive workspace.	<a href="https://www.equallyours.org.uk/equality-and-human-rights-in-practice/employing-people/">https://www.equallyours.org.uk/equality-and-human-rights-in-practice/employing-people/</a>
Gov.uk – Disability Confident Employer Scheme	Scheme providing examples of commitments and activities that businesses can pursue to help disabled people obtain employment. The scheme has three	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/disability-confident-how-to-sign-up-to-the-employer-scheme">https://www.gov.uk/guidance/disability-confident-how-to-sign-up-to-the-employer-scheme</a>

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	levels, which allow organisations to be recognised as Disability Confident committed (Level 1), a Disability Confident Employer (Level 2), or a Disability Confident Leader (Level 3).	
Local Government Association – Diverse by design guide	This guide captures 15 key steps to help local government employers to embed fair values, systems and behaviours throughout their organisation.	<a href="https://www.local.gov.uk/diverse-design">https://www.local.gov.uk/diverse-design</a>
Skills for Care – Confident with difference*	Resource supporting organisations to consider how well diversity is embraced within their organisation and how to improve. It consists of five short films and is accompanied by a series of questions about workers' own practices and the practices of their organisation.	<a href="https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Developing-your-workforce/Care-topics/Equality-and-diversity/Confident-with-difference.aspx">https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Developing-your-workforce/Care-topics/Equality-and-diversity/Confident-with-difference.aspx</a>
Skills for Care – LGBTQ+ learning framework*	Learning framework for working with LGBTQ+ people in later life. It aims to provide a base for identifying the insights, knowledge, understanding and skills that the social care workforce need to help them work affirmatively, inclusively and effectively with individuals from gender and sexually diverse communities.	<a href="https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Support-for-leaders-and-managers/Supporting-a-diverse-workforce/LGBTQ-learning-framework.aspx">https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Support-for-leaders-and-managers/Supporting-a-diverse-workforce/LGBTQ-learning-framework.aspx</a>
Skills for Care – Moving Up*	Leadership and training programme that supports participants from diverse backgrounds who have the desire and drive to progress in their career but are facing blockages and resistance preventing them from doing so. This programme is aimed at black, Asian and minority ethnic leaders who want to develop themselves and progress in their career at all levels, across all roles and sectors.	<a href="https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Support-for-leaders-and-managers/Developing-leaders-and-managers/Moving-Up.aspx">https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Support-for-leaders-and-managers/Developing-leaders-and-managers/Moving-Up.aspx</a>

Skills for Care – Values-based recruitment and retention*	A series of seminars on how to embed a values-based approach throughout recruitment and incorporate values into your recruitment and retention practices to help you find and keep the right people. This series includes seminars on valuable conversations, to help your workforce know they're valued and their contribution is recognised, and on values-based interviewing.	<a href="https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Recruitment-support/Workshops-and-seminars/Workshops-and-seminars.aspx">https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Recruitment-support/Workshops-and-seminars/Workshops-and-seminars.aspx</a>
Social Mobility Commission - Socio-economic diversity and inclusion - Employers' toolkit	Resource providing guidance for businesses aiming to increase the representation of people from low socio-economic backgrounds in their organisations. Specifically, it provides information surrounding why businesses should focus on socio-economic background, alongside guidance to develop a strategic approach to socio-economic diversity (including information around must have interventions, data, leadership and culture, outreach, hiring, progression and advocacy).	<a href="https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1006079/SMC-Employers-Toolkit_WEB_updated_July2021.pdf">https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1006079/SMC-Employers-Toolkit_WEB_updated_July2021.pdf</a>

\* THESE DID NOT FEATURE IN THE DISCUSSION PAPER BUT ARE ALSO USEFUL EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION RESOURCES

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*Summary of the discussion paper 'Benefits of recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce: Rapid Evidence Review'*