

In Greater Manchester, the Combined Authority, National Apprenticeship Service and a group of high profile private and public sector employers have been working together to increase the number of apprentices from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds in the region's workforce.

This short guide has been produced to share best practice and experience around increasing apprentice diversity in the workforce and to help and support other employers to adopt different working practices.

Why is diversity important?

Increasing the number of people from BAME backgrounds on apprenticeships within your organisations is not about 'ticking boxes' or doing it simply because it is the right thing to do. Employers of all sizes and from a range of sectors need to work towards ensuring an inclusive approach that enables them to best reflect and represent the local community and their customers.

An inclusive approach delivers clear, proven business benefits, including:

Competitive Advantage

Businesses with a diverse range of employees are well placed to understand the needs of a wide range of customers. A diverse workforce gives you a competitive edge over others who might not value diversity as you do

Financial benefits & improved productivity

The top performing companies for racial/ethnic diversity were 30% more likely to have financial returns above their national industry mean.

Research shows that where leaders are thought of as inclusive, 84% of staff report feeling more motivated and 81% say it has a positive impact on their productivity

Widening your talent pool

Employers with an inclusive approach are in an excellent position to recruit and retain staff in an increasingly diverse and competitive labour market.

Embedding diversity also means that talent can be recognised and nurtured - wherever it may be

What can employers do?

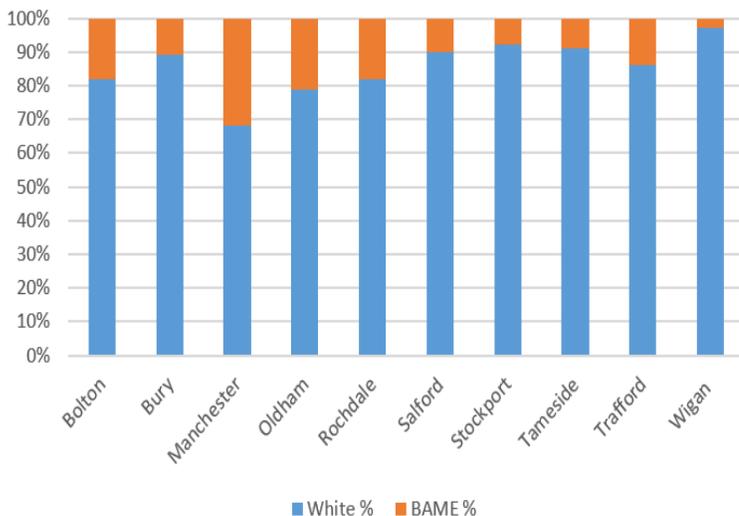
Employers involved in this project have highlighted their top tips and best practice to help other employers progress towards greater diversity.

#1

Take a look at your business and ask yourself...

What is the % representation of BAME apprentices in your business? Does this reflect the BAME % in the working age population in your local area?

Working age population by ethnicity across GM



Does your BAME representation differ in entry roles against more senior roles?

Does your BAME representation across your workforce reflect your customer base?

What is the culture like in your organisation – do recruiting managers understand issues and challenges?

#2

Review your attraction and recruitment processes

Attraction!

Look at the public image of your business – does it portray a diverse workforce?

Where do you recruit from and how? Having visibility to a wide audience will encourage applications from more diverse group of individuals.

Take the opportunity to **challenge perceptions** relating to Apprenticeships – many parents still have strong views that following a more traditional academic route is better than a vocational route. Promoting how Apprenticeships are expanding access to professional roles at the highest levels will help to change those perceptions.

You could ask existing apprentices for feedback on promotional material, job adverts and recruitment procedures, based on their own experiences. You could also engage with local schools and colleges with a diverse student population to promote your opportunities to young people.



When it comes to recruitment, you could:

- ✓ Consider using role profiles that focus more on knowledge, skills and behaviours than the tasks within a job
- ✓ Review, and potentially change, any shortlisting and interview panels – are your panels diverse?
- ✓ Look at your applicant's pre and post shortlisting – are there any trends or patterns where individuals are not meeting minimum requirements? Is there a reason for this? Is there a way to help and support unsuccessful applicants?
- ✓ Work with colleagues involved in recruitment – look at how you could improve your processes and practices to ensure they demonstrate equality and fairness. For example, you could introduce unconscious bias training or diversity training, particularly in relation to recruitment.

#3

Work with your training / apprenticeship provider

Whatever the size of your business, and unless you are delivering your own Apprenticeship training, your training provider is likely to play a hugely important role in the attraction and recruitment of your apprentices.

They will often be the organisation to provide you with the potential applicants – you should be clear about what your expectations are in terms of having a diverse talent pool to consider and select from, so ask them how they are going to deliver that for you. **You also ask them....**

Where they are advertising your opportunities?

What work have they been doing with local communities and how can they promote your opportunities this way?

Are they able to work with you to offer any pre-Apprenticeship activity?

Are they able to communicate the benefits of working for you as an employer and if necessary, provide myth-busting about your organisation, sector or job roles?

#4

Engage with your existing workforce

Apprenticeships can support social mobility and career advancement for existing employees, helping them to develop and progress into leadership and management roles.

When you look at your BAME representation in entry level roles against management and leadership roles, there is a significant difference? Apprenticeships can provide an excellent route to support existing staff to prepare and develop the skills for progression within your organisation.

In addition – creating role models, peer support networks or mentoring can offer extra support to anyone who may need it.

What next?

Whatever the size of your organisation **you can make a difference**. Even if you can only do some of the activities suggested in this guide it will take you a few steps closer to having, and benefiting from, a more diverse workforce. Further information and help is available, some of which is outlined below.

Apprenticeship Diversity Champions Network champions apprenticeships and diversity amongst employers and encourages people from underrepresented groups to consider an apprenticeship

<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/apprenticeship-diversity-champions-network>

The Employer Toolkit (developed by the Learning and Work Institute) is a practical guide to support employers to develop a more inclusive and accessible apprenticeship offer.

<http://www.employer-toolkit.org.uk/>

You can also find out how the Equality Act affects you and your business here

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en>

The GM BAME Apprenticeship Project is supported by

