

# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy 2023-25

## Progress update - March 2025

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy was approved in March 2023 and was extended for another year at the March 2025 Board meeting.

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.

## Year one

In year one of the strategy we achieved our aims to:

- Publish and consult on the draft ED&I strategy and goals and measurements within it
- Re-establish the ED&I Staff council
- Agree terminology with staff – confirmed we will use Global Majority rather than BAME
- Work with ED&I staff council and management team to de-bias key policies, including recruitment and induction, disciplinary, sickness absence, bereavement.
- Seek to address pay gaps by investing in training and development for staff to grow our own talent. This is ongoing.
- Celebrate cultures, diversity and religious traditions. This is ongoing.
- Prioritise data collection based on the new NHF questionnaire so we can understand our Board and staff better. Resident data collection was earmarked for year two of the strategy.

# Year two

## In year two, we aimed to:

- 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. We were aiming to have moved one point on the continuum of becoming an anti-racist, inclusive organisation by the end of the strategy.
  - To progress this aim, we have explored signing up to the Social Housing Anti-Racism Pledge (SHARP), undertaking the self-assessment to determine our current status and what steps will be required to meet the Pledge's requirements. We perform well on organisational leadership and compliance, as well as recruitment at Leadership Team level. We have some good practice established in broader recruitment and building inclusive communities and more work to do in other areas. Further work with the ED&I council, management and staff is required to progress this area further, to revisit the action plan and cross-reference with the SHARP self-assessment and at the end of the year to reassess our position on the continuum of becoming an anti-racist, inclusive organisation.
- Prioritise data collection based on the new NHF questionnaire so we can understand our residents better.
  - Our Neighbourhood Knock programme includes an ED&I survey based on the NHF questionnaire, which is then uploaded to our database. We have so far conducted conversations with 112 households and have a target for this year of a further 700+ households. We expect updating of these records to be much more straightforward in Rubixx.
  - We identified that we have minimal data on residents' disabilities, and this is impacting our ability to tailor services appropriately. As part of our TSM surveys, we now obtain permission from residents to contact them when they flag they have a disability in their survey response. A list of residents who have given permission is provided back to ISHA by our third party survey company, and we follow up with individuals to learn more and update our records. This can be accelerated once Rubixx is live and updating records is a simpler process.
- Prioritise disability as an area of obvious underrepresentation, and also LGBTQI+ inclusion. We are aiming to have taken concrete steps to being more inclusive of people with a disability.
  - We are taking steps to improve our data on residents with disabilities and will use this data to tailor our services.
  - We are signed up to the Government's Disability Confident scheme, with Committed status, and are working towards meeting the requirements for Confident status, the next level up. We can currently evidence almost 50% of requirements and with small changes to our recruitment processes and training,

will be able to evidence the remainder.

- We supported a staff member to apply for the government's Access to Work disability scheme – which co-funds individual support and equipment and workplace education to provide enhanced inclusion and awareness based on individual needs. Feedback from the Access to Work participant has been positive and has seen an improvement in wellbeing and engagement. The funding also includes staff training elements, which enhances our overall disability awareness. We will continue signposting to this scheme appropriately where we identify other staff members who could benefit.
- We have also held staff training on inclusive topics – mental health and wellbeing for LGBT+ people, taking a trauma informed approach, and specific resident focused sensitivity training ahead of our Neighbourhood Knock programme.
- 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 are moving to a community-based approach, supporting our Vietnamese residents to connect with existing Vietnamese community groups and initiatives that provide stronger cultural support and inclusion. In 2025, we provided financial support for a local community Tet (Lunar New Year) celebration, connecting our residents with a broader network, and increasing our local connections.

  

- Commit to honest, open feedback to staff and to reporting annually – including on ethnicity and gender pay gap. We are aiming to have reduced our ethnicity pay gap to below 15%.
  - We have committed to reporting on pay gaps annually starting this year.
  - Given the changes at Leadership Team and Management Team level over the past two years, we expect that the ethnicity gap has not been reduced this year. We are currently recruiting a new Chief Executive and depending on the appointment, there may be an impact on the ethnicity and gender pay gap.
- **Additional aims:**
- To have achieved strategic plan targets of less than 12% turnover and 90% staff engagement and trust scores.
- Our staff engagement scores are not at 90% but we have identified and implemented key initiatives to improve our scores. These include giving staff the right tools for the jobs they are asked to do, including our Rubixx Housing Management system and updated policies and procedures.
- The recent strategic plan extension work has identified management, training and recruitment as areas staff have identified for further support. The People and Culture team will be working with Leadership Team to implement ISHA training programme for managers and staff as well as continuing to support

better recruitment.

- We met the target of voluntary turnover at 12% in the last financial year although our involuntary turnover remains higher. This is due to raising our standards and implementing stronger performance management.
- To be known for our impactful work in ED&I.

There is more to be done, and this aim will be carried forward into the next strategy, with measurable and time bound objectives.

### **Extending into year three**

While we have made some progress on our ambitions for ED&I in year two of the strategy, there is more to be done to achieve our objectives. To align with the extension of the strategic plan for a further one year and to provide more time to deliver outstanding objectives, the Board agreed at the March 2025 Board meeting to extend this strategy by one year also.

Delivery will be driven by an action plan covering:

- Signing up to the SHARP pledge
- Working towards Disability Confident Level 2 status
- Completing our resident data collection exercise
- A plan to use our data to become more inclusive of those with a disability
- Continuing our community-based approach to supporting our Lien Viet residents and other communities fleeing war and persecution
- Reporting on our gender and ethnicity pay gaps and developing targets and actions for reducing the gap
- Delivering the revised strategic plan targets for staff engagement and reduced turnover
- Working with staff and residents to identify how we can deliver impactful work in ED&I more broadly.

**June 2025**