

BRIEFING

SUPPORTING EMPLOYEES: LOWER INCOME AND VULNERABLE EMPLOYEES

The cost-of-living crisis is challenging people as never before. Business in the Community (BITC) has reached out to its members to understand how businesses can support their employees. We have identified a number of clear actions employers can take. This briefing focuses on support for lower income and vulnerable employees.

How businesses can support employees during the cost-of-living crisis

The cost-of-living crisis is complex, but employers can help. BITC consulted members to create a [Cost-of-Living Action Plan](#) which identifies three actions businesses can take now to support their employees:

- Pay the Real Living Wage to employees and contractors.
- Ensure employees have the option to work flexibly.
- Target support towards your lower income and vulnerable employees using workforce data and employee engagement.

How employers can support lower income and vulnerable employees:

- Start by using your workforce data on pay to identify lower paid workers. Pay attention to demographics such as race, gender, sexuality, age and disability,¹ plus differences for full-time and part-time workers, job levels and locations. Consult with employees via [focus groups and networks](#) to build engagement.

- Develop your employees' skills and help them move into better work. Start by supporting staff to understand their skill strengths and development areas and establish training to develop the skills across your organisation. [BITC's Essential Skills framework](#) supports the development of eight essential skills - listening, speaking, problem-solving, creativity, staying positive, aiming high, leadership, and teamwork - which are essential for people to thrive and are proving to be important in a time of crisis.¹ [BITC's 2021 Race at Work Survey](#) found only 31% of Caribbean women have been encouraged to gain the skills they need for more senior roles compared to 48% of white counterparts.

BOOTS PROVIDE A BENEVOLENT FUND THAT CAN OFFER SUPPORT TO ELIGIBLE CURRENT AND FORMER COLLEAGUES IN THE UK, AS WELL AS THEIR IMMEDIATE RELATIVES AND DEPENDANTS, AT TIMES OF FINANCIAL HARDSHIP.



SUPPORTING EMPLOYEES: WORK THAT WORKS

- Implement a [mentoring programme](#) that promotes inclusive progression and supports Black, Asian, Mixed Race and other ethnically diverse employees to connect with business mentors. This action aligns with the fifth key principle of the [Race At Work Charter](#). As BITC research shows, women find caring responsibilities hold back their careers^[1] and that race is a major factor, with 24% of Bangladeshi women saying they have never been promoted.^[2]
- Create partnerships that connect people from disadvantaged groups to your jobs

and become an [Opening Doors employer](#). Sign up to BITC's [Job Coaching programme](#) that aims to engage businesses across the UK to support jobseekers through a series of coaching sessions.

More BITC resources

[BITC's website](#) links you to all our resources and information on how to [join us](#).

BITC COST OF LIVING ACTION PLAN

The BITC Cost-of-Living Action Plan sets out a series of business actions, tested with our members. This briefing has focused on the third action to support employees: Target support towards your lower income and vulnerable employees using workforce data and employee engagement. You can find briefings on the other actions via the [BITC Cost-of-Living Hub](#).



ENJOYED THIS CONTENT?

You might also like to:

- find out more about our [cost-of-living](#) work
- [learn more about our advisory services](#)
- [join us for one of our upcoming events](#)
- tell us [your feedback](#)



Talk to one of our expert team today to learn how membership of BITC can help you take your responsible business journey further and drive lasting global change.

ENDNOTES

ⁱ [Equality and Human Rights Commission \(2022\)](#)

^[1] Business in the Community (2022) ['Who Cares? Transforming how we combine work with caring responsibilities'](#)

^[ii] Business in the Community (2021) ['Race At Work 2021: The Scorecard Report'](#)