UKSBS
Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy 2025-28

VERSION CONTROL

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Introduction

This is the second iteration of the UKSBS Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy, building upon the solid foundations set out in our previous plan, to further advance our commitment for creating an inclusive and diverse organisation enabling us to deliver the best possible services to all who engage with us.

The UKSBS 2025-2030 Business Plan is ambitious, requiring a huge amount of transformational change and growth over the next five years, with our workforce set to grow alongside to support this increased demand. Our people are at the heart of all that we do and are key for the success of the organisation's goals; it is clear just how much of a crucial role diversity and inclusion will play.

Our refreshed EDI Strategy has been aligned to the Business Plan goals, reflecting our ongoing dedication to embedding diversity, fostering inclusivity, and promoting equality across every aspect of our business. By integrating EDI into our core business objectives, we ensure that our commitments translate into meaningful actions, driving positive change and creating a workplace where every individual can thrive.

We will also leverage the opportunities the transformation programmes will bring, specifically the Matrix and SHARP programmes, embedding our culture into all that we do, aligning with our strategy and working alongside external consultants to drive best practice.

Good progress has been made since the launch of the first EDI strategy. We have come a long way in terms of attracting a more diverse workforce through our improvements to recruitment adverts and we have introduced a menopause policy to provide additional support for both employees and managers, promoting a culture of open dialogue. Further information on what we have achieved can be found below.

With this strong benchmark on which to build from, UKSBS will be more ambitious than ever before. We will use the necessary growth to our employee base to implement bolder objectives to attract, develop and retain diverse, talented people and increase the diverse representation at all levels of leadership, particularly underrepresented ethnic colleagues.

Very firmly included within our approach is the need to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010, which legally protects people from discrimination, harassment or victimisation who may be identified under any of the nine protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Whilst not bound by the public sector equality duty, UKSBS does sit entirely within the public sector and supports our public sector owners and clients in delivering their own strategic aims and policies. We therefore voluntarily comply with the public sector duty to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation,

- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, and
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Where are we now?

UKSBS has been pursuing a range of EDI activities through its EDI champions at the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Forum and wider company initiatives. Some specific achievements over the last 12-18 months include:

- attainment of Disability Confident Level 2 accreditation;
- strengthening the work of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Forum, rolling out a number of awareness campaigns on the menopause, diabetes, neurodiversity and PRIDE;
- becoming a member of Inclusive employers, obtaining further support with our EDI strategy;
- expanding gender identification and sexual orientation options and adding gender neutral titles on Oracle, forms and the recruitment portal;
- publishing data on the gender and ethnicity pay gap;
- complying where possible with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018;
- updating the mandatory Diversity and Inclusion training to include a wider range of diversity topics and making it more relevant to UKSBS;
- actively seeking people's ideas and take action on feedback with better communicated 'you said… we've done' after employee engagement surveys;
- focusing on improving the employee voice, particularly those in minority groups to create awareness, creating an environment where employees feel safe in sharing their real-life experiences with the organisation and building confidence in others to bring their whole self to work;
- development and implementation of sexual harassment training; and
- attaining the Menopause Work pledge.

UKSBS Values & Behaviours

The UKSBS Values and Behaviours were developed internally by employees through a series of workshops and agreed by the Board. They underpin our EDI strategy:

Values	Behaviours
Versatility: Through our professional and skilled people, we draw on the resource needed to adapt and respond to our clients' needs, making continuous improvements to ensure we provide a modern service in an ever-changing landscape. **Diversity:** We respect, embrace and recognise each other's differences to build a truly diverse workforce and foster excellent relationships with our clients. **One Team:** We work across service areas to provide excellent services, deliver organizational priorities and to celebrate success together.	**Be Curious:** Bringing curiosity and constructive challenge to what you do and how you do it. **Take Action:** Following curiosity through with actionable steps, thinking about how to do things differently. **Add Value:** Thinking about the value, purpose, quality

Empowerment: We empower and support our people to take responsibility for, and continually improve the service we deliver to ensure our clients' needs are fully explored, understood and supported. **Integrity:** We strive to make the right decisions when supporting our clients, and to provide an honest and open service: one where we ask if we are not sure and take ownership of seeking the best outcomes for our clients and ourselves.	and impact of what you do.

EDI Strategic Statement and Outcomes

Strategic Statement: Making a strong commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion

Our strategic statement is to foster a workplace that champions equality, diversity, and inclusion, committed to creating a culture where all individuals are respected, valued, and empowered to be their authentic selves, free from fear of discrimination or abuse. Through strong, visible leadership and inclusive practices, we strive to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

Strategic Outcome: That everyone can be their true selves at UKSBS

Our primary outcome is for equality, diversity, and inclusion to be firmly embedded in everything that we do. Attaining this is dependent on empowering an enquiring and curious workforce to bring the greatest breadth of views to bear, driving continuous and agile improvement. We therefore wholeheartedly embrace diversity within our workforce and want to create a supportive environment where everyone feels valued and able to be themselves and excel. We aspire to understand and meet the needs of all our customers by providing services that are accessible, inclusive and non-discriminatory whilst operating with integrity and respect.

UKSBS has five values, outlined above. Each value has an objective set against it that supports the EDI strategic statement, with the key success factors and high-level actions detailed below.

Looking Ahead: Our Aspirational Future

By following this strategy, in three years' time, we will have built a truly inclusive and diverse organisation where every individual feels valued, empowered, and supported to succeed. We will have increased diverse representation at all levels, particularly within leadership, by embedding equitable recruitment and development practices. Diversity of all characteristics will flow through all levels of the organisation, from departmental, to function, to teams. Our transformation programmes will have driven a deeper cultural shift, ensuring that inclusivity is woven into the fabric of everything we do. Employees will feel a strong sense of belonging, reflected in higher engagement, retention, and satisfaction.

A key measure of our success will be external recognition of our commitment to inclusion. We will have achieved accreditation from Inclusive Employers, demonstrating that we are not only meeting but exceeding industry standards for inclusion. This accreditation will reinforce our reputation as an employer of choice, attracting diverse talent and ensuring our workplace culture is one where everyone can thrive.

Through our commitment to continuous learning, transparency, and accountability, we will be recognised as a leader in best practice for equality, diversity, and inclusion. By fostering a culture of curiosity, action, and impact, we will ensure that diversity of thought, and experience drives innovation, adaptability, and excellence.

Ultimately, our organisation will not only reflect the communities we serve but also set the standard for inclusivity, enabling us to deliver even greater value to our people and clients alike.

Strategy aligned to organisational values

Strategic Outcome: That everyone can be their true selves at UKSBS				
Value 1: Versatility	**Value 2: Diversity**	**Value 3: One Team**	**Value 4: Empowerment**	**Value 5: Integrity**
We respect, embrace, and recognise each other's differences. By fostering an inclusive environment where varied ideas and approaches are valued, we create a culture of versatility.	We are committed to challenging biases and barriers, ensuring equitable opportunities for all. Together, we embrace our differences, understanding they are essential to our growth and success.	By embracing our diverse strengths and perspectives, we work together as one team. Together, we create an inclusive environment where everyone feels a sense of belonging.	We believe in empowering every individual to reach their fullest potential. By fostering an environment of trust and support, we prioritise employe voice, ensuring all perspectives are heard and valued.	By fostering a culture of trust, we encourage open communication and mutual respect, allowing every individual to contribute authentically. This commitment to integrity not only strengthens UKSBS but also enhances our ability to provide exceptional service to our clients, ensuring their needs are met with respect and professionalism.
Objective 1	**Objective 2**	**Objective 3**	**Objective 4**	**Objective 5**
Ensure decisions are well-informed by utilising qualitative and quantitative data from both employees and clients, enabling a thorough understanding of their needs and efficient direction of our support.	Implement inclusive practices to attract and recruit diverse talent, ensure retention and progression of employees from underrepresented backgrounds, and provide them with tools to further develop their expertise.	Develop skills within our workforce and leaders to cultivate an inclusive culture that maximises the talent and skills needed to provide excellent services for our clients.	Strengthen our mechanisms and communication channels to hear employees' voices, allowing feedback on our policies and EDI initiatives. Support and expand staff networks to foster a sense of community and enhance collaboration across diverse groups.	Our policies comply with relevant laws and regulations in the UK and are reviewed regularly to introduce best practice.

	What does success look like?			
We have a comprehensive system to collect employee data and effectively communicate our intentions for data use, employee benefits, and our dedication to data protection, through an informative campaign. Our system is easily updatable to follow the employee life-cycle. We have disclosure rates above 65% and our database stores information regarding protected characteristics. We seek underrepresented perspectives, consulting those with lived experience, particularly encouraging the creation of employee networks.	We have a representative workforce that reflects the diversity of our client base, the locations in which we are based and the wider UK. We monitor the lifecycle of our employees to identify gaps in progression related to a protected characteristic. We promote mentorship programmes to provide support to underrepresented groups and encourage them to attain senior leadership positions. We have an accreditation from Inclusive Employers to demonstrate our commitment as a place that develops, retains and fully engages diverse talent. We have committed to the menopause work pledge, to demonstrate the importance of removing the barriers faced by women.	Our workforce and leaders understand the importance of inclusion and the role everybody plays in promoting it at work. Leaders take individual responsibility to help deliver and drive our ambition about diversity and inclusion. The training around inclusion is delivered gradually, following the Annual Training Plan and is regularly assessed to confirm the transformation of knowledge into practical skills that all individuals can implement effectively in their roles at UKSBS.	We have solid employee networks on different characteristics/areas that are relevant to our employees. The networks are well organised and engage the wider workforce with events to raise awareness and collaborate with the EDI Forum and the People team to create or update policies relevant to them.	Our policies are regularly updated, and we are always looking to adopt best practices. We support our employees by acknowledging their diverse backgrounds and needs, allowing them to thrive and removing all barriers to their development. Our employees feedback from surveys is positive; they find the policies beneficial as they support their professional growth and well-being.

Actions				
Saas Platform Update: Taking the opportunity of a new HR system to improve and incorporate relevant fields for collecting information on protected characteristics, particularly during the onboarding process but also allowing for updates at any point during the employee life cycle, with at least 65% disclosure rates by April 2026. **Employees Surveys:** Include culture and EDI specific questions within the Pulse and annual employee surveys to gather insights into employee perceptions regarding discrimination, harassment, bullying, training interests, satisfaction with services and benefits, as well as awareness of company policies. These surveys will inform our ongoing efforts to promote a positive and inclusive work environment.	**Inclusive recruitment practices** Inclusive recruitment practices to guide the language used for job applications to be reviewed and updated by April 2026. Continue to provide adjustments for disabled candidates and advertise all roles on recruitment sites specifically aimed at those with protected characteristics by April 2026. Promote flexible working opportunities to support employees who need it, for example, those who have caring responsibilities outside of work. Disclose salaries for job vacancies and send interview questions an hour in advance to candidates who prefer it. The procurement and implementation of an accessibility tool on all our inward and public facing sites and collateral, to reduce barriers faced by those accessing our sites, by December 2026. Recruitment processes to be reviewed by December 2025 to reduce the risk of unconscious bias at the attraction, application, shortlisting and interview stages.	**Training opportunities** All managers are required to attend training on inclusive leadership by June 2026. Attendance MI will be shared with the Executive to measure completion rates. Our wider workforce to undertake training on the following areas, with a 95% completion rate to be attained: - Neurodiversity - Mental Health - Inclusive Communications (inclusive language) All our training opportunities are assessed in the medium term by the People Team. We share challenges and best practice in leadership and delivery among colleagues and teams, fostering an open dialogue where everyone feels comfortable and barriers / stigma are eliminated.	**Create Employee Networks** The EDI forum is established as a formal channel for employee engagement and feedback on policies, initiatives and change. The terms of reference for the employee led networks to be reviewed by September 2025, with clear roles and responsibilities and regular meetings. The employee networks will have representation at the EDI forum. Promotion of the EDI forum by December 2025 to seek members from the community with lived experiences. Creation of an online EDI community hub with the opportunity for employees to share their voices alongside members of the forum to create more efficient awareness and enhance the celebration of diversity and inclusion days.	**Review policies** To ensure comprehensive support, we will implement new policies or allow for provisions related to the following areas by December 2025: • The enhancement of the Welbeing policy to include Women's Health • Sexual Harassment • Flexible working for religious festivals • The Inclusion Policy will be enhanced and become the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Governance and Stakeholders

All UKSBS employees have a part to play towards the successful delivery of this strategy. Understanding and developing equality, diversity and inclusion within our workforce is a key priority for all leaders. Progress will be monitored through the People Committee, which meets every other month. Continual engagement with employees will ensure that those matters most important to them are listened to and addressed.

The People Committee will provide oversight of EDI throughout UKSBS. It will provide clear leadership in implementing the EDI Strategy and be responsible for embedding the strategic outcomes into ways of working and culture.

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Forum will provide support to the People Committee by drawing in voluntary representation from across the organisation. It will look to harness employee insights and ideas to incorporate into policies and working practices. The Forum will help to ensure that communication and campaigns in relation to EDI are effective, appropriate and raises awareness about this Strategy's progress and objectives.

The People Committee and EDI Forum will jointly provide twice-yearly updates to the Executive Committee on progress against each of the strategic objectives and actions.

The following stakeholders have been identified in relation to this Strategy:

The UKSBS Board has overall strategic responsibility for EDI and will be provided with assurance that our strategy and plans are effective and adequate, receiving updates that set out progress and performance on an annual basis.

The Executive Team and Senior Leadership Teams all endorse and collectively own the EDI Strategy. The EDI Executive Team lead (Company Secretary) and People Team will work with leaders across the organisation to help ensure that strategic intent translates into practical results.

Employees have a fundamental role to support the delivery of the strategy and action plan. Progress will be regularly promoted internally to raise awareness and maintain momentum.

Customers and Clients are key to ensuring that we better understand their needs and requirements and to facilitate fair and equal access to service provision.