

IS A LACK OF CONFIDENCE LIMITING PROGRESS?

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion in 2023



INTRODUCTION

As the global ‘war for talent’ continues, the need for UK organisations to create cultures of inclusion and belonging where diverse individuals are welcomed and encouraged to be their authentic selves has become ever more pressing in an increasingly competitive and uncertain business environment. Research stressing the positive relationship between organisational diversity and inclusion and employee motivation, engagement and performance is extensive, as is the data correlating inclusion at work and business innovation, creativity, customer insight and financial performance.

What is also clear is that when individuals and groups do not feel welcomed or valued at work, levels of motivation and engagement drop, as does the positive knock-on effect of inclusion and business performance.

While much progress has been made in recent years to increase levels of inclusion through programmes and activities that seek to mitigate bias across the employee lifecycle, much work remains.

As part of Hays’ new DE&I Advisory Service and the partial acquisition of VERCIDA Consulting, our role as a strategic partner to UK business is to find practical solutions to some of the issues highlighted within this report, specifically:

- 1

The need to continue to build programmes and activities that bring different groups together in order to build confidence in individuals to be their authentic selves at work
- 2

The need to continue to review existing decision-making processes for the purpose of removing bias from hiring, development opportunities and promotion
- 3

The need to focus on building cultures that promote a sense of belonging and psychological safety for all, which includes supporting majority groups to confidently contribute to what is becoming an increasingly complex topic



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ABOUT THE REPORT

When we talk about diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) in a workplace context, we are generally referring to the programmes, activities and commitments that are designed to promote greater DE&I within an organisation and its workforce. The freedom and safety to discuss DE&I issues in a meaningful and authentic way is vital to encouraging and enabling confident and competent performance in any team, but nervousness around this core business area persists – amongst both leaders and employees.

Our latest research aims to capture how confident people feel engaging in DE&I rooted discussions and speaking up and speaking out.

The report also shines a light on people’s perceptions of DE&I at work, and if and where they are seeing their employers take action to drive positive change. Leveraging on the expertise of our specialist partners, we offer practical advice and insights into how organisations can create and foster a workplace culture that not only provides individuals with the safety to speak up, but gives those in management positions the confidence to lean into inclusion conversations.

This latest edition of our annual Diversity, Equity & Inclusion report is based on a survey completed by over 5,350 UK professionals who provided insight into their experiences of DE&I in the workplace.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

DRIVING CHANGE

DISCUSSING WITH CONFIDENCE

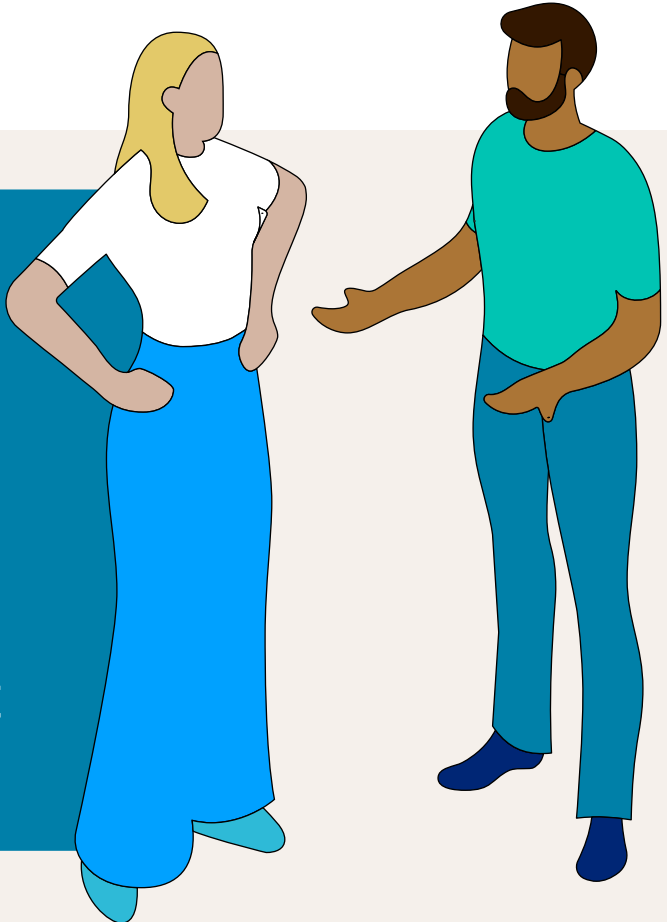
Methodology
This report is based on a survey carried out between 17th July–7th August 2023. Over 5,350 employers and employees across the UK completed the survey, from a range of key demographics, industries and sectors. Throughout the report, we’ve split the results by diversity characteristics, including age, ethnicity, gender, disability and sexual orientation to further recognise trends and insights.

AT A GLANCE

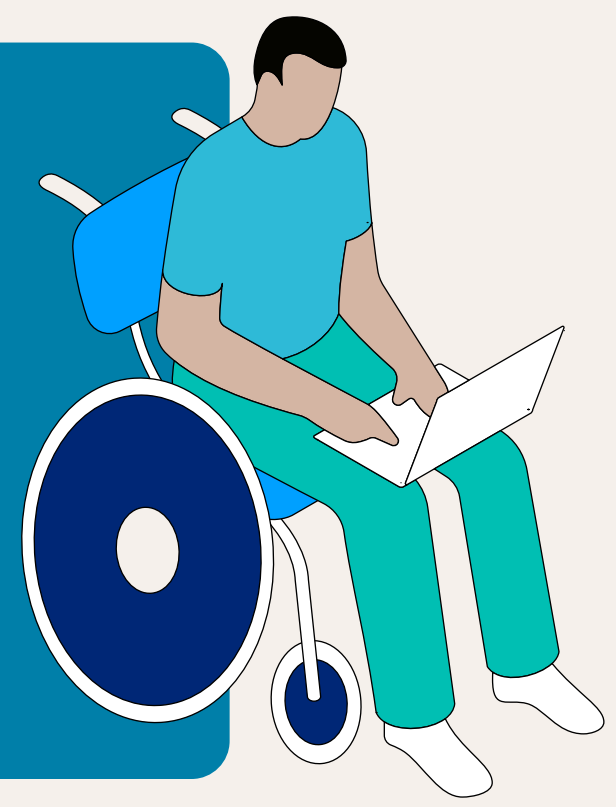
37% have felt the need to hide an aspect of who they are for fear of judgement by others

52% of managers think their organisation is proactively taking action to recruit under-represented talent

54% of managers agree that they feel comfortable engaging in conversations around DE&I that they have little knowledge of



51% say they've felt their chances of being selected for a job have been limited by their background or another identifying factor



56% of managers working in large organisations are seeing proactive action being taken to recruit under-represented talent compared to only 46% of those in SMEs

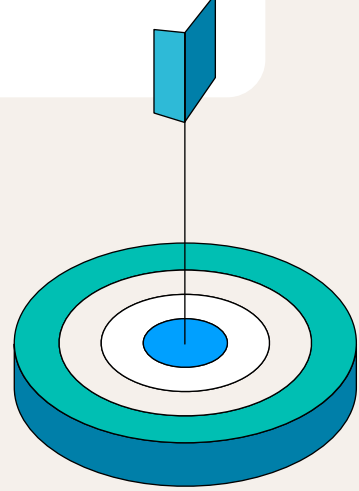


42% think positive action is being taken to improve career outcomes for under-represented talent

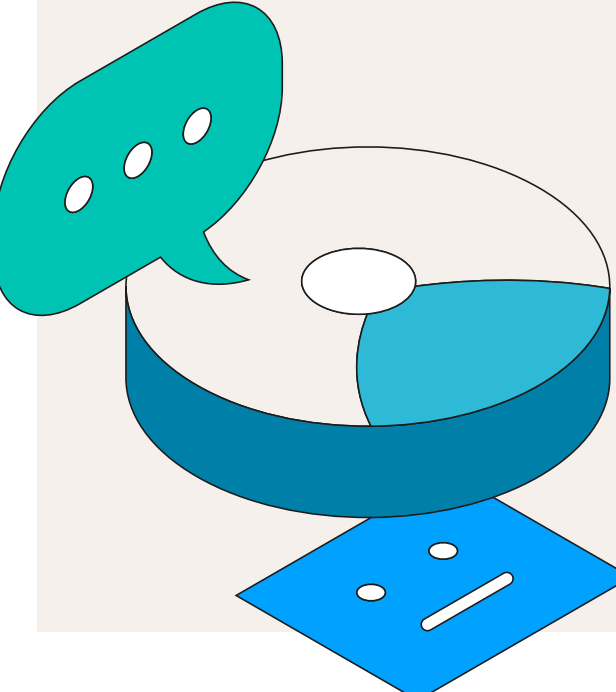
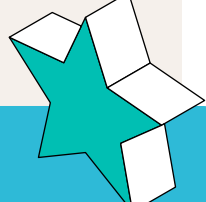
60% of managers feel more comfortable discussing some areas of DE&I than others

48% have felt their chances of career progression have been limited because of their background or an identifying factor

46% of those working in the public sector report seeing positive action being taken to improve career outcomes for under-represented talent compared to 40% of those in the private sector

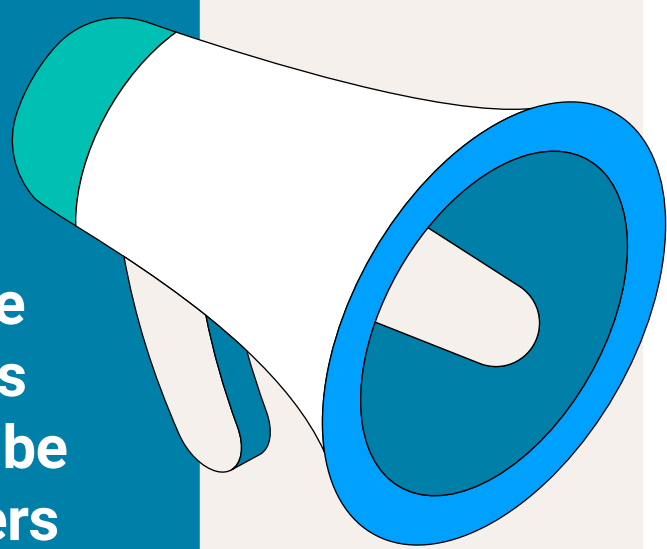


74% of managers feel confident challenging exclusionary behaviour amongst senior members of their organisation, compared with only 55% of non-people managers



25% don't currently feel they have the same opportunities as their peers when it comes to succeeding within their organisation

54% of non-people managers are confident that any concerns they have around DE&I will be listened to by their managers and that action will be taken



PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

We wanted to understand, first of all, how professionals perceive their own career prospects and whether they believe they have the same opportunities as their peers when it comes to succeeding within their organisation. Not only this, but how fully they feel able to be their true and authentic selves at work, and how any impediments to this have affected their wellbeing.



PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

Many still feel they have to hide aspects of their identity at work

Authenticity can be a tricky concept to define, but broadly speaking, it is the extent to which someone can express their true selves – in terms of appearance, behaviour, speech, beliefs and values – in front of others without fear of judgement, bias, exclusion, or discrimination. Most importantly, being and feeling authentic is unique to every person. Despite a growing understanding of the importance of the freedom to be authentic in every aspect of our lives, according to our survey, the workplace remains a space where not everyone feels able to be their true selves.

Over a third of respondents (37%) say they have felt the need to hide an aspect of who they are for fear of judgement by others. This is felt particularly acutely amongst certain groups of people, for example, those who identify as LGBTQ+ (65%), those living with a disability (62%) and those with caring responsibilities (46%). These results highlight the extent to which many individuals ‘cover’ at work. A term originally coined by the sociologist Erwin Goffman, ‘covering’ is the act of playing down aspects of who you are in the workplace for fear of judgement. In this context it is driven by the pressure to conform to corporate norms.

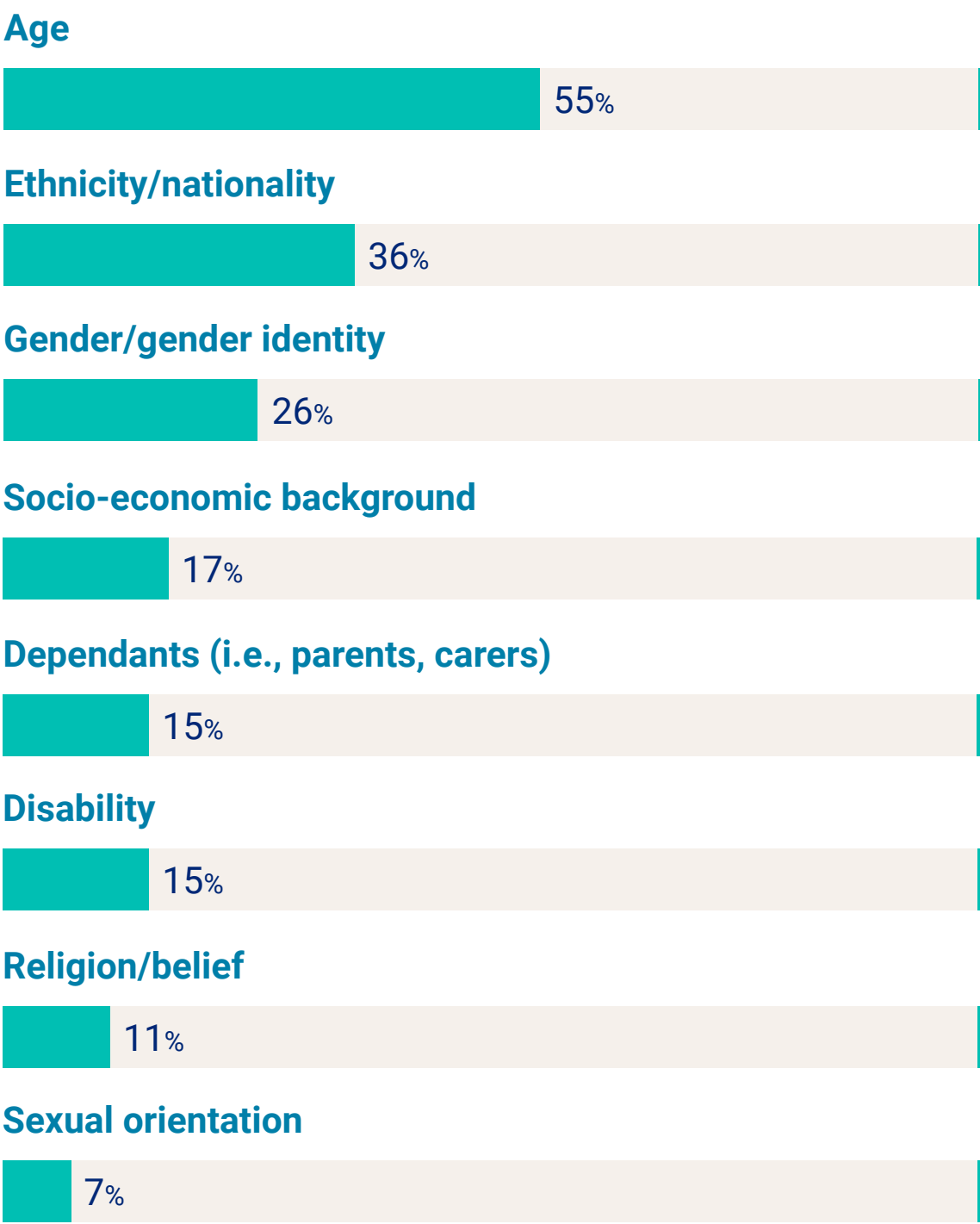
More than half feel they have lost out on a job due to their background

For many, the reluctance to fully be themselves at work is continuing evidence of a fear of discrimination that begins at the recruitment stage. Over half (51%) of respondents say there has been an occasion where they felt their chances of being selected for a job were limited by their background or another identifying factor, which is a marked increase from last year (39%).

However, closer analysis showed that certain groups of people are more likely to believe that their chances of being selected for a job have been reduced. For example, 34% of women say they feel their chances of being selected for a job have been limited due to their gender in comparison to 12% of men. 79% of respondents from a [global ethnic majority background](#) say they believe their chances have been limited due to their ethnicity compared to only 16% of white respondents.

Age remains the main factor professionals feel has led to their chances of securing a job being lowered (55%), followed by their ethnicity/nationality (36%), gender/gender identity (26%) and socio-economic background (17%).

Factors that professionals feel led to their chances of being selected for a job being lowered

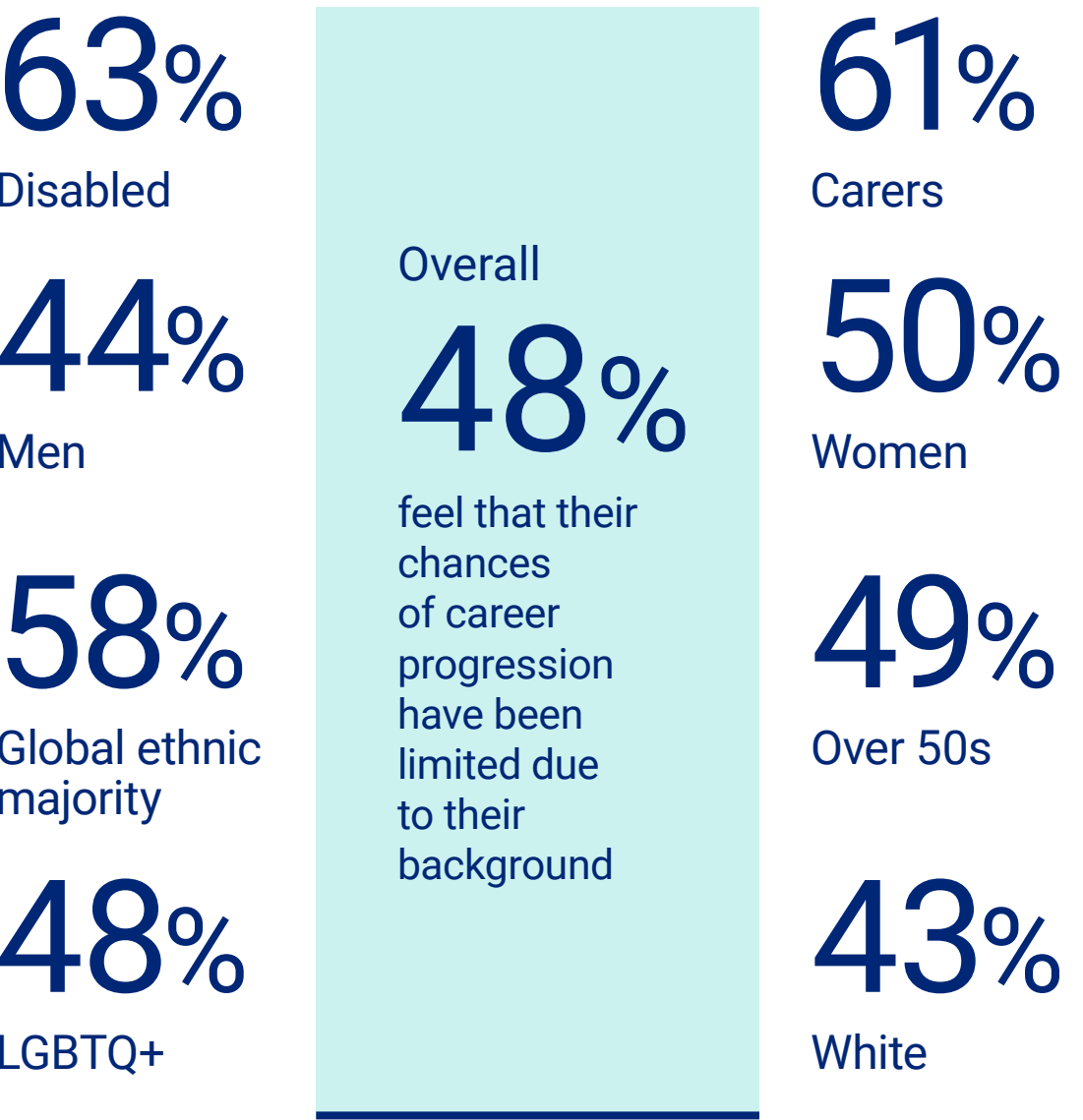


PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

Limits to career progression felt acutely amongst certain demographics

Perceived inequalities do not relate to recruitment only. Almost half of professionals (48%) say there have been occasions where they felt their chances of career progression at their current organisation have been limited because of their background or an identifying factor. Those living with a disability are particularly likely to say their career progression has been limited (63%), along with carers (61%) and those who come from a global ethnic majority background (58%).

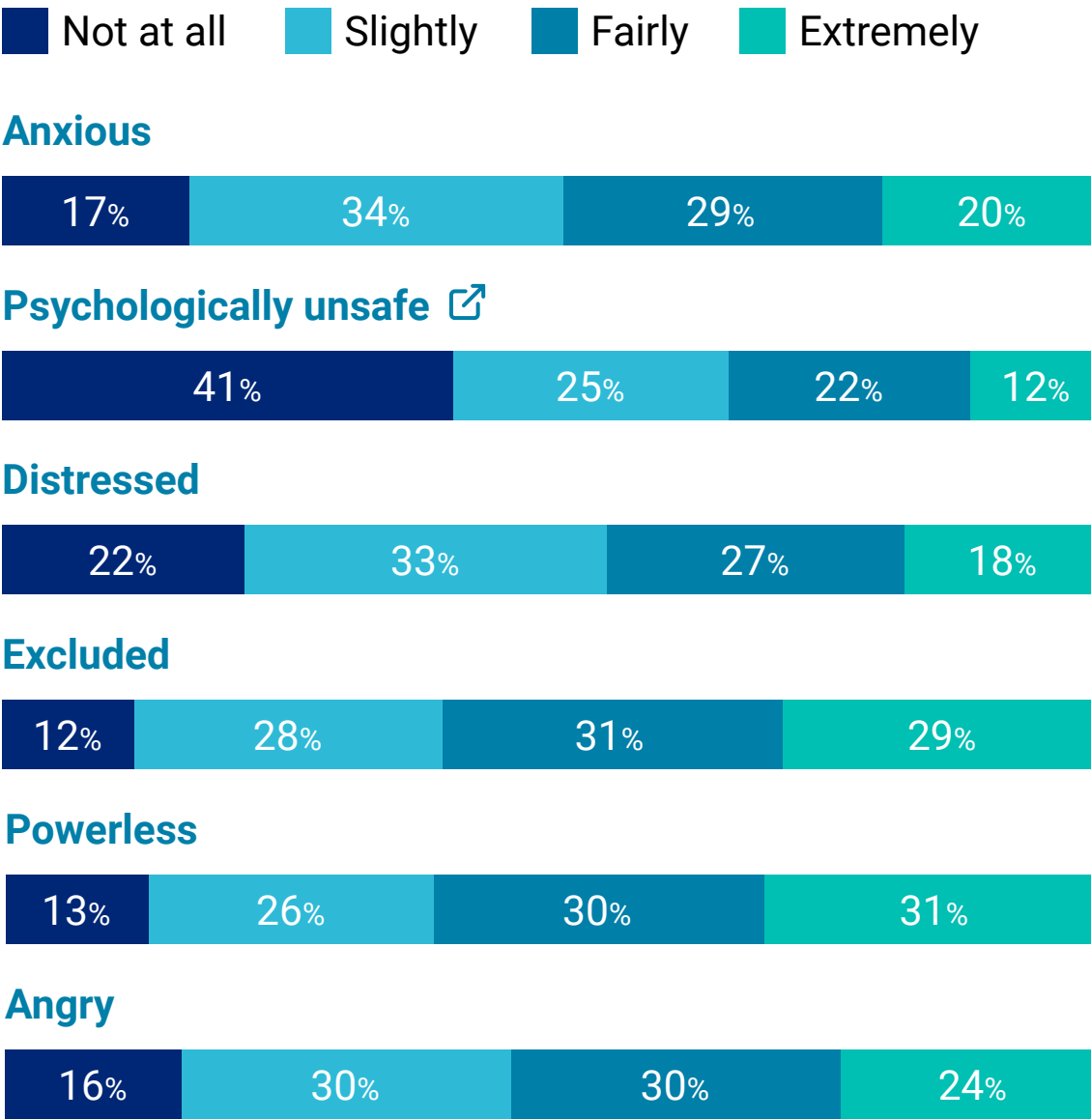
Professionals who say there have been occasions where they felt their chances for career progression have been limited because of their background or an identifying factor



Barriers to career progression affecting employee wellbeing

According to our research, the barriers to progression that people are encountering at work are resulting in considerable harm to the wellbeing of employees. The vast majority (88%) of respondents who have encountered limitations to their career progression due to their background or an identifying factor said this experience made them feel excluded, with over a quarter (29%) saying it made them feel extremely excluded. A further 87% said it made them feel powerless, whilst 84% felt angry – nearly a quarter extremely so (24%). What these results highlight is the ‘emotional tax’ many minority groups face at work, due to various aspects of their identity.

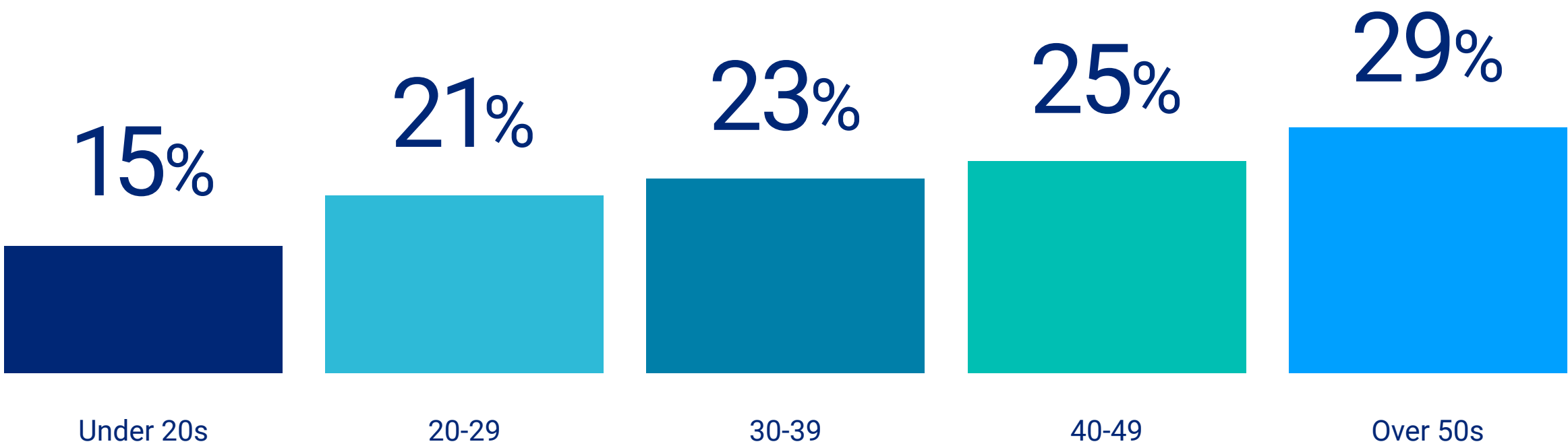
Feelings professionals experienced when they felt their chances for career progression have been limited as a result of their background or another key aspect of their identity



Equal opportunities remain elusive for many

These perceived barriers to progression remain very much a part of people’s lived experiences. A quarter (25%) of respondents don’t currently feel they have the same opportunities as their peers when it comes to succeeding within their organisation, a feeling that only increases the older respondents become. Those from global ethnic majority backgrounds (31%) and people living with a disability (37%) are also more likely to say they don’t feel they have equal opportunities to their colleagues.

Professionals who don’t feel they have the same opportunities as their peers when it comes to succeeding within their organisation, by age



EXPERT INSIGHTS

Jacqui Wallis, CEO of neurominority and disability-led community interest company Genius Within explains how organisations can bridge the neurodiversity retention gap.

Inclusion increases employee retention

Between 15% and 20% of the human population are neurodiverse/neurodivergent (ND), and there are 1.3bn disabled people in the world. The workplace has typically excluded this group, but organisations are increasingly seeking to actively include them.

Furthermore, the strengths typical for this cohort map to the World Economic Forum’s report on the Future of Jobs. This is a powerful incentive in an employment market crying out for specialist skill and talent.

We believe that often because many different neurotypes remain largely invisible, their associated needs can remain undisclosed and unmet.

A key aspect to creating a positive culture of belonging starts with understanding the needs of your employee groups, ensuring your workforce feel “seen”, appreciated, and valued. A key step in ensuring employees feel a sense of belonging to their workplace is to understand their needs, appreciating where they excel and understanding where they might struggle. This will help create a workplace that is person-centric, allowing every individual to be supported so that they can work at their best.

Lack of disclosure is a barrier to adjustments

The recently published Neurodiversity at Work Survey study from Birkbeck¹ found that 88.7% of neurodivergent individuals said they were worried about sharing information about their diagnosis (self-diagnosis or formal).

This means that if we are solely dependent on individuals volunteering that information, we will miss out on providing useful adjustments and support to the neurodivergent workforce.

And of course, if you don’t know what your employees need, you can’t put the right things in place.

Without workplace adjustments 54% of neurodivergent staff are likely to leave

This means that neurodivergent employees are more than twice as likely to leave as their neurotypical counterparts; a difference which we call the neurodiverse retention gap.

The good news is that if tailored adjustments can be put in place, individuals are much more likely to stay with that employer – in fact their attrition rates fall back to just above the UK average turnover rate of 25%.

One of the key drivers for staff retention is increasingly being recognised at diversity, inclusion and belonging levels – ensuring that all employees are included and feel that they are welcome in their place of work. By implementing equal opportunities and pay and making accommodations, employers can ensure that everyone is able to work at their best.



JACQUI WALLIS
CEO,
Genius Within CIC



Head of Solutions Jason Dunwell explores how Hays is taking action to progress its diversity, equity and inclusion agenda, both locally and globally.

The challenge

For Hays to continue to thrive in the continually changing world of work, we know we need to maximise our people’s potential and ensure we continue to attract diverse talent. Our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) is fundamental to unlocking that potential.

The process

The actions that we are taking to progress our DE&I agenda around the world are detailed in ‘Our Hays Promise’, which is our commitment to making Hays an organisation to which everyone feels they belong. As part of this promise, we have spearheaded a number of initiatives, just a few of which include rolling out conscious inclusion training for everyone at manager level and above, enhancing our family-friendly leave and pay provisions, and launching a UK and Ireland inclusion hub – with resources available to all employees.

The role of our Global DE&I Council is also extremely important. It’s the vehicle that has driven the dialogue on setting targets, and allows our people from all over the world to come together in one forum to debate and evolve our DE&I initiatives. At a UK and Ireland level, our UK&I Diversity & Inclusion Steering Committee helps to push DE&I forward and influence progress as well as use their voice to shape and embed inclusive practices.

Over 25% of our employees in the UK&I are part of a community network, demonstrating the enthusiasm amongst our workforce for championing and furthering the DE&I agenda. Just some of these include the Pride Network, Parents at Hays, the Black Network and REACH (Recognising and Enabling All Colleagues and Conditions at Hays). Both globally and locally, we also want to create a culture whereby discussions about DE&I are commonplace, and celebrating International Women’s Day, Pride, Black History Month, World Mental Health Day and International Day of People with Disabilities is a way of honouring what makes us unique, as well as what unites us. Work we’ve undertaken with Black Young Professionals (BYP), and partnerships with Paralympics Ireland and disability network PurpleSpace further demonstrate our commitment to seeing our DE&I ethos reflected back at us in the organisations we choose to work with.

The outcome

The cumulation of our commitment to DE&I at Hays has seen us recognised by a number of professional bodies in the space. In 2017, we were one of only 20 UK organisations to achieve the National Equality Standard (NES), one of the most rigorous and prestigious accreditations for DE&I. We have also recently been awarded a Disability Confident Level 2 accreditation, which requires the demonstration of progress in a number of different areas to better support disability inclusion in the workplace. In Ireland, meanwhile, we were one of only 11 corporates to be awarded Gold status in the Investors in Diversity (IiD) accreditation by the Irish Centre for Diversity.



JASON DUNWELL
Head of Solutions,
Hays
HAYS Working for
your tomorrow

¹Neurodiversity at Work 2023, Demand, Supply & Gap Analysis, Birkbeck, University of London.

DRIVING CHANGE

After getting an overall picture of people's perceptions of the current status of DE&I at work, we wanted to see not only how many professionals are seeing their employers take proactive action to drive positive change to DE&I, but how authentic and effective they feel this action is.



DRIVING CHANGE

Significant number say action to drive change isn't happening

Whilst our findings clearly demonstrate the perception of continuing inequity when it comes to hiring, the question of whether action is being taken to change this is a contentious one. Of the people managers we surveyed, just over half (52%) said they thought their organisation was proactively taking action to recruit under-represented talent. Those working in large organisations (56%) were more likely to believe action was being proactively taken than those in SMEs (46%).

Of those who are seeing action, the majority consider it to be effective – 81% believe it is enabling organisations to increase recruitment of under-represented talent, and the majority (87%) say it feels authentic.

Data capture helps organisations understand whether they're representative of their market

Some of the actions managers are most commonly seeing their organisation take to increase recruitment of **under-represented talent** include collecting data on the current make-up of their organisation to determine if they are representative of the market they operate in, and considering the steps they need to take to populate the gaps (47%), committing to reviewing and improving their assessment and selection frameworks, mitigating bias and ensuring inclusion at all stages (45%), and offering flexible working arrangements at the initial point of contact with candidates (45%).

When it comes to the actions managers would like to see, the most commonly cited was ensuring salary transparency and fairness when advertising roles externally (41%).

Actions managers are most commonly seeing organisations take to increase recruitment of under-represented talent

- 47% Collecting data on the current make-up of their organisation to determine if they are representative of the market they operate in, and considering the steps they need to take to populate the gaps
- 45% Committing to reviewing and improving their assessment and selection frameworks, mitigating bias and ensuring inclusion at all stages
- 45% Offering flexible working arrangements at initial point of contact with candidates
- 41% Advertising on platforms that cater to under-represented groups/specialist communities
- 40% Ensuring salary transparency and fairness when advertising roles externally





Less than half believe their organisation is trying to improve career outcomes for under-represented groups

When it comes to the way professionals perceive their employer's efforts to improve career outcomes for under-represented talent, fewer than half (42%) think positive action is being taken. Those working in the public sector are more likely to report seeing action (46%) than those in the private sector (40%).

Of those who are seeing action from organisations to improve career outcomes, the vast majority perceive it to be effective. 86% believe it's working and 91% feel it's authentic.

Of those who are not seeing their organisation take proactive action, over half (52%) would like to see internal transparency about flexible working policies, and the assurance that uptake will not impact career progression. Other actions they would like to see from their organisation include a commitment to reviewing and improving their assessment and selection frameworks, mitigating bias and ensuring inclusion at all stages (47%) and the assurance of salary transparency and fairness when advertising roles internally (47%). Those with a disability, in particular, would like to see better transparency around flexible working policies (65%). Women would also especially like to see more transparency when it comes to flexibility (58%) and salaries when advertising roles internally (52%).

Actions professionals would like to see organisations take to improve career outcomes for under-represented talent

- 52% Being transparent internally about flexible working policies and making it clear that uptake will not impact career progression
- 47% Committing to reviewing and improving their assessment and selection frameworks, mitigating bias and ensuring inclusion at all stages
- 47% Ensuring salary transparency and fairness when advertising roles internally
- 44% Assigning dedicated resources and investment to improve the career outcomes of under-represented talent
- 39% Regularly benchmarking salaries to ensure they align with current market rates

EXPERT INSIGHTS

Director of Learning & Development Kate Large explains how Mitie is tapping into under-represented talent through the Mitie Foundation.

Enhancing our workforce through untapped talent

As the UK’s largest facilities management and professional services company, we believe that our diversity makes us stronger.

Our business upholds the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals, so we recognised there was an opportunity to enrich the diversity of our workforce whilst also cultivating our social value. We also identified that through these efforts, we could help untapped talent to overcome their unique barriers and tackle the current skills and labour shortage.

In response, we established “The Mitie Foundation” 10 years ago. The goal of the foundation is to empower disadvantaged groups to access employment through tailored Ready2Work programmes, deliver volunteering opportunities across the communities we serve, and work with referral partners to support candidates throughout the recruitment process. These groups include veterans, long-term unemployed, people with disabilities, ex-offenders, and young people (under 25).

Mitie supports the Foundation’s Ready2Work programme by providing work experience placements and mentorship to candidates, either within our offices or with our clients, to help them gain insights into the roles and responsibilities of the workplace.

Recently, we have boosted recruitment of these candidates by creating a talent pool via our ATS system to update those who have participated in the programmes on relevant, suitable roles. Through our volunteering, we’ve built a community focussed on social value that engages with disadvantaged groups. We have additionally partnered with over 40 Ready2Work referral partners to ensure that we are building a diverse workforce that can thrive.

Our achievements so far

- 70% of candidates taking part in our Ready2Work programmes went on to secure employment.
- 19,000 volunteering hours delivered last financial year, facilitated by the Foundation.
- Exceeded our target of 200 candidates securing roles at Mitie through the Foundation, hiring 378 across our business last financial year!



KATE LARGE
Director of Learning & Development,
Mitie



Managing Director Dan Robertson explores how diversity, equity and inclusion experts VERCIDA Consulting fulfilled a brief to implement an inclusive leadership training programme at a global media company.

The challenge

VERCIDA Consulting were asked to design and facilitate an inclusive leadership programme for a large global media company. The core objectives were to take the company’s senior executives through our 7 principles of inclusive leadership, and focus on providing a framework for promoting inclusive behaviours, aligned to wider organisational goals and value.

The process

- Stage 1: Pre-workshop material: Consisted of pre-session reading, video material and having each member of the senior leadership team undertake our inclusive leadership assessment. We engaged with key stakeholders prior to the programme design to learn from others, including what they perceived to be leadership strengths and development areas, and how they think leaders should role model inclusive leadership.
- Stage 2: Workshop delivery: Our workshop was specifically designed to explore ideas of Otherness, empower leaders to act on inclusion through self-reflection, develop a collective mindset of leaders as culture shapers and get leaders to commit to very practical actions on allyship and role modelling.
- Stage 3: Post-workshop: Drawing on the nudge principles from behavioural science, we used iCommit, a unique approach that helps organisational leaders to embed inclusion into workplace cultures by influencing everyday behaviours.

The impact

91% of leaders who attended the workshops suggested they were provided with practical tools to help them to role model inclusive leadership behaviours as aligned to organisational values.



DAN ROBERTSON
Managing Director,
VERCIDA Consulting



DISCUSSING WITH CONFIDENCE

Change cannot happen if a workforce lacks the confidence to drive it at all levels, and therefore it was vital to capture how comfortable professionals feel not only partaking in everyday conversations about DE&I, but calling out perceived inequities, challenging exclusionary behaviour and making honest mistakes.



DISCUSSING WITH **CONFIDENCE**

Managers feel empowered to act as allies to under-represented groups

There is clearly scepticism regarding organisations’ capacity to improve career opportunities for under-represented groups – but change cannot happen if a workforce lacks the confidence to drive it at all levels. In order to equip all staff with the confidence – and consequently the competence – needed to take action, it’s vital that both people managers and non-people managers are encouraged and given permission to discuss diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) in a way that’s meaningful and authentic.

Empowering those in management roles with the knowledge, confidence and ability they need to be advocates for inclusion of under-represented groups is key to bringing about this shift. According to our survey, the majority of people managers (80%) agree that they have the skills and knowledge needed to support and improve DE&I efforts at their organisation and confidently act as an ally to under-represented groups. Just under a third (30%) strongly agree. A further 61% say they feel confident leading discussions on DE&I, with confidence particularly high amongst those from global ethnic majority backgrounds (70%).

A lack of knowledge is creating caution when it comes to DE&I discussion

Easy and open conversations around a topic that’s as nuanced and complex as DE&I is not without its challenges. Somewhat ironically, a fear of seeming inauthentic or insincere can deter people from engaging in serious discussions with employees on the subject. Vital conversations that could go a long way towards increasing people’s understanding of each other often don’t take place.

Just over half (54%) of the people managers who took our survey agree that they feel comfortable engaging in conversations around DE&I that they have little knowledge of, though just 13% feel very comfortable. Of those who don’t feel comfortable doing so, 43% are worried about making a mistake or imparting incorrect information, whilst a third (33%) are fearful of giving offence to someone. This data highlights a lack of ‘psychological safety’ amongst key manager populations. The fear of being criticised for making an error, or using the wrong language is resulting in managers feeling the need to stay silent, or withdraw from conversations on DE&I. This is a critical problem as, in order to promote cultures of inclusion, we need all colleagues – including managers – to openly engage and participate in DE&I conversations.

Reasons managers are reluctant to engage in conversations on DE&I that they have little knowledge of



People more comfortable discussing some aspects of DE&I than others

Feeling empowered to have difficult and perhaps uncomfortable conversations around DE&I can dispel assumptions, whilst also helping people recognise and respect the ways in which we differ. However, well over half (60%) of the managers we surveyed said they feel more comfortable discussing certain areas of DE&I than others, with this number rising to 67% amongst those from a global ethnic majority background and 71% for those who identify as LGBTQ+. When asked to rank DE&I aspects according to how comfortable they felt talking about them, sexual orientation was the topic people feel least comfortable with.

Aspects of DE&I ranked according to how comfortable managers feel discussing them (beginning with most comfortable)

- 1 Age
- 2 Gender
- 3 Disability
- 4 Ethnicity or race
- 5 Religion or belief
- 6 Sexual orientation

Older managers more likely to feel unsafe making honest mistakes

Creating a culture of psychological safety is critical to encouraging more discussions around DE&I in the workplace, which means people should not feel afraid to make honest mistakes. 59% of people managers feel they have space in their organisation to make honest mistakes when discussing DE&I issues, but this confidence diminishes the older respondents get. 64% of under 40s feel they have the space to make honest mistakes in comparison to only 58% of those over 40 years of age.

This signals a generation split between those who feel confident contributing toward DE&I conversations at work, and those who are more likely to stay silent due to a fear of offending. Ironically, what this data suggests is that some groups feel a sense of disconnect or even exclusion from conversations on inclusion at work. This clearly poses a critical challenge for organisations – how businesses can create a culture where speaking up and contributing is valued and harnessed from all.

Feeling psychologically safe in a people management role is just one element of an organisation’s success when it comes to cultivating inclusive leadership. Dedicated time and investment are needed to enable managers to become the allies that their teams need. Just over half (58%) of people managers who responded to our survey agree that their organisation invests in their skills and capabilities as an inclusive leader. Managers working in the public sector (60%) were more likely to agree that their organisation is dedicated to this investment than those in the private sector (55%).

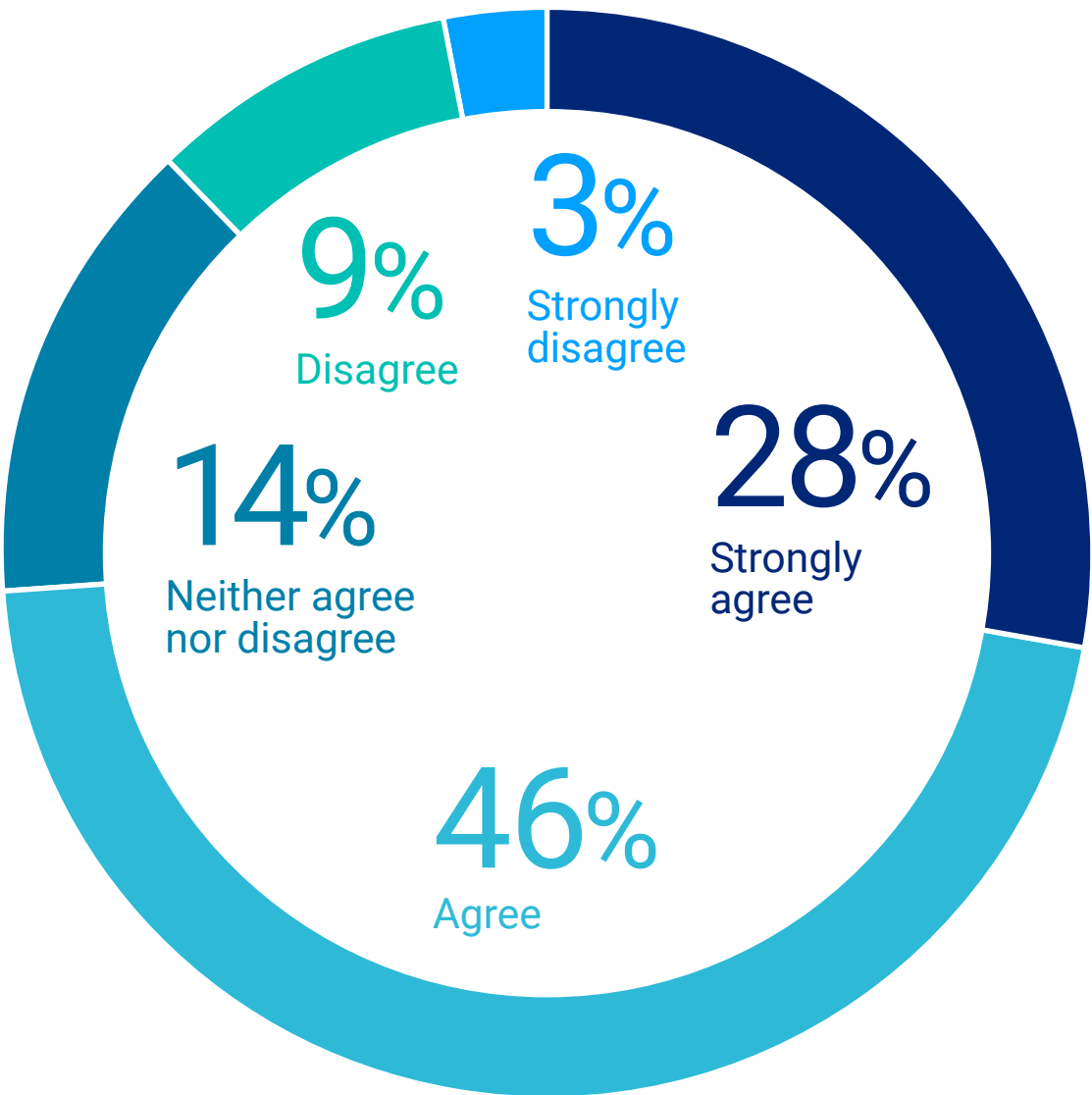
DISCUSSING WITH **CONFIDENCE**

Employees are nervous of challenging exclusionary behaviour among senior leaders

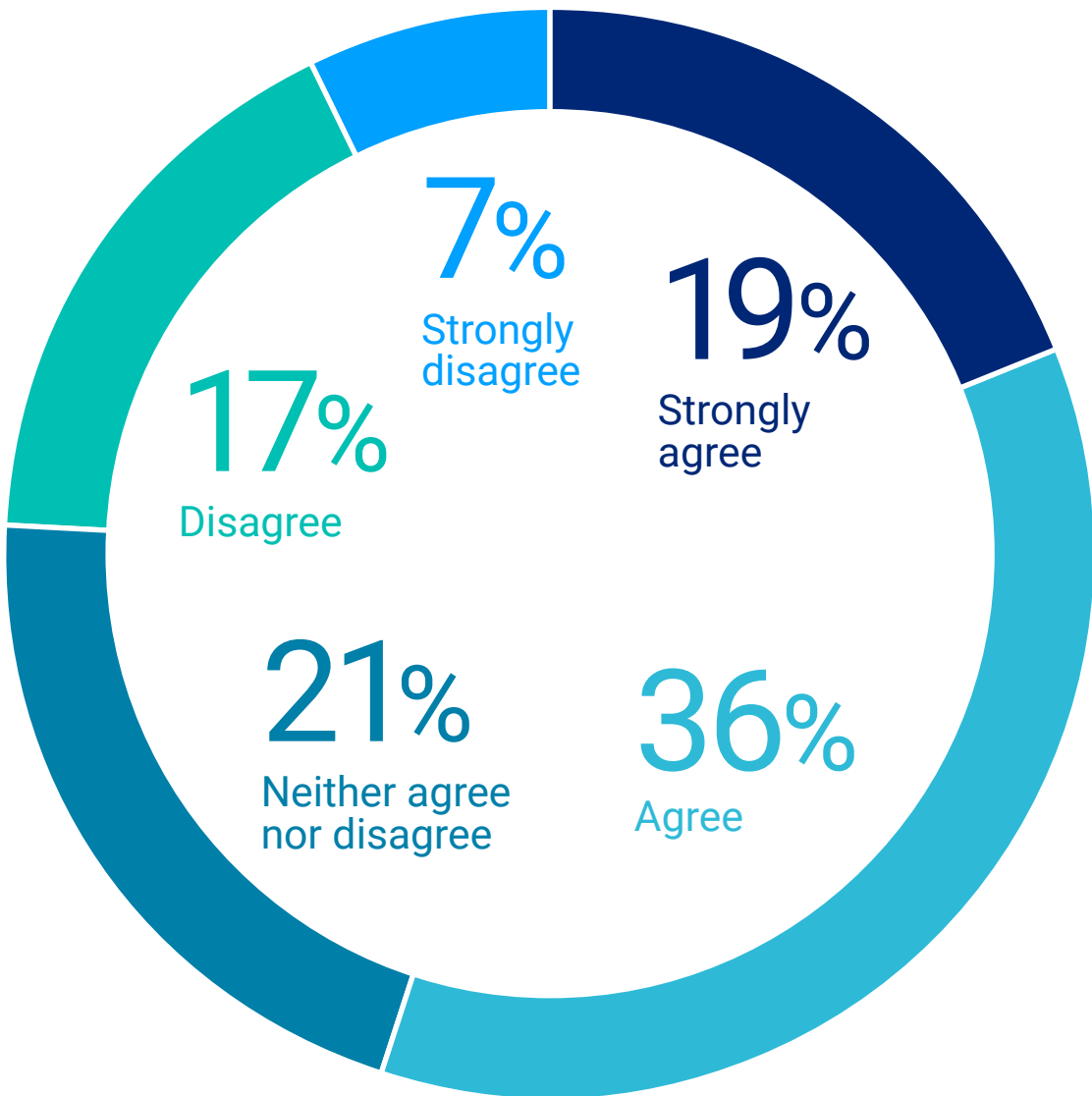
Hierarchy has a clear impact on how people feel about challenging exclusionary behaviour at work. Almost three quarters (74%) of people managers said they felt confident challenging exclusionary behaviour amongst more senior members of their organisation, compared with only 55% of non-people managers. More non-people managers felt confident challenging exclusionary behaviour amongst other members of their team (66%), but this figure was lower amongst those from a global ethnic majority background (57%).

The extent to which managers and non-people managers agree that they feel confident challenging exclusionary behaviour amongst senior members of their organisation

People managers



Non-people managers



Talk is not always translating into action

Though over two thirds (69%) of non-people managers feel comfortable raising any concerns they have around DE&I to their managers, confidence that this will actually translate into meaningful change is more muted. Only just over half (54%) are confident that any concerns they have around DE&I will be listened to and that subsequent action will be taken. This confidence is even more diminished amongst certain groups of people, namely those from a global ethnic majority background (50%) and those living with a disability (45%). Public sector respondents are also more confident that their concerns will be acknowledged and subsequent action will be taken (58%) than those in the private sector (51%).

This data clearly highlights a hierarchy of trust regarding organisational policies and procedures depending on an individual's social group and the sector they are working in. Trust is a key indicator of inclusion and belonging. Clearly organisations need to do more to build trust amongst disabled communities and those from global ethnic majority backgrounds, as well as other diverse groups.



EMPLOYER RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue working towards mitigating bias within your hiring processes

Additionally, in order to promote confidence in inclusive hiring, proactively state your commitment to blind decision-making throughout the whole process, as this approach, when applied with other interventions, assists with reducing bias.

Develop initiatives with the specific aim of developing diverse talent

Focusing on three core interventions – fairness in work allocation, providing diverse talent with a workplace sponsor, and developing career-specific leadership skills and capabilities with a view to building a future talent pipeline. As part of this process build in ‘devil’s advocate’ approaches.

Take a data-driven approach

Take a data-driven approach to inclusive hiring by using the **Positive Action** [☑](#) provisions within the UK Equality Act to attract diverse talent and, when appropriate, the ‘tie-breaker’ provision at selection stage.

Align your approaches to inclusion at work and organisational wellbeing

Such alignment assists with creating a sense of belonging that supports psychological safety, which in turn reduces mental trauma caused by isolation and exclusion.

Take a multi-stakeholder approach

As part of a review of your inclusion and work policies, take a multi-stakeholder approach by considering the inter-relationships between workplace culture and policies on agile work, use of workplace technology, and initiatives designed to promote team connectedness.

Adopt pay transparency policies

Adopt pay transparency policies to reduce bias within pay and reward – this includes reducing wide pay band variables, creating fixed salaries for all roles and ensuring that salaries are included within the job advert.

Develop specific training

Develop specific training aimed at building the confidence and competence of middle managers to actively engage in DE&I conversations at work. Without such interventions, managers’ reluctance to participate in inclusion at work conversations risks creating divisions due to fear of error making.

Develop DE&I learning circles

Seek to build psychologically safe spaces for all through the development of DE&I learning circles. These should focus on discussing intergenerational DE&I topics governed by rules which allow colleagues to explore complex topics without fears of being labelled. Specifically, managers should be provided with the opportunity to develop skills underpinned by the principles of inclusive leadership and allyship.

Build specific policies

Consider how you can build policies and activities that promote workplace cohesion, as well as inclusion and belonging. The need to bring different groups together to share lived experiences and break down barriers is of critical importance within the social context of the rise of identity politics.

Develop measurements and targets

Develop measurements and targets that focus on increasing ratios of diverse talent, while also creating measures that track perceptions (from both majority and minority groups) of workplace belonging, wellness, psychological safety, team cohesion and connectedness.



SUPPORTING YOU ON YOUR DE&I JOURNEY

As part of the acquisition of VERCIDA Consulting, Hays has established a new **DE&I Advisory Service**. The aim is to support global businesses as they take proactive steps on embedding DE&I into workplace cultures through practice measures. We specifically support businesses in the following three areas:

Training

We have a range of training programmes designed to build confidence and competence in DE&I, including:

Inclusive leadership: This programme covers what inclusive leadership is and how it differs from traditional styles of leadership, the influences of cognitive and social biases on leadership behaviour and decision-making and, using the 7 core traits of inclusive leadership, how leaders can build their skills, competencies and confidence.

Managing a diverse and inclusive work culture: This programme, focusing on the business case for diverse teams, provides guidance on ways to create an inclusive team culture. Despite research telling us that team diversity helps businesses to innovate and gain insight into their diverse customers, the current approach to managing diversity is not working. Businesses continue to struggle to attract and develop highly-skilled diverse talent.

Other programmes include:

- Mitigating Bias at Work
- Engaging Men in Gender Inclusion
- Managing a Diverse and Inclusive Workforce
- Promoting Wellbeing at Work
- Let's Talk About Race
- How To Be an Effective Ally at Work

Inclusive Leadership Assessment Tool

Our psychology-based research tool helps business leaders move on from diversity theory to inclusive practice by offering insight into their own and others' behaviours, as measured through a number of inclusive leadership competencies.

Our tool has been specifically designed to be used as:

- A self-assessment tool: Completed by business leaders to gain insight into key areas of strength and areas in need of development.
- A 360 degree tool: Completed by team members as a way of assessing their leaders, offering insight as part of a wider group analysis.
- A team development tool: Completed by team colleagues as a way of mapping group strengths and development areas.
- Due to its flexibility in design, our assessment tool benefits a range of business stakeholders from senior executives to team leaders. It is often used as part of our Inclusive Leadership Workshop.

Developing Future Talent

Our Future Leaders Programme has been designed to support organisations in helping diverse talent to meet their leadership aspirations. Often delivered over six core modules, this programme aims to build the core leadership competencies to meet future organisational needs by supporting women and people of colour in areas such as exploring personal motivation, building relationships, navigating change and developing leadership presence.

Consulting and Strategy

Our Consulting and Advisory service helps today's organisations focus on creating long-term goals centred in the principles of equity and inclusion. We help organisations to think through the maze of inclusion management with a focus on long-term vision for lasting success.

Developing a diversity and inclusion strategy:

Having a diversity and inclusion strategy is critical for any organisation seeking to set out its diversity and inclusion mission and approach. We have developed DIVE© – a diagnostic model designed to help organisations to develop bespoke D&I strategies.

Our diversity DIVE© model:

- **Diagnose:** Where are you now? What does your business and industry data tell us?
- **Individual to you:** What is the right pathway for your business?
- **Vision:** What are your ambitions and aspirations? Where do you want to be in the future?
- **Evaluate:** What measures can we build to review progress and evaluate success?

Inclusive Culture Assessment

We have developed a unique inclusive culture assessment tool. This new, research-based tool helps organisations to move the dial on culture and inclusivity through an employee perception assessment.

Inclusion Insights is a unique survey designed to measure perceptions of inclusion and belonging within an organisational environment. We help businesses to measure their own cultures in the following ways:

- Building the question bank for a local or global engagement survey
- Providing advice on what and how to measure inclusion locally and globally
- Assisting with analysing survey results
- Developing a communications programme pre and post-survey
- Assisting with addressing issues identified

GET IN TOUCH:

For more information on how we can support you, please contact:



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CONTACT US

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