

Diversity and Inclusion at the Charity Commission



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

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Foreword

The charity sector is incredibly diverse - ranging from large charities with complex business models to smaller community charities, all operating the length and breadth of the country and serving people from all walks of life.

It is precisely the diversity of the charity sector – a sector made up of a myriad of individuals and organisations - that drives our ambition to understand and reflect those different backgrounds, experiences, and world views. That strengthens us as an organisation and as a regulator.

We are a better organisation if we are a diverse organisation – diverse in terms of age, background, culture, beliefs, or geography. If we listen to, and seek to bring together different perspectives, we will be more effective, more empathetic, and ultimately, a better regulator.

This document sets out a number of practical ways in which we will seek to embed diversity, for example setting ourselves up to better reflect the sector we regulate, focusing our recruitment away from London to Liverpool and Newport and communicating more clearly with all those who contact us so that they know they are being treated fairly and consistently.

Ultimately, we will only be successful in being the expert Commission, if we commit to embedding a culture that goes beyond simply saying it is mainstreaming diversity to actually, manifestly doing that.



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Helen Stephenson". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Dr Helen Stephenson CBE
Chief Executive Officer



Purpose

The Charity Commission approach to Diversity and Inclusion reflects our ongoing commitment to mainstreaming inclusion. Building a supportive culture empowers and enables our people to reach their full potential, have the confidence to challenge and be challenged, and ensures that no individual or teams feel isolated.

Our credibility and impact is also strengthened. By reflecting and understanding diversity, the varied perspectives and experiences in the charitable sector and wider society will allow us to grow trust and confidence in the activities of the Commission and the sector.

We will continue to go further than the Equality Act provisions by adopting a broader definition of diversity, to include socio-economic and geographic backgrounds. This Diversity and Inclusion approach seeks to add value to the Charity Commission, contributing to its effectiveness as a fair, balanced and independent regulator while maximising employee well-being and engagement.



Objectives

To enable the Charity Commission to:

- **understand and draw people from the communities it serves** – drawing from a range of backgrounds, experiences and locations
- **be accessible to everyone** – engaging the sector and public we serve
- **be flexible** – supporting innovation, performance and engagement
- **welcome talent from wherever it comes** – attracting the best talent from all backgrounds



Approach

Diversity and Inclusion at the Charity Commission is not an end in and of itself. It is an integral part of supporting fair, balanced and independent outcomes by ensuring that we:

Value diversity of teams

Managers are aware of their role in developing diversity of thought. Leaders understand their role in ensuring individuals feel safe to contribute, challenge others, share their knowledge, skills and innovation in the workplace. This will help us ensure we recognise and value difference. We also know that in the wider charity sector, trustee boards with the right mix of skills, experiences, backgrounds and perspectives are well placed to anticipate and manage risks, seize new opportunities, future-proof their organisations and tackle difficult but necessary decisions.

We work with partners to broaden the appeal of trusteeship to the widest range of people, aiming to bring more skills and backgrounds into the sector. Being a diverse organisation supports us to be a credible voice to encourage diversity and inclusion within charities.

Value and invest in our people

We enable career development through accessible and universal training, supporting talented people regardless of background. This begins with a comprehensive induction programme and a broad variety of accreditation opportunities available, from apprenticeships to specialised qualifications and continuous professional development. We provide a clear, precise and rigorous standard of knowledge and skills for managers and leaders to ensure a zero-tolerance approach to bullying, harassment and discrimination. Our teams and leaders use positive action where needed in relation to training, support, recruitment and promotion to ensure the broadest range of diversity is achieved and there is an equality of opportunity for all. In line with our values, our Performance Management system fairly measures the impact and the how of our people's delivery.

Collaborate through partnerships underpinned by our values

Systems, directorates and teams work collaboratively to deliver improved inclusion. We believe that we are better when we work across teams and professions, and we support our internal diversity networks and participation in cross government networks. We recognise networks are important change agents, as we seek to increase the diversity of voices in our decisions and policy making processes, supporting us to embrace new ideas and different ways of working.

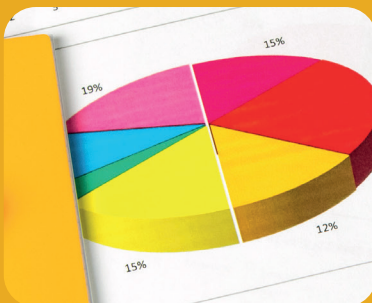


Tackle bullying, harassment and discrimination

We are committed to an inclusive culture that is intolerant of discrimination, bullying, harassment, and other negative behaviours. We ensure our employees feel included, supported, and treated fairly. We welcome respectful, constructive, and professional challenge at all levels, without boundaries across roles and pay grades. We don't sit back if we see something we don't think is right, we will speak up and look out for each other's wellbeing. We are committed to creating and maintaining an open and transparent culture. There are well-communicated processes in place to support this, such as 'Speak Up' campaigns, to encourage reporting of issues and employee assistance routes to support victims. We will regularly review and update our policies around sexual harassment and safeguarding.

Track our progress

Our activity will be data driven, evidence led and delivery focussed. We will continue to measure diversity as an employer. We will also continue to measure inclusivity through our People Survey and inclusion metrics. Equality Impact Assessments are in place and will consider positive outcomes, in addition to potentially negative outcomes, where we will have action plans in place to mitigate them.



Understanding and drawing from the communities we serve

We will continue to focus the majority of our external recruitment outside London, and with four offices across England and Wales, we are better placed to draw on a wider range of talent and better reflect and understand communities across our nation. 50% of our Senior Civil Service roles are, for example, based in our Liverpool office rather than in London.

We will:

- enable sustainable career pathways to empower our people so that they can grow and develop and reach their full potential, wherever their location
- take steps to ensure unintended consequences do not occur, for example, a concentration of professional or managerial roles in London
- broaden our recruitment strategy to strengthen our presence in the Newport Office, in line with strengthening our Welsh Identity and strengthening our approach to the Welsh language



Accessible to everyone

The work we do as regulator for 169,954 charities (as at 21 March 2024), affects many people's lives on a daily basis. Yet too many people, do not know what we do and may even not be aware of us, so won't consider us as an employer.

We will:

- continue to increase our participation in appropriate entry and progression routes that are designed to broaden representation and accessibility to people
- continue to develop a university outreach programme
- take a data-driven approach to monitoring progression and promotion to ensure that the routes to progression are transparent, accessible, and supported
- use role models from a diverse range of backgrounds to increase the visibility of range of experiences and opportunity to make a real difference at the Commission



Flexible in our working environment

We understand that flexibility is important for our people and performance, it enables us to attract and retain talented individuals and increases innovation, engagement and performance.

We will:

- continue to ensure that our hybrid working arrangements are used effectively, balancing the needs of the business and the individual, enabling colleagues to better perform their roles while also delivering value for money. We are aware that this is particularly beneficial to those with disabilities, caring responsibilities, or school aged children
- update HR policies and line manager guidance as appropriate. This will increase accessibility and ensure advantages of increased flexibility for parents and carers are fully realised. Our benefits package offers a range of support to all
- implement the Civil Service Carers' Strategy, setting out our vision and strategic priorities for carers over the next 5 years including renewing our accreditation with Carers UK
- continue to ensure workspaces enable collaborative and flexible working, driving engagement and enhancing outcomes. This will support the attraction and retention of top talent by establishing attractive working environments and by supporting inclusivity, health and wellbeing in the way that we work. Ensure that our employees have the support and workplace adjustments they need to carry out their role



Welcoming talent from wherever it comes

A diverse workforce brings a range of experiences and perspectives, we need to draw on our skills and experiences to achieve our ambitions and fulfil our purpose, as regulator of an incredibly diverse charity sector. We must provide an equality of opportunity for all our people and embed challenge in everything we do. Our people will proactively look for the opportunity to do things differently.

We will:

- improve how we reach out and attract external talent
- build upon existing good practice, streamlining processes to improve equality in opportunity for applicants
- closely monitor recruitment data to ensure these steps are effective
- emphasise to our suppliers, the importance of inclusive workplaces - this will be regularly tested and monitored



Action Plan

As they become available and are reviewed, we will ensure we utilise the evaluation frameworks from central Civil Service to effectively evaluate our diversity and inclusion interventions and programmes

Accessible recruitment:

- continue to ensure job adverts ensure an emphasis on skills, experience and ability, rather than qualifications, to attract the broadest talents. Complete recruitment campaign data analysis to inform how we improve diverse hiring
- build upon existing good practice streamlining processes to improve equality in opportunity for applicants from outside the Civil Service
- widen recruitment schemes we are involved in (we currently take part in Disability Confident and Veterans) and continue to strengthen our relationship with universities to attract talent
- ensure internal opportunities are being filled consistently through Expressions of Interest or a similarly fair and transparent process

Processes to support our people:

- improve employee input of data on the HR system. Use the data to monitor people processes from recruitment, onboarding, career development, performance management and at exit stage
- regularly review our practices to tackle bullying, harassment and discrimination focussing on data, reporting and processes across the entirety of bullying, harassment and discrimination incidences
- in line with the central civil service, we will refresh our policies, procedures and guidance outlining options and clarity for employees about how they can confidentially raise concerns
- maintain our membership and commitment to the Disability Confident Employer Scheme and Carer Confident accreditation and aim to build upon the level

Developing our people:

- establish a clear, precise and rigorous standard of knowledge and skills for managers and leaders to ensure an inclusive culture (avoiding group think) and a zero-tolerance approach to bullying, harassment and discrimination
- establish progression pathways and monitor our approach on equality of opportunity, to ensure that all our people have the same opportunities to progress and develop
- build upon our current apprenticeship offer to enable existing and new staff to bridge and develop their functional and professional skills through quality training