

Listening, learning, and taking action

Article by Jackie Henry, managing partner people and purpose, Deloitte UK

At Deloitte, we're determined to create a truly inclusive firm that fully reflects the make-up of our society. A place where every individual feels they can be their real selves, be heard, and respected.

Sometimes moments in history stick with you, non-more so than the murder of George Floyd in 2020 and the global protests and conversations about racism and the treatment of the Black community. We reflected, listened, learned and took action in the form of our Black Action Plan.

First up we held 'Let's Talk' sessions with Deloitte's Multicultural Network (MCN) and we soon after launched our Black Network and MCN Allies Community to support these important conversations. Each network provides a safe space to help our people understand, support and be advocates for Black and all minority ethnic backgrounds.

This Black Action Plan sets out five key commitments with tangible actions that are designed to make a long-term impact and make our firm fairer.

As part of our wider inclusion plan, it focuses on our Black colleagues, building on the work we're already doing to support our people from all ethnic backgrounds. One year on, we've made lots of progress together – and laid good foundations to keep building on.

Where are we now?

Commitment 1: We will provide equal opportunities

The initial goal here was to improve our policies and processes to help us attract and develop the best, most diverse talent, and to make sure everyone has a fair and positive experience. Over the past year we've reviewed our firmwide reward and promotion processes to ensure

they're free from bias – which is something we will continue to look at regularly.

We've also updated our hiring manager training to explicitly address racial bias which is being rolled out to 2,500 hiring managers – and made changes to our early careers recruitment process to ensure Black candidates aren't disadvantaged. The impact of this has been to close the conversion rate gap between Black colleagues and those from other ethnic backgrounds.

Commitment 2: We will focus on developing people to succeed and thrive

To make sure our people have access to the development and support they need to thrive at our firm and become leaders of the future, we've launched our firmwide Emerging Leaders Programme for Black and ethnic minority senior managers and directors, and 166 participants have completed this so far.

We've also relaunched our Reverse Mentoring Programme, with nearly 300 of our partners and directors including our executive team, being mentored by their more junior colleagues from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Commitment 3: We will drive and evolve our culture and behaviours

Since 2020 over 95 per cent of our people have completed inclusion digital learning, laying a solid foundation from which to understand race issues. In addition, we also asked our 2,600 partners and directors to attend 'Talking about Race' sessions to help them become more comfortable, confident and competent discussing race, acting as allies, and being actively inclusive.

The Black Network became our 12th diversity network and quickly grew in numbers and influence, hosting internal and external events including our Black History Month celebrations. This kicked off with a live cook-along that saw managing partners Jackie Henry and Stephen Griggs going head-to-head cooking Caribbean curry and making Guinness punch! The month wrapped with a live panel discussion on family, with guests including Richard Houston, Deloitte UK's CEO, and Richie Brave, Radio 1 DJ and broadcaster.

Commitment 4: Our brand and platform

We have a responsibility to look beyond our firm, and use our influence to help bring about social change – working with our clients, industry peers, charity partners and suppliers.

With this in mind, we began our new 5 Million Futures partnership with Blueprint for All. We have managed a digital transformation project for the charity as well as mentoring and fundraising. Together we've launched a new bursary programme with six universities, offering financial support, mentoring and other opportunities. So far 41 bursaries have been granted to students who commenced studies in autumn 2021.

We also signed up as a Founding Business Partner of the Change the Race Ratio. Initiated by the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), the

campaign calls for organisations to publish clear targets for greater ethnic diversity and create more inclusive workplaces.

Commitment 5: Measurement and reporting

Targets help to keep us on track and we continue to monitor and report on our outcomes throughout the year. We set a goal of 12 per cent ethnic minority partners by 2025 and three per cent of Black partners by 2025. Our leaders are accountable for the targets and progress against them is reviewed quarterly by the UK Executive.

Our June 2021 partner promotions saw 11 new ethnic minority partners – including one new Black partner. Our overall population of ethnic minority partners increased by 1.3 per cent (from 5.7 per cent to 7 per cent).

Jackie Henry, managing partner people & purpose, said:

"There's much more we have to do to improve representation, particularly for Black partners which remains at 0.6 per cent. We're making more progress at our junior grades, for example we've seen a four per cent increase in our ethnic minority graduate intake this year - from 36 per cent to 40 per cent."

"This is really positive for our ambition to build a more diverse pipeline of future leaders. We are absolutely committed to our inclusion plans and working towards a firm that's truly reflective of society."