SOCIAL MOBILITY FOUNDATION

Feedback on your Social Mobility Employer Index submission

Thank you for making a submission to the Social Mobility Employer Index 2020. Below is your individual feedback report which highlights where your organisation is performing well, benchmarks you against other organisations and suggests areas for improvement. Please read this in conjunction with the main Index Key Findings report which will be published alongside the top list and will provide further context to the information given here.

Given new organisations will enter the Index each year, in the interest of fair and consistent treatment we have assessed each employer based on the information we have received in this year's submission only; generally speaking, we have not compared this submission with any data received in 2019, but have taken notice where organisations have explicitly highlighted improvements on last year or have provided data from previous years.

Please note that we will not be publishing the 2019 ranking alongside the 2020 ranking and so if your organisation is lower than it was in 2019, this will not be known unless anyone specifically looks for last year's Top 75.

In addition to using this feedback, we would also strongly advise reading the 2021 guidance notes before starting your next submission - these will be published when the next version of the Index is launched early next year. The Employer Toolkit from the Social Mobility Commission and The Bridge Group also provides helpful guidance.

If you have any queries regarding the Index or your feedback please contact employerindex@socialmobility.org.uk.

City of London Corporation	Overall ranking: 50

Congratulations on making it into the list of Top 75 employers in the 2020 Social Mobility Employer Index. The Top 75 recognises the organisations that are taking the most action to ensure they are open to accessing and progressing talent from all backgrounds. Your organisation is benefitting from accessing talent from a wide range of backgrounds, and working to ensure employees progress based on effectiveness in role, rather than by background – but as you'll know, there is still more to do. We hope that your organisation will use its position in the Top 75 to advocate for social mobility, implementing new approaches that challenge others to do more over the next 12 months.

Section 2: Work with young people — Decile: 7

It's positive that City of London Corporation is targeting its outreach work at schools with above average levels of Free School Meals/low levels of attainment and is working with a fairly high proportion of children that are eligible for Free School Meals (2019) and without existing relationships with employers.

As the Social Mobility Commission's 'State of the Nation 2018-19' report demonstrated, the biggest gap in access to opportunity is no longer the 'north/south' divide, but that between London and the rest of the country. We would therefore encourage you to continue targeting your support at the areas of the country where the need is greatest and to ensure you are reaching those young people that will benefit the most from your support.

Your organisation has a fairly strong link between the outreach work you do and your recruitment pipeline, in particular reference to the 'Think Investments' programme.

Your organisation did not provide any data on whether or not it is flagging students from its outreach work when they go on to apply for recruitment programmes (e.g. internships) or permanent roles. It is likely that the young people you encounter through your outreach are often from backgrounds which are under-represented in your workforce. If you are not already doing so, we would strongly encourage you to collect this data as part of evaluating the impact of your outreach work and to assess whether it is having the desired effect. If the number of applicants or successful applicants is low, it highlights a missed opportunity for you given the resources you devote to your outreach activity.

The student feedback on the work experience programme is positive, and suggests that the programme is improving students' confidence and understanding of the sector. It is also good that you are tracking the career outcomes of the young people on these activities. We would encourage you to use this information to support your follow-up activity.

Section 3: Routes into the employer — Decile: 5

Yours is one of a small number of Index organisations to offer higher apprenticeships and is bucking the general trend, which sees the majority of organisations offering apprenticeships at levels 2 and 3. We were pleased to see in last year's Index that an increasing number of organisations are offering apprenticeships at a higher level. This is important, as these can

provide a genuine route into the organisation that is comparable with graduate routes and allows for ongoing career progression.

Whilst very few organisations are publishing what they know about the profile of successful applicants, it is important information for you to know as it should shape your strategy and help you know whether what you communicate to candidates about applying to you is the only information they should know. There are two approaches organisations can take here:

- Be honest with applicants about the types of people you prefer in the selection process, it's in no-one's interests to encourage more applications from people who are highly likely to be unsuccessful – including the applicant's

Or

- Review your selection processes so that they are more inclusive, and in particular assess how your existing screening processes relate to job performance.

Section 4: Attraction Decile: 3

The recruitment section of your website has some good information about applying for roles, but does not give a clear overview of the whole process, and has no examples or practice tests. An end-to-end overview, with examples where applicable, would make the process more transparent. Some good examples are provided below:

- Capgemini
- Enterprise Rent-A-Car
- Linklaters LLP

We were also particularly impressed with the mock case study guide from Capital One, which offers candidates helpful tips on case study based interviews and step-by-step examples of this type of interview.

It is good to see that you have initiatives in place to target people from low socio-economic backgrounds. Significant resources are often invested in initiatives to attract those from lower socio-economic groups and it is important that organisations know what they are supporting is effective and leads to change in the diversity of the applicant pool/hires; if it doesn't we encourage organisations to find an alternative initiative that might be more successful.

Section 5: Recruitment and selection Decile: 2

Whilst your organisation has minimum academic requirements, it does have lower requirements than many Index organisations. This is positive, as there is a lack of evidence to suggest there is a connection between prior attainment and performance in role and those from higher socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to have higher prior attainment. Therefore, your approach could broaden the socio-economic demographic of the applicant pool, but we would recommend analysing your application data to see if that is the case.

Based on your submission, the organisation is not currently measuring how many successful applicants met, but did not exceed, the stated minimum grade requirements. We would encourage you to collect this data, in order to establish if the minimum requirements are being used as intended, or whether successful applicants are always exceeding them. If the latter is the case, we would recommend revising the published minimum requirements, in order to more accurately reflect the reality of the application process.

It's positive that the City of London Corporation has removed candidates' grades and the university attended from most stages of the recruitment process, as it could be the case that the name, academic grades or university attended of candidates have an unduly adverse impact on the success rates of certain demographics.

It is positive that your organisation uses standardised questions for its interviews. Whilst there is a degree of variation in every interview, where standardised questions are not used it allows each individual interviewer too much leeway to look for what they personally want and not what the organisation as a whole is looking for, and means that candidates are not all being judged on the same criteria. Strengths-based interviewing has also been proven to have a positive impact on diversity as opposed to competency-based. More information on this can be found in SMF's guide for students here.

Your organisation is not currently monitoring its recruitment process to identify whether there are particular stages at which those from lower socio-economic backgrounds fall down. The employers that have made the most progress with adjusting their recruitment process have all started by assessing exactly which stage candidates from particular backgrounds are being disproportionately rejected and then changing/removing the parts of the process that seem to disadvantage those candidates, in order to level the playing field. Monitoring the process in this way is something that should be done on an ongoing basis to ensure that one year's results are not an anomaly and also because different employers have different experiences e.g. some think video interviews have improved their process and others have found female candidates do disproportionately badly in them.

The organisation currently scores 'Work experience within your sector' as part of the application process, and may want to reconsider this. Work experience is particularly difficult for students from lower socio-economic backgrounds to access, and is often predominantly available in London. Across the board, many more work experience placements go to the relatives of employees and clients than do the best people from less privileged backgrounds, giving the former a natural advantage in your scoring

There can be a case for scoring extra-curricular activities depending on what the activities are, but often the activities that are being scored by organisations are those not available to many socio-economically disadvantaged young people; we would encourage the organisation to review this part of the recruitment process with those students in mind. A related point is that some young people are restricted in the extra-curricular activities they can participate in due to family, or have often experienced a bigger 'step-up' to university and therefore are not pushing to be captain of the netball team or social secretary for a society because they are focussing on their studies. Evidence of these activities being accessed disproportionately by those from higher socio-economic backgrounds can be found in the Bridge Group's report on graduate outcomes here.

There is increasing evidence – for example in The Class Ceiling (Friedman/Laurison) – that those from lower socio-economic groups can suffer a 'double disadvantage' if they are also female or BAME. Access and progression are unequal by socio-economic background (in its own right) and evidence also indicates that this characteristic is also correlated with some aspects of race (i.e. Black employees are often more likely to be from lower socio-economic background compared to other races), and that it has a compounding effect. Evidence of this can be found in research done by The Bridge Group with law firms and the Civil Service Fast Stream. Whilst not every organisation will have enough data to make definitive conclusions, looking at how candidates do if they are in more than 1 under-represented category can help you work out where you most need to focus your efforts.

Section 6: Data collection Decile: 6

It is very positive that the City of London Corporation is collecting 4 data points for current employees. Over half of Index employers are now collecting socio-economic background data from their new employees and over 40% are collecting this for existing employees, predominantly using the metrics of type of school attended, eligibility for Free School Meals and being the first in the family to attend university. This data collection is key and provides a solid foundation on which to base your social mobility strategy. Some employers have begun to enquire about whether those who attended an independent school did so with the support

of a bursary (and then often categorising this group as lower SEB). We advise caution here, since a great proportion of those in receipt of a bursary may a) in fact be on a non means-tested scholarship or b) be in receipt of a means-tested bursary that is a relatively small proportion of the overall fee (therefore still typically requiring significant financial contributions from parents / carers.)

More generally, we found that completion rates for socio-economic background questions were mixed, with some close to 100% and some as low as 10%. High response rates are important because they help to ensure that the data collected provides accurate monitoring of the recruitment and retention of staff, and a better understanding of areas for action. Strategies for increasing completion rates include:

- Placing the questions in the context of other diversity monitoring, and underlining that people can opt not to answer them;
- Providing staff with a detailed explanation of why the data is being collected and how the organisation plans to use it;
- Senior leadership regularly emphasising the importance of collecting this data;
- Linking the collection of the data to the business case for being open to all talent, regardless of background; and
- Using case studies to illustrate how other organisations have used their data collection exercises to improve recruitment practices.

Again this year we have seen an increase in the number of organisations able to provide workforce data broken down by background, which is a positive trend. However, it is still the case that less than half of Index organisations have that data, and so it's very positive that your organisation was able to provide this.

Your organisation is not currently publishing the data it collects on the socio-economic background of the workforce. Whilst we understand that the publication of this data has some organisational risk, we would encourage all employers to collect and publish detailed data on the socio-economic make-up of their workforce to increase transparency and encourage a more open dialogue about social mobility.

Section 7: Progression, culture and experienced hires Decile: 9

It is very positive that your organisation is collecting data on retention, progression, professional exams/qualifications, pay and appraisal grades. The increasing number of studies of pay, progression and retention in the workplace show that those from lower socio-economic backgrounds can progress at a slower rate than those from more privileged backgrounds and

the only way to know if that is true at your organisation is to record the data on what happens in your workplace. We look forward to reading these findings in next year's submission.

Section 8: Advocacy Decile: 9

It has been welcome to see the growth of organisations encouraging employees to share their stories of having come from a different background and in particular if senior employees are involved in this. Junior colleagues can often feel their senior colleagues are all from the same background given the degree of assimilation that takes place the longer someone works somewhere. More and more organisations now run social mobility weeks and/or have social mobility networks of employees. It is good to see City of London Corporation is also doing this.

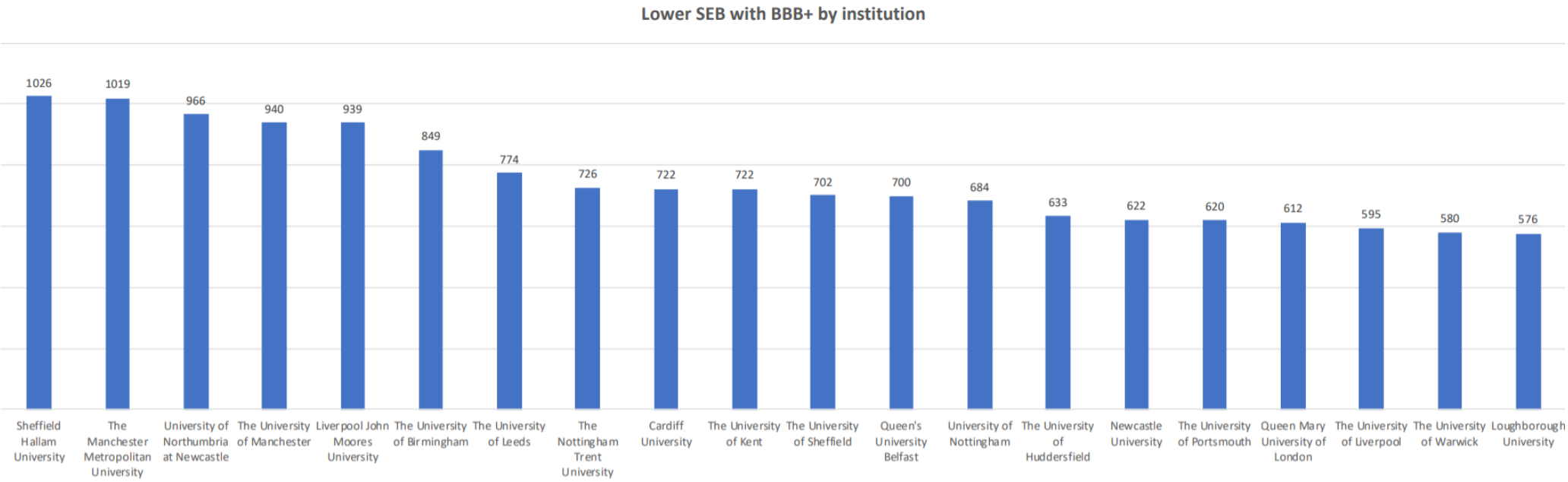
Less than half of Index organisations are encouraging their supply chains to take action on social mobility so it's positive that your organisation is taking action on this area of social mobility. Employers like yours have significant purchasing power, and can create a positive chain-reaction by asking suppliers about their approach to social mobility as part of your contracting process, or working with them to build joint initiatives to tackle the problem.

It's good to see you have targets in place, especially that these are reviewed at senior level. Based on the latest good practice, we would recommend setting targets (rather than quotas), since they are a helpful expression of success and typically the organisation's ambitions in this area. However, any such target should be well informed, so consider diversity within the talent pools you are drawing from, the way in which such a target might differ based on the occupational area within your organisation and seniority, and how the target may change over time.

Employee survey

Your organisation did not participate in the employee survey this year. An overview of the survey results will be provided in the key findings report.

Appendix A:



Top 20 institutions by the number of students from lower socio-economic backgrounds with 300+ UCAS points (graduating next summer). Please note the above data does not include courses allied to medicine or veterinary studies and only includes UK/HOME students.