Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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Minority Ethnic Recruitment Toolkit

Introduction

This toolkit is for recruitment managers in the public sector looking to improve the diversity of their workforce by recruiting more people from minority ethnic backgrounds. This toolkit includes a range of suggestions and ideas for organisations who will appreciate some initial guidance. It is not intended to be prescriptive and some of the guidance will depend on the specific context in which organisations are working. While a lot of the content has been drawn from practice that is used in parts of the public sector, the information in this toolkit may be equally useful to employers in other sectors.

Context

Data from the Annual Population Survey, collected by ONS, shows that the proportion of minority ethnic workers is lower in Scotland's public sector than in the wider economy. There is a risk that this will worsen across the labour market due to the impact on the economy of the coronavirus pandemic.

From a business point of view, research has found positive correlations between workforce ethnic diversity and productivity. Some of the benefits to the workplace include improved resourcing by accessing the best talent by recruiting from a broader talent pool, enhanced corporate image or reputation and improved organisational performance.

This toolkit was originally designed to consider how employers could improve their processes in recruitment to attract more people from minority ethnic communities to apply to their organisations and in turn help to address some of the systems and structures in place that act as barriers for those from minority ethnic backgrounds. These may be embedded in recruitment policies and processes that may lead to unintentional biases of recruiting managers which can result in disproportionately lower success rates.

There is a requirement for public sector organisations to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). A link to the Equality and Human Rights Commission guidance is given in section 3. Taking a proactive approach to understanding and removing the barriers causing low attraction or low success rates can help improve recruiting a more diverse workforce and in turn help to meet this duty.

For fair work employers, it will also help you consider your practice in relation to race equality and help to build a more diverse workforce.

Toolkit components

The recruitment toolkit has 5 equally important components:

Strategic direction

The strategic direction of your organisation should show an intention to increase diversity of the workforce. This may be encapsulated in a broader strategic aim covering other aspects of employment such as retention and progression. The objective should fit with other aspects of your diversity strategy.

For example, for public authorities that provide public services, the objective could be linked to the need for the diversity of the workforce to reflect the diversity of the population they serve. If a service is delivered by staff without minority ethnic representation, this could create barriers and it is unlikely to engage potential minority ethnic clients or provide understanding of how to meet their needs.

Consider what actions have been taken to date to increase workforce diversity in relation to ethnicity. If this is limited then the following examples may provide a steer:

- It could be expressed as an outcome for any recruitment campaigns that your organisation undertakes or the creation of a charter that shows the organisation's commitment to increase diversity of the workforce.

- Senior managers should ensure increasing workforce diversity in relation to race is embedded in their internal policies and decision making processes - recruitment policies and processes will be key elements of this.

- Performance and actions against strategic diversity objectives should be assessed and measured.

- Data gathered on the organisation's current workforce profile must be used to drive or initiate discussions and inform the development of organisational diversity goals and ambitions. (see section on Using Data)

Leadership development for the whole organisation is important as there needs to be buy in and ownership, including commitment by senior management. All people managers, for example should also undertake Race Equality training which is offered by a number of diversity organisations.

It will help any recruiting manager if part of the strategic direction of the organisation is to increase workforce diversity and specifically in relation to minority ethnic people.

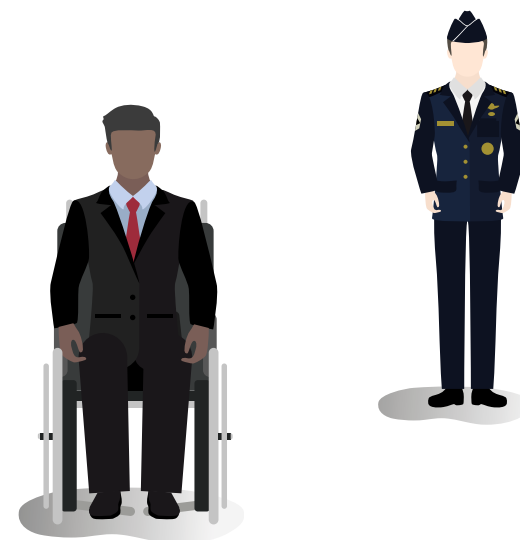# Developing and embedding capability and capacity

If you are carrying out recruitment activity, including application sifting and interviewing, try to ensure that you and interview panel members are from diverse backgrounds (including in terms of ethnicity). It is good practice for those involved in the selection process to have undertaken training in the following areas:

• Recruitment techniques, including sifting and interviewing
• Unconscious bias
• Diversity/race equality awareness

Interactive training settings will give staff the opportunity to reflect and share with colleagues and promote dialogue about race and cultural diversity.

Ensure that learning from race equality or diversity training is implemented throughout the organisation. Consider how its application and subsequent impact/effectiveness will be evaluated.

If using a scoring system when sifting or interviewing, ensure that all those involved in the process are applying the scoring system consistently and allow room in the process to question any inconsistencies. Agree how you will ensure fairness, for example to examine if any low scores might be as a result of conscious or unconscious bias or prejudice. Inconsistencies might be easier to identify in large scale campaigns, so consider how to apply a set standard for smaller recruitment exercises.

Using data

An organisation's collection of data on its workforce in terms of ethnicity and the way it collects that data in recruitment is key to determining what course of action should be taken. It is strongly recommended that organisations use census categories to maintain consistency and to allow for benchmarking.

Decide and be clear on whose role it is in the organisation to collect the data. Identify who they would work with to proactively use this data to inform recruitment strategy. Use of and access to this data needs to be restricted because it relates to personal and sensitive information and needs to be handled in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Start by reviewing the organisation's current practice on collecting and using ethnicity data of the workforce. Is the data complete? Is the data consistent? Are you able to establish a baseline for the workforce in terms of ethnicity? Has it been collected and retained in line with the law? Diversity monitoring data is not used as part of the recruitment decision making process, and should not be included with the applications that are passed to the recruitment panel.

Following a recruitment exercise, the equalities data captured at application stage can help to understand:

- The proportion of applicants who identify as minority ethnic.
- The proportion of applicants who identify as minority ethnic and are applying for particular posts.
- Success rates by ethnicity in securing an interview
- Success rates by ethnicity in job offers
- Where there are gaps in applications from local minority ethnic groups.
- Applicants who identify as minority ethnic but also share other protected characteristics e.g. age, gender, disability. This analysis should be handled in line with GDPR as it can risk identifying people.

Using data
continued

This data can help you identify trends, inform how you market and advertise jobs to reach specific minority ethnic communities and highlight where you need to address barriers that may be preventing minority ethnic communities from applying.

Analysing data for each part of the recruitment process will enable you to look at the representation of minority ethnic people at each stage. For example, if you have high representation at application stage, this would suggest that your marketing campaign is effective. But if the level of minority ethnic candidates is reducing at interview or offer stage, then this may indicate the need for further review of your process or practices which may be disadvantaging minority ethnic people.
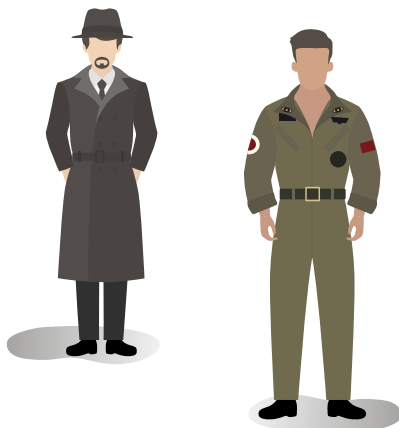
Further guidance is available from the Equality and Human Rights Commission on what information to gather and publish and how data can be used:

https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/employee-information-public-sector-equality-duty-scotland.pdf

https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/what-equality-law-means-you-employer-when-you-recruit-someone-work-you

General sources for data in relation to local populations and ethnicity can be found here:

Scottish Surveys Core Questions 2017 Supplementary Tables

https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/About/Surveys/SSCQ/SSCQ2017/SuppTabs

(Ethnic Group table 4.2)

2011 Census

https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/ods-web/standard-outputs.html

Advertising and outreach

Think about your own branding and the image you want to present of your organisation. Ensure your organisational website is welcoming to and representative of minority ethnic communities. Try to use up to date imagery of actual employees who are from minority ethnic backgrounds and not stock images – or this can be perceived as box-ticking. Engage with your diversity networks if you have them to consider how you might improve your images. Consider allocating resources within advertising budgets to target minority ethnic communities for example.
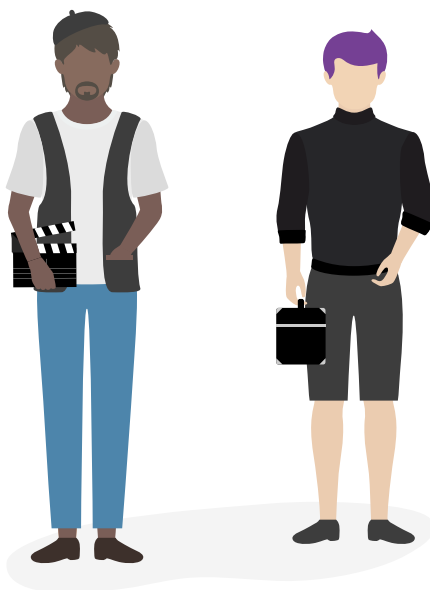
Examples of positive action

A positive action approach to engaging with minority ethnic communities could include:

- Advertising on local community radio stations.
- Engagement at local or national events with representatives from your organisation that come from a minority ethnic background.
- Blog posts or testimonials from minority ethnic people at all levels within the organisation sharing their experiences of working for the organisation.
- Positive images of minority ethnic employees of your workforce or sector within any marketing and advertising campaigns – avoid one standard image.
- Working with minority ethnic community organisations and particularly those who have an employability remit, to engage with local minority ethnic communities.

Advertising and outreach
continued

Examples of good practice

- Providing clear and accessible information about the post and how to apply and what to expect within the application process and seeking feedback on this from minority ethnic people. This could include using plain English, avoiding acronyms and corporate or professional jargon.

- Consider other ways a person can apply alongside digital. Online only application processes can exclude some people.

- Highlight inclusive and family friendly policies to support your people, e.g. transport season ticket loans, salary advances, flexible working, part-time working, job sharing.

- Become a member of an accreditation scheme or charter such as the Race at Work Charter, Carer Positive, Living Wage employer – this makes people aware that an employer has given particular issues specific consideration and are committing to certain standards or expectations.

- Include a paragraph in the job advertisement to highlight that applicants from a diverse background are encouraged.

- Promote Foundation, Modern and Graduate Apprenticeships – these can offer highly valued workplace experience that employers look for when recruiting and can be useful for breaking down barriers as well as increasing skills that help prepare for permanent employment.

Consider whether qualifications are actually necessary, or whether they can be removed. Explore whether some skills and knowledge can be learned on the job rather than required by candidates at application stage. Where qualifications are necessary but might be not be recognised, refer to the UK National Recognition Centre – **NARIC**.

It is important to ensure there is capacity to undertake outreach activity. Ensure you plan your campaigns specifically to include this as well as undertaking appropriate training on topics such as race equality, discrimination and unconscious bias. These should be embedded into recruiter roles or considered as a dedicated resource (which will depend on the size and context of the organisation).

Sifting and interviewing

Agreeing the criteria for shortlisting and interview upfront can help avoid bias within the recruitment process as people are assessed against an objective criteria.

A number of approaches at application sifting and interview stage, when combined, have shown to be effective in improving minority ethnic recruitment.

Anonymised applications
Consider removing names of applicants from application forms before the sift stage, to help avoid conscious or unconscious bias. This helps to avoid assumptions about personal identity. You may wish to consider how the application form is assessed, for example to enable names to be replaced by candidate numbers to ensure that assessments are made purely on the applicant's evidence.

Assessment activity
If your organisation requires applicants to undertake an assessment, consider the accessibility of the assessment methods used. Are they easy to understand if you are not from that organisation? Do they favour people from certain backgrounds (e.g. with certain experience or certain education)?

With any assessment, whether in-house or bought in, check that the method has been tested with people with different protected characteristics to ensure it doesn't unfairly discriminate. Ensure that this is considered in your equality impact assessment of your overall recruitment strategy.

Diverse interview panels
Consider training minority ethnic staff to participate as recruitment panel members. This should be offered as a development opportunity and where there are small numbers of minority ethnic staff, care should be taken not to rely too heavily on the same people.

If possible within your recruitment policy, partner with another organisation to pool staff for sitting on recruitment panels – this can help you to have a larger pool of people to draw on and helps to avoid continuously relying on the same group of people.

Ensure that all your panel members, including minority ethnic staff members, are trained in race equality. Don't assume that just because someone is of a minority ethnic background that they have expertise on race equality.

Sifting and interviewing
continued

Good practice in interview questioning

Check that interview questions do not disadvantage a candidate because of how you have phrased them. E.g.

? | "Tell me from your professional experience about…" ✖

? | "Tell me from your professional or personal experience about…" ✔

This helps to recognise other skills and experience that may have been developed within career breaks.

Review why you are asking the question and ensure that the question enables you to get the answer and avoid terminology that has double meaning. E.g.

? | "How do you deal with conflict?" ✖

? | "How do you manage a problem within a team?" ✔

Consider testing some of the proposed questions on different groups of existing staff, including those from different racial backgrounds, who are not involved with the recruitment process. This will help to ensure that the meaning of the questions is universally understood and not open to misinterpretation. If you have a race equality network, draw on their insight for this.

Application and interview feedback
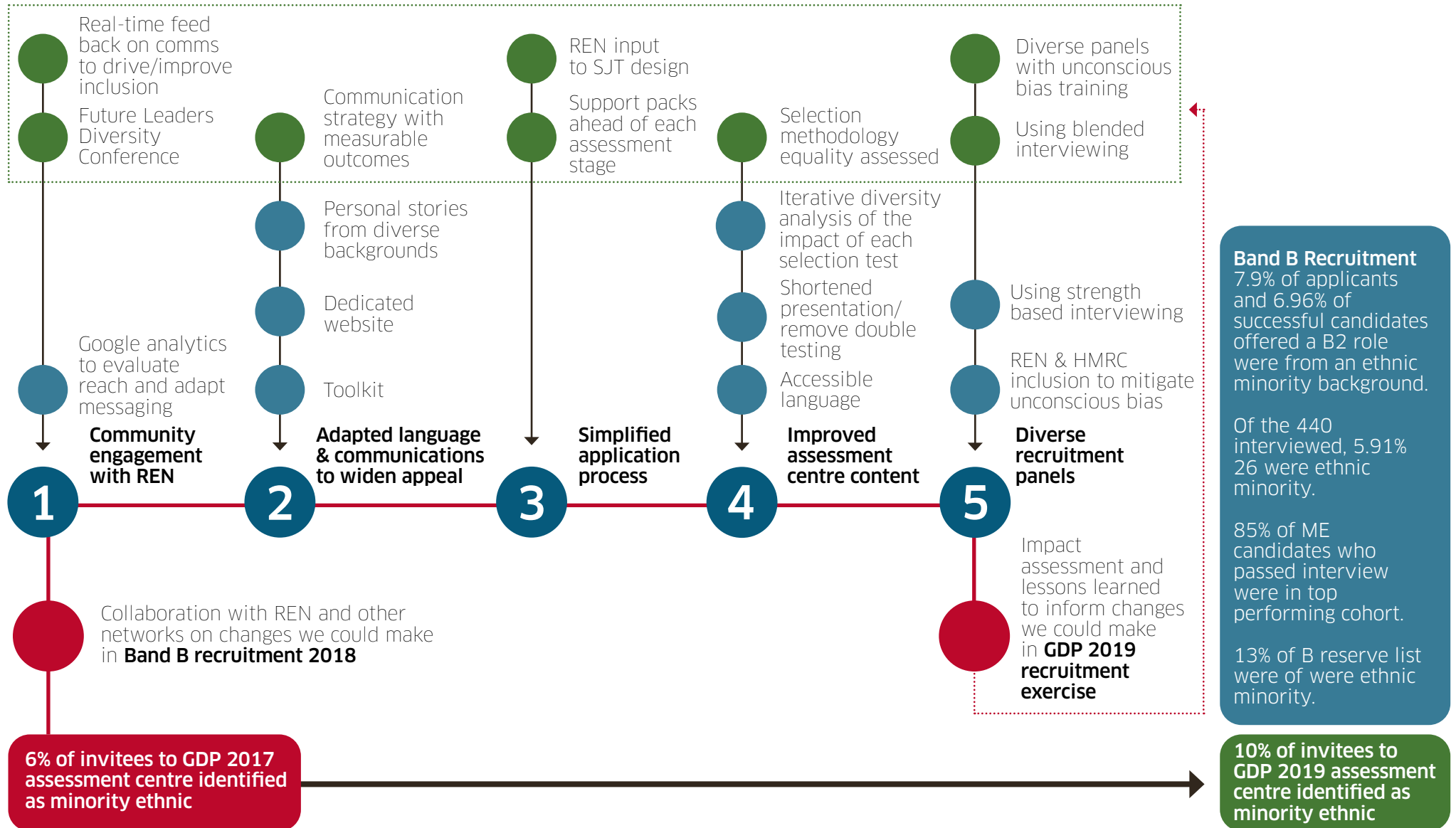
Application and interview feedback is another important process to improve diversity. Good candidates apply but may not have explained their competence, skills or experience in a manner that will score highly in the recruitment methods used, and so do not progress to the next stage. Providing feedback will help applicants to learn from the experience and may improve their chances next time.

Approach taken by Scottish Government
New approaches to recruitment

1 — Community engagement with REN
- Real-time feed back on comms to drive/improve inclusion
- Future Leaders Diversity Conference
- Google analytics to evaluate reach and adapt messaging
- Collaboration with REN and other networks on changes we could make in **Band B recruitment 2018**

2 — Adapted language & communications to widen appeal
- Communication strategy with measurable outcomes
- Personal stories from diverse backgrounds
- Dedicated website
- Toolkit

3 — Simplified application process
- REN input to SJT design
- Support packs ahead of each assessment stage

4 — Improved assessment centre content
- Selection methodology equality assessed
- Iterative diversity analysis of the impact of each selection test
- Shortened presentation/ remove double testing
- Accessible language

5 — Diverse recruitment panels
- Diverse panels with unconscious bias training
- Using blended interviewing
- Using strength based interviewing
- REN & HMRC inclusion to mitigate unconscious bias
- Impact assessment and lessons learned to inform changes we could make in **GDP 2019 recruitment exercise**

6% of invitees to GDP 2017 assessment centre identified as minority ethnic

Band B Recruitment
7.9% of applicants and 6.96% of successful candidates offered a B2 role were from an ethnic minority background.

Of the 440 interviewed, 5.91% 26 were ethnic minority.

85% of ME candidates who passed interview were in top performing cohort.

13% of B reserve list were of were ethnic minority.

10% of invitees to GDP 2019 assessment centre identified as minority ethnic

Approach taken by Scottish Government

The Scottish Government's approach to race equality and inclusion has increasingly focused on systemic change, developing around 5 principles:

- Commitment: explicitly making an increase in diversity, and specifically, race equality, a key measure of success in our recruitment and talent activities.
- Evidence-led: gathering, improving and analysing data, to inform and target our action and evaluate our impact.
- Openness: trying new and innovative approaches and building our learning
- Working collaboratively: with our Race Equality Network and external organisations
- Taking a 'whole systems' approach: addressing the whole employment experience, including tackling our biases.

Many of these principles were tested and improved in our recruitment to our Graduate Development Programme in 2017 and 2019 and our 2018 campaign to recruitment 150 middle managers. Action included:

- The Permanent Secretary setting a strong, clear direction at the outset of these campaigns: if they did not deliver increased diversity, they would be considered a failure.

- Working closely and collaboratively with our internal Race Equality Network, whose representatives formed part of a 'reference group' which was involved in every stage of the design and delivery of the campaign. REN provided valuable feedback on language in selection tests and communication; supported community outreach in person; provided role models and testimonials about their experiences; and joined the assessing panels to increase diversity of thought and perspective i.e. recognising that our different experiences, perspectives and diverse abilities shape how we solve problems and make decisions.

Approach taken by Scottish Government

- Working with over 100 organisations (including 20 race-based external organisations) providing in-person presentations and a separate toolkit of key messages, example Tweets, etc. to enable partners to promote the campaign on our behalf.

- Hosting a 3 day 'Future Leaders Conference' in 2018, providing 35 high potential candidates from minority ethnic, disabled or socio/ economically disadvantaged backgrounds with open-door access to the SG, advice on preparing for graduate selection and an on-going SG Mentor. Individuals described the conference as 'inspiring' 'energising' 'demystifying', and generating 'a warmth and connection to (the SG)'. Of those invited 2 went on to secure places on GDP 2019, and 2 secured 'near miss' appointments.

- Testing approaches such as blended interviewing (strength-based and Situational Judgement Testing) and providing bespoke training to assessors on this and unconscious bias.

- Anonymising recruitment – with assessing panels completely separate from recruiting teams – and increasing the diversity of panels.

- Scrutinising Google analytics throughout the advertising period to evaluate reach and to adapt the message and where it was placed accordingly.

- Exploring the best available assessment approaches which advance equality of opportunity, using a considerable body of research from Government Recruitment Services with particular attention to the impact of certain exercises on minority ethnic candidates.

- Analysing diversity data at each stage of selection testing to understand impact. This iterative approach identified less favourable results than predicted for minority ethnic candidates in some tests, and led to a change of approach in how the successful cohort would be identified. This was successful in maintaining the diversity of the cohort.

Approach taken by Scottish Government

The 2018 campaign for middle managers saw 7.9% of applicants and 6.96% of successful candidates identifying as being from a visible ethnic minority background. Notably, 85% of minority ethnic candidates who passed interview were in the top performing cohort.

The proportion of people who identified as minority ethnic being invited to the assessment centre rose from 6% in 2017 to 10% in 2019. Visible minority ethnic people were represented in the final 2019 cohort at levels above the benchmark of the wider Scottish population (5%).

Some of the lessons learned:

- Large, centralised campaigns lend themselves to building in the actions which can improve diversity (e.g. blind sifting, large-scale outreach, single point of contact for adjustments).

- You have to be clear on who you are targeting and what that will take before you start – plan first.

- A marketing strategy must be tailored to the channels that will reach candidates – go digital and partner up for wider impact.

- The selection processes is a key factor in the accessibility of opportunity – we made changes.

- Making offers and on boarding are where important impressions are formed.

- Taking the time to engage can help you understand barriers better – perceived or real.

- Keep it legal – especially if you are planning positive action – check with diversity professionals if you are unsure.

Reference Guide

These are a few organisations that could help with engaging with local minority ethnic communities and supporting employers/organisations in their recruitment processes. However, do also check who is in your local area.

Council of Ethnic Minority Voluntary Organisations (CEMVO)
Services offered: guidance, support and training on how to work strategically to improve organisational approaches to Ethnic Minority workforce development
Contact: enquiries@cemvoscotland.org.uk
Areas covered: National

Radiant and Brighter
Services offered: Culture and Diversity training
Contact: info@radiantandbrighter.com
Areas covered: National

Reach Community Health Project
Services offered: community engagement and reaching out through local community networks
Contact: admin@reachhealth.org.uk
Areas covered: Glasgow & Clyde, North & South Lanarkshire, East Dunbartonshire and East Renfrewshire

Sikh Sanjog
Services offered: Cultural Awareness Training to Employers and staff in the public sector, including HR staff. Promote vacancies to service users. Circulate employment opportunities to help reach minority ethnic groups.
Contact: info@sikhsanjog.com
sabrina@sikhsanjog.com
Areas covered: Edinburgh

Further guidance

Skills Development Scotland -
Equality and Diversity
https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/
for-training-providers/equality-and-diversity/

Employer Recruitment Guides
https://www.apprenticeships.scot/for-
employers/inclusive-recruitment/

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