



# LINE MANAGEMENT CASE STUDY



## Background

The Diversity Project has identified the important role that line or people managers can play in creating an inclusive culture. Research into current line manager practice around selection, training, objective-setting, performance appraisal and rewards was conducted during 2020 and the results led to a paper **Why Line Management is Critical to Creating an Inclusive Culture** being written which recommended that firms hold conversations with line managers with a view to making changes, if necessary, to the firm's approach to line management. Redington volunteered to use the conversation guide with its own group of line managers.

## Workshop design

Redington brings all its line managers (or team leaders in Redington's parlance) together once a quarter for a workshop. In advance of this, Redington gathers feedback on the performance of its people managers against 5 manager commitments by anonymously surveying all their reports.

The five commitments are:

- 1**  
My manager makes it clear what I need to do and holds me accountable for my objectives
- 2**  
My manager supports me and provides the resources and environment to succeed
- 3**  
My manager is interested in my career development, success and wellbeing
- 4**  
My manager is available, comes prepared and seeks to understand me as an individual
- 5**  
My manager gives me actionable feedback regularly and asks for feedback too

In July 2020, Redington circulated the Diversity Project's paper to its team leaders and designed a survey to gather confidential feedback from them on a number of topics highlighted in the paper including skills, support, right people, incentives and rewards.

The survey results showed that the team leaders consistently felt that "Redington is committed to creating an inclusive culture", that "line management is a critical component in developing a more inclusive culture", and also strongly agreed to the question "I feel supported in my role as a line manager".



Nevertheless, there were some areas where the data clearly showed team leaders thought Redington could improve and a few areas where there was significant divergence in opinions. The firm used these insights to structure the next quarterly workshop where 3 key issues were explored:

- The first was, while externally-provided training was seen as helpful, it was often less targeted/relevant and suggested that it should be co-facilitated by Redington staff.
- The second was that the team leaders would really value the opportunity to learn more from each other and to share challenges that they face as well as best practice. It was agreed that peer group support and safe spaces to talk should be encouraged.
- The third was that the link between good people management practice, individual objectives and reward structures could be clearer.

Redington also asked the group whether the existing manager commitments were sufficient in capturing inclusion, or whether a separate commitment needed to be made. The overwhelming feedback was that this was captured well enough within “my manager seeks to understand me as an individual” for now. As a result no changes have been made to these.

### Impact of workshop

In response to these discussions, Redington restructured the next team leader workshop to breakout into smaller groups led by different team leaders on areas of strength/interest. It was agreed that going forward small group sessions could be led by someone who has particular strengths around the aspect of line management under discussion.

Redington clarified the link between good team leader performance and remuneration. The firm committed to making sure that objectives around people management were built into the objective-setting exercise for all line managers and linked to the firm’s core values. As the firm was about to enter performance appraisal and remuneration discussions, it was able to build feedback around line management capability into the process almost immediately.

Even though Redington was already regarded as having an inclusive culture, it found this exercise very helpful in reviewing all aspects of its people management processes and getting the input of all its team leaders in terms of making some really helpful changes.

### Key takeaways

1. Have conversations about line management and inclusion with all managers (regularly)
2. Agree 3-5 manager commitments and gather feedback from staff against these spotlighting those that are doing well to share best practice with others
3. Clearly link and reinforce people-management and inclusion objectives to remuneration
4. Create safe spaces where managers can speak to and learn from each other.