

Inclusive Recruitment of School Governors and Staff

Supporting Handbook



TH.IS GREAT SCHOOLS



Use of Handbook

This handbook provides suggestions and guidance of best practice to follow for formal and informal recruitment. It supplements ‘Tower Hamlets – The Power of Diversity in Governance’ and the training

Disclaimer:

The inclusive recruitment handbook provided offers helpful insights and suggestions but is not legal or professional advice. It provides general information to assist you in creating an inclusive recruitment process. Every organisation and situation is unique, so consult with relevant experts or professionals for personalized advice.

Efforts have been made to ensure accuracy, but we cannot guarantee error-free or up-to-date information due to evolving recruitment practices and regulations. Verify content and adapt it to fit your specific circumstances and comply with laws.

course on inclusive recruitment. The course provides an opportunity for deeper discussion, context and knowledge share.

Implementing suggestions does not guarantee specific outcomes. Success in inclusive recruitment depends on various factors. We are not liable for any damages or liabilities arising from the use of this information.

Use this handbook as a helpful resource on your journey to inclusive recruitment practices.

Thank you.

School Governance, Information and Traded Services

**Tower Hamlets Children and Culture,
Education and Partnerships**

Contents

1. Introduction and context	4
2. Equality Act	7
3. Unconscious Bias	12
4. Your role as a recruiter: part 1	14
5. Increasing inclusion and representation in a changing world of work	16
6. Your role as a recruiter: part 2 - The recruitment cycle and sourcing	18
7. Your role as a recruiter: part 3 - Interviewing	22
8. Your role as a recruiter: part 4 - Scoring and note taking	27
9. Notes	28

1. Introduction and Context

Purpose, aims and outcome

To ensure the well-being of our communities, it is important to have an environment that reflects the people it serves, including residents and students. By creating inclusive environments in schools, workplaces, and organisations, individuals have the opportunity to thrive, develop, and be valued members of the community. Schools are particularly crucial in empowering students, families, and the broader community by serving as knowledge hubs and facilitating information exchange with parents, business owners, and community members. By engaging with the community's wealth of knowledge, schools can enhance their curriculum and benefit their students and governing boards.

In Tower Hamlets, only 36% of school governors come from Black, Asian and Multi Ethnic backgrounds, despite the school population being over 85% from these backgrounds. The goal is to have a diverse governing board that represents the communities it serves. Inclusive recruitment efforts are being implemented to increase the number of governors from underrepresented groups, specifically focusing on representation from the Black, Asian, Multi Ethnic communities.

Aims:

- *To support schools to recruit more Black, Asian and Multi Ethnic School governors and/or staff for Tower Hamlets.*
- *Encourage those with relevant skills and community insight to step up into school governor, teacher or teaching assistant positions.*
- *Understand best practice, the recruitment cycle and the role of the recruiter.*

Outcome:

School governing boards and staff teams ethnically reflect the communities they serve.

Tower Hamlet Values

- *We are compassionate*
- *We collaborate*
- *We are inclusive*
- *We are accountable*

These all support the ethos of inclusive recruitment.

School's Values

- *What are the specific values that your school holds?*
- *Are you living your values?*
- *How inclusive are they?*



What is the population of your school?

Is there a large Black, Asian, Multi Ethnic population? According to the 2021 census, the population in Tower Hamlets is predominantly Asian, 44.4%, with 7.3% Black and 5% Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups. White people account for 39.4% of the population.

Is your school primarily a one faith?

According to the New Tower Hamlets Census Data Released 2022, approximately 39.9% of the population in Tower Hamlets identified themselves as Muslim, more than a third of the population, not forgetting that some may be brought up with more than one faith and influenced by several cultures.

The perception your school holds influences who you attract to work with you. Be true to your values, challenge when this is not happening. Provide a positive interaction at every stage so candidates and members of the community want to work for you.

- **How is your school perceived?**
- **How do you want your school to be perceived?**
- **Is your school easily associated with the values it holds?**

Watch The power of diverse governance video



Exploring Inclusive Recruitment

Inclusive recruitment ensures the hiring process is fair, unbiased, and accessible to individuals from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups. The purpose being to eliminate discrimination, bias, and barriers that may prevent certain individuals or groups from accessing employment opportunities or other functions like governor roles.

Adopting inclusive recruitment practices, moves you to creating a more diverse and inclusive workforce. This brings numerous benefits, including improved innovation, creativity, problem-solving, and overall organisational performance.

Inclusive recruitment involves adopting strategies and implementing policies that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in the hiring process.





Positive Action

What is Positive Action?

Positive action in the workplace means it is not unlawful to recruit or promote a candidate who is of equal merit to another candidate, if the employer reasonably thinks:

- *The candidate has a protected characteristic that is underrepresented in the workforce*
- *That people with that characteristic suffer a disadvantage connected to that characteristic*

However, positive action does not allow an employer to appoint a less suitable candidate just because that candidate has a protected characteristic that is underrepresented or disadvantaged.

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/positive-action-in-the-workplace-guidance-for-employers/positive-action-in-the-workplace>)

Positive action is different from positive discrimination, which involves giving preferential treatment to individuals solely

based on their protected characteristics (such as race, gender, or disability) without considering their qualifications or abilities.

In recruitment it includes: **a targeted outreach** to underrepresented groups, **unconscious bias training, diversity and inclusion policies** demonstrating that diverse perspectives and experiences are prioritised in the recruitment process.

For specific guidance on positive action, consult legal professionals or official resources such as the Equality and Human Rights Commission in the UK.

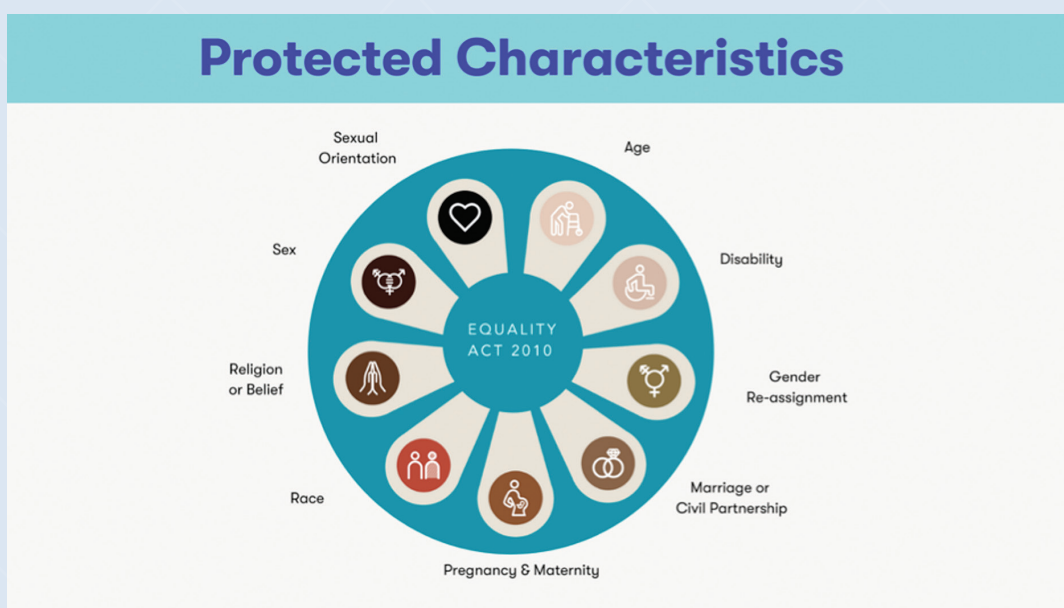


The Equality Act 2010 aims to protect individuals from discrimination and promote equality across various characteristics, such as sex, race, and disability, consolidating previous laws. It sets out the different ways in which it's unlawful to treat someone and protects individuals from discrimination at work and in society, strengthening protection in certain situations.

[<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act-2010/what-equality-act>]

Overview of Protected Characteristics

What are the protected characteristics under the UK's 2010 Equality Act?



Age: Protects individuals from age-based discrimination, ensuring that people of different ages are treated fairly and equally.

Disability: Protects individuals with physical or mental disabilities and health conditions from discrimination, including discrimination arising from a disability and the duty to make reasonable adjustments.

Gender Reassignment: Protects individuals who have undergone or are undergoing gender reassignment from discrimination and harassment.

Marriage and Civil Partnership: Protects individuals who are married or in a civil partnership from discrimination, ensuring equal treatment regardless of their marital status.

Pregnancy and Maternity: Protects women from discrimination due to pregnancy or maternity-related reasons, including protection against unfair treatment during and after maternity leave.

Overview of Protected Characteristics (continued)

Race: Protects individuals from discrimination based on race, ethnicity, nationality, or national origin, ensuring equal treatment regardless of racial background.

Religion or Belief: Protects individuals from discrimination based on religion, religious beliefs, or philosophical beliefs, including protection for both religious and non-religious beliefs.

Sex: Protects individuals from discrimination based on their sex, ensuring equal treatment and opportunities for both men and women.

Sexual Orientation: Protects individuals from discrimination based on sexual orientation, including discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and heterosexual individuals.

Job advertisement, job descriptions, person specifications, application forms, interviews, test or shortlisting should refrain from discrimination on the basis of any of the protected grounds, unless there is evidence that the discrimination is lawful.

Let us look at some examples of discrimination in the recruitment process.

Age range cannot be mentioned as it excludes individuals outside of this range. *“Seeking candidates between the ages of 45-65 only”* would be an example of age discrimination and would further uphold the stereotype and myth that school governors are older. Be aware of language suggesting you are looking for applicants who fall in a certain age group.

Disability – Recruiters are not permitted to ask about an applicant’s health or disability before making a job offer, except when making reasonable adjustments and gathering diversity information, which is kept separate from the selection process. If an interview or visit is offered, ask if any reasonable adjustments are required to enable attendance.

Pregnancy and Maternity - You cannot ask a woman’s plans for starting a family.

Race - specifying language skills that are not relevant to the job, not accepting comparable qualifications.

Religion or Belief – restricting a job to a specific religious publication. Asking about religious holidays or practices that are unrelated to the job requirements.

Exception: Certain roles within religious organisations, such as ministers or priests, may require adherence to specific religious beliefs as part of their job duties.

Sex - Gender specific job titles like ‘Head master’ or ‘head mistress’. Exception: A care worker’s post such as working in a women’s refuge, in which case gender can be stated.



Sexual orientation - asking inappropriate or irrelevant questions about their sexual orientation, or making assumptions about their capabilities based on stereotypes.

You cannot ask candidates to give unnecessary personal details or state requirements that aren't directly related to the job, such as country of birth or sexual orientation except in separate monitoring forms



Intersectionality

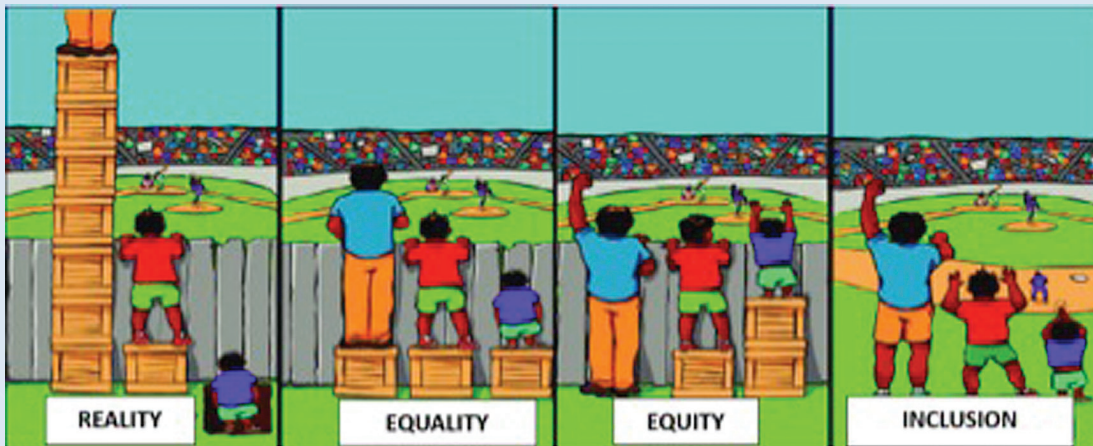
Individuals are unique and can have more than one protected characteristic. The concept was coined by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989.

Intersectionality in recruitment refers to considering the intersecting identities and experiences of candidates during the hiring process. It recognises that individuals' social identities, such as race, gender, ethnicity, age, disability, and more, can influence their experiences, qualifications, and opportunities.

Acknowledging and addressing intersectionality in recruitment, you can strive for a more equitable and inclusive approach that values the diverse experiences of candidates.



Discrimination and the law, your duty as a recruiter



The Equality Act 2010 has significant implications for recruitment processes. Some key implications of the Act on recruitment:

Prohibited Discrimination:

The Act prohibits discrimination in recruitment based on protected characteristics.

Equal Treatment: Employers must treat all candidates fairly and evaluate them based on their skills, qualifications, and suitability for the job, rather than any protected characteristic. Discrimination in job advertisements, application forms, interviews, and selection processes are prohibited.

Reasonable Adjustments: Make reasonable adjustments so candidates with disabilities have equal access to job opportunities. Provide an accessible application processes, and make workplace adjustments if the candidate is successful.

Positive Action: Address underrepresentation or disadvantage faced by individuals with protected characteristics. This may involve targeted recruitment initiatives, or support networks to encourage a more diverse and inclusive workforce.

Harassment and Victimisation:

Employers must take steps to prevent and address any form of harassment or victimisation based on protected characteristics. Complaints regarding discrimination or harassment during recruitment should be treated seriously and handled appropriately.

Recruitment Advertising:

Job advertisements and recruitment materials are inclusive and do not contain discriminatory language or requirements that may disproportionately disadvantage certain groups. Job descriptions and specifications should be based on genuine job requirements and not create unnecessary barriers for potential candidates.

As an inclusive recruiter, you play a vital role in establishing a recruitment process that is fair, inclusive, and upholds the rights and dignity of every candidate.

Under the Act, individuals who believe they have experienced discrimination can take legal action through employment tribunals or the courts. Action starts at the beginning of the recruitment cycle.

Schools and Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

Schools, are subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) The PSED is a legal obligation outlined in the Equality Act 2010 that requires public sector bodies, including schools, to proactively promote equality and eliminate discrimination.

Under the PSED, schools have three main duties: Eliminate Discrimination; Advance Equality of Opportunity and Foster Good Relations. By complying with the PSED, schools can create a more inclusive and equitable environment where all students and staff have equal opportunities to thrive and succeed, regardless of their protected characteristics.

Disability Confident

Disability Confident is a voluntary government scheme encouraging employers to recruit and retain people with disabilities and health conditions.

Candidates with disabilities often look for employers who are Disability Confident.

The badge of Disability Confident can be displayed on your website, recruitment material including job adverts and job descriptions and social media.

There are three levels of Disability Confident:

Level 1 - Disability Confident Committed

Level 2 - Disability Confident Employer

Level 3 - Disability Confident Leader

An example of action supporting Level 1 is where everyone considering themselves to be disabled and who meets minimum selection criteria is guaranteed an interview.

For more information on Disability Confident
(<https://disabilityconfident.campaign.gov.uk/>)



3. Unconscious Bias

What is bias?

Bias comes from our 'fight or flight' response. A response that enables us to survive and keeps us alive. As we have evolved, this translates into 'friend or foe' when we apply it to other people.

Unconscious bias refers to the unintentional attitudes, beliefs, and stereotypes that affect our judgments and decisions without conscious awareness. It is a natural and innate process that we all experience. These biases are deeply ingrained and influenced by societal expectations, cultural backgrounds, personal encounters, media influences, and exposure to stereotypes. They operate at a subconscious level, influencing our perceptions and actions, even when we consciously strive to be impartial and unbiased.

Unconscious biases do not necessarily align with our explicit beliefs or values. Sometimes they result in discriminatory or unfair treatment, even when we consciously intend to be fair. Recognising and addressing these biases is crucial in promoting fairness, inclusivity, and equality. Unconscious bias can manifest in the following ways:

Stereotyping: Assigning certain characteristics or attributes to individuals based on their perceived membership in a particular group.

Confirmation bias: Seeking and interpreting information in a way that confirms preexisting beliefs or stereotypes.

Halo effect: Forming an overall positive impression of an individual based on a single positive trait or characteristic.

Horns effect: the opposite whereby we form a negative impression of an individual.

Implicit association: Making unconscious associations between different groups and specific attributes or qualities.

Affinity bias: A subconscious preference for individuals who share similar attributes or characteristics to oneself. The more we are alike someone, the more we like them.

In-group favouritism: Showing preference for individuals who are perceived as similar to oneself or belonging to the same social group.

Can you think of examples of each of the above in your own life?

What effect does this have in recruitment?

When putting together a recruitment team/ panel if we bring together a group of people who share similar perspectives and backgrounds, we will have the same blind spots, which would be reinforced.

Homophily: When people tend to hire people who think (and often look) like themselves.

Screening CVs: Favour names which are familiar, excluding others, hence some recruiters blind screen removing names of applicants.

Stereotyping of ethnic groups, age groups, etc. can lead to assumptions of their capabilities and influence evaluation and assessment.

Similarity/ affinity bias, where recruiters are drawn to those similar to them

Network bias: Reliance on personal networks and referrals when sourcing candidates, which can be positive or negative depending how vast the networks are and if there are different networks that they can draw upon.

Non-verbal cues can be interpreted differently based on race or ethnicity, affecting the overall assessment of candidates.

Tokenism whereby the perception that individuals from an under represented group is enough to fulfil diversity requirements, rather than aiming for a more inclusive and diverse workforce.

Recognising Bias

What biases could we have? What do you see in others?

Skin colour
Appearance
Body size
Disability



Nationality
Religion
Voice: accent, tone
Cultural differences
Personality

Education

Language abilities

Gender

Sexual orientation

Age

Mitigating Bias

1. Have a diverse recruitment panel
 2. Actively seek diverse candidate pools
 3. Agree questions beforehand
 4. Establishing structured interview processes with standardised criteria to minimize the influence of biases during assessments
 5. Write brief notes on all the candidate's answers
 6. Do not ask leading questions
 7. Make decisions on fact, not assumptions
 8. Keep an open mind - challenge your own and other recruiters' assumptions and biases
 9. Be consistent
 10. If you have a 'feeling' about something, ask questions to clarify
 11. Pursue opportunities to interact with people from diverse backgrounds and engage in conversations that challenge your existing beliefs
 12. Complete the Harvard Implicit Association Test (IAT) and use it as a starting point for discussions
 13. Encourage open dialogue
 14. Pay attention to reactions and emotions - these can be indicators of bias. Is the feeling grounded in rational judgment or influenced by bias?
 15. Seek feedback by creating an open environment where colleagues feel safe to comment on others' approaches
 16. Undergo unconscious bias training
- Recognising bias in ourselves is an ongoing process. By developing self-awareness and actively challenging our biases, we can foster a more inclusive and equitable mindset.**

4. Your role as a recruiter: part 1

As a recruiter you are a salesperson selling what your school has to offer. Applicants are candidates and customers! Voluntary roles such as school governor, where there is no monetary reward, need to be sold in a way that attracts the applicants you want. This is the time to think outside the box.

What do you need to consider to sell the role and attract your ideal candidates?

8 step recruitment action plan

Step 1: Be clear on your outcome: Have more representative and confident governors / staff members. What specifically does this look like for your school?

Step 2: Identify your Audience: Who specifically do you want to attract to the position? Think of the representation of your schools and communities. We know from the data that specific communities are significantly represented in Tower Hamlets. Any other protected characteristics to consider? There are many people from different backgrounds that can contribute significantly to a school governing board.

Step 3: Know how diverse you already are: How representative are your governing board and staff right now? The National Governance Association's (NGA) governing board diversity indicators form is a tool you can use to get to know both governors and staff. It asks about gender, age, ethnicity, disability and other factors. It can give you a clearer idea of the life experience and perspectives people bring to their roles.

<https://www.nga.org.uk/knowledge-centre/governing-board-diversity-indicators-form/>

Step 4: What do you do well as a school? Know what your strengths and unique selling point (USP) are as a school. Be clear so you can use this to attract people to the role.

Step 5: What attracts people to volunteer or work in a school? Think about the values and motivations that drive them. Put yourself in their shoes. Can I really make a difference? Can I influence our children's generation? Consider how they will be treated and what they will gain from the role. Emphasise the importance of transferable skills and the opportunity to learn and grow in the role, rather than the need for extensive education or expertise.



Watch this video: What motivates a governor to volunteer?





Step 6: What are the barriers of the audience you want to attract? Focussing on recruiting members of the Black, Asian and Multi Ethnic communities consider the following barriers:

- a) Language
- b) Current representation – see Step 3
- c) Available networks
- d) Unconscious bias
- e) Stereotypes and misconceptions
- f) Undervaluing transferable skills
- g) “Imposter Syndrome” – people not believing they could fit that type of role
- h) Cultural differences

Step 7: Emphasise the impact and spread the word! Make sure people know what you do. Clearly and regularly communicate the positive impact and influence governors and senior staff can have on shaping educational policies, fostering inclusivity and ensuring the needs of Black, Asian,

Multi, Ethnic students are met. Highlight the importance of representation and the unique perspectives that Black, Asian, Multi, Ethnic individuals can bring to respective roles. Use all your channels of communication. What channels do you currently use? What else can you do?

Step 8: Use these tools

Read *‘The Power of Diversity of Governance Getting governor recruitment and retention right - a guide for schools.’* It’s a user-friendly guide with tips on getting recruitment and retention right and links to other helpful resources.

Watch the Tower Hamlets governor recruitment video



5. Increasing inclusion and representation in a changing world of work

The world of work has changed globally over the last 15 years.

Technology is faster. Search and application can be done with a single click and from anywhere in the world. For many, it has become a platform for networking, building connections, engaging with potential employers.

International mobility for education and work has become more accessible. Look at your residents and the community you are serving.

Flexible work arrangements have led to increased work activities during evenings and weekends. This can help attract potential governors, making it easier to fit around existing commitments.

Hybrid Working – Can this be supported for some non teaching staff? Is this way of working inclusive to all?

Generations

Different generations make up our workforce, Baby boomers, Generation X, Millennials. There are differences as to how they look for work and what they look for. Work now includes both traditional and digital media, newspapers, industry magazines, television, radio, job fairs, social media, word of mouth, referrals and recommendations, organisation websites, job boards, professional networks and events, industry events and conferences.

Today, people seek meaningful employment aligned with their values, prioritising personal and professional growth, valuing diversity and inclusion, flexible work arrangements and seeking work-life balance.

How do you attract the audience you wish to recruit?

What methods would you use?

8 steps to targeting potential recruits

Step 1: What are your current communication channels? Who are you talking to? (Clue: see *'The Power of Diversity of Governance. Tip 3 Make sure people know'*)

Step 2: What relationships and networks (internal and external) do you have access to?

Step 3: What links with the communities do you have?

Step 4: Are there links / connections / relationships you can develop?

Step 5: Advertising and getting the word out. What community engagement opportunities are coming up? What can you do to gain interest and curiosity? Be creative, think about events, written communication, community centres, places of worship, hold coffee mornings, local media, social media. Where can you advertise?

Step 6: Have you made the role accessible across age groups, communities and residents? How will you do this? Keep language easy to understand and to the point, is it possible to provide information in different languages?



Step 7: Agree an action plan with clear actions so everyone knows what they are doing. Keep it simple, it doesn't need to be complicated. Use or modify the example below if useful.

Specific action	Location, date & time	Info/ materials required	Accessible?	Who	Outcome	Follow up
Attend event at mosque	1 Windmill Street 30 th June at 11am	Leaflets on school, school newsletter, job adverts, signup sheet, laptop & power cable, show recruitment video	Provide in relevant languages, large print	Joe & Fatima	10 sign ups to receive applications to role, 4 considering	Send out application Call 4 people considering

Step 8: Think long term - what can you do to maintain the relationships you have developed?

Recruiting from particular backgrounds requires targeted effort over time:

Identify Community Organisations; Collaborate with Community Leaders; **Culturally Sensitive Outreach** (Engage Schools and Bengali Community Events; **Provide Support and Training:** Offer support and training opportunities to candidates who may lack knowledge or experience in the education sector. Explain the training provided, reassure that there isn't an expectation to know how to do the job beforehand;

Networking and Relationship Building: Build relationships and maintain open lines of communication to ensure ongoing engagement; **Emphasize the Impact:** Clearly communicate the positive impact and influence school governors can have on shaping educational policies, fostering inclusivity, and ensuring the needs of Bengali students are met. Highlight the importance of representation and the unique perspectives that Bengali individuals can bring to the governance role; **Flexible Meeting Times and Locations; Celebrate Diversity and Inclusion:** Highlight the existing diversity within the governing body and showcase success stories of Bengali individuals who have contributed positively as school governors.

Building trust and relationships within the Black, Asian, Multi Ethnic community will be crucial for successful recruitment efforts.

Building trust and relationships within the Black, Asian, Multi Ethnic community will be crucial for successful recruitment efforts.

Job Boards

Job boards can be a complementary approach offering free and paid options, these focus on promoting diversity and inclusion include:

Diversity Jobs (www.diversityjobsite.co.uk/);

Vercida (vercida.com);

Inclusive Jobs (<https://www.inclusivejobs.co.uk/>).

Job boards aimed at disabled people include;

Evenbreak (<https://www.evenbreak.co.uk/>)

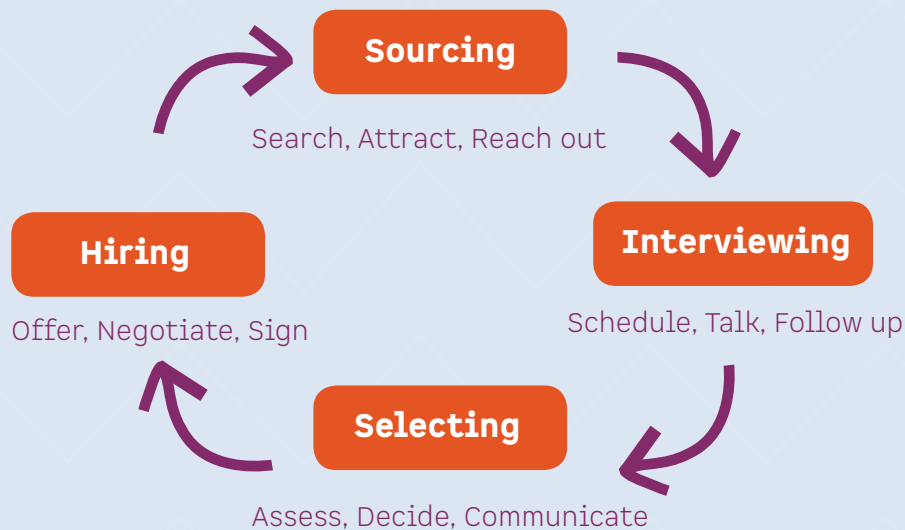
Disability Jobsite (<https://www.disabilityjobsite.co.uk/>)

See how Tower Hamlets governors think you can get more people involved.



6. Your role as a recruiter: part 2

The Recruitment Cycle and Sourcing



The Recruitment Cycle

[credit:
<https://www.herohunt.ai/blog/steps-in-the-360-recruitment-cycle>]

We will focus on sourcing, interviewing and selecting.

As a recruiter, it is extremely important that you are involved with the process from the start until recruitment is complete to ensure a fair and consistent process.

Recruitment Panel

'Recruitment panel' will refer to all individuals recruiting for a specific role. Have a minimum of two recruiters. They will be involved in writing the job description and job advertisement, agreeing the application process and selection criteria, putting together interview questions, agreeing interview scoring and final selection of candidate.

What will your panel look like? Refer to 'Know how diverse you already are' on page 14. Be as diverse and inclusive as possible. You know the type of candidate you want to attract. Who would they like to see on the panel? If you want to attract Black, Asian, Multi Ethnic candidates, ensure this aim is reflected in the make-up of your panel.

Sourcing

How do you attract your ideal candidates? Look at your recruitment materials, namely the job description, job advertisements and application. Review the barriers and take these into consideration.

How can you be creative? Think about the candidate/ customer and win-win approach. What do they get from of it? Refer to step 5 of the recruitment action plan on page 14. How do you put this information across to people? How do you overcome the myths and stereotypes such as "I'm too young" or "I don't have the skills"? How do you encourage people to apply even when English is a second language?

Note: Recruitment of school governors is a more informal process than recruitment of employees. The recruitment process for employees should use a more consistently structured approach.



Job Descriptions

Language:

- Be welcoming!
- How accessible is the language you use?
- Simplify - do you really need long, complicated words
- Can job descriptions and job advertisements be available in different languages?
- Be aware of the use of jargon, acronyms and abbreviations.
- Be clear and concise

Define the job and its required skills without being restrictive. Reassure those who may not typically consider themselves for the role due to a perceived lack of skills. Emphasise that characteristics such as a willingness to learn, enthusiasm to support school leadership and a desire to benefit children are highly valued and welcomed

Include: training is provided; no expectation of knowing the role beforehand; it is a shared responsibility. Emphasise team working, togetherness and fun, meeting parents, staff, children and people in the communities.

Provide a named contact to give potential recruits the chance to find out more. When seeking to attract new governors, offer drop-in sessions in the local community or at school events, to explain more about the role.

Additional information: give dates of informal chats, visits to the school and, crucially, interviews. Be flexible and inclusive by offering options where possible. Allow more people to apply by accommodating commitments such as catering and essential appointments.

Be aware of gender bias, men apply for a job when they meet 60% of the requirements. Women tend to apply when they meet 100% of them.

Additionally for formal recruitment:

- Remember, applicants are both candidates and customers. Perception of the values of your school are important. Potential recruits seek roles that align with their own values.
- Have you made clear which skills are essential and desirable? Could doing this widen your potential candidate pool?

Application

Have a simple application process. For school governors, Tower Hamlets Governor Services offers an example of a simple application form (https://forms.towerhamlets.gov.uk/service/School_governor_application_form). If you decide not to use this follow the tips below.

For formal recruitment, keep it simple and agree the best way for the candidate and you as recruiters to assess. Ideally you are a diverse panel. Often school governors are involved in the recruitment of staff such as head teacher. Ensure the diverse panel can assess in a fair and consistent manner. Be friendly and inclusive, not overly formal. Ensure the application does not confuse or frustrate applicants. Consider accepting video applications. Include your school's commitment to equal opportunities.

Job Advertisement

Incorporate all the previous suggestions. Emphasise friendliness and inclusivity. Make clear how potential recruits will benefit personally. State what is unique about your school. Give examples of inclusivity. Do you have a bilingual programme? Is time off given for religious festivals?

When attracting a specific group of people, state “We actively encourage applicants from all backgrounds, including those from Black, Asian Multi Ethnic communities.” Or “We encourage applicants from underrepresented or diverse backgrounds to apply”

Are you restricting potential candidates' applications? Do they really need a qualification or is lived experience enough? Remember the value of transferable skills.

Clearly outline the qualities and characteristics you are seeking. This provides prospective candidates with guidance on what you are looking for and what to include in their application. It also helps you as a recruiter in setting your scoring criteria for candidate evaluation.

If you have an equality policy, mention it.

Using inclusive language and imagery in job postings to attract a diverse pool of candidates. This involves avoiding biased language and highlighting the school's commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Be aware of gendered language, adverts using strong masculine language leads to a drop in applications from female candidates by up to 10% (People Management 18 August 2021) A gender decoder for job advertisements is <https://gender-decoder.katmatfield.com/> Copy and paste your advertisement and see if subtle linguistic coding is happening.



Shortlisting

As a panel, you should have collectively decided on the shortlisting criteria (to avoid bias) on which you will shortlist. This should be done before you advertise the role.

Using the Tower Hamlets application form as an example, consider what you want to see in each section. In the 'skills' section, do you weigh them differently? In 'experience', remember the value of transferable skills. Consider candidates' answers from a wider perspective. Some applicants are not aware of the skills they have, but their answers will give clues. Be open about what you might accept as suitable answers.

For formal recruitment, if you are Disability Confident accredited, then you need a column where you can record if a disability is stated. If an individual declares they have a disability and meets minimum criteria, then you must offer them an interview under the Disability Confident scheme.

8 steps to inclusive shortlisting

1 Agree criteria. It's up to you how many you choose.

2 Agree scoring:

a. Does each criteria have equal weighting or are some more important?

b. Formal recruitment competence scoring example:

0: no evidence or information provided

1: insufficient evidence to meet criteria

2: covered some criteria but little evidence of competence

3: covers the majority of the criteria with positive evidence

4: covers most criteria giving strong positive evidence

5: covers all the criteria and shows thorough evidence

Or

c. A more informal approach would use a crib list, so you know what you are looking for. What could fall under the category of skills? Have examples of answers you are looking for. Agree how many points are available for each criterion. Would a minimum score of 3 on the scale above meet your criteria? Agree a minimum score needed to progress to the next stage.

3 Create a scoring template. You can use the candidates name or a reference if you decide to use blind screening. Include, Disability declared (if applicable), Criteria 1 (e.g. general), Criteria 2 (e.g skills), etc, with further columns for score, comments and outcome (e.g. invite to interview).

4 Go through applications and score separately.

5 Be aware of biases and assumptions.

6 Discuss scores together, being open to challenge and others' perspectives.

7 Agree on next steps, such as who will follow up with both successful and unsuccessful candidates and whether this will be done by phone (ideally), email, or letter.

8 For those you are inviting to the next stage, usually interview, ask if any reasonable adjustments are required. Do not assume what is required, ask.

7. Your role as a recruiter: part 3 - Interviewing

Are you having an interview or an informal chat? It will depend on the type of role but be flexible and adapt.

Selection Techniques

There are a variety of ways to select a candidate ranging from interviews via telephone, video and in person, presentations, psychometric profiling, work simulations. Recruiting a school governor tends to be more informal. You may want to incorporate an interview/ informal chat with a tour of the school, meeting other governors. Whatever you do, make sure you are consistent and provide the same for all you are meeting as a prospect governor. For a formal interview of a prospective teacher it may include a presentation or work simulation, developing a lesson plan and an interview.

Before the Interview

Just as with the application selection process, the recruitment panel are to plan the interview questions and if a presentation is required (formal interview) to decide on what this looks like. To achieve accuracy and consistency when evaluating candidates, each competency questioned must be graded individually.

Scoring

Scoring is to be agreed beforehand, examples include:

- Do all questions carry the same weighting?
- **5** – Excellent
- **4** – Good
- **3** – Average
- **2** – Below Average
- **1** – Poor
- Allow room for comments, not only as a reminder to yourself as to why you selected a score, but also to be able to put your case forward when the panel are discussing all candidates and a selection is being made. NB: Candidates can request copies of your notes.
- There are a number of templates available on the internet, find one and adapt to suit you.
- Remember to adapt your approach for an informal interview - the scoring framework can be very different. For example, when recruiting a school governor, an individual may not have much relevant experience but willing to learn, how do you score this?

Note down questions you could ask that are related to your schools' values.



Questions – what do you want to know from the applicant?

For formal interviews (staff member) you will have more structured questions. To balance this, have some unstructured questions or supplementary questions you could ask. Consider the style of questions you will be asking:

Situational questions with hypothetical situations to see how an individual reacts. These can be used to assess decision making skills, problem, solving skills, organisational skills.

Cultural fit questions can be asked to link to your school's values.

Behavioural questions assess teamwork, interpersonal skills, time management skills? Adopt the STARR approach; Situation, Task, Action, Result, Reflection.

Technical questions can be used for roles that require very specific skills and knowledge. Make sure they are appropriately weighted when scoring.

Conducting an interview

Adopt Ruth Miller's 4 step GASP approach to interviewing - Greeting, Acquire, Supply, Parting

Greeting - During interviews, remember that it's a two-way process. As a recruiter representing your school, you are being assessed as well. Create a positive impression by ensuring the location is easy to find and considering any accessibility needs. Accommodate requests for reasonable adjustments. Be welcoming and provide clear introductions, time structure, and expectations. Let candidates know if you are taking notes and assure them that you are still actively listening. Avoid distractions such as tapping on a laptop, which can create barriers in face-to-face interviews.

For virtual interviews, ensure you won't be interrupted, check your technology and consider your background—keep it neutral to avoid overwhelming neurodiverse candidates. If you're taking notes on your laptop, stay on mute to prevent distracting keyboard noise. Understand that unexpected distractions may arise for the applicant, such as children entering the room, and be reassuring.

Acquire information - To put your candidate at ease, consider starting with an easy-to-answer question. Keep in mind that everyone expresses themselves differently, so be open to diverse communication styles. For example, you could ask "Why are you applying for this role?" or "What has attracted you to this position?" Focus on inquiring about actual experiences.

Decide who is asking which question and in which order so the flow of your questions ensure a smooth conversation. Your listening skills are crucial, and the candidate should be doing most of the talking. Ask open questions and avoid combining multiple questions or leading the candidate toward a specific answer. If needed, use probing questions to encourage the applicant to provide more information. Record any probing questions asked in your notes.

Virtual interviews - it is very important to clearly maintain eye contact and indicate engagement. **Do not record virtual interviews.**

Supply information - This is where you supply information to the candidate, Think about what they would like to know and have that information available to them. What would a prospective Black, Asian, Multi Ethnic school governor want to know? It may be what support you can offer them if English isn't their first language? What training is available?

What information can you provide?

Note down key documents you might need.

Parting – At the end of the interview or informal chat let the candidate know the next steps and indicate timescales. Make sure you stick to them! Do not comment to the candidate on how well they did. Avoid informal remarks that could be considered discriminatory, e.g. “What, at your age?!” could be considered as age discrimination. Keep conversation neutral - the weather is a common one in this country!

Challenges

Note down challenges have you faced as a recruiter or a candidate?

Some challenges you may experience

- Plan for a backup in case someone from the recruitment panel is unavailable on the day due to illness or an emergency.
- Be prepared for time-slippage, for example, a candidate may be unavoidably late, or an interview overruns.
- Virtual interviewees may struggle with personal engagement.
- Do not judge virtual interviewees by their background, e.g. home décor or religious artefacts on display – they are not a reflection on their ability to do the job.
- Some interviewees may struggle with technology, so take time to check with them that the technology works and be prepared to use alternative methods, e.g. a phone call.
- Be aware of own biases. If someone has an accent, is it stopping them from relaying information? Does it stop them from doing the role?
- Disagreement with fellow panel members. Does anyone have a final decision-making role?



When discussing a candidates' suitability for the role.

What would you do if a panel member is exhibiting personal bias during the interview?

What would make you comfortable / confident to challenge a panel member?

Common Pitfalls

1. First impressions
2. Stereotyping
3. Halo effect - positive first impressions bias
4. Horns effect - negative first impressions bias
5. Recency bias - positive judgement of latest interviews
6. Failure to use scoring scale correctly
7. Rushed decision making
8. Comparing candidates
9. Unconscious bias
10. Lack of engagement
11. Overlooking cultural fit
12. Lack of feedback to candidate

Overall responsibilities as a recruiter

- Focus on accommodating diversity and difference at all stages of recruitment.
- Incorporate multiple approaches to attract candidates who have the skills and dedication, but do not have a traditional occupational background.
- Be aware of your own and colleagues' unconscious biases.
- Have open and honest conversations when scoring - challenge each other.
- Be prepared to justify decisions you make in shortlisting and interviews.
- Be curious about and open to fellow panel members' decision-making.
- Seek equality in the decision-making process regardless of status - no-one's opinion is more valid than others.



Scoring & Note Taking

- Agree the scoring criteria beforehand.
- Inform your candidate you will be taking notes before the interview begins.
- Be mindful that candidates can ask to see notes, especially if they think they have been treated unfairly - in formal recruitment this could go to a tribunal.
- Be factual, avoid making personal comments and keep comments neutral.
- Capture only key points, relevant details and specific examples.
- Use the words of the candidate as accurately as possible.
- Ask the interviewee to repeat if you are unclear - it is better to check you have the correct meaning and understanding of what they wish to say.
- If you use shorthand, add a key to the notes.
- Write notes in pen, or if you type them, pdf them as soon after the interview as possible, date and sign in pen.
- Review notes as soon as you can after the interview..
- Check your school's GDPR and Data Protection policies to see how long to keep notes before destroying them - guidance is six to twelve months. If you wish to keep them longer for future roles, inform the candidate and gain their consent.

Finally, watch some school staff and governors talking about recruiting people from diverse backgrounds.



Notes



The Inclusive Recruitment of School Governors and Staff

was commissioned by London Borough of Tower Hamlets
Governance, Information and Traded Services

For information contact:

Tower Hamlets School Governor Services

Tel: **020 7364 3141**

Email: governor.servicessession@towerhamlets.gov.uk

www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgn1/education_and_learning/schools

This resource was produced for
Tower Hamlets by Know Wonder

Author: **Shelina Prabatani**

Design: **Ben Rogers**

TH.IS GREAT SCHOOLS

