

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy

2024 - 2027

HILLDALE 
housing association



Introduction

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) are an integral part of what Hilldale is about and what we do. We want to ensure that our customers and colleagues can both live and work in a warm and welcoming environment which fosters a culture of mutual respect and understanding.

This strategy helps support our vision and is guided by our values. We want to promote a culture where the diversity of our customer and colleagues is valued and celebrated. We also want to extend this to our stakeholders and in return we will look to them to contribute to this strategy at the same time.

Whilst Hilldale is a small organisation, our ambitions are big and we will embrace best practice principles with the aim of demonstrating excellence in equality, inclusion and fairness in everything we do.

This strategy describes our commitment to EDI, what we plan to do in the coming years, how we want the organisation to behave and how we will embed best practice in all areas of the business.

We may have a lot to do, and yes, our plans are ambitious, but we look forward to noting our progress in the future and looking back on the achievements we have made against the targets and culture set out in this strategy.



James Place
Managing Director



Our aim is to create opportunities, reduce barriers, and realise aspirations for everyone.

We're fully committed to making sure there is no unjustified discrimination in our processes for recruitment and selection, performance management and pay, and that promotion and retention is fairly granted across all our operations.

We also want to work with our customers to understand how their needs are met and work with a range of partners to provide solutions that provide inclusion for all.

EDI runs through everything we do, and our goal is to develop an inclusive culture where we can act as the leader, role model and conduit in changing perceptions or assumptions.

We're determined that our approach to EDI will be much more than just our legal or statutory obligations. Through our approach we'll make everyone's lives and experiences richer and ultimately contribute to developing more inclusive societies.

Our ambition is to build a diverse workforce that reflects our communities and the wider society and to be recognised as a fair and inclusive employer and landlord.

We must fully embrace EDI, working alongside our customers and local, regional and national partners to be a provider of choice for supported housing, tackling tough issues like skills and employment, poverty, domestic violence, mental well-being and anti-social behaviour.

What is equality diversity and inclusion?

The terms 'equality', 'diversity' and 'inclusion' are often used interchangeably, but they're very different concepts.

Together they allow organisations to perform at their best, meet the needs of customers and stakeholders and enable colleagues to be the best versions of themselves.

Hilldale has a strong set of corporate values. Those values support our vision, shape our culture, and describe what makes us different. They guide the way we make decisions and work with our customers, colleagues, and stakeholders.



Our values

Honesty

We do what we say we will do

We never mislead

We acknowledge mistakes, fix them, and learn from them

Empathetic

We care about Hilldale, our customers and colleagues

We take time to understand people's individual needs

We want to share and celebrate changes in people's lives

Accountable

We do not hide from our responsibilities as individuals, a team or as a business

We build trusted relationships

We offer value for money

Respectful

We treat everyone with respect and dignity

We value and actively encourage diversity

We put customers and communities at the heart of all we do

We want to look after our planet

Teamwork

We are one team

We share goals, ambitions and targets

We are committed to strong leadership



Equality

Equality is about fair and impartial treatment.

To us it means ensuring that equality of opportunity is available to everyone. We ensure that our customer and colleagues are treated fairly and according to their needs so that no-one is treated differently or discriminated against because of their characteristics.

Diversity

Diversity means all the ways in which we differ. It also means recognising and valuing that difference in all of us. It includes the differences we can see but also the differences that we can't see and those differences are recognised, respected and valued.

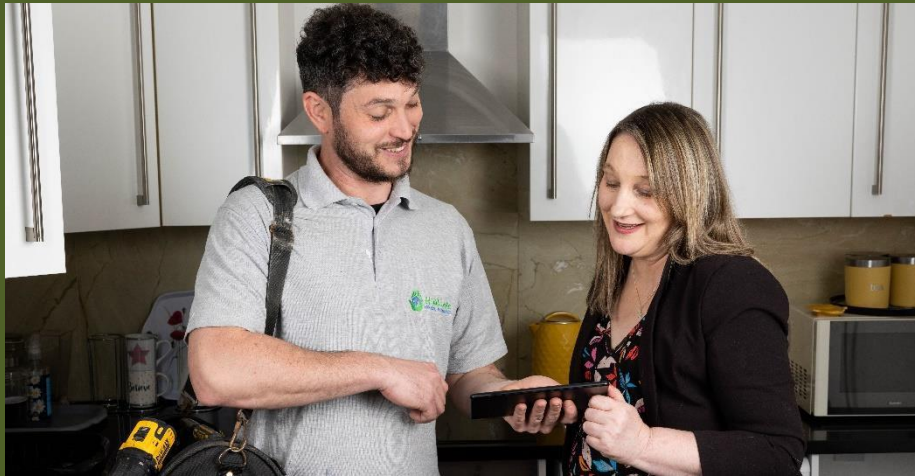
Inclusion

Inclusion means ensuring that everyone is given the opportunity to participate. For us this means ensuring that no-one feels left out and that everyone feels that they belong.

We aim to ensure that our colleagues and customers feel included in our mission, that they have a say in our plans and activities and their views are heard, supported, and respected.

Our strategic themes

Colleague inclusion and engagement



Customer inclusion and engagement



Developing an inclusive culture



Attracting and retaining a diverse workforce



Colleague inclusion and engagement

Creating opportunities for colleagues to achieve equitable outcomes, celebrate differences and promote inclusion.

Our ambition

Hilldale aspires to be an employer of choice that brings out the best in colleagues by providing an inclusive working environment.

We know that colleagues who feel they belong are committed and less likely to leave our business. We understand that potential colleagues value employers that respect diversity and encourage people to embrace and celebrate differences.

Our ambition is for all colleagues to feel included. We're committed to supporting, understanding and making adjustments where necessary to accommodate individual needs.

Our colleagues

We want everyone at Hilldale to value their experience with us. We'll provide opportunities for colleagues to learn and grow enabling them to deliver excellent services to our customers.

The actions we take will ensure that everyone has a voice, their views on our approach are heard and everyone is treated fairly and with dignity and respect.



What we will do:

- Raise awareness and ensure that EDI is being led from within our workforce.
- Ensure that colleagues are offered appropriate interventions to support their physical and mental health conditions.
- Develop surveys to seek colleague's views on our approach to EDI to ensure we can continue to improve and adapt with best practice.
- Review and enhance our equality, diversity, and inclusion training.
- Review how we communicate about EDI to our colleagues, including keeping them up to date with diversity policies and practices.

Customer inclusion and engagement

We're committed to creating opportunities for our customers and communities to grow, develop and thrive.

Our ambition

Everything we do is designed to improve the wellbeing and quality of life of our customers, and to contribute to achieving positive impacts through flourishing communities.

Our customers are all different and require tailored support. We must understand those individual needs so that we're able to offer opportunities that achieve fair outcomes.

Our customers

Our Customer Engagement Strategy focuses on embedding customer involvement and engagement for service development and delivery. The EDI Strategy is linked to this strategy ensuring that we focus on listening, understanding, and responding to the individual and diverse needs of our customers.

We'll ensure that the voice of our customers is considered where there is an impact on the services we deliver, the homes in which they live and the communities in which they thrive.



What we will do:

- Ensure that our customers can hold us to account and influence our strategic direction
- Develop a true 'customer centric' culture that instils trust in us
- Understand what services our customers value the most
- Use co-production to design and improve services with our customers
- Make best use of our resources and deliver services that benefit customers
- Make strategic decisions for the benefit of our customers, present and future

Developing an inclusive culture

Providing a supportive and inclusive environment where everyone feels valued.

Our ambition

We recognise that diverse teams make better decisions and having different people with different perspectives and backgrounds leads to better designed services for our customers.

We'll promote an environment of EDI in all areas of our day-to-day business and activities. We'll encourage our colleagues, customers, and stakeholders to recognise that we all have a personal responsibility to deal with others with dignity and respect.

Our culture

We'll promote a culture which values talent beyond stereotypes and helps people reach their potential by contributing their best beyond any prejudice.

Regardless of their identity or background, everyone deserves the opportunity to develop their skills and talents to their full potential, work in a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment and feel confident to share their views.

We need to ensure that our day-to-day activities encourage this, so we'll continually review our processes, procedures, and our working practices to ensure that our approach doesn't put any group at a disadvantage.



What we will do:

- Develop a framework for robust and reliable equality data to be collected, analysed, reported, and used in decision making.
- Consider the EDI impact when reviewing relevant policies and procedures in our business.
- Include EDI awareness as a mandatory element of our leadership development training and our induction for our colleagues and board members.
- Review our approach to networking to ensure that we have opportunities to keep up to date with best practice guidance and to share learning.
- Provide tools to support colleagues with their challenges in their home and work life.
- Continue to refresh our approach by listening to feedback from our colleagues.

Attracting and retaining a diverse workforce

We'll attract, retain, and develop a diverse workforce to ensure that everyone can succeed to the best of their ability.

Our ambition

We will attract and retain a workforce that is representative of our wider society. We strongly believe that attracting and retaining a diverse workforce will enable us to drive better performance across our business and have a positive impact on how we deliver services to our customers.

We aim to model best practice in identifying and preventing discrimination, bias or other unfair treatment in our approach.

Our culture

Positive recruitment practices will continue to be important. They will help us to find the right people with the right skills and experience for the right roles.

We recognise that any activities in this area need to support us to recruit new colleagues but also create an inclusive approach that enables us to retain and progress talent.

To attract diverse talent, we must remove any barriers that prevent candidates from applying for our roles.



What we will do:

- Keep reviewing what we do to ensure our approach helps us retain our workforce.
- Review our recruitment, selection and onboarding approach to ensure our methods are inclusive and encourage candidates from underrepresented groups.
- Explore how we can diversify our candidate pools through work experience and other relevant opportunities.
- Explore pledges and accreditations that will support our commitments to EDI whilst demonstrating that commitment to potential candidates.
- Improve our website to include our commitments to EDI.

Our public pledges

Not only does our strategy have a strong commitment to equality, but we've also made public pledges on how we want to champion EDI throughout our people practices as an employer.

They include our commitment to:

- the Disability Confident Employer Scheme
- the Living Wage

These pledges provide us with strong frameworks to work within and the guidance to help us make sustained progress and lasting change.

However, we recognise that we need to enhance this approach by reviewing our membership of programmes and forums which may aid our work in promoting EDI.

Monitoring our progress

To ensure that these key objectives are achieved, we'll implement and monitor detailed actions that will specify targets, timescales, and responsibilities. These actions will be reviewed regularly to ensure they remain relevant and reported to our committees. We will also update our Board annually.

Our action plan will include specific EDI objectives and goals – some of these objectives will be about maintaining our current position while others will be about where we need to make progress.



We'll take an evidence-based approach to understanding our position on an annual basis through analysing the various forms of data we collect and seeking intelligence on what we could do differently as we move forward.

Our analysis will not only review demographic data but also seek insight into our success in building an inclusive culture. It'll gain the views of colleagues and customers, as well as reviewing the results of any relevant surveys.

This in-depth analysis will also enable us to measure and therefore celebrate our success and hold ourselves to account and take remedial action if needed.

Communication and engagement with our colleagues and customers will be key and each annual plan will be supported by a communications plan.

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Your way

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