

D&I in tech recruitment

The tech talent
businesses that are
walking the talk



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Introduction

Every year the Tech Talent Charter (TTC) runs one of the UK's largest and broadest diversity and inclusion (D&I) surveys. The survey covers companies' hard diversity data as well as the internal strategies, tactics and ideas they are using to improve diversity in tech. Armed with the information from hundreds of companies ranging over 70 sectors, and covering over 210,000 tech employees, TTC produces the latest insights for tech and HR leaders on how to improve diversity, inclusion and talent supply for tech jobs. But have a conversation with any tech hiring manager or HR leader and they will tell you that there is a crucial area of the tech talent pipeline that needs just as much scrutiny when it comes to D&I: tech recruitment agencies.

Recruitment agencies form a key part of the talent supply chain, and with the shortage of tech workers on the market, they play a vital role in helping companies meet their growth goals. However, finding recruiters whose D&I approach aligns with their own is a challenge many employers face.

Diversity metrics have been reported to be part of around half the SLAs clients are presenting to recruiters so it's important that recruiters (and employers) are recognising this direction of travel and preparing to deliver a diverse pipeline of tech talent to align with internal and external D&I goals.

TTC embraces the role that talent businesses play in solving the diversity in tech problem, and we have many recruitment organisations in our Signatory base. So in our last survey we included an additional set of questions specifically for these companies. Our aim was to find out what third-party talent suppliers are doing to improve diversity in tech for their clients and share these leading organisations and their approaches.

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“Our 2022 target was 40% diverse placements - we were at 39.5% [part way through the year]. We have a target of 50% diverse placements through SR2 by 2025.”

- SR2: Socially Responsible Recruitment

Tracking gender diversity amongst tech role candidates

Over half of recruitment agencies are tracking gender diversity amongst tech role candidates, but a specific group is lagging behind

26 recruitment suppliers responded to our call for data and, in total, these 26 organisations had sourced and put forward 118,799 candidates for tech roles in the 12 month period leading up to the survey. Overall, we saw that around 3 in 5 recruitment businesses (58%) are tracking gender diversity information amongst their tech candidates. This proportion was higher in recruitment agencies who worked with fewer than 1000 candidates, with 80% of agencies in this category tracking gender. Similarly, at the top end of the scale, a small but mighty group of recruitment businesses putting forward more than 10,000 candidates a year were also tracking gender diversity.



However, amongst medium size tech recruiters (working with candidate pools of 1,000-10,000 candidates), measuring diversity of tech candidates was low, with only a fifth of recruiters in this bracket minding their gender data.

We wanted to understand whether the companies who were not collecting diversity data at the time had any intention of doing so in the future so we asked whether they intended to collect gender data in the future. Just a quarter of those currently not collecting gender data had plans to do so in future.



“We supported a TTC Signatory to drive gender and ethnic diversity as part of a restructure of their IT department. In a period of high hiring activity, this increased the number of females holding management positions from 1 to 5 heads. Overall, the percentage of females in the team went from 18% to 23%. Ethnic diversity in the team also increased by 3%.”

- Kinetech Recruitment Limited

What other diversity characteristics are recruitment agencies measuring?

Whilst gender diversity in tech is widely regarded as one of the most significant diversity problems, employers have shown growing interest in improving other lenses of diversity, especially ethnic diversity, disability and neurodivergence. They are also considering how these lenses intersect with one another in unique ways. For example we are hearing more companies explore neurodivergence, or ethnicity, in relation to women. We asked recruiters which other lenses of diversity they would be able to measure to support their clients' wider diversity concerns.





“Patchwork Hub has run multiple Patchworker Partner Placement campaigns, a more bespoke recruitment campaign where we work with employers to take positive action to recruit disabled candidates into particular vacancies. These campaigns involve much closer work with specific employers, both around the job post we work to fill, but also to enact a wider change and learning in their approach to disability and accessibility in the workplace. For this initiative, we create an end-to-end inclusive recruitment campaign on behalf of the employer. This not only lowers barriers for candidates for the vacancy in question, but creates a best practice template for employers to learn from and implement in their wider recruitment campaigns. As part of these efforts, we have also worked with employers to more broadly improve their disability awareness and accessibility, beyond the specific recruitment campaign in question. This has included getting them certified as a Disability Confident employer and helping with a range of internal conversations. This has ranged from easy-to-implement changes such as offering alternative formats for job applications and including accessibility statements in adverts to broader discussions around disability awareness, running workshops around disability and accessibility in the workplace and teach-ins around invisible disabilities. This means that our Patchworker Partner Placements leave a lasting legacy with the employers we work with, beyond the benefits of the individual recruitment campaign. Through the advice and support we offer, we help employers begin on their journey towards centring accessibility and inclusiveness in their recruitment and employment practices.”

- Patchwork Hub

Just under a quarter of recruiters said they would be able to measure ethnic diversity, one in five looked to measure disability and one in six could measure age and religion. Coming in at the very bottom of the priority list were sexual orientation, neurodivergence and socio-economic background, with just a handful of organisations planning to track these diversity characteristics between them. In fact, only one recruitment organisation reported that they would be able to provide measurement of all eight diversity lenses.



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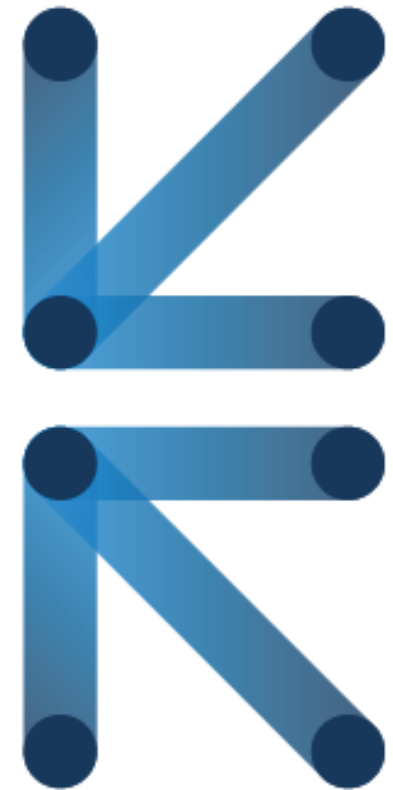
“This year we have introduced a new DE&I monitoring system, so we will be able to report on all protected characteristics next year for those who choose to complete our optional diversity form.”

- Hamilton Forth

And the bottom line: how good is gender diversity in the recruitment process?

Ultimately, TTC surveys recruiters to understand how well they are serving tech employers with diverse and qualified tech talent. Thanks to the survey, we are able to get a sense of how mature diversity measurement is amongst participating recruiters and how successful they are at delivering diverse tech talent.

We asked recruiters to report on gender diversity for their tech candidate pool, and the gender diversity of the candidates who were successfully placed from the previous 12 months. We found that women comprise a lower proportion of the candidate pool recruiters are working with, than they do tech roles across industry. This highlights the vital importance of all tech businesses - both recruiters and employers alike - investing in new tech skills initiatives. It's fantastic to see that amongst Signatories, gender diversity in tech roles is at 28%, but compared to a candidate pool that is 19% gender minorities, this is not sustainable unless there is a concerted effort from all areas in the tech ecosystem to create new pathways into tech.



When they do appear in recruitment processes though, gender diversity does show some promising signs. Though they make up only 19% of the candidate pool, gender minority candidates made up 21% of the successful tech placements.

They also secured their tech role in 26% of the hiring processes in which they took part, compared to 22% amongst the male majority. With a four point increase in success rates, it's clear that female technologists amongst our sample are doing well in their hiring processes, when they get there.

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What are recruiters doing to improve D&I in tech?

With the case for diversity well-documented and a clear commercial benefit to suppliers that source and place more diverse tech talent, it's down to recruiters to work out how to get the job done. We asked the recruiters who were leading the charge with diversity data what strategies they were using to improve diversity and inclusion for their clients and the wider tech ecosystem.

They reported:

- Re-writing job descriptions to be gender neutral.
- Encouraging employers to refine role requirements to avoid excluding qualified candidates e.g. removing requirements for a specific degree and classification unless this is truly necessary.
- Advertising roles on forums that promote flexible working, targeting women and women returners e.g. Facebook groups, specific job boards.
- Encouraging employers to offer tech roles that are 100% remote.
- Encouraging employers to offer part-time, flexible hours & job sharing for all tech roles.
- Encouraging employers to offer tech roles with uncapped annual leave, to enable people to juggle seasonal commitments like school holidays.
- Providing a client-focused D&I manager who offers D&I coaching to employers.



“We have tracked data over the past 4 years regarding Gender placements and have re-written job descriptions to be gender neutral. We encourage employers to consider their requirements to hire and provide consultancy on how to identify and attract the best diverse candidates in the market.”

- Morgan Philips Executive Search

Take inclusive recruitment further

Working with our Signatories TTC has identified further ways that recruiters and recruitment organisations can diversify the candidate pool they supply to clients.

- Ensure the criteria is essential - the more desirable criteria you add, the more this limits diversity.
- Ask candidates if they require adjustments and ensure available adjustments are offered to all candidates, so that individuals do not have to disclose more than others to access them.
- Challenge clients who want a candidate based on culture fit, and instead help them assess “values fit”.
- Leverage the client’s employee resource groups or employee networks to spread news of roles to communities which may be underrepresented.
- Partner with bootcamps and training providers that teach technical skills.
- Encourage transparency around salary brackets and negotiation expectations.



Thank you to all the recruitment agencies who contributed to this report

With a special thanks to Kinetech Recruitment Limited, SR2 - Socially Responsible Recruitment, Patchwork Hub, Hamilton Forth and Morgan Philips Executive Search who reported not only strong D&I results but also shared rich and insightful practices that are quoted in this report.

