

# CURE Inclusive Recruitment Toolkit

Cultural Competency

Unconscious Bias

Representation

Empowerment

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## Forward from Anthony Hassall - Northwest Regional Chief People Officer



“Equality should be at the heart of all that we do as the National Health Service and our commitments across the North West to be both Anti-Racist and Intentional in our efforts to tackle inequalities we still see across our organisations. This document now builds on those commitments and aims to provide practical support for all our leaders to do more to improve their recruitment and selection processes and to reduce the inequalities we still see in leadership roles and some professional groups.

We continue to see barriers experienced by our colleagues from an ethnic minority background, our LGBTQ+ colleagues and those living with a disability in advancing into leadership roles across most organisations. From the impact of institutional discrimination, the biases that we still allow to impact on our decision making processes and the gaps in cultural competency of those recruiting we have many challenges still to overcome, but progress starts by us first recognising the journey we need to travel and then being clear on how we are planning on getting to our destination.

All NHS organisations have been working towards clear targets looking tackling race equality through both the Workforce Race Equality Standard and the new Race Disparity Ratio activity. Many NHS organisations have used the Workforce Disability Equality Standard framework to set targets for increasing representation for our disabled workforce and some have gone as far as setting representation goals for Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual and Trans colleagues into senior leadership roles. By using the CURE toolkit we are asking organisations to build in even more practical steps to tackle the inequalities they see across their recruitment and selection processes and to be intentional in setting out clearly how they are going to get to that destination where inequalities are part of our history that we should learn from not part of the present impacting on our colleagues and wider communities.”

## Why Inclusive Recruitment Matters

This guide aims to support NHS organisations & managers to take intentional steps to improve and develop their recruitment processes to be more inclusive and ensure they are working to reduce inequalities across the NHS workforce.

While we can look at the data that demonstrates the scale of inequalities we see across how the NHS currently recruits it's also important to hear the voices of those impacted by it and below are the words of three staff network chairs from NHS organisations across our region about why getting this right matters.

"We need people with different backgrounds and experience to come together to serve our diverse communities, the true soul of the NHS. However, if we do not think actively about inclusion when we recruit, we most often will select others like ourselves. To truly achieve the care we aspire to, we must recruit inclusively."

**BAME Staff Network Chair University  
Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS  
Foundation Trust**

**Being intentionally inclusive at the  
recruitment stage sends an important  
message to potential, and existing, staff  
that your organisation is serious about  
creating a diverse culture.**

**LGBTQ+ Staff Network Chair Northern  
Care Alliance NHS Group**

**It is important to have that sense of  
belonging culture which enables you to  
develop as an individual and that you are  
able to bring your whole self to work.**

**Ability Staff Network Chair Mersey Care  
NHS Foundation Trust**

## Inclusive Approach

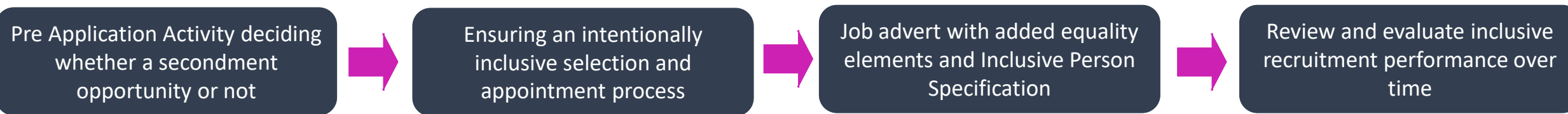
In developing an organisational wide approach to Inclusive Recruitment there are four areas that we should consider and focus interventions to have the biggest impact.

Inclusive recruitment starts right from the beginning considering the job description and what type of contract a role will be advertised for. Different contract types may exclude applicants depending on their circumstances and there is an opportunity for organisations to consider targeted positive action at this stage through ring fenced secondments for underserved communities.

When considering job adverts, we should do more than say we welcome everyone and actively discuss those communities that are underrepresented and how we would particularly welcome applications from those groups. It is also important to consider the person specification and avoiding over reliance of qualifications or requirements that would exclude large groups of applicants unless this is a core requirement of professional registration for a role.

This guide provides some tips & suggestions on improving overall selection & appointment processes and its important this area is considered intentionally to reduce inequalities and actively improve representation across the workforce.

All processes should be regularly reviewed using up to date recruitment data to demonstrate whether measures introduced are effective in reducing known inequalities.



## Intentionally Inclusive Assessment & Selection Methodology

When recruiting staff the first method that is often used is a straightforward question and answer panel interview. While in its self this method of recruitment is not often a barrier to inclusion there are now numerous forms of best practice that offer alternatives to a panel interview and many often have the advantage of making it easier to assess values, provide more accuracy when assessing specific skills and can lead to a more positive impact on inclusion.

### Points to Consider

Consider multi-element selection process with no one element weighted more than 50% of score

Involve different staff in each element of selection process and staff from a variety of roles.

Consider practical tasks or assessments relating to the job role that can be objectively judged as an element of selection

Consider providing all candidates with interview questions at least 15-20mins prior to the interview and space to prepare their best answers

## The CURE Model

The CURE model for taking an intentionally inclusive approach to recruitment is split across four domains. If as an organisation you can develop interventions and actions which aim to reduce inequalities in each of these four areas you will continue to develop a more inclusive and fair selection and appointment process.

For each of the four domains included within the model we have set out simply how each of these areas impact on the inequalities seen around recruitment to support organisations and recruiting managers develop their own interventions and approaches that will impact on these inequalities.

### The four domains of the CURE model are:

- ❑ **Cultural Competency** - Ensuring we are able to understand, communicate and consider the needs of people from all diverse communities.
- ❑ **Unconscious** - Ensuring we have approaches or take actions that tackle bias, removing the ability for it to impact or minimising in decision making.
- ❑ **Representation** - Seeking to improve and increase representation from those within underserved communities within selection processes.
- ❑ **Empowerment** - Ensuring applicants from underserved communities are encouraged and supported to apply for roles and promotions.



## Importance of Cultural Competency

My philosophy as an HR Director has always been to try to remember that everyone who works in the organisation is an individual. This is just as relevant for the patients we care for. We all come from different backgrounds, have grown up in different cultures and will have had very different experiences. This can be because of where we were born or where our family comes from or just because of our life experiences.

Cultural competence is about all of us being able to understand those differences. It is not about changing ourselves or others so we are all the same, it is about ensuring that our attitudes and behaviours take account of others' cultures and backgrounds, both with patients and colleagues.

Learning more about different cultures so we are better able to embrace that difference is critical = everyone deserves to be treated with respect and sometimes that might need us to behave differently to respect our differences. Adapting our processes and practice is just as important as our own behaviours and in recruitment in particular we know there is lots we can do to make sure our process takes better account of the needs of different individuals.

We all have a responsibility to develop our cultural competence, to learn more about differences, understand them and behave in a way that respects and acknowledges them.

**Nicky Clarke – Chief or People Officer - Northern Care Alliance NHS Group.**





## Understanding Cultural Competency

- ☐ Cultural sensitivity is being aware that cultural differences and similarities between people exist without assigning them a positive or negative value.
- ☐ Awareness of cultural difference isn't enough statements like "we are all just people" ignore that we are shaped by our own experiences and that those need acknowledged and valued
- ☐ People start their journey towards improved intercultural sensitivity by accepting that diverse cultures approach situations differently and by developing a curiosity around how people from other cultural backgrounds may respond to environments they are in.
- ☐ Becoming culturally competent means developing the ability to adapt and respond positively to people from backgrounds different to our own. This includes the ability to frame and respond to someone else by engaging in their cultural perspective and not our own.
- ☐ To champion cultural competency is to be able to show empathy for other cultural perspectives and to shift their own responses seamlessly between different cultural environments and the people they are engaging with.

## Taking action to develop cultural competency

### Explore

- ☐ Share community and workforce demographics across recruiting managers.
- ☐ Advertise diverse community events to recruiting managers to attend

### Learn

- ☐ Attend events ran by different communities across your locality particularly those you lack experience of.
- ☐ Participate in community specific equality training

### Understand

- ☐ Hear and share lived experience stories from colleagues and community members
- ☐ Run or participate in activities like living libraries and lets “talk about racism” type events.

### Make it Real

- ☐ Bring diverse staff together to run and deliver projects even if it means working across teams.
- ☐ Gain experience facilitating and communicating with diverse groups and audiences

## Importance of Tackling Unconscious and Conscious Bias

Bias can affect our decisions in all areas of life, but especially in the workplace. We may try to be as objective as possible when making important decisions, especially when these relate to work, however, as human beings, we are all subject to unconscious bias (also known as implicit bias) in one way or another, but the more we are aware of this, the more we can mitigate it. Influences such as our background, lived experiences and environmental conditions can all play a part in shaping our choices, whether we realise it or not. For the most part, this is not a major issue. But we display unconscious bias when we favour or discriminate against people because of these influences without even realising it. In fact, unconscious bias can have a big impact on people-related decisions at work, especially when it comes to recruitment, promotion, talent management, idea generation and innovation. When bias is prevalent, organisations will struggle to recruit diverse teams and efforts to improve inclusion will be of limited success.

Unconscious bias is only a small part of the picture. As organisations we need to tackle conscious bias and structural bias alongside unconscious bias. If we don't tackle all three then the status quo will just reset itself. You might go on your unconscious bias training, recognise how stereotypes are affecting you and decide to personally do something about that. If the organisation you work for is also making sure that you are constantly exposed to counterstereotypes – you might start to make new, positive associations. Institutions can take many practical steps: tackling micro-aggressions, shifting the way they recruit, promote, harness talent, introduce mentoring programmes. These can all help. However, the most important changes we can make are structural – we need to take out the parts of the system that make it possible for people to make bad decisions. It's about setting up good rules, good policies and practices and good legislation. We all need to work hard and our organisations need to do the same.

This is how real change can happen. **Sharmila Kar – Director of Workforce OD & Inclusion – Manchester Health Care & Commissioning**



## Tackling Bias

- ☐ There is often one hard reality we don't like to admit. We are not in complete control of our body and brain. Our body language and instincts are often controlled by our brain without conscious thought and in response to stereotypes or social conditioning.
- ☐ Unconscious bias is a biological process that we often have little direct control over. However we can choose to recognise it happens and become more self aware of how we are responding or which instincts we choose to trust.
- ☐ Everyone has their own unconscious biases they are personal to ourselves and are shaped by our past experiences. Subtle things can make a big impact when it comes to interviews. Consider how much eye contact you are giving, body language or small talk you are making and which candidates you are giving the benefit of the doubt over when it comes to scoring.
- ☐ Other than being aware of the impact bias can have on our decision making and actions, we can choose to influence and change any biases we have over time. Interacting with people from different backgrounds and reading alternative media sources can reduce and change any biases we may hold.

## Taking action to Tackle Unconscious and conscious Bias

### Awareness

- ☐ Delivery of action focussed bias training focused on tackling bias.
- ☐ Discussions about the impact of bias and how to tackling it brought up in team meetings and wider forums.

### Self-Reflection

- ☐ Support staff to utilise tools that help explore and identify personal bias.
- ☐ Deliver facilitated sessions that allow people to share personal experiences of bias

### Tackle Bias

- ☐ Look at recruitment methodologies that reduce the ability for bias to act such as:
  - Test or written activity marked without candidate names.
  - Ensure stakeholder panels are diverse and scoring is major part of selection decision.

### Shift Bias

- ☐ Participate in reverse mentoring programmes.
- ☐ Utilise the Circle of Trust tool to identify diversity gaps and intentionally seek opportunities to connect with people from more diverse backgrounds.

## Importance of Representation

We are all looking at how we can better improve our workforce diversity so that we appeal to the widest talent pool available. Inclusive recruitment boosts diversity and attracts talented individuals.

Creating a sense of belonging starts before you appoint to the role. It starts from the drafting of the Job Description, the language used in our adverts, where and how we advertise, the images we use of our existing workforce, who is involved in the recruitment processes (end to end), how underrepresented staff groups are actively involved in recruitment decisions, and the skill set of the decision makers who shortlist and interview.

Inclusive recruitment is the process of engaging, interviewing and employing individuals equally across a diverse range of backgrounds. It covers gender, race, age, disability, and more. It is an attempt to appreciate how current practices can get in the way of valuing people from all walks of life and in making changes to address any barriers or blocks to genuine inclusivity. There is strong evidence that we get inclusion right staff feel valued and consequently wellbeing improves.

We all have a responsibility to be consistent in how we recruit inclusively; how we promote the benefits of a diverse workforce; how we create opportunities for progression and succession planning; and how we improve representation of diversity at senior levels. Adopting inclusive recruitment practices and being better informed of how to do this well is everyone's responsibility.

**Michelle Cloney - Chief People Officer**

**Warrington and Halton Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust**





## Understanding Why Representation Matters

- ❑ As human beings we bring different perspectives and experiences to every situation we encounter. Diversity or lack of it will always therefore have an impact on the outcome of a situation or process.
- ❑ We can often feel more comfortable either consciously or subconsciously when we are engaging with people with similar backgrounds to ourselves. This is the same during an interview and how the diversity of the interview panel can impact on how comfortable candidates feel.
- ❑ Bias and the impact of social inequalities on our experiences are often complex and difficult to overcome. Ensuring we have diverse representation on our interview panels helps ensure decisions are not influenced by one set of inequalities or cultural bias.
- ❑ Making judgements about candidates skills rather than the context of the experiences they share can be difficult. Having diverse perspectives on interview panels can support a broader understanding of experiences candidates may share.
- ❑ The diversity of the chair on our interview panels can often play an important role in the ultimate outcome of decisions due to the hierarchal culture that can exist in the NHS.



## Taking action to Improve representation

### Community

- ☐ Consider training & including in recruitment processes existing volunteers & staff from diverse range of backgrounds
- ☐ Consider same approach for patients, service users & community members

### Monitor & Act

- ☐ Review demographics of your interview panels regularly.
- ☐ Take steps to increase the diversity of chairs of recruitment panels and interviews. Ask trained diversity representative to chair rather than just be part of the process.

### Multi-Stage

- ☐ Include other activities within recruitment process where you can involve a wider diversity of people.
- ☐ Involve a diverse range of people and trained diversity representatives in design of recruitment activities

### Feedback

- ☐ Ask colleagues from underserved communities to sit in and provide feedback on interview processes.
- ☐ Ask applicants from underserved communities to provide feedback on the recruitment process

## Importance of Empowerment

Hi, my name is David Wilkinson and, as Director of People & OD, I carry the Board portfolio for equality, diversity and inclusion for both service and employment. I am passionate about inclusion and diversity, and these are at the heart of my personal ethos - passion and commitment alone are not enough – being an Executive Director affords me the opportunity to work with networks, to listen to their voices and experience and to take the actions that create the change that is needed.

Our work programme at UHMBT over the last five years has been about creating an inclusive culture, empowering individuals, groups and networks to get involved, to speak out, to become champions for inclusive practice and to contribute to a social movement for change that we called #TowardsInclusion.

As we look to shape the agenda across the North West, it is important that we enthuse and inspire a network of champions, allies and supporters to be the difference, to support us in curating inclusive, fair and equitable working environments where people are supported to be the very best they can be.

**David Wilkinson – Director of People & OD - University Hospital Morecambe Bay NHS Trust**



## Empowerment and Recruitment

- ❑ Support at work can come in many forms. Often people's peer networks can play an important role in providing advice and support in making that next step in their careers. But due to existing inequalities and social factors, this support is not easily accessible for people from across a range of specific groups.
- ❑ Preparing for interviews and ensuring you have a perspective on how to present information that may help recruiting managers easily assess your skills is essential to all job applicants. However for applicants where their life experiences and context of the skills they wish to demonstrate may be different to that of those recruiting them this preparation is even more valuable.
- ❑ It's important any support we give colleagues in developing their careers and supporting inclusion is evidence based and built off staff's own past experiences. All advice and support should try to link to feedback applicants have had from previous interviews or from staff member's own concerns or confidence gaps.
- ❑ Sadly inequalities in society often mean people with some protected characteristics often have to work harder to reach their career potential. Whilst we are working hard to try to ensure this is not to be the case in the future, we should ensure the level of coaching and support reflects the current experiences of our staff.

## Taking action to Empower Colleagues and Applicants

### Coaching & Mentoring

- ☐ Target coaching offers and programmes at staff from underserved groups
- ☐ Deliver peer to peer mentoring programmes for staff from underserved groups

### Preparation

- ☐ Have easily accessible interview skills sessions available with content targeted at different levels and roles.
- ☐ Offer mock interview opportunities for senior roles

### Confidence

- ☐ Regularly share and support the promotion of role models from a diverse range of backgrounds.
- ☐ Provide a strengths based approach to feedback and appraisal to support your team grow

### Development

- ☐ Offer Staff from underserved groups career planning sessions with manager acting as an active ally to support progression.
- ☐ Take steps to target secondment opportunities to underserved groups

## How to review and evaluate inclusive recruitment performance

It's important that organisations continue to evaluate and review the effectiveness of their recruitment and selection processes to ensure they are contributing to reducing rather than increase inequalities across the organisation.

To effectively evaluate and to provide continuous assurance of the fairness and positive impact on equality an organisations recruitment processes are having there are three main areas to consider:

### Data & Measurement

- ☐ Use departmental, divisional & organisational data against likelihood of appointment at shortlisting.
- ☐ Set clear goals and measurable targets to monitor against.

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## Additional Inclusive Recruitment Resources

Stonewall Inclusive Workplace Resources - [Click Here](#)

NHS Employers Inclusive Recruitment Resources - [Click Here](#)

TPP Recruitment Inclusive Recruitment Guide - [Click Here](#)

We Are Purple Inclusive Recruitment Advice - [Click Here](#)

CBI Race and recruitment webinar - [Click Here](#)

EW Group 7 Steps to inclusive recruitment - [Click Here](#)

Dorothy Dalton How to Make Your Interview Processes Inclusive - [Click Here](#)

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