youth futures FOUNDATION

Kier - Disclosure of diversity characteristics: Feasibility study report



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KIER BIT

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About this report

Youth Futures Foundation is the national What Works Centre for youth employment, with a specific focus on marginalised young people. It commissioned the Behavioural Insights Team (BIT), a global research and innovation consultancy, to undertake a project in support of its ambition to help employers create fairer and more inclusive workplaces for young people. This project forms part of Youth Futures Foundation's What Works for Recruitment and Retention programme, which works with a small group of employers and organisations to test promising interventions aimed at improving outcomes for young people and to build a strong evidence base for effective and equitable practice.

Employees are increasingly asked to share information about their diversity characteristics - such as disability status, gender identity, neurodivergence, sexual orientation and social mobility - to help employers understand workforce representation and outcomes. Reliable diversity data enables employers to identify where disparities exist, assess whether policies are having their intended effect, and design organisational changes that better support employees, including those at earlier stages of their careers. However, where disclosure rates are low or uneven across characteristics, employers have limited visibility of who may be underserved or facing barriers, making it harder to target improvements and monitor progress for young people and the wider workforce.

In this project, titled 'Diversity Characteristics Disclosure', BIT is working with Kier Group plc ('Kier'), a major UK infrastructure services and construction business and one of the What Works for Recruitment and Retention employer partners to assess whether introducing employee communication campaigns can improve levels of disclosure of diversity characteristics. The project is organised into two phases: an initial feasibility study and, subject to its findings, a subsequent trial.

This report presents the findings from the feasibility study which examined whether a randomised controlled trial (RCT) of two communication campaigns to encourage employee disclosure of diversity characteristics is feasible at Kier, and if so, how it should be designed. The feasibility work had four main aims:

- to specify the interventions in detail and articulate how they are expected to work through a Theory of Change;
- to recommend an evaluation design, covering an impact evaluation, implementation and process evaluation, and economic evaluation;

- to identify the data, operational, and governance requirements for running a robust trial, along with any remaining risks or uncertainties; and
- to draw out lessons that can inform future Youth Futures-funded projects with employers.

This report, and the underlying feasibility study work, was led by BIT, with Dr Jelka Stojanov (Project Manager) and Tim Hardy (Lead Researcher) overseeing day-to-day delivery. Strategic oversight and quality assurance were provided by Shoshana Davidson, Dr Giulia Tagliaferri and Nilufer Rahim. The wider project team included Dr Reny Kiryakova and Miller Piggott, who provided essential delivery and research support throughout. BIT delivered this feasibility study in parallel with a separate Youth Futures-funded project at Kier assessing the feasibility of a trial focused on improving the fairness and consistency of apprenticeship recruitment. As both projects relied on the same systems and stakeholders, they required close coordination and generated useful insights into operational constraints and opportunities for alignment.

The feasibility study report was first submitted to Youth Futures Foundation and Kier for review on 5 December 2025, with initial comments received on 11 December 2025. It then underwent a further round of revisions and was finalised and approved on 30 January 2026. The report has since been published on 11 November 2026.

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We are especially grateful to the members of the project's Young Person Advisory Panel, comprising six young Kier employees. Their participation in the decision-point workshop, and the feedback they provided on the proposed interventions and trial outcomes, played an important role in shaping the project.

Finally, we would like to thank Youth Futures for funding this work and for their close collaboration on the intervention and evaluation design. We are particularly grateful to Dan Muir, Katy Neep and Kate Macleod for their thoughtful contributions and their careful review of our outputs.

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Executive summary

The project

Youth Futures Foundation has partnered with Kier Group plc ('Kier'), a major UK infrastructure services and construction business, to examine the impact of communication campaigns on Kier employees' disclosure of diversity characteristics such as disability status, neurodiversity, gender identity, transgender status, sexual orientation, social mobility, and other personal characteristics. Improved disclosure is important because, without reliable workforce data, organisations have limited visibility of who may be underserved, where barriers exist, and whether policies or interventions are having their intended effect. Research in workforce equality and inclusion highlights that sparse data can obscure disparities and make it harder to target support or demonstrate compliance with reporting expectations. By testing approaches to increase disclosure, this project contributes to a broader understanding of how organisations can both strengthen data quality and create conditions that support fairer outcomes for employees.

The interventions being tested would include two communication campaigns that aim to bring clarity and purpose to Kier's request for diversity characteristics, tackling two key barriers identified among Kier employees: understanding the purpose and benefits of disclosure and making the disclosure process easier. Both communication campaigns address these barriers by explaining the impact of disclosure for individual employees and for Kier more broadly, as well as by providing a direct hyperlink to the 'Update my diversity information' page in Kier's self-service HR platform, to make the disclosure process easier and quicker. The campaigns also include reminders sent at regular intervals. Within this overarching approach, two versions of communication campaigns aim to test the impact of different message framing. One uses 'positive framing', highlighting the benefits of disclosing diversity characteristics in terms of promoting positive outcomes - for example, explaining how sharing this information helps ensure equal access to opportunities, support and training. The other adopts 'negative framing', conveying the same benefits but in terms of preventing negative outcomes - for example, explaining that disclosure helps avoid unequal access to opportunities, support and training. Both communication campaigns aim to increase the number of Kier employees logging into Kier's internal HR system and disclosing their diversity characteristics.

The feasibility study

This report presents the findings of the feasibility study conducted by the Behavioural Insights Team (BIT) which assessed whether running a randomised control trial (RCT) of two communication campaigns aimed at increasing Kier employees' disclosure of diversity characteristics is feasible. It also provides recommendations for the design of the proposed interventions (communication campaigns) and the evaluation (including an impact evaluation, implementation and process evaluation, and economic evaluation), outlines the key risks that remain and summarises lessons learned to inform future projects within Youth Future's What Works for Recruitment and Retention programme.

The activities used to inform this feasibility study report included:

- A rapid review of the academic and grey literature to identify interventions aimed at improving workplace disclosure of diversity characteristics, which helped inform the selection of interventions to be evaluated in this trial;
- A review of key documents provided by Youth Futures and Kier, to gain insights into the current disclosure process and rates across Kier;
- Completion of essential data protection steps, including agreeing data flows and signing a Data Sharing Agreement (DSA) between BIT and Kier, enabling secure access to current disclosure rates to allow for power calculations;
- Walkthroughs of the key systems used by employees to disclose their diversity characteristics, to understand potential highest impact points along the journey;
- Establishment of a Young People Advisory Panel (YPAP), composed of six young Kier employees, to embed lived experiences into the design of the interventions and outcomes;
- A survey with 57 Kier employees, complemented by four in-depth interviews to explore barriers to disclosing diversity characteristics in greater depth;
- A decision-point workshop with representatives from Kier, YFF and the YPAP, to identify a shortlist of the most feasible trial interventions. Participants discussed the practical considerations of delivering each option and voted on which interventions should be taken forward;
- Mini-group discussions with eight Kier employees to collect feedback on each communication campaign prototype and help us understand employees'

preferences regarding communication channels (how they would like to be contacted) and messengers (who they would prefer messages to come from). These sessions evolved through the project to reflect any ongoing adjustments to prototypes;

- Development of the Theory of Change (ToC), setting out the expected mechanisms through which the communication campaigns might improve disclosure rates;
- Development of materials for the implementation and process evaluation (IPE) and economic evaluation, such as draft topic guides, consent materials, privacy notices, and indicators for the cost analysis;
- Regular and ad-hoc meetings with Youth Futures and Kier staff, to clarify operational processes, test emerging ideas, and ensure alignment between the interventions design and business needs.

Findings

Overall, we conclude that an RCT of two communication campaigns aimed at increasing diversity characteristic disclosure within Kier is feasible and has strong potential to generate valuable evidence. Key insights for each research question are summarised below.

Table 1: Key findings of the feasibility study

Area of focus	Key findings
Intervention design	We propose testing two behaviourally-informed communication campaigns targeted at all Kier employees. These campaigns would aim to explain the reasons behind Kier's request for employees' diversity characteristics and make disclosure easier for employees. Both campaigns would be personalised, with a clear call to action, come from a trusted messenger (e.g., Diversity and Inclusion team), and include follow-up reminders. Access to the diversity characteristics disclosure form would be made easy with a direct hyperlink. Each campaign would use a different framing: positive framing to emphasise the positive outcomes of disclosure, and negative

	framing to highlight how disclosure helps prevent negative outcomes. We recommend that the communication campaigns are sent via email. Employees in the control group would not receive the above communications or any other communications related to the disclosure of diversity characteristics. The various features of the communication campaigns - the message focus, reminders, direct links to Kier's HR platform where disclosure takes place) and positive/negative framings - are expected to increase the number of Kier employees who voluntarily disclose their diversity characteristics. By doing so, the communication campaigns aim to give Kier a clearer picture of their workforce and address specific issues in the organisation.
Outcomes	We propose to define 'disclosure' as having a response listed for the following characteristics on the 'Update my diversity information' on Kier's HR system's self-service: disability status, neurodiversity, gender identity, transgender/gender reassignment, sexual orientation, social mobility, religion and carer status. The primary, secondary and two exploratory analyses will use the core definition of disclosure, which excludes 'prefer not to say' responses. Therefore, if an employee provides a 'prefer not to say' response, that would not be counted as disclosure. The remaining exploratory analyses will use the expanded definition of disclosure, which includes 'prefer not to the say' responses. Our recommended primary outcome is the number of in-scope characteristics disclosed by young Kier employees (aged 16-24), ranging from 0 (i.e., no in-scope characteristics disclosed) to 8 (i.e., disclosed all in-scope characteristics). For our secondary outcome, we recommend looking at the number of in-scope characteristics disclosed by Kier employees over the age of 25. Our recommended exploratory outcomes are: (1) proportion of employees who disclosed all in-scope characteristics (core definition); (2) proportion of employees who disclosed the following characteristics individually: neurodivergence, disability status and social mobility

	(core definition); (3) number of fields completed in the diversity characteristics disclosure form (expanded definition); and (4) proportion of employees who have completed all fields in the diversity characteristics disclosure form (i.e. no blank responses; expanded definition).
Data sources	**Kier's HR system** contains employee-level disclosure data for all in-scope characteristics, as well as their age range, grade, and year they started working at Kier. It also has all information required for delivering the interventions (e.g., employees' contact details). **Email sends datasets** which would contain information on which emails employees are sent and time stamps (to be used in the IPE). We are still assessing the availability of an email opens/ clickthroughs dataset which would contain open and clickthrough rates for each batch of emails sent (to be used in the IPE). HR system and the email sends datasets are expected to be linked via pseudonymised employee IDs.
Sample size	We propose that the sample of employees to be analysed is all Kier employees with a work email address and access to Kier's HR system's self-service. Of these, our sample for the primary analysis would consist of all Kier employees, aged 16-24. Based on 2025 HR system data, it is estimated that roughly 614 young Kier employees would be included in the primary analysis. For the secondary analysis, our sample would consist of all Kier employees over the age of 25, estimated to be 7,257 based on 2025 HR system data.
Randomisation	We propose randomising at the employee level, such that each employee would either receive one of two communication campaigns, or be assigned to the control group, which receives no communication campaigns about disclosure. This level of randomisation was chosen to balance concerns around statistical

	power and spillover risks. We propose to stratify randomisation on baseline disclosure (disclosed no data; partially disclosed data; disclosed all data) and age range (16-24; 25+).
Implementation and process evaluation	We propose two activities for the IPE: 1. A review of implementation data throughout the trial, including checks on randomisation, delivery accuracy and aggregated engagement metrics (e.g., email opens and click-throughs) to assess whether the campaigns were implemented as expected and whether engagement differed across treatment arms. 2. Qualitative interviews with both implementation staff and employees in the treatment groups to explore fidelity, day-to-day delivery, perceived clarity and persuasiveness of the messages, barriers to updating information, activation of the mechanisms in the ToC, and overall acceptability of the campaigns. Together, these activities should provide a clear picture of how the interventions are delivered in practice and highlight opportunities to strengthen future roll-outs. Please note that at the time of writing it is still unclear whether data on email open and click-through rates would be available for the trial. This will be confirmed during trial set-up, with the IPE design adapted as needed should such data not be available.
Economic evaluation	We propose to conduct a cost analysis which would present, separately, the costs of delivering the communication campaigns incurred by Kier and the estimated costs of developing a comparable campaign from the resources produced by this trial (e.g. templates, email content) To obtain cost information, we recommend distributing cost pro-formas to and conduct interviews with relevant staff, and monetising these costs using pay information in Kier's HR system.

	We also propose creating a framework of representative employer archetypes (defined by factors such as business size, sector and presence of existing digital HR systems) and assessing how these costs may differ between Kier and employers that fit each of these categories.
Data sharing	Kier would share pseudonymised data from their internal HR system and available communications datasets for the impact evaluation, IPE and economic evaluation. This includes employee-level data on disclosure rates and other information, such as age range, grade and year they started working at Kier; aggregated data on emails sent and engagement with them (open and clickthrough rates; if available). Kier would also support BIT by helping recruit participants for IPE interviews. BIT recommends collecting additional data directly during the trial for the IPE interviews. All data sharing is governed by the DSA signed by BIT and Kier at project outset, which sets out approved variables, transfer routes and data protection measures.
Ethics	BIT has classified this project as high risk because it involves processing special category data (including disability status, transgender/gender reassignment, sexual orientation and religion). The key ethical considerations relate to data protection and the handling of sensitive personal data, informed consent, and safeguarding. The project underwent BIT's full ethics review on 16 December 2025.

1. Background

1.1 Aim of the project

Kier is a large UK infrastructure services and construction business employing over 10,000 people across the country, including several hundred young people in early careers roles. As with many employers, Kier faces challenges with the disclosure of employee diversity characteristics. For example, in 2025, 49% of 16–24-year-old employees did not disclose their social mobility, and across all other employees, 28% did not disclose whether they are neurodiverse or not. This means that Kier cannot accurately measure and track its progress towards inclusion goals or take adequate countermeasures to prevent any negative consequences due to poor data coverage.

This project aims to understand whether communication campaigns can increase the number of employees that update their diversity characteristics at Kier, using Kier's HR platform's self-service section (the self-service is a section where employees can access their payslips, performance review, diversity profile and record annual leave). The primary focus is on Kier employees aged 16-24 years old, YFF's focus age range. A feasibility study has been undertaken to explore whether a full trial of communication campaigns is possible, and which versions of the campaign are the most promising and feasible. This work is funded by Youth Futures as part of its What Works for Recruitment and Retention programme, which aims to build evidence on how organisations can create more equitable routes into and to remain in good work for young people.

1.2 Aim of the feasibility study

The purpose of this feasibility study was to determine whether a randomised controlled trial (RCT) of communication campaigns can be delivered in a robust and meaningful way, and which versions of the campaign should be tested. Before an RCT could take place, it was essential to understand whether the proposed approach was workable in practice, could be implemented consistently, and could generate reliable evidence on the interventions' impact.

To do this, the study examined a set of practical and methodological questions. These included whether Kier's processes and systems could support the trial, which communication channels and interventions were most promising, and whether the necessary data could be collected to measure outcomes accurately. The study also

explored what the trial would need to look like in practice - covering elements such as how randomisation would work, what outcomes should be measured, and how any risks could be managed.

The research questions that guided this assessment span several interconnected aspects of feasibility, including intervention design and delivery, data availability, evaluation considerations, and operational and ethical requirements. These are summarised in the table below.

Table 2: Areas of focus and research questions for Feasibility Study

Area of focus	Research questions
Intervention design	• What interventions and/or message framings should be trialled, considering the strength of the evidence and Kier's existing processes? • Who should the interventions be communicated by? • Which communication channels should be used to deliver the interventions?
Outcomes	• How will the primary, secondary and exploratory outcomes be defined and sourced? • Which employee characteristics should and could be included as 'in scope' for the outcome measures? • When should the outcome measures be measured?
Data sources	• How can employees' data be linked across communications and HR system data sources? • Is Kier's internal HR system the most appropriate and feasible tool to measure the trial's outcomes?
Sample size	• Which Kier employees should be included in the trial? • Does the sample size of young Kier employees have sufficient statistical power? • Would a multi-arm trial be statistically powered? If so, how many

Area of focus	Research questions
	arms can be trialled?
Randomisation	• Which communication channels can be randomised to send communications to individual employees? • How will we implement randomisation? • What should be the unit of assignment? • Should randomisation be stratified? If so, by which criteria? Is this feasible?
Implementation and process evaluation	• What data points are required to confirm the successful implementation of the selected interventions? • How will we assess employees' views on the perceived effectiveness of the interventions?
Economic evaluation	• What data points are required to conduct a meaningful economic evaluation? • What costs and/or benefits are in scope?
Data sharing	• What datasets (and variables within them) need to be shared with BIT? • What data will be collected directly by BIT (e.g., interviews)?
Ethics	• What ethical issues are associated with the trial? • What ethical approval does the trial need to proceed?

1.3 Feasibility study activities

Feasibility study activities were delivered in two structured sprints. The sections below summarise the key activities undertaken in each sprint.

Please note that this feasibility work was delivered alongside a separate Youth Futures-funded project focused on improving the fairness and consistency of apprenticeship

recruitment at Kier by testing a more structured interview format, which is documented in a separate feasibility study report. Because both projects rely on many of the same systems, stakeholders and governance structures, close coordination was required throughout. This parallel activity generated useful insights into shared operational constraints and opportunities for alignment, with related learning set out in Section 6 of this report.

Sprint 1: Scoping and initial assessment

Sprint 1 focused on developing a clear understanding of Kier's context and processes and assessing whether a series of possible interventions could realistically be implemented and evaluated.

Foundational steps and governance: Early in the project, we completed all required data protection preparations to enable secure sharing and use of Kier's disclosure and HR data. This included developing the necessary documentation, agreeing the data flows, and signing a Data Sharing Agreement (DSA) between BIT and Kier. This step was critical in allowing us to access the information needed to examine current disclosure rates and to conduct power calculations.

Document and process review: We systematically reviewed key documents provided by Kier and YFF - including existing disclosure rates, current forms for disclosing diversity characteristics, and previous campaign material (such as the social mobility push[1]) which was designed to motivate employees to disclose diversity information - comparing current practice against evidence-based research on how disclosure forms should be implemented, to identify potential changes to current practice to include in the intervention. We also examined key gaps in disclosure, as well as the process for employees to update their characteristics in Kier's HR system and identified benefits of disclosure to current employees.

Rapid evidence review: We undertook a rapid evidence review spanning academic and grey literature to identify interventions that have been shown to improve disclosure of diversity characteristics in organisations. This review helped inform the selection of interventions to be evaluated in this trial.

Establishment of the Young People Advisory Panel: We established the Young Person Advisory Panel (YPAP) consisting of six young Kier employees. The YPAP's role was to

[1] In 2023, Kier added the Social Mobility Commission's recommended question to their internal HR system to determine employees' socio-economic background. To encourage uptake, Kier ran a communication campaign alongside the updated HR system form.

ensure that the perspectives and lived experiences of young Kier employees - particularly those who may face disadvantage - were embedded in the project.

Employee 'pulse survey': We designed a short 'pulse survey' to identify the specific barriers to disclosure and examine any trends or differences across age brackets. This was completed by 57 employees who had not previously disclosed all of their diversity characteristics to Kier.

Individual in-depth interviews: To complement the survey findings, we held detailed interviews with four Kier employees to explore the barriers to updating diversity characteristics in greater depth. Alongside this, we discussed communication channels and messengers that employees engage with most, to help refine our intervention design.

Sprint 2: Intervention refinement and trial design

Sprint 2 built on the foundations laid in Sprint 1 by refining the intervention, developing the underlying Theory of Change (ToC), and preparing the components required for a robust evaluation. This sprint focused on translating the agreed direction of travel into a trial-ready design.

Intervention development: Building on the Sprint 1 evidence review and interviews, a longlist of intervention ideas were created. Based on evidence, feasibility and impact, this was reduced to four viable intervention options. During discussions with employees, as well as multiple consultations with YFF and Kier, we decided to proceed with communication campaigns. Multiple rounds of prototypes were created, to reflect different framings, and five messages and five subject headers were shared in mini-group discussions with Kier staff (see below for more detail). Using insights from in-depth interview discussions, as well as best practice from the surrounding literature, a further five messenger options were also presented in these discussions. Finally, we scoped the feasibility of using various communication channels by consulting with Communications and IT teams at Kier.

Mini-group discussions: Once the intervention prototypes had been developed, we sought feedback through a series of mini-group discussions with eight Kier employees in total. Some sessions were run as one-hour group conversations, while others took place as shorter one-to-one discussions where diary constraints made group attendance difficult. These sessions provided feedback on each prototype and helped us understand employees' preferences regarding communication channels (how they would like to be contacted) and messengers (who they would prefer messages to come

from). The content of these discussions evolved as the project progressed. Early sessions explored a broad set of potential interventions, while later sessions focused on a refined shortlist that BIT, YFF and Kier had jointly identified as practical and deliverable.

Decision-point workshop: Midway through Sprint 2, we held a joint decision-point workshop with Kier, YFF and YPAP members. The session drew on insights from the scoping phase to identify a shortlist of the most feasible trial interventions. Participants discussed the practical considerations of delivering each option and voted on which interventions should be taken forward. A final workshop was held at the end of the feasibility study to secure final leadership approval ahead of implementation.

Development of the ToC: After completing all mini-group discussions, we developed a detailed ToC setting out the expected mechanisms through which each shortlisted intervention is expected to increase disclosure of diversity characteristics. The ToC provided a shared framework to guide the trial design and is included within this feasibility study report.

1.4 Outline of the report

The following outlines the structure for the remainder of this report:

- **Section 2** outlines the intervention design. It also presents the ToC, illustrating the expected mechanisms through which the interventions are expected to increase disclosure of diversity characteristics.
- **Section 3** details the proposed design, which includes an impact evaluation, an implementation and process evaluation (IPE), and an economic evaluation.
    - **Section 3.1** details the impact evaluation which sets out the objectives, primary, secondary and exploratory outcome measures, data sources, sample, randomisation approach, and statistical power calculations.
    - **Section 3.2** details the proposed IPE which describes how the feasibility, fidelity, and mechanisms of change will be assessed, including interviews with staff and employees to explore delivery and perceptions of the interventions.
    - **Section 3.3** details the economic evaluation which outlines the planned cost analysis, which will estimate the resources required to design and deliver each intervention, and also assess the relative cost-effectiveness of

the two campaigns.

- **Section 4** summarises key limitations and risks, drawing on feasibility findings and outlining potential mitigations.
- **Section 5** discusses relevant ethical considerations, including participant consent, data security, and governance processes.
- **Section 6** presents lessons learned, focusing on implementation challenges, collaboration with Kier teams, and implications for future delivery.
- **Section 7** presents the conclusions and recommendations, drawing together the main findings from the feasibility study and outlining next steps towards a potential trial.

2. Intervention design

Summary

We propose testing two behaviourally-informed communication campaigns targeted at all Kier employees. Both campaigns would aim to improve employees' understanding of why the organisation collects diversity characteristics and to make the disclosure process easier to complete. Each campaign would test a different framing: positive framing to emphasise the benefits of disclosure, and negative framing to highlight how disclosure helps prevent negative outcomes.

We recommend delivering the communication campaigns via email from the Diversity and Inclusion team, reflecting Kier employees' preferences for trusted messengers. In both communication campaigns (i.e., in the treatment groups), access to the 'Update my diversity information' page on Kier's HR system is recommended to be made easier with a direct hyperlink and employees should receive two follow-up reminders. Employees in the control group would not receive these communication campaigns. Both treatment groups and control groups would continue to receive routine Kier communications unrelated to disclosure.

The ToC sets out how the different features of the behaviourally-informed communication campaigns - such as framings, reminders, and direct hyperlink - are expected to increase the number of employees who voluntarily disclose their diversity characteristics to Kier. If these components are implemented as intended, Kier should see an increase in disclosure levels, providing a clearer picture of its workforce and enabling the organisation to put beneficial outcomes into practice, for example by developing more relevant training programmes.

2.1 Description

Drawing on the feasibility study activities described in Section 1, this section sets out our recommendations for the interventions, communication channels and messenger. Specifically, it explains the rationale for these choices, describes the design of the control and treatment groups and presents the ToC, outlining the mechanisms through which the interventions are expected to drive behaviour change.

As feasibility work progressed, we iteratively refined the list of potential interventions, narrowing down options as practical and technical constraints became clear. At the end of Sprint 1, we presented four promising ideas to Kier and Youth Futures, each supported by evidence and considered feasible within organisational systems. Through further consultations with key teams at Kier and Youth Futures, alongside mini-group discussions with eight Kier employees during Sprint 2, we arrived at the recommended interventions described below.

For this trial, our recommendation is to implement two behaviourally-informed communication campaigns targeted at all Kier employees. Both of these communication campaigns would aim to improve understanding of why the organisation collects employees' diversity characteristics and to make the disclosure process easier to complete. We recommend testing these two interventions alongside a pure control condition, as this design maximises learning while maintaining sufficient statistical power. Further details on statistical power considerations are provided in the Section 3 of this report.

Before identifying communication campaigns as the most feasible option, we considered a broad set of possible interventions during the feasibility study. For example, we examined whether Kier's HR system could be adapted to include new prompts or revised wording to guide employees through the disclosure process. This was not feasible within project timelines. We also considered reserving a brief period in employees' calendars to give them protected time to complete their information; however, Kier's systems cannot create calendar holds that employees can move, making this option impractical. Finally, we explored building disclosure into existing HR interactions, for example, prior to viewing payslips. This was deemed as infeasible due to the operational limitations of Kier's HR system.

Once communication campaigns were identified as the most feasible option, we looked at whether and how we could tailor these campaigns themselves. For example, we explored more tailored messages based on how much of their diversity profile employees had already completed. This approach was discounted because it would require calculating completeness for every employee, which would be time-consuming and risk inaccuracies when carried out at scale. In addition, we explored offering a small charitable donation through the Kier Foundation for each employee who disclosed their details, which would be explained as part of the communication campaigns, but this required trustee approval that would be unlikely to be secured in time. Overall, these constraints led us to **recommend communication campaigns with a direct link to the 'Update my diversity information' page in Kier's internal HR system, two different**

framings, reminder emails and elements of personalisation as the most feasible interventions for the trial.

Below, we first outline the recommended communication channels and messengers, together with the rationale for these choices. We then describe the similarities and differences between the treatment groups, supported by relevant evidence for each intervention feature, before concluding with the control group.

2.1.1. Communication channels

Selecting the right communication channel is essential to ensuring broad reach. Through consultations with the Communications team at Kier, as well as discussions with Kier employees, **we recommend the communication campaigns to be sent via email.** Alongside email, during the feasibility study, we also scoped out the possibility of using text messages, MS Teams, push notifications and posts on Your Kier, but these were all ruled out.

Our understanding is that email communications have the broadest reach within Kier. In contrast, during mini-group discussions, many employees reported not checking MS Teams regularly or having access. We also learned that text messages have a number of limitations, including 160 character-limit, restricted personalisation capabilities, and more costly implementation in comparison to other options (approximately £0.50 per text, as per information provided by Kier's Communications team). We also understand that the number of employees that have a valid phone number Kier has access to is low (only around 800 employees have a known phone number). This significantly limits the reach of any text message communication campaigns. Push notifications were also ruled out in order to minimise the risk of spillover between treatment arms. As push notifications can appear on desktop or phone lock screens, there was a risk they could be seen by nearby colleagues (for example, during meetings), undermining randomisation. Finally, a new post on Your Kier was deemed infeasible early during Sprint 1, as there is no functionality to randomise visibility of content.

2.1.2 Messenger

Another consideration for implementing the intervention was to identify an appropriate messenger. Recent research on employee compliance with digital requests indicates that employees are significantly more responsive to messengers they can trust and who

hold positions of authority.[2]

Several options were explored during mini-group discussions with Kier employees, including the HR team, the Diversity and Inclusion team, senior leaders/CEO, the People and Culture team, and a 'typical employee'. The choice of messenger is critical: they must hold enough authority to convey a sense of action and importance but also be relevant to the content of the message. For example, Kier employees who participated in mini-group discussions mentioned that if the message came from the CEO, it would feel more like a 'tick box' exercise, due to the lack of overt relevance.

Overall, insights from these discussions suggest that the most appropriate messengers would come from the Diversity and Inclusion or People and Culture teams. Mini-group discussion participants did not have a preference between communications being signed either by the team or by a named individual (e.g., Head of Diversity and Inclusion). Although direct evidence comparing individual versus team signatures is limited, research on organisational email characteristics indicates that adding personal cues in messages can positively influence recipients' affective engagement with organisational communications. We therefore recommend using an individual signee as it provides a clearer personal cue.[3] During the feasibility study, it also became clear that the team with diversity and inclusion responsibilities could act as sender with fewer operational dependencies, given established lines of communication with the project team and clarity over ownership of the subject matter. For these practical reasons, alongside employee preferences, we recommend issuing communications under the diversity and inclusion team.

2.1.3 Intervention content

In trial design terms, we recommend for all eligible Kier employees to be randomly assigned to one of two treatment groups, or a control group. **Both treatments:** The communication campaigns in both treatment arms share several core components.

- First, each would include a direct link to the 'Update my diversity information' page in Kier's HR system to reduce the time and effort required to disclose diversity characteristics. Research shows that even small 'hassle costs' (e.g., extra clicks or navigation steps) can significantly reduce follow-through on simple

[2] Schuetz, S.W., Bansal, G., Weng, Q., Lowry, P.B. and Thatcher, J.B. (2025), Heeding the Messenger: The Influence of Sender Characteristics on Security Message Compliance Intentions. Inf Syst J.

[3] Tanis, M., & Beukeboom, C. J. (2011). Organizational identification and the communication of identity: Effects of message characteristics on cognitive and affective identification. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, *50*(4), 784-791.

tasks.[4]

- Second, reminder emails would be sent at regular intervals throughout the trial period to keep disclosure salient and increase the likelihood of engagement. Reminders are well-evidenced tools for increasing uptake in contexts where intention-action gaps are common.[5]

- Finally, both communication campaigns are recommended to be personalised using employees' first names, include a clear call to action, and be sent from a trusted messenger identified through employee feedback. Personalisation has been linked to enhanced relevance of communications,[6] explicit calls to action increase the likelihood of recipients responding or engaging,[7] and trusted messengers increase compliance and responsiveness in a range of settings.[8]

The only difference between the two treatments would be in their framing, specifically:

- **Positive framing (treatment 1):** In the first treatment arm, employees would receive a communication campaign using language that emphasises the benefits of disclosing diversity information, such as ensuring equal access to training and progression.

[4] The Behavioural Insights Team (2020). EAST: Four simple ways to apply behavioural insights. Available here: https://www.bi.team/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/BIT-EAST-1.pdf

[5] Milkman, K. L., Beshears, J., Choi, J. J., Laibson, D., & Madrian, B. C. (2011). Using implementation intentions prompts to enhance influenza vaccination rates. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *108*(26), 10415-10420.

Karlan, D., McConnell, M., Mullainathan, S., & Zinman, J. (2016). Getting to the top of mind: How reminders increase saving. *Management Science*, *62*(12), 3393-3411.

[6] Chandra, S., Verma, S., Lim, W. M., Kumar, S., & Donthu, N. (2022). Personalization in personalized marketing: Trends and ways forward. *Psychology & Marketing*, *39*(8), 1529-1562.

[7] Vafainia, S., Breugelmans, E., & Bijmolt, T. (2019). Calling customers to take action: the impact of incentive and customer characteristics on direct mailing effectiveness. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, *45*(1), 62-80.

[8] Banerjee, A., Alsan, M., Breza, E., Chandrasekhar, A. G., Chowdury, A., Duflo, E., ... & Olken, B. A. (2024). Can a trusted messenger change behavior when information is plentiful? Evidence from the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic in West Bengal. *Review of Economics and Statistics*, 1-33.

- This framing choice is supported by existing evidence. For example, in experimental settings (including RCTs), using positive framing in communications has been shown to improve health-related behaviours.[9]

- **Negative framing (treatment 2):** In the second treatment arm, employees would receive a communication campaign using language that highlights how disclosure of diversity information may help prevent negative outcomes such as unequal access to training and progression.

    - Negative framing has proven an effective measure for encouraging behaviour. For example, one online RCT found that people were more likely to grant access to their personal device storage when they were told they would miss out on certain feature if they did not share this information.[10] In the literature, negative framing is commonly approached as loss-framed messaging, where the consequences of not acting are made salient. However, during the feasibility study at Kier, employees reacted negatively to explicit loss framing (e.g., "if you do not disclose, you will miss out on…"), describing it as punitive and disengaging. For this reason, the negatively framed communication campaign is recommended to adopt a softer, prevention-focused approach, emphasising that taking action will help avoid undesirable outcomes (such as inequitable access to opportunities), rather than implying that inaction will directly lead to losses.

After clicking the link in the email, employees would be required to log into Your Kier and complete a four-step process within Kier's HR system:

- First, employees would see a summary of the answers they have previously provided (with blank boxes for any characteristics not yet completed). This

[9] McNeil, B. J., et al. (1982). On the elicitation of preferences for alternative therapies. New England Journal of Medicine, 306(21), 1259-1262. Wilson, D. K., Kaplan, R. M., & Schneiderman, L. J. (1987). Framing of decisions and selections of alternatives in health care. Social Behaviour, 2(1), 51-59.

The Behavioural Insights Team (2020). A menu for change: Using behavioural science to promote sustainable diets around the world. Available here: https://www.bi.team/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/BIT_Report_A-Menu-for-Change_Webversion_2020.pdf.pdf

Gallagher, K. M., & Updegraff, J. A. (2012). Health message framing effects on attitudes, intentions, and behavior: a meta-analytic review. *Annals of behavioral medicine*, *43*(1), 101-116.

[10] Bongard-Blanchy, K., Sterckx, J.L., Rossi, A., Sergeeva, A., Koenig, V., Rivas, S. and Distler, V., 2023. Analysing the influence of loss-gain framing on data disclosure behaviour: A study on the use case of app permission requests. In Proceedings of the 2023 European Symposium on Usable Security

summary shows each question on the diversity characteristics form and the drop-down response previously selected. To make any changes, employees must click 'update', which takes them to the form itself.

- Second, employees would access the form to update their characteristics, pre-filled with any previous answers. All questions and characteristics include pre-defined drop-down boxes, with some offering an 'I use another term' option, and sexual orientation question also providing a free-text box for employees who identify differently from the listed options. When employees are happy with their answers, they can click 'apply' to continue.
- Third, employees would be shown a summary page to review all their answers. Employees can then click 'next' to review their 'proposed' answers (i.e., that they decided to update) against any 'current' answers (i.e., previously filled in). Any changes between the current and proposed characteristics are clearly highlighted.
- Finally, after confirming their changes, employees see a confirmation page, informing them that the changes have been applied. The page also includes a hyperlink for employees to update their ethnicity on a separate 'Update your personal information' page on Kier's HR system.

Control group: Employees in the control group would not receive any communication campaigns aimed at encouraging disclosure of diversity information. They may still choose to disclose independently but would not receive a direct hyperlink, meaning they must navigate three additional steps prior to the 'Update my diversity information' page in Kier's HR system. Specifically, control group employees would first need to log into the Your Kier platform; second, they would need to navigate to the HR system platform through the Your Kier menu; and finally, they would need to select the 'Update my diversity information' page within Kier's HR system. From there, they would access the same four-step process described above.

Employees in all groups will continue to receive routine internal communications unrelated to disclosure. Full communication campaign texts are provided in Appendix 1.

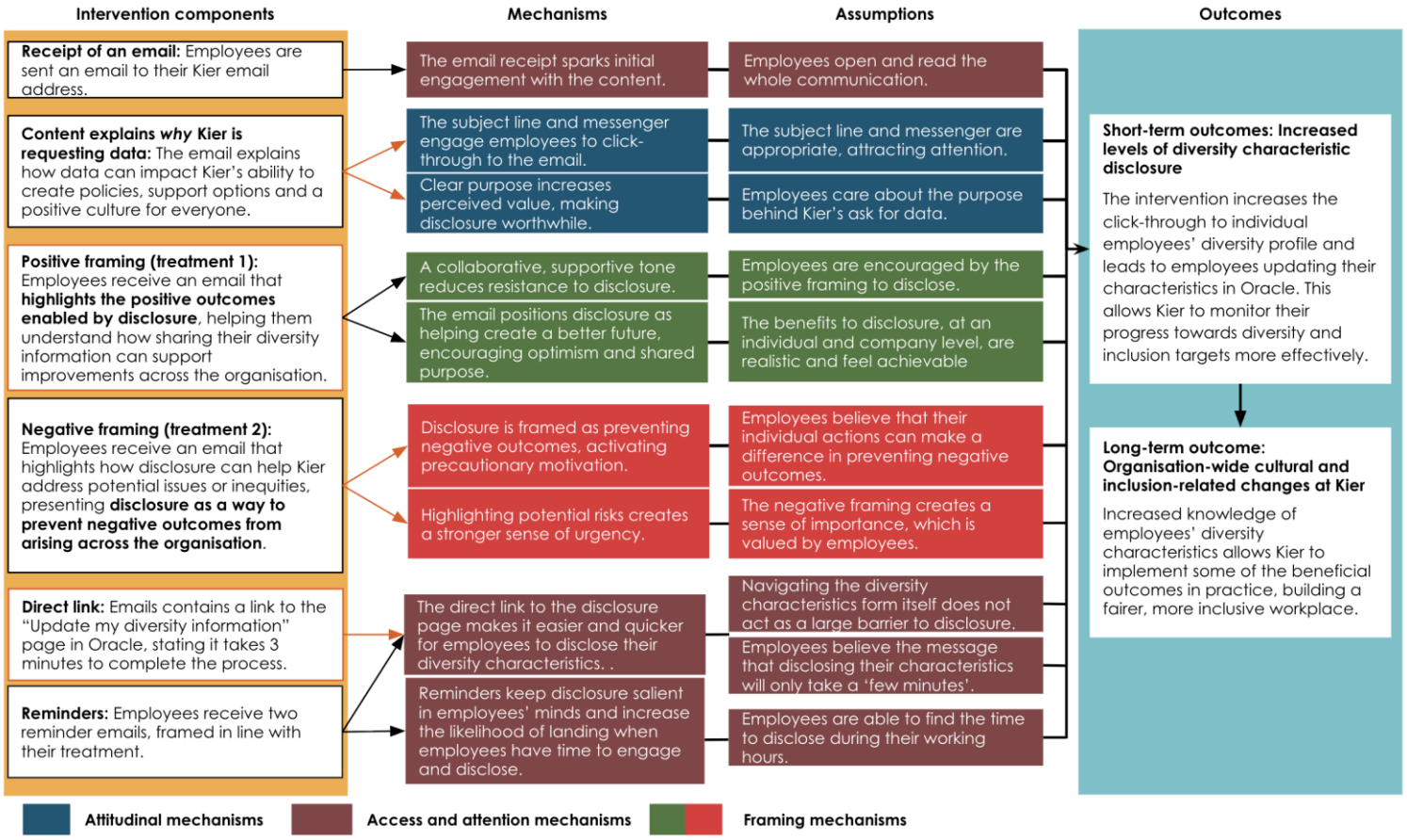
2.2 Theory of change

The ToC in Figure 1 sets out how each treatment arm is expected to lead to improved outcomes at Kier. Both interventions are broken down into multiple components, each representing a specific and observable element of the communication campaigns.

Treating the interventions as a set of discrete components is important because each one activates a different part of the causal chain. Separating the intervention in this way makes the underlying logic more transparent and allows the evaluation to consider not only whether the communication campaigns 'work' as a whole, but also how specific features contribute to changes in disclosure outcomes.

The two interventions in this project each take the form of an email communication campaign aimed at encouraging Kier employees to voluntarily disclose their diversity characteristics. Both campaigns explain why Kier collects this information and make it easier for employees to complete their details, but they differ in the framing used. Each intervention is designed to activate a small number of clearly defined mechanisms that, together, are intended to increase the number of employees disclosing their diversity characteristics to Kier.

Figure 1: Theory of change



Both communication campaigns (treatment 1 and 2) present the purpose of disclosure, capturing both company- and individual-level benefits, which will ensure employees are left with a greater understanding of what the information is used for - making disclosure worthwhile. This is directly relevant to some of the key barriers to disclosure raised in interviews with Kier staff i.e., not understanding the relevance or what the information would be used for.

Communication campaigns are intended to increase the chances of disclosure through a range of mechanisms. Across both treatment arms, the email itself aims to generate the initial engagement with the employee, sparking interest. In addition, the direct link to Kier's HR system should make disclosure both easier and quicker for the employee, reducing cognitive burden. Finally, the reminders keep disclosure salient and increase the likelihood that employees see the email at a moment when they have time to engage. On a treatment-level, the positive framing in treatment 1 intends to encourage optimism and shared purpose by positioning disclosure as a helping hand to creating a better future at Kier, while the negative framing in treatment 2 is designed to activate precautionary motivation to encourage employees to prevent negative consequences to fellow colleagues and company culture. The mechanisms will only operate as intended if a set of assumptions hold. Employees must open and read the whole communication, which should come as a consequence of the employee feeling as though the subject line, channel and messenger attract attention and feel appropriate. Before clicking the link to the 'Update your diversity information' page on Kier's internal HR system, employees must believe that it will only take three minutes to update, as stated in the email. When on the page itself, it is important that navigating the form does not undermine the process and that all diversity characteristics are considered when disclosing. Finally, each treatment's framing must work as intended to encourage disclosure. The assumptions therefore represent the enabling conditions required for the intervention to work in practice.

If the intervention functions as designed, the email communication campaigns are expected to encourage a significant number of employees to access their diversity characteristics profile, and in turn yield a greater number of employees that have disclosed their diversity characteristics to Kier, by increasing the perceived benefits and decreasing the time and effort required to disclose. Over the longer-term, greater disclosure of these characteristics can allow Kier to action the benefits mentioned in the email itself (for example, building more relevant training programmes, designing and delivering relevant support, building policies where everyone is seen and heard and identify any 'hidden barriers' that might be preventing employees from progressing), which is hoped to lead to a fairer and more inclusive Kier.

Overall, the ToC suggests that relatively light-touch but targeted, focused communication campaigns aimed at the most common barriers to disclosure can support increased disclosure throughout the workforce, ultimately leading to a fairer, more diverse workplace.

3. Evaluation design

3.1 Impact evaluation

Summary

The main aim of the impact evaluation is to estimate the impact of the interventions on the number of in-scope diversity characteristics (disability status, neurodiversity, gender identity, transgender/gender reassignment, sexual orientation, social mobility, religion and carer status) disclosed by employees at the end of the trial.

We recommend the primary analysis to focus on employees aged 16-24, and the secondary analysis to focus on employees aged 25+. For exploratory outcomes, we recommend examining (1) disclosure of all in-scope characteristics; (2) disclosure of specific characteristics of interest (disability status, neurodiversity, social mobility); (3) the number of fields completed in the diversity characteristics disclosure form; and (4) whether employees fully complete the form. The first two exploratory outcomes use the core definition of disclosure (excluding 'prefer not to say' responses), whereas the last two use the expanded definition (including 'prefer not to say' responses).

We propose conducting a three-armed RCT comparing two communication campaigns to each other and to a pure control group which receives no intervention, with randomisation at the employee level. This level of randomisation was chosen to maximise statistical power for the primary analysis. We expect spillovers across employees to be relatively low. We recommend stratifying the randomisation on baseline disclosure and age group, to ensure balance on these key variables and make the trial arms more comparable.

Although our primary analysis (on employees aged 16-24) has moderate power when comparing interventions to the pure control group, we are less likely to be able to identify differences in impacts between the two treatment arms. Disclosure rates are relatively high among young employees, as all in-scope characteristics aside from social mobility have been automatically piped into Kier's HR system from application forms since 2023. Our secondary analysis (on aged 25+) has much greater power to detect differences between interventions, both because the sample size is greater and because there is a larger gap between current and full disclosure.

3.1.1 Objectives

The impact evaluation's primary aim is to estimate the change in the number of diversity characteristics disclosed as a result of two different interventions against pure control (i.e. no intervention).

Specifically, the research questions for the impact evaluation are:

- RQ1: What impact do the two campaigns have on disclosure of in-scope diversity characteristics for younger employees (aged 16-24) at Kier?
- RQ2: What impact do the two campaigns have on disclosure of in-scope diversity characteristics for employees aged 25 and over at Kier?
- RQ3: What impact do the two campaigns have on the proportion of Kier employees (aged 16-24 and 25+) who disclose all in-scope diversity characteristics?
- RQ4: What impact do the two campaigns have on disclosure of the following characteristics individually: neurodivergence status, disability status and social mobility?
- RQ5: What is the impact of the two campaigns on the number of fields Kier employees (aged 16-24 and 25+) complete in the diversity characteristics disclosure form (including 'prefer not to say' responses)?
- RQ6: What impact do the two campaigns have on the proportion of employees (aged 16-24 and 25+) with fully completed diversity characteristics?

3.1.2 Outcome measures

In-scope characteristics

Early in the project, it was decided in collaboration with YFF and Kier that our main outcome measure would relate to the disclosure of diversity characteristics, as this directly relates to the goals of the project. In this context, disclosure refers specifically to disclosure within Kier's centralised HR system. For the primary, secondary and first two sets of exploratory analyses (RQ3, RQ4), a diversity characteristic will be considered disclosed if it has a response that does not include 'prefer not to say'. This "core" definition was chosen because Kier's main aim is to better understand the diversity of their employee-base (as opposed to their disclosure preferences), in order to dedicate

resources to help characteristic-specific inclusion networks[11] and ensure an inclusive Kier for employees from all backgrounds. However, this means the main analyses will consider employees who fill in the 'Update my diversity information' form but select 'prefer not to say' as not having disclosed that characteristic. This may disproportionately apply to employees with minority characteristics who may feel less comfortable sharing this information.

Therefore, for the remaining exploratory analyses (RQ5, RQ6), BIT will use an "expanded" definition of disclosure which includes 'prefer not to say' responses. This allows employees who complete the form but choose not to disclose certain characteristics to be captured. Measuring this behaviour separately from non-completion highlights whether the intervention encourages engagement with the form, even if all characteristics are not actively disclosed.

In total, 11 characteristics meeting our definition of 'diversity characteristics' are collected via Kier's HR system. We scoped out the feasibility of including each of them as part of our main outcome measure, considering (1) the current rate of disclosure and (2) level of priority for YFF and/or Kier. For example, Kier currently has a company-wide focus on social mobility, aiming to increase disclosure rates to 75%. YFF also have a 3-year strategy introduced in 2025 to ensure marginalised young people can secure and thrive in good work by targeting 5 priority groups[12].

Table 3 below details all diversity characteristics that Kier collects data on, and their disclosure rates for young employees (aged 16-24) and the remaining Kier employees (aged 25+). For all characteristics apart from ex-forces and reservist status, disclosure rates were calculated based on data provided by Kier's HR system team (the internal HR team responsible for managing employee data) in October 2025; ex-forces and reservist status rates were calculated based on summary data from June 2024.

Table 3: Diversity data collected via Kier's HR system (in the order in which questions are listed)

[11] Kier has 7 'inclusion networks', which act as a voice for people to share their experiences and highlight areas for change. Over 900 employees are engaged with the networks. They are: the Kier Inclusion Network, the Pride Network, the Gender Inclusion Network, the Racial Inclusion Network, the Ability Network, the Armed Forces Network and the One World Network.

YFF's 5 priority groups are as follows: Ethnic minorities (Specifically, Black, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi young people), care-experienced young people, learning disability and autism, criminal justice experienced young people and young people with experience of mental ill health

Characteristic	Question on Kier's HR system self-service	Response options (Note: all questions also have a 'prefer not to say' option)	Disclosure rate for young Kier employees (aged 16-24; n = 614)[10]	Disclosure rate for remaining Kier employees (aged 25+; n = 7,056)[11]
Gender identity	Which gender identity do you most identify with?	Female / Gender fluid / Inter-sex / Male / Non-binary / I use another term	518 (95%)	5,242 (74%)
Transgender / gender reassignment	Do you consider yourself to be transgender?	Yes / No	518 (95%)	5,229 (74%)
Sexual orientation	What term best describes your sexual orientation? If you prefer to use another term to describe your sexual orientation, please define[12]	Heterosexual/straight / Gay / Lesbian / Bisexual / I use another term Open text box for describing with another term	598 (97%)	6,306 (89%)
Disability status	Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or	Yes / No	604 (98%)	6,298 (89%)

	illnesses?; Has this lasted, or is it expected to last, for 12 months or more; Do any of your conditions reduce your ability to carry out daily activities?	Yes / No Yes / No		
Social mobility	What was the occupation of your main household earner when you were aged 14?	Clerical and intermediate e.g. secretary, office clerk, call centre agent, nursery nurse / Long-term unemployed / Middle or Junior Managers e.g. manager in retail, bank, office, restaurant, pub / Modern Professional e.g. teacher, nurse, police sergeant, software designer, artist / Other / Routine, manual and service e.g. van driver, cleaner, sewing machinist, labourer, waiter / Semi-routine manual and service e.g. postal worker, caretaker, receptionist, sales assistant / Senior managers e.g. finance manager, chief executive / Small business owners who employed less than 25 people / Technical and craft e.g. mechanic, inspector, plumber, tool maker, electrician, train driver / Traditional professional e.g. solicitor, doctor, accountant, scientist, engineer	305 (50%)	1,719 (24%)

Neurodiversity	Do you consider yourself to be neurodiverse?	Yes / No	561 (91%)	5,064 (72%)
Religion	What is your religion or belief?	Buddhist / Christian (including CoE, Catholic, Protestant and all other denominations) / Hindu / Jewish / Muslim / Sikh / Any other religion / No religion	562 (91%)	4,895 (69%)
Carer status	Are you currently a carer?	Yes / No	580 (94%)	5,195 (74%)
Ethnicity	What is your ethnic origin?	Asian/Asian British - Bangladeshi / Asian/Asian British – Chinese / Asian/Asian British – Indian / Asian/Asian British - Other / Asian/Asian British – Pakistani / Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - African / Black/African/Caribbean/Black British – Caribbean / Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - Other / Mixed - Other / Mixed - White and Asian / Mixed - White and Black African / Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	608 (99%)	6,676 (95%)

		/ Other ethnic group – Arab / Other ethnic group – Other / White - English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British / White - Gypsy/Irish Traveller / White - Irish / White - Other White – Roma		
Ex-forces status	Are you ex-forces personnel?	Yes / No	538 (84%)	4,986 (65%)
Reservist status	Are you currently serving as a reservist?	Yes / No	538 84%	4,986 (65%)

For all characteristics, disclosure rates are relatively higher for younger employees (aged 16-24) than all other employees (aged 25+). This is partly because, as of the introduction of Kier Recruit in 2023, all characteristics (aside from social mobility) are automatically piped into Kier's HR system from the application form on Kier Recruit. Note that the disclosure rate for social mobility among employees aged 16-24 is 51%, considerably lower than the 84-99% disclosure rates observed for all other characteristics above.

Of all characteristics, we recommend:

- **excluding ex-forces status and reservist status** from the scope as they have not been identified as a priority by either YFF or Kier.
- **excluding ethnicity**, as (1) it has an extremely high disclosure rate (99% for aged 16-24, and 95% for aged 25+), and (2) ethnicity is collected through a separate part of Kier's HR system's self-service ('Update my personal information', rather than 'Update my diversity information'). This means that in our communication campaigns, we would need to provide two separate links - one to 'Update my

diversity information' and another to 'Update my personal information'. This may add friction and prevent some employees from completing their ethnicity information.

We recommend that all other characteristics in Table 3 are included in construction of the primary and secondary outcomes (see Section 3.1.2) because they:

1. are **of interest to YFF and/or Kier**
2. have a **disclosure rate of less than 95% across all employees**. This means that there is room to observe whether employees choose to disclose or not due to the interventions. **Despite relatively high disclosure rates for 16-24 employees (over 90%), we still recommend including these characteristics in the construction of the primary outcome** (Section 3.1.2). This is because (1) young employees can update some of the characteristics in a way that changes whether a characteristic is counted as disclosure under the core definition (i.e. changing their response from 'prefer not to say' to an active disclosure or vice versa), and (2) based on power calculations detailed in Section 3.1.6, we will still be powered to detect plausible effects for this age group.

This recommendation means there are eight characteristics in-scope: disability status,[13] neurodiversity, gender identity, transgender/gender reassignment, sexual orientation, social mobility, religion

Initial conversations were held with YFF and Kier regarding the inclusion of care leaver and criminal justice experience characteristics (additional YFF priority groups). We recommend excluding these characteristics as they are not currently collected and the timeline for adding them to the 'Update my diversity information' form would extend beyond the trial period.

Primary outcome

We propose the primary outcome of this trial to be the number of in-scope characteristics disclosed by young Kier employees (aged 16-24), ranging from 0-8. It was decided to focus on Kier employees aged 16-24 because this age group is of primary interest to YFF.

For the primary outcome, disclosure follows the core definition (having a response listed

[13] There are three questions on disability status: (1) Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses?; (2) Has this lasted, or is it expected to last, for 12 months or more; (3) Do any of your conditions reduce your ability to carry out daily activities?. We will consider an employee to have disclosed their disability status only if they have disclosed for each of these three questions (i.e. have a non-empty and non-prefer-not-to-say response).

for the characteristics on the form, excluding 'prefer not to say' responses). This means that people who fill in the form but only provide 'prefer not to say' responses will not be captured by our primary outcome (though exploratory analysis will capture such individuals). Each diversity characteristic contributes equally to the outcome measure (i.e. the number of disclosed in-scope characteristics). Note that the disclosure rate for social mobility among employees aged 16-24 is 50%, considerably lower than the 84-99% disclosure rates observed for all other characteristics. This means that any observed differences in the primary outcome between trial arms are likely to be driven mainly by changes in disclosure of social mobility, with smaller changes expected among individuals who have already disclosed all characteristics (46%).

Disclosure rates will be measured after a four-week period, which mirrors the approach taken in previous studies on disclosure of characteristics by employees.[14] This time period is sufficient for employees to make changes to their diversity information, and it would allow data to be collected by the end of March 2026, in line with the project's agreed timeframes.

Secondary outcome

We propose the secondary outcome of this trial to be the number of in-scope characteristics disclosed by Kier employees over the age of 25, ranging from 0-8. The secondary outcome is constructed in the same way as the primary outcome, but because disclosure rates are lower among employees over the age of 25, changes in this outcome are more likely to reflect differences in disclosure across multiple diversity characteristics.

Exploratory outcomes

The following exploratory outcomes will also be collected and analysed for employees aged 16-24 and 25+ separately, comparing all arms in the trial:

1. **Proportion of employees who disclosed all eight in-scope characteristics.** This uses the core definition of disclosure (i.e. excludes 'prefer not to say' responses) and is intended to capture whether employees fully disclose all in-scope characteristics.

2. **Proportion of employees who disclosed the following characteristics individually: neurodivergence, disability status and social mobility.** These characteristics were selected because they are of particular interest to YFF and Kier. This exploratory outcome uses the core definition of disclosure and would allow us to see if the interventions have a differential impact on diversity characteristics of most

[14] The Behavioural Insights Team. (2021). Improving equality, diversity and inclusion starts with good data. Available here: https://www.bi.team/blogs/improving-equality-diversity-and-inclusion-starts-with-good-data/

interest.

3. **Number of in-scope characteristics disclosed, using the expanded definition of disclosure, which includes 'prefer not to say' responses.** For context, the proportion of 'prefer not to say' responses is low (2-6%) for most characteristics, 11% for religion, though these numbers may increase if the intervention encourages more employees to visit the page on Kier's HR system. This exploratory outcome is intended to capture whether employees updated their diversity characteristics but selected 'prefer not to say' as their response. If we see a significant difference between trial arms for this outcome, but not for the primary or secondary outcomes, this would suggest that the interventions prompted a small group of employees to go to the 'Update my diversity information' page on Kier's HR system, but did not increase the number of characteristics they were willing to actively disclose.

4. **Proportion of employees who complete all fields (i.e. no blank responses).** This uses the expanded definition of disclosure and is intended to capture those who are willing to complete the form but are not willing to declare at least one characteristic.

3.1.3 Data sources

Datasets

For the analysis specified above to be viable , we must be able to access the HR system dataset listed in Table 4. It has been confirmed that Kier holds data on Kier's HR system. The datasets on email sends and, if available, opens/ clickthroughs would support the IPE specified in Section 3.2. Where available, HR system and the email datasets are expected to be linked via pseudonymised employee IDs.

Table 4: Summary of datasets

Dataset	Description
Kier's HR system	Contains disclosure data for all in-scope characteristics at the employee level. Also contains employee information including their age range (16-24; 25+), grade, and year they started working at Kier. Finally, contains information on employees' main email address, to be sent to Kier's Communications team.

Email sends datasets	Contain data on which emails employees are sent
Email opens / clickthroughs datasets (TBC whether these will be available)	Contain open/clickthrough rates for each batch of emails sent (i.e., at campaign/message level, not individual level)

We first scoped out alternative data collection tools for measuring the trial's outcomes (e.g., developing a new survey). After this initial scoping, it was determined that only Kier's HR system was feasible to use for the trial. This is for three reasons:

1. **All outcome data is collected via Kier's HR system self-service.** There are currently no alternative sources of diversity information within Kier.
2. **Kier's HR system links with the proposed communication channel**. Kier's HR system holds employees' main email addresses.
3. **Introducing an alternative way of disclosing diversity information would likely overcomplicate the process** and become a barrier for busy employees. It also risks confusion about whether employees should use the alternative system in the short-term or Kier's HR system as the long-term source of record.

Data linkage

In order to compile an analysis dataset, we require unique 'keys' or variables that can be used to uniquely identify individuals and link them between datasets. Our current understanding is that both Kier's HR system and the email communications datasets will contain employee email addresses and this is how they will be linked by Kier. BIT are unable to view employee email addresses based on the DSA signed with Kier, so will use employee ID as the linking variable for analysis.

Employee IDs will be pseudonymised by encrypting the numeric employee IDs with a common method across all data owners. Data owners at Kier have been briefed on the method and have already used it to share data for the trial's power calculations, demonstrating that it is feasible to implement.

Data sharing will be conducted using folders on SharePoint, with access restricted to the required individuals only.

Covariates

Following YFF guidance for statistical analysis, we propose using a minimal set of covariates for our main analysis. Specifically, we will include:

1. **Baseline disclosure** (the number of characteristics disclosed at baseline)
2. **Grade of employee** (contributor, management, leadership, strategist, director)[15]
3. **Year of join date** (2023 and before; 2024 and after). This accounts for differences in disclosure since Kier Recruit was introduced, where new hires are asked to complete their diversity information during the recruitment/onboarding process, which is then automatically transferred into Kier's HR system.

All covariates will be sourced from Kier's HR system.

3.1.4 Sample

We recommend that the sample receiving the interventions includes all Kier employees with (at the time at which data are pulled for randomisation):

- an email address with active inbox in Kier's HR system; and
- access to Kier's HR system self-service. This would exclude O-graded employees (n = approx. 2,000), such as operatives and cleaners because they do not have access to Kier's HR system self-service.

We will include those employed permanently, as well as graduates, apprentices, temporary staff or those on fixed-term contracts.

Employees who leave Kier during the trial period will be excluded from the analysis. We expect the rate of attrition based on this to be very low, as only 1.2% of employees exited Kier between the Kier's HR system datasets shared for the purpose of the feasibility study by Kier in September and October 2025.

Of these, our sample for the primary analysis will consist of all Kier employees aged 16-24 **(estimated n = 614)**.[16] We recommend including those who have already disclosed all diversity characteristics as they can update some of the characteristics they have already disclosed (or change their response(s) to 'prefer not to say', which we would also want to capture as a potential unintended consequence disclosures.

For the secondary analysis, our sample will consist of all Kier employees over the age of 25 **(estimated n = 7,056).** Based on Kier's HR system data from October 2025, we

[15] The grades are in order from least to most senior. O grades are excluded, as employees in these grades do not have access to Kier's HR system's self-service.

[16] The number of young Kier employees was calculated using data on diversity data disclosure provided by Kier in September 2025.

estimate that a much lower 23% of this subsample will have declared all in-scope characteristics.

3.1.5 Randomisation

Level of randomisation

We scoped out several possible levels of randomisation based on variables observable in Kier's HR system. Possible levels of randomisation for the trial include:

- Business stream (Construction; Natural Resources, Nuclear & Networks (NRNN); Transportation; Group Services; and Property)
- Combination of business stream and office location (e.g. Construction stream in the Aberdeen office)
- Team (with supervisor name used as a proxy)
- Employee

Of these, we recommend **randomising at the employee level** (i.e. allocating each employee to receive a different intervention, or pure control). Randomising at any other level would meaningfully reduce power for our primary analysis, which focuses on employees aged 16-24 (n = 614, of which 54% (n = 333) have not fully disclosed their diversity characteristics).

We expect risk of spillovers to be low when randomising at the employee level. The channels for delivering the interventions (e.g. email) were chosen carefully to keep spillover risk low. For example, we decided against push notifications alerting staff of new content on Your Kier, as these are more likely to appear publicly on a desktop or phone and be seen by nearby colleagues. However, this does not rule out spillovers from employees forwarding emails to peers or discussing the content with one another in person.

We will attempt to identify the extent of spillovers by **comparing the increase in disclosure rates in the control group over the trial period to previous months.** If we observe a large uptick (and can verify there were no other campaigns relevant to disclosure), this will be interpreted as evidence of spillovers.

Type of randomisation

To increase the chance of the intervention and control groups being balanced on key characteristics that are correlated with the primary outcome, we propose to stratify randomisation by:

1. **Baseline disclosure categorised into three levels** (disclosed no data (i.e. all fields are blank or 'prefer not to say'); partially disclosed data (i.e. disclosed at least one characteristic); disclosed all data)
2. **Age group** (16-24; 25+)

Randomisation implementation

We recommend that randomisation takes the following steps:

- **Kier's HR system team will send the list of employees (with IDs pseudonymised via the process agreed)** with their age group, information on each in-scope characteristic and an indicator for whether they have an email address with an active inbox. BIT will filter to include only employees with a valid email address and conduct stratified randomisation of these employees by baseline disclosure and age. Then, BIT will send back the pseudonymised IDs of in-scope employees in the treatment and control groups.
- **Kier's HR system team will match the pseudonymised IDs back to employee contact details and then send this information to Kier's Communications team, who will deliver the interventions according to the randomised assignment.**
- Four weeks after the start of interventions, Kier's HR system team will send BIT a second dataset with the same pseudonymised IDs as above, and the current disclosure rates for each in-scope characteristic for analysis.

3.1.6 Power calculations

Power calculations determine the minimum detectable effect size (MDES) that we are able to observe for a given trial setup (e.g., number of employees, number of trial arms, significance level). To recommend the design of the trial, we examine how the MDES changes based on (1) sample used to analyse the primary and secondary outcome measures, (2) number of trial arms, with up to five arms considered. We assume that the sample is split equally between arms. The reported MDESs are after adjusting for all possible multiple comparisons (i.e. all treatment arms are to be compared against the control and to each other) using the Bonferroni correction.[17] This correction is slightly more conservative than the Romano-Wolf correction which we plan to use for the analysis.

[17] Using an alternative method for correcting for multiple comparisons would not change our main conclusions. For example, our MDESs for 3 arms (our recommended trial setup) are 15% higher after conducting a Bonferroni correction compared to no correction being made at all.

To calculate MDESs, we used employee diversity disclosure data from October 2025. All eight in-scope characteristics discussed in Section 3.1.2 were included in the outcome construction. Based on the previous month's data (September 2025), we assume that baseline disclosure will explain approximately 90% of the variation in the number of characteristics disclosed at the end of the trial.[18] This is expected as, based on comparing responses to diversity questions in September and October 2025, very few employees update their disclosure forms in an average four-week period. While other activities within Kier could affect overall disclosure rates over time, the randomised design of the trial ensures that such factors should not bias the estimated treatment effects.

To make the results between different numbers of arms (and therefore sizes of arms) comparable, we express MDESs in two ways: (1) the number of additional characteristics disclosed per employee, and (2) as a percentage of the gap between current disclosure (as of October 2025) to full disclosure.

Table 5: Results of power calculations

Primary outcome: Number of in-scope characteristics disclosed by 16-24-year-old Kier employees (n = 614)				
	2 arms	**3 arms**	**4 arms**	**5 arms**
MDES as number of extra characteristics disclosed per employee	0.10	**0.14**	0.18	0.21
MDES as % of gap between baseline and full disclosure (baseline = 7.13 out of 8)	11.5%	**16.3%**	20.2%	23.8%
Secondary outcome: Number of in-scope characteristics disclosed by Kier employees aged 25 or older (n = 7,056)				

[18] The observed value of R-squared (i.e. the proportion of variation in the end-of-trial outcome explained by the baseline value) was actually much higher for employees aged 16-24, at 0.97 (vs. the assumed 0.90). We decided to take a conservative approach here as only 2 employees in this age group had changes in the number of characteristics reported - if the number is even slightly higher in the control group in our trial, this corresponds to meaningful increases in MDESs (e.g., going from 0.97 to 0.90 raises MDESs by roughly 80%).
Note that examining the difference in number of characteristics disclosed as the outcome (and then not controlling for baseline characteristics) very slightly increases MDESs, so is not our preferred approach.

	2 arms	3 arms	4 arms	5 arms
MDES as number of extra characteristics disclosed per employee	0.06	**0.08**	0.10	0.12
MDES as % of gap between baseline and full disclosure (baseline = 5.69 out of 8)	2.4%	**3.4%**	4.2%	4.9%
Significance level: 0.05. Power: 0.8. Linear model estimated by OLS, using baseline number of characteristics disclosed as control variable (R-squared: 0.9).				

We observe low levels of attrition, with only 1.2% of employees leaving Kier between baseline and a month later. While this does not affect the results of the power calculations reported above, it will be taken into account when interpreting the trial results.

On the basis of these calculations, we recommend:

1. **Comparing the impact of two different interventions or messaging framings against control (and against each other).** The power differences between two and three arms (i.e. one and two treatment arms vs. a pure control arm) are reasonably small, as the MDES for the primary outcome only increases by 0.04 characteristics (from 0.10 to 0.14). For our recommended trial design with three arms, the MDES of 0.14 characteristics per employee is equivalent (1) to 16.3% of the gap between current disclosure (7.13 characteristics out of 8) and full disclosure (8 out of 8) and (2) a 14 percentage point increase in the number of 16-24-year-old Kier employees disclosing their social mobility (which has the lowest disclosure rate, of 50%). A previous pre-post study that BIT conducted with engineering firm Arup saw the proportion of staff with fully completed forms increase from 55% to 85%. We treat this 30-percentage-point increase as a plausible upper-bound effect for the current trial. Note that the previous study included 'prefer not to say' responses in the outcome measure. In the current trial, these responses are excluded under the core definition of disclosure but included under the expanded definition. Increasing the number of arms further will raise the chance that we are unable to detect the effects of campaigns

which meaningfully increase disclosure.

2. **That the control group for this trial should be a 'pure' control group which receives no intervention.** This would allow us to estimate the overall effectiveness of both interventions, rather than solely comparing individual intervention elements through an A/B approach where effect sizes are likely to be smaller. Note that we are less likely to be able to detect differences in disclosure rates for the 16-24 age group when comparing campaigns, but have substantially greater power to detect these differences for the 25+ age group, both because the sample size is greater and because there is a larger gap between current and full disclosure.

3.2 Implementation and process evaluation

Summary

The IPE is intended to assess whether the communication campaigns are delivered as intended, and how they are experienced by employees and relevant Kier staff. The recommended IPE approach is designed to address four core research questions:

- RQ1 - Whether randomisation is implemented correctly
- RQ2 - How the intervention is delivered in practice and how delivery can be improved
- RQ3 - Whether the intended mechanisms operate as expected, such as improved understanding of why Kier collects diversity data and increased salience of updating diversity information
- RQ4 - How employees and implementation staff perceive the clarity, relevance, usability and burden of the communication campaigns and associated processes

To address these questions, we recommend a mixed-methods approach comprising two main activities.

1. Reviewing implementation data throughout the trial, including checks on randomisation, delivery accuracy and aggregated engagement metrics (e.g., email opens and click-throughs if available) to assess whether implementation unfolded as expected and whether engagement differed across treatment arms.
2. Conducting qualitative interviews with both implementation staff and employees in the treatment groups to explore fidelity, day-to-day delivery, perceived clarity and persuasiveness of the communication campaigns, barriers to updating information, activation of the mechanisms in the ToC, and overall acceptability of the campaigns.

Together, these activities would provide a clear picture of how the communication campaigns were delivered in practice and highlight opportunities to strengthen future roll-outs.

3.2.1 Objectives

The IPE is designed to evaluate how the communication campaigns were delivered in practice, including implementation fidelity, activation of intended mechanisms, and the experiences of employees and Kier staff involved. The research questions to be addressed by the IPE are as follows:

RQ1. Was the randomisation procedure implemented correctly?

- RQ1a. Were the interventions delivered as assigned?
- RQ1b. Were any challenges encountered during allocation or monitoring (e.g., spillovers) and how were these resolved?
- RQ1c. Did any randomisation issues have a measurable impact on trial integrity or outcomes?

RQ2. How were the interventions implemented in practice, and how can implementation be improved?

- RQ2a. What factors facilitated or hindered successful implementation?
- RQ2b. What changes can be made to the implementation process to improve the interventions, effectiveness, and scalability for future roll-outs at Kier?
- RQ2c. Did any implementation issues have a measurable impact on trial integrity or outcomes?
- RQ2d. What direct or indirect feedback, if any, did implementers receive?

RQ3. What evidence is there that the mechanisms from the ToC lead to any impact / variation in impact?

- RQ3a. Did the interventions activate mechanisms predicted by the ToC (e.g., increasing understanding of why Kier collects diversity data, reducing privacy and discrimination concerns)?
- RQ3b. To what extent were the reasons for diversity data collection clearly understood?
- RQ3c. Were there factors that moderated the strength or consistency of these mechanisms (e.g., perceived difficulty of accessing Kier's HR system)?

RQ4. What are the views of the Kier employees who received the interventions, and of the staff involved in implementation, regarding the interventions?

- RQ4a. How did Kier employees who received the interventions perceive them, including their clarity, persuasiveness, relevance and ease of actioning?
- RQ4b. How did interventions' reception or influence vary across key employee sub-groups (e.g., by age, work location)?
- RQ4c. For employees who received the interventions but did not update their data, what specific attitudinal or procedural barriers remained significant?
- RQ4d. How did relevant Kier staff perceive the implementation of the interventions, including its practicality, burden and overall acceptability?

The sections below present the recommended methods and analysis approach. The precise scope, sequencing and materials would be finalised in collaboration with Youth Futures and Kier prior to trial launch.

3.2.2 Research methods

The IPE is expected to be conducted between March 2026 and May 2026, covering both the period in which the communication campaigns are live and the immediate period afterwards. It is recommended to draw on a mixed-methods approach involving the review of quantitative implementation data and qualitative interviews with both implementation staff and Kier employees receiving one of the communication campaigns.

Activity 1: Review of implementation data

A thorough review of the implementation data is recommended to address RQ1. In particular, reviewing the randomisation data would help verify that the allocation process was implemented successfully and that each communication campaign was delivered to the correct employees (RQ1a). This review would identify any issues arising during randomisation, document how these were resolved (RQ1b) and outline any implications for trial integrity (RQ1c). Lessons learned from running randomisation and addressing any randomisation issues would also be reported in the evaluation report to inform other researchers undertaking similar trials.

In practice, once employee randomisation is completed at the start of the trial, BIT would provide Kier with a list of pseudonymised employee IDs and their assigned treatment arms. Kier would then match these identifiers to employee contact details and deliver the interventions accordingly. To support ongoing monitoring, several BIT staff members would be included within different trial arms so that the team can confirm they are receiving the correct intervention and the expected reminders. This would provide a practical, real-time check on delivery accuracy. Please note that the Kier implementation contact responsible for sending the communications would be aware

of the trial design and of the inclusion of BIT staff members alongside Kier employees as recipients. Although this likely increases attention paid to BIT email addresses, concealing them was considered unfeasible, as sending emails to external contacts would likely trigger a pop-up notification or warning.

Additionally, a designated implementation contact at Kier would share an email sends dataset after each intervention cycle (i.e., the initial communication and subsequent reminders), showing which communication campaign was sent to which pseudonymised employee ID. BIT would cross-reference this dataset against the original randomisation records to verify that assignments have been followed and to identify any anomalies.

Alongside this, if feasible, BIT would review email opens/clickthroughs datasets provided by Kier's Communications or IT teams, including aggregate engagement metrics such as the proportion of employees who opened each campaign and the proportion who clicked through to the HR system link. This information has not been historically available for this type of internal communications at Kier but has been generated for others such as test phishing emails. BIT is working with Kier's IT team to explore whether these metrics could be accessed for proposed trial communications. If available, they would help assess whether the implementation unfolded as expected and whether engagement varied across treatment arms, contributing to RQ2 (RQ2a, RQ2b) in addition to RQ1.

Activity 2: Qualitative interviews

A series of qualitative interviews is recommended to address IPE RQs 2-4. Interviews would be conducted with Kier staff involved in implementing the communication campaigns and with employees who received one of the communication campaigns (i.e., employees in the two treatment groups). The draft interview topic guides for each participant group are provided in Appendix 2 and will be refined further in advance of fieldwork.

Below, we outline the sampling criteria and describe the recommended recruitment approach for each participant group.

Kier staff involved in intervention implementation

Sample and interview set-up: Up to six relevant Kier staff members are recommended to be interviewed in two or more paired or triad sessions, each lasting one hour and conducted via MS Teams. These interviews would take place after the trial period has concluded, and the outcome dataset has been received. The exact interviewees are yet to be confirmed; however, we expect these to include members of the Communications who would be responsible for distributing the communication campaigns and have useful perspectives on data disclosure; representatives from Kier's

HR system IT team, who would play a key role in providing the diversity data required for analysis; and staff from the Diversity and Inclusion team who are likely to act as the official senders of the communications, even where delivery is operationally carried out by HR or Communications teams. These individuals are expected to have direct insight into implementation processes and operational considerations relevant to the interventions.

Recruitment: Participants would be approached directly by BIT. Where BIT does not already hold the relevant contact details through existing collaboration from the feasibility study and trial set-up, Kier's Emerging Talent and Inclusion (ET&I) team, involved in the project since its inception, would first confirm with the identified staff members that they are happy for their name and business email to be shared with BIT for the purpose of arranging the interview. Only those who provide this agreement will have their details passed on. Once confirmation is obtained, the central Kier contact will securely transfer the information to BIT. BIT will then send participants the interview information materials, including an information sheet, privacy notice and session details, and arrange a suitable time for the paired or triad session.

Interview topics: The topic guide is designed to address the relevant research questions by exploring the fidelity and practicality of implementation, perceived effectiveness, the activation of key mechanisms, and broader reflections on the intervention. Discussions will examine how easily communication campaigns were delivered to selected employees (RQ2a), any challenges encountered during this process (RQ2a, RQ2c), and whether anything could have facilitated smoother or more efficient implementation (RQ2b). Participants will be invited to reflect on lessons learned and how the intervention could be improved if it were to be delivered again, including on a larger scale (RQ2b). Where interviewees were directly responsible for distributing the messages or were the named sender, additional questions will explore how employees responded to the communications, including any queries or pushback received (RQ2d). The interviews will also discuss the extent to which the intended mechanisms appeared to operate as expected (RQ3a, RQ3c), and staff members' general views on the practicality, burden and overall acceptability of implementing the interventions (RQ4d).

Finally, to support the economic evaluation, the interviews will also include a short process-mapping exercise tailored to each staff member's role. Participants will be asked to walk through the steps they took when preparing and delivering the communication campaigns - such as reviewing message content, extracting employee lists, coordinating with Communications or IT teams, monitoring delivery, or addressing any employee queries. This exercise will be used to break down the intervention implementation into discrete activities and estimate the time spent on each component. For Kier's HR and communications staff, this process-mapping exercise will be extended to estimate the time that staff in similar roles at other organisations would

need to adapt the resources generated by this trial to their own organisational context. These estimates will be hypothetical, and reflect costs for other employers adapting the interventions, rather than the first-time costs of designing the interventions.

Kier employees receiving the intervention

Sample and interview set-up: Up to 15 Kier employees will be interviewed following completion of the trial period and receipt of the outcome dataset. Interviews will be conducted one-to-one via MS Teams and will last around 30 minutes with the sessions scheduled for slightly longer to allow for any overrun while remaining respectful of participants' time. We expect most interviews to take place during the working day but can offer out-of-hours sessions where this better enables people to take part. As the feasibility study has already provided insight into typical communications and diversity data disclosure, these interviews will focus exclusively on employees in the two treatment arms, whose experiences are most relevant to understanding how the interventions were received and how the intended mechanisms operated in practice.

In the trial, BIT would have access to all information relevant for sampling (i.e., treatment allocation, diversity disclosure, gender, age) in pseudonymised form (meaning direct identifiers are removed and replaced with codes) before recruitment for interviews begins. This would allow BIT to pre-select a pool of potential interviewees that meets the predefined sampling criteria (see 'Recruitment' sub-section below for more detail), because at this stage each pseudonymised record can be sorted into relevant sampling categories. However, once employees opt in to participate and BIT receives their identifiable details (e.g., names, emails) for scheduling, there would be no way for BIT to connect those identities to the earlier pseudonymised records. As a result, the position of participants who ultimately join an interview in relation to certain sampling criteria - specifically treatment allocation and disclosure status - can only be confirmed during the interview itself.

Within this constraint, the primary sampling aim is to include at least six employees from each of the two treatment arms, and at least four who updated their diversity information following the intervention and at least four who did not. A total of 15 employee interviews is expected to be sufficient to meet these criteria. However, if any trade-offs prove to be necessary and within control of BIT's research team, we would prioritise securing balanced representation across both treatment arms.

As secondary criteria, we would seek to include at least six female and male employees, at least four employees aged 16-24 and at least six aged 25 or older. In contrast to the primary criteria, these secondary characteristics are expected to be known on an individual level at the scheduling stage (see 'Recruitment' sub-section below for more detail), making it more straightforward to work towards meeting them. Given the overall sample size, we do not anticipate difficulty meeting these aims; however, if necessary,

we would prioritise representation across the two age groups, as outcomes for younger employees are a key priority for Youth Futures and Kier. Finally, we initially intended to sample by work location (site-based vs office-based), but Kier does not systematically record this distinction, and no suitable proxy has been identified. Instead, location will be captured through self-report during the interview.

Recruitment: Once BIT receives the outcome dataset containing all information relevant for sampling in pseudonymised form, we will identify a pool of around 50 employees who reflect the sampling matrix, anticipating that around 15 will ultimately consent to interview based on research sign-up rates observed during the feasibility study. If the initial pool does not yield sufficient participants, additional employees meeting the sampling criteria on the basis of pseudonymised data will be contacted as needed. Pseudonymised IDs for selected employees will be shared with the ET&I team at Kier who will then re-identify and contact these individuals directly. Kier's invitation will include a brief information summary prepared by BIT, outlining what the interview will involve, its general purpose, who is conducting the research, data-privacy assurances, and what opting in at this stage means. Employees will be asked to confirm that they are happy for Kier to share their name, email address and basic demographic information (e.g., age band and gender, which reflect the secondary sampling criteria) with BIT for sampling and scheduling purposes. Only after BIT receives these details will full interview documentation (information sheet, privacy notice and consent materials) be provided to potential participants, and final consent for the interview itself obtained. Any information provided to participants will not mention the impact evaluation, as all employees will be informed about this at the same point during the post-trial debrief; instead, it will describe the interview in neutral terms (e.g., exploring experiences of receiving recent internal communications and views on disclosing diversity information). Participation will remain entirely voluntary, and no personal data will be transferred for individuals who do not opt in. Employees who take part will receive a £20 incentive as a token of appreciation.

As outlined in the 'Sample and interview set-up' sub-section above, because BIT will not know which pseudonymised records correspond to which named employees, we will not know interviewees' treatment allocation or disclosure status in advance of speaking with them. It would not be appropriate to ask employees directly about their communication campaign before the interview, as they may not be able to identify the campaign they received without support, and such prompting could unintentionally increase their engagement with the material. Similarly, asking employees about their disclosure status in advance could prompt them to update their information or create anxiety that their non-disclosure is being evaluated. Instead, we will include a short set of neutral clarification questions at the start of each interview (e.g., whether they recall receiving recent emails about disclosing their diversity information, what they remember about the content or sender, and whether they updated their information afterwards). In

addition, participants will be asked - if they are willing - to identify and forward the specific communication they received to the researcher at the start of the interview, so that the interviewer can accurately confirm which communication campaign the participant saw. In the trial set-up stage, we will also explore with Kier whether each communication campaign can include a simple letter, number or symbol unique to each variant. This would give participants an easy way to indicate which campaign they received without forwarding their email. Finally, it is important to note that we intend to remain flexible as the sampling matrix gets populated. For example, if the first five interviewees happen to come from one treatment arm, we would adjust subsequent the recruitment approach in coordination with the ET&I team so that employees from the other arm are prioritised. The same principle would apply to the disclosure status sampling criterion. Overall, while this approach introduces some uncertainty regarding the precise quotas achieved across treatment and disclosure groups, it is a proportionate way of sampling employees who are not aware of a trial and may have limited recall prior to the interview context.

Interview topics: Interviews will explore how employees experienced the communication campaigns and the extent to which they activated the mechanisms set out in the ToC (RQ3). This will include whether key messages - such as why Kier collects diversity data, how the information is used, and what benefits it brings - were noticed, understood and influential in shaping employees' decisions to update their information (RQ3a, RQ3b). Participants will also be asked about any factors that strengthened or weakened these mechanisms, such as the perceived ease or difficulty of accessing Kier's HR system or the relevance of the messages to their role or identity (RQ3c).

More broadly, interviews will gather employees' views on the tone, clarity, persuasiveness and overall usefulness of the communications (RQ4a, RQ4b). For employees who did not disclose their information, the interviews will consider the attitudinal, contextual or procedural barriers that remained salient despite receiving the messages (RQ4c). Throughout, we will also probe for any unintended consequences or behavioural responses, positive or negative, linked to the campaigns.

To support accurate recall, participants will be shown the communication campaign they received and invited to 'think aloud' as they describe their reactions, reasoning and actions. This approach will provide an understanding of how the intervention was interpreted and why it did or did not prompt behaviour change. In addition, participants will be shown the relevant HR system pages and asked to comment on the process of accessing and navigating the system, with particular focus on the reflections from those who had not visited Kier's HR system at all, as well as those who visited but chose not to disclose their information.

3.2.3 Analysis approach

Qualitative interviews

We recommend analysing all qualitative interview data thematically using the Framework approach. Interviews will be recorded and transcribed with participants' explicit consent, and the resulting transcripts will form the basis of the analysis. The Framework approach involves developing a structured thematic framework based on the research objectives and populating the findings from interviews into a matrix. Using this approach will allow the project team to pull out key themes, patterns, and differences across participant groups, making it easier to compare responses between trial arms, and draw out key insights. This method keeps the analysis systematic and transparent while still allowing new findings from participants' experiences to emerge naturally.

The Framework approach would ideally be supported by NotebookLM, a secure, closed workspace for reviewing and summarising documents. NotebookLM can be used to organise transcripts, pull out relevant excerpts linked to the analytical framework and generate concise summaries of emerging themes, helping researchers efficiently populate the framework matrix. NotebookLM allows for manual deletion of uploaded materials and notebooks, ensuring that the process remains fully GDPR compliant.

3.3 Economic evaluation

Summary

We propose a cost analysis, which will present, separately, the costs of delivering the communication campaigns incurred by Kier and the estimated costs of developing a comparable campaign from the resources produced by this trial (e.g. templates, email content). To obtain cost information, we will distribute cost pro-formas to and conduct interviews with relevant staff, and monetise these costs using pay information in Kier's HR system.

The proposed outputs from the economic evaluation include the aggregate cost from each treatment arm, plus a cost per unit change in disclosure as a cost-effectiveness measure. We will also create a framework of representative employer archetypes (defined by factors such as business size, sector and presence of existing digital HR systems) and assess how these costs may differ between Kier and employers that fit each of these categories.

3.3.1 Objectives

Our proposed economic evaluation aims to estimate the cost and cost-effectiveness of each of the two campaigns.

The research questions associated with the economic evaluation are as follows:

- What is the cost per employee of each campaign?
- What is the cost per unit change in disclosure of each campaign?
- How might costs vary between Kier and employers with other characteristics?

3.3.2 Methods and analysis

Type of economic evaluation

Instead of conducting a cost-benefit analysis or economic modelling, we propose doing a **cost analysis**. This will identify costs associated with delivering each intervention and where these costs are incurred. There are several reasons why a cost analysis is our recommended approach:

1. **Difficulty of monetising outcomes.** The specified outcomes of the interventions (i.e., disclosure of diversity characteristics) are difficult to monetise directly. While disclosure is expected to lead to benefits, such as more targeted and effective employee programs and better workplace inclusion, there is currently limited research on how these outcomes translate into measurable monetary benefits for employers over the long-term.

2. **Short duration of planned data collection period.** The trial's duration is only one month. There is likely to be a substantial time lag between the interventions and possible long-term effects that could be monetised (e.g., improved staff diversity, productivity and retention). Evaluating the impact of the interventions on these outcomes would require follow-up data that are outside the scope of this study.

3. **No clear mechanisms through which longer-term outcomes would be affected.** In addition, there is a lack of robust evidence that increased diversity data disclosure alone leads to improved retention.[19] Because of this, we do not anticipate detecting meaningful effects on such outcomes within the scope of this trial, and any estimates produced would be noisy due to the absence of clear causal mechanisms. We also do not believe extending the data collection period is worthwhile in terms of the extra resources required for data transfer and analysis.

Approach

Data collection

We will follow the 'ingredients method' by Levin et al. (2018).[20] This accounts for the costs of all resources necessary to implement an intervention, regardless of who incurs the costs. Costs will be broken down into staff time required from Kier. We do not foresee any materials and system resources, as the infrastructure required to send communications (e.g., bulk email tools) already exists within Kier.

Staff costs will be presented separately for delivering the interventions and the estimated costs of developing a comparable intervention from the resources produced by this trial (e.g. templates, email content.

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[19] Horwitz, S. K., & Horwitz, I. B. (2007). The Effects of Team Diversity on Team Outcomes: A Meta-Analytic Review of Team Demography. *Journal of Management*, *33*(6), 987–1015. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206307308587
Bell, S. T., Villado, A. J., Lukasik, M. A., Belau, L., & Briggs, A. L. (2011). Getting Specific about Demographic Diversity Variable and Team Performance Relationships: A Meta-Analysis. *Journal of Management*, *37*(3), 709–743. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206310365001
Zhang, L. (2020). An Institutional Approach to Gender Diversity and Firm Performance. *Organization Science*, *31*(2), 439–457. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2019.1297

[20] Levin, H. M., McEwan, P. J., Belfield, C., Bowden, A. B., & Shand, R. (2018). *Economic Evaluation in Education: Cost-Effectiveness and Benefit-Cost Analysis*. SAGE Publications, Inc. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483396514

- For intervention development, Kier's HR and communications staff will provide estimates of the resources and time other employers would need to adapt the materials from this trial (e.g., templates, email content) to their own context.aFor intervention delivery, the costs will include both dedicated Kier staff time (e.g., sending communications to employees), and time taken by Kier employees to report their diversity characteristics.

To measure the time required by Kier staff, the IPE interviews will include a short process-mapping exercise tailored to each interviewee's role, aided by a cost pro-forma shared and completed in advance. Participants will be asked to walk through the steps involved in preparing and delivering the communication campaigns so that intervention activities can be broken down into discrete components and associated resource use captured accurately. Interviewees will also be asked to specify their job grade to enable cost estimation using aggregated salary data.

For Kier's HR and communications staff, this process-mapping exercise will be extended to estimate the time that staff in similar roles at other organisations would need to adapt the resources generated by this trial to their own organisational context. These estimates will be hypothetical, and reflect costs for other employers adapting the interventions, rather than the first-time costs of designing the interventions. To estimate the time spent reporting characteristics, we scoped out whether data on the average time users spend on the specific HR system page(s) related to diversity disclosure would be available. These data are not available, so we will assume that it takes three minutes to update diversity characteristics (note there are 13 questions in the 'Update My Diversity Information' page) and multiply this by the estimated extra number of individuals who updated their characteristics in each treatment group compared to the control group. As sensitivity analysis, we will use the median time from walkthroughs as part of IPE interviews. If we can access data on clickthroughs, we will also assume that it takes one minute of time for employees who click through but do not update characteristics.

More details on the proposed method for eliciting each relevant cost is provided in the table below.

Table 6: Breakdown of costs for economic evaluation

Cost	Category	Proposed method for eliciting/analysing
Staff at other organisations adapting the interventions using resources	Staff time	- Use IPE interviews to estimate time needed to adapt intervention materials to own context - Ask staff for job grade in this pro-forma (as a proxy for the wages of staff in equivalent HR and

from the trial		communications roles at other employers) - Get average hourly wage for each job grade from Kier's HR system data - using annual salary and hours worked (assume 47 working weeks in a year). - Multiply time spent by hourly wage to estimate cost per staff member - Scale up using number of staff in equivalent roles at other organisations who would be involved in adapting the intervention materials
Kier staff delivering the interventions (e.g., internal Communications team sending emails and other communications to a subset of employees)	Staff time	- Use cost pro-forma and IPE interviews to estimate time spent on delivering the interventions - Ask staff for job grade - Get average hourly wage from Kier's HR system data as above - Multiply time spent by hourly wage to estimate cost per staff member - Scale up using number of Kier staff involved in delivering the interventions in each team
Time spent by Kier employees updating diversity characteristics / going to form	Staff time	**Time spent by employees who update diversity characteristics:** - Estimate the number of employees who updated their characteristics due to the campaign from regression by comparing the percentage in each treatment arm who updated any of their responses to the percentage in the control arm - Multiply this by three minutes (the estimated time spent per employee) **Time spent by employees who click through but do not update diversity characteristics:** - Estimate that it takes one minute for employees who click through but do not update their characteristics-

		Multiply this by one minute (the estimated time spent per employee)

Analysis

Our analysis approach is as follows:

- **Convert time into monetary equivalent.** For each member of staff and intervention activity, time spent (hours) will be multiplied by the hourly pay, corresponding to their job grade.[21]
- **Aggregate costs.** Costs will be summed by activity and by intervention to produce total costs for each intervention. Start-up and recurring costs will be reported separately and then combined to give the overall intervention cost. We will also divide the total cost by the number of employees in each treatment arm to calculate a cost per employee.
- **Calculate cost per unit change in disclosure.** The total cost of each intervention will be divided by the number of extra characteristics estimated to be disclosed in each arm to calculate a standardised cost per extra characteristic disclosed.

We will also assess how intervention costs might differ between Kier and other employers. To do this, we will create a framework of (up to four) representative archetypes of employers based on key factors that are likely to affect costs. Key factors will be informed by IPE/economic evaluation activities and academic/grey literature. For example, we might expect a smaller business (e.g. with fewer than 250 employees) to face a higher administrative burden and cost per employee than Kier (with 10,000+ employees) due to a lack of dedicated Diversity and Inclusion resources and less sophisticated HR systems.

[21] For Kier employees, hourly pay will be calculated by dividing their annual pay by their contracted weekly hours multiplied by 47 to reflect actual working weeks (i.e. excluding annual leave, bank holidays). Hourly pay for YFF and BIT staff will be calculated using standard BIT rates, adjusted for job grade.

4. Risks and limitations

This section outlines key considerations that may affect the robustness or implementation of the proposed trial. We distinguish between **risks**, which refer to factors that could disrupt or weaken the evaluation and therefore need to be monitored and managed, and **limitations**, which describe what the evaluation will and will not be able to conclude even if implementation proceeds as intended.

4.1 Risks

The table below summarises the principal risks, with their assessed impact (I) and likelihood (L) rated as low (L), medium (M) or high (H), alongside the adaptations already in place and mitigations we recommend going forward.

Table 7: Risk register for the proposed trial

Risk	I	L	Adaptations (What has already been done to address this risk?)	Mitigations (What is yet to be done to address this risk?)
Difficulty coordinating across multiple teams	H	M	• Key contacts have already been consulted on the steps involved in	• BIT is currently working with Kier to clarify roles and responsibilities; for example, how each

responsible for different pieces of information and data, risking delays to the sending out of communications on time			delivering the interventions.	part of the intervention delivery and data extraction might be resourced within Kier. We will confirm roles and time commitments early and where possible, align intervention delivery with existing workflows and communication cycles to minimise burden on Kier teams. • Communications will be scheduled in advance.
Spillover effects from employees forwarding emails to peers or discussing the content with one another in person	M	M	• Communication channels (e.g. email) have been carefully chosen to keep spillover risk low. • Kier has confirmed that if employees have queries or encounter issues (e.g. difficulties accessing Kier's HR system), the support routes they use (e.g., Ask-HR or Ask-IT portals) are not visible to other employees. This prevents	• Estimate spillovers by comparing the increase in disclosure in the control group to the increase in previous months.

			colleagues from becoming aware of the communication campaigns through support requests.	
Randomisation not implemented properly	H	L	• Scoped out several ways to verify randomisation implementation	• BIT emails will be 'seeded' into each trial arm, to ensure that communications are sent out correctly to each arm. We will also perform a test run with these BIT email addresses only. • BIT will check which employee IDs are in the set of recipients for each email and other communication to ensure the randomisation process is implemented as intended.
Breach of sensitive data, especially due to various data owners sharing information	H	L	• A shared encryption method for key identifiers has been implemented across Kier data owners, ensuring consistent, secure handling of data throughout the trial. • All data protection and sharing	• All analysis will be carried out on pseudonymised datasets, meaning direct identifiers are removed and replaced with encrypted codes, with the original identifiers held separately and never shared with the analysis team. All work will be undertaken within a secure environment.

			documentation (including the DPIA and DSA) has been agreed and signed in advance of the trial starting. • A secure, access-restricted data transfer process was tested during the feasibility study and will continue to be used during the trial.	
The process to update disclosure on Kier's HR system requires multiple stages, and could deter some employees from updating their characteristics.	M	M		• BIT will work with Kier to ensure that a direct hyperlink to the 'Update my diversity information' page on Kier's HR system is included in all communications.
Staff might feel uneasy or sceptical about the	M	M	• Co-designed communications with internal staff networks. This	• Communications will be designed to focus on the key messages that Kier employees care about most, identified during the feasibility

interventions' messaging or intent			included testing and iterating communications prototypes.	study.
Staff concerns about campaigns and data disclosure (e.g., privacy concerns)	M	M		• Staff in the treatment groups will be signposted to existing HR and Diversity and Inclusion contacts to raise any questions or concerns. Their contact details will be included in intervention materials and other internal communications related to the project. Staff in the control group will continue to have access to standard HR channels as usual. • Kier will ensure that any queries received via existing HR and Diversity and Inclusion channels in relation to the project are regularly monitored and responded to.
Difficulty recruiting for IPE qualitative activities	H	H	• Initial recruitment planning to minimise friction was completed during the feasibility study, and central Kier contacts have already	• Kier employees who received one of the interventions and are invited to an interview will receive simple, direct explanations covering what the interview involves, what

			been consulted on the steps involved in recruiting participants for the IPE activities. • Participant incentives for the qualitative interviews have also been agreed with YFF.	data is shared and between whom, and that participation is voluntary and will not affect their employment at Kier. This will help address hesitation among employees, who may be unsure about how their data will be used, or have concerns about negative consequences. • All interviews will be short and scheduled at a time guided by the participant. Interviews with employees who received one of the interventions will be scheduled as soon as possible after the trial ends. This will support recall. Interviews with Kier teams involved in intervention delivery will be scheduled as early as possible to reduce inconvenience, particularly important for time-pressed staff.

4.2 Limitations

A key limitation of the intervention design is that, while the communication campaigns address important behavioural barriers (such as awareness, perceived relevance and the effort required to locate the disclosure form), they do not address other structural or system-level barriers to disclosure. In particular, the campaigns cannot modify the underlying HR system user journey or simplify the disclosure interface itself, which may continue to deter some employees from updating their information.

A further limitation is that the trial focuses on a relatively light-touch behavioural approach (communications), which is informative but cannot test the potential impact of more intensive operational changes such as embedded workflow prompts or changes to HR processes. As a result, the evaluation will provide evidence on whether behavioural messaging can improve disclosure within existing systems, but not on whether system redesign could produce larger or more sustained effects.

On the intervention design side, we explored several alternative or complementary approaches that ultimately proved infeasible once operational, technical or governance constraints became clear. First, we examined whether changes could be made directly within Kier's HR system - for example, inserting timely prompts or revising on-screen text to guide employees through disclosure. Early discussions with Kier's IT team confirmed that system changes of this kind were not deliverable within project timelines. We also ruled out a second HR system-based option to embed disclosure into a routine HR interaction (such as prompting employees to update their characteristics when checking their payslip), particularly as individual-level randomisation would not have been supported in this case. We also considered personalising communications based on each employee's current level of disclosure, allowing messages to highlight how close they were to full (i.e., 100%) completion. This was deprioritised due to the time and care required to calculate profile completeness accurately for all employees, alongside the heightened risk of errors in large-scale personalised rollouts. A further option explored was the use of a prosocial incentive - specifically, making a small per-employee charitable donation once an employee updated their characteristics, delivered via the Kier Foundation. Although conceptually promising, this approach required trustee approval and could not be progressed within the required timelines. Finally, we investigated whether placing a 15-minute calendar hold into employees' diaries might provide protected time to complete their information. This was not taken forward as Kier does not currently have the ability to create holds that employees can flexibly reschedule, which raised both practical and acceptability concerns. Taken

together, these constraints meant that several potentially high-impact intervention options - particularly those requiring system changes or embedded workflow prompts - were not feasible within this project.

It is also important to note that the planned communication campaigns will run for only one month to fit the planned timeframes for the project. This relatively short period limits the opportunity for employees to encounter and act on the communications, especially those who may be on leave, working atypical patterns or less engaged with email during this window. It is entirely possible that effects may differ at other points in the year, and that longer campaigns incorporating repeated touchpoints could generate larger and more sustained impacts.

On the research side, a key limitation of the impact evaluation is that we are unlikely to be powered to detect meaningful differences between the two communication campaigns for employees aged 16-24, unless one campaign is substantially more effective than the other which is unlikely. This is primarily because the in-scope population is relatively small (around 600 employees, of which only around 200 will be allocated to each arm). We are better powered to compare each campaign against the control group within this age group, and to compare the two campaigns with one another when analysing the much larger cohort of employees aged 25 and above.

A related limitation is that disclosure rates for most characteristics are already relatively high among employees aged 16-24. Since 2023, these characteristics have been automatically piped from application forms into Kier's HR system, disproportionately affecting younger employees who tend to have joined more recently. Social mobility, however, is not captured through the application process and therefore is not pre-populated in the HR system. As a result, most 16-24-year-olds already have complete data for the other characteristics, meaning that any new disclosure observed in this age group will relate primarily to social mobility. We are unable to observe visits to the 'Update my diversity information' page to supplement this outcome, though if relevant datasets become available, we should be able to compare engagement with the email communications (including click-throughs) across treatment arms. Older employees, who have lower baseline disclosure across all characteristics, will allow our secondary analysis to capture broader changes in disclosure.

We also acknowledge that randomising at the employee level carries some risk of spillovers - for example, employees sharing emails with colleagues or encouraging peers to update their characteristics. Although these behaviours cannot be fully observed, we expect spillovers to be minimal given the relatively discreet communication channels

being used (e.g., no push notifications). Moreover, we can test for meaningful spillovers by comparing changes in disclosure in the control group to historical month-by-month trends, which have been very stable.

Finally, our economic evaluation does not attempt to monetise the benefits of increased disclosure. This is because the direct outcomes of the trial are challenging to monetise and there is currently limited evidence that increased disclosure alone leads to quantifiable longer-term organisational gains.

5. Ethics

The planned trial testing the introduction of two communication campaigns to improve disclosure of diversity characteristics at Kier involves several important ethical considerations across the impact evaluation, IPE, and the economic evaluation. These considerations fall into three broad areas: (1) data protection and the handling of sensitive personal data; (2) informed consent; and (3) safeguarding. To support clarity, this section begins with a short summary of the key ethical issues before setting out BIT's ethical assessment and the detailed ethical considerations for each component of the evaluation.

5.1 Summary of key ethical issues

Table 8. Summary of key ethical considerations and how they will be addressed

Ethical issue	Why this issue arises	How it is addressed
Use of sensitive personal data (impact evaluation)	The impact evaluation relies on HR data that include special category information (e.g., transgender/gender reassignment, sexual orientation, disability status, religion) to construct disclosure outcomes. This requires BIT to process the raw disclosure responses for each in-scope characteristic, which elevates confidentiality requirements and the risk of re-identification.	A DSA is in place. All data will be pseudonymised by Kier prior to transfer; BIT will hold no re-identification keys. Data will be transferred and stored via secure, access-controlled systems. Only variables needed to derive disclosure outcomes will be processed, and reporting will be fully aggregated with no individual-level results.

Transparency about the trial and its aims distorts behaviour (impact evaluation)	Awareness that communication campaigns are being compared may influence employees' disclosure behaviour, compromising trial validity.	The communication campaigns will be delivered as standard Kier internal messages, with no reference to the evaluation. This avoids influencing employees' disclosure behaviour and preserves the validity of the trial. A full post-trial debrief will explain the study's purpose, methods and findings once there is no longer any risk of affecting behaviour.
Confidentiality and safeguarding in qualitative interviews (IPE)	Interviews may involve discussion of diversity disclosure, workplace inclusion and data-privacy concerns. Participants may disclose identifiable organisational details or sensitive personal information, and some topics may cause discomfort.	Interviews follow BIT safeguarding procedures; participants may skip questions, pause or stop at any time and request data deletion within 72 hours. If participants make workplace misconduct or wellbeing disclosures (e.g., bullying, harassment, discrimination) during employee interviews, BIT would consult its Safeguarding Leads (Nilufer Rahim and Martina Vojtkova), who would then contact Kier's Safeguarding Lead (exact contact to be confirmed during the trial set-up phase). Participants would be informed about this safeguarding pathway in the participant materials and at the start of the IPE interview so they can decide what they wish to disclose. Recordings and

		transcripts will be stored securely, accessed only by the BIT research team and deleted after analysis. Reporting will be fully anonymised, with quotations checked to remove any identifying details. Support resources will be signposted where appropriate.
Voluntary and informed participation in IPE and economic evaluation activities	The IPE and economic evaluation require direct contact with Kier staff. Because invitations may be sent by Kier, employees and implementation staff may feel obliged to participate or worry that declining could reflect negatively on them. Staff must clearly understand what participation involves and how their information will be used.	Participation will be strictly opt-in. BIT will receive personal details from Kier only for individuals who have explicitly agreed to be contacted for participation. All materials will emphasise voluntariness, withdrawal rights and non-impact on role and relationships at Kier. Consent will be proportionate for each activity (interview and/or cost pro-forma). Identifiable details will be stored separately, used only for sampling and scheduling, and deleted once no longer needed.

5.2 BIT's ethical assessment

BIT has classified the project as **high risk**, primarily because it involves special category data (including disability status, transgender/gender reassignment, sexual orientation, and religion). As a result, the project will undergo BIT's full ethical assessment. BIT's internal ethics review process is aligned with the Government Social Research (GSR) Ethical Assurance for Social Research in Government and with ESRC governance guidance for research ethics committees. For a project of this classification, the review will be carried out by two trained ethics reviewers, and formal approval must be granted before any trial activities begin. The formal ethical review for this project is scheduled for

16 December 2025, after which some aspects of the approach may be refined to manage these ethical considerations.

5.3 Ethical considerations by evaluation strand

5.3.1 Impact evaluation

The impact evaluation will assess whether the two communication campaigns lead to an increase in the number of diversity characteristics disclosed by Kier employees. This strand raises two key ethical considerations. For each, we set out why the issue arises and how it will be addressed within the trial.

Use of sensitive personal data

Why this is an ethical consideration

The impact evaluation relies on internal HR system data, including special category data such as disability status, transgender/gender reassignment, sexual orientation and religion. These data are required to construct the key trial outcomes, which involve determining whether employees have provided a disclosure response for each in-scope characteristic. For analysis purposes, the fields associated with each characteristic are converted into a binary indicator of disclosure (0 = blank response/ has not disclosed or 'prefer not to say'; 1 = a disclosive response provided), and these indicators are summed across all characteristics to create the main outcome measure. This measure ranges from 0 (no disclosive responses provided for any characteristic) to 8 (disclosive responses provided for all in-scope characteristics). Because deriving these indicators requires BIT to handle the raw disclosure fields for each employee, the work involves processing multiple sensitive data points per individual, which carries heightened legal and ethical obligations. Employees may reasonably expect that information of this nature is managed with strict confidentiality, and any risk of re-identification - particularly for smaller teams or minority groups - must be minimised.

How this will be addressed

- An appropriate DSA is already in place. All datasets will be pseudonymised by Kier before transfer, with direct identifiers such as names removed. BIT will not hold any re-identification keys and will not be able to directly identify individuals.
- Data will be transferred via secure, access-controlled channels and all files will be stored on encrypted servers.
- Only the minimum variables required to derive the 0/1 disclosure indicators and construct the primary, secondary and exploratory outcome measures will be

processed. In practice, this means Kier will provide the raw disclosure data for each in-scope characteristic at baseline and at endline, together with a pseudonymised employee ID and a very small number of non-sensitive variables needed for analysis (such as age group). BIT will use these raw disclosure fields to determine whether a response has been provided for each characteristic and convert this into simple 0/1 indicators. The evaluation does not analyse or report the detailed content of employees' responses beyond distinguishing between active disclosure and 'prefer not to say'. All findings will be reported at an aggregated level, describing overall differences in disclosure between trial arms. No information about individual employees or the details of their responses will be presented, ensuring that no individual or identifiable sub-group can be recognised.

Transparency about the trial and its aims distorts behaviour

Why this is an ethical consideration

The impact evaluation involves testing two communication campaigns with Kier employees, without informing them in advance that they form part of a research trial. This raises an ethical issue because employees are not able to give informed consent at the moment their disclosure behaviour is being observed for evaluation purposes.

However, advance transparency about the trial and its aims would almost certainly influence how employees respond to the communications. Knowing that disclosure behaviour is being monitored as part of a study could encourage some employees to disclose their details simply because they feel observed. This would undermine the validity of the findings by introducing bias and reducing the ability of the evaluation to determine whether the communication campaigns themselves have an effect.

For these reasons, employees will not be informed that a trial is taking place during the intervention period. They will instead experience the communication campaigns as part of normal internal messaging at Kier, consistent with how organisational communications are typically delivered. This approach minimises the risk of behaviour distortion and supports a fair test of the intervention's impact.

How this will be addressed

- Full transparency will be restored once the trial has concluded and the risk of influencing behaviour has passed. All employees will receive a post-trial debrief led by Kier's ET&I team in collaboration with BIT, explaining the study's purpose, findings and implications. The debrief will clarify that the communication campaigns formed part of a research trial, that employees' disclosure data were

analysed in a pseudonymised format, and that no identifiable information or individual-level findings were ever reported. This approach ensures that employees are ultimately informed about their participation while still preserving the integrity of the evaluation during the trial period.

- Because the evaluation relies on pseudonymised HR system data that cannot be linked back to individuals by BIT, and because removing individuals after analysis could compromise the randomisation balance required for a valid trial, it will not be possible to offer withdrawal at the debrief stage. Instead, ethical safeguards are built into the design from the outset, including data minimisation, strict pseudonymisation, secure data handling and fully aggregated reporting. These measures ensure that employees' rights and privacy are protected throughout, while still enabling the intervention to be evaluated robustly and without bias.

5.3.2 Implementation and process evaluation

Review of implementation data

This activity will involve checking that the communications were delivered as intended by comparing delivery records shared by Kier with the original randomisation allocations, and by reviewing aggregated engagement metrics (such as open and click-through rates) if available. It will use only pseudonymised data, with no contact with individuals or disclosure of any personal information. Consequently, no consent is required, and the ethical risk is minimal.

Qualitative interviews

Interviews will be conducted with Kier staff involved in intervention implementation and with Kier employees who received one of the communication campaigns.

What are the ethical considerations

- **Recruitment and consent:** Interviews will involve direct contact with individuals and will therefore require clear and genuinely voluntary consent procedures. For Kier employees, a key ethical risk is the potential for perceived pressure or coercion: because the interview invitation comes from Kier rather than BIT, employees may feel obliged to take part or may worry that declining could reflect negatively on them. A similar risk exists for implementation staff, who may feel that participation is mandatory due to their involvement in delivering the communication campaigns. It is therefore essential that recruitment materials clearly emphasise that participation is entirely voluntary, that the decision to take part or not will have no impact on their role at Kier, and that no personal data will

be shared with BIT unless the individual actively opts in.

- **Collecting and handling of personal data:** Interview scheduling requires the collection and processing of identifiable information, such as names, business email addresses and - where employees consent - basic demographic information to support sampling. This introduces privacy, confidentiality and data-minimisation risks. During interviews, participants may refer to their role, team or operational responsibilities, and they may also, even if unprompted, disclose special category data relating to their own identity, experiences or decisions about diversity disclosure. Any such information must be managed with particular care to avoid unintended disclosure of personal or organisational identity. Care must also be taken to ensure that no participant can be recognised in reporting.
- **Safeguarding and participant welfare:** The interview discussion may touch on sensitive areas, including views on diversity-data disclosure, experiences of workplace inclusion, or concerns about privacy and data use. These topics may prompt discomfort, particularly among employees who chose not to update their information or who have reservations about how their data are handled. Interviewers must therefore be attentive to signs of unease and ensure that participants feel in control throughout.

How these will be addressed

- **Recruitment and consent**
    - Opt-in processes will be strictly followed. For Kier employees, BIT will rely only on pseudonymised records when identifying a sampling pool; Kier will make the initial contact with employees, and no personal details will be shared with BIT unless the employee explicitly agrees to participate.
    - Recruitment materials will be drafted by BIT and will emphasise voluntariness. All invitations and information sheets will clearly state that participation is entirely voluntary, that choosing not to take part will have no impact on the individual's role or relationship with Kier, and that they may withdraw without giving a reason.
    - Implementation staff will be contacted only with prior agreement. BIT may use two recruitment routes. Where BIT already works directly with a staff member as part of the feasibility study or trial set-up, BIT will first contact the individual to ask whether they are open to hearing more about a potential interview. No detailed information materials will be shared, and no interview will be arranged unless the individual explicitly agrees to

receive further details. If they give this agreement, BIT will then provide the information materials so they can decide whether to participate. For staff members with whom BIT has not previously interacted, a central Kier contact will first check whether the individual is willing to be approached and consents to their business contact details being shared with BIT for this purpose. Only those who provide this permission will have their details passed on and be contacted about an interview.

- BIT will provide clear information about the interview. Information sheets will explain what the interview will cover - such as participants' experience of receiving or delivering the communications and any factors that shaped whether diversity information was shared - along with details about confidentiality and data handling. For Kier employees who received the communication campaigns, materials will not mention the impact evaluation or the trial, as all employees will be informed about this at the same point during the post-trial debrief. For Kier staff involved in implementation, who will already be aware that a trial is taking place, the materials will situate the interview within the wider evaluation, explaining how their insights will contribute to understanding implementation and supporting the economic evaluation through the process-mapping exercise.
- Consent will be obtained before the interview begins. Final written or recorded verbal consent will be taken after participants have had an opportunity to ask questions.
- No line managers or supervisors will be involved in recruitment. This will help reduce any perception of expectation or pressure to participate.

- **Collecting and handling of personal data**
  - Directly identifiable information (e.g., names, business contact details) will be used only to support sampling and schedule interviews. These data will be stored in secure, access-controlled folders separate from interview data and deleted once interviews are complete. Kier will share identifiable information with BIT only when an employee has explicitly agreed to this.
  - Interviews will be recorded only with explicit consent and used solely for transcription and analysis. Recordings and transcripts will be stored securely on BIT's encrypted systems, accessible only to authorised members of the research team, and deleted after analysis is complete.

- During interviews, participants may - intentionally or inadvertently - share special category data or identifiable organisational details. Any such information will be handled with particular care. Interview recordings and transcripts will be confidential, accessible only to the BIT research team, and used solely for the purpose of analysis. They will be stored securely on BIT's encrypted systems and deleted once analysis and reporting are complete. No interview content will be linked to the HR datasets used in the impact evaluation. All reporting will be fully anonymised and thematic. Quotations will be reviewed to ensure they cannot reveal an individual's identity, team or circumstances. Where participants describe operational processes, small teams or unique experiences, these details will be generalised or omitted to avoid inadvertent recognition.
- Where interviews occur during working hours, participants will be advised to book a private room so that conversations are not overheard and can be conducted confidentially.

- **Safeguarding and participant welfare**
  - Interviews will follow BIT's safeguarding and escalation protocol. Researchers will pause the session and escalate to the safeguarding lead if a participant shows distress or raises a concern.
  - Participants may decline to answer questions, pause, or end the interview at any point, and may request deletion of their data within 72 hours.
  - Appropriate support resources will be signposted after interviews. These may include Kier's internal wellbeing and HR services as well as resources from external support organisations (e.g., Mind, ACAS).
  - Participants will be reminded that all information is confidential, anonymised in reporting, and used solely for research purposes, which may help alleviate concern after discussing sensitive topics.

5.3.3 Economic evaluation

The economic evaluation poses low overall ethical risk, as it focuses on estimating the costs of implementing the two communication campaigns. This work involves BIT collecting limited information from relevant Kier staff via cost pro-formas and short process-mapping exercises within staff interviews and combining these with aggregated, grade-level salary data from Kier's HR system to estimate staff time and resource costs. No individual-level salary data are used, and the information gathered is

non-sensitive and operational in nature, resulting in minimal ethical concerns.

What are the ethical considerations

- **Data sources, minimisation and protection:** The economic evaluation draws on several data sources - cost pro-forma responses from Kier staff, aggregated grade-level salary data from Kier's HR system, and process-mapping information from staff interviews. Together, these datasets create ethical considerations around collecting only the minimum information needed and preventing any possibility that sensitive employment information about individual staff members could be inferred when information is linked.
- **Participation and consent:** Staff who provide cost pro-forma and interview responses must clearly understand the purpose of the exercise, what information is being requested and how it will be used.

How these will be addressed

- **Data sources, minimisation and protection**
    - BIT will design the cost pro-forma and conduct staff interviews, requesting only the minimum information needed for the analysis. HR system salary information will be transferred through secure, encrypted channels in line with the DSA and provided in aggregate form, containing no personally identifiable financial information. Linkage occurs only at grade level, not at the individual level.
    - All completed pro-formas, interview and HR system data will be stored securely on BIT's access-controlled servers.
    - BIT will report only aggregated results, such as average time costs by role or grade. No identifiable information will be used in reporting; all findings will be presented at a summary level.
- **Participation and consent**
    - When BIT or a Kier contact invites implementation staff to an interview, they will explain that the interview includes a short process-mapping exercise and that staff will also be asked to complete a cost pro-forma to support the aims of the economic evaluation. If BIT contacts the staff member directly (i.e., where there is an existing working relationship), the initial email will briefly explain that BIT is carrying out interviews with implementation staff to understand how the communication campaigns were delivered and to support the aims of the economic evaluation. This

email will outline, at a high level, that participation would involve a short interview including a process-mapping exercise and the completion of a cost pro-forma. The staff member will then be asked whether they are happy to receive the full information sheet and pro-forma. Only if they explicitly agree will BIT share the detailed materials and proceed with scheduling the interview. If Kier makes the initial approach (i.e., where BIT does not hold the staff member's contact details), Kier will ask the individual to confirm that they are happy for their name and business email address to be shared with BIT solely for the purpose of receiving the cost pro-forma and interview invitation. Only those who provide this permission will have their details passed on.

- Each participating staff member will receive the full set of interview information materials for the IPE, together with the cost pro-forma and an explanation of how the two elements fit together. These materials will describe the purpose of the interview, the process-mapping exercise, and the costing component; what information is being requested; how data will be stored and used; and will confirm that none of the information provided will be shared with Kier management or linked to HR datasets. Staff will be asked to complete the cost pro-forma in advance, and returning it will constitute informed consent for that part of the evaluation.
- The interview itself will build on the pro-forma, using the process-mapping exercise to discuss the steps involved in preparing and delivering the communication campaigns and to confirm or refine time estimates. As implementation staff will already be aware that a trial is under way, this will be situated transparently within the broader aims of the impact and economic evaluation. Participation in the interview will remain voluntary, and staff may decline to answer any question or withdraw at any time.

6. Lessons learned

Developing and evaluating an employer-led intervention requires close collaboration, clear data processes, and an understanding of how relevant organisational systems operate in practice. While this feasibility study has helped develop and refine possible interventions and the planned evaluation, it has also highlighted several broader lessons that may be useful for future evaluators and employers considering applying and evaluating similar interventions within an RCT or alternative evaluation design. Below, we discuss the following lessons:

Intervention feasibility and evaluation design

- **Lesson #1:** Understanding an organisation's technical and operational limitations early on helps ensure interventions are realistic and deliverable.
- **Lesson #2:** Establish clear intervention decision points and criteria.
- **Lesson #3:** It is difficult to monetise benefits from increased disclosure of information as part of an economic evaluation.

Employee and organisational engagement

- **Lesson #4:** Engaging employees in research activities requires proactive recruitment strategies that account for low response rates and competing workplace demands.
- **Lesson #5:** Identifying and engaging all relevant teams early is essential when project information is held across multiple parts of a large organisation.
- **Lesson #6:** Recognise the capacity of wider stakeholders to participate and tailor engagement to their preferences.

Project management and coordination

- **Lesson #7:** Having a single project manager at the partnering employer streamlined the scoping process.
- **Lesson #8:** Ensure clarity around project decision-making.
- **Lesson #9:** Regular meetings and structured email communications allowed the project to progress at pace.
- **Lesson #10:** Coordinate parallel projects carefully and build in flexibility.

6.1 Intervention feasibility and evaluation design

Lesson #1: Understanding an organisation's technical and operational limitations early on helps ensure interventions are realistic and deliverable.

During the feasibility study, several more intensive intervention ideas - including introducing prompts and technical changes to the HR system and sending calendar holds to all Kier employees - were explored but ultimately found to be infeasible within Kier's current systems and operational capacity. This highlights how easily technical and process constraints can rule out interventions that look promising in theory, underscoring the need to assess these limitations early and to build flexibility into intervention design so it can adapt to what an organisation can realistically deliver.

For evaluators, this means validating assumptions about system capability at the outset and preparing intervention fallback options that remain robust even when more intensive interventions are not feasible. Early technical scoping also helps ensure that strong behavioural levers are not discarded prematurely, as they can often be adapted into lighter-touch formats that still align with the organisation's infrastructure. For employers, it emphasises the importance of engaging HR, IT and operational teams early to understand development lead times, competing priorities and system limitations, and to recognise when lighter-touch approaches may be the most practical and implementable route. It also reinforces that feasibility barriers commonly arise from everyday systems and processes rather than intent or appetite, and that realistic delivery routes depend on involving the right operational teams at the right stage.

Lesson #2: It is difficult to monetise benefits from increased disclosure of diversity information as part of an economic evaluation.

Any potential downstream effects of the interventions, such as improvements in staff diversity, retention, or other organisational outcomes, are likely to take months or years to materialise. There is also limited evidence that increased disclosure alone directly leads to these longer-term outcomes, making it difficult to predict or estimate monetisable benefits from these interventions.

For evaluators, this means that economic assessments may need to focus primarily on the direct costs and immediate outcomes of the interventions, unless benefits are within scope and supported by robust evidence. For employers, it is important to recognise that while long-term monetisable outcomes may not be measurable, the interventions could still provide practical benefits, such as better employee data quality, improved reporting processes, and insights into workforce diversity.

Lesson #3: Establish clear intervention decision points and criteria.

Feasibility work often involves progressing from a long list of potential intervention ideas to a small number that are practical and trial-ready. To support this process, it is important to set explicit decision points, agree the criteria being used to assess options, and be clear about who has the authority to make the final call. Without this structure, there is a risk of ambiguity about what has been ruled in or out, why those choices were made, and which version is considered definitive.

While differing perspectives across teams can add useful insight, they can also create uncertainty if it is not clear how competing considerations are weighed. Introducing structured decision points helps to surface these considerations, apply agreed criteria, and move forward efficiently. In this feasibility study, key intervention decisions were made through decision-point workshops, where options, constraints and priorities were reviewed jointly before a final position was reached. Other formats may work equally well, provided that decision criteria are transparent, decision ownership is understood, and the outcome is recorded as the official intervention choice.

Building this clarity into governance from the outset supports smoother collaboration, prevents confusion at later stages (e.g., during content development), and creates an auditable record of how the intervention design evolved.

6.2 Employee and organisational engagement

Lesson #4: Engaging employees in research activities requires proactive recruitment strategies that account for low response rates and competing workplace demands.

Throughout the feasibility study, engaging Kier employees proved critical for understanding barriers to disclosure and opinions on intervention prototypes; yet, in practice, this was more challenging than anticipated. While the initial pulse survey reached the desired number of employees, follow-up interviews suffered from a steep drop-off: despite eight participants agreeing to be contacted for an interview, only one ultimately scheduled it, and direct outreach immediately after the survey did not generate the expected uptake. Subsequently offering a £20 'thank you' incentive increased engagement, indicating that incentives may be necessary to secure participation. Another contributing factor may have been that emails came from an unfamiliar external organisation (BIT) at a time when Kier was raising awareness about

phishing, potentially making employees more cautious about responding.

A similar pattern emerged during mini-group recruitment. We aimed to use peer referral by partnering with Inclusion Network leads, both to join sessions and encourage colleagues to participate; however, this approach yielded fewer participants than expected within the required timelines. This was compounded by the logistical difficulty of scheduling hour-long sessions during the workday across diverse teams, even though broad representation was important for the research.

From an evaluator perspective, this highlights the need to anticipate low response rates, factor in additional time for recruitment and scheduling, and build incentives into recruitment plans from the outset. From an employer perspective, it underscores the value of early involvement from trusted internal figures (e.g., Inclusion Network Leads), consistent internal communication, and clear signalling that the research is endorsed by the organisation, especially when external partners are contacting staff.

Lesson #5: Identifying and engaging all relevant teams early is essential when project information is held across multiple parts of a large organisation.

Throughout the feasibility study, we sought to engage with multiple teams at Kier - including Communications, HR, IT and HR system teams - to assess the feasibility of different intervention ideas. Coordinating with these teams was at times challenging, as they were balancing our requests alongside their day-to-day responsibilities. We also found that data on employee communications was fragmented. For example, we initially assumed that all employee contact details would be stored in Kier's HR system. In practice, while email addresses were stored in Kier's HR system, data on whether email addresses had an inbox and could actually receive emails (as well as information on the availability of phone numbers or MS Teams accounts, two alternative communications channels that were scoped out), was instead held by a separate IT team. For evaluators, this underscores the importance of clarifying data sources, and the individuals/teams responsible for them from the start and making data requests early to allow teams enough time to pull together and link the necessary data. For employers and potential project funders, this reinforces the value of identifying all relevant teams at the outset and securing warm introductions where possible; engaging one team effectively does not automatically translate into smooth engagement with others. Identifying relevant teams, involving them in key project activities, such as kick-off meetings, and ensuring they understand the project's strategic value can support better prioritisation of project-related requests and help ensure that staff time is allocated efficiently.

Lesson #6: Recognise the capacity of wider stakeholders to participate and tailor engagement to their preferences.

This project relied on engagement with multiple teams and individuals across Kier,

including Communications, HR and Data colleagues. Asks related to this project were additional to people's standard workloads. Meanwhile, individuals who were less connected to the project may not have been fully brought-in or understood its strategic importance. For this reason, it is important for evaluators to respect people's time, minimising burden wherever possible. In this project, this included making sure that requests were as streamlined as possible, communicated by one person from the BIT team, and multiple options were offered for engagement, including responding to email or meeting via MS Teams. For employers, it is important to explain the value of the intervention to teams who are needed for its implementation, being clear about time expectations.

6.3 Project management and coordination

Lesson #7: Having a single project manager at the partnering employer streamlined the scoping process.

This project benefited from having Craig Melvin as a single project manager and primary point of contact at Kier. Having one dedicated liaison greatly reduced the burden on other Kier staff, as he was able to provide most of the necessary contextual information, coordinate internal communications, and introduce BIT to relevant teams when needed. This structure also reduced duplication of effort across BIT and YFF by ensuring consistent messaging and streamlined decision-making.

Overall, for evaluators, a single point of contact can enable efficient communication and swift progress; for employers, it can help manage internal coordination and limit distraction from day-to-day responsibilities. However, the approach relies on the project manager having sufficient protected time for the work alongside their usual responsibilities. While no issues arose during this project, relying on a single point of contact creates a degree of vulnerability if unexpected absence occurs. For future projects, it may be beneficial to have a nominated deputy who can step in if required.

Lesson #8: Ensure clarity around project decision-making.

It is important to be clear on the decision-making process for intervention and evaluation design considerations. For this project, we agreed to hold workshops at critical stage gates to agree recommendations and next steps. Ahead of these workshops, we clarified whether a decision would be made in the workshop itself, or before or after it, and who needed to be involved in the decision. For evaluators, this ensured that decisions could be taken efficiently and with the right input; for

employers, it supported internal coordination by enabling the Project Manager to share recommendations with Senior Sponsors and report back on their steer. This approach worked, but alternative approaches could also be considered, such as including Senior Sponsors in the workshops themselves. Given the separate roles of employer (Kier), funder (YFF) and evaluator (BIT), we also ensured we had clarity on ultimate decision-making, with both YFF and Kier needing to approve all decisions.

Lesson #9: Regular meetings and structured email communications allowed the project to progress at pace.

The feasibility study phase of this project was complex and involved multiple activities and stakeholder interactions. Our core project management process included weekly meetings between YFF, Kier and BIT, with an agenda sent in advance, and minutes and actions circulated afterwards. Actions were updated in an actions log. Additionally, BIT tracked resource and budget weekly, reviewing the project Gantt chart and ensuring team members had clarity over priority activities. This structure enabled the team to keep on top of a huge amount of detail, and ensure that YFF, Kier and BIT were aligned in their understanding of priorities. The regularity of the meetings meant that decisions could be taken quickly, and risks escalated. For evaluators, this regular communication can help maintain momentum and address issues quickly; for employers, it can support visibility of decisions and risks.

Lesson #10: Coordinate parallel projects carefully and build in flexibility.

Delivering two projects in parallel with the same employer and points of contact was achievable and, in many ways, efficient. Sharing systems, governance structures and relationships helped to minimise duplication and reduce the overall burden on Kier. However, this approach requires careful coordination and flexibility: for evaluators, running parallel workstreams means planning the sequencing of activities so that delays in one project do not disrupt the other; for employers, it means managing competing demands on teams whose availability may vary depending on operational pressures. When projects have different levels of urgency or fixed external deadlines, timelines and meeting agendas will inevitably need to shift to prioritise the more time-sensitive work. In this case, the co-occurring project focused on testing the impact of a structured interview format was tied to a pre-determined apprenticeship recruitment cycle, while the Diversity Characteristics project described in this report had greater flexibility, which at times meant it received less immediate attention. For future work, it would be helpful to agree early on how competing priorities across projects will be managed and to ensure that the less time-critical project is not unintentionally deprioritised.

7. Conclusions and recommendations

7.1 Recommendations

Overall, we conclude that an RCT of two behaviourally-informed communication campaigns is feasible and has strong potential to generate valuable evidence. Key insights for each research question are summarised below.

Table 9: Key findings of the feasibility study

Area of focus	Key findings
Intervention design	We propose testing two behaviourally-informed communication campaigns targeted at all Kier employees. These campaigns would aim to explain the reasons behind Kier's request for employees' diversity characteristics and make disclosure easier for employees. Both campaigns would be personalised, with a clear call to action, come from a trusted messenger (e.g., Diversity and Inclusion team), and include follow-up reminders. Access to the diversity characteristics disclosure form would be made easy with a direct hyperlink. Each campaign would use a different framing: positive framing to emphasise the positive outcomes of disclosure, and negative framing to highlight how disclosure helps prevent negative outcomes. We recommend that the communication campaigns are sent via email. Employees in the control group would not receive the above communications or any other communications related to the disclosure of diversity characteristics. The various features of the communication campaigns - the message focus, reminders, direct links Kier's HR platform where disclosure takes place and positive/negative framings - are expected to increase the number of Kier employees who voluntarily

	disclose their diversity characteristics. By doing so, the communication campaigns aim to give Kier a clearer picture of their workforce and address specific issues in the organisation.
Outcomes	We propose to define 'disclosure' as having a response listed for the following characteristics on the 'Update my diversity information' on Kier's HR system self-service: disability status, neurodiversity, gender identity, transgender/gender reassignment, sexual orientation, social mobility, religion and carer status. The primary, secondary and two exploratory analyses will use the core definition of disclosure, which excludes 'prefer not to say' responses. Therefore, if an employee provides a 'prefer not to say' response, that would not be counted as disclosure. The remaining exploratory analyses will use the expanded definition of disclosure, which includes 'prefer not to the say' responses. Our recommended primary outcome is the number of in-scope characteristics disclosed by young Kier employees (aged 16-24), ranging from 0 (i.e., no in-scope characteristics disclosed) to 8 (i.e., disclosed all in-scope characteristics). For our secondary outcome, we recommend looking at the number of in-scope characteristics disclosed by Kier employees over the age of 25. Our recommended exploratory outcomes are: (1) proportion of employees who disclosed all in-scope characteristics (core definition); (2) proportion of employees who disclosed the following characteristics individually: neurodivergence, disability status and social mobility (core definition); (3) number of fields completed in the diversity characteristics disclosure form (expanded definition); and (4) proportion of employees who have completed all fields in the diversity characteristics disclosure form (i.e. no blank responses; expanded definition).
Data sources	**Kier's HR platform** contains employee-level disclosure data for all in-scope characteristics, as well as their age range, grade, and year they started working at Kier. It also has all information required for delivering the interventions (e.g., employees' contact details).

	Email sends datasets which would contain information on which emails employees are sent and time stamps (to be used in the IPE). We are still assessing the availability of an email opens/ clickthroughs dataset which would contain open and clickthrough rates for each batch of emails sent (to be used in the IPE). Kier's HR system and the email sends datasets are expected to be linked via pseudonymised employee IDs.
Sample size	We propose that the sample of employees to be analysed is all Kier employees with a work email address and access to Kier's HR system self-service. Of these, our sample for the primary analysis would consist of all Kier employees, aged 16-24. Based on 2025 HR system data, it is estimated that roughly 614 young Kier employees would be included in the primary analysis. For the secondary analysis, our sample would consist of all Kier employees over the age of 25, estimated to be 7,257 based on 2025 HR system data.
Randomisation	We propose randomising at the employee level, such that each employee would either receive one of two communication campaigns, or be assigned to the control group, which receives no communication campaigns about disclosure. This level of randomisation was chosen to balance concerns around statistical power and spillover risks. We propose to stratify randomisation on baseline disclosure (disclosed no data; partially disclosed data; disclosed all data) and age range (16-24; 25+).
Implementation and process evaluation	We propose two activities for the IPE: 3. A review of implementation data throughout the trial, including checks on randomisation, delivery accuracy and aggregated engagement metrics (e.g., email opens and click-throughs) to assess whether the campaigns were

	implemented as expected and whether engagement differed across treatment arms. 4. Qualitative interviews with both implementation staff and employees in the treatment groups to explore fidelity, day-to-day delivery, perceived clarity and persuasiveness of the messages, barriers to updating information, activation of the mechanisms in the ToC, and overall acceptability of the campaigns. Together, these activities should provide a clear picture of how the interventions are delivered in practice and highlight opportunities to strengthen future roll-outs. Please note that at the time of writing it is still unclear whether data on email open and click-through rates would be available for the trial. This will be confirmed during trial set-up, with the IPE design adapted as needed should such data not be available.
Economic evaluation	We propose to conduct a cost analysis which would present, separately, the costs of delivering the communication campaigns incurred by Kier and the estimated costs of developing a comparable campaign from the resources produced by this trial (e.g. templates, email content) To obtain cost information, we recommend distributing cost pro-formas to and conduct interviews with relevant staff, and monetising these costs using pay information in Kier's HR system. We also propose creating a framework of representative employer archetypes (defined by factors such as business size, sector and presence of existing digital HR systems) and assessing how these costs may differ between Kier and employers that fit each of these categories.
Data sharing	Kier would share pseudonymised data from their internal HR system and available communications datasets for the impact evaluation, IPE and economic evaluation. This includes employee-level data on disclosure rates and other information, such as age range, grade and year they started working at Kier; aggregated data on emails sent and engagement with them (open and clickthrough rates; if

	available). Kier would also support BIT by helping recruit participants for IPE interviews. BIT recommends collecting additional data directly during the trial for the IPE interviews. All data sharing is governed by the DSA signed by BIT and Kier at project outset, which sets out approved variables, transfer routes and data protection measures.
Ethics	BIT has classified this project as high risk because it involves processing special category data (including disability status, transgender/gender reassignment, sexual orientation and religion). The key ethical considerations relate to data protection and the handling of sensitive personal data, informed consent, and safeguarding. The project underwent BIT's full ethics review on 16 December 2025.

7.2 Next steps

The next phase of work will focus on finalising the trial design, communication campaigns and all supporting materials required for implementation. The findings of this feasibility study will be presented to Youth Futures and Kier stakeholders, with the aim of securing agreement from all partners to proceed to trial launch.

BIT will produce a full trial protocol, setting out the finalised intervention protocol and the methodological approach for the RCT, the IPE, and the economic evaluation. This will include the sampling frameworks, data collection tools and research instruments required for each strand. A separate statistical analysis plan will also be developed, detailing the planned analytical approach for the impact evaluation.

Finally, over the coming weeks, BIT will continue to work closely with key contacts across Kier's Communications and HR teams to finalise the interventions ahead of trial launch. This includes securing sign-off on the communication campaigns, confirming the operational steps required for delivery, and obtaining any remaining information needed (e.g., availability of data on email engagement).

Appendices

Appendix 1: Draft communication campaigns

Please note that the text below is a draft and will be finalised ahead of the trial launch in collaboration with YFF and Kier and will be subject to Kier's formal sign-off process.

Positive framing

Subject line: Action required: Help us shape a more positive Kier

Dear [employee],

You can directly help us build a more supportive, fair, and inclusive culture here at Kier. When we understand our workforce better, we can create opportunities and support that reflect everyone's needs.

Please take **three minutes** to update your diversity information in [Kier's HR system] by [deadline]: [hyperlink]

Why is this important?

Your responses will help us:

- Build more relevant training, personal development programmes, and clearer career pathways that genuinely reflect employees' needs and support everyone to progress.
- Design and deliver support and wellbeing resources that reach the right people at the right time, offering effective assistance to you and your colleagues.
- Build policies and a culture shaped by everyone's perspective, helping to create an environment where everyone feels seen and valued.

This information is 100% confidential and only accessible by designated HR personnel.

Thank you for helping us strengthen fairness and inclusion at Kier.

Best wishes,

[Messenger]

Negative framing

Subject line: Action required: Help us remove the hidden barriers

Dear [employee],

You can directly help us prevent hidden issues that may be creating unfair or unequal experiences here at Kier. When we understand our workforce better, we can close gaps in opportunities and support, so they reflect everyone's needs.

Please take **three minutes** to update your diversity information in [Kier's HR system] by [deadline]: [hyperlink]

Why is this important?

Your responses will help us avoid:

- Training, personal development programmes and career pathways that overlook key needs and unintentionally hold people back.
- Support and wellbeing resources that fail to reach those who need them, leaving gaps in assistance for you and your colleagues.
- Policies and a culture that do not reflect everyone's perspective, risking environments where some employees feel unseen and undervalued.

This information is 100% confidential and only accessible by designated HR personnel.

Thank you for helping us prevent issues that could limit fairness and inclusion at Kier.

Best wishes,

[Messenger]

Reminders

Positive framing: Reminder 1

Subject line: Reminder: Don't miss the chance to help us shape a more positive Kier

Dear [employee],

We recently contacted you asking for your help in building a more supportive, fair, and inclusive culture here at Kier by taking three minutes to update your diversity information [here].

There are [x] days left before the deadline **[date]**.

Your information helps us build more relevant training and personal development programmes, design support and wellbeing resources that reach the right people at the right time and ensure our policies are built with everyone feeling valued.

This information is 100% confidential and only accessible by designated HR personnel.

Thank you for helping us strengthen fairness and inclusion at Kier for everyone.

Best wishes,

[Messenger]

Positive framing: Reminder 2

Subject line: Final chance to help us shape a more positive Kier

Dear [employee],

This is a final reminder to update your diversity information [here].

There are only [x] days left before the deadline.

Your information helps us build more relevant training and personal development programmes, design support and wellbeing resources that reach the right people at the right time and ensure our policies are built with everyone feeling valued.

Thank you,

[Messenger]

Negative framing: Reminder 1

Subject line: Reminder: Don't miss the chance to help us remove the hidden barriers

Dear [employee],

We recently contacted you asking for your help in preventing hidden issues that may be creating unfair or unequal experiences here at Kier by taking three minutes to update your diversity information [here].

There are [x] days left before the deadline **[date]**.

Your information helps us avoid investing in training and personal development programmes that overlook key needs; support and wellbeing resources that fail to reach the right people at the right time; and policies that leave some employees feeling undervalued.

This information is 100% confidential and only accessible by designated HR personnel.

Thank you for helping us prevent issues that could limit fairness and inclusion at Kier for everyone.

Best wishes,

[Messenger]

Negative framing: Reminder 2

Subject line: Final chance to help us remove the hidden barriers

Dear [employee],

This is a final reminder to update your diversity information [here].

There are only [x] days left before the deadline.

Your information helps us avoid investing in training and personal development programmes that overlook key needs; support and wellbeing resources that fail to reach the right people at the right time; and policies that leave some employees feeling undervalued.

Thank you,

[Messenger]

Appendix 2: Interview topic guides

Please note that the interview topic guides below are draft versions and will be finalised ahead of the IPE beginning in March 2026.

Interview with Kier staff involved in intervention implementation

Please note that these interviews are intended to be conducted in paired or triad formats. Depending on who attends each session and their specific involvement in the intervention and trial, not all questions listed below will be applicable.

Section 1: Introduction and context setting (Anticipated duration: 5 minutes)

At the start of the interview, the BIT researcher will welcome the participants and thank them for taking part. The researcher will introduce themselves, BIT and BIT's collaboration with Kier. They will also explain the purpose of the interview.

The researcher will then explain that participation is entirely voluntary and that the participants may pause or stop the interview at any stage. They will reassure the participants that all information shared will be kept confidential, that findings will be reported anonymously, and that the data collected will be used only for research purposes. The researcher will also clarify how the information may appear in outputs, such as through anonymised quotations.

The researcher will inform the participants that the interview will be recorded to ensure their views are captured accurately. Before switching on the recorder, the researcher will ask the participants for consent to record the conversation. Once the recording has begun, the researcher will ask again for verbal confirmation of their consent to take part.

Finally, the researcher will check whether the participants have any questions before moving on to the next section.

Section 2: Roles, responsibilities and involvement in implementation (Anticipated duration: 10 minutes)

a. Introductory questions

- To begin with, could you briefly describe your role within Kier and your usual responsibilities within your team?
- Looking specifically at this project, which parts of the communication campaign's development, delivery or oversight were you personally involved in?

b. Team structure and coordination

- How did responsibilities relating to the campaign sit across different teams (e.g., Communications, HR Operations, People and Culture)?
- Thinking back to when the campaign was first introduced internally, how prepared did you feel to deliver or support your part of the intervention?

Section 3: Randomisation, allocation and delivery processes (Anticipated duration: 15 minutes)

a. Allocation and message delivery (RQ1a, RQ2a): Could you talk me through how the randomised allocation translated into day-to-day delivery?

- **Potential prompts (if needed):**
    - How were employee lists received and used?
    - How were the two message variants prepared and sent?
    - How did you ensure the correct variant reached the correct employees?
    - How did you deal with reminders?

b. Monitoring processes (RQ1a, RQ1b): How did delivery monitoring work in practice?

- **Potential prompts (if needed):**
    - Did you have any systems, logs or checks in place?
    - Were any anomalies identified? How were these investigated? Were any issues escalated?

c. Challenges and unexpected issues (RQ1b, RQ2a): Were there any challenges, delays or unexpected issues during allocation or message delivery?

- **Potential prompts (if needed):**
    - Missing or incorrect contact details?
    - Scheduling issues?
    - Technical hurdles?
    - Overlaps or confusion between multiple internal communications?
    - How were these issues resolved?

d. Impact on trial integrity (RQ1c, RQ2c): Do you think any of these issues could have affected the accuracy or consistency of delivery?

- **Potential prompts (if needed):**

- Any situations where an employee might have received the wrong message variant?
- Delays in sending messages or reminders?
- Any concerns about partial delivery or missed recipients?
- Any risk of employees discussing the messages across groups and influencing each other?

Section 4: Practicality, feasibility and operational experience (Anticipated duration: 15 minutes)

a. Delivery experience (RQ2, RQ4d): From an operational point of view, how easy or difficult was it to deliver the campaign as planned?

- **Potential prompts (if needed):**
  - Any parts that ran particularly smoothly?
  - Any stages that were resource-intensive or required extra coordination?

b. Facilitators and barriers (RQ2a): What factors helped support delivery, and what factors hindered it?

- **Potential prompts (if needed):**
  - Systems?
  - Team communication?
  - Clarity of instructions?
  - Staffing capacity?
  - Accuracy of employee data?
  - Competing organisational priorities?

c. Implementer feedback (RQ2d): Did you receive any feedback from colleagues or employees about the communications while the campaign was live?

- **Potential prompts (if needed):**
  - Queries or concerns raised?
  - Requests for clarification?
  - Positive reactions or appreciation?

d. Improvements and scalability (RQ2b): Thinking about future roll-outs, what changes - if

any - would make this campaign easier or more efficient to deliver?

- **Potential prompts (if needed):**
    - Improvements to materials?
    - Changes to internal processes?
    - Additional support or guidance needed?

e. Staff perceptions of burden and acceptability (RQ4d): Overall, how practical and acceptable did the intervention feel from your perspective?

- **Potential prompts (if needed):**
    - Workload?
    - Fit with existing workflows?
    - Willingness to deliver again?

f. Data / IT experience (RQ1b, RQ2c)

- From your perspective, how well did existing systems support the campaign?
    - **Potential prompts (if needed):**
        - Data accuracy?
        - Matching BIT's pseudonymised IDs to [Kier's HR system] records?
- What challenges, if any, arose when preparing or checking data for this project?
    - **Potential prompts (if needed):**
        - Missing or ambiguous data?
        - Turnover or leavers?
- Did any system issues (e.g., delays, extraction problems, access restrictions) have the potential to affect trial outcomes or the consistency of delivery?
- How easy or difficult was it to extract the final diversity-disclosure dataset for the evaluation?

Section 5: Mechanisms and broader reflections (Anticipated duration: 10 minutes)

a. Mechanisms in the ToC (RQ3a, RQ3b): Based on your interactions with employees or colleagues, do you think the campaign helped:

- improve understanding of why Kier collects diversity data?

- make disclosure feel easier?
- keep disclosure top-of-mind through reminders?
- reduce concerns about privacy, discrimination or relevance?

b. Differences by message type (RQ3a, RQ3c): Did you notice any differences in how colleagues responded to the positive versus negative framing?

c. Moderators influencing mechanism strength (RQ3c): Do you think anything made the intended mechanisms stronger or weaker for some employees?

- **Potential prompts (if needed):**
    - Ease of accessing [Kier's HR system]?
    - Previous experience updating data?
    - Views on data privacy?

Section 6: Process mapping and time spent on implementation (Anticipated duration: 10 minutes)

a. Time spent on key tasks: We would now like to understand the steps involved in preparing and delivering the communication campaigns, to help estimate the resources required. Thinking about your role in implementing the campaigns, could you walk me through the key tasks you carried out and roughly how much time each one took? [This section will be guided by the questions included in the cost pro-formas.]

- **Potential prompts (if needed):**
    - **Preparation tasks**
        - Reviewing communication campaign materials?
        - Coordinating with other teams?
        - Verifying or signing off final versions?
        - Checking employee lists?
    - **Delivery tasks**
        - Uploading or preparing mailing lists?
        - Sending the initial communication?
        - Scheduling or sending reminders?
        - Monitoring delivery status or message bounce-backs?

- **Other tasks**
    - Responding to questions, feedback or clarifications from employees or colleagues?
- Which tasks did you complete yourself?
- Which tasks required coordination with other staff members?
- Were any tasks particularly detailed, administrative or time-consuming?

Interview with Kier employees receiving the interventions

Section 1: Introduction and context setting (Anticipated duration: 3 minutes)

At the start of the interview, the BIT researcher will welcome the participant and thank them for taking part. The researcher will introduce themselves, BIT and BIT's collaboration with Kier. They will also explain the purpose of the interview.

The researcher will then explain that participation is entirely voluntary and that the participant may pause or stop the interview at any stage. They will reassure the participant that all information shared will be kept confidential, that findings will be reported anonymously, and that the data collected will be used only for research purposes. The researcher will also clarify how the information may appear in outputs, such as through anonymised quotations.

The researcher will inform the participant that the interview will be recorded to ensure their views are captured accurately. Before switching on the recorder, the researcher will ask the participant for consent to record the conversation. Once the recording has begun, the researcher will ask again for verbal confirmation of their consent to take part.

Finally, the researcher will check whether the participant has any questions before moving on to the next section.

Section 2: Reactions to and comprehension of the communication (Anticipated duration: 7 minutes)

a. Introductory questions:

- Do you remember receiving any recent emails at Kier asking you to update your diversity information in [Kier's HR system]?
    - If so, did you discuss/share any information with colleagues?
- Do you recall whether you updated any information afterwards?
- Do you remember anything about who the message was from?

- Can you tell me whether you work mainly on-site or office-based?

b. Invitation to share communication: The researcher will ask the participant to search their inbox for the email (researcher will give them the subject line) and forward it for the interview. If they cannot find it, the researcher will show it later in Section 5.

c. Initial impressions (RQ3a):

- Do you remember your first reaction when you noticed or opened the message?
- How did the message make you feel at the time?

b. Message comprehension (RQ3b): How clear did you find the message about why Kier collects diversity information?

- **Potential prompts (if needed):**
    - What did you understand about how this information is used?
    - Was anything unclear, unexpected or confusing?

c. Mechanisms (RQ3a, RQ3c): Did the message change how you felt about updating your diversity data in any way?

- **Potential prompts (if needed):**
    - Did it help you understand the purpose any better?
    - Did it reduce concerns about privacy or discrimination?
    - Did it make updating feel more relevant or important to you?

Section 3: Factors shaping behaviour and response (Anticipated duration: 5 minutes)

a. Influences on behaviour (RQ3c, RQ4a, RQ4b): What factors influenced your decision (not) to update your diversity information?

- **Potential prompts (if needed):**
    - Practical issues or time constraints?
    - Access to [Kier's HR system]?
    - Personal comfort or relevance?
    - Competing priorities?
    - Whether the request felt relevant to you or your role?
    - Uncertainty about what happens with the data?

Section 4: Views on the messages and suggestions for improvement (Anticipated duration: 5 minutes)

a. Tone, clarity and relevance (RQ4a, RQ4b):

- From memory, how did you find the tone and clarity of the communication?
- Did the message feel relevant to you and your role?
- What do you remember about the sender of the communication?

b. Unintended consequences (RQ4d, RQ3c): Was there anything about the message that caused confusion, hesitation or irritation?

Section 5: 'Think-aloud' walkthrough (Anticipated duration: 10 minutes)

- **a. Communication (RQ3a-c, RQ4a-c):** The researcher shows the participant the exact message they received. The participant is then asked to talk through their reactions and reasoning as they re-read it .**Potential prompts (if needed):**
    - What stands out most strongly?
    - What, if anything, in this message encouraged or discouraged you from disclosing your diversity information?
        - Any parts you ignored, misunderstood or found helpful?
    - Did any wording affect your trust, comfort or motivation?
    - What, if anything, would make this message more helpful or motivating?
        - Different wording or framing?
        - Different sender?
        - More explanation or transparency?

Time permitting, repeat with one, or both, of the reminders

- Prompt:
    - What are your thoughts on receiving reminders for ongoing Kier initiatives?
    - How do you feel about the tone and clarity of the reminder(s)?

b. [Kier's HR system] (RQ3c, RQ4a-c): The researcher shows the participant the [Kier's HR system] pathway ([Kier's HR system] homepage → 'Update my diversity information' page → The form (step by step) → Submission/confirmation screens). The participant is

then asked to talk through how they would navigate it (or how they did previously).

- **Potential prompts (if needed):**
    - What did you expect to see when you clicked the link?
    - Which parts felt easy or intuitive?
    - Which parts felt confusing, long or inconvenient?
    - Did anything about the form discourage disclosure?
    - If you visited [Kier's HR system] but didn't disclose your information, what made you stop?
    - For those who didn't visit [Kier's HR system] at all: what would have made you more likely to follow the link to [Kier's HR system]?