Focus Groups – the real life experience of people in our region

The West Midlands Leadership Commission

This resource book provides additional information on the views and experiences of people working across the West Midlands. The Leadership Commission would like to thank all the people who took part in the focus groups and the individuals who provide us with case study examples of their own experiences of gaining senior leadership positions. The Commission would also like to thank all of the facilitators for their time and effort in collating this information and thank Anna Sirmoglou of the WMCA for providing a summary table.

Focus Groups Summary

The table over the page summarises the focus group and highlights the barriers to leadership experienced by those who took part. The table also provides details on initiatives that proved helpful in their journeys to senior leadership positions, and also provides suggestions on initiatives that would make a difference.

Focus group descriptor	How many attendees – gender split and other characteristics where available (ie how many BME, disabled, LGBTQi)	Barriers to leadership	Good or helpful initiatives	Changes/measures/initiatives that would help make a difference
Small/ medium Sized Businesses Arts and Culture Recruitment agencies Culture and creative industries Engineering Community Connect (representatives from the Chinese community)	A total of 25 focus groups There is very little information on specific protected characteristics of participants. In some cases there is no information on the total number of participants in each focus group 211 total number of participants + any numbers from the WMP focus group, the BMet focus group , the BPS gender diversity forum	Key themes in order of priority 1) Lack of confidence and self-belief (small/medium businesses, Recruitment agencies, Arts and Culture, 3FF, NHS, Beorigami, BCC, LGBT, WMP, BPS, Priestley Smith, 1-2-1, TAG, BLUK) – 14 total "I see the only barrier being my own confidence. The thing that stops me from aspiring to a position of leadership is I don't feel I would be comfortable in such a position" (BCC) "I would feel isolated and not confident to talk about promotion to others except those leaders	Leadership skills training and development programmes (Small/Medium businesses) "The art of leadership", "ASTONish", "REPresent", "Artistic directors of the future" are industry leadership programmes but it was pointed out by these programmes promote people who do not necessarily need help (Culture and	1) Mentoring, coaching, shadowing and other development programmes that help encourage people, develop skills (including personable and management skills) and boost confidence (Recruitment agencies, small/medium businesses, culture and creative industries, HS2 college, 3FF, Women First, Uprising Alumni,

HS2 college (staff and students) 3FF (Parliamentors) Students ranging from Presidents of Student Unions to graduates Women First Uprising Alumni NHS Beorigami (project managers, community managers) WMCA employees (3 focus groups) Birmingham City University (1 student) LGBT (2 focus groups) West Midlands Police (BAME focus group) BPS gender diversity forum	and the Community Connect focus group where numbers were not recorded Gender: information on the gender of participants was available for 12 of 25 focus groups. For these, there were 86 females and 42 males. Ethnicity not known. However, two of the focus groups were BAME focused – community connect had representatives from the Chinese community and the WMP focus group was with BAME employees Sexual orientation unknown but two of the groups were with LGBT representatives Age – not known but the culture and creative industries focus group consisted of 28 16-30 year olds and a further three focus groups included university students	that have similar backgrounds to me" Lack of confidence was either seen as an individual thing or was in other cases put down to institutional barriers and company cultures and the current homogeneity of senior teams BPS gender diversity forum pointed out that women are more likely to be self-critical 2) Institutional racism, stereotyping, lack of cultural understanding and unconscious bias (Culture and creative industries, 3FF, NHS, LGBT, WMP, BMet, Joseph Chamberlain, BPS, Priestley Smith, City of Wolverhampton college, 1-2-1, BLUK) – 12 total "Institutional racism and patriarchy is cyclical – the more we are aware of the system, the more it stops us feeling confident. This then stops us applying, and therefore props back up our beliefs that we are not represented" young BAME person, Culture and creative industries) "Unconscious bias and discrimination persists which can block the progress of talented BME staff and means there is not always equal access to promotions, projects, senior leaders and secondments. All of this limits the aspirations and success of BME staff" "I have had to be head and shoulders above the competition. If I was equivalent I wouldn't get the position. Skin doesn't help but I can't prove it"	Creative industries) Mentoring (Small/Medium businesses) Shadowing, internships and opportunities to lead projects and work closely with board of directors (small/medium businesses) Unconscious bias training (Small/Medium businesses) Channel 4 doing pop up events to engage with local communities which was seen as a positive initiative(Arts and Culture) "Insight" programme developed to encourage and boost confidence of individuals for positions they may not have otherwise considered seen as positive (Recruitment agencies) Networks developed to identify female candidates from BAME backgrounds (recruitment agencies)	NHS, WMCA, WMP, BPS, BMet, 1-2-1, TAG, BLUK) 15 in total Culture and creative industries pointed out that these mentoring and coaching programmes need to be life -long rather than short-term leadership courses that have less impact. Uprising alumni pointed out that mentoring needs to be targeted at the right people – those who would most benefit 2) Visible Role models (Small/medium businesses, culture and creative industries, HS2 college, Women First, uprising alumni, Beorigami, LGBT, WMP, BPS, BMet, Joseph Chamberlain, 1-2-1, TAG, BLUK) 14 in total "Hearing stories of others that have overcome similar barriers and have come from relatable circumstances have always inspired me to continue with my development and strive for the outcome that I want. Even if it has not been realised yet, I have achieved small steps towards my ultimate goal that I may have given up

BMet focus groups Joseph Chamberlain College focus group Birmingham Professional services (BPS) Student Focus group – Priestley Smith City of Wolverhampton college 1-2-1 interviews TAG, trainees – apprentices, students BLUK		Use of language was also mentioned in the WMP and LGBT groups – language was described as exclusive ("we are tolerant employees" and banter as often being acceptable practice despite the offensive connotations 3) Need to change to fit a stereotype and to have the right connections – hard If you look, sound or act different/assimilation expectations (small/medium businesses, culture and creative industries, Community connect, 3FF, Uprising Alumni, Beorigami, LGBT, WMP, 1-2-1) – 9 total The two key issues were in relation to confidence, self-belief and the feeling that people needed to change/assimilate and adapt to the prevailing culture to stand a chance of promotion. A community connect focus group representative pointed out as a BAME person there is a two-step process to fit in- acceptance and then trying to stand out. "If you are a woman or an ethnic minority you need to push hard to get to the top, you need to be more assertive" WMCA focus group 4) Work-life balance including childcare responsibilities and the perception and reality that leadership positions are a compromise to work-life balance (Small/medium	"Women in Rail" and other targeted initiatives for under-represented groups (HS2) CV workshops, open door policy by senior managers, talks with alumni and patrons, outreach events, work placements for disabled students (HS2 college practices which were praised) BAME members on recruitment panels which was seen as effective (NHS) Women's network at Aston and a women in leadership society (Beorigami) Women in Tech within Silicon canal developing a training platform on their website for women who aim high but lack confidence offering mentoring, educating employees and reaching out to schools and universities. This was described as a positive initiative (Beorigami) "Spring forward" helpful in helping	on long time ago – however, due to these idols I now know that perseverance is key" Young person, Culture and creative industries "I love hearing from people of colour in senior positions – this helps to feel like maybe I can" young BAME person, Culture and creative industries "Representation matters, so I want to see people in leadership positions who look like me. But we need to ensure broader representation is on merit, rather than a tick box exercise. I don't like women only or black only events because they feel ghetto-ised rather than mainstream. I also don't want to be expected to speak on behalf of any particular demographic – I can only speak for myself" 3) General employee awareness, education, training and communication of the values of an inclusive workforce (recruitment agencies, culture and creative industries, HS2 college, 3FF, NHS, Beorigami, WMCA, LBGT, BPS, 1-2-1) 10 in total

		sized businesses, HS2 college, Beorigami, WMP, BPS, Joseph Chamberlain, Birmingham professional services, 1-2-1) – 8 total Specific examples were given in the small/medium businesses focus group that women were asked questions about intentions to have children and the lack of understanding by senior managers in relation to childcare responsibilities 5) Recruiting and promoting to own image/similar to themselves (Small/medium businesses, Recruitment Agencies, 3FF, WMP, NHS, Joseph Chamberlain, 1-2-1) – 7 total 6) Nepotism and "old boys club" mentality and people choosing people they have worked with before (Culture and creative industries, Engineering core, Uprising alumni, WMCA, WMP, 1-2-1) – 6 total An Engineering Core focus group participant stated that it is easier to apply as an external candidate rather than be promoted from within 7) Unnecessary criteria at recruitment level and expectations for "fully experienced" candidates, lack of investment in work experience opportunities restrict the diverse pool of	people develop self-belief (WMP) Master's degree in Leadership for all staff helped with confidence (WMP) "Realising potential" a 2015-18 BAME focused WMP programme lost impetus but was helpful networking wise (people with similar experiences) and helped form positive learning alliances (WMP) Handlelsbanken business development plan "The Wheel"(BPS) HSBC talent pool for women (BPS) "Take 2 hours off" (UBS) initiative helps de-stigmatise the culture around agile working (BPS) Ready Now programme (NHS) This was a year-long programme which had been developed for BME people, as there was a recognition that BMEs were not moving through the system into	There were references to general awareness, unconscious bias training, cultural competency training, training that can help demystify the issue of gender and sexuality 4) Leaders should be held accountable (also through setting objectives), be relatable and live/communicate the values (Arts and Culture, Engineering core, HS2 college, NHS, WMCA, 1-2-1) 6 in total 5) Targeted projects and development opportunities and talent programmes for under-represented groups and young people (Small/medium businesses, recruitment agencies, Culture and creative industries, BCC, WMP, Joseph Chamberlain, BLUK) 7 in total 6) Prioritise internal recruitment and offer better transparency of the process (Culture and creative industries, Engineering core,

		talent (Arts and culture, Recruitment agencies, HS2 College, Uprising Alumni, NHS) – 5 total HS2 college pointed out the lack of industry investment into the long-lasting relationships between students and companies which accounts for a low work experience rate which has a direct impact on the chances of successful leadership positions as there is an adverse lack of work experience. 8) The culture of promotions (Culture and creative industries, Engineering core, Uprising Alumni, WMCA) – 4 total This refers to the early and late working meetings, the perception of people working part-time as not committed enough, the social drinking after work where decisions are made and friendships are formed "Comments such as part-time may be perceived as a joke by some but they may put some people off" (WMCA focus group) 9) Lack of role models (3FF, Women First, NHS, 1-2-1) – 4 total "Lack of representation currently makes it difficult to imagine anything different" BAME young person, Culture and creative industries "It is positive that Deborah who is a woman and dual heritage is the CEO and that there is gender diversity in leadership – it gives us hope" WMCA focus group 10) Time and effort required for promotion (3FF, LGBT, WMP) – 3 total	Leadership positions. The programme helped individuals to develop strategies to move into leadership positions. The success rate had been very good (BLUK) NO ADDITIONAL INFO WAS PROVIDED ON THESE PROGRAMMES so if you need to elaborate on any of these you would need to look further. Also, unless indicated above people did not necessarily say that they found the programmes helpful – these were just programmes they were aware of	WMCA, BPS) 4 in total 7) A talent management and progression process that is embedded into existing promotion main frames. This should include sponsorship programme, career break options, advocation of alternative styles of leadership (Engineering core, NHS, WMP, BPS, 1-2-1) 5 in total 8) A more flexible approach to working, respect and promotion of work life balance (HS2 college, WMCA, 3FF, BPS) 4 in total 9) Educate leaders in terms of the barriers faced by people from diverse backgrounds (Small/medium businesses, NHS, LGBT) 3 in total 10) Better careers advice earlier, at schools and better access to education

		11) Some industries male dominated (WMCA, Engineering core, Beorigami) – 3 total		(Culture and Creative industries, WMCA, BMet, City of Wolverhampton college, 1-2-1) 5 in total
		12) Mental health higher amongst BME and LGBT which is a barrier (Culture and creative industries, LGBT) – 2 total		11) Celebrate successes (culture and creative industries, small/medium sized businesses) 2 in total
		13) At an early disadvantage if from a lower socio-economic background as schooling is worse, university unaffordable and harder to get experience on top of lacking the relevant support networks (City of Wolverhampton College, 1-2-1) – 2 total		12) Invest in apprenticeships to get people from disadvantaged backgrounds involved (Arts and culture) 1 in total
		14) Diversity lacking at entry level which makes it difficult to achieve diversity at senior levels (Arts and Culture)		13) Ensure recruitment panels are diverse (NHS) 1 in total
		"How do we create a pipeline of talent and diversity if young people are not coming through? We cannot achieve diversity at the top because we have not go the pipeline of the new talent right" (Arts and culture)		14) Create a full wrap around LGBT package including mental health support and confidence boosting (LBGT) 1 in total
		15) Home/culture barriers in relation to gender (BPS)		

The table over leaf provides a more detail account of each focus group before the individual focus groups are presented.

West Midlands
Combined Authority

Focus group descriptor	How many attendees – gender split and other characteristics where available (ie how many BME, disabled, LGBTQi)	Barriers to leadership	Good or helpful initiatives (existing)	Changes and measures/initiatives that would help make a difference
Small/medium Sized Businesses	12 in total All women, Ethnicity not specified (names indicate diverse mix)	-Leaders recruiting people similar to themselves and 'Mates of Mates' usually get promoted -Lack of confidence and self-belief -People feeling they need to change/to reflect their managers to have a chance of promotion -Being a woman with kids is a barrier (not just a perception but a reality, given that some women were asked questions about intentions to have children) -Lack of understanding by senior managers in terms of childcare responsibilities	-Leadership skills training/leadership and development programmes -Mentoring with established industry leaders -Internships and opportunities to lead projects and work closely with Board of Directors -Unconscious bias training	-Talent needs to be nurtured and people encouraged -Visible role models -Involve aspiring leaders in senior meetings -Celebrate successes -Educate leaders in terms of the barriers faced by people from a diverse background -Improve aspiration or/and confidence levels through targeted projects. Start at a young age (schools)
Arts and Culture	10 in total 4 females 6 males Ethnicity not specified (names indicate that primarily White British)	Diversity at entry level is lacking which then makes it difficult to achieve diversity at senior levels "How do we create a pipeline of talent and diversity if young people are not coming through? We cannot achieve diversity at the top because we have not got the pipeline of new talent right" -Unnecessary criteria at recruitment stage (i.e. degrees) is hurting diversity amongst applicants -Lack of soft skills can be a barrier for diverse communities -Due to the barriers many young people avoid joining bigger companies and prefer working with SMEs or starting up their own business -Socioeconomic factors lead to under-representation	-Channel 4 is doing pop up events around the country to engage with communities	-Invest in apprenticeships to get people from disadvantaged backgrounds involved -Leaders should be held accountable -Establish a leadership steering group to take forward diversity related ideas

Recruitment agencies	7 in total 2 men 5 women). Ethnicity not specified (names indicate primarily White British)	-Clients are interested in employing fully experienced candidates rather than candidates with the potential to grow into leadership positions. Time to upskill/mentor or train is limited -Leaders recruiting like for like people -Some BAME candidates lack confidence	-A programme called Insight has been developed to encourage and boost confidence of individuals for positions they may not have considered -Networks developed to identify female candidates from BAME backgrounds	-People need to be offered more opportunities to gain the skills and experience required of board members -Mentoring and coaching are crucial (confidence building and networking) -Shadowing - Communication of the values of having a diverse workforce and leadership is crucial
Culture and creative industries	28 people aged 16-30. No further information available	-Old boys club and nepotism for senior positions "Lack of representation currently makes it different to imagine anything different" BAME young person -The culture of promotions (if you are a young parent going to evening social meetings is hard, if you don't drink etc.) -Mental health is really high with groups who are not gender conforming (LGBT) and with BAME groups which makes it harder to get to the top -Connections and looking and sounding a certain way and confidence improves your chances of promotion – certain types make it to the top "Not taken seriously – I believe I am perceived to look and talk a certain way which I feel could hold me back" BAME young couple -"We feel we have to work twice as hard and it is not even recognised. CEOs of top companies will still state hard work for getting there, which is part of it, but it is also privilege" BAME young person -"Institutional racism and patriarchy is cyclical – the more we are aware of the system, the more it is stops us feeling confident. This then stops us applying, and therefore props back up our beliefs that we are not represented" young BAME person	The art of Leadership, ASTONlish, REPresent and Artistic Directors of the future were mentioned as leadership programmes but most maintained that leadership programmes promote people who do not need particular help.	-More education is needed on the use of language -role models -celebrate successes -invest money in programmes that are intersectional -advice and confidence building "Hearing stories of others that have overcome similar barriers and have come from relatable circumstances have always inspired me to continue with my development and strive for the outcome that I want. Even if it has not been realised yet, I have achieved small steps towards my ultimate goal that I may have given up on a long time ago – however due to these idols I know that perseverance is key". Young person "I love hearing from people of colour in senior positions – this helps to feel like maybe I can" young BAME person -More culturally sensitive and targeted programmes for young, gay Muslims -Lifelong mentoring and coaching and action learning rather than 6-week leadership crash courses that finish and then it all stops

				-Internal recruitment first before recruiting externally -Better careers advice earlier – at schools -Senior level apprenticeships, more shadowing and space to learn the top skills
Engineering core	5 in total No further information available	-Some industries, by the nature of the industry, (i.e. construction) have trouble representing these underrepresented groups -Networking plays a role in decision making (social/private conversations) – long hours, traditional white middle class male and pub drinks mentality. Inner cliques which create distinct groups causing an unhealthy hiring environment (people choose people they have worked with before) -Easier to apply as an external candidate than be promoted as an internal candidate		-More accountability of the decisions made by the executives -More secondment or work experience opportunities that enable lateral movement -Transparency and clarity on the process and decisions made on senior level recruitment and promotion -A talent management and progression process is needed that is integrated into existing promotion mainframes. This should include sponsorship programme, career break options, advocation of alternative styles of leadership
Community Connect	No information available, other than it was representatives from the Chinese community	-Looking different, sounding different, cultural differences -As a BAME person there is a two-step process to fit in. You first need to be accepted and then you need to stand out.		
HS2 College (students and staff)	9 people, mixed gender and ethnicity as per report but no further information provided	-There is a lack of industry investment into the long-lasting relationships between students and companies. This accounts for a low work experience rate which directly implicates the chances of successful leadership positions as there is an adverse lack of relevant work experience.	Outreach events compliant with the organisation's ethnic diversity and inclusion of under-represented groups Work placements for disabled students	-Good role models on the top and a diverse leadership team -Action needs to take place with respect to bursaries, scholarships and support network to create a level playing field for all to access the industry. Bursaries and scholarships from local/national businesses, councils and higher

		Reluctance from larger companies to provide work experience especially for senior management positions -The industry does not encourage a flexible workplace and a good quality of life especially at senior levels	CV workshops, talks with alumni and patrons and an open door policy by the senior managers Flexibility of entrance and work pattern and a curriculum designed from the needs of the industry Targeted initiatives for under-represented groups, i.e. women in rail	Education boards to reduce the financial burden of education -A marketable and sustainable outreach programme -Industry needs to take responsibility for the skills shortage -Initiatives that focus on the personable skills of life (networking, small-talk) and management skills -Mentoring -A reality check on the management of today to ensure they understand the changing needs of society -Relatability of senior management to students -A more flexible approach to working , respect and promotion of work life balance -Employee engagement
3FF (Parliamentors) Students ranging from Presidents of Student Unions to graduates	7 total, no further information provided	-Lack of role models resulting in alienation, lack of relatability and reluctance to aim high -Confidence issues -Social capital – if you don't have it or do not know how to accrue it, it can be a barrier -Institutional racism and unconscious bias, making decisions on assumptions, i.e. islamophobia. Experiencing negative attitudes on the basis of their cultural or religious backgrounds -An assimilation or cultural/psychological white-washing is the reality for minorities hoping to enter senior management positions. People not allowed to be themselves – changing your personality to fit the mould -Recruitment decisions are based on relatability to the recruitment who is usually White, male British -The time and effort needed to be promoted – time to reward ratio		-Work-life balance is important -Mentoring would help allow accessibility to higher positions -Networking skills -Critical change of mentality needed in terms of people's self-confidence (I can attitude) and in terms of people's prejudices. -Inter faith initiatives need to be increased

Women First	Approximately 10 women of different ethnic and religious backgrounds	-Affordability for certain groups of people to go to university. -Lack of positive influences and role models for young people -Lack of awareness of job opportunities at senior level		-Schools need to do more to raise aspirations of children from BAME and lower socio-economic backgrounds -Role models within local communities needed -Board mentoring and shadowing needed -Vacancies need to be advertised more widely
Uprising Alumni	2 people – BAME, males. no further information provided	-Not familiar with relevant opportunities -Younger people are not given same opportunities due to perceived lack of experience Not being in the right clique is an issue or not wanting to play by the rules of the clique -Little mobility within leadership – people becoming entrenched in leadership positions and guarding against encouraging new entrants. -Mentoring schemes supporting individuals who do not need help and support		-Mentoring needed of the right groups of people – those who would mostly benefit. -Need for role models and a stronger BAME leadership -A support system is needed to boost people's confidence
NHS	20 participants, 15 females, 4 males, unknown ethnicity but names indicate primarily White British	-People recruiting to their own image -Internalised and institutional racism -Lack of role models to help inspire -Lack of awareness of the opportunities available -Lack of flexibility and willingness to adapt to cultural differences -Lack of experience is a barrier -Fear of rejection and lack of confidence	Having BME members on interview panels	-More mentoring and development schemes (consistent and positive) for under-represented groups -Need for robust talent management systems -Shadowing -Staff networks -Senior leadership messaging on the importance of the agenda -Mandate training and awareness for managers -Partnerships with third sector organisations such as Princes trust -Setting diversity at senior levels as an objective for leaders and having a project lead for inclusion

				-Ensuring recruitment panels are diverse -Development of leaders in cultural competence
Beorigami (project managers, community managers)	4 in total, all female, ethnicity unknown	-Work-life balance can be a barrier. Senior level positions are perceived as being a compromise quality of life wise. -Women are more likely to take a break in their career to have kids which may hinder progress -Lack of structure in terms of what it means to be a leader which may put women off -Some industries are very male dominant -Lack of acceptance of differences -Lack of confidence often due to company culture	Women's network at Aston University and a Women in leadership society. Women in Tech within Silicon Canal is developing a training platform on their website for women who aim high but lack confidence (providing mentoring etc.). they are also educating employers in terms of openness and also visiting schools and universities. A company under the BSEEN project works with young women, raising their aspiration.	-Need for more role models -Education for employers and companies – being more acceptance of differences -Moving the idea of one senior role having all the responsibilities to being more of a collaborative effort, the force driving innovation, a team player is an important way of making the senior job positions more appealing -Role models -Celebrating different leadership styles -Organise not just individual performance reviews but also team ones. If women know what other managerial roles do within the company the will be more motivated and confident on what they want to do -Importance of shadowing and mentoring -Safe zones- facilitate avenues for a mix of people to discuss sensitive issues. A facilitated conversation where women can be open
WMCA employees	14 total, 13 Female, 7 BME	-Some industries male dominated (i.e. transport) -Setting unnecessary/unrealistic criteria in the recruitment process that may put some people off applying – also language used may put some people off -Cliques – who you know. Mates get the jobs, Gentleman's club -"People at high levels are usually from very specific educational backgrounds so you may be less likely to be accepted. Moreover, if you are from a lower socio-economic background you are less likely to have a fair head start, with fewer		-More internal promotion needed – first look for internal candidates before advertising externally -More transparency needed in relation to promotion -Unconscious bias training can help raise awareness -A visibly engaged and representative leadership team who are living the inclusion value -Mentoring and coaching

West Midlands Combined Authority

		resources. Your world is more limited and there is often no direction and little encouragement to aim high" -"It is positive that Deborah who is a woman and dual heritage is the CEO and that there is gender diversity in leadership – it gives us hope" -"If you are already a senior manager or a leader you are much more likely to get development opportunities. There may be hierarchies of importance" -"If you are a woman or an ethnic minority you need to push much more to get to the top, you need to be more assertive" -Women and ethnic minorities are more likely to be stereotyped into certain roles or at a lower rank -Meetings often happen too early or too late and a lot of networking happens outside of working hours. Moreover, if you are a woman you are more likely to work part-time which may be an additional barrier. "Comments such as part-timer may be perceived as a joke by some but they may put other people off" -"Senior managers often speak a different language and it is difficult to associate with them"		-Managers who are supportive and push/encourage you to progress -More internal development opportunities -Blind recruitment -Support should start early on from schools, improving outcomes for young people from deprived backgrounds and different ethnic groups -More generous employment schemes for parents -Create a language of inclusion. Leadership training can be offered to all, along with awareness of inclusive and authentic leadership. The CEO needs to give people leadership exposure and call out people who do not act in line with key inclusive leadership principles.
Birmingham City University	Ibrahim Ilyas, Law student	-Only barrier is people's confidence "I see the only barrier being my own confidence. The only thing that stops me from aspiring to a position of leadership is I don't feel I would be comfortable in such a position"		-Highlight the number of women who have contributed to the wider aspects of legal research which is not currently done. -Targeted recruitment initiatives and development initiatives (for women)
LGBT (2 focus groups)	10 people, 8 male, 2 female, ethnicity not specified but based on names	-Lack of confidence to put oneself forward especially given the senior management composition of white, British, middle aged male. -Institutional barriers for LGBT people		-Training needed for awareness and to demystify the whole issue of gender and sexuality in the workplace

	primarily White British	Having to conform to stereotypical machoism defined as typical characteristic of heterosexuality within WMP. Within the police as well as other organisations you should fit the stereotype (be "butch", be the right age, be male) -Banter which should be considered homophobic, racist and sexist is overlooked and has become acceptable practice -Language can be exclusive – for example, "we are tolerant employers", implying LGBT people should be tolerated and not accepted -LGBT more likely to have ill mental health which in itself is a barrier -The promotion process is a barrier as in some organisations the process can be overwhelming		-Create a full wrap around LGBT package including mental health support, confidence boosting -Board of directors need to be educated to be more inclusive and for them to also connect more externally -Informal homophobia banter needs to be tackled -LGBT leaders openly out are by definition role models – more needed
WMP - BAME	No information on numbers	-Promotion process too complicated – fearful of time commitment in progression -Hiring people in their own image -Conversations behind closed doors – lack of transparency -Unconscious bias -Time commitment which affects work-life balance -Lack of confidence to take on leadership role	Master's degree in Leadership which was available to everyone which helped raise self-esteem and confidence "Realising potential" – aimed at looking at tracking BME progression between 2015-2018. The programme lost impetus but the benefits were the opportunity to network with people who had similar experiences and form positive learning alliances Spring forward – helpful in helping people develop self-belief	-Bespoke talent plans needed -Role models – BAME leaders to give master classes and share their leadership stories -BAME only promotion process and talent programmes -Development to help grow/build confidence -Bespoke mentoring schemes -Conversations being joint about promotions/career development i.e. individual and manager rather than remotely happening by people who don't know you -WMP positive action intervention based on the Accelerated Promotion scheme run nationally

BPS Gender Diversity Forum	No information on numbers/particip ants	Job adverts – language often male centric Agile working not implemented in practice – "bums on seats mentality". Odd comments about people leaving early – flexibility often seen as luxury or lack of commitment. Line managers do not always have an understanding of employees' personal environment and just focus on the work ones. Women are more likely to be self-critical	Handlelsbanken business development plan "The Wheel" HSBC talent pool for women "Take 2 hours off" (UBS) initiative helps de-stigmatise the culture around agile working	Proactively encouraging/pushing women to apply for promotion Women-centric events (training, mentoring, networking Transparency over promotions and performance ratings Talent and succession planning in place Senior leadership role-modelling flexible working and work-life balance – destigmatise agile working Ensure language used in job adverts/job descriptions is not male centric Careers fairs at schools for young people Unconscious bias training, online based modules on agile working and P2P mentoring Introduce cross industry P2P mentoring and support Role models (hearing stories from inspiring leaders)
BMet focus groups	16-18 mixed ethnicity, both boys and girls	Barriers are individual in that you need to work hard to get to the top Stereotyping – e.g. women assumed to be PAs.		Role Models from ethnic minority backgrounds, women or people with disabilities Mentoring For young people, a supportive school environment and parent environment can

				make a big difference in relation to aspirations and gaining work experience, i.e. career college
				Initiatives encouraging young people to aspire higher and interventions starting at an early age (from school)

West Midlands
Combined Authority