



GUIDE

Opening Doors: Inclusive Recruitment Governance

Supporting employers to embed inclusive recruitment within organisational governance.

Opening Doors: Inclusive Recruitment Governance

Supporting employers to embed inclusive recruitment within organisational governance to strengthen accountability and consistent implementation.

As part of the 2026 update to the [Opening Doors Framework](#), Business in the Community (BITC) has introduced an action to explicitly embed inclusive recruitment within organisational governance.

Clear and strong organisational governance, underpinned by an organisation's values, helps set expectations and guide consistent practice across the business, including in recruitment. Without appropriate governance and consistent processes, inclusive recruitment can rely on individual hiring managers, which can lead to inconsistent practices, unequal candidate experiences and increased risk of bias. Embedding recruitment within governance structures helps ensure it is fair, consistent and accountable across the organisation.

Inclusive recruitment governance goes beyond promoting fairness and consistency, helping organisations make better hiring decisions, improve the candidate experience and reduce

organisational risks. Clear accountability, regular reviews of recruitment data and ongoing monitoring of outcomes can help employers identify unintended inequalities and recruitment trends and respond accordingly.

The action:

2a – Embed inclusive recruitment within organisational governance, including accountability for recruitment outcomes and consistency across hiring managers.

This guide supports employers to implement the new action by:

- Clarifying what inclusive recruitment governance means in practice.
- Setting out minimum expectations and leading practice.
- Providing practical steps and examples.
- Highlighting common risks and pitfalls.
- Signposting further guidance and resources.

This guide will support HR teams, talent acquisition teams, hiring managers, senior leaders, equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) teams, and governance, risk and people committees to review, strengthen and embed inclusive recruitment practices consistently across the organisation.

Key Definitions

- **Inclusive recruitment:**
Recruitment practices designed to reduce barriers, minimise bias and provide equitable access to employment opportunities.
- **Organisational governance:**
The structures, policies, processes and accountability mechanisms that direct and oversee organisational activities.
- **Accountability:**
Clear responsibility for implementing, monitoring, and reporting on practices and outcomes.
- **Cross-functional ownership:**
A shared responsibility model where HR, Talent Acquisition, hiring managers, leaders and employee networks contribute to implementing and monitoring inclusive recruitment.
- **Standardised recruitment processes:**
Recruitment procedures that use consistent criteria, assessment methods and decision-making approaches across the organisation.
- **Leadership oversight:**
Senior-level responsibility for setting expectations, reviewing progress and ensuring inclusive recruitment commitments are translated into practice.

Why This Matters

Inclusive recruitment plays a critical role in widening access to employment opportunities, but without clear governance, expectations and accountability, practices can vary across teams, increasing the risk of bias, subjective decision-making and unequal candidate experiences. Inclusive recruitment should therefore not sit solely with HR or Talent Acquisition teams or rely on individual hiring managers. CIPD guidance emphasises that EDI should be embedded within organisational priorities, people processes, leadership behaviours and governance structures, with clear accountability and measurement.ⁱ

BITC's [Responsible Business Health Check](#) (RBHC) recognises that governance develops as organisations mature in their approach to responsible business. This ranges from *Adopting*, where activity may be ad hoc or compliance-led, through *Embedding*, where roles, responsibilities and processes become more formalised, to *Leading* and *Transforming*, where responsible business is integrated into strategy and governance. For inclusive recruitment, this means moving towards clear ownership, consistent processes, leadership accountability and organisation-wide oversight.

This approach is reflected in BITC frameworks such as the [Race at Work Charter](#), which emphasises the role of leaders and managers in creating fair and equitable workplaces. While focused on race equality, these principles of leadership and shared accountability can be applied more broadly to inclusive recruitment.

Evidence from regulators and research highlights that:

- Only around a quarter of business leaders regularly review the diversity data their organisation collects, highlighting a gap between data collection and senior-level oversight.ⁱⁱ
- Effective EDI governance requires clear accountability, meaningful measures and data, and leaders who are accountable for progress and outcomes.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Employers need clear ownership, accountability and monitoring to ensure inclusion policies are put into practice.^{iv}
- Recruitment is particularly susceptible to bias because hiring managers often make complex decisions under time pressure.^v

Drawing on the evidence above, strong inclusive recruitment governance can:

- Improve consistency and fairness across recruitment decisions, translating

organisational commitments into consistent practice across teams and levels of seniority.

- Strengthen accountability and leadership oversight, while clarifying expectations and responsibilities for hiring managers.
- Support objective and evidence-based decision-making, improving candidate confidence and trust in recruitment processes.

Employers are expected to treat inclusive recruitment as an organisational responsibility, not solely an HR activity. Accountability and oversight should be embedded within policies, processes and leadership structures, with senior leaders setting expectations and responsibility shared across relevant teams. Governance should connect organisational commitments with recruitment practice and monitoring.

The New Action at a Glance

Action	Core Aim	Starting	Fully embedded
2a	Governance	Inclusive recruitment policy, accountability and oversight	Board-level ownership, audits, performance measures and monitoring

What this means

Reflecting the maturity approach outlined earlier through BITC's Responsible Business Health Check (RBHC), inclusive recruitment should move beyond being the sole responsibility of recruitment teams and be embedded within wider organisational policies, governance structures and processes.

Organisations should establish clear responsibilities, accountability mechanisms and monitoring arrangements to support fair and consistent recruitment practices.

Starting

- Have a documented inclusive recruitment policy with clear responsibilities for HR, Talent Acquisition and hiring managers.
- Establish leadership accountability and cross-functional ownership of inclusive recruitment.
- Monitor recruitment outcomes and diversity data, and regularly review recruitment policies and findings.

Fully embedded

- Establish board-level oversight of recruitment inclusion outcomes and embed inclusion objectives into leadership and manager performance measures.

- Require inclusive recruitment training for board-level employees.
- Conduct regular recruitment governance audits, including periodic reviews of recruitment tools, assessments and decision-making processes.
- Involve employee networks in recruitment policy reviews and recruitment activity and ensure senior decision-makers have access to lived-experience insight.
- Publish recruitment diversity metrics and progress, using workforce and recruitment data to inform strategic decision-making.

Leading practice spotlight:

Leeds Building Society embeds accountability, monitoring and shared ownership into inclusive recruitment

Leeds Building Society, an Opening Doors signatory, embeds inclusion within its wider governance and recruitment processes. Its inclusion and diversity agenda has an accountable executive, with progress against agreed objectives reported through formal governance arrangements. Colleague-led inclusion forums, supported by senior sponsors and representatives from across the organisation, also contribute to its inclusion strategy.

Within recruitment, the Society uses anonymised diversity dashboards to monitor representation throughout the recruitment journey, enabling Talent Acquisition Specialists and People Business Partners to identify potential barriers, with data reviewed quarterly.

The insight gathered has led to new initiatives being launched, including the sharing of behavioural interview questions in advance and the upskilling of inclusion forum members to support diverse interview panels. External recruitment partners are also expected to support these aims, including through consistent diversity data collection and monitoring.

Together, these measures demonstrate how leadership accountability, cross-functional ownership, recruitment standards and regular monitoring can help embed inclusive recruitment across an organisation.^{vi}

Common Risks and Pitfalls

Without clear governance and accountability, organisations may fail to identify recruitment risks or apply inclusive recruitment consistently, creating unequal experiences for candidates. Common governance pitfalls include:

- Lack of leadership accountability.
- Unclear ownership and responsibilities.

- Inconsistent implementation across teams.

Getting Started: First 90 Days

Organisations can begin strengthening recruitment governance by focusing on a small number of actions that establish accountability, consistency and oversight.

- **Review what you already have** – check existing recruitment, people and EDI policies and processes to identify gaps.
- **Make ownership clear** – agree who leads, who supports and who is accountable for inclusive recruitment across the organisation.
- **Create consistency** – establish standard recruitment processes and assessment criteria to support fair and consistent decision-making.

Next steps

- Once these foundations are in place, organisations can build on their approach by strengthening capability, monitoring progress and embedding accountability.
 - **Build capability** – train hiring managers and interviewers on inclusive recruitment and make expectations part of their roles and responsibilities.

- **Track progress** – use recruitment data and clear measures to monitor outcomes and identify potential barriers or inequalities.
- **Review and improve** – regularly review recruitment practices, address gaps and use findings to inform ongoing improvements.

Tools & Resources

As a starting point, we recommend the following resources:

- [CIPD - Inclusive Recruitment Guide](#) - see “Monitoring and measuring”
- [CIPD - People Manager Guide: Inclusive Recruitment](#)

- [ACAS - Making Your Workplace Inclusive](#) - see “Having a workplace policy”, “Putting the policy into action” and “Leadership”
- [Lloyd's - Inclusive Hiring Toolkit](#)
- [UK Government: Make Job Descriptions Inclusive](#)
- **BITC** - Race at Work Charter - [Meeting the BITC Race at Work Charter](#)

Join the Network and Learn More

If your organisation is not yet an Opening Doors signatory, [join our network](#) to access practical resources, tailored support and opportunities to learn from peers.

ⁱ CIPD, *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in the Workplace*, 2026. Available at: <https://www.cipd.org/uk/knowledge/factsheets/diversity-factsheet>

ⁱⁱ Inclusion at Work Panel, *Report on Improving Workplace Diversity and Inclusion Practice*, 2024. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/report-on-improving-workplace-diversity-and-inclusion-practice>

ⁱⁱⁱ CIPD, *Resetting EDI and Reaffirming Inclusion*, 2025. Available at: <https://www.cipd.org/uk/knowledge/reports/resetting-edi-reaffirming-inclusion/>

^{iv} ACAS, *Making Your Workplace Inclusive*, 2026. Available at: <https://www.acas.org.uk/making-your-workplace-inclusive>.

^v CIPD *Fair Selection: An Evidence Review*, 2023. Available at: <https://www.cipd.org/uk/knowledge/reports/fair-selection-evidence-review/>

^{vi} Business in the Community (BITC), *Leeds Building Society: Opening Doors to a More Inclusive Workforce* (2026); Leeds Building Society, *Our Commitment to Inclusion and Diversity* (updated December 2025); Leeds Building Society, *Annual Report and Accounts 2025* (2026)



Business in the Community (BITC) champions responsible business as essential for long term economic growth and resilience. We convene, campaign, and consult with business to tackle society's most pressing challenges—from climate change and place-based regeneration to inequality, workplace wellbeing, and inclusive growth.

Founded by His Majesty King Charles III in 1982, BITC has over four decades of experience in engaging business and delivering measurable impact in both business and in communities through evidence-based interventions. As a trusted partner to business and government, BITC convenes leadership, influences policy, and accelerates action—helping shape a future-ready economy that works for everyone.

Business in the Community

137 Shepherdess Walk
London
N1 7RQ

www.bitc.org.uk

020 7566 8650

Business in the Community is a registered charity in England and Wales (297716) and Scotland (SC046226). Company limited by guarantee No. 1619253.