

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Wellbeing Strategy



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Cover image: British Red Cross volunteer Cyrus delivers food and provisions to local communities affected by storms in Aberdeenshire. Photo © Peter Summers/BRC.

Introduction

Our Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Wellbeing Strategy is a long-term commitment to continue our journey towards becoming a truly inclusive, anti-racist and equitable organisation. I am pleased to present our refreshed Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (EDI) and Wellbeing Strategy – the next steps building on the commitments made in 2022.



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While we have made significant strides, we recognise that our journey is ongoing. This strategy represents a renewed and collective commitment to build on our previous work – fostering a cohesive culture where everyone feels a genuine sense of belonging.

This document is the result of meaningful collaboration. It has been co-designed with our diversity networks, their allies, and a broad cross-section of stakeholders. Their lived experience and diverse perspectives have been instrumental in shaping our direction and priorities.

At the heart of this strategy is our value of inclusion which incorporates the principles of equity, diversity and belonging. This will continue to guide our actions and inform our decisions, ensuring that we remain steadfast in our commitment to build an environment where all individuals are respected, valued, and empowered to thrive.

As a leader, I remain committed to cultivating a culture that is inclusive, fair, and courageous – one that reflects our organisational values of compassion, inclusivity, dynamism, and courageousness. I am inspired by the people I meet, across our organisation, and am committed to inspiring others in return.

I know there are still challenges, but I'm committed to tackling them. Together, we can build a culture where everyone feels they belong and can contribute.

This strategy isn't just about EDI and wellbeing – it's about living our values in every part of our work, everywhere we operate. It's about being human in how we lead, connect, and care.

I will continue to lead with integrity, challenge compassionately, and enable others to do the same. I encourage each of you to reflect on the role you play in advancing this strategy and to take active steps in bringing it to life.

Béatrice Butsana-Sita
Chief Executive Officer

Our vision

This strategy guides us to 2030, embedding equity, diversity, inclusion, and wellbeing into everything we do at the British Red Cross. With three bold and purposeful strategic objectives, it offers a roadmap for transformation – one that reflects our values and our commitment to lasting change. We imagine a British Red Cross where everyone feels seen, heard, and valued – a place where belonging is real, and wellbeing is at the heart of everything we do.

We believe real progress happens when we come together – drawing on the strengths of our staff, volunteers, and the people who use our services. We're committed to breaking down barriers and continuing to build a culture based on teamwork, respect, and openness. Listening to and learning from different perspectives will guide our journey, helping us value the diverse voices that shape who we are.

To support this, we'll improve how we connect and communicate with people. We'll also keep strengthening our data on employees, volunteers, and service users to better understand the makeup of our organisation. This will help us track how well our strategy is working and make sure it remains inclusive and meets the needs of our communities.

This is more than a strategy – it's a call to act. Together, let's make equity and wellbeing part of everyday life. Let's lead with courage, listen with care, and take purposeful action.

Why we're acting now

Revisiting our EDI and Wellbeing Strategy is both timely and necessary. It allows us to align with the overarching Strategy 2030. Furthermore, as the world evolves and our organisation adapts, this strategy ensures we remain responsive, inclusive, and future-focused. It addresses key external shifts, including:

- **Embedding EDI and Wellbeing into our core operations** – not as add-ons, but as essential principles.
- **Responding to legal developments**, such as the Supreme Court ruling on the definition of “woman” and the Employment Rights Bill, which challenge us to evolve and lead with integrity.
- **Strengthening our stance amid global shifts in attitudes** toward equity, diversity, and inclusion, in particular.

What guides us

At the British Red Cross, we are guided by our mission to mobilise the power of humanity, and working in partnership with others, we support individuals and communities to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies.

We know that crises don't affect everyone equally. Many of the people we support – and those who work or volunteer with us – face multiple challenges like racism, poverty, ableism, displacement, and more. These realities show up daily in our work, both in the UK and internationally, and are reflected in our data and feedback. We also understand that these inequalities, along with the demands of humanitarian work, can deeply affect wellbeing – from stress and burnout to trauma and mental health struggles.

We're here to support our volunteers and front-line staff as they face the emotional and mental challenges of humanitarian work. We'll actively create ways to help people regain strength and rebuild their resilience, making sure that when wellbeing is affected, the right support is available to help them thrive.



Photo © Joanne Crawford/BRC

What guides us (continued)

EDI and Wellbeing have been incorporated into our Organisation's Strategy 2030 with a clear goal *"Develop a culture of equity and trust, where all our people are actively inclusive."* This goal is underpinned by an ambitious and dedicated strategic objective which will be delivered during 2026-28 *"Culture: Advance an empowering environment where everyone is respected and belongs, that prioritises both physical and psychological safety, identifies and removes barriers to participation and encourages and genuinely hears volunteer and staff voices."*

We aim to embed wellbeing, both physical and mental, into everything we do, and to foster spaces that are cohesive, inclusive, and equitable. These values are deeply aligned with the fundamental principles of the Red Cross Movement, rooted in justice, dignity, and opportunity for all.

This strategy is inclusive of everyone, including those working or volunteering across the UK or internationally. We understand that many individuals within our movement bring valuable lived experience of crises and humanitarian action aligned with our mission. This includes experiences of displacement, conflict, forced migration, health inequities, disasters, and emergencies. We deeply value the insights these experiences offer and are committed to creating a culture where these voices are not only heard but valued, respected and included.

To be a truly fair and equitable organisation, we must continue to build on our work to foster a genuine sense of belonging and embed inclusion into everything we do. We understand that everyone's wellbeing is shaped by who they are, that's why we value each person's unique experience. Real change happens when inclusion and belonging are part of everything we do – from decisions and strategies to policies and everyday actions – with openness, honesty, and accountability at the heart.

The foundations of a culture where everyone feels seen, heard and valued

EDI, wellbeing, and belonging are not just the right thing to do – they are essential to our success as an organisation. This is important because our work will have greater impact and achieve its outcomes of dignity, safety, choice and connection the more we are able to create inclusive spaces where diversity of thought is welcomed and respected.

We are committed to creating an organisation where every individual feels valued, respected, and empowered. Our approach is grounded in four core beliefs that continue to guide our journey toward cultural transformation.

What guides us (continued)

Supporting recovery and wellbeing

- 1** We focus on supporting people's emotional, mental, and physical health. This shows our commitment to creating a caring environment where rest, recovery, and healing are valued. By using approaches that understand trauma, leading with compassion, and putting wellbeing first, we aim to build a workplace where everyone feels supported and able to do their best.

Safe and meaningful engagement

- 2** We're creating spaces where everyone's voice matters. This means making it safe for people to speak openly, share feedback, and work together. We welcome different views and are open to learning and growing. We promise to listen carefully and respond with respect, showing how much we value people's input. Our engagement will be genuine – not just for show -and will lead to real change. We'll also be clear about how people's contributions have shaped decisions.

Cultivating trust

- 3** Trust is key to building a welcoming culture, but it doesn't happen automatically. We will work hard to be honest, reliable, and open in what we say and do. That includes admitting when trust is low and taking steps to rebuild it. We will also show trust in others – by sharing power, listening closely, and making space for people's personal experiences to guide decisions. Trust grows through honesty, empathy, and staying true to our values. We know it takes time, and strong relationships are built on respect.

Intersectionality and unity

- 4** People's identities are complex and can overlap in ways that affect their experiences. We want our work to reflect and respect these differences. At the same time, we aim to bring people together across those differences—not to make everyone the same, but to build a fair and welcoming future where everyone feels they belong.

UK Nations and International

The British Red Cross brings people together to help others through tough times – whether it’s preparing for, responding to, or recovering from a crisis, here at home and around the world.

While our principles remain consistent across the UK and internationally, we recognise that cultural and legal differences shape how we work in different contexts, particularly in Northern Ireland and overseas. We’re proud to have leaders in these settings who model behaviours relevant to their local context, and we’re committed to listening to them, and to wider stakeholders, to ensure our EDI and Wellbeing work is relevant, credible, and grounded in lived realities.

Our commitment to anti-racism reaches beyond the UK. We know racism is a global issue, shaped by history and colonialism. That’s why we work with our partners, communities, and staff to make anti-racist actions part of everything we do across the Movement.

We will adapt our policies, practices, and leadership to reflect the unique strengths and challenges of each setting, and to ensure inclusion of Global Majority and minoritised staff and volunteers everywhere.



You don’t need to understand it, you just need to respect it.

Laura Murphy-Fuller, Internal Services Directorate

Turning purpose into progress

To stay focused and avoid confusion, we've narrowed our strategy down to three clear and connected objectives.

Objective one: We'll foster safe and belonging for all

Outcomes: Everyone feels safe, respected, and included at work.

Everyone feels seen, safe and valued, and can fully participate. We will create spaces where staff and volunteers can feel psychologically safe and culturally supported, especially those with lived experience of marginalisation. This includes safe routes to raise concerns, strong safeguarding and proactive inclusion that centres minoritised voices.

To support this, we will:

- Strengthen our Diversity Networks and launch an Allyship programme to promote fairness and equity, which will help us to create space for everyone to learn, reflect and build the skills that help others feel safe, seen and valued.
- Review and create policies which equip managers to support minoritised groups in particular – our Trans Inclusion processes and a cognitive decline policy to support those with early onset conditions such as dementia.
- Ensure transparency and accountability by showing how people's voices have influenced action, including maintaining an anonymised reporting mechanism.



Photo © Abbie Trayler-Smith/BBC

Turning purpose into progress (continued)

Objective two: We'll advance equity in action

Outcomes: Fair access to opportunities is built into how we recruit, pay, develop, and promote people.

Fair access to opportunities and resources, with systems that work for everyone. We will remove barriers to opportunity to ensure fairness and transparency across recruitment, pay, development, decision-making and leadership.

To turn this commitment into action, we will:

- Strengthen equitable recruitment by eliminating bias and supporting routes into employment for people with lived experience of minoritised communities.
- Conduct accessibility audits across spaces, systems, and practices, including improving existing processes for workplace adjustments.
- Involve diverse voices through our safe and meaningful involvement approach to identify and address barriers.
- Review progression pathways to ensure fairness for minoritised communities.
- Work with our Anti-Racism Advisory Group (ARAG) to dismantle systemic barriers and drive cultural change.
- Regularly assess cultural health and use data insights to drive improvement and measure impact.



Photo © Ben Langdon/BRC

Turning purpose into progress (continued)

Objective three: We'll embed a culture of care and wellbeing

Outcomes: Wellbeing is part of how we work, not just an add-on.

Compassionate environments that protect and promote mental, emotional, and physical health. We will build a culture of care where wellbeing is not just a personal responsibility but an organisational one. This includes understanding and responding to the factors that contribute to stress, fatigue, and trauma. Promoting team, organisational and community wellbeing.

To strengthen wellbeing, we will:

- Continue to expand and diversify support options, including mental health, flexible working, and financial wellbeing.
- Explore tailored resources for employees from migrant or displaced communities.
- Build on our tools which equip leaders to support teams empathetically.
- Use data to identify gaps and tailor interventions.
- Use strength-based language to recognise the value of diverse lived experiences, while actively rejecting white saviourism and discriminatory behaviours or language.



EDI and wellbeing are critical to us meeting the needs and expectations of staff, volunteers, supporters and service users in the UK and overseas. We can and should all play a role in this and I'm excited by the new strategy and the way it was cocreated with colleagues.

Adam Rowlands, Chair ISD EDI & Wellbeing Working Group.

How we will deliver and measure change

This strategy will be delivered through an integrated and accountable framework that includes high impact priority actions, which will be refreshed annually. The high impact priority actions are enablers for the strategic objectives set out in this strategy.

For the year 2025/2026 they are:

- Fair recruitment and growth – We will recruit fairly and support everyone to grow and develop in their roles.
- Dignity and Respect for all – We treat everyone with dignity and respect, valuing each person equally.
- Being Anti-Racist – We are working to create a fair, inclusive environment where everyone is treated equally.

How we'll work

Embedding EDI and Wellbeing

Every team will play a part in delivering this strategy, with clear plans and goals to guide progress.

Inclusive Leadership and Governance

We'll grow inclusive leadership skills, ensure diverse representation, and make EDI and wellbeing part of leadership accountability.

Tracking Progress

We'll measure impact using both numbers and stories across teams and countries.

Working with Others

We'll build partnerships that reflect our values – especially with groups led by and for marginalised communities – and embed social value in how we work with volunteers, suppliers, and communities.

Culture Change and Inclusion

We'll listen to underrepresented voices, challenge barriers, and build inclusive practices at every level. We'll stay accountable through clear goals, honest reflection, and ongoing learning.

“Curate, create, encourage and nurture a culture of allyship.

Jon Pewtner, UK Operations.

How we will deliver and measure change (continued)

Guiding our journey

This strategy was co-designed with people who care deeply about its aims.

We held sessions with staff networks, individuals with lived experience from minoritised communities, and a broad group of stakeholders. They shared what truly matters to them – and here's what they told us:

Stop:

- Working in silos, which creates inequity and inconsistent experiences.
- Assuming what people need – be more collaborative.
- *“Making me feel like I have to use my emotional labour to keep telling my story to justify who I am.”*



Start:

- Tailoring support to reflect each person's lived experience.
- *“Making it easier for me to be me at work or in my volunteering role.”*
- Creating visible role models at all levels of the organisation.



Continue:

- Supporting Diversity Networks as allies, advocates, and experts by experience.
- Striving for greater diversity – *“We need more people like me at the British Red Cross.”*



Intersectionality helps organisations understand how overlapping identities shape experiences, enabling more targeted and inclusive strategies for equity and wellbeing.



Create a community not a corporation.

Alex Fraser, UK Operations.

Closing remarks

I'm incredibly proud to serve as the Executive Sponsor for Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Wellbeing at the British Red Cross. With over 150 years of history and as part of a globally respected humanitarian movement, the British Red Cross holds a unique place in people's hearts – both in the UK and around the world.



Photo © Kate Stanworth/BRC

This refreshed EDI and Wellbeing Strategy is a bold and necessary step forward in our journey to becoming a truly inclusive, welcoming, and anti-racist organisation. It sets out a clear vision: one where diversity is celebrated, everyone is supported to thrive, and our values are lived every day. A place where we extend compassion to those who need it most, and where we actively dismantle the systemic and cultural barriers that stand in the way of equity.

As an organisation built on trust, compassion, and service, we have a duty to be transparent, accountable, and above all – equitable. Fostering a diverse and inclusive culture isn't just morally right; it's essential to our wellbeing, our effectiveness, and our ability to serve communities with empathy and impact. When people feel they belong, we all do better. We are stronger together.

I fully endorse Beatrice's intent and thank her for her leadership. Alongside my fellow executive directors, I am committed to making this strategy a reality – not just in words, but through action.

Now, I invite you to join us.

Reflect on what allyship means to you. Consider how you can role model inclusive and equitable behaviours in your everyday work. And above all, be a changemaker.

Together, we can build an organisation where everyone feels seen, heard, and valued – and where our commitment to humanity is reflected in everything we do.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dorothy Brown". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Dorothy Brown

Chief Operating Office

Understanding the language we use

Accessibility

Accessibility means making services, spaces, and tools easy for everyone to use. When things are designed well, they remove barriers and benefit everyone – this is sometimes called the “Curb Effect.”

Allyship

Allyship means standing with others whose experiences differ from your own. It’s about using your voice and influence to support them, while recognising your limits and making space for their leadership.

Anti-Racism

Anti-racism means actively standing against racism in all its forms – supporting diverse communities and challenging unfair systems, behaviours, and beliefs. It’s more than being “not racist”; it’s about acting.

Cultural competence & Cultural Intelligence

Cultural competence is understanding a culture well enough to engage respectfully. Cultural intelligence is the ability to work effectively across different cultures.

Colonialism

Colonialism is when one country takes over another place and controls it. They often take land, resources, and power, and this can hurt the people who live there. It has caused unfairness that still affects people today.

Global Majority

Global Majority is a collective term for people who are Black, Asian, Brown, dual-heritage, Indigenous to the global south, or racialised as ethnic minorities. It reframes these groups as the global majority, promoting empowerment and equity. At British Red Cross, we use minoritised ethnic groups when discussing systems of power and oppression, while Global Majority is suitable for international contexts.

Intersectional

Intersectionality looks at how different parts of a person’s identity – like age, race, or disability – combine to shape their experiences. For example, someone who is older and disabled may face both ageism and ableism.

Wellbeing

Wellbeing is about how people feel at work – mentally, physically, emotionally, and socially. It includes feeling supported, managing stress, maintaining balance, and feeling safe, valued, and connected.

