

ACCESS.A Action Plan

AFBE-UK has called companies and individuals into action. We understand at this moment, though you may want to enact plans, you may be wondering how. ACCESS.A is an action plan, that we have created, to help companies get started.

ACCESS.A asks every company to **A**cccept facts about racial disparity, **E**ducate itself and its staff, create a **S**trategy and **S**afe places, and finally, but not less important, to be **A**ccountable.

ACC - Accept facts about racial disparity

The under representation of BME people within our industry is well established in numerous studies carried out by the Royal Academy of Engineering, Engineering UK and others. The “nothing to see here” stance of many leaders is often a barrier to achieving parity.

- Accept that there is an issue and accept that your company can do better.
- Listen to your BME employees; in the current climate this can be done effectively through virtual tea and talk sessions as well as employee engagement surveys.
- Do not lump the experiences of all minorities and protected characteristics together – each has its own challenges, difficulties, disadvantages which may not be significant to the others.
- Don't assume that similar experiences are identical.

Speak out in support of the BME community. This can be done through social media.

When creating social media posts

- Tie in ethnicity D&I into the company's overall vision.
- Have a focus on some of your BME employees.
- Show solidarity with the BME community by speaking about Systemic racism.
- Outline measures you are taking to support BME employees.

Establish a baseline in your company.

- Conduct surveys to understand the viewpoint of your BME colleagues and enable suggestions to a solution.
- Establish how ethnically diverse your workforce is.
- Establish how inclusive your recruitment practices are.
- Understand how your BME staff feel about the lockdown and about returning to work.

E – Educate Yourself (E)

It's everyone's responsibility to understand racism.

Encourage everyone, but AT THE VERY MINIMUM the D&I TEAMS, to educate themselves on the *History, Facts and Experience* of marginalised groups.

- Consider running book clubs for employees in which they read a selection of books and/or podcasts explaining Systemic racism, micro-incivilities, unconscious bias, etc. (AFBE-UK can help you compile a list of recommended literature, webinars and podcasts).
- Look into the company structure, and determine how the company hires BME employees and how successful it is at retaining them.
- Look at how token-ism is currently present in your company and how it makes your black (and / or minority) colleagues feel.
- Meritocracy and diversity are not opposites they should go hand in hand.
- Implement suggestions with time and funding.

S – Create a Strategy

Create an effective diversity strategy that details methods, targets and allows for measurable results (in the way a recognised standard is used in engineering work) in line with Equality Act 2010 and the UN's SDGs, specifically SDG 10 "Reduce Inequalities".

- Conduct an internal audit of current status, i.e. no. of employees categorised by race and position.
- Report ethnicity and race, but not incorporated within culture, geography or nationality.
- Report on ethnicity pay gap.
- Never assume unconscious bias has been eliminated – keep finding ways to decrease it.
- Commit to doing the work long term, even when the headlines have moved on.

S – Create Safe places (S)

Provide safe spaces within the organization for everyone, especially BME people to express themselves.

- Encourage managers and senior managers to consider the well-being of their BME employees.
- Demonstrate you are an ally. This should include those who have a board level position.
- Amplify the voices of those speaking out on racial issues relating to BME people.

A – Be Accountable

- Conduct confidential audits to ensure implementation of your diversity strategy (AFBE-UK can facilitate).
- Review and ensure you are in line to meet targets, and where not, evaluate why.
- Lead by example – ensure ethnic diversity is visible at all levels – from junior staff to board members. Invest in diversity at all levels.
- Ensure there are statistics on leadership and progression of BME staff.
- Donate to organisations making a positive change (AFBE-UK can recommend)
- Donate / sponsor organisations advocating black issues (AFBE-UK can recommend).

AFBE-UK is happy to be consulted on how you can do more.