



Briefing Pack

Fairest-Futures is a company founded in September 2021 by Shaniqua Mckenzie. The aim of the business is to reduce the amount of discrimination that people face in recruitment and in the workplace in three ways: grievance writing support, unconscious bias training and lobbying for changes in employment law.

Shaniqua Mckenzie Bio

Founding Story

Shaniqua drew inspiration from her personal experience of workplace discrimination when founding Fairst-Futures.

In 2022, Shaniqua entered the Ingenuity Competition hosted by Nottingham University. The competitive program provides entrepreneurs the opportunity to develop their start-ups, compete for a recognised title and funding. In July 2022, Fairst-Futures was awarded the Southeast Regional Champion and Fairst-Futures began to work towards its objectives.

By Shaniqua Mckenzie

What we do

- Grievance Writing Support

Fairest-Futures sell and draft employee relation policies such as disciplinary, grievance, and equality and diversity policies for employers. As well as this, the company also provides a grievance writing service for employees who are experiencing discrimination or other issues at work.

- Unconscious Bias Training

Fairest-Futures will be launching unconscious bias training for employees and employers in the Autumn of 2023. The Unconscious bias training covers all nine of the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010, age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. Live actors will be incorporated into all training and will model scenarios of the unconscious bias training.

- Lobbying for changes in employment law legislation

Fairest-Futures aspires to make the future fair. This is only possible if the concept of fairness and equal opportunities is present in legislation. There have been many advancements that have improved this area, but Fairst-Futures aims to lead more campaigns for change inspired by people's personal experiences.

Case Studies

Fairest-Futures has supported employees suffering discrimination speak up about their experiences and challenge unfair practices in the workplace.

Chrissy

Chrissy suffers from depression and anxiety. Whilst working part-time as a kitchen assistant Chrissy experienced several microaggressions regarding her disability. For example, her line manager once said to her

“that they (meaning the company) do not have time for people who will be calling in sick because of depression and that if she took this approach she would lose her job”

Chrissy also noticed that she was being treated differently to her peers who did not suffer from depression and anxiety. For instance, Chrissy was made to work shifts that she was not paid for and to complete unpaid training out of fear of reprisals.

Chrissy was eventually dismissed from the company. Initially, Chrissy wanted support appealing this dismissal and to write a grievance regarding the discrimination and work that she had not been paid for. Chrissy decided that she no longer wanted to appeal the dismissal as she would prefer to work elsewhere. However, Fairest-Futures supported Chrissy writing a grievance. Parts of the grievance were upheld, and Chrissy was paid for all the shifts and training that she had previously completed.

Belinda

Belinda was a part-time care assistant. This role involved Belinda visiting elderly or vulnerable clients in their homes to provide them with personal care, companionship and support with housework or other tasks they could not complete independently.

Belinda was falsely accused of taking money and financially abusing one of her long-term clients, she felt that the allegations made were because of her race. Belinda was able to detail other staff members (who were not the same ethnicity as her) and had had similar allegations made against them but were not treated the way she had been. The care provider immediately assumed that Belinda had been stealing money and accused her of “lying” as opposed to completing a thorough and fair investigation.

Following instructions from Belinda Fairest-Futures intervened and wrote both a grievance and grievance outcome appeal letter. The grievance appeal was upheld, and Belinda was cleared of the false allegation of financial abuse.

What Next?

Our first campaign, Is my Name Hireable, proposes that when applicants apply for jobs, they should be assigned an ID number to replace their names, reducing bias in the shortlisting phase of recruitment. Initially, Fairest-Futures goal is to achieve this locally and progress this nationally.



Currently, Fairest-Futures is approaching local business leaders and persuading them to introduce job applicant ID numbers into their organisations.

Why is this needed?

Many people with names of African heritage have felt that they have been unsuccessful in job applications because of their names. For example, a British teenager of Sundanese heritage who changed her name to Rowan after struggling to be shortlisted when job hunting noted her success in job applications doubled (Croxford, 2019).

In addition to personal anecdotes there have been ample studies carried out worldwide demonstrating this bias. Nuttfield College's Centre for Social Investigation (CSI) found that British citizens from ethnic minority backgrounds must send approximately 60% more applications to achieve a positive response.

Additionally, the BBC have also found similar results. A job seeker with an English sounding name "Adam" was offered three times the number of interviews than an applicant with a Muslim sounding name, despite their applications being identical (Adesina & Marocico, 2017)

How can you help?

If you are determined to make the future fair, passionate about equality, and if you would like to reduce the scope for unconscious bias in your organisation please contact Fairest-Futures for support implementing job applicant ID numbers.