**Transcript for Webinar *The CIOB’s approach to Diversity & Inclusion***

**Speaker:** Elena Dove-Edwin, EDI Project Officer

**Slide 1**

[Elena] Hello everyone, my name is Elena Dove-Edwin, and I am the EDI Project Officer at CIOB. In this webinar, I will be talking through the CIOB's approach to D&I, our understanding of what D&I means and what we are doing to make it a core part of our organization, as well as how we are seeking to lead in this space.

**Slide 2**

[Elena] Let us begin by exploring what the CIOB is and what we do. We are the world's largest and most influential professional body for construction management and leadership.

Our members work worldwide in the development, conservation, and improvement of the built environment. We accredit university degrees, educational courses, and training. Our professional and vocational qualifications are a mark of the highest levels of competence and professionalism, providing assurance to clients and other professionals procuring built assets.

As a professional body that represents the leaders and managers who work at every stage of the lifecycle of a construction project, we seek to influence government, industry and other stakeholders around the world with the aim of promoting the construction management discipline and addressing the challenges that the sector faces.

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[Elena] In terms of what we do:

* We aim to improve the quality of life of the users and creators of our built environment.
* Enhance professional standards to help create a professional industry
* To drive innovation
* Influence political decisions
* Help to create a diverse and inclusive industry through leading by example in our D&I work

We also campaign on the major issues of the day, right now our work involves:

* Eradicating modern slavery from the industry
* Ensuring that our environment is protected through more energy-efficient buildings and less-wasteful construction practices.
* Improving the quality of the built environment
* Ensuring the right skills, talent and behaviors are nurtured in construction
* Promoting diversity and inclusion across the built environment sector

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[Elena] In this webinar we will be exploring:

* Our definition of Diversity & Inclusion
* A look at the profile of the Built Environment sector
* The importance of D&I in the Built Environment sector
* CIOB's commitment to D&I
* How CIOB is embedding D&I
* How employers and individuals can promote D&I
* Next steps – looking ahead to 2030

**Slide 5**

[Elena] It's useful to begin by clearly defining what we mean by diversity and inclusion.

* **Diversity:** Positively valuing the differences between people.
* **Inclusion:** Creating an environment where everyone feels welcome, valued and able to fully participate

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[Elena] So what does the Built Environment sector look like demographically?

Using the UK as an example, we can see that there is significant underrepresentation of particular groups in the sector.

We know, for example, that Women make up about 15% of the construction population, but only 2% of site operatives are female.

Furthermore, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Labour Force Survey reported that just 5.4% of construction workers were from ethnic minority backgrounds in 2019. Only 6% of construction workers have a disability, and a third of LGBT+ workers believe that their sexual orientation is a barrier to career progression in the industry.

In addition – the data shows that the UK workforce is aging with 35% above the age of 50 and only 10% between the ages of 19-24. With an ageing workforce and the average retirement age being 55 years old, as well as the fact that younger generations are not entering the sector, this poses a serious threat to its longevity.

In summary, the statistics highlight that the sector’s workforce is not reflective of the wider community and there is significant under representation.

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[Elena] There is also increasing evidence of strain in the supply of professional and management talent in the Built Environment sector, or in other words, there is a skills shortage in the sector.

The British Chamber of Commerce reported in January 2022, 79% of firms are struggling to recruit staff, which is a record high.

According to the CITB Construction Skills Network’s forecast, published in January,

224,900 extra workers (44,980 a year) will be needed to meet UK construction demands between now and 2027

Therefore, the sector is already experiencing a substantial skills shortage. The changes happening as a result of digitalisation and modern methods of construction, the challenges of Brexit and the pandemic will likely further exacerbate this critical problem. This, coupled with an increasingly ageing workforce is only going to increase the skills gap and threaten the long-term economic sustainability of the industry that accounts for up to 6% of GDP of the UK and provides employment for 2.3 million people.

So, there is clear evidence of an urgent need for additional workers to meet demand and address the skills shortage

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[Elena] Aside from being a clear way for addressing the skills shortage, are there any additional benefits of a commitment to diversity & inclusion in the built environment sector?

Well, firstly, research has shown that organisations with a more diverse workforce involved in decision making are more creative, as they benefit from different perspectives. They avoid the pitfalls of ‘group thinking’ and limit the potential negative impacts of unconscious bias.

For similar reasons, employees with different experiences and skills are more likely to take account of diverse needs during design and planning work.

Furthermore, robust and detailed research by such organisations as Mckinsie & Company have given us compelling evidence of the correlation between diverse and inclusive companies and profitability. It also makes organisations more competitive on the global market.

In their 2017 report, *Delivering through Diversity* McKinsie found that Companies with ethnically and culturally diverse boards worldwide are 43% more likely to experience higher profits

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[Elena] Furthermore, we know from research carried out by organisations such as Stonewall and Deloitte – that employees who feel valued for their contributions rather than judged on protected characteristics have higher levels of satisfaction and give, on average, an extra 30% extra productivity in discretionary effort - is there an employer that would not want that?

Also, companies with an evident commitment to inclusive practices and a diverse workforce enjoy greater legitimacy in global markets. The evidence shows that they are more innovative and responsive to diverse global customer needs and aspirations.

There is also evidence of increasing importance of fair and ethical behaviour to younger generations – affecting decision making when seeking employment and when choosing contractors to work with. So, an evident commitment to D&I will help to attract the best candidates from all communities and enhance potential business opportunities.

And if we are to avoid further appalling tragedies, such as Grenfell, we must help the sector listen to and consult with the diverse communities it serves.

Finally - although compliance with legislation should NOT be our primary motivation – it is important that Companies comply with relevant local legislation to prevent costly and damaging legal action that can also negatively impact on reputation

**Slide 10**

[Elena] D&I has become a core focus for many organisations. The business case is compelling and many of the most successful global companies are adopting an overt commitment to diversity and inclusion:

**Johnson and Johnson** for example, have pledged that by 2025, the company aims to have 50% women in management globally. While, in America, the organization is aiming to have 35% racial diversity in management positions.

**Mastercard** has been doing great work in the realm of D&I for a while. As of 2021, women earn $1.00 for every $1.00 that men earn, and the same is true for people of colour. 81% of final candidate interviews include women and they’ve established nine Business Resource Groups (BRGs) with 130 chapters in 47 countries to represent diverse communities and their allies.

At **Marriatt**, the international hospitality brand, more than 40% of the top 1,000 Marriott leaders are women. And they are aiming to achieve parity in gender representation for global leadership by 2025. 53% of its workforce is women, while people of colour make up 66%. They are amongst Forbes’ “Best Employers for Diversity” and Marriott also partners with more than 4,000 diverse-owned companies in various areas of their supply chain every year.

**Unilever** has said [it will spend £1.8bn annually with suppliers owned by underrepresented groups](https://www.theguardian.com/business/2021/jan/21/unilever-advertising-stereotype-diversity-women-ethnic-minorities) by 2025. This will include companies owned and managed by women, minority ethnic groups, people with disabilities and the LGBTQI+ community.

**Starbucks** has taken steps to link executive pay to diversity initiatives, launched a mentorship scheme connecting employees from under-represented backgrounds to senior leaders and is aiming to double the number of employees who identify as Black, indigenous or people of colour in its corporate wing by 2025.

Whilst no one company can be said to have found all the answers in respect of all under-represented groups – their commitment is evident.

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[Elena] The built environment sector also provides us with examples of companies who understand the business benefits of inclusive practices and have set out ambitious plans to change their workforce demographics:

**Willmott Dixon** are seeking to expand and facilitate women's opportunity to join their business and their target is to recruit 50% women to their management trainee programme each year. In 2022, 48% of their management trainees are women. They also have their own Charter.

One of the most influential people in the UK construction industry, Sir James Wates Chair **of Wates Group,** has effectively used his leadership position to promote Disability equality as a critical issue in the sector. James Wates has penned blogs for construction sector magazines, established a fund for promoting inclusion and has produced videos in evidence on global platforms such as LinkedIn.

**Kier** has set out a D&I roadmap to highlight the milestones they have achieved and hope to achieve by 2026. These include developing a comprehensive D&I training programme, creating clear career pathways and opportunities for employees.

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[Elena] So we can see that employers in a variety of sectors, including the construction industry, are demonstrating a commitment to D&I. But why is the CIOB, a professional membership organisation, so committed to championing this agenda?

Firstly, as a global membership body, as well as the world's largest professional membership body, we are well placed to contribute to changing the face of the built environment sector. The CIOB also has the necessary influence to contribute to this important work that will benefit everyone - from construction sector employees, clients and end users.

The CIOB’s objectives, as defined by our royal Charter, specify that it is our role to promote the science and practice of building and construction for the public benefit. So, we have a duty to ensure that our work is to the benefit of all – wider society - not just construction professionals.

As an international membership body, it is also an imperative that we understand and adopt inclusive practices to attract, support and provide the best possible services to our diverse members with a diverse range of needs and aspirations.

Furthermore, we want to be part of the change to ensure that it is sustainable and effective, ensuring that it is addressing the underlying causes of under-representation.

And finally, because ensuring a more diverse and inclusive sector is a key way to help tackle the skills shortage and ensure the built environment's longevity.

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[Elena] CIOB has expanded the EDI team, by recruiting myself, allowing us to do even more work and achieve the aims we have set out in our new 5-year Action Plan. Our new Action plan was launched this year, which I will go into further detail about in a moment.

We also have our member led advisory panel and we currently have 200 companies have signed up to our D&I Charter.

EDI objectives have been built into our corporate plan to highlight our commitment and dedication to EDI and to ensure it is a core part of how we operate as an organisation.

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[Elena] This action plan is a framework to deliver change, setting out activities to embed and enhance how we approach EDI across all CIOB functions and will be reviewed in 2028.

The measures will include providing visible leadership on a national and international basis; recruiting a more diverse membership and better understanding their needs whilst ensuring that our educational materials and the events and conferences we host are inclusive and accessible. These initial activities will align with the life of the current CIOB Corporate Plan and lay the foundations for more ambitious, aspirational EDI objectives that will be an intrinsic part of the CIOB Vision for 2030.

In our Action plan we are creating:

* Objectives for each department
* Ownership at senior level
* Detailed actions for each objective and the actions are SMART – for example, specific targets for membership relating to age, disability, gender and race
* Regular reporting on progress, including published analysis of our EDI data

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[Elena] Our D&I Charter is for employers in the BE sector which aims to help facilitate a competitive sector and enhance employee belonging by outlining five commitments for employers to follow that promote more inclusive practices and increased diversity in the sector.

It was first launched in Nov 21 and is our first D&I charter. Currently we have 200 companies that have signed it.

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[Elena] As I mentioned, our Charter outlines 5 commitments:

* Show leadership
* Make a plan
* Prepare the culture
* Be transparent
* Be accountable

By signing our Charter, you would be committing your organisation to upholding these commitments and working to make changes to be in line with them.

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[Elena] Without leadership from the top of the organisation, there can be no real commitment in the rest of it, and the journey will never start. Leadership consists of articulating a vision for where the organisation is going, including what is expected of employees in order to get there.

When company boards are aligned and resolved to move forward on diversity and inclusion, there will be an initial statement of intent, but it can’t be left at that: boards will need to weave the message into ongoing communications, both internal and external, lest the workforce assumes it is a passing phase.

Aside from issuing statements, construction business leaders can take action to show they are serious. For example, they can invest resource in getting recognised in one of the indices that rank companies on diversity and inclusion. In January 2020, Mace entered Stonewall’s UK Workplace Equality Index for the first time, placing 142nd of 503 companies ranked. For the past three years, Willmott Dixon has entered and been listed in the Times Top 50 Employers for Women list.

Gaining such recognition takes effort but delivers four valuable dividends. First, it focuses and guides a company in its practical efforts to be more diverse and inclusive. Second, it becomes a valuable marketing asset, a vivid story that differentiates a company in the eyes of clients. Third, it sends a clear message to potential recruits that the company takes the issue seriously and is intent on making progress. And fourth, it inspires a company’s workforce, cementing its collective self-perception as a positive, inclusive organisation and spurring the drive to improve.

Other actions senior leadership can take include speaking at events, within and outside the company. Here, it is important for leaders to speak honestly, admitting that it is a learning process and that the company may not yet have attained its goals but that there is a commitment to progress. Leaders must also listen.

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[Elena] Visible senior leadership should translate into a clear plan of action. The plan should include stretching but realistic targets for increased representation of underrepresented groups in the workforce.

However, setting good targets requires knowing where you are now, because you won’t know if you are moving forward if you don’t know where you started. So, the first step in creating the plan is collecting data on the current state of diversity in your company. Having identified where you are, you can decide on the actions that stand a chance of moving you toward your targets.

As well as collecting quantitative data, companies are advised to collect qualitative data through, for instance, focus groups and surveys in order to gauge sentiment in the workforce, which hard numbers won’t convey. Do people feel welcome? Do they have a sense of belonging?

Having established the state of diversity in an organisation, targets can be set. For example, after launching a gender diversity steering group and local action groups at the end of 2016, Willmott Dixon has an aim of achieving 50% gender parity across its workforce by 2030, a stretching target, but not impossible.

What the specific actions in the plan are will depend on your organisation’s unique context and diversity profile.

One of Willmott Dixon’s strategies has been to target management trainees. In 2018, it set a target that 50% of its management trainee intake would be women and achieved 51%. To build on this, and to ensure a new generation of women could grow into future leadership roles, the company successfully applied for CITB funding to launch its Women’s Leadership Development Programme with Cambridge Judge Business School, with 17 high-potential female leaders becoming the first cohort in 2021.

A degree of realism is needed when setting targets. Smaller companies with limited turnover will not be creating enough new jobs to achieve gender parity in a short space of time. However, smaller companies will reap business and human dividends in becoming more diverse and inclusive, so it is important for them to make the start as well.

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[Elena] When people from underrepresented groups begin appearing in greater numbers on our sites and in our offices as a result of leadership from the top and an effective diversity action plan, they will need to feel welcome if they are to stay and thrive. They will not feel welcome if they encounter hostility, humour that is demeaning (whether intended or not), and undue attention paid to the characteristic that sets them apart.

As a white and male-dominated industry, construction in many instances has further to go in creating and sustaining a culture in which differences in gender, sexual orientation, race, cultural background and ability do not matter. That effort is complicated by the nature of a construction project, which sees teams from diverse organisations, all with their own cultures, converging on a site.

The culture of a company and of a project are complex and cannot be changed instantly. Humans naturally seek out affinity groups – other people who seem to be like them in appearance, background and outlook. Left unattended, cultures breed micro-cultures of exclusion because affinity groups tend to define themselves in ‘us-and-them’ terms. In these micro-cultures are unspoken assumptions about what’s acceptable and what isn’t, encompassing humour, conceptions of right and wrong, status, how conflict is handled, and more. When such micro-cultures foster dismissive or hostile attitudes towards people who are different, they must be addressed.

It starts with a company’s leadership communicating its expectations that everyone in the company and on site will be treated with the courtesy and respect we all deserve as people. This encourages everyone to feel empowered to challenge discrimination. Willmott Dixon started with a poster campaign under the banner, ‘Respect in the workplace’, featuring the slogan, ‘If in doubt, leave it out’ with relatable scenarios depicting awkward moments where a joke goes too far, or something comes out wrong. This recognised on the one hand that norms are changing, and that people worry about what they’re ‘allowed to say these days’, while on the other hand reminding people that exclusionary micro-cultures are not acceptable and that courteous and respectful behaviour is professional behaviour and is normal and expected.

The company followed that campaign with one featuring the slogan, ‘If in doubt, call it out’, a step further that encouraged people to challenge discriminatory behaviour when they witnessed it. This campaign was accompanied by guidance on how to call out unacceptable behaviour, offering strategies and things to say that keep challenges proportionate and avoid unnecessary conflict and loss of face.

Company leaders may themselves feel awkward and uncomfortable with this topic. Experts advise them to be open about this and to admit that they’re on a journey of learning and heightened awareness like everyone else.

The terminology is subject to change, but the aim is simply to create a culture in which people advance according to merit, and everyone is treated with courtesy and respect, which benefits everyone.

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[Elena] Publishing an annual report is another example of a company’s leadership showing its resolve and commitment. An annual report is an opportunity to celebrate success, renew focus, evaluate strategies and make new ones.

This is the natural place to publish progress against headline targets and updates on actions to be taken to meet them. Because it shows progress or otherwise, the annual report acts as insurance against companies hiding behind fine words.

It can be a motivational tool, engendering pride among the workforce that progress is being made as well as hunger for more. It is also a recruiting tool. People from underrepresented groups will be more attracted to companies who can demonstrate their commitment to diversity and inclusion, and their willingness to have that commitment held up to scrutiny.

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[Elena] Experience shows us that unless someone at the top is made accountable for these charter commitments and for making progress, a company’s genuine aspiration to be more diverse and inclusive is at risk of failing. It is essential that the responsible executive has the power and authority to make the necessary changes happen.

Of course, the director in charge can’t be expected personally to do everything themselves, but they can set up the organisational structures, such as steering groups or action committees, that get things done. They can also act as a conduit between the organisation and its various levels and the collective responsibility of the board.

It is worth emphasising that the named director need not be a member of an underrepresented group. The spirit of diversity and inclusion dictates that competence and talent matter more than race, gender or other characteristics, so if the best person to do the job right now happens to be white and male, because of his experience, knowledge and commitment, then that is who should do the job. In addition, it is neither fair not realistic to expect members of disadvantaged groups to address historic discrimination. What is important is that everyone understands the business benefits of diversity, not who is championing it at any given time.

**Slide 22**

[Elena] So what are the benefits of signing-up to the CIOB D&I Charter?

* Well, for a start - Showing your commitment to making the industry more inclusive sends a positive message to your existing employees. It sends a positive message to your clients, and importantly to your future recruits. In short, our Charter can help a company build its reputation as being a business that is socially aware and conscious of its impact.
* The Charter is not prescriptive, but it does give those who sign up a very practical direction of travel that ultimately will benefit their business, as evidenced through our case studies.
* The Charter is adaptable for any speed and size of business. By signing up a company is saying 'we want to do more' and will be joining the 200 other organisations, of various sizes, who feel the same.
* Signatories to the Charter are also automatically invited to the quarterly CIOB Diversity & Inclusion Forum that provides a forum for sharing challenges and successes with other built environment employers from around the globe

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[Elena] Joining the Charter is simple. If you follow this link [Diversity and Inclusion Charter Sign-up (jotform.com)](https://eu.jotform.com/220044400486041) you will be taken to a JotForm where you'll be asked to fill out a form giving us a few of your details (you name, comp name etc.) and that's all, then you'll be one of many organisations that are committed to D&I.

You can also find more information about our EDI work by following this link For more information visit [Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion | CIOB.](https://www.ciob.org/industry/policy-research/policy-positions/equality-diversity-inclusion)

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[Elena] Now, looking ahead at 2030, EDI is and will remain a key priority for us. At CIOB, we understand that EDI is not a ‘zero sum game’. Promoting fair and equitable access to opportunities and inclusive practices will contribute to a stronger economy to everyone’s benefit, across and beyond the construction industry. We also know that change takes time, and we will continue to focus on EDI until we see a construction industry representative of the communities it serves, that is inclusive and accessible for all.

For the future we will be aiming to:

* Attract a diverse and global membership and make sure that we are listening and engaging with them to better understand their specific needs to ensure our services are appropriate and useful
* We will of course continue to lead in the EDI space and continue to encourage more and more organisation in the sector to make EDI a priority
* And in relation to this, we will work on ensuring that recruitment practices across the sector are inclusive and able to attract people from various backgrounds
* Also ensuring that the resources we provide, our training and events are inclusive for all

Most importantly we want to get you involved in this exciting journey.

**Slide 25**

[Elena] So Finally - A call to action

I'd like you to consider three things you will do differently. Give yourself a timeline for tangible outcomes and put a date in your calendars for review of the impact of your actions.

We of course would love to hear about your successes and the lessons you learn, so please do reach out to the CIOB so your org can become an example of best practice that we can highlight in future publications.

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[Elena] Thank you very much for listening, I hope you have a clearer understanding of CIOB's aims and approach to D&I.

I will leave you with the EDI team's email address should you have any questions or comments.