

The Better Hiring Institute's commitment to making hiring in the UK Faster, Fairer, and Safer influences all the work that we do. To grow the economy and increase efficiency, the UK labour market must address barriers to fairness to more widely engage groups that are traditionally marginalised in the hiring process.

Whilst not creating an exhaustive list, we have sought to identify the most prominent barriers to fairness in UK hiring with our proposed solutions. This list has been created in conjunction with leading experts and organisations across a variety of sectors in the UK, who make up the Better Hiring Institute's members and associates.

This is not a ranking, and the number does not denote any more or less importance than any other barrier included in this list.

## **1. The Urgent Need for Standardisation and Transparency in Job Adverts**

The importance of transparency when looking to make a career move is something reflected in collected data, internationally. Data shows that most groups would be more likely to apply for a job with a clear and informed job advert, for example including salary information. This can be seen much more clearly with work-seekers who are neuroatypical and/or have disabilities. To combat drop-outs and promote proactive recruitment, organisations should follow a standardised job advert process that makes clear the requirements and scope of a role.

## **2. Emphasising Flexible Working Models & Making Flexible Working a Clear Option in Job Adverts**

Data shows that around 10 million people in the UK of working age are not currently in employment. Research has shown that many would return to the labour market if the job had the flexibility the individual needed. With the Flexible Working Bill receiving Royal Assent, organisations should promote flexible working, clearly advertising this in job adverts, to attract people back to the labour market to fill vacancies.

## **3. Remove Unnecessary Job Requirements**

1 in 4 graduate and entry level jobs require at least 1 year work experience, resulting in graduates and people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds unlikely to meet entry requirements. A recent study by the Social Mobility Foundation revealed that people from more privileged backgrounds were 42% more confident in their job search, benefiting from family connections and financial support. This has led to around 36% of graduates in roles that they are overqualified for. We welcome John Spellar MP's Bill to regulate the use of minimum qualification requirements, which should be built upon to deal with this barrier. We call on employers to remove all unnecessary job requirements from the hiring process.

## **4. Enable Remote Hiring by Making Digital Right to Work Available to All**

The current digital scheme implemented on 1<sup>st</sup> Oct 2022 has resulted in a reported fall in job applications by **20%** and a rise in applicants dropping out of the hiring process due to **1 in 5** job seekers not having the required documents for the digital scheme. The Institute held a productive meeting with the Minister of State for Home Office and proposals for change such as expanding the types of documentation accepted by IDSPs or allowing for vouching to verify identity, and have been accepted, it is imperative these are now implemented.

## **5. When Hiring Ensure There is a Diverse, Representative Hiring Panel to Reduce Bias**

To improve fairness in the hiring process and combat the issue of bias especially with the onset of AI, hiring decisions and/or interviews should be conducted by a diverse, representative hiring panel.

## **6. Hire for Attitude, Not Just Skills**

UK employers should hire for potential and not just for skills where those skills can be taught by the employer or learnt whilst in the post. Better joined up working between industry and educational institutions moving forward is critical to ensure the UK has the right future skills it needs.

## **7. Ensuring that Humans are Always Involved in Hiring Decisions**

The rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the Hiring process has the potential to improve efficiency but also to compound existing bias. AI should not be used arbitrarily to sift out work-seekers or determine their suitability. New York City have recently legislated to force all hirers to be transparent when using AI, it's time for the UK to have a position.

## **8. Addressing Criminal Records Bias & Ensuring Consistent Hiring Decisions**

When asked if they would automatically exclude a candidate who declared an unspent conviction, **30%** of employers said that they would. Best practice for UK employers is to follow positive steps suggested by [Release Scotland](#) and campaigns including Ban the Box, such as explicitly encouraging applications from people with convictions where appropriate. Furthermore, there should be consistent decisions made on adverse hiring checks that may exclude an individual from getting a job such as adverse online or social media checks, adverse credit checks and adverse referencing.

## **9. Promoting and Supporting Applications from Underrepresented Groups**

Anonymising the hiring process has been shown to increase the likelihood of applicants reaching interview stage, with research conducted by the University of Oxford showing that levels of discrimination in the UK labour market remaining the same since the 1960s. Organisations should explicitly promote applications from underrepresented groups, factoring in inclusive recruitment processes such as removing the CV from the hiring process, or implementing a form of anonymised recruitment, or implementing competency-based questions as part of the application process ahead of sifting.

## **10. Creating a More Inclusive Workplace for Workers with Disabilities**

Data shows that around 48% of work-seekers with disabilities are worried about disclosing their disabilities and negatively impacting their prospects of gaining employment. This is despite around 1 in 5 people in the UK having a disability. Employers must create more inclusive practices such as a skills-based interviews (and moving away from traditional CV recruitment), removing disclosure from the application stage, and signing up to the government's Disability Confident employer scheme.