

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy

Progress update - June 2024

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy was approved in March 2023 and is due for review in December 2024.

We were very clear that the strategy starts from a place of inspiration, not regulation and that we are driven by the conviction that the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion should be central to an organisation founded in seeking to redress some of the world's ills.

Significant progress has been made in some areas, with a prioritisation and refocus to others after experiencing some delays.

We have rebuilt the staff ED&I Council, who have been instrumental in achieving some of our targets, including getting to know our staff better, celebrating different cultures and religions and raising awareness of our desire to challenge and report racist comments. They have also held regular surgeries to provide a safe space for reporting and raising concerns.

We had quite a long list of priorities and have made progress against most of these:

Publish and consult with Board and staff on our draft ED&I strategy and the goals and measurements within it.

- Achieved

Regain the momentum to becoming an anti-racist organisation, reaffirming this as our goal, publishing the process for raising and receiving complaints and concerns about racism and revisiting the draft action plan from 2020.

- Revisiting the draft action plan is a priority for the Staff ED&I Council in 2024/25.
- We have seen greater confidence from staff that their concerns will be addressed, with increased reporting of concerns and evidence of more trust that these concerns will be addressed meaningfully.

Agree terminology with staff (i.e., If not BAME what is the preferred terminology)

- A staff survey and treatise from the Staff ED&I Council led to the decision to use 'Global Majority' rather than BAME.

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Prioritise data collection based on the new NHF questionnaire so we can understand our Board, staff and residents better.

- We completed the questionnaire for staff and Board and will be undertaking a door knocking exercise later this year to 'get to know the person behind the door' and improve our data and understanding of our residents.

Prioritise disability as an area of obvious underrepresentation, and also LGBTQI+ issues.

- We have signed up to the Government's Disability Confident Scheme and are recognised Disability Confident – Committed. We have also made changes to our recruitment advertising and approach to be more inclusive and offer adjustments that may be helpful. The Staff ED&I Council also organised LGBT+ Mental Health Awareness Training for staff.

Audit and de-bias (if necessary) our policies and processes – including recruitment, disciplinary, promotion and training and development.

- We are in the process of reviewing and updating the majority of our HR policies with the involvement of a working group that includes members of the Staff ED&I Council. To date, recruitment and induction, disciplinary, sickness absence have been updated.

Seek to address pay gaps by investing in training and development for staff and grow our own talent. This will have the added benefit of aiding retention, boosting morale, strengthen organisational memory and consequently improving service delivery.

- We have launched a training scheme for our customer service advisers, who can be supported to do their CIH Level 2 and once qualified, receive a pay rise. All roles are advertised internally and below manager level, they can be advertised internally only, which gives existing staff the opportunity to apply for promotional opportunities as they arise.
- A Learning and Development communications campaign was run last year and raised the profile of training available to all staff. We also have an L&D lead in place within the People and Culture team, who will be responsible for driving our L&D programmes forward.

Celebrate cultures, diversity, and religious traditions.

- The Staff ED&I Council has done a lovely job of celebrating our staff cultures, with a Nigerian Independence Day celebration, Black History Month initiatives, a Pride celebration and LGBT+ Mental Health Awareness training. This is complemented by the work of the communications team to celebrate and provide information about various cultural and religious events.

Establish how best to continue the work of Lien Viet with Vietnamese communities in Hackney and celebrate its legacy, including investigate working with other communities fleeing war and persecution.

- We continue to provide translated documents, most recently interviewing several Vietnamese residents for our 90th anniversary publication, and translating it into Vietnamese to be inclusive. There is more to be done here as we consider how to celebrate Lien Viet's legacy meaningfully in the long term.

Seek to re-establish the ED&I council with a remit to work alongside the CEO and Board on the delivery of this strategy, and to provide a conduit to LT (Leadership Team) on issues of concern

raised by staff.

- Achieved
- The second round of nominations has recently been held, with half the council to be replaced as per the terms of reference.
- We have had greater instances of reporting as staff start to trust that their concerns are taken seriously and will be addressed.

Commit to honest, open feedback to staff and to reporting annually – including on ethnicity and gender pay gap.

- This has not yet been actioned but is appropriate for this year's reporting.

Looking forward

In 2024/25, we are focusing on contractors and the experience of residents. In particular, better understanding of the 'person behind the door' and greater empathy to our residents' experiences. By the end of the year, we are aiming to have:

- moved at least one point on the continuum of becoming an anti-racist, inclusive organisation.
- Have taken concrete steps to being more inclusive of people with a disability
- Have reduced our ethnicity pay gap to below 15%
- Achieved strategic plan turnover and staff engagement targets
- Be known for our impactful work in ED&I.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is very much a part of our approach at ISHA and we have a number of staff who are passionate proponents for continued improvement. In particular, the collaboration between the People and Culture team and the Staff ED&I Council has paid dividends. Our Chief Executive continues to sit on the National Housing Federation's National ED&I working group and is at the forefront of raising ED&I profile in housing generally. We are making good progress and have great ambitions for ISHA.

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