



**LONDON WORKS**



**FORWARD STRATEGY**

2015-2018

# INTRODUCTION

from Liam Kane, Chief Executive, ELBA

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On behalf of the Board of Directors I want to welcome you to the London Works Forward Strategy Summary - 2015-2018.

The idea to set up our own recruitment agency was born in 2010. Back then we were already convinced about the quality of our candidates, but we knew that we had a lot of work to do to ensure that we built a model that was both sustainable and scalable.

Thanks to the generous support of our backers, Barclays, the Greater London Authority, the City of London Corporation, the Royal Borough of Greenwich the London Legacy Development Corporation and the University of East London - the vision has now become a reality.

London Works was launched in January 2014 and, in our first year, we placed over 100 talented people into work with some of the region's most forward-thinking employers including Barclays, Macquarie, Canary Wharf Group and the East London Foundation Trust.

Now that we know that the model works, we are looking forward to the future and communicating through this strategy summary - our short, medium and long-term goals.

Organisations are only as good as their people, so it's vital for business success that firms identify and recruit the best individuals. Yet there's growing evidence that when it comes to making the most of their assets, some of Britain's leading employers are missing out on untapped talent – to the cost of both the bottom line and fairness.

London Works was established to make it easy for employers to widen their talent pool. Our main call to action for employers is simple:

**Position London Works in your recruitment supply chain – you have nothing to lose but a lot to gain!**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Liam Kane". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

**L.J Kane, ELBA Chief Executive  
London Works, Company Secretary**

# CONTEXT

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In January 2014, ELBA launched London Works (LW), a not-for-profit, recruitment agency.

With seed funding from Barclays, the Greater London Authority, the City of London Corporation, the Royal Borough of Greenwich the London Legacy Development Corporation and the University of East London- the company, London Works Agency Ltd was able to test our theories in practice – and they worked!

London Works is wholly owned by ELBA and when it makes future surpluses, will be able to Gift Aid these sums back to ELBA to support our Community Works and Education Works programmes that help provide the top quality London Works candidates that London business needs.

As a truly commercial recruitment agency, London Works charges employers a fee for placing skilled temporary, contract and permanent staff. However, as a not-for-profit organisation it has two main social goals:

- 1) To engage London's talented but disadvantaged young people as its candidate base.**
- 2) To reinvest LW earned surpluses into furtherance of ELBA's charitable goals around area regeneration and employability**

LW is competitive with commercial agencies; pays at least London Living wage to all temporary contractors and permanent appointments; provides all benefits including holidays and pensions required by law and provides a private sector standard of service to both employers and employees. The generated fee income leverages existing charitable support in the area and provides a coherent programme uniting the many brokers (Uprising, Adab Trust, City Brokerage etc.) and their initiatives.

ELBA's unique status as a representative alliance of east London based, large corporations and institutions - committed to the area's social and economic regeneration, with a membership of over 100 local employers - positions us at a clear advantage to deliver LW successfully. We gain access to corporate preferred supplier lists by reason of our CSR roots that other start-up agencies can only dream of.

By working with local stakeholders including universities, colleges, local authorities and community support organisations, LW accesses some of London's most talented, skilled and enthusiastic workers with a view to placing them as contract and permanent workers within our member companies and their supply chains.

In its first year of trading London Works placed over 100 people into work. In 2015/16 we are aiming to place 350 into work – a challenging but very realistic ambition.

# CALL TO ACTION ON ACCESS TO JOBS

## GOAL 1: SHORT TERM (2015-2016)

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In the short term, our focus will remain firmly fixed on increasing the number of employers active as hirers via London Works.

Far too many employers are, unknowingly and unintentionally, using recruitment and selection methods that present barriers to candidates from less privileged backgrounds. London Works is all about knocking down those barriers to social mobility.

However, make no mistake; although LW is working in the field of connecting social mobility with recruitment, participation is not just an exercise in good citizenship.

It is best practice, and it offers clear business benefits.

### **1. London Works exposes employers to a larger talent pool.**

If employers are recruiting predominantly middle and upper class candidates from Russell Group universities, they're missing out on a pool of talent that traditional selection methods may be screening out. If every company is fishing in the same pool, how can you be sure someone else isn't getting the best?

### **2. London Works increases your skills base.**

Hiring people from different backgrounds will bring new skills, talents and perspectives to any business and provide depth to your candidate pool.

### **3. Benefit from local staff flexibility**

Local staff can get to work on time, never mind transport difficulties or weather conditions challenges. In addition, your licence to operate in the area will be enhanced by giving jobs to local people.

### **4. Maintain international competitiveness.**

All businesses have an obligation to recruit the most talented people for the job, irrespective of background. This will support the UK's economic growth and international competitiveness. LW isn't asking for a lowering of standards but an option to provide competitive candidates from non-traditional backgrounds.

### **5. Increase future diverse applications**

Forward thinking and better practice employers embrace social mobility through LW. They attract more diverse applications and provide greater choice to hiring managers. They'll open the door to many candidates who may not have otherwise thought about trying to get into their business. As they gain a reputation as an accessible employer, the flow of such candidates will only grow.

### **6. Demonstrate your Corporate Social Responsibility commitment.**

We know that CSR is high on most employers' agendas, and it's important to prospective candidates too. Many look to work for companies with a strong commitment to CSR. A diverse

workforce combined with a stated, clear, long term commitment to diversity and inclusion is a good way to demonstrate yours.

**7. Encourage a culture of change.**

Embracing social mobility shows a freshness of thinking that can bring a positive feeling throughout an organisation. It shows employees that things can be done differently, and that positive change can happen.

**8. Build your public profile**

In challenging economic times, the perception of your business in the minds of wider society will be enhanced as you begin to embrace and feel the benefits of encouraging social mobility in your recruitment.

**Put simply, London Works will be focusing on showing employers just how easy and beneficial participation in this arena can be through 2015/16**

# HELPING EMPLOYERS TO MAP AND MEASURE SOCIAL MOBILITY

## GOAL 2: MEDIUM TERM (2016-2018)

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Recruiting and developing a more diverse workforce can require everything from changing the mindset of the organisation and ensuring the culture is adaptive to diversity, to the ways in which talent is developed and recognised, to the recruitment policies and practices themselves. Most employers get that now, much more than in the past, but unconscious bias or fear of something different may still bring us back to homogeneity. If you always do what you've always done, and particularly in recruitment, if you only ever recruit those whom you've always recruited, then you will continue to have what you've always had.

All of this explains why we will be working to support our employers map and measure social mobility across their workforces. There is undoubtedly a social case for helping people from more disadvantaged backgrounds secure equal access to all types of jobs, professions and careers. But the business case is at least as pressing. Enduring skills shortages come together with the acknowledged benefits of diverse work forces to ensure this is the case. And those points are reinforced when you consider that some of the spectacular corporate failures and scandals we've seen in recent years were clearly made possible through monoculturalism – places where everyone was too like everyone else, “group think” prevailed and no-one challenged the prevailing view, even when it was clearly wrong and a road to ruin.

But knowing it and doing it can be different propositions. It is difficult to get what you don't measure. Our work in this area will set out some simple steps organisations can take to gather data on social background and some steps they can take to use this data to track social mobility, and to act where it is not being delivered. This work, drawing on existing expertise in the area developed by the Association of Graduate Recruiters and Professions for Good, will be delivered in partnership with ELBA's Education Works team.

# SECURING 'SPECIALIST SUPPLIER' STATUS

## GOAL 3: MEDIUM - LONG TERM (2017-2018)

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By 2017 we expect to have fully proven our worth as a reputable, specialist recruitment agency, capable of meeting and exceeding some of the highest resourcing standards in the region.

As our track record continues to grow, we will begin to pursue the contractual positioning of 'specialist diversity, inclusion and social mobility partner' within the terms of our supply agreements.

At the time of writing this report, we are signed up as preferred suppliers to over 50 of our clients, where we compete against a variety of commercial recruitment agencies for opportunities posted via their online portals. This is an enviable and fantastic opportunity in terms of sheer access to roles, however, this approach has proven to be more challenging than originally anticipated.

The electronic nature of 'portal based' recruitment can be a tough obstacle to overcome for London Works' candidates as their CVs are often judged out of context with our mission.

Our model has worked most effectively where we have been asked to supply talent based on our view of our candidates' suitability against specific roles. This blending of blind and contextualised stages of recruitment offers a more egalitarian recruitment process and reduces the prevalence of unconscious bias.

Securing 'specialist' status will enable us to put our candidates forward on a talent first basis for consideration, prior to posting them via the online portals.

The case for change is often made in terms of fairness: that is, a labour market which recruits according to a narrow social background is unjust in principle. The facts suggest, that tackling barriers to social background is also a matter of competitive advantage. By changing practices to incorporate London Works services as a formal stage within their processes, the region's leading employers will see a range of benefits.

**LONDON WORKS**

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