DEPARTMENT FOR OPPORTUNITIES

Employer Toolkit

Visit departmentforopportunities.org to find out more about DO.
There are simple steps you can take to improve social mobility in your workplace and recruit skilled employees from a broader socio-economic background.

You can implement them in your company right now. Take a look at our best practice tips and tricks to help your company hire amazing talent.
2. Remove applicant name, university, and/or grades from applications. Unconscious biases can sway decisions, especially when there are large numbers of applications.

3. Offer apprenticeships at the higher levels (4 through 7). These are equivalent to university degrees, while also being more focused on the professional skills needed in your organisation.

4. Consider your interview panellists. Are they diverse in socio-economic background, schooling and regional upbringing?

5. Advertise all your vacancies publicly and through several channels. Ask your recruiters for all shortlists they provide to be diverse in terms of socio-economic background.

6. Review hires:
   - **Socio-Economic Background**
     - Assess the socio-economic background of your applicants and hires. Use metrics such as highest parental qualification and type of secondary school attended. Government recommended measurers for use by employers are available here.
   - **University**
     - Assess the distribution of universities attended by your successful applicants. If Russell Group university graduates are disproportionately successful, identify why this is so and whether this reflects ability to do the job.

“I think the key thing that will bring about the most change is having the right people around the table to make hiring decisions.”

– Claudine, Solicitor
1. Collect Data:
Collect socio-economic background data for your current workforce at all levels. This can identify potential “class ceilings”.

2. Mentoring:
Provide mentoring at all levels of the organisation, particularly for those from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

3. Accessible Work Experience:
Cover travel and lunch expenses for work experience placements up to two weeks. For placements longer than two weeks and internships pay the relevant national minimum wage. Clearly indicate the reimbursement offer when advertising placements and internships.

4. Internship Recruitment:
Incorporate your work experience placements and/or internships into your formal recruitment process. Ensure that applications are open and advertised widely.

5. Equality & Diversity:
Include socio-economic background in all equality and diversity initiatives and surveys alongside the equalities protected characteristics such as race and gender.

6. Internal Culture:
Review your organisation’s culture for whether it is inclusive of people from different socio-economic backgrounds. Use diversity surveys to assess the retention of staff from different backgrounds.

“We need to evaluate circumstances. A person who has gone to a more difficult school has had to work a lot harder to hit the same grades as, say, someone who has been to private school.”

-Afolabi, Charity Co-Founder
Use your purchasing power with contractors and suppliers to encourage them to take action on social mobility in their workplaces.

If you do recruitment outreach, focus your work on social mobility “coldspot” areas or in schools, colleges and universities with higher proportions of socio-economic disadvantage. Use digital and social media solutions to reach people you normally wouldn’t, e.g. with online Q&As or targeted advertising of internship applications.

If you do outreach with young people, assess the proportion of how many go on to apply to roles and how many are recruited.

Talk about why you want to improve socio-economic diversity in your workplace. Encourage staff at all levels, including senior managers and directors, to share their social mobility stories.

“It is so important to have people of mixed backgrounds in HR. If I’m applying for a job or going into an interview, I always try and do a bit of background research into what the HR team is like.”
-Lisa, Marketing Manager
“We need to take positive action that actually comes to fruition. No more empty promises and nice words.”

–Deeba, Lawyer

This toolkit is a collaboration between the Department for Opportunities and the many people we spoke to along the way. Some of their best advice can be found here, direct from them.

To hear their stories visit: departmentforopportunities.org

“Companies need to understand that increasing diversity isn’t just the right thing to do, it’s the smart thing to do. Whether it’s having people from different backgrounds that can provide a wider context to decisions and give a greater chance of a fair process, or just having people who are able to be themselves and can focus on the job at hand rather than worrying about unwritten cues. It makes good business sense.”

–Jonathon

“Companies can tackle hiring discrimination by making applications anonymised, and taking away details such as dates and institutions. There’s so many people that bring so many different things to the employment market that you’re automatically dismissing.”

–Soraya

“You’ve got to give people a chance because first glances don’t tell you everything. Businesses need more of an understanding of what they’re looking for. You can get some of your best staff from just having a second look, looking over that page again, being more open.”

–Bukola

“They [businesses] could support and uplift people within their programs. If you uplift the person then it’s like a ripple effect. They could improve their livelihood. Improve their skillset.”

–Juliet

“We need more transparency. There is a lie that’s being told to people that all you have to do is get good grades. People need to know which other factors are being evaluated, so that they know which parts of themselves to present.”

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