

Our EDI Strategy

Representation, belonging and impact





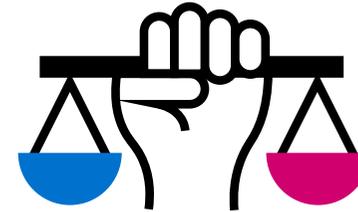
Why do we need an EDI Strategy?

Our SNG EDI strategy is all about creating a workplace where everyone – colleagues, customers, and partners – feels like they belong. It's part of our bigger mission to be a socially responsible and forward-thinking organisation that truly values equality and inclusivity.



Why now?

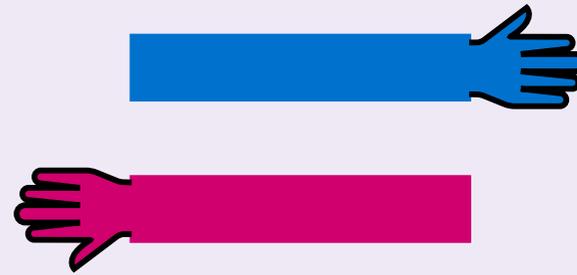
We're going through a lot of change, and while structures, systems and processes are a huge part of the integration, we also need to build a culture of inclusivity and trust. We want to make sure everyone feels valued and included, regardless of who they are, what they can do and where they come from. By putting EDI at the heart of this, we can create a sense of unity and make sure that the new SNG is fair and welcoming to all.



What's EDI all about?

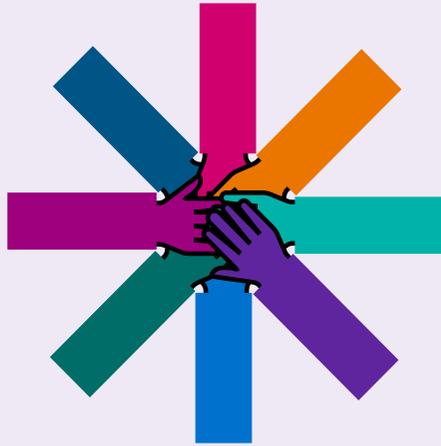
EDI stands for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. It's all about making sure everyone's treated fairly and given the same opportunities, no matter who they are or where they come from. It's also about getting rid of discrimination and bias, and making sure people are respected for their differences.

Let's break it down...



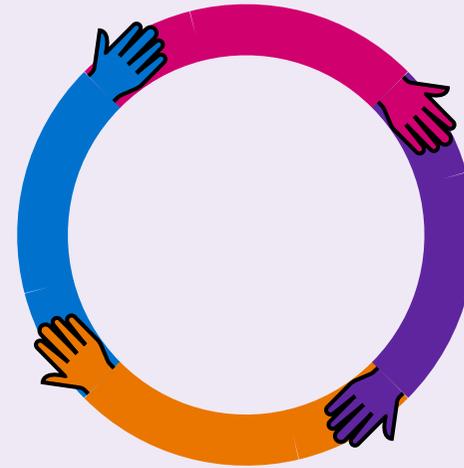
**Equality is essentially
about fairness.**

We want to make sure no-one gets treated unfairly because of things like their age, gender, race or any of the other characteristics that make them who they are. It's not just about treating people the same but also making sure that everyone has the same opportunities, especially if they might be at a disadvantage.



Diversity is about celebrating our differences!

Whether it's cultural, personal or professional, diversity brings all sorts of perspectives and experiences. It's all about having a variety of backgrounds, abilities and ideas that make us stronger, more creative and better at what we do.



Inclusion means creating a place where everyone feels that they belong.

It's about making sure everyone's voice is heard and valued. To do that, we need to be aware of our own biases and work on managing them so that everyone can feel comfortable and part of the team.

You might have heard of the term 'protected characteristics' but what does it mean?

There are certain characteristics that are protected by law, which means it's illegal to treat someone unfairly because of them. These include:

- **Age**
- **Disability**
- **Gender reassignment**
(someone changing their gender from male to female, or vice-versa)
- **Marriage and civil partnership**
- **Pregnancy and maternity**
- **Race**
- **Religion or belief**
- **Sex**
- **Sexual orientation**
(who someone is attracted to, romantically or sexually)

Discrimination, bullying, harassment and victimisation based on any of these is wrong and can even be a crime.



How does our EDI Strategy fit in?

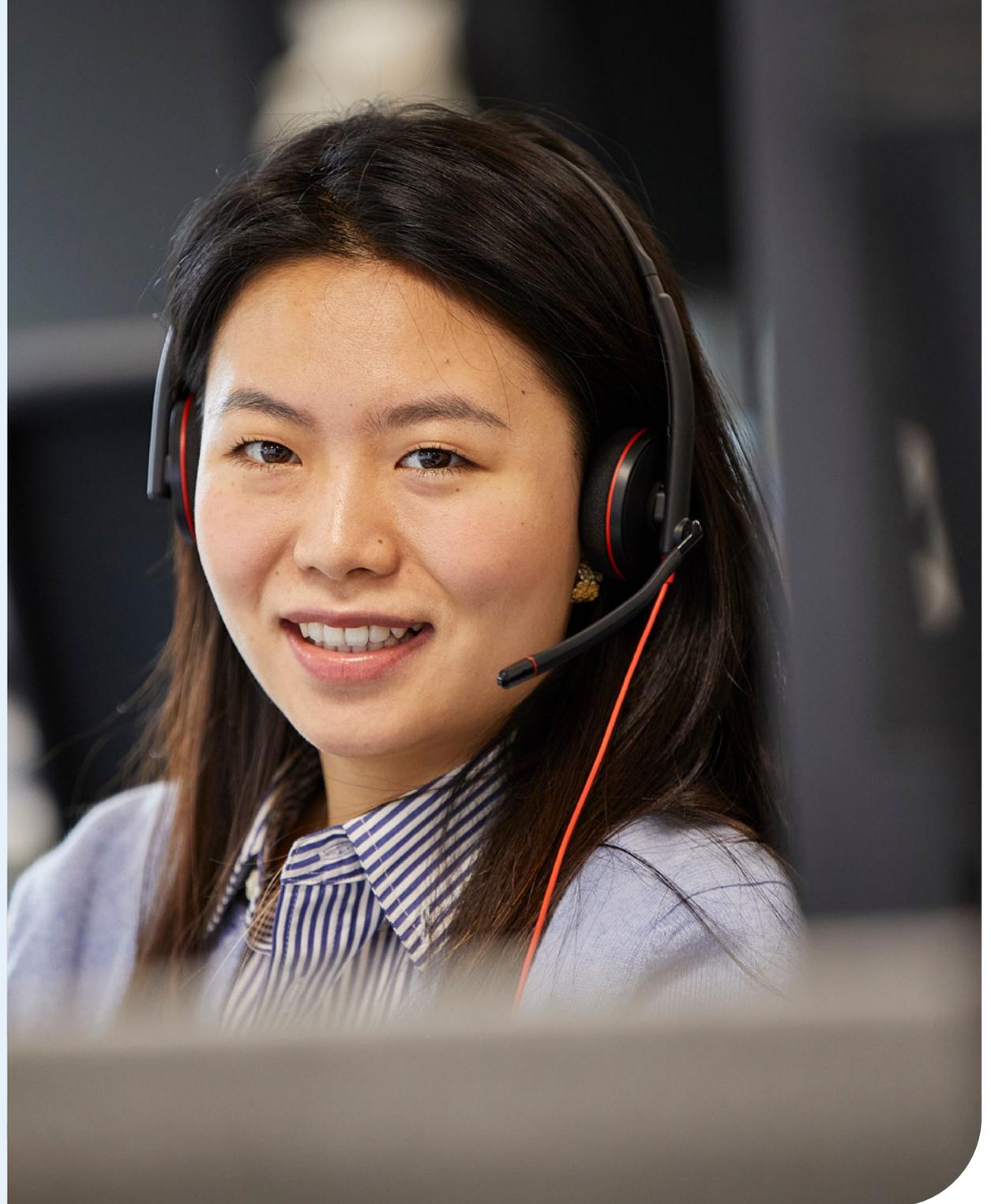
SNG's EDI Strategy directly links to other supporting strategies, examples of this include:

- **Great Place to Work (People) Strategy:** creating an environment where our people feel valued, empowered, and equipped to deliver exceptional outcomes for our customers and stakeholders
- **Better Together (Customer Experience) Strategy:** Building a better future together, leaving no-one behind
- By aligning with broader supporting strategies, the EDI strategy serves as a springboard for a unified **Total Experience (TX)** approach in SNG that delivers positive outcomes for colleagues and customers alike.



Building on our legacy foundations

- The previous EDI strategy from Sovereign Housing Association and Network Home's 10-Point Plan provided the joint foundations for this new combined approach to EDI at Sovereign Network Group.
- By integrating these established principles, the new strategy builds on their successes, ensuring continuity and using the best practices that have already driven positive change.
- Core elements, such as inclusive leadership programmes, data-driven decision-making, and equitable service delivery, have been carried forward, refined, and scaled to reflect the expanded scope of SNG.



The bigger picture – what's happening externally?

SNG operates in a dynamic environment where political pressures, economic challenges, and rising social expectations demand strong leadership.

With advancing technology, strict legal requirements, and environmental factors, we need to embrace innovation while ensuring digital and housing inclusion remains a priority.

Reputation is also a key driver – SNG's ability to lead on EDI, build customer trust, and attract talent will cement its position as a sector leader.

Embedding EDI at every level isn't just a strategic ambition; it's essential for delivering on our mission in a rapidly evolving external landscape.



“As we move into 2025 and beyond, organisations are entering a defining era for equity, diversity and inclusion. Evolving legislation, heightened societal expectations, and an increasingly polarised global climate are reshaping workplace priorities. Leaders must adopt a strategic and forward-thinking approach to meet these challenges head-on.”

(Inclusive Employers 2024)

Aligning with the G15 Ethnic Diversity Pledge

As a signatory of the G15 Ethnicity Pledge, we are committed to fully aligning our EDI strategy with its principles, ensuring that equality, diversity, and inclusion remain at the heart of everything we do.

Our focus on **improving workforce representation** reinforces the pledge's aim of increasing diversity in leadership by establishing strong talent pipelines and embedding accountability in hiring and progression.

By **building an inclusive culture**, we are embedding EDI into behaviours and performance to create a workplace where everyone belongs.

Additionally, our commitment to **enhancing customer and community impact** ensures that our services are fair, equitable, accessible, and reflective of the communities we serve.

Through these actions, we are not only meeting our pledge commitments but actively driving meaningful, lasting change in our organisation and beyond.



What's our EDI Strategy?

Building on the strengths of our two merging organisations, our strategy has three main focuses:



01 Improving colleague representation

We want more diversity at all levels, especially leadership. And we want our workforce to be representative of the communities we work with too. We want to see more people with different ages, religions, ethnic backgrounds and genders, as well as people with differing abilities. We'll be offering more early-career opportunities, making sure hiring and succession plans are fair, and holding managers accountable for promoting EDI.



02 Building an inclusive culture

Building an inclusive culture is all about us creating an inclusive 'way we do things around here'. We'll weave this into our values, behaviours, employee engagement and performance so that EDI is a part of how we work every day.



03 Enhancing customer and community impact

We're making sure that our services are accessible and meet the needs of diverse communities. We'll also be aligning our partnerships and procurement practices to EDI values.

The strategy will roll out in three phases over the next three years, and we'll track progress along the way.

**You'll know
we've achieved
this because
you'll see...**

1

Improving colleague representation

- Increased senior representation
- Developed diverse pipelines
- Enhanced attraction strategies
- Fair recruitment practices

2

Building an inclusive culture

- EDI principles embedded into leadership
- An inclusive environment established through awareness, and accountability
- Intersectionality and allyship promoted and the voices of under-represented groups amplified

3

Enhanced customer & community impact

- An improvement in fair and equitable access to housing services for all customers
- Data informed equitable service delivery improvements delivered across SNG
- Supplier partnerships aligned with EDI
- Improved Employer Value Proposition (EVP) visibility



Who's responsible for EDI?

Everyone plays a role in making this happen! But we'll also have leaders, EDI ambassadors and a steering committee to make sure everything is going smoothly and in the right direction. Plus, we'll engage with customers, partners, suppliers and the wider community to make sure we're all in this together.

How will we track progress?

We'll keep an eye on how we're doing by using audits, feedback from colleagues and customers, and performance indicators. We'll set clear goals and update everyone regularly on where we're at.

The three phases of our EDI Strategy

Consolidation.

2025/26

First up, we'll focus on making improvements to what we've already got. This includes expanding early-career programmes, increasing diversity at a leadership level and ensuring our recruitment practices are inclusive. We'll also run training for senior leaders on creating an inclusive culture, launch an all-colleague EDI survey and set up forums for EDI ambassadors to support our initiatives.

Strengthen.

2025/26

Next, we'll expand mentoring programmes and leadership pathways, focusing on under-represented groups. We'll strengthen local partnerships to attract diverse talent, and we'll start publishing annual EDI reports to show our progress. We'll also keep working on making our culture more inclusive by offering training for all managers and ensuring that all colleagues and EDI networks are supported.

Evolve.

2027/28

By this stage, we'll have EDI fully embedded in our workforce plans, and we'll start sharing our EDI progress with the public through our annual report. We'll also focus on promoting inclusivity in housing services, community engagement, and expanding our recruitment efforts to show that SNG is a leader in diversity and inclusion.

So that's the big picture! We're committed to making sure that everyone, no matter who they are, has an equal opportunity to thrive at SNG.

How will you play your part?



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Sovereign Network Group is the trading name of Sovereign Housing Association Limited, which is charitable.
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