



EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGY 2020-2025

INTRODUCTION

Promoting equality of opportunity is important to the Aldgate Connect BID, we demonstrate this by our continued commitment to promoting and providing best practice under its remit in society including, albeit not exhaustively; as an employer, commissioner, promoter, celebrator of place, organiser and as part of the community. It displays our legal and moral obligations towards being an inclusive employer and part of society.

Aldgate Connect BID values the diversity and creative potential that employees from different backgrounds, skills and abilities bring to the workplace and across all projects and interventions conducted by the BID. Our EDI Policy goes beyond sound workplace practice and aims to treat all that we reach and influence fairly and with dignity and respect. Promoting and supporting equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace is an important aspect of all business practices and by doing so, we are valuing everyone within and across the organisation as an individual.

The effects of discrimination can have a significant impact on an individual's wellbeing, performance at work. A 'one size fits all' approach is never advisable, as the needs of all individuals differ particularly on the grounds of multiple protected characteristics (intersectionality), these experiences are distinct and often have heightened impact. Therefore, to reap the benefits of an equal and diverse workforce, it is vital for us to have an inclusive environment where everyone feels able to participate and achieve their potential. This Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy aims to go beyond legal compliance, it seeks to add value to all that we do.

WORKPLACE STRATEGY

The equality and inclusion strategy 2020-2025 sets out a vision for the Aldgate Connect BID to make concrete progress on equality and inclusion by achieving sustainable development goals through policy objectives and actions. An effective workplace strategy is vital in supporting our business objectives. As a result, Aldgate Connect BID will take the following relevant steps to implement and manage a successful Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy.

As an organisation, we believe that all individuals are important, and we will continue to ensure that we do not put anyone at a disadvantage. Regardless of one's identity or background, everyone deserves the opportunity to develop their skills and talents to their full potential, as well as work in a safe, supportive and inclusive environment. The following three key factors that are supported within our organisation that ensure the needs of individuals are met, whether through employment or within the delivery of the services that are provided:

1. **TALENT**

Employees who feel valued at their workplace are more likely to give their best contribution. Taking consideration of equality and diversity can aid the Aldgate Connect BID to develop an open and inclusive working culture.

The importance of equality, diversity and inclusion in recruiting and retaining the skills and talent we require has become increasingly apparent. Not only is designing appropriate and fair people practices important, it is also vital for us to create an open and inclusive working culture, in order to ensure employees, feel valued, respected and where contribution is recognised. This will only be delivered by us, by developing inclusive approaches to all employment policies and practices; we will aim to manage equality and diversity matters in ways that also support the business contexts.

2. **MARKET COMPETITIVENESS**

A diverse workforce has the ability to inform the development of new or enhanced products or services, open new market opportunities, improve market shares and broaden our Social Value commitment. Nonetheless, Aldgate Connect BID will continue to encourage different perspectives to be heard, so that every employee has the ability to use their voice and have a say.

3. **CORPORATE REPUTATION**

Social Value used to be considered as only referring to environmental issues. However, we are taking on a wider approach to Social Value and are considering the overall image of the Aldgate Connect BID as important in attracting and retaining both customers and employees.

POSITION AS A PLACE BASED ORGANISATION

As a Business Improvement District (BID), we recognise our place as influencers of the wider community of Aldgate. We want to ensure that Equality, Diversity and Inclusion are also enhanced and evident across all of the BID's projects and contributions to wider society, and not just the workplace. This will be evident across the following relevant projects and contributions (this list is not exhaustive):

a. **STEERING GROUPS AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE BOARD**

We will ensure that its steering groups are inclusive and have equal and diverse representation across them.

b. **CODE OF CONDUCT**

We will ensure that the code of conduct is met across all written and spoken communication, including marketing and promotion, as well as meetings and events.

c. **PROJECTS AND INTERVENTIONS**

We will make sure that all projects and contributions made by the BID are inclusive and reflective of a diverse range of viewpoints and ideas.

d. **EVENTS ACCESSIBILITY**

We will actively research and ensure that our events are easily accessible wherever possible.

e. **REPRESENTATION FROM DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS**

We ensure that we have awareness of the movements and viewpoints of those who are underrepresented. We will actively look for opportunities to aid their representation and help raise awareness.

f. **COMISSIONING AND PROCUREMENT OF SERVICES**

We will ensure that a non-discriminatory approach is undertaken, when commissioning or procuring services. In the procurement process, we will acknowledge the EDI practices of the businesses that work with us.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Aldgate Connect BID are working hard to ensure that there are processes in place to guarantee that no discrimination is taking place in the workplace, including but not limited to, age, disability, harassment and bullying, race, religion, sex discrimination and gender reassignment, sexual orientation discrimination or socio economic background. Professional advice and training will continue to be undertaken in order to ensure all measures are considered that meet with the EDI policy. The majority of adjustments are low-cost and simple to implement to allow people with disabilities to perform daily duties at work, but make a significant difference. Additionally, we are supporting and adhering to legislation such as the Equality Act 2010 to ensure full compliance.

RECRUITMENT

Equality, diversity and inclusion begins with recruitment. To ensure this we will:

- Consider all candidates solely on merit, against carefully considered, justifiable job/role requirements and competences.
- Ensure employees involved with recruitment receive the appropriate training including recent unconscious bias training.
- Ensure all role advertisements are welcoming to applicants from a diverse range of backgrounds.
- Avoid the stereotypes that only certain groups of people are suitable for particular jobs or roles.

OVERALL STRATEGY

1. Ensure that initiatives and policies have the support of the Managing Director and Directors.
2. Develop a culture of inclusion as a continuous process of improvement.
3. Develop a diversity strategy to support the achievement of business goals, including ways of addressing the diverse needs of businesses and how these can be further developed.
4. Focus on fairness and inclusion, ensuring that merit and competence are recognised.

5. Be mindful of conscious and unconscious biases.
6. Be familiar with legislation, policies, audits and consultations.
7. Design guidelines and provide training for line managers to support this EDI strategy.
8. Be respectful of all beliefs and preferences that may be influenced by national cultures and be mindful of how these might affect employees on a day-to-day basis.
9. Ensure clear, open and accessible communication channels.
10. Offer learning and development on the EDI policy for the team and the whole business community.

NEXT STEPS

In order to implement this strategy to benefit the teams and stakeholders, Aldgate Connect BID will:

1. Communicate the EDI policy to all employees, to ensure their knowledge of it.
2. Raise staff awareness and ensure a level of compliance through the provision of relevant training.
3. Ensure continuous development towards Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the workplace.
4. Create a thought process to ensure EDI is being included in all events and activities provided by the Consultancy and develop opportunities for feedback.
5. Working to understand other organisations issues and challenges and learn from working collectively.
6. There is potential to undertake an EDI survey within the stakeholders/businesses, which will set out what they would expect to see under this umbrella.
7. Arrange an informal EDI workshop for the business community, with a key speaker to educate on the topic.
8. Scope out the objectives for the following 12 months that will be updated annually.
9. Create and provide a diversity questionnaire for recruitment, which will be held anonymously with full confidentiality.