

Discriminating by Name

In the know

A BBC undercover test has found that a job seeker with an English name fared significantly better in initial recruitment sifts than a person with a Muslim name.

Undercover Test

The BBC test found that a CV with the name Adam gained 12 interviews from 100 job opportunities, while a CV with the name Mohamed was only offered four. This test highlights the issue of religious discrimination in the workplace; an unlawful act which appears to still be occurring against religious groups, including Muslims.

Existing Discrimination Protection

The recruitment process is often an unexpected area where discrimination happens, however the Equality Act 2010 provides equal protection for those already employed. All recruitment decisions should be based on the needs of the job role, or the criteria set out in the person specification and those carrying out the process should be trained on correctly carrying this out.

A simple way of removing the potential for any religious discrimination based on names is to carry out 'name-blind' recruitment, where the name is simply removed. This allows those making the decision to focus solely on the skills, qualifications and experience outlined in the application.

Organisational Culture

Having a proactive culture will reduce the likelihood of discrimination happening because those suffering feel able to come forward about their experience and those who carry this out are aware that this will be acted on.

Employers need to ensure they are adequately training staff on what is and isn't acceptable, from recruitment decisions to everyday conversations to dismissal procedures. Carrying out diversity and equality training will also allow members of staff to understand the qualities and advantages of having a diverse workforce. Having an effective equality policy is also useful as a way of communicating the correct standards of behaviour to all members of staff.

Croner Tips

- **It is vital that employers recognise that the coverage of the Equality Act 2010 extends to job applicants.**
- **Names supplied on application forms should not be used to filter applicants based on how English the name sounds, or the perceived race or religion of the person.**
- **Any complaints of race or religious discrimination need to be handled properly and in a timely manner with formal disciplinary sanctions imposed against the perpetrators as reasonable in the circumstances.**

Please contact the Business Support Helpline for advice on your specific situation before acting on the information in this article.