

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

STRATEGY

2023 TO 2026

Our approach to EDI is driven by being an organisation which embraces inclusion and belonging.

We want our employees, stakeholders and communities to see that we openly celebrate and encourage everyone to be their authentic selves.

INTRODUCTION

Our organization is committed to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion within our workplace and the communities we serve. This EDI strategy outlines our plans for the next three years, building upon the achievements and learnings from our previous strategies.

Our goal is to become an inclusive organisation where everyone can be their best authentic self, celebrating differences, challenging ignorance and bigotry and embracing learning.

The terms equality, diversity and inclusion are often used interchangeably but they are very different concepts. Together they allow organisations to perform at their best, meet the needs of customers and stakeholders and enable employees to be the best versions of themselves.



OUR VALUES

We already have a strong set of corporate values. Those values support our vision, shape our culture and describe what makes us different. They guide the way we make decisions and work with our customers, colleagues, and stakeholders.

Equality, diversity and inclusion is a golden thread that ties CDS together. It links corporate vision to our values and explains how we will achieve our actions with fairness, with respect and with collaboration.

We want equality, diversity and inclusion to become second nature at CDS to the extent that it becomes unnecessary to speak about their individual definitions and they become natural to the way in which we work.



OUR COMPANY U-TICK VALUES

Our values are critical to our success and we want to constantly be positively reinforcing values-driven behaviour across our business.



UNITY

We work as one team, with one reputation



TRUST

We strive to be reliable, fair and to act with integrity



INTENTION

We know why we do things, we have plans and we monitor them



IMPACT

We care about the impact that we have on others



COMMUNICATION

We seek understanding as a basis for win/win solutions



COLLABORATION

We achieve more when we work with others



KINDNESS

We are brave and honest, facing difficult issues with empathy



Commitment

We are serious in our commitment to equality and diversity and our EDI policy statement is clear that it forms part of the core values of CDS and sets out the minimum that we will do in order to deliver on our commitment.



Equality Act 2010: types of discrimination

The Act describes six key types of discrimination that employees are protected from; these differ depending on which of the protected characteristics is being discriminated against:

Direct discrimination – If you are treated worse than others because you have any of the protected characteristics.

Indirect discrimination – If you are put at a disadvantage to others due to workplace policies or ways of working that discriminate against those with any of the protected characteristics.

Harassment – If you are degraded, offended, or humiliated by another person on account of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Victimisation – If you are poorly treated after submitting or supporting a complaint regarding protected characteristic-related discrimination under the Equality Act 2010. It spans age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Unfavourable treatment – Specific to the pregnancy and maternity characteristic, this occurs if you are treated badly because you are pregnant, taking maternity leave, returning to work after giving birth, or because of reasons related to these.

Failure to make reasonable adjustments – Specific to the disability characteristic, this arises if your employer does not ensure that disabled people can access services, education, and jobs as a non-disabled person would.

Discrimination arising from disability – Specific to the disability characteristic, this occurs if you are treated poorly due to circumstances arising from your disability and the discriminator is or should be aware that you are disabled.



Framework

The regulatory framework for social housing providers also places requirements on us to treat residents with fairness and respect and to be able to demonstrate an understanding of the different needs of residents, including in relation to the protected equality strands and residents with additional support needs.



Individual

We also all have individual responsibilities in respect of equality and diversity. We would all wish to be treated fairly and with respect ourselves and should seek to treat others in the same way.

AIMS OF THIS STRATEGY



Ensure that we continue to look after the needs of our staff and residents. We know that their needs are varied and different. We will ensure that we meet those needs by considering the various ways in which our work impacts on them and allowing them to feedback to us. Doing so will also allow our customers to understand that we care and that we are here to help.



Create a balanced workforce that's ready to help with our mission. We know that by having teams of mixed gender, ethnicity, physical ability, age, sexual orientation we will have a variety of viewpoints and a wider range of experience. This will in turn allow us to improve our decision-making and problem-solving.



We feel that our new approach will help us to achieve the best outcomes. The approaches we are taking set our vision for diversity and inclusion and will allow us to achieve our equality, diversity and inclusion ambitions.



Play a leadership role in diversity and inclusion. We want to play our part in delivering sector change by being bold in the actions we take on EDI, sharing our work and using our influence to drive inclusive behaviours.



Our Anti-Racism Action Plan stresses that our values are intrinsic to all our work and decision making and our commitment to taking tangible steps toward becoming anti-racist, as part of our wider EDI work, is essential if we are to live these values in our business



Become an organisation which embraces inclusion and belonging. Our employees, stakeholders and communities will see that we openly celebrate and encourage everyone to be their authentic selves.



KEY FOCUS AREAS AND ACTIONS

To address the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act, we have identified key focus areas and corresponding actions:

GENDER

- Monitor gender pay gap,
- Accommodate flexible working whenever possible
- Encourage participation in mentorship programmes
- Educate and raise awareness of women's health

AGE

- Support employees at all stages of their career,
- Address age-related health experiences,
- Provide training and education

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

- Raise awareness of LGBTQ+ experiences,
- Offer learning and development programs,
- Build partnerships and support networks

RACE

- Support progression of BAME employees to senior roles,
- Encourage participation in mentorship programmes,
- Address micro aggressions and cultural awareness

RELIGION

- Support religious observance and worship,
- Address hate crime

DISABILITY

- Increase understanding of disability impact on employees,
- Support employees with disabilities and manage adjustments

GENDER REASSIGNMENT

- Improve trans awareness and provide training,

PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY

- Manage the impact of pregnancy and maternity leave on work,
- Review policies and ensure they incorporate needs of pregnant people

CARE RESPONSIBILITIES

- Raise awareness of diverse care responsibilities,
- Offer support and training,
- Accommodate flexible working when possible

SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUNDS

- Reduce the financial burden that CDS practices may have on lower paid staff

OUR 3 YEAR ROADMAP TO SUCCESS

START

SET OUR
BASELINE

We'll start by:

- using our data to review and baseline our current EDI position with staff and Board Trustees
- promoting our planned EDI approach
- implementing the NHF Chair Challenge

YEAR
1

ESTABLISH
ACCOUNTABILITIES
AND
BELONGING

Our ambitions for Year 1 are to have:

- committed our senior leadership to lead actions on EDI
- considered our people processes (sourcing, attraction, recruiting, promoting) through an EDI lens and altered procedures, as appropriate, to help deliver our targets
- Earn the silver Trailblazers award from Race Equality Matters for implementing impactful solutions to drive race equality
- made an inclusive culture part of the CDS brand and promote widely,

YEAR
2

EMBED OUR
COMMITMENTS

Our ambitions for Year 2 are to have:

- created a culture where it is normal to raise the question of unfair treatment constructively
- for our suppliers to understand and implement our EDI requirements
- incorporated diversity and inclusion objectives into business plans
- reviewed measurements against our EDI actions

YEAR
3

LEAD AND
PROMOTE
EXCELLENCE

Our ambitions for Year 3 are to have:

- taken an active leadership role on EDI in the housing sector
- empowered our staff with knowledge and resources to embed an inclusive culture in our workplace environments.

A DIVERSE WORKFORCE

At CDS we strongly believe that attracting and retaining a diverse workforce will enable us to create a positive impact and delivery of services.

We will continue our best practices on unconscious bias and being a good ally in order to prevent discrimination of any kind.

This inclusive approach will also be carried through our recruitment procedures to enable us to recruit and retain the right people, with the right skills in the right roles.

We will continue to assess and remove barriers that could prevent candidates from applying.

In order to ensure we recruit and retain our workforce we will keep reviewing our:

- recruitment process
- no name CVs where possible
- selection process
- onboarding
- EDI Training
- include our commitment to EDI on recruitment documentation



OUR PLEDGES

Not only does our strategy have a strong commitment to equality, but we've also made public pledges on how we want to champion EDI throughout our people practices as an employer. They include our commitment to:

- being a Race Equality Matters Trailblazer
- being a Mindful Employer
- the Disability Confident Employer Scheme
- Paying the London Living Wage

We will take a robust approach to our EDI monitoring which will be aimed at our employees and tenants.

Our aim is to enable us to celebrate our achievements and hold ourselves to account and take action if needed. All findings and outcomes will be reported to our Board of Management.



Everyone at CDS has personal responsibility for EDI in their areas of work. However, our desire for leadership and excellence in EDI starts at the top.



Our Board has overall accountability for the delivery of our equality, diversity and inclusion strategy. In particular that means that our Board will monitor progress on this strategy and play its part in advancing our inclusion agenda over the next 3 years. The Corporate Services Committee, specifically, will receive updates at each meeting.

By following this strategy, we will work toward creating an equal, inclusive and diverse environment that aligns with its core values and objectives. This will not only help us meet our moral, social, and legal obligations, but also enhance our reputation in the sector as a leader in promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion.

