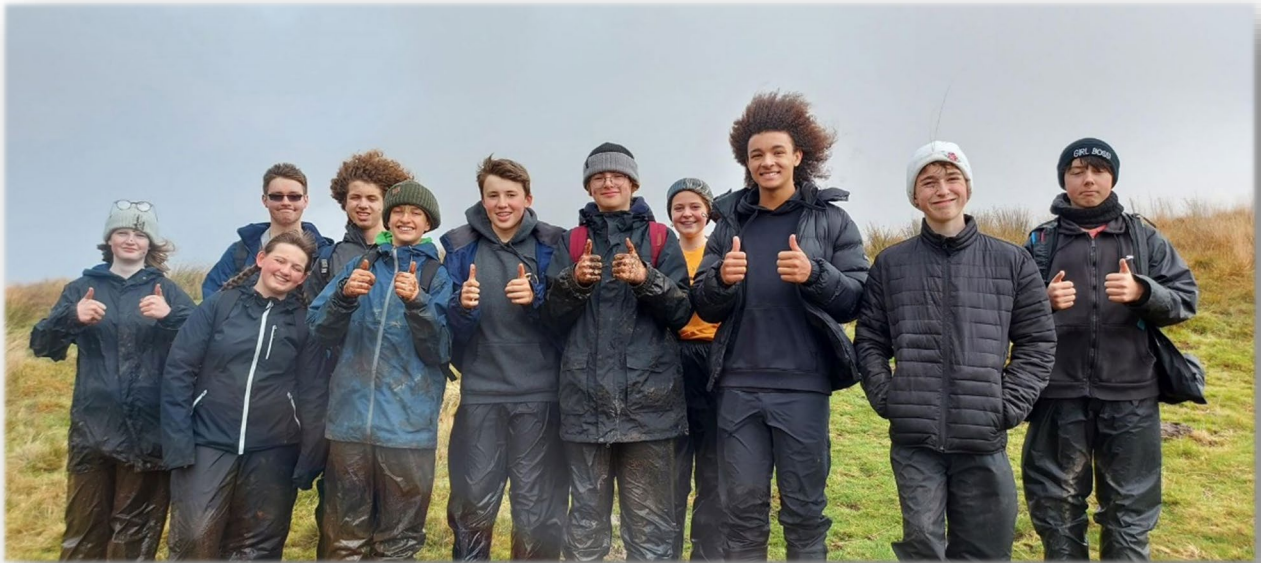


Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy

2024-26



Our commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

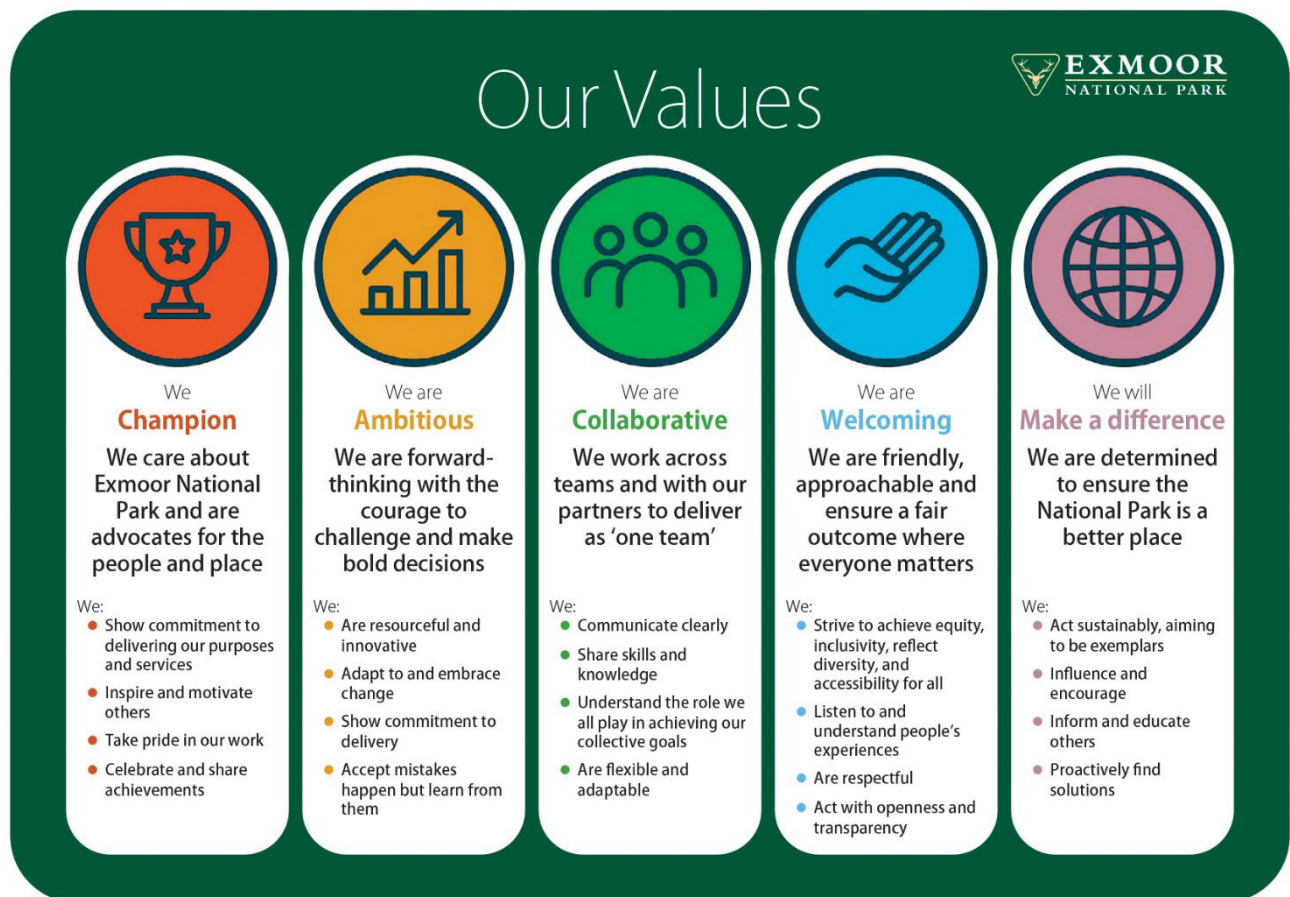
Exmoor National Park Authority (ENPA) will put EDI at the heart of our culture and in our work. We will ensure that everyone can find opportunity, belonging and inspiration on Exmoor.

We will strive to achieve equity, reflect diversity and be inclusive and seek to better understand, identify, challenge, and remove discrimination and barriers to participation wherever they may occur.

We will provide services that are accessible and inclusive for all.

As an employer we will understand and monitor our diversity and reflect the national and local communities we serve.

We now have a new set of values, one of which (*We are Welcoming*) will help us to drive forward our EDI work to deliver an inclusive culture.



Introduction

The Corporate Strategy 2023-2026 has set out the six priorities for Exmoor National Park Authority and those relevant to this Strategy are:

- A welcoming place for all, improving people's health and wellbeing
- A great organisation to work for

The Corporate Priority is to:

"Take positive action to support the Authority's commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. Adopt an EDI Strategy and develop actions to ensure EDI is embedded into our work."

The EDI Strategy was developed with the EDI Oversight Group which includes staff from across the organisation and Authority Members. They meet at least 3 times a year and aim to:

- Look at where we are as an organisation and how we currently address EDI, as well what is happening more widely.
- Scope issues and opportunities.
- Identify ideas for actions and a framework for how we respond.

As the Group has developed, a Terms of Reference has been produced which sets out the role of the Group:

- Acting as Champions for the EDI Strategy both collectively and within their Teams/Sections/Board.
- Acting as a forum where EDI issues can be discussed in a supportive, open and positive way.
- Reviewing the progress of the Strategy against agreed objectives in the Corporate Plan, be a sounding board for issues and ideas to achieve our objectives and provide guidance on actions that may contribute to more effective delivery.
- Reviewing equality impact assessments, particularly for larger projects or new policies.

It is our intention that this will help to further embed EDI into the organisation and its culture.

It is vital that there is commitment from our Leadership Team, Members, and staff. Encouraging staff and Members to discuss and explore EDI in a safe environment will be key to increasing our understanding. We are not always going to get it right, but we will do our best.

Feedback from the EDI training delivered to Members and staff in 2024 showed that:

- We recognise that *'population, visitor, and employee profiles are changing and that we need to adapt to be a modern National Park.'*
- Both staff and Members want to see *'clear and concise action when inappropriate behaviour or language is used'*
- And most of all that *'we should all think of the impact of our own words before we speak.'*

ONS data shows the diversity of Exmoor's local communities is different to the national statistics, and we recognise that. We understand that there are other forms of diversity within our communities that may not be obvious or presented. These may include socio-economic and health inequalities, as well as the protected characteristics. The South West also has a large elderly population that may feel socially isolated and excluded. Understanding local and national data will help us to focus our work in the most effective way.

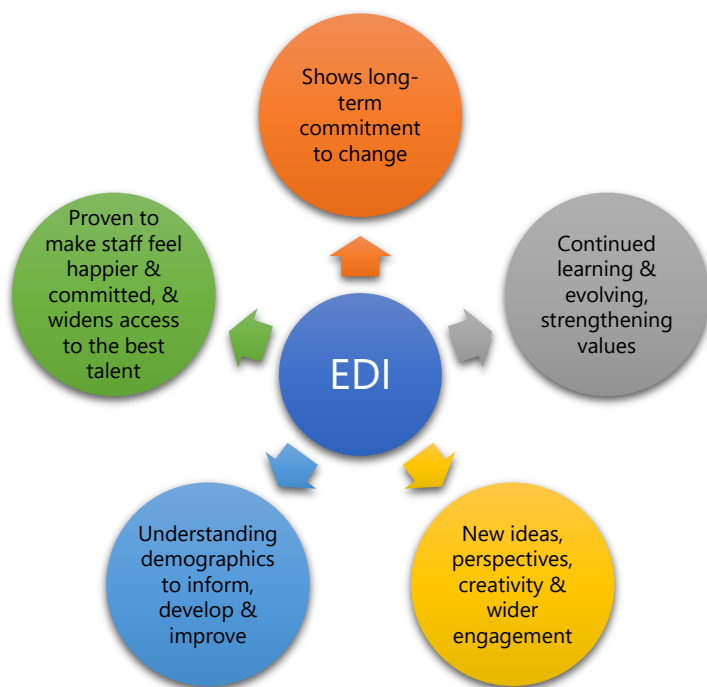
Why does EDI matter?

As a local government organisation, we are required to ensure that we meet the Public Sector Equality Duty. In carrying out our National Park purposes, we have a duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of our local communities. Finally, as our work is directly funded from government, as a **National** Park we should also consider our responsibilities to the nation.

Raising awareness and understanding of EDI helps us be mindful of equity and diversity as an employer, across all our work and services. Embedding EDI across all our work ensures staff, Members, partners, and customers feel valued and respected.

Having clear objectives and goals will help everyone be involved and committed to addressing EDI.

What are the benefits?



Having a strategy, monitoring progress, and reviewing it annually provides a long-term commitment in a genuine and transparent way.

Embracing EDI enables us to continue learning, evolving, and adjusting for a fair and inclusive culture and strengthens our values.

Understanding our internal and external demographics enables us to inform, develop and improve our workplace and services.

A diverse workforce and collaboration with partners and customers from differing backgrounds bring new ideas, perspectives, and creativity, enhancing decision-making and service delivery. It also provides opportunities for wider engagement with international communities of protected areas.

Exmoor National Park is seen and understood to be a welcoming place for all to visit.

Openness to diversity is proven to make staff feel happier and committed to their work and widens access to the best talent.

What do we mean by Equality, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion?

Equality means each individual or group of people are given the same resources or opportunities. Therefore, everyone benefits from the same support, and this is equal treatment.

Equity recognises that each person has different circumstances and that we do not all start from the same place. This requires the allocation of resources and opportunities to reflect people's differing needs, to achieve an equal outcome.

Paula Dressel, Race Matters Institute, describes this well *'The route to achieving equity will not be accomplished through treating everyone equally. It will be achieved by treating everyone justly according to their circumstances.'*

The Authority has adopted the word **'equity'** rather than *'equality'* as we feel this describes a process rather than an endpoint. It requires us to be mindful in all our work, to reflect on how we can achieve greater fairness.

Diversity relates to the full range of human differences. Differences could be in relation to a protected characteristic or something else such as socio-economic background, working pattern or having caring responsibilities. It recognises that everyone is different, and that diverse teams, boards and workforces produce better outcomes because they have considered, reflected on, and respected broader experiences and perspectives.

Inclusion ensures all people feel valued and supported. Without inclusion the benefits of diversity (such as creativity, innovation and problem solving) cannot be realised.

Our EDI Statement on the first page sets out our commitment to EDI and will inform all our work. This commitment must be demonstrated in practice.

What are we doing already?

At a strategic level, we have created the table in Appendix 1 which sets out where we are in meeting our EDI objectives relating to legal requirements, raising awareness, gaining understanding and application, integrating and sustaining it. The document also shows the things we need to undertake to meet all these criteria.



We are already doing some great work, and the list below does not cover everything. In addition to this, we work with and support our partners who are also active in EDI.

- ✓ Renewed ENPA values.
- ✓ Representation on national EDI working groups which enables a good understanding of national work and priorities which will be fed into our own EDI work.
- ✓ Two members of staff are trained as National Park Accessibility Champions by Access and Inclusion UK. Part of the role of the South West Partnership is to report back directly to the Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work through an accessibility champion.

- ✓ EDI Champions across the Authority who are passionate about this work.
- ✓ A 'Youth Board' has been developed to get younger people involved in the Authority's work.
- ✓ Developed a new 'Volunteer Strategy' which echoes our commitment to EDI.
- ✓ Recruitment and selection policies that provide for a fair recruitment process, which are updated to reflect current best practice.
- ✓ We have options in place to help with the cost of attending an interview.
- ✓ We make reasonable adjustments during recruitment and employment as they are required.
- ✓ Robust and fair employment policies provide work-life balance and enable people to raise concerns about discrimination/inappropriate behaviour, and for them to be dealt with effectively.
- ✓ Monitor data in terms of recruitment, workforce, sickness absence and exit interview information.
- ✓ A Disability Confident Employer and a Chartered Signatory to Mindful Employer. We have also signed up to the Menopause Workplace Pledge.
- ✓ Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans are available should they be required.
- ✓ Support for people to fill in forms if they have difficulty.
- ✓ A suite of e-Learning courses including mandatory courses on Equality and Diversity in the Workplace.
- ✓ Authority papers include an equalities statement.
- ✓ EDI training for all staff and Members.
- ✓ The Learning and Engagement team hosted the Health and Wellbeing Officers conference in November – the action plan from this will add to what we can do.
- ✓ Supported visits from black women's walking group and Muslim walkers' group.



Volunteering - Hope Centre, Minehead



Steppin' Sisters Women's Walking Group

- ✓ Collecting data for education to provide more information on inclusion, e.g., free school meals.
- ✓ Our Young Rangers Programme is available specifically for young people eligible to Free School Meals and is free to participants.
- ✓ Offer discounted rates for free school meals at Pinkery Outdoor Learning Centre residentials.
- ✓ Accessible toilet and accessible walking routes at Pinkery Outdoor Learning Centre.
- ✓ Identified funding for access improvements and audit of accessible routes.
- ✓ A new website which is 100% accessible.
- ✓ Rooms to pray if required.
- ✓ We welcome large groups from overseas (e.g., SOL) at our National Park Centres.
- ✓ Developing Supported Internship roles with Somerset Council.

What are the aims of the Strategy?

Using the feedback from the EDI training last year and from the discussions at the EDI Oversight Group meetings, a set of aims were developed:

1. Adopt and commit to an Authority EDI statement.
2. Incorporate EDI into all our work and communicate this both internally and externally.
3. Raise awareness and understanding of EDI.
4. Increase diversity on our Board and within our workforce.
5. Engage with new audiences and partners and encourage a diverse range of visitors that reflects the nation.
6. Provide services that are accessible, inclusive, and welcoming for all.
7. Provide clear goals and targets for teams to work towards.

How will the Strategy be delivered and monitored?

The Head of Climate, Nature and Communities, Learning and Engagement Manager and HR Officer, with support from all managers, are responsible for delivering and monitoring this work. Working with the EDI Oversight Group, we will discuss ideas for championing the Strategy and embedding it into the work and culture of the Authority.

In delivering this work, we recognise that there will be constraints on capacity and budgets, and we may not be able to deliver everything. However, we have some great people championing this work and have existing external partnerships (and contacts for new partnerships) which puts us in good stead.

We will monitor and review progress, particularly updating what we have delivered, where we are improving, and identifying new opportunities or actions. Members will be presented with progress as part of the annual Corporate Plan reporting.



Levels	Basic We meet the legal requirements set out in the Equalities Act 2010.	Awareness Equity, diversity and inclusion are recognised as essential to our overall success and initiatives are in place to improve.	Understanding & Application Our Members, Leaders, Managers and staff recognise and embrace the benefits of diversity. ENPA implement EDI into projects, programmes, strategies and policies and monitor the outcomes.	Integration EDI is completely integrated into our organisation, is continually monitored and reviewed to ensure outcomes are met and we continuously challenge ourselves to do more.	Sustained EDI is central to how we think and work over the long and medium term. This is reflected in resource allocation, staffing, strategy, partnerships and service delivery. We can clearly demonstrate and evidence positive and sustained change.
Culture & Values	We meet the legal requirements.	An EDI Strategy has been adopted which shows our commitment to EDI. Progress monitored and reported annually. All staff and Members (including new) are provided with EDI training. We have a good understanding of where we are with EDI through monitoring, research and available data.	An equality statement is provided on our Authority reports, and it is considered at decision making at Leadership Team level. EDI is incorporated into our values.	There is no systematic monitoring in place across the organisation, except for recruitment, outreach work, and visitor surveys. Workforce monitoring is reported annually at Authority.	Equality Impact Assessments are completed as part of any staffing review. Resources are available to ensure reasonable adjustments are in place for staff.
Actions	Continually review legislative changes and incorporate into work.	Follow up on regular training. Create central space for data. Survey staff. Communication.	More evidence needs to be provided to demonstrate equality, and diversity is embraced and considered and is not just a 'tick box' exercise. Embed into values work.	Consider methods to regularly monitor EDI across the organisation.	Training to be provided for completing EIAs at all levels across the organisation. Evidence of positive and sustained change needs to be gathered.



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Services	We meet the legal requirements, including the website.	We have begun to define what success in EDI would look like and staff and members will be engaged in developing actions and ideas to deliver EDI in ALL our services	There are EIAs for all services on file, but they are out of date.	There are areas of the organisation that monitor service delivery, e.g., recruitment, visitor surveys, and outreach work.	Further work is required to ensure that EDI is considered in the development and long-term view of our services.
Actions	Continually review legislative changes and incorporate into work.	Messaging and training.	Review of EIAs across services. EIAs were completed for all HR policies, and these are now being reviewed.	Consider our approaches to monitoring equality in service delivery.	Decision makers should question EDI when discussions take place and be aware of these before decisions are taken.
Resources	We meet the legal requirements.	Resources are available to support our EDI work.	Leadership Team recognise the need to resource the application of EDI.	Whilst resources are available, we need to ensure that there is capacity to deliver this work.	Whilst resources are available for the EDI work, we still need to ensure that resources and capacity are available in long-term to sustain this work.
Actions	Continually review legislative changes and incorporate into work.	Research and monitor resources.	Remind LT of the importance of this work.	The approach to the Strategy has been a collaborative one across the organisation and Members to ensure that everyone can take positive action and act as Champions.	Further discussion will need to take place regarding resourcing in the long-term, possible external funding opportunities.



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Strategy	We meet the legal requirements.	EDI is clearly defined and highlighted as a priority within key documents with clear targets / outcomes identified	Staff and Members involved in the Strategy's development will be aware of this work. However, wider communication is required once the Strategy has been completed.	The Strategy has not yet been integrated into the work we do.	The Strategy will need to be monitored for effectiveness and further developed for the longer-term.
Actions	Continually review legislative changes and ensure the EDI Strategy is updated accordingly.	Keep highlighting this as an important area of work.	Raise awareness and understanding of the Strategy.	Attend team meetings to integrate the Strategy into their work.	Consider how and when we monitor effectiveness, and consider actions for 2026 and beyond.