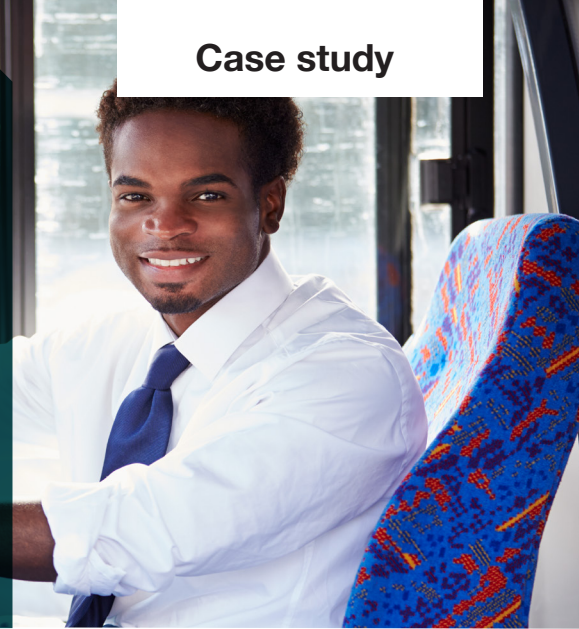


Putting the candidate First – building diversity in the bus sector



The challenge

To develop a successful local service, First Bus recognised that it needed to closely work with and for the communities it serves. Building a sense of identity is key to the success of their operations in York.

Therefore, First Bus has been working to increase inclusivity and diversity across their business as well as give back to local communities.

They have done this by looking at 3 key areas:

- Improving their internal recruitment processes
- Developing strategies to attract a more diverse pool of candidates
- Building a culture of inclusivity and creating positive tangible impact by giving back to communities.

Action taken

- **Putting the candidate first** – First Bus have been improving their internal recruitment processes by putting the candidate at the heart of the process, making the application as smooth as possible. As a tangible outcome, they have updated their policy so that candidates should not be waiting more than one week to hear back from an interview.
- **Prioritise diversity and taking control of the narrative** – from a recruitment perspective, they have been targeting a diverse range of candidates and using myth-busting techniques to address perceptions of being a bus driver.
- **Inclusivity is key** – First Bus have also updated internal practices to enhance an inclusive working culture such as implementing an inclusion calendar and increasing employee flexibility.
- **Getting involved in the community** – finally, they have been contributing to local social value events in order to increase presence and advocacy in areas in which First Bus operates. In York, they have seeking to integrate their operations with the communities they serve. They have immersed themselves within the community via fundraising initiatives, male mental health campaigns and local pride.





Outcomes

As a result of the action taken by First Bus, they now have better engagement with local communities. This is due to the company getting more involved with community events which has fostered a positive relationship between operator and customers.

Additionally, First Bus has created a more inclusive economy by increasing diversity in the driver's workforce amongst local communities.

Also, through their renewed focus on employee wellbeing, they have supported peace of mind through a more inclusive and enjoyable work culture.



Lessons Learnt

By updating their inclusivity and diversity practices, First Bus have learnt the following lessons:

- To ensure operators can keep pace with the evolving expectations on operation services and employment practices, maintaining high levels of engagement with staff as well as communities is key
- Taking a targeted approach to community and stakeholder groups is more likely to generate positive advocacy
- Learning about best social value practice from other industries helps to develop a more people-centric approach
- Keeping up-to-date with research on new technologies allows bus operators to remain on the forefront of change that is happening within the industry
- This can then be communicated internally, allowing staff to develop their learning and industry expertise



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Contact bcoe@ciht.org.uk.