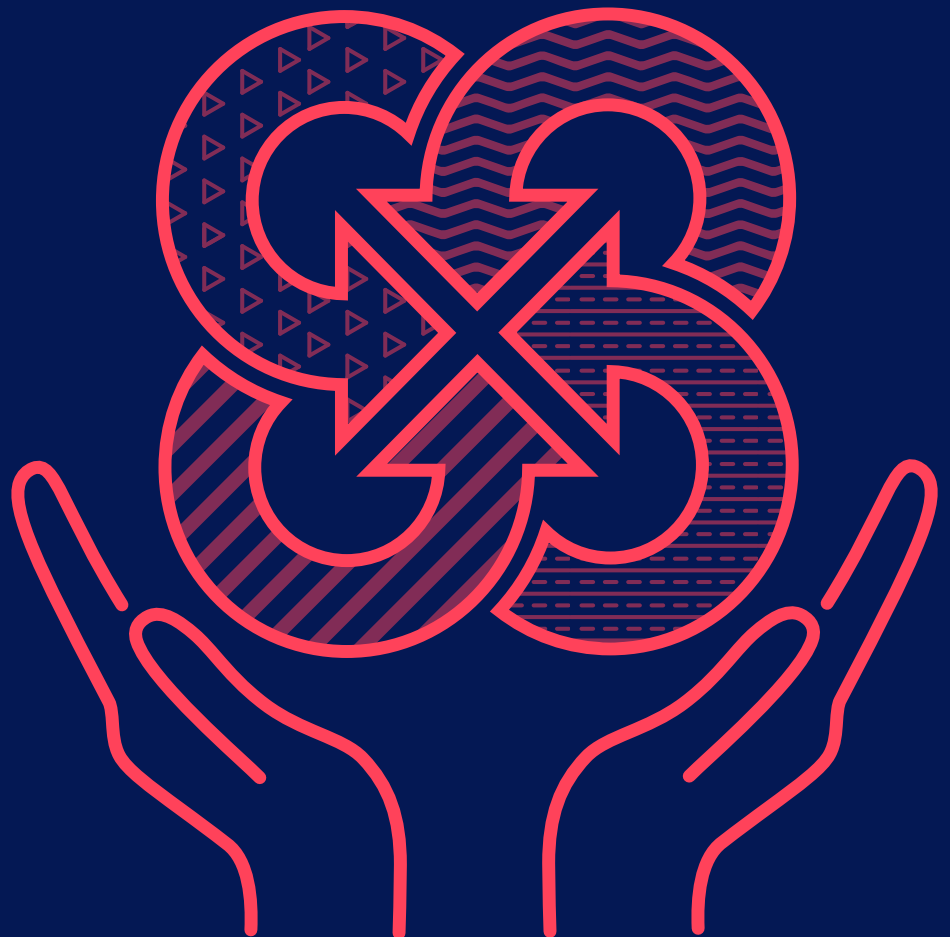


Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2023-2028

An evolution of our 2022 Equality,
Diversity and Inclusion Strategy



Foreword

Billy Harkness

Director of People and Change

At RoS we are striving to create an inclusive workplace where everyone feels valued and respected because of their difference – a place where every colleague can be themselves so they can reach their potential and help us achieve our vision and strategic goals. We want to be innovative and productive so we can deliver the best products and services to our customers, and we need diversity to help us achieve this. The more we collaborate and value difference the closer we get to living in a truly inclusive community.

This diversity and inclusion strategy provides us with a road map to create an inclusive workplace. To deliver those commitments requires us to be a place that can attract, retain, and invest in talent wherever it is found. It is for this reason that we want RoS to have a truly diverse workforce with a culture of openness and inclusivity, as a means of delivering better outcomes to the customers we serve. We must all take responsibility for advancing diversity and inclusion. My ask of all colleagues in RoS is that they get involved and that we all work together to create a great place to work where we all feel we belong.

Pauline Stratford

Diversity and Inclusion Lead

Since joining RoS at the start of the year, I have been inspired by the desire across the organisation to get things right for colleagues and customers with lived experience of inequality. This was particularly clear when refreshing our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. We wanted to reflect this in our foreword, making it a collaboration of different perspectives. I am confident with the commitment of our colleagues, that this strategy will support us to keep advancing diversity and inclusion at RoS.

PCS

Trade Union

Trade Unions have led the way with bringing equality into workplaces. PCS firmly believe every worker has the right to achieve their full potential – no matter what their gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, or background is. We are proud of the work we have done in this area, improving workplaces across the Civil Service.

This strategy is another welcome step in a long journey, and we are determined to continue to work towards a workplace and a society where diversity is valued, and we remove all barriers to inclusion as quickly and widely as we are able.

Wesley Liddle

Customer Services Manager

It is important to us that all our customers can access our services and receive the same high level of support when they do. A key part of this is also to ensure that our diverse colleagues have the right support to enable them to provide the best service they can. Understanding the needs of our colleagues and how to support them, helps us to better support our customers as well.

This strategy will build awareness across everyone working at RoS and put diversity and inclusion at the forefront of everyone's minds when delivering our services. To improve, we must have the right conversations and this strategy will make colleagues more comfortable doing just that. As customer-facing teams, we commit to holding regular, open discussions to learn from our experiences of supporting diverse customers and continually improve what we do.

Ruth McArthur

Learning and Development Adviser and Member of our Neurodiversity Network

As someone with late diagnosed autism I've often experienced inequality without realising it. I thought that everyone else experienced things the same way. Educating myself about neurodiversity as well as other equality factors, I have become a lot more understanding, caring and open to other perspectives. It is important to me that every individual in our communities is welcomed and valued for their uniqueness, lived experience, and for what they bring to the table.

RoS, as our workplace, is a big part of our lives and we all spend a lot of time here so I can't think of a better place to start. Growth or improvement in anything starts with awareness and to gain awareness you need education – you don't know what you don't know. This strategy will help us all to be more aware and to better understand diversity and inclusion.

The maturity models in this strategy will be key for progression by helping us to identify where we are in real terms and what we need to do to get better. By measuring our progress and impact, we send the message that this is important and that in turn raises awareness and creates a demand for education and a desire to improve.

I believe our networks can support this strategy by sharing our stories and experiences and learning from each other. We can measure our own journeys to becoming an advocate for ourselves and others. Together, we can create an inclusive community in RoS where colleagues feel they belong.

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Introduction

This strategy sets out our approach to diversity and inclusion, particularly our support for our colleagues and customers with lived experience of inequality and disadvantage. This includes those with [protected characteristics under the Equality Act \(2010\)](#).

Diversity and inclusion statement

We are committed to increasing the diversity of our workforce and ensuring we are an inclusive organisation for all our colleagues and customers.

We will mindfully consider those with protected characteristics in everything we do and engage our colleagues across RoS in supporting this work. We will strive to continuously advance diversity and inclusion within RoS, making this integral to our organisation. We will seek opportunities to be innovative and sector leading in addressing inequality.

Diversity and inclusion (D&I) are a priority for Registers of Scotland (RoS), and as an organisation we strive to continually improve in this area. We do, however, recognise that we operate within a wider context in which inequality persists across many areas of life for those with protected characteristics. This includes barriers to securing and sustaining employment and in accessing public services. We also acknowledge that we can play a part in reducing this wider inequality by consciously removing, or avoiding, any barriers in the delivery of our own role, as an employer and service provider.

Evolution of our strategy

We published our strategy for diversity and inclusion in January 2022. Since then, we have developed our approach further. This refreshed strategy reflects our progress. It also sets out how we will continue to advance diversity and inclusion over the next five years.

Our evolved strategy now outlines:

- the pillars of our approach to diversity and inclusion
- the enablers that will support us to take this work forward and measure our impact
- maturity models to define our journey to become more diverse and inclusive, going beyond compliance with our legal duties to be responsive, to integrate D&I across our organisation and to strive to be innovative and example of good practice as an employer and service provider

Policy context

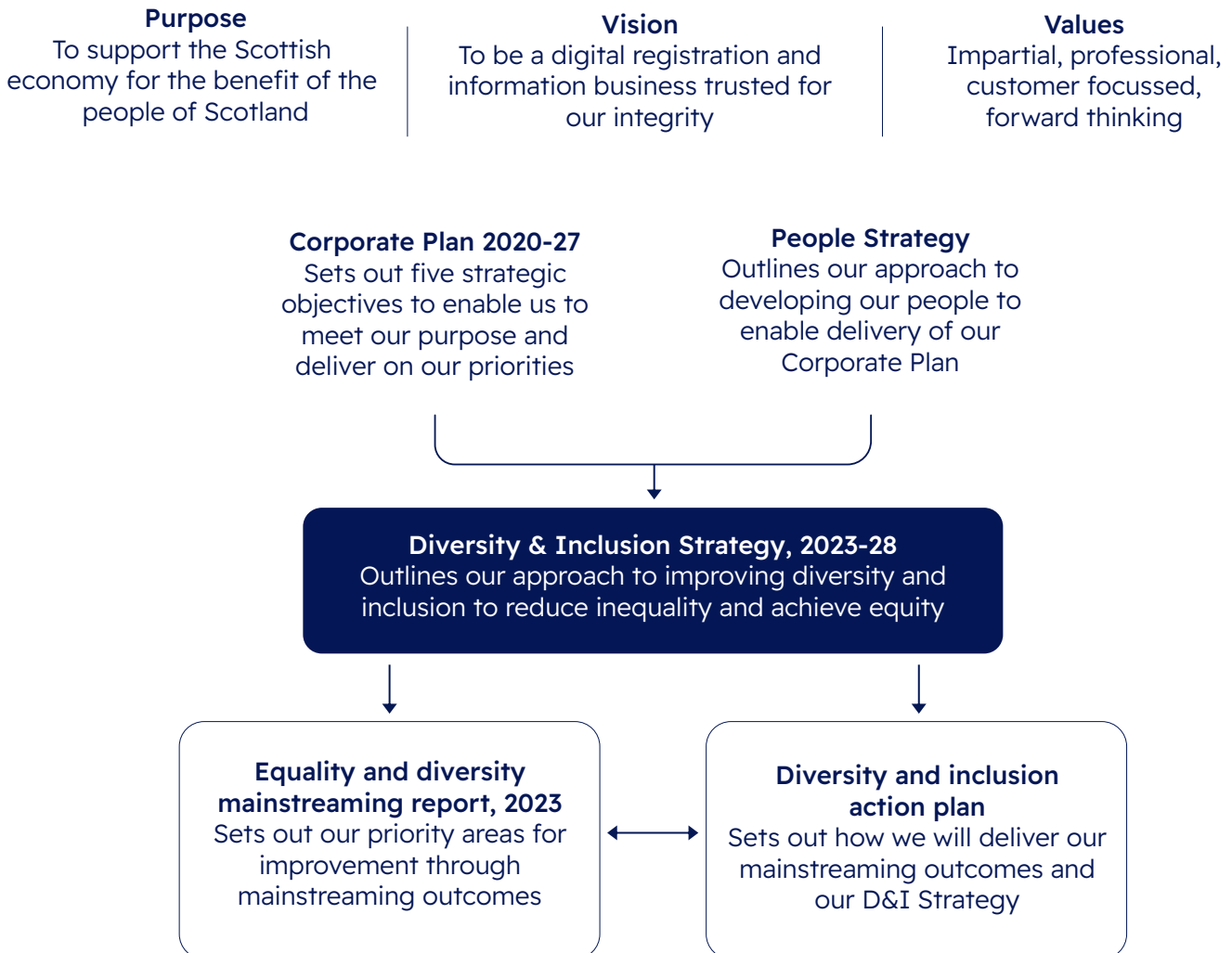
Our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy is integral to our wider policy and strategy. It will support us to fulfil our purpose and vision as an organisation and ensure we embed our values. By taking this strategy forward, we will make a critical contribution to our Corporate Plan, specifically to:

- inspire our people to adapt, grow and innovate to empower a thriving and inclusive organisation (Corporate Plan Objective 4)
- be an effective, efficient and future-focussed delivery organisation (Corporate Plan Objective 5)

Our People Strategy aims to ensure colleagues feel valued and are supported to thrive at RoS. Our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy will support this aim for our colleagues with protected characteristics.

Our diversity and inclusion agenda

This strategy sets out our longer-term approach to progressing diversity and inclusion. Every two years we publish our Equality & Diversity Mainstreaming Report. This identifies key areas for improvement. Our Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan is our mechanism for delivering this agenda. It is critical to taking forward this strategy.



Defining our approach to diversity and inclusion



Diversity

Refers to the differences in characteristics of a population.

We aim to become an organisation that is representative of the diversity within Scotland's population. We believe in the benefits of different perspectives, experiences and skills. We value the positive impact that a fully diverse workforce can bring to our culture and our ability to innovate and to serve our customers.

Inclusion

Refers to how well those with diverse characteristics are supported.

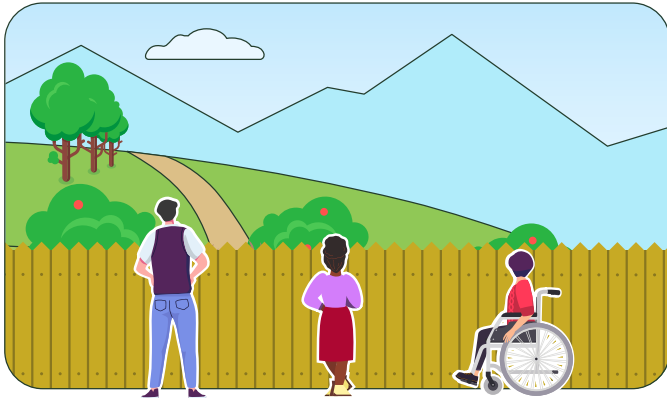
We aim to ensure that we provide equal opportunities, resources and equitable support to our colleagues with protected characteristics. We believe that all our colleagues should feel a sense of belonging in RoS. Everyone should be able to bring their whole, authentic selves to work and be treated fairly and with respect when they do.

We aim to ensure that we consider all colleagues or customers in the working environment we create and the services we deliver. To be inclusive, we need to understand and meet the diverse needs of our colleagues and customers. We realise that it is critical to ensure that we consider these needs at the right time and that we address them in the most effective way.

The following image illustrates the stages of listening and supporting that move us from exclusion to inclusion.

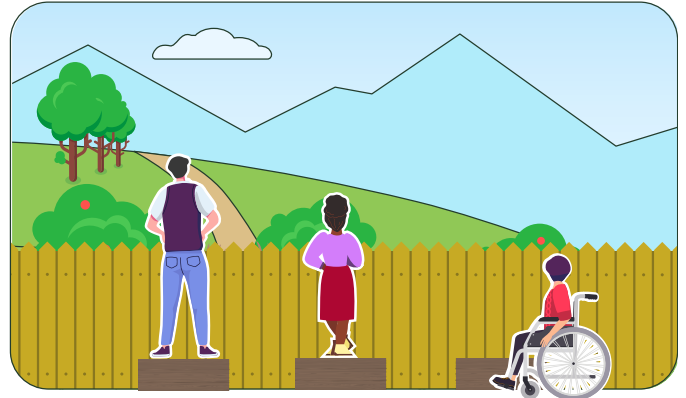
Exclusion

Individuals are excluded from experiences and outcomes when their needs are not considered from the outset and when they are not given support to overcome any barriers that were created as a result.



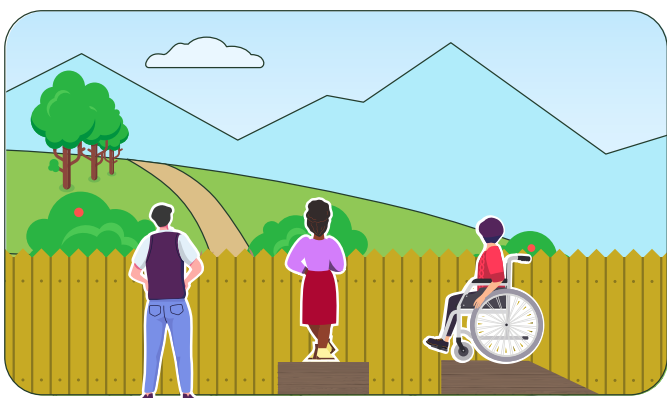
Equality

Support can be provided to overcome barriers. However, if the support is the same for everyone and is based only on the needs of some individuals, then others will still be excluded.



Equity

To overcome barriers, a better solution is to tailor the support provided to the needs of individuals. It's more likely in this case that everyone will be included. However, they will still be excluded until the support is actually put in place.



Inclusion

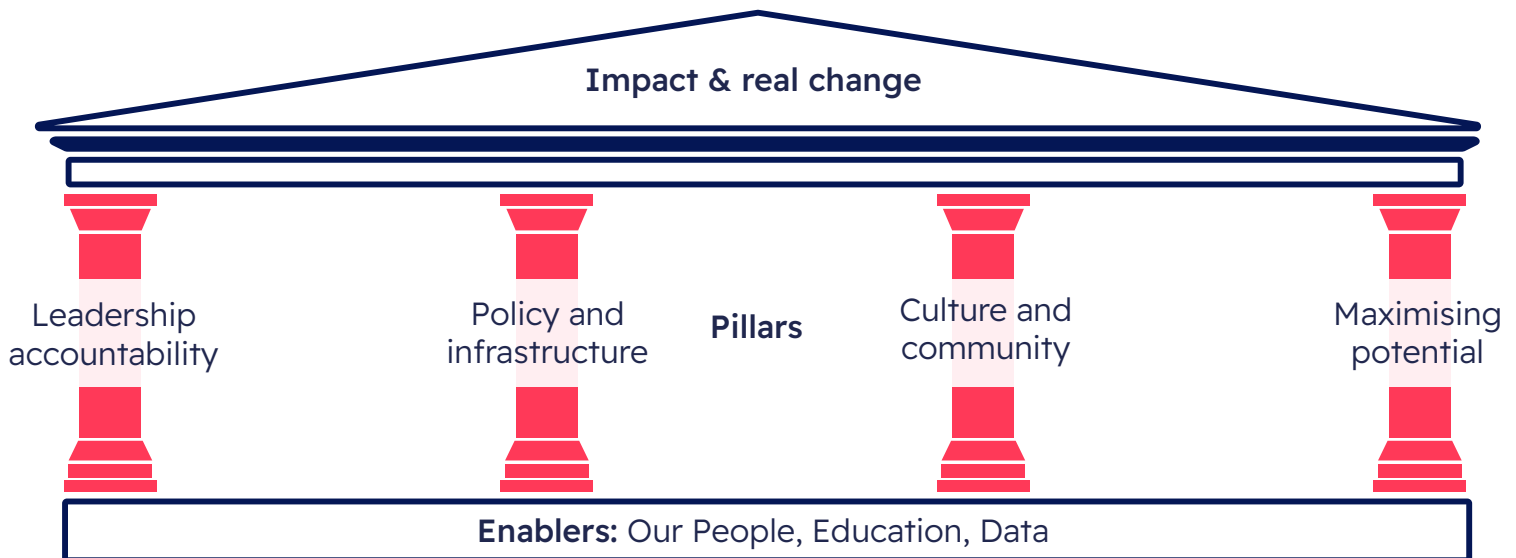
The best option, wherever possible, is to listen to people with a range of different needs at the start and accommodate them in any initial design. By creating environments without barriers in the first place, we greatly reduce the likelihood of anyone being excluded at any point.



As above, we will listen to diverse voices so that we don't unintentionally create barriers for our colleagues or our customers. The earlier we include these voices, the better able we are to address their needs and make our organisation truly inclusive.

Pillars of our approach

There are four pillars to our approach to diversity and inclusion. To create real change, we recognise that these pillars need to focus on our behaviours as an employer and service provider as well as fostering positive attitudes and engagement from all colleagues.



Leadership accountability

Setting a clear direction and leading by example is essential to progress diversity and inclusion. This requires strong, visible commitment and action from senior leaders. Leaders need to be active allies, promoting diversity & inclusion and owning actions that will help RoS to become more diverse and inclusive.

Policy and infrastructure

In addition to accountable leaders, diversity and inclusion can only be progressed if the policies, procedures and infrastructure of our organisation is inclusive and accessible. We consider the diverse circumstances and experiences of all colleagues to ensure that these core elements of our organisation can meet their needs. This includes our approach to carrying out Equality Impact Assessments.

Culture and community

All colleagues should feel that they are welcome at RoS and respected by their colleagues, line managers and senior leaders. We want everyone to feel valued for their uniqueness while also feeling a sense of belonging. They should know that they have a voice in decision-making across the organisation. We will listen so that we understand and consider the actual needs of our colleagues and don't act on incorrect assumptions. We want our organisation to be based on kindness, tolerance and acceptance of all.

Maximising potential

We want to ensure that we attract and retain a diverse workforce and benefit from their experiences, perspectives and skills. We want to provide the same sense of welcome, safety and belonging to all our existing and future colleagues so that everyone can maximise their potential within RoS. This means that our people are equipped to deliver in their roles, supported to perform to their best and able to thrive. We believe that this will also allow us to fulfil our potential as an organisation, ultimately ensuring we provide a better service for our customer.

Taking forward diversity and inclusion across our organisation

Our diversity and inclusion action plan is critical to taking forward this strategy. The plan captures all actions to advance diversity and inclusion across the organisation. We will develop the actions in partnership with the colleagues who will be responsible for their delivery. This will ensure shared ownership for our diversity and inclusion agenda, including input from our Trade Union, PCS.

There are two key enablers that will help us to effectively take forward our diversity and inclusion agenda.

- A co-ordinated structure of D&I groups that bring **our people** together so that we can direct and deliver our agenda and support our colleagues
- Continual **education** to build the knowledge, understanding and ability of our colleagues to progress diversity and inclusion

Accurate and robust **data** will also enable this work, in relation to tracking our progress and measuring our impact.

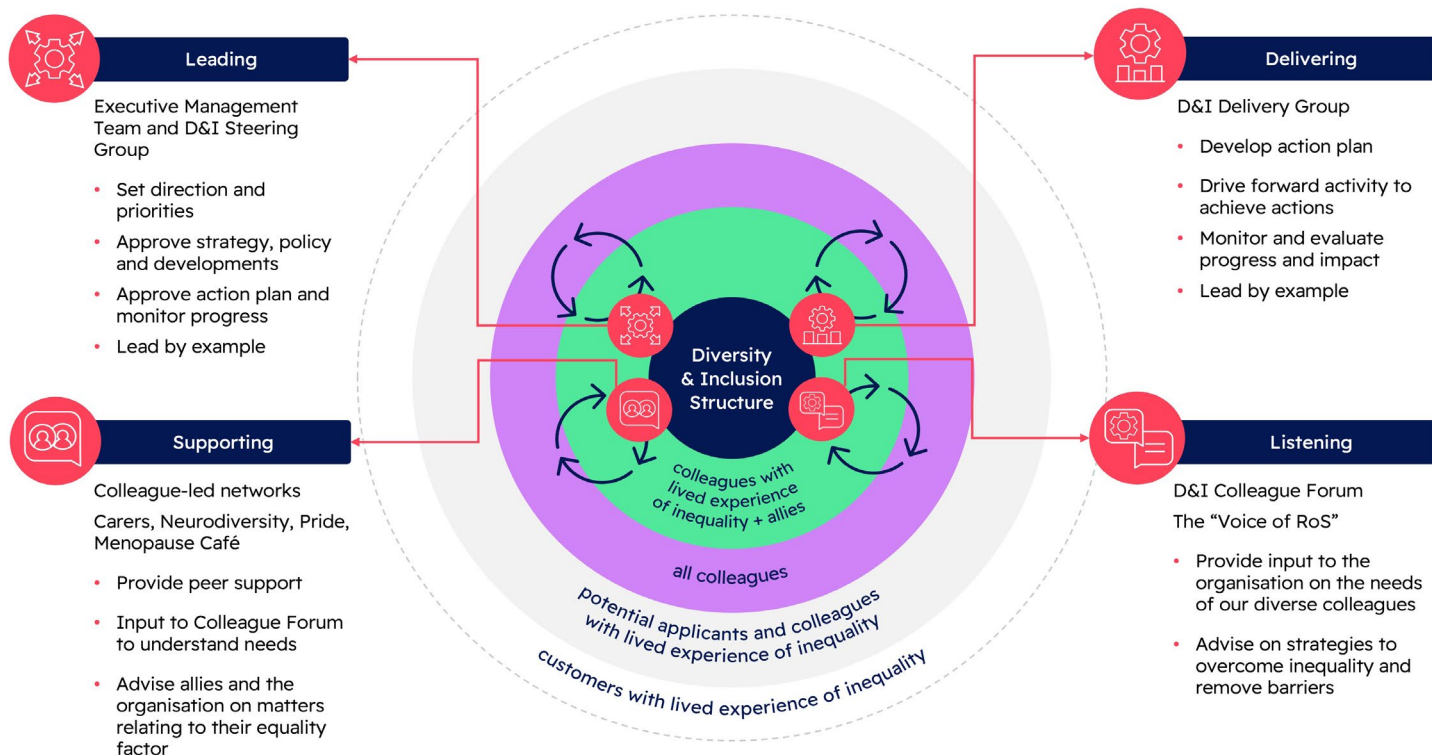
Our people

Every colleague in RoS has a role to play in advancing diversity and inclusion and we have developed a Diversity and Inclusion Structure to support this. Our structure is designed to cover four key elements of taking forward our diversity and inclusion agenda:

- Leading – our Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group and our Executive Management Team provide leadership and direction for the agenda
- Delivering – our Diversity and Inclusion Delivery Group is responsible for developing and taking forward our action plan
- Listening – our Diversity and Inclusion Colleague Forum provides the ‘voice of RoS’ and we engage with this group to better understand the needs of our colleagues
- Supporting – our colleague-led networks, focused on specific equality factors, provide peer support, as well as advice and guidance for allies and the organisation on how best to support them

Our structure is intended to connect those with responsibility for diversity and inclusion to all colleagues across RoS. This includes senior leadership, colleagues with lived experience, allies and all those who work for RoS.

Our Diversity and Inclusion Ecosystem



Education

We will continue to ensure that our colleagues have the learning they need to understand, and support, the needs of those with protected characteristics.

Education is also key to equipping our colleagues to effectively contribute to the groups in our Diversity and Inclusion Structure and our overall agenda. We will increase knowledge and understanding of the practical strategies and actions that can meet the needs of equality groups.

We will also support our colleagues with any professional development they need to contribute effectively to their group. This may include their confidence to discuss inequality, share and listen to lived experience and provide effective peer support.

Measuring our progress and evaluating our impact

In 2022, we highlighted that we are on a journey of improvement in relation to diversity and inclusion. A key element of evolving our approach was to better define this journey and ensure we can track our progress and evaluate our impact.

Defining our diversity and inclusion journey

Our journey is defined by understanding the change we want to see across our organisation. The change that will allow us to achieve our goal of being a diverse and inclusive organisation for our colleagues and customers. To ensure this change is effective and sustainable, we recognise that it will take time and involve small steps. As such, we have developed maturity models to articulate the key milestones in our journey.

Since our pillars of diversity and inclusion focus on both our behaviours as an organisation and the buy in from our people, we have developed two maturity models to track our progress against both these key elements of change.

Our organisation

This model will allow us to track our progress against the organisational behaviours we are seeking to change.

As a public sector organisation, a key step in our journey is to ensure that we are compliant with our legal duties under the Equality Act (2010). However, we want to go beyond this to provide a fully inclusive working environment for all colleagues.

Change takes time and is more likely to be sustainable if we make steady progress, recognising small steps along the way. As such, our model includes five stages with each stage building upon the one before.

Different functions across RoS may be at different stages of this journey. The upcoming section on measuring our impact provides more detail on this.

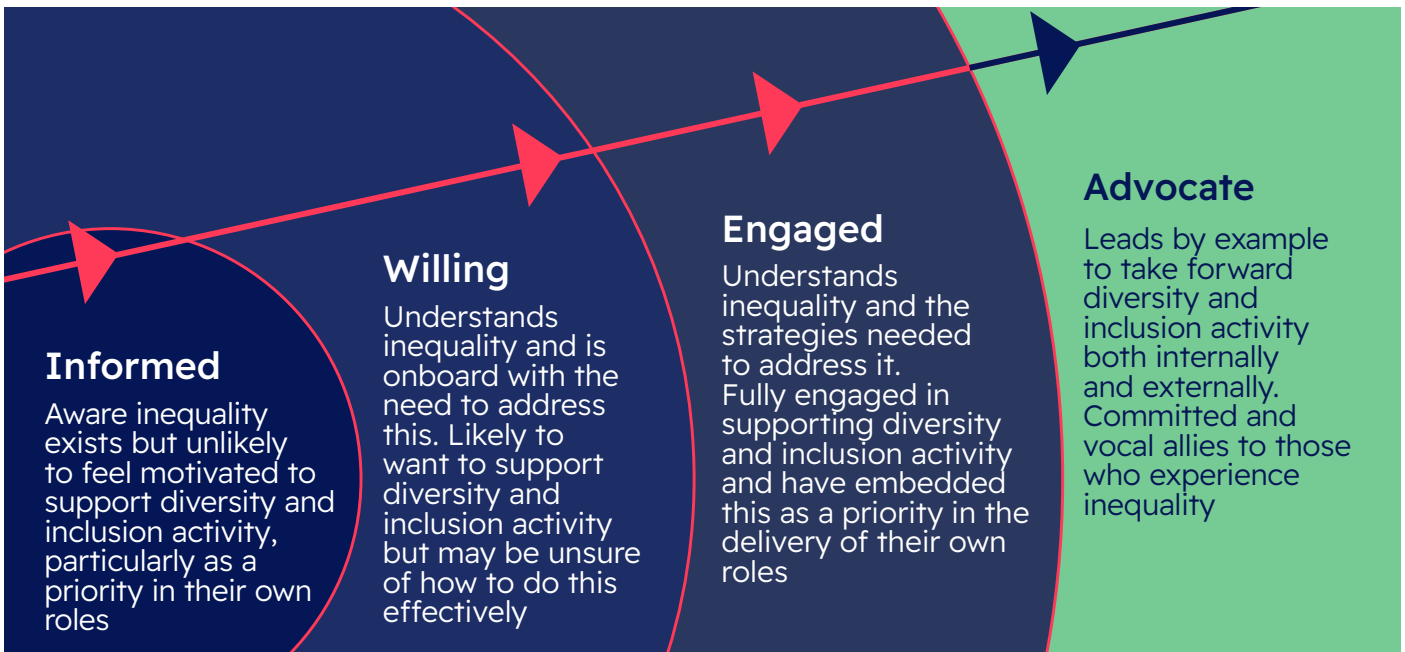


Our people

This model will allow us to track improvement in the buy-in of our colleagues to support our diversity and inclusion agenda.

Creating a positive culture and sense of community for those with protected characteristics requires understanding, positive attitudes, and support from all colleagues. People will naturally be at different stages in their awareness of inequality and their attitudes towards addressing this.

We will aim to ensure that we move all colleagues to a starting position of being informed and support them to reach the level of being an advocate.



Measuring our impact

It is essential that we have appropriate and robust data to measure our progress and evaluate our impact. Our available data includes HR and organisational data as well as survey findings, for example the Civil Service People Survey. We will continue to improve the data we have and ensure effective use of this to inform our activity.

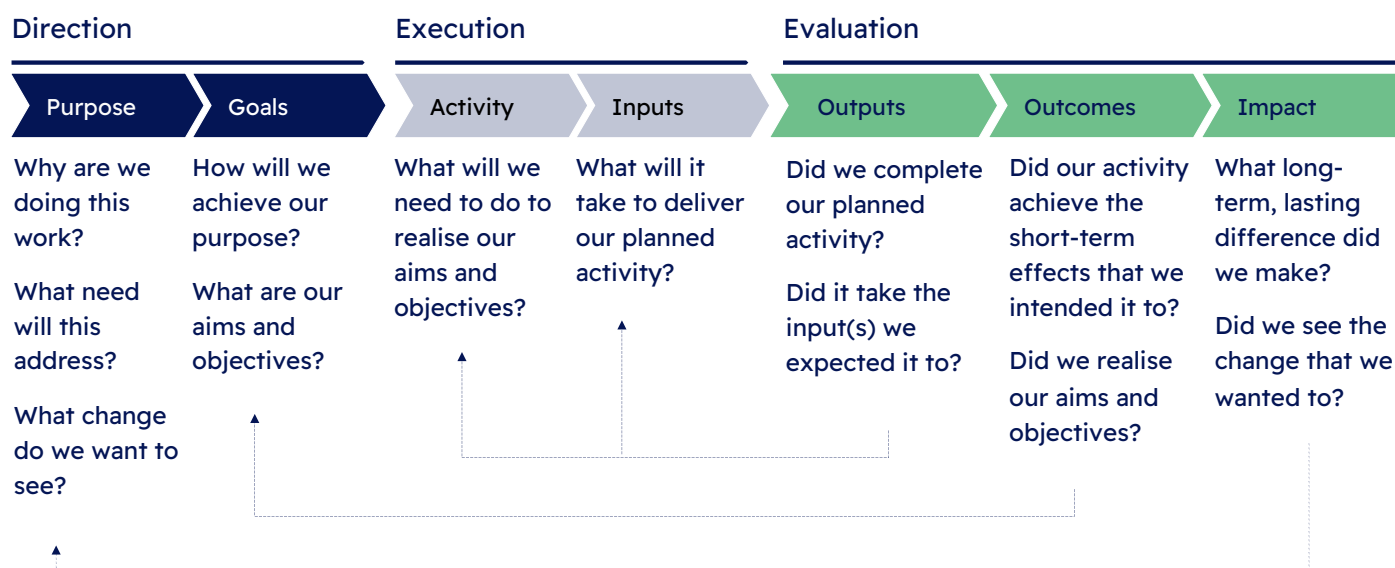
Measuring the impact of our actions

Each action in our plan will be measured to understand its individual impact and inform our future activity. This will also ensure we focus on what works and the actions that are the most efficient and effective in driving forward our agenda.

The combined impact of all our actions will also be monitored by our Diversity and Inclusion Delivery and Steering Groups. We have identified a set of key performance indicators to monitor on a 6-monthly basis and report on annually. These measures will allow us to track our overall progress. We will use this evidence to evaluate where we are in our journey and which stage of our maturity models we have reached.

Our evaluation strategy

The benefits that we deliver from our actions need to be considered within a strategy. The benefits and impact should relate back to our intended purpose and goals. We will also consider the input required to deliver each action so that we focus on efficiency as well as effectiveness.



Evaluating our impact in the wider context

To fully understand our progress, we also need to evaluate our impact within the external context in which we're working. As such, we will identify appropriate comparisons for our key performance indicators, such as census data, labour market information, and benchmarking from the Civil Service People Survey.

Reviewing our approach to diversity and inclusion

This strategy will be due for a full review in 2028. However, we acknowledge that the wider, external diversity and inclusion agenda can change quickly. At times, this can change our legal obligations. It can also advance our thinking and lead to the identification of better ways to addressing this agenda.

Each year, we will consider this strategy considering any external developments in diversity and inclusion. If required, we will account for these developments in our strategy and/or our implementation of it.

Every two years, we will produce an Equality and Diversity Mainstreaming Report. Again, the development of this report, particularly our engagement with colleagues may identify changes in our own internal priorities around diversity and inclusion. As such, every two years, our review of this strategy will consider any external and internal developments in diversity and inclusion.

This will ensure that our strategy remains appropriate and effective throughout its lifespan, reflecting the current reality and priorities in relation to diversity and inclusion.

