

# Sparks Programme FAQs

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## What is the Sparks Programme?

The Sparks Programme is an exciting new initiative by Inclusive Employers for 2022.

The Sparks Programme gives people from under-represented backgrounds the opportunity to kick-start a career in Inclusion & Diversity. Through the Programme, we will ignite the careers of the I&D pioneers of the future by providing professional training and certification, mentoring and networking opportunities.

## About this year's criteria

### Why is the programme specifically for Black people?

This is the launch of our Sparks Programme, and it has been inspired by our own anti-racism programme and activity. This is our phase one to remove barriers from our own industry in Inclusion & Diversity. We are hoping with the success of this specific programme, to roll it out further to other identities that are underrepresented.

We acknowledge that these barriers are both social and political injustices that result in discrimination for many black people in the UK. In a work context, a survey of UK employees by the CIPD (the professional body for HR and people development) found that...

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- one in three Black employees say that discrimination has played a part in a lack of career progression to date - almost three times as many as white British employees
- one in eight of the working-age population is from a Black background, yet they occupy only one in sixteen of top management positions

We know the Sparks Programme won't eradicate prejudice completely in the workplace, but we're hoping to use our platform to make space for a group of people to support their career and/or community.

### Why is the maximum education level A-level/BTEC?

We acknowledge that different educational levels come with privileges and opportunities to varying extents. Studies show that 89.9% of university graduates go into employment or further study. But we know there are many barriers and reasons why people would not attend University and instead stop their education at college (A level/BTEC) or secondary school (GCSE's/ O levels).

The impact of not receiving this opportunity is that the employment drops to 83% for those with 2 or more A levels and 76% in employment for those with 5 or more GCSEs. And no matter the qualification level, white 16 to 64-year-olds are more likely to be employed than those from almost all other ethnic groups.

### [Information on educational qualifications and equivalents](#)

### Is there an age limit to apply?

Anyone of any age can apply.

### UK applicants only

To get the most from the course, we will only accept applications for delegates who are based in the UK. This is due to the content of the course being UK based but also due to the timings of the sessions.

### I already work in Inclusion and Diversity – can I still apply?

Yes, the Level 6 programme will support your existing knowledge and upskill your ability to influence organisational changes and set strategies. Or, depending on your experience, you may be ready to begin a role as a Consultant in Inclusion & Diversity. You can view our current vacancies [here](#) and download our job packs to find out more about roles at Inclusive Employers.

### What if I don't match the criteria?

If you don't match the criteria for this year's intake, please check back as we will be reviewing this for our 2023 intake. Alternatively, if you are looking for a role in Inclusion & Diversity you can view our current vacancies [here](#).

### Details of the Level 6 CMI Course

#### What is the Level 6 CMI?

Inclusive Employers works with the Chartered Management Institute (CMI) to provide our own set of Inclusion and Diversity Qualifications.

Our Level 6 Inclusion Qualification is a vocational qualification. This course lasts six days and is split into three units.

- Module 1 focuses on **Leading Equality, Diversity & Inclusion**
- Module 2 is **Organisational Culture**
- Module 3 looks at **Coaching Skills for Leaders**

You can find more details about the course on our [website](#).

#### How long will it take?

The course lasts six days, in three sets of two consecutive days, over a period of 4-6 months. As a CMI accredited course, there is a total time commitment of 58 hours over a 12-month period.

#### If I'm successful when does the course start?

A new cohort starts the Level 6 programme monthly, but we would like all successful applicants to start the course in 2022. We will work with you to find the most suitable cohort and dates for you.

You will be expected to undertake your own research on top of this time and complete a number of tasks and essays. The qualification will be passed via three written assessments.

#### What experience do I need?

You need work experience to qualify for the Programme but you do not need to be in an Inclusion & Diversity related role because the CMI enables us to use “scenario” based questions for the assignments e.g. “what would you do in this situation....?”

Most importantly, you will need a passion for Diversity & Inclusion with the appetite to research and contribute to making a difference in an ever-changing industry.

#### Will it be in person or online?

The course will take place online via Zoom with the other students in the call also. There will also be some additional attendance to Inclusive Employers webinars via Zoom that last 60 minutes.

These are webinars that our members attend weekly with a different topic and presenter each time. It's a space to learn something new and engage with content to develop your understanding and engagement.

#### Who will be supporting you through this Programme?

- The Level 6 CMI qualification will be delivered by Steven Copsey. In this [blog](#) he shares how he did level 6 as a student and how he now has become a teacher.

- We'll pair you with a [member of the Inclusive Employers](#) team who will be your mentor.
- There will be approximately 10 students per course all from different backgrounds including experiences, jobs, roles, and sectors. You will be able to also learn from one another during the course.

## Benefits and outcomes of the course and programme

### Will I get a job at the end of it?

A job isn't a guaranteed outcome because of the course, but it should support your future applications both in interviews and applications.

### Do I need to be working in a professional role already?

It doesn't matter what your current role is whether paid or voluntary. But we would recommend that those applying wish to aim for a career in Inclusion & Diversity.

### Does it matter that I am in full time employment?

It doesn't matter if you're in employment full-time, part-time or volunteering. As long as you're able to attend the necessary amount of time needed to complete the course. Time dedication is six days in three sets of two consecutive days, over a period of 4-6 months. As a CMI accredited course, there is a total time commitment of 58 hours over a 12-month period.

### I'm worried about a return to learning after so many years out of the classroom

So many of our Level 6 Students have expressed this concern but don't worry! It is a vocational course; the focus is the workplace and there is a lot of support in place to help students succeed. You will learn from your tutors; your course mates and they will learn from you...it's a very collaborative and safe environment which means learning is so much easier.

### Would I get any support with the assignments?

Yes, we provide guidance on what is expected in each assignment, you can send in a draft and then have a chat with one of the team about any changes that you could think about. It obviously must be your own work but you will have ongoing access to the recordings so you can always go back and rewatch sessions, attend Inclusive Employers webinars and dip into a big CMI learning portal.

### Can I apply for any money to support me?

No, there is no financial transaction involved in the programme - Inclusive Employers pay for the training and associated costs. You need to provide the commitment, time and have access to a laptop and the internet.

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### **I will need some adjustments due to my disability, can you support me**

We can absolutely have a conversation before or after applying about what support you may need in order to get the most from the course.

Via zoom/teams we can use live subtitles.

### **English is not my first language – is that a problem?**

Not a problem at all as long as your English is strong enough to be able to understand the lessons and complete the assignments.

### **I only have work experience in a volunteering capacity – is that a problem?**

We would encourage you to think about work experience in the broadest context and we are completely open to receiving applications from people who have volunteered rather than been employed.

### **Will I have to sign any forms**

Yes – you will have to sign a declaration that any assignment is your own work and a separate form that gives us permission to publish any blogs that you might write during the course of the programme.

### **If the dates of the course don't fit with my other commitments, can I attend a mix of units?**

All the course delivery is during the day and for full days. We expect students to join one cohort and stay with that group throughout their 6 days “in the classroom”.

### **Will I be able to attend during school hours?**

The first session of a teaching day starts at 9.30am and the last session ends at about 4pm so you may need to make alternative arrangements at the end of the day.

## **Sparks Programme timeline**

- **Application form opens – 27<sup>th</sup> January 2022**
- **Live Zoom Webinar – 10<sup>th</sup> February 2022, 9:30am start**  
(You can register [here](#))
- **Application deadline - 4th March at 5pm**
- **Shortlist of applications – 10<sup>th</sup> March**  
All applicants will receive an update on their progress
- **Interviews with shortlisted applicants between 21<sup>st</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> March**
- **Decision from interviews made by early April**

### Live webinar about the programme ahead of applying

We will be hosting a zoom webinar for 60 minutes where you will hear from the facilitator of the Level 6 programme and an Inclusive Employers colleague who took part in the Level 6 course and who is a Sparks Programme mentor. There will also be time to ask questions.

Please register for the webinar [here](#).

You will not need a Zoom login to watch this, simply click the link and join.

### How to apply and the process

#### What's the application process?

Please apply via our [application form](#).

There are three steps to get involved with the programme:

#### Step 1:

**Complete our [application form](#) which includes an overview of your work history, plus the following four questions:**

1. Tell us why the Sparks Programme interests you. (250 words)
2. What are your career aspirations? (250 words)
3. What impact has the Black Lives Matter movement had on workplace improvement? (500 words)
4. Please explain how you will approach the Sparks Programme and make it work for you. (100 words)

Our advice would be to write your answer to the above question in a word document and then copy/paste this into the smart Survey when you're ready to submit it. You can submit and save your answers in the survey as you go if you prefer this.

#### Step 2:

**Colleagues at Inclusive Employers will shortlist the applications.**

In order to make our processes as bias free as possible, we will be 'blind-shortlisting'. This means that the shortlisting panel will only have access to and make their decision on who to shortlist based on the information you provide in Sections 3 and 4.

### Step 3:

#### Interviews

- Questions
- Get to know you
- Time to ask questions

## Contact information

If you have any additional questions then please [get in touch](#) via email.