

# Construction Leadership Forum

## Equity and Inclusion Action Plan 2022 – 2026

“Six by 2026”

# Introduction

## Welcome to the National Construction Equity and Inclusion Plan 2022– 2026

In a post COVID, uncertain world, we face new economic and social challenges of an unprecedented scale that have the potential to impact our commercial success; however, we must not allow ourselves to be deflected from the task of addressing the historical inequality legacies that exist within our sector. Achieving greater equity and inclusion within our organisations is part of our plan for success, we know that companies with greater equity and inclusion do better, have a healthier and more engaged workforce and demonstrate greater diversity of thought. It provides greater connection to our stakeholders, shareholders, customers, and employees and is central to our core objective of driving innovation and performance across the Scottish construction sector.

As an industry we have achieved so much, and we have many companies who have made considerable progress.

Our intention has been not to replicate or replay the evidence base of sector challenges that we all acknowledge exist, but to use this existing data, evidence base and our collective experience to identify solutions, to identify what works best for construction in Scotland and to create new innovative policies and programmes that will drive real and lasting change in equity and inclusion across the Scottish construction sector.

We will also seek to offer greater support to those smaller and micro businesses within our sector, recognising the unique challenges they face post covid and the significance of their contribution to the sector and economy. Sharing knowledge and best practice on equity and inclusion will benefit us all.

We have identified 6 core aims that we believe will address the immediate challenges within our sector. Our intention is to deliver this plan over the next three years, to set specific measurement outcomes and commit leadership support to make it happen. We see this as a dynamic process, recognising that we must continue to respond to commercial pressures, technological advances and changing workplaces and practice. However, our focus and commitment are absolute – to make the Scottish Construction Sector an employer of choice and an industry that represents all the communities in which we operate.

Chair

CLF Leadership Group

# Our Challenge

The Scottish Construction sector needs to change. We know this. Our research, evidence and stakeholder feedback has identified those areas where we need to make better progress and where we need to address systemic inequalities that exist within the construction sector. These challenges are not unique to Scotland. We know equity and inclusion are a focus for global and UK companies and organisations. We also recognise that we cannot drive change on our own. It will require the Scottish Construction sector to work with Governments, local authorities, regulators, educators, the recruitment sector, media and with our workforce and customers to deliver the change we all want to see.

We can however, work together as individual companies and organisations towards a set of shared goals and a shared aspiration to reduce inequity in our industry in Scotland.

This Equity and Inclusion Action Plan, sets out our commitment to achieve 6 strategic objectives by 2026. These objectives have been identified through discussion with companies within the sector, through detailed research and are evidence based. They build on the progress we have achieved so far and will over time, create a solid platform from which we can improve equality and diversity in the Scottish Construction sector.

## Evidence

- 15% of construction workers in Scotland are female
- 1.6% of construction workers are from an ethnic minority background
- Only 2% of people would consider construction as career sector of choice
- Gender Pay Gap of 23%
- 10.5% disabled workers
- 33% of construction workforce are aged 50+
- 2.7% of starts in Modern Apprentices are female

## Our Vision

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To create a construction sector in Scotland, where everyone can bring their true selves to work. Where opportunity and career development are open to all, where businesses and organisations work together to challenge inequity, share best practice, knowledge and what works well. An industry committed to collecting data, evidence and working to achieve a shared set of equity and inclusion objectives.

Our aim is to make Scottish Construction the preferred career choice for our people, our customers, and our stakeholders.

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# What Our Organisations Told Us

We have listened, challenged ourselves and gathered industry wide opinions to determine what do we need to do, when and how.

A number of strategic themes emerged from our research and discussions, these have been incorporated into this action plan and are highlighted below.

## “It starts at the top”

The importance of visible and committed leadership, culture and behaviours was a consistent finding across the research and discussions. To make progress, change cultures and behaviours and achieve widespread buy in to transformation change in equity and inclusion requires committed leadership across the sector.

## “Working to Survive”

The pressures of covid and the external economic environment remains a key focus for many SMEs and micro businesses. The action plan needs to recognise that 99% of businesses do not currently have the capacity or resources necessary to prioritise equity and inclusion as much as they would wish to.

## “Can’t be what you can’t see”

The need for visible role models across all protected characteristics is also needed, where employees can see and recognise the career progression and opportunities that exist, and which will also reflect the inclusive nature of the sector. Public image and reputation is also a key factor in attracting diverse talent into the sector.

## “What gets measured, gets done”

The need for accurate, timely and reliable data was identified. Leaders within the sector need to set clear targets and objectives and measure progress against equity and inclusion objectives as they would in any other business area. The sector also needs to hold itself and others to account in delivering this strategy.

## “Call it out”

Employees should not be afraid to call out bad or unacceptable behaviours in their workplaces. Organisations need to have open and transparent cultures, which operate zero tolerance in areas of discrimination, and which actively support and promote diversity at all levels, be it by protected characteristic or neuro divergent thinking.

## “Procurement, procurement, procurement”

The issue of procurement was a consistent theme across many of the sector discussions, recognising that whilst the Scottish Government and local authorities currently use public procurement to advance equality of opportunity more could be done through public procurement to advance equality and achieve wider social benefits, recognising that public procurement accounts for over half of construction spend in Scotland. The role and value of incentives in changing workplace behaviours was widely recognised, but also the need to support companies towards greater compliance with procurement guidelines, ensuring that procurement was not a disincentive or competitive disadvantage to smaller organisations.

Consideration was given to the recommendations of the Fair Work Commission in Construction which has provided a detailed action plan as to how public investment can be leveraged more effectively.

### “Don’t reinvent the wheel”

Significant investment has already been made in developing toolkits, online resources, and training materials to support businesses. Great clarity on the business benefits of equity and inclusion needs to be given and easier access to materials, expertise and signposting to existing services provided. Raising levels of awareness across the sector was also considered important.

### “One size doesn’t fit all”

Recruitment, local employment supply chains and attraction of talent emerged as themes of regional variations across Scotland. Inclusive employment and recruitment challenges are even greater within rural or non-urban areas. Recognition needs to be given to the nature of the unique locational challenges faced by some businesses and specific local support packages that may need to be developed to assist businesses of all sizes in these remoter areas.

### “Important to make a start”

A key theme emerging across this work has been the desire to get started. Recognising that organisations are all at various stages on their equity and inclusion journey, the importance of making a start was consistently highlighted across organisations.

Detailed findings from our desktop research, three focus groups, two case studies and in-depth interviews are contained within the Equity and Inclusion Report.

# Our Success So Far

Despite challenges considerable progress has been made by companies within the Scottish Construction sector over recent years.

Progress has been made in many companies employing over 250 staff and also amongst some smaller companies in the SME sector. We know many of these companies and organisations are already sharing their expertise and knowledge, we intend to encourage and accelerate this experience transfer to many more companies and industry supply chains.

Through our research, case studies and discussion with industry representatives we have identified a number of best practice areas that can be shared across companies and with their supply chains. Details are contained within the Equity and Inclusion Report.

Acknowledging what is already happening within the sector and sharing knowledge, experience and learning will help support those with least resources and those at the initial stages of their equity and inclusion journey

We have incorporated these success factors into our six strategic aims.

## Best Practice Success Factors Identified from Case Studies and Focus Groups:

1.Visible and Committed Leadership

2.Culture and Behaviour

3.Staff Engagement

4.Training

5.Fair Recruitment Practice

6.Promotion and Retention

7.Monitoring, Measurement and Evaluation



# Our Six Aims

We have listened, consulted, and researched across our sector in Scotland, asking companies and organisations where they would like to see change, where they believe we can make greatest progress in addressing equity and inclusion. From this detailed analysis and understanding, we have identified six key aims that we will be our focus over the next four years.

## Aim 1: Leadership Culture and Image

To create and promote an inclusive and equitable working environment for all our people, that challenges poor behaviours and demands better.

We will be open and transparent and underpin our commitment by agreeing and publishing an industry wide equity and diversity mission statement.

## Aim 2: Compliance and Knowledge Transfer

Share best practice and success across the sector and supply chain. Recognising we will all achieve more by working together to challenge inequality in our workplaces. We will look to signpost and support SME's to access existing training and development resources. Where we identify gaps, we will develop tools to support businesses.

We will publish an annual report highlighting our progress.

## Aim 3: Data and Evidence

Build a shared data and evidence bank, enabling agreed benchmarks and measures to be established across the sector, against which we will drive progress and measure change. Recognising our sector is complex and at various stages in their equity and diversity journey.

## Aim 4: Education and Training

Commit to ensuring we have equity and diversity at the heart of our industry wide education and training programmes and in our businesses, representing all the communities in which we operate. Collaborating with partners and stakeholders who can offer the expert support we need.

## Aim 5: Recruitment, Retention and Promotion

Be recognised as a sector of choice for our people, our potential recruits, and future generations, with opportunity for all at the core of our businesses.

## Aim 6: Employee Engagement and Communications

We will listen to our people.

We will put in place a bi-annual sector wide equity and inclusion survey, which establishes national benchmarks and measures our progress in driving change, and which monitors the sentiment and perceptions of our employees.

# Equity and Inclusion Plan 2022 – 2026

	Action	Measure	Timescale	Who
<b>Strategic Aim 1: Leadership, Culture, and Image</b>				
To create and promote an inclusive and equitable working environment for all our people, that challenges poor behaviours and demands better. We will be open and transparent and underpin our commitment by agreeing and publishing an industry wide equity and diversity mission statement				
<b>Commitment to address equity and inclusion</b>	Agreed and Shared Industry Mission Statement agreed by Leadership team	Statement published on company websites and recruitment materials of all 250+ employers in sector	2022	Leadership Group Companies 250+ employees
		Improve awareness and uptake on existing Equity and Inclusion online toolkits for SME's and micro businesses. Ensure process in place to signpost businesses to free, accessible information and to support organisations and online resources	2022- 2023	Leadership Group

<b>Improved Industry external Image</b>	National Sector wide communications campaign to promote Equity and Inclusion	Improved perception and image measures achieved in sector wide tracking surveys	2023 – 2024	Leadership Group Companies 250+ employees
	Annual Construction Sector Equity and Diversity Recognition Awards	Number of entries and best practice case studies submitted	2022– 2023	Leadership Group Companies 250+ employees SME's Micro Businesses
<b>Strategic Aim 2: Compliance and Knowledge Transfer</b>				
Share best practice and success across the sector and supply chain. Recognising we will all achieve more by working together to challenge inequality in our workplaces. We will publish an annual report highlighting our progress				
<b>Ensure Equity and Diversity Action Plan 2022 – 2026 Compliance</b>	Mainstream project steering group into permanent sector Equity and Diversity Expert Group	Monitor progress on Equity and Diversity Action Plan 2022-2026, reporting on 6 monthly <u>basis</u> to Leadership Group	2022 – 2026	Leadership Group
<b>Share best practice, insights, and knowledge across the sector</b>	Maintain and develop the virtual Equity and Diversity Virtual Resource Centre. Providing access to all	Number of companies accessing information and insights or requesting additional support from the		Leadership Group

	companies to support their equity and inclusion activities	Construction Innovation Group		
	Maximise equity and inclusion progress through procurement opportunities.	Work with sector partners to raise awareness and use of existing procurement support tools	2023 – 2025	Leadership Group
	Establish an Annual Construction Equity and Inclusion Conference to bring industry wide professionals together to share best practice and exchange knowledge	Equity and Inclusion Conference launched, and calendar dates agreed for annual event rotating between Aberdeen, Edinburgh, and Glasgow	2023 – 2024 then annually	Leadership Group
<b>Strategic Aim 3: Data and Evidence</b>				
Build a shared data and evidence bank, enabling agreed benchmarks and measures to be established across the sector, against which we will drive progress and measure change. Recognising our sector is complex and at various stages in their equity and diversity journey				
<b>Agree national equity and inclusion measures and targets</b>	Build sector wide equity and inclusion people measures	Collect data on equity and inclusion from companies employing 250+ staff and publish industry wide information and progress on an annual basis on key industry equity indicators – race, gender pay gap, disability, LGBTI and age.	2023 – 2024	Leadership Group

Strategic Aim 4: Education and Training				
Commit to ensuring we have equity and diversity at the heart of our industry wide education and training programmes and in our businesses, representing all the communities in which we operate. Collaborating with partners and stakeholders who can offer the expert support we need.				
<b>Continue to work with our partners to promote construction as career of choice for school leavers, college, and university graduates</b>	Support educationalists, skills agencies, and trade bodies to promote sector wide career opportunities Establish equity and diversity measures for education and recruitment channels	Increase in range of diversity measures for candidates entering education and training opportunities	2022 – 2026	Leadership Group
Strategic Aim 5: Recruitment, Retention and Promotion				
Be recognised as a sector of choice for our people, our potential recruits, and future generations, with opportunity for all at the core of our businesses.				
<b>Establish national equity and inclusion advertising and recruitment standards</b>	Develop a recruitment toolkit to be used by large, SME and micro businesses to support their equity and inclusion recruitment and retention programmes. Linking to existing toolkits such as Equate, FIR and Inclusive Practice materials	Number of SME and Micro businesses using the recruitment and retention toolkit,  Increase in diversity of candidates entering the sector as measured against baseline	2023 – 2024  2023 – 2024	Leadership Group

	Develop a national "Equity and Inclusion Employer" accreditation system which aligns with "Considerate Contractor Scheme" and display on all construction sites	Number of businesses successfully complying with accreditation requirements and displaying award	2025 – 2026	
<b>Strategic Aim 6: Employee Engagement and Communications</b>				
We will listen to our people. We will put in place a bi-annual sector wide equity and inclusion survey, which establishes national benchmarks and measures our progress in driving change, and which monitors the sentiment and perceptions of our employees.				
National Construction Sector Employee Survey to be developed and implemented	National research online survey to identify workforce attitudes, behaviours and views of equity and inclusion in the sector	National set of workforce benchmark measures on equity and inclusion to be established	2023 – 2024	Leadership Group Companies 250+ employees
	Roll out of online attitude survey to SME and micro businesses		2024 – 2025	SME and micro businesses

## Next Steps

We acknowledge that to achieve the change we all want to see will take time. We also recognise that across our sector, companies are at quite various stages in their equity and inclusion journeys. However, we believe that our Six Aims are achievable for each of us and for the sector by 2026. Some may get there sooner than others, some will require more help and support from our stakeholders, partners and from within the industry itself but the crucial factor is that we make a start. Recognising that our commercial success and the futures of a new generation of construction workers are dependent upon us delivering change.

The work starts now. We have set ourselves the ambitious target to deliver our strategic aims by 2026, we will now ensure we make that happen.



We would like to thank the following companies and organisations for their support and contributions to this work:

Steering group members:

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Case Studies

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In-depth Interviews

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