



FACTSHEET

MENTORING CIRCLE MODELS

A key Race at Work Charter action is:

Take action that supports ethnic minority career progression

Actions can include embedding mentoring, reverse mentoring and sponsorship

This fact sheet outlines key insights into youth unemployment and a simple mentoring model. The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) have rolled out the model across twenty geographical areas identified by DWP as part of their examination of race disparities experienced by those looking for work. This is now the Jobcentre Plus policy approach for engaging young people with employers.

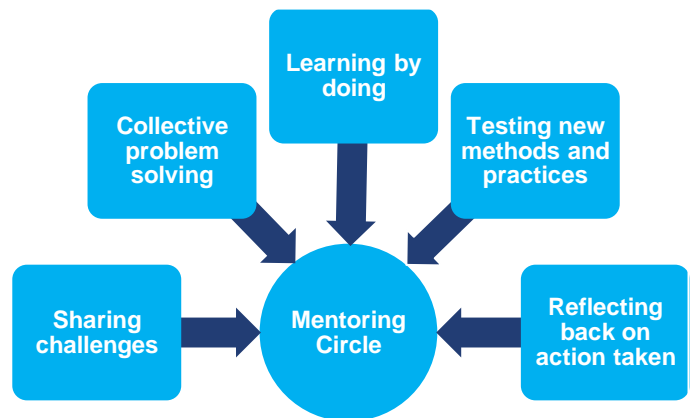
The 2018 DWP mentoring pilots

The twenty locations for these included London, Manchester and Birmingham - areas with the highest disparities for employment outcomes for young ethnic minority job seekers.

See the [Race at Work 2018 Scorecard](#) report for the full list of the twenty locations.

What is mentoring and what are mentoring circles?

A mentoring circle is a type of action learning set which focuses on the personal development of those involved.



Mentoring is to support and encourage people to manage their own learning in order that they may maximise their potential, develop their skills, improve their performance and become the person they want to be.

Eric Parsloe,
Oxford School of Coaching & Mentoring





Why do we need mentoring for unemployed youth?

The UK workforce is diverse:

- 1 in 10 of the current workforce is from a BAME background, the working-age population is 1 in 8.¹

The emerging workforce is even more diverse:

- 1 in 6 UK-domiciled students at university is from a BAME background.²
- 1 in 4 children in primary and secondary schools is from a BAME background.³

Employers have found it difficult to establish a diverse workforce that reflects the local communities or society at large.

In 2013 Business in the Community hosted its flagship Seeing is Believing visit led by the Race Equality Leadership Team for senior leaders across sixteen organisations focussing on young unemployed people in Brixton, London from BAME backgrounds. The visit highlighted a number of issues including; the need for young ethnic minority job seekers to increase their connectivity and engagement with employers

The visit also spotlighted the need for employers to be clear and transparent about their expectations in

What is expected of organisations?

Recommendations for mentoring circle participation

A mentoring circle comprises of a senior leader, employee and BITC and/or DWP personnel to deliver three structured 2-hour sessions. This will be a commitment for a 3-week period with interactions between employers and job seekers on the mentoring weeks. The sessions can be delivered at Jobcentre Plus offices or other suitable premises with an on-site visit to your business site if this is feasible.

the content and quality of applications. Leaders also gained insight into the barriers and challenges faced by BAME jobseekers.

The importance of mentoring in achieving race diversity cannot be underestimated. Our Race at Work survey highlighted this in both the 2015 and [2018 reports](#) as something highly desired by BAME employees and jobseekers. The plain fact is that ethnic minorities who advance the furthest in their career, all share one characteristic—a strong network of mentors and corporate sponsors who nurture their professional development.

Mentoring Circle Meetings

We recommend three mentoring circle meetings with suggested topics which will enable you as an employer to share:

- **Session 1:** Insight about your organisation and your application process.
- **Session 2:** Practice your interview process, and fine-tune your selection criteria.
- **Session 3:** Offer an on-site visit and information on different career routes into your organisation and sector.





Recommended Circle Size

We recommend 6-10 mentees for a circle to enable group and some 1-2-1 sessions for those who may want specific support.

BITC CROSS ORGANISATIONAL MENTORING CIRCLES

This established programme is now in its 7th year (2020) and **focuses on employee progression** with **38** employers and **350** participants engaged in the 2020 programme. There are many circles in London, with five in Birmingham, three in Manchester and two in Scotland.

Each employer nominates up to ten employees from BAME backgrounds to be part of the programme and the employer also nominates a Lead Mentor to run a Circle. This programme runs for 6-months each year. If you are interested in finding out more information, please contact the Business in the Community race team at race@bitc.org.uk.

References

¹ Race to the Top 2014

² Race to the Top 2014

³ Race to the Top 2014

The Race to the Top 2014 report is available on request.

