



Science and
Technology
Facilities Council

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan

Research and innovation
by everyone, for everyone



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Introduction

This publication presents the latest iteration of the Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plan 2022–2023. As a world-leading multi-disciplinary research and innovation organisation this plan details why equality, diversity and inclusion are important for our organisation, our staff and our communities.

We are part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), which is the largest public funder of research and innovation in the UK.

We have developed our action plan in the context of the development of the first edition of the UKRI EDI Strategy and associated UKRI shared EDI actions.

We aspire to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion for all who work in and with STFC. We will actively listen and value everyone who works for and with STFC and demonstrate respectful and inclusive behaviours to each other and everyone we work with.

Our EDI action plan is a rolling 12-18 month action plan that will be reviewed and updated at least annually.

In addition to STFC funding research in particle physics, nuclear physics, astronomy, space science and particle astrophysics, we build and operate many of the UK's largest multi-disciplinary research facilities at our national research and innovation campuses. This has created an ecosystem of supporting facilities, institutions, and people that catalyses, nurtures and accelerates innovation in science and technology. This allows the UK to enjoy competitive commercial advantages along with the wider industrial, societal, and economic impacts that come with it.

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Our fundamental research seeks to understand the Universe from the largest astronomical scales to the tiniest constituents of matter, and creates impact on a very tangible, human scale. We have funded and provided key technologies for the UK to play a leading role in some of the most ground-breaking discoveries of the last fifty years; including the discovery of the Higgs Boson at CERN and the first direct detection of gravitational waves. These profound and exciting discoveries have changed the way we understand the universe. They, along with many of the other activities STFC supports have the potential to inspire the next generation of young people to pursue careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects.

We are one of the largest science delivery organisations in the UK with around 2700 directly employed staff, most of whom are in scientific, engineering and technical roles.

As part of UKRI, we have an integral role to play in helping to secure the UK's position as a world-leader in science, technology and innovation. To achieve this, the UK needs to attract, develop and retain a diverse pool of talented people.

“To secure the UK’s position as a world-leader in science, technology and innovation...the UK needs to attract, develop and retain a diverse pool of talented people.”

UKRI's EDI strategy and action plans

Excellence in research and innovation requires a culture that values and supports different people, ideas and perspectives. Embracing the widest possible range of exceptional talent and skills will strengthen research and innovation and the ability to improve lives, helping to create a knowledge economy that benefits everyone and supports growth and prosperity.

In 2022, UKRI ran a consultation on its draft EDI Strategy and received a broad range of feedback and views. UKRI has used this feedback, together with long-term work across UKRI and extensive engagement across the research and innovation sector, to help refine the strategy and develop a suite of action plans.

It is clear that a variety of approaches and interventions will be needed to create a more inclusive research and innovation system, where people, creativity, and ideas can flourish. The UKRI EDI strategy serves as a unifying framework, to which our suite of action plans are directly linked.

These action plans enable us to test, pilot and evaluate approaches in different contexts – some will be system-wide, while others will be more focussed. The plans are informed by data, insight, and engagement with our communities. The action plans are living documents that will continue to evolve as we learn from ourselves and others. We will use our People, Culture and Talent portfolio approach to connect work across these action plans and actively share learning as we make progress

Through this approach, we are giving greater visibility of the work happening across UKRI to foster a research and innovation system 'by everyone, for everyone'. We will continue to share our experiences, successes, and challenges as we develop and evolve our plans.

“It is clear that a variety of approaches and interventions will be needed to create a more inclusive research and innovation system, where people, creativity, and ideas can flourish.”

STFC's Case for EDI

Thanks to our position as a major employer of scientific and engineering staff and through working collaboratively with many UK and international research institutions and industrial partners STFC has a key role to play in developing and helping to secure the UK's position as a world-leader in science, technology and innovation.

To achieve this, the UK needs to attract, develop and retain a diverse pool of talented people in the areas of science, technology and innovation and STFC has an ongoing programme aimed at achieving that.

Current data shows that 25% of STFC staff have declared that they are female and 6% have declared they are Black, Asian or minority ethnic. This compares with ca. 51% and 14%, respectively in the UK population. Our demographics are comparable with those of our research communities, e.g. in a 2019 survey of Institute of Physics membership 25% of respondents declared they were female and 9% were Black, Asian or minority ethnic. This does indicate that there is a larger pool of talent and potential we could be recruiting from in the UK population alone, which could benefit not only our work, but also contribute to wider reaching impacts.

“STFC has a key role to play in developing and helping to secure the UK's position as a world-leader in science, technology and innovation.”

UKRI's EDI strategy has 4 objectives:

1.

Foster a world-class research and innovation system, 'by everyone, for everyone'

2.

Include and support a diversity of people and ideas through our funding and partnerships

3.

Create a more inclusive and fair organisational culture, where everyone can contribute and participate, and feels valued and respected

4.

Advance and grow knowledge and capability to support a thriving research and innovation system by being a creative, evidence-based and evidence-informed organisation



The case for why EDI is important to STFC is aligned with these objectives and falls in to the following four areas:

- A.** We have an ethical and legal responsibility to our staff to provide a workplace that is equitable and where all feel included and valued. As one of the largest parts of UKRI, we can support the delivery of parts of the UKRI workforce EDI plan. By developing the right working environment and culture, we can also help to mitigate risks around retention and recruitment. In addition, under the Public Sector Equality Duty, we are required to:
- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
 - advance equality of opportunity and
 - foster good relations.
- B.** Diverse organisations are more efficient and have been shown to out-perform those that are not, e.g McKinsey's 2020 report finds that companies with gender diversity executive teams were 25% more likely to be profitable and this increases to 35% for culturally and ethnically diverse executive teams. STFC's mission of discovery and innovation is best achieved by utilising the talents of diverse teams. By recruiting from a wider talent pool, we future-proof those key technical areas where failure to recruit and retain talent will put STFC's mission at risk.
- C.** STFC is a public body and we have a public responsibility to support the health of our research and business ecosystems and represent the public. As Professor Melanie Welham, UKRI Executive Champion for People, Culture and Talent, said "As the UK's largest public funder of research and innovation, UKRI has a responsibility to catalyse and convene change across the system."
- D.** STFC can make a difference to the national skills agenda. Women and minority ethnic people are significantly under-represented in STEM, particularly in physics and our research communities. We can help develop national skills pipelines to support our research and business eco-systems, including in emerging technology areas where the UK has an opportunity to be world leading.

“By developing the right working environment and culture, we can also help to mitigate risks around retention and recruitment.”

Our EDI action plan is a rolling 12-18 month action plan that will be reviewed and updated at least annually. In this first phase, a significant amount of the actions are focused on EDI in the workplace, but in the next phases, we will aim to increase the external focus.

A. Create an inclusive workplace

We have nearly 3,000 members of staff working across 5 locations in the UK, as well as internationally. We are operating at the cutting edge of science and technology, working in partnership with UK and global research communities and businesses. We have responsibility to provide a workplace that is equitable and where all feel included and valued and can contribute to their best.

A.1. Inclusive leadership & culture: These actions are focused on engendering a supportive and inclusive culture throughout STFC. This includes improving understanding of our colleagues so that we can work together more effectively. The actions should also help to attract and retain staff, which is one of the greatest risks to successful delivery of our mission.

Action	Priority	Who/lead	Status
A1.1. Trial the STFC leadership behaviours framework. To promote and develop inclusive leadership in STFC.	H	STFC HR	The pilot was launched in Spring 2022, with 75 staff at Band F & above.
A1.2. Review lessons learnt from the trial of the STFC leadership behaviours framework and consider further development and roll out	H	STFC HR	Due to be reviewed Spring-Summer 2023
A1.3. Analyse the STFC results of 2022 UKRI People Survey and develop local plans. To celebrate strengths and also take corrective actions to tackle any hotspots	H	STFC HR + Department Directors	Plans were developed in Autumn 2022 and progress will be reviewed prior to the next People Survey
A1.4. Promote EDI training, with the target of staff having completed the EDI Fundamentals by the end of March 2023	H	UKRI workforce EDI team + STFC internal Comms	Training was launched Nov 2022
A1.5. Promote National Labs EDI activities. To embed EDI into local activities and ways of working	H	STFC EDI champions	Ongoing activity. Work for 2023 programme underway
A1.6. Participate in and promote local and national EDI events. Advertised in the UKRI EDI calendar	M	STFC EDI champions & Networks	Ongoing activity/programme
A1.7. Hold a neurodiversity awareness event. To enable more effective working with our neurodiverse colleagues	M	STFC EDI champions	To be held Spring 2023
A1.8. Work with the UKRI EDI Workforce team to develop a pilot for STFC to trial an anonymous reporting tool to raise concerns, so that these can be investigated and addressed. This requires appropriate UKRI policy & processes to be in place	M	UKRI EDI workforce + STFC HR team	Not started

Priority: H = high, M = medium and L = low/longer term activity Updated January 2023

A2. Workplace accessibility: Our sites provide a workplace for several thousand people as well as hosting thousands of visitors each year including facility users and school visits. These actions are focused on providing healthy and accessible working environments across all of STFC's estates, and supporting our future growth and development plans

Action	Priority	Lead	Status
A2.1. Develop guiding principles for STFC's welfare and wellbeing amenities and incorporate these in the design guides and site development plans. To have a consistent approach to provisioning dedicated spaces for welfare and wellbeing amenities across all of STFC's estates.	M	STFC Estates	Work on improving existing amenities started Spring 2022. Statement due Spring 2023
A2.2. Develop STFC's Accessible and Inclusive Design Standard. To deliver improved accessibility standards, driving inclusivity for all site occupants and support our plans for growth.	M	STFC Estates	Standard has been drafted and are due to be published by Spring 2023
A2.3. Commission a RAL site accessibility audit. To enable accessibility improvements to be prioritised and aligned with existing property condition surveys and site development plans This approach will be extended to other STFC sites	M	STFC Estates	Consultant started assessment in Autumn 2022. Report is due Spring 2023

A3. Progression & promotion: These have been identified by staff as priority areas for improving EDI at STFC

Action	Priority	Lead	Status
A3.1. Review the STFC promotions process, aligning with work on development of career framework. To streamline the process, reducing bureaucracy and barriers, making it more efficient and fairer	H	STFC HR.	An initial review was undertaken Autumn 2022. A proposal is scheduled for the Executive meeting in Feb 2023
A3.2. Publish a guide on the different routes to promotion in STFC. To provide transparency of career progression & promotion options	M	STFC HR	Complete

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B. Increase diversity in STFC

Increase diversity in STFC: To help succeed in our mission, we need to convene diverse teams and encourage diversity of thought. These actions are focused on increasing diversity in STFC and also exploring options to improve mobility and porosity in our R&I ecosystem.

B1. Recruitment: STFC's demographics are typical of our communities, but there is talent and skills that we could benefit from. These actions are focused on attracting and recruiting a wider range of people and experience into STFC.

Action	Priority	Lead	Status
B1.1. Trial the STFC talent attraction framework in hard to recruit areas – featuring messaging “Discover what’s possible”. To attract a wider pool of candidates, aiding both recruitment into STFC and diversity of staff	H	HR	Launched Spring 2022 – we have seen an increase in both the number and diversity of candidates
B1.2. Review talent attraction framework pilot and develop plans to implement for all STFC recruitments	H	HR	To review Spring 2023
B1.3. Improve guidance on recruitment best practice. To produce more inclusive job adverts, improve diversity on interview & selection panels and attract a more diverse pool of candidates	H	STFC HR	Work is ongoing to improve guidance to hiring managers. Use of Taleo tool commonplace
B1.4. Undertake campaign to improve quality of staff EDI data (part of UKRI EDI workforce plan). To understand barriers to disclosure of EDI data and inform the development of new UKRI ERP system	H	STFC HR & UKRI Workforce EDI	Undertaken Autumn 2022
B1.5. Assess interview training and options for provision of refresher/training. Interviewers follow inclusive practice and do not unintentionally disadvantage any candidates	M	STFC HR & UKRI Workforce EDI To do - Spring 2023	To do - Spring 2023

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B2. Wider diversity considerations: These actions are to support diversity in STFC, beyond recruitment

Action	Priority	Lead	Status
B2.1. Trial a 6-month reverse mentoring pilot focused on black and minority ethnic mentors. To improve racial awareness within STFC senior management & decision makers and to identify how we can improve as an employer of this under-represented group	H	UKRI RISE Network	A professionally supported pilot was launched Autumn 2022 and is in progress
B2.2. Review the outcomes from the reverse mentoring pilot and consider wider implementation e.g. to other protected groups and across UKRI	M	STFC HR & UKRI Workforce EDI	To do - Spring 2023
B2.3. Review outcomes from the STFC hybrid working trials. To improve our flexible working offering	M	Continuous Improvement	Complete – updated guidance provided to staff
B2.4. Develop options for secondment opportunities both within STFC & UKRI and to/from industry & academia. To promote greater cross fertilisation of ideas and building of networks.	M	TBC	To do during 2023

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C. Represent the public good

As part of UKRI, we have a responsibility to support the health of our research and business ecosystems. Public engagement and outreach activities have long been an important part of our programme and pre-covid, we typically had a million interactions each year. These actions are focused on our grants processes and engagement with the public.

C1. Grant funding: These actions are focused on encouraging diversity of the people we fund, enabling more people to contribute, participate and benefit from our investments

Action	Priority	Lead	Status
C1.1. Undertake Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) for all funding opportunities and train staff in completing these following the UKRI process. To advertise funding opportunities to as wide an audience as possible.	M	UKRI EDI Workforce & STFC Programmes	To do - Spring 2023
C1.2. Improve the diversity of members on our grants and advisory panels, including maintaining the target for at least 30% women and encouraging diversity across all characteristics. To encourage inclusive and accessible panel/community meetings and contribute to encouraging diversity of the people we fund.	M	STFC Programmes	Ongoing activity

C2. Engaging with the public: These actions (and those below in D2) are focused upon building and expanding upon the good foundations of our public engagement

Action	Priority	Lead	Status
C2.1. Incorporate accessibility and inclusivity into the planning of the Daresbury Lab open week 2023. To showcase our facilities and science including diversity of people, and ideas to over 20,000 members of the public	M	Event Project Manager	Planning has started. The events will be held July 2023
C2.2. Undertake strategic discussions with national bodies such as Institute of Physics (IoP) and the Engineering Institutes about greater promotion of STEM. To improve public perception of Physics and Engineering as a career choice and the importance and relevance of our research	M	STFC Executive	To do in 2023
C2.3. Reinststate an STFC EDI webpage and update & extend EDI related content To demonstrate commitment to EDI and to showcase diversity of our work and the people we fund, and provide role models	M	STFC EDI Steering Group	Ongoing through 2023
C2.4. Engage with our research communities on the forward development of our EDI activities	M	STFC Executive	To do - spring/summer 2023 Town hall meetings

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D. Contribute to the national skills agenda

To fulfil the UK's ambition to be a Science Superpower, the UK need a vibrant skills pipeline, particularly in technology and engineering fields where there are national and international skills shortages. These actions are focused on where we can use our people, funding and facilities to feed into the national skills agenda

D1. Early careers skills pipeline: This action is focused on expanding our highly regarded apprenticeship scheme, offering alternative technical careers path as well as up-skilling in key technical areas

Action	Priority	Lead	Status
D1.1. Undertake phase 1 of the STFC Skills Factory including a campaign to improve diversity within the cohort. To double the numbers of apprentices by September 2025, providing a pipeline of technically skilled staff for both STFC and industry/SMEs	H	Skills Factory Lead	Preparations are underway to start ramping numbers from September 2023 intake.

D2. Public engagement to further the skills agenda: These actions are focused on using our staff and facilities to enthuse the next generation about careers in STEM

Action	Priority	Lead	Status
D2.1. Continue STFC's Wonder Initiative to improve our reach with schools and young people from the 40% most deprived areas of the UK. To work with children from diverse backgrounds and encourage them to consider a career in STEM and/or have a greater interest in STEM	H	STFC Public Engagement	Ongoing activity
D2.2. Expand STFC's public engagement activities undertaken by STFC's Apprentices & Graduates. To provide young role models to school children, helping young people and their families to see STEM as exciting, relevant, and diverse. To also raise awareness of alternative career paths such as technical/apprentice routes	H/M	STFC Public Engagement	The scheme was launched Spring 2022. The goal is to deliver over 1500 days of direct community-focused activities by March 2026
D2.3. STFC Technicians/Apprentices to participate in the Technician Gallery at the Science Museum. To inspire young people aged 11–16 to consider technical careers across a range of industries	M	STFC Technicians Commitment Group	In progress

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D3. Improve diversity in the early career researchers: These actions are focused on increasing the diversity of the students and early career researchers we support, with the longer term aim of attracting a wider pool of talented people into research and innovation careers

Action	Priority	Lead	Status
D3.1. Participate in the national 10K black interns scheme or to develop/participate an equivalent scheme. To support and mentor black students. Inspire and promote career opportunities for a group that significantly under presented in our R&I communities.	M	STFC EDI Steering Group	Planning started for summer 2024 placements
D3.2. Encourage diverse recruitment in PhD studentship by sharing best practise from across UKRI with all doctoral investments. To increase the diversity of the people we support through doctoral investments.	M	STFC Programmes	To do - Spring 2023
D3.3. Encourage diverse recruitment across all doctoral investments by monitoring CDT progress on actions to encourage a wide range of talented applicants. To understand and promote any actions that have encouraged a wider range of applicants.	M	STFC Programmes	To do – by Spring 2024
D3.4. Review EDI aspects of our current fellowships process. To improve the overall process to create environments where diverse people and innovative proposals are fostered	M	STFC Programmes	To do - Spring 2023
D3.5. Hold a Quantum Technologies for Fundamental Physics Engagement Event jointly with EPSRC. To start exploring the opportunities and challenges in some emerging research areas such as Quantum. Areas of skills shortage need to encourage as wide range of talented individuals to pursue careers in research and innovation.	M	STFC/EPSRC	Event held Spring 2023

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Acknowledgements

Developing our first EDI strategy has drawn on expertise across UKRI and from interactions with many people, organisations and partners across the research and innovation sector.

We appreciate and value the insight, expertise and commitment from many people, which has shaped the development of our strategy.

Accessibility

To request copies of this report in large print or in a different format, please contact the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team at UKRI:

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