



# Leicester Future Leaders Youth Employment Accessibility Report 2019



# Executive Summary

**This report seeks to validate the work of Access Generation, delivering research designed and delivered by young people and to ensure it adequately reflects the views of young people from the black, Asian minority ethnic (BAME) community.**

This work also seeks to understand the criteria that BAME young people apply when choosing a prospective employer. The research and intern project validated the work of Access Generation and highlighted that the majority of companies do not effectively address diversity and inclusion in a way that would be recognised by young BAME people.

Companies commonly include policies on equality, modern slavery and gender pay gap (this is a legal requirement for companies with over 250 employees) but go no further into the topic of diversity and inclusion. There is a gap between the expectations, wants and needs of BAME young people and what businesses say about themselves.

This clearly is an issue as BAME young people do not feel the opportunities are there for them to access or progress in the workplace. This is an issue that may make people feel uncomfortable but we believe it needs to be addressed.

**Companies and organisations that seek to understand and embrace inclusivity and diversity will be in a position to access a wider pool of talent that they might currently be missing out on. It does not involve an investment in money but empathy and care ensuring that unconscious or conscious bias is removed from the recruitment process.**

# Access Generation is a social enterprise that was established in September 2016.

Our primary purpose is to encourage businesses to employ inexperienced young people by providing straightforward free practical guidance online at [www.accessgeneration.co.uk](http://www.accessgeneration.co.uk)

We want to help small to medium businesses to build their own pool of talent and become an employer of choice for young people.



Only 5% of companies evidenced a positive attitude towards diversity and inclusion



Only 13% of companies addressed the topic of diversity and inclusion (directly or indirectly)



1 in 5 companies used employee testimonials to demonstrate their culture effectively

## Recommendations for businesses:

- Introduce anonymity in the recruitment process - remove bias
- Include visual images of diversity in the workplace - if a young person sees themselves represented in the workplace they will feel they would be accepted
- Inclusion and diversity starts within the workplace - focus on existing employee engagement

This research was based on assessments on 156 company websites, focus groups and survey results that included the views of 91 young BAME people as participants.

## Objectives

- To validate the Access Generation's Youth Employment Accessibility Research assessment matrix
- To validate young people's criteria for choosing an employer, working exclusively with BAME young people
- To identify if additional assessment criteria is required to expand on the topic of diversity and inclusion

## Background

The Leicester Future Leaders project is a 3-year programme, awarded £230,000 to increase diversity amongst business leaders across the region.

The programme aims to increase diversity within the workforce of local businesses and increase the numbers of black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) groups getting internships and jobs with businesses across the region and create more opportunities for high-skilled work in the local economy.

Access Generation felt there was a gap in youth employment research to the extent of barriers to employment that young people face.

We spoke to nearly 100 young people and found that 80% would go online to assess a company regardless of where they first see a job post.

We worked with students and young people from university and youth initiatives who designed the youth employment accessibility assessment matrix.

This work is designed and delivered by young people assessing the job application process and what a company says about itself against young people's expectations and experiences.



80%

of young people will look at the job section on a company website to find out more about the company regardless of where they first saw the job posting.



70%

of all job seekers surveyed said they would research a company before applying (source: **Indeed**).



73%



of job seekers of all ages would apply for a job on a mobile device (source: **REED**).



## Methodology

We used different methodologies to provide data analysis (based on Access Generation's research matrix) and opportunities to collate individuals' experience and feedback. The type of methodologies used in order to produce this report is as follows:



Focus groups and workshops with former and current students from the BAME community at De Montfort University



Researched and assessed 150 companies - 50% of which was completed by Prince's Trust young peer researchers volunteers (companies and organisations assessed were small to medium based in Leicester and Leicestershire, typically between 25-250 employees)



An online survey with BAME students



Analysed the results of the research on company websites, focus groups and survey

### 1. Focus group - workshop activity assessing company websites

This workshop required the participants to analyse different company websites from their phone or laptop to assess the ease of access to the job application process, to look at what support was available and what the companies said about themselves. During this activity, participants were asked to look at 20 company websites and identify what was good, bad or missing from the point of view of BAME young people.

### 2. Focus group - workshop activity reviewing young people's criteria for choosing an employer

This workshop involved participants agreeing on the criteria for choosing an employer and weighting it in order of importance. This work was carried out and compared against Access Generation's employer attractiveness survey (previously defined by 100 young people). This activity was completed through a facilitated conversation looking at a list of the 17 criteria and weighted high, medium or low importance.



### 3. Focus group - understanding BAME views on diversity and progression in the workplace

This focus group was a chance to gather BAME student views on diversity and progression in the workplace. This was designed to add valuable insights supporting the launch of the Leicester Future Leaders project. This activity took the form of a facilitated conversation where participants shared their experiences of applying for jobs and being in employment.

All the conversations were recorded and commonly occurring messages will be featured in the results in this report (only feedback that was cited more than three times will be referenced in this research).

### 4. Survey

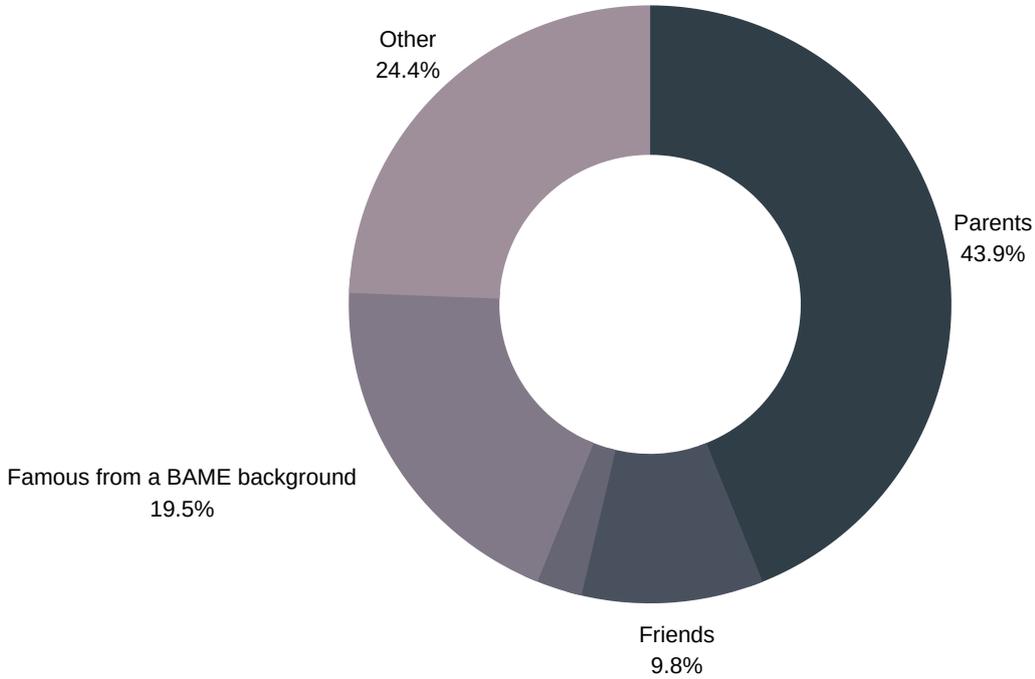
This online survey was created to take some of the insights gained from the focus groups and test them with a wider audience. This survey presented statements in which participants were asked to indicate how strongly they agreed or disagreed. For example, how do you feel ethnic minorities are represented in the workplace? - Positively, Somewhat positive, In between, Negative or Extremely negative.



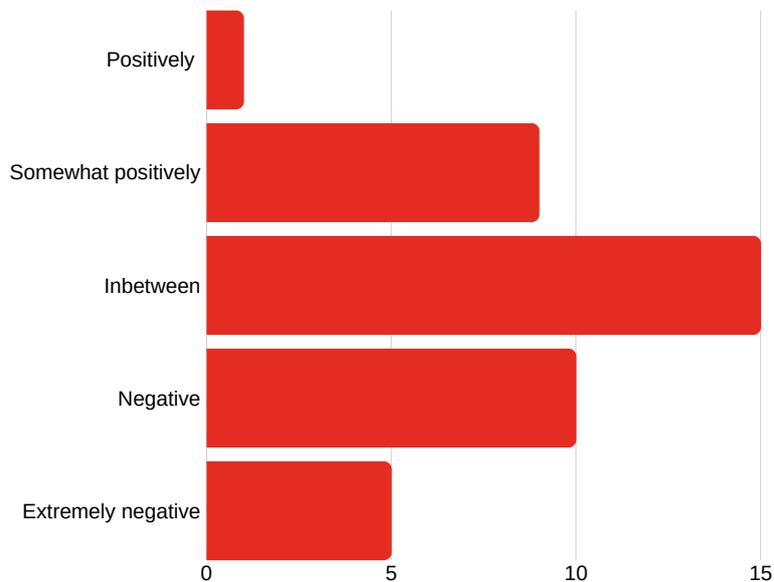
## The results

The following survey results are from an online survey of 36 BAME students

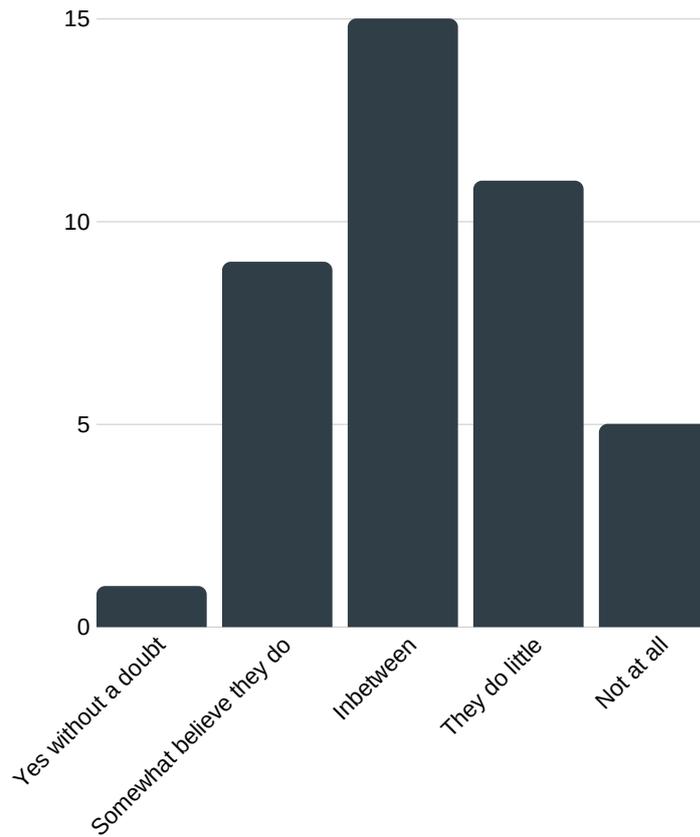
### Who is your mentor/role model in life?



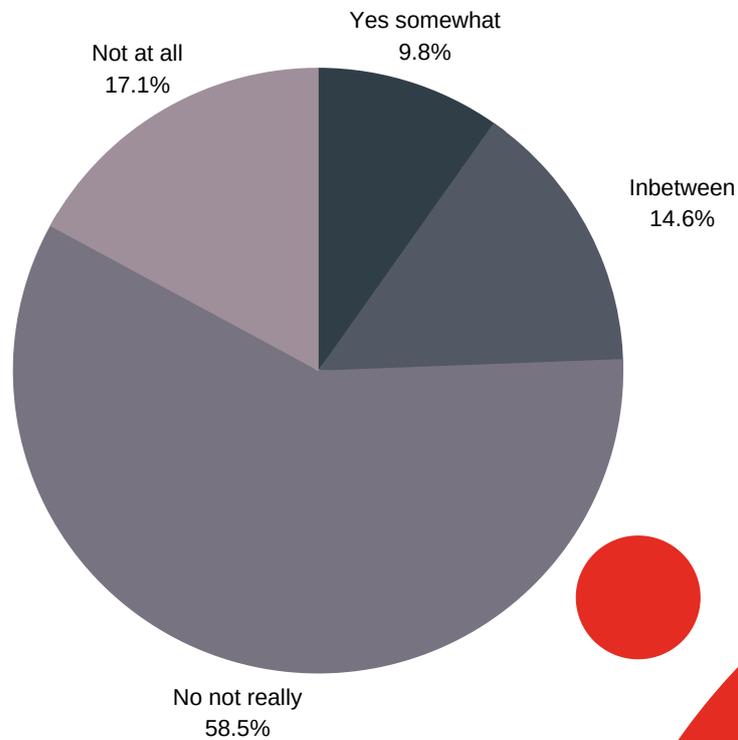
### How do you feel Ethnic minorities are represented in the workplace?



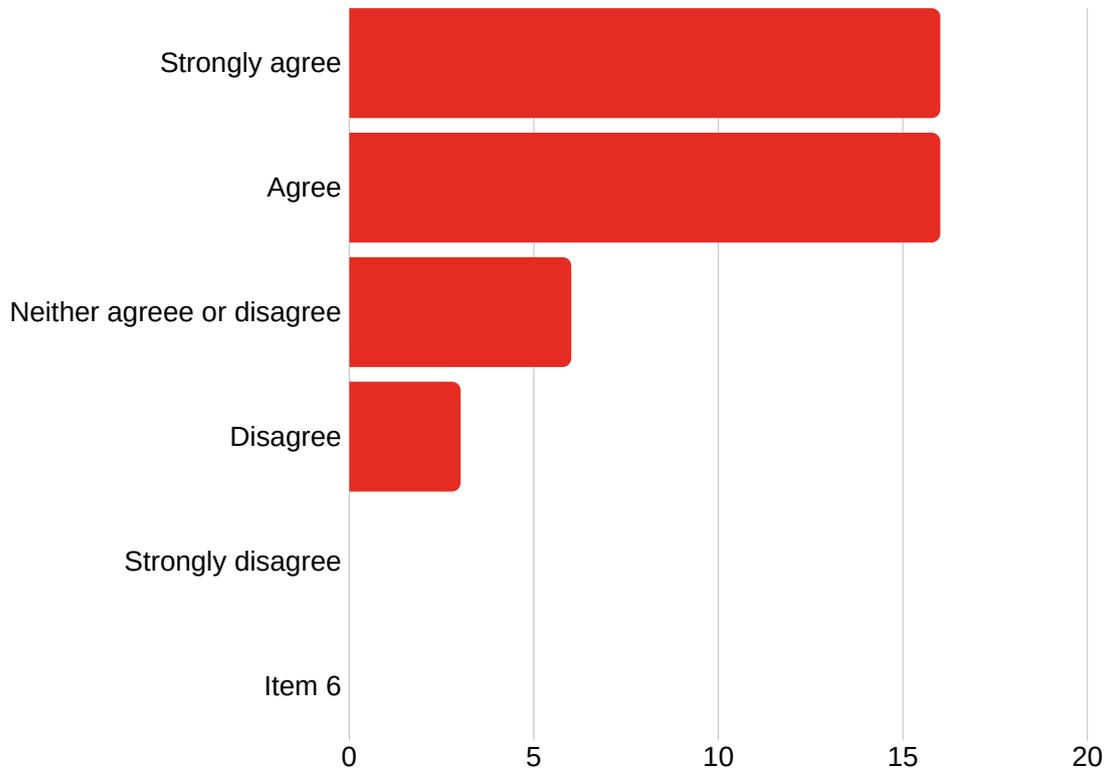
## Do you think that the workplace culture adapts and engages with BAME employees?



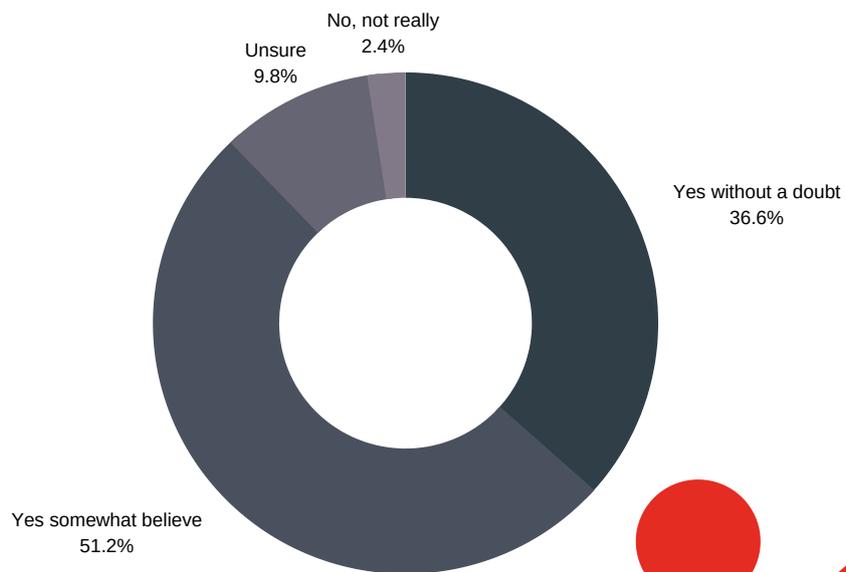
## Do you think that BAME groups have the same opportunity in improving their career progression?



## Do you believe that BAME groups have to change aspects of their identity and culture to blend within a workplace environment?



## Regarding diversity and inclusion do you think there is an issue within the workplace?



## About Youth Employment Accessibility Research

This research was designed by young people and is delivered by young people.

Questions were grouped under five headings; Candidate Journey, Support, Employer Brand, Overall Quality and Key Entry Criteria.

Candidate Journey = Navigation

Support = Information supporting the job application

Employer Brand = What the company said about itself

Quality = Overall quality of the jobs section compared to the rest of the website

Key Entry Criteria = Accessibility of jobs for young people based on their criteria

For each question under the first four categories, the scoring ranged from 0 – not evident or missing to 5 – evident and well presented with examples. The maximum total score for the four categories is 95.

For Key Entry Criteria, the questions were simply yes or no, so the scoring ranged 0 - no, 5 - yes. Therefore, Key Entry Criteria is not included in the total score and is stated separately.

For the Leicester Future Leaders project, our interns and two Prince's Trust volunteers assessed 156 websites from companies and organisations in Leicester and Leicestershire area.

Only 5% of companies evidenced a positive attitude towards diversity and inclusion. Only 13% of companies addressed the topic of diversity and inclusion (directly or indirectly).

1 in 5 companies used employee testimonials as a way of demonstrating their culture effectively.

4% of companies researched scored over 70 and therefore were in the upper quartile and met or exceeded the expectations of young people. 60% of companies scored 20 or less and therefore were in the lower quartile and failed to meet expectations. Young people visiting these websites would likely not engage and bounce off the site.

49% of companies addressed the organisations purpose with 10% achieving the maximum score. A company's purpose is one of the top criteria that a young person looks for when choosing an employer.

24% of companies cited employee testimonials and 19% achieved the top score. Young people are sceptical and look for evidence provided by named employees demonstrating company culture and evidence of progression.

56% of companies scored 0 for the support category. This means over half the companies did not recognise that inexperienced candidates need support to make the best application they can rather than the hurdles and barriers used to filter experienced candidates out.

12% of companies were not accessible in anyway to young people and only 5% were fully accessible meeting young people's criteria.

This means only the 5% who met young people's criteria would fully benefit from the pool of talent of inexperienced young people.

# What young people said in the focus groups...

"No one looks like me, therefore it makes it harder for me to see myself working for that company."

"Names which are non white get sorted out."

"If I change my name, I know I have a better chance of getting a job role."

"It's hard to get a job without any experience."



## Statistics from the focus groups

- Only one in fifty participants cited a white person as their role model
- 95% agreed that role models are important
- 100% of participants agreed that BAME communities are at a disadvantage in the workplace compared to white counterparts
- 95% felt that their name can play a part in being disadvantaged
- 94% felt that employee engagement is important

### Yomna's story

- She believed she did not get a job because she had experience of working with an Islamic charity on her CV
- She has applied for a number of roles using the experience with the charity on her CV
- As soon as she took it off her CV the number of responses increased substantially

**Should we consider religion as a barrier?**



## Secondary (desk) research

- BAME groups are losing out on £3.2 billion per year in wages compared to white colleagues doing the same work (source: Guardian)
- BAME candidates are three times less likely to get an offer of a job opportunity than their white counterparts (source: BBC)
- The Chartered Management Institute found that 12.5% of the UK working population are from BAME groups, with only 6% represented in top management positions

The Equality Act 2010 was brought in and designed to replace several other prior pieces of legislation. Under this act discrimination is defined as unfair, unjust or prejudicial treatment of a person on the basis of sex, gender, race, disability, age, religion or national origin.

**The Leicester Future Leaders project is addressing the question:**

**Why do BAME students attain more in education but are less likely to progress into leadership roles?**

**BAME students told us:**

**“We have to attain more because we feel at a disadvantage from the start”**

## Conclusion and commentary from Adil and Omar (interns)

Young people want to see diversity and inclusion in the workplace and see the BAME communities being represented.

Please do not say, you are a diverse workplace without bringing factual statistics and numbers on your page. Please do not say, your business is diverse when you have only white men and white individuals on your website. Please, promote diversity correctly and include the BAME community.

People from the BAME community should not be judged on their name, colour, age, religion, ethnicity or background. Judge them instead on their merit, skills and qualifications. If businesses can make diversity and inclusion a priority in the workplace then they will reap the rewards.

Young people are doing their research on a company before applying for a job. We look for diversity and examples of employee engagement. If the research does not provide the evidence that young people are looking for, then they are likely to not apply to work for your organisation.

Young people want easier application processes. This refers to having to put your personal details (register) in even before you know the recruitment process and next steps.

We want more companies to offer trainee roles, including roles for graduates and non-graduates. It is important that the workplace understands the importance of offering young people a chance to get work experience because we're waiting to get in.

## Summary

**What we have learnt from engaging with students and former students from De Montfort University has reinforced what we already knew.**

**Young people want to work for companies and organisations that state their purpose, are supportive and inclusive and provide opportunities to progress within their chosen career.**



## What next?

The findings from this research will feed into the development of a toolkit for Leicester and Leicestershire businesses to make their attraction, recruitment and retention practices fully inclusive.

A launch conference during the Leicester Business Festival will be followed by the creation of partnership working groups through 2020.

These will bring together businesses and students round a table to develop resources that really work for the local business community and help deliver effective change.

Access Generation will create a campaign to raise awareness and give a voice to young people with regards to the issues raised around the lack of diversity.

We will also provide guidance for businesses to help them evidence and become an inclusive employer.

We are currently focussed on the following;

- Further educate and support businesses through events and training workshops
- Continue to produce content online to share guidance and insights with businesses
- Explore opportunities to collaborate and work with young people to disseminate our support through third parties
- Continue to signpost initiatives with businesses to bridge the gap between the world of work and young people.

### Acknowledgement

Thank you to De Montfort University, the Students' Union and the Leicester Future Leaders project funded by the Office for Students.

A big thank you to our young peer researchers and panel members; Omar, Adil, Suraya, Peter and Immanuel.

And thank you to students who attended and participated in focus groups, workshops or survey.

And finally, thank you to our supporters who have been welcoming to our interns; Prince's Trust, Imperial Corporate Events, Vista and other Work Live Leicestershire partner organisations.



# Our sponsor's commentary

The Leicester Future Leaders project 2019-22 is about bringing the student voice into dialogue with business to achieve change.

Access Generation's work in this space is helping us understand our starting point and how we will measure success.

Access Generation have engaged young people directly to plan and carry out research into the accessibility of small and medium sized enterprises for BAME students and graduates seeking work.

Both the questions and responses are therefore framed from a young person's perspective, advancing the discussion from the outset.

A big thank you to Access Generation and graduate interns Adil, Omar and Suraya for their work on this research.

We look forward to continuing working together as we create Leicester and Leicestershire's toolkit for the inclusive attraction, recruitment and retention of graduate employees in the region, helping the economy to thrive.

**Adele Browne**  
Head of Careers and Employability, De Montfort University



# ACCESS GENERATION.

## Get involved

If you want to be included in future research, attend a training workshop or speak to us further please call Chris Tarry on 07976403301 or email [chris.tarry@accessgeneration.co.uk](mailto:chris.tarry@accessgeneration.co.uk)



For more information visit  
[www.accessgeneration.co.uk](http://www.accessgeneration.co.uk)

Published: October 2019