

*How do you quash the conscious
AND unconscious bias of staff
(especially senior, long serving or
“old school”) in relation to protected
characteristics*

Michael Ball

Introduction

- Conscious bias
- What is unconscious bias ?
- How do we spot it ?
- What are the risks ?
- Taking Action
- Promoting the benefits
- Conclusions and the way forward

Unconscious bias

- Unaware
- Outside control
- Hidden preferences and dislikes
- Automatic quick judgments
- Background, environment, personal experience
- Stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination

How to spot hidden bias

- Social events and assumptions
- Who will attend? Who is involved in discussions? Planning?
- Team work and 'fitting in'
- Promotion choices and recruitment
- Appearances – overweight, short, older – typically has negative impact
- Assessment within organisation

Risks

- Promotion panel
- Incorrect scores
- Missing notes
- White staff encouraged to progress
- Finding of unconscious bias
 - Francis v London Probation Trust

Taking action

- Recognise it
- Audit of employee life cycle
- Evidence based decisions
- Reframe conversation – fairness and respect
- Broaden range of contacts at work

Taking Action

- Anonymous surveys
- Customised training
- Anonymous complaint channel
- Raising awareness to reduce impact
- Positive diversity projects
- Focus on strategic business outcomes

Taking action

- Organisational buy in
- Compulsory courses?
- Follow Up
- Encouragement – appraisal or review
- Compensation awards
- Individual accountability

Reasonable steps defence

◆ Gateley Plc

- All reasonable steps taken to prevent discrimination
- Pre-emptive action
 - *Caniffe v East Riding of Yorks Council*
- What further steps could be taken?

Conclusions

- Chosen or conscious discrimination – conduct issue
- Unconscious bias – training issue
- Negative perceptions and hidden preferences
- Action can improve workplace relations
- Unlock potential

Questions

