



Arc Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Strategy: 2021 – 2025

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Our EDI Statement:

At Arc we are not all the same. We come from all walks of life and a wide variety of backgrounds. We draw on these differences in who we are, what we've experienced and how we think to create services that work for everyone. We celebrate the diverse and inclusive community that is Arc, empowering clients, staff and volunteers to connect, belong and grow.

Our mission:

To offer supported accommodation where people can be inspired and empowered by their own strengths.

Our vision:

For homeless people to have a safe and supportive environment.

Our Values:

Integrity, Dignity, Resilience, Respect, Empathy and Inclusion.

1. Introduction

Working across Sedgemoor and Somerset West and Taunton Arc houses, supports and enables homeless people to maximise their potential. We strive for all homeless people to have a safe and supportive environment, where people can be inspired and empowered by their own strengths. Formerly known as Taunton Association for the Homeless we have been in existence for more than 40 years, now with 17 properties housing 174 people.

Arc understands that it is not just about having a roof over your head so we help our clients on a road to recovery, inspiring and assisting people to move forwards through a positive journey to true independence.

At any one time Arc employs about 50 staff. The work is often challenging and our staff and volunteers work under considerable pressure to ensure that clients have every opportunity to become inclusive members of society.

This is important to ensure we continue to provide a wide range of services to absolutely any single homeless person as well as continuing to attract and retain a talented and diverse staff and volunteer body.

We are committed to making the changes needed to value everyone for who they are, to examine practices and behaviours and lead by example. We want to ensure that Arc mobilises the full potential of its whole community.

In September 2020 a Themed Thursday was held on the subject of equalities which identified a need and a desire to examine the subject more closely. As a result, a task and finish group was established which reports to Your Voice. After meeting a few times the group proposed that the first step should be to agree an EDI Strategy.

2. Legislative Context

As a member of the National Housing Federation, and having adopted its membership rules, Arc respects and acknowledges its latest Code of Governance (November 2020) in which Equality and Diversity expectations are outlined.

The panel below lists the requirements placed upon Arc by the Equality Act 2010, as a provider of services to the public and as an employer:

Protected Characteristics	Statutory Duties	Equality Act Obligations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Race• Age• Sex• Gender Reassignment• Disability• Religion or Belief• Sexual Orientation• Marriage or Civil Partnership• Pregnancy and Maternity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eliminate Discrimination• Advance Equality of Opportunity• Foster good relations between different groups• Demonstrate due regard for equality in policies and processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Publish relevant, proportionate information showing compliance with Equality Duty• Publish Equality Objectives

Our aim is to exceed compliance with the legislative requirements of the Equality Act 2010 - to demonstrate best practice and, ultimately, be an exemplar of EDI in the sector and more widely.

3. Our EDI Vision

Equality, diversity and inclusion are critical to our success as an organisation in the 21st Century.

We live in a world that is not fair or equal, where systemic bias assists some, and holds others back. Yet we know that talent and potential are equally distributed throughout the population, regardless of background, identity or characteristic. Recognising this means we must take proactive steps to correct those imbalances, to ‘level the playing field’ and fulfil our mission to unlock that talent and potential, amongst our clients, staff and volunteers.

We will know we have been successful when we can say with confidence that the following statements are true:

Clients	Attract	We adopt a ‘no judgement’ approach that all and any are welcome to seek housing and support. This is made clear in all our literature, media and brand awareness material.
	Retain and Engage	“Nothing about you without you”. Arc supports each client in a person-centred way, avoiding assumptions and listening attentively to their needs and wishes.
	Develop and Progress	Every client is helped to set and move towards their own goals in life, with no expectations, time constraints or conditions.

Staff	Attract and Recruit	We attract interest in roles from the broadest range of backgrounds imaginable. We are interested in the person, their strengths, their experience and the extent to which they share our mission, vision and values. Arc’s recruitment message reflects this, and our desire to be representative of our local communities.
	Retain and Engage	We ensure that every staff member is treated fairly, with dignity and respect, and supported to be their authentic self, freeing them to contribute fully to the life of Arc.
	Develop and Progress	We offer opportunities that build on individual strengths promoting these to the full, even outside of the role a person is initially appointed to carry out. We develop and nurture people who represent our values and the diversity of the clients and communities with whom we work.

Volunteers including the Board	Attract and Recruit	We attract interest in voluntary roles from the broadest range of backgrounds imaginable. Our Board is diverse in the broadest sense. We are interested in the person, their strengths, their experience and the extent to which they share our mission, vision and values. Arc’s recruitment message reflects this, and our desire to be representative of our local communities.
	Retain and Engage	We ensure that every volunteer is treated fairly, with dignity and respect, and supported to be their authentic self, freeing them to contribute fully to the life of Arc to the extent that they wish.
	Develop and Progress	We offer opportunities that build on individual strengths promoting these to the full, even outside of the role a person is initially appointed to carry out. We develop and nurture people who represent our values and the diversity of the clients and communities we work with.

4. Process

Our EDI priorities must be evidence-based so the first task is to understand our starting point. We will agree the baseline quantitative and qualitative information required that will help us to identify areas of weakness, identify a clear direction of travel, make informed decisions and measure the impact of any interventions.

Analysis of the data will enable us to set SMART objectives and identify what resources will be necessary to implement our plan.

At all stages we will communicate with our stakeholders, informing them of the progress made, the lessons learnt and what support they can give.

This strategy is our Commitment to Change. By the end of the 4 year period covered by the strategy we want to be significantly more diverse and supportive as an employer, strongly championing EDI with clients, staff, volunteers, partners, other homelessness organisations and policy makers to support the rights and needs of all citizens even if this requires fundamental changes to the way things are done.