

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION UPDATE DECEMBER 2022

Raven's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy, approved by the Board in 2021, sets out the commitments and immediate actions to be carried out across the organisation during 2021 and 2022. As this strategy has now been in place for over a year, it is timely to reflect on what has been achieved in that year.

This annual update supplements the previous quarterly updates provided in April and July 2022.



Commitment to achieve

The National Housing Federation's 2020 revisions to the Code of Governance set out an enhanced requirement for Boards of Housing Associations to demonstrate a clear and active commitment to achieving equality of opportunity, diversity and inclusion in all the organisation's activities. These commitments include:

Seeking regular assurance about how these commitments and objectives are being delivered in practice

Raven to annually publish information about its work to deliver these commitments, objectives and the progress it has made

The membership of the Board and committees comprises people with diverse backgrounds and attributes, having regard to the diversity of the communities the organisation serves and aligned with the organisation's stated commitments to equality, diversity and inclusion

This update demonstrates the energy and commitment that has been made by several people across different teams at Raven to make progress against the EDI strategy. We should highlight the commitment shown by Julie Jacobs-Obodai, Employability and Skills Manager, who was recognised in the Women in Housing Awards in June 2022, where she was shortlisted for the Inclusion Champion Category.

THE MAIN PROGRESS THIS YEAR:

- Improving our data quality held about employees' protected characteristics
- Significantly increasing the volume of information sharing
- Awareness raising about issues relating to EDI
- Achieving Disability Confident Accreditation
- Completing research with customers about their lived experiences.

THIS TABLE SHARES SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR WORK BUT IS NOT A FULL LIST OF EVERYTHING THAT HAS BEEN DONE.

Race and housing issues have been a major element in housing research and policy discourse for at least five decades; this strategy will be a long-lasting and dynamic commitment to EDI across all of our activities, rather than a set of actions we set out to deliver in a defined period.

YEAR 1 COMMITMENTS	DONE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop staff awareness, competence and confidence in discussing EDI and delivering the outcomes set out in this strategy for each other and our customers and communities 	Raised profile of discussing EDI issues online through interviews with Directors about their experiences of EDI and through sharing information about awareness days
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To survey customers to understand the baseline from which we can measure improvement in their perception of Raven's management of EDI and understand their priorities 	Partnered with Watermelon to carry out detailed qualitative and quantitative research with over 300 customers – awaiting the outcome of the research
SPECIFICALLY, AT THE OVERARCHING CORPORATE LEVEL, RAVEN WILL:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be active in Diversity Networks to network, exchange best practice and generally raise the organisation's understanding and profile 	Raven is part of the NHF National Network for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Professionals; the NHF South East EDI network to share best practice plus the Women in Trades network
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the work of a diversity working group with representatives from across all parts of the organisation (EDIT) 	EDIT are active at Raven and meet regularly with the Director of Transformation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide Investment for EDI-related activities (for example reasonable adjustments to comply with the Equality Act 2010, and communication and training programmes) 	Funding has been provided for training and where a need has been identified
EQUALITY	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish Raven's Gender Pay Gap report against the industry benchmark 	Published annually
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pay all staff the Real Living Wage (RLW) 	All staff paid at RLW and we made a once-off cost of living payment to lower-paid staff to support them
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce equality impact assessments (EQIAs) for policies and procedures that are being revised or newly drafted 	The equality impact assessment has been created and is now in use

DIVERSITY

- Improve our diversity data quality for staff, report on exec management and Board and compare to the communities we serve

There has been a marked improvement (near 20%) in our diversity data quality, with large increases in the percentage of employees who have disclosed their data

- Use specialist agencies in Board and Executive Leadership recruitment that are experienced in attracting diverse applicants

Raven has engaged a consultancy that specialises in diverse searches, and has specific BAME and female networks to tap into – there has been an increase in diversity on the Board in 2022

ATTRACT DIVERSE TALENT

- Ensure that the language and imagery on our careers website reflects our commitment to diversity, and shows a diverse range of existing employees

Raven's new website has more representative imagery and language and our Reachdeck accessibility tool has already supported hundreds of customers with assisted reading and translations

INCLUSION

- Communicate where we are actively demonstrating Inclusion with staff and tenants in anonymised stories of adaptations, adjustments, impact assessments, support and training

Stories shared in the Buzz staff newsletter and our Raven Times customer newsletter. 'We hear you' campaign playing back to customers where we have listened and made service improvements as a result

- Enable people to be comfortable being themselves at work

Enabled the use of preferred pronouns in email signatures for staff

- Provide wide-ranging support for mental health and wellbeing

Raven provides a wide range of support services including mental health first aiders and held two events in 2022 with a focus on financial, physical, social and mental wellbeing



Next steps for EDI and our Customers

Raven's customer Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) research is ongoing with our research partner, Watermelon, to find out more about the real-life experiences of our customers with protected characteristics (such as disability, gender, race and age). The quantitative part of the work has been completed following over 300 interviews with customers and (pending full analysis) has highlighted that over a quarter of customers reported an issue with physical or mental ill health.

The qualitative work is almost complete in the form of customer interviews and focus groups. We've had a good response following a social media campaign, which will provide valuable insight into customer needs, experience, and expectations. The qualitative research has been highlighting the breadth of lived experiences our customers have had both with Raven and in a wider context and the existing impact these experiences have on their lives.

Watermelon also interviewed some frontline staff to get a complete picture of Raven's knowledge, confidence, and capacity to support customers effectively. We hope to identify where training

and extra support are needed for staff to ensure confidence, consistency and understanding of the range of needs and communication styles of our customers.

The customer research will enable us to have a much clearer understanding of how Raven's policies, procedures and services may be positively or negatively impacting particular people. We will use the feedback to give us a baseline position and prioritise the actions and steps we can take to improve services where we need to.

Findings and themes from the research will be shared widely across Raven and with customers – all data will be anonymous. The research will also help us to understand customer views on providing their sensitive data to Raven, the likelihood of them sharing that data and any concerns that we should address when collecting data.

In line with our privacy statement, equality and diversity data will only be used to improve our services.

