

Research reveals too many staffing companies are failing to record data on the diversity of their staff

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- 41% of staffing firms don't record workplace demographics
- Respondents said there is generally a culture of diversity and inclusivity in recruitment, but were less certain about their firms' active policies
- Religious beliefs and staff qualifications least likely of all data to be recorded

Joint research from the Association of Professional Staffing Companies (APSCo) and the Recruitment & Employment Confederation (REC) has revealed that two in five employment businesses (41%) do not record data on the demographic makeup of their own workforce and leadership teams.

In a survey of both corporate and individual representatives across the recruitment sector, the trade bodies found that many firms felt unable to track this information as they are 'too small of an organisation' (quoted by 38% of respondents) or simply hadn't considered it (26%).

While survey respondents generally agreed that a culture of diversity and inclusivity exists within recruitment, there was far greater uncertainty about staff having access to equality, diversity and inclusion (ED&I) training and whether their business had an active and evidenced ED&I programme.

According to the REC and APSCo, with ED&I rising up the corporate agenda for client businesses, recruiters themselves need data to ensure their own workforce reflects the diversity of the businesses they partner with.

Ann Swain, Chief Executive of APSCo commented:

"When we first embarked on this collaborative research, our hope had been to identify what the current make-up of the recruitment sector looked like, any discrepancies between corporate and individual views, and where diversity may be 'lacking'. What we found, though, was a more pressing issue: a lack of information. Without a clear and honest picture of your workforce, will be difficult for staffing companies to identify where there are gaps or what demographics are currently under-represented.

"However, while we might not be where we'd like to when it comes to being able to identify the demographic balance in the recruitment world, now is the time to commit to driving true diversity – starting with accurate and essential record-keeping. There are restrictions on what employers can and can't ask staff and how recruitment businesses approach the tracking of sensitive personal data will require careful management and guidance. Through APSCo Embrace - an all-encompassing Equality, Diversity & Inclusion member service which includes a number of different strands to support recruitment firms with their own ED&I approaches – we will be working closely with our members to help them navigate the diversity landscape."

Neil Carberry, Chief Executive of the REC, said:

"The glaring finding of the report is a lack of effective diversity monitoring in some recruitment

businesses. As the old saying goes, what gets measured gets managed, so effective data collection needs to spread more broadly across the industry. The REC will be there to help support recruiters on this journey. This is already a core part of our business plan, as reflected by our signing up to the Race at Work Charter, being a Disability Confident organisation, and the regular content and advice we provide to members through the REC website and podcast. There will be more to come later this year!

“More than any other sector, recruitment sits at the heart of workplace diversity and inclusion. As an industry, we open up opportunity to millions of people every year. Many in the industry are making a difference, both individually and collaboratively – and our own firms being examples of good practice is central to making progress. That’s why the REC and APSCo chose to work together on this issue.”

The joint research found that religious beliefs and staff qualifications are least likely to be recorded, with 90% and 73% of corporate respondents respectively stating they do not collect this data. A further 65% of those organisations surveyed said they did not record any sexual orientation data on their workforce while 40% don’t collect information on the age of their workforce.

In terms of demographic data, the joint research found that:

- Over 75% of corporate respondents’ workforces were White British, with 40% of corporate respondents indicating that their entire senior leadership team (SLT) is White British.
- There is a fairly even balance between men and women at a senior level in the recruitment sector.
- 94% of individual recruitment professionals said they were heterosexual, while 24% of business respondents reported that their entire workforce was heterosexual.

Both recruitment trade bodies agreed that it is important for businesses in the sector to record demographic data in line with the compliance and relevant guidelines associated with the tracking of sensitive data. Collecting this data is an important stepping stone in improving diversity and inclusion practices in the staffing industry. Both the REC and APSCo will be working with their members to provide best practice and legal guidance on the best ways to do this.

Ends

Notes to editors:

- The REC and APSCo’s UK Recruitment Diversity & Inclusion Index can be downloaded here (<https://mediaserver.responsesource.com/mediabank/8474/UKRecruitmentDiversityInclusionIndexFinal.pdf>) or here (https://d2rqxpyrbcb756.cloudfront.net/6816/2340/2420/UK_Recruitment_Diversity__Inclusion_Index.pdf).
- APSCo and the REC surveyed 105 staffing companies and 348 individual recruitment professionals for this report. Data were collected between December 2020 and May 2021.

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About APSCo

APSCo (The Association of Professional Staffing Companies) is the only membership body dedicated to representing excellence in the professional recruitment industry. With offices in the UK, Germany, Singapore and Australia, it provides members with the information, intelligence, ideas, opportunities and support they require to become compliant, efficient and successful.

For more information visit www.apsco.org

About the REC

The REC is the voice of the recruitment industry, speaking up for great recruiters. We drive standards and empower recruitment businesses to build better futures for great candidates and themselves. We are champions of an industry which is fundamental to the strength of the UK economy.

Find out more about the Recruitment & Employment Confederation at www.rec.uk.com.