

Gender, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan 2024 - 2027

Growing Together for Everyone

January 2024



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Introduction

Since our inception in 2013, Digital Catapult has grown to ~300 people in 2024. An innovation organisation, we harness the expertise, perspectives and connections of people of more than 40 nationalities thereby bringing together a diversity of skills, experience and backgrounds. Our ambition is to ensure the UK accelerates the practical application of Deep Tech - delivering impactful outcomes for the tech sector, businesses and communities across the UK.

This Gender, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (GEDI) plan is a living document, reviewed and updated annually, to incorporate new actions and developments. It outlines our progress and sets milestones to guide our future efforts in achieving our goals for equality, diversity and inclusion. Our ambitions to address and understand issues around Gender, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion are embedded in the actions of the plan. They align with our core values of Ambition, Curiosity, Openness and Optimism and use an evidence based approach to advance a thriving research and innovation sector.

We are committed to equality and proud of our diverse workforce. We believe that having this plan in place and delivering to its ambitions will enable everyone working with us to thrive.

Growing Together for Everyone

At Digital Catapult, we envision a fair, open, and prosperous future for all. By working closely with businesses of all sizes, government, academia and civil society, we leverage our unique position within the UK Research & Development (R&D) sector to drive significant impact. Our role as a UK innovation organisation places us at the forefront of shaping a better world, fostering an inclusive economy and society.

Gender equality and equal opportunities are paramount at Digital Catapult. Our ambition is to ensure a gender balance within our organisation and promote its importance through our work. While there is still progress to be made, we are committed to embedding equity, diversity and inclusion in everything we do. Research consistently shows that diverse teams generate better insights, ideas, decisions, and solutions. For instance, the 2023 McKinsey "Diversity Matters even More" report indicates that companies committed to diversity have a 39 percent increased likelihood of outperforming those with lower ethnic representation.

Currently, 43% of our staff, 60% of our Board of Directors, and 50% of our Senior Leadership team are women. These percentages are impressive compared to data in the Tech Talent Charter's 2024 "Diversity in Tech" report, which found that only 21% of senior tech leadership roles are taken by women and non-binary individuals. To further gender equality, we must focus on areas within our organisation where progress has been challenging and innovate to overcome barriers.

Milestones guided by our Mission Statement - *Growing Together for Everyone* - are set out below, and will be achieved through this Action Plan. This enables us to measure progress against our ambition and adapt as new opportunities and priorities emerge.

Su	Susan Bowen, Chief Executive Officer, Digital Catapult																									



Scope

This Plan applies to all who work at Digital Catapult.

Effective implementation of the plan will require commitment from all staff and organisational support to advance the knowledge and skills, enabling the efficient integration of EDI practices in our work.

Accountability & Responsibility

Ratification

The CEO and the Senior Leadership Team will ratify this plan.

Communication & Monitoring

The Senior Leadership Team will receive and review progress against this plan every 6 months with the KPIs / measures being reported as part of our operational reports.

The Board of Directors will receive a copy of this plan annually for review and feedback.

The Chief People Officer will ensure this plan is communicated to staff on an annual basis and that annual results and updates are also communicated. They will keep the plan regularly updated to accommodate new actions and developments.

Data Collection

The People team will lead the annual Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Survey internally.

A defined group of people comprising team members from our delivery and analytics teams is responsible for the surveying and data collection of our programme participants and to report back on progress of our impact and reach into diverse communities and demographic groups.

Self-Assessment Team

The following roles will be responsible for annually collecting and analysing data; identifying good practice and any issues of concern; identifying actions to address issues and the ongoing development of this plan:

CEO
Chief People Officer
Chief Strategy Officer
Employee Voice Network Team members (EDI Committee)



Gender

Why is it important to us?

Improved gender equality:

- Ensures a diversity of perspectives and improved decision-making.
- Provides optimal opportunities for everyone to contribute their skills and talents.
- Promotes gender equality as a core value, reflected in our policies.
- Supports non-discrimination and the protection of fundamental human rights and takes into account
 the Equality Act 2010. With that in mind, we recognise that gender can be non-binary and that
 different gender identities, apart from men and women, exist, including LGBTQi+. Digital Catapult
 stands in support of equal rights and fair treatment of all members of the LGBTQi+ community.

What do we want to achieve?

- To foster an inclusive world class research and innovation system with the below ambitions.
- To be recognised as a role model for good practice on gender equality within the UK research and innovation sector.
- Grow the women in tech talent pipeline and enable greater talent mobility through succession planning.
- Improved gender balance across all levels of our organisation and across functions, maintaining a balance where it exists and focusing on improvements that need to be made.
- Ensuring that equal opportunities are open to all genders through the management of fair and inclusive recruitment, development and promotion processes.
- Identifying and removing barriers to women's full and equal career progression through ensuring fair, transparent and equitable processes and practices.
- Enhanced experience for women in the workplace, including on social, health and wellbeing issues.
- Continued support for transgender and non-binary colleagues, ensuring supportive policies are in place and specialist advisers in the People team are trained on trans-inclusion.
- Support diversity of people and ideas by ensuring our work reflects the importance of gender
 equality, including by having gender balanced panels and speakers at our events and declining to
 participate in external events or panels where gender diversity is not upheld.
- Create a more inclusive and fair organisational culture including representation of gender diverse individuals within projects and research activities implemented by Digital Catapult.

- Reduction of Gender Pay Gap from 23% (April 2023) to below 18% by 2027.
- Maintaining a gender balanced Board of Directors (currently 60% of our Board are women).
- Maintaining a gender balanced Senior Leadership Team (currently 50% women).
- At least 40% women at Head of level and above by 2027.
- Improving the gender balance within our Technology function by 2027 (in 2024, 24% of our technology team are women).
- Gender balance across the organisation at 50:50 level by 2028, or not reducing from the current ~43% women:57% men.
- Improving the experience of women at Digital Catapult as reflected in annual engagement and EDI surveys such that more than 75% would endorse Digital Catapult as an employer (an increase from 69% in 2024).



- Ensuring equality of opportunity in our promotion process and monitoring practices.
- In FY24-25, launching a Future Leaders Programme with a focussed cohort supporting female
 employees to gain skills and experience to help elevate and progress them, supporting women in
 their career journeys with us; through training and mentorship programmes, and through our policies
 and benefits provision, to support them to accommodate work demands on their return from
 parental, maternity, or family-related leave and during menopause.
- Regular reviews of new policies to measure potential impacts from a gender perspective.
- Ongoing assessment of our recruitment practices to ensure gender awareness in our job descriptions and job advertising.
- Positive action efforts to attract talent to the organisation to bring about greater gender balance in some teams or functions where this is required.
- Hiring for potential in situations where this can be achieved and managed while keeping business objectives and imperatives in mind.

Timeline	Owner						
Q1 FY 24-25 (and ongoing annual reporting)	Chief People Officer						
Ongoing	Head of People Operations						
Q2 and Q3 FY 24-25	Chief People Officer; Head of People Operations						
Ongoing and report annually	Chief People Officer; Head of People Operations						
Ongoing	Talent Acquisition team; Head of L&D						
Q4 FY 23-24	Head of L&D / Head of People Operations						
	Q1 FY 24-25 (and ongoing annual reporting) Ongoing Q2 and Q3 FY 24-25 Ongoing and report annually Ongoing						

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Acquisition, People Operations and Learning & Development to build knowledge and to ensure a positive employee experience for our trans and non-binary staff		
Ensure all events organised and attended by the company consider gender diversity in the establishment of panels and topics discussed.	Ongoing	Events and Programme Leads
Promote Gender Equality through a regular series of visible events, such as International Women's Day, and encourage additional male Inclusion Champions.	Q4 FY 24-25 IWD and ongoing	People and Events teams
Identify and maintain networks with women in industry in order to attract more senior women leaders to our job opportunities, especially within the technology teams where we do not have a good gender balance.	Ongoing	People
Career Progression		
- Jarcel Frogression -		
Development of a Future Leaders (womens) cohort to support professional development of women, including tailored mentoring and coaching	Q1 - Q2 FY 24-25 and ongoing.	Chief People Officer / Head of Learning & Development
Development of a Future Leaders (womens) cohort to support professional development of women, including tailored	Q1 - Q2 FY 24-25 and ongoing. Ongoing	
Development of a Future Leaders (womens) cohort to support professional development of women, including tailored mentoring and coaching Ensure gender balanced interview panels and actively mitigate risks of unconscious bias in hiring and promotion		Learning & Development Talent Acquisition team; Head of
Development of a Future Leaders (womens) cohort to support professional development of women, including tailored mentoring and coaching Ensure gender balanced interview panels and actively mitigate risks of unconscious bias in hiring and promotion processes Open access for all staff to	Ongoing	Learning & Development Talent Acquisition team; Head of People Operations
Development of a Future Leaders (womens) cohort to support professional development of women, including tailored mentoring and coaching Ensure gender balanced interview panels and actively mitigate risks of unconscious bias in hiring and promotion processes Open access for all staff to online / self-led learning content	Ongoing	Learning & Development Talent Acquisition team; Head of People Operations
Development of a Future Leaders (womens) cohort to support professional development of women, including tailored mentoring and coaching Ensure gender balanced interview panels and actively mitigate risks of unconscious bias in hiring and promotion processes Open access for all staff to online / self-led learning content Work-Life Balance Review of policies to support work-life balance including hybrid and flexible working	Ongoing Ongoing	Talent Acquisition team; Head of People Operations Head of Learning & Development



Equity

Why is it important to us?

We recognise that each person has different circumstances and needs and we will endeavour to allocate the resources and opportunities needed for our team members to reach an equal outcome. In ensuring we are taking an equitable approach, we strive to achieve an equality of experience and opportunity for everyone who works with us.

What do we want to achieve?

It is important to us that all of our staff are treated fairly:

- To ensure a fair and equal chance to achieve their career ambitions;
- To build a psychologically safe workplace in which there is mutual trust and confidence;
- So that staff feel valued and respected; and
- Our obligations under the Equality Act are addressed.

Digital Catapult is an organisation that supports all staff in achieving their full potential and their career ambitions and addresses any barriers to progression through understanding differences and making adjustments where they are deemed reasonable.

Our leadership demonstrates commitment to equality in visible and practical ways, and particularly in how it supports the career progression of our team members and in how it influences the employee experience.

Through our programmes, we will work to break down barriers that exist for certain demographic groups within the tech innovation and investment space. This will be evidenced through our acceleration programmes, such as our Black Founders programme.

Actions	Timeline	Owner
Development of a guidance document signposting how to address inappropriate behaviour of any type, including bullying, harassment, discrimination and sexual harassment in order to achieve a 100% awareness and understanding and mitigate the risk of these occurrences and to	Q3 FY 24-25	Chief People Officer



protect our staff		
Review workplace accommodation process and develop guide for line managers such that at least 75% of employees agree our facilities and infrastructure is accessible.	Q1 FY 24-25	Head of Learning & Development
Review current and new People policies to ensure equity is upheld.	Q3 FY 24-25	Head of People Operations
Launch an internship programme to support people with disabilities and /or neurodiversity to gain meaningful and paid work placements that will lead to better opportunities for long-term employment, either within the organisation or via other employers.	Q2 FY 24-25	Head of Learning & Development
Achieve Disability Confident Status by 2025 and including an enhanced on-boarding for staff with disability.	Q4 FY 24-25	Head of Learning & Development
Continue to review and improve on the accessibility of our infrastructure and offices, including our corporate website.	Ongoing	Various

Diversity

Why is it important to us?

We know that enhanced diversity leads to:

- Better decision-making and outcomes.
- A wider diversity of perspectives and lived-experiences in our workforce that will enhance our expertise and offerings to industry.
- Attracting and retaining talent in all our locations.
- An organisation that reflects UK society.
- Increased opportunities for social mobility.



What do we want to achieve?

- Increase diversity of candidates applying for roles in Digital Catapult, including more women at senior levels, more individuals from ethnically under-represented groups and from different socio-economic backgrounds.
- To have a system and processes in place to collect diversity data, including closing gaps in the ethnicity data we collect
- Diversity Data collection follows best practice.
- We have identified all groups that are under-represented in our workforce, and addressed barriers to their access, retention and promotion.
- Demonstrate an increased proportion of our Core offer is delivered outside the South and East of England
- Continue to take actions towards increasing the diversity of our Programme participants, for example, through our Black Founders programme, through our Open Calls and in the value propositions we offer to our clients.
- Run programmes with companies that are themselves diverse, operating across the UK, with diverse founders and innovating with a range of advanced digital technologies.

Actions	Timeline	Owner
Analysis of the demographics within our staff and identifying gaps in representation with an action plan to attract these demographics	Q4 FY 24-25	Head of People Operations; Talent Acquisition
Organise events that champion and highlight diversity and the associated positive impact.	x3 per year	People Team; Programmes
Review and monitor recruitment processes to include: » bias detection tools; » plain language; » unconscious bias training; » increasing the diversity among applicants.	Ongoing	Talent Acquisition
Maintain memberships of the Living Wage foundation and the 5% Club	Q2 - Q3 FY 24-25	Head of L&D
Consideration of our intern recruitment process to enhance diversity amongst applicants.	Ongoing	Talent Acquisition



Summer Work Experience programme with a particular emphasis on providing work experience opportunities to students from diverse backgrounds.	Q2	Head of L&D
Review and monitor approach to programme participation	Ongoing	Programmes

Inclusion

Why is it important to us?

We know that promoting inclusion will:

- Enhance a culture that respects and values all staff and fosters allyship.
- Ensure greater psychological safety thereby leading to higher levels of well-being, morale, engagement and motivation within our teams.
- Allow staff to bring their authentic self to the workplace and increase a sense of belonging so they
 can do their best work.
- Allow all staff to feel they belong, are listened to, and are valued, irrespective of their backgrounds, the level of seniority or where they are located in Digital Catapult.

What do we want to achieve?

- An active, committed and effective EDI committee from within the EVN with EDI champions across teams.
- To document EDI principles and for them to be embedded in our ways of working and for inclusion to be at the heart of our innovations.
- For our staff to all feel they are included and that their sense of belonging is reflected positively in our respective employee engagement surveys.
- To be recognised as an inclusive workplace and for this recognition to be reflected in exit interviews and review site (e.g. Glassdoor) comments.

Actions	Timeline	Owner
All staff to complete EDI online training module within their probationary period and to refresh annually with 100% completion	Ongoing	Head of Learning & Development



Q4 FY23-24 and ongoing	Chief People Officer
Q2-3 FY 24-25	Head of Learning & Development
Q2- 4 FY 24-25	Head of Learning & Development with other contributors
Q3 FY 24-25	Chief People Officer
Ongoing	Head of People Operations
Ongoing	Head of Learning & Development
Ongoing	SLT; Leaders
Q2-3 FY 24-25	Head of People Operations
	Q2-3 FY 24-25 Q2- 4 FY 24-25 Q3 FY 24-25 Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing

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	Communication and compliance are important to ensure that staff have the opportunities to learn about the principles of gender, equity diversity and inclusion and to put these into practice, embedding them into our																														



work practices to ensure we are, together, building a culture of dignity and respect. As a Catapult, and given our role in the ecosystem, it is critical that we comply with its obligations under all aspects of GEDI. By actively communicating on this Plan and the principles within it, we demonstrate our commitment to GEDI and that we take this seriously, and that we want our staff to do likewise.

Through our committed actions, we anticipate that staff will have greater awareness of our policies and practices linked to gender, equality, diversity and inclusion, that this will lead to an enhancement of our culture and that we will be in full compliance with legislative requirements.

Actions	Timeline	Owner							
Monitoring and tracking of the implementation of this plan	Ongoing	Chief People Officer; EDI Task Force							
Communicate EDI survey and focus group results and follow up Action Plan to all staff, through video and intranet message, and all company presentations.	Q3 - 4	Chief People Officer							
Introduce new internal communications tools to help embed GEDI policy and process: - EDI topics highlighted in People Newsletter monthly - GEDI-themed all company update session per year - GEDI Open Forum each year	Ongoing	People team; EDI Task Force; EVN							

Dedicated Resources

This plan and its delivery is informed, led and guided by a number of staff across the organisation; our EDI Committee from within our EVN; our People Team, and a range of staff networks/ Employee Resource Groups.

Our People Team, located in London and Belfast, undertakes regular specialist training in EDI topics ensuring that the advice and expertise required to lead on the creation of an inclusive workplace and culture is available. The Team is committed to ensuring EDI best practice is embedded within all of our people processes, policies and procedures.

Our Action Plan will be set annually with the Senior Leadership Team and Board and reviewed on a six-monthly basis; with quarterly steering by the Chief People Officer and our EDI Committee Group Lead; bringing together representatives from prior listed groups. Through this forum, we harness the sharing of



evidence, expertise and advice on different aspects of EDI - unlocking peer support to ensure the company is a place where:

- → Everyone can achieve their potential and bring their whole selves to work;
- → Our delivery programmes champion the value of inclusion, attract diverse applications and participation levels and where participants report that they are delivered to in an inclusive manner, and:
- → We live and advocate for the values we want to see across the UK digital technology and innovation system.

The EDI Committee will operate under a published Terms of Reference to be developed.

We have a range of EDI staff networks and groups supporting working around the topics of gender, equity, diversity and inclusion, including:

- Women in Tech network: providing support to women employees at Digital Catapult in areas of gender equality for women.
- Menopause coffee mornings: To provide support and education around this topic for women and allies.
- Parents & Carers Network: offering support to parents and carers in the spectrum of their parenting needs and inequalities they may experience.

Data Collection & Monitoring

We will collect disaggregated data on sex and gender related aspects of our workforce and use this as the evidence base to evaluate GEDI plan's progress against the targets and indicators set.

We began organisation wide EDI Surveys in 2021 and conduct these on an annual basis. Data from these surveys build our baseline and inform and track our progress.

We have signed up as a participant on the Great Place to Work index and have been accredited as a Great Place to Work, one of the Best Workplaces in Tech in the UK and one of the Top 100 overall Best Workplaces 2024. Participating in this survey allows us to benchmark ourselves against other organisations and understand the employee experience of our staff across various dimensions.

We are working to enhance our demographic data collection of applicants to our vacancies and of our staff at the point of hire so that we can work to address under-representation.

In addition, on an annual basis we report and publish our Gender Pay Gap along with a committed action plan.

Alongside these activities as an employer, our programmes will benefit from gathering robust data on inclusion in our applicants and participants, and setting actions based on analysis of those data. We commit to disseminate our progress and good practice on EDI widely within the UK Research,



Development and Innovation community.

Learning and Development

Training and awareness raising activities around topics related to gender, equity, diversity and inclusion are a priority for Digital Catapult. We commit to addressing topics that are evidenced as being areas of relevance, for improvement or development, through the different feedback mechanisms we have in place: our annual engagement survey and EDI survey, and through exit interviews and ad hoc feedback.

We provide training using different formats to meet the needs of differing learning styles and based on the levels of responsibility held by our staff. This training is intended to bring about long-term and consistent positive behavioural change that we believe will drive a culture of inclusion.

Online learning: We deliver online, self-led training via our Learning Management System. Included in this system is our suite of Core Learning modules, which encompass compliance training and topics that support our culture. Within Core Learning, we have a mandatory module on EDI and on Mental Health that all staff are required to complete during their probationary period and to refresh on an annual basis.

Live training: Hiring managers and those people who are involved in recruitment activities are required to attend interview training which covers aspects of unconscious bias and ensuring we are running an inclusive process.

We have a catalogue of training programmes that we run throughout the year on unconscious bias; allyship, understanding microaggressions; psychological safety; allyship; mental health training; religion in the workplace; menopause; and neurodiversity. We also engage external third party experts to support these initiatives where needed and hold listening circles to share experiences. .

Celebration and Awareness: We celebrate moments in the year to educate, engage, and include people of all backgrounds by, for example, celebrating international women's day, pride month, bring your kids to work day, national inclusion week and black history month among others. Our Employee Voice Network acts as a forum for ideas and feedback to be shared and for action to be taken to continuously develop and improve our culture.

Work-Life Balance & Organisational Culture

We promote and support having an organisational culture and working environment that is inclusive and fair to people of all backgrounds and that follows the principles of trust, respect and psychological safety. We have a hybrid working policy that provides a positive balance of meeting both organisational and individual needs. It is critical to the business that we come together to collaborate in person and we know that there are many and great benefits of working together in this way. Equally, we understand and recognise the individual benefits that come from being able to work remotely on some days. We intend to keep this positive balance in the way we work together as one team.

In addition to our hybrid working arrangements, we also have policies to support flexible working requests and we have enhanced family leave policies covering maternity, paternity, shared parental and adoption.																								



Throughout the year, on top of our generous annual leave allowance, we provide times for the whole team to take a break all together. We do this on our Summer Fridays and during a winter shut down between the Christmas and New Year bank holidays.

Our Health & Safety policy ensures workplace assessments and home risk assessments are conducted periodically to protect the safety, health and wellbeing of staff. We make adjustments and provide additional assistive equipment/ technology if this is requested and deemed a reasonable adjustment that will support and enhance our staff to work at their best.

Diversity & Balance in Leadership and Decision Making

With our gender balanced and diverse Board and Senior Leadership team, we have ensured that decision making at the highest levels incorporates different experiences and perspectives and a diversity of thinking.

Through improvements made to our interview and selection process, we will always strive to have diverse and gender balanced interview panels encouraging us to think more broadly and inclusively about who we are bringing into the organisation, seeing past our unconscious biases, and keeping the focus on being consciously inclusive.

We will develop innovative and inspiring initiatives to ensure we are both recruiting and readying people from diverse backgrounds to take on leadership roles with us in the future.

Balance & Inclusion in recruitment, career progression, project teams & events

As referenced in prior sections, we have revised and improved our hiring and recruitment process to put inclusion at the centre of how we work. We use gender decoder software to ensure our opportunities are advertised to appeal to people from all backgrounds, ensuring the language used is appropriate and bias is mitigated and that terminology is accessible and easy to understand. We offer reasonable adjustments to all applicants and always strive to ensure our interview panels are diverse and gender balanced. This applies to interview processes for new team members and for existing staff.

We have a standardised career progression framework and structured promotions process ensuring that there is an equitable approach to readying and considering people for the next step in their careers, whether this is via a manager or technical expert career pathway. Recommendations for promotions are considered for approval by the line manager, their senior manager and the People team to ensure objective and fair decisions are being taken.

We have training, mentorship and coaching programmes in place that help employees to make decisions about their career options with us and we support people to accommodate work demands on their return from parental, maternity, or family-related leave.



Our project teams are typically multidisciplinary and include people from a diversity of backgrounds. We are proud to have a team of people with us which is almost 50:50 women and men and who come from more than 40 different countries.

Whether we are curating and hosting events ourselves or attending external events hosted by other organisations, our commitment is to eliminate and decline events with "manels", ensuring that event panels, hosts and participants bring a broad diversity of experiences, backgrounds and perspectives.

Integration of the gender dimension into research

We design and deliver collaborative programmes through which many businesses, individuals and institutions can benefit. In doing so, we will be proactive and reflective in engaging people, businesses and communities to represent the sector and the broader population; and amplifying our EDI Mission Statement through our direct delivery.

As an influential and neutral UK wide innovation organisation, we have a privilege and responsibility to engage constructively on key opportunities and challenges for both the digital sector and the UK R&D ecosystem; including through the x-Catapult 'Inclusivity in Innovation Charter'. By listening to and learning from others, and demonstrating the principles of our Mission Statement in engaging with Government and industry at senior levels, we have significant influence over how digital tech changes lives, the economy and society for the better. We will contribute to gender equality in R&D by collaborating and sharing knowledge across UKRI.

We will:

- Develop a framework to include the gender dimension in our Responsible Innovation offer in Research & Innovation proposals so that the gender dimension is embedded into the design of research and innovation activities;
- Consider all genders for language and images in research material and production.

Measures against all forms of harassment

We are committed to preserving and promoting the physical and emotional health, safety and well-being of all our employees and all those who engage with us. We do this through our policy provision and through educating staff about different forms of bias and strategies to combat any form of harassment, including sexual or gender-based harassment.

We provide staff and decision-makers with specific training courses and materials on EDI and on combating sexual and gender-based violence, gender equality and unconscious biases.

We have policies in place to uphold EDI principles and protect staff from harassment including, but not limited to: EDI, Sexual Harassment, Anti-Bullying, Dignity at Work, Trans Inclusion, Whistleblowing.

The effectiveness of our policies and training investment is measured on an ongoing basis via feedback on our training courses, through our employee engagement and EDI surveys and through exit interviews.

We will be creating reporting mechanisms that allow staff to raise and document concerns and we are also reviewing the ways in which issues and conflicts can be raised and resolved in a more collaborative way.