

POSITIVE ACTION GUIDE FOR LONDON'S CHIEF EXECUTIVES

**MOVING
ON UP** 



You have the power to
tackle the young
Black male talent gap
within your company.



ABOUT THIS GUIDE



The government has recently published new [‘Positive action in the workplace’](#) guidance. It covers the nine protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act.

This ‘Positive Action Guide for London’s Chief Executives’ has been developed by the Moving on Up (MoU) Employer Champions Group, which represent a range of London companies. This Guide focuses on one underrepresented group in the workforce - young Black men. The Guide should be read in conjunction with the government guidance and the [Mayor of London’s Inclusive Employers Toolkit](#).

The MoU Employer Champions urge you to add to your company’s achievements by building a workforce that includes all of London’s talented young people.

Moving on Up is a London employment initiative working with employers, local councils, Jobcentre Plus, civil society organisations and young Black men. We are all committed to closing the unemployment gap between young Black men and young White men aged 16-24.

WHAT ALL LONDON'S CHIEF EXECUTIVES SHOULD KNOW



- **1 in 5** (21%) of all young men in London are Black and mixed heritage.
- Young Black men have unemployment rates that are **up to 3 times higher** than for young White men, regardless of their qualification levels.
- An ethnically diverse workforce **improves business performance**.
- Delivering on diversity, inclusion and equity for your people and customers is a continuous journey, not a 'tick box' exercise.
- Overtly valuing diversity and inclusion will help you to **attract talented people** who will want to stay and be part of a team that improves performance.
- Positive action is a useful tool for achieving diversity and inclusion.
- Positive action is about **levelling the playing field**. It is not about lowering entry requirements.



AS CHIEF EXECUTIVES THE DECISIONS ARE YOURS



YOU CAN

- **Show leadership.** The gap in unemployment rates for young Black men will never be closed without the commitment and leadership of Chief Executives like you.
- Choose to increase the representation of young Black men in your workforce, aiming to **reflect the population** profile of 1 in 5 young male employees being a young Black man.
- Use positive action to **level the playing field** for young Black men.
- Mandate your **HR lead** to use this guide to achieve and sustain the 1 in 5 profile of young Black men across your workforce.
- Ensure that your **annual reports** and website show what you are doing year-on-year to deliver on workforce inclusion and equity for women, ethnic minorities and disabled people.
- **Build the culture** of your organisation through your leadership on positive action to become a company that welcomes and promotes talented young people from all of London's diverse communities.
- Bring your workforce with you through **open communication** and consultation on any changes.

WHY IT'S TIME TO TAKE POSITIVE ACTION



Evidence for 2021 shows that:

(APS, Dec 2021)

- **35%** of young Black men in London were unemployed compared to **15%** of young White men.
- Just over 1,000 young Black men in London started an apprenticeship in 2021/2022 making up 13.6% of all young male starts in London in that year. Remember, 1 in 5 (21%) of all young men in London are Black and mixed.
- **31%** of young Black men with a degree level qualification in the UK were unemployed, compared with 10% of young White men.

Standard recruitment and promotion practices have not closed the unemployment gap for young Black men.

According to Youth Futures Foundation's survey of 2,296 ethnic minority young people:

- 7 in 10 (71%) have experienced some form of workplace discrimination.
- 1 in 3 have experienced discrimination when applying for a job (37%) and/ or at a job interview (36%)
- More than half (55%) of young Black people feel that employers underestimate their abilities because of their ethnic background

(Youth Futures Foundation, Narrowing the gap: tackling ethnic disparities in youth employment, 2022)



BUSINESS BENEFITS OF USING POSITIVE ACTION



- A **wider pool** of talented, skilled and experienced people from which to recruit
- A **dynamic and challenging workforce** able to respond to changes
- A **better understanding** of the needs of a more diverse range of customers – both nationally and internationally
- **Improves business performance**

WHAT IS POSITIVE ACTION?



The Equality Act 2010 enables you to take positive action to help improve your company's ethnic diversity.

With regard to young Black men, positive action means treating young Black men more favourably where this helps them overcome a disadvantage or participate more fully. It also means acting to meet needs they have that are different from the wider population.

Positive action is one of the government's range of measures aimed at ending discrimination in the workplace under the Equality Act. It can be used in two areas: **“encouragement and training”** (Section 158, in law since October 2010); and **“recruitment and promotion”** (Section 159, in law since April 2011). Section 159 permits an employer to take ethnicity/race (a protected characteristic) into consideration when deciding whom to recruit or promote, where people having the protected characteristic are at a disadvantaged or are underrepresented.

Positive action is entirely voluntary and is just one of a range of measures an employer can adopt to help increase the recruitment of young Black men.

WHAT DOES THE EQUALITY ACT ALLOW YOU TO DO?

Positive action provisions mean that it is not unlawful discrimination to take special measures aimed at alleviating disadvantage or under-representation experienced by protected characteristic groups, such as young Black men.

The actions you take should be 'proportionate', taking into account the seriousness of the disadvantage, the extent of the needs or under-representation.



WHAT ARE POSITIVE ACTIONS?



ENCOURAGEMENT AND TRAINING

- Holding open days and job fairs to encourage young Black male applicants.
- Developing targeted training, traineeship pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programmes.
- Developing a training course to develop the technical skills of young Black men.
- Reserving places on a training course for young Black men.
- Introducing an external mentoring scheme for young Black men to help them appreciate what the company expects from applicants.
- Offering training or paid internships to help young Black men get opportunities or progress at work.
- Offering work experience in the company prior to the assessment centre process.

Creating A-Level scholarships, work placements, summer student schemes.

Setting targets for the recruitment of young Black men on apprenticeships and graduate schemes.

Adding statements to job adverts that encourage applications from under-represented groups such as 'We welcome ethnic minority applicants'.



A man in a blue suit is shown in profile, pointing upwards with his right hand. He is in a meeting room with other people blurred in the background. A purple arrow points from the top left towards the text box.

WHAT ARE POSITIVE ACTIONS?

RECRUITMENT AND PROMOTION

- Where a young Black male is **“as qualified as”** a young White male and young Black men are under-represented in the company, the position could be offered to the young Black male.
- If a graduate training scheme with 20 places is over-subscribed and multiple candidates for the 20th place are of equal merit, this place could be offered to a young Black man.
- Should be used alongside preparatory supportive measures permitted under S158 encouragement and training.

HOW DOES YOUR COMPANY JUSTIFY POSITIVE ACTION?



- When young Black men suffer a disadvantage connected to their ethnicity.
- When young Black men have needs that are different from the needs of persons who are not from the same ethnicity, or participation in an activity from young Black men is disproportionately low.

WHAT EVIDENCE DO YOU NEED TO TACKLE DISADVANTAGE OR UNDER-REPRESENTATION?

- Your knowledge of your workforce profile.
- Comparisons with employers in your sector or of the picture nationally will be sufficient.
- You **do not need** sophisticated statistical proof. (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2011). Qualitative evidence is valid.





YOU CAN MAKE
A DIFFERENCE.

Discover the Inclusive Employers Toolkit
Join the Employer Champions Group

Take action today

www.actionforraceequality.org.uk/moving-on-up



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Moving on Up (MoU) Employer Champions:

Affinity Water, High Speed Two (HS2) Ltd, Kier, Keyhaven Capital, Lendlease, Veritas Investments and WTW

Moving on Up is supported by Trust for London and City Bridge Foundation.

For more information visit:

www.actionforraceequality.org.uk/moving-on-up

To download the Inclusive Employers Toolkit visit:

www.actionforraceequality.org.uk/moving-on-up/inclusive-employers-toolkit



Action for Race Equality
Registered Charity No 1056043

