



National Audit Office

CORPORATE

Diversity & Inclusion Strategy 2026 – 2030



NAO STRATEGY 2025-2030
TRUST • VALUE • IMPACT



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Introduction

Our Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) Strategy supports us to achieve our business objectives and build our culture. We aim to recruit, develop and retain talented people with the skills we need, whatever their background. We foster belonging by recognising and valuing individual differences, celebrating the unique perspective and insights each of us brings. The strategy focuses on measurable actions in priority areas, ensuring real progress. All staff are encouraged to understand and contribute to an inclusive workplace, both individually and as part of their teams.

The aims and objectives of our D&I Strategy have been agreed by the Executive Team and the Board.

D&I and business aims



Business aims

Increase our impact on more productive and resilient public services and the quality of financial management and reporting in government

Cross-cutting D&I aims

Our people are our greatest strength, and our focus is ensuring all colleagues have opportunities to develop, grow and be supported in their careers.

- When our teams reflect the diversity of the communities our work affects, we gain richer, more compelling insights that directly inform our **recommendations** and drive **meaningful improvements**.
- By drawing on a wide range of perspectives, we challenge assumptions, think creatively, and **ensure our audit findings are relevant and impactful for those we serve and that our corporate functions deliver high-quality, impactful expertise**.
- This diversity not only supports **excellence and high quality in our audit outcomes**, but also helps us deliver solutions that truly address the needs of the public.
- It enhances our ability to **understand, connect with and influence** a wide range of stakeholders by bringing together varied perspectives, experiences and insights.
- A culture of inclusivity and belonging empowers everyone to contribute with confidence, collaborate effectively, and **create lasting impact in support of the National Audit Office's (NAO's) aims**.
- An inclusive working environment supports **fairness and transparency**, which are central to **good-quality audit work and well-run corporate functions**.

Progress against the last strategy



Continued to attract diverse talent to our annual graduate programme.

Female colleagues made up 49% of NAO Senior Management and 50% overall staff as of 2025.

Met our targets for disabled representation (15% vs 14%).

Gender pay gap reduced to 1.27% and disability pay gap to minus 2.18% as of 31 March 2025.

Improved retention of ethnic minority colleagues after ICAEW (Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales) qualification.

Piloted a two-year sponsorship programme to advance ethnic minority staff into leadership roles.

Improved our coaching offering to accommodate different life experiences.

Achieved Disability Confident Level 3 Leader status.

Executive Director sponsor for each of the staff networks.

External suppliers are required to demonstrate a commitment to D&I in procurement exercises.

External webpages meet the new government guidelines of WCAG 2.2.

Where we have more to do



We continue to focus on ensuring all colleagues have equal access to challenging, interesting work that supports their career ambitions.

We know that disabled colleagues report feeling less engaged at the NAO compared with the rest of the office.

We have recently improved the data reporting for socio-economic background, which gives us an opportunity to make targeted interventions and monitor progress against these.

Our staff networks are well established, and we have more opportunities to work with them, and our diversity champions, to support our D&I goals.

We are seeking to increase our focus on intersectionality, recognising the different factors that contribute to each person's experience.

While we attract candidates from ethnic minority backgrounds to our roles and have improved retention, progression to more senior roles, including in numbers of applicants and number of staff promoted, is not representative of the NAO population for this group.

Peakon scores on Inclusivity and Belonging have remained steady, giving us something to build on.

The D&I Strategy

Our strategy is based around two key ambitions, which form our vision for D&I in the NAO over the course of the next four years. These are supported by three priorities, each aligned to a roadmap for activities. The strategy is further underpinned by the NAO's values, which are central to our ways of working.

A high performing, authentically engaged workforce that is diverse in thought and representation

Ambitions

An inclusive culture in which all colleagues are valued and supported to achieve their potential

Improved diversity at senior levels, particularly for under-represented groups

Priorities

A consistent understanding of, and behaviours in support of, inclusivity at all levels of the organisation

Effective use of our D&I data and insights, with a strategic and coordinated approach to data sharing and reporting, including compliance requirements

Values

Ambitions

Our aims over the strategy are to develop:

A high performing, engaged workforce that is diverse in thought and representation

To develop a workforce that reflects the diversity of the UK, so that we are drawing on the widest possible talent pool. We have diverse representation at all levels of the organisation, and teams collaborate on robust problem-solving, decision-making, and innovation.

A culture of respect in which all colleagues act inclusively with each other and with the bodies we audit

To foster a workplace where everyone is respected, valued, and empowered to contribute to the NAO's strategic objectives. Our people work in high-performing teams and feel encouraged and motivated to share their views and perspectives. We work inclusively with the bodies we audit and seek to understand the impact of public spending on different communities and places.





Priorities

Improving diversity at senior levels, particularly for under-represented groups

Our approach to talent management and development provides our people with support, encouragement and guidance to realise their career ambitions, with targeted interventions when needed, including sponsorship and coaching offers. Our methods for managing performance and assessing talent are free from bias, and all colleagues have an equal opportunity to work on high-profile, stretching tasks.

A consistent understanding of, and behaviours in support of, inclusivity at all levels of the organisation

We have a strong culture of inclusivity across all levels of the NAO, strengthened by open and constructive feedback and high-quality leadership and management, which is role modelled by our senior colleagues. Our culture is further strengthened by the contribution of our staff networks and D&I champions who promote, enhance and support our D&I agenda.

We effectively use our D&I data and insights, taking a strategic and coordinated approach to data sharing and reporting

We use data to make evidence-based decisions on interventions that will be most impactful and recognise the intersectionality of our people. We use external partnerships to promote our achievements and to monitor our progress through benchmarking.



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