

June 2021



Being ourselves

Ofwat's strategy for equality, diversity and inclusion

ofwat



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Foreword: Being Ourselves at Ofwat

This strategy belongs to everyone at Ofwat. We asked some of our colleagues what ‘Being Ourselves’ means to them:

“

This strategy is about getting our own house in order

I want to see diversity embedded into all that we do

Our commitment goes beyond jumping on a bandwagon

It’s important to broaden our horizons

It’s a two-way street: having respect for others and being respected

It’s about being able to bring your whole self to work

Being able to explain my differences and views, and to disagree well and safely

Pressing the ‘pause’ button on preconceived ideas and impressions

Understanding people and benefiting from richness and diversity

We need to be more representative on a number of levels

It’s a really exciting opportunity to understand and get to know each other better – wouldn’t it be boring if we were all the same?”

Our strategy is clear – we have a key part to play in delivering public value and encouraging corporate social responsibility across the sector. To do this, we must ensure that Ofwat and the sector reflect the communities they serve – that is, they must be equal, diverse and inclusive. We must be the change we wish to see in the sector”

– Ofwat Board discussion, March 2021

What does equality, diversity and inclusion mean in Ofwat?

Our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion is set out in our [People Strategy](#), which commits us to:

- ensuring our organisation and the sector reflect the communities they serve;
- encouraging diverse views, listening to others as we make decisions on how we work;
- creating the environment in which all Ofwat people can be their true selves at work;
- proactively addressing areas of inequality and under-representation;
- positively living our SAILOR values; and
- bringing our ‘respect’ value to life, by listening, learning and acting.

Our aim is to create an environment where colleagues feel comfortable in bringing their whole self to work, where everyone is treated equally, empowered to thrive, and together we achieve our vision of improving life through water.

“

I’m passionate about EDI as it is part of my values and is proven to enrich organisational performance where it is done well”

– Ofwat colleague



Support



Ambition



Integrity



Learning



Ownership



Respect

Why is EDI important?

Organisations that are committed to equality, diversity and inclusion perform better, are more attractive to employees and are better connected to their customers. For Ofwat, EDI means:

Delivering public value

Understanding and reflecting the needs of all customers and communities in our work. Making sure that Ofwat reflects the communities we serve is an important part of this.

‘Walking the talk’

Our corporate strategy sets out our clear expectations that it is time for the water sector to act – we need to demonstrate our own commitment to meeting these challenges in Ofwat.

Benefits of diversity

Having a diverse and inclusive culture makes us a better, more attractive employer for current and future staff. Diversity of thought leads to better decision making, minimising risk, supporting innovation and creativity by bringing together different experiences, backgrounds, and skills.

Being ourselves

The results of our 2020 People Survey show that equality, diversity and inclusion is important to us all. We want everyone to feel comfortable bringing their whole self to work so that we can be the best organisation we can be.

Our SAILOR values

Diversity and inclusion underpin all of our SAILOR values:

- Support: for each other, whoever we are.
- Ambition: to be an exemplar among regulators and within the sector.
- Integrity: to be true to ourselves and bring our whole selves to work.
- Learning: we are on a steep learning curve as an organisation.
- Ownership: this is a strategy that will be owned by all of us.
- Respect: respect for one another and our differences is at the heart of EDI.

Our legal duty

The public sector equality duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) requires public bodies to consider the needs of different groups of individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work and to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination;
- advance equality of opportunity; and
- foster good relations between different people.

The equality duty is supported by specific duties set out in regulations. The specific duties require public bodies, such as Ofwat, to publish relevant, proportionate information demonstrating compliance with the equality duty and to set specific equality objectives.

What we need to achieve through our EDI strategy

In the first few months of 2021 we asked our colleagues what was most important to them with regards to equality, diversity and inclusion. From their answers, we identified five priorities for EDI in Ofwat:

1. Diversifying our talent

The most senior levels of Ofwat are not as diverse as they should be. Diversifying our talent at all levels is critical to increasing diversity and innovation, from entry level, through the talent pipeline and all the way to SLT and Board.

2. Engagement

There are some excellent examples of clear commitment, engagement and support for driving EDI in Ofwat. This engagement needs to be more consistent across the organisation. An important part of this strategy is to engage everyone in Ofwat in our EDI work.

3. Systemic shift

Our policies, practices and processes set out the expectations we set for ourselves and how we work. It has been a while since some of these

have been reviewed from an EDI perspective. We need to make sure that there are no unintended biases or barriers present in both what we say and what we do. Additionally, better data capture relating to EDI will ensure we make evidence based decisions.

4. Education, behavioural and mindset change

Better knowledge, skills and awareness are critical to take EDI to the next level in Ofwat. We heard a consistent call for a blend of increased education, behavioural and mindset shifts as well as pragmatic tools to both understand the issues and to turn knowledge into action.

5. External and regulatory influence

Ofwat’s strategy, ‘[Time to Act, Together](#)’, sets out our expectation that water companies will reflect the communities they serve. It is important for us to role model our commitment to EDI, delivering on the Public Sector Equality Duty and encouraging water companies to embrace equality, diversity and inclusion at all levels.

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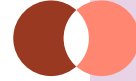

**It’s important full-stop...
I want all colleagues to
feel fairly treated and
respected”**

– Ofwat colleague

What we will do: our EDI goals

Ofwat’s People Strategy clearly identifies equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) as a key area for development in Ofwat; with more diversity in the workforce to reflect our communities and to ensure that everyone in the workplace is comfortable being themselves, in line with our public value principles.

We have used what we heard from our people to develop four goals for EDI in Ofwat. Together with our corporate strategy, Time To Act, Together and our SAILOR values, these four goals will help us create an organisation where we can all Be Ourselves.

	Educate through awareness and development 	Evolve through our external brand and influence 	Engage through inclusive actions and behaviours 	Equip through end-to-end policy and progress alignment 
What this means	All colleagues have a working knowledge of EDI and how this applies to their role in Ofwat. Leaders are driving the conversation and the action.	Strengthened relationships and partnerships externally, clear articulation and role modelling of our commitment, action and impact.	Our values and behaviours highlight inclusive principles and are fully embedded into key processes and inform decisions on recruitment, performance and promotion. Leaders role model our expectations of others.	Cohesive policies, processes and practices that support our EDI ambition and are consistently applied.
How we will measure our success	We will measure participation in learning and development for EDI and how comfortable we are talking about EDI (via our People Survey).	Reduction in ethnicity, gender and other pay gaps and our participation and leadership of external EDI partnerships and initiatives.	We will check to ensure that EDI is included in all internal announcements and use our People Survey to test how our colleagues feel about EDI.	We will use demographic data to measure diversity throughout the employee journey at Ofwat and colleagues’ ability to influence future ways of working (via our People Survey).

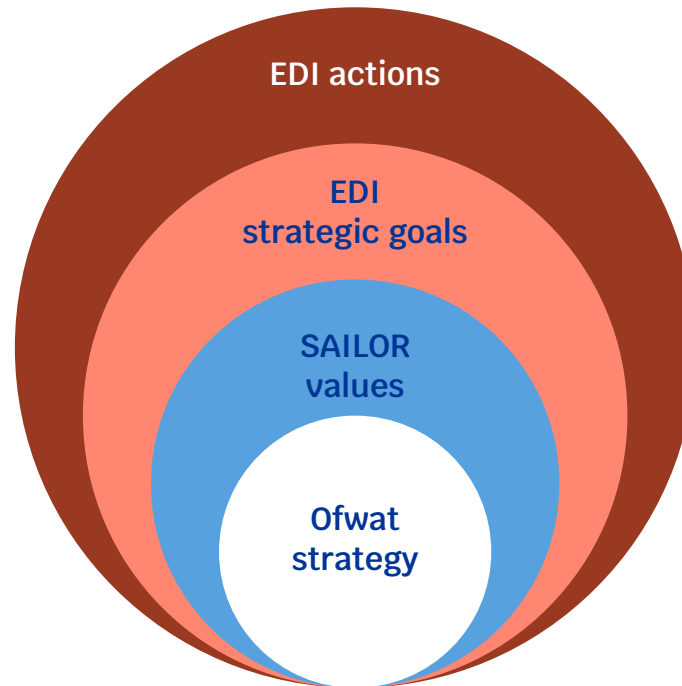
Our EDI plan: Where we are now and where we want to be

Our annual People Survey results for 2020 show that we are starting this work from a positive position. We asked colleagues questions on inclusion and fair treatment and received encouraging responses:

- 78% of our colleagues said they felt valued for the work they did.
- 90% of our colleagues said they were treated with respect by the people they worked with.
- 87% of our colleagues said they thought that Ofwat respects individual differences (for example cultures, working styles, backgrounds, ideas).

We have been working to become inclusive and diverse, include more divergent thinking in decision making and to understand our customers better.

But there is still more to do. The shifts we need to make from where we are to where we want to be in the future are outlined on the next page.

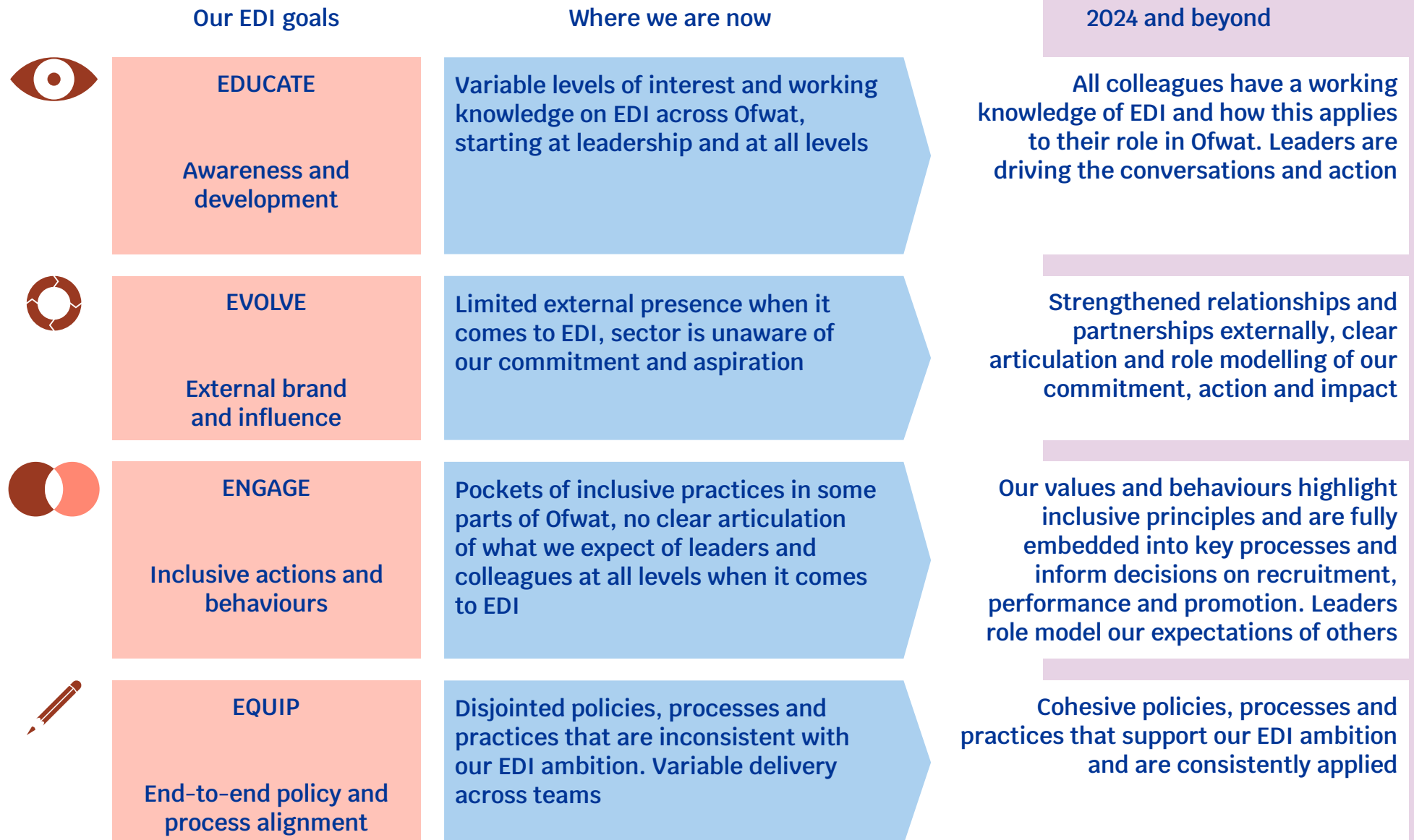


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My experience in other organisations shows that when you get this right, it makes for a happier, more productive workforce and creates a place where I want to work”

– Ofwat colleague

Our EDI goals and the shifts required to achieve them



How we will work

How we work to achieve our EDI goals is as important as what we do. We will deliver our EDI strategy by following these principles.



Reinforce attitudes and understanding that EDI is critical for our future success



Take clear action, knowing what we can control and what we can influence



Establish our data and D&I baseline to inform our strategic direction



Focus on both our internal and external environments



A long-term approach that requires continuous focus and delivery



Engage with specialist expertise and advice when and where required

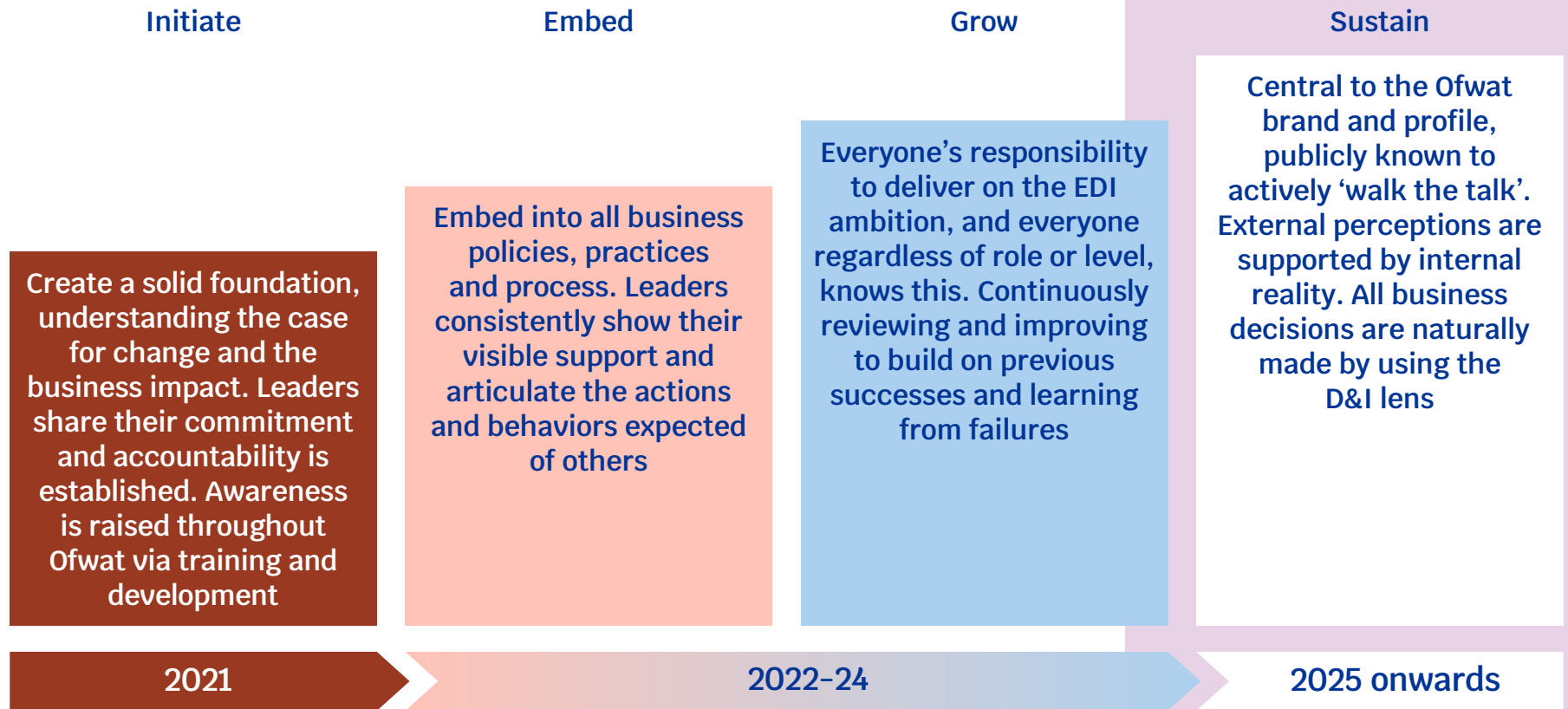
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EDI should be central to everything we do, on every small level”

– Ofwat colleague

Our EDI action plan

It will take several years to reach a point where EDI in Ofwat is truly embedded and long lasting – creating an environment where colleagues feel comfortable in bringing their whole self to work, where everyone is treated equally, empowered to thrive, and together we achieve our vision of improving life through water. To achieve this long-term success, we must create solid foundations for future growth, based on insight and data. This will be our specific focus for delivering the first year of our strategy.



Monitoring our progress

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is everyone’s responsibility. We want to ensure that everyone has the knowledge and resources they need to achieve our EDI goals. There are four groups of people in Ofwat with additional EDI responsibilities:



Accountability – People Committee

The People Committee oversee this strategy on behalf of Ofwat’s Board and we report to them on progress.



Leadership – SLT People sub-group

Each member of our SLT has signed up to this strategy. SLT is committed, individually and together, to achieving our EDI goals. A group of SLT members is responsible for the delivery of our EDI strategy.



Delivery – Being Ourselves working group

Our Being Ourselves working group is led by a member of SLT and our Director of People, with responsibility for specific actions in the EDI Action Plan.



Support – Being Ourselves champions

Our Being Ourselves champions come from across the organisation. They are all committed to equality, diversity and inclusion in Ofwat. They provide ideas, challenge and energy to help us deliver our strategy.

“

If we want to be the best organisation we can, having an effective approach to EDI is essential – otherwise we will always be that bit weaker than we could be”

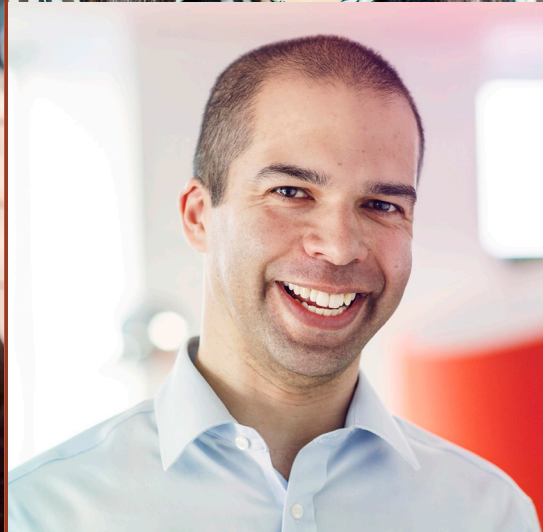
– Ofwat colleague



“

Working in a place where people have mutual respect, where there are no barriers because of a particular feature or characteristic is vital for a workplace where people can thrive”

– Ofwat colleague



**Ofwat (The Water Services Regulation Authority)
is a non-ministerial government department.
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