

Mears Approach to Diversity & Inclusion



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This business case captures why diversity and inclusion is key to our business and how it is part of our DNA. It ensures that we build on our successes and continue to strive for even better outcomes for our customers, clients, staff and all stakeholders. We see diversity and inclusion as part and parcel of our day to day work and one of the foundations stones that bring our values to life.

GETTING IT RIGHT MATTERS TO EVERY SINGLE ONE OF US.

We build on strengths

- Who we are - good people who want to do the right thing
- What we need - to recruit and retain the best people in order to grow
- What we do - deliver the best services we can to diverse customers, and clients
- We are a business that respects and complies with the law.

We understand the business need to

- Leverage our skills and understanding of diversity and inclusion to realise business benefits
- Comply with legislation
- Considerably change our staffing profile over the next 3-10 years, year on year
- Be industry leaders on diversity and inclusion and so gain competitive advantage.

Our markets

- In housing and construction sectors, 36,000 new recruits needed each year to stand still
- Massive shortage and turnover of care staff
- 1 in 5 building employers turning away work due to lack of skilled staff
- 1 in 5 of the general UK workforce nearing retirement
- Women account for 46% of the UK's workforce but less than 2% of trade apprentices
- BAME account for 11% of workforce but 3% of construction apprentices
- People with disabilities largely not in the construction or maintenance workforce
- Brexit uncertainty



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The Business Case

We understand the general business case. A diverse workforce:

IMPROVES	REDUCES	INCREASES
Decision making	Sickness levels	Staff and customer satisfaction
Problem solving	Cost of low level conflict	Engagement
Creativity	Unwanted conformity	Productivity
Flexibility	Staff turnover	ROI and Profit
Innovation	Fear	

We also have our own business case that fits with our values and our culture. We are clear about our next steps.

Within Mears

We have evidence that we do great things which our customers, clients and staff recognise and appreciate.

There are patterns that we need to change in order to build on strengths in the future. For the next 3 years we are going to focus on:

- Greater diversity at middle and senior levels including the Board (specifically race and gender)
- More women in trades
- More men in Care
- More disabled people
- Addressing the impact of an ageing workforce whilst also respecting the benefits that older employees give to the business
- Diversity among apprenticeships

Line managers are key to the productivity and positivity of the workforce.

We will:

- Ensure all staff have regular good quality 1:1s with their supervisors or managers
- Ensure managers are equipped to talk to staff about career paths at Mears
- Use the new HR system, Workday, to have the management data we need to track patterns and then take action
- Evaluate line managers on what they say and do on diversity and inclusion

We want to do the right thing but do not always have the tools.

We will:

- Ensure managers feel confident and competent to talk to staff around diversity and inclusion, just like they are about health and safety
- Ensure our Bid Teams are able to talk about diversity and inclusion with even greater confidence with our clients and our written bids reflect this
- Be more representative of our clients and customers in 3 years' time



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Legal and financial risk

Mears reputation has been hard won over many years.

We will:

- Protect our reputation and ensure we do not incur legal and financial costs due to non-compliance
- Count the less obvious costs of getting it wrong including staff turnover, motivation, morale

Mears wants to match what is required of our clients under the Equality Act:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

We will comply with the requirements of the Gender Pay Audit from April 2017, which will require us to record the average pay for men and for women.

We will take action to ensure social economic factors do not stop our staff and customers being treated fairly and with respect.

The cost to employers when they defend a tribunal case is on average £90,000 when direct and indirect costs are considered e.g. management time, legal fees, reputational damage and morale. Recent examples of payouts include £63,000 (Avon and Somerset Police), £4.5 million (Mid Yorkshire Hospital NHS Trust on sex and race grounds), £100k (BBC).

MISSION STATEMENT

Mears will be a sector leader in diversity and inclusion, and will be able to prove this through the use of Workday, and regular reporting on progress to Board, clients, customers and staff.

Hidden costs of getting it wrong - e.g. losing a member of staff because they feel overlooked, or excluded because they are different to the majority - are also significant.

GOALS

- To create a diverse, highly skilled and engaged workforce at all levels to deliver even better services to clients and customers
- Create an effective diversity and monitoring system and capability to enable analysis, evidence-based decision making and tracking of progress
- Develop a clear action plan for diversity and inclusion which will be enforced
- Develop and deliver practical diversity and inclusion training for all staff
- Develop clear accountability and competence on diversity and inclusion for all posts at all levels
- Ensure the diversity and inclusion steering group monitors and reports progress
- Initially set targets to increase the representation of women, and BAME people at middle and senior levels, and at all levels in Housing, and in Care increase the numbers of men at all levels
- Ensure that we understand the negative impact of unconscious bias, particular colleagues with the authority to recruit, promote and manage others
- Review our recruitment and selection processes to ensure they do not adversely affect any group on the basis of their protected characteristics, and enable the attraction and selection of the best talent.



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