

PRCA

RACE & ETHNICITY

EQUITY BOARD



Closing the

ETHNICITY PAY GAP

in the PR and Communications industry

A dark blue silhouette of a city skyline with various skyscrapers of different heights, set against a lighter blue background.

FOREWORD

by Barbara Phillips MPRCA

Chair of Race, Ethnicity & Equity Board

We in the PR and communications industry will remember 2020 for many things. A global pandemic, permission granted (finally) to work flexibly and remotely and the outpouring of pain and suffering from Black, Asian, and ethnically diverse practitioners in our industry.

It has been a year of racial reckoning. A time I openly admit – I thought would never come. A year where your Black, Brown and ethnically diverse colleagues courageously pulled your gaze away from a Black man being choked to death on the street in the US. Instead, they along with REEB, persuaded you to listen and consider why the PR and communications industry is itself choking under oppressive, toxic, White-centred policies. Policies although profitable, discriminate and are unsustainable.

Our industry needs a reset. Currently, the environments in which Black, Asian, and diverse ethnic practitioners operate, have created fertile ground for a disparity in rates of pay and career progression. Also, for those practices to be widely accepted and go unchallenged. These cultures are created in part when recruiting is exclusively from a tiny homogenous network of people who look, speak and operate just as the White majority does, and who won't ever rock the boat; thereby perpetuating behaviours and practices that stereotype and exclude at best, and discriminate and are openly racist at worst.

The gargantuan task of resetting our industry to achieve a racially equitable baseline, including psychologically safe, anti-racist cultures, is not the responsibility of your Black and Brown colleagues. The data in this report will show that despite many years of Diversity and Inclusion reports, events, green papers and even awards; today, the salary you pay a Black, Asian or ethnically diverse employee, is for the most part, still much less than what you pay your White employee, even for an identical, or equally comparable role.

Communications is a fast-moving sector, and we are all spoiled with instantly gratifying responses, especially since the introduction and popularity of social media. Reporting and then closing your ethnicity pay gap will not afford you that instant gratification and yet, you must still do the work. Reporting your ethnicity pay gap is just the first step of many to redress the balance by paying your (majority of Black practitioners) the same rate for the same role and redress the career progression imbalance.

What's in it for you? Reporting, then starting the work to close the gap will give your Black, Asian, and ethnically diverse employees some sense of justice. It will afford you our new-found, genuine respect. It will help you retain our talent and encourage us to recommend PR and communications as a career within our networks and to the next generation. Do not underestimate how important this is.

If these outcomes are among those you value within your organisation, you will not hesitate to undertake the work to report and close your ethnicity pay gap as detailed in this guide.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUMMARY	7
PART ONE: START WHERE YOU ARE	9
STARTING OUT: ADDRESSING STUMBLING BLOCKS AND CHALLENGES	9
ON THE JOURNEY	11
BUILDING TRUST TO IMPROVE DISCLOSURE RATES	11
REVIEWING YOUR PROCESSES	14
PAY TRANSPARENCY	16
WELCOME FEEDBACK	17
PART TWO: COMMUNICATING YOUR INTENTIONS	18
PART THREE: ACCOUNTABILITY AND SETTING YOURSELF UP FOR SUCCESS	19
RE-VITALISING PR AND COMMUNICATIONS CULTURE	21
LINKS AND RESOURCES	22
SURVEY QUESTIONS	22

SUMMARY

Understanding and committing to closing ethnicity pay gaps is essential to building fairer and more resilient workplaces. Gender pay gap reporting revealed that every sector in the UK has a gender pay gap and has been a catalyst in spurring organisations to take effective actions to close their gender pay gaps.

Currently the PR and communications sector gender pay gap is 13.6% within the industry and 15.4% within agencies. 8.6% is the national average for full time employees and 17.9% for both full time and part time employees¹. With the prospect of ethnicity pay gap reporting becoming legislation too, it is widely anticipated that ethnicity pay gap reporting will have the same galvanising effect. Currently only 36% of employers collect ethnicity data according to the Equality and Human Rights Commission² and only 82 UK based companies have publicly reported on their ethnicity pay gap. **None are from the PR sector.**

The financial impact of ethnicity pay gaps in the UK is not to be underestimated. ONS figures reveal regional differences in the ethnicity pay gap with the largest gap in London at 23.8% and smallest in Wales at 1.4%³. Given that the majority of Black, Asian, and ethnically diverse communications professionals are based in and around London, the figures do not make good reading. According to The Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, improved participation, and progression, is estimated to be £24 billion a year, which represents 1.3% of GDP⁴.

The value of the PR and communications to the UK economy is £14.9 billion; there are 95,000 PR practitioners in this sector yet only 10% come from ethnically diverse backgrounds which presents only a 1% increase since 2018. The data shows that within this 10% cohort ethnically diverse professionals are not widely featured within senior roles. 89% of Board Directors and Partners identify as White British, 84% of Chairmen and Managing Directors identify as White British, whilst 77% and 78% of Senior Account Executives and Account Executives identify as White British, respectively⁵.

£14.9bn

Value of UK PR and communications industry

95,000

Practitioners in PR and communications

10%

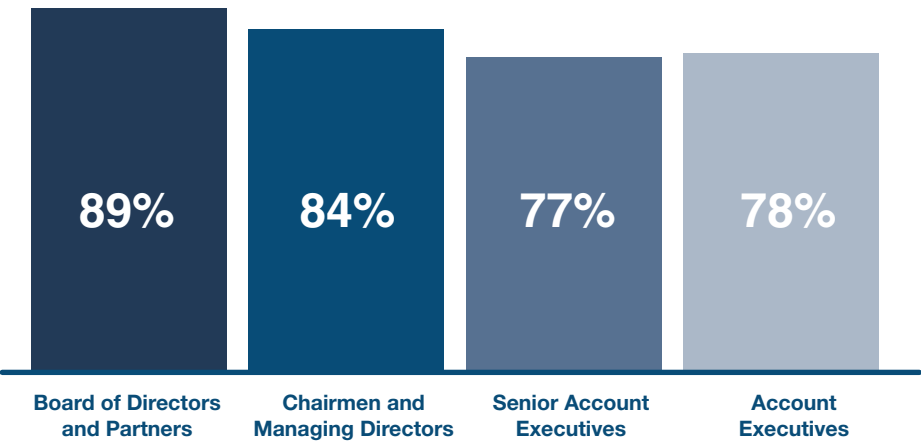


NON-WHITE

- 1% Black Caribbean
- 1% Black African
- 2% Indian
- 1% Asian British
- 1% Chinese
- 1% Mixed White/Black African
- 1% Mixed White/Asian
- 1% Other Mixed Background
- 2% Any Other Ethnic Group

data: PR Census 2019

Of the 95,000 professionals of the PR Industry...



...identify as White British.

1. Office for National Statistics (ONS) gender pay gap figures
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/bulletins/genderpaygapintheuk/2019>
2. Measuring and reporting on ethnicity and disability pay gaps, Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2018
3. ONS Ethnicity pay gaps: 2019
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/articles/ethnicitypaygapsingreatbritain/2019>
4. BEIS Analysis (2016)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/bme-individuals-in-the-labour-market-analysis-of-fullrepresentation>
5. PR and Communications Census 2019

The differing impact that Covid-19 will have on ethnically diverse PR professionals is not to be underestimated. The 2018 Race at Work survey found that 25% of Black, Asian, and ethnically diverse employees witnessed or experienced racist harassment or bullying from managers in the last two years⁶.

Research shows that within the PR industry 26% of employees from ethnic minority backgrounds have been bullied, undermined or harassed in some way⁷.

More than 4 in 10 (42%) feel that their ethnicity negatively affects how the current crisis impacts their career prospects compared to 20% of professionals from White backgrounds.

“New research since the outbreak of Covid-19 has shown that Black, Asian and ethnically diverse marcomms professionals are, on average, taking a greater pay cut of around 18% in comparison to their White counterparts⁸. ”

It is important to acknowledge that ethnicity pay gap reporting presents challenges that require additional care and consideration to be effective. The PR and communications sector, like all others, will not be immune to these challenges but can be a leading example of what authentic, agile, and emotionally intelligent organisations can achieve through commitment to act.

This “how to” guide provides the foundational building blocks to meaningful ethnicity pay gap reporting to inspire PR agencies and communication teams to close their pay gaps. Included are actions that will be the most effective for the PR and communications sector to inspire movement in the right direction.

This guide is divided into three sections to help you understand where you are on your ethnicity pay gap reporting journey.

6. **BITC Race at Work 2018: The Score Card Report**
7. **KANTAR's Inclusion Index (2020 findings)**
8. **The research was conducted by People Like Us and Censuswide**, polling 219 respondents employed in or who used to work in either PR, marketing, advertising or journalism between 18.05.2020 – 04.06.2020.

PART ONE

START WHERE YOU ARE

STARTING OUT - ADDRESSING STUMBLING BLOCKS AND CHALLENGES

The idea of ethnicity pay gap reporting is simple yet poses challenges for PR and communications, agencies and in-house teams to put into place and get right. Talking about race in the workplace is not easy and as a result, many organisations face stumbling blocks in getting started.



RECRUITMENT

Many of the stumbling blocks are created through a consistent culture across the industry. It starts with recruiting new talent. The typical, common practice of industry professionals is to recruit in their own image. ‘Who do we know that does xx?’. This is common practice in PR, with a great deal of importance traditionally placed on personal networks and media contacts rather than competence alone.

It’s also worth noting that the number of PR professionals who were privately educated is 3 times higher than the national average. That filters through to recruitment because people hire those from their own circles (homophily). And when internships or graduate level opportunities are offered only wealthier (often White) young people can afford to pursue the profession through this route. Consequently, recruiters hire someone whose face fits, talk their talk and shares a similar cultural background to them. When faced with diverse candidates it’s often a case of ‘they won’t fit in’ or ‘won’t fit with clients in-house’ or ‘won’t fit with senior leadership’. This perpetual lack of diversity means there are unlikely to be any diverse interview panels, thereby repeating the cycle of excluding diverse talent.

In addition to this widespread hiring practice, Black, Asian, and ethnically diverse professionals are often paid much less at entry level and are promoted less frequently which increases the ethnicity pay gap within the industry.

These stumbling blocks are opportunities for the PR and communications sector to acknowledge the causes of ethnicity pay gaps and undertake practical actions to close them. We spoke to a number of PR firms who shared their challenges and how they are working to overcome them.

WE JUST DON’T HAVE THE DATA SO WE CAN’T REPORT ON IT.

This is a common challenge, but not one that is not insurmountable. Our advice is to simply start where you are. Review existing surveys, recruitment data and any other ways in which you may have collected this data and start there. Whatever you have, little or no data, this is your starting point. Focus on the next step, working on collecting the data.

Create a communication plan on what information you are collecting, why you are collecting it and what your intentions are. Everyone starts from zero, so commit to it. Further in the guide there will be more advice on what you need to consider.

Discussions on what categories to use to measure ethnicity pay gaps are still ongoing. However, it is generally agreed that using White vs BAME as a measurement is not useful as this does not provide accurate information. There will be different categorisation options according to organisational size.

The Government will decide and announce their advice on categories by December 2020.

OUR DISCLOSURE RATES ARE LOW SO THE FIGURES WILL BE SKEWED.

Here, the focus needs to be on how you can improve on those figures. As many organisations have not been consistently collecting this data, this will be a common issue. Work with what you have and focus on improving your disclosure rates. Drill down and find out why disclosure rates are low. Is it a lack of communication? Is it inconsistency in collecting the data? Is there mistrust in how it will be used? Getting the answers to the relevant questions will help you identify how to improve your disclosure rates. In addition to this, improving your disclosure rates gives you something to discuss in your narrative about your pay gap data. Getting to the root cause of low disclosure rates is where you should focus your energies.

IF WE HIRE AND PROMOTE ON GROUNDS OF ETHNICITY, WE'LL LOWER THE BAR.

This is a common response that suggests that there is a direct link between ethnicity and ability. **This is not the case.** Given that most organisations in this sector utilise informal networks that are predominantly White, there is no factual evidence to support the idea that hiring more Black and Asian employees will lower the standards of the organisation.

THERE'S NO BLACK OR ASIAN TALENT OUT THERE.

The talent pipeline in the PR and communications industry is full of Black, Asian, and ethnically diverse talent. The real issue here is that they are not visible within the industry as it is now. The areas to focus on to find out why they are:

- Not applying for roles
- Not getting pass interview stage
- Not progressing within firms
- Leaving at a higher rate than their White counterparts

Focusing on these aspects will get you reviewing your recruitment practices, how you encourage career progression, how promotions are decided and what your retention strategies are. Focusing on being proactive will give you the real answers and focus your energies on where you can make changes.

WE PAY EVERYONE FAIRLY, SO WE DON'T NEED TO DO THIS.

Equal pay is an integral part of closing pay gaps. The only way to ensure that you are paying fairly and that there is no pay discrimination is to conduct regular equal pay audits. This will give you the evidence you need to prove you do pay fairly. Black and Asian talent often come in at the bottom of the pay scale as an account executive, yet even within this low level, anecdotal evidence suggests that there is still pay discrimination. Not having a consistent approach to deciding pay rates and not undertaking regular equal pay audits to prove you provide equal pay, fuels the ethnicity pay gap. These equal pay audits should be done every 3-5 years depending on the size of your organisation. The Equality and Human Rights Commission provides guidance on how to conduct them⁹ and there are software providers which makes collecting and analysing the data easier for you.

9. **Equality and Human Rights Commission;** Equal pay review for smaller organisations <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/multipage-guide/equal-pay-review-smaller-organisations>



ON THE JOURNEY

If you have ethnicity pay gap data but your disclosure rate is low, then working on how to improve it is your starting point.

83% of HR/diversity leaders surveyed said they need better data to drive progress on race and ethnicity¹⁰ yet only 36% of employers gather ethnicity pay gap data and this rises to 60% for organisations with 250 people or more.

Focus on getting as much data as you can on your ethnicity data for your agency or organisation at all levels from account executives right up to senior management. However, you do need to remember that it is not as simple as sending out a form once and asking your employees to tick a box.

A big hurdle to making change are fears around data collection, GDPR and also legal challenges on pay discrimination. Currently there is very poor uptake on reporting ethnicity within organisations because individuals are not sure how their data is going to be used.

“The McGregor Smith review revealed that 54% respondents were reluctant to acknowledge their ethnicity for fear of that data being used against them.”¹¹

This high number poses a real challenge for organisations to overcome that fear and to build trust to improve disclosure rates. Fears of being targeted for redundancy, grievance related matters and bullying and harassment are not uncommon. To alleviate those fears and generate this trust, organisations need to be proactively addressing organisation cultural issues that are already in existence and intentionally work to rebuild and regain trust going forward.

Another hurdle to making change are fears around data collection GDPR and also legal challenge on pay discrimination.

BUILDING TRUST TO IMPROVE DISCLOSURE RATES

Understand and acknowledge that regaining trust to gather ethnicity data will take time and that not seeing disclosure rates improve within weeks is not a sign of failure or a reason to stop trying. With 1 in 4 employees from an ethnic minority background experiencing bullying and harassment in some way, it's not surprising that there is reluctance to provide this data.¹²

Within the PR and communications sector we know that:



16% BELIEVE THAT SENIOR MANAGEMENT DISCRIMINATE WHEN IT COMES TO HIRING OR CAREER ADVANCEMENTS OF THOSE THAT REPORT INTO THEM

36% HAVE EXPERIENCED PEOPLE TAKING SOLE CREDIT FOR SHARED EFFORTS THAT THEY CONTRIBUTED TO

24% HAVE BEEN EXCLUDED FROM EVENTS/ACTIVITIES IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS

26% HAVE BEEN BULLIED, UNDERMINED, OR HARASSED IN SOME WAY¹³

10. **CMI and BAM: Delivering Diversity;** Race and ethnicity in the management pipeline, July 2017
11. **Race in the workplace: The McGregor-Smith Review** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/race-in-the-workplace-the-mcgregor-smith-review>
12. **KANTAR'S INCLUSION INDEX,** 2020 findings
13. **KANTAR'S INCLUSION INDEX,** 2020 findings

Organisations need to intentionally create environments where people feel safe to come forward and give their data in order to get a true picture around existing pay gaps.

So, what can you do on a regular basis to build trust and raise disclosure rates?

DO

✓

Focus on clear and transparent communication on what data is being collected; why this data is being collected and how it will be used.

✓

Be explicit in addressing fears and rumours that may take hold about the reason for collecting this data. Low disclosure rates indicate either lack of understanding of importance or lack of trust due to workplace culture. Either way, both issues must be addressed openly and repeated on a regular basis.

✓

Create visible accountability so that everyone knows who (this should be a small team with an executive or senior sponsor) is responsible for ethnicity pay gap reporting.

DON'T

✗

Cite 'data protection and confidentiality issues' as a reason not to collect data. Smaller agencies should use the 5 ethnicity categories Black, White, Asian, Mixed ethnicity, Other while larger organisations should use the 10 ethnicity characteristic grouping's as per the ONS figures¹⁴.

✗

Let rumours derail your efforts, provide different forums for questions and open discussions on ethnicity data collection- this should be a mixture of conversations in person, virtual conversations and anonymous reporting platforms.

✗

Assume that low disclosure rates mean you can't report on anything related to your ethnicity pay gap. Start with what you have, explain why the disclosure rate is low and how you aim to improve it over the years.

Collecting this data is not a 'one and done' exercise, so think about all the different touch points for gathering this data:

- At interview or on boarding sessions
- During appraisals
- Promotion and pay rise conversations
- When changing passwords on laptops
- Updating HR systems/portals
- In HR email signature
- During online anonymous surveys

14. Office for National Statistics (ONS) – Ethnicity pay gaps: 2019 Ethnicity breakdowns <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/articles/ethnicitypaygapsingreatbritain/2019#ethnicity-breakdowns>

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Understand and acknowledge that regaining this trust to gather ethnicity data will take time and that not seeing disclosure rates improve within weeks is not a sign of failure or a reason to stop trying.
- Be unequivocal in your commitment to change the root causes of distrust from your Black, Asian, and ethnically diverse employees in your organisation. Leave no room for doubt in your commitment.
- Provide ways to anonymise the process of gathering data to protect confidentiality.
- Address the 'say/do' gap. Take the actions required that you have committed to taking.
- Engage all relevant stakeholders in this work as this is not purely a HR exercise. Key influencers in your organisation need to be championing this work and be able to articulate the narrative and vision for ethnicity pay gap reporting.
- Communicate your plan of actions within 60-90-day parameters to demonstrate that you are taking a considered approach to rectify the issues that have come up. This transparency with all your employees will help to foster trust.
- Focus on implementing change based on existing ethnicity data. If you have gaps in your data, work on why they are there and start creating a plan to close those data gaps.
- Include in your pay gap report supporting guidance on best practice on data collection. This is important as employees often refuse to share information on ethnicity. The key is to improve internal and external engagement to get employees to share their details with their employers. Pay gap reporting needs to consider your internal HR systems, legal and compliance obligations as well as your wider PR challenges.



REVIEWING YOUR PROCESSES

Ethnicity pay gap reporting focuses attention on the average pay of Black, Asian, and ethnically diverse employees in comparison to their White colleagues. This pay gap figure is indicative of wider organisation attitudes that influence who is recruited, promoted, and rewarded within your organisation as well as who is not.

The ethnicity pay gap is not indicative of a lack of merit or talent, but of your processes, both intentional and unintentional. Therefore, closing your ethnicity pay gap is not only about ensuring fair pay with no discrimination, but also reviewing the entire life cycle and looking for opportunities to eliminate race discrimination.

WHAT SHOULD YOU BE LOOKING AT?

RECRUITMENT

- Look at your existing recruitment data. What percentage of your potential candidates are Black and Asian? If it's low, why is this? This is especially important if your workplace is situated in or near a multicultural city or area. What roles are ethnically diverse applicants applying for, successfully being short-listed for, and actually getting? Are there patterns emerging? Are there bias hotspots within your recruitment process that need to be addressed? Take into consideration where bias may be affecting the outcomes.
- Are you embedding a real commitment to diversity through your recruitment processes? When recruiting for new hires is ethnic diversity/representation ever a consideration? Are you creative in where you look for candidates? Is there a heavy reliance on utilising existing predominantly White networks? What can you do to change that? Do you regularly recruit ex-interns or acquaintances of senior/influential employees based on proximity and connections? Review all aspects of your recruitment process to see where you can make improvements to minimise race discrimination.

PROMOTION

- Review your existing promotion data to get a breakdown by ethnicity of the frequency of promotions, the scope of promotions and the pay data of promotions. You want a picture of not only who is promoted, but also who isn't. Once you have this information, the question focuses on why there is an imbalance and how can you rectify it.
- Promotion transparency. Does your organisation have clear guidelines on what is required for each employee to gain promotion? Do all line managers have a clear understanding of this? Do managers communicate this to their teams? Are the guidelines applied consistently across your organisation? Focusing on this will allow you to identify where the promotion gaps are and what you need to do to close them.
- Pay transparency. Is it clear to all employees how their pay is constructed, the different pay grades in the organisation, the rules around negotiating your salary, how bonuses are constructed, when bonuses are awarded and how to get a bonus? In addition to salary and bonuses, are non-monetary benefits clearly explained and understood?

If the answer is no to any of these points, then this is an opportunity to rectify hidden discrimination within your current pay structure. Many organisations encourage secrecy around pay, but this is often where pay discrimination flourishes. The Equality Act 2010 Clause 77 provides protection for employees who are gathering evidence for a potential equal pay claim. This is to encourage organisations to adopt more transparency around pay and benefits in the workplace.

RETENTION

- Retention is about the experience of your employees. Look at your retention data. Are there identifiable patterns? For example, if you're an agency, based in London with high numbers of Black and Asian employees, who generally leave within 3 years why is that? If you're a large PR organisation in Birmingham and none of your Black or Asian staff ever make it past Public Relations Associate roles, why is that? There are lots of reasons why people do not progress, but you need evidence to be sure that discrimination is not a recurring factor.
- Review your grievance data and exit interviews. These will provide you with information about your organisational culture that you could utilise in closing your ethnicity pay gaps. Are there disproportionately more grievances from Black and Asian staff? Are they from one department or a range of departments? What do your exit interviews tell you? Are you informally aware of racial bias in your organisation? How is this information used to instigate cultural change?
- Does your organisation provide career support through mentors, sponsors and industry role models? What is the ethnicity breakdown of those who are being mentored or sponsored in your organisation? Are there ways you can open up these opportunities to more Black, Asian, and ethnically diverse employees to aid career progression?

PAY TRANSPARENCY



Pay transparency means that the way that pay and benefit is designed and awarded should be clear and simple to understand. Improving pay transparency both internally and externally will have a big impact on your pay gap. One of the factors that contributes to pay gaps is lack of consistency relating to negotiations. Women do negotiate but are more likely to be told that this makes them “intimidating,” “too aggressive,” or “bossy.”¹⁵ This is despite the fact that 70% of hiring managers expect candidates to negotiate salary.¹⁶

STEREOTYPES AND BIAS TOWARDS BLACK CANDIDATES THEN COMPOUND THE ETHNICITY PAY GAP PROBLEM DUE TO RACIAL BIAS DURING NEGOTIATION.

Currently there is little academic research on racial bias in negotiations due to secrecy around negotiation and pay which is part of the problem. Therefore, pay transparency is an important factor in closing ethnicity pay gaps.¹⁷

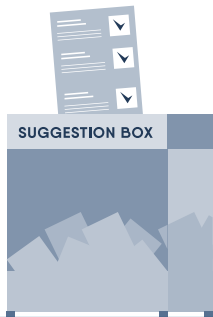
In addition to this, the gender and ethnicity pay gap can start from the interview stage if salary ranges are not provided and firms rely on the interviewee stating their last salary or current salary expectations. This exacerbates both the gender and ethnicity pay gap, but feeds unequal pay too, which is unlawful.

TO CLOSE PAY GAPS AND AVOID GENDER AND RACE EQUAL PAY DISCRIMINATION CASES, PR FIRMS AND IN-HOUSE TEAMS SHOULD ADOPT PAY TRANSPARENCY AS STANDARD. THEY SHOULD CLEARLY COMMUNICATE THE SALARY RANGE ON OFFER FOR ALL ROLES TO ENCOURAGE COMPLETE TRANSPARENCY.

How you can do this:

Internally publish salary bands for each tier within the organisation (push for narrower bands where necessary)
Externally publish these on job adverts or include the phrase ‘salary starting from...’
Link pay transparency to promotion opportunities - i.e. be clear on how employees move up into the next pay grade and what the next pay grade is
Improve transparency in the current appraisals system so employees are clear on how their achievements are being recognised
Provide clarity around how bonuses are structured and rewarded
Conduct an equal pay audit using pay gap software and internally publish findings
Have a clear policy on salary negotiations and create negotiation standards so managers can see when potential decisions are markedly outside of the norm.
Allow a safe space for people to ask questions about pay.

- 15. LeanIn.Org and McKinsey & Company, Women in the Workplace 2019.
- 16. The Robert Half Blog – Salary Negotiation <https://www.roberthalf.com/blog/compensation-and-benefits/salary-negotiation>
- 17. Bargaining while Black: The role of race in salary negotiations. <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2018-51751-001>



WELCOME FEEDBACK

This is ground-breaking work that will have a lasting and positive impact on your organisation. In the process of taking action to create a more inclusive culture whilst closing your ethnicity pay gap, it is important to communicate regularly and allow different and ongoing opportunities for feedback. The purpose of this, is to ensure that your ethnically diverse employees feel valued, heard, respected, and fairly compensated for their contribution in your firm. For this to happen during this process and beyond, feedback and open communication should be encouraged.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO?

- Create feedback loops for employees to share issues and insights into what is and isn’t working
- Ensure that all staff are aware of what you are doing and the reasons why i.e. how it benefits the organisation as a whole
- Provide different feedback channels, a mixture of public and private
- Create employee surveys to gather organisational intelligence
- Invest in starting an employee resource group to encourage feedback and help shape future actions
- Provide training for line managers on how to have difficult conversations so employees feel confident in raising issues and concerns
- Nominate several executive sponsors with influence to set and drive this agenda throughout the organisation
- Link up actions and outcomes to wider business operations e.g. CSR, supply chain, operational targets etc.

PART TWO

COMMUNICATE YOUR INTENTIONS

Use multiple internal communication channels at your disposal to educate and inform everybody on what data you are collecting, why you are collecting it and what your intentions are. These could include intranet, focus groups, internal employee resource groups, newsletters, collaboration channels such as Slack and Yammer and team meetings. Your team leaders should be well briefed so that they are consistent in their corporate messages on closing ethnicity pay gaps.

In addition to this, your CEO and their executive team and any senior leadership groups must take full ownership. No exceptions.

They must visibly endorse this work in both words and actions to start building trust. There should always be a time scale around the collection window as well as the date by when you expect to publish results or updates.

The idea is to make sure that everybody is aware of what you're doing and that there is complete transparency and accountability. This will also give your employees plenty of opportunities to ask questions and to open conversations and dialogue around collecting ethnicity pay gap data. Open communication fosters trust which, will improve your disclosure rates and enable you to take meaningful actions faster.

Create an internal campaign to showcase the stories of those who have shared their ethnicity data (ask for volunteers). Create engaging narratives around why they have done it, talk about how easy it was and what the benefits to them and the wider organisation is.

As stated before, data privacy and confidentiality is a key aspect of building trust so be clear on several things:

1. Who is collecting the data?
2. How this data will be anonymised to ensure complete anonymity ?
3. Discuss how data protection, privacy and GDPR will be considered when collecting this data.
4. This data collection exercise is for ALL staff not just those who are Black, Asian so stress the importance collecting this data.
5. Address any myths or concerns that arise from conversations about ethnicity data collection.

Rinse and repeat until you get better disclosure rates.

CONSISTENT LOW DISCLOSURE RATES ARE A KEY INDICATOR OF A LACK OF TRUST EITHER IN THE WORKPLACE CULTURE OR LACK OF REGULAR COMMUNICATION ABOUT WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT.

PART THREE

ACCOUNTABILITY AND SETTING YOURSELF UP FOR SUCCESS

It is important to recognise that this work requires dedication, investment, and consistency. The ethnicity pay gap you have did not appear overnight. Closing these gaps requires commitment to implement changes and regular refining to ensure successful outcomes.

Here are some pointers on how to set yourself up for success:

1. SET SPECIFIC AND MEASURABLE GOALS

"We will collect ethnicity data in 'x' number of ways over the next 6 months."

"We will get our data verified to ensure accuracy."

"We will sign up to the Race at Work Charter and commit to the five calls to action within 'x' amount of time."

Your goals need to be simple yet effective.

2. CREATE A SPECIFIC ACTION PLAN AND COMMIT FULLY

"We will appoint one/two executive sponsors with ultimate accountability for actions and commitments in this work."

"We will create a team across the organisation responsible for delivery of outcomes through action."

Your action plan must be simple to understand and must include a clear responsibility hierarchy. To enhance commitment, link outcomes to performance-related reviews and personal objectives of line managers.

3. INVEST WHERE YOU HAVE KNOWLEDGE OR RESOURCE GAPS

"We recognise that we cannot do this alone due to resource, knowledge and/or time constraints. We will invest in getting the professional advice and support we need to reach our goals."

If you do not have the expertise or resources to undertake this work, find organisations that do and invest in getting professional support.

4. CREATE AN ECO-SYSTEM OF ACCOUNTABILITY

"We will embed our goal of closing our ethnicity pay gap within our internal organisation objectives and within our external commitments as a PRCA member."

Empower key influential people to hold you accountable on results delivery and implementing change in workplace behaviours. Enhance business accountability by linking this work to other business strategies/priorities e.g. Health & Wellbeing Strategy, Business Development Strategy, Pay Gaps Strategy, Recruitment and Retention Strategy, Corporate Social Responsibility etc. To improve the likelihood of success, closing your ethnicity pay gap must be linked to other business objectives.

5. TRACK YOUR PROGRESS WITH INCREMENTAL MILESTONES

"We acknowledge that progress is not instant, but we can track incremental successes along the way."

Closing pay gaps requires continuous work, open and honest conversations about race in the workplace as well as changes to policies and organisational culture. This takes time. Consistency is what will move the dial. To keep momentum going, consider the smaller wins on the road to closing your pay gaps and measure them all as successes.

6. REVIEW AND ADJUST YOUR PLAN AS NEEDED

"Here is the progress and learnings so far. Given what we know, here are some things we can tweak and refine."

Even the best laid plans experience change, so be flexible with your actions when moving towards your goal.

7. THE END POINT – DID YOU REACH YOUR GOAL?

If yes, then share with others how you achieved it and what lessons you learnt. If no, keep tweaking and refining until you get there.

If PR and communications is generally defined as focusing on protecting reputation and managing public / customer opinion, then acting to close ethnicity pay gaps in the industry should be a central pillar going forward.

RE-VITALISING PR AND COMMUNICATIONS CULTURE



It starts at the top and permeates its way down to the most junior levels. It also spans horizontally to include smaller budget start up clients, to the agency's showpiece brands and award-winning work. You should have representation that reflects available talents in every aspect of your agency – the decision making should be as diverse as the work you are expected to produce.

Internally, focusing on truly diversifying the make-up of your team should be your goal. In today's modern world, diversity is a currency that many understand and value. Organisations that still have predominantly White employees and senior leadership teams are at risk of losing touch with the modern world. Even if having an (almost) all-White comms team accurately reflects your employee base and leadership it will not reflect your customer base irrespective of sector and specialism. This rings true whether you operate in a business to business, or straight to consumer market.

Revitalising your culture is more likely to encourage ethnicity disclosure which will in turn put your organisation on the path to reporting and closing your ethnicity pay gap.

Top tips on revitalising your culture:

- Look at your board representation and make sure it includes meaningful representation from your Black, Asian, and ethnically diverse senior professionals. The belief that there is a lack of available talent is a myth.
- Think about how you can make your culture and work environment a psychologically safe space for all employees especially Black and Asian professionals.
- Go further and commit to a deep-seated review of the policies and practices that enable discrimination, especially around race.
- Call out and do not support behaviour that is rooted in structural racism and discrimination conscious or unconscious. Make team leaders accountable for both theirs' and their direct report's actions.
- Create a safe credible forum for Black, Asian, and ethnically diverse employees to bring to light racist behaviour, microaggressions and other behaviours that damage their opportunities to progress in your organisation. Be prepared to listen to uncomfortable truths while focusing on finding solutions.
- Be demonstrably anti-racist. From the C-Suite to the junior ranks. Adopt anti-racism as one of your corporate values, be vocal in your journey to make your organisation actively anti-racist and commit to fighting hard to protect it.

Closing ethnicity pay gaps requires adopting the approach that this is a marathon, not a sprint. Every action that you take will help you to make the PR and communications industry a more equitable and inclusive sector. One that not only attracts more talent, but is able to retain it.

LINKS AND OTHER RESOURCES

- [Equality and Human Rights Commission: Measuring and reporting on disability ethnicity pay gaps](#)
- [Ethnicity pay gap reporting consultation](#)
- [Ethnicity pay gaps in Great Britain: 2018](#)
- [REEB at PRCA](#)

SURVEY QUESTIONS

The following questions will help you identify the challenges and opportunities that the industry faces in closing ethnicity pay gaps.

This is a great way to begin your reporting journey, irrespective of where you are currently.

1. Why is your organisation passionate about reporting its ethnicity pay gap?
2. Please describe an overview of your approach, along with examples of any action that's been taken to address the gap.
3. What has been the biggest obstacle your organisation has had to overcome on this issue?
4. What is the most effective way of addressing the ethnicity pay gap in PR/your organisation?
5. What is the one piece of advice you'd give to other PR agencies and in-house comms teams about reporting and closing the ethnicity pay gap?

THANK YOU TO OUR FOUNDING SPONSORS



 Compiled by
Michelle Gyimah
Speaker, Consultant, and Gender Pay Gap Specialist

PRCA REEB®, November 2020



www.prca.org.uk/REEB

 @PRCA_REEB