

A man and a woman in industrial safety gear are looking at a tablet. The man is wearing a white hard hat, safety glasses, and a blue jumpsuit with reflective stripes. He has yellow earplugs around his neck. The woman is wearing a yellow hard hat, safety glasses, and a blue jumpsuit. They are both wearing gloves. The background is a blurred industrial setting with metal structures and windows.

EC
ITB*

**EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION
ACTION PLAN**

CEO'S FOREWORD

The Engineering Construction Industry is responsible for the design, build, maintenance and decommissioning of major UK infrastructure.

Our industry sectors are at the forefront of progress in the journey to Net Zero and have a vested interest in harnessing the benefits that a more diverse and inclusive talent pool can provide, including a broader range of views and experiences that not only increase performance but also unlock much that needed innovation.

The ECITB is entirely committed to leading industry learning and in doing so we want to promote diversity of thought, encourage meaningful discourse, and cultivate inclusion which we believe are the cornerstones of organisational change and progress.

Diversity and inclusion are the seeds of change, which given the right investment, the right support from organisational leadership and the right conditions in which to grow become exactly what we need them to be – drivers for change.

Our vision is to support industry as it becomes a place where everyone can belong. One of the greatest challenges for engineering construction is the increasing demand for skills and a substantial increase in the number of people required to deliver net zero critical projects.

If we are to achieve success in attraction and retention, we must put a focus on enhancing workplace diversity and inclusivity.



With diversity and inclusion there is often pressure to act quickly. However, I am conscious that, without careful planning and targeting, action taken can be insubstantial and short lived.

I'm very proud of the work undertaken by our team to produce this plan for action and believe that it outlines the foundation for long-term and meaningful progress.

The ECITB wants to help industry attract greater volumes of new entrants from every walk of life. We want it to be a place for everyone and it is my hope that our stakeholders will join us in moving forwards towards that goal.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'A. Hockey'.

Andrew Hockey
CEO, ECITB

OUR GOAL

To support and influence the engineering construction industry in creating a strong culture of inclusion for all, regardless of background, and to widen diversity of participation from current levels.



DEFINITIONS



EQUITY

Fair treatment of everyone so that likelihood of success is not determined by background. Equity means considering an individual's unique circumstances, barriers and disadvantage and adjusting the support provided to enable an equal opportunity of a positive outcome.



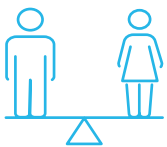
DIVERSITY

The range of different perspectives, demographics and cultures within an organisation. Diversity covers the differences protected under the Equality Act but also encompasses broader difference such as socio-economic background and diversity of thought.



INCLUSION

The extent to which difference and diversity is embraced within an organisation. In an inclusive environment, all individuals are valued, encouraged and feel a sense of belonging and psychological safety, regardless of any different backgrounds and perspectives.



EQUALITY

Treating everyone the same, regardless of difference. What is important is equality of opportunity or outcome – in order to achieve equality of opportunity for different groups, there is a need to act equitably to minimise the impact of potential barriers and disadvantage faced by individuals or those from a particular group.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The Engineering Construction Industry Training Board (ECITB) is the statutory skills organisation for the Engineering Construction Industry (ECI) in Great Britain.

A non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Education, the ECITB works with employers and governments to attract, develop and qualify the engineering construction workforce in a wide range of craft, technical and professional disciplines. Employer-led, we fund training to enhance skills across the engineering construction industry.

This action plan sets out the equity, diversity and inclusion priority action areas and objectives of the ECITB for the 2023-25 strategy period.

Our 2023-25 strategy, Leading Industry Learning, includes a strategic objective in the Foundation pillar to champion diversity and inclusion. It sets out a high-level approach of publishing an action plan, improving measurement in relation to diversity (internally and externally) and working with partners to widen the diversity of participation on ECITB-led new entrant schemes.

Under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) the ECITB has a responsibility, as an employer and in our role as an Industry Training Board, to:

- a. Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- b. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- c. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and others

As an arms-length body under the Department for Education, our Annual Priorities Letter sets out the key objectives the Minister for Skills wishes us to focus on. In 2023, the letter encourages the ECITB “.... to continue to use its influence to promote diversity in the construction sector. It’s important that ECITB helps ensure that training courses and products do not create barriers for workers from more diverse backgrounds and deprived areas.”



BUSINESS CASE

The engineering construction industry is key to delivering the ambitious pipeline of energy and processing projects over the next 30 years.

The volume of skills, and the creative innovation, needed to meet that ambition makes it more important than ever for the industry to be attractive and inclusive to individuals from all groups of society.

The ECITB's 2021 Workforce Census shows that the industry is 86% male, predominantly white¹ and with almost 40% aged 50+. This illustrates the scale of potential to open up engineering construction opportunities to a more diverse workforce. It also highlights that action to challenge current cultural norms and create inclusive environments in the industry will need to be driven by, and fully engage, the white, male majority.

Research by McKinsey² highlights productivity benefits that industry can experience as they develop their inclusive work practices. It states that a supportive work environment creates a more productive workforce.

It will also benefit from a broader range of talent that is more representative and ultimately create an environment of better-informed decision making and policy development. To truly benefit from diversity of thought, inclusive organisational behaviours and work practices should be developed otherwise retention of diverse talent can suffer.

Gen Z (born 1997-2012) and Gen Alpha (born 2010-2024) are the new generations entering the workplace. Research by McKinsey & Company has found³ that Gen Z are the most diverse generation yet and are radically inclusive.

Gen Zers' search for authenticity generates greater freedom of expression and greater openness to understanding different kinds of people. ECITB and employers across the Engineering Construction industry should recognise the importance of embedding inclusion and diversity in recruiting and retaining the skills and talent they need. Diversity matters to Gen Z through many dimensions, not just isolated to race and gender but also related to identity and beliefs. Employers that can better embrace a spectrum of differences are much more likely to diversify their talent pipelines and realise the productivity benefits of diversity and inclusion.

¹ Low ethnicity data returns mean an industry figure cannot be quoted

² [How diversity, equity and inclusion \(DE&I\) matter | McKinsey](#)

³ [Generation Z characteristics and its implications for companies | McKinsey](#)

GOVERNANCE

Considering diversity and inclusion during our activities is the responsibility of every ECITB employee.

Accountability for delivery of this action plan sits with the EDI Lead on the Senior Leadership Team, on behalf of the Chief Executive. The Chair of the ECITB Board will nominate one of the Trustees to act as ED&I Sponsor. The EDI Lead will ensure regular engagement with the Sponsor and will provide a progress report to the Board annually.

Delivery of the action plan is supported by the Inclusion, Diversity and Equality Action (IDEA) group. The EDI Lead acts as the sponsor for IDEA.

IDEA was formed in 2020 with volunteer members from across the ECITB organisation. It appoints a Chair from its membership and sets its own programme of work, supporting the action plan delivery but also acting as a special interest, support and advocacy group for EDI within the organisation.

The EDI Lead is invited to attend as part of their governance responsibilities and liaises regularly with the IDEA Chair.



BREADTH OF DIVERSITY

There are many facets of diversity. There is also a lack of diversity across engineering construction in many areas, although data to underpin that fact is sparse beyond gender and age.

Some are visible (e.g. gender, ethnicity, physical disability) and other aspects are more hidden (e.g. neurodiversity, sexual orientation, religion and belief, socio-economic background).

The different facets also intersect so any individual will belong within several groups and it is wrong to assume that the group sharing a characteristic is an homogenous entity – for example, two women or men could face very different experiences or barriers because they have different ethnicity, disability or parental responsibilities. The support that would help them both achieve the same equality of opportunity will be different.

The ECITB aims to go beyond compliance with the protected characteristics defined under the Equality Duty.

We will also consider wider factors in our actions wherever relevant, for example socio-economic background, caring responsibilities and social value, as these could present potential barriers or opportunities in the context of engineering construction.





SUPPORTING INDUSTRY OUR EXTERNAL ACTION

This action plan has 6 focus areas for our external work supporting the engineering construction industry.

OUR EXTERNAL ACTION

SUPPORT

We will support industry by:

- Maintaining standards and products that incorporate appropriate consideration of EDI
 - Providing grant funding to in-scope employers for EDI training
-

STIMULATE CHANGE

We will use our resources, networks and strategic partnerships to stimulate change in the industry by:

- Developing positive action programmes to support underrepresented groups, based on evidence
 - Providing constructive challenge to the industry to actively consider and take action to improve their diversity and inclusion
 - Developing and maintaining working partnerships with specialist third sector organisations, trade bodies and client organisations with aligned focus on EDI
-

SHARE KNOWLEDGE

We will facilitate EDI knowledge sharing by:

- Creating a knowledge sharing network
 - Linking with third party networks
 - Celebrating success through case studies, events and communications channels
-

SIGNPOST RESOURCES

We will help industry employers and training providers to find relevant support resources to help their EDI action by:

- Signposting to ECI-relevant resources produced by other organisations, via our website and in-person interactions
 - Creating or commissioning key ECI-relevant resources where not available from other sources
-

ADVOCATE

We will signal the importance of EDI to the ECITB and to the industry by:

- Acting as thought leaders, with consistent and inclusive messaging
 - Ensuring our external communications, imagery, products, events and panels are accessible, inclusive, and representative
-

MONITOR

We will monitor and measure progress by:

- Using data collection to establish a diversity baseline for the industry
 - Measure, and publish, changes over time
-

ACTIONS FOR 2024

These actions will be reviewed and refreshed each year.



Establish quarterly EDI knowledge-sharing network for ECITB in-scope employers, providers and associated stakeholders (Q1)



Deliver and evaluate cross-sector pilot returner programme to attract industry re-entrants from diverse backgrounds (start Q1, complete by Q4)



Support our Scholarship delivery provider network with developing approaches to increase diversity of 2024 cohort, compared to diversity of previous cohorts (Q2 and Q3)



Establish baseline diversity data

- For in-scope employers, incorporate diversity data gathering questions into 2024 ECI Workforce Census (Q1)
- For new entrants, gather diversity data for ECITB-led learner cohorts (by end Q3)
- For key regions, investigate demographic profile of areas with concentrations of ECI industry (Q2)



Create signposting area for EDI organisations and resources on ECITB website (Q1)



Incorporate accessibility requirements into specifications for key new systems – replatformed website and assessment management system (Q4)



OUR INTERNAL ACTION

We recognise that, in order to support industry effectively and be credible advocates for equity, diversity and inclusion, we need to develop as an organisation and embed an inclusive approach that aligns with our responsibilities under the PSED across all areas of our operation.

Our internal action will concentrate on five focus areas – progress in these areas will establish a strong foundation from which to deliver our actions to support the industry. These are the commitments we aim to deliver against in this 2023-25 strategy period.

OUR INTERNAL ACTION

LEADERSHIP

This means signalling the importance of EDI within the ECITB through consistent leadership behaviours.

- Identify a Board sponsor and an accountable EDI lead on the Senior Leadership Team (SLT)
 - As a leadership team, define objectives that set out the expectations of ECITB leaders and managers indemonstrating inclusive behaviours
 - Establish and track EDI performance indicators as part of SLT monitoring
-

GOVERNANCE

This means considering inclusion and the impact on different groups in our governance processes, policies and operational decisions:

- Embed equality impact assessment in our governance processes and decisions, including project delivery, procurement and grant disbursement
 - Review and update our policies that underpin recruitment, retention and progression to incorporate
-

COMMUNICATIONS

This means reflecting inclusion and diversity in our internal and external communications activity:

- Ensure our documentation and communication material, internal and external, is accessible
 - Consider EDI as a core part of our planning for events
-

LEARNING

This means supporting our staff to develop their knowledge and confidence on EDI topics:

- Provide training to relevant staff in key areas such as conducting equality impact assessment and inclusive recruitment
 - Provide access and signposting for all employees to internal and external resources that support EDI knowledge and understanding
-

DATA

This means establishing an internal diversity data baseline and measuring progress to inform future action:

- Monitor aggregate staff demographic profile for gender, ethnicity and age
 - Extend aggregate monitoring to cover disability
 - Develop data collection mechanisms to enable analysis of recruitment, retention and progression in relation to protected characteristics
 - Monitor staff feedback on equity and inclusion within ECITB interactions
-

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (PIs)

As the ED&I action plan implementation progresses we will develop and track a relevant set of performance indicators, internally and externally.

Core PIs will be tracked from the outset. For aspirational PIs, we will investigate routes to establish a collection mechanism and baseline where none currently exists.

Core PIs will be published annually.

Initial indicators include:

EXTERNAL

Core PIs

- Industry diversity (gender, age, ethnicity)
- Support of EDI training (grant funding, number of learners)

Aspirational PIs

- Industry diversity (disability, sexual orientation)
- New entrant diversity (ECITB-led programmes)

INTERNAL

Core PIs

- Staff diversity (gender, age, ethnicity)
- Gender pay gap
- Staff EDI training (uptake and completion rates)

Aspirational PIs – for management information, as appropriate for our organisation

- Staff diversity (disability, sexual orientation)
- Staff diversity (recruitment, retention and progression)
- Governance group diversity
- Ethnicity pay gap

