



WSA Community Consultants EDI Policy



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Statement of Intent

At WSA Community Consultants, we believe that through empowering diverse communities and making them the center of their own development, amazing things can happen. We actively engage with a broad range of communities putting them at the heart of their own development in order to positively support them in retaining power over their own lives.

We work by empowering these groups; joining the dots to share learning between the projects we work on, as well as bringing our own learning, knowledge and experience. We want to make a constructive change, and believe that to be most inclusive means to make a point of being accessible and supporting all to participate.

WSA Community Consultants strives to create a sense of community, honesty and openness in which those involved in our work can feel able to fully be themselves in a safe space of shared purpose and connection. Our vision for improving places and lives is not just about *what* happens, but about how people *feel* about what happens.

Community can mean many things but is always at the heart of what we do, whether that's supporting neighborhoods to come together or by talking about shared experiences. WSA Community Consultants want our efforts to be sustainable and so sharing skills, experience and learning is at the top of our agenda.

Our skills and areas of interest are as follows but are not limited to:

- Community Development
- Evaluation
- Patient Voice
- Training

Our priorities include:

- Community-centred Work
- Evidence-based Knowledge
- Social Inclusion
- Empowering and Strengthening Local Leadership & Involvement
- Building Local Knowledge & Skills
- Working with Groups and Learning from Best Practice

We recognise that the starting point is one of inequality, where systemic oppression continues to curtail life possibilities – and we know that immediate and sustained action is necessary in the face of these inequalities. This is why we commit to actively disrupting the systems that may attempt to manifest in our own business, in

organisations we connect with and in our work with diverse communities, to develop and nurture new systems that support thriving for all.

We strive for our work to build relationships between those who share protected and non-protected characteristics, thus contributing to improving equity within and across systems, not just within the scope of our projects.

Our aspiration is that when you interact with WSA Community Consultants team members, whether they be staff or associates through training, partnerships, as an employee, potential recruit or partner – the work to understand, promote and engage in equity, diversity and inclusion processes is evident and reflective of the values you wish to see upheld.

In our aim to deliver equitable treatment for all, we strive to ensure that every interaction is respectful and meaningful. The representation and inclusion of all genders, races, cultures, identities, sexual orientations, ages, religions, abilities, languages, experiences and expressions is at the heart of our work. We aim to identify, educate on and eliminate barriers to achieve fair treatment for everyone, with a particular focus on addressing the imbalances faced by underrepresented groups.

We are committed to self-education and the sharing of knowledge. We believe fervently that our ongoing learning is important and will remain so – and, until the inclusion and belonging landscape is consciously shaped into a system that truly represents all, our work will continue.

Our Commitment and Values

WSA Community Consultants is committed to promoting equity and valuing diversity. We will monitor the performance of the organisation by implementing its EDI policy in all of the work we do internally and externally, as well as with clients and communities.

WSA Community Consultants aims to promote:

- equality and equity of opportunity for all
- a workplace where people are treated with dignity and respect, as well as being valued for who they are and the contribution they make to the organisation
- a culture where diversity is celebrated and difference is seen as an opportunity to unite, positively impact and support internal and external stakeholders

This ethos is underpinned by a core set of values, which include:

- creating an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all clients, staff, volunteers and associates are recognised and valued
- providing entitlement to support which promotes dignity and respect for all
- offering access to training, development and the availability of opportunities for clients, staff, volunteers and associates
- regular reviews of equality and equity in the workplace
- regular reviews of WSA Community Consultant's practices and procedures to ensure fairness

Our Ways of Working with Communities

We understand that whilst we have substantial skills and knowledge, the real experts in any community are essentially its members. We wish to go beyond the rudimentary sharing of knowledge or filling of skills gaps, to instead creating a sustainable change, effectively allowing our clients to learn deeply from our experiences, as we learn from theirs. We're committed to curating knowledge from other initiatives and sharing good practice, as well as offering support and intervention around our broad scope of community development, participation, networking, training and evaluation skills.

We work with communities and clients to identify their needs and design the work responsively so that projects build capacity and results can be maintained after project completion.

To assist us in our work, we use a range of frameworks and models to support positive examples of working, putting communities at the heart of their own development and ensuring we deliver the most relevant and bespoke project plans. We have experience of using methods such as participatory appraisals, participative consultations, and planning and evaluation tools to meet our goals.

We are also dedicated to creating and strengthening community leadership and voices, as well as building on our strong commitment to social inclusion and empowerment.

WSA Community Consultants know that actions ripple, so our aim is to cause positive reverberations with our partners that will impact inclusive participation for years to come.

With you, we intend to act as a guiding force to secure the equitable futures of those we interact with. Our aspirational goals and our EDI Policy, complement our commitment to partnership working and have been written to fully realise our ambition of increasing the representation of historically underrepresented groups.

1 | WSA - EDI Policy – Clients, Staff, Volunteers & Associates

The senior management team (SMT) at WSA Community Consultants (WSA) recognise and accept that all areas of the present workforce, in particular those that work in our context, need to be more inclusive of the underrepresented groups we wish to impact. Whilst we are committed to inclusion and to establishing a more diverse workforce.

We are aware of the fact that a robust Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) approach is required to achieve the changes we desire. We feel a more diverse workforce would add a greater richness, as well as the ability to manage a broader and deeper scope of community development and engagement objectives for the future. It would align with our values and enable us to be better equipped to achieve our vision and mission.

We seek to broaden our recruitment methods, particularly with regards to our associates' team, in order to enhance accessibility of employment for individuals from inadequately represented communities.

Key Principles and Priorities

As an organisation we are committed to our clients, our staff and our associates. We endeavour to share our common experiences and to build upon the existing knowledge and expertise of the organisation to the mutual benefit of our clients and our team. Where we can be, we are involved in community work on a voluntary basis. This fits in with our ethos and values around inclusion, accessibility and participation.

Our Responsibility to Our Teams

WSA are striving to build a staff team that is representative and that disrupts the systemic nature of indiscernible progress for marginalised groups, instead replacing it with a culture of inclusion, belonging and opportunity. Whilst we seek to achieve this aspiration, we are simultaneously looking for ways to empower a range of community voices in the work that we do.

We will continue to seek out views and opinions from across all spectrums of communities and support peer learning and engagement in paid roles; recognising that being an expert by experience is valuable and should be reflected in the pay that is offered. We continue to develop awareness around how our organisational diversity may impact our practice by mitigating gaps and involving those who have knowledge in professional capacities, as well as empowering them to be involved in related processes.

WSA are committed to providing employment opportunities regardless of race, religious creed, national origin, ancestry, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, gender, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding, age, sexual orientation, military or veteran status, class, educational attainment, experience of the care/criminal justice systems, substance misuse, homelessness or any other protected or unprotected characteristics in accordance with applicable relevant laws.

We embrace the opportunity to lead by example and to effect meaningful change. We seek to empower groups to represent themselves by recognising the role that having diversity of leadership and staff has in that.

What This Means for the Communities We Work With

We are committed to tackling inequality, proactively encouraging inclusiveness through facilitation of community and organisational participation. Above all, we endeavour to work with honesty, integrity, trust and the highest level of professionalism in all of our activities.

Strategic Objectives

Living our values means extending them to everyone. We want to ensure our staff and associates feel the impact of a fair and inclusive work place and have access to routes of recourse should the need arise.

We will actively accelerate cultures of inclusion and belonging, as well as dismantling barriers to opportunities as they relate to protected and non-protected characteristics. This will include offering associates a culture of openness to acknowledging knowledge gaps, signposting to learning and the opportunity to share from their wells of experience in a 30-minute, monthly drop-in session, as well as other ways of learning and sharing.

We will do this through:

- training
- access to tools and processes
- opportunities for reflective practice
- discussing and reviewing our work
- implementing equality impact assessments at the scoping and review stages for all projects
- sharing best practice within the network and learning from best practice from elsewhere
- monitoring applications and systems for jobs to ensure that our adverts reach a wide range of applicants

2 | WSA - EDI Policy Implementation

As a community development organisation, it's important for us to bring the diversity of cultures, backgrounds and perspectives together for our clients, communities, candidates, staff and stakeholders. Building a diverse, equitable and inclusive culture allows those we engage to bring their whole selves into our interactions.

We recognise the need for a range of initiatives within organisations like ours as a means of attaining the gold standard in EDI implementation. As a small organisation, we recognise our limited capacity but are working towards a future where we are able to offer mentorship opportunities, internal development programmes, events and additional resources, tools and more.

At WSA, we commit to ensuring that all stakeholders have access to the right conversations, forums or meetings by addressing discriminatory barriers to success and engaging with our work force, associates and clients to effect lasting change.

Policy Implementation: Expectations

WSA Community Consultants recognises that passive policies do not provide equity nor encourage diversity and inclusion in employment, training or services. We will seek to promote EDI within the following framework of responsibilities.

Responsibility for implementing and developing the policy rests with the management team. The overall co-ordinating responsibility for equal opportunities and management of diversity and inclusion is delegated to the Company Director.

However, WSA believe that all who work with or for the organisation have an individual responsibility: to embrace the policy and ensure personal involvement in its application and to co-operate actively to ensure that the environment we desire is a reality.

Therefore, WSA Community Consultants requires individuals:

- to implement proactive measures introduced by the organisation to ensure equity of opportunity, diversity, inclusion and non-discrimination
- not to harass, abuse or intimidate any other member of personnel or stakeholders
- to inform management if they suspect discrimination is taking place

We require our Senior Management Team:

- to ensure that proper records of employment decisions are maintained and regular reviews of employment practices are carried out
- to ensure that grievances are dealt with in a fair and consistent manner and in line with the WSA Grievance Policy and Procedure
- to actively promote the benefits of personnel and participant diversity in employment, services and training
- to ensure that all staff apply this policy in the work they do on a daily basis
- to undertake and champion equality impact assessments, using the tool to inform best practice and to operate with consideration

- lead with integrity, both internally and with external project work
- ensure that the highest standards of practice with regards to EDI are observed in the delivery of the organisation's services
- undertake training and development opportunities to ensure that competence is maintained
- collate and discuss relevant organisational information and make recommendations for improvement
- seek the views and opinions of personnel, partners and stakeholders on the operation of the policy in their area of responsibility, in particular to meet the varied needs of clients
- facilitate training and discussion on equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion issues, as appropriate
- offer advice and guidance to members of personnel on WSA's EDI policy and related procedures
- enable staff, partners and associates to be stakeholders in the policy and its actions
- ensure that managers are supported in their roles in regard to the EDI policy and processes
- ensure that the EDI policy and associated documents are reviewed on an 18-month basis
- review and approve policies, procedures and practices that impact equal opportunities and diversity
- co-ordinate the delivery of the EDI strategy and action plan

Policy Implementation: Monitoring

The management team will annually monitor and review the equality of opportunity relating to WSA, in addition to the recruitment and selection procedures. All aspects of personnel policies and procedures will be kept under review to ensure that they comply with the EDI policy.

If it is found that the policy is excluding or discouraging the development of personnel, the Company Director should take positive action to re-adjust the policy.

Policy Implementation: Recruitment and Promotion

WSA Community Consultants strives to ensure that:

- our leadership and personnel reflect the wider community
- personnel be encouraged to discuss their development and training needs through a process of regular support and annual appraisals
- clear and accurate information on vacant posts be available through advertisement, job descriptions, person specifications and interview
- vacancies should be advertised sufficiently widely to reach the widest possible range of candidates, either internal and/or external
- recruitment material not imply any preferred group, unless a genuine occupational qualification exists limiting a post to a particular people

- applicants be informed, through all recruitment material, of the organisation's commitment to equal opportunities, equity, diversity and inclusion
- while person specifications can include 'essential' and 'desirable' requirements that are necessary and justifiable, WSA will seek advice to ensure these are non-discriminatory
- job postings contain accurate descriptions of necessary qualifications and skills, avoiding language that can dissuade minority groups from applying
- actively seeking to support the lived experience of employees and potential new recruits
- postings (and career sites) be assessed to ensure they are accessible

Policy Implementation: Interviews and Selection

Where possible, WSA will:

- consider what is inclusive in terms of gender, disability and ethnicity in forming interview panels and will strive to include members from the communities we seek to serve
- ensure interview panels take extreme care not to ask discriminatory questions which do not comply with WSA's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy statements, e.g. questions relating to race, nationality, ethnic or national origin; gender; marital or civil partnership status or caring responsibility, sexual orientation, age, physical, sensory or learning disability, mental health, political or religious beliefs, class or employment status
- strategically structure interviews and interview guides to ensure equity and fairness throughout the selection, interview and offer process

3 | WSA - EDI Policy – Working with Communities and Clients

We recognise that whilst we have substantial skills and knowledge, the real experts in any community are essentially its members. We're committed to learning from other initiatives and sharing good practice, as well as offering support and intervention around our broad scope of community development, participation, networking, training and evaluation skills.

Equality Impact Assessments

We will introduce equality impact assessments as part of our work to ensure that external standards are met and that our internal standards are fulfilled.

A template, to be completed within a month of starting each project as part of the scoping phase, will be shared with all key members of the WSA team. Each assessment and the related outputs are to be reviewed by the team at agreed milestones.

Access to the EIA can be found in the appendices.

4 | WSA - EDI Policy – Legal and Ethical Responsibilities

Our Legal Responsibilities

The Equality Act 2010 contains measures which have direct implications for our functions and underpins the legal framework in which we operate. It informs our approach as an employer.

The Equality Act 2010 identifies nine protected characteristics. These are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

In respect of these nine protected characteristics, section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 established the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which requires us to have due regard to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups
- foster good relations between people from different groups

[Equality diversity and inclusion \(EDI\) strategic framework 2020-25 \(nmc.org.uk\)](https://www.nmc.org.uk/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/edi-strategic-framework-2020-25)

Access to Processes

This policy applies to all and WSA takes a firm approach regarding its enforcement and any potential breaches of this policy, which will be dealt with in accordance with our anti-bullying and grievance policies. Serious cases of deliberate discrimination are likely to amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.

If you believe that you have experienced discrimination, or your dignity has been compromised whilst at work, you can raise the matter through our Grievance Policy or through our Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy as appropriate. Complaints will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate.

There must be no victimisation or retaliation against staff who raise concerns about discrimination. However, making a false allegation deliberately and in bad faith will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under our Disciplinary Policy.

Acknowledgement and Commitment to Improve Statement

As we refine our strategy, we'll continue to seek feedback and guidance from experts to ensure our approach has the greatest reach and impact.

WSA will ensure that this document undergoes regular reviews, making certain that principles are embedded in practices and that this policy remains a living document with a view to growth and improvement.

WSA Community Consultants will comply with all applicable legal and regulatory requirements and standards.

This policy is fully supported by our management team and will be monitored and reviewed annually.

Appendix

Equality Impact Assessment Tool for WSA projects

Guidance note: Please use this form at the outset of a new project/piece of work. Some sections may not be relevant to all work and therefore can be left blank or marked n/a.

A. Name of the project and two line summary

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B. Person responsible

Name:

Job title:

Please also state other team members:

C. Equality and diversity considerations

Are there particular ways in which the groups below may be impacted by your activity? The impact may be negative or positive. Are there any special considerations which may reduce negative impacts on these groups? (delete any that are not relevant and feel free to add any others):

- Age
- Disability
- Race (including ethnicity and nationality)
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Trans and non-binary
- People experiencing multiple needs such as homelessness, mental health problems, being involved in the criminal justice system or substance misuse.
- Social deprivation
- Pregnancy and maternity

D. Evidencing Impact

Please answer each of the following questions:

1. What actions will we take to address equity, inclusion and diversity in this project?
2. How will we engage people and communities in this project and ensure that our delivery is inclusive?
3. Does our project disproportionately affect any one group and if so how are we addressing this?
4. Are any changes/reasonable adjustments required to improve equality of opportunity or avoid discrimination? This could be in communications, recruitment or delivery, and at any stage of project cycles.

E. Review

Please have a mid point and end of project review and make some notes here to show progress or any other issues that need addressing. Note if a project is short or one off training we might not have a midpoint review.

Mid point review:

Date –

Notes –

End of project review:

Date –

Notes -

F. Sign-off

EqlA undertaken by (name and job title):

Date: