

# DIVERSITY IN EARLY TALENT RECRUITMENT

## An event summary

In June 2018, Cohesion brought together a number of organisations that recruit Early Talent, to share ideas and best practice in Diversity and Inclusion.

Cohesion would like to thank the various delegates and companies that took part including:



# Growing Diversity

The profile of the labour market is changing. Women now make up more than **50%** of the workforce. **20%** of potential employees have a disability and **5%** of those use wheelchairs. There are **1 million** fewer people in their 20s than ten years ago. **12%** of the UK's university undergraduates are young people from black and other ethnic minorities

**65%** of UK organisations *intend* to recruit a diverse workforce.

We now live in an era where the quality of a company's people has become the distinguishing feature of a successful organisation, and people can often be the single sustainable source of competitive advantage.

But only **49%** of organisations actively monitor their intake.

Equality and diversity go beyond legal obligations, it's about the competitive edge a fully inclusive workforce brings to an organisation.

Managing diversity, like equal opportunities, requires organisation to ensure that all decisions about the employment and training of people are objective, based on merit, relate to individual personal development criteria and support business goals.

# The Speakers

Debs Edmondson and Amanda Marques from Cohesion kicked off with a presentation covering:

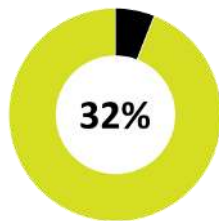
- **What is diversity and how does it benefit organisations?**
- **The Early Talent landscape**
- **Examples of Company programmes & interventions**
- **The role that Universities can play**

We then heard from Kay Stewart, who represented the University of West London. Kay was able to share and discuss the perspective of candidates and current students, and what equality, diversity and inclusion means to them.

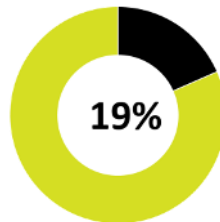
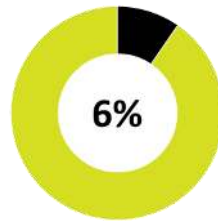
## Group discussion

Very often, companies need to evolve their thoughts and practices to survive, and diversity in the workplace presents one of the biggest challenges.

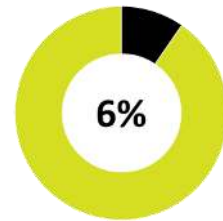
By sharing personal definitions of what 'diverse' means, we were able to explore and examine the variety of areas where diversity could come into effect.



6% of the UK's working population are LGBT, yet 32% choose to hide their sexual orientation



10% of the working population are from a BME background, but only 6% reach management positions.



For every £1 earned by a man, a woman earns 81p - 19% less.

Having shared attendees' definitions of what diversity meant to them, the group then explored the concept of engaging with a 'wholly inclusive' workforce and the associated benefits of engaging with and recruiting a diverse employee base.

The entire landscape within early talent is changing and companies are having to rethink not only their programmes, but also how they engage, assess, select and connect with their early talent intake. With the increase in apprenticeship schemes and reduction in graduate numbers, the war on talent is continuing to heighten and the associated problems of this are even more acute when looking at niche skill sectors. Despite these figures, **96%** of diversity leadership groups think that they will struggle to recruit and would like to broaden the pool from which they attract candidates.

Recent figures released by the government estimate that increasing diversity in the workplace, could give an annual boost to the UK economy of **£24 billion**

# Diversity or Inclusion

Whilst diversity is often the buzz word that comes up in conversation around the board room table, inclusion is increasingly hot on its heels. Policies alone are not enough to build an inclusive workplace, and inclusion shouldn't be a box-ticking exercise. Inclusion is about ensuring that no one feels left out because of their age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, marital status etc. Ultimately an inclusive working environment allows people to be themselves at work.

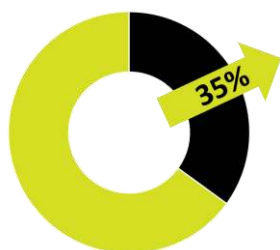
## Diversity



## Inclusion



The conversation was concluded by Kay Stewart who gave her perspective and feedback from working with current and previous students within her university. Kay provided three examples of individuals from diverse backgrounds who despite having requisite experience and qualifications had struggled to find employment.



**It has recently been found, that companies in the top quartile for racial/ethnic diversity, were 35% more likely to have financial returns above their industry average.**

# Seminar Recommendations & Takeaways

**Attraction recommendation** – certain groups are more likely to be studying closer to home and returning home after graduating – for example women, mature students and those from low-participation backgrounds, so localised attraction is going to be key to impacting diversity in your Early Talent schemes .

**Attraction recommendation** – you may be missing out on the best talent by only targeting selected universities. Though seemingly obvious, you may also find that you attract a more diverse range of applicants from a university with a more diverse student population!

**Scheme recommendation** – does your scheme *have* to be set across multiple sites, which will require the new employee to re-locate? Can the scheme be adapted to offer suitable experiences from one site? Of course there are multiple benefits to multi-locations schemes, however we are seeing a reluctance from early talent to relocate, so it may be an easy fix!

**Application criteria recommendation** – do you ask for certain degree types, minimum grades or a set a benchmark for testing scores? They may be a useful filter for large application numbers, however are you sure that these are good predictors of top-talent and long-term performance? Track how well people perform on-scheme and look back at the scores they achieved during the recruitment process. Students from low-participation backgrounds are less likely to meet some of these criteria, because they haven't had access to the same opportunities. We don't think you need to lower your standards, however if you are serious about increasing diversity then we do recommend that you remove application barriers, to allow students from all backgrounds to apply.

**Communication recommendation** – people like to know that they are applying for a company that is serious about diversity, so we recommend that you think about everything from images / stories on the website through to your assessor pool at final stage. Are you ensuring representation from diverse groups throughout your process? Will applicants be able to see 'people like them' as they go through the recruitment process?

## And finally .....

**Be brave** – if you are truly going to impact diversity, you will need to be brave in the recruitment decisions you make and help the wider business understand the benefits that a diverse workforce can bring.

If you would like further details or intelligence on this topic, or would like to be invited to any future events, please contact:

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