

## Statement of intent

Community Leisure UK is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion and condemns discrimination and racism in all forms. We recognise the presence of systemic inequality, discrimination and racism within our society and understand the role and platform we have to acknowledge, address and take action against it as part of our work as a representative body within the public leisure and culture sectors.

Our core work is to represent and provide a network for leisure and culture trusts across the UK, to promote the trust model and to harness the power of the collective to strengthen our members' contribution to communities.

We have identified three ways to deliver on these commitments of equality, diversity and inclusion as an organisation: working with our members, engaging with our partners, and educating ourselves as an organisation.

We inform our members and provide actionable advice on increasing equality, diversity, and inclusion within their own organisations and work in collaboration with partners.

Through our partnerships, we actively encourage awareness around equality, diversity and inclusion, and utilise our networks to engage with and include organisations that represent marginalised or under-represented groups in our and members' work.

As an employer, we actively encourage our employees to seek out learning opportunities relating to equality, diversity and inclusion. Staff are encouraged to share this learning within the team to support organisation-wide learning and growth. We are committed to providing equal opportunities throughout employment with Community Leisure UK, including the recruitment, training and development of employees.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

We have made this Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan into a three-year plan, recognising that behaviour and cultural change does not happen overnight. By making this a three-year plan, we will also be able to monitor change within our membership, and support members on making sustainable changes to their own internal policies and procedures.

The actions as identified in this plan will be incorporated into the work plans of the Community Leisure UK staff, which are reviewed monthly.

The Board and Community Leisure UK will formally review this plan on an annual basis at the same time as the annual Community Leisure UK business plan, implementing these actions into the business plan and adjusting where needed based on member feedback.

This plan complements and sits alongside the sector leadership development work the Board has requested Community Leisure UK to support members with.

Action Plan 2022 – 2025

| Aim  | Objective   | Actions and KPIs  |
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| <p>Create inclusive workplaces within the Community Leisure UK membership.</p> | <p>Increase the diversity of members' Board, workforce and volunteers by building confidence and knowledge to review and introduce new inclusive policies and procedures.</p> | <p>This objective will be achieved and measured through the annual HR survey and the work plans of the HR Special Interest Group. It also links to our Active Kindness programme and takes learning from best practice in volunteering. Specific targets will be set and discussed by the HR SIG and will be measured against a baseline collected in 2022.</p> <p>This objective also acknowledges the recruitment challenges and the need to recruit staff to be able to deliver public leisure and culture services. This context will be considered when discussing and acting on diversity within recruitment and retention policies and procedures.</p> <p>By April 2023:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Members have been introduced to the tools they can use to audit their workforce.</li> <li>● Members have been introduced to inclusive recruitment principles and the tools they can use to review and adapt their recruitment practices.</li> <li>● Members have started sharing templates and best practice on auditing their workforce and Board.</li> </ul> <p>By April 2024:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The number of members who have implemented workforce auditing procedures has increased, as compared to the baseline gathered in 2022.</li> <li>● Members report to understand their workforce diversity and the extent to which their current workforce represents their local community.</li> <li>● Members report to have changed their recruitment practices in recognition of their current workforce diversity and organisational targets for change.</li> </ul> <p>By April 2025:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The number of members reporting the top 5% of their earners to be female or from ethnically diverse communities through our annual HR Survey have increased, as compared to the baseline gathered in 2022.</li> </ul> |

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|  |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The number of members who have implemented workforce auditing procedures and have set organisational targets has increased again, as compared to the baseline of 2022 and 2024.</li> </ul>  |
|  | <p>Ensure Community Leisure UK meetings are a safe and inclusive space for all members.</p> | <p>As a membership association, we have a responsibility to reflect on our own meetings and make sure that these are safe spaces. Our priority is to listen to members' feedback and respond and adapt.</p> <p>By April 2023:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Leisure UK has surveyed the membership about their experiences with our and other meetings in a professional context within public leisure and culture, and has reported back to the members on the feedback and any changes that they will implement to provide more inclusive spaces moving forward.</li> <li>Community Leisure UK has shared their insights with partners to raise awareness of the extent of inclusive and safe spaces within the public leisure and culture sector.</li> </ul> <p>Afterwards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Leisure UK annually surveys their membership to collect insight on the inclusivity of meetings in a professional context for public leisure and culture, with the number of members reporting unprofessional behaviour decreasing year on year when compared to the 2022-23 baseline.</li> <li>Community Leisure UK updates the membership at their Annual General Meeting on the feedback from members and changes that the company has made to ensure their meetings are safe and inclusive.</li> <li>Community Leisure UK shares their insights with partners to raise awareness of the extent of inclusive and safe spaces within the public leisure and culture sector and to encourage other organisations to make changes where needed.</li> </ul> |
|  | <p>Support members in understanding their organisational cultures.</p>                      | <p>As a membership association, our role is to facilitate discussion with members and provide them the tools and insights to evaluate their own organisational culture. This will happen through the HR Special Interest Groups but also through member discussion at Board level, and at Regional and General Meetings.</p>   |

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|   |   | <p>By April 2023:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members have discussed their current operating culture, including the role of senior managers to challenge unprofessional and inappropriate behaviour.</li> </ul> <p>By April 2024:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organisational cultures have been discussed at all Community Leisure UK Regional Meetings with senior leaders of the membership sharing experience of inclusivity in their own workplaces.</li> <li>Members feel supported and have evaluated the extent to which their workplaces provide a safe and inclusive environment, as measured through the annual HR survey.</li> </ul> <p>By April 2025:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The number of members that report having evaluated and feel confident that they have a safe and inclusive organisational culture has increased as compared to the baseline collected in 2023/24.</li> </ul> |
|   | <p>Create a succession plan for the Community Leisure UK Board to improve Board diversity</p>   | <p>This will be delivered through the Community Leisure UK Business Plan and falls under the Board work plans. The Board is committing to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a succession plan with the view of improving diversity:</li> <li>Share stories of leadership journeys and career paths within leisure and culture.</li> </ul>   |
| <p>Improve the journey of being active and culturally engaged across culture and leisure trusts</p> | <p>Review the customer journey of engaging in public leisure and culture and support members in making changes based on community need.</p> | <p>This objective will be covered through the various Special Interest Groups, the Active Kindness programme and Community Leisure UK's social value work.</p> <p>Actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is discussed as a standard agenda item in all Special Interest Groups to explore how the work of members can actively embed ED&amp;I considerations throughout their work.</li> <li>Learnings from Active Kindness are actively shared within Special Interest Group meetings, focusing on engaging and understanding communities and adapting programming to community needs.</li> <li>Equality, Diversity &amp; Inclusion is actively considered under the social value impact of members work, and is incorporated in social value work programmes.</li> </ul>  |

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Learnings from SIG meetings and members' approaches are shared with the Active Kindness and social value work programmes to facilitate best practice sharing.</li><li>● Community Leisure UK continues to support partner campaigns and initiatives, including seeking out new partnerships, that provide actionable advice to the leisure and culture sector on how to increase accessibility and inclusivity.</li></ul> |
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## Background

When discussing equality, diversity and inclusion within our membership and with partners, we mean to refer to equal opportunities for participation in public leisure and culture in the broadest sense – both from the participant and the employee perspective.

This is in line with the [trust model](#) which ensures that individuals, community groups and families, regardless of where they live, their income or their ability to engage, have access to affordable and subsidised public leisure and cultural services. In addition, we include any individual or group of people with protected characteristics as per the Equalities Act (2010), including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Following the first year of working with an Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan, we have identified two core aims that we will focus on in the next three years.

1. Create inclusive workplaces within the Community Leisure UK membership

We know that there is still a lack of understanding and confidence of how diverse our sector truly is, and how to create an inclusive professional environment. We also know that some of the current professional cultures and behaviours are leading to discrimination, inequality, bullying and sexism.

With regards to current workforce diversity, members express being afraid to get things wrong with their employees, and, consequently, do not have full insight into the real diversity of their current workforce as this is not being measured.

From our partnership working, there is clear evidence that not only do [less than 3 in 10 disabled people feel encouraged to return to physical activity](#) after the pandemic, but disabled people are also vastly under-represented in the fitness and leisure sector workforce. There is a moral obligation for organisations to [address the imbalance between disabled and non-disabled people in the sector](#), which not only will enhance service for disabled customers but also improve workplace practices for disabled employees.

In addition, we know from [research](#) that the number of women in leadership positions in the sport sector is increasing, but that progress is slow. Community Leisure UK has noticed this lack of diversity within senior management directly in the past few years, with our own Board being homogenous and not diverse. This reflects the public leisure and culture sector leadership as our Board is made up of member representatives.

The lack of workforce diversity is also evidenced in the Community Leisure UK annual HR surveys where two third of members consistently report that fewer than 50% of their top 5% earners are women. Moreover, our HR survey in 2021 showed that most members have no representation from ethnically diverse communities in their top 5% of earners.

In the arts and cultural sector, inequality in the workplace is widely [discussed](#) with a lack of [racial](#) and social diversity being the focus. Class-based exclusion [has been found](#) to be more pronounced in the Creative Industries than in any other industrial sector.

However, workforce makeup is only part of the challenge as diversity follows more holistically when an inclusive culture is created.

Other [research](#) has shown that two thirds of the leisure and sport workforce have heard discussions or language in a professional setting that they would deem inappropriate or unprofessional. In the same research, 48% of female respondents believe they have been discriminated against because of their gender. Over half of women and nearly a third of men report to have felt unsafe or uncomfortable due to the behaviour of colleagues, clients, or others in a professional context.

Following our workshops in 2021, more members have shared their experience and observations of unsafe and discriminatory practices within a professional context.

As a membership association, we have a responsibility to address these practices within our membership and will therefore focus our ED&I work more internally. This is about members' operating culture and how we as a sector and individuals behave in a professional context.

At Community Leisure UK, we strongly believe that if we do not support members in being inclusive in the way they operate and behave, it risks their whole operations being tokenistic, including the progress they have made in their outward facing activities which increase participation in physical activity, leisure, arts and culture.

We also have a responsibility to lead by example and seek to increase the diversity in our Board and support members in doing the same across their organisation.

These reflections mean that there will be three core areas to focus on within the aim to create inclusive workplaces:

- Workforce make-up including inclusive recruitment and retention policies based on an understanding of current workforce diversity;
- Workplace cultures including banter and behaviour in professional settings both inside and outside members' own workplaces;
- Board diversity of Community Leisure UK.

## 2. Improve the journey of being active and culturally engaged across culture and leisure trusts

While members' charitable objectives are at the heart of their operations, the customer journey of supporting people to be active and culturally engaged will need to be reviewed. It is important to consider other factors outside physical activity, leisure and culture that influences engagement levels and that will set expectations on how to engage. There is also not one set of reasons that stops people from being active, therefore the journey has to be reviewed holistically.

Our work in 2021 showed that there is more work to be done to work with communities and people with lived experience. Specifically, this means working with members and partners to understand who their local community is, how these communities are represented, and what stops them from engaging.

Here it is important to realise that improving parts of the journey for one group, will make venues and activities more accessible for others too. This work is closely related to our social value work, with members demonstrating how they make a difference locally,

using a place-based approach to their work, and to our Active Kindness programme which has been set up to creatively build our members' capacity on volunteer management.

This aim is strongly focused on public leisure and culture managed by Community Leisure UK members being accessible and adapted to community needs. Partnership working and collaboration with other national representative organisations will be a key focus to achieving this aim to bring the latest insight and best practice to our membership, and to share the challenges and opportunities identified by our members with the wider leisure and culture sector.