



Inclusivity Guidelines for CIBSE members and staff

Produced by CIBSE Inclusivity Panel



Engineering for everyone

CIBSE Inclusivity Statement

CIBSE members, affiliates and staff work every day to advance the art of the possible. Our product, the built environment, is shared and enjoyed by all. We believe that an inclusive culture brings resilience, creativity and innovation – qualities that deliver both better buildings and a stronger Building Services Engineering community. We're working hard to ensure that our organisation and profession are welcoming to all, for the benefit of all.

Foreword

We all want to be treated fairly, whatever the situation or context. And a major part of working in the built environment is contributing to improving quality of life for society as a whole. As a Professional Engineering Institution, CIBSE is driving the implementation of equality, diversity, and inclusive practice.

Our members do a fantastic job of sharing the science, art and practice of building services engineering with the wider world. Whether organising a special interest group event or electing a new regional committee, this guidance has been developed to help us all be more inclusive and to treat people fairly. It covers a range of issues from events and accessibility, to language and knowledge, providing actions that are clear and easy to implement.

This is an ongoing commitment and we will review and update this guidance regularly, so please do share your suggestions and experiences of using these guidelines with us at: inclusivity@cibse.org.



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Communications

Language

The language we use, whether written or spoken, formal or informal, sets the scene for an inclusive environment.

- Plain English should be used to ensure clarity of expression and adhere to stylistic consistency in publications.
- All written and verbal communications should use language that is gender neutral, e.g. Chair rather than Chairman. We have included examples of inclusive language in Appendix A.
- Be sensitive to labels – avoid labelling people where possible.
- If reference to demographic groups is required, use terms that are deemed to be widely acceptable, such as those outlined in Appendix A.
- Where possible endeavour to have a balance of male/ female and people from different ethnic backgrounds and age groups in text as well as images.
- For written communications use available software to check accessibility.
- Consider whether translations of key documents will be required in other languages.
- Whenever possible, ask the person what their preferred terminology is. One person may prefer one term over another.
- Put the person first, for example “people with disabilities” rather than “disabled people”.

Balance

Be mindful when using case studies, testimonials and quotes that they are representative of different groups.

Images

The images we include in documents should demonstrate our commitment to diversity.

- Images used should include positive images of people from diverse backgrounds, including different cultures, genders and age.
- Avoid images where males are active and females look passively on.
- In publications, our focus is often on the excellent projects or technical solutions that we have created. We have to remember we are a profession of people, and to provide greater connections we should ensure images of people are used alongside images of projects or plant and equipment.
- Avoid using pink and blue to represent genders.
- Design event marketing literature and select images according to the theme and the target audience.
- Use images that reflect the audience you wish to attract.
- For online images, check whether an “Alt Text” is included for people with visual disabilities who have screen readers. “Alt text” is the written copy that appears in place of an image on a webpage if the image fails to load on a user’s screen. This text helps screen-reading tools describe images to visually impaired readers.
- If using video footage, get the video subtitled.
- Consider Sign Language interpretation on video footage.

Accessibility

CIBSE publications, media and events should be accessible to all. Remember that not all disabilities or additional needs are visible.

- For written communications, use a clear layout, and for legibility provide a strong contrast between print and background.
- Continue to make sure all materials e.g. event videos, technical information, are available online to enable universal access.
- Make sure all social media accounts have activated the accessibility features in the settings, for example Image Description.
- All members and attendees should be given the opportunity to communicate their access requirements in advance of interviews/ events/ meetings (e.g. wheelchair access, large font printing, sign language interpreters etc.) to facilitate participation. Give examples of the type of access you can provide.
- Check that host buildings for events or meetings have safe, unassisted and convenient means of access throughout the building for people with disabilities.
- In publicity material, include information on accessibility, detailing accessible features of the building / venue.



Meetings and Events

Events are a key element of the public face of CIBSE, so they must reflect our inclusivity aims.

Selecting and approaching speakers and Chairs for events

- When selecting and approaching speakers / Chairs for panels and events, aim to include a diverse selection of gender, ethnicity and age.
- Encourage new voices, by including speakers who have not spoken at previous events.
- Specifically ask members for suggestions of diverse speakers.

Research

Find out who the experts on the topics required are, asking previous speakers for recommendations, or approaching industry-wide or company internal diversity networks.

Briefing

- It is important to brief speakers and Chairs prior to the event to ensure they understand CIBSE’s inclusivity statement and these guidelines, particularly around appropriate language.
- The Chair should ensure that all speakers get a similar amount of time to speak, and be aware of anyone being spoken over.
- When briefing photographers ensure they take shots of a cross section of the audience.

Audience

- Ensure that communications are comprehensive in coverage of all demographic groups; certain elements should specifically target under-represented groups.
- When compiling targeted invitation lists, ensure that under-represented groups are targeted. Collaborate with industry diversity groups to advertise your events more widely.

Support groups

There are a number of industry collaborative groups that could be contacted for example Building Equality, BAME in Property, NAWIC (National Association of Women in Construction) www.buildingpeople.org.uk has further details of organisations that are working within our industry.

- Research and plan where you could advertise to reach a different or new audience. For example, consider advertising in press specific to different ethnicities.
- When hosting dinners, encourage attendees to consider the diversity of their tables when inviting guests, by incorporating CIBSE's inclusivity statement on invites.
- Actively target schools and universities and membership organisations that have greater diversity.

Committee meetings

- Include diversity and inclusion on the agenda at committee meetings, with regular updates on what each committee/ group is doing to improve diversity.
- Have a diversity and inclusion champion within each region or committee, this could be the Chair or another committee member.

Time of day

Consider the time of day carefully while taking into account target audiences i.e. those with caring responsibilities may be more likely to attend if timing avoids evenings and / or school holidays.

Timing of meetings

- Consider major religious festivals or holidays when scheduling meetings. This website details the major religious festivals www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/religious-festivals.
- If events coincide with cultural/ religious events, be sure to acknowledge this and ensure those participating are adequately catered for i.e. during Ramadan, cater for the breaking of the fast.
- Alternate timings of events between, morning, afternoon and evening.

Dietary requirements

- Cater for all dietary needs by asking in advance whether the attendees have any special requirements, allergies or intolerances.
- Ensure food is suitable for all, and that there are options for non-alcoholic beverages.
- When choosing menus provide alternatives to pork and beef. Serve halal / kosher food where appropriate and state this is available on publicity material.

Travel and subsistence

- Teleconferencing/ video conferencing facilities should be made available for those who want or need to participate remotely.
- Rotate the location of meetings to ensure it is fair regarding travel distances, and costs.

Supply chain

Ask suppliers of goods and services about their inclusion and diversity commitments and check that these match CIBSE's expectations.

Topics / themes

- Check that entertainment for events is inoffensive and not derogatory to any group. If in doubt ask.
- Monitor and analyse which topics are most and least successful in attracting a diverse audience.
- Hold events focused on diversity and inclusion to widen awareness and create a space to discuss the relevant issues.
- Regions and other networks should aim to hold a variety of social events to cater for the wider membership.

Pricing

- When setting ticket prices, take into account all audiences to avoid alienating those less able to afford expensive tickets. Consider subsidising a number of tickets as appropriate.

Dress code

- Consider all groups when choosing the dress code for an event. For example, use "formal wear" instead of "black tie". Or if appropriate, don't have a dress code.

Recruitment

Recruitment and selection of steering groups, panels and committees

- Those from under-represented groups should be actively encouraged to apply to join any relevant committees as vacancies arise.
- Experienced committee members should actively support and mentor less-experienced people and encourage them to step up into roles they may not have otherwise considered.
- Committee vacancies should be advertised to the membership at large via a number of different channels.
- Consider setting targets for representation on committees from different demographic groups.

Reverse-mentoring

Allow senior members and staff to learn from those who are more junior, or from underrepresented groups about their experience of the organisation.

Flexible roles

Offer shared roles to encourage different people to get involved in committees e.g. some special interest groups have joint event officers or joint vice-chairs.



Governance

Monitoring and evaluation

We need to measure how we are doing.

- Put processes in place for receiving feedback after events, i.e. handing out feedback forms at events, placing an anonymous suggestion box in a visible place at events or emailing attendees post event.
- It is important to monitor and to respond to feedback carefully.
- Monitor and evaluate the recruitment process for committee members:
 - » Does advertising the roles to diverse audiences attract applicants from more diverse backgrounds?
 - » Does the introduction of more flexible terms increase the number of applications from people with caring responsibilities?
 - » Are particular groups not applying? Are applications from certain groups disproportionately unsuccessful?

Awareness

Find out more about people from different cultures and backgrounds e.g. by attending and arranging talks from diverse groups and those who are under-represented within CIBSE and the wider industry.

Chairs of committees/ senior leadership

- Chairs must role model inclusive behaviours, and call out all inappropriate behaviour.
- Chairs must ensure they lead inclusive meetings, including consideration around location, time, and that everyone is fully welcomed, comfortable and encouraged to participate in the meeting.
- Chairs should change at regular intervals as defined in the CIBSE Terms of Reference for committees.
- Include diversity and inclusion within the role description for Chairs and senior leadership.

Knowledge sharing

- Share knowledge throughout the organisation, about best practice, effective processes, and events that have been particularly successful in attracting under-represented groups.
- Use conferences, events, awards, regional updates, social media and other communication channels to share best practice within the organisation and the wider industry.
- Collaborate with industry groups and organisations, working together to make collective improvements.

Addressing bad behaviour / complaints and grievances

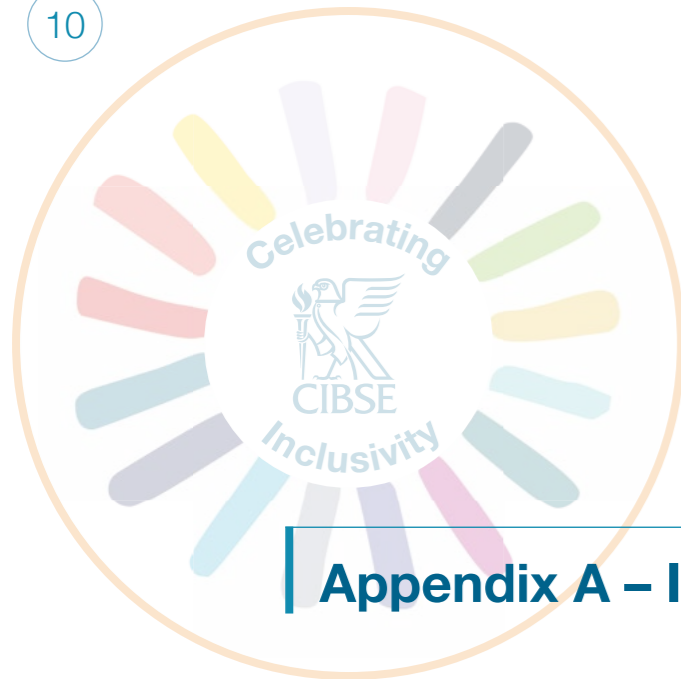
- Empower all members to call out bad behaviour, for example racist, sexist, transphobic and homophobic comments.
- Publicise to all members how the complaints/ grievance procedure works, and that all complaints will be taken seriously. www.cibse.org/about-cibse/governance/complaints-procedure

Training

Do some online training to deepen your knowledge about fairness, inclusion and respect. The Supply Chain school have some free resources:

www.supplychainschool.co.uk/uk/fir/construction/default.aspx

If you are unsure about any of the above, please contact the Inclusivity Panel to discuss further at inclusivity@cibse.com



Appendix A – Inclusive Terminology

Disability

In most situations there should not be a need to refer to an individual's ability or disability. If the need does arise, best practice is to use a person-focused approach rather than focusing on the disability.

Tips	Use	Avoid
Avoid blanket terms. Always put the person before the disability.	Person with a disability, people with disabilities	The disabled, the handicapped
Avoid using terms that imply normalcy/ being healthy when referring to people without disabilities.	People without a disability	Normal, healthy, able-bodied person
Use positive language rather than descriptions that emphasise limitations.	Accessible toilets/ lifts	Disabled toilets/ lifts
Avoid negative terms that overextend the severity of a disability.	Person who uses a wheelchair People living with cancer or dementia	Wheelchair-bound, confined to a chair Cancer or dementia victims
Avoid outdated and derogatory terms.	People who are deaf People with a mental illness/ condition Person with learning disability	Deaf and dumb Nuts, psycho, mad Retarded, slow
Avoid terms which equate the person with the ability or disability.	Individual with schizophrenia A person diagnosed with autism	Schizophrenic Autistic person
Avoid using euphemisms.	Person with a learning disability	Challenged, special
Avoid being effusive about the achievements of people with disability when they are going about their daily life and work.	Successful, productive	Courageous, inspiring, heroic

Age

Tips	Use	Avoid
Avoid general terms as these imply that people of certain age groups or generations are a homogenous group, failing to recognise people's individuality.	Mature individual, older person/ people Young person/ people, young adults	The elderly, the old, pensioners, OAPs The young
Avoid using the terms 'girls', 'boys' when referring to members, colleagues or employees, as these refer to young children	The men/ women on site Our colleagues on site	The boys / girls on site
Avoid using language that stereotypes or implies that a particular age group is more or less able or has stereotypical characteristics by virtue of chronological age.	An effective and vibrant team An experienced workforce	A young and vibrant team A mature workforce

Race, ethnicity and nationality

Only use a person's race, ethnicity or nationality to identify or describe them if it is directly relevant to the point you are making. And remember, never assume that a person's appearance defines their nationality or cultural background.

Tips	Use	Avoid
Use adjectives rather than nouns when it is necessary to refer to someone's race.	Asian people	Asians
Avoid irrelevant ethnic descriptions.	The engineer	The black engineer
Don't use 'minority group' as it implies inferior social position and is often relative to geographic location.	Minority ethnic group	Minority group
Avoid stereotyping, e.g., making positive or negative generalisations about members of a particular racial, ethnic or national group	N/A	Chinese people are really good at maths
Avoiding patronising comments based on stereotypes.	N/A	You speak such good English!
Avoid outdated terms.	Minority ethnic	Coloured

Sex, gender and gender identity

Sex, gender and gender identity are all related, but for some people they do not line up.

Sex – is a label that's usually first given by a doctor based upon the genes, hormones, and body parts (like genitals) an individual is born with. A person can be male, female or intersex.

Gender – is how society thinks a person should look, think, and act as girls and women and boys and men. Each culture has beliefs and informal rules about how people should act based on their gender. Gender is usually considered binary (man or woman) but can also be viewed as a spectrum.

Gender identity – is how a person feels inside and often how they show their gender through clothing, behaviour, and personal appearance. It's a feeling that begins early in life. This can be man, woman, transgender, cisgender, non-binary, genderqueer/gender fluid or agendered.

Tips	Use	Avoid
Use gender neutral terms.	Humans, Humankind Quality of work/skills Attend the phones Artificial, manufactured, synthetic	Man, Mankind Workmanship Man the desk/ phones Man-made
Use gender neutral pronouns and expressions.	Anyone who wants their work reviewed Welcome to everyone	Anyone who wants his work reviewed Welcome ladies and gentlemen
Use person-centred language.	Trans people	The transgender
Respect the preferences of those people who want to be referred to by gender neutral pronouns.	They, them, theirs (e.g. Sam ate their food because they were hungry.) It is correct to use in the singular.	She, her, hers and he, him, his
Use terms that include all relationships	Partner, spouse	Boyfriend, wife, husband
Avoid titles that imply the usual job-holder being of a particular gender.	Admin Chair, Chairperson	Admin ladies Chairman
Be mindful of appropriate and respectful in-group versus out-group naming, i.e. avoid using terms that are only used by individuals that self-identify as part of a specific community.	N/A N/A	Queer (only use if you identify as queer) Agender (only use if you identify as agender)
Avoid using patronising terms that may cause offence to a particular gender.	The person's name, their professional title or, friends and colleagues,	Girls, Ladies, Dear, Son, Love
Avoid irrelevant gender descriptions.	An engineer A receptionist	A female engineer A male receptionist

Recognise and respect the difference between sexual orientation and gender identity

Only use LGBT+ when referring to both sexual orientation and gender identity-based communities.

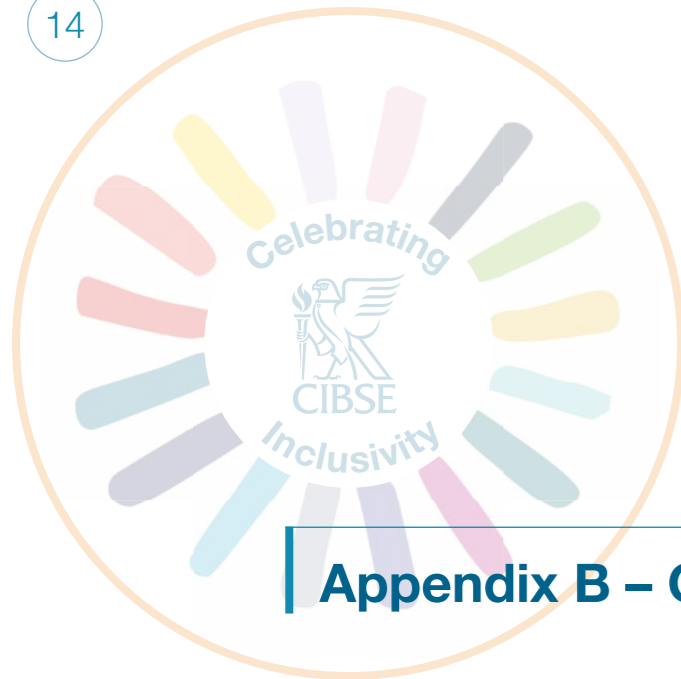
Use 'straight cisgendered' or 'ally'.

Don't use 'LGBT+' if you are only talking about gender or gender identity.

Don't use 'straight' as the opposite of 'LGBT+' (transgender people can be any sexual orientation, including straight).

Sexual orientation

Tips	Use	Avoid
Avoid terms that suggest a degree of voluntary choice when this is not necessarily the case.	Sexual orientation	Sexual preference Lifestyle choice
Use person-centred language.	Lesbian, gay, bisexual people	Lesbians, gays, bisexuals
Use language that does not assume heterosexuality as the norm.	Invite your spouse / partner	Invite your girlfriend/ wife



Appendix B – Other useful resources

Royal Academy of Engineering Diversity Toolkit – www.raeng.org.uk/policy/diversity-in-engineering/diversity-inclusion-toolkit-resources

UK Government Equality Act 2010 Guidance – www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance

Real Estate Balance Gender Diversity Toolkit – www.realestatebalance.org/toolkit

Sustainability Supply Chain School Fairness Inclusion Respect Toolkit – www.supplychainschool.co.uk/uk/fir/construction/toolkit/fir-toolkit.aspx

Managing Diversity and Inclusion in the Real Estate Sector by Amanda Clack and Judith Gabler



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If you have any comments or questions, we would welcome your feedback. Please contact us on inclusivity@cibse.org

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