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# Leaders Like You

A report from the West Midlands Combined Authority's  
Leadership Commission 2018

**#ImHere**



West Midlands  
Combined Authority

**Mayor of the  
West Midlands**



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# Meet the Commissioners



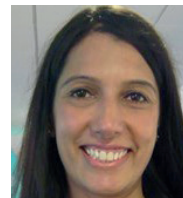
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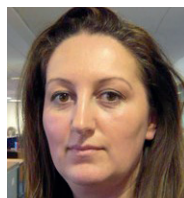
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# Foreword

The West Midlands Combined Authority took a bold step when they asked for this Commission to be set up. From the outset we knew there was a deficit in the diversity of Leaders both in the private and public sectors but there was insufficient robust data to address this issue. In setting up the Commission the CA knew that it too would have to open itself up to scrutiny.

In the region we are witnessing an exciting and rapid shifting of the political, economic, social, cultural, environmental, and technological landscapes. Our region is a microcosm of the world marked by Globalisation, Digitisation and Diversity yet this does not touch on the lives of some of our most marginalised people.

There are three striking metrics of the West Midlands. This region is one of the most ethnically diverse areas in the UK, and in Europe. In addition, Birmingham is one of the youngest cities in Europe with under 25 year olds making up 40% of the population. It is also the only UK city in which the population is increasing and is set to become the first majority 'black' city in the UK by 2020.

Our research has found that a fuller profile of diversity in leadership in the WMCA area is not possible to construct because of data gaps. Nevertheless, enough information is available to show there is a significant leadership diversity gap.

More analysis would be helpful on 'diversity within diversity' or 'intersectionality', that is, the representation of groups that have two or more of potentially under-represented characteristics. There is also a need for more monitoring of information to be able to evaluate better the impact of leadership diversity promotion activities.

The region has an exciting opportunity to grow rapidly economically but will be held back if we do not tackle the underrepresentation in leadership roles from people of all backgrounds. It is vital that if we want to develop an inclusive region, where people are respected and feel a part of society we need to look at the importance of diverse leadership with a determination to put into place actions which not only embrace it as a concept but adopt it in all of our societal and political decisions; this needs to happen in our streets and neighbourhoods as well as in our public and private insitutions.



I want to thank the Commissioners who have spent the last nine months in not only guiding the work but being out and about listening to people.

We the Commissioners feel that this is the beginning of a long overdue journey. The work for our current leaders in the private and public sectors begins now.

As a Commission we could not have undertaken this important work without the support of our Universities in the region. This work was led by a dedicated team from the University of Birmingham under the stewardship of Jenny Phillimore, Kiram Trehan, Jane Glover and Yanan Zhang.

**Anita Bhalla OBE**  
 Chair, WMCA Leadership  
 Commission

# Foreword

## Inclusive Leadership for Inclusive Growth



The Leadership Commission was established to identify the fundamental issues within our region that prevent our high-level positions being reflective of the communities we live in.

As the WMCA portfolio lead for Cohesion, Inclusion and Public Service Reform the work of the Leadership Commission is pivotal to delivering on my agenda for reform and for instigating positive change across the region.

The diversity of the West Midlands is one of our biggest strengths, we have a young and incredibly diverse population for which we need to ensure there are opportunities to grow and flourish. We want change to be sustainable and not just about meeting 'quotas' to deliver diversity.

We know that people from under-represented groups are not taking advantage of the opportunities we want the region to provide for them. There are barriers to progress in life and work which are felt disproportionately by certain communities, groups and individuals. This is not a new issue, but it is a critical one. We will not close the productivity gap articulated in our Strategic Economic Plan without inclusive leadership and inclusive growth that enables more of our citizens to play a full part.

Inclusive growth means using diversity as an asset – but what the Leadership Commission makes clear is that we will need a step change in practice to get there. Inclusive Growth can only become sustainable through the evolution of a more inclusive leadership culture and practice across the region.

The work of the Commission over last 9 months has been supported by academic teams who have produced some fantastic data on which to develop our understanding of the barriers preventing a more diverse leadership across our region. But we have sought to go beyond this and to look at some of the real stories behind the headlines so that our path forwards creates sustainable solutions that will deliver the long-term change needed to deliver inclusive leadership.

I am incredibly proud of the work that has been achieved through this commission. The challenge is now is to act on the recommendations in collaboration across our region.

**Councillor Steve Eling**  
Leader of Sandwell Council,  
WMCA portfolio holder for  
Cohesion and Integration

# Foreword



In my time as Managing Director of John Lewis, Chair of the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP, and candidate for the Mayoralty I was constantly struck that meetings of regional leaders involved many people who looked like me – white, male, middle aged! All were admirable individuals in their own right, but as a group we did not reflect the rich diversity of our vibrant region. On becoming Mayor I was determined to try to do something about that as it can't be right that the half who are women, third who are from BAME backgrounds and the 20% who have some form of disability are underrepresented in our leadership. The Leadership Commission under the chairmanship of Anita Bhalla OBE was therefore born.

I am extremely grateful that the WMCA, local councils, businesses and our regional institutions have come together to provide data, ideas and support for changing the makeup of the leadership of our region. That's been combined with real life experience from the many focus groups led by our commissioners and strong academic input from the Universities of Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Birmingham City, Warwick and Coventry. IRiS (Institute for Research into Superdiversity) at the University of Birmingham have been the main drivers of this report and I am grateful for the dedication in producing this report.

I am pleased that the outcome is honest and challenging to us. The recommendations call for better talent pipelines for people of all backgrounds whether their diversity is evident or not.

The Commission calls on all of us in leadership positions to think what difference our own actions can make, to ensure we release the potential of our fellow citizens and ensure the West Midlands becomes a place where everyone can fulfil their potential. I look forward to using the Mayoralty to help make this happen.

**Andy Street**

Mayor of the West Midlands  
and Chair of the WMCA



# Executive Summary

This report is a summary of a nine-month research programme commissioned by the West Midlands Combined Authority's Leadership Commission on promoting leadership diversity in the area covered by the WMCA. This work is a first amongst combined authorities and its central message – that there is now an economic and business imperative for greater leadership diversity and inclusivity in addition to the clear social imperative - needs to be taken up across the whole country, not only through the WMCA area.

The diversity and young age profile of the WMCA area is a huge asset and yet there is a significant leadership diversity gap. This matters as research suggests that greater leadership diversity leads to greater prosperity and reduced marginalisation and disaffection amongst excluded groups.

The research, undertaken by local universities and coordinated by the University of Birmingham, aimed to: better understand current representation of key groups in leadership positions; identify barriers and good practice in overcoming these barriers; and lay the basis for a strategy and action plan to promote inclusive leadership which would be monitored and evaluated.

# Where are we now?

- A full profile of diversity in leadership in the WMCA area is not possible because of data gaps. Nevertheless, enough information is available to show there is a **significant leadership diversity gap**.
- Women tend to be better represented in leadership in the public sector than the private sector in the WMCA area, particularly in the NHS, local authorities and civil service where they are a large majority of the workforce. They also make up a large majority of the workforce in education too but tend to be poorly represented in leadership positions. **Female directors of large, private sector companies are a rare sight**.
- **People with disabilities are underrepresented across the board** in the public and private workforce both as a whole and in leadership positions.
- **The proportion of BAME people in the workforce of local public and private sector organisations is generally significantly below that in the local working age population.** It tends to be lower still in leadership positions.
- Information is scarcer for other groups, but some is available on people identifying as LGBT. **There is a huge gap in information on people from working class backgrounds in leadership positions.**
- More analysis would be helpful on 'diversity within diversity' or 'intersectionality', that is, the representation of groups that have | two or more of potentially under-represented characteristics.
- There is also a need for more monitoring information to be able to evaluate better the impact of leadership diversity promotion activities.



# Barriers

- Barriers to diversity in leadership can be found at different levels - societal, organisational/institutional and individual.
- Recruitment barriers need to be tackled to have a 'pipeline' of diverse future leaders.
- Barriers common to most groups include:
  - Lack of self-confidence and self-belief partly as a result of institutional factors;
  - A tendency to recruit and promote in one's own image;
  - Nepotism and an "old boys club" mentality;
  - Exclusion from informal networks of communication;
  - Stereotyping/preconceptions of a person's roles and abilities derived from prejudices in wider society;
  - Lack of mentors, role models and appropriate networks of individuals to provide social support and advice.
- Barriers faced particularly by women include:
  - Non-recognition of commitment to personal and family responsibilities;
  - More subtle biases such as the requirement for career breaks if having children;
  - The dominance of male leadership and male leadership styles.
- Barriers faced particularly by people with disabilities include:
  - Job security;
  - Personal development;
  - Career prospects;
  - Perceived capacity to lead; and
  - Travel-to-workplace difficulties.
- Barriers faced particularly by BAME people include:
  - Paucity of mentors, role models and support groups;
  - Lack of understanding of cultural differences;
  - Pressure to assimilate and conform to an organisational stereotype;
  - A backdrop of institutional and societal racism.
- Barriers faced particularly by LGBT include:
  - Lack of confidence;
  - Having to conform to stereotypical machismo;
  - Banter which should be considered homophobic;
  - Use of language which is exclusionary;
- 'Double marginalisation of people having two or more 'underrepresented characteristics' needs to be considered.

# What can we do about it?

Workforce and leadership development programmes need to be embedded in an organisation's human resources strategy.

Good practice in promoting diversity in leadership is good practice for all staff and leadership development, and vice versa.

Diversity-promoting interventions fall into two broad categories of changing organisational culture and supporting individuals.

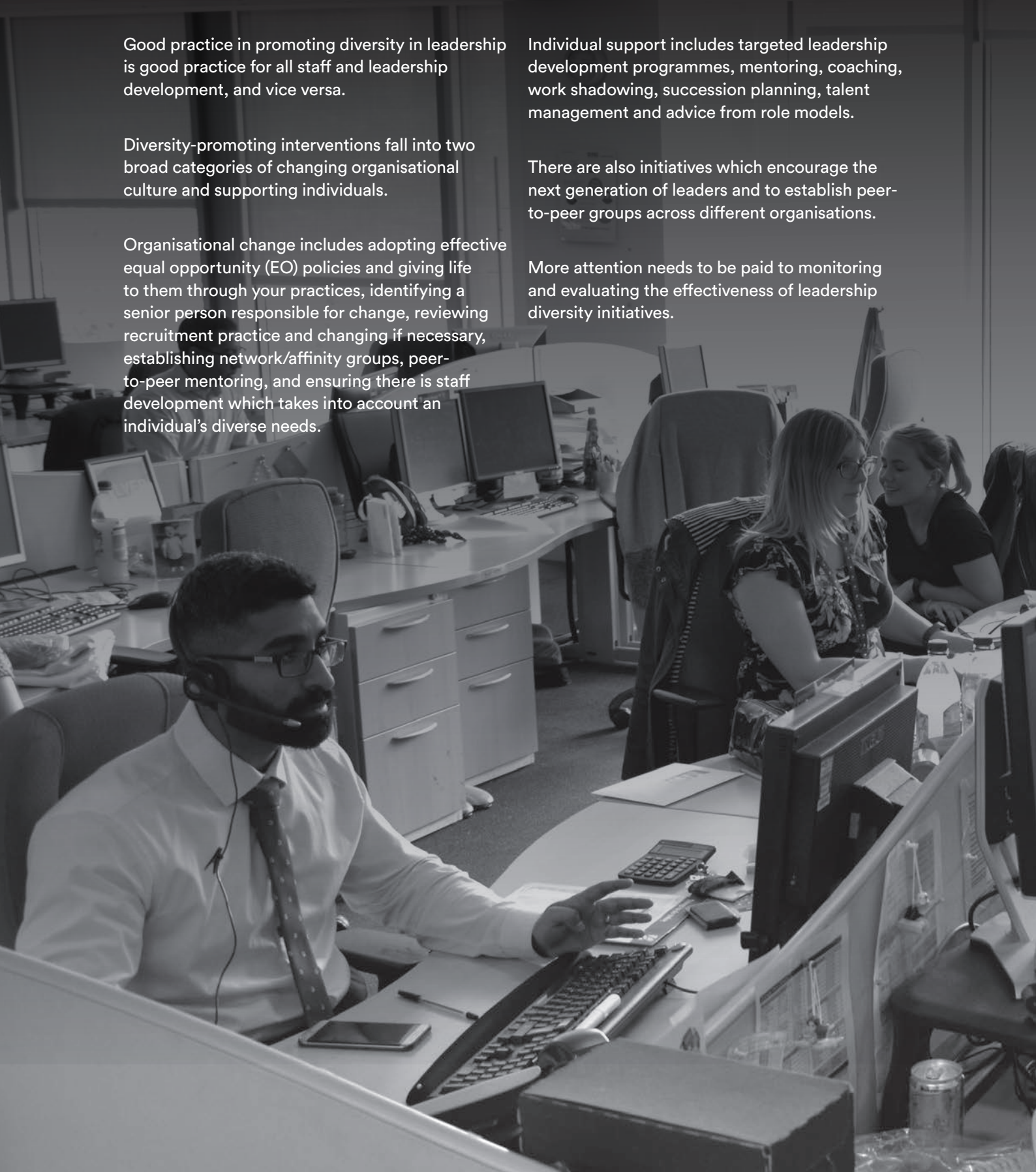
Organisational change includes adopting effective equal opportunity (EO) policies and giving life to them through your practices, identifying a senior person responsible for change, reviewing recruitment practice and changing if necessary, establishing network/affinity groups, peer-to-peer mentoring, and ensuring there is staff development which takes into account an individual's diverse needs.

The West Midlands region has a better rate of adoption of EO policies and many practices but there is a great deal of room for improvement.

Individual support includes targeted leadership development programmes, mentoring, coaching, work shadowing, succession planning, talent management and advice from role models.

There are also initiatives which encourage the next generation of leaders and to establish peer-to-peer groups across different organisations.

More attention needs to be paid to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of leadership diversity initiatives.



# Recommendations

On the basis of the evidence collated through this research, the West Midlands Leadership Commission is making a number of recommendations for the WMCA and its partner organisations under five themes:

1. Inclusive leadership to drive inclusive growth
2. Working in partnership with business to develop inclusive leadership
3. A step change in recruitment and human resource development
4. Combatting the evaluation and learning deficit
5. A route map for the next generation.

## Theme One: Inclusive leadership to drive inclusive growth

### Recommendation 1a:

The WMCA must lead by example and will act on an ambitious plan to bring more diverse leaders into its own organisation, networks and governance, drawing on lessons from this research. It will commit to:

- track and report publicly on progress on this action plan by publishing an annual review;
- taking responsibility for updating the information on leadership diversity across the WMCA area, including seeking to fill data gaps;
- evaluating the impact of this Leadership Commission after 12 months; and
- holding a repeat West Midlands Leadership Commission enquiry every 5 years.

### Recommendation 1b:

Embed Leadership Commission outcomes within the strategic goals of the WMCA, measuring the inclusiveness of the area's growth on an ongoing basis through our Inclusive Growth Unit.

### Recommendation 1c:

Transport is a major enabler of access to employment especially for people with disabilities, and the lack of this can limit skills, training, job and leadership opportunities, which will affect the long-term leadership pipeline. The WMCA, TfWM and partners will propose interventions to address the barriers.

### Recommendation 1d:

The WMCA will work with its regional partners and national experts to explore what leadership skills our future economy will require, and how we can bring best practice to bear in the region.

### Recommendation 1e:

Major events in the region including the Commonwealth Games and City of Culture provide a platform to showcase this vision of inclusive leadership and to act as a catalyst for practical progress. The WMCA will work with partners to ensure that promoting diversity and inclusive leadership are embedded in the ethos and delivery of these and other major events.



## Theme Two:

### Working in partnership with business to develop inclusive leadership

#### Recommendation 2a:

The West Midlands Leadership Commission is calling for a generational change in the diversity of leadership within the region. Success will depend on ownership right at the top of organisations, aligning inclusive leadership to the core values and goals of future business. Without this ownership at the top and throughout an organisation, it will be far harder to break down the barriers faced by those from underrepresented groups seeking leadership positions. The Mayor wishes to convene a 'Inclusive Leadership Meetings' for leaders of organisations to meet, commit to action and share successes and difficulties.

#### Recommendation 2b:

Evidence suggests that many organisations in particular sectors struggle to diversify their leadership and workforce. The WMCA will work with those struggling the most and encourage the development of capabilities in other organisations to do the same.

#### Recommendation 2c:

To celebrate the best and encourage progress across the board, future inclusive leadership targets should be transparent. The WMCA will work with organisations to work out how a more inclusive leadership can be achieved, and help organisations set realistic targets.

#### Recommendation 2d:

We don't accept that diverse role models are too difficult to find. The WMCA will create a live list of female, BAME, disabled and LGBT panellists and speakers so that event organisers in business and across the sectors can more easily access a more inclusive list of speakers. Success will be celebrated with a showcase publication and event, developed in partnership with the region's major media outlets.

#### Recommendation 2e:

Mentoring is a powerful tool for building bridges into leadership. We recommend an expansion of the Mayor's Mentors scheme, including encouraging today's CEOs and whole boards to sign up and help young people connect with today's leaders within the region.

#### Recommendation 2f:

We recommend the championing of other support mechanisms including 'affinity groups' within organisations and work shadowing.

#### Recommendation 2g:

The WMCA will play a leading role embedding diversity within its investment and delivery portfolio and its inward investment strategy, incentivising it within its supply chain through its social value policy, it should also expect its partners to commit to inclusive leadership and measure the impact of these policies over a ten year period.

## Theme Three:

### A step change in recruitment and human resource development

#### Recommendation 3a:

There is a need for effective HR practice that continually works on the barriers to progression for groups under-represented in leadership. The WMCA will work with employers to share the evidence of effective practice, and to strengthen networks which can bring under-represented groups into leadership roles.

#### Recommendation 3b:

There is a need to fill the gap between often good recruitment policy, and everyday practice that has yet to catch up. Pro-diversity recruitment and promotion will be encouraged by the WMCA. The WMCA will host a roundtable of HR managers in the region to explore ways in which we can create a fairer regional system.

#### Recommendation 3c:

The bar must be raised on HR and recruitment policy. Where there is evidence that interventions have made a difference, as with blind recruitment and the NHS practice in the region of ensuring representative interview panels, it should be disseminated to allow these initiatives to be adapted by other sectors.

#### Recommendation 3d:

Potential leadership candidates in the focus groups often spoke about the lack of useful advice on progression. This generates scepticism about whether commitments to inclusive leadership are genuine. If they are to convince potential candidates that they do have a fair chance to take up leadership roles, employers need to address this perception, and to change practices where necessary.



## Theme Four: Combatting the evaluation and learning deficit

### Recommendation 4a:

The lack of robust evaluation of leadership interventions means we don't always know what works. We recommend collaboration with our Universities, funding and research partners to establish an Inclusive Leadership Institute including research centres such as the Centre for Women's Enterprise and Leadership at the University of Birmingham. The Institute will evaluate the impact of leadership initiatives and facilitates networks to co-design effective future interventions.

### Recommendation 4b:

The evidence highlights the value and power of peer-to-peer learning networks, where leaders from different organisations can learn from each other. We recommend that the WMCA works with its partners to design peer-to-peer mentoring initiatives to strengthen these networks, building initially on the University of Birmingham's 21st Century leadership breakfast sessions.

### Recommendation 4c:

We recommend sharing with the national government the Commission's analysis of the key gaps in how national and regional data on key dimensions is currently recorded and gathered. Addressing these gaps would enable more robust strategies in our region. This would also be a platform for mutual learning across regions on how to encourage inclusive leadership.

### Recommendation 4d:

Our commission highlighted clear areas where a lack of research into particular cohorts undermines our ability to develop good leadership interventions. We recommend working with regional universities to facilitate further research into the least studied groups.



## Theme Five: A route map for the next generation

### Recommendation 5a:

It is critical that more is done to raise levels of aspiration for young people in our marginalised communities. We recommend the creation of a Youth Combined Authority, working in partnership with relevant youth organisations, to bring young people from all parts of our region together to build future political leadership capability and help us see the world through their eyes. We will promote the LGA's Be a Councillor campaign and work with councils to deliver information events for people who wouldn't normally see themselves becoming an elected representative.

### Recommendation 5b:

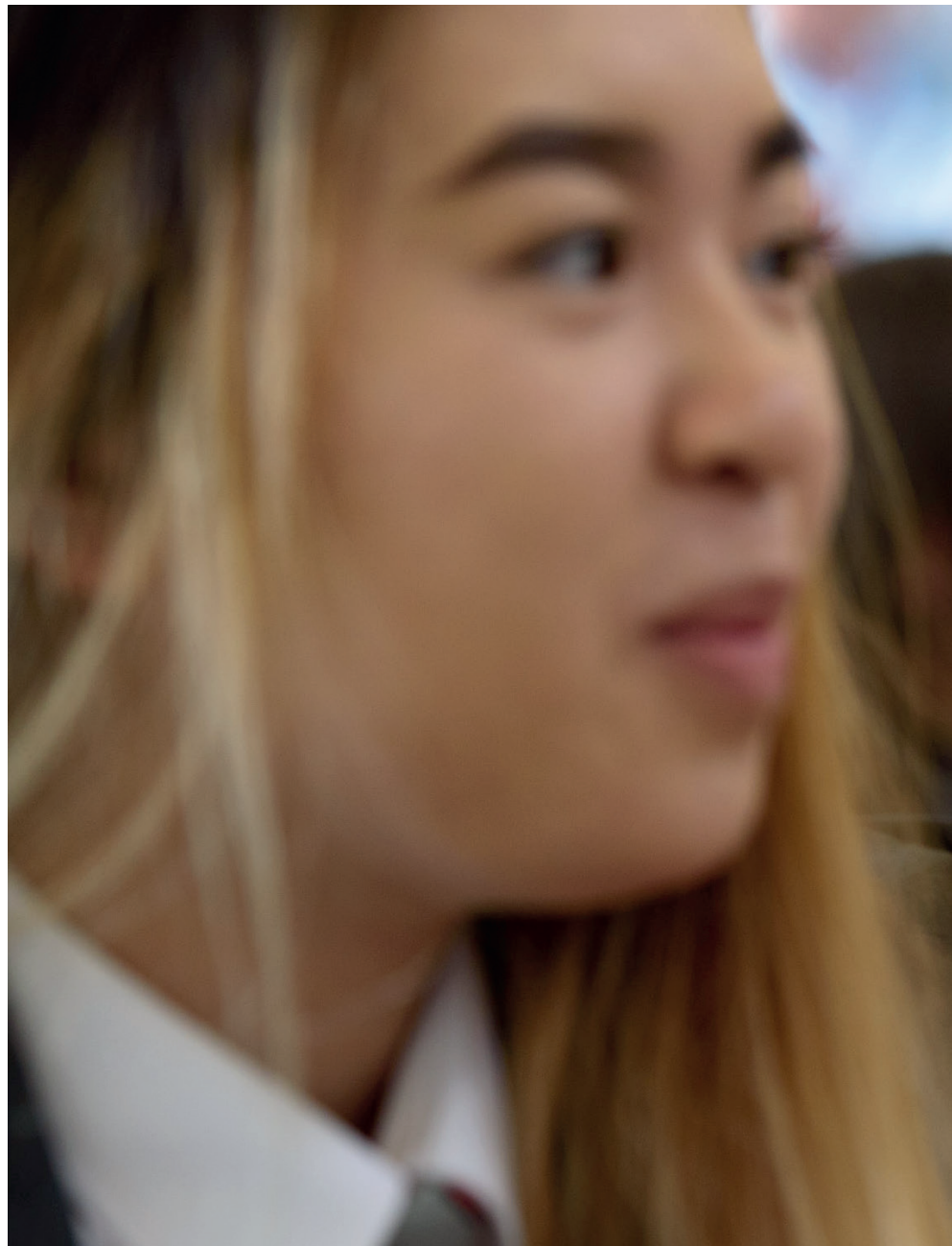
We also recommend that the WMCA and its partners work more closely with schools to encourage young people from underrepresented groups to aspire to leadership positions. The WMCA supports Professional Services Week in Birmingham and will work with partners to broaden the scope of that week, encouraging young people from all across the region to access the many and growing opportunities in the region.

### Recommendation 5c:

Our deliberative research told us that fragmented access to information hinders potential. We therefore recommend the creation of an opportunities portal which puts leadership opportunities in the region into a single, accessible platform.

### Recommendation 5d:

The WMCA will work with West Midlands universities to create a leadership programme for young and emerging leaders from the faith communities, the Young Changemakers Academy, with a summit event to kick off this work.



## Next steps

Following the publication of this report, the West Midlands Leadership Commission will mobilise commitments from a range of organisations from the public, private and social sectors to play leading roles in taking the Commission's ideas forward. It will stress that increasing leadership diversity and inclusivity is not just a challenge for the WMCA, but also a particular challenge for Local Economic Partnerships and individual local authorities.

The WMCA is interested in hearing from you on current/future initiatives that fit in with the recommendations outlined above.

**Mobilising commitments will start with a phased launch of the research outcomes that will involve the publication of key research findings, sector specific recommendations and support mechanisms. Discussions will take place with the WMCA on the future role of members of the Leadership Commission and the universities supporting its work. The Commission will also work closely with the WMCA's Inclusive Growth Unit to develop its forward agenda.**





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# Introduction

The diversity and young age profile of the people who live in the West Midlands has been recognised for a long time as a fantastic asset in the region. The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and its partner organisations, recognising that diversity is an economic and social asset, have proudly sought to build on this asset to attract investment and visitors and to promote inclusive growth, that is growth that provides benefits for all who live in the area.

However, the WMCA and its partners recognise that more needs to be done as there is a significant leadership gap amongst private and public sector organisations based in the area it covers. The number of women, people with disabilities and Black, Asian and other Minority Ethnic (BAME) people is lower than would be expected given their numbers in the area's population. For example, BAME people make up 12.4 per cent of the UK working population but only 5 per cent of senior managers. This is true for some other groups within the local population.

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<sup>1</sup>The WMCA brings together representatives from the local authorities of Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall and Wolverhampton and is led by a directly elected Mayor

This gap exists because certain communities, groups of people and individuals face higher barriers to progress in life and work than others. This in turn can discourage those facing these higher barriers from aspiring and striving for leadership positions resulting in feelings of exclusion and marginalisation.

## Does it matter?

Clearly for the individuals affected it does. But the leadership gap also has a profound negative impact on the prosperity of the West Midlands conurbation and wider region and therefore on the population as a whole. New research makes it increasingly clear that organisations with diverse workforces perform better.

### Companies in the top quartile for gender and ethnic diversity are more likely to have higher financial returns than their industry average.

This is because a diverse board or governing body tends to have a better understanding of:

- Its customer base/the people it serves, a particularly important factor in the West Midlands given the diversity of its population and the export-orientation of its industry;
- The environment in which its organisation operates;
- The range of opportunities and obstacles it faces.

Organisations with a more diverse board or governing body also tend to attract top talent, have greater employee satisfaction and are better at problem solving, decision making and innovation.

Reflecting diversity better in leadership also matters for other region-wide reasons:

- Given regional population trends, promoting diversity grows the pool from which leaders of the future can emerge. Relying on a shrinking number of white, male and able-bodied men will not be enough.
- More negatively, if certain groups feel that they are being excluded from leadership positions, then this can only increase the risks of discouraging those within the leadership pipeline to aspire to senior leadership positions. More generally, it will increase the risk of disaffection and social conflict.

In short, there is now an economic and business imperative for greater leadership diversity and inclusivity in addition to the frequently cited social imperative of greater equality.

# The Leadership Commission

These issues led the WMCA to establish a Leadership Commission to explore ways of improving opportunities for people from those communities and groups which are currently under-represented in the leadership of the West Midlands. Over the past year, the Commission has worked on a research project with a number of the conurbation's universities to:

1. Understand the current representation of key groups in leadership positions in the West Midlands.
2. Identify the barriers these groups face within the region.
3. Identify good practice in the private and public sectors.
4. Create a strategy and action plan with priorities for tackling leadership under-representation.
5. Launch early actions and initiatives aimed at addressing a number of these challenges.
6. Recommend a mechanism for monitoring and evaluating the delivery of recommendations arising out of the research.

This is a summary report of this research, including recommendations from the Leadership Commission on strategies and actions that should be implemented by the WMCA, its partners and all those who can make a positive contribution to closing the leadership gap.

As far as we are aware, this work is a first amongst combined authorities and similar groupings, and we strongly believe its message needs to be taken up across the whole country, not only through the WMCA area.

## The research

The research was led by the University of Birmingham. It involved:

- An extensive review of studies and existing data on leadership and diversity in general and, more specifically, in the West Midlands.
- A survey of data and diversity policies and initiatives across many organisations, mainly in the public sector.
- 18 focus groups involving 139 people including employers, employees from under-represented groups and students.
- Case studies of people in leadership positions and interviews with people involved in work to promote leadership diversity.

## What this report covers

The next chapter of this report summarises the data available on leadership diversity in the West Midlands. It focuses on women, people with disabilities and BAME people but touches on other under-represented groups where data is available.



# Where are we now?

## Headlines

- A full profile of diversity in leadership in the WMCA area is not possible because of data gaps. Nevertheless, enough information is available to show there is a significant leadership diversity gap.
- Women tend to be better represented in leadership in the public sector than the private sector in the WMCA area, particularly in the NHS, local authorities and civil service where they are a large majority of the workforce. They are a large majority of the workforce in education too but tend to be poorly represented in leadership positions. Female directors of large, private sector companies are a rare sight.
- People with disabilities are very underrepresented across the board in both the workforce as a whole and in leadership positions.
- The proportion of BAME people in the workforce of local public and private sector organisations is generally significantly below that in the local working age population. It tends to be lower still in leadership positions.
- Information is scarcer for other groups, but some is available on people identifying as LGBT. There is a huge gap in information on people from working class backgrounds in leadership positions.
- More analysis would be helpful on 'diversity within diversity' or 'intersectionality', that is, the representation of groups that have two or more of potentially under-represented characteristics.
- There is also a need for more monitoring information to be able to evaluate better the impact of leadership diversity promotion activities.

This chapter draws together existing and newly acquired information on the proportion of specific groups and communities in the workforce and leadership positions. It provides as complete a picture as possible of leadership diversity in the West Midlands. Despite the patchiness of data, it represents the first comprehensive effort to audit leadership in the West Midlands across its public and private sectors.

After describing the data sources and identifying gaps, it looks at the position across all sectors where information is available of:

- Women;
- People with disabilities;
- People of BAME heritage.

Other groups, such as those from working class backgrounds and the LGBT community, are also under-represented but information on them is far sparser though this is provided when available.

## The data sources

This profile has been built from the following data sources:

- Existing studies conducted by researchers.
- An analysis of the government's statistical service's Labour Force Survey (LFS) by Hoque & Adam for the Leadership Commission in 2018. The LFS is the only economy-wide data available, but the sample size of the survey means that data is only available for the West Midlands region as a whole and not for the smaller WMCA area.
- Information provided by the NHS (NHS Workforce Monthly Data Jan 2018 analysed at a county level), the West Midlands local authorities, the West Midlands Fire Service and the civil service.
- Information from the education sector.
- Information on the cultural sector from the Arts Council.
- An analysis of the directors of corporate boards in the largest West Midlands companies.

## Data gaps and interpretation issues

Building this profile has been hindered by several gaps in the data including:

1. Different definitions of leadership positions in different organisations.
2. Limited specific information available from much of the private sector and from parts of the public sector.
3. Most of the evidence focuses on gender and leadership but with a growing body of evidence in relation to ethnicity and leadership. Less attention has been paid in research and in monitoring to disability and sexuality. There is virtually no evidence on some important under-represented groups such as those from a working class background, particularly white, male working class.

4. The data and studies are limited in relation to 'diversity within diversity' or 'intersectionality', which is, the representation of groups that have two or more of the potentially under-represented characteristics such as BAME women or disabled women.
5. The data provided here is mainly for a broad range of leadership positions. Greater under-representation may be shown if only the most senior positions are considered. This is suggested by the data on chief executive officers (CEOs) and directors.
6. Little available time series evidence (except for the LFS though there are interpretation problems here) making it difficult to judge trends or the impact of external factors such as the financial crisis and funding reductions. These may have reduced leadership diversity if a de facto 'last in, first out' policy applies, consciously or unconsciously.
7. Linked to this, limited monitoring and evaluation from which to judge whether policies and initiatives are making a difference.
8. The data for leadership in local authorities was collected via a request sent out by West Midlands Employers. Six of the seven WMCA councils provided data (all except Walsall council), which provides the data set for the analysis below.

There are also interpretation difficulties. For example, definitions changed over time with the LFS requiring caution in interpreting trends.

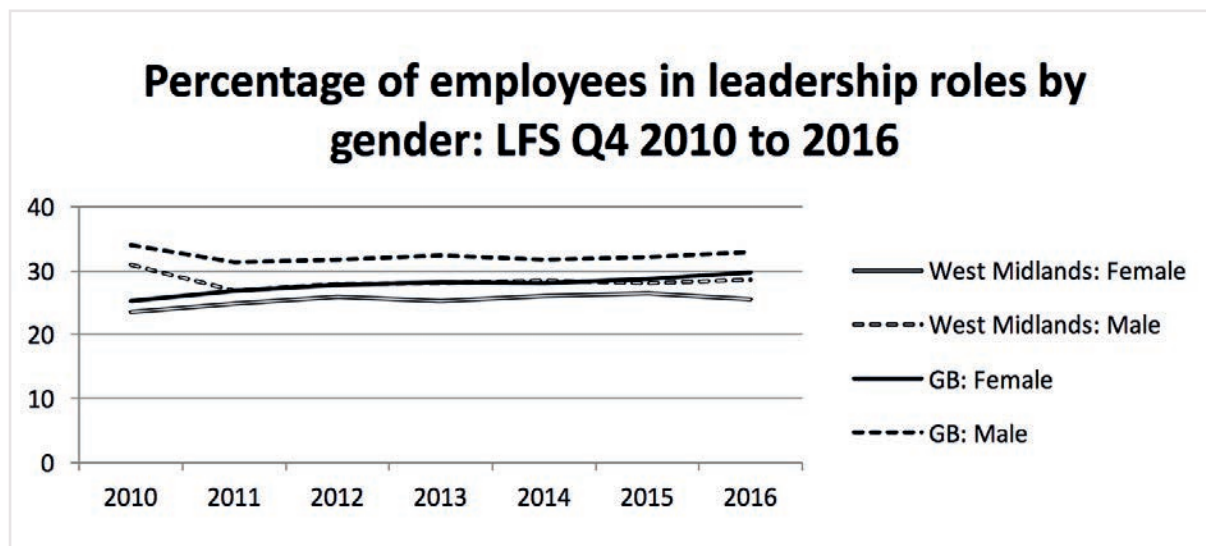
In addition, the employment of some groups is concentrated in specific economic sectors. For example, three-quarters of BAME managers are concentrated in just three broad sectors: public administration, education and health; banking, finance and insurance; and distribution, hotels and restaurants. That means that changes in the number and proportion of BAME people in leadership positions over time may be the result of changes in the overall economic structure and not a result of leadership and diversity development policy and practice.

Nevertheless, it has still been possible to provide a broad profile of leadership diversity in the West Midlands despite these data difficulties.



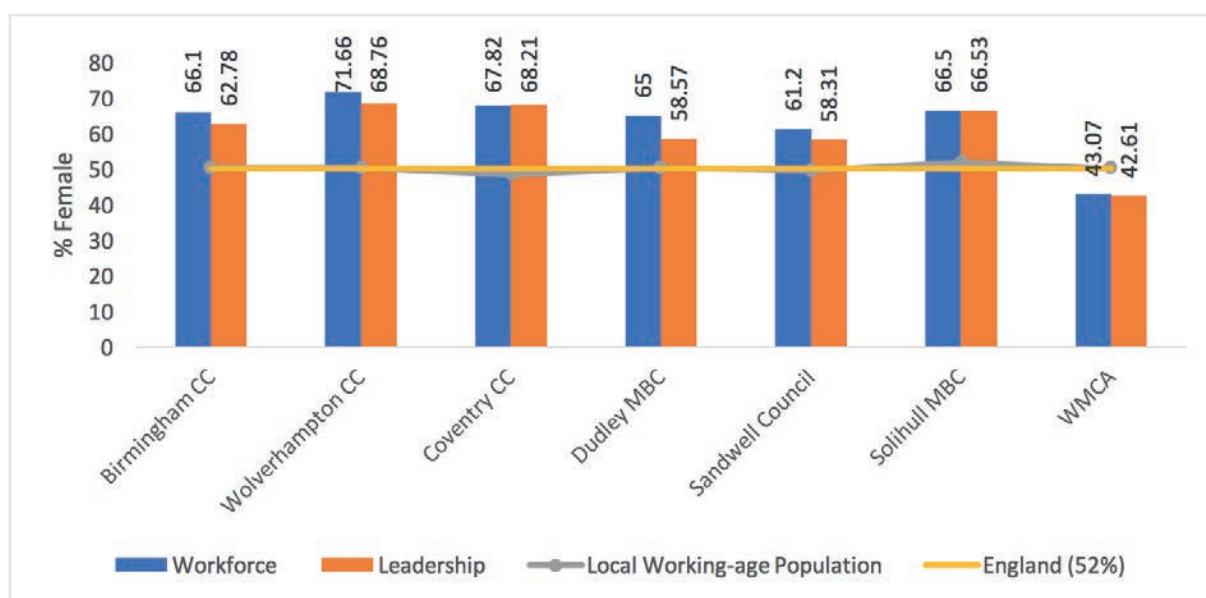
## Women

Looking at the regional economy as a whole, LFS data suggests that women have been under represented in leadership roles consistently from 2010 to 2016. (See chart below.) In addition, the West Midlands is lagging Great Britain as a whole in terms of female representation.



Turning to the public sector, the Leadership Commission's survey of Councils in the region showed that female representation in the workforce and in leadership positions is higher than the percentage of women in the working age population in six of the WMCA councils (but slightly lower in the WMCA itself). In addition, female representation in leadership roles is very close to that in the overall workforce.

### Female representation in the West Midlands Local Authorities, Feb 2018

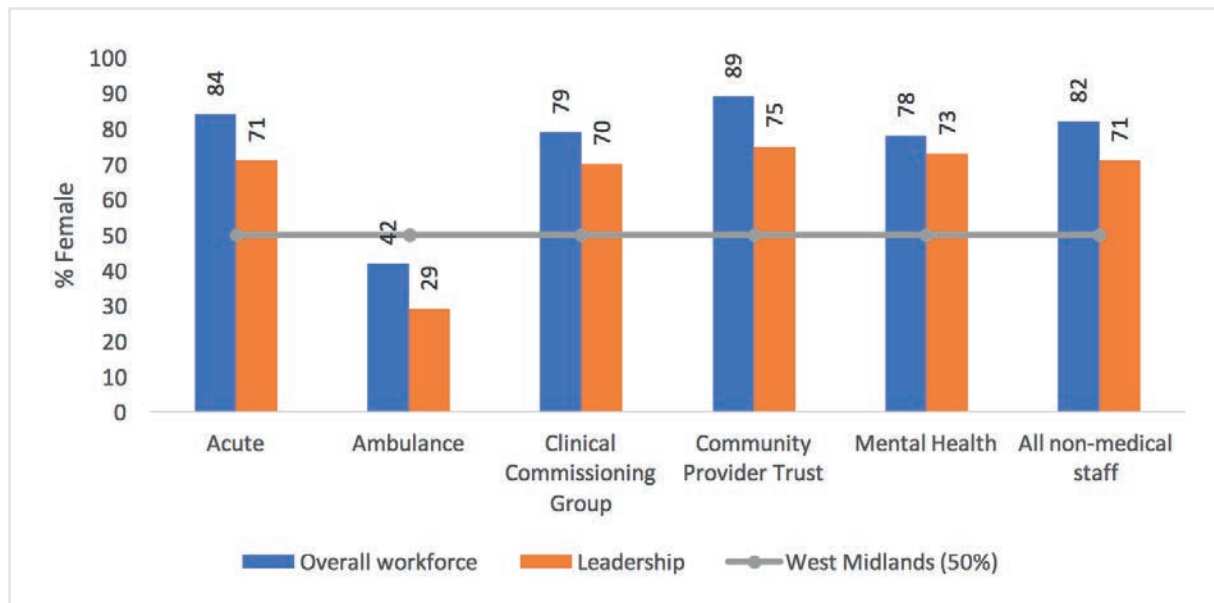


The picture for the NHS is similar to local authorities but with greater contrasts. Over three quarters (82% for non-medical staff) of the West Midlands NHS workforce are female but the proportion in leadership positions is a few percentage points lower. This is the picture across all parts of the NHS except the Ambulance Trust.

<sup>3</sup>Defined as managers, directors and senior officials, and professional occupations.

<sup>4</sup>Leadership roles in local authorities are defined as Chief Executive, Director, Service Director, Head of Service, Service Manager, Group Manager, and all other post-holders designated as 'Managers'.

## The representation of women in the West Midlands NHS Trusts



Women's representation in the **Civil Service** was higher than that of the population in the seven WMCA areas. The percentage of women employees was the highest in the Dudley Civil Service, at 72.86%. Women employees account for more than 50% of the leadership in the civil service (more than 66% in Walsall) although the percentage is lower than their representation in the civil service workforce as a whole.

Data provided by the **West Midlands Fire Service** for its workforce based in the WMCA area shows that women make up less than a quarter of the whole workforce and a slightly lower proportion in leadership positions.

Women form a large majority of the education sector but a significant minority within the sector's leadership. For example:

- In 2015, 64% of secondary classroom teachers were women (rising to 90% in primary schools) but only 40% of headteachers were (DfE 2015).
- At primary school, where men make up just over 10% of teachers, approximately 30% of headteachers are male. If headships reflected the workforce, 74% of heads would be female and there would be 1,739 more female heads.
- The gender balance of female CEOs in MATs (Multi Academic Trusts) is not representative of females in the teaching workforce. There is a significant gender imbalance on MAT Boards. These gender imbalances reflect gender imbalances in the school sector despite the fact that MATs have freedoms that could potentially enable them to address these gender imbalances at Board and CEO level.

<sup>5</sup>Leadership in NHS trust is defined as staff in Grade 8a and above.

<sup>6</sup>Leadership in Fire Service includes Area Commander and above as well as Station, Group, Crew and Watch commander.

Women make up 30% of the **West Midlands Police** (not including civilian staff) and 26% of leadership positions defined as sergeant or above. They do make up 50% of the most senior level of leadership however.

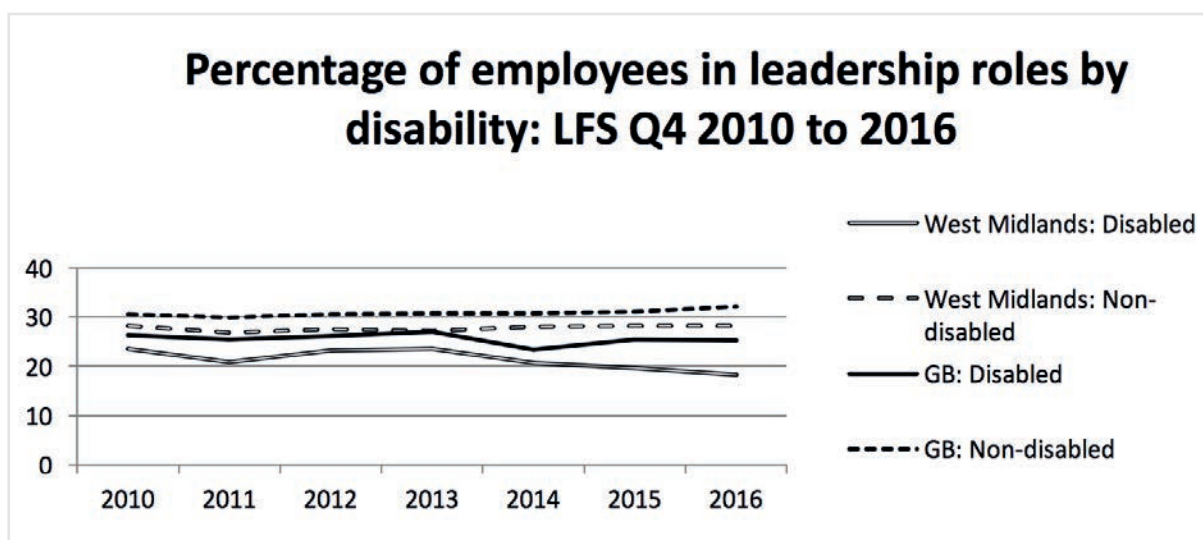
Diversity in the **cultural sector** plays, perhaps, a particularly important role in society. The Arts Council England's (ACE) Equality, Diversity and the Creative Case (2018) argues that diversity is crucial to the connection between the arts and society because "it represents a commitment to the wider world, and forms a two-way channel along which people can travel and find a platform to tell their stories". However, diversity in employment and leadership in the UK's cultural industries remain weak with ACE's latest report stressing that despite small improvements, "aspirations are not always translating into meaningful actions or significant appointments" and that leadership plays a major role in this.

Evidence on leadership diversity in the cultural sector is sparse but in a report specifically written for the Leadership Commission, Birmingham City University analysed leaders in West Midlands NPOs (National Portfolio Organisations) from ACE's data. This found that out of 48 organisations in total, 54% (26) are led by women, 16% (8) are led by people from ethnic minority backgrounds. Of the organisations led by women, 23% are from an ethnic minority background, which is much higher than the 9% of male leaders.

An indicator of the diversity of leadership in the **private sector** is diversity at the company board level. **In 2017, women made up only 13% of the directors of corporate boards in the largest (by turnover) 1000 West Midlands companies** according to a report commissioned by the Leadership Commission. Only 58 companies have perfectly gender-balanced boards. **Over half of the companies (56%) have male-only boards**, whereas 2 have female-only boards.

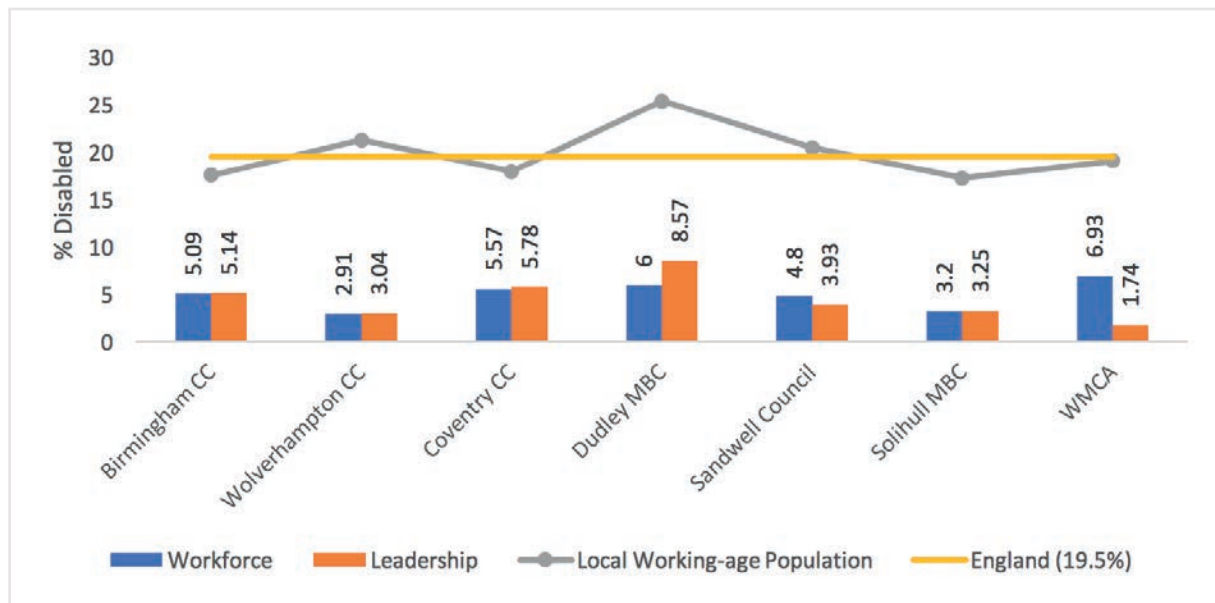
## People with disabilities

The LFS data suggests that people with disability have been consistently under-represented in leadership positions in the regional economy between 2010 and 2016, and to a greater extent than women. Again, the West Midlands appears to be lagging the country and the position may have worsened in recent years.



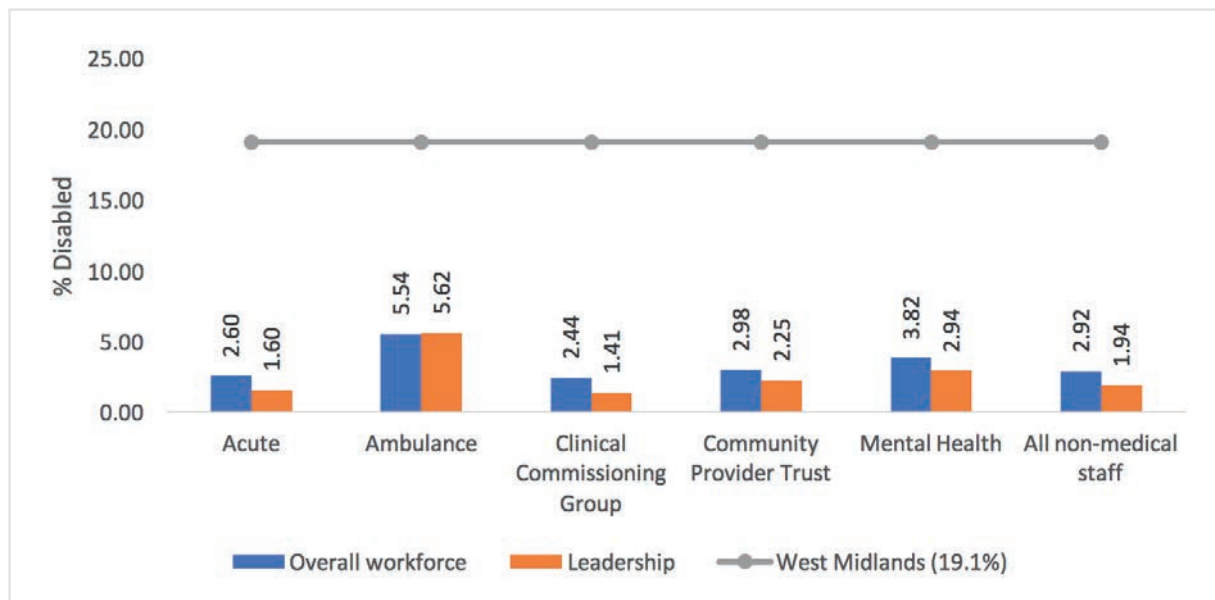
The proportion of disabled people working in six of the WMCA councils (no data for Walsall Council) was much lower than the disabled working-age population proportion in all the council areas. However, the proportion of disabled people in leadership roles is slightly higher than that in the overall workforce, except for Sandwell Council and the WMCA where it was lower.

### Disabled representation in the West Midlands Local Authorities, Feb 2018



Again, representation of disabled people in the West Midlands NHS workforce is much lower than in the local working-age population (2.92% vs 19.1%). Representation is even lower in leadership positions except in the Ambulance Trust.

### Representation of Disabled People in the West Midlands NHS Trusts

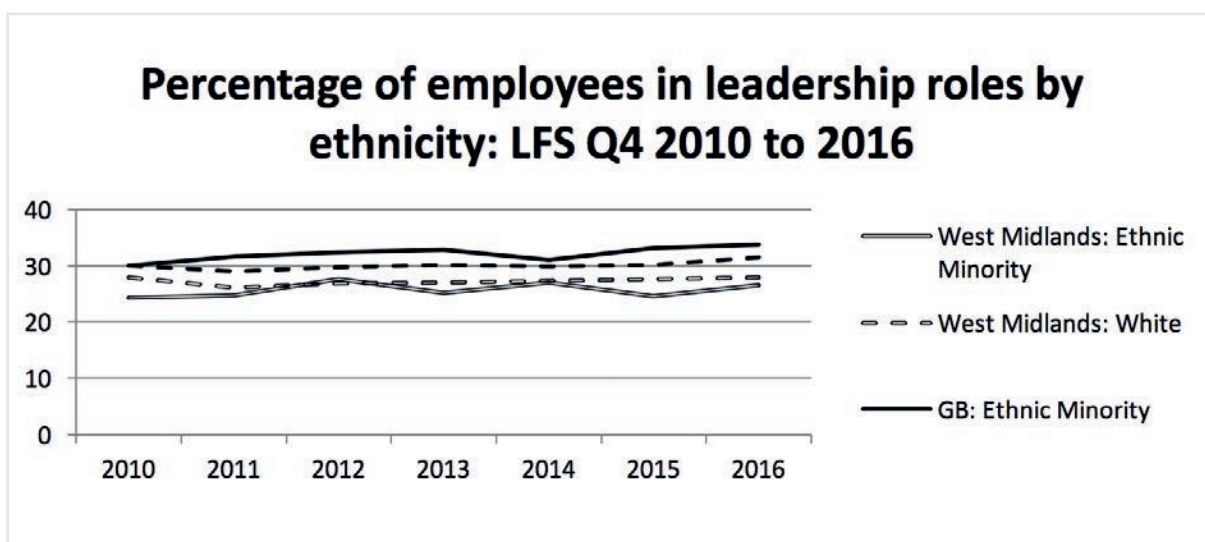


Representation of disabled people in the West Midlands **Civil Service** was lower than in the local population. The percentage of the West Midlands population who were Equality Act core-disabled or work-limiting disabled was 19.1%, while the highest proportion of disabled staff was found in the Solihull-based Civil Service at 8.41%. Except in Sandwell and Walsall, where none of the leadership disclosed a disability, representation in leadership was either higher or close to that in the overall workforce.

A similar picture of under-representation of people with disabilities is shown in the data from the **West Midlands Fire Service**. They made up 3.9% of the workforce and 3.8% of leadership positions. There was substantial variation between local authority areas with 6.6% of the workforce in Dudley though none in leadership positions.

## BAME representation

BAME people appear not to have always been under-represented in leadership positions in the region since 2010 according to the raw LFS data, though they were for the last two years data was available. However, the Hoque and Adam's study suggests that this was due to specific factors such as the size of organisations and foreign ownership. When these are taken into account, **BAME people appear to have been consistently under-represented in leadership positions, in particular in management positions.**

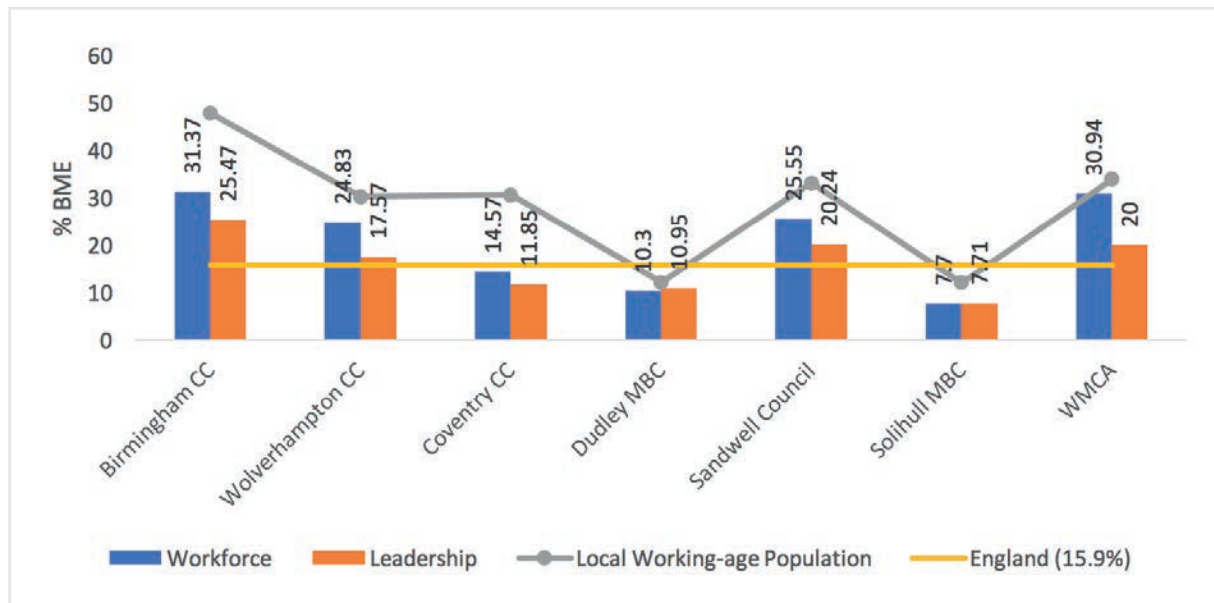


The specific importance in the WMCA area of reflecting BAME diversity in the workforce and in leadership positions is shown in the chart below. The proportion of BAME people within the population of working-age was much higher in all the councils in the WMCA area than that for England except for Dudley and Solihull. It was three times higher in Birmingham (47.9% vs 15.9%).

However, within the 6 WMCA local authorities we looked at, BAME representation in the overall workforce and in leadership positions was lower than in the local working age population, although in Dudley and Solihull it is very close.

The chart also reflects the career progression challenges facing BAME people. In all Councils, again with the exception of Dudley and Solihull, the proportion of BAME people in leadership roles was below the proportion in the workforce.

## BAME representation in the West Midlands Local Authorities, Feb 2018

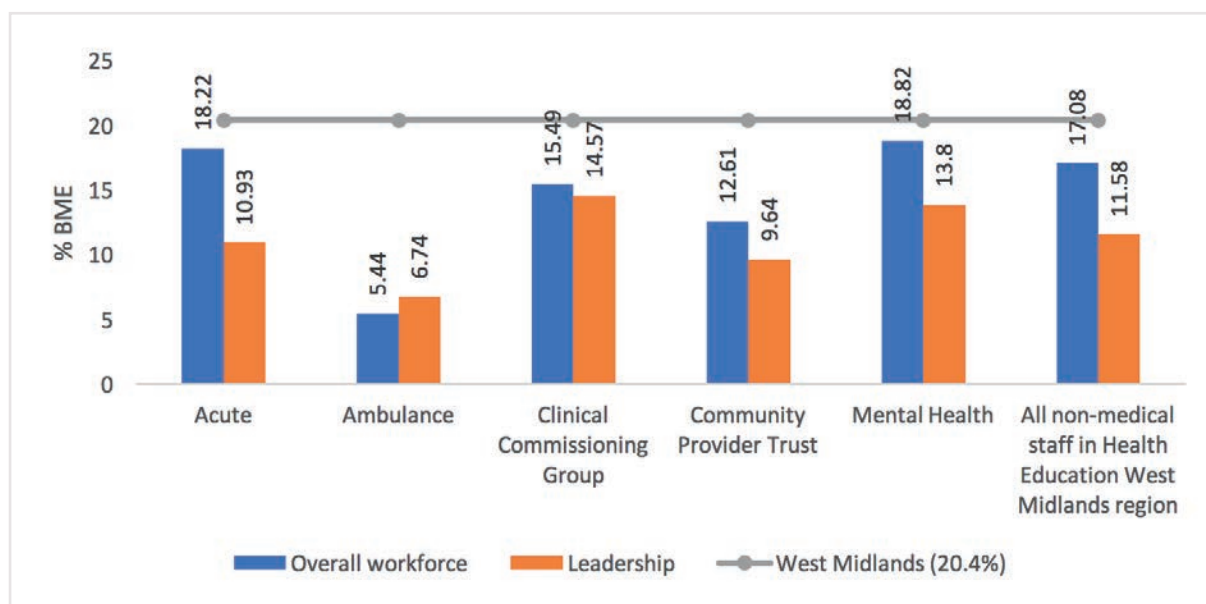


Further but limited information is available on groups within the broad BAME category. For example, in Birmingham 11% of leadership positions are held by people of Asian ethnicity (compared to 27% of the working age population) and 11% are held by people of Black ethnicity (9% of the working age population in 2011). A similar picture is presented by Wolverhampton: Asian people held just under 10% of leadership positions compared to an 18% share of the local working age population while for Black people the figures were closer at 5% and 6% respectively.

This does not mean necessarily that Black people faced fewer barriers to leadership than Asian people within Councils as there could be other reasons for the relatively lower representation of Asian people. However, it does illustrate the value at obtaining more detailed information on diversity in leadership to more fully understand what is going on. For the same reason it would be useful to obtain more data on 'diversity within diversity' (sometimes called 'intersectionality') such as the position of Black women or Asian disabled.

The BAME representation in the West Midlands **NHS** workforce is very close to that in the local working-age population although there are variations across the different NHS trusts. Again, challenges to career progression may lie behind the proportion in leadership positions being quite a few percentage points behind that for the whole workforce with the exception of the Ambulance Trust, where the proportion in leadership positions is larger, and in Clinical Commissioning Groups where the proportion is close to the workforce but below the proportion in the population of working age.

## BAME representation in the West Midlands NHS Trusts



BAME representation in the West Midlands **Civil Services**' based workforce was either higher or close to that in the population of working age in England (15.9%) but lower than the proportion in the local working age population apart from Walsall. The percentage of BAME staff in leadership positions was even lower than that in the overall workforce except in Walsall.

BAME representation in the **West Midlands Fire Service** considerably lower than that of the local population. In the Walsall Fire Service, just under 2% of the workforce self-identify as BAME. The workforce in the Birmingham Fire Service is the most diverse by ethnicity among those in 7 WMCA local authority areas, although, at 13%, is still much lower than the BAME proportion of the local BAME working age population. Representation in leadership positions is even lower than in the overall workforce except for Coventry. **None of the leadership report that they are from BAME backgrounds in the Solihull Fire Service.**

The proportion of people of BAME background in the **West Midlands Police** force (not including civilian staff) at 9% is just under a third of the BAME proportion of the working age population. They also make up 9% of leadership positions although these are all in the middle and lower levels of leadership. (Care is needed in using percentages when small numbers are involved. It would only take one BAME person to be promoted to the top level of leadership in the West Midlands Police and the percentage of BAME people at that level would jump to 17%).

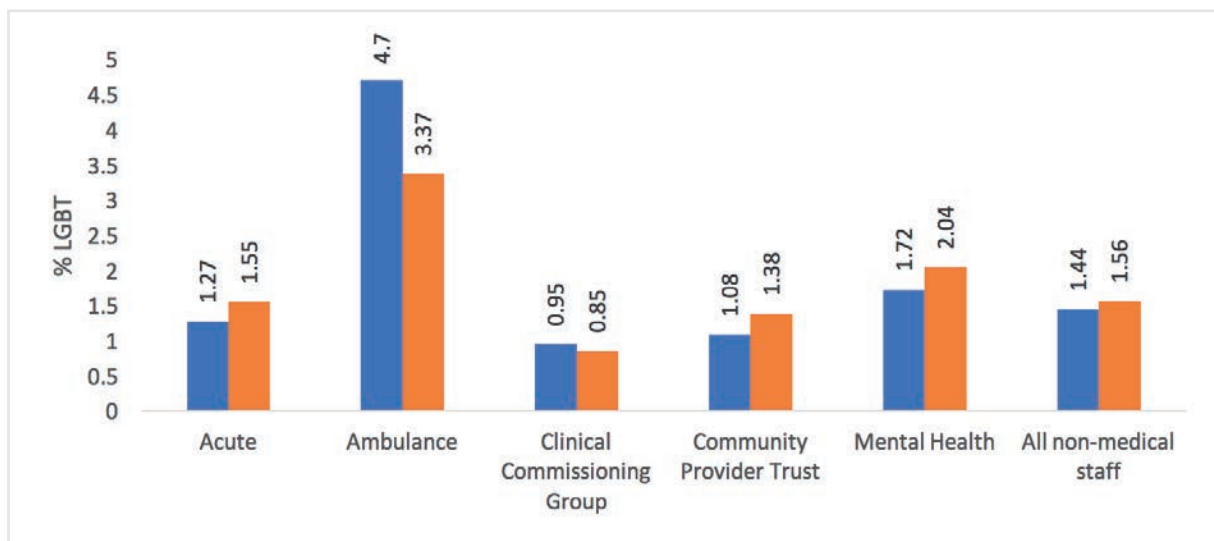
Diversity in the cultural sector may have a particularly important impact on attitudes in society more generally yet the limited evidence available suggests that the sector is underperforming in this area.

## LGBT

The LFS data suggests that **LGBT people are as likely to be in management and professional positions as non-LGBT people.**

The NHS is one of the few organisations that provide information on other groups. About 60% of the West Midlands NHS workforce disclosed their sexual orientation and 1.4% say they are LGBT. Representation in leadership roles is close to or higher than that in the overall workforce, except for the Ambulance Trust.

### Sexual orientation in the West Midlands NHS Trusts



In the **West Midlands Fire Service**, 1,311 out of 1,902 staff reported their sexual orientation. Overall 2% of the workforce identified as LGBT and 1.5% of those in leadership positions. **The highest proportion of staff and of those in leadership positions who identify as LGBT is in the Wolverhampton Fire Service (3.7% and 4.7% respectively).**





# Barriers

## Headlines

- Barriers to diversity in leadership can be found at different levels - societal, organisational/institutional and individual.
- Recruitment barriers need to be tackled to have a 'pipeline' of diverse future leaders.
- Barriers common to most groups include:
  - Lack of self-confidence and self-belief partly as a result of institutional factors;
  - A tendency to recruit and promote in one's own image;
  - Nepotism and an "old boys club" mentality;
  - Exclusion from informal networks of communication;
  - Stereotyping/preconceptions of a person's roles and abilities derived from prejudices in wider society;
  - Lack of mentors, role models and appropriate networks of individuals to provide social support and advice.
- Barriers faced particularly by women include:
  - Non-recognition of commitment to personal and family responsibilities;
  - More subtle biases such as the requirement for career breaks if having children;
  - The dominance of male leadership and male leadership styles.
- Barriers faced particularly by people with disabilities include:
  - Job security;
  - Personal development;
  - Career prospects;
  - Perceived capacity to lead; and
  - Travel-to-workplace difficulties.
- Barriers faced particularly by BAME people include:
  - Paucity of mentors, role models and support groups;
  - Lack of understanding of cultural differences;
  - Pressure to assimilate and conform to an organisational stereotype;
  - A backdrop of institutional and societal racism.
- Barriers faced particularly by LGBT include:
  - Lack of confidence;
  - Having to conform to stereotypical machismo;
  - Banter which should be considered homophobic;
  - Use of language which is exclusionary;
- 'Double marginalisation of people having two or more 'underrepresented characteristics' needs to be considered.

There is clearly a leadership diversity gap in the West Midlands although, as shown in the previous chapter, it varies across sectors, between different organisations and across different groups. The next step is to ask why this gap exists, or more pro-actively, what are the barriers that need to be overcome to close the gap. The Leadership Commission's research sought to answer this question through a review of previous studies, focus groups of potential leaders, case studies of those who have moved into leadership roles and asking organisations what they have identified as barriers. Our findings are summarised in this chapter.

Barriers to diversity in leadership can be found at different levels - societal, organisational/ institutional and individual. In addition, many barriers to diversity in leadership positions are also evident during the recruitment process. Recruitment barriers need to be tackled to have a 'pipeline' of diverse future leaders. As one focus group participant put it:

“

How do we create a pipeline of talent and diversity if young people are not coming through? We cannot achieve diversity at the top because we have not got the pipeline of the new talent right

”

However, some research suggests that the major barriers experienced by women and other minority groups relate to upward career mobility rather than at the recruitment and job entry stage .

Many barriers are common to all underrepresented groups. We start by outlining these before moving on to barriers that are specific to particular groups.

## Common barriers

The most common barrier raised at the focus groups was a lack of confidence and self-belief. As one participant put it:

“

I see the only barrier being my own confidence. The thing that stops me from aspiring to a position of leadership is I don't feel I would be comfortable in such a position

”

However although this quote suggests that overcoming a lack of confidence was an individual's responsibility, many said it was down to institutional barriers such as company cultures and the current homogeneity of senior teams. Many felt that to progress they had to change and assimilate into the prevailing culture of the organisation and, sometimes, become the 'company man' stereotype.

Focus group participants thought that this institutional barrier was reinforced by four others commonly encountered:

- A tendency to recruit and promote in one's own image (a risk warned about in most team building guidance);
- Nepotism and an "old boys club" mentality - people choosing people they have worked with before;
- Exclusion from informal networks of communication (e.g. discussions taking place in the men's toilet or in pubs); and
- Stereotyping/preconceptions of a person's roles and abilities derived from prejudices in wider society.

---

<sup>7</sup>Giscombe and Mattis, 2002

The last of these meant that you not only had to be accepted into the organisation's informal structures and culture, but you also had to stand out.

“

Institutional racism and patriarchy is cyclical – the more we are aware of the system, the more it stops us feeling confident. This then stops us applying, and therefore props back up our beliefs that we are not represented.

If you are a woman or an ethnic minority you need to push hard to get to the top, you need to be more assertive.

”

The tendency, often unnecessarily, to emphasise that a very experienced person is needed at recruitment or for promotion works against those who have been underrepresented in the past and therefore deprived of significant line experience, visible and/or challenging assignments.

Many case studies of people who have succeeded in rising to a leadership position highlighted how being allowed to tackle a visible and challenging project, and prove themselves through it, was central to their eventual promotion.

A further barrier identified was the lack of mentors, role models and appropriate networks of individuals to provide social support and advice. If you are disadvantaged by a lack of knowledge of organisation structure, processes and politics in relation to climbing the career ladder, then mentors and support groups are invaluable.

“

Lack of representation currently makes it difficult to imagine anything different

It is positive that ... who is a woman and dual heritage is the CEO and that there is gender diversity in leadership – it gives us hope

”

The importance of these barriers is reinforced by many have been identified in studies in the West Midlands and elsewhere which provide further evidence of the reality of all these barriers.

## Barriers faced by women

Three further barriers are particularly important for women:

- Non-recognition of the specific demands on time from commitment to personal and family responsibilities;
- More subtle biases such as the requirement for career breaks if having children. A study of promotion decisions in education in Birmingham revealed that the additional length of time taken to gain experience and promotions by women who had a career break linked to child birth and care subconsciously counted against them in the minds of those making promotion decisions.
- The dominance of male leadership and male leadership styles and approaches which are then seen as the attributes required for successful leadership .

These barriers can create a more discouraging work environment as explained by one focus group participant:

“  
Comments such as part-time  
may be perceived as a joke by  
some but they may put some  
people off.  
”

<sup>8</sup>See Clarke, 2011; Doherty & Manfredi, 2010.

## Barriers faced by people with disabilities

Key specific issues identified by disabled employees in senior leadership positions were:

- job security;
- personal development;
- career prospects;
- perceived capacity to lead; and
- travel-to-workplace difficulties.

Some of those involved in promoting engagement of disabled people in society, including Sir Philip Craven, ex-President of the International Paralympic Committee, point to the hidden assumptions underlying the term ‘disabled’. They argue that they are people with some capability impairments but with many other capabilities. **They do not disable themselves but rather it is society that disables them by not adapting to allow them to use their capabilities.**

## Barriers faced by BAME people

The paucity of mentors, role models and support groups is emphasised as a particularly important barrier for BAME people. They are also disadvantaged by the lack of understanding of cultural differences and the pressure to assimilate and conform to an organisational stereotype. Institutional racism is a backdrop to the barriers they face – a societal barrier - and contributes to underachievement of some minority ethnic groups in education which feeds through to recruitment and promotion barriers.

## Barriers faced by other groups

LGBT has been characterised as one of the areas of ‘invisible’ diversity that has received much less attention in the management field than visible forms such as gender or race and ethnicity. Making it visible depends upon the openness of individuals to identify as LGBT. There is still an understandable reluctance to be open given the abundant prejudice that still exists in society and many probably fear that being open would be the end of their career or worse.

The barriers identified by the two LGBT focus groups included:

- Lack of confidence to put oneself forward especially given the senior management composition.
- Having to conform to stereotypical machismo.
- **Banter which should be considered homophobic, racist and sexist is overlooked and has become acceptable practice.**

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<sup>9</sup>See Danieli, 2006; Roulstone and Williams, 2014.

- Language can be exclusive – for example,

“

we are tolerant employers

”

implying LGBT people should be tolerated but not accepted.

Intersectionality is having two or more characteristics that are underrepresented - also presents additional barriers, for example, the “double marginalisation” which professional women of colour face because of their gender and minority ethnic status .

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<sup>10</sup>See Giscombe and Mattis (2002).

# Initiatives to promote leadership diversity

## Headlines

- Workforce and leadership development programmes need to be embedded in an organisation's human resources strategies.
- Good practice in promoting diversity in leadership is good practice for all staff and leadership development, and vice versa.
- Diversity-promoting interventions fall into two broad categories of changing organisational culture and supporting individuals.
- Organisational change includes adopting effective equal opportunity (EO) policies and giving life to them through your practices, identifying a senior person responsible for change, reviewing recruitment practice and changing if necessary, establishing network/affinity groups, peer-to-peer mentoring, and ensuring there is staff development which takes into account an individual's diverse needs.
- The West Midlands region has a better rate of adoption of EO policies and many practices but there is room for improvement.
- Individual support includes targeted leadership development programmes, mentoring, coaching, work shadowing, succession planning, talent management and advice from role models.
- There are also initiatives which encourage the next generation of leaders and to establish peer-to-peer groups across different organisations.
- More attention needs to be paid to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of leadership diversity initiatives.

Having identified barriers to promoting leadership diversity, the Leadership Commission's research focussed on initiatives undertaken to challenge and overcome these barriers. While leadership development has traditionally focused on improving individuals' leadership capabilities, successful diversity-promoting interventions fall into two broad categories:

- (1) programmes to change organisational culture to be more accepting and embracing of difference; and
- (2) programmes to support individuals within the system.

We have summarised and provided some examples of these initiatives under these two headings based on reviews of available data and studies,

information provided by organisations linked to the WMCA area and our focus groups and case studies. But through our research we have also concluded that both these sets of initiatives work best when they are integrated into an organisations human resources strategy and approach rather than being left as add-ons which can be discarded at any time.

This reinforces another key conclusion that many of the successful diversity initiatives could be adapted to benefit all who were aspiring to leadership positions. This is because many of the barriers to diversity are faced by all though felt more intensely by underrepresented groups. If the approach entailed within these initiatives were integrated into staff and leadership development policies, improving any individual's abilities to progress and achieve, then all would benefit.

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In short: good practice in promoting diversity in leadership is good practice for all staff and leadership development, and vice versa. Stressing this conclusion may be important to counter any criticism that may emerge amongst staff that are not from an underrepresented group because they believe they are being discriminated against.

Furthermore, our research suggests that there is a need to support society-wide initiatives in addition to internal organisational work, and that monitoring and evaluation is needed to check and build on what works best.

# Organisational culture change

Programmes to change organisational culture are located in a context of an organisation's diversity and inclusion policy and practices. A review of the government's 2011 Workplace Employment Relations Study (WERS) conducted for the Leadership Commission found that the uptake of formal written equal opportunities is higher in the wider West Midlands region than in any other region of Great Britain. **Over three quarters of workplaces in the West Midlands have adopted a formal written equal opportunities (EO) policy that makes explicit reference to gender and ethnicity, with 71% referring to disability.**

However, adoption of a policy does not always mean that practice changes. The review therefore also looked at the adoption of the following five EO practices:

- monitoring of recruitment and selection;
- recruitment and selection procedures reviewed to identify indirect discrimination;
- monitoring of promotions;
- promotion procedures reviewed to identify indirect discrimination;
- reviews of relative pay rates.

It found that adoption of these practices is very limited across all regions of the UK although the adoption rate is higher in the West Midlands than in several other regions of Great Britain and the national average. However, uptake of special recruitment procedures for disadvantaged groups is lower in the West Midlands compared with many UK regions and with the Great Britain average. Uptake for LGBT, disabled and women returning to work particularly low. On the other hand, the West Midlands adoption rates of family friendly practices are higher than the Great Britain average although these adoption rates remain very low with the exception of financial help with childcare. This was available at 36% of workplaces surveyed in the West Midlands compared to 30% for Great Britain.

Other information collected for the Commission's research suggested that the following practices were effective in bringing about organisational change:

- **Establishing network/affinity/advocacy groups.** These give employees space to discuss and organise their own initiatives and sometimes advocate for change. They may be open to all employees, for example, those interested in obtaining leadership positions, or be organised for specific groups such as women's groups or Black workers groups. They may be established by an organisation's management or by employees themselves.
- **Ensure there is someone accountable at a senior level for making change happen.** Without such accountability, the risk of the push for organisational change fizzling out increases tremendously
- **Review recruitment processes.** Are they fair? Are the recruitment panels diverse? Are panel members trained in how to avoid unconscious discriminatory behaviour? Would 'blind' application forms make a difference? Is there scope for positive/affirmative action to improve diversity representativeness?
- **Make internal promotion processes simpler and stream-lined** and ensure confidentiality so people are not embarrassed if they fail.
- **Prepare people for the process of applying for promotion or even jobs** – coach them for interviews and help people to cope with the organisational culture.
- **Offer internal work experience** where employees can shadow leaders.
- **Help people to handle rejection** – always give positive feedback.



## The Focused Women's Network: an example of an affinity group

The Focused Women's Network was launched by the Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) in March 2007 to support RBS in actively attracting, retaining and developing talented female members of staff. The network supports the development and career advancement of all RBS employees by giving them further opportunities to network internally and externally, to get involved in activities that will enable them to excel and challenge themselves, and to gain access to additional personal development. The mission of the network is to:

- provide employees with numerous opportunities for personal development;
- develop a diverse workforce, resulting in a more successful and sustainable business;
- to be a voice of change and influence the culture at RBS;
- enhance RBS' reputation as an employer with strong representation of female role models,
- where female talent is developed and retained;
- increase collaboration amongst colleagues and create new business opportunities through networking;
- influence the behaviour of leaders; and
- give back to the local community and contribute to RBS' corporate social responsibility principles.

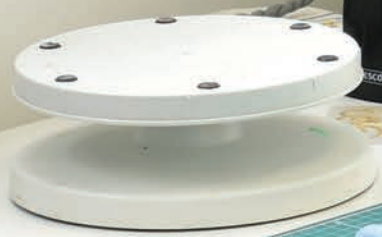
Starting in London in 2007, the network now spans across the globe. In 2014 they delivered personal development workshops, programmes and online training, a wide range of networking events as well as inviting inspirational speakers to speak to its members.

RBS introduced unconscious bias training to all employees in 2014 and introduced gender targets to get more women in senior leadership roles. For the eighth consecutive year, they have been recognised as a Times Top 50 employer for women



Others

Item	Checked	Count
1	✓	1
2	✓	1
3	✓	1
4	✓	1
5	✓	1
6	✓	1
7	✓	1
8	✓	1
9	✓	1
10	✓	1



# Individual development programmes

Our research has highlighted the following initiatives that have been taken and are thought to make a difference.

- **Comprehensive leadership and development programmes** possibly targeted at specific underrepresented groups or structured to take account of the barriers faced by different groups.
- **Succession planning:** Identifying potential future leaders and developing them in order to ensure a smooth transition from one leader to another. This could be achieved through ‘frequently updating lists of high potentials based on project-based performance, and basing succession decisions on a diverse pool of candidates’. However, a note of caution: relying on the present executives to select successors can limit opportunities to enhance senior management diversity unless they compensate for potential unconscious bias and target underrepresented groups.
- **Individual career development action plans**
- **Mentoring and coaching.** Several of our case studies pointed to how mentoring had helped them.
- **Talent management and internal recruitment.** This includes ensuring that staff from underrepresented groups are given opportunities for new work experiences and to develop their skills on challenging tasks.
- **Talks and coaching by role models** and people from underrepresented groups who have ‘made it’. These were appreciated by some participants in focus groups:

“

Hearing stories of others that have overcome similar barriers and have come from relatable circumstances have always inspired me to continue with my development and strive for the outcome that I want. Even if it has not been realised yet, I have achieved small steps towards my ultimate goal that I may have given up on long time ago – however, due to these idols I now know that perseverance is key.

I love hearing from people of colour in senior positions – this helps to feel like maybe I can.

”

## Examples of leadership programmes in local authorities

- Shropshire Council has a Future Leadership Programme, where personality type tools are used to help people better understand and respect diversity. In addition, Shropshire Council implements Gender Pay Gap regulations and has joined the national Apprenticeship Diversity Champions Network.
- Birmingham City Council is implementing the 'Senior Leadership Programme' and the 'Springboard' programme, which both focus on increasing the diversity profile of their leadership. Springboard focuses on helping and encouraging female staff to obtain senior positions.
- Coventry City Council is running a senior leadership programme which will include a bespoke piece of work on diversifying the senior leadership team. The other project 'Recruiting for a 21st Century Public Service' is about using the University of Birmingham research into the 21st century public servant as a base line for the diversification of senior leadership team.

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# Supporting change outside your organisation

Some organisations have concluded that they also need to contribute to change outside their organisation. One set of initiatives is to work with schools, colleges and universities to encourage the next generation to strive to become leaders. A conscious decision is needed to ensure this encouragement includes work with students in poorer areas and from underrepresented groups.

**Peer-to-peer groups** across organisations discussing actions to improve inclusivity and diversity and sharing learning can influence change outside your organisation as well as bringing learning from outside in.

## Monitoring and Evaluating

A finding of our research was that monitoring and evaluating diversity initiatives was thin on the ground although public services have a legal requirement to make diversity information available.

While the complexity of diversity interventions makes evaluating their effectiveness a not straightforward task, a lack of checking whether they are making a difference is an indicator that promoting diversity is not embedded in an organisations ethos. As a minimum, monitoring should focus on numbers and changes in numbers between years but feedback from local community organisations, staff and those striving for leadership positions should also be part of the process.





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