

## EDI IN ACTION CASE STUDY: AVIVA

With approximately 18 million customers, Aviva is one of the largest insurance companies in the UK. And the senior leadership team are unequivocal about the commercial benefit of successful ED&I strategies. They recognise that diverse teams reflect the marketplace and with a range of diverse thought and opinion, better business decisions are made, as well as propositions offered that suit a diverse customer base. This is not a view that is always shared by shareholders but the leadership team believes this demonstrates why action on their part is so important.

### Equality and diversity in finance

Aviva sits at the heart of the financial services industry, a sector that has historically had a reputation for a non-diverse, non-inclusive workforce. So Aviva potentially faces an even greater challenge than some other organisations in shrugging off outdated stereotypes and removing obstacles to a diverse and inclusive culture – and tackling it starts with the boardroom.

Aviva is ahead of its industry peers, aiming for higher-than-standard diversity targets; it has a target of 40% of leaders to be female and 13% to be ethnically diverse, aligned with recent census statistics. Recognising the multiple problems that need tackling concurrently, Aviva has also set itself apart from other companies by publishing its ethnicity pay gap as well as their gender pay gap, with a disability pay gap to follow in the future. Collecting and publishing that information is part of its ED&I strategy; it publicly holds the organisation to account for making continual improvements, to hit its ambitious equality targets.

### A person-centred approach

Aviva encourages its employees to work with their line manager to create a “Workplace Adjustment Passport”, a document that can travel with them through their time at Aviva, and that details any short, medium or long-term adjustments needed to fulfil their potential at work. If they need flexibility in their work schedule to allow for caring for a relative, or long-term changes due to a health condition, it is agreed upon and detailed in the Passport. This allows employees to shape their work journey around their own circumstances and, importantly, not have to detail their needs and requirements repeatedly when line management changes.

### Creating communities

All Aviva employees are encouraged to join at least one of the “Aviva communities”, which have been created to support inclusion, to flag issues and lobby for change where it’s needed. There are six communities for employees to get involved with, in recognition of the fact that everyone has an identity of some kind and workplace needs are not restricted to protected characteristics. The communities are:

- Aviva Origins, focusing on ethnicity, religion and social mobility
- AvivAbility, focusing on supporting people with visible and invisible disabilities
- Aviva Balance, focusing on gender
- Aviva Pride, focusing on LGBT issues
- Aviva Generations, focusing on age-related issues
- Aviva Carers, focusing on all types of caring responsibilities

Each community is paired with two members of the executive team who work closely with the community’s co-chairs and members, giving all employees a voice and a role in shaping policies to better suit their colleagues’ diverse needs. In one instance, the Aviva Carers community lobbied for carers’ leave – the result was the introduction of 35 hours’ leave for all employees to meet any caring responsibilities that they might have.

### Engagement as a measure

Tracking membership of and engagement with these communities is one element of Aviva’s strategy around measuring the success of their EDI policies. In addition, they run annual employee engagement surveys, with additional pulses being run more often to keep EDI targets in sharp focus. Employees are also encouraged to share personal data through an HR-led campaign, ‘This Is Me,’ which in turn is used to drive action plans and set EDI targets.

### Moving the dial

As a result of their EDI strategies, Aviva has been accredited by Carers UK as a supportive employer, and in 2020 won Working Families’ Best For Fathers Award, recognising their achievements in achieving equality for parents. They have increased their female leadership to 33.7%, moving towards their target of 40%.