

Checklist: actions for boosting social mobility in the workplace

Use the checklist below as a guide when making your commitments to improving social mobility in your business. These recommendations are informed by Totaljobs and Social Mobility Foundation research, supported by Totaljobs' insights into the recruitment process and SMF's experience in working directly with employers to improve their social mobility practices.

Attracting talent

Focus your recruitment efforts towards **social mobility coldspots**, which are areas of the country where levels of social mobility are at their lowest, to connect with hard-to-reach talent and diversify your talent pools.

- Utilise targeted display advertising to engage with jobseekers based in coldspots, or areas with a high density of Free School Meals.
- Educate students about the career paths on offer, invest into building the employability skills of young people, and advertise work experience or internships as part of your school outreach.
- Ensure job opportunities are advertised widely and not directed towards family members of current staff.
- Include salary in job ads, as **30%** of people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds said this would help them to find the right job for their needs.
- Pay travel and expenses, as a minimum, for work experience.
- Provide structured, paid internships that ideally have a pathway to full-time employment.
- Offer the equipment required to do the work, especially for remote roles, for example a laptop.

Recruitment processes

Often recruitment processes unintentionally disadvantage those from lower socioeconomic groups. Assessing your hiring strategies and working to make them more inclusive is essential in ensuring everyone has access to opportunity, whatever their socioeconomic background.

- Offer advice webinars and application support, particularly aimed towards younger people. This can be invaluable to those who do not have parents, teachers or networks who can support them in their job search. In fact, **30%** of people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds say advice on what an employer is looking for from an interviewee would help them, along with guidance on the application process (**28%**) and potential interview questions (**23%**).
- Check your bias; candidates can be overlooked based on indicators of lower socioeconomic backgrounds and this is not a fair recruitment practice.
- Monitor applications from lower socioeconomic backgrounds to understand the diversity of your talent pool.

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- Invite applicants to informal advice sessions with colleagues already working in your business – **21%** of people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds said this would help them during the application process. The same goes for unsuccessful applicants; invite them for mentoring or skills sessions to create an engaged talent pipeline for the future.
- Practice contextualised recruitment and question your assumptions about what qualifications are required for a role. Consider removing requirements for an undergraduate degree when it is not necessary to succeed in the role, and look at school grades in the context of the location and results of the student body as a whole.

Retaining talent

Collect socioeconomic data and use it as the bedrock of understanding the experiences of your staff, whatever their social background, and devising a retention strategy.

- Start by communicating why socioeconomic data is being collected and analysed.
- Utilise your data to understand what is happening and target the change you want to see.
- Measure your success by building key performance indicators based on the socioeconomic diversity data into your firm's performance.

Ask these questions from the [Social Mobility Commission's data collection toolkit](#) to determine socioeconomic background.

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are an excellent way of upskilling staff, whether they're just starting out or they have years of experience under their belt.

- Offer apprenticeships at as many levels between two and seven as possible, with mechanisms in place to allow employees to move up and through levels.
- Treat apprenticeships as having equal parity as graduate routes.
- Build in career development routes as part of your apprenticeship offering for current staff – this allows them to have structured ways to progress, while still gaining recognised qualifications.

A culture of action and accountability

Leadership buy-in is critical for ensuring you have an inclusive culture where social mobility is given the focus needed to make positive change.

- Demonstrate your commitment to improving social mobility by nominating a member of your leadership team to oversee your social mobility work.
- Encourage employees (including senior colleagues) to share their own stories, celebrating the diverse range of backgrounds they have come from.
- Engage with other employers by hosting events on the topic of social mobility as part of your broader diversity initiatives.
- Track your progress by entering the [Social Mobility Employer Index](#). Entering the Index allows you to benchmark your business against other organisations and receive feedback on further steps you can take to improve social mobility.

Download the [employer's guide](#) to social mobility to find out more

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