Using data

This resource accompanies our guidance for **employers on taking an anti-racist approach to tackling gender inequality in the workplace**. It will help you to gather the data you need to identify where you might have issues with policies and practices. This will give you a solid evidence base to set your organisation's priorities for change and create a targeted action plan to achieve them.

Racially minoritised women still face deeply rooted prejudices and racism in their lives, which contributes to their inequality at work. The barriers that create this inequality are present in the vast majority of workplaces, which means all employers need to look at their organisations honestly and identify where and how they need to create change.

Data, whether from your HR systems, or staff surveys, or direct engagement with women in your workforce, will help you to identify the most pressing issues for your organisation. This means you can direct your time and resources where they are most needed, and have the greatest capacity for impact.

Data gathering and analysis practices will vary for different sized organisations, and different sectors. For example, public sector employers are legally required to gather workforce data on gender and ethnicity, while large private sector companies may have more comprehensive workforce data than smaller businesses.

It's important to remember that data is not an end in itself. Some employers can become too focused on this stage, leading to a delay in the work of culture and practice change. Gathering data is important, but you can begin taking action without it. **Our guidance** will help you get started.

Where do I start?

To begin with, you could look at the data you have on your workforce profile and pay. You should check if you can break this down by gender and race to identify patterns. This is known as gender- and race-disaggregated data. You may already gather this – if you don't, you should start now. You may need to make changes to your HR systems to enable you to do so.

Staff surveys can also be a useful way to take the temperature of your workforce and identify any concerns. If you use these you should make sure the results can be disaggregated by race and gender.

Engaging with racially minoritised women in your organisation is an important step in creating a picture of your organisation, and building their trust that you are committed to change. You can do this through an anonymous survey or by convening a discussion group.

Intersectional data

The gold standard of employee data is intersectional data. This is data that you can filter by more than one characteristic at a time, for example by race and gender. This is important, as if you can only break down your data by gender **or** race you can identify where the women are in your organisation, and where the racially minoritised people are, but not the racially minoritised women.

Our guidance sets out how racially minoritised women's experiences at work differ from white women's experiences, and from the experiences of racially minoritised people as a group. If you have intersectional data this will help you better understand the experiences of your workforce.

What if I don't have this data?

Many employers don't have access to all of this data. But, you don't have to have all of it in order to take action and set targets. The issues faced by racially minoritised women at work are well-evidenced and relevant to most workplaces, so don't worry if you don't have data that is specific to your organisation. The **actions in our guidance** include simple steps to help you identify what data might be helpful to you.

If there are no racially minoritised women in your organisation, prioritise action on recruitment. You can find the information you need to get started in our guidance.

Using data alongside our guidance

You're gathering staff data for a purpose: to understand your organisation, to set actions and targets and to measure progress. For each section of our guidance you'll need the right data and you'll need to know what to look for.

Demonstrate anti-racist leadership on gender equality and drive change

Change starts from the top. Senior leaders have a key role to play in setting the agenda for change, driving action and staying accountable. They'll be responsible for agreeing a strategy, action plan and targets to track progress. Data can help you to shape these. This includes data relating to staff composition, working patterns, recruitment and promotion, learning and development, flexible working and workplace culture. There's more detail on these below.

Understand and improve your workplace culture

The barriers faced by racially minoritised women in recruitment and promotion, learning and development, and access to flexible work all contribute to workplace cultures that aren't inclusive. Workplace cultures can also include harmful behaviours which can be overt, but are also often subtle, creating a hostile environment for different groups of women.

You can find information on recruitment, learning and development and flexible working in the sections below, which will help you to build a picture of your organisation. Further data that will help you understand your workplace culture includes:

Workforce data

This means looking at the composition of your workforce: who works where, and how. This includes data on:

- Overall headcount.

- Full-time and part-time work.

- Employees by grade.

- Employees by job type/role.

- Employees on fixed term and/or temporary posts.

- Pay, including uplifts and access to bonuses.

- Employees' performance management ratings.

In analysing the data, you should consider if racially minoritised women are:

- Concentrated in part-time work.

- Concentrated in particular grades.

- Concentrated in particular roles.

- Overrepresented in insecure work.

- More or less likely to receive a pay rise.

- More or less likely to receive a positive performance evaluation.

This data is an important foundation for developing your action plan.

Data on discrimination and harassment

You should gather data on grievances and disciplinary incidents to identify any patterns. In analysing the data, you should consider the following questions:

- Are racially minoritised women overrepresented or underrepresented among grievance cases?

- Have there been any grievances raised about racist and/or sexist behaviour, sexual harassment or discrimination? What was the outcome?

- Have any staff been disciplined for racist and/or sexist behaviour, sexual harassment or discrimination?

- Are there higher instances of grievances about racist and/or sexist behaviour, sexual harassment or discrimination in particular teams, grades or divisions/departments?

You can also better understand this by talking to women in your organisation, for example through surveys or focus groups. It's important to remember the majority of women don't report incidents of discrimination or harassment, so it will take time to build trust. It might help to engage with organisations that represent racially minoritised women to help facilitate this work.

Tackle racism and improve gender equality and diversity in your recruitment & promotion practices

The data you need on recruitment and promotion includes:

- Applications for jobs/promoted posts.
- Shortlisted applicants.
- Appointments/promotions.

Questions to ask include:

- Are racially women more or less likely to make it to interview and/or appointment?
- Are there patterns by department, grade or role? For example, are racially minoritised women less likely to be promoted to senior posts?
- You can also survey your employees to find out their experiences of applying for promotion to explore how different groups feel about your processes.

Ensure learning and development are accessible to all

You should aim to include a wide range of data here. This includes:

- Employees who access essential training, and non-essential training.
- Employees who request training and the request is refused.
- Employees who access development that might facilitate promotion.
- Employees who participate in shadowing, coaching or mentoring.
- Employees who are identified for internal development programmes.

Questions to ask include:

- Who are the main beneficiaries of training and development opportunities?
- Are part-time employees able to access training and development opportunities to the same degree as full-time employees?
- Are racially minoritised women represented in development opportunities that can help them achieve promotion?

You can also survey employees on how able they feel to access informal development opportunities. This will give you an evidence base for action to address any unequal access to learning and development.

Create better quality flexible working for all

It's best practice to keep records on flexible working requests, including how decisions are made to approve or refuse requests. The data you should gather includes:

- Employees who work flexibly, including by type of arrangement e.g. flexitime, compressed hours.

- Flexible working requests that are refused.

- Proportion of women returning to work following maternity leave.

- Destination of women returning to work following maternity leave.

Questions to ask include:

- Are racially women more or less likely to work flexibly, or to have a flexible working request refused?

- Is flexible working used more in certain teams?

- Are women returning from maternity leave able to access flexible working?

- Are women returning from maternity leave able to return to the same job?

This information will enable you to identify issues which constrain women's return to work following maternity leave, and provides a basis for widening uptake of shared parental leave.

Close the Gap works in Scotland on women's labour market participation. We work with policymakers, employers and unions to influence and enable action that will address the causes of women's inequality at work.

Close the Gap