Asif Sadiq MBE—supplementary written evidence (FOJ0087)

Follow-up answers to questions from oral evidence session on 5 May 2020

- There is a problem that not everyone knows how to get into journalism – for example it can require sending a speculative email to ask for work experience. We need to ensure that informal processes are replaced with formal processes within media organizations, in order to create fair processes for all and to reduce elements of privilege that currently exist.

- 'Invisible' characteristics, such as socio-economic background, religion and diversity of thought are too often overlooked. How class intersects with other characteristics. As well as multiple layers of diversity, majority of the current measures only measure one diverse characteristic, so for example, you are either female, or BME but no measurement for both together.

- There is a problem of affinity bias – people looking for a 'mini-me'. This can lead to them seeking particular skills which are actually not essential, such as shorthand, which applicants from under-represented backgrounds are less likely to have. Similarly, employers may value having had work published but not having self-published work online; the former is more conventional but less accessible.

- The possibility of some sort of charter and how this would work [and any other policy suggestions] It would be great to have a charter that all media organisations would have to sign up to that would ensure that they have to work towards D and I and report yearly on their progress. This would create healthy competition and also transparency, which would support D and I efforts.

- Some organisations run 'two tier' work experience schemes We need to ensure that everyone received the same work experience opportunities and to do this, we need to have a standar work experience process, as opposed to different processes depending on who you know.

- There is a risk of pigeonholing. For example, BAME journalists may not want to report on BAME issues. Conversely, there is also a risk of journalists having to conform to the dominant thought of the organisation.

- The need for news organisations to adapt – with more than just tick box initiatives – or risk commercial failure Tick box diversity is not working and there is a lot of research that proves that organizations need to go beyond the boxes and create truly inclusive environments where everyone has a sense of belonging, only then will we achieve and benefit from the true value of having both diversity and diversity of thought.

May 2020