Inclusion & Diversity.

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The BIMA Tech and Inclusion Report (2019) found out that mental health, stress and anxiety are challenges within the industry and for marginalised groups, such as the neurodiverse, the figures are deeply upsetting with incidences of anxiety and depression appearing much higher at 84%. The report also revealed that 40% of Afro-Caribbean and those of mixed heritage, 31% of Asian and South East Asian and 35% of women have reported experiencing discrimination. Whilst we make efforts to bring people from diverse backgrounds into the industry, we are also driving them away.

These insights compel us to action and for the first time provide a clear sign-post on what to do next.

Introducing the BIMA Inclusion & Diversity toolkit – a playbook made up of a number of guides to get you started. Each guide, focuses on a different aspect of Inclusion & Diversity and is backed up with compelling research, outlining why you should tackle this topic within your organisation. The guides provides essential ‘What you need to know’ information and ‘How to get started’. They give practical assistance to get you going on your I&D journey, the rest is down to you!

Due to the intersectional nature of a person’s identity (how the combination of their gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, disability etc impacts their experience of discrimination and/or privilege in the workplace) we would recommend that you take a broad view of diversity by reviewing a number of the guides in this toolkit (rather than viewing each guide as a siloed topic).

I’d like to thank all of the BIMA Inclusion & Diversity Council team and their networks in realising this vital toolkit resource for all BIMA members. The guides will be reviewed and updated annually but if you’d like to make suggestions for improvements please reach out to diversity@bima.co.uk.

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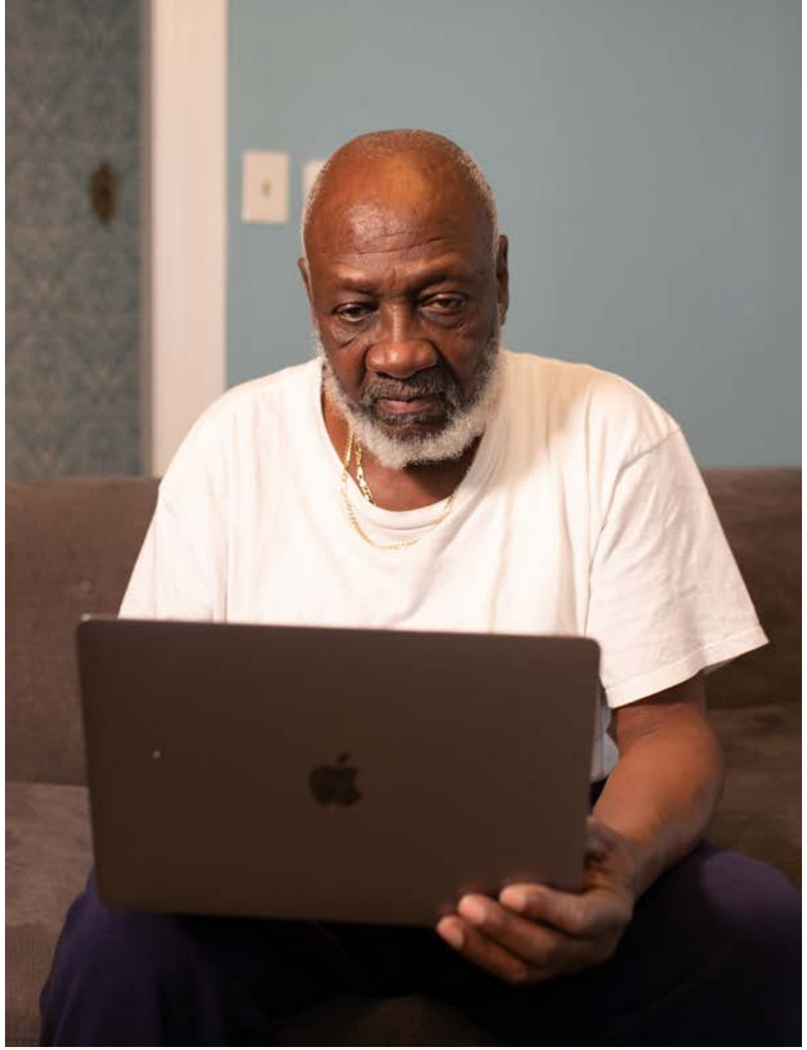
How to get Started

The business case for Diversity & Inclusion is, by now, hopefully well understood. Like any change management programme we recommend organisations take a strategic approach to inclusion and diversity in order to drive the desired outcomes. We recommend the desire for change is discussed with those who set the culture, primarily your leadership team, but also employees across the business. Like all business imperatives, you should establish a clear view of the current state (through primary and secondary research) before establishing a vision for the change you want to see and the priorities that are right for your business along with the key performance indicators (what you will measure) over time. Diversity & Inclusion is a long game but it is proven to drive both employee engagement, innovation and performance so having a long term plan is not only the right thing to do but also makes good business sense!

Age in the workplace



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Inclusion & Diversity Toolkit: Age in the Workplace

A Business case for being age inclusive

Having a multi-generational workforce has been proven to increase employee and customer satisfaction (HRDConnect, 2016). Older employees have been shown to stay for longer, and have lower levels of absence. B&Q demonstrated an increase in profitability through their older workforce programme. By tapping into the older generations, employers can benefit from knowledge sharing, and overcome the skills deficit we are projected to face due to new visa implications (People management, 2018) .

Organisations now have more than five generations in their workplace, and making all of them feel included is challenging, but only 8% of organisations include age as a part of their D&I strategies (PWC), despite 1 in 3 employees over 55 feel they've been discriminated against because of their age.

Age discrimination also impacts younger workers. 16-24 years olds have the highest levels of unemployment in the UK at around 16% (ONS). Younger workers are often in more vulnerable and less regulated positions. If youth unemployment in the UK matched that of Germany's 5%, addressing this would represent a £40 billion increase to the UK's GDP.

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What you need to know

The current workforce is made up of five generations:

The silent generation 1925-1945

Baby Boomers 1946-1964

Generation X 1965-1980

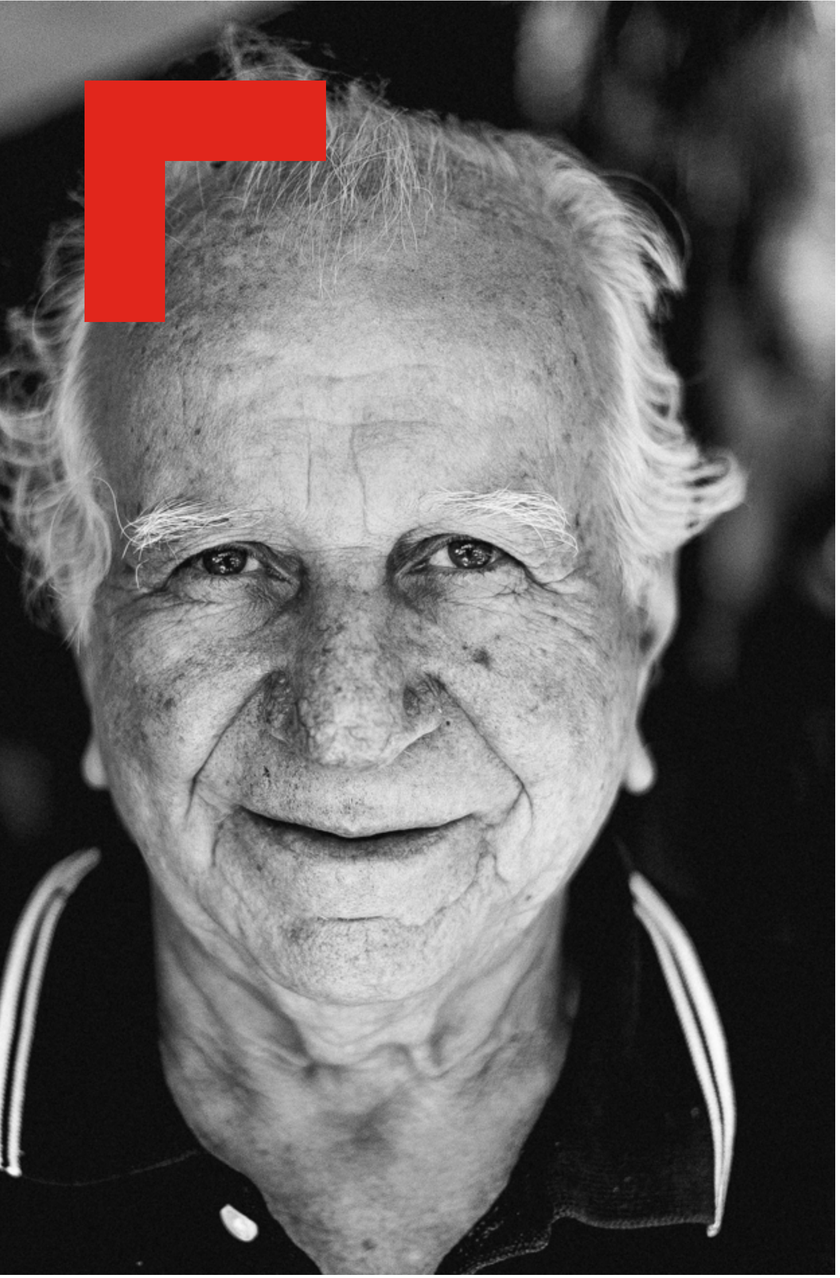
Generation Y (Millennials) 1981-2000

Generation Z 2001-2020

Millennials, born between 1980-2000 make up a quarter of the UK population and are the largest generation in the workforce. However, with longer life expectancy, the average age of the population is increasing, and with 28% of men and 42% of women aged 50-64 being able to work, there are now three times as many unemployed older “workers” than young people not in education, training or employment (CIPD, 2015). This means there is a huge pool of untapped talent, and a government challenge to support an increasingly ageing population on pensions alone.

Due to an increase in routine jobs becoming automated, entry-level manual or administration jobs are no longer as widely available to school leavers or those re-entering the workforce. These have been replaced by non-routine and managerial roles which are not open for low skilled workers, which reduces the ability for upward occupational mobility (Blackham, A 2018). A solution to this is paid internships and apprenticeships to learn skills relevant to the specific occupation, and internal management training programmes.

Research shows that each generation looks for different values in the workplace. Older generations value work-life balance and flexibility, younger generations value trust, recognition and freedom (CIPD 2015). One of the ways businesses are approaching this variation is to offer a more bespoke reward system that can be tailored from a suite of products to the individual.



How to be Age Inclusive

01. Hiring practices

Advert wording can imply that a business is looking for an older or younger employee. Words like “dynamic” or “seasoned”. It is also illegal to indirectly discriminate by specifying things like years of experience if it does not directly relate to the role. Using blind CV screening, when you block out the dates, names and the schools attended also help remove bias in the process. In order to avoid discriminating against those returning to work, or fresh into the workforce, consider using situational judgement tests in your interviews. These are proven to be the best predictors of performance, and they allow for a person’s behaviours to shine over experience.

02. Mentoring & Reverse mentoring

Creating an inclusive environment involves all participants to empathise with their co-workers and act with respect. This can be encouraged through mentoring and reverse mentoring (younger generations to older generations) so that they can share perspectives and experiences.

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03. Removal of retirement age

60% of employees surveyed said they don’t want to retire, and many companies are embracing this by removing the assumed retirement age from their company policies.

04. Flexible working & job-sharing options

To attract older generations and those who are semi-retired, offering flexibility in hours, and job share options will be very attractive.

05. Ageless apprenticeship schemes

One of the reasons for high unemployment in the oldest and youngest generations is a skills mismatch. Education is not preparing school leavers with the right skills for jobs, and those over 55 may have skills that are now obsolete. By offering apprenticeship schemes without age limits within your business you can access both of these talent pools.

Key Takeaways

Age inclusion is multi-generational Everyone has something to offer, and although the youngest and oldest generations are the most vulnerable when it comes to age discrimination, everyone should feel age is just a number and not their credentials.

One size does not fit all With such a range of generations in the workforce, it is not possible to build benefits programmes for everyone. Many organisations try the “pick and mix” approach, providing a suite of benefits for individuals to choose from. A number of providers now offer this to businesses, for example, different types of insurance. This means different life stages can be catered for at the same time.

Training provided Providing your returning workers with training on using technology, and your school leavers with critical thinking and soft skills will help all your employees perform better. Being open to candidates who need some extra support, but demonstrating the right behaviours will help you tap into the hidden talent pools.

Signpost to other sources of information

https://app.croneri.co.uk/topics/age-discrimination-advertising-and-sourcing-applicants-interviewing-job-descriptions-and

https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/managing-an-age-diverse-workforce_2015-what-employers-need-to-know_tcm18-10832.pdf

https://www.hrdconnect.com/2016/08/24/mcdonalds-finds-customers-want-and-prefer-an-age-diverse-workforce/

https://academic.oup.com/ilj/article/48/1/1/4990560

Thank you.