



Equality Hub

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John Penrose MP  
Email: [matthewf.smith@parliament.uk](mailto:matthewf.smith@parliament.uk)

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Dear John,

**RE: INCLUSIVE BRITAIN AND ADVANCING FAIRNESS IN THE WORKPLACE**

Thank you for your letter of 4 May regarding advancing fairness in the workplace and highlighting the parallels in your report: *Poverty Trapped: Why Is Poverty Still With Us After 70 Years Of The Welfare State?* I am replying as the Minister of Equalities.

First, I would like to commend you on your report. I have noted the findings and alignment with *Inclusive Britain* - the Government's response to the findings from the independent Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, published on 31 March 2021.

As you are aware, advancing fairness in the workplace is a key priority for this government. We have made it clear that everyone should be treated fairly in the workplace so that they can thrive and reach their full potential. We recognise that employers stand the best chance of achieving this when they focus their efforts on effective actions which have a proven track record of improving diversity and inclusion. That is why we have taken on board the Commission's recommendation to bring together academics and practitioners who are experts in this field to create the Inclusion at Work Panel. This is one of the actions set out in *Inclusive Britain*.

The Panel will look at the evidence to develop resources and approaches based on what actually works and provide resources to help employers target their efforts in creating more inclusive workplaces. The evidence shows that the best workplaces are those where diversity of thought and experience are celebrated and where individuals are not worried about being disadvantaged because of their backgrounds. Our guidance will help employers to foster this kind of work environment.



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This government also shares your reservations about the merits of some diversity training. I was deeply concerned when I saw the findings of the review of the evidence on unconscious bias that showed it is ineffective in improving representation of underrepresented groups and that there is emerging evidence of unintended negative consequences. That is why I fully supported my ministerial colleague's decision to remove the mandatory training from the Civil Service curriculum. We believe it is important for employers to focus their energy and resources on actions which are proven to make a positive difference.

With regards to the Inclusion Confident Scheme that you note is referenced in *Inclusive Britain*, we will explore models such as the Disability Confident Employer Scheme which help organisations to improve the way they recruit, retain and develop disabled employees. To replicate this success, we will use evidence developed by the Inclusion at Work Panel and working with businesses, civil society and academia to develop an evidence-based framework employers can use to create more inclusive workplaces.

As part of our stakeholder engagement, the Panel will seek the insights of key organisations to help shape delivery of the scheme and would therefore welcome a discussion with the British Standards Institute. Thank you for sharing contact details for their Head of Industry and Government Engagement – my officials will take this forward.

Yours sincerely,

**KEMI BADENOCH MP**  
Minister of State for Equalities and Levelling Up Communities