

Stepping up to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Our strategy 2022-25



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Introduction

We're delighted to present the first ever Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy at StepChange Debt Charity.

This is an important moment for the charity and a key part of our future development.

At StepChange we believe that our differences, backgrounds, and experiences are what make us a better place to work and a more effective organisation. We believe that it is this uniqueness of individuals that is valuable and should be celebrated.

We recognise that people reach their full potential when they can truly be themselves, and to unlock this potential, we must be thoughtful, build a sustainable approach with specific objectives, measurable outcomes and clear expectations for leaders and colleagues.

Stepping up to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) 2022-25, will guide us in our journey to becoming a more inclusive organisation that fosters a culture of belonging, and cultural and social equity. We will fully seek to live out the principles underpinning this strategy ([see page 9](#)) through our provision of debt advice services for our clients, and culture for our colleagues. We will be bold and brave in our approach to tackling the issues surrounding inequality and take an active approach to ensure we are ready both for now and the future.

Stepping up to EDI is about all of us working together and making change happen. It is only through us taking ownership, collectively and individually that will effectively bring about positive change.

This strategy sets out the aims, objectives, and actions that we have put in place to set the foundation for our future direction. We will refer to it as a roadmap, which will ensure we are accountable and meeting the milestones we have set for ourselves. It sets out how we intend to engage colleagues and clients to heighten our understanding of their needs and address them appropriately.

In addition to this, we will continually review our diversity data to ensure we are heading in the right direction.

As a regulated organisation it is our duty to:

- Treat clients and colleagues fairly
- Work to accelerate change
- Use data to monitor progress
- Be inclusive

We are proud to be signatories of the Neurodiversity in Business Charter, Race Equality Charter, and a disability confident employer.



The Prince's Responsible Business Network

Race at Work Charter signatory



CEO introduction



As the leading provider of free debt advice in the UK, we are in an incredible position to positively change the lives of our clients. Our colleagues do this day in, day out.

But to continue to do this we need to maintain a dedicated team of colleagues who get out of bed every day to make a difference.

At StepChange we believe in the value of an equal, diverse, and inclusive organisation. Diversity is a competitive advantage that will enable us to be even better at what we do, operate more efficiently, and deliver more effectively.

This bold strategy sets out how we'll embrace equality, diversity, and inclusion to deliver our mission as a charity.

To do this, it is important that we are reflective of the communities we seek to serve and work within. It is by reflecting these communities that we will have greater cultural awareness, knowledge, and insight, along with the tools and resources, to anticipate and respond to client needs effectively.

We are committed to creating a culture of belonging; one where every individual feels they are able to thrive and perform at their best to achieve their full potential. Our colleagues contribute to our success every day, enabling us to look after as many clients as possible. It's important that our colleagues feel that StepChange is more than a place that they come to work, but a place where they can thrive, be the best version of themselves and achieve great things.

This strategy underpins our Stepping Up in a Changing World Strategy (<https://www.stepchange.org/about-us/stepping-up-strategy.aspx>) and will focus on four critical areas: leadership, recruitment, retention and engagement, and development. These priorities have the support of, and will be led by, our senior leaders who will champion and lead the way forward for EDI and will be held accountable in demonstrating their commitment.

We will continue to monitor progress over the next three years and beyond, regularly reviewing our position against our objectives every quarter and regularly publishing reports internally and externally.

And as always, we need your help to deliver this. So please get involved, engage with this exciting area of work, and let us know how we can continue developing and delivering.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Phil Andrew', written over a white background.

Phil Andrew
CEO

Vision, mission and values

Our vision is to create a society free from problem debt. We recognise that problem debt is a problem because it has an impact, not just on the individual, but their families and relationships.

It is important that we implement EDI into every area of the organisation; getting as close to our clients as possible to ensure we're able to help as many people as possible, as much as possible. Our interventions have helped transform the lives of millions and we're committed to helping millions more.

Our mission is to provide free debt advice and solutions for people at risk of, or struggling with, problem debt and we seek to influence public policy and private sector practice to prevent people falling into problem debt in the first place.

This strategy will demonstrate how EDI aims to drive our vision, mission, and values.

✓ Our values

We're committed to our clients

We make change happen

We work together



Definitions

“Diversity is being invited to the party; inclusion is being asked to dance”

— Vernā Myers, VP Inclusion Strategy, Netflix



Helpful definitions

Here are our definitions of these terms:



Equality

We'll provide equal opportunities for everyone and protect our colleagues from discrimination in all forms



Inclusion

We'll aim to build a culture where everyone feels welcome and has a sense of belonging. A culture where our differences are not only acknowledged but embraced



Diversity

We'll recognise, respect and be proud of everyone's differences. We recognise diversity as an advantage in all its forms and celebrate this



Equity


We'll aim to ensure the fair treatment, access, and equality of opportunities for everyone and remove systemic barriers that prevent some groups from fully participating

Cultural equity considers the values that everyone brings and embodies these in policies and processes. This includes, but is not limited to, those who have been historically under-represented based on protected characteristics, such as, race/ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, religion and, socioeconomic status. Socioeconomic status is the social standing or class of an individual or group. It is often measured as a combination of education, income, and occupation

Social equity is impartiality, fairness, and justice for all people. It considers systemic inequalities to ensure everyone in a community has access to the same opportunities and outcomes


Our strategy and EDI commitments



Stepping Up in a Changing World commitments	EDI commitments 	
<p>We will put our clients and their needs at the heart of everything we do</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will provide platforms for the client voice to be heard, to understand the root causes of problem debt and how different communities are affected. We will use this knowledge to improve our service and make positive societal impacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will consider the needs of our vulnerable clients within our vulnerable client strategy
<p>We will empower our people and further develop their skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will be bold and brave in our approach; providing our people with the right opportunities to enable them to be their best selves at work, including talent pipelines • We will continue to educate ourselves and provide learning resources, including e-learning modules, and guidance to ensure that we are culturally aware • We will develop our leaders through an inclusive leadership programme • We will manage behaviours of all colleagues against our inclusive behavioural framework • We will train all managers involved in recruitment to be inclusive recruiters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will engage colleagues in EDI matters through an effective governance structure, listening forums and network groups • We will review and monitor our Total Reward strategy to ensure that we remain competitive and can appropriately attract, reward, and retain a diverse and high performing colleague group • We will develop, review, and monitor our colleague policies to ensure that they are inclusive • We will consider the needs of our vulnerable clients within our vulnerable client strategy • We will conduct and review EDI via surveys, to identify areas for improvement and review our progress regularly





Stepping Up in a Changing World commitments	EDI commitments 	
We will deliver value for money in a changing funding landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will continue to invest in our EDI efforts, allocating resource where necessary to fulfil our goals and objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will continually assess whether our EDI actions are delivering against our targets and ambitions
We will listen to and collaborate with our growing network of partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will collaborate with external subject matter experts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are proud to be signatories of Disability Confidence, Neurodiversity in Business, and the Race at Work charters
We will continue campaigning to affect changes that stop people falling into problem debt, and help them recover if they do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and collect data to inform policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represent the charity when appropriate to influence the sector’s development



Strategy principles

This strategy is based on the following principles

More than diversity

Diversity is great — but it's not enough. We'll focus on equity, equality, and inclusion as well as diversity in the workplace.

Representation

We want to achieve a diverse community of colleagues that reflects the society we seek to serve — our colleagues should be representative of the country as a whole with supplementary targets and key performance indicators (KPIs).

Data

We will ground our EDI direction in data and focus on measurable, tangible outputs.

Belonging

All colleagues should be able to work and be able to be themselves. Our approach will be based on fairness and respect, with equal access to opportunities and resources, allowing them to contribute fully to StepChange's success.



Knowledge

We recognise that we all start at different places in terms of knowledge, understanding, beliefs and backgrounds. We will provide information, education and development opportunities that bring awareness to, and educates, colleagues on EDI.

Culture

We will build a culture that actively promotes and celebrates everyone's differences, consists of active allies, takes action and is accountable.

Collaborate

We will seek to have a collaborative and consultative approach with our colleagues and communities — particularly under-represented groups.

Systemic

We recognise that discrimination and inequality is systemic within society — so we will aim to build policies, processes and systems that have inclusion at the heart of them, particularly when we're managing change.

Colleague data — Where are we now?

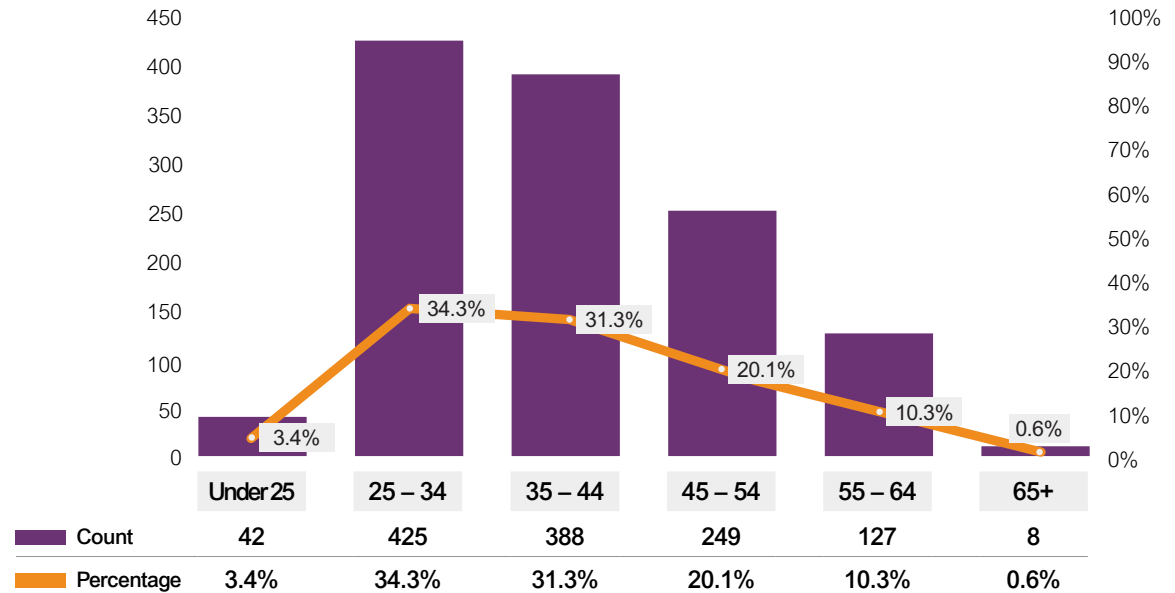
The following data paints a broad picture of the demographics of our colleagues:

Age

The Census 2021 report showed the majority of the population fall within the following age brackets:

- 30–34
- 35–39
- 50–54
- 55–59

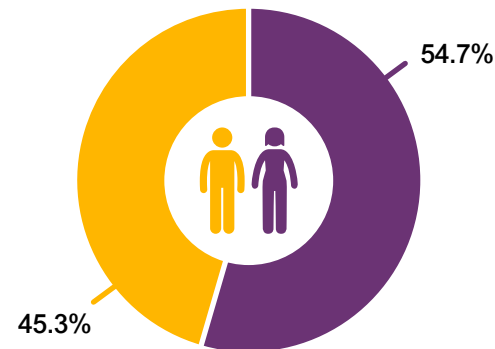
The average age of our colleagues is 40. There is an opportunity to focus on increasing representation of the 25–34 year olds, to ensure our workforce is even more representative of these age ranges.



Gender

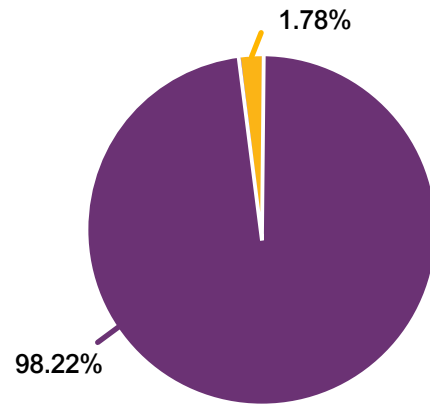
The Census 2021 report showed that there were 30,420,100 women (51% of the overall population) and 29,177,200 men (49.0%). Our data demonstrates that we have a good gender split overall, with good female and male representation throughout the organisation.

Male	Female
561	677

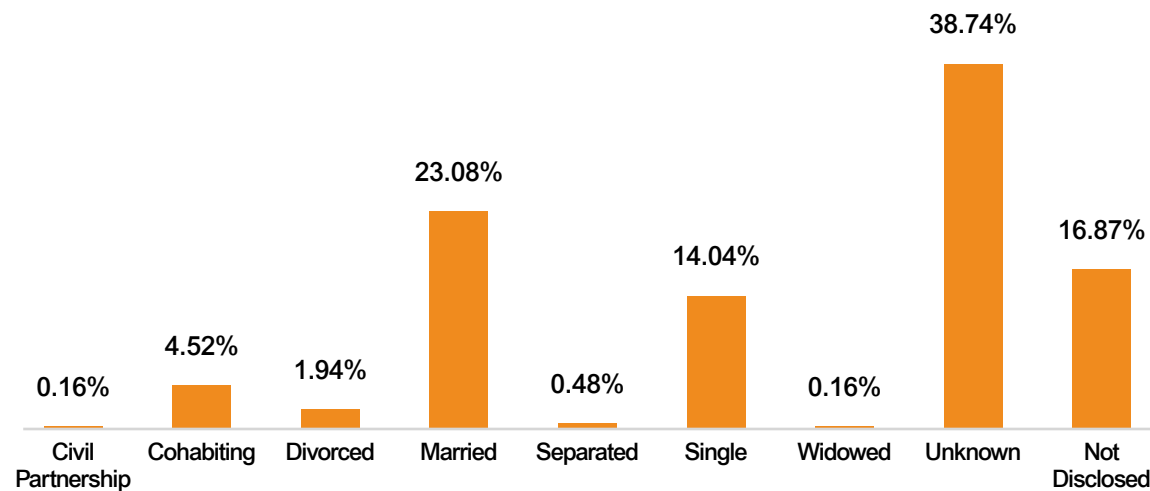


Disability

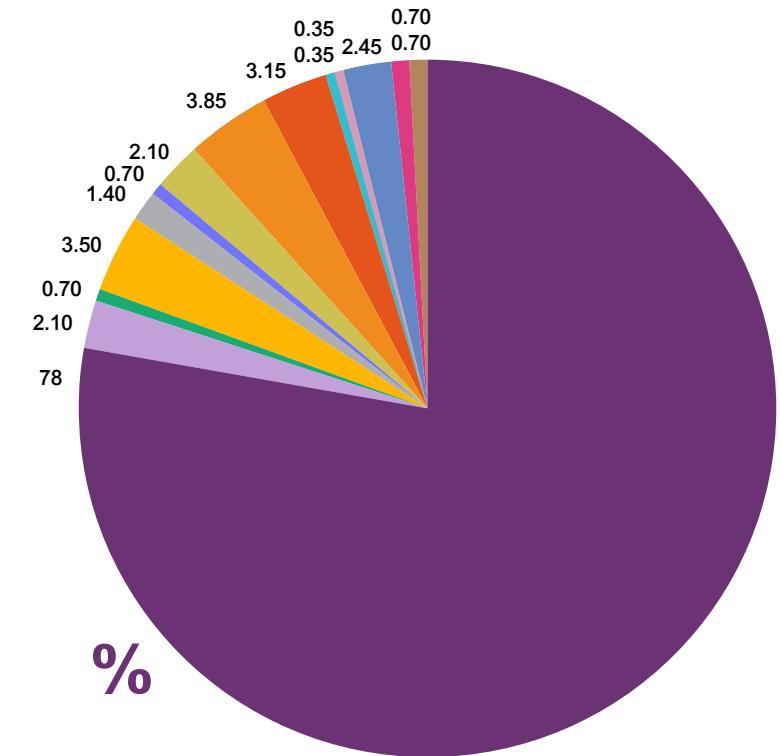
Identifies as disabled	Does not identify as disabled / no response
22	1217



Marital status



Ethnicity



- African
- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Irish
- White and Asian
- British
- Other Asian
- White and Black African
- Caribbean
- Other Mixed
- White and Black Caribbean
- Chinese
- Other White

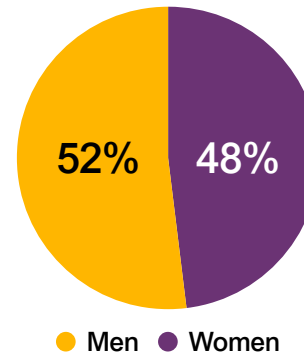
Gender pay gap — Our results 2021

Pay gap

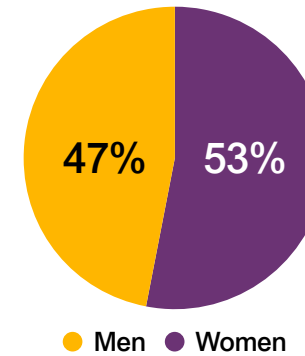
7% lower Mean gender pay gap	1.7% lower Median gender pay gap
8.8% lower Mean gender bonus gap	0.0% lower Mean gender bonus gap
80.6% total % of female employees receiving a bonus	82.4% total % of male employees receiving a bonus

Pay quartiles

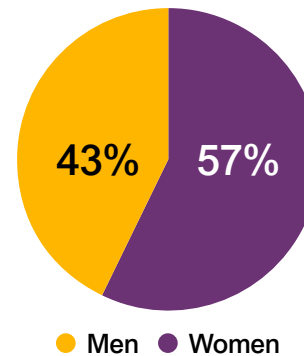
Highest quartile



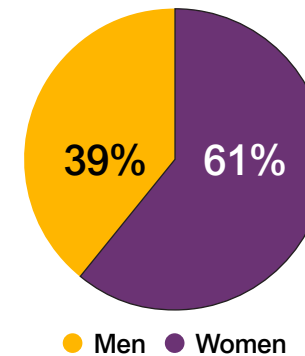
Upper middle



Lower middle quartile



Lowest quartile



Data summary

Background to our colleague data

- There are currently some inconsistencies in the ways we are currently collecting colleague data
- Due to these inconsistencies, a data gathering exercise will be conducted, along with an internal communications campaign. Attention will be paid to encouraging a high completion rate of 75%
- Data will strongly inform our direction of travel and we recognise the importance of getting it right
- There are two areas of significant difference: the first being disability, with only 2% of colleagues who identify as having a disability, compared to 21% of working adults within the UK. The second area is ethnicity, where only 9.9% identify as non-white British compared with 14% of the population. When we mention disability, we are referring to the social model which says that people are disabled by barriers in society, not by their impairment or difference
- We currently do not have adequate data on the sexuality, religious beliefs, caring responsibilities, or social mobility. This will be a focus for us during the data drive coming later on in the year
- We will compare our current position with the national Census data 2021, due to be published on 28 June 2022
- Our first opportunity to measure progress will be via the engagement survey in September 2022



EDI Strategy survey data

In March 2022 we shared our EDI Strategy principles. We also recently issued a survey inviting colleagues to share feedback and listening sessions with our Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) and colleagues throughout the organisation to help shape the EDI Strategy.

There were seven key findings and recommendations from the survey and listening sessions:

- There is a strong desire to see **positive change** in terms of EDI within the organisation
- **Engagement** and **development** received the greatest response and suggestions
- There is a desire for more **communication** from senior leaders and consultation when key decisions are made
- Some participants would like **more opportunities to express themselves**, whether it be via pronouns, forums for them to submit suggestions about EDI, or ways to report microaggressions
- **Retention** also received a high response with participants wanting more opportunities for growth within the organisation and career opportunities
- Participants would like to see **greater optical representation** at senior leadership level in terms of race and ethnicity
- Training and education are needed to **create greater awareness** of key EDI matters and foster a culture of belonging

We've used the findings and suggestions from the survey and listening sessions to form the four strategic pillars of the strategy: **leadership, recruitment, retention and engagement, and development.**

Ways we're stepping up to EDI — Four strategic steps





1. Leadership

We want our leaders to lead and champion the way forward for EDI at Stepchange.

We'll achieve this by:

- Providing an inclusive leadership and recruitment programme for the Executive and Senior Leadership Teams (SLT)
- Introducing a governance structure around EDI to ensure accountability
- Include EDI in all performance reviews along with key EDI behaviours, as reflected in the Leadership Programme ([see page 30](#))



2. Recruitment

We want to attract a multitude of talented people, with diverse perspectives and experiences, regardless of background or personal characteristics.

We'll achieve this by:

- Completing an end-to-end review of our current offering, approach, and processes within recruitment in collaboration with the Enabling and Operations functions
- We already meet the AA accredited standard of the W3Cs Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), but we will improve the language we use to make sure it's inclusive and identify any tools to improve accessibility
- Raise our voice on EDI externally via marketing, case studies and photography, to ensure our brand is inclusive and representative
- Make public commitments to increase our ethnicity and other representation
- Introduce EDI to all recruitment processes, including trustee recruitment, using appropriate training programmes where necessary, accredited recruiter training and diverse interview panels
- Introduce initiatives to increase representation at all levels within the organisation, by conducting diversity audits and taking positive action in recruiting diverse talent
- Introduce processes to ensure there are diverse shortlists for all roles



3. Retention and engagement

When people feel valued and heard, they feel part of the organisation. As such, we want to nurture an inclusive environment and one of belonging. This will be led and demonstrated by a leadership team who model these behaviours.

We'll achieve this by:

- Reviewing our current processes, policies, and procedures to ensure inclusivity
- Developing new policies where required e.g., LGBTQ+ colleagues, those experiencing conditions relating to hormonal health issues and disabled people
- Provide platforms for open dialogue and opportunities to engage with EDI across the organisation
- Launch colleague networks groups and frequent EDI events to ensure representation and inclusion within decision making processes
- Introduce an EDI communications plan on updates and progress
- Conduct an audit of our current internal communications channels to ensure accessibility
- Introduce talent pipelines and clarify the route to progression for colleagues and promotions process



4. Development

We want to support everyone to achieve and perform at their best at StepChange.

We'll achieve this by:

- Conducting an end-to-end review of, and clarify, our promotions process
- Establish a mentoring, reverse mentoring and sponsorship programme across the organisation and collaborating with other organisations across the industry
- Conduct and review an EDI survey to identify areas that require support and review our progress regularly
- Providing EDI awareness and e-learning modules to the whole organisation which will also become part of the onboarding process in collaboration with the Learning and Development team
- Providing leadership training to develop inclusive leadership behaviours across the organisation



Our aims

Aims	Actions	How will we know if we've been successful?
<p>1. We will equip our leaders to champion areas of EDI, model behaviours and lead on this for the organisation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders will participate in an inclusive leader and inclusive recruiting programme • Leaders will be measured against the EDI behaviours included in the leadership framework • Leaders will play an active role in the governance structure to ensure tangibility and accountability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders will cascade their commitment to their teams, as well as implement and action specific EDI related actions for their areas • Leaders will play an active role and champion an area of diversity – providing platforms for their teams to have open and honest conversations, promoting psychological safety • Inclusion is clearly part of the business strategy • EDI will be included within all performance reviews
<p>2. We will attract and recruit the right candidates, with the right skills from diverse candidate pools, in order to better represent the communities we serve</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR recruitment and senior leadership teams to undertake inclusive recruiter training • Candidates will be recruited into part-time roles • EDI will become part of the onboarding process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will have achieved colleague representation at nationally representative levels, with the following targets achieved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain our 50:50 gender split at senior leadership level and strive for nil pay and bonus gap • Increased Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic representation to 14% • Increased disability representation to 13% • Increased representation of client voice at board level



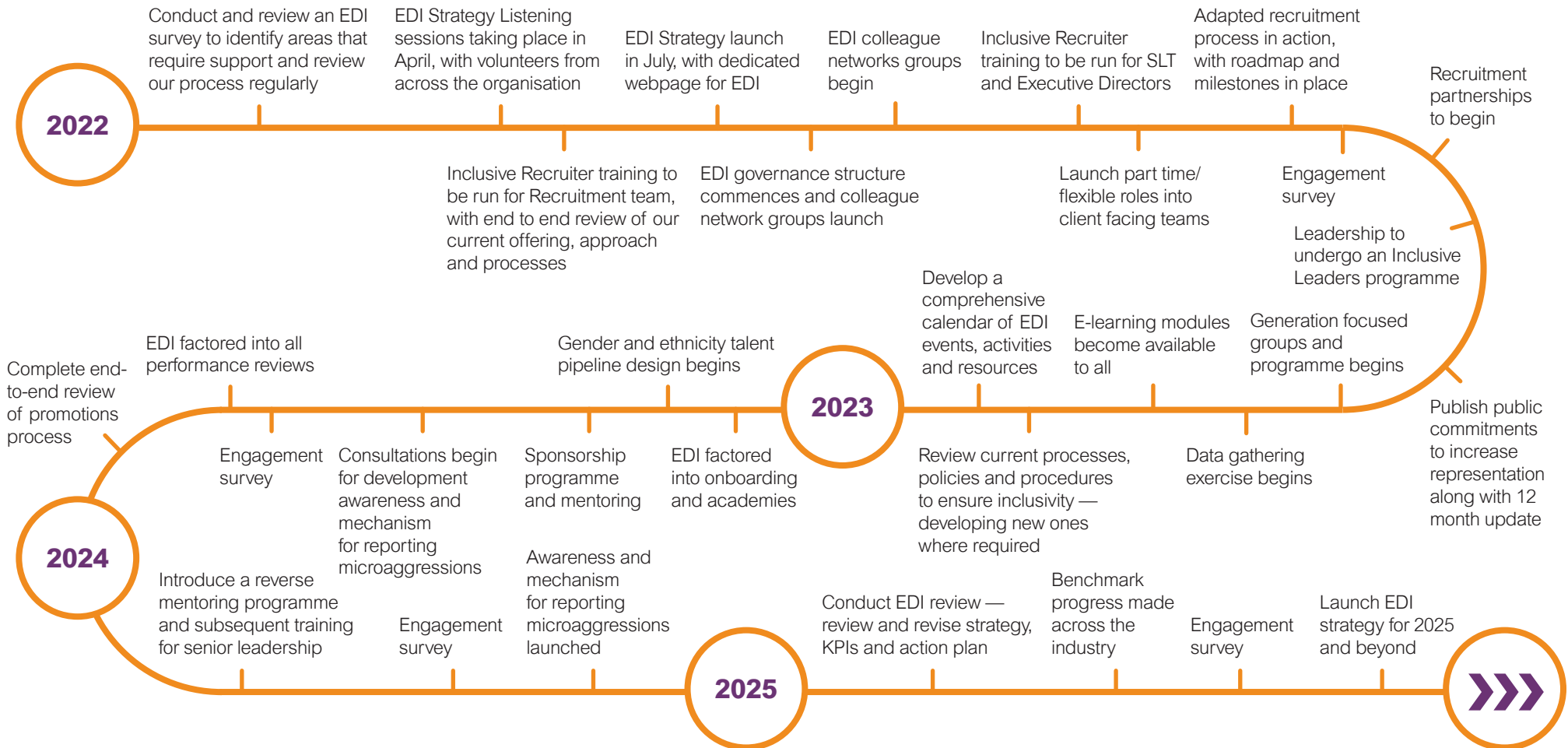
Aims	Actions	How will we know if we've been successful?
<p>3. We will retain and upskill our colleagues; regularly evaluating our proposition and colleague journey</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will implement mandatory EDI e-learning modules for all colleagues. This will also become part of the onboarding process for new starters • We will launch our colleague network groups, providing a platform for colleagues to play an active role • We will provide regular updates on the progress of EDI • We will regularly review and improve mechanisms for diversity data collection and reporting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will have effective colleague network groups, with the right distribution of power, so that the efforts of all are adequately rewarded and acknowledged • 98% of colleagues will have successfully completed all EDI e-learning modules, with an increase of knowledge and awareness reflected in the engagement survey • We will be able to successfully benchmark our progress nationally and within the charity sector
<p>4. We will grow and develop our colleagues by providing opportunities for development and career progression</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will increase awareness around EDI with regular events and communications • We will introduce a mentoring, reverse mentoring and sponsorship programme for senior leadership and colleagues • We will introduce talent pipelines, starting with gender and ethnicity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased engagement with EDI activities and events • Effective mentoring, reverse mentoring and sponsorship programmes that promote knowledge sharing and insights • Effective talent pipelines that increase the visibility of talent and improve mobility for under-represented groups across the organisation



EDI strategic goals and priorities

Aims	Year 1	Year 2	Year 2
<p>Recruitment</p> <p>We will attract and recruit the right candidates, with the right skills from diverse candidate pools, in order to better represent the communities we serve</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key stakeholders to participate in inclusive recruiter training, with recruitment plan to follow • We'll recruit and onboard new colleagues into part time flexible teams within client facing departments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDI to become part of the onboarding process for new colleagues and the academies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDI Strategy for 2025 and beyond
<p>Leadership</p> <p>We will equip our leaders to champion areas of EDI, model behaviours and lead on this for the organisation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership to increase capability against the leadership framework (incorporating the EDI leadership behaviours) and EDI awareness through an Inclusive Leadership programme • Introduce an effective EDI governance structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDI included within performance reviews 	
<p>Development</p> <p>We will equip our leaders to champion areas of EDI, model behaviours and lead on this for the organisation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase awareness around EDI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sponsorship and mentoring programmes begin • Gender and minority talent pipelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reverse mentoring programme begins for senior leadership
<p>Retention and Engagement</p> <p>We will grow and develop our colleagues by providing opportunities for development and career progression</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colleague network groups to begin • EDI e-learning modules to become available for all • Increase effective communications around EDI • Data review and gathering exercise starts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce ambitions and targets • Consultation on microaggressions • Promotions process review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benchmark progress • Launch mechanism to report microaggressions

EDI Strategy roadmap — What we'll deliver by when



Throughout

- Frequent EDI events
- Regular EDI governance meetings with minutes taken and published internally
- EDI communications plan
- Regularly updated e-learning awareness modules
- EDI impact assessments

Measuring impact for 2025 and beyond

Leadership

- ✓ The Executive and Trustee Boards share their personal narrative and have created individual plans to lead EDI in their areas
- ✓ SLT cascade their commitment to their teams and have created individual plans to lead EDI in their areas
- ✓ Poor behaviour is challenged

Policies and processes

- ✓ People and Culture (P&C) team understand their role in supporting the EDI Strategy and supporting framework
- ✓ Adopt a 'check and challenge' approach which identifies gaps and opportunities to promote EDI – stories are captured and shared
- ✓ Data is used to monitor progress and indicate where focus is needed

Management responsibility

- ✓ Line managers feel equipped to lead EDI in their areas
- ✓ Surveys show high engagement levels from all groups
- ✓ Managers have developed EDI plans for their areas

Governance and accountability

- ✓ EDI included in regular 121s and performance reviews
- ✓ Everyone understands their role in fostering EDI and there are consequences for action and inaction
- ✓ Non-compliance is challenged

Strategy and data

- ✓ Clear and comprehensive strategy, roadmap, and framework
- ✓ Framework is underpinned by data and reporting cycle
- ✓ Strategy and plans are revisited and reviewed and adapted where needed

Engagement and communications

- ✓ Comms team include DEI messages in business communications
- ✓ Leaders and key influencers feel engaged and equipped to build EDI into their spheres of influence
- ✓ EDI messages are authentic, integrated and come from many areas of the organisation

EDI ambitions summary

Our diversity goal is to increase diversity representation of our colleagues to accurately reflect the society we seek to serve.

It is our aim to create sustainable change and address inequality. In order to achieve this, we need to be more culturally aware and create a culture of belonging and inclusion. We have set ourselves some diversity ambitions, with a view to focus on incremental year-on-year increases. We're aware that often goals focus on intention, but processes and practices remain the same, therefore, we have outlined some key actions that we will implement to help us reach these goals. Change will only come if we hold ourselves publicly accountable, and so we will be sharing these goals internally and externally and we will be transparent about our progress.

Our commitments, by 2025:

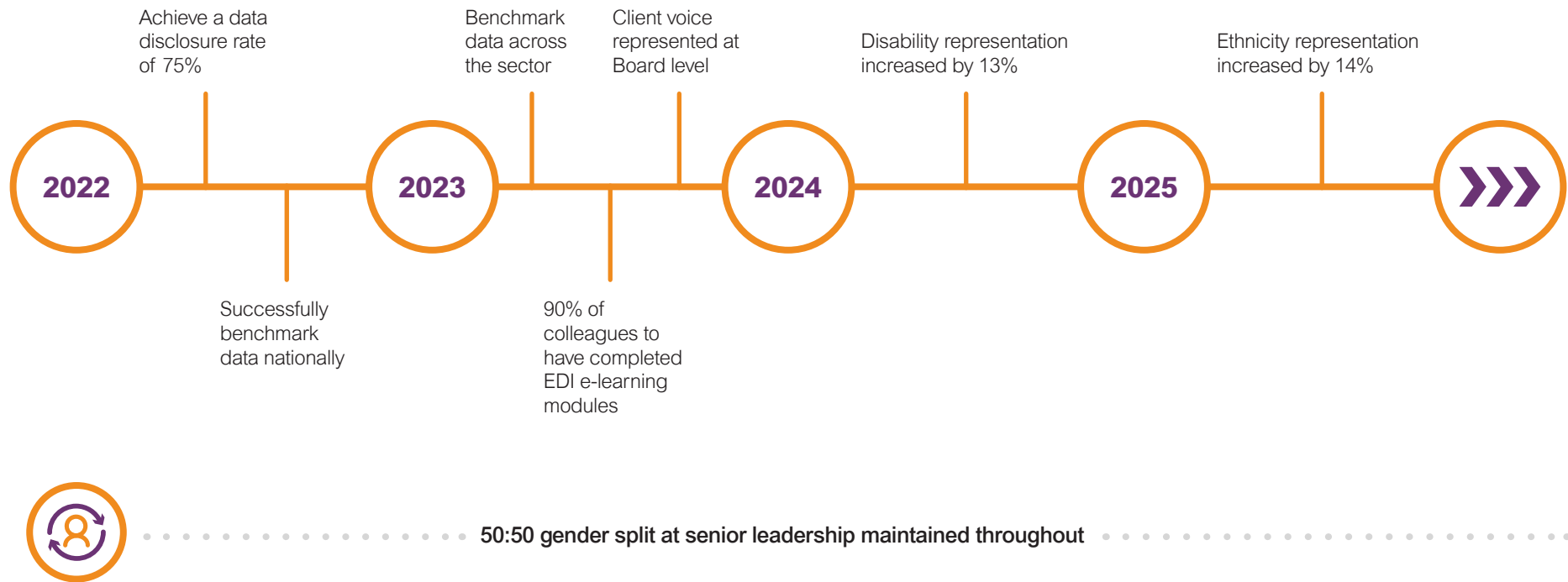


EDI ambitions table

	2022	2023	2024	2025
Race and ethnicity	9.9%	11%	13%	14%
Gender	Senior leadership Male 50% Female 50%	Male 50% Female 50%	Male 50% Female 50%	Maintain 50/50 split
Disability	2%	6%	10%	13%
LGBTQ+	Unknown but currently 2.7% of UK population	5%	9%	12%
Age (Under 25)	3.4%	5%	8%	10%



Goals and ambitions roadmap



How we'll achieve these goals

Recruitment

1. We will take a new approach to recruitment, undertaking a programme that will give us a new set of principles and processes to implement. We hope that this will result in more inclusive practices and the removal of bias and barriers to opportunities
2. We will include multiple women in shortlists for recruitment and promotions



Increase ethnic minority representation

We will focus our efforts to increase race and ethnicity representation in areas with greater race and ethnicity representation i.e., London, Birmingham, Newcastle and Leeds



Create new pathways

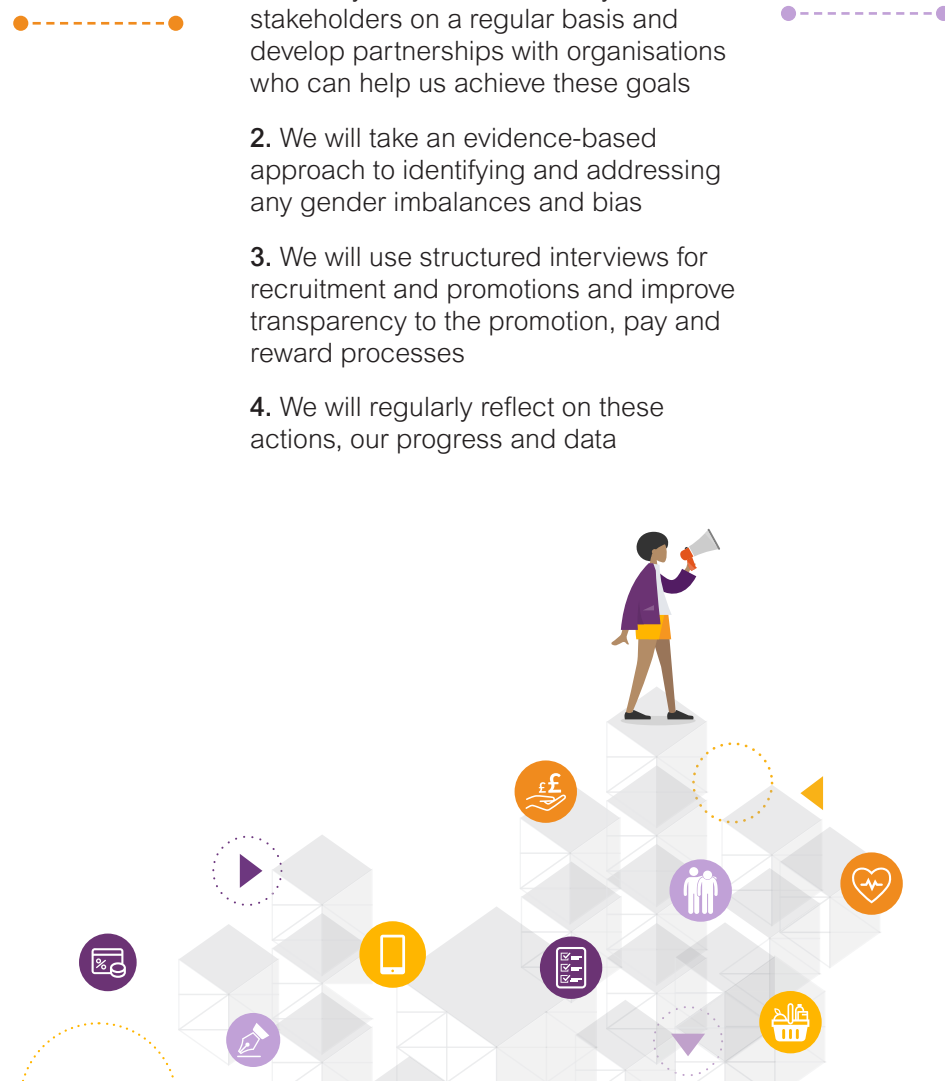
We will introduce a social mobility programme and an apprenticeship scheme to encourage under 25s to join our organisation

Adopt best practice

1. We will benchmark our goals externally and consult with key stakeholders on a regular basis and develop partnerships with organisations who can help us achieve these goals
2. We will take an evidence-based approach to identifying and addressing any gender imbalances and bias
3. We will use structured interviews for recruitment and promotions and improve transparency to the promotion, pay and reward processes
4. We will regularly reflect on these actions, our progress and data

Nurture our talent

1. We will build our own talent pipelines, increasing advancement and development paths to help our colleagues succeed
2. We will provide more forums for discussion and actively listen to our colleagues and take action
3. We will create a work environment that enables people to be their authentic selves
4. We will profile and encourage flexible and part-time working for men, women, non-binary and gender fluid colleagues in our communication campaigns, to build a more inclusive workplace
5. We will ensure gender equality is actively considered as part of our policy improvements
6. We will evaluate the effectiveness of our talent development and pipeline activities and target interventions to identify, understand and take action where the proportion of women decreases



Reporting impact

We need to ensure that this strategy is having an impact, and as such, we will use data and set ambitions to measure our progress and impact as we implement our EDI Strategy.

We will measure and report on:

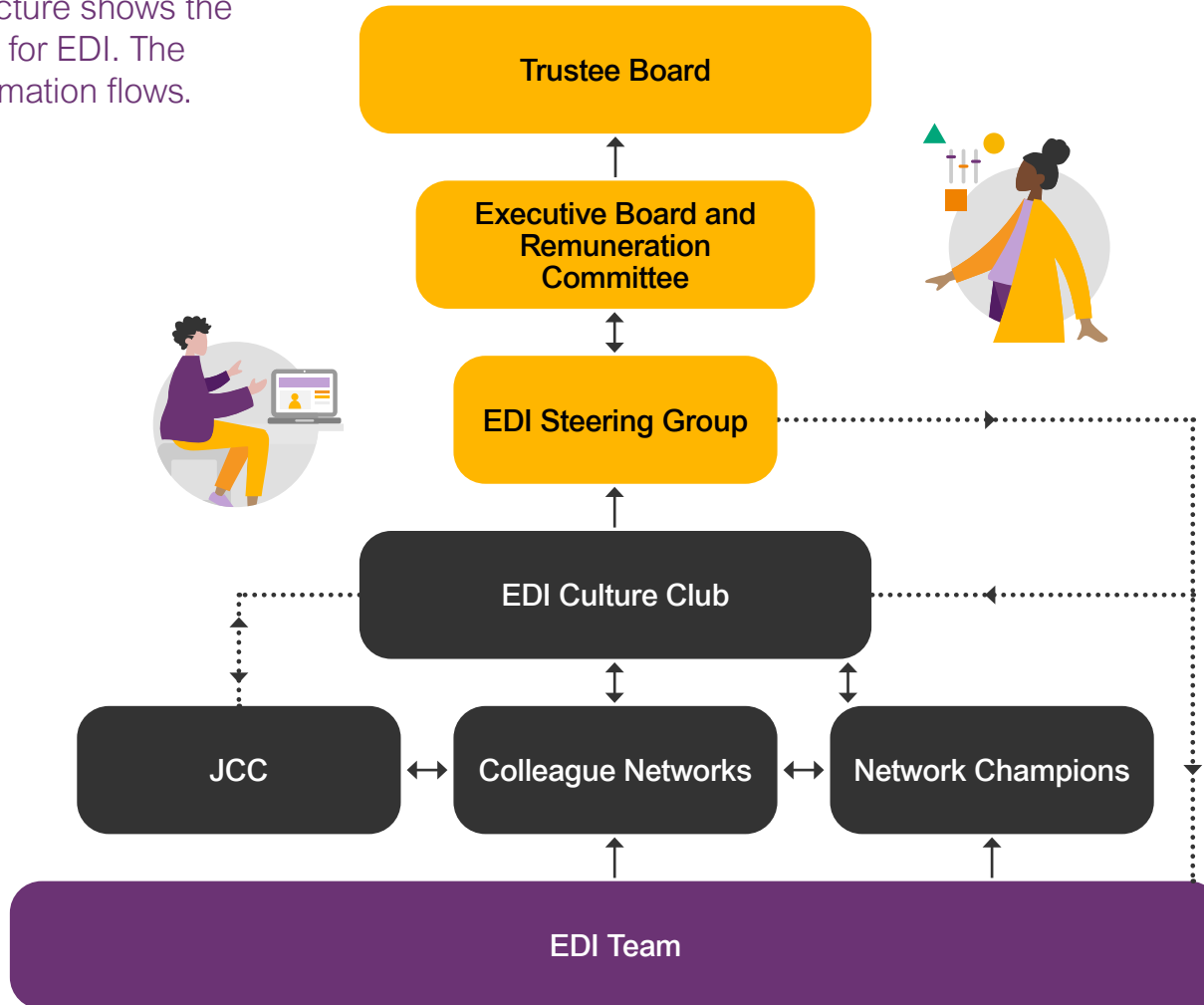
- Our gender, disability, ethnicity, bonus, and pensions pay gap
- Equal pay audit
- Engagement Survey and EDI Survey
- Progress in achieving our public commitments, goals, and ambitions
- The comparison of our workforce data within the industry and how well this reflects our client base

We will produce the first report in 2023.



EDI governance structure

Our EDI governance structure shows the decision-making process for EDI. The arrows indicate how information flows.



EDI governance roles and responsibilities

The Executive Board are responsible for the delivery of EDI priorities. Executives are expected to incorporate EDI priorities into their strategies. The Executives are accountable to the CEO for ensuring adequate resources are in place to deliver the EDI priorities via this EDI Strategy and other supporting frameworks and guidance.

The EDI Steering Group are senior management and line managers who are responsible for raising the importance of EDI in their areas, using data to drive future direction and undertake impact assessment and quality reviews. They must report on how their teams are doing in regard to EDI principles and values after having conducted annual performance reviews.

The EDI Culture Club are senior leaders and chairs and co-chairs of colleague network groups, who are representatives from across the organisation. Their purpose is to ensure that our culture is aligned to the strategy and drive actions forward and report on progress against this EDI Strategy, supporting frameworks and guidance. They sign off equality impact assessments and EDI initiatives for their areas of responsibility. Members of the EDI Culture Club are responsible for championing EDI in their areas and raising the profile of EDI throughout. The EDI Culture Club makes recommendations to the EDI Steering Group.

The Trustee Board must be confident that StepChange are compliant with equalities legislation and employment law in the decisions and information that is presented to them, as well as aspiring to meet the EDI Principle of the Charity Governance Code. The Trustee Board will challenge the Executive Board and the organisation to ensure that it strives for more than compliance. They should acknowledge that views and data presented are representative of the views of our colleagues, and that it is beneficial to hold the Executive Board and subsequent committees and networks to account.

All colleagues have a responsibility for the delivery and compliance with equalities legislation. Everyone has a responsibility for their own development and increasing their awareness with EDI related matters and keeping up to date with relevant training and insights resources. Everyone has an individual and collective role to play in contributing to a culture of belonging and celebrating the diversity of every individual.

EDI Change Influencers

Senior sponsors – each area of protected characteristics will have a senior sponsor championing the way forward through the organisation. These are executive directors and/or heads of departments who promote awareness, inclusion, and equality. They work closely with colleague network groups when necessary.

EDI Champions - colleagues at any level who volunteer to participate in colleague network groups and work to raise awareness of, and remove systemic barriers to, achieve the goals outlined in this strategy and beyond.

Colleague network groups – these groups bring our colleagues of all levels together. Most colleagues will share similar characteristics, but everyone is encouraged to join and contribute their own experiences and knowledge and learn from others. Our colleague network groups will be consulted on policy, take ownership of EDI events throughout the year, and provide advice on colleague engagement.

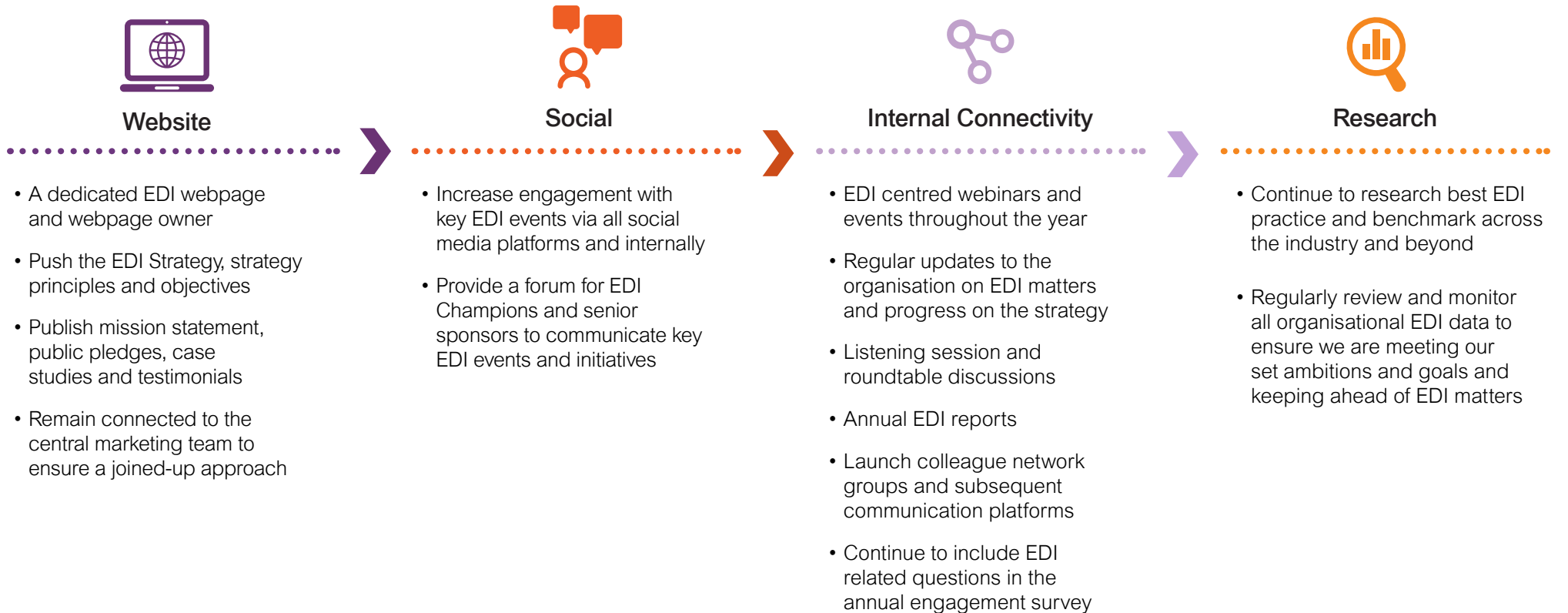


How we'll communicate the strategy



A communications plan will underpin the strategy with a focus on four main areas. An effective EDI Comms plan allows us to:

- Clearly define our EDI proposition and approach to achieve consistency
- Develop a better understanding and get closer to our colleagues and clients
- Enhance our storytelling capabilities
- Establish a consistent tone of voice with all audience



EDI leadership behaviours

Empower talent

We enable everyone to reach their full potential. We are intentional learners who prioritise building capability in ourselves and others.

We trust in the abilities of those around us, sharing knowledge readily and empowering them to take ownership within their role.

Act purposefully

We are aligned behind a common purpose. We think broadly, shaping our future through commercial, insights-driven decisions, to have a positive impact on clients and partners.

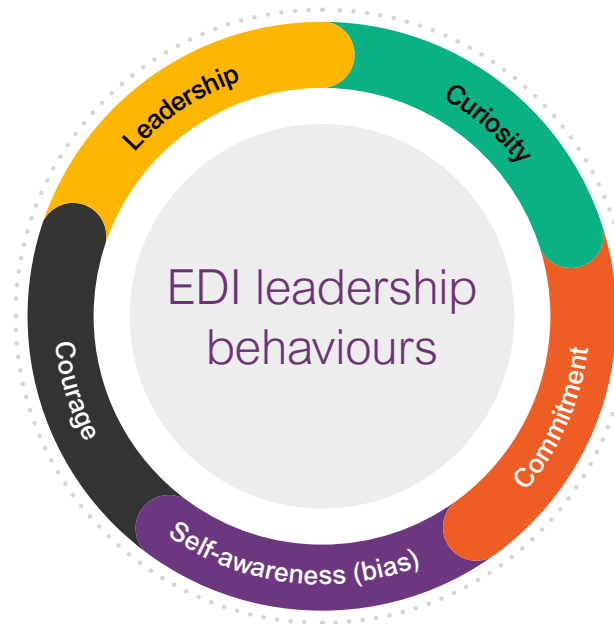
We take a long-term view, guided by our vision, values and purpose. We look outwards anticipating trends and responding at pace.

Build trust

We create and sustain a culture of openness, transparency and trust. We have courageous and direct conversations; encouraging honest, constructive and frequent feedback to help each other succeed.

We do this by being authentic, self-aware and respectful. We consider our impact on individuals, teams, clients and communities.

We communicate clearly and transparently, even when messages are difficult.



Deliver results

We energise and motivate others behind clear goals and priorities, role-modelling resilience and drive to deliver impact and value.

We drive individual accountability and ownership, enabling others to take action and make decisions. We ruthlessly prioritise, ensuring we are spending time on activities that add value.

Drive change

We embrace change and have the courage to think differently, constructively challenging existing approaches to drive improvements and new ways forward.

We are adaptable and agile, ready to shift direction in response to changing requirements.

We bring people along the journey with us, creating a safe environment for experimenting and fostering a culture of resilience and innovation.

Create connections

We build strong relationships, partnerships and teams through transparent conversations. We break down silos to enhance collaboration.

We value diversity of thinking, understanding that different experiences and perspectives result in stronger decision-making. We are inclusive, involving the right people with the right skills at the right time.

Editor: Yasmin Lewis, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager

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