

TLC: TALK, LISTEN, CHANGE

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGY



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Equality, diversity and inclusion is at the heart of who TLC: Talk, Listen, Change is.

This Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy will be implemented over a four-year period (2021 – 2025) and includes four specific equality objectives:

Embed: Embed equality, diversity and inclusion at the heart of our governance structures.

Reflect: Ensure the diversity profile of TLC: Talk, Listen, Change's workforce and Board is reflective of the community served and brings the voice of clients and the community into the organisation to influence the design and delivery of high-quality services to our diverse population.

Affirm: Ensure that the service TLC: Talk, Listen, Change delivers are accessible, inclusive and affirmative for the communities that we serve.

Learn: Ensure learning and organisational development is positively influenced by staff and used to further shape organisational development.

1. INTRODUCTION

Equality, diversity and inclusion is at the heart of who TLC: Talk, Listen, Change is. It is integral to our brand, reputation, success, sustainability and impact. It enables alignment between what we say and what we do.

Our vision is to have an inclusive and affirmative organisational culture. We want everyone who comes into contact with us, both offline and online, to feel valued and respected and our programmes, services and general ways of working to demonstrate our stated commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

Diversity is any dimension that can be used to differentiate groups and people from one another. Diversity allows for the exploration of these differences in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment. It means understanding one another by surpassing simple tolerance to ensure people truly value their differences. This allows us both to embrace and also to celebrate the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual and place positive value on diversity in the community and in the workforce. The power of diversity can only be unleashed and its benefits reaped when we recognise these differences and learn to respect and value each individual irrelevant of their background.

This strategy will be implemented over a four-year period (2021 - 2025), supported by annual review to keep it up to date, targeted and relevant. The actions arising from this strategy will be included in our annual business plan and we have developed this plan as a working document that will continue to be reviewed and updated regularly with our staff, volunteers and Trustees. Everyone across the organisation will be responsible and accountable for confronting discrimination, challenging inequality and championing inclusivity.

It is fundamental that we create a culture of accountability where staff feel supported to both consider their own prejudices and identify and challenge incidents of discrimination and ensure principles of fairness and equal opportunities for all are at the centre of our core beliefs. We expect that all our staff, volunteers and trustees, through education, and effective communication and role modelling from our Chief Executive and Chair, will confidently challenge and call out poor, unacceptable and inappropriate behaviour. We understand that this includes recognising and challenging the subtler aspects of discrimination too as well as explicit behaviour.

We will nurture an organisational culture where people working and engaging with us feel respected and comfortable being themselves, free from discrimination, micro-aggressions, offensive behaviour or bullying. We will focus not only on explicit behaviours but also implicit attitudes and beliefs that may determine the way that we function and operate. The result will be an organisational culture that is experienced as more inclusive, affirmative and fair, allows for speaking up, encourages self-reflection and individual responsibility, manages disagreement and conflict constructively and is empowered, optimistic and aligned to our values.

There will be expanded opportunities for under-represented groups internally and externally to participate and contribute to informing and shaping the organisational culture. We will also acknowledge the responsibility and need for accountability from groups in the organisation who are already well represented. We want to empower staff who are not part of a minority group to be good allies with the skills and confidence to take positive, affirmative action.

There will be alignment with how we engage with equality, diversity and inclusion internally and how it is reflected and addressed in the delivery and content of our programmes and services. TLC: Talk, Listen, Change will use its platforms to amplify unheard voices, be that of our staff, our volunteers or our clients.

This strategy has four specific equality objectives:

Embed: Embed equality, diversity and inclusion at the heart of our governance structures.

Reflect: Ensure the diversity profile of TLC: Talk, Listen, Change's workforce and Board is reflective of the community served and brings the voice of clients and the community into the organisation to influence the design and delivery of high-quality services to our diverse population.

Affirm: Ensure that the service TLC: Talk, Listen, Change delivers are accessible, inclusive and affirmative for the communities that we serve.

Learn: Ensure learning and organisational development is positively influenced by staff and used to further shape organisational development.

An action plan supporting delivery of these objectives will be developed when this strategy has been ratified and will form part of TLC: Talk, Listen, Change's annual business delivery plan. Progress and delivery will be monitored through the People Committee, and assurance provided to the Board through regular reporting processes.

2. STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

2.1 The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act came into effect on 1 October 2010 as UK legislation to legally protect people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. The Equality Act affords legal protection from discrimination to nine specific groups known as “Protected Characteristics”.



TLC: Talk, Listen, Change formally recognises its legal and moral duty to identify and address the needs and barriers that individuals may face in achieving their potential. We also recognise the continuing relevance of equality legislation of the Equality Act 2010 and through this strategy we will endeavour to address by reasonable adjustments and positive action to remove any barriers that may exist in relation to any of the above mentioned protected characteristics for both staff and clients.

2.2. Accessible Information Standard

The Accessible Information Standard aims to make sure that people who have a disability, impairment or sensory loss get information that they can access and understand, and any communication support that they need from services.

The Standard informs organisations how they should make sure that clients, and their carers and parents, can access and understand the information they are given. This includes making sure that people get information in accessible formats. The Standard also informs organisations how they should make sure that people get support from a communication professional if they need it, and about changing working practices to support effective communication.

2.3. The 2020 year

Health inequalities have been emphasised recently through the disproportionate effects of COVID-19 on protected characteristics groups. Issues of gender inequality have been highlighted due to the increase in domestic abuse incidences during the pandemic and the impact of the economic recession on women compared to men. In addition, the Black Lives Matter movement has facilitated conversations of lived experiences of Black and other minority ethnic communities resulting in an increased scrutiny of equality practices across organisations.

Whilst there is a mandated requirement to collect data, the focus of change sits within the culture of individuals and organisations, therefore our actions in this strategy focus also on how decisions are made, how staff are heard and how individually as an organisation we behave.

3. OBJECTIVES

a. Embed:

Embed equality, diversity and inclusion at the heart of our governance structures.

- Ensure that the decisions we make are subject to appropriate equality analysis.
- Ensure all Board development programmes include responsibility and accountability in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Ensure responsibility and accountability for equality, diversity and inclusion is clearly articulated in Board members' role descriptions.
- Monitor and report on the diversity of the Board of Trustees annually.
- When filling Board vacancies, encourage applications from under-represented groups as needed, to help our Trustees to better reflect both our workforce and client base.

b. Reflect:

Ensure the diversity profile of TLC: Talk, Listen, Change's workforce and Board is reflective of the community served and brings the voice of clients and the community into the organisation to influence the design and delivery of high-quality services to our diverse population.

- Set targets for both workforce and Board and monitor and report on the diversity of the TLC: Talk, Listen, Change team annually and the extent to which this represents the communities we serve.
- Review and update recruitment practices to strengthen awareness, responsibilities and processes when recruiting staff and Board members with protected characteristics.
- Implement positive action recruitment campaigns to increase our diverse representation to better reflect the communities we serve.
- Work with our staff networks to determine barriers to career progression through gathering feedback of experiences, promoting career opportunities and providing mentorship and support to colleagues.
- Provide training for staff on equality, diversity and inclusion practice, for the whole organisation and as required / requested as part of individual objectives setting.
- Provide flexible and inclusive working practices for all staff to support diversity across the workforce.
- Engage everyone across the organisation in supporting and leading work across all areas of this strategy.

c. Affirm:

Ensure that the services TLC: Talk, Listen, Change deliver are accessible, inclusive and affirmative for the communities that we serve.

- Monitor and report on the diversity of our clients.
- Work alongside and in partnership with diverse organisations to ensure that TLC: Talk, Listen, Change's work and programmes meets the needs and desires of those communities.
- Understand the barriers to engagement with TLC: Talk, Listen, Change for under-represented groups.
- Work collaboratively with individuals and communities to make activities and services more accessible.
- Work with partners to reach out and engage with individuals, groups and communities – improving awareness and engagement with TLC: Talk, Listen, Change and the organisation's work.
- Train and upskill staff, providing opportunities to increase understanding around equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Enable and encourage ongoing reflection, learning and discussion across the whole TLC: Talk, Listen, Change team on equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Play an active role in external networks and partnerships, supporting change on a wider scale locally and nationally.

d. Learn:

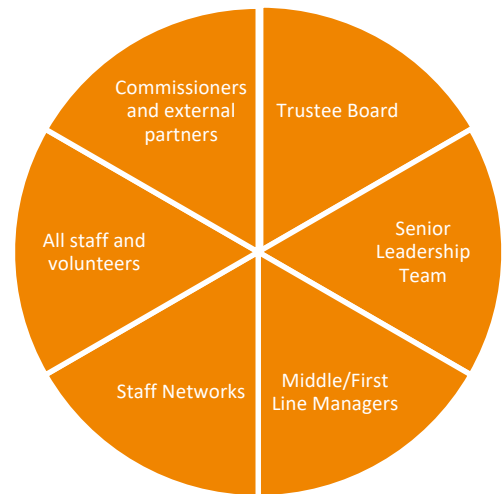
Ensure learning and organisational development is positively influenced by staff and used to further shape organisational development.

- Establish process for deriving learning from staff networks, staff surveys, HR processes, exit interviews and line management 1-2-1s.
- Review and establish clear terms of reference for our staff networks.
- Identify if any staff networks are missing and if there is any appetite across the organisation for these to be established.
- Use the combined intelligence of our staff networks to review, challenge, and develop our learning and support continuous improvement.
- Ensure there are robust feedback mechanisms for network members through governance group structures to support learning and organisational development.
- Provide opportunity for reverse/co-mentoring.
- Establish annual staff survey with section dedicated to equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Regularly review staff feedback and formalise learning that needs to be mainstreamed across the organisation.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Delivery of this Strategy requires equality, diversity and inclusion to be embedded into everyday working practices with all staff required to demonstrate the values of TLC: Talk, Listen, Change.

More specifically the following groups have key responsibilities of:



- **Trustee Board**
The Board, with the Chief Executive as accountable officer, sets the tone for how the organisation operates, and role models best practice in equality, diversity and affirmative leadership and culture. The Board will demonstrate due regard to compliance with legislative and mandatory practices. The People Committee of the Board oversees the implementation of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and also takes feedback from the staff network groups.
- **Senior Leadership Team**
The Head of Business Services is the lead for equality, diversity, and inclusion. The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for role modelling compassionate, supportive and affirmative leadership behaviour and practice. Individual Directors and Heads of Services are responsible for supporting network Chairs or staff belonging to a staff network through reverse mentoring schemes or peer support mechanisms.
- **Middle/First Line Managers**
Responsible for embedding equality, diversity and inclusion across TLC: Talk, Listen, Change and acting as champions and role models. Demonstrating due regard through appropriate equality consideration of decisions made in relation to employee relations and client/partner interactions. All leaders and managers are expected to role model compassionate, supportive and affirmative leadership behaviour and practice.

- **Staff networks**

Responsible for constructively sharing experiences and ideas to ensure learning and organisational development; actively engaging in surveys to enable capture of equality information; support equality analysis activity; and encourage staff engagement. The staff networks are fully inclusive of any staff and volunteer at TLC: Talk, Listen, Change and this segment is only shown separately for pictorial reasons.

- **All Staff and Volunteers**

Responsible for demonstrating TLC: Talk, Listen, Change values by treating colleagues and clients with dignity and respect. Everyone has a responsibility to recognise discriminatory behaviour and to raise that concern either with individuals, line managers or through staff support networks and/or the Head of Business Services. Personal responsibility for recognising micro-aggressions and discriminatory behaviour in ourselves as well as in others and a commitment from all to self-reflection and educating ourselves.

- **Commissioners and external partners:**

Responsibility to act in line with Equality legislation and to have open and honest conversations with us in line with this strategy. Commitment to highlight commissioner or partner practice which is not in line with this strategy.

5. COMMUNICATION PLAN

Through this strategy the aim is to:

- Effectively convey and communicate key equality, diversity and inclusion activity and messages to all clients, staff, volunteers, key stakeholders, Trustee Board, public sector, third sector and private sector partners.
- Seek views from diverse groups on how we communicate to increase the accessibility of our communications.
- Understand the importance of the language we use at TLC: Talk, Listen, Change and agree a shared approach for the choice of language we want to embed in our organisational culture and internal and external communications.
- Communicate externally with messages, content and tone which are accessible and engaging for diverse audiences.

Several methods will be utilised to promote the strategy:

- Website pages.
- Internal communications.
- Social Media.
- Marketing, posters, leaflets.

All our communications will be free from political affiliations.
