

Creative Access Thrive report.

Thriving or surviving?

A report into the career progression of
people from under-represented groups
in the creative economy



July 2022



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Introduction.

In this first Thrive report by Creative Access, we set out to understand whether people from groups under-represented in the creative economy are finding opportunity to progress and thriving in their careers and what employers are doing to facilitate this.

- For employees, we looked at whether they feel they have the necessary tools and resources for career progression, such as a strong network, skills and knowledge as well as more intangible factors such as confidence
- In our research with employers, we examined whether they are putting in the right structures to support employees and build inclusive cultures in their organisations

The research was conducted over a two week period during April 2022. This is intended to be an annual survey, which over time will provide a richer picture of not just the demographics of people entering the sector, but if and how they are thriving within it and what areas employers and organisations like Creative Access should focus on to help overcome barriers to progression. It will also tell us how much progress the sector is making year on year and indicate the pace of change.





Research Scope.

Following a Theory of Change workshop, we ran surveys to gain insight from three target groups:

- Candidates in receipt of support from Creative Access (interns, alumni, mentees, Kickstart placements)
- Employer partners who had previously purchased services from Creative Access
- A wider group of employers across the creative industries

Surveys were distributed to these groups by social media and dedicated email newsletters. The responses were gathered using a web form. We received responses from 258 candidates and 189 employers.

Candidate response breakdown

Candidate responses

11% Disabled

78% Black, Asian, ethnically diverse

47% Lower SES

Please note candidates could identify with more than one characteristic.

Employer response breakdown

Employer responses by sector

28%

Music, theatre,
dance, visual
art

22%

Film, TV, radio

12%

Publishing

10%

PR, marketing

Employer responses by organisation size

60%

were from
organisations
with 49 or
fewer FTE

24%

from
organisations
with 50-249 FTE

17%

from
organisations
with 250 or
more FTE



Executive summary.



The headlines

- Overall candidates feel optimistic about career progression
- The greatest barriers to career progression – who report much lower scores across all metrics - are faced by:
 - disabled people
 - those from lower socio-economic backgrounds
 - those who are both disabled and from a lower socio-economic group
 - those who are both disabled and from a Black, Asian and ethnically diverse background
- Candidates are more confident they have the skills and knowledge to do their jobs, but feel disadvantaged when it comes to having the contacts, confidence and networking abilities that are also key for progression
- 9 out of 10 (90%) candidates ranked at least one area of the support they have received from Creative Access as having a significant or very significant impact on their career
- Employers are making some progress in DE&I but it is slow and insufficient in many areas, particularly in terms of providing adequate and much needed training for staff and hiring managers
- Most employers are now using inclusive recruitment practices, such as Positive Action, although many have only put these in place relatively recently and they are yet to see the impact
- Employers are not prioritising or investing in training for hiring managers and staff on inclusive recruitment, DE&I or mental health, with many yet to put any in place



Candidate snapshot.

Moving on up

Two-thirds (66%) of candidates surveyed, reported progress in their career in the last 12 months. However, when asked to report on the tangible elements of career progression, (eg whether they had a pay rise, promotion or received training in the last year) the results were significantly lower.

Of particular note was the lower rates of promotion amongst disabled people compared to other groups.

	Total	Black, Asian and ethnically diverse	Disabled	Lower social economic status
Pay rise	37%	41%	32%	33%
Promotion	31%	34%	21%	31%
Training	32%	29%	36%	32%

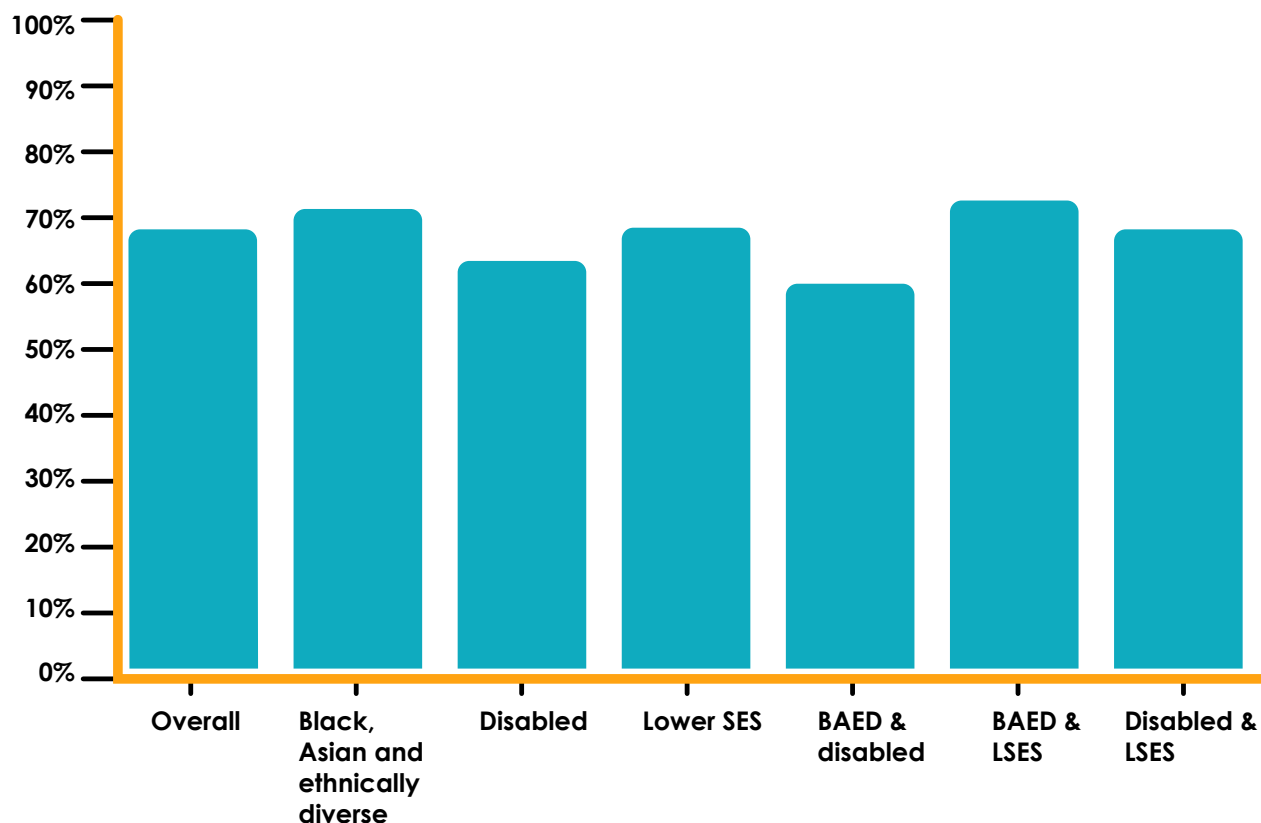


Looking into the future.

Over two-thirds of people working in the creative economy say they can see opportunities for career progression ahead. Interestingly, slightly more candidates from both Black, Asian and ethnically diverse and lower socio-economic backgrounds report seeing opportunities than those from other groups. This seems to indicate employers taking steps to provide career development support and map career pathways for these groups.

The group seeing the least career progression opportunities was those who are both disabled and from a Black, Asian and ethnically diverse background (60%).

% seeing opportunities for career progression



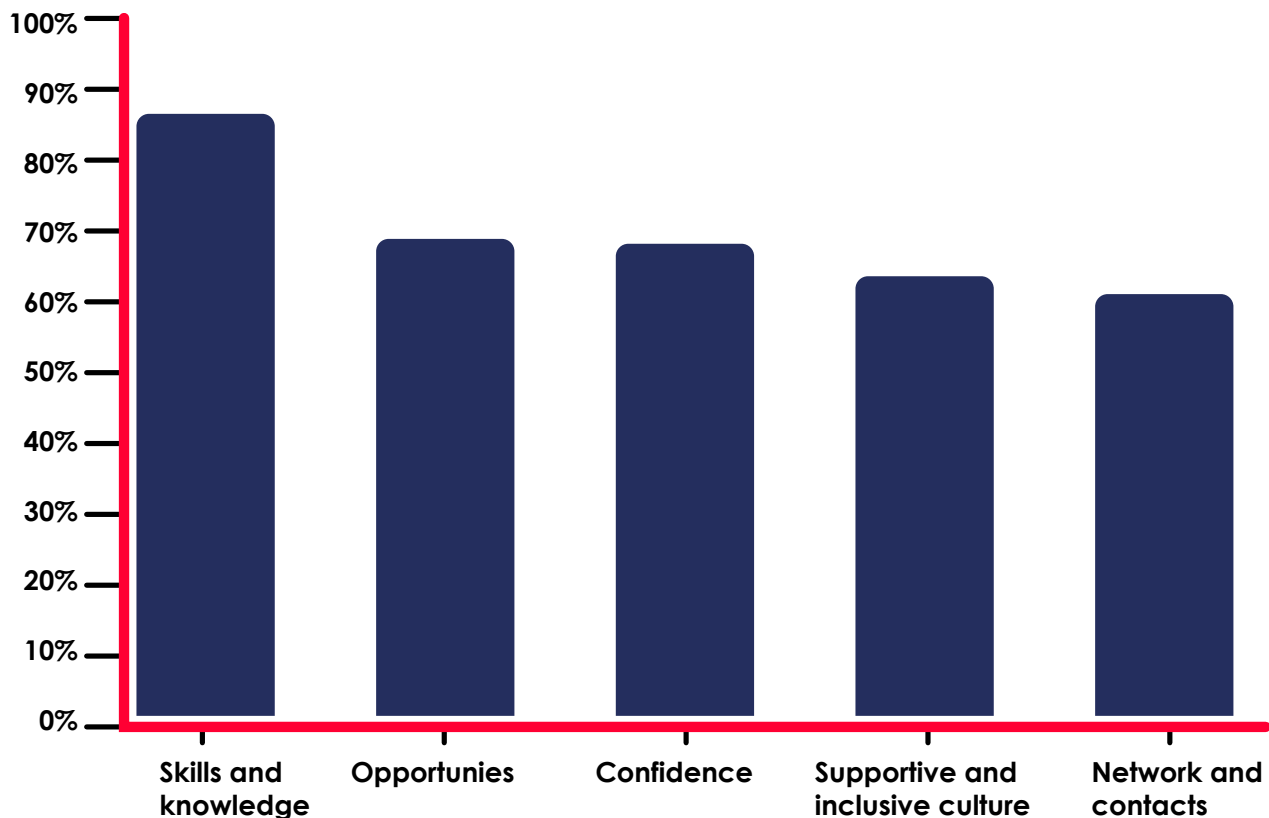


Confidence in skills over contacts.

Over 8 out of 10 candidates feel confident that they have the skills and knowledge to progress in their careers. This was significantly higher than those who feel they have the supportive culture (64%) and network and contacts (62%) they need to thrive.

This seems to reflect employers investing more in skills training, than in investing in changing the culture or in helping employees develop broader skills needed for progression, such as networking or building contacts.

% reporting access to elements needed for career progression



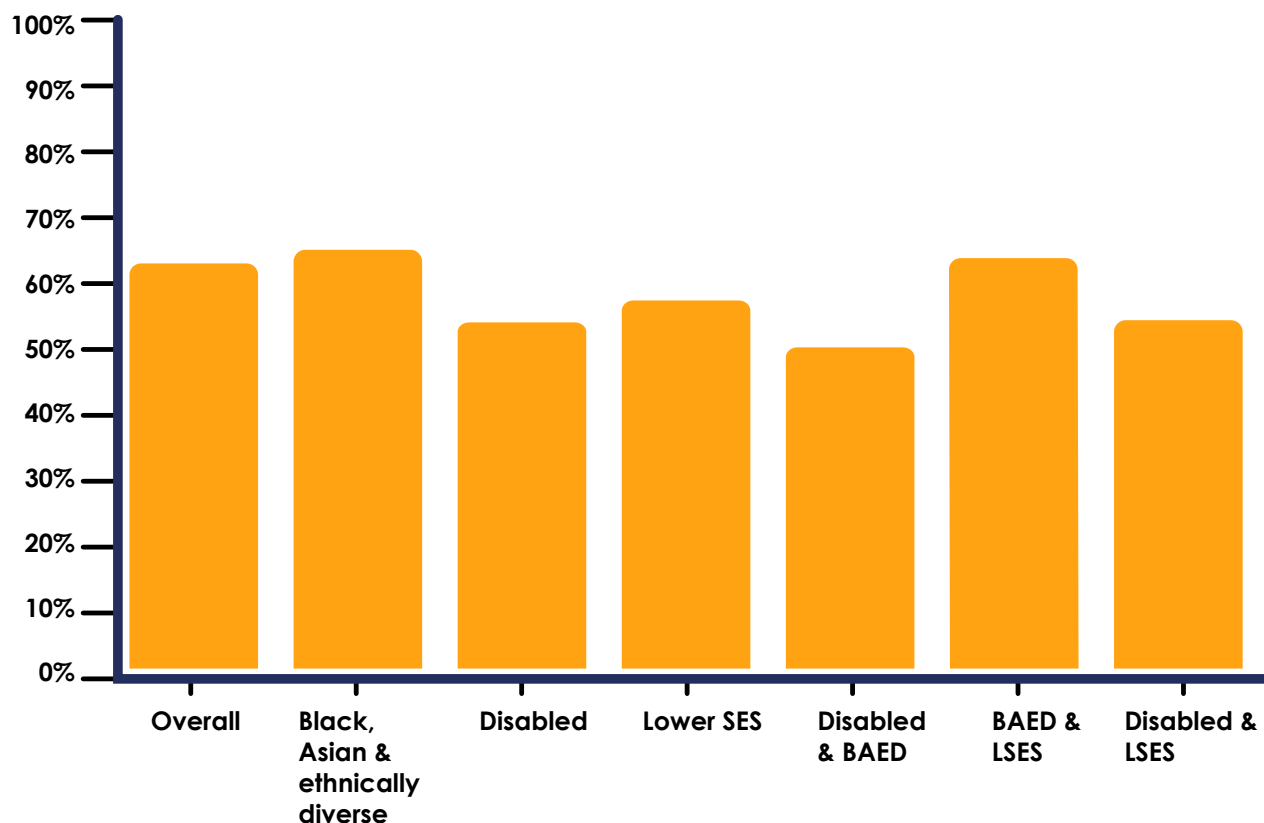


Who you know still matters.

The lack of a network is a key barrier to entry for people from groups under-represented in the creative industries. It seems this barrier can persist throughout their career with less than two-thirds (62%) reporting they have access to the contacts they need to progress.

The pandemic has also prevented candidates from being able to build their networks as effectively. This shows the need for and value of mentoring and other networking activities to support career progression for people from these groups.

% with access to network/contacts needed to progress

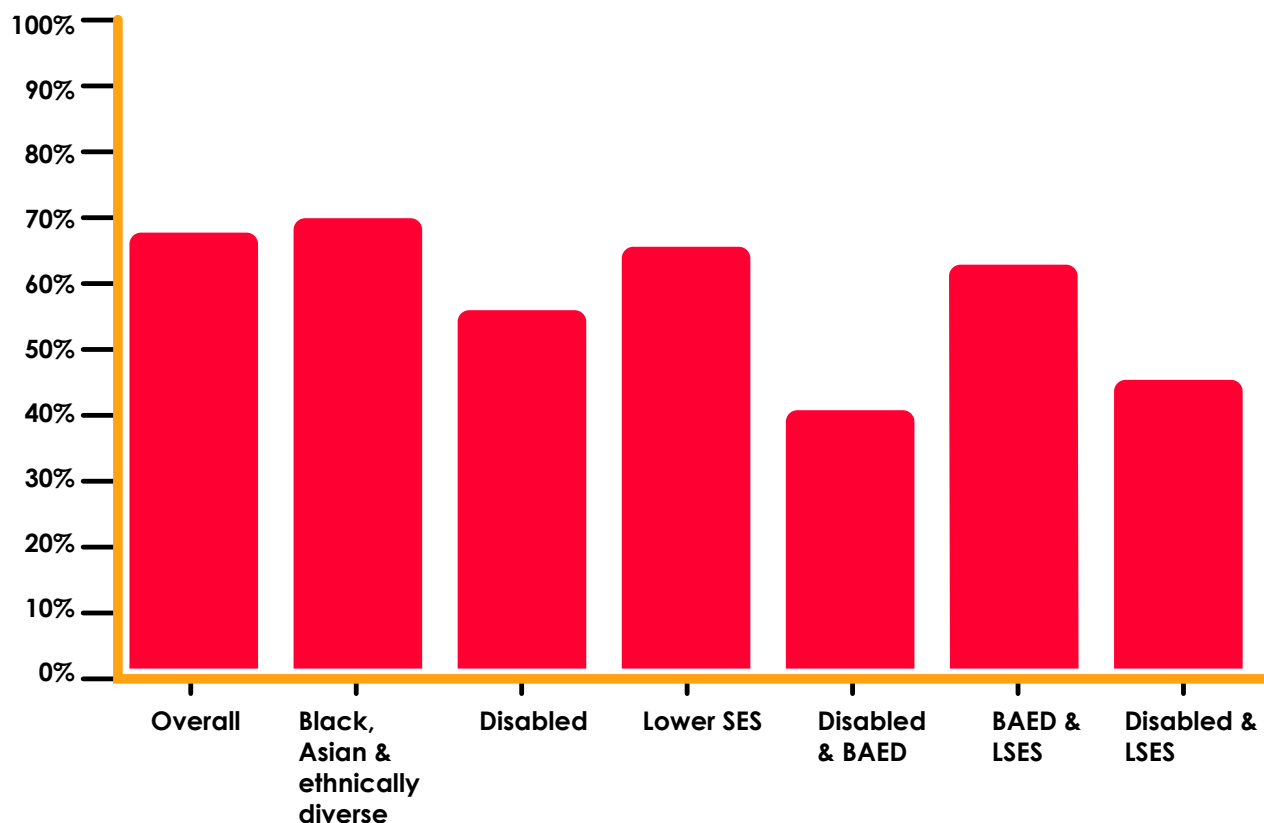




Confidence is key.

Over two-thirds of those surveyed feel they have the confidence they need to progress in their careers. However, this drops by over 10% for disabled people in the industry and further to less than half (40%) for those who are both disabled and from a Black, Asian or ethnically diverse background. Employers need to do more to provide clarity and consistency in what everyone in their organisation needs to do to progress and ensure everyone has equal access to confidence-building opportunities, role models and mentors.

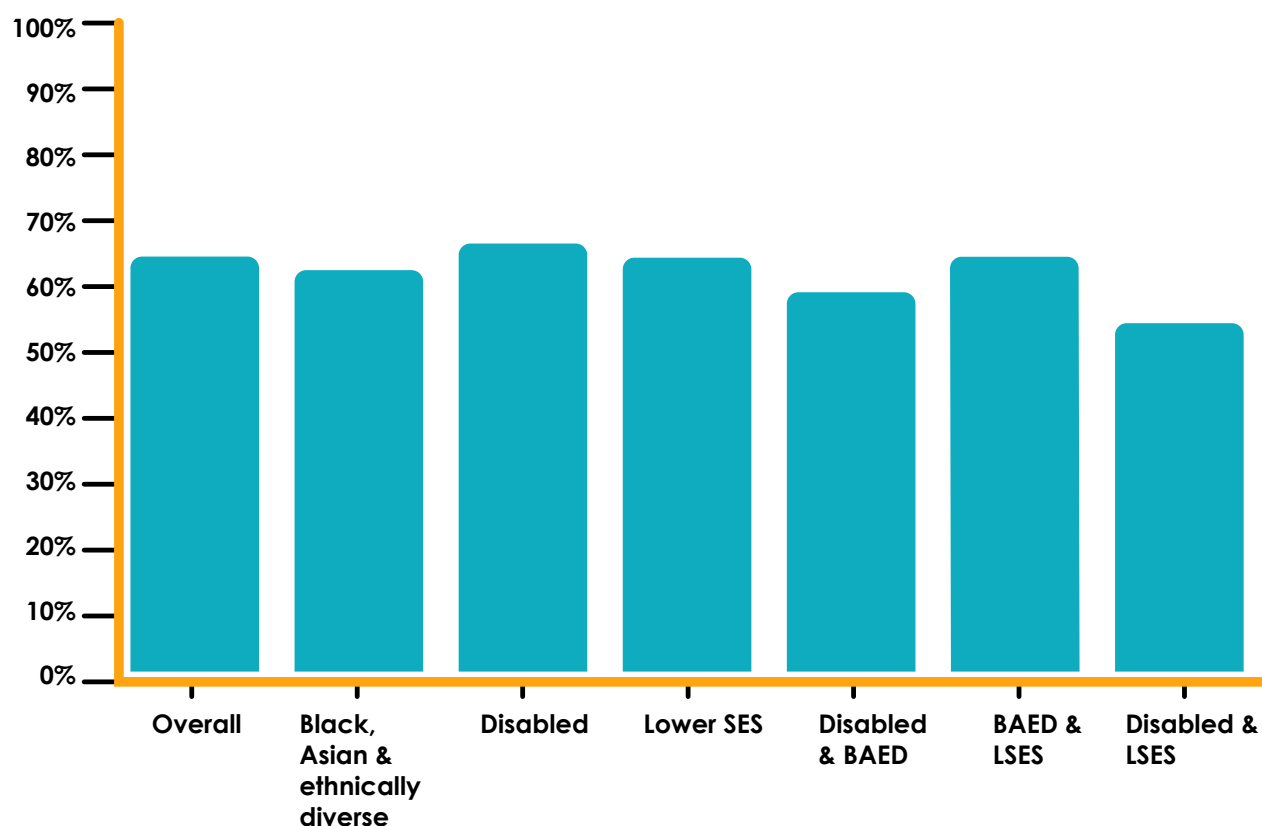
% with the confidence needed to progress



A supportive and inclusive culture.

Candidates' reporting working in a supportive culture is lower than their reporting of confidence in their own skills and resources. Interestingly disabled people are the most likely to report working in a supportive and inclusive culture (68%), versus 64% of candidates overall. However, the data for those who are both disabled and from a lower socio-economic background shows this group reports the lowest levels of working in an inclusive culture.

% reporting working in a supportive and inclusive culture



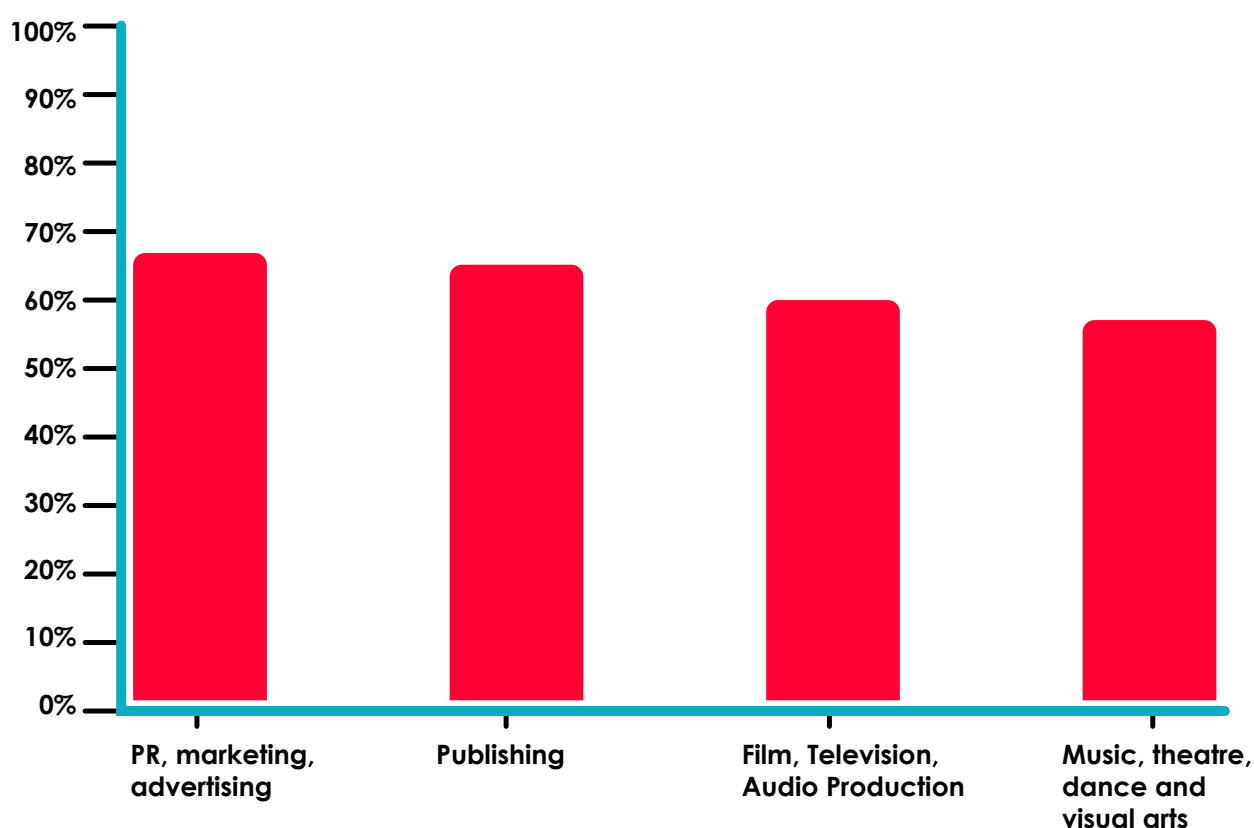


Culture club.

There was a significant difference between candidates' experiences working in different creative sectors, with 7 out of 10 (69%) of people working in PR, marketing and advertising reporting working in a supportive and inclusive culture versus 59% of those working in music, theatre, dance and the visual arts.

This difference may reflect that the possibility that many racially minoritized people in PR, marketing and advertising are from privileged backgrounds and therefore better able to navigate the culture and code-switching required. It could also indicate differing levels of resources available in music, theatre, dance and visual arts organisations, which are more likely to be charities or in the public sector compared with PR, marketing and

Supportive and inclusive culture by sector





Creative Access impact.

9 out of 10 of candidates rank at least one area of the support they have received from Creative Access as having either a 'very significant' or 'significant' impact on their career progression. This is broken down further by eligibility categories below:

	Total	Black, Asian and ethnically diverse	Disabled	Lower social economic status
Very significant in at least one area	75%	78%	71%	79%
Significant or very significant in at least one area	90%	90%	89%	92%

Staying power.

Nearly all of those who have completed a Creative Access programme are still working in the industry after two years and this is consistent across different groups:

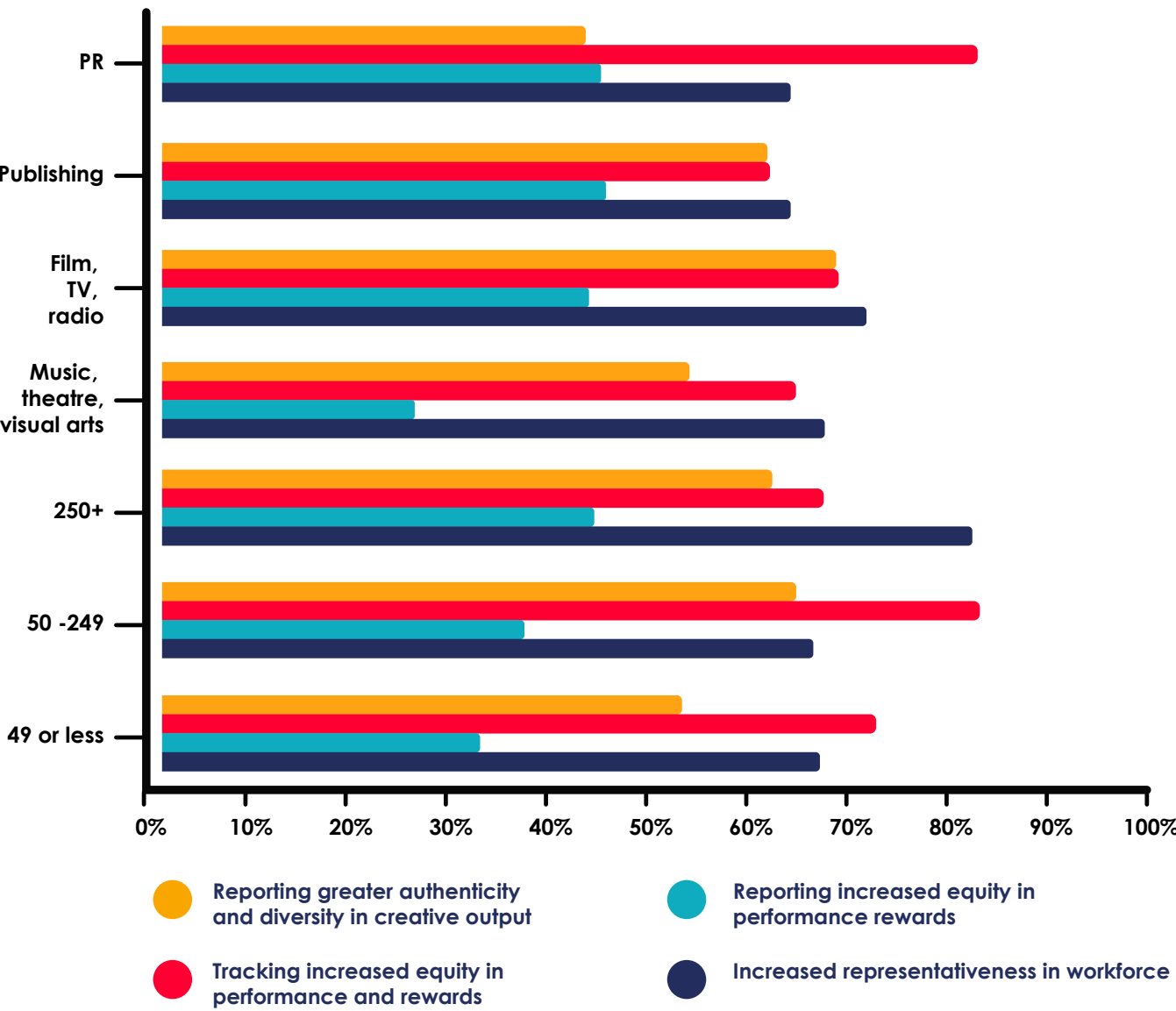
- 92% of those from Black, Asian and ethnically diverse backgrounds
- 92% of disabled people
- 90% of those from lower socio-economic backgrounds



Employer snapshot.

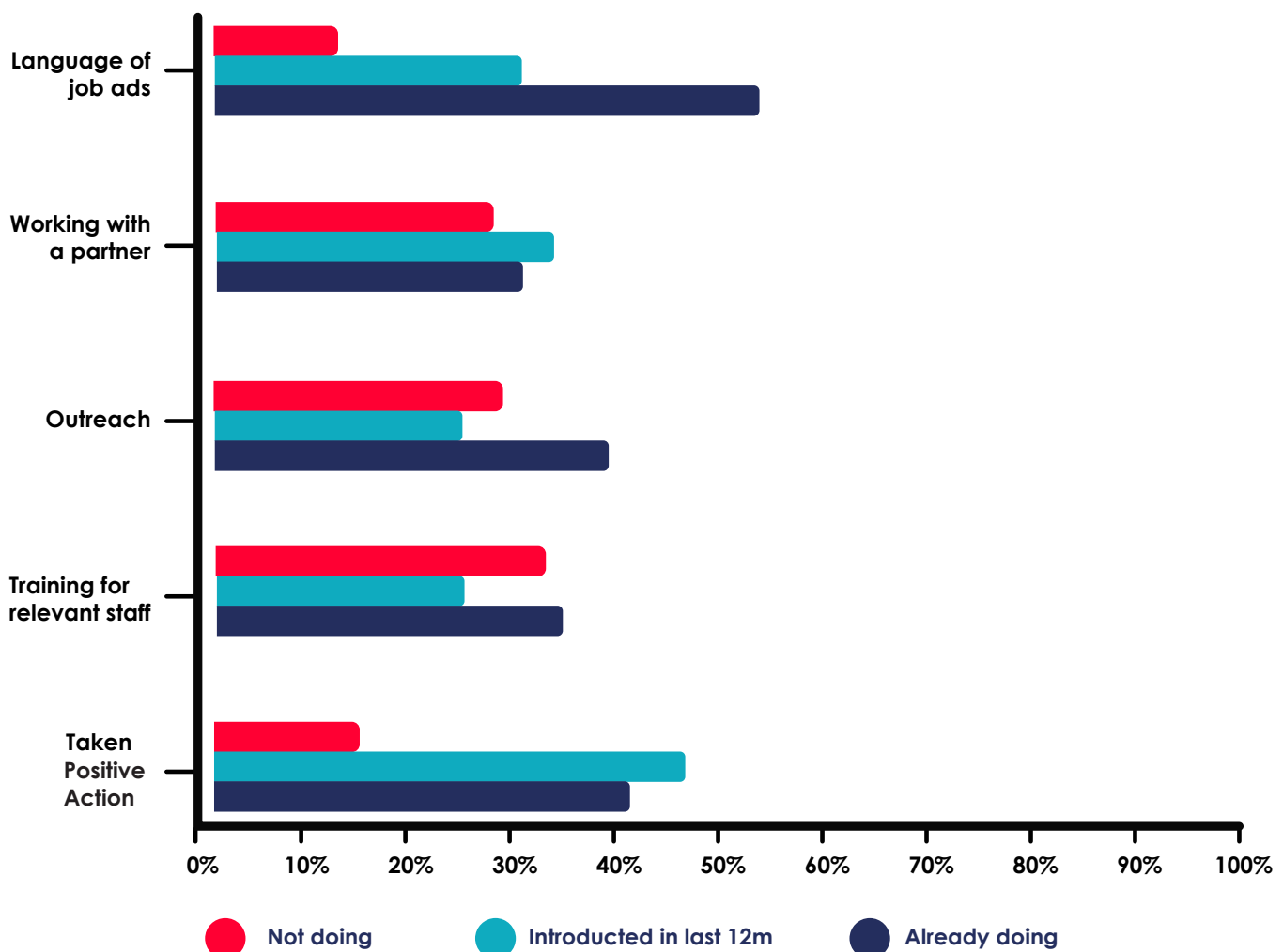
Most employers surveyed are now employing inclusive recruitment practices, although many have only put these in place relatively recently and so impact to date will likely be limited.

There is a significant increase in data collection and tracking, but few employers seem to be sharing or reporting this data back to internal or external audiences.



Inclusive recruitment practices.

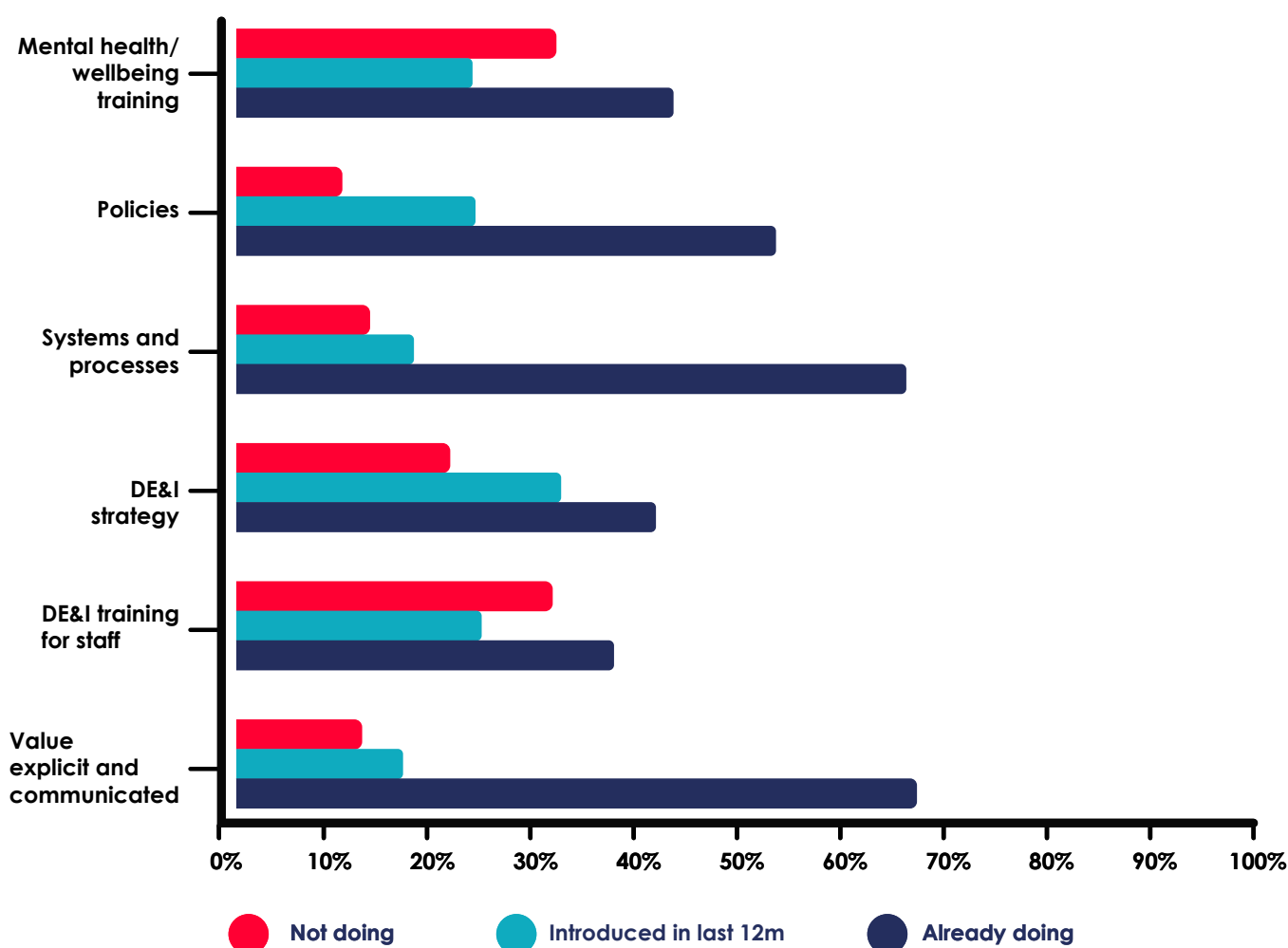
The research shows that employers are increasingly putting in place more inclusive recruitment practices with almost half (45%) having introduced the use of Positive Action and a third (31%) changing the language used in their job ads in the last year. However a further third (33%) are yet to put any inclusive recruitment training in place for hiring managers and other staff.



Slow progress.

While the majority of employers already have a DE&I strategy and best practice processes in place, the research shows many are still playing catch-up with a third only introducing a DE&I strategy and a quarter putting in place DE&I policies in the last year.

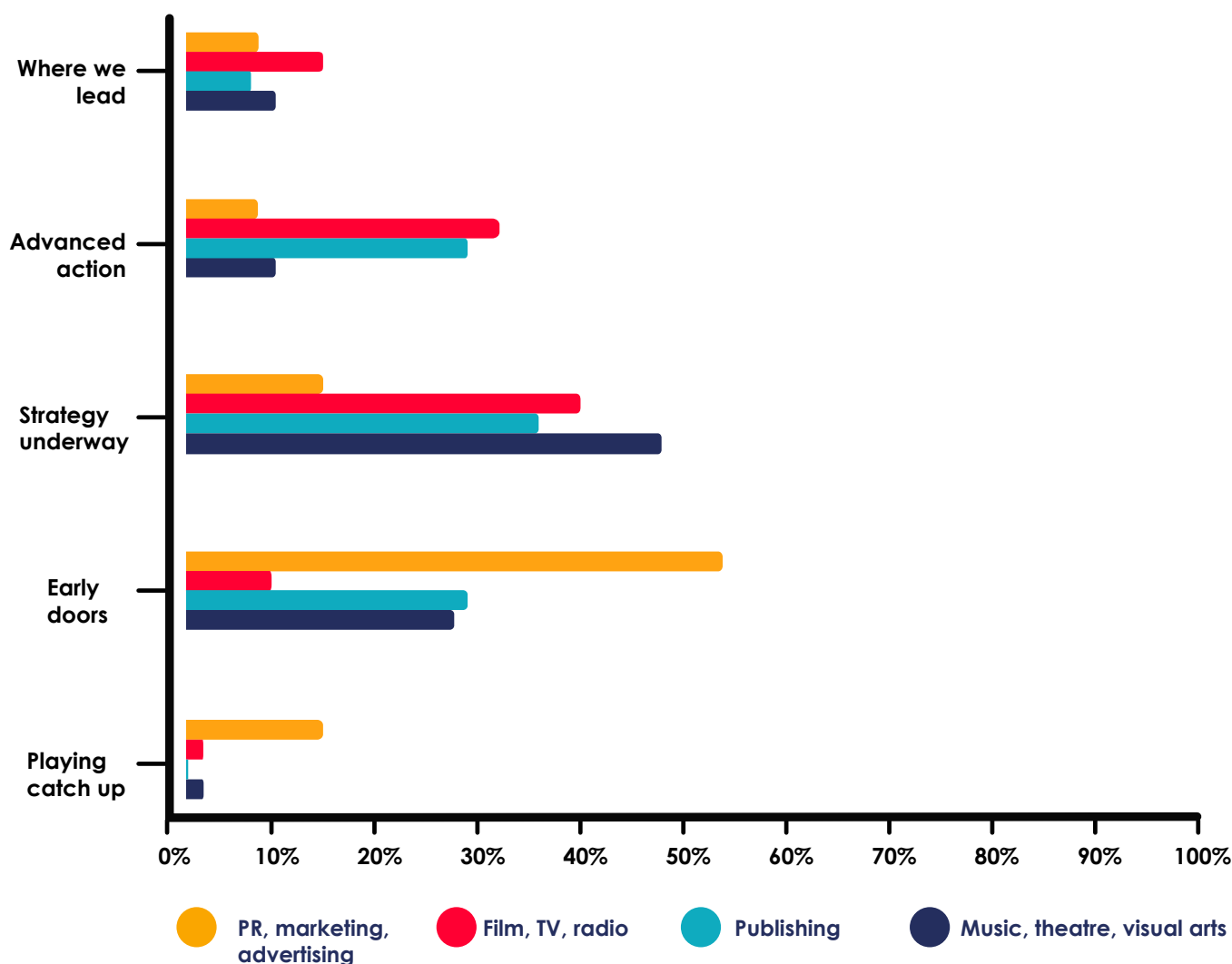
There is a significant lack of investment by employers in appropriate training with almost a third not currently providing any training in DE&I (31%) or mental health (33%) for their staff.





When asked to rate their organisation's progress towards its DE&I goals, the majority of employers reported that they have a strategy in hand.

Unsurprisingly given many employers have only introduced practices to improve inclusive culture and recruitment in the last 12 months, relatively few feel confident that they are at an advanced stage.





Final word.

Overall, our first Creative Access Thrive report shows much to be optimistic about in terms of career progression and opportunities for people from under-represented groups in the creative industries.

However, when the data is split by group, we consistently see a much more challenging picture for disabled people and those who reported identify characteristics in more than one under-represented group. Employers and the industry need to place a significant focus in supporting and helping disabled people and those from intersectional groups access opportunities and progress.

While most employers are now using inclusive recruitment practices, many started these practices relatively recently, so will not yet be seeing the impact of this. With a third of candidates saying their organisation does not have a supportive and inclusive culture, employers have a lot more work to do in providing DE&I and mental health training for staff, working with inclusive recruitment partners and doing outreach to specific groups.

While the largest group of employers report that they have a strategy in hand, relatively few feel confident that they are at an advanced stage in DE&I. The desire to improve against DE&I outcomes seems to be there, but employers still have a long way to go and require support and expertise in this area.





Employer recommendations.

- Put in place inclusive recruitment practices, including taking Positive Action where appropriate and always including a salary or salary range when posting roles
- Invest in training in DE&I, mental health and inclusive recruitment practices through an expert partner
- Provide career development support as well as skills training through mentoring and help with networking and contact building
- Start collecting DE&I data now and review this annually against hires, pay, promotions and bonuses to identify any areas of inequity to be addressed
- Deepen understanding of the specific support different groups in your organisation may need, for example disabled people and those from intersectional groups – there is no one size fits all approach





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