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Evidence Based Practice Report

Introduction

Originating in the medical sector and swiftly being adopted by Human Resource Professionals, Evidence Based Practice (EBP) is based on the idea of critically weighing up multiple sources of data, ideas and fact in order to form a comprehensive decision. The evidence can come from a range of stakeholders such as 'local organisation, experienced professionals' (Young, 2023) and others relevant or involved in the decision. However, it is important to be wary of potential bias or the integrity of the evidence provided in order to ensure you make the most satisfactory decision. There are many different approaches to evidence-based practice that can aid in providing insight into sound decision making within a business.

AC 1.1

The significance of the concept of evidence-based practice can be highlighted using the 6 A method. The 6 A method consists of 6 steps which involves asking, where one will identify issues to form an answerable question, acquiring, this process helps to facilitate objective awareness and encourages professionals to analyse the question and begin deeper research into multiple sources, aggregating, where one will evaluate and collate the research into summarised findings, applying, where one will intertwine the findings within the decision making process and lastly, assessing, where one will analyse the decision made and the outcomes it may have (Young, 2023).

However, this model can only be most effective if the research and findings that are aggregated are from reliable sources. There are 4 main sources (Young, 2023) that should be used when using EBP in order to ensure the highest credibility of the final decision. A mix of qualitative and quantitative data that can take the shape of any of the following: scientific data such as research papers, organisational data such as sickness absence data, professional expertise from experienced individuals both internally and externally and business stakeholder evidence.

When making business decisions such as evaluating whether monetary bonus are effective when it comes to increasing employee performances, considering using EBP can be seen as extremely important due to the many benefits of this practice, such as a decrease in both unconscious and conscious bias that may be present in an individual decision maker. As stated by Rob Briner (Briner, 2015), evidence-based practice ensures that professionals seek deeper answers to the questions instead of just making decisions based on the idea the professional 'just knows' the outcome will happen a certain way. EBP also aims to encourage professionals to make better informed decisions in favour of aiding in the production of the ideal outcome wanted by promoting the use of rational decision making due to the necessity of the variety of sources and information required by the practice.

On the contrary to this, the outcome of the decision is only likely to be as effective as the sources and credibility of the evidence as stated before. If a professional is only seeking and aggregative 'evidence' that leads to their favoured decision, this is destroying the idea and message EBP is trying to instil into professionals and HR as a whole of making better informed decisions.

AC 1.2

Analysis tools are often applied in organisations, and were thought to be first referenced in '1967' (Morrison, 2022), in order to help recognise and diagnose issues, challenges and opportunities. An example of an analysis tool is PESTLE. PESTLE is used to highlight external and internal factors that may implicate a decision or decision making process. PESTLE can be broken down into 6 main categories: Political, Economic, Social, Technology/Technological, Legal and Environmental. Each category is used to record the benefits and implications that particular categories have in order to influence and shape decisions.

There are obviously many benefits and drawbacks of choosing to incorporate PESTLE analysis into decision making processes within an organisation. One of the most important benefits it's the commonality and 'simplicity' (Battista, 2023) of PESTLE, this means that the method is inclusive and can be used by a variety of professionals/stakeholders, leading to a broader scope of understanding of potential implications that a decision may have. On the other hand, although the model is simplistic and relatively easy to grasp, it only offers one side of the picture by analysing at a macro level, leaving room for 'assumptions to slip in' (Battista, 2023).

Despite this, PESTLE analysis does allow organisations to become anticipate and future 'threats' (SHTAL et al., 2018), giving room for an organisation to mitigate these and limit or prevent their impacts. Although, due to the rapid nature of change within business environments, even if this analysis is completed regularly, it is unlikely to predict changes that may impact business in the future. An example of this would be the COVID-19 outbreak, which drastically changed and shaped the working environment and how organisations are lead, creating a whole new need for 'responsible leadership' (Hailey et al., 2022) within organisations.

Following on from this, as well as analysis methods, organisations also user analysis tools such as organisational benchmarking. Benchmarking involves judging ones organisational performance via 'comparisons with outside organisations' (Tucker et al., 2014) and can be done for a variety of different topics such as employee salaries. Compensation benchmarking is the 'process of collating external information on pay packages outside of your organisation' (Fields, 2022). Extremely important in the current cost of living financial crisis in the UK, this allows organisations to create competitive salaries that both attract and retain employees as well as meeting compliance laws. This in turn can reduce hiring/ recruitment costs and potentially encourage higher productivity rates within current employees.

Benchmarking as a whole has its positives and negatives. Where benchmarking allows organisations opportunities such as the ability increase their competitive advantage and improve customer satisfaction, it also allows for organisations to imitate other organisations without the full consideration of their own 'strengths, weaknesses and uniqueness' (LinkedIn , 2023(a)), which creates risk. Despite this, when used effectively, benchmarking can highlight 'organisational achievements' (Perez, 2015) and limitations giving scope for improvements or celebrations that can take place within an organisation, however, to conduct benchmarking can be extremely costly in terms of resources, time and funds. Time spent on benchmarking can reduce time spent 'unique strategy choice' (Martin, 2023) and result in your organisation becoming part of the status- quo.

AC 1.3

Critical thinking can be described as 'the art of making clear, reasoned judgements based on interpreting, understanding, applying and synthesising evidence gathered from observation, reading and experimentation.' (University of Edinburgh, 1970).

The main principles of critical include and revolve heavily on the basis of clear and logical reasoning, objective analysis, open-mindedness and scepticism. These principles allow one to determine whether a statement is true or false, as it encourages the use of logic over any other cognitive function.

Within people practice, human resource professionals must be sure to use evidence-based practise when making decisions. This includes being critical to determine whether all the sources of information have validity to prevent us corrupting 'our thinking' (Shiroma, 2022) with external

factors such as unconscious bias or cultural fads, such as a growing desire to work from home, impacting decision making as little as possible so that the outcome is as fair as it can possibly be.

AC 1.4

There are a multitude of decision-making processes that can be applied to situations to ensure effective outcomes are achieved. Starting with De Bonos Thinking Hats, which was developed by Edward De Bono in 1985 and involves 6 different 'hats' that the process user/s are encouraged to 'wear' in order to enable them to think from different perspectives. The process is designed to be a 'simple, effective parallel thinking process' (De Bono Group, 2023).

- The 6 different coloured hats include:
- White hat: Information. For the white hat wearer, the facts and data are called for.
- Red hat: Emotions. For the red hat wearer, feelings and intuition are encouraged to be expressed.
- Black hat: Critical Judgement. For the black hat wearer, the ability to criticise and find difficulties/problems that may cause obstacles.
- Yellow hat: Optimism. For the yellow hat wearer, it is important to explore the positives and how they may add value and benefit to a decision.
- Green hat: Creativity. For the green hat wearer, users must explore the possibilities of new ideas and perceptions.
- Blue hat: Control. For the blue hat wearer, controlling and ensuring that the thinking hat guidelines are adhered too is the aim.

Using De Bonos Hat encourages users to explore a diverse range of perspectives within a structured framework in order to come up with more informed decisions.

Another decision-making process is Plan-Do-Check-Act or PDCA. The process was 'pioneered by Dr William Deming' (Mind Tools Content Team, 2023) in the 1950s and is most commonly used for continuous improvement. Again, broken up into stages, each stage of PDCA signifies a different step.

- Plan: The first stage of the method involves identifying issues and being able to understand any threats and opportunities, this can then be used to strategize and create potential solutions to these. In this stage it is important to explore all the information fully to enable later referral to this at a later stage.
- Do: The second stage is where any solutions discovered in the plan stage are applied in small-scale test groups. This usually shows any flaws or issues the solution/decision may have but on a less disruptive minimal scale. It is still important to gather data and statistics at this point so they can be analysed later.
- Check: In this step, the small-scale project implementation is analysed with the success scored against the criteria developed in step 1. This stage is where you evaluate if the solution is working as it should, if not, then going back to the planning stage is a must.
- Act: Finally, this is where you implement the solution at a wider scale, reverting back to

the planning stage to continually improve and build upon the current solution to make it even more effective

As this PDCA method is cyclical, it means this method can continually operate to implement change effectively such as implementing a new HR system or deciding to outsource payroll to an external company.

Lastly, stakeholder analysis 'is the process of identifying an organisation's stakeholders and their interests, assessing their influence, or how they are impacted by the organisation'(CMI, 2022) in order to formulate effective strategies to maintain relationships with them.

There are multiple stages to this method, however, the main ones are briefly described as follows:

- Identifying: This is where you identify the different groups and types of stakeholder that an organisation may impact. For example, identifying primary stakeholder groups such as employees and investors or secondary stakeholders like local governing bodies and inspectors.
- Analysis: Once you have identified and mapped your different groups of stakeholders, it is important to grasp the variety of needs. It is important to base this on the level of importance each group has. This stage allows for prioritization of specific group needs over others.
- Engagement: This stage focuses on how to engage stakeholders by managing and meeting their expectations and needs. Involving specific stakeholders like employees in decision making, ensuring they have a voice within the organisation is an example of how this theory can be implemented easily.

AC 1.5

Ethics can be defined as the concept of making judgements and decisions on the right course of action (Armstrong and Taylor, 2020)

There are many ethical perspectives that can be applied to a multitude of situations, however the ones that will be covered in this report are deontological, utilitarianism and stakeholder theory.

Deontological ethics encourages followers to adhere to a set of rules or 'moral code' or code of conduct. Due to these rules, actions can be 'distinguished as morally right or wrong' (Ethics Unwrapped, 2022) to them and even if the actions are seen as morally wrong, if they are part of the rules then they must be obeyed. For an organisation this may mean choosing to use specific suppliers that do not allow child labour, although this may be more costly and cost strategic position, it is about the principle of not exploiting children. In turn, the benefits of this framework include the ability it gives to avoid the 'demanding aspects of consequentialism' (Alexander & Moore, 2020) can bring, as decisions are made based around moral duty. However, due to these 'rules', deontology can be an extremely rigid framework that doesn't provide room for movement within the decision-making process.

Secondly, utilitarianism focuses on happiness and wellbeing. Any action that better happiness or wellbeing is seen as morally right or ethical. This framework is centred around the idea of 'the greater good'. When looking at trade unions, one can see that utilitarianism fits well into this as it

revolves around 'social benefit' (Gustafson, 2013) of decisions, directing organisations to behave more ethically. As a whole utilitarianism strives to maximize the overall happiness and positive repercussions for the greatest number of people (Mill, 1863). Although, like deontological ethics, this framework is extremely old and dated, which can leave gaps within current ethical decision-making processes.

Although these ethical frameworks have their positives, their drawbacks push us to look for other models such as the Eight Lenses of ethical perspective (Clarke, 2015). These lenses aim to provide more insight into ethical decision making by offering 8 possible ways to think about a decision and the impacts it may have. For example, where one might choose to make the decision to not hire someone due to them having a disability, the sections based around rights and duties would highlight that human rights and employment law would not permit this and this would breach the Equality Act (2010), even though one may see it as the most favourable decision. This category would encourage thinking and researching from different perspectives.

Linking closely with this, stakeholder theory is a perspective that suggests organisations should take all stakeholder interests into consideration, even those on the peripherals of organisations such as smaller groups like local communities. This can link in nicely with the Eight Lenses framework, as again, this encourages organisations to consider wider groups of people not just shareholders. Both these methods encourage organisations to gather a greater scope of information to aid decision and judgment making processes.

AC 3.1

Measuring non-financial and financial performance is crucial for an organisation. Examples of these include, measuring non-financial performance by absence tracking via disciplinarys or notifications of improvement (NOIs). These are usually actioned when an employee surpasses their absence triggers, disciplinary meetings tend to take place after a NOI has been issued to the employee to warn them that they have reached their absence triggers.

This method of measuring non-financial performance can benefit a company by showing them specific absence trends, such as the 'number of spells' (Suff, 2023), which can allow an organisation to investigate absences to find the root cause of this, i.e. not enough holiday entitlement given. However, the downside to absence tracking is that specific methods of this can result in the 'penalisation of employees' (Suff, 2023), with health conditions who may require more absence leave than available. The Equality Act 2010 means that employees with health conditions should have suitable adjustments that cater to this.

When looking at ways to measure an organisations financial performance, this can be obtained via Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The KPIs used by an organisation can vary, but to illustrate this example, a balance sheet will be used. Balance sheets capture a businesses' 'assets, liabilities and owners' equity at a specific point in time' (Stobierski, 2020). Balance sheets can be of use to companies in terms of attracting investment from external stakeholders such as investors, as balance sheets for 'publicly-traded companies' (Lockert, 2021) are usually available to view publicly. However, the drawback of a balance sheet is that it only focuses on a specific point in time, rather than the bigger picture, which many investors would often require before deciding to invest in a specific organisation.

AC 3.2

People practices are the processes and approaches used by human resource professionals across the length of the employee lifecycle (CIPD, 2023). These processes can add value to an organisation in a variety of ways, impacting the organisation's success.

For example, at the recruitment stage of the lifecycle, an organisation wants to attract a highly skilled and motivated workforce and retain them for a long period of time in order to 'stay ahead of competition' (LinkedIn, 2023(b)). This can be made possible by ensuring that the workplace culture is both attractive and great for both current and future employees.

Human Resource professionals have great influence of the organisation culture and organisational culture has great influence of HR professionals, so an ideal way to measure the impact of people practices have had on organisation culture can take the form of surveys. Exit Surveys are carried out when an employee is leaving the company and can provide great insight into the culture of an organisation by investigating the reasons why they are leaving. This also helps an organisation measure turnover and the reasons for so. Exit interviews also give a place for employees to be more open with their reasons for leaving as employees may be reluctant to 'voice criticisms of their manager' (Peters, 2023) in their resignation itself.

Another method that can be used to evaluate this is employee appraisals. Appraisals, can give organisations an insight into the strengths and weaknesses of individual employees and departments as a whole, this can be used to support in terms of 'learning and development' (Gifford, 2022), offering opportunities for employees to gain further knowledge and training, rather than being dismissed on the basis of capability, or the employee feeling as though they are incapable and unheard, which can help foster a culture of supportiveness.

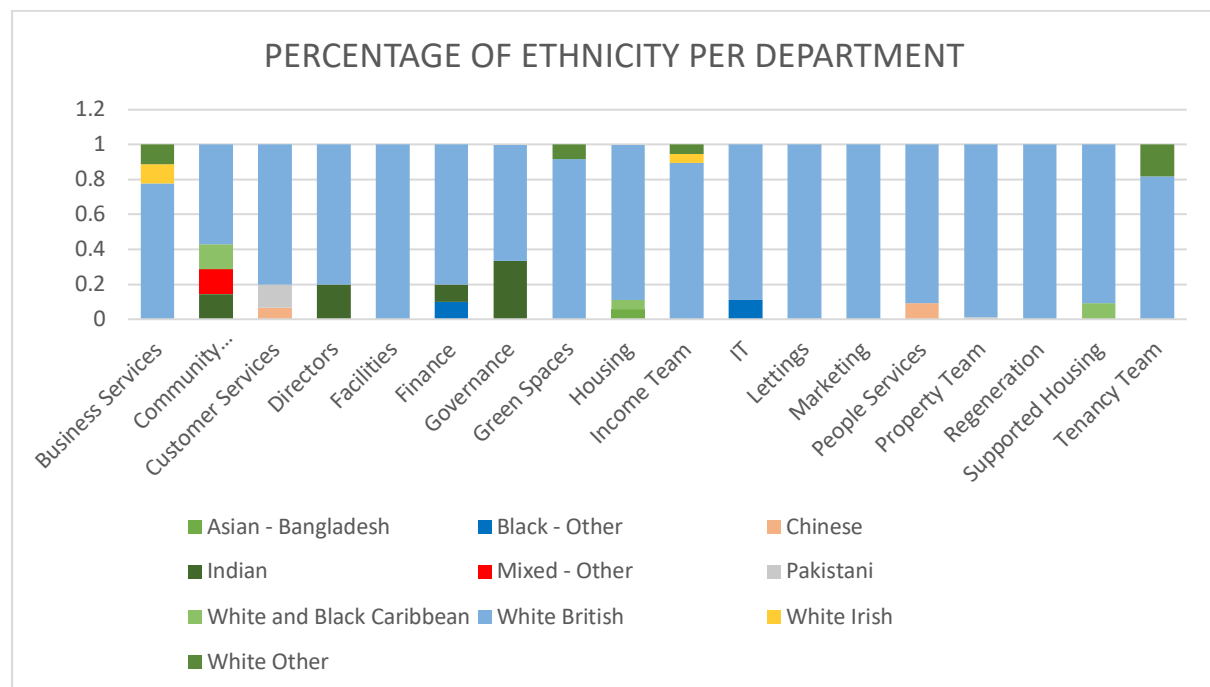
Equality, Diversity, Salary and Inclusion Data

PERCENTAGE OF EACH GENDER BY TYPE

A pie chart titled 'PERCENTAGE OF EACH GENDER BY TYPE' showing the distribution of gender types. The chart is divided into three segments: a large blue segment for 'Male' (54%), a large green segment for 'Female' (45%), and a very small orange segment for 'Non Binary' (0.77%). The labels and percentages are placed next to their respective segments.

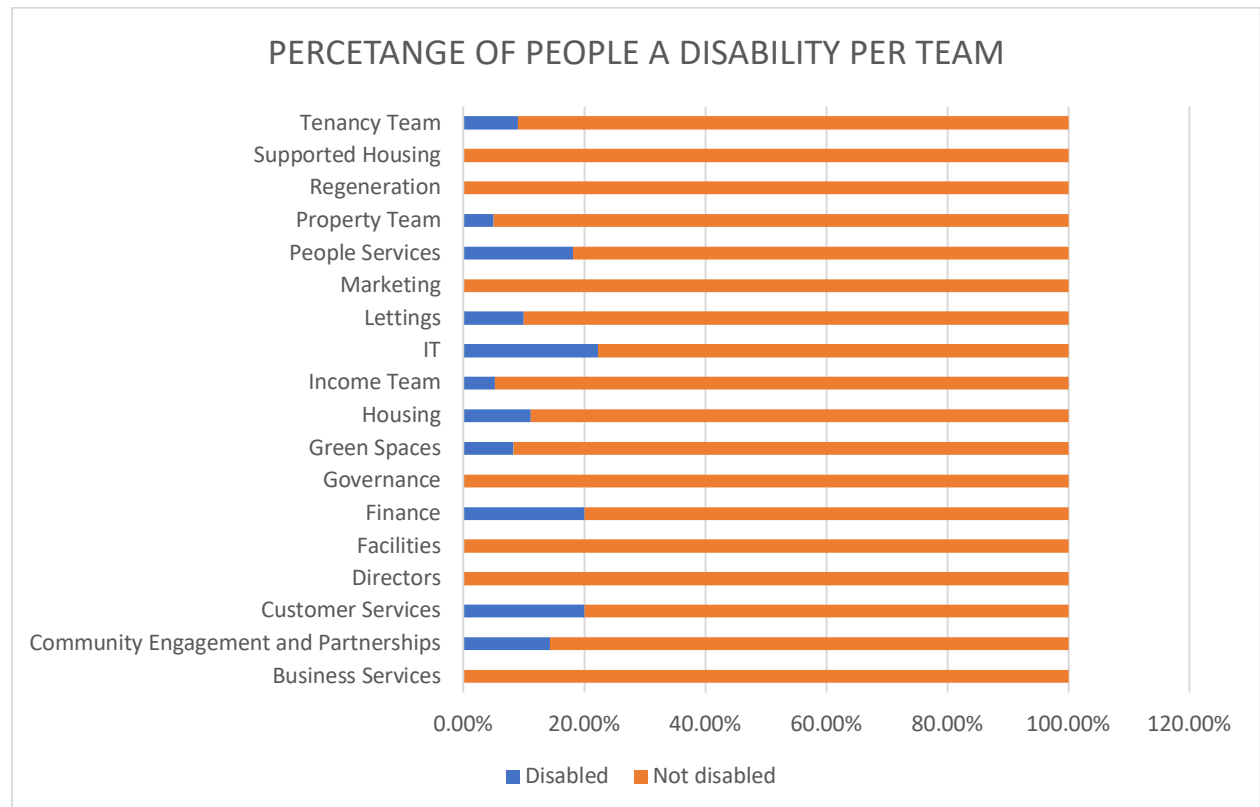
Gender Type	Percentage
Male	54%
Female	45%
Non Binary	0.77%

Ethnicity as a percentage per team.



The graph above illustrates the percentage of each ethnicity per department. The most prominent ethnicity across all departments is White British, with 4 departments being made up completely of the ethnicity White British. The most diverse department is Community Engagement & Partnerships with just over 40% of the team being made up of 3 different ethnicities including White & Black Caribbean, Mixed other & Indian.

Disability percentage as an organisational whole and by teams.

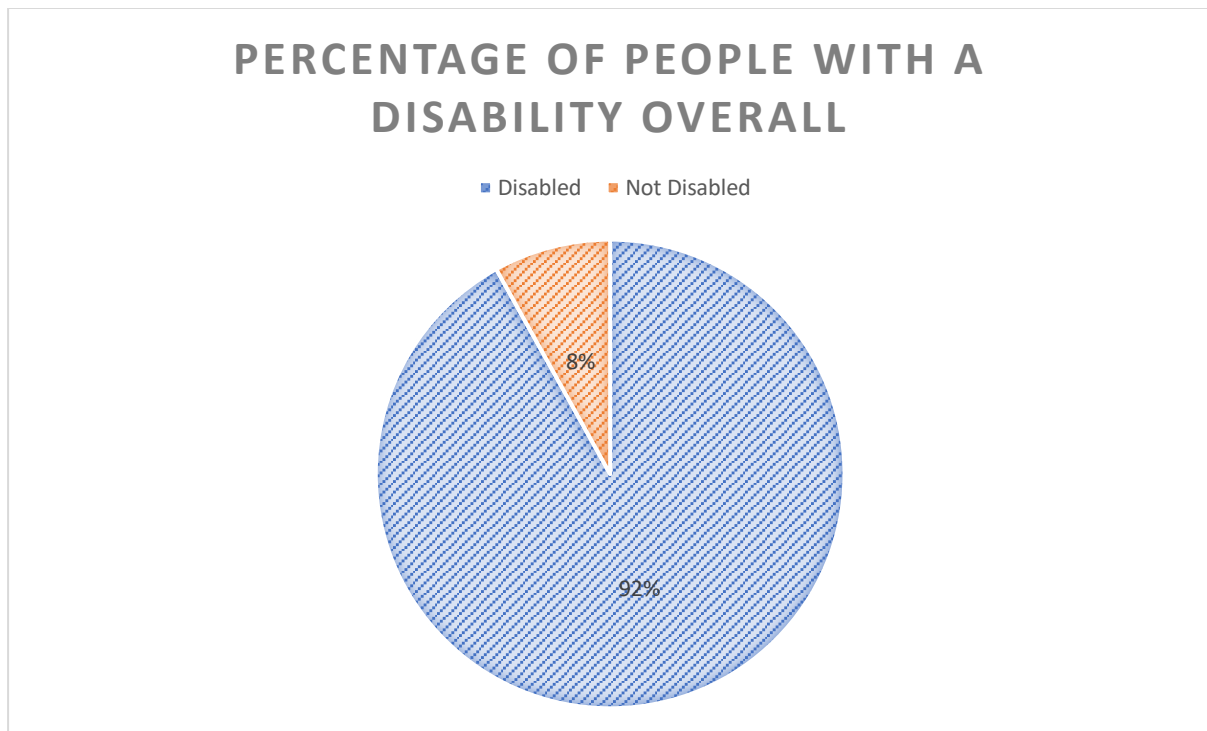


The graph above displays the percentage of people with a disability per team. 11 out of the 18 teams have an employee/employees who identify as disabled.

Below this, is a graph illustrating the overall percentage of employees with a disability within the organisation. There are significantly less people who identify as disabled within the organisation. A recommendation to encourage a higher employment rate of disabled employees would be to increase accessibility within work. This can include, homeworking or flexible working, an accessible office, tech equipment that can be tailored depending on the disability. This will widen the talent pool even more for an organisation, which can help with sourcing and finding the correct candidates for the correct roles, making recruitment a more streamlined process.

The Equality Act 2010 states that an employer must create reasonable adjustments for anyone disabled and not discriminate against anyone with a disability. However, this can present a risk to the company in terms of cost to the business both financially and culturally, if employees are consistently needing time off due to health-related issues that are preventing them from working. It is important an employee should have the capability to perform the specific role, even with adjustments, otherwise it would not be feasible. For example, employing someone who struggles with mobility in a position where they are constantly moving around or on their feet, even with adjustments would potentially create a risk for the business.

Despite this, it is important to remember not all disabilities are visible, and not everyone who is disabled wants to/needs to disclose they are disabled. So, this recommendation is based off of the fact that all those employees that identified as disabled are the only disabled employees within the organisation.

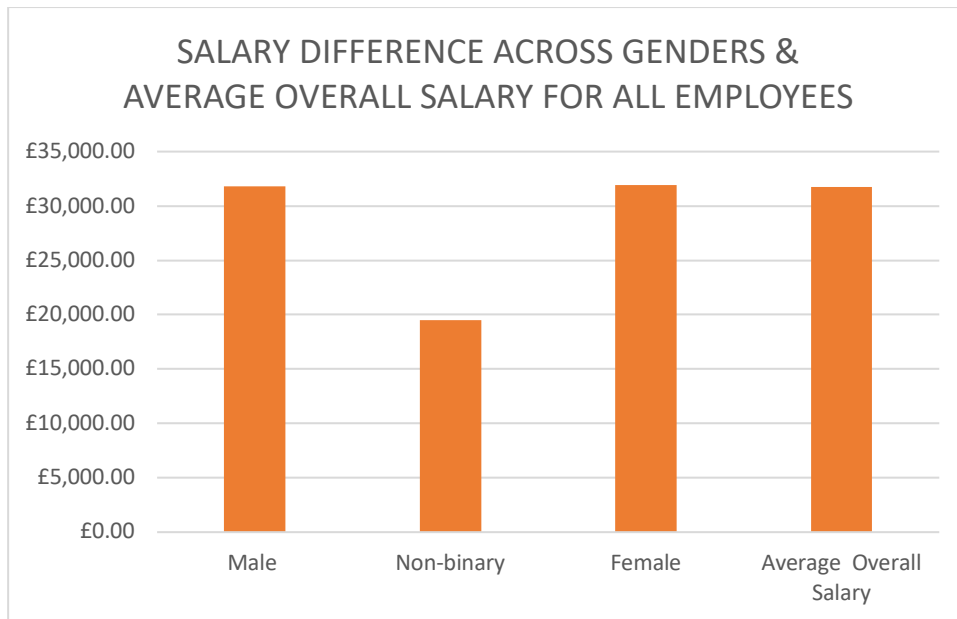


Salary difference across genders & overall average salary paid by the organisation

Below is a graph displaying the average salary difference across the genders. The data shows female employees are paid just under £100 more than their male counterparts are averaged, however both male and female employees are paid averaged over £10,000 more than their non-binary counterparts. There is no information on whether the employees work fulltime or parttime, so it is hard to compare whether the averages are fair. Contrary to this it may be an idea to conduct a salary appraisal to bring specific employees, such as Albert Runcorn, a female employee working within the Business Services Team as a Performance Officer whose counterpart team member Alastor Moody, a male, working in the same role and team whose salary is £10,000 more.

The benefits of doing this would result in a closure in the organisations gender pay gap, which naturally helps foster a more equal workspace, however doing so would require budgeting depending on how many employees this specific situation applies to.

The graph also displays the average overall salary paid by the organisation to their employees. The average overall salary was £31,757.46.



Feedback regarding Hybrid Working Practices Data Review with Personal Recommendations:

When looking at the feedback provided by employees regarding the hybrid working practices at the organisation, the first major point that stands out is 250 employees out of the 300 who gave feedback saying they strongly disagree with the statement referring to feeling less stressed when away from the workplace. This suggests that the work-life balance of employees is being compromised due to stress. The organisation may want to think about introducing a wellbeing scheme that offers advice, counselling and tips on how to mitigate and cope with stress. Introducing an extra few days of leave for the purposes of destressing could also help, 'de-stress days' can be taken via the same process as annual leave and allow employees to have a paid day off to 'relax and avoid burnout, with no questions asked by the employer'(DavidsonMorris, 2023). This idea would result in a cost to the business both in terms of productivity and financially, however, the benefits from employing these recommendations within the organisation are extremely vital in order to maintain a happy, healthy workforce.

Another important response was that the majority of employees disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statements regarding missing the engagement with their colleagues in the workplace and feeling fully supported when working at work. This highlights that there may be some issues within the workplace, it may be an idea to offer retraining to all the managers in the topic of workplace management as a refresher. This would cost the organisation, however in the long run, this could help reduce employee dissatisfaction, turnover, and sickness absence rates as the training may help managers be more supportive. It may encourage them to 'actively seek out ways to improve their performance' (Creighton et al., 2018), and that of their teams.

The issue with this recommendation is that not all managers can undergo the training at once, so there may still be teams who feel unsupported/unhappy.

However, despite these issues, the results do show that the majority of employees enjoy working from home some days of the week. The organisation has clearly recognised there is a want for hybrid working, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, so by them allowing this option to continue, it is actively supporting employees to be more flexible with their working patterns,

offering a better balance between work life and home life. A recommendation for the future may be to make it optional to work from home, as not everyone will want to work from home. As well as this, ensuring that all equipment given to employees for home working is set up correctly and is sufficient to support their role, this includes providing specialist chairs to help with the posture of the working employees.

Overall, although the results do vary, they do show that employees do not seem to be getting the most out of homeworking. In order to make the most of this benefit, it may be an idea to implement some of the above recommendations or reach out to employees and ask what they would like to see implemented, as this will help drive employee engagement.

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