

# Introduction to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion for the supply chain

## Supply chain advice pack

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[www.riseretrofit.org.uk](http://www.riseretrofit.org.uk)



# Overview

## About this pack

This advice pack is designed exclusively for supply chain partners involved in housing retrofit. This pack introduces EDI and its context. There is a separate pack which explores the practical implementation of it in practice.

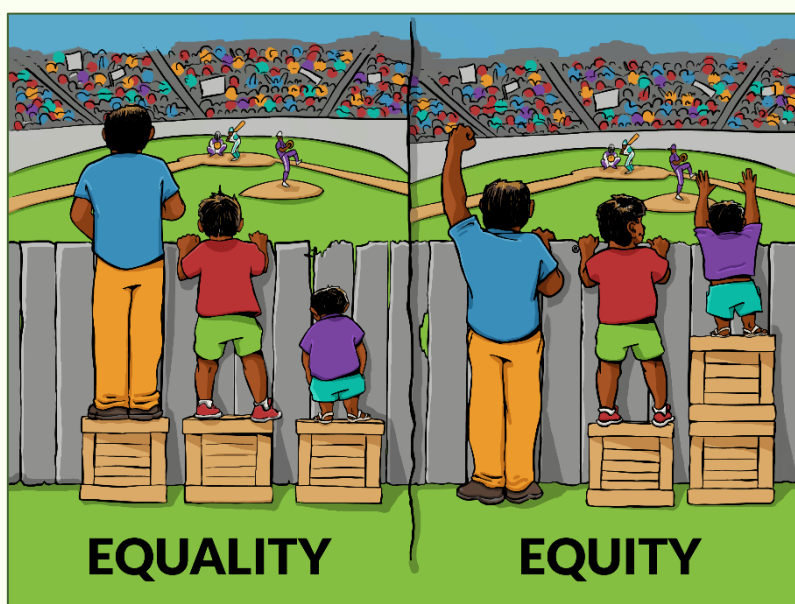


## What is EDI?

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion are three interconnected principles to promote fair treatment and opportunity for all.

- Equality refers to providing equal access to opportunities and reducing systemic inequalities.
- Diversity recognises and values the differences among people, including race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, and socio-economic background.
- Inclusion is about creating environments where all individuals feel welcomed, respected, and empowered to contribute.

Source: Interaction Institute for Social Change



# Why EDI matters in retrofit

- EDI is critical to retrofit because it ensures projects are fair, inclusive, and effective for all residents. Retrofit programmes impact diverse communities, and without EDI, solutions risk excluding vulnerable groups, reducing trust, and failing to meet real needs. The sector's lack of diversity—women make up only 15% of the workforce (2% on-site), ethnic minorities 6%, and disabled people 6%, compared to much higher representation in the general population—limits innovation and talent engagement (CIOB, 2023)<sup>1</sup>.
- Embedding EDI improves outcomes by drawing on a wider range of skills and perspectives, creating retrofit solutions that work for everyone. It also helps organisations meet legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and avoid discrimination risks. Inclusive engagement is vital for tackling issues like fuel poverty (11% of households) and poor housing conditions (7% of social-rented homes report damp or mould), which disproportionately affect vulnerable groups (DESNZ, 2025<sup>2</sup>; The Green Register, 2025)<sup>3</sup>.
- Practical steps such as accessible surveys and resident feedback loops ensure voices are heard—one study showed response rates jumped from 25% to 98% when surveys were designed inclusively (BRI, 2025)<sup>4</sup>.
- In short, EDI is not just a compliance requirement; it is essential for delivering retrofit projects that improve health, wellbeing, and trust across communities.

**Representation in Construction vs General Population**



<sup>1</sup> Chartered Institute of Building (2023). [Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion](#)

<sup>2</sup> Department for Energy Security & Net Zero (2025). [Annual Fuel Poverty Statistics report 2025](#)

<sup>3</sup> The Green Register of Construction Professionals (2025). [6 Important Retrofit Statistics for August 2025 - The Green Register](#)

<sup>4</sup> Building Research & Information (2025). [Improving survey-based data collection for more effective domestic retrofit evaluations](#)

# Benefits of EDI



If you limit your input, you limit your output



Better outcomes

Inclusive delivery

Social value

Attracting talent

Compliance and reputation

Staff satisfaction and retention

Representing customers and audiences

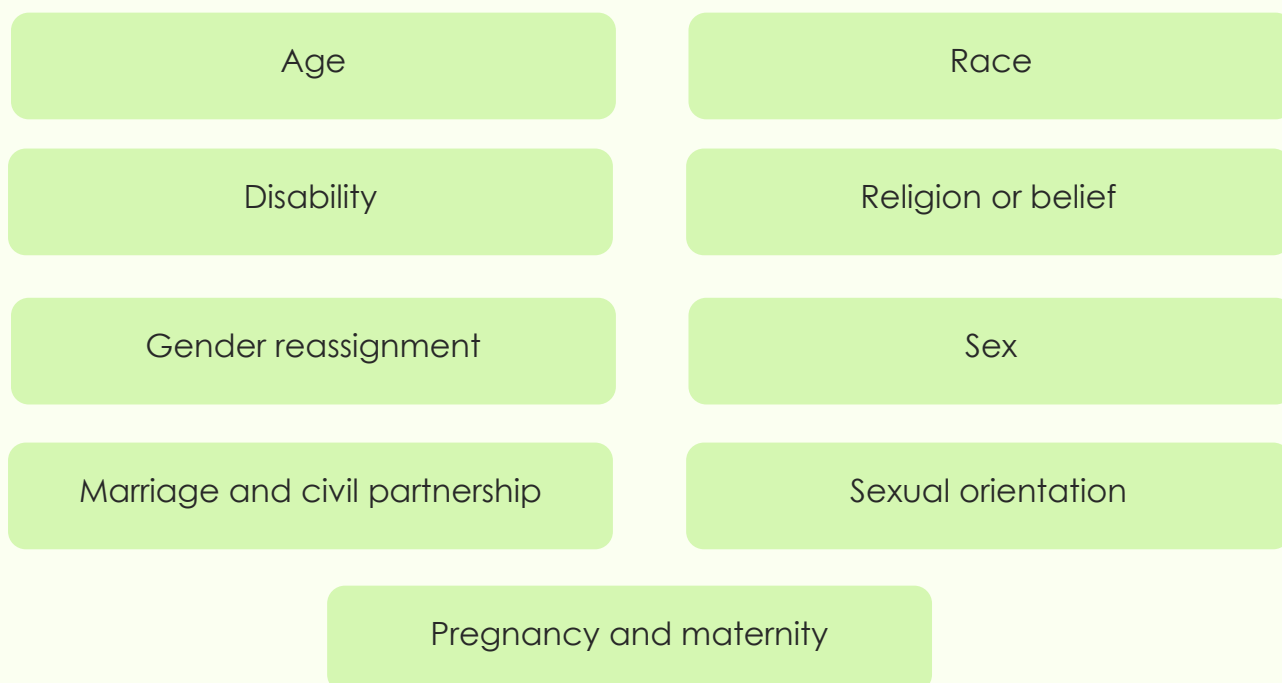
- **Better outcomes through diverse skills:** When teams include people from different backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives, they approach challenges in unique ways. This diversity leads to more creative solutions, stronger decision-making, and innovative approaches that improve project success rate.
- **Inclusive delivery:** Making retrofit solutions inclusive means considering the needs of all residents – regardless of age, ability, or background. This ensures that upgrades are accessible and equitable, which improves satisfaction, reduces complaints, and builds trust between providers and communities.
- **Social value:** Support local employment, upskilling, and SME engagement – SMEs make up 60% of UK private sector jobs, with 16% in construction (FSB, <https://www.fsb.org.uk/media-centre/uk-small-business-statistics> 2025)<sup>5</sup>.
- **Attracting talent:** Inclusive workplaces help address skills shortages and retain a motivated workforce.
- **Staff satisfaction and retention:** Inclusive workplaces foster respect, belonging, and equal opportunities for growth. Employees who feel valued and supported are more engaged, motivated, and loyal – reducing turnover and associated recruitment costs.
- **Compliance and reputation:** Reduces legal risk, ensures Equality Act compliance, and strengthens funding and partnership opportunities.
- **Representing customers and audiences:** A workforce that reflects the diversity of the communities it serves can better understand and meet their needs. Representation helps build stronger relationships, improves communication, and ensures that solutions are culturally and socially relevant.

<sup>5</sup> The Federation of Small Businesses (2025). [UK Small Business Statistics | FSB Business Data](#)

# Legal and standards context

The principles of EDI are embedded in key legislation and standards that guide retrofit delivery. Best practice, when introducing new ways of working, new projects, or workplace changes, is to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment. This ensures you are doing the best for your staff and customers while also meeting your statutory requirements as an employer.

- **Equality Act 2010:** Protects individuals from discrimination across nine protected characteristics.



- **Public Sector Equality Duty (2011):** Requires public bodies to consider how decisions affect people with protected characteristics.
- **Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard:** Sets expectations for inclusive communication and engagement with residents.
- **PAS 2035:2023:** The UK retrofit standard includes explicit requirements for accessibility and inclusion. For example, clause 12.1.3 states: *"All retrofit advice shall be delivered in a form that can be understood by the occupants, i.e., taking account of language, the age of the occupants, any hearing or sight difficulties, etc."* This ensures that technical advice is communicated in an inclusive way, considering diverse needs and circumstances.

# Conclusion

- EDI is essential for fair and effective retrofit delivery, ensuring projects meet the needs of all residents and comply with legal and industry standards.
- Embedding EDI strengthens the supply chain and workforce, driving innovation, improving representation, and creating inclusive solutions that build trust.
- Legal compliance matters – aligning with the Equality Act 2010, PAS 2035, and other standards reduces risk and enhances reputation while meeting statutory obligations.
- Inclusive practices deliver measurable benefits, from higher resident engagement and satisfaction to improved social value, talent attraction, and long-term sustainability.

# Resources



**Podcast:** All RISE podcasts are available [here](#).

**Apprenticeship podcast:** "Apprenticeships in retrofit with Warmworks" available [here](#).



**Masterclass:** All RISE masterclasses are available [here](#).

**Apprenticeship masterclass:** "Green Skills and teams for your project" available [here](#).



**Advice pack:** All RISE advice packs available [here](#).

**Apprenticeship advice pack:** "Apprenticeships in retrofit for the supply chain" available [here](#).



This pack aims to share insights, good practices, and lessons learned from the sector. It is intended for informational purposes only and does not constitute as recommendations or endorsements of specific suppliers, products, or services or as legal advice. Please always check the latest regulations.



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