



# BA GUIDE:

## Inclusive Recruitment



[bicycleassociation.org.uk](https://bicycleassociation.org.uk)



The Bicycle Association of Great Britain



@BicycleAssoc

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# Welcome

**The BA Guides are a series of concise documents aiming to offer definitive information on matters of interest to the UK cycle industry. BA Guides are available as free downloads on the Bicycle Association website for reference by the wider industry, media and general public, while more detailed and specific material is reserved for Bicycle Association member companies.**

This Guide was produced by the Bicycle Association. Please note that the Bicycle Association cannot give formal legal, financial or insurance advice. Any business or technical decision you may take based on our advice is entirely at your own risk. All information given, especially that related to regulations, laws etc., is a summary of our best understanding of what the law requires, but ultimately the interpretation of the law is a matter for the courts based on the individual facts of any particular case. You are therefore advised to consult the relevant legislation yourself and, if necessary, to seek independent advice on specific legal questions.



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# Introduction

From using gender-neutral language in job ads, to being transparent on policies and benefits, we share a set of inclusive hiring practices to help you recruit and retain a more diverse workforce. This BA Guide introduces a set of actions that can be implemented by businesses of all sizes, to encourage more diverse applicants to apply for vacancies, and ensure the recruitment process is inclusive for everyone. The content was originally published as a BA news article, [How to recruit more inclusively: quick wins for your business](#), featuring expert guidance from Gemma Lloyd, founder of global DEI advocate [WORK180.com](#). This guide has been supplemented with insights and ideas from our BA Members and Investors in Cycling community, including Isla Rowntree, founder of Islabikes, and Bianca Carlin, HR Director at WiggleCRC. You can listen to our full conversation with Isla and Bianca in the [BA podcast](#), [Quick wins to improve diversity and inclusion in your business](#).

We recommend that you work with an HR professional to understand the wider context of [preventing discrimination in recruitment](#) (including your legal obligations), and how best to incorporate these additional tips into your hiring processes.

If you have inclusive recruitment insights to share, we would love to hear from you. Please reach out to us at [info@bicycleassociation.org.uk](mailto:info@bicycleassociation.org.uk).





# 1. Why is inclusive recruitment important?

## ‘Stronger than ever’ - the business case for diversity, equity and inclusion

According to new research by McKinsey, the business case for diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) in the UK is ‘stronger than ever’: diverse businesses are more profitable; they recruit - and retain - the best talent; make better decisions; have more motivated employees; perform better in a crisis; and have a superior understanding of customers’ needs<sup>1</sup>. An Accenture study found that 41% of shoppers removed at least 10% of their business from a retailer for their lack of focus on diversity, equity and inclusion<sup>2</sup>.

Taking action to recruit more diversely is, therefore, an important part of building resilience, competitiveness and sustainability into your business.

## Easier said than done?

However, many companies in the cycling industry experience challenges in their efforts to recruit more diverse talent, citing a lack of diversity in applicants for job vacancies, particularly for technical or industry-specific roles. With record job vacancies in the UK and beyond, talent shortages continue to be a significant issue, which has been compounded by Brexit in some sectors, including retail and logistics<sup>3</sup>.

Yet within the cycling industry there are also pockets of success - companies that have been tenacious, attacking the talent pool challenge from multiple angles and re-working their whole recruitment and retention process, while working systematically to make their workplace culture inclusive. Over time, these companies have succeeded in moving the dial: like Islabikes, who have increased female representation in their workforce from 3% to 48% over four years.

In this guide, we aim to help employers in the cycling industry overcome these challenges and make tangible progress towards more balanced representation in their workforce, by sharing expert guidance, together with the insights, experiences and practical tips of those who have ‘been there and done it’ in the cycling industry.

If you have inclusive recruitment insights to share, we would love to hear from you - please reach out to us at [info@bicycleassociation.org.uk](mailto:info@bicycleassociation.org.uk).

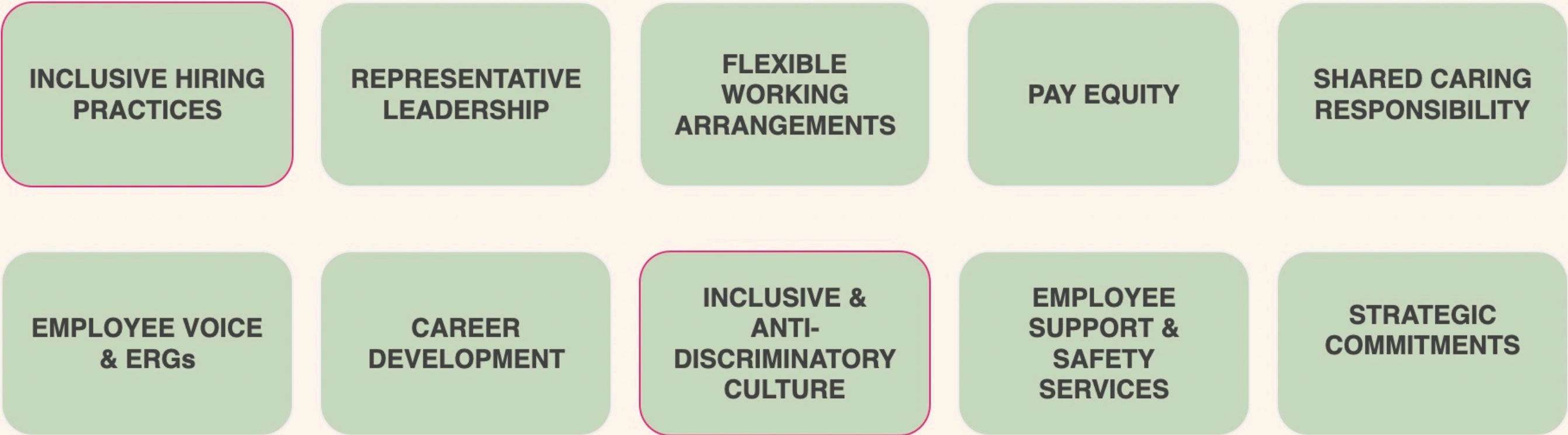
To find out more about the business benefits of diversity, equity and inclusion, read our full report, [Diversity in the Cycling Industry](#).

‘Stronger than ever’ - the business case for diversity, equity and inclusion

According to Gemma Lloyd, DEI is a marathon, not a sprint: “Quick wins will make improvements, but real change requires longer-term planning and cultural change efforts. Employers need to focus on continuous improvement and making progress over perfection.” Gemma pointed out that equality benefits everyone - for example, by offering all employees flexible working arrangements, men and women can share caring responsibilities at home.

Taking action to recruit more inclusively, then, is just one part of making your organisation a more diverse, equitable and inclusive place to work. If you are taking your first steps on this journey, you may also find the Bicycle Association’s [10-step diversity, equity and inclusion action plan](#), including a downloadable template, a useful resource in helping you set goals and track progress over time. This action plan is adapted from WORK180’s ten standards for driving diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace, shared with us by Gemma:

The ten standards for driving equity in the workplace



Poll: How far along the diversity, equity and inclusion journey is your organization?



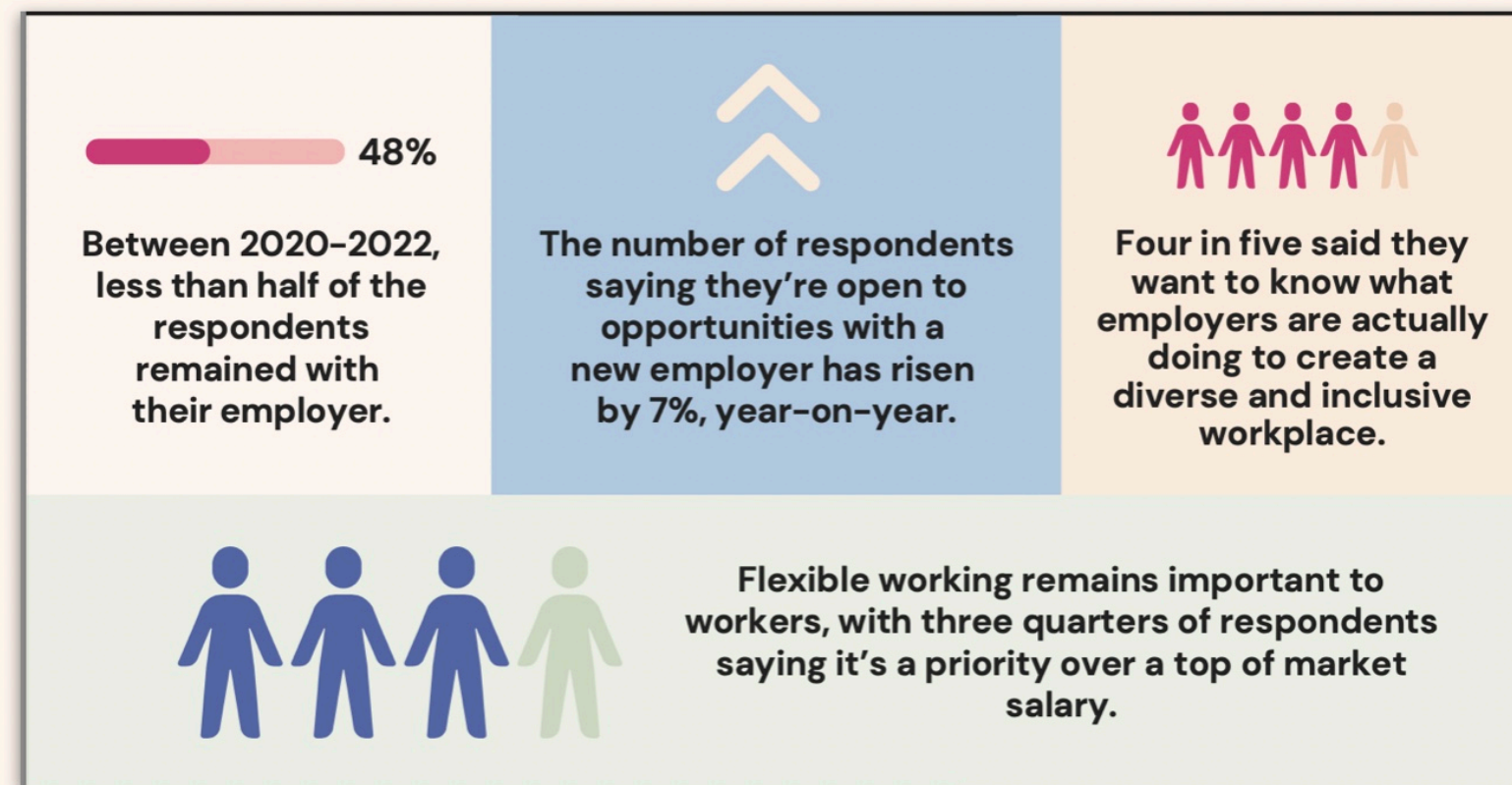


# 1.1 Our Downloadable DEI Action Plan:

10-step diversity, equity and inclusion action plan					
DEI standard	Objective	Actions	Accountability	By when	Measuring success
#1 We have inclusive hiring processes	We commit to fair and transparent hiring processes that empower people of all backgrounds and experiences to apply and know they will be genuinely considered.	e.g. 1. Advertise roles in a broad range of publications 2. Ensure ad wording, job spec and interview process are inclusive to a diverse range of candidates 3. Ensure a diverse range of candidates is represented at shortlist stage	e.g. HR Manager All hiring managers	e.g. Q2	e.g. Increase in the representation of diverse employees from ___% to ___%
#2 We champion representative leadership	We recognise that achieving balanced, representative leadership is vital to achieving diversity in our organisation and across the industry.				
#3 We embrace flexible working	We help every employee overcome workplace barriers and thrive, by normalising flexibility.				
#4 We are transparent and equitable about pay	We work towards true pay equity, promoting transparency and benchmarking to track, measure and prove progress.				
#5 We help everybody care	We promote shared responsibility of unpaid care, regardless of gender, to enable everybody to thrive in the workplace.				
#6 We listen and are data led	We measure our progress and create a listening culture that empowers all employees to share their experiences, learning from them to make lasting change.				
#7 We support career development for all	We nurture and retain our employees through career development support that builds confidence, skills, networks and direction.				
#8 We commit to an inclusive culture for everyone	We champion inclusive and anti-discriminatory cultures among employees and customers, in which a wide range of people can come together and thrive, recognising that inclusive organisations are better for all.				
#9 We offer safety and support services to all employees	We recognise the important role employers play in the removal of systemic barriers faced by women and marginalised groups (e.g., harassment, domestic violence) and offer robust support for those impacted.				
#10 We make strategic commitments to diversity, equity and inclusion	We lead from the top, making a formalised commitment to building and maintaining a diverse, equitable, inclusive organisation.				



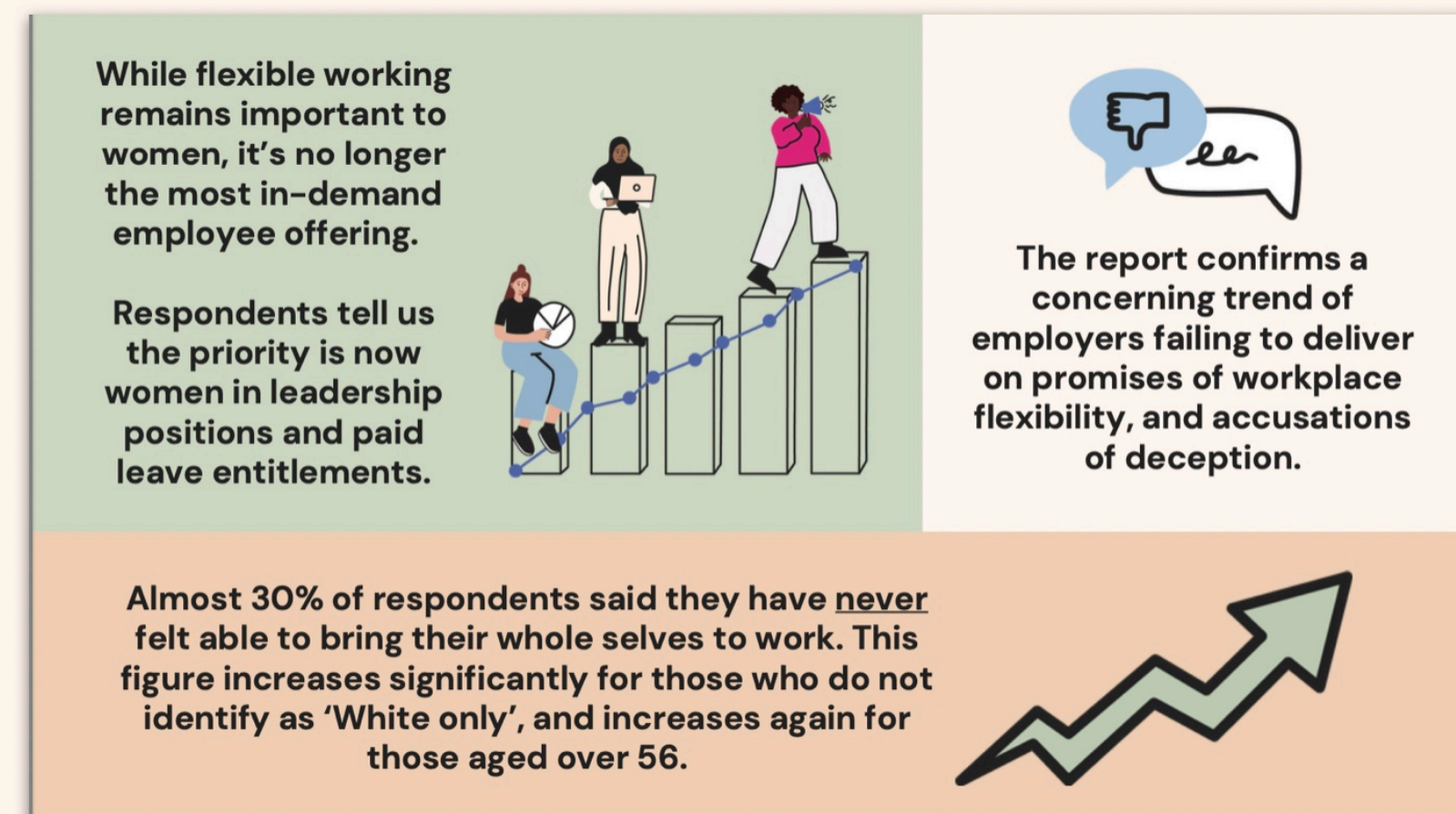
## Are you a place women and marginalized communities will want to work?



Source: [What Women Want Report 2023](#)

WORK180

Gemma also shared with us the results of a [WORK180 global survey, What Women Want 2023](#), inviting attendees to consider if their workplace was welcoming and inclusive to women and marginalised communities:



Source: [What Women Want Report 2023](#)

WORK180

## 2. Inclusive recruitment tips

### #1: Structure your job advertisements to be inclusive

As Isla Rowntree says, “you have to receive applications representative of more diversity before you even get into the recruitment process, to have a chance to change the mix of your organisation.” When deciding what information to include in a job ad, and in what order, Gemma Lloyd recommends first thinking carefully about the ‘What Women Want’ survey insights (see above) and including specific details that will encourage women and people from marginalised communities to apply.

**Here is a summary of her insights:**

#### Job title

- Choose a clear, accurate title
- Steer clear of titles that sound too fancy
- Do include a salary range

#### Who we are > Social impact

- Consider re-wording to ‘Social impact / Your mission’
- We are fortunate in the cycling industry to be able to draw on the health, wellness, environmental and social benefits of cycling. Foregrounding these, and showing how the role will make a positive impact, will appeal in particular to those who may not already be cycling enthusiasts

#### The role > How you’ll make an impact

- Consider re-wording to ‘What you’ll contribute to / How you’ll make an impact’
- As above, focus mainly on how the role will make a positive impact

#### Required skills > About you

- Consider re-wording to ‘On the first day we would expect you to / About you’, to give a more personal touch
- Think carefully about experience vs. potential, bearing in mind that asking for ‘x years of experience’ could deter younger candidates, or people who have taken time out from work for maternity/paternity/childcare, from applying
- Make sure that criteria relating to skills or qualifications are not unnecessarily restrictive - for example, encourage applicants to demonstrate ‘equivalent skills / experience’ if they don’t hold specific qualifications

#### Culture/Benefits > What we offer you

- Consider re-wording to ‘What we offer you’, to show a more personal touch

#### Apply Now > Continue the conversation

- Consider re-wording to ‘Continue the conversation’ - today, the interview process is becoming more of a two-way dialogue, with candidates also seeking an opportunity to interview the organisation to decide whether it offers a good fit, so this can resonate more powerfully



In summary, thinking about how you would like people to feel when they read your job ad is a powerful way to help guide the tone and information you include - in the words of Maya Angelou:





## #2: Use gender-neutral or feminine coded language in your job ad

**“I discovered that the wording in the ads were putting people off applying or even considering that the advert was meant for them...I was the employer that was saying, ‘well, we've put a job advert out there, 46 people have applied, and 45 of them are men - how can I recruit more women?’ and my colleagues challenged me and said, actually, it's the language that we're using in the job ads that we need to change.”**

**Isla Rowntree**

Research shows that different words conjure up different, and sometimes gendered, pictures and stereotypes in our minds. These words can be off-putting to certain groups of people, so being aware of, and swapping out, these words can be an effective way to encourage more diverse applicants. Importantly, research shows that masculine job ads deter women from applying, but not men - and feminine-coded job ads do not deter men or women. In other words, it is better to use neutral or feminine-coded language in your job ads.

There are many online tools available to help you - a search for ‘gender decoding job ad tool’ reveals many options.





We carried out a quick test of one such tool and the results were revealing, showing the subtle, unconscious and systemic nature of gender bias - for example, ‘male-coded’ words include ‘lead’, ‘confident’ and ‘independent’, while words such as ‘responsible’, ‘commitment’ and ‘cheery’ are apparently ‘female-coded’. Below, we have included a couple of anonymised ads, composed from merging several real ads posted on industry job boards. These ads overall show a bias towards male-coded words, despite following many of Gemma’s tips (see above) for an inclusive job ad structure:

Decode your text

↶ Undo

↷ Redo

✕ Clear

Head Mechanic

We are a busy bicycle workshop and retail unit based in ..., a new exciting destination with lots of businesses, bar and restaurants.

Our workshop is located in a vibrant neighborhood, surrounded by many green spaces.

We are a small team of passionate cyclists and mechanics, promoting a happy workplace characterized by positive relationships between colleagues and management.

The demand for our services is growing rapidly.

We work as a team undertaking all sorts of repairs and services to keep our customers’ bikes running in tip top condition.

The quality of our services and repairs are our top priority, whether they want a brand new bike bespoke to their requirements or top notches service on their latest road, we cater to everyone!

Job description

Are you an experienced bike mechanic with a passion for problem-solving and a **confident** approach to all types of bicycles? Do you have at least five years of experience in the field and the desire to **lead** a team of mechanics to success? If so, we have an exciting opportunity for you!

We are a growing bicycle shop based in a community orientated canalside destination and we are looking for a skilled and motivated Head Mechanic to join our team. The successful candidate will be **responsible** for **leading** a team of mechanics, ensuring that all work is carried out to the highest standards, and providing excellent customer service to our clients. The ideal candidate will have:

- A minimum of five years of experience in bike repairs and maintenance
- A problem-solving mindset and a **confident** approach to all types of bicycles
- Ability to work **autonomously** and with confidence in a fast-paced environment
- Cytech Level 2 or 3 qualification is desirable, but not essential with relevant experience.
- Excellent communication skills and the ability to work effectively within a team
- Willingness to work weekends on rotation
- A **commitment** to providing outstanding customer service

Job Role:

- Servicing and repairing bicycles to the highest standards
- Keeping on top of workshop stock and ensuring that stock is replenished before it runs out
- Occasionally sell bicycles, accessories and components
- Ensure the workshop is reasonably clean, tidy, and safe for use

In return, we offer:

- Flexibility and full-time role with 40 hours per week
- **Competitive** salary of £28,000 per Annum, + bonuses
- 28 days holidays
- Colleague discounts
- Free or discounted food and drinks in the surrounding restaurants.

If you are interested in applying for this position, please email your CV and cover letter to ...

We look forward to hearing from you!

Your results

① How it works

You're using **more** **male-coded** words than **female-coded** words.

6

2

Your text is more biased than most job ads on Totaljobs.com. **1.4%** of all words in your text are male-coded. We suggest replacing them:

autonomously

Competitive


confident

confident

lead

leading

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The important lesson here is that both the information you include, and the language you use, can make a big difference to who applies.

Bianca Carlin outlines how Wiggle CRC’s approach has changed over time, to be more inclusive: “**Historically we used to use lots of very movement-orientated words, so we’d talk about ‘coming and enjoying the ride’ and ‘coming for a run’, but actually, that language might isolate somebody who is part of the disability community, so actually we've taken a lot of that language out. We also add positive diversity statements to all of our adverts - we call it our diversity commitment, which we share externally, and link that to all of our adverts, so that people can access that to see what we stand for. We've also reviewed all the imagery we use - when I first started [at Wiggle], most of the imagery would be white middle-aged men on bikes. We've tried to change that now, so we represent a much wider group - and that's not just restricted to our job ads, we are now doing that across our marketing ... We’ve also started signposting in our job ads, for example to flexible working or parental leave, so we might appeal to a wider demographic.**”

Isla Rowntree offers further advice: “**In our adverts for operational roles and workshop roles we don’t include the headline words ‘mechanic’ or ‘workshop’ because as women, even though we're not thinking consciously ‘we can't do that’, subconsciously we’ve been taught that's not for us. Right at the start, with the name of the job title, we're potentially putting off a whole raft of applicants. That was revelatory for us as a business. Really working on that detail in every single line of the job advert...significantly changed the makeup of the initial applications that we received, for all roles within the organisation and particularly the more technical roles.**”

Decode your text

Undo

Redo

Clear

Store Manager

We are looking for someone to join our ... Store as Store Manager to provide exceptional customer service to help our customers.

You will want to get involved with Retail and have a passion for the *whole* outdoors. This role will involve you being a duty manager in the absence of the Store Manager, so this is a great opportunity to develop your retail **leadership** skills and experience through taking on additional **responsibilities** and greater involvement in commercial **decision** making.

About the Team

Our customer facing staff play a huge part within ..., which is why this is an exciting opportunity for the **individual** who wants to be part of a growing retailer, offering real service with personality.

We are champions of being a sustainable brand and by choosing to do the right thing and aiming to do better continuously, we are world class at what we do; these guiding **principles** are embraced throughout our Retail Team.

We enjoy serving customers and enjoy closing a sale. We are helpful, **cheery**, engaging and knowledgeable. We feel pride when we get a review, see customers with our products in use, win awards.

About you

Take pride in offering great service and love being on shop floor

Motivated to get things done, keen to be outdoorsy & entrepreneurial & work with the team to build something a bit different & special

Have an awareness across a range of outdoor gear and activities

Perks of the job

We truly believe that our success **depends** on the people that work here and the culture we create and are passionate about providing a place people want to work. We offer a range of benefits to enhance your career and wellbeing; ability to buy extra holiday, ... discount for you, your family and friends, life insurance, critical illness cover, cycle to work scheme, enhanced pension contributions, paid volunteer days and we are environmentally and sustainability conscious and we promote a learning culture.

We value all cultures, backgrounds and experiences, ... is an equal opportunity employer and welcomes everyone to our team, so be yourself, join our community and help us ....

We’re a bunch of do-ers that make things happen. We enjoy the industry and energy of work and find reward in what we achieve so if you feel this role is a good fit, we’d love to hear from you.

Your results

How it works

You're using **more** **male-coded** words than **female-coded** words.

4

3

Your text is more biased than most job ads on Totaljobs.com. **1.0%** of all words in your text are male-coded. We suggest replacing them:

decision

individual

leadership

principles



### #3: Share your benefits publicly on your website

Alongside encouraging prospective applicants to ‘continue the conversation’, sharing specific details of the benefits and policies your company offers - for example, details about job flexibility at your company, parental leave policies, mentoring and coaching opportunities, personal and professional growth opportunities - can really help to build trust. Here is an [example from Islabikes](#).

#### What can we offer you?

- We are a Living Wage employer and offer a basic starting rate of £9.30 per hour for unqualified team members
- Annual salary reviews that consider inflation, performance and personal contribution to the business
- 28 days’ paid annual leave (including bank holidays), plus the option of an additional 10 days’ unpaid leave
- Full-time, part-time and flexible working considered
- Salary sacrifice scheme for childcare payments
- Loan our children’s bikes for your dependents free-of-charge
- Emphasis on maintaining a good work/life balance
- If overtime is required, we pay you for every minute you work
- Clean working environment with Islabikes branded uniform provided free-of-charge
- Full in-house training provided with further full-funded training opportunities available
- Cycle to work scheme with the ability to earn up to £4 per day
- Loan one of our adult bikes free-of-charge
- Staff discount scheme for friends and family
- A positive, driven working environment with opportunities to build your skill set and knowledge and develop professionally

ISLABIKES



#### What kind of person do we look for?

- Ability to multi-task, organise yourself and communicate effectively
- Enthusiasm for all things innovative in design and exceptional quality
- Customer focussed and able to put the customer at the centre of all actions
- Driven to achieve efficient working practices
- Interest in cycling and a passion to learn more
- Team player with the motivation to seek opportunities
- Attention to detail, delivering to a high standard



ISLABIKES


Shop

Explore

Contact

Our ground-breaking approach to maternity and paternity leave

News | Jun 04, 2018 | Dave Bowater



Having a child is a life-defining moment yet despite changes in legislation, both parents still do not enjoy the same parental leave benefits. At Islabikes we've decided to take the initiative by introducing a ground-breaking new parental leave policy.

What does this mean?

- 33 weeks at 50% of national living wage
- Additional leave if your baby is premature
- Return to work bonus of up to 1-months' salary
- Up to 8-week phased return to work and re-induction
- Flexible working options in the first 6-months of your return
- Review of flexible working options at the end of the 6-months to determine a long-term working plan

So why is this so important?

In 2015 the government introduced shared parental leave. Less than 1% of new fathers take advantage of it. It simply isn't working. Whilst researching the policy online, we were shocked to find only 1 company offering similar benefits. With the government's plans not working, it's up to industry to take up the gauntlet. The more employers that offer truly equal parental leave, the more pressure will be placed on others to follow suit.


We think it's really important to maximise employees enjoyment of this time without having a long-term effect on their working ambitions. With expanded options for all parents, we hope that it will not only encourage more dads to spend time with their new-born but will also encourage more women back into work after having their baby and should make the transition much easier.

If you have further examples to share, we would love to include them in this guide - please reach out to us at [info@bicycleassociation.org.uk](mailto:info@bicycleassociation.org.uk)




Let's work together to make the world better

Have a cause you're passionate about? We'll support you any way we can. Whether you need extra funding, paid time off or another set of eager hands, we're always happy to help.



Charity support

In addition to the charity, advocacy and community programmes we support that help make the world a better place with bikes, we support our employees charitable donations and fundraising to the causes they are passionate with our matched donations programme and fundraising fund.



Volunteer PTO

All Trek employees have access to paid time off to volunteer for causes that help build our communities, so whether you want to spend the day working at a food bank or empowering our youth, we'll support you every step of the way.


Lunch ride, anyone?

Humans aren't meant to sit at a desk eight hours a day. Whatever part of the business you're in, we encourage you to do things during your workday that help you feel your very best. Whether it's a lunch ride with your colleagues, a midday walk or weekly therapy, we'll do whatever we can to support you and make sure you have the time and resources you need to thrive both mentally and physically.

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Of course, it is also important to share your commitment to diversity and inclusion practices - for example, by sharing that you have signed the BA's diversity pledge, by detailing your specific commitments to diversity and inclusion, and by including a personalised inclusive hiring statement. Here are a few examples from our Members and Investors in Cycling:

<https://www.cannondale.com/en-gb/careers>

#### Diversity and Inclusion

At Cannondale, we recognize that progress cannot be achieved in solitude. That's why we cultivate a space for diverse ideas to thrive, both inside and outside the office. Through our women's affinity group, Growth in Relationships and Opportunities for Women (GROW), we encourage connectivity and authentic interaction with peers to form powerful relationships that drive change forward. GROW's mission is to give women a safe, inviting place to make connections, grow professionally, and facilitate learning and idea exchange in our workplace, our business, and our communities.

<https://www.wiggle.com/>

Being diverse and inclusive are key to our company values. You can find out more about the actions we're taking to support diversity on the Wiggle or Chain Reaction careers page on our websites. Please do not hesitate to contact our talent team if you would like to discuss access needs and reasonable adjustments further. We are constantly striving to be a better business, and not just because it makes good business sense, but it's the right thing to do.

<https://www.frogbikes.com/careers>

At Frog, everything we do revolves around our values of People, Planet, Product and Profit: treading lightly on the planet, treating everybody with respect, and producing a responsible, sustainable and desirable product. We look for the same values in our employees. If you meet some but not all the criteria above but believe you have what it takes to succeed in this role, please do apply, we'd like to hear from you.

<https://www.lbk.org.uk/about>

#### Our role.

The London Bike Kitchen is a not-for-profit that teaches and supports people in becoming self-sufficient and proficient in bike maintenance. We welcome those from all backgrounds and cycles and encourage them to contribute to community bike culture in London and the world.

#### Our objectives are to:

- a) Promote self-reliance and confidence through education
- b) Make cycle maintenance accessible and affordable
- c) Get more people of all backgrounds working on their bikes

As a not-for-profit social enterprise, our goal is to create a workshop that is self-sustaining and open to everyone. The money that you spend here will subsidise classes and shop time for those from disadvantaged backgrounds, allowing them to gain access to bikes and bicycle education.

<https://www.islabikes.co.uk/pages/careers>

We welcome applications from enthusiastic people with an insatiable appetite to learn.

Qualifications or previous experience are not essential to be part of the Islabikes team, as much of our training is conducted in-house. However, if you do have relevant or transferable experience, make sure you tell us about it in your application. We aim to give staff the most rounded view of the business possible. After you are fully trained there may be opportunities to gain skills and experience in another part of the business that you find interesting.

If you have further examples to share, we would love to include them in this guide - please reach out to us at [info@bicycleassociation.org.uk](mailto:info@bicycleassociation.org.uk)



## #4: Share employee images and stories to bring your policies and benefits to life

Creating stories of employees, whether as images, videos or blogs, and sharing these on your website and social channels, can really bring your inclusive policies and benefits to life, and show how they are making a difference for your people. According to research shared with us by Gemma Lloyd, facts are 20 times more likely to be remembered if they're part of the story, and WORK180.com's own data shows on average an increase of women and marginalised communities applying to roles by 52% and sometimes up to 600%, through sharing a story. There are some powerful examples of [these employee stories on the WORK180 blog](#). Here are some further examples from the cycling industry:



<https://www.lbk.org.uk/about>

SENIOR CONCEPT DESIGNER

Kayla Clarot

"I've never had so many opportunities at one time to grow as a designer—you can jump rungs pretty quickly here. It's also one of those places where you can have an idea, design it, pitch it, and if you stand your ground and you really believe in it, the odds are pretty decent that it'll get made. There aren't a lot of places like that."



<https://www.specialized.com/gb/en/careers>



# About Islabikes

- Intelligent design
- Exceptional quality
- First class customer service

Islabikes has single-handedly redefined the notion of a child’s bicycle with a product unparalleled in its depth of design detail. We believe in striving for excellence and efficiency, not just in our products but in our workforce too and every member of our growing team is committed to delivering the best for our customers.

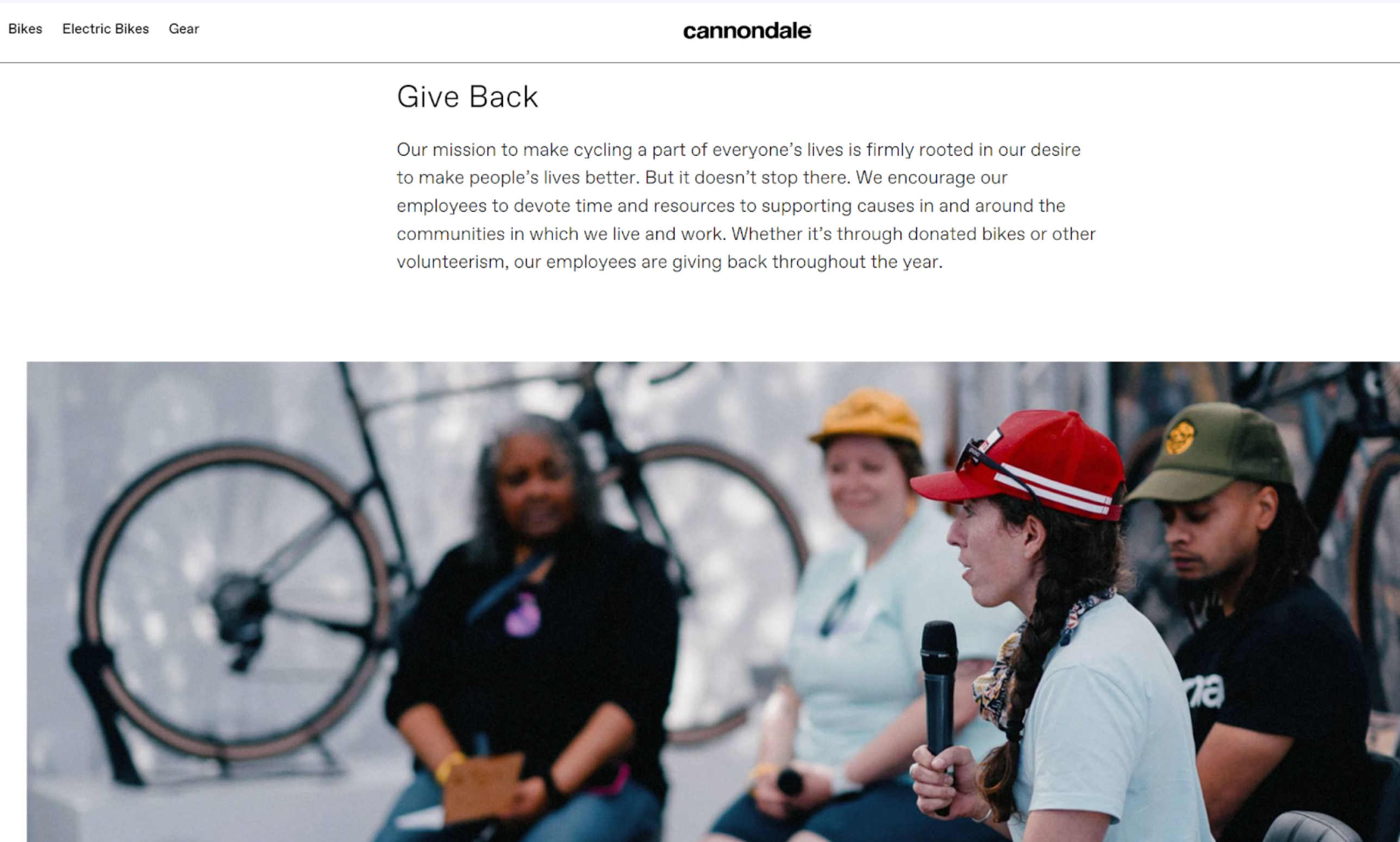
Learn more at our [Story](#) page.



<https://www.lbk.org.uk/about>

<https://www.islabikes.co.uk/pages/careers>

<https://www.cannondale.com/en-gb/careers>



If you have further examples to share, we would love to include them in this guide - please reach out to us at [info@bicycleassociation.org.uk](mailto:info@bicycleassociation.org.uk)



## #5: Promote your jobs to different audiences

Once you have put in all the hard work to make your job ads and careers page more inclusive, an important next step is to think carefully about where you will promote and advertise these roles. Sticking to the same channels you have always used is likely to yield similar results, so think creatively: are there local cycling, community or Facebook groups who could share your ads? Could your customers help connect you with new audiences? Encouraging (with or without a financial incentive) your staff - particularly those who represent marginalised groups - to recommend roles to their own friends and family is also a powerful way to encourage more diverse applicants to apply.

Aneela McKenna, MTB coach and Founder of [Mòr Diversity](#) adds the following suggestions to help cycle businesses widen the talent pool and reach out to a more diverse audience:

- Engage in partnerships with the local schools/college.
- Reach out to inclusive cycling groups/clubs in your local area.
- Be active on social media – share employee stories and build diversity into this.
- Enable potential applicants to register for future vacancies /receive job alerts.
- Consider returner programmes, mentoring opportunities and internships.
- Give feedback to unsuccessful candidates.
- Have an open day/career event/run mechanics events for minority groups, to build relationships and earn trust).





## #6: Standardise interview formats, criteria and scoring

Ensuring that your interview process is fair for all candidates is a crucial part of becoming an inclusive employer. During our webinar, Gemma described a scenario which may sound familiar to many in the cycling industry: during an interview, a shared passion for a certain style of riding/brand/product/trail emerges, the list of interview questions is abandoned and an animated conversation about said riding/brand/product/trail takes place instead. While it may be tempting to consider this as a positive experience, demonstrating a candidate's cultural fit with an organisation, Gemma warns us that in fact, what this actually exposes is the unconscious biases that make us more likely to select "people like me", regardless of their objective fit for a specific role. To counter this bias, Gemma offers the following three recommendations:

- Diverse interview panels
- Commitment to diverse candidate shortlisting
- Standardised interview formats, criteria and scoring

Isla explains how this works in practice at Islabikes: "It's really important to have very structured interviews, where you know what you're seeking in the role, and that also, within that particular set of skills or experience, you drill down with specific questions to draw out whether that person is a good match or not. We also have a scoring system with marking frames, where you score each of those individual aspects on a predetermined scale. We then input the scores onto a spreadsheet, with minimum hurdles for some of the aspects. In this way, we are trying to allow for our own biases as an interviewer, and to put as much in place to screen those out, so that we don't end up recruiting the person we like, which is usually the person that's like me. I really strongly recommend that anybody who is serious about this does the legwork in the interview structure phase - once you've got it in place, you can apply it to lots of different roles."

We have also adapted our interview process for technical roles, so that it is more inclusive for people with little or no experience of bikes, as we offer in-house training to all staff in any case. So, for example, instead of screening candidates based on existing skills, we now give them a simpler bike assembly task, with clear instructions, and score them based on their manual dexterity and their ability to follow instructions."

Bianca also sheds light on the system-based approach used at WiggleCRC: "We have fairly structured questions from a competency base that we've preset for the levels across our business, which sit in line with our values and culture. These questions cover a wide spectrum. In addition to these, we have a set of technical, job-specific questions which each candidate is asked. We're very fortunate that we have a system now, where we input all interview data and can run reports and look at trends. It's a relatively new system, but aspirationally, we would like to use it to help us identify trends and pathways, and see where we can make improvements, for example to the spread of demographic we have within the business, or to examine where the blockers may be in the process - so, perhaps we have a really diverse set of applications, but these individuals are not making it into the business. Identifying and making sure we can remove those blockers, whether we're creating them ourselves, or they are being experienced by the candidates - I think it would be interesting to flush that data out, so we can do better for everyone."

However, amid all the structure of a data-led approach, Bianca urges us to continue to look for those personal connections: "I really strongly believe that with all this work we are doing to try and make these processes fairer and more inclusive, we don't want it to become like a cage that managers sit within, too afraid to get things wrong or say the wrong thing, because then you lose the heart and the soul of the business. So for us, we do have a structure, but we still allow some personality to come through. We've coupled all our recruitment work with training and development on different approaches, and learning from different people to try and open people's hearts and minds to what may be happening 'under the bonnet' - things they may not be aware they've been doing for some time - but you definitely still want those connections to happen, because that's when you win people in the interview process - when they really connect with the organisation, rather than necessary a person. You definitely don't want to lose this."



## #7: Make the interview process accessible for all

To ensure your interview process is accessible for all candidates, take time to work through - ideally with an HR professional - what adjustments you may need to make. For example, is the meeting room accessible and appropriate for those with physical disabilities? Will you need to allow extra time, or could you share questions in advance to allow those with cognitive disabilities, or neurodiversity, to give their best on interview day?

Beyond the interview itself, employers who take inclusivity seriously keep an open mind about the adaptations they may need to make to accommodate the working environment of people with disabilities. Here, a disabled Level 3 Cytech technician working in the cycling industry describes two very different interview experiences:

“Until 2021, I’d run my own workshop, but Covid supply issues had made things very difficult and so I decided to look for salaried work. Through word of mouth I heard of a job at a local bike shop. I met them, they liked me and offered me a job. I called them back to accept the job and explain about my disabilities, and the support available to employers through the ‘Access to Work’ funding to make accommodations for me. Up to that point, I’d felt the job had been mine, but straight away, on the phone, everything changed and they told me they had found someone else.

The interview with my current employer was like a breath of fresh air. I’m aware I don’t have to disclose my disabilities at interview, but now I prefer to be up front. In the interview, which was with the MD and my manager, the MD did express some concerns about how the company might manage my neurological conditions, but we talked through the detail of this and I was able to reassure him. I was offered the job and the company has been really good in making changes to accommodate me, including adjusting the office layout and providing me with a raised desk and stool.”





## #8: Introduce a formal inclusive recruitment policy, including an on-boarding process

To ensure everyone in your business implements these tips consistently, and in particular all those involved in the recruitment process, an important final step is to capture all of the actions you are taking in a formal document, which is shared across the business and reviewed/updated as necessary.

Aneela McKenna, founder of [Mòr Diversity](#) also advocates taking time to develop a comprehensive on-boarding process for new starters:

"On-boarding is very much part of the recruitment cycle. It's all well and good recruiting a more diverse talent pool, but what about when they are appointed - what is the on-boarding process like? How will you make people feel welcome and encourage them to stay on, especially when they are in the minority and from an underrepresented group?"

An online search for 'onboarding process' returns many free templates and checklists, to help you design your process.







### 3. SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION—ISLABIKES

We have reproduced in the following pages an example of an inclusive **job description for a Cycle Technician**, with kind permission from Islabikes.

**Sarah Worrallo of Islabikes explains:**

“The opening diversity statement is at the beginning of the advert to set out what we believe in and why we value a diverse workforce. We removed words we deemed as masculine such as ‘workshop’ and ‘mechanic’. We felt they set the scene as a grubby garage setting, which may put off applicants! In the ‘what we can offer you’ section, we added working around school/childcare commitments, as we’ve found juggling childcare is a massive barrier to working and parents often feel guilty for having to do the school run. We added in skills we need to do the job, instead of asking for specific experience required. An example I’ve used is someone who has a hobby that requires dexterity and patience, as the bike PDI process can be quite fiddly. At interview, I always encourage applicants to think about experiences inside and outside of work.”





# SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION—ISLABIKES

**Job Title:** Bicycle Technician

**Salary:** Dependent on experience

**Hours:**

**Date:**

Islabikes have two core teams; bicycle technicians and customer service advisors. Our roles and responsibilities are varied and there are opportunities to be involved in and support other areas of the business.

**Islabikes Equity and Diversity Statement:**

Islabikes is committed to equity, diversity and inclusion in our staff, work environment, and the change we want to see in the cycling industry and our society. We value a diverse team with a wide range of life experiences because we recognise that we're stronger when we benefit from the innovative contributions, creative solutions, practical know-how, and community insights brought by people of different backgrounds. We strongly encourage applicants from those who will contribute to this diversity. As users of the disability confident scheme, we guarantee to interview all disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for the vacancy.





# SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION—ISLABIKES

## The Position:

We're currently recruiting a positive and dependable person to support with the preparation, servicing, and delivery of bicycles.

## What will you do?

*Are you methodical and organized? Do you have an eye for detail and enjoy following a process step by step? You will:*

- Follow guidelines to prepare high quality bicycles and carry out servicing on our full range of bikes.
- Locate and process orders for customers correctly and efficiently
- Support incoming deliveries by organizing and moving stock

## Are you good at checking things are correct and spotting errors? You will:

- Understand the needs of Islabikes customers
- Check the quality of our products and feedback concerns to the quality team
- Maintain a clean and organised workspace
- Use computer software to process deliveries to customers

## What kind of person do we look for?

- Ability to multi-task, organise yourself and communicate effectively
- Passionate about innovative design and exceptional quality
- Customer focused and able to put the customer at the center of all your actions
- Driven to achieve efficient and better working practices
- Team player with the motivation to seek development and training opportunities
- Attention to detail, delivering your work to a high standard

## What else can you get involved in at Islabikes?

- Support and advise customers
- Create images, text and graphics for [www.islabikes.co.uk](http://www.islabikes.co.uk)
- Create social media and marketing material
- Stock administration and control
- This list is not exhaustive, if you are driven and willing to learn we want to hear from you.



# SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION—ISLABIKES



## Who are Islabikes?

Islabikes was founded by renowned British bicycle designer Isla Rowntree, one of the few female designers in the industry.

## Our aim is to provide a better cycling experience through...

- Intelligent design
- Exceptional quality
- First class customer experience
- Environmental and social responsibility

Islabikes has single-handedly redefined the notion of a child's bicycle with a product unparalleled in its depth of design detail. We believe in striving for excellence and efficiency, in our products and our team, with everyone committed to delivering the best for our customers.

Learn more on our [Why Islabikes?](#) page on our website.

## Want to join our team?

Send us your completed application form, on our careers page. If you have further questions, give Sarah a call on for an informal chat: 01584 708383

**Closing Date:**

## What can we offer you?

- We are a Living Wage employer and offer a basic starting rate £10.90 for unqualified team members
- Full-time, part-time and flexible working inc. job shares, allowing you to work around other commitments such as childcare or the school run
- Salary sacrifice scheme for childcare payments
- 28 days paid annual leave (including bank holidays), plus the option of an additional 10 days' unpaid leave (pro-rated for part time employees)
- Emphasis on maintaining a good work/life balance
- Annual salary reviews that consider inflation, performance and personal contribution to the business
- If overtime is required, we pay you for every minute you work
- Clean working environment with Islabikes branded uniform provided free of charge
- Earn £4 per day for cycling or walking to and from work
- Staff discount scheme for friends and family
- Maternity and Paternity paid at 100% of your salary for the first six weeks
- A positive, driven working environment with opportunities to build your skill set and knowledge and develop professionally



# SUMMARY CHECKLIST

**Here is a handy checklist of steps all employers can take to make hiring practices more inclusive, which can be implemented from today:**

- Include an inclusive ‘call to action’ in job advertisements
- Use gender-neutral language in job advertisements
- Be transparent with policies and benefits
- Promote jobs to different audiences
- Have diverse interview panels
- Commit to diverse candidate shortlisting
- Standardise interview formats, criteria and scoring
- Make the interview process accessible to all
- Introduce a formal policy and process across the organisation, to support diverse and inclusive hiring practices

**Bianca offers us valuable final words:**

*“My advice is to take the first step, even if it is scary. You might not get everything right, but the first step is the hardest one and in our experience, we find that people don't actually mind if you get it wrong, as long as you're open to feedback, you listen to it and then you respond to make changes as necessary. When you're on the journey, it gathers speed and momentum and people jump on with you, and they can help you and guide you. So, don't be afraid of making a mistake or not getting everything perfect - it's about progress, not perfection.”*





## FURTHER RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

Please visit [our Diversity webpage](#) for a growing list of resources, links and further reading.

1. McKinsey & Company (2023) *[Fixing the ladder: How UK businesses benefit from better social mobility](#)* [Accessed 27/04/23]
2. Standish, J. (2019) *[All in: Inclusion & Diversity drive shopper habits](#)* [Accessed 27/04/23]
3. Business in the Community (2021) *[The Times Top 50 Employers for Women](#)* [Accessed 27/04/23]



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