



**AFG Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy
2023-2026**



Foreword

Brian Walsh – Chair of Board of Trustees

When the Board and I launched **AFG's Strategy for 2023-2026** earlier this year I spoke about how very proud we were of the people who make AFG the organisation that it is, with their unwavering commitment to provide exemplary support to people living with a learning disability or mental health condition.

This is an incredibly exciting time for us all as begin a new chapter in our journey, with a renewed focus on the **growth and development** of the organisation.

One of the overarching aims of AFG's Strategy is **to be a place seen by our people as a Great Place to Work**.

For me, being a great place to work, has multiple dimensions – it is about us being a **people first organisation** that engages, develops and rewards our amazing colleagues; it is about having **exceptional leaders** that inspire, empower and promote the organisation; and it is about creating a **vibrant, diverse and inclusive culture that creates belonging**.

This final dimension of *creating a vibrant, diverse and inclusive culture* is incredibly important to me and is an area that the Board and I hold very close to our hearts.

AFG is a people organisation, with our people at the heart of everything we do.

We can only achieve our vision to positively impact more lives, if our staff feel valued, supported, recognised, treated with respect and equitability. It is essential that we create a culture, and environment, where our staff feel they belong, where they have safe spaces to speak and be heard, and where our leaders listen and act to create a culture free from discrimination.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees I am delighted to be able to introduce **AFGs Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (ED&I) Strategy 2023-26**, which sets out our commitment to promoting ED&I amongst our workforce at all levels.

Through this strategy we are sharing our commitment as an organisation to take steps to ensure we are a great employer that values and welcomes the different ideas, skills, behaviours, and experiences of all our people, and which will contribute to the creation of our vibrant and inclusive culture.

We recognise that our measure of success in creating an inclusive culture, and a great place to work, is one which is wholly owned by our people. Being seen as a great place to work is an achievement that is gifted to us by our staff in response to the actions we take to genuinely see, hear, support, nurture, grow, develop and include our people.

The launch of our ED&I Strategy today is an incredibly important moment – one which demonstrates our commitment to our people.

I look forward to working with you all to deliver this exciting phase in our ED&I strategy and development of our inclusive culture.



“...its about creating a vibrant, diverse and inclusive culture that creates belonging.”

Introduction



I'm delighted to welcome you to AFG's first Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy. Our ED&I Strategy plays a critical role in achieving our aims of having a vibrant, diverse and inclusive culture which creates a sense of belonging.

We are committed to embedding equality, diversity and inclusion (ED&I) into all our processes, policies, and most importantly our culture. Delivering just our legislative obligations is not enough.

Our ED&I Strategy builds upon good fundamental foundations and pledges to address inequalities in our organisation, creating an inclusive culture which is equitable and free from all forms of discrimination.

We are passionate about ensuring that all our staff feel that they can **bring their whole selves to work** and feel a sense of belonging, that they are valued, and that their skills and abilities are recognised.

We believe that having a workforce that represents the people we support and the communities in which we work will help us to ensure that we enshrine inclusivity in all that we do.

An important first step in developing our ED&I Strategy & Action Plan has been to commission an independent review and audit of our current practice, to understand the experiences of our people, and to co-create our action plan for the future.

To support with this work, AFG **commissioned Ametrine Coaching & Consultancy** to undertake an independent compliance audit; Culture Survey; SWOT Analysis; and a range of Focus Groups with our staff to hear first-hand their experiences and priorities for this strategy / action plan.

I am really excited about where this action plan will take us, and for the amazing conversations, and depth of engagement that we will see across our organisation.



“We are committed to embedding equality, diversity and inclusion (ED&I) into all our processes, policies, and most importantly our culture”



Ametrine Coaching & Consultancy are a Merseyside based ED&I consultancy service. They specialise in equality, diversity and inclusion, providing support to organisations to set, design, and deliver their equality objectives and to create opportunities to diversity and enhance their workforce.

We wish to share our sincerest thanks to **Irene Afful** who is the founder of Ametrine who has independently supported us to define our ED&I vision and goals.

Irene's research, audit, consultation with staff has been pivotal to shaping the recommendations that you will see within this strategy.



We are on a Journey of Development

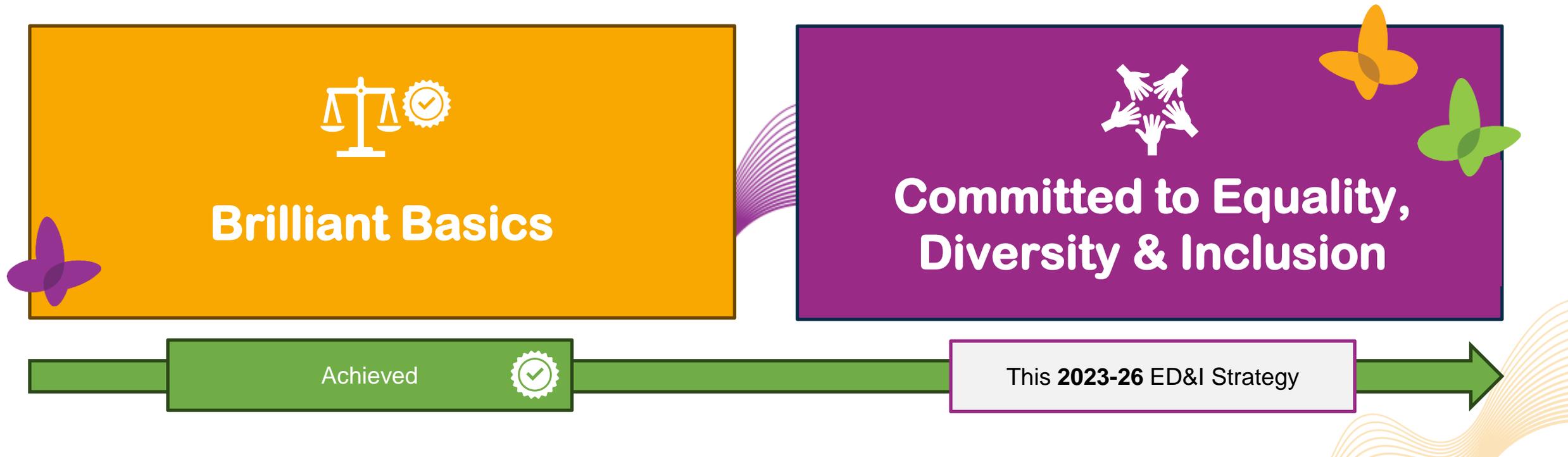


Creating a vibrant, diverse and inclusive culture takes time, personal and leadership development, engagement, and the building of trusting relationships and safety. We are committed to developing our culture meaningfully, recognising we are on a journey that will span across several years.

We are starting from a great place – Our Employee Opinion Surveys, Culture Surveys, and Policy/Process/Compliance Audits all show our foundations in terms of legal compliance, policies and practice are working well – These are our **Brilliant Basics** which are in place today and form the foundations for our practice.

This three-year strategy demonstrates our shared **commitment to equality, diversity & inclusion**.

During 2023-26 the objectives of our ED&I Strategy will take us on the journey to achieve our ambition for a vibrant, diverse and inclusive culture. During this phase we will create stronger opportunities for our people to be seen and heard; we will celebrate the diversity that exists within our organisation; we develop our staff and leaders; we will create a safe and inclusive culture; we develop our practices and policies to be equitable for all; and we will create equity of opportunity for our people – this is our commitment to all our staff.



What does equality, diversity & inclusion mean to AFG?



At the heart of our ED&I Strategy is an ambition to **develop the culture of our organisation** – Hiring diverse talent alone isn't enough, it is the **workplace experience** that shapes whether people remain, thrive and feel as though they belong.

Diversity

Diversity is about **celebrating differences**, valuing our colleague and people we support's uniqueness.

Diversity recognises that **everyone has their own experiences and skills** with which to make a valuable contribution.

Inclusion

Inclusion means that **everyone feels appropriately respected, valued, and welcomed** as a person we support or colleague.

We know that there are **many different types of barriers** that make people feel excluded, so we will aim to address these and be as inclusive as possible.

The Core Components of Inclusion are:

Equality

Equality is about recognizing the difference in individuals. We can only treat everyone with equity by recognizing and embracing their differences. By recognizing and meeting individual needs we can provide equality of opportunity, treating everyone fairly.

We want every person, both the people we support and colleagues, to feel that they are receiving fair treatment and have quality of opportunity and rights, irrespective of their background, income, circumstances, or protected characteristics. This relates to equality and fairness of opportunity and bias free processes.

Openness

This relates to bias and discrimination and the ability of managers and colleagues to identify and address microaggression's and the ability to have open conversations in a safe environment.

Belonging

Belonging relates to embracing multivariate forms of diversity, building connection and fostering a sense of community.

Our Strategic Framework



Our ED&I Strategic Framework covers the period 2023 to 2026. Our overarching aim of this strategy is to **create a vibrant, diverse and inclusive culture that creates belonging.**

The independent exploratory work that has been undertaken by *Ametrine Consultancy* has helped us to identify **8 key themes to our ED&I Strategy.**

Collectively, these themes will help us to direct our actions to achieve our strategic ambitions and an inclusive culture.

Each theme has a set of strategic objectives which we will deliver over the three years leading to March 2026.

Over the next few pages, we will set out our deliverables against of each of these themes and objective areas.



Our Policies & Procedures are a fundamental element of the foundations for our practice, actions, and culture.

We will ensure that our policies and processes are fit for purpose and **free from discrimination** in terms of their impact on minority groups.

We will ensure that our policies and processes are subject to **Equality Impact Assessments (EIA)** and will monitor for disproportionality.

We will build a **truly diverse and inclusive workforce**, from top to bottom that reflects the communities in which we operate.

Having reliable data on our people is the basis for understanding our work on equality, diversity and inclusion.

Our data can help us **understand staff satisfaction**, analyse trends in recruitment and development, and work towards an improved staff experience.

Our approach is to become more proactive by using data to develop projects and interventions to promote equity within the organisation

Diversity brings different insights, **creates challenges**, and encourages change and innovation.

We recognize the importance of diversity across all roles and levels within our organisation.

As part of this strategy, **we will recruit, retain and develop a diverse workforce and Board**, which is representative of the communities in which we work.

We will also take action to increase the representation of ethnic minorities and people with disabilities in our more senior roles.



We will ensure that all our staff have **access to training and development opportunities** to progress their careers within our organisation.

We will ensure that our leaders hold the **values, skills, learning and resources** to create an inclusive culture which is free from bias and discrimination.

We will invest in the **development and retention of our staff** – creating clearly defined career pathways and support to create pipelines of diverse talent for our management and leadership roles.

We will develop **our internal and external communication channels** to promote, celebrate and embrace ED&I.

We will also **create opportunities for a stronger voice for our staff** and the people we support through the Staff Forum and Equality Champions to help develop a sense of belonging for all.

Our people will have a positive experience of AFG through opportunities to engage with leaders and each other in community activities and events.

We will **embrace and develop an organisational culture** that values the diversity and inclusion of our staff and the people we support.

We will ensure that **ED&I is truly embedded within our organisational culture** and becomes 'business as usual', embracing and valuing the unique contributions of our diverse staff.

AFG will be seen as a great place to work by all of our staff.



We will **build stronger relationships and connections with diverse groups and communities** for our mutual benefit.

We will **build and nurture relationships with diverse community groups and networks** to support the continuous development of our ED&I offer and to raise competence, learning and support within our charity.



We will ensure that **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion become an essential and integral part of what we do**, with individuals and leaders taking ownership of actions

We will put in place **a framework to ensure that our progress against this ED&I Strategy and Action Plan** is delivered effectively and that our progress and successes are communicated.

Our Board of Trustees will maintain oversight for the delivery of this strategy as part of their commitment to our staff, and in discharging the duties of *Principle 6* of the [Charity Governance Code](#).

Alternative Futures Group

