

CIOB's Response to the LGBT+ Business Champion's call to engage

Introduction

The Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) is the world's largest professional body for construction management and leadership. We have a Royal Charter to promote the science and practice of building and construction for the benefit of society, and we have been doing that since 1834.

Our 45,000 members work worldwide in the development, conservation and improvement of the built environment. We accredit university degrees, educational courses and training in universities and colleges. Our professional and vocational qualifications are a mark of the highest levels of competence and professionalism, providing assurance to clients and other professionals procuring built assets.

We currently have 170 staff situated in regions to reflect where large numbers of our members are based. The majority of employees are in the UK (142) and our second largest area covers China and the Middle East (6 people in each region), we also have staff based in Africa (2), Australia (3), Hong Kong (5), Ireland (3), the Middle East (6) and Singapore (1).

We are pleased to be able to respond to this call to engage and would welcome the opportunity to provide further information if necessary.

Question 1: What is your organisation doing to improve the collection of LGBT+ diversity and inclusion data of employees?

In January 2021, CIOB appointed our first Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Transformation to demonstrate our commitment to promoting EDI both internally and externally as a professional body. With this appointment, CIOB put forward an EDI action plan that aligned itself with CIOB's Corporate Plan and lay the foundations for more ambitious, aspirational objectives that will be part of CIOB's vision for 2030.

As part of the action plan, collecting data to build an accurate picture of the workforce was a key part of that. Internally CIOB have collected data from staff members to better understand our workforce, recruitment processes and support provided to minority groups.

To improve the collection of data, we ran a data collection campaign which was accompanied with a considered communications campaign setting out why we are collecting the data and how it will be stored.

Question 2: What is your organisation doing to improve the outcomes and experiences of LGBT+ employees in the workplace?

CIOB's action plan has been put in place to understand the current workforce and what actions and objectives can be taken forward to improve the outcome and experiences

of employees who belong to minority groups. Towards the end of 2021, CIOB collected data from existing staff to better understand the composition of the workforce and will continue to monitor and collect data to help identify gaps in policies and recruitment processes.

Question 3: For organisations which operate in countries where LGBT+ people routinely experience discrimination, what is your organisation doing to support the safety and advocacy of LGBT+ staff?

CIOB promote fair working internally regardless of where a staff member is based in the world. CIOB takes employee safety and wellbeing seriously which is why we have implemented an employee assistance programme (EAP) that all our staff can access at any time they need. The EAP provides employees a confidential telephone helpline which is available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week as well as an online portal to offer comprehensive practical information and emotional support on many issues including financial, work-related, as well as personal matters including marital and relationship concerns, mental health support and substance abuse. This offering is reflective of what we offer to employees in the UK, and we offer all employees face to face counselling sessions. All these services are free and completely confidential.

On data collection, CIOB decided it would only collect data from those based in the UK in order to minimise employee risk and safety for those based in other countries who are not as accepting and, in some places, illegal if they were to identify as LGBT+. This is to minimise distress and impact of CIOB asking for data where it could put employees in a difficult and dangerous situation.

Question 4: How does your organisation have a positive social and economic impact on LGBT+ equality, including in countries where LGBT+ people routinely experience discrimination (where relevant)?

CIOB has a Royal Charter and therefore acts within the wider public interest than just our members. As a Professional Body operating in what is seen as a very male dominated industry that lacks diversity in all areas, it is important as CIOB to be a leading voice on the issue and to provide guidance and support for other businesses operating in the wider sector.

CIOB has recently launched a [Diversity and Inclusion \(D&I\) in Construction Charter](#) for competitive advantage and enhanced employee belonging which is applicable for all companies. The Charter outlines five steps businesses can undertake to becoming a more diverse and inclusive employer. This includes showing leadership, making a plan, shape a culture, being transparent and being accountable.

The Charter is still a new initiative and currently has thirty-seven signatories. We will be seeking feedback on progress made by businesses who have signed-up in early May 2022 and would happily provide this information if useful.

CIOB believe that having resources like the Charter can be an asset for industries like the construction industry to start on their journey to gather data to understand their workforce, identify gaps in their policies, and become more accountable and transparent on their progress.

In the UK, CIOB have previously held discussions with parliamentarians on our work with the D&I charter and has received particular interest from those in the devolved nations. CIOB was recently recognised in a motion by Paul McLennan MSP in Holyrood for our work on the EDI charter and will continue to have conversations with policy makers on how Government can encourage industry to become a diverse and welcoming place for all.

CIOB have brought together experts from across the built environment to form an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Panel which aims to provide advice to CIOB's work in this area. In April 2022, CIOB and other key membership bodies in the built environment sector have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to drive forward the creation of a more diverse, equitable and inclusive sector. Over the next few months, the institutes will work together to produce a more detailed plan of work that focuses on improving data collection from our membership, improving understanding of transition from education into employment as well as what guidance do we need to provide our industries to be competent in driving up standards for EDI.

CIOB have responded to similar consultations on both data collection and inclusion policies for those belonging to minority groups and will continue to respond where appropriate. We have also recommended Government looks at the procurement practice in construction to enhance access from under-represented groups into the industry. This could entail enhanced recognition for employers who are visibly demonstrating a commitment to enhancing opportunities, such as those who are signed up to sector-led charters (like CIOB's) and/or have actively taken steps to improve their internal practices such as a formation of policies, data collection or staff representative groups.

CIOB would welcome the opportunity to provide further information and have further discussions on this topic. To arrange a meeting with CIOB, please contact Daisie Rees-Evans, Policy & Public Affairs Officer at drees-evans@ciob.org.uk.