

Chartered  
Insurance  
Institute  
Standards. Professionalism. Trust.

# Equality, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

Guiding principles  
for stakeholders

December 2023  
2nd Edition  
[cii.co.uk](http://cii.co.uk)



## Introduction

As the professional body for insurance and financial planning it is our role to work with our stakeholders to develop a profession that meets the needs of consumers which in turn will further help them build business capability for the future.

As the consumer base becomes more diverse and more demanding, the importance of a diverse and inclusive workforce becomes more apparent – giving businesses the ability to anticipate the needs of consumers whilst thinking creatively as well as critically.

In a study by PwC, 79% of international business leaders agreed that enhanced customer satisfaction was a core outcome from a diverse and inclusive workforce, with 85% believing it enhanced business performance.

We still have a way to go on our profession's journey to understanding, promoting and realising equality, equity, diversity and inclusion, but wherever you are in your journey there are some steps that we can all take to move further forwards.

These 'guiding principles' provide us with the steps upon which a more diverse and inclusive workplace and customer proposition can be built.

### **Who is this guide for?**

The guiding principles have been developed for CII and PFS members and other stakeholders who have accountability or are keen to lead and drive diversity and inclusion initiatives.

Its aims are straightforward and will help you to deliver and make progress with diversity and inclusion initiatives.

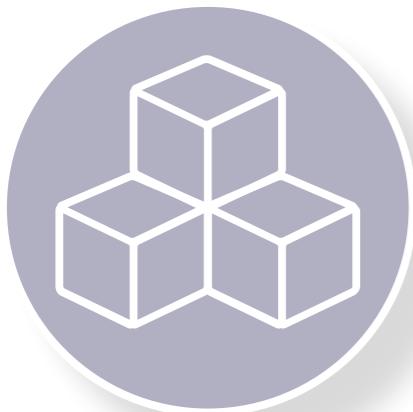
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## The six key steps

### Step 1 - The fundamentals

#### **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Strategy**

A written policy and strategy outlining your principles, approach and intent is a good place to start.

The senior management team should sign-off on any policy and strategy to provide their commitment.

Socialise and engage your colleagues with the policy and strategy, the intentions behind it, and be proud that your organisation is committing to equality, diversity and inclusion.

#### **The Equality Act 2010 and Protected Characteristics**

Know the basics, the dos and don'ts of the Equality Act - refer to our booklets 'Making Inclusion a Reality' and 'Diverse Thinking'. They provide an engaging new way to consider some of the protected characteristics.

#### **Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the General Assembly - 1945 and 1948**

**Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status.**

Human rights include the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, and many more. Everyone is entitled to these rights, without discrimination.

#### **Leadership**

It's not for HR to lead on equality, diversity and inclusion. You should have an executive sponsor who is genuinely passionate about this and can provide support, insight and guidance. You may not have a budget or a large formal committee to help you on this journey, but an executive sponsor can support with delivering on output and achievements.

Diversity and inclusion should be clearly linked to strategic objectives and behavioural leadership should be evident.

#### **Data**

What gets measured gets done! Start with the basics; can you collate, store and analyse the data of your people and your customers?

Ensure data is anonymised when analysed and reported. Work out where you are now and think about where you want to be. Start with some basics such as age, gender and ethnicity and if you do have disability, carer data and so forth. Report on these and use them to provide you with insight to shape your approach. In other words, your operational plan and strategic focus.

We have an equality monitoring template – feel free to access and use this and adapt it as required.



## The six key steps

### Step 2 - Engagement

It is all about engagement, awareness and dialogue, once we have this, then over time, it will turn into action and outcomes.

#### Learning & Development

Consider your compulsory training and ensure that unconscious bias and inclusive leadership training is part of the compulsory training package for your people managers.

It is essential to deliver at least one annual equality, equity, diversity and inclusion training activity for all colleagues in addition to any compulsory training, this could be any of the following as an example: supporting employees with mental health; highlight female talent; assist people with disabilities, e.g. dyslexia.

Consumers are at the heart of all that we do and we should encourage training activity for colleagues to better understand their needs, for example; people with dementia, people with autism or people from different cultures.

There are so many areas of focus you can select from - the above examples are simply a start.

#### Engagement

There are many opportunities to attend short workshops or conferences which have a diversity and inclusion focus. You should share these opportunities internally. Your executive team and other colleagues should attend at least one a year.

Alternatively, the CII would be delighted to attend an internal event to speak about diversity and inclusion.

We encourage you to access our resources on diversity and inclusion, use them in meetings, workshops, conferences – spread the word.

If you run a programme of events, then try to engage a diverse range of speakers on different topics and ensure your senior leaders are present.



## The six key steps

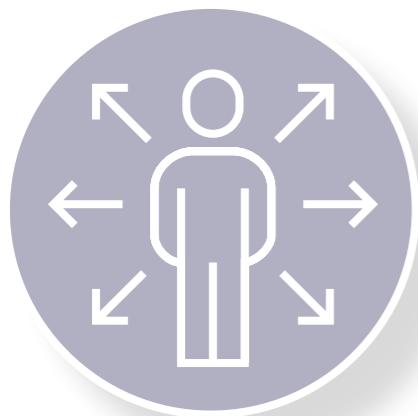
### Step 3 - Put equality, equity, diversity and inclusion on the agenda

#### Equality and Inclusion Impact Assessments (EIAs)

An Equality and Inclusion Impact Assessment (EIIA) is a tool aimed at improving policy development and implementation by ensuring that individuals and teams consider the likely impact of their work on different groups. It involves anticipating the effects of policies, procedures, and functions on different groups and making sure that any negative impacts are eliminated or minimised and opportunities for promoting and advancing equality, diversity and inclusion are maximised. Refer to our *Making Inclusion a Reality* for guidance on this.

#### Visibility

Ensure equality, diversity and inclusion is an agenda item on every Board and Senior Management Team meeting. If it's not already, then equality, equity, diversity and inclusion should become an integral part of your organisation's decision-making – make it visible.



## The six key steps

### Step 4 - Our behaviours

#### Our professional behaviour

CII Professional Standards - our Code of Ethics has been designed to provide members with practical, realistic guidance to follow.

Our members are required to:

- Comply with the Code and all relevant laws and regulations
- Act with the highest ethical standards and integrity
- Act in the best interests of each client
- Provide a high standard of service
- Treat people fairly regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Refer to our Code of Ethics - practical guide for more information.

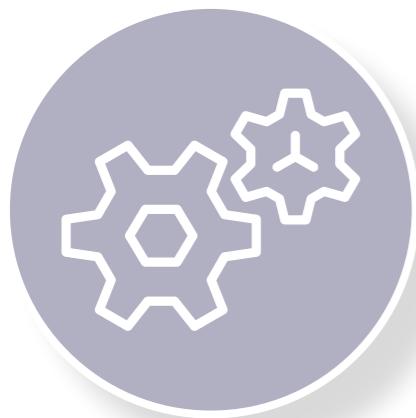
We often talk about the culture of an organisation and one ingredient is behaviours - the 'how' we engage and 'how' we do things around here. Our interactions and conduct are the heart of inclusion, engaging with each other with dignity, respect and as an individual are all fundamental.

We encourage you to reflect on how you like to be spoken with, what language is appropriate or inappropriate, what micro behaviours and body language is acceptable for you.

Our inclusive language document is a useful source of reference; however, it goes beyond this. Start to call out behaviours and language which may not support an inclusive workplace.

When you start to recognise the 'how' we can then filter this with our peers, colleagues, suppliers, customers and all relationships we have in the workplace. The cumulative effect creates an inclusive culture.

Let's use this as an opportunity to set the standard of acceptable professional behaviour by starting with our colleagues and then with our suppliers and customers.



## The six key steps

### Step 5 - Interventions

#### People policies

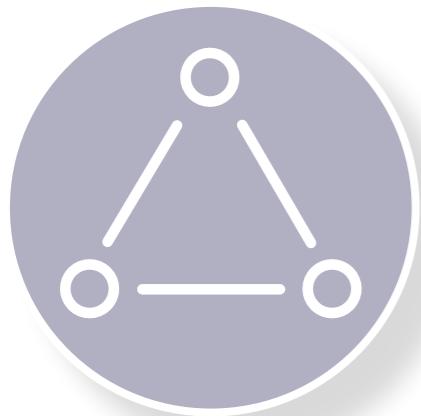
People policies should be reviewed to ensure they are inclusive and mitigate bias where possible. For example, your recruitment process, end of year review process and reward strategy.

Refer to our 'Inclusive Recruitment' booklet for some guidance in this area.

#### Inclusive language

The language of inclusion is critical. Review your internal policies (not just the HR policies) to ensure that the language used is relevant, inclusive and connects with people from diverse communities.

If you use case studies or model examples, aim to have diverse examples. If a clause applies equally to everyone, regardless of their gender identity, then try to use gender neutral language to reflect this.



## The six key steps

### Step 6 - Customers and suppliers

#### People policies

Professionalism, respect and trust are essential ingredients in any working relationship; this is a two-way exchange. Work with your customers and suppliers to ensure they fulfil some of the basic guiding principles with colleagues from your organisation.

Always behave with professionalism, respect and trust with your colleagues regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, career responsibility.

#### Consumer Duty

On 31 July 2023, new rules came into force for financial services firms. The new rules, known as the Consumer Duty, set a higher standard of consumer protection in financial services.

Firms are required to consider a range of needs in their target market, including "vulnerable" consumers. Whilst firms are not required to assess the needs of consumers on an individual basis, the design and sale of products must factor in the range of consumer characteristics within the target market for the relevant product. Vulnerable customers may not be just the elderly. Consider protected characteristic groups, e.g. disabled or race/religion. Determine whether your products and services provide the cover and support they might need and not just at purchase, but for the life of the product or service.