

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STEERING COMMITTEE (EDI SC)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Purpose

The Growth Company (GC) is committed to eliminating all forms of discrimination and harassment across all aspects of its business both internally and externally in its relationship with its stakeholders and communities.

The EDI Steering Committee (EDI SC) will be a representative body that will act as a 'Voice for All' and recognise the differing needs of individuals including, recruitment, selection, training, performance, development and promotion of colleagues. It will identify problems and propose relevant EDI actions and will monitor the effectiveness of these actions. The aim will be to influence organisational and cultural change and to raise awareness to ensure that everyone that works at GC feels valued.

The EDI SC is responsible for supporting the strategic direction and leadership of GC's Corporate Plan and overseeing the delivery of our EDI objectives and Action Plan, as an employer, as a regulator and as a service provider. The EDI SC supports and oversees the work of our EDI Network Groups.

2. Growth Company Values

The Growth Company's (GC) values have been shaped and driven by our people and underpin our business beliefs. These shared attitudes and behaviours enable us to succeed without compromising our principles and make GC a great place to work.

- **Make a positive difference:** We're proud to make a positive difference to the businesses, communities and individuals that we work with.
- **Stronger together:** We achieve more by working together.
- **Empower people:** We encourage ambition and challenge assumptions.
- **Do the right thing:** We always aim to do the right thing for the right reason.
- **Build on success:** We learn from our experiences to enable continual growth.

3. Legal duties

Notwithstanding our values and commitments, GC has a legal obligation to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998 which provide protection from discriminations and uphold equality, diversity and inclusion.

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 was introduced to consolidate and strengthen laws that protect people from discrimination and disadvantage. The Equality Act 2010 replaced several previous laws, making it easier for everyone to understand their rights. It also helps to ensure people with what are called protected characteristics are not discriminated against.

The Equality Act 2010 sets out that the nine characteristics that are protected are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

The three aims of the Equality Duty are to have **due regard**:

- **Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation** and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- **Advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- **Foster good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

Having **due regard** means consciously thinking about the three aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision-making. This must be core to the work of the EDI SC and the EDI Network Groups activities.

Human Rights Act 1998

The Human Rights Act 1998 sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms that everyone in the UK is entitled to. It incorporates the rights set out in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) into domestic British law. The Human Rights Act came into force in the UK in October 2000

GDPR Requirements

It is important that all EDI SC Members understand their responsibility under the GDPR requirements.

It is important that when personal information and data is shared at EDI SC meetings that this must not be shared with anyone outside of the meeting as this would be a breach of the GDPR and could lead to disciplinary action being taken.

4. Equality objectives

GC equality objectives will ensure that we:

- Are a good employer; promoting a culture of fairness, inclusion and respect.
- Remove any identified barriers in the workplace to enable our people to be themselves and feel that they belong.
- Ensure that GC is representative of the communities, customers and clients we work with.

- Offer (and continuously improve) inclusive services for individuals and businesses wherever practical and possible to support the greatest diverse groups of customers.
- Assess whether our people feel that the organisation is inclusive and how valued they feel - so that we can take targeted action.
- Regularly review our policies to ensure that there is a process in place for them to be Equality Impact Assessed.
- Demonstrate our commitment to zero tolerance against any form of discrimination that is clearly communicated.
- Signpost individuals that experience discriminatory or inappropriate behaviour or breach of any policy to HR.
- Identifying trends that inform policy development.

5. Governance

- The EDI SC will report and be accountable to SMT and the GC Board (See Appendix A)
- Membership will be reviewed every two years by the EDI SC to enable it to achieve its aims and objectives.
- Members will be appointed to the EDI SC for a two-year period. After this time an election process will be established for EDI Network Chairs.
- The EDI SC will meet every month to review the objectives and support the development of the EDI Strategy and Action Plan.
- Minutes summarising what has been discussed and noting any actions planned at these meetings will be available on the intranet.
- The EDI SC will nominate the EDI Network Chair(s) to develop individual EDI Action Plans and monitor progress.

6. Membership

The duration of the meetings will be 90 minutes via Microsoft Teams.

The EDI SC should consist of members which include the following:

- EDI Sponsor for SMT and Chair – Carla Nuttall
- Secretariat – Cheryl Madden
- OD Specialists – Virginie Ghaznavi
- HR Specialists – Rebecca Cronin (Recruitment) Emma Griffiths (Policy) or Business Partner
- EDI Network Chairs
- Communications Business Partner (supports the communication for the EDI Network Chairs)
- Head of Employer Engagement for Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (Employment) – Adrian Bird

Invited Guests to the EDI SC

- An EDI Champion or representative from the Employee Consultative Committee (ECC) and Organisational Development Steering Group (ODSG) attends 2 meetings per year

- The Chief Executive – Mark Hughes attends two Q&A sessions per year
- GC Board Lead, Vanda Murray – will meet with the EDI SC once a year to focus on progress and preparation for the EDI Annual Report to GC Board

7. Role of GC Senior Management Team (SMT)

Each of the 8 EDI Networks now have an SMT sponsor(s) who have committed to:

- Actively support each of the networks to drive forward and promote the ongoing initiatives/campaigns aligned to the EDI Action Plan
- Demonstrate their individual SMT commitment to continuously improve our offering and ensure that we promote an inclusive culture
- Learn more about equality, diversity and inclusion and any challenges/barriers that employees may experience so areas for improvement can be identified

8. Role of the EDI SMT Sponsor

The EDI SMT Sponsor will be responsible for:

- Attend the EDI SC meetings and agree on the agenda
- Update GC Senior Management Team (SMT) on the progress of the EDI Strategy and EDI Networks Action Plan
- Take budget proposals for EDI Action Plan activity to SMT for sign off

9. Role of the EDI Chair

- To ensure that the meetings are managed, well-structured and keep good time management
- To ensure that the Code of Conduct for meetings are adhered to at all times (See Appendix B)
- To agree the agenda for the meetings prior to each meeting
- To be responsible for chairing meetings for the EDI Steering Committee
- Ensure that the EDI SC fulfils its remit and role.
- Report and ensure that actions are recorded from the meetings to the EDI SMT Sponsor and EDI Lead on matters that require SMT decisions
- Liaising with SMT and the EDI Network Chairs and experts as required

9. The role of the Secretariat

- To agree and circulate the agenda with the EDI Chair, EDI SMT Sponsor and OD Specialist prior to each meeting
- To take minutes and record actions from the meeting
- To ensure that minutes are uploaded onto the system at least 3 days after the meeting.
- To ensure that the membership list is kept up-to-date

10. Role of EDI Network Chairs

The EDI Network Chairs will be responsible for the following EDI Network Groups: -

- **Age** AgeNetwork@growthco.uk - Matthew Richardson
- **Health and Wellbeing (includes Disability, Mental Health and Neurodiversity)** HealthandWellbeingNetwork@growthco.uk - Cheryl Madden. This network also includes the *Neurodiversity Champion subgroup, the Menopause Support Group and the Mental Health Champion Subgroup.*
- **LGBTQ+** lgbtqplusNetwork@growthco.uk - Billie Kemp and Lucy Emmingham
- **Military Veteran and Reservist** – militaryveteranandreservistsnetwork@growthco.uk Andy Roberts and Nicholas Williams
- **Parents and Carers** ParentandCarerNetwork@growthco.uk - Naomi Ilagoswa and Vicky Wilding
- **Race - Embrace** EmbraceNetwork@growthco.uk – Fiona Miller, Mysha Williams and Labisi Brimah
- **Religion and Faith** - ReligionNetwork@growthco.uk - Timothy Jeffrey and Nadir Sultan
- **Women** WomenNetwork@growthco.uk - Virginie Ghaznavi

Agreement should be made for protected time for the EDI Network Chair's line manager to support the work of the EDI Network Group in line with the time required to deliver the EDI action plan.

11. Responsibility of the EDI Network Chair

- To be sent a copy of the Role Description (Appendix C) and Chairs Handbook once appointed.
- Provide monthly reports/updates on key actions from the action plans.
- Assessing and reporting on progress against the EDI Action Plans in a clear and timely manner which is RAG rated.
- Take ownership of the EDI Action Plan for their network and continuously drive their EDI Network Group Members to make progress on allocated tasks within the timescales outlined.
- Organise meetings with the EDI Network Group members at least once per month.
- Issue an agenda in advance of any meetings.
- Ensure that records of any key actions/discussions from the meeting is distributed in a timely manner (e.g. within 5 working days) to the EDI Network Group Members
- Set out clear budgets to support the action plan from within the EDI Network Group.
- Raise any issues impacting on the EDI Network Group so that the relevant specialist support and advice can be provided.
- Challenge any inappropriate behaviour and inform the relevant specialist follow the relevant policies to resolve any issues or concerns related to EDI.
- Attend monthly EDI Network Chairs meeting to agree priorities for the agenda and potential joint working opportunities
- To attend EDI Network Chairs pre-meeting every month
- To be provided with protected time against outcomes on the EDI Action Plan

In the event that the EDI Network Chair is unable to attend the EDI SC meeting they must nominate a representative from the EDI Network Group to attend on their behalf.

The EDI Network Chairs to provide the allocation of time that is required to complete the EDI Action Plan during the next 6 months, which will be reviewed by SMT.

Name of EDI Meeting	Frequency of meetings	Time required
EDI Steering Committee	Monthly	1 hour 30 mins
EDI Network Group Meetings with the EDI Network Chairs	Monthly	1 hour
EDI Network Chairs pre meeting	Monthly	1 hour
EDI Network Chairs preparation time for delivery of the Action Plan	Monthly	Varies

12. Reporting Requirements

- It is the responsibility of the EDI Network Chairs to identify and present the key actions from the EDI Action Plan at each EDI SC meeting.
- The key actions and timescales should be presented to the EDI SC for discussion by the EDI Network Chair.
- The EDI Chair will record the actions and timescales that will be presented to SMT by the EDI SMT Sponsor and EDI Chair for discussion and agreement.
- The EDI Chair will provide an update on the actions submitted to SMT at the next EDI SC meeting
- The EDI Network Chairs will update the EDI Action Plan to reflect SMT decisions, actions and timescales.
- Access to the EDI Action Plan and notes and action update tracker from the EDI SC meetings will be available using the links provided.

13. Role of Network Group Members

All members will contribute to the work of the EDI Network Group by:

- Analysing reports on equality monitoring statistics in respect of employees and GC's services' users and providing relevant feedback/suggestions to consider.
- Establishing ad-hoc Subgroups to take action in relation to specific areas of work as required.
- Actively support the actions required to drive the EDI Action Plan, reporting to the EDI Network Chair(s) on progress or findings.
- Championing the promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion for employees, individuals and businesses.
- Establishing two-way communication and engagement opportunities between employees and GC's leadership on the EDI Strategy and Action Plan.
- Attending the EDI Network Group meetings regularly showing commitment and engagement

- Call out any inappropriate behaviour and follow the relevant policies to resolve any issues or concerns related to EDI.
- For managers to support colleagues to attend EDI Network Group monthly meetings.

14. Frequency of meetings

The EDI SC will meet every month to discuss progress against the EDI Action Plan.

The EDI Network Chairs will meet every month before the EDI SC meetings.

The EDI Network Group Members will meet monthly with the EDI Network Chairs. Additional meetings may be held when required.

15. Allies – Action to create an inclusive workplace

See Appendix D for further guidance on Allies.

16. Review

The EDI SC will review its performance, membership and Terms of Reference at least annually.

November 2023

EDI SC GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

