

DEI in data: Many bridges still to cross



In partnership with

Rockborne
A HARNHAM GROUP COMPANY

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Diversifying Data & Analytics Team Should Be A Priority



As a business looking to help create the next generation of data and analytics talent, we place a significant emphasis on ensuring that the future of our industry is as diverse as possible.

However, as highlighted in our sister company Harnham's [Diversity In Data Guide 2021-22](#), there is still a long way to go.

With many businesses having clearly made deliberate efforts over the past few years to be more diverse and inclusive, results so far suggest a more holistic view to hiring will be required if any significant progress is to be made.

This involves considering intersectional diversity – where multiple underrepresented groups overlap with one another – and trying to address the root causes of today's lack of representation, rather than just creating hiring quotas. This is perfectly achievable for most of the country's leading data teams and can be done by providing multiple routes into data careers, partnering with ground-level organisations and providing opportunities for mentorship.

While there is an argument that it is a business's moral obligation to build diverse data teams, there is also plenty of research to suggest that diverse data teams produce better results and result in a significant reduction in algorithmic bias*. As such, diversifying data and analytics teams should be a priority for all businesses looking to pioneer within their fields.

Amy Foster

Chief Talent Officer

[Rockborne](#)

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Balanced data needs diverse data teams

One of the key challenges made to the widening use of data and analytics is that bias can become embedded in decisioning, personalisation, segmentation and so on, because all these models reflect underlying data which may be skewed. The solution is to ensure diversity of perspectives which can review, test and pushback based on multiple points of view.

This is only really possible if the workforce across the data and analytics sector is itself diverse. This makes the data captured by Rockborne's sister company, Harnham's, annual salary survey a vital tool in building a representative workforce – having benchmarks can drive hiring policies and processes, as well as being the basis for telling success stories.

In this whitepaper, we have extracted four of the most important strategic indicators of the data and analytics workforce – gender, ethnicity, disability and education. Aligned to these are comments captured from members of the DataIQ 100 2022 edition about the DEI policies within their data and analytics offices as well as the broader organisation.



Sanjeevan Bala
group chief data officer and AI officer
ITV



Lorenzo Bavasso
global director of data and AI
digital, BT Group



Maya Bull
head of CRM
Telegraph Media Group



Pedro Cosa-Fernandez
general manager, data
News UK



Andy Hill
chief data officer
Unilever



Andy Isenman
head of technology, cloud and data
Heathrow Airport



Wade Munsie
global chief data officer,
GSK Consumer Healthcare



Cornelia Schaurecker
global big data and AI director
Vodafone Group



Amy Foster
chief talent officer
Rockborne

1. Gender still divides

What the research says:



28% of the UK data and analytics workforce is female in 2022, down from 30% in 2021.



What data leaders say:

“We are pushing hard on developing a more diverse, more inclusive and more equal workforce. We want to ensure that we have gender, race and ability diversity across all our teams across the world – diversity drives growth. We are committed to achieving 50/50 gender balance and are putting this into action through our Women In Data programme. It’s a career goal of mine really to move the needle on this.”

Andy Hill
Unilever

“Vodafone makes diversity and inclusion a priority, with one of our three purpose pillars being ‘inclusion for all’. The company has set the goal of being the best employer for women by 2025, which we hope to achieve through our work on tackling gender inequality, including our global menopause research and support, and our global maternity policy which offers 16 weeks of fully paid maternity leave, among other initiatives.”

Cornelia Schaurecker
Vodafone Group

What Rockborne says:

“The lack of gender diversity in data and analytics may be the result of an historical shortfall of women in STEM, but efforts made over recent years have seen this begin to turn around, particularly within further and higher education. However, as the impact of this is yet to be felt within data and analytics, leaders within the field need to ensure that their data roles are appealing to as many candidates as possible and that they are providing opportunities to transition into the data space from other STEM disciplines.”



2. Ethnicity and gender pay gap

What the research says:



Black, Asian and minority ethnic women earn £48,000 on average, **19%** less than white males on an average of £59,000.



What data leaders say:

"I have always been very passionate about building teams, and diverse ones at that. We're about 50% on both BAME and gender. If you stick to your principals as a leader, are transparent and empathetic, then build a decent external reputation, then things will work out. People join for the reputation – they stay for the opportunities and the leadership."

Wade Munsie
GSK Consumer Healthcare

"We proactively engage in diverse communities with a focus on representation from all backgrounds. Our people development and resourcing teams actively raise awareness of our culture and transformation journey. During our onboarding approach, we look to tailor any adjustments that we might need to make to accommodate individual needs and circumstances better."

Sanjeevan Bala
ITV

What Rockborne says:

"Intersectional diversity should be key to an organisations' diversity and inclusion efforts, and it is clear that individuals from two or more underrepresented groups are likely to face more obstacles in their data careers. Pay gaps are a key indicator of a lack of diversity at leadership level, too, and so enterprises should be making a deliberate effort to ensure their data leadership team is as diverse possible if they are looking to reduce the pay gaps found within their company."



3. Disability poorly represented

What the research says:



19% of UK working-age adults are disabled, but disabled individuals make up just 5% of the UK data and analytics industry.



What data leaders say:

“There is no barrier, no background limitation, in a way no rule that prevents us from working with the right talent. Diversity makes the ideas flow, and it is a crucial ingredient for success, especially in data and AI, where we want to remove that confirmation bias and think differently, looking at complex problems from different perspectives.”

Lorenzo Bavasso
BT Group

“Diversity and inclusion are incredibly important to me and I do a lot of work around neurodiversity, being dyslexic myself. With an incredible skills shortage in our industry, I do not believe a single approach will work. Therefore, things like formal training can be less important than potential. I believe you should never stand in the way of talented people achieving their goals.”

Andy Isenman
Heathrow Airport

What Rockborne says:

“Data and analytics should be an accessible field, but it is down to employers to create an inclusive environment. This begins by making sure interview processes are not restrictive. For example, allowing additional time in technical tests for those who need it allows individuals to demonstrate their true capabilities. However, true inclusivity comes not just from removing barriers, but by providing a working environment where employees can bring their true authentic selves to work.”



4. Education at a premium

What the research says:



While only 7% of secondary students attend a fee-paying school in the UK, this more than doubles within data and analytics to 16%.



What data leaders say:

"I have never sought to hire anyone with a specific background as I think we have so much to learn from different types of experience. I have hired apprentices and graduates with little or no work experience – if someone is enthusiastic and hardworking, we are able to support their learning on the job and create a path of development through the team."

Maya Bull
Telegraph Media Group

"Diversity is key so, like any other team in the organisation, we try our best to bring (and grow) talent from diverse backgrounds. We are very lucky to benefit from the excellent apprenticeship programme at News UK and have three two-year long apprenticeships in our team. Our apprentices receive on-the-job training, mentoring and coaching with experienced and talented staff."

Pedro Cosa-Fernandez
News UK

What Rockborne says:

"While companies say they are seeking diverse talent, many also require a 'Russell Group' university degree from applicants. Unfortunately, these universities have their own challenges with diversity and are more likely to host students from fee-paying secondary schools. By limiting potential employees to these institutions, leaders of data teams are drastically reducing the scope of talent available to them."



About Rockborne

Rockborne, founded in 2021, is an expert provider of specialist Data and Analytics consultants. It employs diverse, talented, and ambitious STEM graduates who are immersed in a powerful combination of bespoke data, technical, business, and interpersonal training to meet the needs of leading global companies. Rockborne are helping their clients transform outcomes with their world-class data talent.

For more information about our services and how we're building the next generation of Data & Analytics talent, please visit rockborne.com.

About DataIQ

DataIQ is the first dedicated membership business for data and analytics leaders and their teams. Formed in 2011 we connect, develop and elevate the fast-evolving data and analytics profession.

Our core purpose is to help our members build great businesses through driving value from the intelligent use of data, analytics, and getting the best from their people, technology and data.

DataIQ delivers benefits for data leaders, their teams and their organisations. Our members come from global, FTSE 100, large and mid-market organisations including Aviva, BBC, BT Group, GSK Consumer Healthcare, HSBC, Sainsbury's, Sky, Three, Walgreens Boots Alliance and WarnerMedia.

More broadly, DataIQ focuses on raising the profile of the data, analytics and insight functions in organisations and championing a positive agenda for the industry.

Believing strongly that it's people that make the real difference, rather than data and technology, we have established the industry's two most high-profile recognition programmes – the DataIQ 100 and the DataIQ Awards.

The annual DataIQ 100 identifies the most influential people in data-driven businesses - making it into the list is a recognised honour. Meanwhile, the DataIQ Awards, often referred to as the "Oscars of data", showcase excellence in the industry. Winning a DataIQ Award is a real mark of distinction for any individual, team or business.

To find out more about becoming a member, our recognition programmes or joining our wider community visit www.dataiq.co.uk

