

FIVE YEARS ON

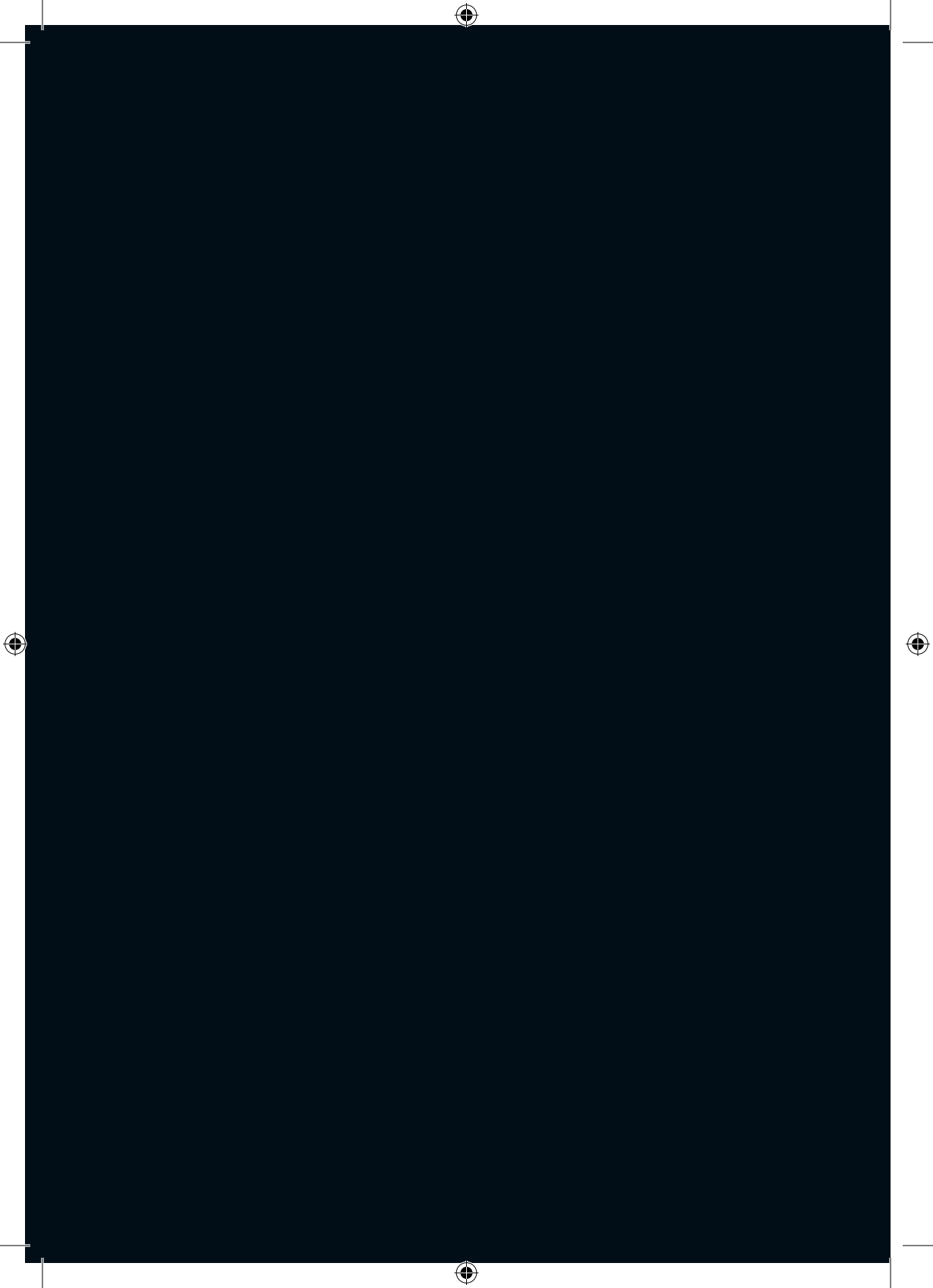


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Foreword



This piece of research is an investigation into the retention of top ethnic minority graduates in the first five years of their careers.

We all know that recruitment is not the only factor to consider in building a representative workforce. But firms who spend a lot of time and money on a diverse intake each year also know that this is unlikely to translate into a diverse workforce in the long term if retention rates of their ethnic minority employees are not as good as retention rates of white employees. When ethnic minority graduates leave organisations in comparison to their white counterparts, and why, is of central importance in any analysis of diversity. And a key part of this is how these graduates see their chances of promotion and becoming part of senior management.

This report uses both quantitative and qualitative data to examine these issues and make a series of recommendations both to organisations and to ethnic minority graduates beginning their careers. I hope that you find it useful.

Sir David Bell
Chairman
Rare



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Five Years On

December 2012

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Executive Summary

The data

- A case study based on data from three law firms suggested that retention rates for ethnic minority employees did not differ significantly from those of white employees.
- The firms that provided data are committed to diversity, and this result reveals the benefits that a commitment to diversity beyond the recruitment process can have on the ethnic make-up of a firm's workforce.
- The analysis of retention rates by gender revealed that female employees begin to leave at a slightly faster rate than their male colleagues.

The experiences and opinions of ethnic minority graduates

- Overall, top ethnic minority graduates working for blue-chip organisations have a suspicion that they face a glass ceiling.
- Overt racism was not one of the obstacles thought to contribute to the perceived glass ceiling.
- A lack of role models created a sense amongst the graduates that ethnic minority employees might not have a fair chance of advancement within their firms.
- This lack of role models translated into a worry that genuine mentors were in short supply. This was of significant concern to the graduates as mentors were seen as necessary to advance one's career.
- The graduates felt that as ethnic minority employees they experienced more pressure to "fit the mould" at work. The emphasis placed on social interactions involving alcohol and activities common to individuals from higher socioeconomic groups made the graduates feel they were at a disadvantage when it came to networking and socialising – softer aspects seen as essential to advancing one's career.

The experiences and opinions of ethnic minority partners in top City law firms

- The ethnic minority partners reported that they had had no experience of overt racism in their roles.
- The partners acknowledged the fact that a lack of role models and the prevalence of alcohol and particular social activities can present a challenge to ethnic minority employees.

- The partners advised that these challenges were not insurmountable. They advised that ethnic minority employees need to be confident in their ability to do their job and that they should not self-select out of promotion processes or networking and socialising opportunities.

Gender

- The female ethnic minority graduates saw gender as presenting more significant obstacles to career advancement than ethnicity.
- The female graduates identified a lack of female role models as a problem.
- Becoming a mother was seen to be the most significant obstacle to advancing in one's career as a woman.
- It was felt that cultural differences exacerbated the issue of gender for ethnic minority women.
- Ethnic minority men also saw parenthood as a potential barrier to career progression. Some thought that this reflected a wider cultural difference about the role of family.

HR approaches to the issue of retention

- Not all firms conduct analysis into the retention rates of their black and minority ethnic (BME) employees compared to white employees.
- Cultural networks provide a source of education on diversity and cultural difference within the firm.
- Clear promotion processes and official mentoring schemes are put in place by some firms to ensure an equal chance of advancement for all employees, regardless of ethnicity.

Recommendations

- Recommendations for both firms and graduates are included in section 9 of this report.

Background

Existing knowledge and research

Existing research reports have investigated the issue of BME retention rates within a range of sectors.

*Diversity in the Legal Profession in England and Wales*¹, funded by the Legal Services Board, covers the entirety of the legal profession. It investigates why the profession continues to be segmented and stratified on gender, race and class lines, despite the recent increases in the number of female and BME lawyers joining the profession. It also investigates the reasons behind women and BME lawyers leaving the profession in disproportionately high numbers. The findings suggest that the profession is perceived as inherently masculine in character and that it is characterised by biases against non-white professionals and those from lower socioeconomic groups.

*Career Progression in the Legal Sector*² by the InterLaw Diversity Forum for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual (LGBT) Networks investigates the different experiences of lawyers and business professionals across the legal sector based on their gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation. Having analysed patterns of participation and satisfaction, the impact of gender and ethnicity on career progression, support from role models and a number of other factors, the report concludes that existing initiatives aimed at increasing diversity are not having a significant or sufficient impact. The report states that, as a broad rule of thumb, the more an individual diverges from the elite-educated, white, male norm, the less well-paid and the less satisfied they will be with their career progress.

Reports on retention and progression rates within public sector organisations suggest that ethnic minorities face a glass ceiling when trying to progress. *Mapping of Black Asian and Ethnic Minority Career Progression and Leadership Development in Local Government*³ concludes that career progression of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) staff in local government remains limited and that BAME staff continue to be found 'disproportionately in the lower echelons of the local government hierarchy'. *The Recruitment and Retention of Black and Minority Ethnic Staff in the National Health Service*⁴ presents a worse picture as it concludes that evidence suggests racial

1 Sommerlad, H., Webley, L., Duff, L., Muzio, D., Tomlinson, J. (2010) 'Diversity in the Legal Profession in England and Wales: A Qualitative Study of Barriers and Individual Choices'. University of Westminster.

2 Ward, S., Winterfeldt, D., Moran, L. (2012) 'Career Progression in the Legal Sector'. InterLaw Diversity Forum for LGBT Networks.

3 Gervais, M. (2009) 'Mapping of Black Asian and Ethnic Minority Career Progression and Leadership Development in Local Government'. Ethnos Research and Consultancy.

4 Oikelome, F. (2007) 'The Recruitment and Retention of Black and Minority Ethnic Staff in the National Health Service'. Race Equality Foundation.

discrimination remains a feature of the internal labour market, with BME employees remaining disproportionately in low level roles.

*Black & Minority Ethnic Representation in the Built Environment Professions*⁵ finds that there are obstacles faced by BME professionals and claims that even companies that have developed equal opportunities policies have struggled to achieve representation of BME staff into the organisation beyond graduate level. It concludes that progression and promotion is often dependent upon having a 'face that fits' and there is a perception among BME professionals that, as a result, their white counterparts get more opportunities to progress more quickly.

Approach for this study

Whilst existing research pieces have focused either on all levels within an sector, or on a wide range of graduates, this report will focus on high achieving ethnic minority graduates, that is, graduates who have obtained at least AAB at A Level and have attended universities within the Russell Group or top 20. As a result, this report will provide an insight into how some of the most able BME graduates fare when trying to progress in their careers with top firms including law firms, investment banks, accountancy firms, public sector organisations, engineering firms, and advertising and communications agencies.

Methodology

This study was carried out between May 2012 and September 2012.

We conducted four focus groups with a total of twenty-six ethnic minority graduates, thirteen of whom were men and thirteen of whom were women. The participants were drawn from a number of organisations, including law firms, investment banks, accountancy firms, public sector organisations, engineering firms and advertising and communications agencies. We grouped the participants according to their industries to enable trends to be easily identified.

Of the twenty-six participants in the focus groups, twenty-one had attended Russell Group Universities, with thirteen achieving AAA or above at A Level and twenty achieving AAB or above at A Level.

The findings of these focus groups were illuminated by in-depth and semi-structured interviews with nineteen individuals. Ten of the interviewees were Rare alumni who had taken part in the focus groups. In addition, four ethnic minority partners at top City law firms were interviewed with the aim of gaining an insight into the journey and experiences of ethnic minority graduates who have succeeded in securing senior roles within a very competitive industry. All four of the partners interviewed had been involved at some point in their careers with recruitment and diversity and were therefore able to offer opinions on these issues also. Finally, five individuals with experience of working on human resources (HR) tasks

5 Centre for Ethnic Minority Studies, Royal Holloway, University of London (2005). 'Black & Minority Ethnic Representation in the Built Environment Professions'.

were interviewed (one a recruitment partner in a law firm and four HR professionals); these individuals had experience of working in diversity and were from a number of different industries: law, investment banking and the public sector.

Quantitative analysis was also conducted to gain an insight into the retention trends for ethnic minority graduates when compared with white graduates. This analysis took the form of a case study into retention rates within top City law firms. Three firms kindly provided data on their trainee intakes of 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007. Information was given on each trainee's ethnicity, gender, joining date and leaving date to enable the analysis of retention rates for a number of different groups. A total of 1214 lines of data were analysed.

The names of all of the participants in the focus groups and interviews have been changed to ensure confidentiality, and the names of the firms have not been revealed.

Profile of high achieving ethnic minority graduates

Rare's *What Top Ethnic Minority Students Want*⁶ presented a profile of top ethnic minority students. The report was based on 837 interviews in which top ethnic minority students were asked to rate the importance of certain job characteristics out of five. Having the opportunity to advance within the organisation was deemed to be the most important factor by the students, receiving an average rating of 4.5. The second most important factor was deemed to be having intrinsically interesting work.

Top priorities for top ethnic minority students in a career include career progression and the work being intrinsically interesting. Our research suggests that the perception of a glass ceiling greatly increases the risk of this talented group leaving their employers.

These results suggest that top ethnic minority graduates are ambitious - they want to progress within their careers whilst taking on interesting and challenging work. The focus groups and interviews conducted for *Five Years On* paint a similar picture, with the ethnic minority participants expressing a desire to have a fair chance of advancement, and being concerned about their careers when this doesn't seem to be the case at their current firms.

This profile is important as it suggests that a perception of a glass ceiling greatly increases the risk of this talented group leaving their employers. This means that as well as ensuring there is not a glass ceiling for ethnic minorities to contend with, firms will also have to communicate that fact clearly to their ethnic minority employees.

"If I ever felt I was being overlooked for opportunities I would leave." Peter, trader in an investment bank

6 Kanimba, J., Mokades, R. (2010) 'What Top Ethnic Minority Students Want'. Rare Recruitment Limited.

Data analysis : A case study of law firms

To begin this research piece we conducted data analysis to gain an insight into whether retention rates for white graduates differed significantly from those of BME graduates on top graduate schemes.

We requested data from a number of organisations and three City law firms kindly agreed to provide us with their data. This provided us with the opportunity to conduct a case study into retention rates within a particular sector. The results of this case study provide an insight into retention rates within top law firms that have been committed to promoting diversity for a number of years.

The three law firms provided data on their 2003 – 2007 trainee intakes. The data included details of the ethnicity, gender, joining date and leaving date, if applicable, of each trainee. The combined dataset consisted of 1214 records.

Retention rates by ethnicity

The data from the three firms was combined to provide a data sample large enough to result in statistically significant results. The number of years that white graduates remained with their firms was compared to the number of years that ethnic minority graduates remained with their firms.

The results of the analysis provided good news as they showed that across these three firms, overall, BME employees were not more likely to leave the firm than white employees.

These results suggest that BME and white employees taken on as graduates have similar retention rates across the three firms that provided data⁷.

7 The results showed that:

- 1 White graduates and BME graduates were **equally likely** to stay with their firm for 1 or more years.
- 2 White graduates and BME graduates were **almost equally likely** to stay with their firm for 2 years or more.
- 3 White graduates were 11% **less likely** than BME graduates to stay with their firm for 3 years or more.
- 4 White graduates were 8% **more likely** than BME graduates to stay with their firm for 4 years or more.

The data for all of the intakes of 2003 – 2006 and the spring intakes of 2007 was also analysed to find the percentage of graduates that stayed with the firm for 5 years or more. This involved a total of 1077 records. The results revealed that white graduates were 6% more likely than BME graduates to stay with their firm for 5 years or longer.

Finally the data for all of the intakes of 2003 – 2005 and the spring intakes of 2006 was analysed to find the percentage of graduates that stayed with the firm for over 6 years. This involved 816 records. The results revealed that white graduates and BME graduates were almost equally likely to remain with their firm for 6 years or more.

4.2 Retention rates by gender

We also investigated whether retention rates differed according to gender, in order to isolate ethnicity as a variable. The data for the intakes of 2003 – 2007 for all three firms was also analysed to identify retention rates by gender⁸.

The findings suggest that female lawyers begin to leave the profession at a slightly faster rate than their male counterparts after the first two years with the firm. The findings also suggest that this gap widens as the years go on⁹.

When analysing this data we verified that the trends we identified were attributable to the variable of race rather than gender. If the BME population in the dataset had been overwhelmingly female it could have been suggested that if BME retention rates fell below those of white graduates this may have been the result of gender, not ethnicity. However, the BME population in the dataset used for this analysis was 56% female and 44% male, compared to 51% female and 49% male for the white population, which suggests that the results for BME retention rates do reveal a trend for ethnicity, and not a hidden gender trend.

8 This involved a total of 1422 records.

9 The results revealed that:

- 1 Male and female graduates were **equally likely** to stay with their firm for 1 year or more.
- 2 Male and female graduates were **almost equally as likely** to stay with their firm for 2 years or more.
- 3 Male graduates were 4% **more likely** than female graduates to stay with their firm for 3 years or more.
- 4 Male graduates were 5% **more likely** than female graduates to stay with their firm for 4 years or more.

The data for all of the intakes of 2003 – 2006 and the spring intakes of 2007 was analysed to investigate the percentage of graduates that stayed with the firm for 5 years or more. This involved a total of 1265 records. The results revealed that male and female graduates were almost equally likely to stay with their firm for 5 years or more.

Finally, the data for all of the intakes of 2003- 2005 and the spring intakes of 2006 was analysed to investigate the percentage of graduates that stayed with the firm for 6 years or more. This involved a total of 967 records. The results revealed that male graduates were 8% more likely than female graduates to stay with their firm for 6 years or more.

Experiences of the workplace as an ethnic minority graduate

Three law firms provided data for our data analysis. However, our qualitative data was drawn from people from twenty-two firms across a number of industries. This provided a broader insight into the experiences of BME graduates in the workplace and their perceptions of their chances of progressing in their careers. For this reason, the findings of the qualitative research sometimes paint a different picture to that of the quantitative research. Whilst the data we analysed suggested that retention rates for BME and white employees were similar across the three firms that provided data, the findings of the focus groups and interviews sometimes suggest otherwise for other firms.

To begin, the graduates were asked how they had found their jobs so far. That included how they found their day-to-day work and interactions with their colleagues.

No reports of overt racism

A positive finding was that none of the graduates working in the City or in the public sector reported any instances of overt racism.

The one report of overt racism was made by Tola, a graduate working for a train company, which she said was like 'The Land Before Time'. She spoke about a time when one of the managers responded to a mistake made by a black conductor by saying: 'All black people are afraid of the police'. Tola was most offended by the fact that her colleagues all seemed to find this acceptable, with one of her colleagues on the graduate scheme retelling the story all over the office as if it was a funny joke.

Despite this, the absence of multiple reports of overt racism is a welcome finding. This finding was corroborated by the ethnic minority partners that were interviewed. All four were clear that they had never been the victim of any discrimination as a result of their ethnicity.

Overall experience at work is positive

Overall the graduates that we spoke to seemed to have had positive experiences at work. When asked what they liked about their jobs the majority of the graduates referred to the fact that they were challenged at work or that they were frequently learning new things. A large proportion of them also referred to their colleagues as an element of their working life that they liked.

There were some common complaints, however.

A common complaint from the graduates working in City jobs, both in finance and in law, was that the hours are too long and also unpredictable. The graduates discussed how this makes it difficult for them to see friends and family, and to make plans outside of work.

Three graduates who had experience of working in advertising and communications agencies also complained about the quality of the work they were given when first joining their agencies. All three said that because agencies are exceptionally hierarchical, new graduates tend to be given work well below the level of their capabilities. Tola, whose first graduate job was in an advertising agency, was made to stay later than she needed to in order to complete menial tasks such as buying milk or stamps. The director's main justification for this was that when he was her age he worked long hours, so she should do so as well.

Perceptions of a glass ceiling for ethnic minority employees

Ethnic minority graduates and their thoughts on the glass ceiling

In both the focus groups and the interviews the graduates were asked if they thought there was a fair chance of career advancement regardless of ethnicity in their organisations. The responses were mixed but did suggest the graduates have suspicions that there is a glass ceiling for ethnic minority employees.

“I believe there is no glass ceiling”

Of the ten graduates interviewed, four answered with an unqualified yes when asked if they thought there was a fair chance of progressing within their firm regardless of their ethnic background. Two of these graduates made references to their own experiences of advancing within their firms to justify their answers.

Olivia, who works in Operations at an investment bank, made reference to her experience of getting promoted after just two years when justifying her answer.

Olivia, assistant officer in an investment bank

“I don’t think my ethnicity has ever hindered me or stopped me from getting to where I want to be. I think it is completely based on what you can do, and what people show they can do, rather than what ethnicity you are. So I’ve never felt any prejudice against me because I’m an ethnic minority or because I’m a woman.

“I’ve been there about three years and I’ve been working really hard in the hope that I can be promoted. They don’t say that because you’re a woman or because you’ve only been here for two years or because you’re young, that you can’t get promoted. They are fair. If somebody works hard and shows that they are working and that they want a promotion or a pay rise, they will give it to you.

“Throughout all of last year I had all of the support I needed from all of the managers in our team to get the promotion I wanted.

“I think some of it comes down to you having to be quite proactive about it. I think there are people who aren’t necessarily proactive about it. When we started the graduate scheme, there were about six of us in Operations. Not all of us were promoted in February. I think some people think it just comes, but I don’t think it comes automatically, I think you have to work for it. You have to show that you want it and that you are capable of doing the job.

“The information is available, but it’s about being proactive and asking the right people the right questions. No one is just going to tell you what you need to do. Everybody is swamped in their own work; they don’t always have time to be thinking about how they can pull somebody up to the next stage. As a manager I think it makes it a lot easier to have someone come and ask: ‘How can I get there? What do I need to do?’ instead of the manager having to ask: ‘Do you want to be promoted?’”

“I believe there is a glass ceiling.”

For the other six graduates who were interviewed and a majority of the other participants in the focus groups, there were mixed feelings about there being a fair chance of advancement within their firms regardless of ethnicity.

A lack of role models contributes to the perception of a glass ceiling

A number of the graduates had to qualify their positive answers when they realised that there were very few ethnic minorities in senior roles at their organisation. A lack of role models seemed to create a suspicion that there was a glass ceiling to contend with.

“This is something I’m not sure about because there are not many ethnic minority individuals at the top of the tree...” Trevor, associate at a City law firm

“Yes...I think so... although there’s not much evidence of that because at the top we have very few ethnic minority partners...” Prina, associate at a City law firm

“Across the bank in general there are two Asian managing directors and no black managing directors, out of about fifty in total. I don’t know if that’s going to change in 10–15 years...That’s not to say people like us can’t get there, but I don’t know if it’s harder. I think that’s something I’ll find out as I start trying to move up...” Samuel, associate at an investment bank

During the finance focus group an interaction between two of the participants demonstrated the positive impact that role models can have on ethnic minority graduates’ belief that they will be able to progress, along with the worry that can result from a lack of role models.

Peter, trader in an investment bank: *“I’m lucky that my team is very diverse. Of the five people on my desk, one is Asian, I’m black and another guy is black. He’s 26 and has already climbed two steps out of the five. That’s really nice to see. It gives me a lot of confidence and envy – in a good way. The fact that he can do it gives me something to aspire to...”*

Dominic, analyst at an investment bank: *“I’m the only black person in my division in the whole of Europe out of 150... On Peter’s point that he has someone to look at, I’m quite scared as I have no one to look at. I wish I had someone to look up to.”*

In his one-on-one interview, Dominic, an analyst at an investment bank, went on to tell a story that revealed the hope that some junior ethnic minorities can place in senior role models, and the worry that is caused when those role models are not seen to advance within the firm.

Dominic, analyst at an investment bank

“As you go higher up the firm, the attrition rate of ethnic minority groups becomes greater than the average.

“There’s the famous case of a black guy who was quite senior here, and a lot of people in my peer group used to look up to him. He left here because he didn’t make partner, or something like that. I don’t know the ins and outs of it but that went around for two to three months, and people were like: ‘Oh my gosh! If he can’t do it, no one else can!’ – and that kind of thing. This was around January or February last year. He was very senior, at managing director level. Reportedly, he was pushing for partner, didn’t get promoted and left because he wasn’t promoted. There are a whole range of circumstances and reasons why that could have happened, but in my peer group we had a bit of a flash panic thinking: ‘If he can’t make partner here what hope do I have?’ That was thrown around and discussed.”

One problem that a lack of role models presented to the graduates was the fact that this might make it more difficult for them to find mentors when trying to progress in their careers. It was widely accepted by the graduates that mentoring can play a big part in people securing promotions. It was also accepted that informal mentoring relationships tend to result from the mentor seeing some sort of similarity between him or her and the mentee. The combination of all of these factors seemed to suggest to the graduates that they might find it more difficult to advance in their organisations.

“For me, the obstacle is not seeing anyone else who is similar to me who has actually made it. Out of twelve partners, there’s one woman. She hired me. There’s that, but it’s still not someone who has come from my background and you don’t really see them around. Having one person who could mentor me to get to that level could give me more belief that you can actually make it to partner level.” Grace, trainee accountant at an accountancy firm

“I think banking is an industry where at a certain point it helps to know someone. People do get jobs because their dads were managing directors. We won’t get that for a while as there are no black people at the top.” Peter, trader in an investment bank.

A conversation within the law focus group revealed another reason that a lack of role models might present such a problem for ethnic minority graduates. Some members of the group started to discuss the lack of understanding and support that they received from family and friends in regard to the demands of

their jobs. This was said to be a result of the fact that they were the first in their family to enter into work in the City.

Christina, trainee: *“No one in my family is a lawyer, no one is the City. When I’m still at work at 11, they’re like: ‘Why!?’ My mum always tells me: ‘Don’t work too hard.’”*

Selena, trainee: *“My mum has called me before, to talk about something like the dentist and she doesn’t understand why I can’t have a long chat at 9pm because I’m still working. And the next day, she doesn’t understand.”*

Christina, trainee: *“...we’re the first generation that is making it. In terms of where we see ourselves in five years time, we don’t have the support network to get that kind of guidance. We need people to talk to about how to get to that stage. Other people have those role models because their parents do it. That’s what’s really missing.”*

Obscure promotion processes create suspicions of a glass ceiling

The concerns of some of the graduates about there being a fair chance of advancement in their firms regardless of ethnicity were eased significantly by clear and structured promotion processes.

A number of the graduates said that the promotion process for the first few stages within their firm had been made very clear, but that it became more unclear the higher one climbed toward the more senior positions. The comment was made a number of times that climbing onto the higher rungs on the career ladder seemed to be more about ‘politics’ and ‘knowing the right people’ – a concern for some graduates.

Dominic, who expressed concerns about a lack of role models, seemed to take comfort in the fact that his firm had clearly laid out the procedure for promotion within the firm, and had openly identified and started to address the problem of disproportionate attrition rates for BME employees at senior levels.

“It’s very clear how to move to each level. They make it clear how to move from DA to associate, associate to VP [vice president]. A few months ago the black network had an event. The black partner who sponsors the network spoke about retention and where he thinks the firm is failing. He identified that at the senior levels, from associate to VP, there’s a lot of attrition. From VP to MD [managing director] there’s a lot of attrition. They talked about what they are trying to do to keep people motivated and to push them to try to get to senior positions. At the lower levels it’s not really a problem but they’re very focused on getting black and Asian professionals promoted where appropriate.” Dominic, analyst at an investment bank

Those graduates that found their firm's promotion processes relatively obscure seemed to suspect that people who were better connected might have a better chance of advancing through the firm. They worried this would put them at a disadvantage, as they were not as well connected as some of their white colleagues.

"I don't think the process ever is made clear. If it is made clear I think it will be made clear six or seven years down the line...if it is made clear. But no one knows how. It's a very opaque process. No one knows how things are decided... Maybe it's just something I don't know; maybe the people who will get there have been given a book of instructions and will know how to do it." Prina, associate at a City law firm

"The firm is generally seen to be opaque in that regard. It doesn't go out of its way to make that clear to anyone. But maybe if you know someone in the field you will get an advantage, so people who have family or friends who have progressed much further than we have will have an advantage in that area... It makes me think: 'What do I not know?' It makes me a little bit anxious because I think there may be things that I should be doing that I'm not." Christina, trainee lawyer at a City law firm

As highlighted earlier on in this report, such worries and concerns are likely to make top ethnic minority graduates consider leaving their employer as they are ambitious and want to have a fair chance of advancement. A promotion process that creates a sense of uncertainty runs the risk of encouraging top ethnic minority graduates to move elsewhere.

Ethnic minority partners do not believe there is a glass ceiling

In contrast to the views of the graduates, the ethnic minority partners interviewed all clearly stated that they did not think there was a glass ceiling for ethnic minority graduates in their industry. All four expressed the opinion that they thought their firm was a 'genuine meritocracy'. They did acknowledge that it might seem easy for them to say that having made it to the top, but still strongly affirmed the fact that there was an equal chance of advancement within their firms.

"I think the one thing about the City generally, and in particular my firm, is that it is a genuine meritocracy. I think the opportunity has been there just as much for me as it was for a white candidate who might have been in my shoes." Isaac, partner at a City law firm

"I have been surprised at the lack of barriers and the diversity of our people, of our business, of people's attitudes". Laurence, partner at a City law firm

However, three of the partners did acknowledge the difficulty that a lack of role models can present for ethnic minority graduates. It was acknowledged that this can often lead to ethnic minority graduates self-selecting out of the process and leaving the firm early.

Isaac spoke about a discussion he had had with a group of ethnic minority lawyers about the perceived glass ceiling.

Isaac, partner at a City law firm

“There was clearly an unvoiced concern amongst the group that this was not the environment in which they would succeed as they were ethnic minorities... One person asked: ‘What is the biggest thing that is holding back ethnic minorities from progressing in City careers?’ I said that I thought the biggest thing holding ethnic minorities back is themselves... I think with ethnic minorities there can be a fear that they are just not going to fit in, that there will be prejudices against them, and this leads them to sometimes opt out or deselect themselves. That’s not the organisation that’s doing that, it’s the individual. Sometimes it might be with good reason, but I suspect many times it’s not... Having confidence about and knowing yourself, and knowing yourself as an ethnic minority is important, and being proud of that is important. But also realising that being from an ethnic minority actually has commercial value... You should be thinking: I am as well placed as anyone to succeed and advance in this organisation, I do have something that is different, let me think how that difference can play to my advantage.”

The point that being an ethnic minority ought to be seen as an advantage was made by Laurence as well. He argued that because business in the emerging markets is becoming more of a focus for law firms, being from such a background can prove a great asset in winning business and building client relationships.

“What I say to people is that we’re doing a lot of business in Nigeria and we need people with connections in Nigeria. It’s such a relationship driven market, if you have those connections, use them.” Laurence, partner at a City law firm

What do HR teams do to ensure an equal chance of advancement for all?

The four HR professionals, along with the recruitment partner and three of the ethnic minority partners, were asked to give details of what their firms do to ensure there is a fair chance of advancement for everyone within their firm, regardless of ethnicity.

Data analysis

When asked if they had identified any trends regarding the retention rates of ethnic minority graduates when compared to the retention rates of white graduates, three quarters of those interviewed revealed they had not analysed the data on BME retention rates and therefore could not comment on the trends. The interviewees that could comment on the trends represented two organisations, a City law firm and a public sector organisation.

The City law firm's data revealed that it tended to lose ethnic minority lawyers at a slightly earlier stage than white lawyers. Hannah, the partner speaking about these trends, said it had proved very difficult to get to the bottom of why this trend occurs. She said that the exit interviews conducted with employees leaving the firm had never involved an employee mentioning ethnicity as a reason for leaving. Hannah referred to the issue of a lack of role models as a possible explanation.

"I suspect it is just part of a feeling that you're not within an environment where you feel wholly comfortable and perhaps there aren't enough role models so you're quite happy to be here at a junior level as there are quite a significant number of ethnic minority lawyers at a junior level, but when you look ahead of yourself you may think, actually, I don't stand a chance of being made a partner so I'm not going to stay.

I think that's wrong. I think that if you're good enough and you stay, you stand just as much chance as anyone of being made a partner." Hannah, partner in a City law firm

By contrast, the public sector organisation's data revealed a different trend, with ethnic minority graduates having similar retention rates to those of white graduates, and being rated on average slightly higher in terms of performance than white graduates.

Clear promotion processes

When asked what their firm does to ensure a fair chance of advancement regardless of ethnic background, a number of those interviewed referred to their firm's appraisal system. They argued that because all employees were assessed against the same competency frameworks, which were communicated clearly to all, this meant that the process was objective. It was also mentioned that the topic of promotion was raised within appraisals.

Another thing that was referred to was the fact that the promotion process was made clear to all employees, and that there were standardised development programmes available at particular stages of one's career to ensure everyone was given help and advice. For example, individuals from two City law firms spoke of the development programmes associates are put onto when they reach the stage at which partnership becomes a consideration. These programmes are in place to give the lawyers a chance to learn more about the skills required to become a partner and to enable them to identify their development needs.

"To address the problem of ethnic minority retention rates, I think firms should have a combination of the firm having as much transparency and objectiveness around important processes, particularly recruitment and promotion processes, together with making sure that you've got as much awareness and understanding around difference – whatever aspect of difference there is – I'm not sure what beyond that firms can do.

One of the things firms can do actually is to have more senior role models. But that isn't something that a firm can fix overnight." Isaac, partner at a City law firm

Mentoring programmes

The interviews revealed that a number of the firms spoken to had mentoring programmes in place to ensure everyone had support in advancing in their careers.

Isaac spoke about the years just before he was promoted to partner. The partners in his group were great lawyers, but not good mentors, and therefore he was initially quite worried that he did not have a mentor. However, he found a mentor within the firm who helped him prepare for the partnership promotion process by speaking to him about business matters from a partner's perspective as well as speaking to him about his own progress. Having made partner, Isaac fed back that having a firm wide mentoring programme would be beneficial. At his firm, it is now the case that every lawyer approaching the transition from associate to partner is offered the chance to have a formal mentor. He identified this scheme as levelling the playing field.

"I think there was a belief that people were generally mentored, but it was done on a very informal basis, so some people got a lot of support and some people didn't. Informal mentoring probably still happens, but there is now a formal mentoring structure in place for people going through the process – this levels the playing field a bit." Isaac, partner at a City law firm

Such schemes, when implemented effectively, address the concerns expressed by some of the ethnic minority graduates mentioned earlier in this report that people better connected than them are more likely to advance in their careers as they will receive the support and advice necessary to advance. In addition, official mentoring programmes could provide some of the support and encouragement that some ethnic minority graduates might not receive from family members who do not have a full understanding of their work and its demands.

Official mentoring programmes could provide some of the support and encouragement that some ethnic minority graduates might not receive from family members who may not fully appreciate the demands of their work.

Bridget, one of the ethnic minority partners interviewed, mentioned that her firm was planning on enabling participants in a mentoring scheme to put forward ethnicity as a criteria for selecting a mentor. Comments from Prina, one of the graduates interviewed, suggested that such an addition to mentoring schemes could be of significant benefit to ethnic minority employees. She spoke about the benefits of an informal mentoring relationship she had with a female ethnic minority lawyer. She also highlighted how official mentoring programmes can be ineffective if not taken seriously by the mentors.

“Yes I do have a mentor. It was sort of an accident... but she was a great mentor as she was a woman, she has a family life and she was also from an ethnic background so she sort of understands some of the issues.

“I do have someone at work who is supposed to be my mentor, but we don’t have a mentoring relationship. He doesn’t come in to ask how I’m doing, how it’s going.” Prina, associate at a City law firm

Cultural networks

Five of the people interviewed about HR approaches to ethnic minority employee retention rates mentioned the cultural networks set up by their firms.

Isaac mentioned that the main aim of his firm’s multicultural network was to play a role in education – both in terms of cultural differences and religious differences. The network has held events for Christian, Muslim and Hindu religious festivals and has also held events for black history month.

He noted that the network seemed to have had a positive effect on ethnic minority retention rates. In addition, he noted that the multicultural network had benefitted the business by bringing together lawyers and the support staff and strengthening links with clients through tapping into client cultural and religious networks.

“In terms of linking the multicultural network back to retention, I think it’s been really positively received. A lot of people see the firm as taking a genuine interest in their culture, their heritage and their religion. It makes you feel more comfortable and makes you feel valued in a way – the fact that people understand you. I think that’s been really important.” Isaac, partner at a City law firm

This role of multicultural networks could prove important in tackling some of the issues faced by ethnic minority graduates when at work. For example, Trevor spoke about the ignorance he faced when speaking about something as culturally and religiously significant as Ramadan. This is a problem that could be addressed through events focused on diversity.

“It does get difficult sometimes. I’m going to be fasting next month, and there are a couple of partners that just don’t know what it is. When you’ve got the most intelligent people in the country who know so much about everything, and love general knowledge, the fact that they don’t know that Muslims have to fast for a month can be a bit annoying.” Trevor, associate at a City law firm

Programmes overtly addressing BME retention issues

None of the people interviewed about their firm’s approaches to ensuring an equal chance of advancement for all regardless of race mentioned programmes that specifically address the issue of BME retention rates. However, Dominic, a graduate working in an investment bank, did mention a scheme



in place at his firm that openly tackles the problem of high attrition rates for black employees and demonstrated the positive effect this had on him.

Dominic, analyst at an investment bank

“There’s an initiative which is for black analysts and associates and is focused on skills development and making sure that people understand what progression involves. The managers of the analysts and associates are invited to the training. My manager was invited to a session and I had a session on managing up.”

It is the case that attending sessions targeted a specific ethnic group can cause graduates to feel awkward at times. However, the fact that Dominic’s manager was involved in the programme and clearly supported him in it, alleviated these concerns.

“There was a situation where I was meant to go to a session but I didn’t know how to excuse myself as I had lots of work. I didn’t know how to have the conversation. Because my manager was involved he came over and said: ‘Shouldn’t you be at that session?’ I said: ‘Yes, but I’ve got x, y and z to do’. He went over to the other member of the team and told him I had to go to the session, and that was the end of it, I was sent to the session. So he’s been good at supporting me and ensuring I go along. There is definitely support there.”

Knowing the firm was aware of its issues surrounding the attrition rate for black employees and that it was clearly doing something about it made Dominic feel a lot more confident in his chances of being able to progress within the firm.

“My team has been very clear about where I need to be to progress, having that was already great - having the added knowledge that the firm is behind me as an ethnic minority employee is sort of a double boost, so that I feel this is definitely something that’s achievable.”

The fact that Dominic’s managers were strongly behind the initiative to tackle the problem of high attrition rates for black employees is significant as such programmes will only be effective if they are seen to be taken seriously by senior management. In one of the focus groups a graduate highlighted the ways in which attempts at improving diversity within a firm can be undermined by managers.

“In our organisation we had a ‘Respect Month’ but the directors were making fun of their own Respect Month. If organisations actually embodied the values they claim to hold, such as respect, issues surrounding diversity would reduce.” Kelechi, project support assistant, public sector organisation



Rare recommends

For firms

1. Make sure your promotion process is fair by collecting data and checking the trends for ethnic minority employees compared to white employees.
2. If your data analysis reveals that your process is fair, be sure to let everyone know this.
3. If your data analysis reveals that your process could be fairer, acknowledge this and do something to tackle the problem that is clear for all to see. If you set up a programme, involve managers to ensure the programme is properly supported.
4. Make your promotion process clear to all employees.
5. Set up a formal mentoring programme to help level the playing field.
6. Hold events and talks that address cultural and religious differences to ensure everyone within the firm learns, appreciates and understands the effects such differences can have as well as recognising the benefits of such diversity to the firm, both culturally and in terms of business.

For graduates

1. Do not self-select out of the process. Have confidence in your ability to do your job well.
2. Be proactive about seeking advice on your career.

Trying to fit the mould

Having spoken of their worries about a perceived glass ceiling, the graduates were asked specifically what they thought the obstacles and barriers were that faced ethnic minority employees at work.

Ethnic minority graduates feel pressure to fit in

As previously mentioned the graduates were well aware that there was a need to network and have good relationships at work to improve their chances of promotion. Some of the graduates revealed that they felt at a disadvantage in this area as they felt that it was harder for ethnic minority employees to socialise and fit in at work. It was accepted that everyone has to 'mould' themselves a little bit to fit in at work, but some of the graduates felt that the need to mould themselves to fit in at work was significantly greater for ethnic minority employees.

"If people at senior levels aren't like you, it's hard to connect with them and therefore to progress... There's less common ground. It's not definitive but if people at senior levels aren't like you, you actively have to look for shared interest and mould yourself." Alicia, trainee lawyer at a City law firm

Alcohol

Alcohol emerged as an issue in the focus group of City lawyers. This group consisted of six lawyers, five of whom were Asian and five of whom were women. A number of lawyers in the group were either practicing Muslims or had grown up in a Muslim household. This is significant as Muslims usually do not drink for religious reasons.

The group felt there was a large pressure to drink alcohol at work in order to seem sociable and part of the team. Even the members of the group that did drink alcohol found that the focus on alcohol at work was too much and that it made them uncomfortable.

Jusna, trainee: "Yes, social events are, as standard, 'let's go out for drinks'. I'm obviously Muslim (points at headscarf, others laugh), which doesn't help."

Selena, trainee: "Do you find the drink thing a big problem because, I've experienced the same thing and, I like to drink a bit but not, like, every night?"

Jusna, trainee: *"With the trainees, as standard, every Friday night after work the trainees will go to the pub for drinks. I like the trainees, I like the conversations but I don't like hanging out in pubs so I won't go. That obviously separates me from the other trainees. If there are house parties or whatever, I won't even get invited. It means that my friendships at work don't get that strong."*

Alicia, trainee: *"I have a friend who doesn't drink but feels she has to work twice as hard to seem bubbly and friendly and to meet the level of drunk people."*

Jusna, trainee: *"I feel like I have to prove myself a lot, to prove that I am still funny and sociable, to get people to go beyond my hijab."*

Barbara, trainee: *"It's expected that you'll drink, they'll ask why if you're not."*

Christina, trainee: *"The associates will talk to each other about how much they're going to drink at client events. I was told by an associate: 'Don't say no to a glass of wine'. She wouldn't have said that to me if she didn't know that I did drink but, if I didn't drink, it would be hard."*

Jusna, trainee: *"My one associate friend, who is also Muslim, was asked by a partner to go to a closing drinks for a client and she really didn't want to go - I would go to drinks and not drink - but she didn't want to go. She was put under a lot of pressure and made to feel really uncomfortable, like she was letting the whole team down by not going, that it would look bad in front of the client. There's definitely that pressure."*

Eric, trainee: *"It's a 'strength in numbers' thing. During a vacation scheme at a small, traditional firm, it's more noticeable if you don't drink - I didn't meet a single person that didn't drink. At my current firm, it's a bit more diverse, it's a bigger firm. It's easier for people."*

Three black graduates who had experience of working within advertising and communications agencies spoke about the prevalence of alcohol within that industry. One of these graduates said the drinking culture was one of the reasons she left the agency she used to work for.

"For me, it wasn't just drinking... if you just had one drink that was a problem. It wasn't just a culture of drinking, it was a culture of getting drunk... There were some afternoons that were a complete write off because people drank too much and because I refused to drink more than one glass I got lumbered with all the work. One of the reasons I left advertising was because of the drinking." Tola, previously employed by an advertising agency

Lack of social capital

The graduates also discussed the effects that they felt their lack of social capital (i.e. the benefits gained from certain social networks and experiences) had on their ability to socialise and network with their colleagues at work.

As ethnicity is often linked to socioeconomic background, it is often the case that ethnic minority graduates have not been exposed to some of the activities and experiences that their white colleagues from higher socioeconomic backgrounds have been exposed to.

This was an issue raised mainly by the lawyers that took part in this research. Trevor, an Asian Muslim originally from Bolton, discussed his experiences at length.

Trevor, associate at a City law firm

“I used to find socialising here really difficult because I’m from Bolton. I’m from a close knit community and wasn’t really part of a big city. I found it very difficult at first as people do have very specific interests. People are interested in things like skiing, wine, Selfridges, Fortnum & Mason. There’s a pattern that goes on, it’s Michelin star restaurants, and I’m from none of that. I don’t have an interest in any of it. Having foam on top of my steak means nothing to me. Neither does cheese, or Gorgonzola, or wine, blah blah blah. So at first I found it difficult as people seemed to acknowledge and value certain things in people which I didn’t have. Like certain kinds of clothes, interests, a certain thing to do on the weekend. They seem to do similar things. But over time, I would say a part of me has just decided to conform. Not in a bad way, but in a ‘it makes your life easier way’. It’s not like I’m having to something devilishly awful, eating a nice meal once in a while or going on a holiday is not awful. But I do feel like I’ve changed in the past few years from who I used to be, not significantly, but I do think there is a pressure to mould in certain ways to the environment you’re in.”

Samuel, an associate at an investment bank, described his firm and the City in general as having an ‘Old Boys’ Network’ and described the ways in which he felt this makes it more difficult for ethnic minorities to get to senior positions within the firm.

Samuel, associate at an investment bank

“The banter here involves a lot of chat about ‘Oh, when I was at Oxbridge’ and ‘When I went shooting at the weekend’ or you’ll get managing directors (MDs) talking about which public schools they’ll be sending their children to. The conversation is a bit different and that’s when you realise that you wouldn’t be able to take part in these conversations – it’s not really me. This happens at every level. A higher proportion of our intake every year comes from public school education when compared to the other banks...”

“The City does definitely have an ‘Old Boys’ culture, which means that when you come from certain universities or certain public schools or certain circles it makes it easier to build up networks. I think that is probably slowly changing, but it still does exist to some extent.”

“When you get to MD level it’s all about relationships and knowing the right people in the right places, so it comes back to the Old Boys culture in the city. If you look at the CEOs and the CFOs in the City and the big corporates, there’s a similar sort of Oxford/public school element that there is at my firm. I think that helps certain MDs here build up a rapport as they can say, ‘Oh, we went to the same school; we have the same connections’ etc. That makes it easier.”

When asked about the ethnicity of the people in senior roles at his firm, Samuel identified that there were no black or Chinese managing directors, but there were two Asian managing directors. He attributed their success to the fact that they were culturally similar to the rest of the senior people at the firm.

Samuel, associate at an investment bank

“I know the Asian managing directors have been quite good at moulding themselves into the culture that works here. In the sense that if you take their colour out of the equation and just speak to them as people, they come across as just the same as the white MDs.

“I think there’s a posh Britishness about them. Not in a bad way at all, but in terms of speech and the things they like to do. The whole shooting and horse races culture.”

Samuel was clear that he didn’t think there was an insurmountable glass ceiling for ethnic minority employees; however, it was clear that he did view his lack of social capital as a disadvantage he would need to overcome.

“But again, whilst I think being ethnic can make it more difficult, I don’t think it rules it out at all. It might mean that you have to put in that extra 10-15%. You can look at it two ways. You can either think of it as you starting a level below the others – which is not how I think of it – I think of it as there are certain people who have a leg up. I don’t feel like I have that leg up, but that’s not something for me to complain about, it’s up to me to make the most of it.

‘A leg up’ meaning your parents have sent you to the right schools or got you in the right circles, or you’ve been brought up a certain way. That’s the sort of leg up I’m talking about, which I don’t necessarily have, but if I don’t make it, it sure as hell won’t be as a result of me being ethnic, it will be because I haven’t worked hard enough or been successful enough in getting myself out there or making my ability known. It’s not a ceiling; it’s like being in a race and wearing slightly heavier boots...”

The partners’ view: ‘Be yourself. Be confident’

The ethnic minority partners interviewed for this report acknowledged the worry that alcohol and social activities can cause for ethnic minority employees, some having had concerns in the past themselves. However, their main message was that these things aren’t as much of an obstacle as they might seem.

Alcohol

Isaac, one of the partners interviewed, doesn't drink for religious reasons. He acknowledged the worry that alcohol can present for ethnic minority employees. He admitted that it had initially been a concern for him and told stories about Muslim graduates he had known who had felt a lot of pressure to drink at work and felt extremely uncomfortable with the situation.

His advice to graduates that find themselves in such situations is that they need to be confident and stick by their personal choices. He argues that in reality, whether or not you get a job or get promoted is not going to depend on whether or not you drink alcohol.

Isaac, partner at a City law firm

"I don't drink alcohol. Has it been something which over the years I have been concerned about, the fact that it differentiates me and the fact that a lot of client events involve alcohol? As a junior lawyer it probably did, I was aware of it. It means that you can opt out of certain client events and social events, such as wine tasting...so that can be an issue.

"Every summer I mentor a cohort of students. I had this really bright Somalian lad. He was doing a placement at an American law firm and one at an English firm. I saw him after his first week at the US law firm and he was a bit worried because the placements tend to be social events as well, so most evenings the firms lay on activities for the students to do. He said he felt really out of place because a lot of the social events involved getting pissed, going to bars and having drinks – there was alcohol every night. No one had said anything but he felt like he was outside the circle just because he wasn't drinking as well. He told me about a Pakistani guy who was also on the placement with him, who also hadn't drunk before, but had started drinking that week – which is awful – as he felt under a lot of pressure. My guy asked me how I would have dealt with that. He really felt difficult about it, especially as the Pakistani guy had started drinking as well, he felt it put more pressure on him. I said at the end of the day it's just a job, it's just a career – you need to stay true to yourself. I said I'm sure any law firm would be really disappointed if they had felt they had made any of their students feel pressurised into doing something so fundamental. I said, whilst you may feel the pressure, and I'd be very surprised – most law firms that have any sense of decency will not want any of their people or prospective people to do anything against their will – I said that's how you need to view it. Whether you get that job just is never going to be down to whether you had that beer or not. He got through it, and he got offered the job in the end. He didn't drink, he got offered the job and he took it, and I'm sure he is going to do very well.

"The alcohol thing is important, but I think it's more about the individuals being confident with why they are not drinking and being proud of that. If it's for religious reasons you just have to say 'I'm a Muslim' – they just have to be confident about that. Over the years I have been asked by clients and people internally: 'So you're not having a drink then?' and I'd say: 'No, I don't drink'. Sometimes people will ask if it is for religious reasons, I say yes and then that's the end of the conversation. I've never felt under pressure."

Isaac revealed that his managers did once acknowledge that alcohol-focused events might not always be appropriate and organised an alternative which was gratefully received.

“I think one of the positive things is that people are generally now much, much more aware. As an example, back in 2008 I worked for this massive thing for a year to a year and a half. At the end of it there were twelve of us on the team and everyone went out for dinner and there was a big piss up. Because of another client thing I couldn't go out that night and I was stuck in the office. The next day one of the partners came in to see me and said he was very sorry I missed the night as in many ways I had been one of the key people involved in the deal. He said it had also occurred to him that it was probably a completely inappropriate thing as well as it had revolved around alcohol. That hadn't even occurred to me, but I told him I really appreciated him thinking about that. He said they had been thinking about what they could do that would be of more interest to me and he knows that I'm seriously into my cars, so he said the firm would pay for me and some of the people in my team to do a half day at a racing track. It was really nice, really nice. It was massively more expensive than a slap up meal and some booze, but it was the recognition that I'm not going to be that interested in a slap up meal and some booze. I think certainly my firm has become much better at things like that – the awareness of making sure we tailor social events so that they don't indirectly have the effect of alienating certain individuals or groups.”

A lack of social capital

When asked about the problems faced by ethnic minority graduates with a lack of social capital, the ethnic minority partners interviewed responded in similar ways. Their advice was that these activities are not as important as they might seem when it comes to moving up through the firm, and that graduates should be confident enough to ask questions about the activities they have little understanding of and to suggest alternatives.

Hannah, partner in a City law firm

“I think so much of it is about confidence. I wished I'd realised earlier on that I didn't need to just fit in with everybody else. I didn't come from a background at all where we went to the opera or did shooting or any of these things. I found it quite amusing when people were talking to say: 'I know nothing about it, tell me about it. How on earth do you get pleasure out of it?' 'Why do you sail?' Or rowing, people were always talking about rowing and I would just say: 'I don't get rowing. It's cold and you have to get up at the crack of dawn. Explain it to me.' I used to make a virtue out of being a complete dunce about these things.

“So rather than pretend that you know about sailing just be completely honest about it, say, 'this is something I know nothing about, tell me about it'. People want to share their experiences. They don't look down their noses and say 'What do you mean you know nothing about opera?' They genuinely

want to share their love of something so I think for me, realising that you don't actually have to conform all the time, and pretend that you've come from the same background, because otherwise you're not being yourself and you're not letting people get in to know you properly... People can guess if you're holding something back and you're being very private. It's about opening up to people and letting them see who you are...

"I think too often people make assumptions about who they are meant to be and therefore never show their real self so they never feel comfortable and then they decide that they are going to leave..."

"I think you go into the working world making these assumptions about what everyone is like and you're terrified of making the wrong move early on in your career. But in retrospect I realise that actually you can be yourself. As long as you're good at your job. If you're not good at your job then you can't really do anything. But as long as you're good at your job you can pretty much be what you want to be."

The three other partners reinforced this message by claiming that not taking part in events such as sailing or shooting will not affect your chances of getting a promotion. It was highlighted that not all white lawyers go along to these events.

In addition to this, it was suggested that showing an interest and getting involved with things outside of your comfort zone can be a good thing, but also, getting involved with the social committee and suggesting alternative options is also a real option that should be pursued.

"It's about contributing positively rather than just thinking 'I'm different so I'm going to opt out of all this.'"

"We do have a sailing club but that's something that is done as a global firm thing. I've never been on it and it's not like 'you haven't been sailing so you're not a part of the team', but if you want to do it it's there for you. We have football teams, hockey teams, netball. My sense is that there is something for everybody."
Laurence, partner in a City law firm

"I think that if you are a BME lawyer, actually recognising that as well as the firm having the responsibility to make sure that it welcomes all of its staff, I think we as individuals also have a responsibility to get involved as well. I went on a sailing trip two years ago. Absolutely bloody hated it. Really hated it. But I went. Sometimes you do things like that, not because you feel peer pressure, but actually because you recognise that that is the environment that you are working in. Some of it is about opting in..."

“When people say they are left out because they don’t ski or sail, I think when you drill down and look and see how many sailing and skiing events firms actually do – my firm does one a year – then you look at probably 600 white lawyers who haven’t gone along to it, so why do the 10 BME lawyers suddenly feel they are massively disadvantaged when compared to the 600 white lawyers that haven’t gone along to it?”
Isaac, partner at a City law firm

“If you are in a circumstance where all the social events are based on things you aren’t familiar with, it is about seizing the opportunity perhaps and joining the social committee so that you can suggest ‘why don’t we do x’. It’s about contributing positively rather than just thinking ‘I’m different so I’m going to opt out of all this’. It’s all part of my message which is to accept that you’re different and go in and use that. You can participate but you can make it so that people are moving onto your terms as well. Most of the time people have just never even thought about other options. It’s not that they wouldn’t take part, it’s just that if you do come from this background where every event involves drinks down the pub, that’s what you do. Just suggest a night out to the cinema with the group of people, go to see a play, or a book reading club. Something that’s different but also engaging for people. So you’re doing it on your terms. I think that’s the way that I would manage that sort of thing so that your difference is seen as a positive and not as something that’s a negative.” Hannah, partner at a City law firm

Rare recommends

For firms

1. Ensure there is an understanding amongst all employees that drinking alcohol should not be expected of anyone, nor should it be forced upon anyone.
2. Offer a range of social events that do not focus solely on alcohol.

For graduates

1. Be confident in your own personal and moral decisions in regard to alcohol.
2. Don’t put on a front. If you aren’t sure what an activity involves, ask questions about it. This will help you get involved in a natural way.
3. Get involved in organising social events so that you can suggest alternatives to the status quo.

Gender

Whilst speaking to the participants for this research piece about retention issues in relation to ethnic minority graduates, the subject of gender in relation to retention was mentioned a number of times without prompting.

Ethnic minority women see gender as a bigger problem than ethnicity

Whilst they identified the problems faced as an ethnic minority graduate at work, the female participants identified gender as presenting more significant problems and concerns.

Sexism

Sexism was explicitly mentioned by three of the women spoken to.

Tola, who works at a train company, told some shocking stories of the sexism she experiences at work. Her male colleagues comment on her appearance, make sexually suggestive comments about her and sometimes invade her personal space.

"A lot of the men just see you in a more sexual way and it's not quite right.

"This guy was meant to be helping me with something on the computer and he kept touching my leg. He kept making me squeeze past him to get to the mouse.

"There are two guys who are always commenting on my appearance: 'Hiya gorgeous, you look great'. It's so inappropriate. I've spoken to some of my other friends at other companies who say it wouldn't be allowed." Tola, graduate at a train company

Laura, who has a role with an engineering company, has experienced a similar level of sexist remarks.

"I went on a trip and was told: 'I'm taking you to distract them as a bit of eye candy.'" Laura, graduate civil engineer at an engineering company

The women who worked in the City did not mention such explicit instances of sexism; they mentioned more subtle instances.

Hannah, one of the female partners we interviewed, spoke about being underestimated simply because she was a woman. She admitted that she did think she had had to work harder than her white male colleagues as an ethnic minority woman. Tola echoed this view.

"No doubt I have probably had to perform at a higher level because of being a woman and being an ethnic minority than most of my white male contemporaries. But it's very hard to judge that, you just do what you do and you do it to the best of your ability."

I think sometimes as a woman people don't take you seriously enough. They can underestimate you in terms of your commitment and your drive, and I think sometimes they can think you will be more easily pushed over. I think you do have to work harder, show your commitment more, stand up to people. But equally you also have to do it in a sort of humorous and approachable way otherwise you get labelled as a bitch, or somebody who is overly aggressive. There's quite a lot of baggage you do carry I think just because of your sex or your ethnicity." Hannah, partner at a City law firm

Prina spoke about social events that were only open to men and the fact that these put her at a disadvantage in terms of building networks and mentor relationships.

"There are lots of things that go on if you're a boy, but don't go on if you're a girl. So the boys will play golf together. In one group the male partner will invite all of the male associates to play golf at his estate once a year. They play cricket once a year as well which all the boys take part in. There are also lots of team sports you can get involved in."

"If someone who is at my level is hanging out all day with a partner who is playing golf he's getting that one-on-one time to talk about his career needs, his career development etc. He is basically getting one-on-one time with someone who could potentially be a mentor. And where am I, I'm in the office, not getting that time." Prina, associate at a City law firm

Lack of role models

The female graduates also expressed concerns about there being a lack of women in senior roles. This lack of role models had the same effect as the lack of ethnic minority role models: it created suspicions about there being a glass ceiling.

“There are not many women leaders. A woman has not been made a partner in years. If you look at the people who run the firm, not many of them are women. When you look at the trainee split, I think it’s about 40% women at the trainee level, then when you go to the next levels, that percentage starts to drop massively. If you look at the lawyers who are about 7/8 years qualified you actually find that about 90% of them are men.” Prina, associate at a City law firm

“Being a woman makes it even more difficult, because if you do look at that population, if you look at how many are women – none of them are ethnic minority, and very few are women relative to the number of male MDs we have. It’s really difficult.” Olivia, assistant officer in an investment bank

“If there were a couple of partners who were women and had kids it’d be like ‘Wow, I’d like to be like her’. But we’re doing this stuff for the first time from our backgrounds so you don’t know how it’s going to go.” Jusna, trainee lawyer at a City law firm

When reflecting on the things that they thought had helped them succeed in getting to their current positions, Hannah and Bridget, the female ethnic minority partners we interviewed, made reference to having female role models to look up to.

“I was recruited for my first firm by a female partner who was a very well respected and high profile woman within the firm that I joined, which was probably even rarer those days. When I joined my current firm I joined where there were two female partners ahead of me. So I suppose I always had very good female role models around me.” Hannah, partner in a City law firm

“In fact there was a really fabulous female partner in the property group ... what she was doing was really powerful.” Bridget, partner in a City law firm

Having children

Whilst the graduates had strong feelings and suspicions about, but were not certain of, the reasons they thought there was a glass ceiling for ethnic minority employees, the female graduates interviewed were certain about the cause of the glass ceiling for female employees. They all identified the desire to have children and care for those children as the obstacle faced by women.

Having a child and wanting to look after that child was seen as something that would make it incredibly difficult, if not impossible, for a woman to continue progressing in her career.

“Whether white or from a minority background, all women say the same thing: society expects women to have children at a certain point, biological clock etc. It shapes the way they progress in the city. That’s the core, regardless of ethnicity.” Christina, trainee lawyer at a City law firm

The demanding nature of jobs in the City, both in law and finance, was identified as the reason having a child whilst trying to progress in one’s career was seen to be so difficult to do successfully.

“As a woman, not making any stereotypes, but inevitably you’ll want to cut back on working hours when you have children, if you want to have children. That’s something I would want to do and I just can’t see myself working in this industry because it’s just not feasible, it’s not manageable. I couldn’t do it. The hours I work now, no way would I be able to come in at 8am in the morning and leave at 8pm if I have kids.” Olivia, assistant officer in an investment bank

“Issues with family start before birth. My principal is pregnant with triplets. She gets tired and is already anticipating difficulty with having to leave at 7pm etc.” Selena, trainee lawyer at a City law firm

This obstacle was seen as insurmountable by Prina, who openly said she didn’t think she would have a future at her firm as she did want to have children.

“I think if you’re a woman who wants to not have kids, not get married, and you’re prepared to work all the hours, and you’re good enough, then you’ll make it. The problem is, there aren’t that many women like that out there. Most women want to have kids or get married and I think once you fall into that camp it’s much harder.

“It just makes it clear that I can’t advance in my firm. It’s not a place you can stay long term if you want to have those things. For me it just means there’s no career development, there’s no long term future. Unless you’re willing to make such sacrifices in your personal life.” Prina, associate at a City law firm

The female graduates were broadly aware that their firms were trying to introduce flexible working schemes to accommodate female employees who wanted to continue in their careers after having a child. However, a few of the graduates expressed the opinion that some flexible working arrangements resulted in women having their chances of progression reduced due to a lack of face-time in the office.

“Lots of female associates come back part time... how much is that their choice - that they came back and sort of drop out of the race?” Barbara, associate lawyer at a City law firm

“I don’t know how seriously you’d be taken if you worked three days a week. It’s not just about how good your work is, it’s about how much time you actually have to show off your skill set. Automatically, if you are working from home two days a week and come into the office one day a week, your face time with your colleagues has automatically fallen and there are other people there who are in the office five days a week.

That’s the hard reality of it unfortunately. If someone says you can work three days a week, with one day in the office, great, but I don’t know if you’d get to have that same level of impact. If somebody’s there five days a week in senior management’s faces then they make more impact.” Olivia, assistant officer in an investment bank

This demonstrates the significant challenge presented by the issue of gender to firms when considering retention rates, as despite there being schemes in place to accommodate the needs of working mothers, there still remains the worry that women making use of such schemes will be passed over for promotion.

Bridget, one of the female partners interviewed, mentioned that there was a chance she had put off having children until after she had made partner, revealing that some of the concerns expressed by the female graduates might have affected her choices also.

“I didn’t make a point of having a family before partnership and if you like jeopardising it before that. My pat answer is that I hadn’t met the right man at the time... What I don’t know is if subconsciously my thought was: ‘I want to see how far I can go in this organisation and I don’t want to jeopardise it before making partner’.” Bridget, partner at a City law firm

HR teams’ responses to the issue of retention rates by gender

Over half of the people interviewed about the response of HR teams to the issue of ethnic minority retention rates mentioned the issue of gender without being prompted.

Gender acknowledged as a significant challenge

Two of the firms that had not conducted data analysis to investigate ethnic minority retention rates had conducted analysis to investigate trends surrounding gender and retention, suggesting that gender is seen to be a more pressing issue.

“I think in many ways the gender issue is far more complex and difficult than the ethnicity issue is. It can be extremely difficult as around the time a woman is at the experience level to be considered for partnership that is around the time they are thinking about getting married and having children and thinking about their biological clock. Frankly no one should ever have to choose between the two. We

should be in the environment where people can to a degree balance having a successful career whilst at the same being a good wife, a good mother, a good father etc etc. I think there is still a big hurdle there in the gender issue.” Isaac, a partner at a City law firm

The problem of female retention rates was identified by one HR professional as potentially being a significant problem for her firm’s overall retention rates, as women made up the most part of its intake.

“We easily take more women at trainee level. The challenge is that they become senior associates and then sort of disappear between that stage and partnership. That’s the focus.

“There is clearly an issue for gender. It’s often to do with timings and expectations of the role.

“In your mid thirties you begin to think you better get on to have some children, but that is just as the career moment is coming to partnership. I think that means quite a lot of women leave earlier as they can’t see the career working with a family. That’s a challenge for us as if at recruitment stage 60% of all the best people are women, and you’re losing all your women, then you’re losing all your best people. Or they tend to step off the escalator and because of the pyramid structure there are always more people coming through. So the focus is on realising that just because you’ve stopped for a few years that doesn’t mean you’ve become incapable of coming back and doing what we thought you had the chance to do before.

We have to address being more flexible with timings and expectations for people.” Susan, a recruitment partner at a City law firm

Mentoring and development programmes

As well as the option of flexible working programmes, which involve working part time and having the option to work from home, some firms had set up development programmes to tackle the problem of female retention rates.

“Gender is another area my firm is quite heavily focused on – looking at areas of gender and making sure women are given more of a chance to make it through to partnership and given more support. There is a dedicated programme that has just been started for women who might go for partnership in the future.”

Isaac, partner in a City law firm

Cultural differences

Whilst gender was identified by both the female graduates and some of the HR professionals as a more challenging problem than ethnicity, our findings suggested that ethnicity can exacerbate the problems faced by women in regards to retention.

Culture and its effects on ethnic minority women

Some of the female graduates interviewed revealed that they felt being an ethnic minority woman could be more of a challenge than being a white woman when it comes to career progression. They explained that certain cultural values and expectations meant that some ethnic minority women felt under pressure to have children earlier than their white colleagues.

“Muslim women think about marriage and kids from their 20s. The majority of other trainees think about it in their late 20s or 30s. If I talk to people at my level about wanting to have kids now, they look at me like I’m from a different planet. They say: ‘Why are you talking about kids now? We have so much to achieve!’” Jusna, trainee lawyer at a City law firm

In some cases, the individual is well aware of their family expectations from the very beginning of their career.

“In some families careers are a priority. In mine, family is the priority; getting married and having children is more important than having a good job. As much as people don’t like admitting that, a lot of the time the expectations of your family do have an effect. Even if you think it won’t have an effect and you say: ‘I’m going to be different’, subconsciously it might be something that you always have to carry around with you. I don’t think there should be a timeline, but it affects me as I know that however well I’m doing in my career my family won’t recognise it because they will think I have failed in other areas.” Christina, trainee lawyer in the City

Culture and its effects on ethnic minority men

These cultural expectations do not apply only to women. Some men from ethnic minority backgrounds also have strong views on what they want their family life to look like and this can present an issue if they are working a very demanding job.

Trevor identified the lack of ethnic minority individuals in senior roles in his firm as a reason he was not sure that there was a fair chance of advancement within the firm. However, he was not sure if this underrepresentation was due to something the firm did specifically in relation to ethnic minority employees, or if it was a result of the values the ethnic minority employees held. He spoke about the pressure he was already receiving from his family about the hours he worked, and how he thought that might affect his chances of staying in his current role in the future.

Trevor, associate at a City law firm

“...There are not many ethnic minority individuals at the top of the tree, but I’m not sure if that’s because the firm isn’t accommodating or whether it’s because people have their own cultural values.

“For example, for Muslims, it’s very unlikely that a Muslim brought up with Muslim parents, or Pakistani parents or Indian parents, will want to stay in this job because family values mean so much.

So for example, I've been brought up with serious family values and my family already get quite angry that I'm always away - I very rarely make family events. And actually that pressure is massive and if I do have children I could not be the kind of parent that leaves them in day care. I would want to be there at 6pm, before they go to bed. I would want me and my wife to find some sort of arrangement for us to be the sole carers of our children.

"I've not figured out if it's a firm thing or whether it's a cultural thing for ethnic minority employees. There's no real evidence to say that it is a firm thing, but the figures don't lie, there are very few women and very few ethnic minorities at the top of the tree. But maybe that comes down to a cultural thing because for any partner - man, white, black, brown - you have to work very hard and you have to sacrifice a lot of your life. I think it probably comes down to the fact that a lot of women don't want to sacrifice that part of their life. They do want to be mothers and they do want to be a part of their children's lives and not have to put them straight into day care. And ethnic minorities do have different priorities in life other than working their socks off."

The cultural expectations extend beyond having and caring for children. Isaac spoke of a graduate he knew who was about to qualify, but wasn't sure if he would be able to continue on in his job due to family commitments.

Isaac, partner at a City law firm

"I think being from BME backgrounds people tend to have different approaches to their life plans which can have an effect on retention rates. For example, one of the guys I mentor at my firm is an Indian guy who is qualifying in September. He's very bright, a lovely guy. I went out for a coffee with him and we were speaking about his plans for once he had qualified. He was grappling with the question of whether he wanted to stay on with the firm or not, which was a surprise to me... I asked him why. He's an Indian guy from the Midlands and he's the eldest son. He always knew that it was his parents' desire to live with him when they got older, and it is his desire as well. His parents have always lived in the Midlands, so they will not want to move down to London. For this reason, he has always known that he will have to leave London to take care of his parents. So the thing he was grappling with was whether he should stay at the firm to get some experience and then move away, or if he should move away on qualifying having the benefit of a training contract.

"It is interesting as I think it is a very good example of where retention is being very clearly affected by someone's cultural background - it has nothing to do with the firm."

Rare recommends

1. Ensure there is a zero tolerance policy towards sexism.
2. Offer flexible working options to all parents, men and women.
3. Create a clear set of expectations and give people the option to meet these expectations while working flexibly.
4. Provide mentoring and development programmes targeted at women who wish to advance within the firm.

Summary of recommendations

Recommendations for firms

1. Make sure your promotion process is fair by collecting data and checking the trends for ethnic minority employees when compared to white employees.
2. If your data analysis reveals that your process is fair, be sure to let everyone know this.
3. If your data analysis reveals that your process could be fairer, acknowledge this and do something to tackle the problem that is clear for all to see. If you set up a programme, involve managers to ensure the programme is properly supported.
4. Make your promotion process clear to all employees.
5. Set up a formal mentoring programme to help level the playing field.
6. Hold events and talks that address cultural and religious differences to ensure everyone within the firm learns, appreciates and understands the effects such differences can have as well as recognising the benefits of such diversity for the firm, both culturally and in terms of business.
7. Ensure there is an understanding amongst all employees that drinking alcohol should not be expected of anyone, nor should it be forced upon people.
8. Offer a range of social events that do not focus solely on alcohol
9. Ensure there is a zero tolerance policy towards sexism.
10. Offer flexible working options to all parents, men and women.
11. Create a clear set of expectations and give people the option to meet these expectations while working flexibly.
12. Provide mentoring and development programmes targeted at women who wish to advance within the firm.

Recommendations for ethnic minority graduate employees

1. Do not self-select out of the process. Have confidence in your ability to do your job well.
2. Be proactive about seeking advice on your career.
3. Be confident in your own personal and moral decisions.
4. Be yourself. Don't put on a front. If you are unsure what something is, ask questions about it. There is no shame in not knowing something and in fact, asking questions can make you appear more enthusiastic and interested in things. This will help you feel more comfortable, natural and involved in professional and social situations.
5. Be part of the planning and organising of social events at your firm.



Appendices

Ethnicity

Three law firms provided data on their 2003 – 2007 trainee intakes. The data included details of the ethnicity, gender, joining date and leaving date, if applicable, of each trainee. The combined dataset consisted of 1214 records.

Retention rates for the first four years

Headcount (all intakes of 2003 - 2007)					
White			BME		
Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
497	519	1016	86	112	198

Stayed 1 year or more					
White			BME		
Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
496	517	1013	86	112	198
100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Stayed 2 years or more					
White			BME		
Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
452	450	902	76	104	180
91%	87%	89%	88%	93%	91%

Stayed 3 years or more					
White			BME		
Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
408	394	802	75	99	174
82%	76%	79%	87%	88%	88%

Stayed 4 years or more					
White			BME		
Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
339	320	659	49	70	119
68%	62%	65%	57%	63%	60%

What percentage of graduates stayed for five years or more?

The data for all of the intakes of 2003 – 2006 and the spring intakes of 2007 was analysed to find the percentage of graduates that stayed with the firm for 5 years or more. This involved a total of 1077 records.

Headcount (all intakes of 2003 - 2006, Spring intakes of 2007)					
White			BME		
Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
434	471	905	74	98	172

Stayed 5 years or more					
White			BME		
Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
234	236	470	34	50	84
54%	50%	52%	46%	51%	49%

What percentage of graduates remains for 6 years or more?

The data for all of the intakes of 2003 – 2005 and the spring intakes of 2006 was analysed to find the percentage of graduates that stayed with the firm for over 6 years. This involved 816 records.

Headcount (all intakes of 2003 - 2005, Spring intakes of 2006)					
White			BME		
Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
332	356	688	58	70	128

Stayed 6 years or more					
White			BME		
Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
149	130	279	23	28	51
45%	37%	41%	40%	40%	40%

Gender

The data for the intakes of 2003 – 2007 was also analysed to identify retention rates by gender. 1422 records were analysed.

Retention rates for the first four years

Headcount (all intakes of 2003 - 2007)		
Male	Female	Total
692	730	1422

Stayed 1 year or more		
Male	Female	Total
681	716	1397
98%	98%	98%

Stayed 2 years or more		
Male	Female	Total
616	633	1249
89%	87%	88%

Stayed 3 years or more		
Male	Female	Total
538	547	1085
78%	75%	76%

Stayed 4 years or more		
Male	Female	Total
444	443	887
64%	61%	62%

What percentage of graduates stayed with the firm for 5 years or more?

The data for all of the intakes of 2003 – 2006 and the spring intakes of 2007 was analysed to investigate the percentage of graduates that stayed with the firm for 5 years or more. 1265 records were analysed.

Headcount (all intakes of 2003 - 2006, Feb intake of 2007)			Stayed 5 years or more		
Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
606	659	1265	311	328	639
			51%	50%	51%

What percentage of graduates stayed with the firm for 6 years or more?

The data for all of the intakes of 2003- 2005 and the spring intakes of 2006 was analysed to investigate the percentage of graduates that stayed with the firm for 6 years or more. 967 records were analysed.

Headcount (all intakes of 2003 - 2005, Feb intake of 2006)			Stayed 6 years or more		
Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
473	494	967	201	192	393
			42%	39%	41%

About the Authors



Naomi Kellman

Naomi Kellman graduated in 2011 with a first-class degree in Philosophy, Politics and Economics from the University of Oxford. In her second year at Oxford, she was the Vice President and Secretary of the Oxford African and Caribbean Society.

Naomi was the Research and Programme Coordinator at Rare from September 2011 – September 2012. In 2011 Naomi completed Rare's research report, *Class, Race and Graduate Recruitment: Best Practices*, and wrote an article based on the findings for The Guardian website. She was also the coordinator of *Target Oxbridge*, a programme focused on helping high achieving black students from state schools maximise their chances of getting into Oxbridge, which received attention from the Times Education Supplement.

During the summer of 2010, Naomi completed an internship at the Department for Education working on government education policy. She subsequently gained a place on the Civil Service Fast Stream, having completed the Intensive Coaching Programme run by Rare. She took up her position with the Civil Service Fast Stream at the Department for Education in October 2012.



Raphael Mokades

Raphael Mokades founded Rare in 2005, on his own, with no previous recruitment experience, no candidates, no clients, and a desk in someone else's office. He has been the company's Managing Director ever since. Rare now works with some of the UK's most prestigious companies, has over 2,500 candidates on its books, and employs sixteen people.

Prior to starting Rare, Raphael was in charge of diversity at Pearson, the international media company which owns the FT. Pearson won two Race for Opportunity awards during this time.

Raphael has a First class degree from Oxford University. He represented Oxford at basketball, served as his College's JCR President, and organized the biggest ball Oxford has ever seen.

Raphael is a non-executive Director of Hubbub, the local online food delivery service.

Raphael has written on business, sport and social issues for the Guardian, Times and Financial Times. He has co-authored five Rare research reports: *Recruiting Arabic-Speaking Graduates* (2009); *High Achieving Black Students: A Portrait* (2009); *What Top Ethnic Minority Students Want* (2010); *Class, Race and Recruitment: Best Practices* (2011); and *Five Years On* (2012). He also is the author of *Three Steps to Success* (2011), published by Profile Books.

About Rare

Rare is an award-winning specialist diversity recruitment company with expertise in graduate recruitment and development.

The company has in excess of 2,500 candidates on its books, of whom almost 900 are current students attending 40 universities, including Oxbridge. Of Rare's database, 93% have the equivalent of AAB at A Level or better with 73% having AAA or better, 50% are female and 12% are at Oxbridge.

Rare offers a bespoke service to students from diverse backgrounds, working closely with them to assess their strengths, weaknesses and motivations, and assisting them in identifying their target industries and organisations. Support is offered throughout the application process and beyond using an extensive range of guides, programmes, seminars and one-on-one training and development sessions.

Awards

- Highly Commended at Business in the Community's RfO Awards 2012.
- Black Solicitors Network's UK Diversity Legal Award 2012
- Reach Society Award 2012

Website: www.rarerecruitment.co.uk

Twitter: @Rare_London




About Barclays

Barclays is a major global financial services provider engaged in personal banking, credit cards, corporate and investment banking and wealth and investment management with an extensive international presence in Europe, the Americas, Africa and Asia.

With over 300 years' experience, Barclays are experts when it comes to understanding customers' needs. As well as helping millions across the globe with their finances, Barclays also employs over 140,000 people globally, with 34,000 in Retail and Business Banking in the UK (UKRBB).

Barclays culture emphasises teamwork and a collaborative approach, recognising and rewarding talent and innovation, rather than position and tenure.

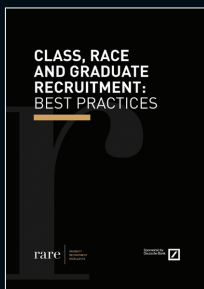
Realising employees' potential through continuous personal and career development is key to the way Barclays does business.



For those starting out their career, there are opportunities to get involved in internships, graduate schemes or MBA programmes, as well as benefiting from structured career progression plans, job rotations and international work placements.

Barclays also encourages mentoring within the business. Skills-sharing across the global organisation is actively promoted and many colleagues benefit from being part of a structured and rewarding mentoring programme.

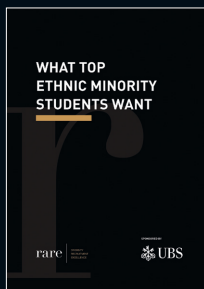
Previous Publications



Class, Race and Graduate Recruitment: Best Practices

December 2011

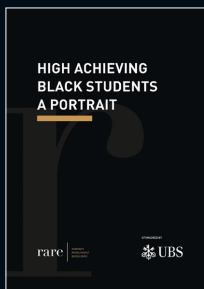
Rare's most ambitious research to date into the success of candidates from different socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds. The research looks at different stages of the recruitment process and combines qualitative and quantitative data to produce a list of recommendations to ensure fairness throughout the entire process.



What Top Ethnic Minority Students Want

December 2010

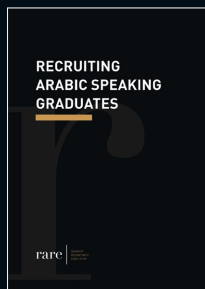
Unique research into the factors influencing the career choices made by high-achieving young people from ethnic minority backgrounds. This research – a corollary of 'High Achieving Black Students' – leverages information gathered by Rare's proprietary 'What Makes You Tick?' questionnaire.



High Achieving Black Students: A Portrait

December 2009

A rare examination of the lives of elite black students and the factors contributing to their academic success. A series of in-depth candidate interviews lead to recommendations for companies to better understand and connect with this demographic on career-related issues.



Recruiting Arabic Speaking Graduates

January 2009

Rare's first independent research piece. This research looks at native and non-native Arabic-speaking students and how best companies can develop and support these students as they enter the world of work.

About Rare

Rare is a specialist diversity recruitment company with expertise in graduate recruitment and development.

Rare connects exceptional people from diverse backgrounds with great careers in top organisations.

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DIVERSITY
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