

Inclusion from the inside out – a strategic approach

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West Midlands Police – covering Birmingham where 42% of the population are from a BAME background – need a diverse workforce, but this will only happen if we are inclusive

Case study 2 mins read

My challenge at West Midlands Police (WMP) – covering one of the most multicultural counties in Britain – is to improve representation, which is currently at about 12% for Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) staff.

Our business case is about driving legitimacy. The bottom line is that we can't be effective if we are not representative. We want to create an organisational culture where colleagues from diverse backgrounds respect and behave appropriately towards each other.

One of the reasons that diversity and inclusion (D&I) has not always worked elsewhere is because the approaches used have often been simplistic and based on platitudes. In 2018, here at WMP, we developed and published an all-encompassing three-year D&I strategy that has four overarching goals:

1. **Inclusive culture** – we will build the architecture and environment that sustains this.
2. **Inclusive leaderships** – our leaders actively lead inclusion and role-model inclusive behaviours.
3. **Colleague diversity** – our workforce will better reflect the communities we serve, in order to better serve the communities we reflect.
4. **Inclusive reputation and service** – we will strive to build trusted relationships with all the communities we serve.

Each member of the executive team takes responsibility for a strand of the strategy. We plan to embed D&I into all business owners' activities, systems and processes within three to five years.

We expect it to permeate the whole organisation. Therefore, we are ensuring that each department has its own D&I plan. We've suggested a process that they should follow, which involves auditing their staff for protected characteristics, consulting with colleagues and then, with reference to the overall strategy, creating a plan.

In terms of changing the culture, this is probably the single most important thing we are doing.

West Midlands Police D&I strategy 2018-21

	Year 1: Perform for success	Year 2: Enable the business	Year 3: Business ownership
Objectives	Change dialogue from diversity to inclusion Support leaders to drive agenda Improve recruitment representation Drive D&I capability Stakeholder clarity	Build D&I into processes HR Business Partners enable ownership with Senior Leadership Team Clear and deliverable representation goals Increased public and colleague legitimacy	Make D&I business as usual Organisational ownership Reduced reliance on D&I team Clear systems and processes embedded for delivering D&I

	Year 1: Perform for success	Year 2: Enable the business	Year 3: Business ownership
Areas of focus	Detailed business case		
	Dialogue and courageous conversations	Performance management	D&I toolkits
	Governance processes	Departmental plans	D&I built into performance objectives for all
	Leadership capability and accountability	Fairness in policing	D&I infrastructure fully embedded and working
	Education	Cultural competence development	
	PA recruitment	Clear external commitment to achievable representation goals	Best practice model sharing across the police force
	PA development		
	Dignity at work	Selected external benchmarks	External recognition for successes (robust and tangible to share with colleagues)
	Inclusive reputation and service	Talent identification and development	
	Talent identification and development		Talent identification and development
	D&I toolkits	D&I toolkits	

	Year 1: Perform for success	Year 2: Enable the business	Year 3: Business ownership
Accountability	D&I team	D&I team, people organisation development, business	People organisation development, business

Our D&I strategy has traction because Chief Constable Dave Thompson leads from the front and is uncompromising. Nobody is in any doubt about where he stands on D&I. He's just signed up to stay at WMP for another three years.

This is important because it gives a clear message to the naysayers that the momentum we've developed over the past 18 months around D&I is going to be maintained. The chief instigated the D&I strategy and he's going to see it through to the end.

Tags

Diversity and inclusion