

# **Annex 27a: Diversity & Inclusion Strategy**

December 2021

# Include Me

## Diversity and Inclusion Strategy



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## Our Diversity and Inclusion Vision

**'We are committed to creating a sense of belonging for our colleagues and truly reflecting the communities we serve'.**



**Peter Emery CEO**  
Electricity North West

**"At Electricity North West, we are committed to creating a sense of belonging for our colleagues. We are pleased with the progress already made, but we recognise that to become truly inclusive, we still have some way to go.**

As we look ahead, our workforce faces the exciting and challenging prospect of leading the North West to Net Zero. To successfully achieve this, we must be able to access the full range of talent and skills available in all our communities.

We need diversity of thought and skills, we need equity and inclusion in recruitment and opportunities.

I was pleased to be appointed as Chair of the Energy Network Association (ENA), Diversity and Inclusion Group in August 2021. This role provides me with the opportunity to learn from a UK-wide group of people and drive change in diversity and inclusion not only within our own business but across the UK Energy Sector, where we hope to build the foundations for a more diverse and inclusive sector.

I am passionate and fully committed to creating an environment where we encourage openness and create positive change to improve some of the historical imbalances that have existed in our industry for the benefit of our existing colleagues, our customers, communities and future talent entering the sector.

The success of this strategy requires every colleague to work together to ensure we achieve our goals and create a culture that is open, respectful and inclusive of each other.

This strategy will define who Electricity North West is for years to come. Now is the time to increase our ambition to make a significant difference by creating a workforce that truly reflects the communities we serve."

# Why diversity and Inclusion matters to us

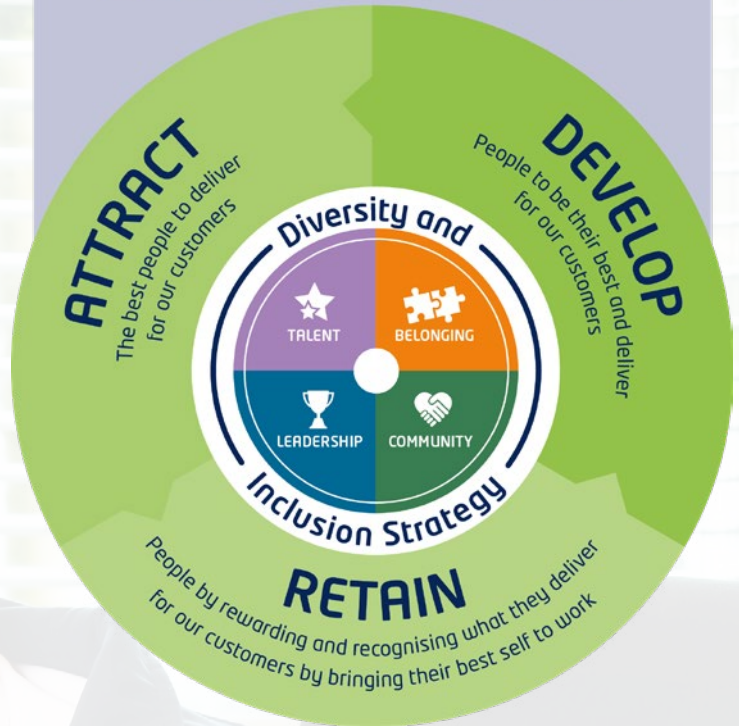
Our colleague-led purpose 'together we have the energy to transform our communities' and our principles reflect the essential role that we play in the lives of our colleagues, customers and key stakeholder groups.

The specialist skills of our colleagues are crucial to the successful delivery of our five-year business plan. Our business plan commitments will ensure we maintain a motivated, engaged workforce. Achieving this will ensure we are equipped to build, operate and maintain a reliable and resilient network as we transition towards Net Zero.

We recognise that the utilities industry is one of the least diverse sectors in the UK. We know we can do more to attract diverse talent into the business. Our business plan provides a platform to increase diversity across the utility sector by recruiting a highly skilled workforce that is representative of our communities and influencing our supply chain to do the same.

## People Vision

To develop an inclusive culture, where colleagues' expertise supports us in future proofing our network, leading the way to Net Zero and always ensuring our customers are at the heart of everything we do.



This strategy supports our people vision to develop an inclusive culture. The D&I strategy sits at the centre, working interdependently to attract, develop and retain the best talent in our business.

To hear why diversity and inclusion are important to us and our colleagues, please click on the video link here.



## What we mean by diversity and inclusion



**Every colleague in our company contributes to our diversity because we are all different. Traditionally when talking about diversity, we link this to a specific group of individuals with characteristics and identities covered by equality legislation, but it's wider than that.**

We are also diverse because of our upbringing, where we live, education, accent, how we think, our values, standards and behaviours etc. For us, embracing our differences is what makes this a great place to work.

Diversity and inclusion go hand in hand. It is about representing the diversity of the area in which we work and the diversity of the customers we serve.

Inclusion is about creating an environment where every colleague feels they belong, where their contribution is valued, and their difference is embraced.

We are passionate about creating a working environment that supports our colleagues and provides a good work life balance.

A truly inclusive workplace considers the needs of all colleagues and removes unnecessary barriers.

## Benefits of a diverse and inclusive workplace

There are so many benefits of being a diverse and inclusive employer for our customers, colleagues and future colleagues entering the industry. For us it's about creating a great place to work, and we recognise some of the key benefits detailed below:

### Attracts great talent

We need great talent and skills that will support our plan. We need to stand out as an employer of choice. We know great people want to work in diverse, inclusive environment that is fair and respectful.

### Greater collaboration and innovation

By creating an engaging environment where colleagues are respected, listened to and have a voice, we can share ideas and drive change.

### Increased colleague engagement

When people are happy in their roles, they contribute higher levels of discretionary effort, leading to greater performance outputs and overall motivation.

### Retention of our colleagues

Our colleagues will want to stay working with us, building great careers and developing their full potential, being advocates for our brand.

### Reflects our customers & the communities we serve

Our local communities will see colleagues that represent them, they will see that we embrace difference through great customer service and look at us as a preferred employer of choice.

## What our colleagues think about inclusion

“ Everyone having the same opportunities. ”

“ Makes me feel welcome. ”

“ Celebrating what makes us unique and the advantage that brings. ”

## What our customers said

Our customers are key to everything we do, our focus in all our activities is to create an excellent customer experience.

What our customers think about diversity and inclusion really matters to us. Through various stakeholder events, when asked about why it's important, they said;

“ Everyone should have a fair and equal opportunity when it comes to jobs. It's also about representing the community. ”

“ Always asking the 'who's missing?' question to make sure you are being inclusive. ”

“ It's more than just race, it's how people think and what they do, there is so much more than skin colour and all companies will benefit from diversity. ”

“ Making roles that are generally male dominated more attractive to women, enable them to feel that they can take on any job. ”

## Our journey and leaving a legacy



**We have developed this strategy following engagement with key stakeholders to understand differing needs and requirements to make this truly impactful.**


Our stakeholder groups include our colleagues, trade union partners locally and nationally, other Distribution Network Operators, our Customer Engagement Group, Customer Deliberative panels and the Energy Networks Association, diversity and inclusion panel. The feedback has helped us shape our strategy and overall vision.

We recognise that our sector has been identified as one of the least diverse. We are committed to addressing this imbalance within our own business whilst also working collaboratively with other Electricity Distribution Network Operators and suppliers across the UK. This collaborative approach will ensure we can share best practice and drive positive change. Our regulator Ofgem is championing a change in culture across the Energy Sector putting diversity and inclusion front and centre of everything we do.


Our strategy outlines our ambitious strategic goals and measures developed to make a difference now and in the future. We have developed some great initiatives already to drive change in this space, we know that changing the historical imbalances is a journey, but our strategy shows our commitment to making this happen.

# Our Diversity and Inclusion Focus

As part of our business plan, we have set ourselves some ambitious, quantitative measures to drive change. By 2028, we aspire to achieve the following targets in the 3 key areas below:

	Increase our female diversity		
	Female Measures	Current Population	2028 Goal
	Female population	25%	30%
	Female Leaders	32%	37%
	Female Engineers	7%	12%

The North West has a regional diversity of 51% females.

	Increase our Ethnic Minority Diversity		
	Ethnicity Measures	Current Population	2028 Goal
	Colleagues from an Ethnic Minority background	4%	12%
	Leaders from an Ethnic Minority background	2%	5%

The North West has a 12% ethnic minority demographic.



**We want at least 80% of our colleagues to willingly share their diversity data with us**



# Our diversity and inclusion strategy

## Our vision

“We are committed to creating a sense of belonging for our colleagues and truly reflecting the communities we serve.”



We will work with colleagues to create a great place to work where everyone feels they belong



We will be innovative in attracting talent and making our career paths accessible to the diverse talent in our communities



Our leaders will support all colleagues driving respect and fairness in everything we do



We will champion diversity and inclusion in our communities to drive positive change

Our vision is underpinned by four key areas of strategic focus; Belonging, Talent, Leadership and Community.

We have fully embraced the need to set defined quantitative metrics. Under each strategic focus we have set ourselves measures of success for the next 2 years. These measures demonstrate our commitment to positively embracing an inclusive culture and the diversity of our workforce.

Our diversity metrics are reflective of our community demographics and, whilst ambitious, we are confident that our robust diversity and inclusion strategy will ensure these measures are achieved. These are illustrated on the pages 8-11. We commit to continually reviewing and evolving this strategy to achieve our 2028 measures.

## HR Director, Rachael Parr

“Diversity brings strength to the company in a number of ways. Firstly, cognitive diversity from colleagues from different backgrounds provides for better problem solving and innovation. Secondly, being representative of the communities we serve means that we are best placed to provide excellent customer service. Creating an environment where colleagues feel that they belong results in a happier workforce who are best placed to perform and to reach their full potential. I really don't struggle to share and be proud of the value that diversity and inclusion brings!”



# Our Future commitments

## Belonging



We will work with colleagues to create a great place to work where everyone feels they belong

## Measures of success

- Establish successful colleague network groups
- Deliver inclusive leadership training for all leaders
- Deliver unconscious bias training for all colleagues
- Achieve a 75% positive agreement for belonging

**We must all play a role to create an inclusive culture. All colleagues are responsible for bringing our vision to life, creating a truly inclusive, respectful workplace. It is important that our colleagues are heard and that any positive steps we take are impactful.**

## What we will do....

### 1. Create opportunities for colleagues to share experiences and be part of the solution for positive change

- Promote an environment where colleagues can speak up, offering regular invitations and opportunities to discuss and share experiences in a safe environment
- Establish Colleague Led Resource Groups (CRGs) that will give support, voice and representation to some of our underrepresented groups in our business. Examples may be LGBTQ+, Women in Engineering but ultimately this will be driven by our colleagues.
- Establish a Diversity and Inclusion Council; where our CRGs will come together every 6 months with our CEO, Peter Emery, to provide a colleague voice and influence change.
- Recruit diversity champions to become allies, collaborate on new initiatives and support with solutions and delivery.
- Engage in reverse mentoring with the Executive Leadership Team and CEO, where our leaders will listen, understand and learn about colleague experiences.

### 2. Developing our diversity data

- Improving our diversity and inclusion data throughout our 'Include Me' campaign. Building trust and raising awareness of the purpose of collating data to drive change and monitor progress.

### 3. Review our current working practices with a diversity and inclusion lens

- Review of all people policies to include gender neutral language and promote diversity, for example our family friendly policies recognise same sex couples
- Identify opportunities to support colleagues through key life events, for example, parental leave, starting a family, disability, menopause, illness
- Review of procedures and office accessibility to make them more inclusive
- Adoption of agile working practises wherever possible

### 4. Raise awareness of diversity and inclusion

- Deliver conscious inclusion training to all colleagues
- Deliver inclusive leadership training to all leaders
- Develop a quarterly communication strategy to promote diversity and inclusion focus, raising awareness and providing opportunity for colleague feedback.

## Talent



We will be innovative in attracting talent and making our career paths accessible to the diverse talent in our communities

## Measures of success

- Increase the diversity of candidate applications
- Increase the representation of females and ethnic minority colleague groups
- Successful achievement Silver Investors in People accreditation
- Progress improvements in Gender Pay Gap

**We will retain our talent providing fair opportunity for development and building great careers for our people. We will attract diverse talent using various recruitment platforms and working closely with our communities.**

## What will we do....

### 1. Improve and adapt our attraction strategy to attract a diverse talent

- Work with our recruitment agency partners and specialist consultants to develop our recruitment approach
- Promote flexible and agile working to support work life balance
- Continuously develop our attraction strategy for our apprenticeship programs making them accessible to a wider talent pool in our community
- Promote diversity and inclusion commitments on our company website and career pages
- Work with our local communities, schools, colleges and armed forces
- Achieve Investors in People Silver accreditation and Investors in Wellbeing accreditation to demonstrate our commitment to our colleagues.

### 2. Ensure our recruitment process is fair and accessible to all

- Develop our processes to reduce bias and always promote inclusivity.
- Introduce diverse interview panels to promote a fair and consistent experience.

### 3. Development opportunities are available to all

- Introduce a self-nominated talent program removing bias and championing fairness of opportunity
- Use our performance management data to ensure that talent is identified consistently.

## Leadership



Our leaders will support all colleagues driving respect and fairness in everything we do

## Measures of success

- Deliver inclusive leadership training for all leaders
- Embed inclusivity competencies into our leadership competency framework
- Establish a leadership D&I workstream to drive change
- Achieve 75% positive agreement for inclusive leadership

The foundations for developing a culture of inclusivity starts with our leaders who are custodians of our inclusive culture. We will to raise awareness of and diminish unconscious biases that may influence decision making. Our leaders supported by our CEO and Executive Leadership Team will champion our drive for culture.

## What we will do....

### 1. Leadership development

- Deliver a robust leadership development program with a key focus on inclusive leadership.
- Train, support and develop our trade union partners to raise awareness of unconscious bias and strengthen our D&I focus and culture.
- Embed inclusivity into all our internal leadership development programs
- Support minority groups in pursuing leadership development opportunities ensuring fairness exists across all our talent and succession processes.

### 2. Our leaders will champion good practice and drive inclusion

- Embed inclusivity into our leadership competency framework as a standard leadership requirement.
- Establish a Leadership workstream that will champion of diversity and inclusion. This workstream will highlight challenges, provide feedback, support any D&I initiatives, share best practice and champion positive action.
- We will actively engage with consultants and other utility groups to develop our learning and implement best practice.

## Community



We will champion diversity and inclusion in our communities to drive positive change

## Measures of success

- Increase community partnerships
- Achieve Disability Confident Leader status
- Influence the Energy Networks Diversity and Inclusion Charter
- Positively influence our supply chain to drive change in the sector
- Feedback from key stakeholder groups

We will embed ourselves in our communities to understand challenges and opportunities to promote ourselves as a local employer of choice. We will use our position in the community to champion diversity and inclusion with our suppliers and other third-party relationships.

## What we will do....

- **Sign the first Energy Networks Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Charter.**  
We will work in collaboration with the Energy Networks Association to develop diverse and inclusive workplaces across the energy sector.
- **We will champion diversity and inclusion with our suppliers and contractors.**  
We will build robust standards into our due diligence procedures to ensure we are working with companies who support our diversity and inclusion vision, creating a sense of belonging for our colleagues and truly reflecting the communities we serve.
- **Engage with Schools, Colleges and Universities.**  
We will develop our existing relationships with community schools and colleges, continuing to provide educational support through our Bright Sparks program on electricity generation and Net Zero initiatives. We will provide work placements creating greater awareness of STEM subjects and energy sector career opportunities.
- **Develop our existing partnerships**, such as the Armed forces, Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter, Centre for Ageing Better, to continue to identify opportunities to establish ourselves as an employer of choice in the North West.
- **Advance our status as a Disability Confident Employer** to become a Disability Confident Leader.
- **Developing new partnerships.**  
We will work with community groups who are addressing inequalities in society, sharing our resources, to help make a collective impact that matters.
- **Offering a 'fresh start' to talented people in our community.**  
We aim to use the opportunities that exist within Electricity North West to provide opportunity and training for people.

# Include Me

Our 'Include me' campaign is all about giving our colleagues a voice. It's about creating opportunities for our colleagues to be involved, to participate, share their ideas and contribute towards the success of our D&I strategy.

We will create multiple opportunities where people can come together and join us in achieving our vision of creating a sense of belonging and reflecting the communities we serve. Examples of initiatives where people can be included under this campaign:

- Become a part of a Colleague Led Resource Group;
- Become a Diversity and Inclusion champion;
- Responding freely and honestly to D&I surveys;
- Helping to raise awareness about things they are passionate about, for example, how different cultures and religions worship and celebrate;

The 'Include Me' campaign is an opportunity to create a D&I presence in our company, through a simple, purposeful headline that says exactly what we want all our colleagues to do, which is to be included, to speak up and to share with us ideas for creating a great place to work. This collaborative way of working forms part of our strategy principles.

The success of the include me campaign will be measured through:

- A score of above 75% in the D&I survey (belonging);
- Effective input from colleague led resource groups;
- At least 80% of our colleagues to have willingly shared their diversity data.
- D&I training to have been facilitated for all colleagues.



# Our progress so far

We are confident our strategy will generate significant momentum, building on our recent success. We are proud of our commitment to making a difference. See below a summary of the progress we have made so far:

## Belonging

- Recruited a Diversity and Inclusion Manager responsible for supporting the business in the delivery of this D&I strategy;
- Developed a new Inclusion Policy that outlines to our colleagues our commitment in supporting diversity and inclusion;
- Achieved Disability Confident Employer status;
- Provided multiple faith rooms and breastfeeding facilities;
- Made our offices more accessible to wheelchair users;
- Our CEO, Peter Emery, was appointed as Chair of the Energy Network Association's first Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee, championing change across the energy sector;
- Nominated for Employer of the Year Award in the Utility Week Awards 2021.

## Attracting Talent

- Implemented a new applicant tracking system improving candidate accessibility; the system has several features including changing font sizes, reading job adverts out loud and changing the language of a job advert;
- Trialled a blind application process;
- Our career pages showcase personal colleague inclusivity stories;

- Improved the diversity of our recruitment panel, training recruitment champions to participate in our interview process;
- Achieved the Living Wage Accreditation
- Won the Recruitment Excellence Award at the Apprentice of the Year Awards in October 2021 in recognition of our diverse attraction strategies.

## Inclusive Leadership

- We have exceeded our goal of achieving 30% female leadership representation set in 2018, currently, 32% of our leaders are women;
- We have facilitated unconscious bias training to 60 operational managers
- We have trained 20 leaders as recruitment champions to help remove unconscious bias.

## Community

- We developed successful partnerships with two local mosques, supporting with career fairs, CV writing and interview skills;
- We have signed the Social Mobility Pledge and have committed to actions that we have built into our strategy;
- We are partnered with the Centre for Ageing Better, creating a short film that promotes how the skills and knowledge of older generations can support our younger generations.

# Our strategy principles

## Sponsorship

All our D&I initiatives will be sponsored by Clive Wilkinson, Operations Director, a member of the Executive Leadership Team.

Clive has a passion for creating a respectful and fair workplace; he has worked directly with our local communities and volunteered to sponsor our D&I commitments. Clive will help bring our strategy to life, providing support, direction and driving change for under-represented groups.

## We will be transparent

We will be transparent, open and honest about our progress, sharing our progress with colleagues, customers and key stakeholders.

We have several communication channels that we will use to raise awareness of diversity and inclusion. We will ensure our communications are accessible to all our colleagues.

## We will rely on evidence

We will underpin our action with evidence. We will use quantitative and qualitative data to identify challenges in our communities and understand our colleague experiences. We will measure our success through regular review and analysis of this data.

## We will act on feedback

We will encourage open conversations, where colleagues are happy to share feedback and not be fearful of making mistakes.

We recognise that feedback makes us better, it drives change. For anyone reading this strategy who wishes to ask any questions or talk to us about diversity and inclusion in a safe, confidential space, please contact our Diversity and Inclusion Manager.

Email: [Dandi@enwl.co.uk](mailto:Dandi@enwl.co.uk)

## We will review

Our strategy provides us with a purposeful approach for our five-year business plan.

We will review and commit to report on our progress every six months, and at the end of 2023, we commit to reviewing our strategy, defining our new challenges and positive action.



Clive Wilkinson, Operations Director  
Electricity North West Ltd



# Colleague Stories

“ My team understand the importance of Friday prayers to me. They enable me to schedule my work appointments around Jum’ah to ensure I can complete my work and worship. This kind of support makes me

feel like I belong. It creates a really positive working environment and motivates me to be the best I can be, giving confidence to me and others from minority backgrounds to be ourselves at work. ”



Moheeb Ahmed, Civil Electrician

“ Electricity North West continues to support me to be the best I can. While working part-time, I’ve been able to get involved in many different and interesting projects and progress my career. I’m a better mum

because of my work and being a parent has taught me more about leadership and people management than any course or textbook could! ”



Jen Carter, Head of Risk, Control and Assurance

“ As a same-sex parent some people assume I don’t have the same responsibilities or outlook as a mother would because of my gender. But I understand that it can take time to venture away from social norms as we behave more inclusively. There’s still

progress to be made on our journey to make everyone feel like they can be their true selves at work and that’s okay - as long as we’re moving in the right direction and we keep learning. ”



Ged Flannigan, Internal Communications officer

“ I have 70% hearing loss, but this has never prevented my progression in the company which has always supported me and provided special equipment when I needed

it. My colleagues always go the extra mile to ensure that I can keep up with conversations, whether this is face-to-face or on a Teams meeting. ”



Sam Loukes, EHV Manager

