# McDonald's UK reaffirms commitment to diversity despite US rollbacks



The UK division of McDonald's has reaffirmed its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policies, maintaining its initiative for greater representation within the company's leadership ranks. This declaration stands in stark contrast to actions taken by its parent company based in Chicago, where DEI initiatives have faced significant rollbacks following Donald Trump's return to the White House.

According to reports, while McDonald's in the United States has cancelled diversity targets for minority representation in senior roles, renamed its diversity department, and relaxed requirements for DEI suppliers, the UK arm is continuing to uphold its original pledges. These commitments include a target for 40 per cent of leadership roles to be occupied by individuals from active minority groups, with a plan for improved representation by 2030, alongside efforts to promote social inclusion through supply chains.

Al-Khabazin, a representative of the BFAWU (Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union), expressed concerns regarding the American parent company's decisions, urging McDonald's UK to avoid following suit. The union labelled the actions of the American corporation as a retreat from essential DEI obligations.

This divergence mirrors a broader trend seen within multinational companies, notably Deloitte, where the UK branch has articulated its ongoing commitment to diversity even as its American counterpart has opted to discontinue specific DEI goals and regular diversity reporting. The debate surrounding corporate diversity policies has intensified, often polarising opinions. Proponents argue that such initiatives enhance business performance by drawing on a wider pool of talent, while critics contend that they undermine meritocracy, citing shifting political climates and recent court rulings in the United States that have imposed stricter limitations on affirmative action in higher education.

In the wake of these developments, several notable American companies, including Walmart, John Deere, and Harley Davidson, have also scaled back their DEI programmes. Trump's previous declarations targeting what he referred to as “woke companies” have further inflamed the conversation surrounding corporate responsibility in diversity practices.

In addition to its commitment to DEI policies, McDonald's UK has faced scrutiny over allegations concerning workplace conduct, including bullying and sexual harassment in its restaurants. These issues have prompted a reassessment of the company’s reputation since the dismissal of former CEO Steve Istrbruck in 2019 for his inappropriate relationship with an employee.

The Fawismite Association, a women's rights group, cautioned that the developments in the United States serve as a warning signal for the UK’s economy, highlighting the potential implications of truncated DEI commitments. Meanwhile, criticism of corporate diversity initiatives is not limited to right-wing voices. During a recent speech, Wes Streeting, the UK's Minister of Health, described some initiatives implemented in the name of equality, diversity, and inclusion within the National Health Service as being driven by “ideological horse trading” that might detract from genuine efforts to address inequality.

Currently, McDonald's UK maintains its stance on DEI policies, explicitly stating there are no intentions to emulate the changes made by its American parent company. However, as global pressures mount against DEI initiatives, the sustainability of this position remains an area of considerable interest.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.hrmagazine.co.uk/content/news/mcdonald-s-rolls-back-dei-initiatives/> - This article supports the claim that McDonald's has rolled back some of its DEI initiatives in the U.S., including modifying representation goals and renaming its diversity team to the Global Inclusion Team. It highlights the company's commitment to inclusion despite these changes.
* <https://www.thepinknews.com/2025/01/08/mcdonalds-reverses-dei-practices/> - This piece corroborates the rollback of DEI practices by McDonald's in the U.S., citing the retirement of specific diversity goals and the pause on external surveys. It also mentions the broader context of right-wing backlash against DEI initiatives.
* <https://www.esgdive.com/news/mcdonalds-dei-2025-global-inclusion/736733/> - This article explains McDonald's shift from DEI to a focus on 'global inclusion,' including changes like retiring representation goals and renaming its diversity team. It provides context on the company's strategic reevaluation following a comprehensive Civil Rights Audit.
* <https://corporate.mcdonalds.com/corpmcd/our-stories/article/our-commitment-to-inclusion.html> - This McDonald's statement outlines the company's ongoing commitment to inclusion, despite changes to its DEI approach. It highlights achievements in diversity and inclusion, such as pay equity and supplier diversity goals.