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# Business Collaboration to Design out Homelessness



# Meet our panel



Jayne Hussey,  
Partner, Mills & Reeve



Andy Street,  
Mayor of the West Midlands



Jean Templeton  
Chair of the WMCA Homelessness Taskforce  
and CEO of St Basils



Jessica Wilkes-Ball, Senior Sustainability  
Manager, Mills & Reeve and Business  
representative on the WMCA Homelessness  
Taskforce



Andreea Tudor, Operations Manager,  
Business in the Community



Suzanne Burton, Business Systems Director  
and Interim Responsible Business Lead, adi  
Group

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# Agenda

<b>8:30am</b>	<b>Welcome</b> , Jayne Hussey, Mills & Reeve, Partner
<b>8:35am</b>	<b>Introduction to the WMCA Homelessness Taskforce</b> , Andy Street, Mayor of the West Midlands
<b>8:50am</b>	<b>The role of businesses in designing out homelessness</b> , Jean Templeton, Chair of the WMCA Homelessness Taskforce and Jessica Wilkes-Ball, Senior Sustainability Manager, Mills & Reeve and Business representative on the WMCA Homelessness Taskforce
<b>9:20am</b>	<b>Businesses helping to tackle homelessness</b> , Andreea Tudor, Operations Manager, Business in the Community and Suzanne Burton, Business Systems Director and Interim Responsible Business Lead, adi Group
<b>9:50am</b>	<b>Call to action</b> , Jayne Hussey, Mills & Reeve, Partner
<b>10:00am</b>	Event close

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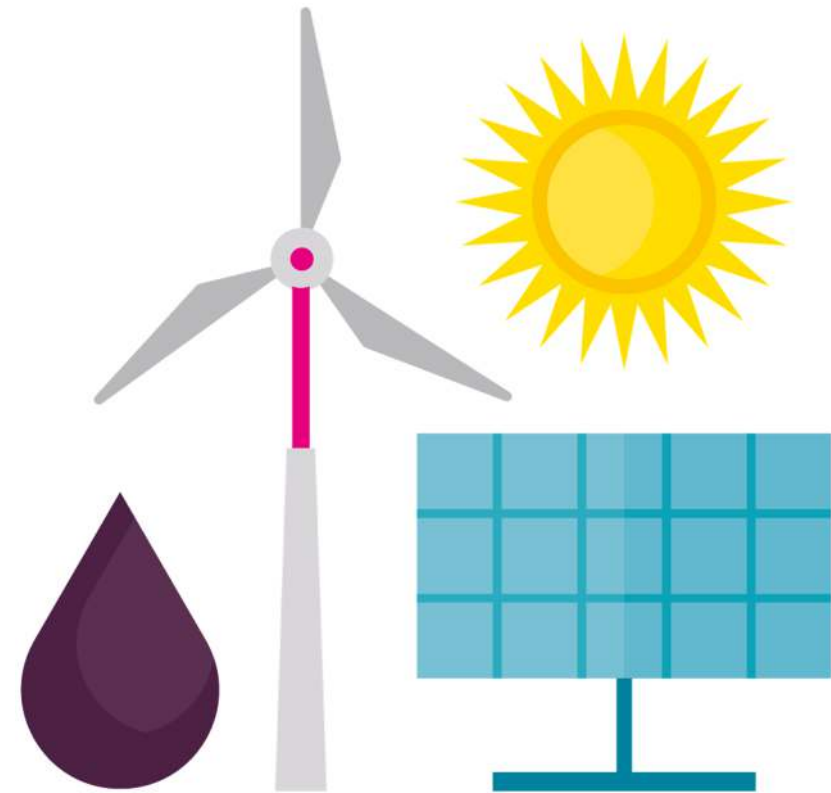
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**Jayne Hussey**

**Partner**

**Head of Office Birmingham  
Mills & Reeve**



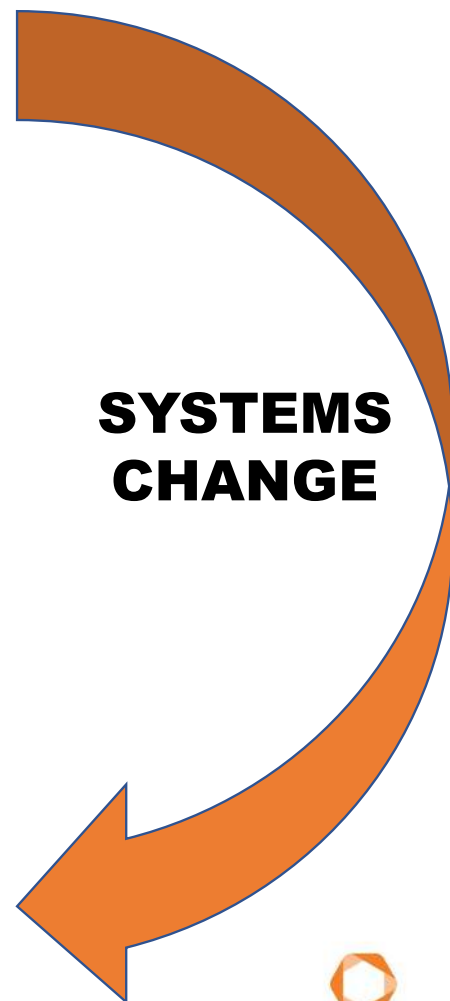
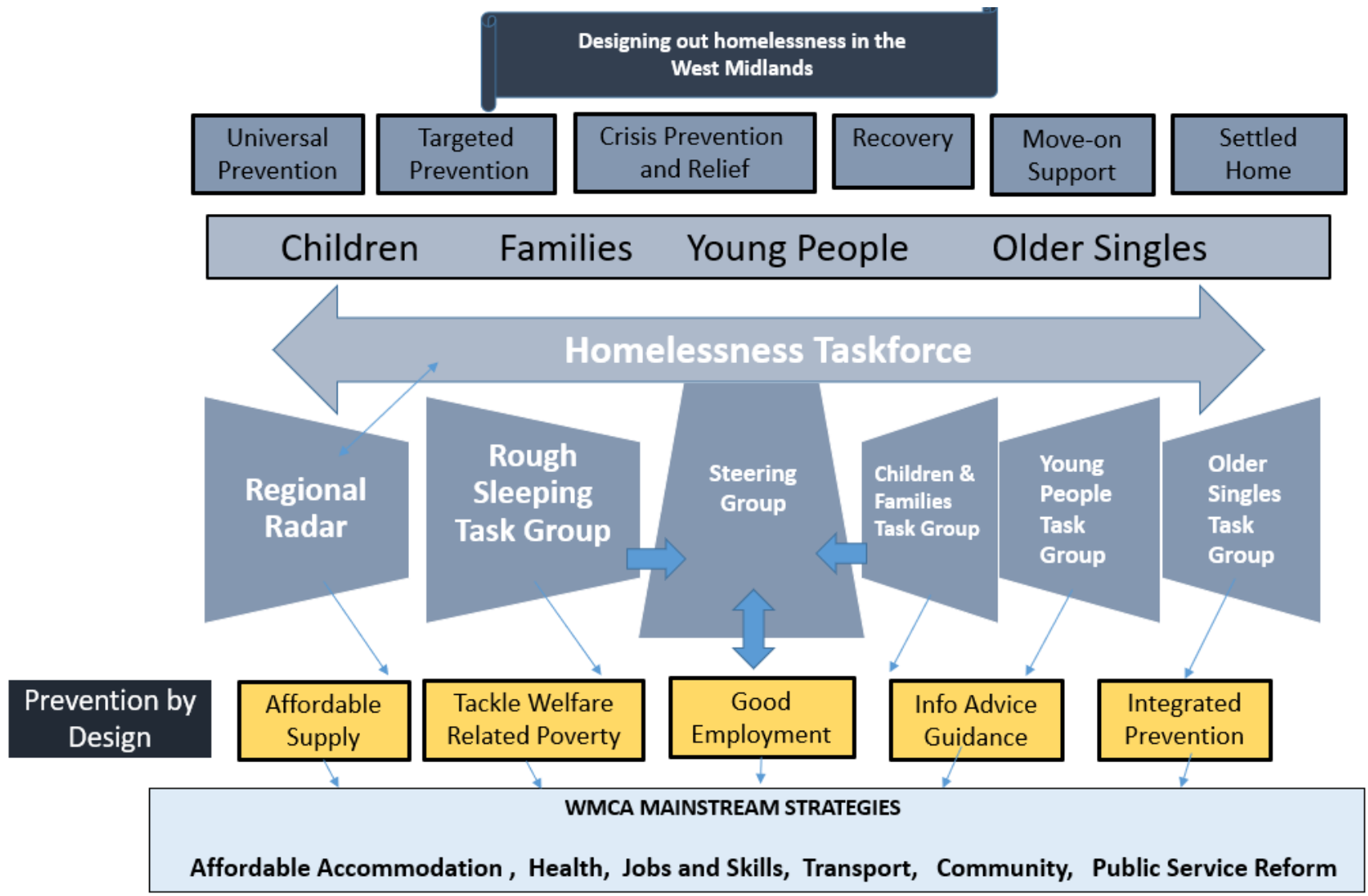


Andy Street  
Mayor of the West Midlands

# Designing out Homelessness Everybody's business

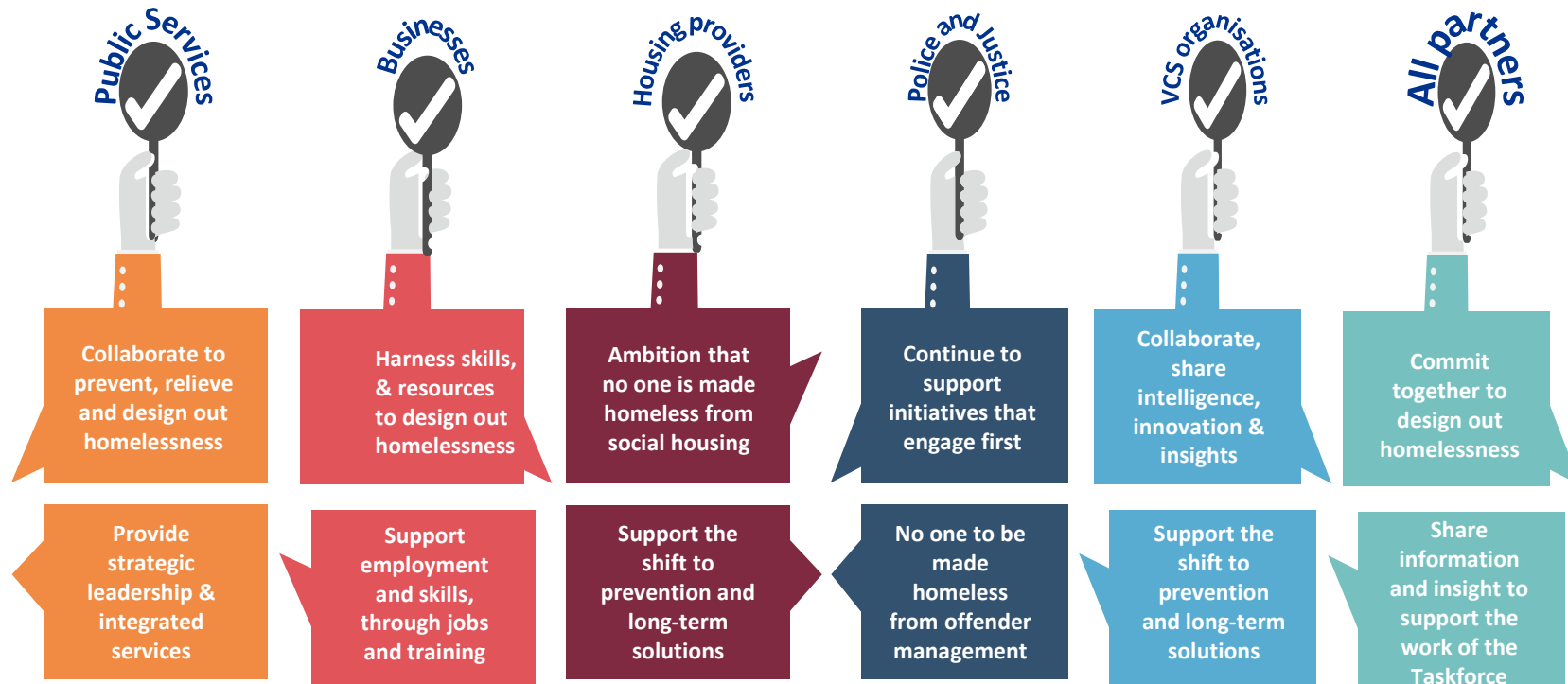
Jean Templeton, Chair of WMCA Homelessness  
Taskforce

Jessica Wilkes-Ball, Business Representative on  
Taskforce



[www.wmca.org.uk/C2CToolkit](http://www.wmca.org.uk/C2CToolkit)

# WMCA Homelessness Taskforce Pledges - our commitments to making a difference





# Homelessness is fundamentally an equalities issue

It's about economic inequality at all levels, with some communities and people more exposed as a result of the structural inequalities of race, class and gender.

It's about policy and investment choices and access to education, decent jobs, housing, support.

It's about poverty which creates an inability to meet your own and your family's needs.

It's about power inequality and the pressure to focus on compliance with system expectations.

**It is not true that we are all no more than a pay cheque away from homelessness.**

## **Inter-related factors**

### **Structural factors**

Poverty, inequality, housing supply and affordability, unemployment & insecure employment, welfare reform and policy failures, LHA levels

### **Individual factors**

Poor physical or mental health, violence and abuse, alcohol and drugs issues, bereavement, experience of care and/or prison; trauma

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Homelessness  
The ultimate  
exclusion

# Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

## Annual Rough Sleeping snapshot count figures Nov 2022 (published 28<sup>th</sup> February 2023)

- **3,069 people found to be sleeping rough nationally**, (3,695 people previous year); **88 in the WMCA area**, (63 people in the previous year); **down from 169 in 2018**.
- *74% above the level in 2010, when the annual snapshot count methodology was first introduced*
- Most people sleeping rough were from the UK, similar to previous years. In 2022, 64% were from the UK, 21% were EU nationals and 6% were from outside the EU and the UK. 10% were recorded as 'not known'
- Rough sleeping increased in every region of England
- Biggest rise in London up from 640 people in 2021 to 858 in 2022

## Quarterly Statutory Homelessness Stats (July- Sept 2022)- published 28<sup>th</sup> Feb 2023

- As of the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022 nationally there were **99,270 households in temporary accommodation** – a rise of 4% from the same date the year before - the highest level in 18 years (**WMCA total = 5,189**)
- This figure includes **over 125,000 children (WMCA total = 10,309)**
- The most common reason for households needing help to prevent homelessness was that their private rented Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST) had come to an end; Of the households owed a prevention duty for this reason, the biggest increase was due to rent arrears caused by rises in rent

# Jobs and Homes – critical protective factors



## Jobs and Homes – The Challenge

- 41% of Universal Credit claimants are working
- 20% of people facing homelessness are in work
- Youth Unemployment rate is 11.3% compared to 3.9% for general population
- Only 4% of the private rented sector in the West Midlands is available to people on benefits
- Social Landlords report 20,000+ people on their waiting lists

## Jobs and Homes – The Opportunity

### INclusion Employment

- Create pathways into employment for those furthest from the labour market
- Work with partners who work with those furthest from your labour market
- Support a housing offer which underpins work
- Remove the costs of shame and embarrassment
- Ban the box and automatic exclusions
- Provide assistance to those in your employment experiencing difficulties including homelessness, domestic abuse, mental health issues and provide access to confidential early help.
- Listen to those with lived experience and co-design in a collaborative way
- Simplify, Personalise and Humanise
- Progression happens from different starting points, both for people and organisations

# DESIGNING OUT HOMELESSNESS: PRACTICAL STEPS FOR BUSINESS

2019



**A toolkit for employers on how to prevent, offer help  
and create pathways out of homelessness.**

In partnership with:



Mayor of the  
West Midlands



## POSITIVE PATHWAYS MODEL

Universal prevention

Targeted prevention

Prevent

Crisis prevention and relief

Recovery

Help

Move on support

Settled Home

Create pathways

[designing-out-homelessness-checklist.pdf \(wmca.org.uk\)](https://www.wmca.org.uk/designing-out-homelessness-checklist.pdf)

[designing-out-homelessness-full-toolkit.pdf \(wmca.org.uk\)](https://www.wmca.org.uk/designing-out-homelessness-full-toolkit.pdf)

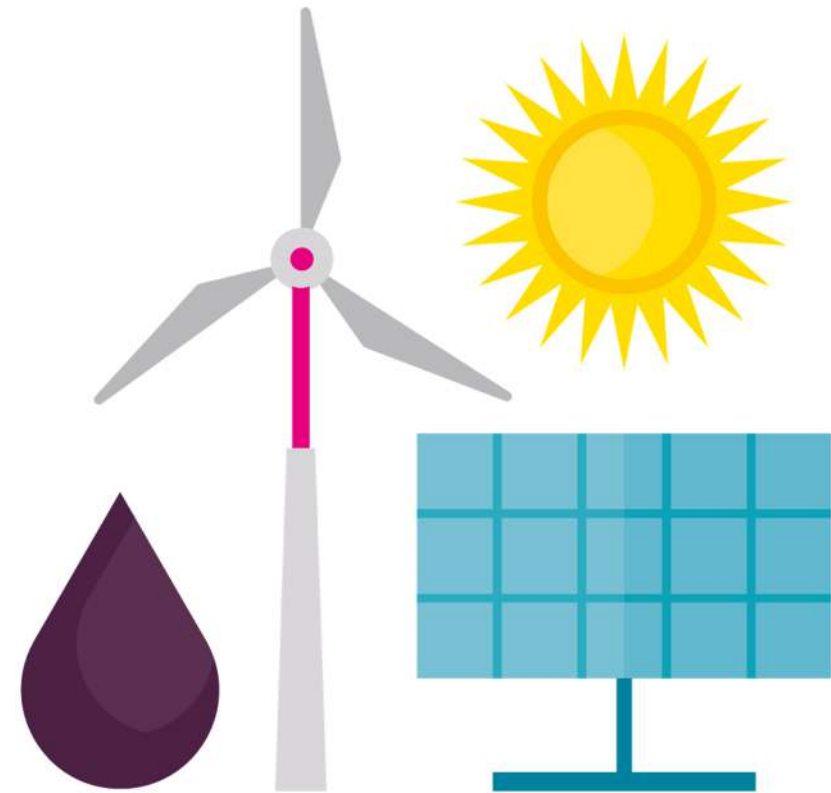


**IN**cl**u**s**i**o**n**

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**Jessica Wilkes-Ball**  
**Senior sustainability manager**  
**Mills & Reeve**





# Strategy: 3Ps

## Diversity, inclusion and wellbeing strategy

We aim to be a firm where we recruit, retain and promote the best people; in a place where everyone thrives and can be themselves; and create strong partnerships with our clients and communities.

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# Key objectives by 2025:

- Increase the proportion of ethnically diverse staff to a minimum of 18%.
- Increase the number of staff who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or as belonging to other minority sexual orientations or gender identities.
- Increase the number of hires annually from lower socio economic communities by 5%.
- Increase the number of disabled staff within in our workforce by 5%.
- Demonstrate the impact and evidence our wellbeing initiatives
- Increase the number of female Partners from 29.4% to 33%
- Achieve Stonewall WEI top 100 status
- Achieve Disability Confident Status

# How we are supporting our staff

- Employee support fund – a non-repayable grant up to a maximum of £1,000
- Cost of living payment – exceptional £1,000 payment to staff to help manage the sudden and dramatic increase in the cost of living spread over four months (November 2022 - February 2023) to cushion the worst of winter bills
- Financial wellbeing - provided various resources on our intranet, events and tips during Talk Money Week
- Mortgage advice – provided staff with access to webinars from Radcliffe and Newlands on various mortgage topics from first time buyers to managing mortgage payments and interest rates
- Smart Spending App - provides everyone at Mills & Reeve access to deals, vouchers and cashback on numerous retailers, from John Lewis, to Sainsburys and Pizza Express
- Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) - available for any confidential support and is open 24 hours a day, every day of the year

**Andreea Tudor, Operations Manager**

# **BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY**





The Prince's  
Responsible  
Business Network

# BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY HAS BEEN DELIVERING **SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT** FOR 40 YEARS



1982

Formed in 1982, and with His Majesty King Charles III as our Royal Founding Patron, **we are the largest and longest-established membership organisation dedicated to responsible business.**

2023



Today, **we work and campaign with more than 600 members to continually grow their responsible business practices, uniting our efforts for greater social and environmental impact in our communities.**





## ISSUE EXPERTISE

### BE PURPOSE DRIVEN

#### Responsible Business & Strategy

We want every business to be faster, braver, and bolder in how they create sustainable change, so that businesses can help meet the Global Goals by 2030.

### PROTECT OUR PLANET

#### Climate Action

We want every business to take climate action that accelerates a just transition to a net zero, resilient future where people and nature thrive.

### PROVIDE GOOD WORK

#### Health & Wellbeing

We want every business to put wellbeing at the heart of all business decisions to support thriving people, thriving business, thriving communities, and a healthier planet.

### CREATE A SKILLED AND INCLUSIVE WORKFORCE

#### Gender Equality

We want a gender-equal world where everyone, regardless of gender, can flourish, driving change around pay, power, job security, and harassment & discrimination.

#### Race Equality

We want every business to ensure that an individual's ethnicity does not determine their potential for recruitment, development, and/or progression opportunities at work.

#### Employment & Skills

We want everyone, regardless of their background or experience, to be able to access the education, employment, and skills they need to thrive during their working lives.

### COST-OF-LIVING CAMPAIGN

# BUSINESSES IN THE UK ARE FACING SIGNIFICANT EMPLOYMENT CHALLENGES



## SKILLS SHORTAGES

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Employers continue to face a shortage of suitably skilled candidates that is restricting the ability of businesses to grow. This is exacerbated by a tight labour market, with an average of one unemployed person to every vacancy (ONS, 2023).



## TALENT RETENTION

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Employees are becoming more mobile, choosing businesses with a mission they believe in, and careers that offer fulfilment, as well as adequate compensation and benefits



## DRIVE FOR DIVERSITY

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Employers are increasingly prioritising diversity and inclusion. 100% of businesses signed up to BITC's inclusive recruitment campaign cite building a diverse workforce as a driver for inclusive recruitment.

# EMPLOYER PRACTICES ARE **MAINTAINING INEQUALITIES**



## IN EDUCATION

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**Inequities appear at all stages of the education system**, highlighted by the disadvantage gap which has grown in recent years



## IN RECRUITMENT

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**Traditional recruitment practices are closing the door to potential talent**, often excluding and overlooking individuals because of their background or life experience.



## IN WORK

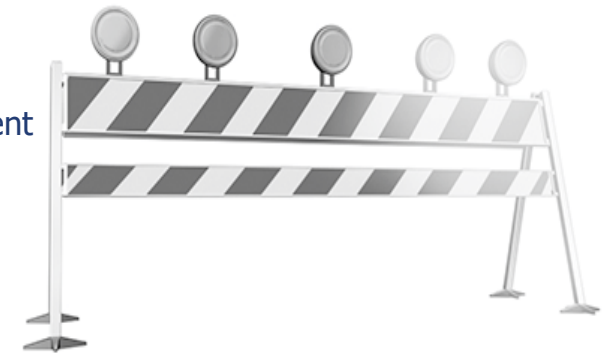
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People from lower-socioeconomic backgrounds are less likely to progress and have fewer skills development opportunities at work, **perpetuating the low skill, low pay cycle.**



# WIDESPREAD RECRUITMENT PRACTICES ARE BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR DISADVANTAGED GROUPS

- 70% of employers ask about **criminal records** on their application forms
- Two-fifths of job descriptions contain **jargon**
- Two-thirds of employers ask for **previous experience** for entry-level roles
- **Inaccessible job applications** prevent 3 in 10 people with a learning difficulty from finding employment
- Only 55% of **young people** think that they understand the skills that employers are looking for
- Only 15% of job adverts offer **flexible working options**
- 97% of employers say that **spoken English** is 'significant' for their organisation
- Young applicants are 4.5 times more likely to be invited to interview than **older applicants**



# TO REACH UNTAPPED TALENT, BUSINESSES NEED TO CHANGE THE WAY THEY RECRUIT

## 5 KEYS FOR INCLUSIVE RECRUITMENT



- 1**  **CREATE PARTNERSHIPS THAT CONNECT UNTAPPED TALENT TO YOUR JOBS**
- 2**  **SHOW CANDIDATES THAT YOU ARE COMMITTED TO INCLUSION**
- 3**  **USE COMPREHENSIVE JOB ADVERTS WITH INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE**
- 4**  **FOCUS ON THE ESSENTIAL SKILLS NEEDED TO DO THE JOB**
- 5**  **PRIORITISE ACCESSIBILITY AND ELIMINATE BIAS**

Opening Door employers commit to a minimum of three specific actions across the five keys for inclusive recruitment

# THE EMPLOYER'S RESPONSIBILITY

Prevent	Help	Create Pathways
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure you provide good work for all, ensuring job security, rights and a fair income.</li> <li>• Offer mental health support through workplace initiatives and employee assistance programmes.</li> <li>• Know how to spot signs of domestic abuse and how to support employees who may be affected.</li> <li>• Support employees in times of relationship breakdown, bereavement and trauma.</li> <li>• Recognise the symptoms of substance misuse and put support in place to help employees address it.</li> <li>• Talk about homelessness in the workplace, raising awareness to combat stigma around poverty, debt and financial exclusion.</li> <li>• Offer opportunities and remove barriers for people with criminal convictions.</li> <li>• Understand the problem of modern slavery and act to stop it in communities and supply chains.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equip your employees with the knowledge and resources to understand homelessness and know how best to respond.</li> <li>• Support charities tackling homelessness and its causes.</li> <li>• Consider what products or services your business may be able to give in kind.</li> <li>• Create strategic charity partnerships to support projects through skills-based employee volunteering.</li> <li>• Encourage employees to fundraise, donate and support alternative giving schemes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove barriers in your recruitment process. Partner with charities to support their efforts to get people ready for work.</li> <li>• Offer work placements or work experience to give people direct experience in the workplace.</li> <li>• Offer jobs through charities or specialist recruiters.</li> <li>• Provide a chance for jobseekers to see inside your workplace.</li> <li>• Offer apprenticeships to people of all ages.</li> <li>• Ensure your jobs offer fair pay and in-work benefits.</li> <li>• Ensure you provide job security, certainty of hours and flexibility.</li> <li>• Make training and development available to all your employees.</li> <li>• Assess people's needs to help them transition into employment from a period of homelessness and provide the necessary support to help them sustain work.</li> </ul>



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BITC's job coaching programme

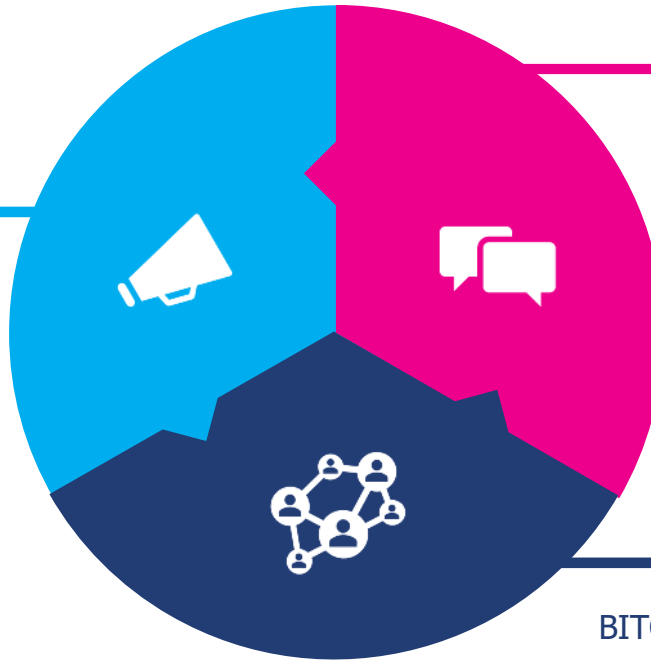
# BOOSTING JOB PROSPECTS THROUGH COACHING



# OUR INTEGRATED APPROACH

## OPENING DOORS CAMPAIGN

BITC's Inclusive Recruitment campaign supports employers to identify and remove barriers within recruitment practices.



## JOB COACHING

BITC's Job Coaching programme trains business volunteers as job coaches from participating organisations and matches them with jobseekers referred to the programme from community partners.

## REGIONAL NETWORKS

BITC's Regional Networks drive engagement across the UK, connecting jobseekers to live opportunities and taking action to improve recruitment practices.



Andreea Tudor, Operations Manager  
[andreea.tudor@bitc.org.uk](mailto:andreea.tudor@bitc.org.uk)

“Becoming an Opening Doors employer allows us to build on the progress we have made through our Diversity & Inclusion strategy and commit to driving further improvements. At Tesco, **we recognise and celebrate the value of a diverse workplace**, and BITC’s campaign aligns perfectly with our aim of making sure that Everyone is Welcome at Tesco.”

Emma Taylor, Chief People Officer at  
Tesco plc



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Responsible  
Business Network



# adi helping to tackle homelessness

Suzanne Burton



# adi Pre-Apprentice Program

Founded in 2017





# Pre - Apprentice Programme

**6th year**  
intake for pre  
apprentices

**12 Year**  
10 students

**12 Year**  
11 students



**11**  
now with adi  
as full-time  
apprentices  
**100% Retention**

**3** former pre -  
apprentice have  
now been offered  
full time roles

**60** Current Pre-  
Apprentices



## Our Apprentice Academy Founded in 1999



# Apprentice Academy

Since 1999 we have onboarded 74 apprentice

7% of our employees are apprentices



Currently have 24 apprenticeship vacancies

In the first phase of our new mentoring programme to take our apprentice academy to the next level



# Helping the community



# Supporting our community

Each year on average  
we are involved in

**30**

initiatives to support  
our community

Contributing to over

**35**

charities & organisations

Offering each employee

**1**

volunteer day

**£147,046**

Total amount raised for  
Heart Research UK in 7  
years partnership.



# Ready for work

## BITC

Over 20 work placements with BITC

Some work placements were extended to a 6-month placements



3 of the individuals who had work placements were offered full time roles within adi

Those who's became full time employees have progressed to manager/supervisor roles



## Supporting our Employees



# Supporting Our Employees

**BHSF**

**Employee  
Assistance  
Programme**

**Mental Health  
Champion and  
First Aider**



**Energy Support  
Loans**

**Pit Stop**

**Wellbeing  
centre**



# What's next for adi?



- St Basils work placements.
- Mentoring programme.
- Mental health first aiders.

# Questions

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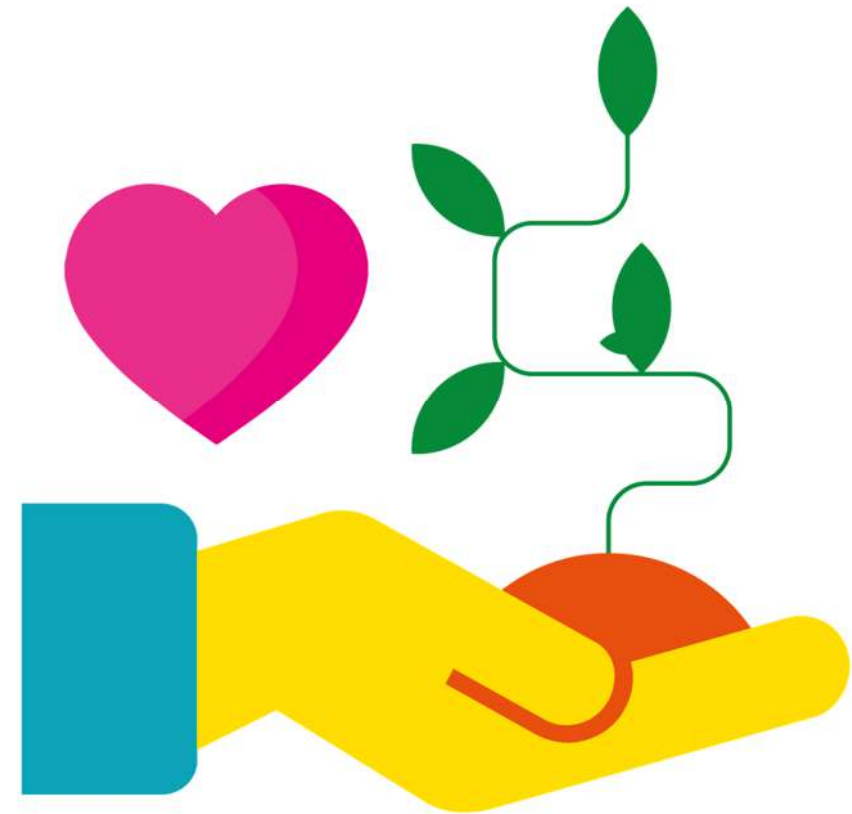


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# Call to action

**Jayne Hussey**



# Thank you

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