

Race and Recruitment: Exposing the Barriers



29%

of both white and BAME applicants secured jobs when applying directly to an employer

44%

of white applicants but only 29% of BAME candidates were offered jobs when applying through a recruitment agency

Exposing the barriers to recruitment



Foreword from
Sandra Kerr OBE,
Director, Race for
Opportunity

Having reviewed the findings of our latest research, **'Race and Recruitment: Exposing the Barriers'** I am compelled to ask recruitment agencies and recruitment professionals to scrutinise their current processes to check for fairness and transparency when dealing with job seekers from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The BAME candidates interviewed in this research were more likely to be qualified to degree level than white respondents, but less likely to get a job through a recruitment agency.



Why?

'Race to Progress: Breaking down Barriers', our research report published in 2011, highlighted the need to engage with the UK recruitment industry in light of the research's findings on perceptions of casual racial discrimination from some recruitment agencies when dealing with black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) clients. Prior to this report, Race for Opportunity had already engaged with employers and recruitment agencies in our Recruitment Industry Engagement Initiative (RIEI) in order to work together to find constructive solutions to the issues of diversifying recruitment in general.

Following on from Recommendation Three in 'Race for Progress: Breaking Down Barriers', we promised to engage head on with recruitment agencies and employers to look at what actions need to be taken. Our factsheets for employers, recruitment agencies and candidates are intended to combat the barriers that we found.

Close 

how ?

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why ?

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How?

In Q4 2011, as part of the Mayoral initiative to support businesses and strengthen their ability to become more diverse, Race for Opportunity and Diversity Works for London (DWfL), commissioned SPA Future Thinking to carry out a survey amongst applicants and employees to find out whether any bias was identifiable that affected the chances of BAME candidates in recruitment.

2,692 people who had looked for a job in the last 12 months responded, 2,038 were white and 580 BAME.

It is important to note that the sample was not random; it was achieved by Race for Opportunity partner organisations, employers and recruitment agencies distributing a survey to their contact database. Race for Opportunity employers have a strong record on diverse recruitment.

Close 

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how ?

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Exposing the barriers for BAME

candidates with recruitment agencies



Our research has exposed **four key stats** that demonstrate the challenge BAME candidates face when applying for jobs directly to an employer or through a recruitment agency.

1 2 3 4

BAME respondents were **more likely to be qualified to degree level** than white respondents, and were younger on average. Despite this, BAME applicants were **less likely to be offered a job through a recruitment agency**.

Exposing the barriers for BAME

candidates with recruitment agencies

1

29% of the BAME candidates who applied through a recruitment agency were offered a job, compared to 44% of white applicants.

Close



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1

2

3

4

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Exposing the barriers for BAME

candidates with recruitment agencies

2

57% of BAME applicants were invited to interviews through a recruitment agency, compared to 73% of white candidates.

Close



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1

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4

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Exposing the barriers for BAME

candidates with recruitment agencies

3

When applying to directly to an employer, outcomes were more equal, with **29% of both BAME and white applicants securing jobs.**

Close



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Exposing the barriers for BAME

candidates with recruitment agencies

4

91% of BAME applicants apply directly to employers, 88% of white applicants choose this route.

Close



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The recruitment experience, a need for change

Our research identifies **four areas for change** mentioned by both white and BAME applicants – making progress here would make a difference for everyone:

- 1 Feedback at each stage of the process to manage candidates' expectations.
- 2 Feeling respected and included.
- 3 Having a single point of contact.
- 4 Availability of alternative assessment methods.

A significantly greater proportion of BAME applicants also mentioned:

- Evidence of a diversity policy and practice (particularly black applicants).
- Help with completing application forms (particularly Asian applicants).
- Diverse role models (particularly black applicants).
- Provision of adjustments for health, religion and culture.



Barriers to overcome

Click



The recruitment experience, the barriers to overcome

There were **three clear barriers** for all job seekers, white and BAME:

- 1 Jobs not matching the applicants skills or qualifications.
- 2 Issues with the job description.
- 3 Issues with the job advertisements.

BAME applicants were more likely than white applicants to cite:

- Issues with navigating recruitment websites.
- Being asked questions about their ethnic/religious background.
- Being asked questions about linguistic backgrounds (particularly amongst black applicants).



Back



Practical

recommendations

Change is needed if all candidates are to be treated fairly in the recruitment process. 'Race and Recruitment: Exposing the Barriers' includes dedicated tips and recommendations for candidates, recruitment agencies and employers.

These are the tools that can achieve change.

FACTSHEETS

Download Factsheets:

- ↓ Employers factsheet
- ↓ Job seekers factsheet
- ↓ Recruitment agencies fact sheet

NEW TOOLKIT

In partnership with an experienced head hunter we have produced a tool kit with top tips for job applicants

[Advice for Job seekers Toolkit](#)

LINKS

For information about BITC's work on diversity and inclusion, please see www.bitcdiversity.org.uk.

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Google

Adrian Joseph

Chair, Race for Opportunity
Leadership Board
Director, Search Advertising,
Northern & Central Europe

Appointments Commission

Anne Watts CBE, Chair

Barclays Capital

Kashif Zafar

Managing Director and
Head of European Rates Sales

The British Army

Colonel Mark Abraham, OBE

Assistant Director, Employment

Department of Health

Surinder Sharma

National Director for Equality and
Human Rights

EDF Energy PLC

Peter Prozesky

Chief Nuclear Officer

Ernst & Young LLP

Ben Castell

Partner, UK and Global Advisory
Leader for Consumer Products

Northern Trust

David Wicks

Senior Vice President and
Regional Executive Operations
and Technology, EMEA

Pertemps Recruitment

Partnership

Carmen Watson

Managing Director,
Commercial Division

Roast

Iqbal Wahhab OBE

Chief Executive Officer

Royal Bank of Scotland

Joanne Ferris

Head of GBM Diversity

Sainsbury's Supermarkets Ltd.

Deborah Dorman

Head of Great Place to Work

Shell UK Ltd

Graham van't'Hoff

Chairman

Transport for London

Andrew Quincey

Director of Commercial

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Race for Opportunity Champions

MITIE Group Plc

HSBC Bank Plc

National Grid

J Sainsbury Plc

The Royal Bank of
Scotland Group

American Express Services
Europe Ltd

Barclays Bank Plc

Deloitte

EDF Energy Plc

Ernst & Young LLP

Shell UK Ltd

ASDA Stores Ltd

Department of Health

Prudential Plc

Pertemps Ltd

BT Plc

Google

McDonald's Restaurants Ltd

HM Revenue and Customs

Home Office

Strategic Health Authority
Yorkshire and the Humber

Army

Ministry of Justice

Northern Trust

Transport for London

CPS

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Sincere thanks to Diversity Works for London and for their support with this work, and to all the members of the RIEI Steering Committee:

BT

Clear Company

Deloitte LLP

Department of Health

EHRC

Enterprise Rent a Car

Equal Approach

Home Office

HSBC Bank Plc

Independent Head Hunter –
Elizabeth Solaru

Job Centre Plus

Michael Page Int'l

Morgan Stanley

Pertemps Recruitment
Partnership

Prudential Plc

Recruitment and
Employment Confederation

Race for Opportunity

Sapphire Partners

Transport for London

The Housing Executive

The Law Society

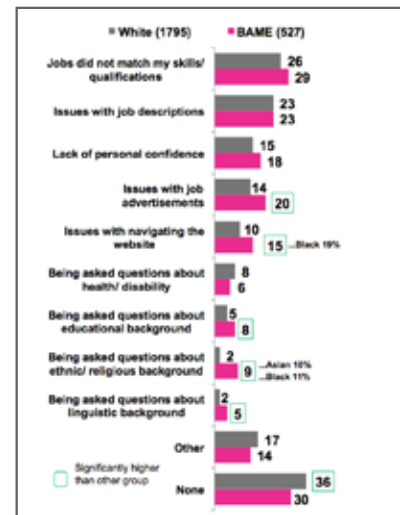
Many thanks to those additional recruitment agencies who also disseminated the survey: Gi Group, Sue Hill Recruitment and Love & Tate.

Facts and statistics

Profile of those surveyed were:

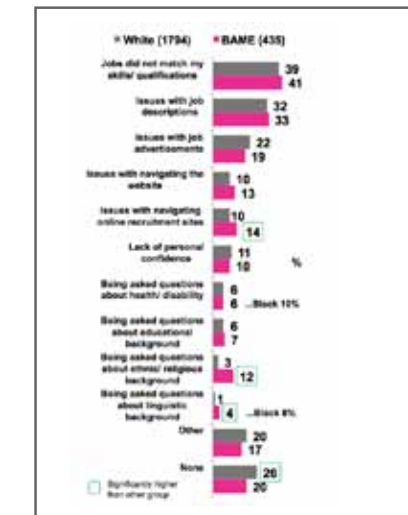
	White	BAME
Ethnicity	2038	580
Gender		
Male	48%	42%
Female	52%	58%
Age group		
16-34	35%	47%
35-54	46%	48%
55+	18%	5%
Education		
Secondary/A levels	27%	14%
NVQ/Vocational	13%	7%
Diploma	11%	8%
Degree	22%	31%
Post Grad Qual.	15%	28%
Professional Qual.	9%	10%
Other / Refused	3%	2%

Figure 1: Barriers encountered in getting a job by applying directly to an employer



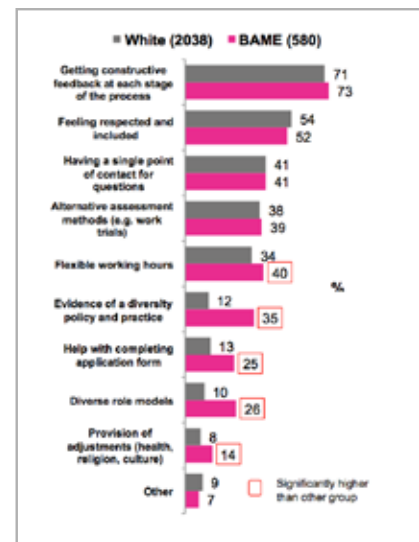
Bigger graph +

Figure 2: Barriers encountered in getting a job through a recruitment agency



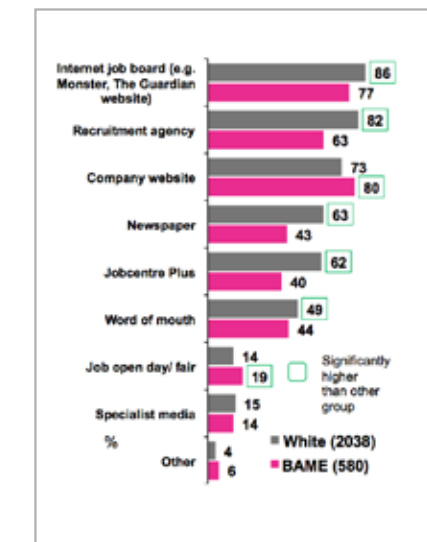
Bigger graph +

Figure 3: What would make the biggest difference to your experience of the recruitment process?



Bigger graph +

Figure 4: Sources used to look for jobs



Bigger graph +

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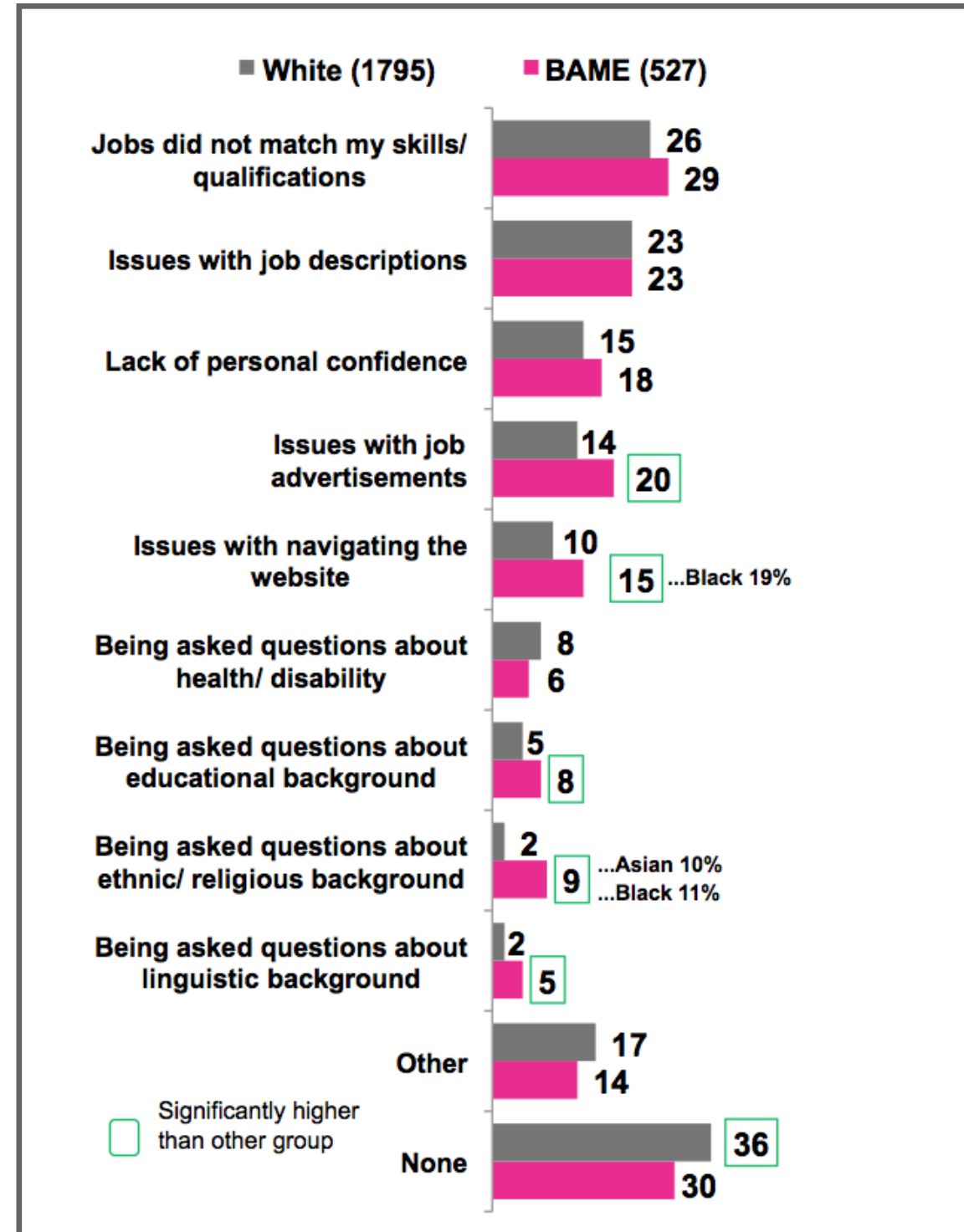


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Close X

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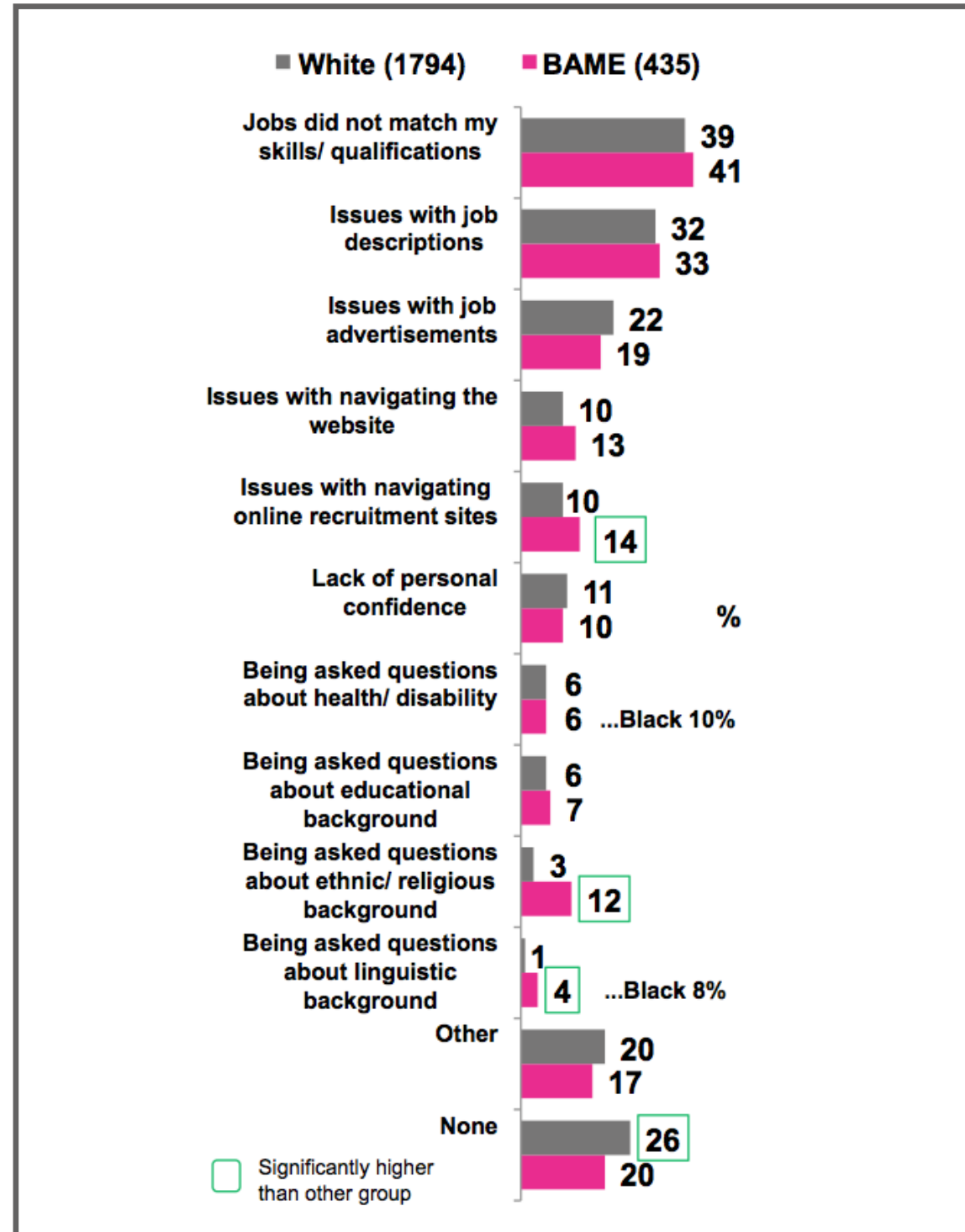


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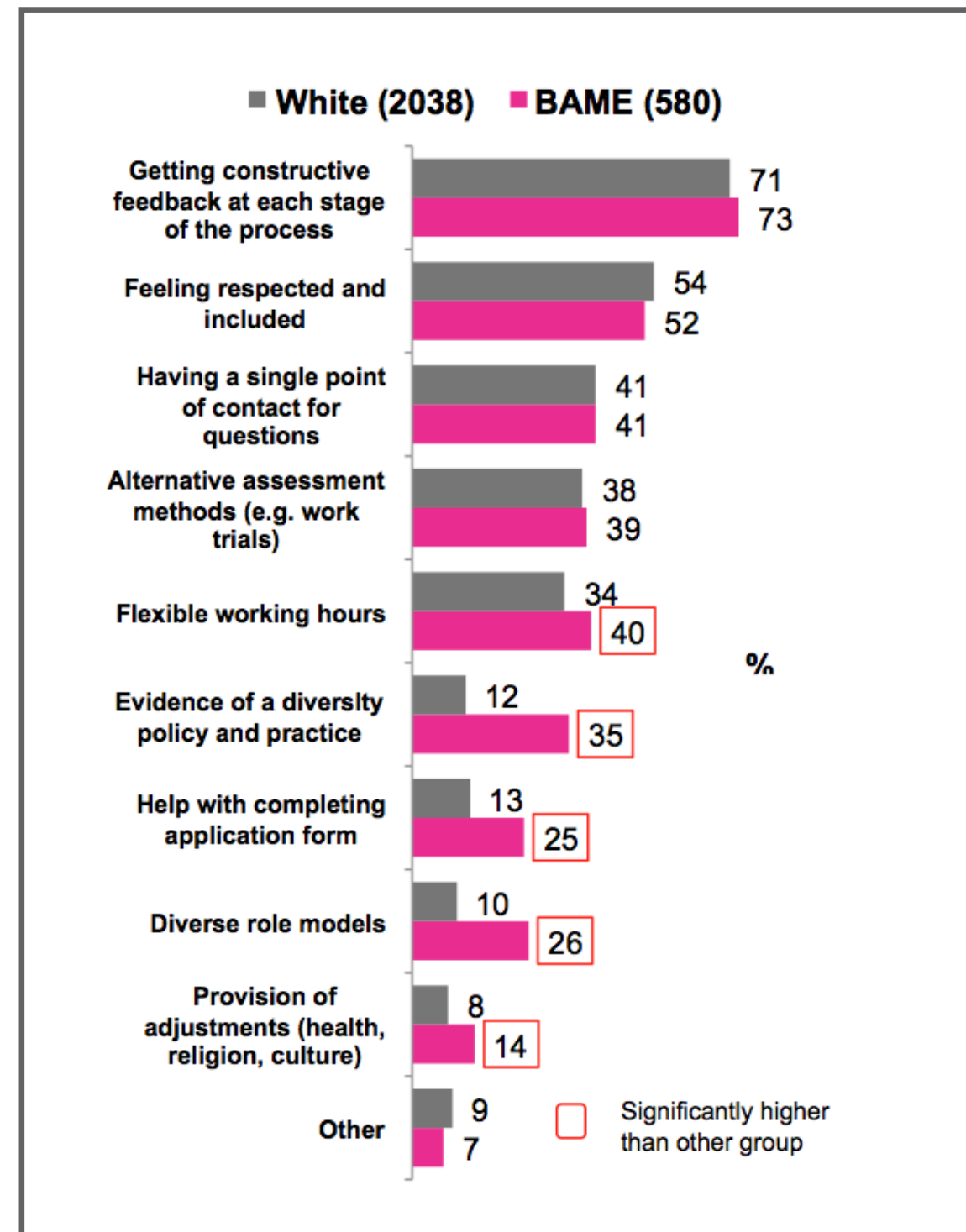


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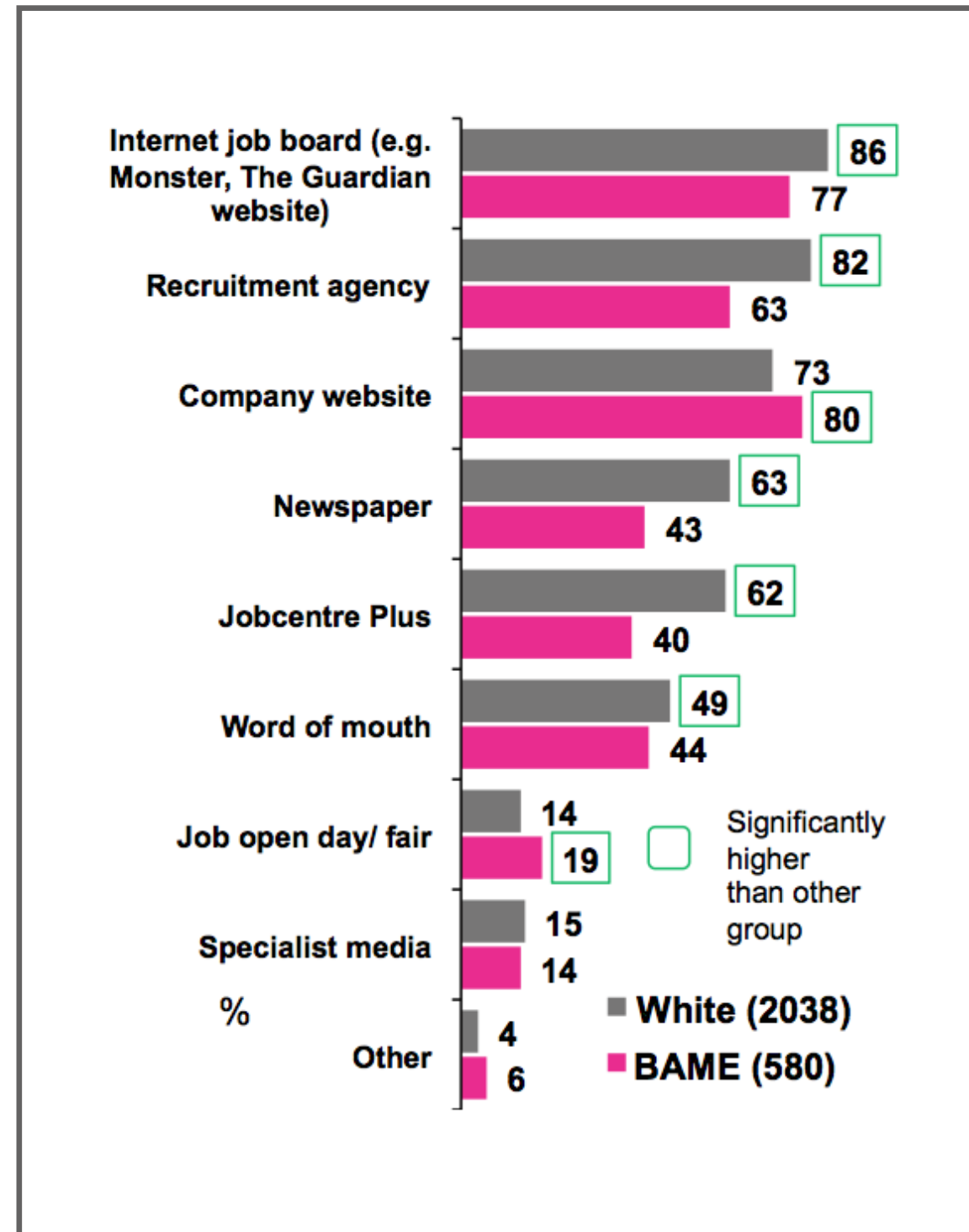


Figure 4: Sources used to look for jobs

Close X

Get in touch

Race for Opportunity is the race equality campaign from Business in the Community.



Race for Opportunity (RFO) is committed to improving employment opportunities for ethnic minorities across the UK. It is the only race diversity campaign that has access to and influence over the leaders of the UK's best known organisations.

For further information on Race for Opportunity, Business in the Community's race equality campaign, please call 020 7566 8661 or visit www.bitcdiversity.org.uk

