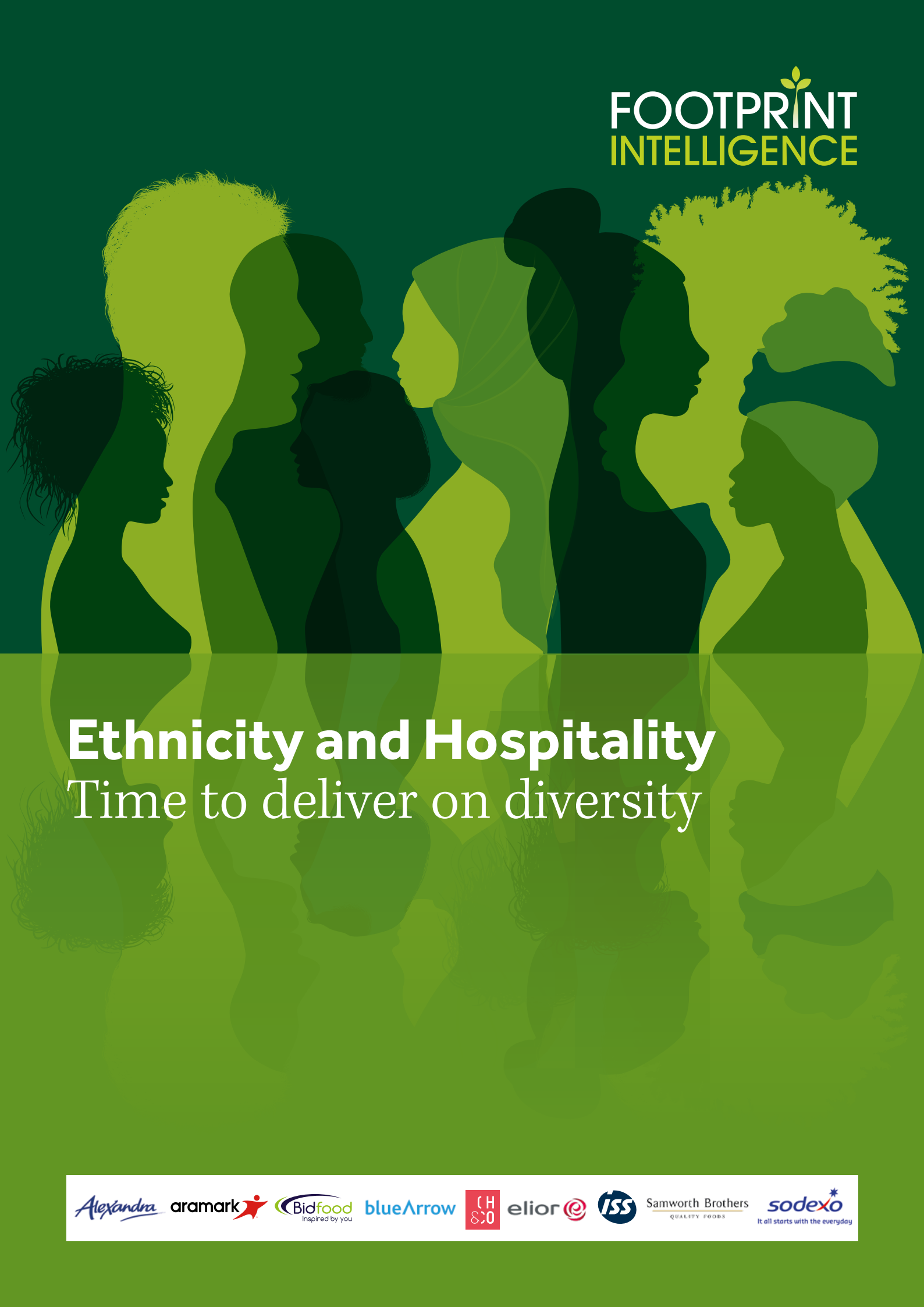


The background of the entire page is a dark green. Overlaid on this are several silhouettes of people of various ethnicities and ages, shown in profile and facing right. The silhouettes are filled with different shades of green, creating a layered effect. The central text is white and positioned over the middle of these silhouettes.

Ethnicity and Hospitality

Time to deliver on diversity

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Partner Comments

 Our sector is currently experiencing significant resource challenges and there is a notable employment gap when it comes to those from under-represented ethnic groups. As such, there has never been a better time to work towards achieving greater equity than what currently exists. It is, however, crucial that industry collaborates if we are to affect sustainable societal change. This report provides valuable insights on the actions we can all be taking to achieve better representation. Together we can make a better everyday for everyone to build a better life for all.
Raj Jones, Head of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Sodexo UK & Ireland

 We were delighted to support this research report to highlight the issues surrounding ethnic diversity and inclusion within the hospitality sector and ultimately, we hope that from the research found, businesses will be able to develop informed diversity and inclusion (D&I) strategies.
Phil Harland, Director of Client Management, Alexandra

 People are at the center of everything we do and so we're focused on equity and wellbeing of our employees and consumers, the people in the communities where we live and work, as well as the people in our supply chain. It was an honor to serve as a coalition partner advancing the research of equitable outcomes in the area of ethnicity.
Fenimore Fisher, Vice President, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Aramark

 We're so glad to have helped fund this research into this area, which has been overlooked for too long. We've all seen a lot of tokenism in this space so we wanted to help facilitate a deep dive into the issues and the creation of an actionable roadmap for improvements.
Heather Angus, People & Sustainability Director, Bidfood

 We all have a responsibility to broaden our efforts in EDI and a large part of this is being aware of what's been achieved but more importantly what still needs to be done. In this spirit, we're happy to be part of this report, sharing our practice and learning from others.
Allister Richards, COO, CH&CO

 Diversity and inclusion is central to all that we stand for and we are committed to supporting equality across our entire business. As a leading employer within the sector, we appreciate the opportunity to contribute to this research, gain further insights and share best practice.
Justin Johnson, Human Resources Director, Elior

 ISS are delighted to support this research. We know how important representation is in hospitality, especially that of minorities. Discrimination, of any kind, should never be accepted within our industry nor beyond. This report will help us to improve even further in this important area of Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging.
Mark Davies, Managing Director at ISS UK Food Services

Introduction

In her seminal government review¹ on race in the workplace published in 2017, Baroness Ruby McGregor-Smith, a Conservative Peer and former chief executive of Mitie Group, stated that although successive governments and employers have professed their commitment to racial equality “vast inequality continues to exist”.

The hospitality sector is no exception. A survey² by not-for profit Be Inclusive Hospitality published in April 2022 found significant proportions of professionals from Black (37%), Asian (28%) and Mixed Ethnic groups (39%) had experienced or witnessed racism in their current workplace.

Personal testimonies from hospitality professionals of Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority backgrounds interviewed for this report – most of whom asked to remain anonymous – supports the view that racism and racial discrimination remains commonplace within the sector.

That's not to suggest that sector employers aren't taking issues of ethnic diversity and inclusion seriously. The murder of George Floyd and subsequent Black Lives Matter movement has in many cases been the catalyst for the development of new diversity and



inclusion (D&I) strategies and commitments, or at the very least recognition that racial disparity is an institutional issue that must be addressed.

One interviewee for this report of Black African ethnicity has noticed that “following George Floyd’s murder in 2020 [...] more people realised that race in our society is a real issue and that acknowledging and starting [a] conversation about this was important”.

Another – a female finance manager of Black Caribbean ethnicity – says of her own current employer: “Things have shifted because of the environment we are in. They can no longer be an organisation where they are not

aware of who works for them and who uses their services.”

Yet a lack of ethnic diversity in senior positions within pub, restaurant, hotel, contract catering and other hospitality businesses suggests that efforts to improve diversity and inclusion of people from Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority backgrounds have yet to bear fruit.

Through discussions with businesses, experts in diversity and inclusion, and hospitality sector professionals from Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority backgrounds, this report explores the racial inequality that still exists within the sector and how businesses can begin to deliver on their diversity and inclusion ambitions.



CHAPTER 1

Hospitality's diversity dilemma

“Businesses are losing out on access to a lot of talent because of their attitude.”

Sean Campbell, chef manager of Indian South African ethnicity

On the face of it, the hospitality sector does not have an ethnic diversity problem relative to the wider UK economy. A 2020 report from the Resolution Foundation think-tank on ethnic minorities in the hospitality sector³, commissioned by Be Inclusive Hospitality, found that workers from a Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority background comprised 17% of the hospitality workforce prior to the coronavirus pandemic, higher than the 12% across the UK economy.

That diversity, however, invariably sits in lower-paid roles. In its 2021 annual report⁴, Women in Hospitality, Travel and Leisure (WiHTL), the community dedicated to promoting diversity in hospitality, travel and leisure, collected data from more than 200 of the largest businesses in the industry. It found ethnic minority representation of 6% at board level, 3.8% on executive committees and 5.5% for direct reports. In every case this compared unfavourably with the consumer goods industry and only at board level did hospitality outperform the retail sector.

Aggregated data such as this can mask disparities between the experiences of different ethnic groups but it does show that as a whole people from Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority backgrounds are underrepresented at a senior level. Why is this the case? McGregor-Smith was in no doubt that across the UK

economy as a whole the issues are deep and structural. “Barriers exist, from entry through to board level, that prevent these individuals from reaching their full potential,” she stated in her review, which included a plan to remove these barriers under six broad headings:

Gather data



Take accountability



Raise awareness



Examine recruitment



Change processes



Government support



Ethnic minority representation at top three leadership levels by sector

	HTL	Consumer goods	Retail
Board	6.0%	11.4%	4.5%
ExCo	3.8%	5.7%	5.8%
Direct Reports	5.5%	7.1%	6.0%

Source: WiHTL annual report, 2021

Source: McGregor-Smith Review, 2017

Moral and economic case

The moral case for greater ethnic diversity and inclusion in the workplace should be all that businesses require to take action, but the economic case – if needed – is compelling. McGregor-Smith cited evidence that the potential benefit to the UK economy from full representation of ethnic minority individuals across the labour market, through improved participation and progression, was estimated to be £24bn a year, representing 1.3% of GDP.

The review also cited McKinsey

research from 2015 that found companies in the top quartile for racial and ethnic diversity were 35% more likely to have financial returns above their respective national industry medians.

More anecdotally, the review noted how businesses that responded to the call for evidence identified a range of positive business impacts from increased racial diversity in their organisations including attracting staff from a wider talent pool, improved employee engagement, more effective

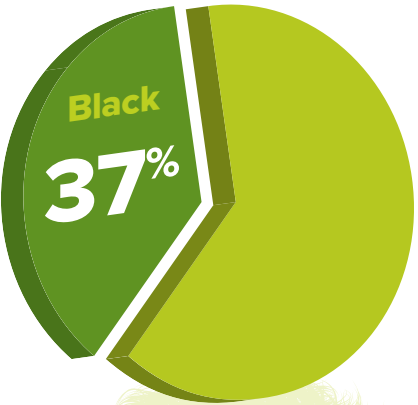
teams, increased innovation and improved understanding of their customer base leading to higher customer satisfaction.

Low priority

Yet for all the benefits that can be delivered by having an ethnically diverse workforce, the subject struggles to get the high-level interest it needs and deserves within UK businesses across all industry sectors. PwC recently published its 25th annual survey of chief executive officers (CEO)⁵. Out of 177 UK CEOs surveyed just



Hospitality sector workers who have experienced or witnessed racism in their current workplace....



£24bn/year

the potential benefit to the UK economy from full representation of ethnic minority individuals in the labour market

8%

Whitbread's target for people from ethnic minority backgrounds in its top 100 leaders by the end of 2023

40%

of UK CEOs include race and ethnicity representation in their corporate strategy

5%

mean ethnicity pay gap in Sodexo's 2020 pay gap report

\$1.5bn

Starbucks' target for annual spend with diverse suppliers by 2030

40% included race and ethnicity representation in their corporate strategy and just 10% linked it to the CEO's bonus and incentive plan. On both counts, this ranked race and ethnicity representation as the lowest priority of five metrics surveyed, the others being employee engagement, customer satisfaction, greenhouse gas emissions and gender representation.

Businesses failing to prioritise ethnic diversity and inclusion also face missing out on future talent. "The pipeline in the future is from ethnically diverse people," says Sandra Kerr, race director at not-for-profit Business in the Community (BITC). "It will benefit business; it will benefit

the economy; it will benefit taxpayers if we could just sort all of this out."

In future, people from Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority backgrounds looking to build a career in the hospitality sector will actively seek employers they believe treat all colleagues fairly and with respect. "I believe that the industry is split into those who are racist and those who are international and just do not behave like that. I have only worked for those that don't care about race, just about ability," says a male operations manager of Indian ethnicity.

Sean Campbell is a chef manager of Indian South African ethnicity. He now works for Baxter Storey where

he says his managers have been "brilliant" and "look at everyone as equals", and the experiences he describes reflect a diverse 18-year career within the hospitality sector working for a number of different employers. Campbell talks of the potential cost to employers if they don't step up to the plate on race: "I have lots of Indian and Black friends who will stay working for Indian private caterers or Black private caterers; they won't go anywhere else because they don't want to feel like they are not needed or wanted because of the way they are treated. Businesses are losing out on access to a lot of talent because of their attitude."



CHAPTER 2

CHAPTER TWO

Racial discrimination – the lived experience

“I was told that there were plans to develop me within the business but there was never any further discussion or further effort put into my learning at all.”

Female sommelier of Black African ethnicity

Racism in the workplace can take many forms. It can be overt, for instance the use of openly racist language, use of stereotypes and racist jokes, as well as racial slurs, generalisations, judgments and bullying.

It can also be more covert and discriminatory – being treated differently, not taken seriously, or not afforded the same opportunities for career progression as White colleagues.

Both still exist within the hospitality sector, albeit not all professionals from Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority backgrounds experience racism or racial discrimination. Indeed, some (albeit a minority) of interviewees reported

wholly positive experiences of working within the industry.

Hospitality remains a desirable sector in which to work for people of all ethnicities. Interviewees reported being attracted by the “fast-paced” environment or an “interest in food, beer and wine”.

But it also remains the case that people from Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority backgrounds are less likely to climb the ladder and ultimately fill senior roles within the sector than their White peers, a problem that major sector employers have begun to acknowledge.

Interviewees were asked whether they had experienced overt and/or covert racial discrimination during their time in the hospitality sector?

“About 14 years ago I was working in a hotel in London. I was the only Indian guy working in the restaurant. No one ever saw me as an Indian person so they constantly passed remarks of you know, I hate Indians, they smell like this and stuff like that.”

Sean Campbell, chef manager of Indian South African ethnicity

“I went out to visit one of our locations. I was given some guest passes for an area and the team members there blatantly looked at me and my family [then] turned away and left us standing. We were asked why we were in these areas.”

Female finance manager, Black Caribbean ethnicity

“It has been more in the form of micro aggressions; often being ignored, underestimated or have people be condescending towards me.”

Female sommelier, Black African ethnicity

“I have personally never experienced racism throughout my career so far. [...] I have been quite fortunate to have worked in places where I always felt appreciated and given space to thrive.”

Female supply chain manager, Black African ethnicity



“We have really great representation of Black, Asian and people from Mixed Ethnic groups of around 20% in our frontline teams, above the UK labour market average,” says Raj Jones, head of diversity, equity and inclusion at contract catering firm Sodexo UK & Ireland. “What we don’t see unfortunately is that translating into our management and senior leadership positions and that’s where we’ve got work to do.”

A lack of senior level representation is a challenge too for CH&Co, a contract caterer supplying schools, workplaces and events. “Whilst we are confident that there are no structural or organisation barriers to equality of opportunity, we know that has not translated into an ethnically diverse board,” says chief operating officer Allister Richards.

McGregor-Smith, in her review, stated it was “simply not right that BME representation in some organisations is clustered in the lowest paid positions”. She added that “we need to stop hiding behind the mantle of ‘unconscious bias’”, and noted that “much of the bias is structural and a result of a system that benefits a certain group of people”.

The structural discrimination faced by Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority professionals does

Sodexo takes the lead on pay transparency

In June 2021, Sodexo became the first company in the hospitality sector to voluntarily publish its ethnicity pay gap. The company’s 2020 pay gap report⁶ for the first time included the relative pay of people in different ethnic groups and showed a mean ethnicity pay gap of 5%. The data was based on the 75% of Sodexo’s workforce who voluntarily shared their ethnicity information.

The mean ethnicity pay gap is the difference between the average hourly earnings of employees in different ethnic groups versus the benchmark for White employees.

In the report, Sodexo broke down pay gap data into three different ethnic groups: Black, Asian and Mixed Ethnic backgrounds, in recognition that the combined pay data for these groups may hide disparities between them. It showed the greatest pay gap was for Asian employees at 7% followed by Black employees (5%) and those employees from Mixed Ethnic backgrounds (2%).

The report also showed significant gaps in bonuses paid, with 30% of White employees receiving a bonus versus 16% for Black colleagues and 19% and 14% respectively for Asian employees and those from Mixed Ethnic backgrounds.

not just manifest itself in fewer opportunities for career progression. The Resolution Foundation report found evidence of a “pay penalty” relative to White British professionals even allowing for compositional factors such as age, qualifications, job type and length of service. It found a 7% pay penalty for men relative to their White

British counterparts and a 5% penalty for women.

Racial bias

The Be Inclusive Hospitality Survey found that 43% of Black sector professionals believe their race or ethnicity has hindered their career progression in past or current workplaces with 37% of Asian and

28% of Mixed Ethnic employees feeling the same. White employees, by contrast, largely feel their ethnicity has neither helped nor hindered their progression with just 7% saying it has been a hindrance and 18% a help. This suggests there is a degree of cognitive dissonance among White employees over the existence of racial bias within the workplace.

A female sommelier of Black African ethnicity, born in the UK, describes her lived experience of the unconscious bias that many professionals believe exists within the hospitality sector.

“I was told that there were plans to develop me within the business but there was never any further discussion or further effort put into my learning at all. I was then told there just was not the space for me to go beyond my current role. This was not the case with other colleagues, one who was notably offered a more involved role after being there for a few months and another who was constantly being mentored, pushed, trained and now manages.”

Our interviewees also revealed a reluctance to speak out about racism and racial discrimination among people from underrepresented ethnic groups. “It’s never come up where I could

speak to anyone about it because if you’ve been going through this your whole life, not only in work but in your personal life, it’s horrible,” says Sean Campbell. “We just accept it for what it is because it’s too much drama trying to explain to someone that’s being racist how hard it is.”

The Be Inclusive Hospitality survey found 33% of Black respondents who have witnessed or experienced racism at work would not report it to their manager, a senior manager or HR, nor would 29% of Asian respondents or 38% of those from Mixed Ethnic backgrounds.

It’s important to note that individuals do not have a homogenous experience of working in the hospitality sector. Nor do the realities facing people of different ethnicities always align. The Resolution Foundation report noted how “the personal characteristics and experiences of the different ethnicities forming the BAME group vary considerably, and using the aggregated BAME group hides this variation.”

It found workers from some ethnic groups, such as Indian or Pakistani, were much more likely to be in the highest paying occupations than other ethnic groups such as workers from Black, African, Caribbean, Black British,

Interviewees were asked whether they felt they had faced greater barriers to progression within the hospitality sector than white colleagues?

“On more than one occasion I felt as if I was unfairly overlooked. It only made me work harder.”

Male chef, Black West Indian ethnicity

“I have to work a lot harder to gain the same career progression opportunities. Senior chefs also think I have ‘an attitude problem’ [...] when I am actually trying to improve the quality of how we work and not accept mediocre standards or inefficiency.”

Male chef, Black British of Caribbean background

“At my level no, but I have noticed generally that the leadership team is closed to people from underrepresented ethnic groups.”

Female supply chain manager, Black African ethnicity

Mixed, Multiple and Other Asian backgrounds. The Resolution Foundation noted that people in those groups are relatively young compared to other workers in the hospitality sector, which may go some way towards explaining the differences. Hospitality workers from an Indian background also have the highest proportion of degree holders.



CHAPTER 3

Delivering the business response

“We are very strong believers that pay reporting is a good thing.”

Raj Jones, head of diversity, equity and inclusion, Sodexo UK & Ireland

Maintaining the status quo on ethnic diversity and inclusion is morally (and many would argue economically) unsustainable. So what are hospitality businesses doing to tackle racism and racial discrimination within their organisation and improve representation and opportunities for career progression?

The starting point for many companies is to sign up to industry-wide initiatives and commitments. More than 780 employers across all industry sectors – including around 20 companies operating within the foodservice sector or drinks trade – have signed Business in the Community’s Race at Work Charter⁷, which asks signatories to commit to seven key actions to demonstrate their commitment to improving quality of opportunity in the workplace.

For many, the next step is to establish a formal D&I strategy. Research captured in the 2021 annual report by WiHTL, shows

86% of companies now have a D&I strategy in place of which 87% include ethnicity, up from just 24% in 2020.

WiHTL also found progress has been made on the number and maturity of strategies designed to improve ethnic diversity, a development it partly attributed to the impact of the Black Lives Matter movement.

Progress is being made too on data collection. In 2021, 70% of businesses surveyed by WiHTL either collected ethnicity data or were in the process of doing so, up from 56% in 2020.

Data is key

The role of data is considered critical to the success of efforts to improve ethnic diversity and inclusion. The McGregor-Smith review stated that “no company’s commitment to diversity and inclusion can be taken seriously until it collects, scrutinises and is transparent with its workforce data”.

Race at Work Charter – key actions

- 1 Appoint an executive sponsor for race.
- 2 Capture ethnicity data and publicise progress.
- 3 Commit at board level to zero tolerance of harassment and bullying.
- 4 Make equity, diversity and inclusion the responsibility of all leaders and managers.
- 5 Take action that supports Black, Asian, Mixed Race and other ethnically diverse employee career progression.
- 6 Support race inclusion allies in the workplace.
- 7 Include Black, Asian, Mixed Race and other ethnically diverse-led enterprise owners in supply chains.

Source: Business in the Community, 2021



Echoing the point, Be Inclusive Hospitality founder and chief executive Lorraine Copes, says data on metrics such as representation, pay and staff retention are indicators of whether or not there is a problem within a business. “The importance of data feeding into your KPIs is that it really should crystallise what you are going to measure, what is not working and what needs to be improved. It’s only when you continually revisit the KPIs as you would with any other business objective, you can close the gap on where you are versus where you want to be.”

The McGregor-Smith review called on the government to legislate to ensure that all listed companies and businesses employing more than 50 people publish workforce data broken down by race and pay band. The Conservative government

under Theresa May subsequently consulted on the proposal but there remains no formal requirement for businesses to report on ethnic representation and pay gaps, despite gender pay gap reporting now being mandatory.

Businesses like Sodexo are not waiting for a green light from government. “We are very strong believers that pay reporting is a good thing. It does drive actions and I think in taking the lead we’ve sent a very clear message internally and externally around this,” says Jones at Sodexo.

Target setting

Sodexo has pledged to go a step further and establish targets to increase the representation of Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority individuals in management positions and develop scorecards to track and measure progress.

Some hospitality businesses have already set targets for ethnic representation:

- Starbucks’ US business last year set a target of having Black, Indigenous and people of colour represent at least 30% of partners at all corporate levels and at least 40% at all retail and manufacturing roles by 2025.
- Whitbread has committed to greater diversity in its leadership population, with targets of 8% ethnic minority and 40% female representation in its top 100 leaders across the business by the end of 2023. It also intends to set targets for greater ethnic diversity in its middle management population.

Culture is critical

Generating data and setting targets are just two elements of what experts say must be a holistic approach to improving ethnic diversity and inclusion.

A lot of the barriers to achieving workplace equality start and end with the company’s culture. One indicator that a culture of discrimination exists is when employees lack the confidence to report issues of racism and discrimination. “We do a lot of work to really reinforce that you

will be supported if you report something,” says Sodexo’s Jones. “We will investigate and we will take it seriously.”

Richards says CH&Co actively promotes its whistleblowing function to make it clear that colleagues can speak up to an external support network without fear of backlash in the workplace. “Respecting confidentiality and anonymity is key to encouraging an open culture where colleagues feel supported in speaking up,” he adds.

CH&Co also ensures that every employee undertakes equality and diversity training as part of their induction, with refresher training repeated every year via virtual training modules. Additionally, in 2022 all CH&Co managers will complete unconscious bias training.

The most progressive businesses emphasise the fact that it’s the responsibility of all employees to report incidents of racial abuse and discrimination, not just those on the receiving end. A female finance manager of Black Caribbean ethnicity discovered soon after moving to her current employer in the leisure sector that she had “white allies” within her immediate team. “A team member made some racially discriminatory comments about me, but not to me. It was other team members

Greene King commits to call time on racism

Greene King, whose founder Benjamin Greene had links to Transatlantic Slavery and argued against its abolition in the 1800s, (a situation the modern company describes as “inexcusable”), has established a ‘Calling Time on Racism’ plan that sets out four long term commitments to drive cultural change in the way it recruits and develops its people.

As part of the plan, last year the pub group launched a reverse mentoring programme where every member of Greene King’s executive board is now assigned a mentor from Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority backgrounds to hear how diversity and inclusion impacts on team members at all levels and across all divisions in the business.

“They will share experiences which will help our executive board members have a greater understanding and awareness of different profiles and backgrounds,” says Garry Clarke-Strange, head of inclusion and diversity at Greene King. “It’s about changing, it’s about education, it’s about creating more opportunities. It’s about everyday inclusion for everyone at Greene King.”

who challenged that individual and raised it with the HR team and they then dealt with the matter.”

Programmes proliferate

Businesses are increasingly developing programmes and initiatives that support a levelling of the playing field for employees from Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority backgrounds. These include access to leadership and employee training along with sponsorship and mentoring programmes.

In response to the murder of George Floyd, Sodexo established a strategic taskforce made up of colleagues in senior positions which has since run a series of listening sessions with Sodexo’s Black colleagues to understand their lived experiences of racism and racial bias.

Elior, a contract caterer, has recently introduced a mentoring programme to help deliver on its

gender diversity objectives. HR director Justin Johnson says the business is likely to use the same framework as it develops its D&I strategy for underrepresented groups, including ethnicity.

Supply chain focus

Efforts to foster greater equality should extend beyond the company’s direct sphere of influence. Some businesses are actively working within their supply chains to ensure they are creating opportunities to work with businesses run by people from underrepresented backgrounds and that suppliers themselves are actively promoting diversity and inclusion.

Through its supplier diversity and inclusion program, Starbucks says it spent nearly \$800m (£590m) with diverse suppliers in 2021 and earlier this year pledged to increase its annual spend with diverse suppliers to \$1.5bn (£1.1bn) by 2030.

CHAPTER 4

CHAPTER FOUR

Bridging the ethnicity divide

“It’s far too complex and deep rooted a problem to attempt to address with standalone initiatives.”

Lorraine Copes, founder and chief executive, Be Inclusive Hospitality

Initiatives like pay surveys, mentoring programmes and whistleblowing functions are important signs of progress on racial equality, but in isolation they will not succeed in levelling the playing

field for people from Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority backgrounds.

The McGregor-Smith review stated: “Fixing this will involve a critical examination of every stage of the process, from how individuals are recruited to how they are supported to progress and fulfil their potential.”

For Copes at Be Inclusive Hospitality, inclusion and equity is first and foremost about company culture. She suggests that comparing perspectives on the company’s culture from Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority professionals with perspectives from White colleagues can often highlight disparities.

Culture, of course, can be an abstract concept that means different things to different

people: Copes suggests employee engagement surveys can be a good way to gain insights anonymously into how people feel about where they work and their opportunities for progression.

Even more fundamentally, she believes it is critical that businesses make clear what they stand for as an organisation. “The reality is this: racism exists. Prejudice exists. And what organisational leaders are never going to be able to do is change the opinions and views of every person within their organisation whether they have decision making power or not. But what they can do is make it really crystal clear what behaviours they expect from their employees and the consequences of not adhering to those.”





Copes says she is a firm believer in the leadership team setting the tone for the organisation with regards behaviours and attitudes that are acceptable or otherwise.

Beyond that, it is considered vital that all employees feel they have a stake in an ethnic D&I strategy and a voice in how it is delivered. When employers sign up to the BITC Race at Work charter they are encouraged to set up an advisory group of staff across the wider business to consider how they are going to make their commitments come to life.

Copes suggests that when creating a D&I strategy “there is often a lack of objectivity and range of views within the senior leadership teams making the decisions. I appreciate that the conversations are being had to make this change, but including Black and Brown voices at the same level of seniority within these conversations will produce very different outcomes.”

Copes adds that if these voices are not present within the organisation “there are many [external] agents of change who can support these conversations”.

Recruitment rules

A D&I strategy that aims to boost representation of people from all ethnic groups has to consider both

Celebrating inclusion one day at a time

One element of a wider strategy to make Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority employees feel included in the organisation is to acknowledge days and events that are important to their particular culture or religion.

“Some of the organisations that we work with have an annual inclusion calendar where they pull out all the key cultural dates across every ethnicity within the UK and ensure they engage and actively do something for each of those events in the same way they might do something for Christmas or Easter,” explains Copes at Be Inclusive Hospitality.

She adds: “It could be circulating a book, it could be sharing some reading, it could be an internal event, it varies, but it’s all about being aware of the array of diversity that exists within your organisation from a race, gender, disability or sexuality perspective.”

the recruitment process and the accessibility of career progression opportunities.

The McGregor-Smith review recommended that when recruiting through a third party or recruitment agency, employers should ensure proportional representation on lists. Larger employers should also ensure the selection and interview process is undertaken by more than one person and that, wherever possible, this panel should include individuals from different backgrounds to help eliminate any lingering unconscious bias.

BITC’s Kerr says another reason why it’s important businesses diversify the people who are part of the selection process and/or the interview panel is “so that they are part of the discourse and can also act as role models for those people thinking about trying to progress in the organisation”.

She also warns businesses against assuming that if people from underrepresented groups want a promotion they will automatically put themselves forward in the same way a White colleague might. “It’s not a case of people not wanting



it, but sometimes it’s the [lack of] knowhow and access to the experiences that enable you to build your confidence, demonstrate what you can do and move up the ladder.”

Sponsors and mentors

Sponsorship programmes for high potential individuals have historically been seen as another important way in which to support professionals, including those from ethnically diverse backgrounds, in their career progression. But while Copes acknowledges the role sponsorship has to play, she is clear in her view that “sponsorship on its own doesn’t move the needle. Sponsorship has to be supported by other initiatives that focus on removing the structural barriers that exist as part of a broader D&I strategy.”

Similarly, Copes says mentoring can be “really impactful” but can also “be of little to no use” as an isolated initiative to help improve representation. “What you don’t want to do is start supporting people to move up within your organisation having not addressed some of the structural barriers and challenges. It’s far too complex and deep rooted a problem to attempt to address with standalone initiatives.”

She adds that listening groups,

Investing in future leaders

In 2021, WiHTL partnered with McDonald’s to launch an ‘Ethnic Minority Future Leaders’ (EMFL) programme with the aim of boosting the number of people from underrepresented ethnic groups in leadership ranks within the hospitality, travel and leisure sectors.

The EMFL incorporates a reverse mentoring programme and executive sponsorship, and aims to improve representation in leadership roles by identifying and investing in high potential ethnic minority employees and supporting their career progression.

The first cohort launched in January 2021 with 40 participants from over 25 companies.

where Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority professionals are asked to share their lived experiences of racism and racial discrimination, may ultimately benefit the employer more than the employee who has to re-live a trauma at work, which can be exhausting.

The absence of role models in senior positions is often cited as another barrier to people from Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority backgrounds fulfilling their potential within the hospitality sector. Jones says that as part of Sodexo’s establishment of its strategic taskforce, the business profiled very senior colleagues from Black and Asian backgrounds who

colleagues might not have known were in senior roles in the business. “That was quite inspirational for some of our colleagues to see that,” she says.

Dealing in data

And what of the role of targets and reporting of senior level representation and pay gaps? For all its benefits, accurately capturing representation and pay gap data is not without its challenges. A report last year from the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities⁸ pointed to statistical issues with ethnicity pay gap reporting, and said employers choosing to publish such data should take care to break



figures down by different ethnic groups. Companies also face difficulties in generating comprehensive data since businesses cannot force employees to share their ethnicity. Elior’s Johnson says the business has recently done some high level analysis on its ethnicity pay gap. “One of our challenges is that we’ve got 20% of our employees who haven’t disclosed their ethnic background,” he explains.

In its latest sustainability report⁹, Bidfood highlighted some other limitations in the process. It noted how ethnicity has multiple categories with far smaller data samples, whereas gender pay gap reporting involves a largely binary characteristic. Geographical variations also play a key role: if a depot is located in an area with a low ethnic minority population, for example, there is unlikely to be a diverse pool of employees in the labour market.

Nevertheless, BITC’s Kerr believes that in future more businesses will publish data on their pay gaps, which she says must be backed up with a plan to address the results. “What I’m really advocating for is pay gap [publication] and [an] action plan. Not just, here’s our pay gap, but here’s our pay gap and these are the

We asked interviewees whether role models for people in underrepresented ethnic groups are sufficiently visible within the organisations they have worked in?

“Very few organisations have senior people of colour. How often at conferences are people of colour represented? Or on TV when talking about the sector?”

Male operations manager, Indian ethnicity

“I don’t have anyone to look up to. There’s nobody like me above me.”

Female finance manager, Black Caribbean ethnicity

“I can’t really look at anyone and say, I aspire to be like you. I’m aspiring to be like me at the moment.”

Sean Campbell, chef manager, Indian South African ethnicity

“There are visibly more minorities and underrepresented demographics in positions of leadership now. The change is noticeable but there could always be more that can be done.”

Male chef, Black West Indian ethnicity

things that we’re going to do where we see there are disparities.”

Pressure is also growing on the government to mandate ethnicity pay gap reporting, rather than rely on businesses setting their own reporting frameworks which may not be consistent or comparable. In February, the House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee published a report¹⁰ on ethnicity pay gap reporting in which its central recommendation was

for the government to introduce mandatory ethnicity pay gap reporting by April 2023 for all organisations that currently report for gender. Legislation should include the requirement for employers to publish a supporting narrative and action plan, the committee said.

The question of whether businesses should set targets or quotas for metrics like recruitment, senior level representation and pay



is also subject to debate. WiHTL, in its annual report, said some leaders it spoke to were opposed to the approach, suggesting that setting targets leads to “tick the box thinking, which is at odds with a culture of inclusion and does little to unlock the true value of diversity”.

For her part, Copes is in favour of businesses setting targets as part of their ethnic D&I strategies. “Ultimately, if you don’t have targets and KPIs attached to any objective, personally or professionally, how do you move forward towards it? How do you know when you’ve achieved success? How do you know what that looks like?”

But she adds that targets must be supported by company-wide cultural change and education or they run the risk of breeding resentment among existing employees.

Collaboration is key

For Sodexo’s Jones, businesses being open with their data can be part of a collaborative sector-wide approach to achieving greater ethnic diversity and inclusion. “We’re not going to crack it by ourselves. Under-representation in management positions and above is what many organisations are experiencing, so let’s be

We asked interviewees what more they would like to see businesses do to build equity for people from Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority backgrounds in the workplace and advance representation and career progression opportunities?

“Be more inclusive, open-minded and willing to give a chance to people that do not necessarily look like them.”

Female supply chain manager, Black African ethnicity

“Work with companies that have solutions and are actively working to rectify the issue.”

Female sommelier, Black African ethnicity

“I believe that affirmative action is required and that boards should have to have quotas for ethnic minorities and women.”

Male operations manager, Indian ethnicity

transparent about where we have our pinch points, and what we’re doing in regards to that.”

More broadly, Elior’s Johnson believes sharing of best practice examples, materials and resources, including by third party organisations, can help businesses identify areas for action. “Working collectively and altogether must be better for everyone,” he says.

Kerr says that one of the things employers really value is the chance to hear, share and learn from other organisations – including from other industry sectors – in a safe space. “The

appetite is there,” she adds.

The appetite is unquestionably there for hospitality businesses to become more diverse, inclusive places to work. But no one involved in the sector should underestimate the scale of the task needed to get there. Real change will only come when the structural and cultural shifts needed to deliver racial equality and equity align.

Hospitality businesses should ask themselves a simple question – are they going fast and far enough?

1. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/594336/race-in-workplace-mcgregor-smith-review.pdf
2. <https://bihospitality.co.uk/research-and-insights/>
3. <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2020/12/Ethnic-minorities-in-the-hospitality-sector.pdf>
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8. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-report-of-the-commission-on-race-and-ethnic-disparities>
9. <https://bidfood.pagetiger.com/bidfood-sustainability-report-2021>
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About this research

Footprint Intelligence

Footprint Intelligence was commissioned to produce this report. The research comprised in depth, semi-structured interviews with industry representatives and employees, desk-based research and comments and insights gathered from other opinion leaders.

Footprint Intelligence is Footprint Media Group’s research and analysis division, helping companies develop successful strategies in the context of responsible business practices. Footprint Intelligence aims to drive, promote and share best practice by helping industry resolve pressing sustainability issues. It asks tough questions and finds answers. It uses research and industry insight to bring businesses together to identify solutions, opportunities, trends and challenges.

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