

10. Creating a diverse and inclusive working environment

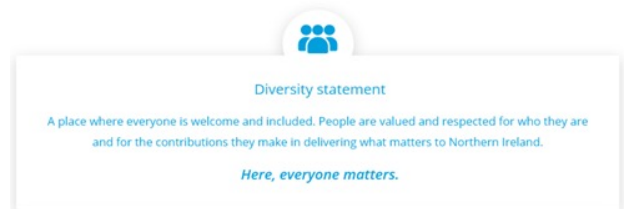


Situation

It is only with a happy and healthy workforce performing their roles to the best of their ability that we can achieve its ambitions to deliver world class service to our customers. Cultivating a work environment in which everyone is respected for who they are and the contributions they make is in direct support of our goal to create a great place to work.

Action

We have a diverse range of needs and circumstances. Our youngest employee is 17 and our oldest is 74. We also have a multi-disciplinary, highly dispersed, male dominated workforce. Our diversity and inclusion strategy aims to promote and celebrate diversity, creating an inclusive environment in which everyone matters and a healthy staff mix. Through involving people from different backgrounds, experiences and skills, we can do our jobs better, solve the problems we face quicker and find new and better ways of working.



By making D&I a strategic priority we will ensure that we attract and retain the best talent. Talent which can help us gain the advantage we need to ensure NI Water remains fit for the future.

To help make inclusion an everyday reality at NI Water we have undertaken D&I awareness campaigns emphasising the need for everyone to demonstrate inclusive behaviour in how we treat each other, how we carry out our day-to-day work and how we live into the value of respect.



To help drive D&I across our organisation we have established a D&I workgroup made up of passionate people from across NI Water who represent all our employees in informing our D&I efforts. We ran a number of new campaigns this year to address the imbalance of females in our workforce including our International Women's Day 'Choose to Challenge' and the International 'Engineering Heroes' Women In Engineering Day.

Our Board play an active role in ensuring our organisation is taking diversity and inclusion seriously. They are supported at the highest levels by our Executive Committee who role modelled their commitment to D&I earlier this year by undertaking a series of Inclusive Leadership workshops to build their knowledge and understanding in this area.

Results

NI Water is proud to hold the Diversity Mark NI Bronze Chartermark which places us among some of NI's leading employers and recognises our strategic commitment to D&I. Over the last 18 months we have taken a holistic approach to D&I - reinforcing the role that all employees play through top-down leadership role-modelling and bottom-up participation in our awareness campaigns with colleagues sharing their own personal stories.

We continue to increase female representation in traditionally male dominated roles through our Apprenticeship Strategy (17% of our 2021 intake are female compared to 0% in 2019). Through this strategy we are providing visible role models for females in STEM.

Our D&I efforts extend beyond female representation however and we were delighted to have been shortlisted recently for a Responsible Business Award through Business in the Community as an Age Friendly employer - recognising our commitment to recruit, retrain and retain people 50+.

We also recently became the first company in NI to sign up to the UK government's 'Levelling Up' campaign, which aims to improve social mobility throughout the UK through focused effort on driving equality of opportunity at key life stages. Our involvement in this will help us maximise the positive social impact we make in our local communities.

By creating the conditions in which people can bring their true selves to work we engage, retain and inspire top talent to perform to their best, nurturing innovation, creativity and driving performance excellence for our customers.

