

Diversify and thrive

Diversity and inclusivity can help ready construction for the future, writes **Lucile Kamar**

In its report *Our Changing World: Let's be ready*, RICS highlighted that one of the key areas employers want it to address is the so-called war for talent.

It is fair to say that the workforce of the UK's land, property and built environment sectors has not historically been very diverse or inclusive. Coupled with the fact that the surveying profession currently faces a skills shortage and an ageing demographic, this means the need for further change and diversity in the sector has never been greater. Attracting the right talent inevitably means recruiting from a wide range of varying backgrounds.

Marking our mark

Among the many ways in which RICS is supporting workplace diversity and inclusion is the Inclusive Employer Quality Mark (IEQM). Launched in 2015, the IEQM is based on six principles: leadership and vision; recruitment; staff retention; staff development; staff engagement; and continuous improvement.

The IEQM aims to encourage firms of all sizes to look carefully at their employment practices and prioritise inclusivity. More than 120 companies have already signed up to the IEQM, allowing us to reach more than 150,000 people in total.

A diverse and inclusive workforce is a competitive one, better reflecting its own clients, its employees and the wider community. The report *Diversity Matters* (<http://bit.ly/mckdiversity>) from McKinsey & Company looked at the relationship between gender diversity levels and companies' financial performance, and the numbers speak for themselves.



Companies in the top quartile for gender diversity are 15% more likely to have financial returns above their respective national industry medians. Not only does creating and maintaining a diverse and inclusive environment make business sense, it is also in line with the Equality Act 2010.

But our statistics show there is a long way to go in achieving diversity across chartered surveying. It will likely be another 40 years before the number of female chartered surveyors comes close to equalling the number of men who are in the profession.

Current RICS-qualified membership statistics reveal:

- that only 13% of surveyors in the UK are female, with 13% of them in quantity surveying and construction and 13% in project management
- that 1.2% of surveyors are from Black, Asian or minority ethnic backgrounds
- that those with disabilities make up fewer than 1% of the profession
- we do not yet have data for lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender surveyors.

Shared resource

So how are we going to attract and retain diverse talent and ensure we have a thriving property sector for the future?

While RICS was developing the IEQM, it began to see huge demand for a resource for our members to share best practice and to learn from each other how best to embed diversity and inclusion in their workplace.

We therefore created the profession's first Diversity Hub – an online portal that enables members and external bodies to share case studies, best practice and research on diversity and inclusion. This has been described by our members as the “missing piece of the puzzle”, proving that putting policies and measures in place does not have to be time-consuming or resource-intensive. The move is very much in line with RICS' ambition to support members and their firms. It continues to lead the way by promoting the diversity and inclusion agenda.

If you have an innovative approach to share, please join the conversation on the hub. You can also attend a networking session in your region at one of our series of free lunches, Driving for Diversity, each of which will feature a panel of industry representatives discussing one of the principles of the IEQM. To find an event near you, please visit rics.org/diversity.



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Related competencies include
Business planning, Teamworking