

iCoCo Workforce Cohesion Toolkit

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"For many the workplace is the most diverse environment they experience in their daily lives. The case studies and practical advice in the iCoCo toolkit will enable employers and their employees to jointly develop approaches which will make the employer more productive and the workplace a more cohesive and collaborative environment for all."

Caroline Waters OBE, Director People and Policy, BT



"BITC is delighted to be supporting iCoCo's Workforce Cohesion Toolkit. The workplace is one of the main places people from different backgrounds and cultures come together and therefore can and should lead the way in encouraging cohesion and integration for the benefit of both business and the community."

Peter Lambert OBE, Deputy Chief Executive, Business in the Community



"We are very pleased to be supporting iCoCo's Workforce Cohesion Toolkit. The toolkit is a guide for leaders of organisations to cohesion proof the workplace and offers practical, simple steps that will benefit all aspects of your business."

Rt. Hon. John Denham MP, Department for Communities and Local Government



"Work is one of the places where we are most likely to meet people from backgrounds different to our own. Where people come together in a common goal, it can be a powerful force for helping everyone get along in the wider community. I welcome the iCoCo toolkit - it will help employers understand the simple steps they can take to help make their workplace more harmonious, more productive and more likely to make the local neighbourhood a better place to live."

Commissioner Meral Hussein Ece OBE, Equality and Human Rights Commission



"The workplace is just one area where cohesion needs to be developed; schools, colleges, community organisations and neighbourhoods are some of the other vital areas. But, the workplace is a 'neutral' space in which people have to collaborate to achieve organisational goals and the way they work is governed by professional standards too. So, this gives workplaces the edge in being able to influence the way people see others - if given the chance to do so. This toolkit shows how business is already beginning to lead the way."

Professor Ted Cantle CBE, Executive Chair, iCoCo



"The workplace provides an excellent opportunity to promote cohesion and that is why UNISON is supporting the iCoCo Workforce Cohesion Toolkit. Trade unions are at the forefront in promoting the equality and diversity agenda and we believe that this toolkit will play its part in encouraging employers and trade union officials to prioritise cohesion."

Bob Abberley, Assistant General Secretary and Frank Hont, North West Regional Secretary, UNISON

1. Introduction

How people interact with each other in the workplace is fundamental to community cohesion.

"Workers who spend eight or more hours together, five or more days a week under commonly imposed conditions will generally find both the opportunity and the need for interaction. Their shared experiences (of accomplishments and oppressions) create a sense of connection, mutual support and collectivity"

Working Alone, The Erosion of Solidarity in Today's Workplace, Charley Richardson, New Labour Forum 17 (3), pp. 69-78, Fall 2008

The workplace may sometimes be the only place in which people from different backgrounds, ages and abilities are able to interact and begin to come to terms with difference - and a principal route by which society can become 'more at ease' with itself. However, the workplace often simply reflects wider social divisions based on long-standing rivalries of culture and class - and inequalities.

Tackling these divisions is likely to improve both organisational problems and help to alleviate some of the divisions within the wider communities in which the workforce live and socialise. Indeed, with the right support and commitment, workforces may well be able to play a much more positive role in bringing different groups together, promoting understanding and tolerance and help to avoid community conflict and disorder.

This toolkit is aimed across the public and private sectors and at leaders of organisations, HR professionals, managers, leaders and trade unionists. The toolkit aims to shift attitudes and cultures of organisations and offers practical steps to embed cohesion across the workplace, for the benefit of staff, the business and the wider community.

2. What is cohesion?

Community cohesion is simply about making sure that people of all different faiths, ethnic and other identities develop trust and respect for each other and can work together. It means tackling some of the prejudices and stereotypes – often reinforced by inequalities – which contribute to separateness, rivalries and conflict.

Put more simply, community cohesion is ensuring that 'different groups of people get on well together'.^[1] But this is easier said than done - the concept of community cohesion emerged in the UK in 2001 as a result of riots and disturbances in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham.

The independent Community Cohesion Review Team, chaired by Ted Cante, reported at the end of 2001, some six months or so after the riots. The 'Cante Report'^[2] as it became known, provided a national overview of the state of race and community relations, following visits to a wide range of towns and cities, including both riot stricken areas and those that had not experienced any tensions.

The report demonstrated how divided and un-cohesive communities had become in some areas and found that people were living 'parallel lives' in fear and ignorance of each other. Since then, a whole area of public policy developed to respond to the situation. This is not confined to the UK with many European and Western democracies responding to this new era of 'super diversity' in similar ways.

To build cohesion many organisations, including iCoCo, believe that we need to encourage wider civic engagement and a richer notion of British citizenship with its attendant rights and responsibilities, promoting greater interaction within and between communities. The best and fairest societies are those in which people share experiences and common ambitions whatever their racial, religious or cultural backgrounds. In essence, we need to develop the sense of a shared society in which everyone's life chances are unaffected by what or where they were born.

There has been some debate over the exact definition of cohesion. This is not surprising, it is a new concept and the issues which we face are constantly changing in response to social and economic factors – and the process of globalisation. The Institute of Community Cohesion has developed a definition of community cohesion which will be the main point of reference for this review. It believes that community cohesion is an outcome, but the process is also critical. It comprises at least six facets:

- Interaction between individuals, communities and wider society to promote trust and common understanding
- Active citizenship: participation in civil society, in public institutions, the workplace and in political life
- Equality of access to the labour market, housing, education, healthcare and social welfare. Evidence of progress towards equality of outcome across society
- A society at ease with itself, with a real sense of security, welcome and belonging
- Respect for the rule of law and the liberal values that underpin society
- Civil, political and social rights and responsibilities

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1. Our Shared Future: The Final Report of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion, 2007
 2. Community Cohesion: A Report of the Independent Review Team, 2001
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Why is cohesion relevant?

1. How people interact with each other in the workforce will have a major impact on the performance of the organisation.

"Workers who spend eight or more hours together, five or more days a week under commonly imposed conditions will generally find both the opportunity and the need for interaction. Their shared experiences (of accomplishments and oppressions) create a sense of connection, mutual support and collectivity" [3]

2. It will also have a major impact on the performance and well being of each individual and their commitment and contribution.

"The workplace serves not only as a source of potential friends; it serves as a kind of community within which many individuals experience" [4]

3. What happens in the workplace will also impact upon the wider community. It has been identified as a place in which people should be able to interact - and by which society can become more at 'ease with itself'.

4. But very often the workplace often simply reflects wider social divisions based on longstanding rivalries of culture and class – and inequalities. Tackling these divisions is likely to improve both internal and external relationships and may also help to alleviate some of the divisions within the wider communities in which the workforce live and socialise. Indeed, multicultural workforces may well be able to play a much more positive

role in bringing different groups together, promoting understanding and tolerance and helping to avoid community conflict and disorder.

"The workplace provides a significant, ongoing opportunity to address the cumulative effects of the layers of separation in society. As a venue for interaction - particularly if that interaction is supported and encouraged by employers working in partnership with employees - it provides a platform for an improvement in relationships, and in productivity if staff are more content" [5]

5. In a think piece paper ahead of the final report Shamit Saggat, Professor of Political Science at the University of Sussex, positions organisations within the wider and globalised world:

"The rationales are twofold: a) in order to avoid general suspicions and hatreds from undermining the efficiency of market forces; and b) because of the opportunity to build mixed, fully integrated workplaces using human capital resources to their full." [6]

3. Working Alone, The Erosion of Solidarity in Today's Workplace, Charley Richardson, New Labour Forum 17(3), pp.69-78, Fall 2008

4. Working Together; How Workplace Bonds Strengthen a Diverse Democracy, Cynthia Estlund, 2003

5. Our Shared Future: The Final Report of the Commission for Integration and Cohesion, 2007

6. Community Cohesion and the Public Interest, Shamit Saggat, 2007,

What is in it for our organisation?

Three big wins for your organisation include:

By implementing the **seven ways to get started**, you can get a picture of what your organisation looks like, where people are, and how they are feeling. By understanding this and implementing the appropriate interventions, there are huge benefits:

1. **Business Benefits.** Reduced absence rates, less bullying and a better HR process. It will also increase productivity levels as people are generally happier with morale levels higher.
2. There is a greater opportunity to access a wider talent pool. The image of your business improves as people see you as a good place to work. This means more people from diverse backgrounds applying for positions, widening the pool of talent accessible to you.

3. Benefits to the community too, as people who work together happily will take their understanding and co-operation into their communities.

"In a previous job I worked in an area where a large manufacturer closed down. I found that people created a support network for those affected directly by the closure. You had some people whose partners had lost jobs who had to advise others who had lost their jobs. Yet this had a positive effect in that it built relationships with people as you developed a greater understanding of them outside of the workplace."

Seven simple ways to get started

So what do you need to get started? Cohesion is about understanding people and respecting their difference. The leadership needs to come from the board of the organisation with committed delivery and implementation from HR and people who manage staff, so that it is embedded into the culture of the organisation. Within the workforce there are some basic starting points:

1. Ask what the vision and ethos is for your organisation; does it reflect the aspiration for a united workforce that can work together. Where does the leadership come from?
2. Take a look at your current HR/equality/people policies. Do they cover cohesion and tackle the importance of respect for all in the workplace?
3. Find out what is going on in your organisation. Talk to your employees; the local authority; the police; community groups and where appropriate the recognised trade union who may have a useful contribution to make; examine HR statistics for absences, sickness and incidents. Get a picture of your workforce.
4. Check out the organisation's demographic data. Where do people fit within the workforce? Where are they positioned within the organisation, at what level do they work, which departments, who works on shifts? Break this down by ethnicity, gender, disability and age.
5. Work with your trade unions and staff representatives, find out what issues the workforce are bringing up. Do some of these issues relate to factors around cohesion?
6. Create a support network for staff, so people feel they have somewhere to go if they are not happy about a particular issue in the workplace. This could be in the form of employee networks, a department representative or through regular team meetings where people can air their views in a confidential setting. Make sure support networks do not create more divisions.

7. Decide what schemes and processes to introduce that might tackle any issues that may have arisen from the above. This could be along the lines of informal social gatherings to bring different people together or more formal arrangements like cohesion training sessions for all staff.

Is this just for big organisations?

Workforce cohesion does not just apply to big businesses or organisations. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) have a significant role to play. They not only operate on the front line of many communities, but employ 13.5 million people (59.2% of the total private sector workforce).[7]

Whilst it is important to recognise that for many SMEs, simply being able to operate efficiently and effectively to deliver their goods or service is of primary concern, it is equally important to note that if there are tensions within local communities, this will affect SMEs just as significantly. SMEs are more dependent on local business networks and can be put out of business completed by disturbances and tensions in those communities.

Five key reasons why cohesion is important for SMEs

Cohesion in the community is crucial for SMEs if they are to continue to operate and “do” business.

There are specific concerns for the SME sector that differ from bigger businesses. For example:

1. Operating on the front line in communities, and therefore feeling first-hand the implications of tensions between different groups of people.
2. Recruiting locally – yet wanting to ensure that there is a pool of wide local talent.
3. SMEs may reflect – and reinforce – the divisions within the local community if they are unable to recruit on a cross-cultural basis.
4. Within the workforce – ensuring people get on. SMEs tend to have minimal HR or Personnel capacity and are less able to cope with poor relationships and morale and have disproportionate cost implications too, in terms of recruiting new staff.
5. They are part of the supply chain of larger businesses and public bodies and sooner or later will be bound by the same ethos.

This toolkit aims to provide some guidance to SMEs about how to tackle cohesion within the workforce. However, there is also a strong case for SMEs to work together, perhaps with local Chambers of Commerce and Local Authorities to ensure support is available.

What evidence is there that cohesion works?

The good practice examples demonstrate how many different organisations have improved performance, turned round difficult situations and have been able to capitalise on the diversity in their workforce and local community.

See **Case Studies** section below, but here is one example –

Bradgate Bakery

Bradgate Bakery in Leicester employs an incredibly diverse workforce. Working with Leicester College, Bradgate assessed every individual's language and communications skills and ascertained that over 75% of those employed had poor or very poor levels of English. In order to orientate, induct and integrate them into the existing workforce they embarked on designing and implementing a bespoke training and development plan with the College for all of the 80 new employees. All new staff were assigned a hygiene member of staff who was trained as a 'buddy'. Their buddy role was to coach and assist the new member of staff and try to make them feel welcome and integrated into the team.

In its four years since the implementation of this form of ESOL business language training, the business has seen year on year improvement with employee survey results, lower staff turnover, a stability rating of just over 90% and a massive improvement in the cleaning regime.

Some other issues you may be interested to know

How has cohesion emerged?

The concept of community cohesion emerged in the UK in 2001, following the disturbances in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham. The independent Community Cohesion Review Team, chaired by Ted Cante, reported at the end of 2001, some six months or so after the riots. The 'Cante Report' as it became known, provided **a national overview of the state of race and community relations**, following visits to a wide range of towns and cities, including both riot stricken areas and those that had not experienced any tensions.

The Cante Report drew attention to polarised and segregated communities, in which people led 'parallel lives' and made some 67 recommendations. Whilst still highlighting the need to tackle inequalities, the recommendations were much more wide ranging and amounted to a new approach to race and diversity.

How does Cohesion relate to the workplace?

There is now an economic imperative for organisations to take an active role in the cohesion agenda. Globalisation has made the world of business much more inter-dependent and the understanding of different cultures and people is a necessity. Many businesses profile themselves as responsible businesses and are involved in many wider societal issues and this leads to a greater sense of public accountability.

Jeffrey Schwerzel, (lectured at St Ethelburga's, Oct 04) is a firm believer in the contribution of business to civil society and the impact larger businesses can have on smaller ones.

"Where large and global companies lead, smaller and more local companies will follow. The nature of business will undergo fundamental changes in the coming decades: the changes regard the position and role of companies in society. Companies are no longer just about making profit: they have a public role and are attributed a moral duty to be active in civil society. The business-scape is fundamentally changing." [8]

Many organisations are very aware of their role within civil society and the impact they can have on the key issues affecting society, whether it be the environment, poverty etc. Some organisations have been very successful in raising the profile of particular issues, for example The Body Shop and animal testing.

The role of business and cohesion is a developing area and one which has many benefits both to business and civil society. Building trust and understanding within the community and avoiding conflict within the wider society has major benefits to business and the economy.

It is simply better for business - and the workforce

The Equality and Human Rights Commission's report "Talent not Tokenism" (2008) asks businesses to recognise the importance the workforce can make on public image.

"The workforce influences how the business is perceived to the world outside. Who is employed and what they are like says something about the business to customers, suppliers, contractors and potential recruits, as well as to existing employees and to trade unions representing them" [9]

There is much to be exploited here and a great opportunity for business, building cohesion, can create a real competitive edge and have a real impact in civil society.

What are the key challenges to cohesion in organisations?

The challenges have perhaps never been greater. We are in an era of 'super diversity' with over 300 languages in London schools and over 60 in some of our small market towns. We now have many new 'human interfaces' to manage and new ideas about personal and communal identity. Demographic change, including an influx of migrant workers and a fast changing economy, has created new opportunities but it has also de-stabilised some of our more traditional communities and brought about widespread questioning of that change. And as a number of recent studies have pointed out, there are concerns about wage level competition and the longer term impact on skill levels and the labour market. There is also, of course, an acceptance that the economy has grown as a result of recent migration, even if the level and nature of the benefits are sometimes contested.

Within our workforces, new issues need to be addressed. Whilst there have been many years of largely successful equality and diversity policy and practice, there remains large disparities between different groups of people.

- The pay gap between men and women is widening [10]

- In 2007/2008 there were over three times as many age discrimination cases than in the previous year. **[11]**
- Whilst the gap between white and black and ethnic minority workers is closing slowly, the gap still remains at 15.7%. **[12]**

Business in the Community's Race to the Top Report suggests that action is needed immediately and employers should review their current practice and policy to ensure a sustainable commitment to the agenda **[13]**

We need to recognise the challenges still to be faced.

But we also need to be able to build upon our successes too.

Most of all we need to recognise that business and social environments have changed and look forward – with a positive commitment to the impacts of globalisation and demographic change.

8. The Business of Muslim Integration, The Formation of Islamic Civil Society in Non-Muslim Countries, Jeffrey Schwerzel, Oct 27th 2004

9. Talent not Tokenism: The Equality and Human Rights Commission report 2008

10. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1202929/Pay-gap-men-women-rises-girls-stereotyped-careers.html>

11. <http://www.ageconcern.org.uk/AgeConcern/employment-tribunal-stats-info-march09.asp>

12. <http://www.personneltoday.com/articles/2008/04/22/45515/employment-gap-between-white-and-bme-staff-is-closing.html>

13. Race to the Top, The Place of Ethnic Minority Groups within the UK Workforce, Race for Opportunity, December 2008

Key messages from this section

The workplace is therefore a key area for the development of integration and cohesion.

Harmonious places to work provide a stronger social environment in which employees are much more likely to reach their potential and perform to the best of their ability. How people interact with each other affects all aspects of the workplace including recruitment, induction, retention and progression.

Having a cohesive workforce allows people to feel at ease with each other and themselves and therefore encourages working with difference, and diversity becomes valued rather than tokenistic.

The workplace provides this opportunity because it is bound by organisational rules. People have to act professionally and with civility because they have to work together to achieve the company's goals. Such focussed and controlled collaboration within communities is generally less clear and enforceable.

The workforce also provides an opportunity to bring people together to work on specific issues that affect them - and often brings together people who would not necessarily collaborate within the community.

3. Policy and literature review

Workforce cohesion and how this fits into current policy and legislation

The world of work has changed dramatically in the last 30 years, providing challenges and opportunities for employers and employees alike to respond to. Globalisation, demographic changes, the rise of new industries and the decline of others have all impacted on the way work is carried out, and, until recently, economic success has also helped to change attitudes to work and how it relates to people's lives.

There has been a plethora of literature on the importance of diversity and equality within the workplace, but little has been done on the importance of the actual interactions between people and what this means to relationships formed within and outside the workplace. Cynthia L. Estund, an American Professor, is one of the few authors who recognises the importance of such relationships and how this can help civil society.

"The burgeoning literature on democratic civil society, civic engagement and associational life has focused largely on voluntary civic organizations in which citizens choose to associate on the basis of what they already share. Those groups serve important functions in a democratic society. But those groups, by definition voluntary and largely beyond the scope of antidiscrimination law, cannot be relied upon to bring individuals together across social cleavages of ethnicity and identity. In a diverse but still-too-divided society, that is an important mediating function, and it is one that the workplace is uniquely situated to serve. The antidiscrimination laws have had a significant impact on the workplace; for most adults, it is likely to be the most racially diverse place in which they spend much time. At work, individuals cooperate and converse day after day, and form ties of familiarity and empathy with individuals from different groups. Social science research confirms the tendency of this kind of cooperative interaction to foster more positive intergroup attitudes and relations. The workplace is thus a uniquely important locus of associational life in a diverse democratic society." [1]

It is vital that this toolkit is placed within the current context of the economy and how equality and diversity practices have impacted the workplace. It must also look forward and recognise that society and the workplace is changing quite rapidly, and these changes are having an impact upon the interaction and relationships between different groups of people within and outside the working environment.

1. Cynthia L. Estund, New York University -School of Law, Working Together: The Workplace in Civil Society (Abstract) December 1999, Columbia Law School, Public Law and Legal Theory Working Paper No. 3

Equality and diversity at work

Work pressures in a globalised world

More countries in the world are trading and competing with each other than ever before. The established output of western societies such as the UK, EU and USA is now being challenged by countries such as India and China, due to the shift of manufacturing to South Asia. China is now on course to become the third largest economy after the US and Japan.

As a result traditional manufacturing in the UK has declined rapidly, decimating many traditional working class communities. Other employers, such as the service sector, have continued to pursue outsourcing and off-shoring initiatives, with as much as 2-3% of services sector jobs being lost to low wage economies.

Population movement has also had a considerable impact on the labour market. The percentage of non-UK born workers as part of the UK workforce now stands at 12%.^[2] Many immigrants are likely to be younger than their UK counterparts and are either higher skilled or lower skilled. This has particularly resulted in pressure around low-wage jobs with immigrants being prepared to take lower pay and undertake more unattractive tasks than UK workers.

The rise of multinational companies (MNCs), often bigger than small countries, has enabled employers to flexibly move around the world to target localised markets and seek out competitive labour. MNCs have had to adapt their understanding of the different communities and societies that they work within, which brings with it additional complexity. In an interview with CNN, IBM CEO Sam Palmisano described how his organisation:

"needs to contribute wherever we operate in the world. Now societal problems are different; global climate has a higher priority in some countries than others, healthcare has a higher priority, education systems are different... IBM doesn't have a common global agenda, but our agenda is to contribute" ^[3]

Whilst globalisation has aided businesses to grow and recruit from across the world therefore increasing growth and competitiveness, there has been both positive and negative impacts upon workforce cohesion. For some employers diversity has led to increased productivity for others it has caused friction and tension.

One the one hand there are the views of global businesses who see their workforces as global. For example, in the same interview Sam Palmisano states

"If you look at innovation, if you look at our most innovative products, they're multicultural and multi-gender. The teams that do the greatest work, from innovation and breakthrough, tend to come from all over the world...So when you experience this, you realise the best way to innovate. You need diversity. It needs to be multicultural"

This is an interesting point and demonstrates strongly the business case for diversity in a globalised world. However, one cannot ignore the impact this has had on local communities who have lost jobs and industries due to globalisation and the consequential impact this has had on relations between groups of people.

"There is no doubt that globalization has coincided with higher unemployment among the less skilled and with widening income inequality." [4]

2. Employment of foreign workers in the United Kingdom: 1997 to 2008, ONS, 2008, http://www.statistics.gov.uk/elmr/07_08/downloads/ELMR_Jul08_Clancy.pdf

3. Interview with IBM CEO Sam Palmisano, CNN, <http://edition.cnn.com/video/#/video/bestoftv/2009/01/12/gps.ibm.ceo.part2.cnn>

4. Does Globalization Lower Wages and Export Jobs?, Matthew J. Slaughter and Phillip Swagel, 1997 International Monetary Fund, September 1997 <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/issues11/>

Demographic change and disparity in the UK workplace

The UK is growing and aging. The UK's population is expected to grow by 5 million people in the next 20-25 years (and reached 61m in 2009). Life Expectancy is rising, from 76.1 years to 86.7 years for men and 79.8 years to 86.7 years for women, over the next fifty years. The average age of the workforce will also rise with the age of the average worker rising from 38.7 years in 2000 to 42.6 years in 2025.

The gender balance of the workforce has changed dramatically in the last 30 years with an expectation that women will make up 48% of the labour market by 2012. However gender is still disproportionately represented across sectors with 80% of home carers and 80% of cleaners being women, and 82% of MPs being men.

Family life is also changing with more than two thirds of working-age women with dependent children (68 per cent) now in employment.**[5]** More than twice as many mothers with children aged under five are returning to work than was the case 10 years ago.**[6]** However the vast majority of women with under-fives take a step down in their career as a result: be it in terms of responsibility or hours worked. Before children, 85% of working women are full time; this falls to 34% of working mothers with pre school children.**[7]**

Ethnic minorities currently make up 8% of the UK workforce and this is increasing. As Ethnic Minorities have a younger age profile than the population as a whole, they are projected to account for over a half of the growth in Britain's working age population over the next decade. They are 17% of all university students and show a greater participation rate in Higher Education than the white population, though very much under-represented in the more prestigious universities and in some study areas. They also represent a fifth of all students in state funded primary and secondary schools in the UK making them all the more important to the future labour market. However, BAME groups remain under represented in management roles and those in management roles tend to be clustered in health education and public administration.**[8]** The proportion of white men working full-time is shrinking. By 2011, it is estimated that only 20% of the workforce will be white, male, able bodied and under the age of 45.**[9]** Success within the labour market is notably differential for different ethnicities with people from Bangladeshi and Pakistani heritage experiencing lower rates of employment than Black Caribbeans and Indians.

Skilled work is growing in the UK, as more and more jobs require degrees, this is resulting in skills shortages, where employers are unable to recruit the skills they need, and skills gaps where applicants for the jobs do not have the skills required. Skills shortages are increasingly occurring in high-skilled jobs, whereas skills gaps are occurring in low-skilled jobs as well. As a result many employers are turning to migrant workers to meet seasonal operating needs as well as to fill skills and labour shortages. This is particularly noticeable in rural areas where migrant workers are 33% of agricultural workers, 25% of those in fishing and 20% of those in the distribution, hotel and retail sectors.**[10]** The UK has seen a 186% growth in non-UK migrant workers in rural areas between 2003 and 2007.**[11]**

However the workplace is struggling to come to terms with this changing diversity, illustrated by disparities in rates of employment, in rates of unemployment and in the high levels of under-employment for many diversity groups **[12]:**

- Women make up almost half of the workforce but less than 10% of directors of FTSE 100 companies are women and they earn on average less than 75% of similar male incomes
- London's economic output would be £1.5 billion higher if part time employment rates for women with children in London were raised to equal those in the rest of the country

- Black, Asian or other minority ethnic graduates are less likely to secure good jobs compared to similarly qualified white graduates
- Employment rates for Bangladeshi and Pakistani men are at least 20% below those similarly qualified
- One fifth of the working age population has a disability, yet only 11% are in employment
- Government statistics show that by 2015, more than two-fifths of the workforce will be over the age of 50. People over 50 are less likely to become unemployed, but once unemployed take longer to return to work and are more likely to leave the labour force altogether

Government reports have also highlighted how people from ethnic minority communities are becoming segregated in terms of occupation and in terms of career progression. In 2003 the Cabinet Office's "Ethnic Minorities and the Labour Market Final Report" **[13]** highlighted the differentials that are occurring with regard to the employment of people from ethnic minority groups.

In terms of career progression it noted that:

"while White and Indian men have tended to maintain broadly similar rates of higher occupational attainment, with the exception of the Chinese, remaining ethnic minority groups have lower proportions of professional/managerial employment than their White and Indian peers. Similar patterns are found in respect to women ... in 2000, 16 per cent of working Indian women were in professional or managerial jobs, slightly higher than White women, for whom it was 15 per cent; while 13 per cent of working Black Caribbean women fell into this category."

The report highlighted the nature of the industries in which certain ethnic minority groups are typically found. For example, 52 per cent of male Bangladeshi workers in Britain are in the restaurant industry (compared with only 1 per cent of White males), while one in eight male Pakistani workers is a taxi driver or chauffeur (compared with a national average of one in 100). By contrast, approximately one in 20 working Indian men is a medical practitioner - almost ten times the national average. While the first two occupations offer little or no opportunities for progression, quite the reverse is true for the medical profession. This fact will influence, in very different ways, the career trajectories of Bangladeshi and Pakistani men on the one hand, and Indians on the other.

This pattern has also been proved to apply to the public sector, as recent research has shown that the numbers of people from an ethnic minority background in the upper echelons of the civil service. Senior black and Asian managers have remained at 3.5% of available positions and the

figures for local authorities are lower, with only 2.7% of all officers from an ethnic minority and an even lower figure for chief executives and executive directors.[14]

More recently, the Women and Work Commission said that the pay gap between men and women has widened to 22.6% compared to 21.9% in 2007 and are blaming stereotyping by careers advisors as one of the key reasons.[15]

These disparities indicate that whilst there has been many years of equality legislation and some very good policy and practice within the private sector to tackle discrimination, there remains persistent inequalities. This can create unnecessary tensions between different groups of people. What might be required is a more tailored policy that looks at how cohesion fits within the overall context of the organisation. Therefore not wiping away the current good practice and policy that exists, but looks at how people actually work together. The resulting effect may not tackle some of the pay and sector inequalities, but might help tackle issues around career progression. Cythnia Estlund describes how the involuntariness of the workplace can actually create positive relations: [16]

"...The very involuntariness of interactions within the workplace turns out to play a curiously constructive role in making possible the extraordinary convergence of close and regular interaction and a relatively high degree of demographic diversity...People can be forced to get along - not without friction, but with surprising success"

However, wherever workplaces and educational institutions are segregated, or simply over represented by people from one background - faith, social class, ethnicity or gender in particular - then the opportunities to interact with each other and to build trust and understanding is necessarily limited.

5. Labour Force Survey 2008, <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=1655>

6. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/working-mothers-total-has-doubled-in-past-10-years-743059.html>

7. http://www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/pressreleases/stories/2009/05_may/18/working.shtml

8. Race for Opportunity, Race to the Top: The Place of Ethnic Minority Groups Within the UK Workforce, 2009. www.bitc.org.uk

9. Will Hutton, *Working Capital: Executive Summary*, The Work Foundation, 2002
10. *Migrant Workers in Rural Areas: Briefing Paper*, Commission for Rural Communities, Cheltenham, UK, 2007
11. *State of the Countryside 2008*, Commission for Rural Communities, Cheltenham, UK
12. <http://www.lda.gov.uk/server.php?show=ConWebDoc.1484>
13. http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/cabinetoffice/strategy/assets/ethnic_minorities.pdf
14. <http://www.guardianpublic.co.uk/senior-civil-service-diversity>
15. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/8173445.stm>
16. Cynthia L. Estlund, *Working Together: How Workplace Bonds Strengthen a Diverse Democracy*, 2003

Types of Jobs

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the percentage of UK output accounted for by the manufacturing, primary and utilities has declined since the early 1980s, with manufacturing dropping from 24% of total UK output to an expected 17% in 2012. However transport, distribution and business and other services have seen steady growth. The output share of the public sector has risen from 22% to 28%.

This situation is echoed within the distribution of jobs across the labour market. In the early 1980s 23% were employed in manufacturing jobs. In 2012 that is expected to be around 10%. The Public Sector has risen from 26% to 30%, while the percentage of people working in business and other services has gone from around 16% to 28%. Interestingly, the public sector is smaller than it was in the 1960s, but has been increasing since the 1990s. Over 80% of this increase has been in health and education.

The structure of the workplace has also changed considerably, largely due to organisational and technological change. Whilst the number of managerial jobs is rising, there is an increasing lack of demand for the skilled trades and administrative, clerical and secretarial occupations. With the increase in low quality jobs also being noted, we are seeing the rise of an 'hour-glass economy' overloaded at top and bottom with a hollowing out in the middle, particularly around those 'jobs for life' that were the backbone of employment for so many communities.

These changes could create considerable impact on cohesion issues as employees' relationships within a particular workplace become transient as their time is limited within an organisation. This

could result in weaker ties to other colleagues and less effort being put in to getting on with fellow workers. The insecurity issue also poses difficulties in terms of 'blame culture' when things go wrong, or workers feel threatened by changes attributed to globalisation, such as the recent issue over "British Jobs for British Workers".^[17] Tensions arising could manifest in both workplace and community.

17. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2009/jan/30/brown-british-jobs-workers>

Commuting to work and length of work

With the environment a key focus in modern debate, more attention has been given to the relationship between where people live and where people work. This has exposed differing relationships between work and community depending on where you live.

Out of the 29 million people employed in the UK, 5 million ^[18] commute daily to and from a fixed place of work with the remainder working from home or as mobile workers. While 61% of people still live and work within the same local authority, long distance commuting (i.e. trips of over 50 miles) is on the rise, with 12% of all long distance travel attributable to commuting.^[19] The UK average commuting time from home to work is currently 27 minutes, however one in ten workers commute for more than an hour with 3% of commuters travelling for over an hour and a half one-way. The distance that workers commute differs considerably by region with Wales having the UK's lowest average of 20 minutes. Most regions have a commute of under the UK average of 27 minutes, with the exception of London which has an average of 43 minutes.

In terms of amount of time spent in the workplace, the UK has some of the longest working hours in Europe, despite the fact that average hours/week have been decreasing since the mid-1990s. In 2008 the average UK working week stood at 37 hours ^[20], although over a fifth of the workforce work more than 45 hours and four million work more than 48 hours a week, the cut-off point for the European Working Time Directive.

Although the working hours/week ratio in the UK is high in comparison to EU standards, it is worth noting that other developed countries such as Australia, Japan and the United States have more long-hours workers than the UK. UK workers also have less paid leave on average than their EU

counterparts (20 days per year compared to 25-30 in most EU countries) but again do better than Japan (17 days) and the United States (10 days).[21]

An independent study of long hours working published by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) found that those working the longest hours in the UK are men aged 30-49 with children and employed in the private sector. Unlike other EU countries, where people working long hours are most likely to be found working in hotels and restaurants, in the UK they are more commonly found in manufacturing. [22]

The issue of commuting lends a particular dynamic to the link between cohesion and workplace. This increasing distance travelled to work and the amount of time spent at work leaves a lot of questions about potential impact on the relationship that a workplace will have with the community within which it is based. On one hand it is clear that where an employee lives and works in a particular neighbourhood they will have a stronger interest in the dynamic between the community and the employer. Research carried out for the US Corporation for National and Community Service shows a clear link between the amount of voluntary activity taking place in a US city and the average length of commute taken by a city's citizens.[23] This may then be demonstrated by greater employee involvement in specific local interactions, such as commitment to charity fundraising, volunteering within local communities, links to local schools and hospitals and so on.

However those employees that commute a considerable distance now find themselves involved with two communities, and their time split between them. Increasingly people, particularly in London and to a lesser extent the South East, are finding that their interactions at work are with completely different sets of people to those they live next door to.[24] They engage at work with colleagues from a dispersed area and interact, during breaks and after work, with shops, bars and cafes that they do not develop long-term interests in.

It is also worth noting the impact that commuting has on who can and cannot access particular workplaces as a result of preparedness to commute. The GLA's 2008 "Women in London's Economy" report noted that increasingly London's higher childcare and transport costs, and its occupational mix, make the costs of working in London greater than the benefits for a larger proportion of women. Lone mothers and those with low skills are particularly disadvantaged.[25]

19. DfT National Travel Survey 2008
20. Labour Force Survey 2008
21. CIPD factsheet on uk working hours.
<http://www.cipd.co.uk/subjects/hrpract/hoursandholidays/ukworkhrs>
22. *ibid*
23. Research Brief: "Volunteering in America Research Highlights" July 2008, Corporation for National and Community Service, http://www.volunteeringinamerica.gov/assets/resources/VIA_Brief_FINAL.pdf
24. See for example research carried out for the Commission on Rural Communities on the impact of being a "commuter town" on the Yorkshire town of Spofforth
<http://www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/files/CRC09Spofforth.pdf>
25. Women in London's Economy, GLA Report, 2008
http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/economic_unit/docs/womenlondoneconomy2008-sum.pdf

The impact of the recession

There is an increasing recognition around the impact that the recession may have on community cohesion. Increasingly in the media, there is a notion that the immigrant worker from Eastern Europe and the British worker are unable to work side by side because their wants and needs vary so much. With the recession affecting the livelihood of thousands, this gap will surely close, possibly resulting in additional tension (protests were held notably in February outside the Lindsey Oil Refinery leading to the 'British jobs for British workers') but also perhaps leading to greater social contact between different groups. However, the way immigrants find work is often not through agencies but through gangmasters, who exploit those who come to them looking for work.^[26] Because of this, opportunity isn't shared equally, and again, prospects for contact and communication are limited.

Recently, there has been an exodus of British workers taking up jobs abroad, in nations such as Italy ^[27] where the employment prospects are greater. How this will affect the British labour market is yet to be seen. Will Eastern European workers continue to see Britain as land of opportunity or will the current trends of immigrants returning home and the sheer lack of jobs available mean that there is increased contact between British workers now forced to take up the most menial jobs and the minority immigrants who remain in the country?

There is great potential for a correlation between the recession and a rise in tensions between different groups, as jobs become less secure and communities struggle. A culture of blaming 'the other' for problems like unemployment is certainly a major concern for the future of community

relations in the upcoming months. Councils and local governments have started to recognise the massive potential damages unemployment and recession can have on local communities: 'the economic downturn will affect our communities in adverse ways. It is at times such as this that it is important to build and nurture resilience in our communities and neighbourhoods...it is well documented that at times of economic downturn the conditions for extremism to thrive become more conducive.'**[28]** This fear is reflected in a recent study: **[29]**

Most councils report that the recession has not yet had an impact on community cohesion, but a range of indicators, from growing unemployment to increased use of council services, is evidence of an increasing impact on many local communities.

The government has made a commitment to attempting to protect the interests of minority groups over the coming months, it 'will launch a major review of the labour market to prevent "at risk" groups such as women, ethnic minorities, the elderly and disabled workers, being "left behind" as Britain sinks deeper into an economic downturn.'**[30]** Clearly the government recognises the real fear that economic hardship will deepen rifts in communities, however, it needs to be mindful that any notion of preferential treatment or positive discrimination is likely to meet with huge hostility from those who may be out of work or feel somehow neglected by those in authority. In difficult times, the government has to be especially wary of creating unnecessary tensions between groups.

The official word from government is equally as cautious and tentative with regard to cohesion. Sadiq Khan, the former Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, has spoken about the need for solidarity and togetherness in worrying economic times.

'In difficult economic circumstances you can go one of two ways. On one hand, you could get people worried about access to public services and jobs. At worst this could create competition between different groups that could corrode local cohesion...This is a challenge that calls for local ingenuity, flexibility, working across public bodies, sharing resources and expertise, forging links with charities, community and voluntary groups. And very often the answer doesn't lie in creating extra meetings but making sure that existing events people already care about - whether it's about local food, parenting or sports facilities - are designed in such a way to bring different people together.'**[31]**

Indeed, there does not appear to be a problem with local government understanding the seriousness of the situation, 'In a Local Government Association survey of the impact of the economic slowdown on local authorities, almost half of the shire district councils responding said

that they thought that local community cohesion would slightly deteriorate over the next twelve months as a result of the economic downturn.'^[32] A more pressing issue, therefore, is to make sure that business is aware of its responsibilities with regard to fairness and cohesion.

There is of course the worry that when firms are having to downsize and concentrate all their energies on staying in business, the issue of equality, diversity and cohesion in the workplace could be seen as lacking importance. An article in 'Here is the City' highlights this concern: **"With HR departments under pressure due to staff cuts, insiders say that initiatives like diversity are becoming 'nice to haves', rather than something which is business imperative.'** ^[33] In tough economic times, if the only notable positive for diversity and cohesion is its economic benefits, then its relevance and importance can be questioned. Organisations such as Business in the Community (BiTC) are rising to this challenge by arguing that the case for cohesion is not centred solely around business benefits, but also around the benefits for society and communities. In their 2009 response to the recession BiTC clearly state that **"If businesses want to survive and thrive, it is people, and the workplaces that support, empower and nurture them that will largely determine success or failure."**^[34]

26. See BBC article "Migrant Workers Face New Slavery" at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/6401365.stm>

27. <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article5678922.ece>

28. http://councilminutes.bradford.gov.uk/council_minutes/docs/executive/Exec13JanDocBWappB.pdf

29. <http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/aio/9215423> - IDeA and LGA Recession Survey of the Economic Slowdown on Local Authorities 2008

30. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/we-will-shield-minorities-from-the-recession-vows-minister-1634772.html>

31. Speech by Sadiq Khan MP at the University of Buckinghamshire, High Wycombe, 12 November 2008. <http://www.communities.gov.uk/speeches/corporate/sadiqcommunitycohesion>

32. <http://applications.huntsdc.gov.uk/moderngov/Published/C00000284/M00003179/AI00026762/Economicdownturnappendix.pdf>

33. http://news.hereisthecity.com/news/business_news/8175.cntns

34. The Responsible Workplace: How to survive and thrive, BiTC, 2009

4. What people told us

From the **case studies**, interviews and focus groups we researched for this toolkit, we discovered some key issues that arise for organisations in tackling cohesion in the workplace.

Some of the work organisations have undertaken to tackle cohesion centre around

- Removing barriers
- Improving understanding
- Facilitating interactions and building relations
- Promoting cohesion outside the workplace

These issues are explored further in subsequent pages.

Language policy

The issue of a common language is crucial to how people feel within the workplace and from our evidence, is quite position specific. There have been instances identified in our research where the lack of a common language has created feelings of alienation and separation.

This has been overcome to some extent by requesting staff members to use a common language and only to speak English during work time. There are English speaking courses available for staff members who are not confident English speakers and the 'buddying up' with colleagues who do speak English is a positive way to aid understanding and cohesion between colleagues. This has improved interaction, camaraderie and trust within the workplace.

Bradgate Bakery: Language Support

Project summary: Bradgate Bakery employs an incredibly diverse workforce and recognises that a broad based skills pool enables them to remain competitive and successful in a highly demanding chilled food manufacturing market. Sixty five percent of Bradgate Bakery's workforce lives in and around the LE4 postcode. Located at the heart of the community, offering long-term sustainable employment opportunities is supported by English language training for new staff that need assistance. This helps the local economy and community cohesion. The company has developed its own culture that encourages all workers to leave their religion, politics, culture and prejudices at the factory gate. As part of this culture they:

- support workers to develop their language skills so no one is excluded or isolated
- collectively celebrate all the major religious festivals - Christmas, Diwali and Eid
- have mixed teams on the production lines so the staff cover for each other during the festivals

Use of networks

From our research, networks have provided a very useful way of bringing groups of like-minded people together and creates an environment of acceptability of difference.

Networks are a good way for businesses to learn about perceptions within the workforce and if there are cohesion issues relating to specific groups of people. They are a useful mechanism for informing and learning and should be used proactively by businesses to learn more about their workforce. However, they can in some instances create and reinforce divisions within the workplace and the feeling that one group has privileged access or influence.

To ensure networks work effectively, it is important they remain independent but operate within a governance structure. See **How do I cohesion proof my organisation** for useful information on governance for networks and the case study below which shows how effective networks can be in aiding cohesion in the workplace.

Deloitte's networks

Project summary: "Deloitte" is the brand under which tens of thousands of dedicated professionals in independent firms throughout the world collaborate to provide audit, consulting, financial advisory, risk management and tax services to selected clients. With 11,000 people across the UK and Switzerland, Deloitte has the broadest and deepest range of skills of any business advisory organisation.

Deloitte's internal diversity networks connect partners and employees who share affinity indicators such as gender, race, religion and sexual orientation. With more than 2,500 members, these groups provide their people with a shared sense of belonging, help them balance their working and non-working lives - and help to build bridges between their workplace and the world outside the firm. Diversity means more than focusing on attracting and retaining women and people from ethnic minorities.

Structural and physical divisions

Where people are physically placed within an organisation is crucial to how they feel about their role and status. For example, in some instances - for perfectly good organisational reasons - lower levels of staff have been grouped together on lower levels of the organisation (including basements), with professional staff on higher floors. Such physical separation can create feelings of resentment and alienation and reduce the possibility of interaction and trust.

The use of space is therefore important to how people feel within an organisation and impacts upon cohesion within the workforce. However staff may be structurally separated as a result of labour market and other factors. For example, some businesses have nightshifts comprised of Eastern European workers and dayshifts of British workers.

More often the divisions revolve around the type of work and the skills required, with ethnic and gender divisions being institutionalised. In these cases, the divisions may simply reinforce those found in the local community or wider society, but may well inhibit interaction and limit the development of cooperation and trust.

Integration/Open discussion

There has been a general concern about how to integrate new staff into the workplace, especially workers with different backgrounds to the existing team. This has also applied to the integration of staff as they were promoted and moved into a new team.

The integration of staff at all levels requires a structured and informed process in which existing staff are involved. An easy and effective way is to ensure the induction programme for new staff includes integration processes. This could be through a formalised meet and greet for the new staff member, with an informal 'first lunch' provided for new staff to meet existing staff, to an ongoing buddying system.

Equally there should be systems in place to ensure existing staff members are aware and accepting of the new person. Open communication about team dynamics, where the new person fits into the team and roles, will all help integrating the new person and aiding cohesion.

Dealing with contentious issues

There are inevitably occasions where contentious issues in the news or in the local community are talked about in the workplace and may lead to very divided views and even hostility between groups. Issues such as 9/11 or local Far Right campaigns have all had an impact on 'conversations' in the workplace. And more individual and personal issues relating to the equality strands (age, disability, gender (including transgender) , race, religion or belief and sexual orientation) have also been evident.

Experience suggests that the impact of these issues can be tackled through an open and honest debate, facilitated within the boundaries of normal professional behaviour found in most

workplaces, rather than being exploited by informal grapevines and rumour mills. These issues do need to be raised with some care, but are generally better out in the open than festering below the surface.

One option is to ask staff members who are affected to talk openly about the issues relating concerns, perhaps on both sides, but demonstrating that they can be considered in a mature way which promotes respect for all points of view. Some businesses actively promote discussion of the issues of the day through 'talking point' cards set on tables at breaks and lunchtimes. The key issue is to ensure there are parameters set for the discussions and that everyone is aware that respect for all is integral to the debate. Small but powerful interventions such as those described, help dispel any myths or stereotypes about people and encourage people to integrate and talk openly about difference

How well are we doing?

The way forward

According to Trevor Phillips, Chair, Equality and Human Rights Commission, whilst Britain has changed in terms of diversity, the workplace has not moved enough in parallel.

"...While the working population has become more diverse, in many important ways the rules that govern our working lives have remained - our working practices have not evolved to keep pace with the rapid changes in wider society"[11](#)

But our research shows that some workplaces are ahead of the game and that more generally, things are beginning to change. Equality and diversity policy and practice is taken very seriously by businesses and there are some very good examples of how businesses have incorporated new approaches to ensure everyone is treated equally, with the same opportunities. Clearly, given that inequality remains within the workforce (age, disability, gender (including transgender), race, religion or belief and sexual orientation), there is still more to be done. There is also a need to take the debate further and also to focus on cohesion in the workplace.

Our research shows that the workplace provides a great opportunity to address cohesion issues. People are 'forced' to work together and therefore need to have some level of understanding of each other. This is not to say workplace tensions do not exist and never will, however if we harness the potential the workplace can bring to cohesion, this is not only beneficial to businesses but can also impact positively on wider society.

With communications making the world seem a lot smaller and the impact of globalisation, the way we do business is fundamentally changing. There has been an increase in the number of markets that can be accessed, the outsourcing of departments abroad has become more widespread and the movement of people working across the world has meant that all businesses have had to become much more culturally literate. It has encouraged organisations to look at their core values and adapt them to these changes.

There is now a need to adapt current policy and practice to reflect the cohesion agenda rather than sticking to previous approaches to equality and diversity. Flexibility and adaptability to the marketplace will become key to pursuing cohesion practice, both within the workforce and by more generally working with difference and building commonalities to ensure that business and societal goals are in harmony.

"Companies must respect values and differences and reflect these in order for employees and customers to be able to recognise themselves in the company. These values include cultural and religious values. This is becoming core business for companies and will for many require a change in business approach" [2]

1. An Equal Future, The Guardian, 3rd October 2009

2. The Business of Muslim Integration: The Formation of Islamic Civil Society in Non-Muslim Countries, Jeffrey Schwerzel Lecture at St. Ethelburga's on October 27 2004

5. Case studies

Introduction

A number of businesses and public sector employers are beginning to understand workforce cohesion and to develop good practice, with the public sector carrying out the equality duties laid down by legislation. These are providing examples of improved performance, reduced tensions and better morale within the workplace.

The development of these case studies has highlighted the detailed work that organisations like **Business in the Community** and Skills for Business [1] are doing with the different Sector Skills Councils,[2] to establish a baseline in relation to diversity. This is a pre-requisite to addressing the issues of cohesion in the workplace. A report [3] conducted by Skills Active and Skills for Justice identified the current position in relation to diversity-management skills, ageing workforce, gender imbalance, minority imbalance, migrant workers and other issues. Analysis of the Sector Skills Councils' work shows there are different challenges faced by them. For example, the majority of them believe age, gender, race and migrant workers are seen as issues for them to address. Interestingly only four out of the 24 Sector Skills Councils see addressing the issue of management skills - 'Knowledge/actions regarding the delivery of equality and diversity to the workforce and maintaining equality and diversity in the workplace appears as one of the skills lacking/required by front, middle and senior managers and supervisors' as a gap in the sector.

However, we have identified a number of good practice case studies that are addressing, in some way, the issues of business and cohesion without necessarily recognising and classifying it as such.

Our case studies: Summary analysis

To date, over 20 different case studies have been identified and captured. Of these, the majority are from large businesses within the retail and service sectors. The majority of them cross cut across a number of themes:

Workforce cohesion eg. BT Reaching Out; Eversheds Unlocked; UNISON's Challenging racism in the workplace; Four Seasons Hotel Dublin; Deloitte's Diversity networks; Royal Mail; TUC/MCB initiative

Labour market review eg. North West Development Agency's developing the evidence base; Business in the Community's Code of conduct on employing migrant workers in Great Britain; Enterprise4All; The Co-operative Group's Age diversity

Responsible business eg. British Airways; Enterprise as a catalyst for community cohesion; The Co-operative Group's Community funding

Cohesion and the marketplace eg. The Co-operative Group's Diverse customers, Asda, Eversheds' Increasing understanding of different faiths

Additionally, we have identified a number of initiatives/organisations that are working with the business sector to address particular issues in relation to cohesion. These initiatives have been delivered by organisations like the Regional Development Agencies that have a broader remit.

After analysing the findings we have developed a number of sub-themes that more closely define the type of intervention that has been identified. There are four sub-themes:

Removing barriers eg. language/skills gap/retirement age. Case studies: Bradgate Bakery; Four Seasons Hotel; The Co-operative Group's Age diversity

Improving understanding eg. information on different faiths and cultures. Case studies: Royal Mail, Eversheds' INcreasing understanding of different faiths; TUC/MCB initiative

Facilitating interactions and building relations eg. events and activities both in and outside of the workplace, support networks/clubs and societies. Case studies: Deloitte's Diversity networks; Bradgate Bakery; Four Seasons Hotel

Promoting cohesion outside of the workplace eg. activities aimed at the wider community usually through volunteering and financial support schemes. Case studies: British Airways; The Co-operative Group's Community funding

Interestingly, most companies approached have activities such as employee volunteering and financial support for community initiatives but very few saw the potential impact which such interventions could have on the local community. For example, we were not able to identify any examples of where the business had an audit by ethnicity of beneficiary community organisation that have been supported through their employee volunteering scheme.

The case studies referred to above are summarised by theme.

Workforce cohesion case studies

Bradgate Bakery Language Support

Bradgate Bakery employs an incredibly diverse workforce and recognises that a broad based skills pool enables them to remain competitive and successful in a highly demanding chilled food manufacturing market. 65% of Bradgate Bakery's workforce lives in and around the LE4 postcode. Located at the heart of the community, offering long term, sustainable employment opportunities is supported by English language training for new staff that need assistance. This helps the local economy and community cohesion. The company has developed its own culture that encourages all workers to leave their religion, politics, culture and prejudices at the factory gate. As part of this culture they:

- support workers to develop their language skills so no one is excluded or isolated;
- collectively celebrate all the major religious festivals- Christmas, Diwali and Eid;
- have mixed teams on the production lines so the staff cover for each during the festivals.

BT People Networks

At BT, people networks are a vital part of the corporate infrastructure. The company understands that people who belong to a network will have a more in-depth knowledge of the requirements of that minority group. There are many opportunities for BT and the networks to share that knowledge. Whilst the majority of network activity is undertaken in member's personal time, BT supports the chairs of networks to undertake a certain percentage of the role during working hours.

The networks are very influential in the service, marketing and product development roles of the business. For example the LGBT network, Kaleidoscope, has worked closely with the Retail Marketing group to identify possibilities within the LGBT marketplace for BT's products. Other networks have similarly influential roles. By talking to Able2 the disability network, BT can understand the issues uppermost in peoples' minds, for example a recent knowledge call on dementia awareness reflected the importance of this issue to a significant number of BT people, their families and BT customers.

BT believes that this dialogue offers an excellent way for BT and the networks to learn from each other and for the company to develop a deeper understanding of minority groups and the issues which they feel are important.

People Networks make a valuable contribution to facilitating interaction and understanding between different employees. The company has a very clear set of guidance on the governance of these networks to ensure they achieve their objectives and are working to improve the engagement of employees within a range of networks covering different faiths, ethnicities, interests and activities.

There are 10 People Networks which are open to all employees. Current estimations show that around 7-8,000 employees are engaged in networks with the largest being the Women's network with over 3,500 members.

BT Reaching Out

Until recently, the UK had been experiencing the longest period of sustained economic growth. The company has noted that during this time although there are more people in work than ever before the number of people in the labour market must continue to grow. The company has recognised that they need to attract people who may be currently excluded from the labour market.

As a response the Company has developed the Reaching Out initiative. This initiative has three strands- Searching wide, Selecting In, and Changing Lives. The aim of the initiative is to look in places that are often overlooked and beyond the normal comfortable recruitment routes.

Deloitte's Networks

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With 11,000 people across the UK and Switzerland, Deloitte has the broadest and deepest range of skills of any business advisory organisation.

Deloitte's internal diversity networks connect partners and employees who share affinity indicators such as gender, race, religion and sexual orientation. With more than 2,500 members, these groups provide their people with a shared sense of belonging, help them balance their working and non-working lives - and help build bridges between their workplace and the world outside the firm. Diversity means more than focusing on attracting and retaining women and people from ethnic minorities.

Four Seasons Hotel

Building communities is one of its three corporate values of this international business.

The Four Seasons Hotel in Ireland has taken a proactive approach to diversity management in light of the 365, full and part-time employees from 56 nations.

Activities include a welcome pack for new arrivals, support for settling in – advice on accommodation, assistance to secure PPS (NI) number and work permits where required. They hold national theme days in the employee restaurant and social activities including cultural evenings such as Asian dance, Lithuanian food and music, Irish dancing and Chinese New Year Celebrations.

During Ramadan a room is allocated in the hotel so Muslim workers can break their fast together. Also a prayer room is made available. Work shifts are adjusted so that they are able to fast with breaks planned to coincide with sun rise and sun setting.

The Hotel was the winner of the inaugural Hospitality Diversity Awards in 2005. The aim of the award is to reward cultural integration, recognise the work done to welcome international workers to Ireland.

Royal Mail

Royal Mail Group is unique in reaching everyone in the UK through its mails, Post Office and parcels businesses – which directly employ over 176,000 people in the UK. Every working day Royal Mail processes and delivers over 75 million items to 28 million addresses. These items pass through a network of 70 mail centres, 8 regional distribution centres and 3,000 delivery offices. Then a fleet of over 30,000 red vehicles and 33,000 bicycles help them to deliver them to their final destination.

Royal Mail Group is totally committed to diversity in the workplace. They have a Head of Diversity & Inclusion based in each business unit specially dedicated to promoting diversity and implementing activities and policies across the business to support this.

They have a very comprehensive website dedicated to diversity. The website is one step in making a truly diverse workforce benefit both their customers and the organisation. The website aims to celebrate their rich mix of people and encourage employees to learn more about each other's diverse ways of life. It has a number of interesting features like 'Test your knowledge on cultures and religions by answering the 20 multiple choice questions' in a protocol section and a section on 'Steps to take towards better understanding'.

TUC/MCB

The TUC and the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) have been working jointly, ever since the London bombings in July 2005, in support of workplace justice and against Islamophobia.

They have done a number of things including:

- publishing a joint statement in 2006 pledging to work together to encourage more Muslims to join trade unions, encourage better community relations and combat Islamophobia, both within workplaces and in society at large;
- MCB Secretary General Dr Muhammad Abdul Bari addressed the TUC congress in September 2006, and the TUC General Secretary was guest speaker at the MCB's Tenth Annual General meeting in June 2007
- joint seminar in April 2007 on the theme of employment and Islamophobia;
- The 'Building Community alliances' joint-event of the TUC Organising Academy and the MCB brought together representatives from unions and London mosques in March 2008;
- In August 2009 Radio Ramadan bulletins - Promoting Muslim engagement with Unions

UNISON: Challenging racism in the workplace

Workers of BME heritage are more likely than white colleagues to be disciplined at work, to experience harassment and to work in junior or temporary positions. This has impacted negatively on cohesion levels within these organisations.

More than 30 years of legislation to outlaw race discrimination has not, in itself made enough of a material difference to protect these groups of workers, but the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 has opened up new doors for Black workers, trade unionists and for Unison, one of the leading unions for public sector employees, to deliver equality.

Unison's Challenging Racism in the Workplace course harnesses the full force of the law to improve the quality of Black people's working lives and to improve relations between workers and employers in order to deliver equality in the workplace

Labour market review case studies

Business in the Community

Business in the Community's (BitC) Migrant Worker Group produced a paper on the challenges and opportunities posed by the migrant labour force in rural areas. The group comprises of 24 businesses and organisation including Samworth

Brothers, Asda, Sainsbury's, Tesco, Marks & Spencer, Co-operative Group and HSBC.

As part of its work the group has produced a voluntary code on employing migrant workers for employers to sign up to.

The Code has six elements:

- Recruitment e.g. take care that in recruiting from a country they do not create a shortage of local skills;
- Travel and accommodation e.g. where possible, support migrant workers in finding suitable accommodation;
- Integration into the host community e.g. seek to build a sense of belonging, social integration and acceptance by the local community, through social and sporting events;
- Providing for the needs of those who speak little or no English, ensuring that the cultural needs of minority ethnic people are met e.g. encourage and support migrant workers to learn English as a second language;
- Preventing and addressing racial discrimination and harassment in the workplace e.g. by promoting a culture that recognises, values, and respects diversity;
- Affording fair treatment in the workplace. e.g. ensuring that workers are provided with a copy of, and have understood, their employment contract/ terms and conditions. Provide an explanation of these in the worker's first language where required.

Co-op Group Age Diversity

The Co-operative Group is the UK's largest mutual retailer. It is the fifth largest food retailer, the third largest retail pharmacy chain, the number one provider of funeral services and the largest independent travel business. It also has strong market positions in banking and insurance. The Group employs 123,000 people, has 3 million members and around 4,900 retail outlets.

The Co-operative Group has gone much further than the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations require and has removed the contractual retirement age altogether. This means that just because an employee reaches a certain age, they are not obliged to retire if they don't want to. It simply doesn't make sense to retire an employee just because of their age; all that should matter is competency to do their job and how they do it rather than misplaced stereotypes about older employees. It also means that the Group benefits massively by retaining valuable skills and experience that would otherwise have been lost.

This means that employees can now choose to continue working past 65 if they wish to do so, giving them much greater flexibility. From a pensions perspective employees are able to continue in the scheme past 65 and it is possible to draw a pension whilst continuing to work for the organisation.

Enterprise 4 All

The Asian Business Federation (ABF) is a not for profit organisation established in

2000. It is now the UK's largest Asian trade organisation representing, supporting and connecting thousands of members from across the UK. The organisation has many non-BME members – approximately 10% of its membership.

Alongside the development of the ABF, Enterprise4All was formally established in 2007 as a delivery agency for the different business support programmes targeted primarily at BME individuals but with a firm intent to work with other hard-to-reach groups and communities in the North West.

In recent times, E4All has gone through a process of change to become a more all-inclusive support agency. Under the leadership of Chief Executive Ilyas Munshi, who joined the company in April 2008, E4All now assists a wide range of under-represented groups including not only people from BME communities but also women entrepreneurs, people with disabilities, the over 50s and so on.

North West Development Agency

In September 2007, the NWDA commissioned Experian to undertake research to identify the key trends in demography, migration and diversity in the Northwest, the opportunities that these trends present, and the ways in which policymakers should be responding to these trends. This research has identified five key trends that are significantly impacting the Northwest – the ageing of the Northwest population; internal migration flows; international migration; growing cultural diversity and inequality of opportunity. The study put forward nine strategic priorities for the Integrated Regional Strategy- including: ensuring sufficient and appropriate ESOL provision and addressing the unique barriers faced by different minority groups.

The research findings have been used to feed into the Principles and Issues papers that have been prepared for consultation in preparation for the first Integrated Regional Strategy

Responsible business case studies

British Airways

Originally the architect's office during the building of BA's headquarters at Waterside, the British Airways Community Learning Centre at Heathrow has welcomed more than 50,000 visitors since it opened in 1999.

The centre primarily provides learning programmes for schools and community groups in and around the Heathrow area. The programmes focus on customer service training, languages, global and environmental education and ICT. All are designed around the theme of British Airways core business of aviation.

A 240 acre parkland site which is the largest public parkland that has been developed since Victorian times is used to enhance the delivery of the environmental education programmes for young people. The centre also has links with the British Airways Museum and hosts artefacts dedicated to the history of British Airways.

Co-op Community funding

The Community Fund is the Co-op group's grants scheme that helps local communities throughout the UK. Since the group started the initiative in 1997, thousands of clubs, community groups and self-help organisations have benefited.

The way the scheme works is by committed members of The Co-operative Group who want to help improve the lives of others, donate part or all of their share of the profits. These members have already raised millions of pounds each year for all kinds of community projects.

In line with the democratic values of the business the decision on which groups to support is made by members. There are over 50 Area Committees made up of democratically elected members of The Co-operative Group who meet and decide on applications from their specific area. With their local knowledge, they are tasked with making the tough decisions on which projects to fund. These meetings are generally held every other month.

Enterprise as a catalyst for cohesion

Enterprise4All has commissioned a detailed report examining the role of entrepreneurship in promoting community cohesion in Whalley Range in Blackburn. It is entitled "Enterprise as a Catalyst for Community Cohesion - A Research Study into Inter-Community Collaboration through Business". It compares the area with other areas of the North West, (Rusholme Manchester, Chinatown Manchester and Chinatown Liverpool) and seeks to provide an insight into how these areas gained and have maintained their profile, and how their commercial activity has contributed to community cohesion.

Case studies illustrated that community cohesion is an evolving process and can take many years. However the influence of commercial activity can catalyse the process and offer the resident community the opportunity to engage with the wider community and therefore advance the aims of cohesion more rapidly. This activity can, however, create new challenges. There was unanimous agreement by the consulted groups that enterprise is a key to improved interaction between communities.

Eversheds 'Give and Gain' Day

Eversheds 'Give and Gain' day is based around Business in the Community's annual employee volunteering event. Eversheds staff were joined by volunteers from across the business community working in teams with schools and community organisations on projects aimed at improving cities. The activities aimed to give back to the communities in which they work in a range of ways from helping children raise their reading skills through literacy programmes to raising awareness of work opportunities.

Over 400 members of staff took part in 41 projects community projects worldwide.

Eversheds Unlocked

Eversheds is taking part in the College of Law/ Sutton Trust's joint venture called Pathway to Law. Within Eversheds it is known as 'Eversheds Unlocked'. This programme is designed to give young people (aged 16-18) who have potential and an interest in law, but who normally would not consider university due to social, economic and /or other cultural backgrounds, the support to successfully apply to university to study for a degree .

The three day programme is designed to not only 'demystify law' and what a career in law (at Eversheds) could mean to them, but how it could help them achieve the things they want in life, along with looking at the skills they might need to develop and challenges they might have to overcome to achieve the success they want.

Cohesion and the marketplace

Asda

ASDA is one of the largest supermarket chains in the UK with 356 stores. In 1999 the business became part of the Wal-Mart retail group. They currently employ around 170,000 people in the stores and depots nationwide.

The company has a very strong commitment to diversity both in the workplace and the supply chain.

The company has recognised the importance of having a diverse and integrated workforce and therefore actively seeks to recruit from to reflect the local community in which the store is located. The company has a number of ways ensuring that the workforce is integrated and cohesive, for example, celebrating different festivals.

ASDA has also introduced an extensive ethnic food ranges across a number of their stores. The company has achieved very significant sales growth of over 110% by identifying and working with ethnic minority suppliers to expand their supplier base. Innovatively, rather than simply buying out failing franchises, ASDA has helped small ethnic minority suppliers to expand and thrive to meet the needs of the company's growing customer base.

Co-op Diverse Customers

The Co-operative Group is the UK's largest mutual retailer. It is the fifth largest food retailer, the third largest retail pharmacy chain, the number one provider of funeral services and the largest independent travel business. It also has strong market positions in banking and insurance. The Group employs 123,000 people, has 3 million members and around 4,900 retail outlets.

As well as delivering on its operational and financial goals, the Co-operative Group aims to deliver on its social goals, playing an active part in supporting local communities and the wider world.

The group's funeral business has taken a pro-active approach to the diverse ethnic communities in which it operates to increase the number of funerals from non-Christian backgrounds. It did so by successfully bringing together the

knowledge of the funeral business with their Black and Minority Ethnic Membership Network so that they could effectively engage with multi-faith communities in South-East England. The measures taken included:

- Refurbishment of the Hounslow Funeralcare branch to better support the needs of their diverse client base
- Multilingual literature and website pages giving details of the services in Punjabi, Gujarati, Urdu and Hindi
- A cultural awareness staff training programme
- A suite of new products and services aimed at ethnic minority communities

Eversheds increasing understanding

Eversheds is one of the largest full service law firms in the world with nearly 5,500 colleagues globally. The workforce is very diverse, in terms of gender 64% are female and, in terms of ethnicity over 10% are non white in the UK. Additionally all of the major faiths are represented in the workforce. Being an international firm both the client base and supplier chain are also diverse.

The business has a number of practical measures that support its commitment to diversity and in particular increasing workers understanding of different firms. A publication *Belief in Diversity – A guide to different faiths in our workplace* has been produced covering the main faiths. This includes details on beliefs, festivals, traditions, dress. There is also a section on answers to questions that colleagues may have e.g. Will prayer times have an impact on work arrangements? When are the main festivals? What are the ramifications for managers? In the last section there is a named contact in the business with which colleagues talk to for further information about the religion.

6. How do I cohesion proof my organisation?

Here are a list of things to do, and not do, to help you think about cohesion in the workplace.

Do

1. Undertake an audit/review of the workforce to establish the background of all employees. This will help you to get a picture of your organisation but you will also need to find out how these groups relate to each other and whether tensions exist within your workforce. This will enable you to identify and understand the cohesion issues faced by the company.

How?

- Use informal networks, questionnaires, staff surveys, the intranet and ask your staff to take part. Make sure you reach all sections of the workforce.
- Explain why you are doing this and create spaces for your staff to speak freely and confidentially so you can get a full picture of the issues that might affect your organisation.
- Include questions that cover all aspects of the six equality strands (age, disability, gender (including transgender), race, religion or belief and sexual orientation).
- Ensure visible leadership from the senior management team and a nominated person to take on responsibility to lead the review and to make recommendations on actions required to address cohesion issues.

2. Engage with the workforce directly or through representative bodies such as trade unions, to ensure that problems on the ground are identified and dealt with quickly.

A good mechanism for engaging with your workforce is through employee networks. Having employee networks are a great opportunity to allow like-minded people to come together and discuss issues that affect them in the workplace. It is important when setting up networks that governance arrangements are set by employers and that the networks do not create or reinforce divisions. Our **network pages** have more detailed information on networks.

BT People Networks is a good example of this engagement through networks.

3. People need to be able to communicate across the entire organisation and that means ensuring a common language within the workforce.

How?

- Have a clear language policy, agreed with employees.

- Offer English language training for staff (perhaps supported by, or part of, other local schemes).
- Try partnering up through buddying schemes, to raise the confidence of non-English speakers and to break down any barriers and encourage cohesion.
- Ensure the whole workforce understands the benefits of a common language in the workforce in terms of improved communication and interaction.

Bradgate Bakery implemented a language policy which has helped the organisation break down language barriers.

4. Seek support and advice to address any of the different aspects of cohesion and their impact on the workplace and the wider community.

How?

- Build links with community and faith leaders.
- Get advice and support from local agencies - no business is an island and your problems are almost certain to be found elsewhere, or even the result of wider societal divisions.

See the **useful links** section for further details of support and resources.

5. Recognise and celebrate projects both inside and outside of the workplace that your business is involved in that address any aspects of cohesion.

How?

- Produce newsletters/blogs/information boards that highlight internal and external projects that have a cohesion impact. This might be from CSR programmes to recognising the benefits of a buddy scheme.
- Offer lunchtime or break talks on different issues and utilise your staff. For example, talks on understanding different faiths, exploding myths and stereotypes etc.

Eversheds 'Give and Gain' day celebrates involvement in projects outside of the workplace

6. Review initiatives such as employee volunteering, employee giving and grant awards to ensure they support cohesion and that they also encourage and facilitate interactions between people of different backgrounds. The **Co-operative Group's Community Funding** project does this.

7. Promote integration of teams/shifts if they are dominated by people of one background or separated by the physical arrangements of the workplace. Make sure the importance of integration in the workforce and what benefits it will bring to them is explained (eg. higher morale, getting on better with your colleagues etc). **Bradgate Bakery** have addressed this issue.

8. Undertake a review of facilities such as staff canteens/restaurants, to ensure the layout and the menu are inclusive and encourage interaction of workers from more than one particular background.

9. Celebrate the different festivals and cultural events as part of a wider calendar of social activities. Take the opportunity to increase people's understanding of the differences as well as highlighting what workers have in common eg. supporting a local football team. Eversheds **Understanding Faith** initiative illustrates how they have achieved this.

10. Remove barriers, or perceptions of them, **to recruiting people from different backgrounds** to increase the diversity of your workforce, eg. allowing staff the opportunity to observe religious beliefs in a sensitive and supportive way whilst at the same time trying to ensure that other colleagues are supportive. View the Co-operative's **Age Diversity** programme for further details.

11. Work with your trade union on all aspects of the points above to get a better picture of your organisation. UNISON devised a training programme to help to **challenge racism in the workplace**.

12. Ensure that when new policies and precedures are introduced, middle and line managers have bought into the objectives and understanding of the policy as they have a direct impact on those the polict is affecting. A good way forward is to introduce targets on implementation to ensure the policy is delivered and embedded into the organisation.

Don't

1. Under-estimate the market potential from changing demographics, for example the growing older population and those from BME communities.

2. Allow staff to display any materials which are gratuitously provocative to other colleagues eg. stickers in support of a political party who demonise particular groups.

3. Allow misinformation/rumours on different faiths/beliefs go unchallenged in the workplace. **DO** develop a plan for dealing with this and make sure it is followed and implemented in a professional, open and transparent way.

4. Assume all workers/colleagues - or managers - are aware of the different cultures and faiths of the workforce. **DO** consider providing materials such as posters/intranet sites on these. Make use of external sites and resources illustrated here.

5. Allow shift/teams to reinforce divisions within the community by predominantly or exclusively comprising people of the same backgrounds in terms of age, gender, race or faith. This could also be a business risk in terms of tensions and undermining collaboration across the workforce and could also affect business operations during holidays and religious celebrations.

6. Restrict your potential to recruit people of different backgrounds by not addressing any perceived or actual barriers, eg. shift patterns, language skills required.

7. Forget to review the support you give to the local community to ensure it is bringing people together rather than supporting people from one particular background.

8. Keep putting off the day when you undertake **a cohesion audit** of your business to 'cohesion proof' it and thereby maximising its sales and profits.

Getting started

Seven simple ways to get started

So what do you need to get started? Cohesion is about understanding people and respecting their difference. The leadership needs to come from the board of the organisation with committed delivery and implementation from HR and people who manage staff, so that it is embedded into the culture of the organisation. Within the workforce there are some basic starting points:

1. Ask what the vision and ethos is for your organisation; does it reflect the aspiration for a united workforce that can work together. Where does the leadership come from?
2. Take a look at your current HR/equality/people policies. Do they cover cohesion and tackle the importance of respect for all in the workplace?
3. Find out what is going on in your organisation. Talk to your employees; the local authority; the police; community groups and where appropriate the recognised trade union who may have a useful contribution to make; examine HR statistics for absences, sickness and incidents. Get a picture of your workforce.
4. Check out the organisation's demographic data. Where do people fit within the workforce? Where are they positioned within the organisation, at what level do they work, which departments, who works on shifts? Break this down by ethnicity, gender, disability and age.

5. Work with your trade unions and staff representatives, find out what issues the workforce are bringing up. Do some of these issues relate to factors around cohesion? View **UNISON's Challenging Racism in the workplace** case study.
6. Create a support network for staff, so people feel they have somewhere to go if they are not happy about a particular issue in the workplace. This could be in the form of employee networks, a department representative or through regular team meetings where people can air their views in a confidential setting. Make sure support networks do not create more divisions. View more information about **employee networks** and **BT Reaching Out** case study
7. Decide what schemes and processes to introduce that might tackle any issues that may have arisen from the above. This could be along the lines of informal social gatherings to bring different people together or more formal arrangements like cohesion training sessions for all staff.

Networks

Networks are a really useful tool for organisations to use to establish how people are feeling within the workplace. However, whilst their independence is important, there needs to be proper governance in respect of how they are set up and run.

1. If someone in the workplace registers an interest in setting up a network, the Diversity Head, HR or person responsible for staff in the workplace, should take the lead. It may be that a group already exists, or that they need advice as to how they develop.

It would be helpful (but not necessary) if the group has an interim leadership team in place and have a clear idea of their aims and objectives that are in sync with the organisation's core values.

Develop a business case for why it should exist and consider the following:

- Objectives
 - Benefits of your group to members and your organisation (eg. employee relations, role models, better understanding, marketing opportunities)
 - Possible dis-benefits in terms of barriers with others and encouraging silo mentality
 - Organisational structure (Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer etc)
 - Development plan
 - Budget plan
2. Decide how much you can offer in terms of support to the network.

3. Within the first year, the network will need to run an election and elect the Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. A decision will also need to be made about the length of such posts (2 years, 3 years etc).

4. The Network will need to set a constitution. It should contain information such as aim, vision, mission leadership team, term of office etc). Set up some advice and guidelines about what you require from a constitution.

Deloitte and **BT** have both set up a variety of networks, further details of which you can view on our Case Studies pages.

How do I make my organisation cohesion friendly?

Below are a set of indicators to help establish how employers and the workforce can contribute to cohesion within the workplace and wider community, and enhance business benefits.

Policy and process

The production of policy statements is no guarantee of success, and may not result in a change of practice and culture, but it is a necessary first step towards change. The emphasis should be on very clear and simple statements which everyone understands and might include:

- An overall vision statement, which supports an ethos of inclusion and respect for all.
- How you will judge success and keep your finger on the pulse to monitor a constantly changing workplace environment.
- Policy on employment rights (including bullying and harassment, respect in the workplace, dignity at work).
- An equal opportunities and diversity policy which sets out legal responsibilities and company policy.
- Equalities monitoring systems in place which monitors applications, recruitment, selection, promotion, access to training and development.
- Review mechanisms in employee appraisals and performance indicators.
- An equalities and cohesion policy statement in respect of suppliers and customers, which explains their importance to the business and establishes handling and monitoring processes.
- An active supplier/procurement policy which includes a section on equality and cohesion.
- Equality and cohesion training for staff (of all levels) focussed on the needs of employees and customers.

Turning policy into practice

- Visible commitment from the top of the organisation within the workplace - eg. director level input to meetings and training emphasising the importance of policies; openly engaging with different groups of staff during lunch breaks etc.
- A strong and positive set of corporate values which focuses on the value and respect of all people within the organisation, led from the top of the organisation.
- Proactively running formal and informal discussion sessions on difficult issues and implication for practice, particularly those that might pre-empt misunderstandings and tensions within the workplace and local community.
- Promoting strong and positive relationships between people of different backgrounds in the workplace using non-threatening and engaging techniques; making 'difference' interesting and even exciting.
- Annual employment surveys (or informal techniques and feedback systems - eg. via the trade unions or workforce representatives) to determine how well people of different ages and backgrounds feel they are working together within the organisation and targeting interventions appropriately.
- Actively promoting exchanges and interaction between different groups of employees where sections, shifts, departments or functions are over represented by particular ages and backgrounds.
- Measures to assist both new employees and those who are 'different' to be accepted and their characteristics to be understood and appreciated - eg. migrant workers, people with disabilities, females in a male environment (or vice versa), minority faiths etc.
- Considering workforce representation against the make-up of the community from which recruitment takes place and whether the differences reflect societal divisions which the employer might be able to influence - eg. low representation of different backgrounds because of low skills, or perceptions that the workplace is not open to them and/or dominated by other groups.
- Review of management information systems to consider any wider patterns - eg. grievances, sickness and absence, high turnover, lower levels of performance associated with particular groups.
- The use of employee networks and ensuring the interaction between them.

Focus on outcomes

- High levels of morale and motivation overall, with no association between low scores and particular groups and backgrounds.
- High levels of confidence within workforce (particularly managers) in being able to relate to all backgrounds; and a demonstrable level of sociability across and between teams.
- Positive views of the workplace from external sources, across backgrounds within local (or wider) community.

- Low levels of sickness absence, turnover, grievances, disciplinaries, associated with any group, or across the workforce as a whole.
- The ethos of the organisation is clearly reflected in the supply chain and amongst individual and corporate customers.
- An outgoing Responsible Business/CSR programme (volunteering, community investment, engaging with schools etc) which reflects the openness and aspiration of wider engagement of the organisation; and contributes to a better understanding of people within the workforce.
- A Responsible Business/CSR or outreach programme which contributes to the community cohesion strategy for the local area and helps to break down barriers and create better understanding between groups of people in the local community.
- Visit **Awards for Excellence** to see independent peer assessed corporate responsibility awards which are run in association with the Financial Times which recognise and celebrate companies who have shown innovation, creativity and a sustained commitment to corporate responsibility.

7. Frequently Asked Questions

What is cohesion?

Why is cohesion important to my organisation?

But isn't this just for big business? What about SMEs?

What evidence is there that cohesion works?

What are some of the main issues affecting organisations at the moment?

What do I need to do to get started?

How can my business impact on cohesion both in and outside of the workplace?

Will there be additional costs to the business for addressing cohesion within the workplace?

Where can I get help to address the issues of cohesion?

What is cohesion?

Community Cohesion is simply about making sure that people of all different faiths, ethnic and other identities develop trust and respect for each other and can work together. It means tackling some of the prejudices and stereotypes - often reinforced by inequalities – which contribute to separateness, rivalries and conflict.

Why is cohesion important to my organisation?

Harmonious places to work provide a stronger social environment in which employees are much more likely to reach their potential and perform to the best of their ability. How people interact with each other affects all aspects of the workplace including recruitment, induction, retention and progression.

Having a cohesive workforce allows people to feel at ease with each other and themselves and therefore encourages working with difference and diversity becomes valued rather than tokenistic.

The workplace provides this opportunity because it is bound by organisational rules. People have to act professionally and with civility because they have to work together to achieve the company's goals.

The workforce also provides an opportunity to bring people together to work on specific issues that affect them - and often brings together people who would not necessarily collaborate within the community.

But isn't this just for big businesses? What about SME's?

Cohesion is for ALL businesses. Below are just a few reasons why cohesion is important:

1. Operating on the front line in communities, and therefore feeling firsthand the implications of tensions between different groups of people.
2. Recruiting locally – yet wanting to ensure that there is a pool of wide local talent.
3. SMEs may reflect – and reinforce – the divisions within the local community if they are unable to recruit on a cross-cultural basis.
4. Within the workforce – ensuring people get on. SMEs tend to have minimal HR or Personnel capacity and are less able to cope with, poor relationships and morale and have disproportionate cost implications too, in terms of recruiting new staff.
5. They are part of the supply chain of larger businesses and public bodies and sooner or later will be bound by the same ethos.

What evidence is there that cohesion works?

Take a look at the **case studies** section of the toolkit for evidence of cohesion working.

What are some of the main issues affecting organisations at the moment?

There are a number of issues affecting organisations at the moment, but some of the key ones relate to:

- Language and how to deal with different languages in the workplace.
- The benefit of having networks in the workplace.
- The effect of structural and physical divisions.
- The importance of integration and open discussion in the workplace.
- How to deal with contentious issues

Visit **What people told us** for information

What do I need to do to get started?

There are some basic things you can do to get started. Take a look at **How do I cohesion proof my organisation?** for a guide to getting going

How can my business impact on cohesion both in and outside of the workplace?

Very often the workplace often simply reflects wider social divisions based on longstanding rivalries of culture and class – and inequalities. Tackling these divisions is likely to improve both internal and external relationships and may also help to alleviate some of the divisions within the wider communities in which the workforce live and socialise. Indeed, multicultural workforces may well be able to play a much more positive role in bringing different groups together, promoting understanding and tolerance and helping to avoid community conflict and disorder.

Will there be additional costs to the business for addressing cohesion within the workplace?

You may incur some costs in the short term as you cohesion proof your organisation and adopt policies and practices. However over the longer term you will save as a more cohesive workforce allows for better retention of staff and therefore lower recruitment costs, less absenteeism, fewer health and safety incidents, higher productivity, greater loyalty and commitment and less litigation around employment issues.

View [How do I cohesion proof my organisation](#) for help

Where can I get help to address the issues of cohesion?

8. Useful links

Where to get more help....

Organisations that can help

ACAS www.acas.org.uk

Business Action on Skills www.bitc.org.uk/workplace/skills/index.html

Business in the Community www.bitc.org.uk

Business Link www.businesslink.gov.uk

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development www.cipd.co.uk

Diversity Works for London www.diversityworksforlondon.com

Equality and Human Rights Commission www.equalityhumanrights.com

Improvement and Development Agency www.idea.gov.uk

Institute of Community Cohesion www.cohesioninstitute.org.uk

London Development Agency www.lda.gov.uk

MERLIN* www.bitc.org.uk/london/programmes/merlin.html

Migrant Workers North West www.migrantworkersnorthwest.org

Opportunity Now**

www.bitc.org.uk/workplace/diversity_and_inclusion/gender/opportunity_now/

TUC www.tuc.org.uk

Unison www.unison.org.uk

Your Local Authority

Useful Resources

Employers Forum on Age www.efa.org.uk

Employers Forum on Belief www.efbelief.org.uk

Employers Forum on Disability www.efd.org.uk

Mosaic*** www.bitc.org.uk/princes_programmes/mosaic/index.html

Race for Opportunity**** www.bitc.org.uk/workplace/diversity_and_inclusion/race

Skills for Business Network www.sfbn-equality-diversity.org.uk

St Ethelburga's Business of Faith www.thebusinessoffaith.org

English for Speakers of Other Languages www.direct.gov.uk

Publications

A Shared Workplace, A Shared Future, *Representing migrant workers, challenging racism in the workplace - for a better life for all*, ICTU Migrant Workers Support Unit

Business in the Community Position paper on Migrant Workers,
www.bitc.org.uk/document.rm?id=8450

Community Footprint, www.bitc.org.uk/resources/publications/building_stronger_co.html

Cynthia L. Estund, New York University -School of Law, Working Together: The Workplace in Civil Society (Abstract) December 1999, Columbia Law School, Public Law and Legal Theory Working Paper No. 3

DCLG, Guidance for Local Authorities on how to mainstream community cohesion into other services,

www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/mainstreamcommunitycohesion

DCLG, The Economic Case for Cohesion,

www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/economiccasecohesion

Diversity Return on Investment, Making the Business Case for Diversity,
www.equalitymagazines.com/droi.html

Ely, Robin J., and David A. Thomas, Team Learning and the Radical Diversity-Performance Link, Harvard 2004, quoted in Harvard Business School Working Knowledge website
<http://hbswk.hbs.edu/item/4207.html>

Race for Opportunity 2005 Survey quoted in <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/4626271.stm>

Race for Opportunity, Race to the Top: The Place of Ethnic Minority Groups Within the UK Workforce, 2009
www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/cabinetoffice/strategy/assets/ethnic_minorities.pdf

Talent Not Tokenism: The Business Benefits of Workforce Diversity,
www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/talentnottokenism.pdf

The Business of Muslim Integration: The Formation of Islamic Civil Society in Non-Muslim Countries, Jeffrey Schwerzel, Lecture at St. Ethelburga's on October 27th, 2004,
<http://www.stethelburgas.org/documents/muslimintegration.pdf>

The Responsible Workplace: How to survive and thrive, BiTC, 2009,
<http://www.bitc.org.uk/resources/publications/responsibleworkplace.html>

Vulnerable Migrant Workers: The Responsibility of Business. An overview and comparative analysis of food production, manufacture and retail companies, May 2009, The Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility, <http://www.eccr.org.uk/module-htmlpages-display-pid-20.html>

Women in London's Economy, GLA Report, 2008,
www.london.gov.uk/mayor/economic_unit/docs/womenlondoneconomy2008-sum.pdf

*Opportunity Now is the only membership organisation representing employers who want to transform the workplace by ensuring inclusiveness for women. They work to build and communicate the business case for this, to share and inspire best practice and to give employers and their people the tools to drive change.

**MERLIN aims to inspire and raise the aspirations of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) young people through interaction with adults of similar ethnic backgrounds. BAME business professionals volunteer to serve as inspirational examples and role models in schools.

***Mosaic is a multiple set of initiatives designed to support young Muslims and their peers growing up in our deprived areas whilst also breaking down barriers and suspicions within British society.

****Race for Opportunity is committed to improving employment opportunities for ethnic minorities across the UK. It is the only race diversity campaign that has access to and influence over the leaders of the UKs best known organisations