WOMEN IN CLEANTECH
GENDER DIVERSITY RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION GUIDANCE

March 2021

INTRODUCTION

In 2018 the London Sustainable Development Commission undertook research to understand the participation of women within London's low carbon, environmental goods and services sector, the "cleantech" sector[1]. The evidence collected as part of that research indicates a low participation rate of women in cleantech in terms of founders, holding senior positions and retention in the sector. This is a problem for the growth of the wider cleantech ecosystem in London.

Evidence is there to support the diversity dividend argument with the latest McKinsey "Delivering through diversity" report[2] finding that companies in the top quartile for gender diversity on executive teams being 21% more likely to have above average financial profitability, up from 15% in 2015. Gender diversity is good for business, but women are still underrepresented in senior roles and this lack of representation is even more apparent in the tech sector.

In addition to this the COVID 19 pandemic has highlighted the deep inequality within London and the economic and social impact of that inequality. Insecure livelihoods and the resultant lack of secure incomes have led to extreme hardship and people employed in lower wage frontline work have been more at risk of infection. The epidemic has particularly impacted women – in a recent report from the Women's Budget Group it was highlighted that women were more likely to work in sectors hit hardest by COVID, are more likely to live in poverty and are more likely to be in low paid and insecure employment.[3] The COVID crisis is exacerbating inequality and could lead to an increase in the gender pay gap, which at 17.5% in pre-pandemic London was already too high. In addition, during lockdown working mothers have seen a bigger proportional reduction in their hours of work and are spending more time caring for children while trying to work.[4]

Our work seeks to encourage and support women to enter the cleantech sector and to provide guidance for employers to help increase diversity in the workforce. The low carbon goods and services sector is growing, doubling in size over the last decade and provides many opportunities both for innovators and entrepreneurs but also for those wanting a career with development potential within larger organisations. London's low carbon and environmental goods and services sector (its 'green economy'), was worth about £48 billion in 2019/20, employing around 317,000 people across approximately 14,000 businesses. The sector has grown from £24 billion in 2010/11 when it employed around 164,000 people across around 9,000 companies.

Whilst our focus is on the cleantech sector this guidance could be applicable to any employer seeking to improve the gender diversity of their workforce.

[1] https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/lsdc_-_women_in_cleantech_2018_report.pdf
[2] https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/delivering-through-diversity
[3] https://wbg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/FINAL.pdf
[4] Gender differences in the impact of the Covid-19 lockdown on unpaid care work and psychological distress in the UK | Understanding Society
[5] https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/london_low_carbon_market_snapshot_-_2019.pdf

ABOUT THIS GUIDANCE

As part of our work to help more women enter the cleantech world we are creating a range of guidance materials. This guide is focused on the recruitment and retention of women in the workplace and is aimed at employers both large and small. Its purpose is to highlight good practice in the recruitment of female staff, to help increase both the pool of available candidates and ensure the process is fair, transparent and inclusive. In addition, the guidance includes help for employers to understand some of the factors that can influence decisions to stay or to leave an organization that may be as a result of conscious or unconscious discriminatory behaviours or working conditions.

Other guidance materials in this series include Event Diversity Guidance - https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/wic_event_diversity_guidance_final.pdf

N.B. The WiCT work focusses on gender disparity within Cleantech but it should also be noted that other disparities exist based on the 9 protected characteristics - https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/protected-characteristics - which sit outside of the scope of this guidance but which should also be taken into consideration when recruiting and developing staff.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDANCE

This guidance is not intended to replace the need to adhere to workplace practices governed by national government regulations around worker rights, discrimination regulations or other legal or statutory frameworks governing work in the UK. It is instead additional guidance designed to highlight good practice and challenge unconscious biases as part of recruiting and developing staff and can be used by employers on a voluntary basis as required.

1 - Making a commitment

○ Create a formal statement or commitment to Equality, Diversity & Inclusion and identify the responsible parties for overseeing a programme to deliver on this committment. In this way your organisation sends a clear message to future and present employees about their commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Build the business case into this statement to ensure senior management buy in.

○ This commitment should be available for, at minimum, employees but consider making it publicly available for jobseekers, clients and the general public. The commitment should be backed up by a plan and clear actionable items and include values that the organisation commits to following to support their statement.

Commitment Example:

In order to ensure our offer to our customers is internationally relevant we must create and nurture a company culture that mirrors the world we serve. We are committed through every area of our company, whether internally or externally, to build a team that values and reflects the unique opinions and backgrounds the people of this world have to offer.

The example below is the commitment from Salesforce, ranked by Glassdoor as the UK's no1 employer in 2021.[6] Glassdoor is one of the world's largest jobs and recruitment sites.

Salesforce Equality Commitment – We're greater when we're equal

Equality is a core value at Salesforce. We believe that businesses can be powerful platforms for social change and that our higher purpose is to drive Equality for all. Creating a culture of Equality isn't just the right thing to do, it's also the smart thing. Diverse companies are more innovative and better positioned to succeed in the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

We strive to create workplaces that reflect the communities we serve and where everyone feels empowered to bring their full, authentic selves to work. There is more work to be done, but with the help of our entire Ohana (Hawaiian word for family) — our employees, customers, partners, and community — we can achieve #EqualityForAll.

To enable delivery of the ED&I commitment, organisations should develop a clear ED&I policy and action plan.

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2 - Recruitment

Job advertisements:

○ Where possible avoid listing particular educational requirements or years of experience on a job posting unless absolutely necessary. (Example, a specialised certification for lawyer and/or accountant).

○ Instead specifically list the skill set and knowledge needed to accomplish the job duties. Consider using a competency framework as a basis for explaining the skills attributes needed for a role.

Notes: Various studies demonstrate that women and minorities are less likely to apply for a job posting if they do not meet all of the qualifications of the postings.

○ Do not assume that 3-5 years of experience or an MBA automatically qualify an individual. They may have all the skills needed, but may not hold the advanced degree listed and therefore miss an opportunity for a more diverse applicant pool.

○ Avoid the use of jargon and overly technical language within job advertisements, using plain language where possible.

○ Ensure that opportunities for flexible working including part time, flexi time, job share or working from home are clearly stated within the advertisement. If flexible working is not included as an option consider how or if this could be.

- Consider removing the need to demonstrate evidence of years of experience in specific technical capabilities in favour of incorporating a test element within the interview process to asses competence.

- Prior to posting, scan all job postings through "Gender Decoder" or similar, a service that identifies words within the posting that may attract or deter candidates from applying based on gender.

  Notes: Every person has unconscious bias, by using technology we can attempt to limit the unconscious bias that comes through from the job posting creator in addition to the unconscious bias held by the job seeker.

- Consider where jobs are advertised and how they could reach a more diverse audience through channels targeting specific societal groupings. In addition to standard job boards, seek to post job openings with Gov.UK which provides resources to the unemployed. Organisations can register to advertise their job posting with the following link: https://www.gov.uk/advertise-job. Build relationships with organisations or initiatives that provide support aimed at specific sectors of society to help communicate opportunities in a more targeted and diverse way.

- Ensure if using recruitment or search and selection organisations that they are fully briefed on the need to put forward a diverse candidate selection.

- Applicants may choose to visit your website prior to application. Ensure that images of workers and individuals associated with your organisation are diverse and inclusive.

  Notes: The Mayor of London's Inclusive Employers Toolkit[7] aimed at supporting young black men into the construction industry cites research from the Runnymede Trust showing that young black men recognise where imagery does not match the reality of workplaces – this is likely to be the same for women so openness and transparency about challenges around diversity is advisable.

- Ensure that any programmes that support efforts to change under-representation within your organisation are advertised and promoted so that prospective candidates are aware of your commitment e.g. the Greater London Authorities 'Our Time' programme.[8]

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[7] https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/workforce-integration-network-win/inclusive-employers-toolkit/engagement-and-recruitment
[8] Our Time - Supporting Future Leaders | London City Hall

CV screenings:

- Consider 'blind' CV screening, where items such as candidates names and locations are removed from the document being screened. The aim is to remove the possibility of unconscious bias based on gender, ethnicity or age of a candidate.

Notes: Many public sector organisations such as the civil service and large corporates are adopting this approach to recruitment and were involved in a drive by central government to encourage organisations to pledge to adopt this approach in 2015[9]. In addition, the Social Mobility Campaign also encourages employers to pledge to adopt a name blind approach alongside a number of additional measures to application screening. The pledge has now been signed by 500 organisations globally.[10]

Interview process:

- Define a transparent interview process for all candidates/job seekers and ensure that it is clearly detailed on the job application.

- Make no exceptions to the process for referrals and avoid "fast-tracking" candidates.

- The interview process should clearly state the number of interviews and their format (phone or in-person). This will also assist in setting the proper expectations with the jobseeker.

- Use panels where possible for interviews and ensure panels are balanced and diverse across a range of protected characteristics. Where panels are not possible ensure an equal number of both male and female interviewers are involved in the process with additional focus on overall diversity where possible. Relax requirements for panel members around hierarchy to ensure that panel diversity is prioritised over panel seniority.

- In-person interviews should have at least 2 members of the organisation meeting with the job seeker at all times. This will help counteract and combat individual unconscious bias as part of the interview process.

- Require specific reasons related to the job function in order to advance or reject the candidate. Do not allow "culture fit" solely as a reason to advance or reject a candidate.

- Use consistent evaluation methods across all interviews to ensure evaluation of performance is transparent and fair. Scoring mechanisms with clear guidance around scoring criteria can be a useful way to maintain a balanced approach and limit bias.

- Understand the 'positive action' element of the Equalities Act and whether it is necessary to take appropriate actions to address recruitment imbalances (see box below).

- Provide feedback to unsuccessful job applicants when requested and where possible.

[9] https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-time-to-end-discrimination-and-finish-the-fight-for-real-equality
[10] https://www.socialmobilitypledge.org/

Positive Action recruitment measures under the Equalities Act

'*Positive action* means treating one group more favourably where this helps them overcome a disadvantage or participate more fully. It also means acting to meet needs they have that are different from the wider population.'

Positive actions are lawful under the following sections of the Equality Act 2010:

Section 158

Actions might include training to enable individuals to gain employment, or health services to address their needs. For example, if a company is seeking to recruit diverse candidates for a specific, technical role but has been unable to find any potential employees from groups which are under-represented in that role e.g. young Black men, the company may use Section 158 of the Equality Act to develop and promote a training course for young Black men to develop the technical skills required for the role.

Section 159

Permits an employer to take a protected characteristic into consideration when deciding whom to recruit or promote, where people having the protected characteristic are at a disadvantage or are under-represented - this positive action can be taken only where the candidates are "as qualified as" each other. For example, if two candidates for the same job are equally well qualified for the role, and one of those candidates is from a demographic which is under-represented in the company, e.g. a young Black man, a company may use Section 159 of the Equality Act to offer the position to the candidate from the under-represented group.

Interview training:

- All employees/managers responsible for interviewing candidates should go through formal training on the organisation's interview process. Training should include compliance requirements, company process and education on the presence of unconscious bias in the interview process and how to identify and minimise its effects.

- Training should be offered at minimum, quarterly, and be available to all staff should they so desire.

- All interviewers should complete the training before they are permitted to interview job seekers.

3 - Monitoring and reporting

Placement goals:

- Collect and analyse demographic information from job seekers and employees to help understand and evaluate diversity within the workforce.[11]

- Collect and analyse demographic information of panels shortlisting and interviewing to ensure representation is achieved.

- Achieving diversity will require an understanding of the intersectional nature of the challenge – applicants may well be facing multiple diversity challenges and may not therefore fit into single demographic diversity profiles. Ensure this is reflected in how demographic data is collected.

- Strive to reach demographic representation within the organisations job applicants and employees that proportionally represent the geographic regions from which you recruit.

Notes: Diversity Placement Goals should be used to analyse trends and measure failure or successes of the various initiatives taken by an organisation to expand a candidate pool and provide an inclusive interview process that attracts diverse employees.

- Placement goals should never be used as a "quota" that can be obtained or a sole tool in hiring individuals from a diverse background.

Timing:

- At minimum, analyse the available demographic data within the organisations applicants and employees to track initiatives and identify continued areas of improvement.

Organisational hierarchy/structure:

- Targets should be in place to ensure representation and diversity at each level of the organisation.

4 - Retention

Training:

- At minimum, bi-annually, provide formal, organisational wide training that defines and provides appropriate guidance on the topics of unconscious bias, racism, gender awareness, active bystander, diversity, equality, and inclusion.

- Training should allow for small groups (no more than 10) break out sessions that can facilitate individuals through thoughtful discussion on such topics. Consider using cards such as Lean-In's Cards to prompt discussion.

[11] https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/workforce-integration-network-win/workforce-data-equality-guide

Transparency/inclusion:

- At minimum, bi-annually, provide the organisation with insight into the trends of the organisations diversity, equality and inclusion efforts and openly ask for input.

Working conditions:

- If possible, provide employees with flexible working hours, flexible or part time options including job shares for full time posts and remote work capability.

  Notes: Individuals face various needs whether medical, family, travel or others and by allowing employees to work flexible hours you may be able to retain those employees that are forced to make a choice between their individual needs and the strict working hours of the organisation.

Compensation:

- Research various data points and define positional salary bands based on the job duties required within each role. The organisation should be able to clearly describe each employee's compensation based on their duties and skill level as relates to the defined salary band for fair comparison to the markets.

Notes: Demographic details should have no bearing on compensation if accurate salary bands are used and followed correctly. For further transparency and messages of wage fairness, organisations should consider various levels of providing transparency around the salary bands to their employees.

- Data is recorded about gender and in the workforce and pay gaps are reported where data allows for statistical significance.

- The organisation voluntarily reports and publishes its gender pay gap, even if there are under 250 employees, unless doing so would lead to the disclosure of pay information on individuals.

- Take action to tackle gender pay gaps where they exist. There are multiple resources available to help organisations take action to do this.[12]

Performance management:

- Employees should have clear and documented goals and key performance indicators (KPI's) to be met through their job performance. Performance reviews and management should be tied directly to the ability to perform as they relate to the clearly defined objectives. Compensation should directly relate to their skill level and ability to perform their job duties.

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[12] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/731288/Gender-Pay-Gap-actions_.pdf

○ Consider creating diversity targets as part of KPI's for managers responsible for hiring where practicable.

Communication:

○ Organisations should consider employee led groups, Slack groups and/or activities such as employee networks that allow for the expression and celebration of diversity. These groups should be supported through the provision of additional time and resources.

○ CEOs and executive leaders should regularly discuss the organisations commitment and progress on equality, diversity and inclusion with staff so that there is no question as to an organisations values and what is and is not acceptable behaviour.

Zero tolerance policies:

○ The organisation should define intolerable behaviour as it relates to harassment, discrimination and workplace bullying. The policy should be publicly available to employees with clear directions as to who an employee can report such an incident to alongside disciplinary measures that would be taken should the behaviour be identified.

Meetings:

○ Consider a "Round Robin" technique for meetings in which each member is invited to speak and/or pass to ensure adequate opportunity for discussion.

○ Be aware of and invite individuals to participate where they have the opportunity to discuss and contribute to meetings two levels above them in the hierarchical structure of the organisation.

Community:

○ Partner with community programmes and/or non-profits that support the Diversity & Inclusion values of your organisations and encourage your employees to participate in the volunteering opportunities.

Returning to the workforce:

○ Organisations report on their retention rates for pregnant women a year after they return to work following maternity leave.

○ Organisation should actively support those returning to work after career breaks to fulfil caring responsibilities.