

# Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging STRATEGY 2025-2027



# Foreword

In today's dynamic and interconnected world, fostering an environment where every individual feels valued, respected, and empowered is not just a moral imperative but a strategic necessity. We have an exciting business strategy, "Time for Growth", that relies on our colleagues showing up authentically to deliver our mission: *to drive sustainable growth by delivering value to our members, fostering an inclusive and supportive work environment for our colleagues, and positioning ourselves as the leading voice in business and policy.*

Our commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) is grounded in the belief that without diverse perspectives and inclusive practices that drive innovation and enhance performance, we cannot create a workplace where everyone can thrive to deliver our mission. We are proud of our diverse workforce - our gender split favours women and we have majority female senior leaders in the organisation\*. Our 2023 average gender pay gap stood at 3.4% (mean) and 11.5% (median) lower pay for woman compared to men. We have an encouraging proportion of ethnic minority colleagues working at the CBI - at 17% this is broadly in line with the ethnic minority representation in UK\*\*. But we can't be complacent, and we know we must do more to promote an experience that's equitable and creates the conditions for all colleagues to succeed and belong.

Our pulse surveys and ethical culture review by Principia in 2023 provide the organisational north star needed for a strategy that seeks to shift the dial and position us an organisation that is inclusive by default and design. Our DEIB strategy is built upon four foundational pillars: **Psychological Safety, Wellbeing, Representation, and Colleague Experience** - these are the areas described by our colleagues as the cornerstones to creating a

\* Data based on headcount snapshot on 5 December 2024.

\*\* 2021 census reports 18% of people from a Black, Asian, mixed or other ethnic group

truly inclusive workplace. These pillars are not just abstract concepts; through our employee resource groups, we asked colleagues how they want to feel, and this will act as our benchmark in understanding whether the actions in this strategy are having a positive impact. And whilst change isn't easy, we commit to continuing to listen and learn what works for our organisation, as we embark on this next phase of cultural renewal.

Together, these pillars form the foundation of our DEIB strategy, guided by our co-created values: **Integrity, Respect, Brilliance** and **Courage**. We invite our colleagues to join us on this journey, as we work together to create a more equitable, diverse, and inclusive future at the CBI, in support of our mission.



Rain Newton-Smith  
Chief Executive, CBI



Asha Musoni  
Chief People Officer, CBI



# Inclusion Pillars



## Psychological Safety

“I feel I belong, can speak up without fear and am respected for who I am”



## Wellbeing

“I feel supported mentally and physically and flexibility is afforded to me, ensuring I can show up as my best self”



## Representation

“I feel represented internally and externally as I can see people who are like me in impactful roles, and in our wider community”

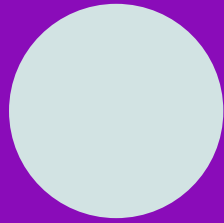


## Experience

“I feel processes, policies and procedures are free of bias and promote equity of opportunity”

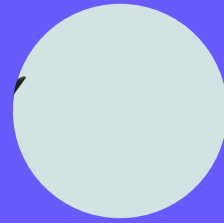
Foster value-based, inclusive behaviours and maximise wellbeing

# Achieving our Inclusion Aims



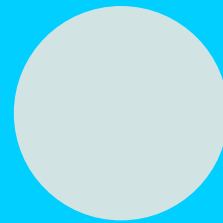
## **Inclusive leadership**

Leaders value and include a variety of perspectives and backgrounds, including appreciating difference. Inclusion is built into leadership roles and change delivery



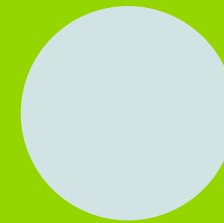
## **Training and Awareness raising**

Programmes deliver the inclusion objectives we need to be inclusive by design, seeking to address a wide range of differences and needs



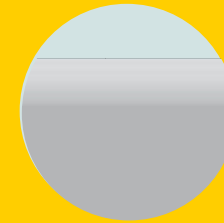
## **Data and Insight**

Operational data, surveys and external benchmarks will help us understand our progress against diversity and inclusion ambitions and support action planning.



## **Improved systems and processes**

Systems, processes and policies will support better, consistent colleague experiences where this matters the most; including how, where and when we work. Systemic equity is the golden thread



## **Alliances and Partnerships**

Partnerships will pilot, test and share bold inclusive practices, fostering a safe learning environment where lessons promote better inclusive approaches



# Underpinned by our Values



## Integrity

**We lead** honestly, holding ourselves and others accountable to our values, ensuring we are open, consistent and thoughtful in everything we do.



## Respect

**We behave** inclusively, embracing diversity of all kinds, creating a fair and supportive environment, treating each other with kindness and empathy.



## Brilliance

**We deliver** collaboratively, bringing together the brightest **minds**, continually learning and seeking ways to create impactful solutions we are proud to share.



## Courage

**We challenge** confidently, building a trusted environment, daring to do things differently, and empowering people to speak up and create the change they want to see.

# Pillar 1 – Psychological Safety

## Our ambition:

Creating a safe workplace is everyone's responsibility. When we feel psychologically safe, we are more likely to seek help, innovate, and share ideas. This allows us to express ourselves freely and bring our whole selves to work. Building trust internally is just as important as our external efforts. Through impactful communication and culturally aware leadership that values diversity, we can foster a positive and inclusive work environment.

## We will

### 1. Introduce an engagement Non-Executive Director role

Our Board will have an “ear to the ground”. Alongside our Staff Council, we will develop the role of Engagement NED to support our cultural transformation approach and position ourselves as a listening organisation.

### 2. Enhance the voice of all colleagues

We want every voice at the CBI to be heard. Through highlighting the various routes to raise an issue or speak up, we will help build even more confidence that we want to listen and constantly improve. We will develop a framework, to be shared at induction stage and beyond, showing all routes across our organisation for colleagues to participate, have their say or seek advice on all matters that relate to safety and experience at work, ensuring this is acted upon.

### 3. Elevate the role of our employee resource groups (ERGs)

The role of our ERGs is critical to creating an inclusive workplace. We will ensure this role is fully embedded and recognised within the organisation by formalising the time commitment allotted to ERG activities each month. Introducing time limits for serving as an ERG lead will increase diversity of thought and ensure no one person becomes overburdened by this duty and establish a clearer recognition approach for ERG leaders.

### 4. Further reduce the risk of (sexual) harassment in the workplace

A new legal duty places a positive obligation on all employers to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace. We want to be leading in this area. We will build on our existing approach with regular risk assessments, monitoring this through our People & Culture and Risk & Audit Committees.

### 5. Deliver holistic leadership training to build trust and psychological safety

Mckinsey suggests the following training to build psychological safety and trust: communication, change management, understanding strengths (own and teams), cultural awareness, unconscious bias, sponsorship/allyship, situational awareness/humility and group dynamics. We will develop a leaders training package aligned to these topics.

### 6. Introduce Trained Mediators

Healthy conflict is a sign of a psychologically safe team. We will continue to embed this into the culture/behaviours using values-based language as a way to conduct conversations. We will develop a conflict management approach, identifying trained mediators to support colleagues, ensuring a level of understanding of individual difference and supporting better resolution at informal stage.



# Pillar 2 – Wellbeing

## Our Ambition:

We aim to improve wellbeing outcomes for all so our workforce can be productive and thrive every day, including focusing on how we get work done more efficiently. We will create more opportunities for everyone to connect and review our wellbeing programs to ensure they provide good value and meet our changing workforce needs. We'll focus on men's health and wellbeing, recognising our strong, well-established wellbeing offering for other groups in our organisation.

### We will:

#### 1. Create fit-for-purpose, inclusive workspaces

Ensuring our HQ and regional offices are fit for purpose for all colleagues and support our need to connect is critical in promoting a workplace where all feel they belong. Our workspaces will be inclusive by design and support collaboration and knowledge sharing.

#### 2. Develop people strategies that support sustainable workloads

We will review how our organisation operates to promote clearer team boundaries and processes that support collaboration across teams. This will be underpinned by a strong decision-making framework, introducing clearer levels of accountability.

#### 3. Review our wellbeing benefits/offering

We will ensure our wellbeing benefits align with the CBI of today, following a series of changes to our workforce. Our benefits and wellbeing offering should serve to support better retention and attraction, considering the existing demographic of the organisation and need for

choice.

#### 4. Nurture men's health

Men occupy just under half of all senior leadership roles in the CBI and have a direct impact on our culture and role modelling. We will create more safe spaces for men to share their experiences and introduce an enhanced wellbeing offering to support men's physical and mental health.



# Pillar 3 – Representation

## Our Ambition:

We aim to be a champion for better representation externally and internally. However, setting diversity targets is not easy, especially as an SME. Small changes can throw us off track quickly. We want to avoid unintended consequences having targets may bring such as perceptions of tokenism and reverse discrimination against privileged groups. We will therefore set ambitions, not targets. This will allow us to focus on building sustainable representation, ensuring our diverse colleagues are psychologically safe, well and their experience at work is equitable.

### We will:

#### 1. Develop our 3-year workforce plan, to include representation ambitions for the following groups which are critical to fostering a diverse workforce:

- Gender split
- Ethnic minority overall
- LGBTQ+ overall
- Disability overall
- Senior ethnic minority
- Senior female
- Social mobility

#### 2. Introduce ambitions for our CBI Board and regional councils and committees

We will ensure our Board and regional committees are diverse and routinely monitor diversity. We will develop appropriate ambitions for Board and our committees, introducing the monitoring of ethnicity as standard.

#### 3. Introduce a robust monitoring mechanism for our representation ambitions

We will introduce a RAG monitoring approach underpinned by several monitoring indicators, including external benchmarks, labour market data in each of our geographical locations and monitoring which critical/impactful roles are occupied by our diverse colleagues.

#### 4. Improve our representation data

We will improve our data recording and capture process to support diverse representation at our events and monitor the diversity of our speakers.





# Pillar 4 – Experience

## Our Ambition:

We want everyone to experience the workplace, their colleagues and leaders in the most positive way. Ultimately, when we feel we have been treated fairly and have access to opportunities, we are more committed. Equity should underpin all our systems, processes and policies – these should be free from bias at every stage so that we do not unintentionally treat some colleagues unfairly. Creating an equitable experience stems from our leaders; they have a huge stake in how policies are applied and how colleagues experience the workplace.

## We will:

### 1. Elevate the role of our leaders

Our leaders are central to role modelling, operating our systems and processes critical to colleague feelings of fairness and equity. They will be accountable for delivery and ensuring changes embed in the business, through effective training and involvement in decision-making.

### 2. Revamp the way we collect colleague sentiment

We have quarterly pulse surveys currently. We will review our approach to quarterly surveys and introduce an inclusion index, so we understand how we are tracking against inclusion and how we benchmark against other organisations.

### 3. Review our onboarding process and induction training

We will review our onboarding and induction process in line with our newly created values. Our standards around misconduct and harassment will be clear; and if you are a leader, your role as decision-maker and change agent a critical part of inducting you into your new role.

### 4. Introduce pay transparency and recognition approach

We will agree an approach to pay transparency, including how progression and internal movements impact pay, and educate leaders on how pay works at the CBI. Our recognition approach will be transparent and underpinned by the goals in our business strategy and values.



# Governance

To successfully implement the changes proposed in this strategy, clear governance structures will ensure transparent accountability for the execution of priorities and the management of related interdependencies.

**Internal Governance:** Our initiatives will be subject to internal and external oversight. The People & Culture Committee, a sub-committee of the CBI Board, will have overall oversight. Ultimate responsibility for the DEIB Strategy rests with the Executive and Senior Leadership, while operational execution is entrusted to our People & Culture Team. Our Staff Council and Employee Resource Groups will articulate our workforce's perspectives and contribute significantly to awareness raising efforts and impact monitoring. The Culture Advisory Committee will continue to play a crucial external consultative role.

**External Governance:** We are committed to fostering advancements in business practices aligned with our inclusion priorities. Our ongoing policy advocacy efforts and engagement continues through our Future of Work Committee - a forum where inclusion topics are regularly addressed. Our Regional Directors facilitate connections with organisations through established People & Skills Networks, promoting wider people-related matters. They also engage in diversity/inclusion-focused events/groups, demonstrating our outward commitment to inclusive practices.

