

ukactive

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan
2025/26





More people
More active
More often

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan 2025/26

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Our Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan



ukactive exists to improve the health of the nation by getting more people, more active, more often. ukactive provides outstanding membership services and facilitates partnerships for a broad range of organisations, all of which support our vision and has a role to play in achieving that goal.

The physical activity sector plays an essential role in narrowing the disparities and inequalities faced by people today, no matter their age, ability, or background. Our role at ukactive is to best support the **industry's growth** and ensure the sector can provide services that are accessible to all members of society. For this to happen, we must ensure our services and provisions are equally accessed, enjoyed and participated in by all so that the benefits of physical activity are felt across the entire population

We recognise our unique potential and position to showcase and inspire equality, diversity and inclusion across the sector, and our Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan is our ambition to be reflective of society and the communities that the sector serves. As a membership organisation, we have the responsibility to role model this commitment and be transparent in our intent, alongside our support to progress the equality diversity and inclusion agenda across the sector.

Huw Edwards, CEO



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Who we are

About ukactive

ukactive exists to improve the health of the nation by getting more people, more active, more often. ukactive provides services and facilitates partnerships for a broad range of organisations, all of which support our vision and have a role to play in achieving that goal.

We serve over 4,000 members and partners from across the public, private and third sectors, from multinational giants to local voluntary community groups. We do so by facilitating partnerships, campaigning, and providing outstanding membership services.



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Our Mission and Vision

Our long-standing and uncompromising vision is to get more people, more active, more often. We are committed to improving the health of the nation through promoting active lifestyles.

We achieve this by facilitating big impact partnerships, campaigning and providing world class membership services. We exist to serve any organisation with a role in getting more people, more active, more often.

We provide a supportive, professional and innovative platform for our partners to succeed in achieving their goals and create the conditions in which our sector can grow.

We are committed to:

- Improving the health of the nation
- Supporting organisations that promote physical activity
- Helping to reduce the pressure on our NHS

Our responsibilities are:

- To protect, inform and advise our members
- To represent and champion our members
- To help our members grow

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement (internal – ukactive People Plan / Strategy)

To our staff, board, committees and councils:

ukactive is a place where everyone has the opportunity to work, develop and succeed, irrespective of their background, age or ability.

We aspire to be a community where diversity and inclusion is celebrated, all feel engaged, valued and supported within a collaborative working environment.

We believe that doing this enables all to do their best work, meaning ukactive is successful in delivering the most value for our members.

We commit to continually review and report on our progress

Strategic Areas of Focus (internal EDI 17-point action plan):

Building a Diverse Organisation – Understand and improve the diversity across our workforce and governance groups

Engagement and Activation – To raise awareness of, celebrate and champion internal and external efforts on EDI

Fairness and Equity - Ensuring all staff are supported, trained and have equal and fair access to opportunities

We recognise our potential to role model our EDI ambitions and progress, and the support to the sector detailed within our business strategy 'Vision 2030' to 'develop the sector to provide a more inclusive service' (see p.12)



Inclusion Advisory Group – purpose and role

Inclusion Advisory Group Purpose and Role

The ukactive Internal Advisory Group (IAG) will be convened by the Strategic Lead for EDI and HR Manager to initiate a collaborative approach towards advancing inclusion and access across ukactive, its board, committees, and councils (the 'organisation'). The group will utilise insight, informing a collective ambition and structured agenda to:

- Develop strategies and policies in relation to EDI
- address the barriers and challenges faced by the organisation in the realm of EDI
- inform, educate and provide practical support to the organisation about EDI
- influence the ukactive business plan and people plan

ukactive wants to continue improving the standards for all staff, its board, committees and councils, and this collaborative approach will be fundamental for success. The group shall have representation from across the departments and levels (hierarchical / seniority structure) of ukactive and meet on (at least) a quarterly basis.

The members of the Internal Advisory Group include:

- Strategic Lead for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- HR Manager
- Director for Business Operations
- Director for Membership Experience and Sector Development
- Senior Research Manager – ukactive Research Institute
- Board member - acting as EDI champion for the board

The Strategic Lead for EDI and HR Manager are responsible and have strategic oversight of the DIAP supported by the ukactive Board EDI Champion and Chief Executive.



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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: 17-point Action Plan

E,D and I Statement

ukactive is a place where everyone has the opportunity to work, develop and succeed, irrespective of their background, age or ability. We aspire to be a community where diversity and inclusion is celebrated, all feel engaged, valued and supported within a collaborative working environment. We believe that doing this enables all to do their best work, meaning ukactive is successful in delivering the most value for our members. We commit to continually review and report on our progress against these aims.

Areas of Focus

Building a Diverse Organisation – Understand and improve the diversity across our workforce and governance groups

Engagement and Activation – To raise awareness of, celebrate and champion internal and external efforts on EDI

Fairness and Equity - Ensuring all staff are supported, trained and have equal and fair access to opportunities

• Building a Diverse Organisation

1. Audit, monitor and publish the diversity of our workforce, board and committees
2. Compare the diversity of our workforce with that of national trends and similar organisations
3. Improve the diversity in leadership and governance positions by agreeing achievable time-bound targets
4. Embed EDI within recruitment policy and processes. Openly communicating ukactive's commitment through the process.
5. Track applicant and candidate equality data
6. Track and broaden reach of advertisements

• Engagement and Activation

7. Appointment of senior champions of EDI for ukactive and our Board
8. Staff Council formed to help support inclusivity across all levels of organisation
9. External and internal EDI plans are communicated to all of our people
10. Publish EDI plan summary on our website
11. Workforce opinion and awareness on EDI is actively sought through staff engagement survey, with results clearly communicated
12. Set annual calendar of events to display and support EDI, seeking opportunities to partner with specialist organisations and initiatives

• Fairness and Equality

13. Full review of internal policies to ensure EDI considered throughout
14. Policies are made freely and readily available to all workforce
15. Personal development is encouraged and supported. All development and training opportunities assessed on a free of bias basis
16. All employees to be appropriately supported by completing regular EDI training
17. Working environment and practices are assessed to create an environment where all are able to work to their best



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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement - external

To our members and the physical activity sector

ukactive aims to help our members create a sector that is accessed and utilised by all, enabling everyone to be active and participate in whatever capacity they wish.

We recognise our potential to showcase and inspire equality, diversity and inclusion across the sector.

We will play a key role in supporting the sector make positive changes to better support all backgrounds, ages and abilities.

End goal: Physical activity sector to be seen and recognised at the most welcoming and most inclusive industry.



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Guidance For Front Line Staff To Assist Trans People
To Access Leisure Facilities

Supported by:



Life in our Years

Unlocking physical activity participation
for older adults



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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion – support for members

Self-Assessment Toolkit

ukactive has provided leadership and support in line with its Vision 2030 business strategy to *'drive the development of the sector to provide a more inclusive service'* and for the fitness and leisure sector to be recognised as the *'most welcoming and most inclusive Industry'*. In order to achieve this, ukactive developed a self-assessment toolkit to understand the sector's relationship with inclusion to ask: *'How are we doing, how inclusive are we, what more can we do?'*

The self-assessment toolkit builds upon the existing programmes, insight, resources and guidance, including:

- **Everyone Can**, a programme that aims to narrow the **disparities facing disabled people within the physical activity sector**.
- The collaboration with This Girl Can, an initiative **helping to engage more women and girls in physical activity** and creating safer spaces for them to be active.
- **Life In Our Years**, a programme that identifies **what over-55s want from the fitness and leisure sector** with recommended steps to promote their participation.
- The **musculoskeletal (MSK) health hubs** programme, a pioneering programme **transforming leisure centres and facilities** into health hubs for those with MSK conditions.
- **Guidance for transgender access**, and providers of **single sex services and spaces**
- **Guidance for Children and Young People in Leisure Facilities**



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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion 2025



Progressing the equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) agenda
ukactive's role to drive the development of the physical activity sector to provide a more inclusive service.

Strategic Partners for EDI:


89% say their workforce is supportive of EDI, with participating organisations reporting that their workforce is:

- Unsure about diversity (24%)
- Knowledgeable about diversity of individuals or groups (68%)
- Able to recognise and appreciate diversity (16%)
- Able to recognise and proactively cater for diversity (13%)

How can an organisation improve in this area?

- Conduct equality monitoring to understand the diversity of your workforce (and associated requirements for them to fulfil their roles and succeed)
- Seek to encourage a diverse workforce that is representative of the communities that the organisation or product serves
- Offer training in EDI to all staff, and supplement development with in-person training and hearing from those with lived experience and diverse backgrounds in your organisation
- Encourage the workforce to proactively learn and take personal responsibility for EDI
- Understand the training needs and requirements of the workforce, asking: 'How can they be supported to succeed?'
- Ensure that recruitment processes encourage and support all to apply and are fair and free of bias
- Consider the establishment of networks and groups to support those from similar backgrounds and shared experiences
- Ensure underrepresented groups are given opportunities to feedback and that their views are actively sought
- Encourage and celebrate diversity across the workforce
- Establish and promote policies amongst the workforce



Review and comment from ukactive's Strategic Lead for EDI



Timothy Mathias
Strategic Lead - Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
ukactive

There were lots to start in the analysis of the first year of the EDI self-assessment toolkit – and that is by congratulating the organisations across the physical activity industry that took part. By participating, they have made an important step forward in how well they are performing and gathered insights into their own organisations' relationships with inclusion. Also, by participating, they have joined the wider sector, allowing us at ukactive to collate the data and begin to get an idea of how well the industry is a whole performing on EDI. So well done!

For an industry of technical experts, and one with such diverse operating models across a range of services, provision and activities, plus reaching so much of the population and communities, it is encouraging to see that the sector is not an 'or 'cookie cutter' model for EDI. And since we are not a regulatory or governing body, our unique role is to support the sector to learn, and support our members – our ambition is for every organisation across this marvellous industry, to develop their own thinking and own approach with regard to EDI.

That is why we launched the self-assessment toolkit – allowing those across gyms, fitness and leisure to reflect on their EDI process and in a completely non-judgemental manner. Underpinning this is 'and what more can we do?'.

Above and beyond the support we provide, the day-to-day enquiries, and the suite of resources, insight, guidance, programmes and campaigns we offer, we are also seeing a positive following feedback from members indicating a clear gap in the provision of EDI support. This best exemplified by 77% reporting feeling 'not 37'

digitally or conversely confident' with EDI, and 63% answering 'not or not sure' when asked if they felt that their EDI efforts were a success.

We wanted to cut through the clichés and non-specificity and offer a tool that was an easy entry point into the subject matter and then the basis of a discussion to progress the work. After all, EDI is a complex topic, even for us, and sometimes confusing and overwhelming agenda... where does one start or begin? And even once a discussion has begun to work on EDI, how does it know if it is doing well?

The overall picture

It should be no surprise that the average score across the 47 organisations particularly is good at 47% – what we term the 'EDI activator' – demonstrating a commitment to the agenda.

We are, after all, a people industry – invested in helping people be healthier, feel better, and live longer and happier lives. Most of the responses from the toolkit suggest that they are keen to identify gaps in provision, report that EDI helps to influence participation and engagement with a view to improving the lives of people, and promote and celebrate inclusion to external audiences.

This is an area in which this sector really excels – and for which we should be particularly proud. We are excellent at offering targeted programmes to those who are less active, and those who are able to reap the benefits of physical activity in a safe and welcoming environment.

But there is more to EDI than the programmes that are delivered – and the self-assessment toolkit is intended to encourage or organisations

The EDI self assessment toolkit report, published February 2025 and featured data from submissions by 47 organisations across the physical activity sector, in line with the Vision 2030 business plan and ukactive's development of the EDI agenda

Main findings:

• The sector sits in the 'EDI Activator' category, with an average score of 47%.

This category is defined as 'demonstrating a commitment to the EDI agenda through a good knowledge and activation on EDI through utilising strong programmes and initiatives.

• 'Workforce and training' was the highest scoring category (averaging 55%) across the self-assessment submissions, suggesting the sector is doing well in educating and supporting the workforce in EDI.

• 71% say their business plan or strategy contains references to EDI, suggesting there is a good integration of EDI to support the objectives of the organisation.

• 29% say they do not have a shared purpose with EDI, but 18% have a clear, published statement with their ambitions and goals on the agenda. This suggests more work can be undertaken to define exactly what EDI means for organisations, the benefits, and how it can be achieved practically.

• 76% say EDI helps to influence participation or engagement growth with their products, provision and services.

• 80% can identify gaps in their provision for underrepresented or underserved groups, suggesting that the ambition to develop and grow audiences is supported by EDI.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in 2025/26

How will ukactive support its members this year across EDI?

In line with its Vision 2030 business strategy to *'drive the development of the sector to provide a more inclusive service'*:

- Continued **engagement and support for members on day-to-day enquiries**, and political, societal and topical matters relating to EDI and affecting fitness, gym and leisure facilities – this will take the form of member network sessions, online webinars and guidance notes and briefings.
- A revised **Children and Young People in Leisure Facilities Guide** – featuring updates, an FAQs and case studies of fitness, gym and leisure centres engagement with children and young people.
- A report summarising the **findings from year one of the EDI self-assessment toolkit and recommendations** for the sector.
- A revised 'year two' of the **EDI self-assessment toolkit with updated questions** and areas of focus
- A revision of the **Everyone Can agenda to support disability inclusion access and inclusion** – including engagement with the sector's senior leadership with a disability inclusion Task Force, an updated online 'hub' to host resources and insight, and an update to the 'Experiences and expectations of the 1 in 5' research focusing on the requirements of disabled people in their use of fitness, gym and leisure centres
- Working with specialist organisations to **explore the relationship that fitness, gyms and leisure centres hold with those from ethnic and culturally diverse backgrounds** – with a view to publishing key insight, and a resource in the form of a consumer engagement 'playbook'.
- **Safer Spaces to Move** – a project furthering to understand the barriers women can face when taking part in physical activity in fitness and leisure facilities, including the piloting of campaigns to promote the safety and wellbeing of women in facilities.
- The **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion category at the annual ukactive awards** - celebrating the utilisation of an inclusive and diverse mindset to welcome, celebrate and support their customers and colleagues

ukactive's EDI function will be supported via the **ukactive membership, key stakeholders from specialist organisations and those with lived experience** – in the form of the **Everyone Can (disability) Task Force, Safer Spaces to Move Task Force and Children, Young People and Families steering group**, plus the **Wider Activity Forum and Member Councils**.

MISSION:

More people, more active, more often

OBJECTIVE

- To help our members engage over 20% of the population by 2030

PURPOSE

- To support, protect, and inform our members
- To represent and champion our members
- To help our members grow

STRATEGY

- The growth and development of our members within the sector

HOW WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS

DEVELOPMENT OF THE SECTOR TO PROVIDE A MORE INCLUSIVE SERVICE

- Fully adopting consumer data and insight to inform decisions that engage a diversity of audiences.
- Delivering the highest professional standards across all areas of the sector.
- New programmes and services that strive to make facilities as inclusive as possible.
- Fully established and integrated into health pathways to support NHS and wider mental and social wellbeing pathways.
- Fully supportive of children, young people and families, to make activity a life habit.
- Delivering insight-led, inclusive, and targeted campaigns to drive engagement in physical activity.

GROWTH OF SECTOR RELATIONSHIP WITH NATIONAL, CIVIC, AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO SECURE SYSTEMIC REFORMS TO IMPROVE THE SECTOR'S OPERATING LANDSCAPE

- To secure long-term investment in order to support infrastructure sustainability, and to navigate and access health funding and systems.
- To deliver fundamental reform of the existing tax and regulatory system to reduce burdens on the sector and encourage greater participation.
- To successfully work with governments across the UK to deliver incentive schemes that increase physical activity levels and prioritise health and wellbeing.
- To ensure that there is ring-fenced investment for strategically designed sport and physical activity-based interventions through the plan for Health and Social Care.

Supported by:

- Our Governance structure
- Our People

Informed by:

- Our membership and stakeholder engagement

Underpinned by our values:

- We are a community, we care, we are driven, we empower and we are progressive