

## IMPACT REPORT



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## I. Vision & Mission

BeOnBoard envisions a society where all citizens are fairly and **equitably represented** at the table with decision-makers and the leaders in Bristol and nationally are representative of the diverse population they are serving.

With this vision in mind, BeOnBoard aims to **increase diversity at senior level**, mainly in terms of ethnicity and gender, in the private and voluntary sector.

The initiative was sparked by the realisation that there is a significant amount of **unlocked potential for developing outstanding future leaders** within our BAME communities.

Responding to this challenge, BeOnBoard delivers on four main objectives:

- 1. Identifying emerging leaders** from diverse backgrounds across the city and region to build a talent-pool of highly skilled individuals with great potential for leadership.
- 2. Supporting their professional development** through the provision of training – where required – to make them board-ready.
- 3. Providing a platform to connect** business Boards to potential Board members from the talent-pool e.g. through networking events, individual introductions and more.
- 4. Providing support and mentoring** throughout the application process and after the placement to ensure the candidate's success.

## II. Demographics

As part of the delivery of objective 1, in May 2019 BeOnBoard has launched its inaugural round of training sessions to improve board-readiness levels across its talent-pool.

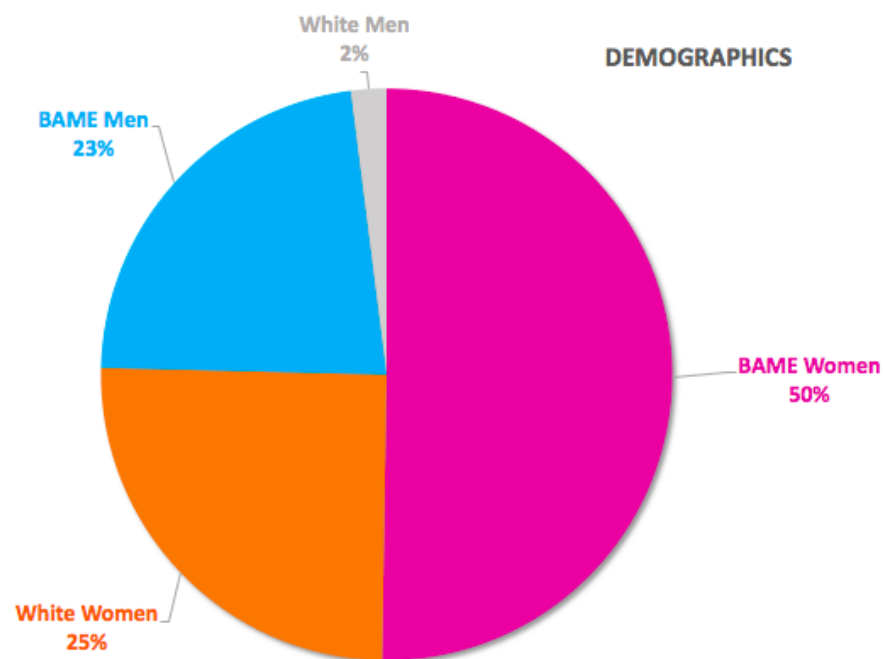
The sessions were structured as introductory half-a-day courses with the following time schedule:

1. **Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup>** - Inspiring Your Board Career
2. **Thursday 9<sup>th</sup>** - Inspiring Your Board Career
3. **Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup>** - Developing Your Board CV
4. **Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup>** - Developing Your Board CV

Whilst the 'Inspiring your Board Career' session included an overview of all the essential aspects to understand Boards' structures, roles and responsibilities, the 'Developing Your Board CV' session focused on practical exercises for identifying one-self's key strengths for Boards and tailor one's own CVs specifically for Board applications.

The sessions included **high-profile speakers**, such as **Jane Roscoe**, Director and CEO of the London Film School, and **Kate Anthony Wilkinson**, Group General Counsel to Mulberry, to share their extensive first-hand experience on various Boards across the city.

Each session was attended by an average amount of 10 participants, resulting in **40 people trained in multiple areas.**



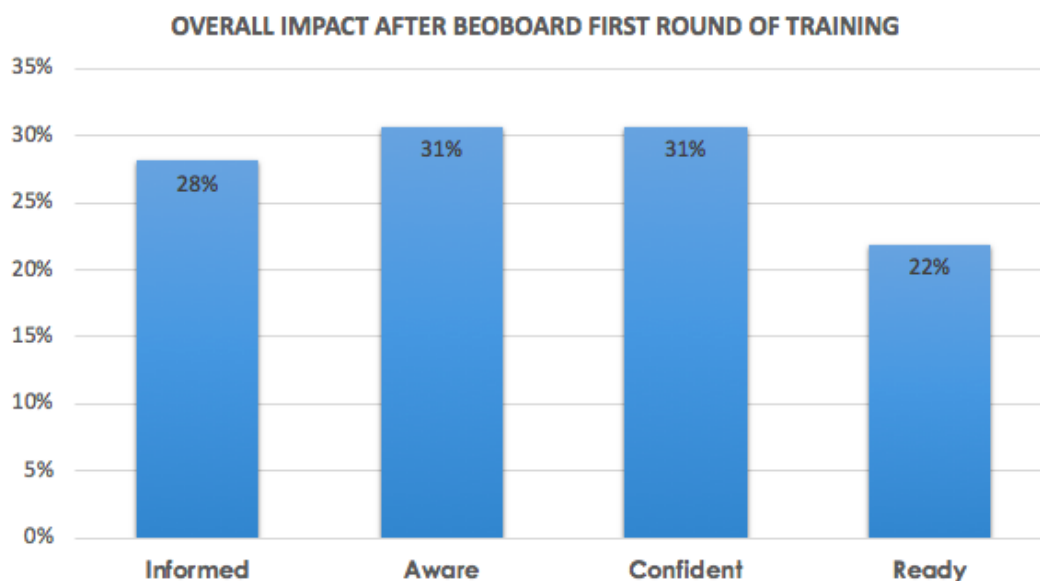
Out of the 40 people, 50% were BAME women and 23% were BAME men, resulting in **73% overall BAME participants**.

In terms of gender, **75% of total participants identifies as a woman**.

### III. Impact

BeOnBoard ensured an accurate and comprehensive assessment of its impact by recording feedback directly from the trainees during all sittings.

After only four sessions of 3 hours each, BeOnBoard was able to make an exceptional impact on the candidates' professional careers, as evident from the following figures of average **improvement across all sessions**:



- **28% increase in trainees' knowledge** on Board roles and responsibilities;
- **31% increase of awareness** on what Chairs are looking for in a Board candidate;
- **31% confidence increase** in identifying one self's relevant skills for Board positions;

- **22% increase in candidates' overall readiness** to apply for Board vacancies.

Upon completion of the introductory training, almost **70% of total participants** stated that they now feel either **'informed'** or **'very informed'** on Boards dynamics and the responsibilities that being a Board member requires.

Moreover, by the end of the 3 hours almost **50% felt 'confident' or 'very confident'** when approaching the application process for Board vacancies.

The second and fourth sessions were particularly effective, ending with respectively with 78% and a 100% of participants declaring that they now feel knowledgeable about the above-mentioned themes and almost **60% felt immediately ready to apply for a Board vacancy.**

#### **IV. Feedback**

Among the qualitative feedback, the most common qualities used to describe the training were **'very informative'** and **'very useful'**. Clear appreciation was also shown to the speakers and their precious insights they brought into what is required to be a successful NED, as well to the facilitators due to their ability to create a **'relaxed environment'** and a **'good atmosphere'**.

Some of the qualitative comments can be found below:

*"Excellent – would recommend to others (and have)."*

*"A great opportunity. Good content, great to build a network, please shout louder about this!"*

*"BeOnBoard is needed – fulfils a gap by acting as a bridge."*

*"It was really good – some of the best training I've ever had."*

*"The workshop has helped me to focus on strategic leadership skills for NED roles, helped me unpack my tactical skills and to include a line pointing out the skills you would bring to their board – priceless!"*

Whilst the training was delivered with positivity and encouragement, at the same time it created a safe environment for **sincere discussion around the barriers** to equitable representation at senior leadership and the challenges that come with the commitment of being a contributor at decision-making level.

This honest approach helped candidates assess their readiness or, in some cases, lack of thereof:

“This was good training; however, it has put me off. This is not a negative, it's just not right for me now. I hope to revisit this in the future.”

“Very useful. I have a meeting next week regarding an opportunity to become a NED & I now am confident to ask the correct information. Thanks.”

This also helped them reflect on what skills should be developed to allow them to achieve a sense of confidence and readiness as outlined in the following section.

## **V. Recommendations for future training**

When answering the open question about areas or skills to be explored in future training sessions run by BeOnBoard, the vast majority of demands were for further practice in re-structuring **CVs and cover letter (18%)** for Board applications.

At the second place is **Finance & Risk Management** with **16%** of mentions. This element has been cited multiple times during all sessions as one of the key areas to be developed among candidates.

In addition, a considerable number of participants asked for guidance in regard to **Governance & Legal (14%)** requirements, as well as guidance on how to **Research/Find Board Opportunities (14%)**, and how to develop **Negotiating & Influencing skills (14%)**.



Moreover, **Identifying Transferable skills (9%)** has been deemed as a fairly important area to explore, followed by **Strategic Thinking (7%)** and **Interviewing Techniques (5%)**.

Finally, the last two skills mentioned to be developed are **Diplomacy & Managing Conflict (2%)** and **Client Relationship Management (1%)**.

## VI. Beyond Training

Recommendations were not limited to training modules; the necessity for **'one-on-one support across all stages of the application process'** was stated by four different individuals in the feedback.

Another frequent request was the opportunity for **one-on-one consultancy** on how to maximise transferable Board skills while on current professional positions.

Furthermore, a couple of respondents have explained that they wish for BeOnBoard to offer the opportunity to observe a Board before applying or to offer the '**A day in the life of a Board member**' format type of experience.

Finally, it was stated that an ongoing **networking environment** of more meetings would be useful.