

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy

May 2024

The Aldersgate Group is committed to promoting Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) in all aspects of our organisation. We recognise that a diverse and inclusive environment is essential for fostering creativity, innovation and sustainability, as well as a rewarding workplace experience. With this EDI strategy, we aim to cultivate a culture that values and respects the unique perspectives, experiences and identities of all individuals within our community and beyond. This strategy will be overseen at Board level and led by directors and senior leaders of the organisation; however, it is the responsibility of all members of the team to ensure that EDI remains a central aspect of our organisational values and practices.

Managing diversity and inclusion is a continuous process of improvement, not a one-off initiative, and as such this strategy will be reviewed regularly.

Definitions

Equity refers to ensuring fair treatment and opportunities for all individuals, addressing any existing imbalances or biases to create a level playing field for professional growth and success. This fosters an environment where all individuals have the same chances to thrive and succeed based on their merits and capabilities.

Diversity involves embracing and celebrating the range of backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives that individuals bring, fostering a dynamic and inclusive work environment that values different viewpoints and insights.

Inclusion entails creating a supportive and collaborative atmosphere where every individual feels respected, valued, and empowered to contribute their unique skills and perspectives, promoting a sense of belonging and engagement for all.

Protected characteristics refer to characteristics which are protected by law under the Equality Act 2010, designed to protect people against discrimination at work. These characteristics include age, disability, gender reassignment, marital status / civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Intersectionality means that we all have multiple, overlapping social identities that intertwine to create unique advantages and disadvantages and impact on our experience. For example, these identities can include protected characteristics such as religion or gender, but can also include politics, caring responsibilities, family life, neurodiversity and socioeconomics. Accordingly, all individuals will be impacted by EDI discussions.

Context

AG's work to address the lack of diversity in our organisation, which reflects a problem in the environmental sector more widely, is ongoing in line with our organisational values. We seek to ensure that diversity is represented on our website, at our events and on our speaker panels, and we have a statement on our website and in our recruitment materials stating our commitment to EDI.

Since 2022 we have participated in the annual RACE Report, run by our member organisation SOS-UK. We had 100% employee completion on the staff perceptions survey in 2023. The results from these reports have helped to galvanise us further and provided a solid framework for areas that we can improve.

In 2023, we created an EDI policy and joined the Diverse Sustainability Initiative, with a public pledge to:

1. Create an annual internship aimed at students from a BAME and/or disadvantaged background. We are working with Cambridge Zero to employ an intern over summer 2024 and are exploring options with SOS-UK to create a similar internship for longer periods.
2. Work more closely with our staff with protected characteristics to signpost support groups and advocacy groups that they could join, as we are too small to form our own. These groups are set up through the Diverse Sustainability Initiative.
3. Hold more open conversations with our staff about EDI, with leadership on EDI coming from the top of the organisation. This has started already in 2024 with an online training programme for all staff to complete.

Internal strategy

The focus of this strategy is on fairness and inclusion. Its aims are that:

1. Merit, competence and potential should be the basis for all recruitment, employment, development and reward decisions.
2. All staff, especially managers, are alert to the influence of conscious and unconscious biases.
3. Our working environment should be actively inclusive of all colleagues.

Recruitment and selection

Aldersgate Group will regularly review recruitment and staffing processes, with the aim for the organisation to be made up of individuals with different lived experiences, backgrounds, protected characteristics and thought processes.

Steps that we will take include:

By September 2024:

- Implementing an inclusive recruitment process based on CIPD inclusive practices.
- Requesting job applicants complete an optional EDI form.
- Reviewing inclusion statement on website and in the recruitment process.

Ongoing:

- Providing training to those involved in recruitment on unconscious bias.
- Collating and utilising data, both organisational and national, to understand trends across recruitment and retention and identify which perspectives we are missing.
- Maintaining an application-based approach to new Directors for the Board, considering diversity of experience, industry and expertise.

Performance management, reward and remuneration

Aldersgate Group will regularly review performance management, reward and remuneration processes to promote clarity and fairness. Steps that we will take include:

- Ensuring that staff have the opportunity to provide feedback on organisational processes and their line management.
- Providing training for the team on how to receive and deliver feedback inclusively and considerately.
- Seeking employee feedback on inclusivity through an annual staff survey and regular line manager check-ins.
- Ensuring that remuneration policies and procedures are clear, with training for line managers on how to feed into and deliver reward decisions.
- Ensuring that Aldersgate Group decision-making processes are clearly communicated to staff.

Opportunities for learning and development

Aldersgate Group is aware that some development opportunities can be unequal or inaccessible for some groups of employees. To address this, we will:

- Review development opportunities regularly to cater for diverse needs, interests and aspirations, both at a team and individual level.
- Supporting staff to find appropriate mentoring support from outside the organisation, where this would be beneficial.

Aldersgate Group is dedicated to providing comprehensive and ongoing training for all staff members to enhance their understanding and ability to effectively deliver on EDI initiatives. This commitment underscores the importance of equipping employees with the necessary knowledge, skills, and tools to cultivate an inclusive and equitable workplace environment. Through training, Aldersgate Group aims to empower its staff members with the necessary tools and knowledge to actively contribute to the organisation's EDI goals, fostering an environment where every employee is equipped to champion equality, equity, diversity and inclusion in their respective roles. We commit to providing at least one training session per year for the whole team to increase EDI awareness and engagement.

Work-life balance and working life

Aldersgate Group will:

- Actively promote best practices for inclusivity among the staff, fostering a work environment where all voices are heard and valued.
- Continue to promote flexibility in working practices and encourage respect for differing beliefs, opinions and convictions.
- Encourage and facilitate open conversations about EDI.
- Check that communications and working methods are including everyone.

Feedback and whistleblowing

It is important that AG staff have the opportunity to provide feedback on EDI. This will be through:

- Maintaining a visible and transparent system for staff to provide feedback on Aldersgate Group's performance in fostering an inclusive work environment.
- Including questions on EDI in the annual survey and exit interviews.

- Ensuring that the feedback system is clearly signposted through the employee handbook and relevant policies, such as the Grievances and Whistleblowing policy and the Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
- Guaranteeing reported complaints or issues will be addressed promptly and with utmost seriousness.

Transparency Commitment

Aldersgate Group will commit to transparency regarding its own diversity and inclusion efforts, regularly sharing this information internally with staff and externally with stakeholders, partners, and the public within the Annual Review, which is available on the Aldersgate Group website. This will include communicating progress, challenges, and achievements in the organisation's journey toward a more diverse and inclusive environment.

Governance for EDI Delivery

The directors of Aldersgate Group will appoint at least one director who will provide governance and oversight specifically for EDI delivery. The designated director will play a crucial role in monitoring the implementation of the EDI strategy, ensuring that it aligns with the organisation's values and long-term vision for sustainability and inclusivity.

We will continue to review EDI within the risk register on a quarterly basis, or more if required. Risks will be reviewed at the quarterly Board meetings.

Staff Governance and Support Networks

Staff members at Aldersgate Group who identify as having protected characteristics will be encouraged and supported to join dedicated external networks, fostering a supportive environment for collective discussions, feedback, and initiatives focused on enhancing EDI practices within the organisation.

The organisation will encourage active participation and engagement in organisational matters from all staff members, recognising the importance of inclusive decision-making processes and the empowerment of individuals from diverse backgrounds. For example, through regular dialogue between staff at all levels, senior management and the board of directors.

Accessibility

Aldersgate Group recognises the importance of accessibility and is committed to fostering an inclusive environment that accommodates individuals from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, with varying levels of education, and differing access to resources. This commitment extends to ensuring that individuals with disabilities are provided with the necessary support and accommodations to fully participate and contribute to all aspects of our organisation. By prioritising accessibility, Aldersgate Group aims to create a workplace environment that is inclusive and supportive of individuals from diverse backgrounds, abilities, and levels of access to resources, fostering an atmosphere of equal opportunity and empowerment for all.

External Strategy

Hosting events

Aldersgate Group will actively seek to promote EDI practices when hosting events, roundtables, webinars and workshops. This includes ensuring diversity across speakers and panels, as well as within audiences.

Speaking on panels

Aldersgate Group representatives will actively seek to challenge the makeup of panels which they are invited to speak on if they are not promoting diversity.

Partnership with Value-Aligned Stakeholders

We will seek out partnerships and stakeholders that align with the values of diversity and inclusion, fostering collaborations that prioritize EDI in all joint initiatives and projects.

We will explore signing up to the Race at Work Charter.

Integration of Best Practices

- Aldersgate Group will actively study and incorporate best EDI practices from other leading organisations, seeking to embed these practices within our organisational culture and operational framework.
- Continuous learning and adaptation will be encouraged to ensure that our EDI efforts remain dynamic and responsive to the evolving needs of our organisation.
- All current and future programmes, funding bids, and other streams of work will prioritise EDI as a fundamental element of success.
- Adequate resources and budgets will be allocated to ensure that EDI goals are effectively integrated into all operational aspects.
- Performance assessments for programs and work streams will include an evaluation of their delivery on EDI goals.

Conclusion

This Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) strategy will serve as a guiding framework for Aldersgate Group, enabling us to foster an inclusive and equitable environment for all individuals, both internally and externally. By upholding these principles, we aim to contribute to a more just and sustainable future, where diversity is celebrated, and all voices are heard and valued.

Measuring success

To measure the success of this EDI strategy, we have set the following aims for 2027:

- Using 2022 as our baseline, see an increase in diversity within our RACE Report submissions.
- For employees to report that they feel AG is actively and successfully promoting EDI internally and externally in the biannual Staff Perceptions Survey.
- For employees to have challenged, where relevant, member organisations and external stakeholders to hold more diverse events or host more diverse panels.

Review

This strategy will be reviewed regularly.