



# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is the practice of creating organisations where every person can contribute fully, feel they belong, and be treated fairly. Equality means fair access, treatment, and outcomes. Diversity means recognising and valuing what people bring — in identity, background, experience, and perspective. Inclusion means creating conditions where those differences are genuinely welcomed and people can participate without masking who they are. Effective EDI practice also understands that people hold multiple, overlapping identities — and that inequality is often shaped by the intersection of those identities, not any single characteristic in isolation.

## WHAT ACTIVITY LOOKS LIKE

- EDI strategy and governance: developing organisational EDI strategies, setting measurable objectives, and embedding EDI into governance and board-level reporting.
- Workforce data and monitoring: collecting, analysing, and acting on diversity data across the employment lifecycle — from recruitment through to exit.
- Policy design and equality impact assessment: reviewing and designing employment policies for equity, conducting EIAs, and applying positive action measures where lawful.
- Staff networks and voice: establishing and supporting staff networks, ERGs, and co-production mechanisms that give underrepresented groups genuine influence.
- Pay gap analysis and reporting: gender, ethnicity, and disability pay gap analysis with substantive action plans — not just compliance reporting.
- Culture, allyship, and awareness: designing programmes that change behaviour rather than just raise awareness, and building sustained allyship as an organisational practice.
- Neurodiversity and workplace adjustments: creating environments that work for people with ADHD, autism, dyslexia, and other cognitive differences — including practical, proactive adjustment processes.
- Menopause and life stage inclusion: designing policies and practices that support employees through menopause, caring responsibilities, and other life stage experiences.



## EDI ACROSS SECTORS

### PUBLIC SECTOR

Public sector organisations have specific legal duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), including publishing equality information and setting equality objectives. NHS organisations are additionally accountable through WRES (Workforce Race Equality Standard), WDES (Workforce Disability Equality Standard), and the NHS EDI Improvement Plan.

### THIRD SECTOR

Charities and social enterprises often lead on EDI in terms of values and mission, but face challenges around resource, governance diversity, and the gap between stated commitments and lived experience for staff and volunteers.



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## SKILLS TO DELIVER EDI EFFECTIVELY

Effective EDI practice is skills-led, not just knowledge-led. The distinction matters: knowing the Equality Act is not enough. What makes the difference is what a practitioner can do with that knowledge, and with people:

- **Advocacy and championing:** making the case for EDI at the most senior levels with credibility, persistence, and without compromising relationships — this is not the same as simply communicating EDI messages.
- **Centring lived experience:** treating the testimony and day-to-day experiences of affected people as primary evidence — not anecdote — and creating conditions where that evidence shapes decisions.
- **Intersectional analysis:** understanding that people hold multiple identities simultaneously, and that the experience of disadvantage is shaped by the interaction of those identities, not by any single characteristic.
- **Data literacy:** reading, interpreting, and communicating workforce data — including pay gaps, progression rates, and survey results — disaggregated by protected characteristic and intersectionality.
- **Facilitation and difficult conversations:** holding space for conversations about race, disability, class, religion, and other dimensions of identity with skill, safety, and genuine curiosity.
- **Negotiation and diplomacy:** securing resource, prioritisation, and senior commitment for EDI work in environments where it is contested, deprioritised, or misunderstood.
- **Policy and systemic practice:** designing policies that are equitable in practice not just intent, conducting rigorous equality impact assessments, and applying positive action lawfully.
- **Practitioner self-awareness and positionality:** understanding how your own identity, privilege, and relationship to power shapes your perspective and your practice — and being honest about where your blind spots sit.
- **Resilience and emotional sustainability:** EDI work is often emotionally demanding and politically exposed. Managing the personal cost of this work while maintaining effectiveness is itself a professional skill.

## RESOURCES TO HELP

- **CIPD:** Profession Map EDI specialist knowledge, research, guidance, and the EDI hub.
- **Inclusive Employers:** practitioner community, resources, training, and the Inclusive Employers Standard.
- **ENI (Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion):** TIDE benchmarking, events, and practitioner resources.
- **Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC):** statutory guidance, codes of practice, and enforcement information.
- **ACAS:** practical guidance on equality at work, reasonable adjustments, and employment relations.
- **Menopause at Work:** employer resources, policy guidance, and practitioner support for menopause inclusion.
- **ADHD UK:** employer guidance on supporting employees with ADHD in the workplace.
- **Autistica:** research and employer resources on supporting autistic employees.
- **Business Disability Forum:** practical guidance, toolkits, and membership for disability-inclusive employers.
- **Business in the Community (BITC):** race, gender, and disability workplace programmes and benchmarking.
- **Race Equality Foundation:** research and resources on racial inequality in employment and services.
- **Avant People:** EDI maturity self-assessment, EDI practitioner self-assessment, and resources.

## KEY FRAMEWORKS AND STANDARDS

- **Equality Act 2010:** covers direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and the duty to make reasonable adjustments.
- **Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED):** requirements for public sector organisations to publish equality information and setting equality objectives.
- **Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023:** introduces a proactive duty on employers to prevent sexual harassment, not just respond to it.
- **Avant People EDI Maturity Framework:** a six-theme organisational self-assessment taster tool.