



100 BAME APPRENTICES REPORT



*Key insights on culture and
diversity in Apprenticeships*

BAME Apprentice
Network Patrons:





CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	PAGE 3
BACKGROUND	PAGE 4
AIMS & OBJECTIVES	PAGE 5
OUR SAMPLE	PAGE 6
OUR FINDINGS	PAGE 7
DISCUSSION	PAGE 9
RECOMMENDATIONS	PAGE 11



ABSTRACT

Aims

This research has been conducted to find out how we can further improve apprenticeship offerings to individuals from BAME backgrounds; through the possible development of a BAME Apprentice Network and employer support organisation.

Methodology

100 BAME apprentices were sampled and a questionnaire used to gather first-hand data of their experiences and views.

Findings

This study shows that BAME apprentices are facing numerous challenges, influencing their engagement with apprenticeships, as well as their experiences once in an apprentice role. They wish to be part of support networks to improve their experiences. Employers also require support to recruit more apprentices from BAME backgrounds.

Recommendations

Increased support for BAME apprentices and their employers is needed. BAME networks for apprentices should be forged, to ensure that their needs are understood and met.



BACKGROUND

In 2016 Business Secretary Sajid Javed MP, set a target that BAME apprenticeship uptake must increase to 20% by 2020. As little research had been carried out into the factors influencing the poor uptake of apprenticeships from BAME communities; it was unclear why the BAME community was not engaging with the apprenticeship opportunities.

In light of this, Thinkfest set out to gather data that might glean the relevant information around apprenticeships; specifically sampling those members of the BAME community who had first-hand experience in the world of apprenticeships. In doing this, Thinkfest gained subjective and insightful views of the current apprenticeship scene, which could then be used to inform further engagement with the community.

Over the past 5 years Thinkfest has run the BAME Apprenticeship Awards (previously Asian Apprenticeship Awards), where successful apprentices were given a platform to share their triumphs through a collective and public celebration of their achievements giving credibility and publicity to apprenticeships. Through the engagement with employers and learning providers, the awards brought to the forefront key issues surrounding the need for greater diversity within apprenticeships.

According to a 2019 government survey, between 2009 and 2018, the percentage of apprentices from the 'Black, Asian, Mixed and Other' ethnic groups combined, increased from 6.7% to 11.1%; whilst the number of people who participated in apprenticeships tripled over the same period to 90,200. The survey showed a growing demand among BAME apprentices for apprenticeships in three subject areas: business administration, health and social care and retail and commercial enterprises (accounting for 81% of BAME apprentices compared with 72% of 'White' apprentices). It also highlighted opportunities to improve representation in sectors such as engineering and construction, where BAME apprentices are currently underrepresented.

Following the findings of this report we found that a wider issue needed to be dealt with, and thus rebranded and became the BAME Apprenticeship Awards. We realised that there was a broader need for racial inclusion within apprenticeships, especially in terms of progression within apprenticeships.

This research therefore aims to explore the additional efforts that need to be made to further our work to continue to promote apprenticeships within the BAME community.



AIMS & OBJECTIVES

Over the last 5 years the BAME Apprenticeship Awards have been pivotal in bringing together employers and apprenticeship stakeholders to celebrate amazing BAME apprentice talent. However not enough has been done to address the ethnicity employment gap. To advance our work in this area, we are conducting this report to find out how we can further improve apprenticeship offerings, to those individuals from BAME backgrounds.

Our key objectives are-

- To find out what issues BAME apprentices are facing and their subsequent needs.
- To find out whether the label BAME is relevant
- To unearth current employer limitations and opportunities for development
- To discover whether a BAME Apprentice network might be required and the purposes it should achieve.



OUR SAMPLE

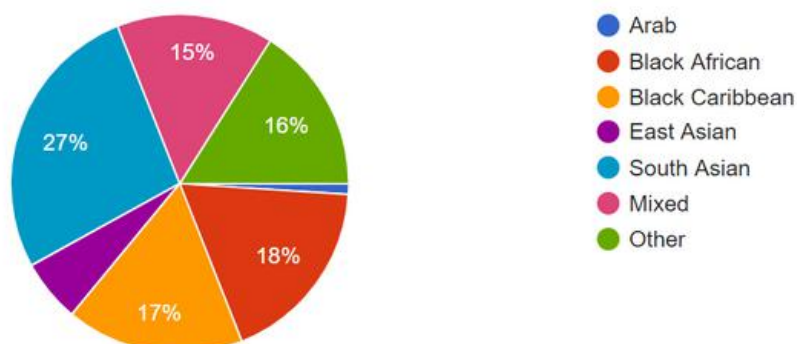
We reached out to over 100 BAME apprentices, asking them to complete a questionnaire about their experiences during their apprenticeship. Of the 100 apprentices that completed the survey, 82% were still currently enrolled in an apprenticeship. The sample reflected a comparatively equal mix of individuals from a variety of BAME backgrounds. Similarly, those taking part were from a variety of sectors, with a majority working in engineering and manufacturing along with health, medical and social care.

In regards to age, 60% were between the ages of 16 to 24, 24% were 25 to 35 and 16% were over 35. Those taking part were informed that their responses would be completely anonymised, providing them with the reassurance and confidence that they could be completely honest in their responses.

What sector do you work in?



Which of these best describe your ethnic group?



OUR FINDINGS

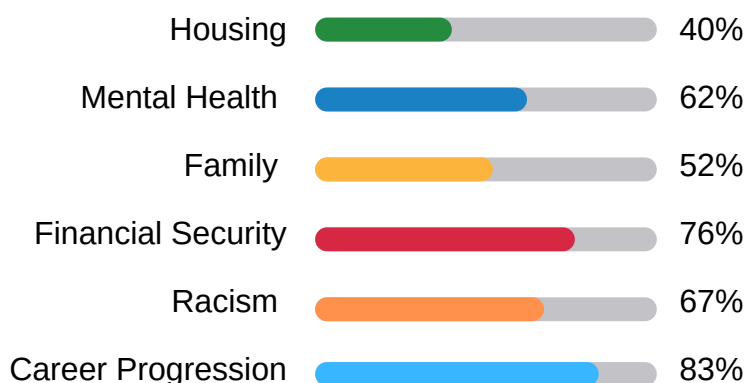
Following much media attention and debate around the use of the term BAME, we were keen to find out whether our sample of apprentices recognised and identified with the term BAME. The resulting 80% who stated that they did identify with the term BAME, gave us confidence that BAME is still a relevant term, and should be used as a catalyst for change.

Throughout the data we did not find any specific trends between different ethnic backgrounds and the answers provided. This tells us that our sample are facing similar issues regardless of their ethnic background.

77% of our sample had experienced racial abuse in their lifetime, a worrying statistic which supported our hypothesis that racial discrimination is a major factor affecting people from BAME backgrounds. This may also explain why 45% feel at a disadvantage because of their ethnic background and 36% feel that they are less employable because of their race. On a positive note only 15% of responders felt that their employer was not inclusive and equal, with 23% of them still unsure.

The areas of concern for apprentices gave us a great insight into the barriers that are contributing to the low uptake of apprenticeships in the BAME community. With career progression being the highest scoring category at 83%, financial security at 76% and mental health at 62%. Family, 52% and housing, 40% were also hurdles that our sample faced.

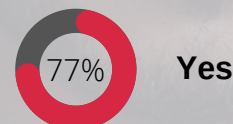
Which of the following areas are of concern for you?



Do you identify as BAME?



Have you ever experienced racial abuse?



Do you feel disadvantaged because of your race?



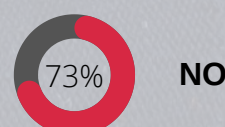
Do you feel less employable because of your race?



Do you feel your employer is inclusive and equal?



Do you think corporate organisations do enough to recruit from BAME backgrounds?





OUR FINDINGS

With career progression being a great concern to people from BAME backgrounds, we delved further, finding out more about their access to support and what resources they felt they needed to succeed.

Only 24% of apprentices had access to an apprentice support group or network, with 90% saying that they would be interested in joining a National Apprentice Network support group made for BAME apprentices. 75% of the sample requested support in the way of professional development workshops with 64% looking for career progression and additional professional training.

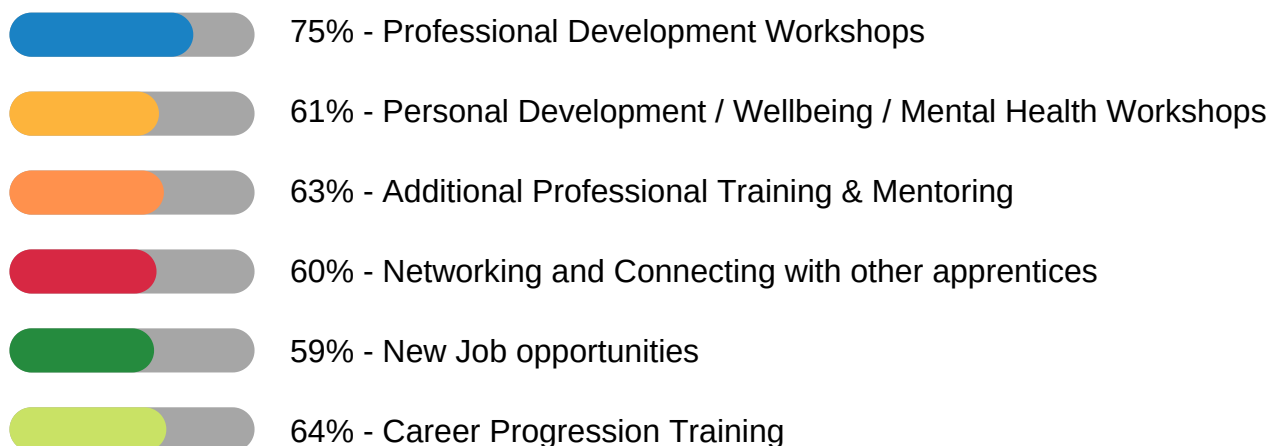
Are you currently a member / have access to an apprentice support group or network of any kind?

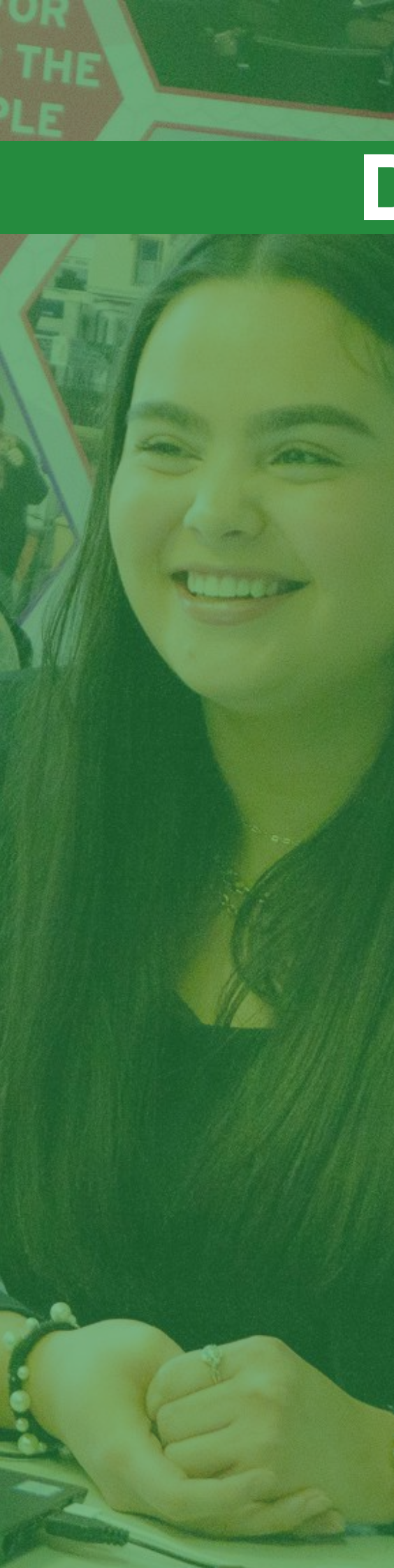


Would you be interested in joining a national apprentice network/support group made for BAME apprentices?



What kind of support or activities would be most valuable if you joined this BAME Apprentice Network?





DISCUSSION

The initial part of our survey looked into how individuals identified and how they felt it impacts their life and career. The findings were very clear in showing us that a large majority of people from BAME backgrounds experience racial abuse. This would undoubtedly have a negative impact on their confidence in their own ability, giving rise to insecurities, uncertainties and self-doubt. Making them feel that they've failed before they've even tried.

With 45% of the sample answering that they did sense marginalisation and 27% not being sure; it supported our hypothesis that BAME apprentices need appropriate and targeted support. It is therefore clear that more work needs to be done to promote racial equality in society and the workplace.

While only a small number of people felt that their employer was not inclusive and equal, a large proportion did feel that corporate organisations do not do enough to recruit people from BAME backgrounds. This means that employers need to do more to engage with the BAME communities.

We felt it important to ask the sample if they identified as BAME, in order to ensure that the title for the proposed support network and groups would be appropriately labelled to attract the target group of apprentices. With 81% of the apprentices answering 'yes' to BAME identification, and only 5% saying no, we feel that this term remains relevant and appropriate.

In light of the areas of concern emphasised by the sample, we also discovered the obstacles faced by BAME apprentices, affording us with the opportunity to make concerted changes through support and training. Drawing upon the first-hand insights of our responders, we see that career progression and financial security contributed greatly to decisions regarding apprenticeship engagement. Thus, reminding us of the need for employers to augment the apprentice experiences in this area.

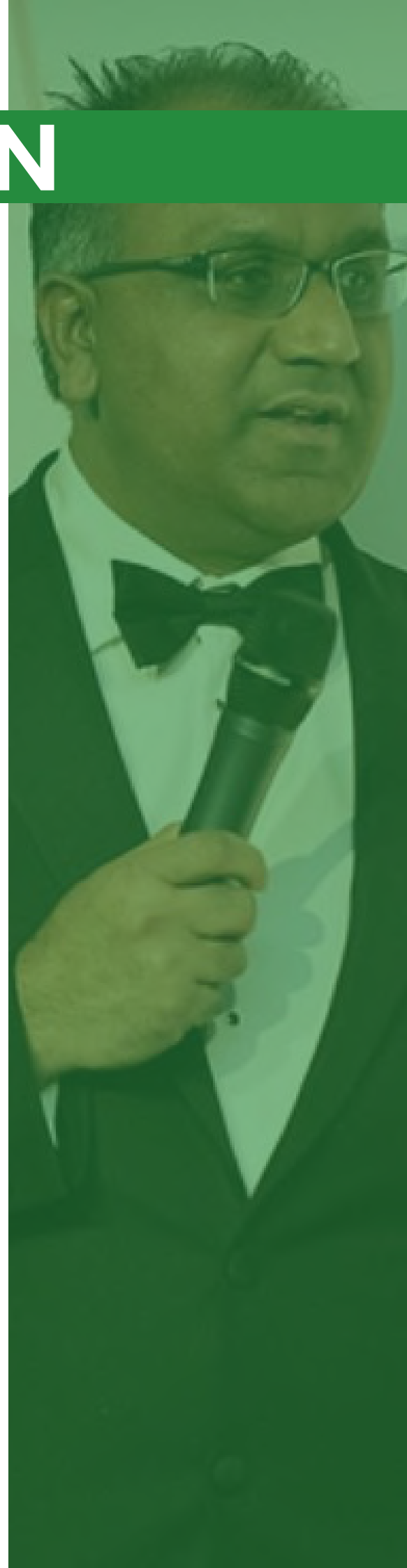
DISCUSSION

Mental health, housing and family issues, also suggest a need for personal support for BAME apprentices; helping them not only to enter into the roles, but also commit fully to them, carrying them to completion.

A significantly large amount of the apprentices sampled were between 16 and 24 years old, with over $\frac{3}{4}$ of them not being a member of, or having access to any support groups. This seems a worrying finding in that, the youngest members of our workforce, those who are still learning and the least skilled are not receiving the support that they most certainly require and would benefit from.

The research also showed that the apprentice sample agreed with this suggestion, with over 90% expressing an interest in being part of a national support group/network for BAME apprentices. This recognition of a need for support by the BAME apprentices highlighted that this needed to be acted upon in order to improve the apprentice experience and outcomes.

When we delved into the types of activities and support that the apprentices might appreciate, they expressed a clear interest in professional development, additional training, new job opportunities and career progression training. Therefore, although employers may already be offering some training and development to their apprentices, there is certainly a great deal more to be done in this area. BAME apprentices not only wished to be part of a network which could support them, they also valued additional training and development prospects.





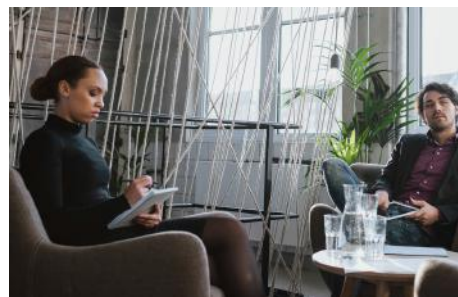
RECOMMENDATIONS

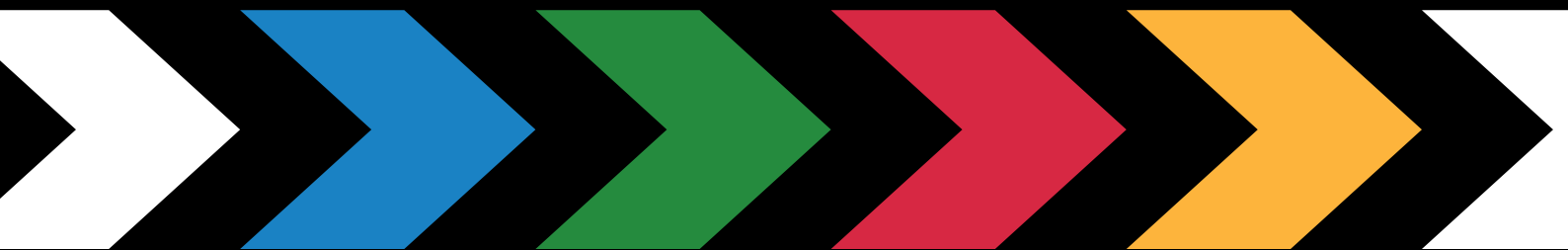
The central finding of the report is that numerous and marked changes must be made by employers to recruit more BAME apprentices. This can be achieved through the routes and changes unearthed through this research.

The need for career progression opportunities should be addressed by employers, making clear the stratification of roles and responsibilities at each point. BAME Apprentices not only need to be aware of the progression available to them, but also be supported and given the chances to meet these superior roles.

In order to address the findings of this report we intend to-

- Increase visibility of positive BAME apprentice role models and leaders
- Create a network to support BAME apprentices with personal and professional development.
- Carry out more research into the disparities between different ethnicities
- Support employers to-
 - Engage with BAME communities
 - Market more career opportunities to potential BAME apprentices.
 - Create more progression opportunities for BAME apprentices.
 - Develop a more diverse, inclusive and equal workplace for all.





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