

EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Best practice guide for the offshore wind sector

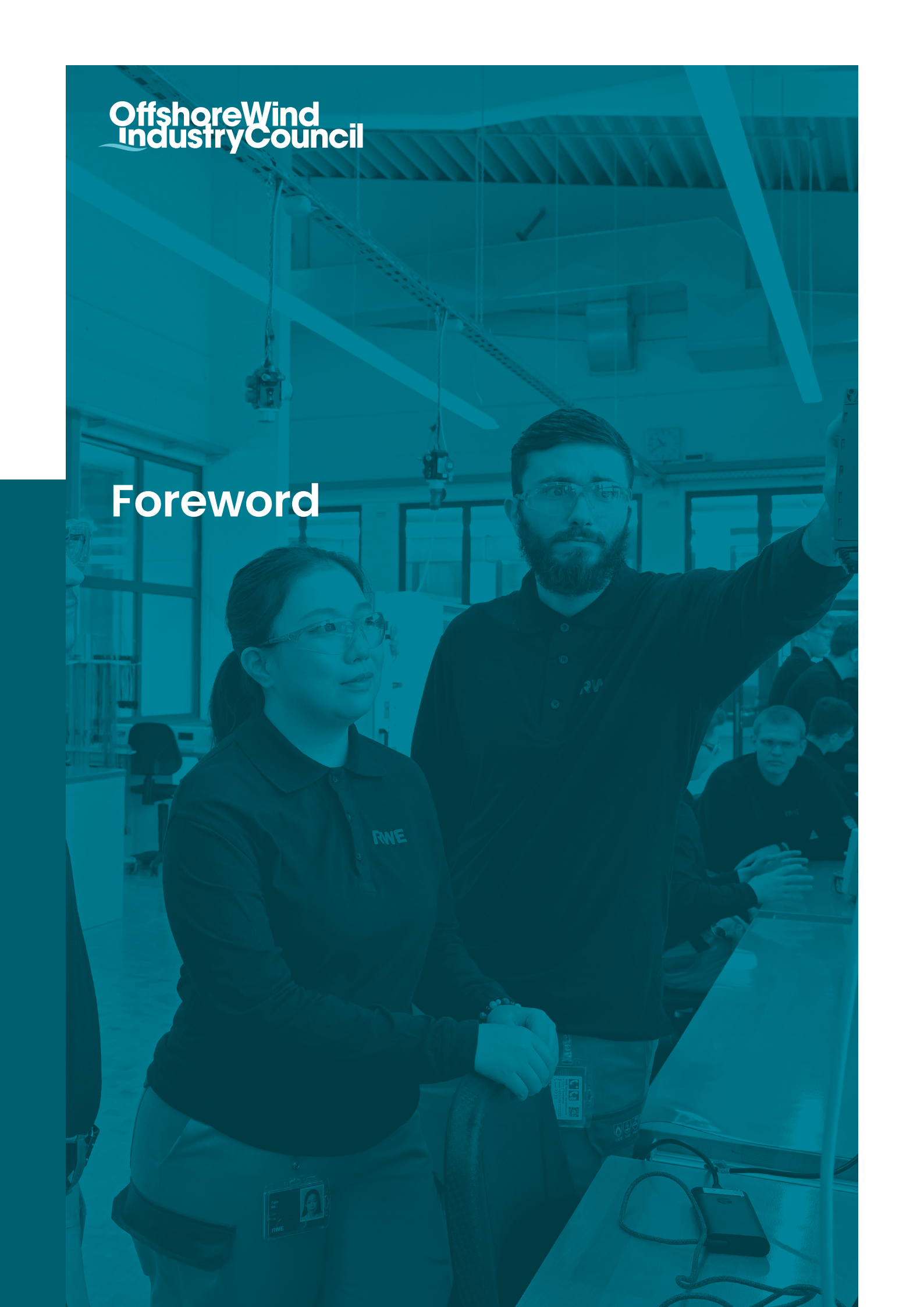
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Supporting businesses and their supply chains in building inclusive cultures, attracting and retaining diverse talent, and embedding equity across operations, partnerships, and decision-making.

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Foreword



The background image shows two RWE employees, a man and a woman, in a workshop or laboratory setting. They are both wearing RWE polo shirts and safety harnesses. The man is pointing upwards with his right hand, and the woman is looking in the same direction. In the background, other people are visible working at tables, and there are various pieces of equipment and structures hanging from the ceiling.

Foreword

In today's rapidly evolving world, fostering equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) is not just a moral imperative, it is essential for driving the innovation and collaboration needed to meet the challenges of achieving energy security and net zero. Nowhere is this more critical than in the offshore wind industry, where the collective effort to contribute to national and global targets demands diverse thinking, equitable opportunities, and inclusive workplaces.

EDI best practices require practical strategies that empowers the industry to harness the full potential of our workforce while building a sustainable future, and the Diversity & Inclusion Working Group was established in 2019 to support the changes needed across the entire industry and established industry targets for both gender and ethnicity.

A lot has changed since the first version of the OWIC Diversity & Inclusion Best Practice Guide was released in 2020. It resulted from commitments in the Offshore Wind Sector Deal to improve the gender balance and improve the ethnic diversity of the workforce. At that point, the proportion of females was 18% and few companies gathered data on the ethnicity of their workforce. The most recent OWIC Skills Intelligence survey shows that the proportion of females is now at 22%, with 7% of the workforce from ethnic communities.

The Best Practice Guide was an exemplar, establishing a standard across the industry and it is on that foundation that the Guide has been updated, developed further to embrace more under-represented communities and to provide new drive to achieve the targets on gender and ethnicity.

This guide has been created to help senior leaders, HR professionals, line managers and individuals adopt impactful D&I practices. Beyond their structural benefits, these practices have a profound impact on individuals. When people feel valued, respected, and supported, their confidence and creativity soar, which fuels the innovation needed to drive clean energy forward. For the industry, this translates into stronger collaboration, groundbreaking solutions, and greater overall resilience.

More work will still be needed to ensure that the offshore wind workforce is a true representation of the UK population but this updated Guide is a great way to continue that work that's been started to enable a cultural shift to happen at all levels within an organisation.

A truly inclusive workforce ensures we draw from a deeper well of perspectives, skills, and experience enabling the bold, transformative action required to meet our sustainability and energy goals now and in the future.

Ranjit Mene

Energy Commercial Director,
RINA

Celia Anderson

Skills Strategy Lead,
RWE Renewables Offshore

Foreword

Throughout my career in renewables, I have been privileged to work within a diverse and varied workforce – partly through good fortune and partly through proactive choices. This experience has shown me how essential equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) is for driving innovation, improving decision-making, and ultimately achieving stronger organisational performance. I have first-hand experience of relying on the diversity within teams to excel, for example by problem-solving in different ways. Moreover, widening the talent pool and attracting new entrants into technical and leadership roles helps address critical skills shortages, while an inclusive culture enhances workforce attraction and long-term retention.

All of these factors are vital to support the scale and pace of growth our industry needs to meet the dual goals of energy security and net zero.

This guide is designed to embed and promote EDI within UK organisations by providing inspiration and concrete actions for leaders, so please share it across your organisation. Following through on some of these actions can help set behaviours that lay the foundation for long-term cultural change and sustained progress in gender and ethnicity representation in the UK.

I would like to thank everyone involved in the collaborative production of this document, especially the Diversity & Inclusion Working Group and the Investment in Talent Group, who have championed EDI through the OWIC People and Skills Plan.

Melissa Read

Offshore Wind Manager,
Equinor

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About the authors



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Dr Jade Stalker is a Lecturer in Organisational Behaviour at Norwich Business School, University of East Anglia. Her work focuses on workplace inclusion and diversity, particularly neuroinclusion and gendered experiences in male-dominated industries. She brings professional experience from the energy sector in both the UK and international contexts, which informs her research and teaching practice. She is also a proud member of the Institute of Neurodiversity (ION).

A broader collaborative project between the University of East Anglia and Anglia Ruskin University informs this best practice guide.

Executive summary

This Best Practice Guide has been developed to support organisations embedding equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) as core values and everyday practices. Drawing on industry insights, current research, and lived experiences, the guide provides practical tools and strategies for leaders, managers, HR professionals, and teams to create workplaces where everyone feels included.

Why EDI matters

- Diverse and inclusive organisations perform better and innovate faster.
- A commitment to equity ensures fair access to opportunities, progression, and resources.
- Inclusive workplaces improve safety, well-being, and retention, particularly in sectors facing skills shortages and workforce sustainability challenges.
- The sector aims to attract from the wider community to build a diverse workforce. This requires expanding the potential pipeline of talent.

What the guide covers

- The business and moral case for EDI.
- Guidance on supporting underrepresented and marginalised groups, including gender minorities, racialised groups, LGBTQIA+ employees, disabled people, neurodivergent colleagues, parents, and caregivers.
- Practical approaches to measuring and evaluating EDI beyond compliance and numerical targets.
- The role of organisational culture, leadership, and everyday behaviours in driving change.
- Tailored advice and quick-reference tools for leaders, HR professionals, and line managers.
- Clear explanations of key EDI concepts and terminology.

This guide is designed to move beyond abstract commitments and policies, offering actionable steps to implement immediately. By adopting the practices outlined here, organisations will not only strengthen performance and innovation but also contribute to a fairer, safer, and more inclusive sector for the future.

Executive summary continued

A ten-step roadmap for building an inclusive culture

1. Model inclusive leadership at all levels
↓
2. Align values with behaviours
↓
3. Make inclusion visible offshore and onshore
↓
4. Co-create with underrepresented groups
↓
5. Normalise feedback and challenge
↓
6. Address microcultures in teams
↓
7. Audit and act on systems and symbols
↓
8. Prioritise flexibility, including in operational roles
↓
9. Celebrate progress, acknowledge gaps
↓
10. Diversify decision-making

See page 18 for more detail

Introduction

The offshore wind sector stands at the forefront of Britain's clean energy transformation, driven not only by innovation and technology, but by the people who bring vision and commitment to every project. As our industry expands to meet the demands of a net zero future, our workplaces must evolve too by becoming places where every individual feels respected, valued, and able to contribute fully.



This guide is more than a collection of policies; it is a practical resource shaped by voices from across the sector, blending hard-won experience and current research to help leaders, managers, and teams build inclusive cultures and attract diverse talent. Whether you are just starting your EDI journey or looking to strengthen existing efforts, every page is designed to empower meaningful action and foster genuine belonging in offshore wind.

About this guide

This guide is grounded in a four-stage research project by the University of East Anglia and Anglia Ruskin University, supported by the Offshore Wind Industry Council (OWIC). The project used evidence to identify barriers and enablers to EDI in the offshore wind sector.

The research brought together multiple perspectives and experiences through:

- **In-depth interviews with men and women** – capturing lived experiences and highlighting the structural and cultural challenges women face in the sector.
- **A sector-wide, intersectional-focused survey** – examining perceptions and experiences of inclusion, workplace culture, and organisational commitment to EDI across different groups and roles.
- **Interviews with neurodivergent employees** – revealing how cognitive diversity is currently experienced, supported, or overlooked in different working environments.
- **A focus group with senior leaders from major offshore wind companies** – testing emerging themes and identifying realistic, leadership-driven pathways for change.
- **Conversations with HR representatives and line managers** – uncovering the enablers and challenges for those working in HR and line management to direct tailored advice for those roles.
- **Collection of best practice case studies** – capturing EDI-related case studies that work well within and outside the sector.

The guide combines these insights to reflect the realities of the UK offshore wind sector including its workforce, operational challenges, and cultural dynamics. Rather than offering generic advice, it provides actionable, sector-relevant guidance to help organisations drive meaningful and sustainable progress on EDI. Some critical issues that arose from this are outlined in the table below.

The guide focuses on principles, good practice, and practical application rather than providing legal advice. The aim is to support organisations in embedding inclusive practices that will remain relevant even as the legal framework evolves.

Theme	What we heard
Representation and role models	The importance of seeing people like them in senior roles was highlighted.
Work-life balance and flexibility	Flexible working is valued, but often unavailable offshore creating uneven experiences. This was particularly important for women and fathers.
Inclusion offshore	Offshore workers described feeling disconnected from EDI initiatives that are more visible in office settings
EDI fatigue and scepticism	Some respondents expressed cynicism about EDI efforts, feeling they were performative or lacked follow-through from leadership
The role of line managers	Line managers were really important in determining an individual's experience and how they engaged with inclusion

The basics: what do we mean by EDI?

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) are not abstract ideals. They are three unified and practical principles for building fair, respectful, and high-performing workplaces.

Equity refers to the recognition that people have different starting points and needs. At the core, equity involves removing barriers and ensuring fair access to opportunities.

Diversity refers to the range of identities and experiences people bring to work, including gender, race, disability, neurodiversity, age, sexual orientation, and more.

Inclusion is creating environments where everyone feels valued, respected, and able to contribute, regardless of their background. Inclusion is not just for underrepresented groups. When all employees feel supported and heard, collaboration, morale, and productivity improve. Inclusion helps workplaces work better for everyone.

The case for EDI

“The benefits of having a diverse workforce are often misunderstood.”

— Asian-British man, Mechanical Service Engineer

The business case

EDI contributes to improved organisational performance. Research shows that diverse teams improve innovation, decision-making, and problem-solving, leading to better financial returns (McKinsey, 2023; Royal Academy of Engineering, 2024). Inclusion supports talent attraction and retention by adopting a positive work culture where individuals feel respected and valued. In offshore wind, which faces labour shortages and complex challenges, inclusive practices are essential.

Royal Academy of Engineering (2024) provides evidence of the extensive business and economic advantages of EDI in the engineering economy. By prioritising EDI, companies can boost their business and engineering performance, driving benefits in four areas: People, Products and Services, Partners, and Processes. Here are some of the report’s findings:

Enhances talent attraction and improves retention

- 81% of engineers consider diversity an essential factor when choosing an employer.
- 82% of women in engineering and construction report that the presence of role models informs their decision to join a company.
- Engineering companies (spanning startups, small and medium-sized enterprises, and large businesses) interviewed said they saw a rise in job applications after launching EDI measures.
- Women executives at US public firms were less likely to leave their firms when their CEOs were perceived to value diversity.
- Gen Zs and millennials at diverse companies are 42% more likely to stay beyond five years than those who consider their firm not diverse.

Companies investing in EDI are better positioned to secure local content contracts, win project bids that require community benefit evidence, and deliver innovation through diverse problem-solving approaches in offshore environments.

Boosts staff satisfaction and performance

- Engineering companies interviewed noted increases in staff satisfaction after adopting EDI measures.
- 53% of UK engineers surveyed said that feeling included at work increased their motivation – 45% said it improved their performance.
- Across industries, teams with inclusive leaders are 17% more likely to report high performance.

Investing in EDI:

- Enhances risk management, including health and safety
- Fuels innovation, enhancing engineering solutions
- Improves operational efficiency through supplier diversity
- Gives businesses a competitive advantage with customers
- Equips companies to attract investment
- Reduces potential risks and costs of product redesign
- Stimulates the development of more inclusive products
- Reaches a wider range of end users and taps into new markets

The moral case

The moral case recognises that historical and systemic inequalities have limited opportunities for many people based on gender, race, disability, neurodivergence, sexual orientation, age, or other characteristics. EDI work seeks to correct these imbalances, not as an act of compliance, but because it is the right thing to do. Organisations are increasingly expected by employees, communities, and society at large to uphold ethical standards that go beyond minimum legal requirements.

The sustainability case

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion are not separate from sustainability; they are part of it. ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) frameworks increasingly require businesses to demonstrate how they are addressing the social dimensions of sustainability, not just carbon metrics or supply chain impacts. EDI falls squarely within this, and its implementation will affect how inclusive and credible the sector truly is.

Offshore wind delivers sustainability, and environmental sustainability requires social sustainability. A just energy transition must engage all communities and workers. Good EDI practice builds public trust and ensures renewable energy solutions are equitable and innovative.

In environmental justice, a just energy transition means ensuring that marginalised groups are not excluded from the benefits of clean energy jobs or disproportionately impacted by the sector's externalities. Inclusion includes addressing regional inequalities, access to training and infrastructure, and inclusive decision-making.

Social sustainability is fundamental to long-term success and investor confidence. Investors, regulators, and communities demand proof that companies are building fair, safe, and inclusive workplaces, and that their climate commitments do not reinforce existing inequalities. By embedding EDI into ESG reporting and procurement, the sector can strengthen its licence to operate, reduce reputational risk, and ensure that the transition to net zero is also a transition towards justice.

The legal case

There are clear legal obligations in many jurisdictions requiring organisations to prevent discrimination, harassment, and victimisation, and to promote equal opportunities in the workplace. Failure to comply with EDI-related legislation can result in legal action, reputational damage, and financial penalties. Proactively engaging with EDI helps organisations mitigate risk and meet regulatory expectations, while demonstrating accountability and good governance.

Whilst legal frameworks vary across different countries, in the UK, the Equality Act 2010 provides legal protection for nine protected characteristics:

Age, Disability, Ethnicity and Race, Gender Reassignment, Pregnancy and maternity/paternity, Marital or civil partnership status, Religion or belief, Sex, Sexual Orientation

Menopause is increasingly being treated under disability or sex discrimination cases. Organisations can be liable if they do not make accommodations.

Neurodivergence is protected under disability, and tribunals are backing employees where employers didn't adjust recruitment or performance processes.

Important to consider:

Social mobility/socioeconomic background

Caring responsibilities

Migration status and nationality

Geography and rural/coastal access

The population of unemployed people who are actively seeking work

Experiences of those working in the sector

People are drawn to the offshore wind sector for more than just a job. For many, it is a chance to do meaningful work that aligns with their values, contributes to climate action, and opens opportunities to grow and learn.

“Renewables align with my values and are how the world needs to go. We need to save our planet, and we all need to play our part.”

— **Female, Wind Turbine Technician**

“I really love renewables. I try to live sustainably, and going into renewables was something I knew would make me feel fulfilled.”

— **Female, Technician**

From technicians to engineers and site leads, people describe a deep sense of purpose, tied not just to environmental goals, but to innovation, community benefit, and the chance to be part of something bigger than themselves.

When asked what attracted them to the sector, responses included:

“A desire to contribute meaningfully to sustainable development.”

“Working in an industry striving to make a difference.”

“Opportunity of making a positive contribution to the world.”

“Contributing to a better future, energy security, and tackling climate change.”

“The work environment and contributing to Net Zero.”

“Joining a sector with visible growth, where there are opportunities to learn.”

“What’s not to love about this industry!”

“More females are coming through.”

“The various opportunities available within the industry, and the ability to travel for domestic and international work.”

“I wanted to transfer my skills to a new energy industry.”

These voices highlight a powerful sense of mission, but they also underline the stakes. People enter the sector with high expectations of purpose, fairness, and inclusion. When their experience does not match that promise, when flexibility is only available onshore, when progression feels out of reach, or when they are the only woman offshore, that gap becomes a retention risk.

Busting common EDI myths

Myth	Reality
"Gender equality is just about helping women."	Gender equality means creating a fair and inclusive workplace for everyone. It benefits men too, especially when it comes to flexibility, wellbeing, and workplace culture.
"We do not have a problem, we just hire the best person for the job."	That only works if the playing field is level. Bias in job design, recruitment, and development pathways can mean the 'best' is often measured through a narrow lens.
"We'd love to hire more women, but they do not apply."	That is a pipeline issue we can fix. Role design, language, outreach, scheduling, and visibility all shape who sees a given job as possible, for them.
"Flexible working isn't realistic offshore."	Not all offshore work is the same. More flexible models do exist in the energy sector, it is about designing jobs differently, not lowering standards.
"If we give women special support, it's unfair to men."	Support is not about unfair advantage; it is about removing unfair barriers. Equity means some people may need different tools to reach the same outcome.
"The culture offshore is what it is. People just need to toughen up."	Exclusion, banter and bias affect performance, retention, and safety. A culture that works for more people is a stronger, safer, more productive one.
"We've got a few women in senior roles now, job done."	Progress is not parity. True gender balance means representation at all levels and in all roles, not just a few high-profile examples. This includes improving the balance of males in female dominated roles too.

A roadmap to inclusion

In the offshore wind sector, organisational culture directly influences who feels welcome and safe, whether on a vessel, at an onshore operations base, or in a corporate office. Technical excellence and safety are rightly prioritised; however, an over-reliance on traditional norms, top-down decision-making, or "one-size-fits-all" approaches can unintentionally exclude those who do not fit the dominant profile. An inclusive culture builds inclusion into daily practices, decisions, and leadership.

2.

A Ten-step roadmap for building an inclusive culture

1. **Model inclusive leadership at all levels**
Promote and support leaders (site supervisors to executives) who listen actively, challenge bias, and create space for different perspectives.
2. **Align values with behaviours**
Make sure the organisation's stated commitment to EDI is reflected in real-world practices. For example, in team meetings, shift handovers, project decisions, hiring, and recognition.
3. **Make Inclusion visible offshore and onshore**
Ensure inclusive messages, practices, and representations are embedded across offshore sites, operation and maintenance bases, offices, and hybrid roles.
4. **Co-create**
Proactively involve underrepresented groups in strategic discussions, project teams, and leadership development across all disciplines, especially in field-based, engineering, and technical roles. Top-down initiatives alone will not create lasting change.
5. **Normalise feedback and challenge**
Create safe channels for employees to raise concerns or share experiences without fear of backlash.
6. **Address microcultures in teams**
Offshore and site-based teams often develop strong subcultures. Monitor for exclusive behaviours like banter, gatekeeping, or cliques that make others feel unwelcome.
7. **Audit and act on systems and symbols**
Review policies, communications, physical spaces, and informal norms to identify what might unintentionally exclude or marginalise certain groups. Audit everything from PPE design to training content to meeting structures. *Ask: Who might this unintentionally exclude?*
8. **Prioritise flexibility, including in operational roles**
Find creative ways to support flexibility in scheduling, travel, and shift planning to better include caregivers, older workers, disabled employees, and those with long commutes or non-visible health conditions such as sickle cell, endometriosis, or chronic fatigue. Recognising and accommodating fluctuating energy levels or health-related needs can make operational environments more sustainable and equitable for all.
9. **Celebrate progress, acknowledge gaps**
Recognise improvements, but be honest about areas that need work. Transparency builds trust and shows a better commitment to long-term change.
10. **Diversify decision-making**
Ensure diverse representation in committees, leadership groups, line management, and strategy discussions.

Equity over equality

Many organisations in the offshore wind sector are beginning to recognise the importance of providing equal opportunities. Equality assumes that giving everyone the same tools, policies, and chances creates fairness. However, in practice, individuals start from different places and encounter distinct barriers. Simply treating everyone the same does not guarantee equal outcomes.

Equity acknowledges differences and tailors support so everyone can succeed. Workers may need different assistance, resources, or flexibility to access the same opportunities. This approach is not about giving some people “more,” but about ensuring that systems, practices, and environments are fair and inclusive for all. Individual needs are also likely to change over time, these needs should be monitored to ensure support continues to be appropriate.

To move from equality to equity, organisations must examine systems, challenge long-held assumptions, and intentionally design inclusion into the very structure of work. Asking questions such as: Who was this role originally built for? Who might it now exclude?

Enforcement, accountability, and change management

EDI progress tends to slow without clear accountability or measurable outcomes. To embed accountability, offshore wind organisations should treat EDI like any other strategic priority: measured, resourced, and regularly reviewed.

Mechanisms for Accountability:

- **Leadership KPIs:** Make EDI progress a formal part of performance reviews and promotion criteria for senior staff.
- **EDI Dashboards:** Develop internal dashboards showing representation, retention, policy uptake, and culture metrics by location and demographic.
- **External Scrutiny:** Consider third-party reviews or EDI audits, and publish EDI progress transparently.
- **Funding Levers:** Tie access to internal innovation funding or procurement approval to evidence of inclusive practice.

Scenario-Based Guidance

"This is reverse discrimination."

Acknowledge the discomfort, then reframe equity as correcting unequal starting points, not disadvantaging others. Share data on systemic barriers and invite participation in equity work.

"I just do not see the point of all this."

Use storytelling (e.g. quotes from offshore women or LGBTQIA+ employees) to personalise the issue. Link EDI to operational outcomes: safety, absenteeism, retention.

"We do not have time/resources right now."

Start with one nudge: e.g. build EDI into team meetings or procurement templates. Emphasise that culture change can be incremental but must start somewhere.

Addressing resistance and apathy

Due to the different narratives around EDI, sometimes people feel left out or resist initiatives or change generally. Resistance takes many forms including apathy, delays, pushback, undermining, or discrimination claims. Rather than reacting punitively, the goal is to shift culture through understanding, education, and behavioural nudges.

Everybody should feel valued regardless of background, as diversity brings different experiences and perspectives. However, it is vital to acknowledge the experiences of those who feel left out. Some people in the sector may feel EDI efforts exclude or blame them. Addressing these perceptions constructively helps foster shared understanding and allyship.

- Frame EDI as a sector-wide benefit that improves safety, well-being, and innovation for all.
- Use messaging like “equity lifts everyone” or “inclusive teams are stronger teams.”
- Involve majority groups as allies and advocates, not just observers or bystanders.
- Highlight examples where allies have led or supported inclusive change, especially in offshore contexts.

EDI involves dismantling outdated organisational systems that enforce narrow norms, many of which no longer serve anyone. For example, challenging patriarchal workplace models allows men to move beyond obsolete roles like sole breadwinner, and instead embrace more human, emotionally open modes of working and leading.

Voice and representation

It is essential to embed lived experience into decision-making. To avoid experiences of tokenism, underrepresented voices must be embedded at every level. That means both formal structures and informal feedback mechanisms.

Key Actions:

- Co-creation: Involve impacted groups in designing maternity policies, PPE procurement, facilities, and flexible working pilots.
- EDI Working Groups: Formalise these with clear remits, resourcing, and mechanisms to escalate insights to senior leadership.
- Participatory Tools: Use anonymous suggestion platforms, employee panels, or structured storytelling sessions to surface lived experiences.
- Contractor Voice: Include suppliers and offshore contractors in feedback loops. Their experience is often invisible yet critical.

Capacity building and EDI roles

Recommendations:

- **Appoint EDI Leads or Focal Points** within each organisation (or cluster for SMEs), with formal time allocation and influence.
- **Regional Cluster Roles:** Share EDI expertise regionally – joint roles, secondments, or pooled consultants.
- **Upskill Everyone:** Provide basic EDI literacy training to all employees and deeper capability building for managers and leaders focusing on bias awareness and embedding inclusion.
- **Recognise Emotional Labour:** Acknowledge and reward those doing invisible inclusion work (e.g., mentoring, advocacy, support).

Wellbeing and mental health integration

Inclusion is beneficial for everyone. A route to buy-in and access to all is to make inclusion tangible through wellbeing. Mental health must be viewed as a structural EDI issue, not just an individual one. The guide should connect inclusion to the psychological safety and well-being of all workers.

Practical Steps:

- **Tailored Wellbeing Toolkits:** Develop sector-specific guidance addressing offshore, site-based, and home working needs.
- **Normalise Conversations:** Build in check-ins and mental health prompts into daily operations and safety briefings.
- **Training:** Provide mental health first aiders with EDI training to better support marginalised staff.
- **Reporting Without Retrauma:** Design anonymous reporting systems that are trauma-informed and accessible.
- **Menopause, Menstruation, and Mental Load:** Address gendered aspects of wellbeing often ignored in male-dominated settings.

By integrating EDI into every aspect of wellbeing strategy, organisations can boost performance, reduce absenteeism, and build a truly inclusive environment for all.



Equinor: The bottom-up approach

Project bidding mechanisms, increasing legal reporting requirements, and emerging legislation highlight the expectation for businesses to develop strategic approaches to cultivate a more diverse and inclusive workforce. To ensure their UK Diversity and Inclusion strategy will be effective, Equinor has undertaken research to identify the root causes behind barriers to entry and progression for women in technical roles offshore.

Research Design and Delivery

Driven by a bottom-up approach, securing and maintaining internal buy-in via a compelling business case and strategic project updates was critical to obtaining initial funding and resources and building a coalition of key allies across the business.

Hands-on, collaborative fieldwork and shared experience were at the core of the methodology, helping to bridge the onshore-offshore divide. The research team completed Global Wind Organisation training before spending five days offshore at Dudgeon Wind Farm, working alongside technicians. Limited desk research was completed beforehand to ensure observations were fresh, authentic, and unbiased. Afterwards, the team was able to reflect carefully on their preconceived ideas and misconceptions, whether confirmed or disproven.

Findings were first socialised and sense-checked with the offshore host team, fostering trust, building credibility, and embedding ownership within operations. Reflective, open, discussions were then extended across the organisation's business areas and geographical contexts, identifying common challenges and inspiring replicable solutions.





Impact and Outcomes

While building on existing work, enthusiasm, and energy to target identified causes, the findings have since been used to develop actions, shape strategy and drive change.

For example, this research provided the foundation for Equinor's latest successful "Women in Energy" campaign, breaking down barriers and challenging misconceptions that hinder a diverse workplace. In addition, time spent offshore inspired one member of the research team to take up an operational role at the Dogger Bank Wind Farm, further showcasing the value of in-field exposure in highlighting potential career paths that had not previously been considered.

Keeping field exposure and close collaboration with operations at the heart of this research has been key to driving meaningful strategic initiatives and moving towards a more inclusive workforce. Bottom-up approaches like this can drive change that benefits the broader industry, local communities, and businesses. We are early on in our journey, but this process has been an insightful and inspiring one!

Below is the series we talk about in the extract above and a link to the Women in Energy YouTube series

[Women In Energy – YouTube](#)

Women in Energy
by Equinor
Playlist • 5 videos • 132 views

Join us as we delve into real-life experiences, practical strategies, and valuable insights from our colleagues... [more](#)

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- 1 **Beyond the Degree: Powering Energy with Diverse Skills – Women in Energy: Episode 4**
Equinor • 171 views • 10 months ago • 3:22
- 2 **Stepping into a Technical "Man's" World – Women in Energy: Episode 3**
Equinor • 255 views • 10 months ago • 4:25
- 3 **Life Offshore – Women in Energy: Episode 2**
Equinor • 414 views • 1 year ago • 3:41
- 4 **Women in Energy - Trailer**
Equinor • 163 views • 1 year ago • 1:56
- 5 **Balancing Parenthood & Careers - Women in Energy: Episode 1**
Equinor • 161 views • 1 year ago • 4:27

Measuring and evaluating EDI

Understanding who makes up the offshore wind workforce is a necessary first step, but only a first step. Representation data gives us a snapshot of where we stand and whether existing interventions are shifting the dial. Without a clear picture, it is easy to overestimate progress or miss where structural barriers persist. Collecting data at one time point, such as during recruitment, does not capture the entire workforce and creates challenges in measuring changes over time.



The most recent statistics (OWIC, 2025):

39,898

offshore wind workforce.

33%

target, which at the current rate will be reached in 2032. 40% as an ambition.

22% 78%

female

male

(from those who disclosed their gender).

7%

diverse ethnic background,
93% white (however, high numbers
of people not disclosing).

Insight: A strong representation strategy must be matched by a strong disclosure culture. If people do not feel safe to share who they are, you cannot measure who you're excluding.

Disaggregating and reporting workforce data

To turn data into action, how you collect and report it matters as much as what you measure. Diversity statistics are often too general, hiding inequalities across different groups, roles, and locations.

Why disaggregation matters:

- “22% women” tells you nothing about where those women are; are they mostly in admin or HR roles, or are they progressing into offshore and leadership positions?
- “7% ethnic minority” without further breakdown obscures whether some groups (e.g., Black or mixed heritage staff) remain almost absent.
- Grouping all disabled employees ignores the wide variation in experiences, adjustments needed, and levels of exclusion.

Best practices for reporting:

- Report percentages and raw numbers: “4% of leadership roles are held by racially minoritised staff (8 out of 200)” is clearer than percentages alone.
- Track trends over time: year-on-year change is more useful than static snapshots.
- Always include non-disclosure rates: high “prefer not to say” responses may indicate trust issues or unclear data use policies.
- Where possible, present data on intersectionality: e.g., percentage of racially minoritised women in offshore technical roles.

Tool tip: A simple matrix or dashboard that cuts data by demographic, job level, and location can reveal patterns of exclusion hidden in headline figures.

Disaggregated data allows organisations to move from generalised diversity efforts to targeted, meaningful action, and enables staff to see themselves reflected in the detail, not lost in the average.

What to disaggregate:

- By job type (technical, project, operational, administrative, leadership)
- By location (onshore vs offshore, regional hubs)
- By contract type (permanent, contractor, apprentice)
- By pay band or grade
- By progression markers (promotion, training access, attrition)

Define and measure class disadvantage.

Most organisations do not ask about class, let alone track it. You can use the social mobility index. It allows you to use proxy indicators such as:

- Parental occupation
- Type of school attended (state/private)
- Eligibility for free school meals
- Highest parental qualification

Diversity targets

Setting clear, measurable diversity targets is a vital mechanism for driving accountability and progress, especially in a sector like offshore wind where representation gaps remain stark. Targets help create urgency, signal commitment, and provide a benchmark for evaluating interventions. But on their own, they risk becoming box-ticking exercises. Representation alone does not guarantee inclusion, equity, or retention if the culture stays the same.

That's why a mature approach to EDI must go beyond headcount targets, also to measure how people experience the workplace: who feels safe to speak up, who thrives, who stays, and who leads. Targets must reflect not just who is present, but how they are treated.

Moving beyond diversity targets

"I'm often invited to many external events, but within the organisation, it would be valuable to have more open conversations about diversity—discussions about why women belong here and the positive impact we bring. It shouldn't feel like we're just filling quotas or ticking boxes to improve appearances."

— Female Wind Turbine Technician

Diversity measurements, whilst beneficial to temperature check representation organisation or sector-wise, can create an overfocus on ticking boxes. These do not show us how people feel, and whether they belong. They also do not show us representation across roles and levels or within different segments of the sector (e.g., technical roles, offshore, STEM roles).

A common pitfall of focusing on workforce demographics without asking who is included in decision-making or whose voices shape the culture is that turnover may be high. Shifting mindsets to think about inclusion and equity is a useful strategy.

Make room for qualitative insight

Because stories matter

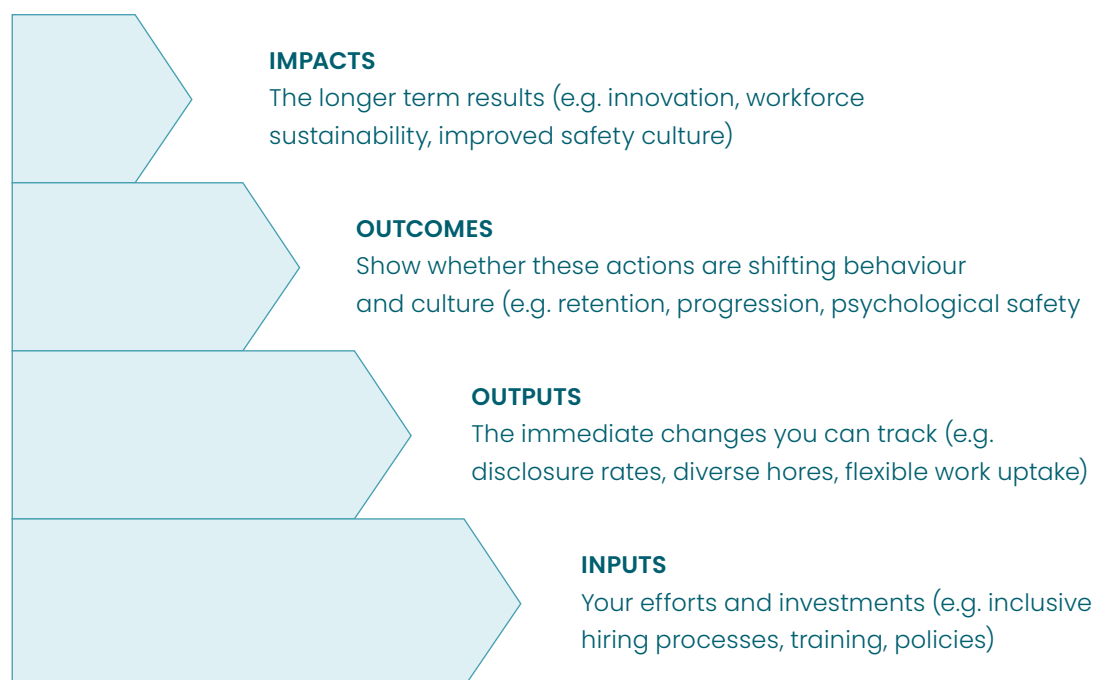
Numbers won't show you who's being excluded in day-to-day life, but interviews, diary studies, and storytelling can.

Quick wins:

- Case studies of good practice and lived experience
- Qualitative "pulse checks" at key project stages.
- Candid internal blogs or video interviews with underrepresented workers.

Embedding EDI takes long-term organisational change. The targets and measurement system should reflect this as part of a broader framework. The figure below gives one example of how an organisation can track the whole picture: from what they put in place, how it is experienced, and what long-term change it drives. It supports a shift from activity-based reporting to evidence of actual impact.

Organisational change hierarchy ---



Beyond representation: Inclusion and cultural targets

EDI must be audited like safety and finance, with progress tracked yearly, benchmarks set against industry standards, and potentially bringing in external evaluators or peer reviews where trust is low.

What you can do:

Focusing solely on diversity can hide deeper problems: low retention of underrepresented staff, poor psychological safety, or stagnation in career progression. To avoid this, organisations should also set inclusion and equity-related targets that track experience, culture, and opportunity.

Involve staff in co-designing cultural metrics, what does a “good place to work” look like from their perspective?

Use metrics to ask:

- Who has access to opportunity, development, and decision-making power?
- Where do patterns of exclusion persist across the lifecycle of a project or contract?

Embed accountability:

- Inclusion scores feed into leadership performance reviews
- Equity gaps (e.g., in pay, training access) trigger action plans — not just commentary
- Evaluation findings shared internally with staff and contractors — not sanitised for PR

Targets help make gaps visible, building momentum, and ensuring that progress isn't left to chance. They should be:

- Visible: published and shared internally
- Dynamic: reviewed annually and adapted as needed
- Contextualised: linked to broader culture and strategy goals
- Paired with action: every target should have an associated plan and owner

A dual focus on who is in the room and how the room feels is essential for real inclusion. Otherwise, we risk inviting people in, only for them to leave quietly.

Mentoring

Mentoring is a structured relationship where experienced professionals provide guidance, support, and knowledge-sharing to help others develop their skills and career pathways. From an EDI perspective, mentoring is particularly valuable as it helps remove barriers to progression for underrepresented groups. By pairing individuals across different backgrounds, roles, and levels of seniority, mentoring not only supports personal and professional growth but also strengthens diversity of thought, leadership pipelines, and retention within the sector.

“I have my mentor—he’s been with the company for a long time. He’s always pushed me, telling me, ‘You can do it.’ He’s positively influenced and helped during my time on site.”

— **Female, Engineer**



Case Study: NHS reverse mentoring

In a progressive step towards tackling workplace inequalities, North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust (NWAFT) launched a Reverse Mentoring Programme to bridge the gap between senior leaders and underrepresented staff. It flips the traditional model, with staff from diverse backgrounds mentoring executives, creating space for lived experience to shape leadership thinking. Reverse mentoring gives senior leaders direct, personal insights into how policies and cultures affect marginalised colleagues.

Programme Design and Delivery

The reverse mentoring programme invites staff across all levels of the Trust to participate, senior leaders as mentees and staff from diverse backgrounds as mentors. Each pairing is carefully matched, with training provided to both parties to foster trust, establish boundaries, and guide meaningful dialogue.

Impact and Outcomes

Dale Travers, Acting Chief Strategy & Transformation Officer, shared how the experience enhanced his understanding of his mentor's work environment and day-to-day challenges. He acknowledged how this knowledge had helped him celebrate contributions, identify constraints, and champion improvements, some of which may even influence Trust-wide policies.

Application to the Offshore Wind Sector

In the offshore wind sector, where leadership structures are still emerging and workforce diversity is limited, particularly in offshore environments, reverse mentoring presents a powerful mechanism for inclusive culture-building. Pairing senior leaders with technicians, engineers, or support staff from underrepresented backgrounds (e.g., women, racialised minorities, LGBTQIA+ workers, or those with disabilities) could illuminate structural and cultural barriers to inclusion that may otherwise go unspoken.

Parallel Mentoring: Bridging Onshore and Offshore Divides

In addition to reverse mentoring, the offshore wind sector would benefit from *Parallel Mentoring*, a structured peer-to-peer learning model between onshore and offshore staff. This approach supports mutual understanding of distinct operational contexts, improves communication across locations, and nurtures cross-functional collaboration.

By pairing offshore workers with onshore colleagues in mirrored roles (e.g. a turbine technician offshore with a project planner onshore), parallel mentoring can foster shared learning about constraints, safety, wellbeing, and team dynamics. It can also be used to surface issues of inclusion, language, or cultural disconnect that might impact morale or efficiency across sites.

This model encourages dialogue that is not hierarchical but horizontal, recognising the expertise both groups bring to the table. It helps bridge the often-siloed experiences of offshore and onshore workforces, enabling policies and leadership decisions to be more context-aware and inclusive.

Material conditions for inclusion

Inclusion does not just happen in policies or training rooms; it occurs on site, in the gear we wear, the spaces we use, and the assumptions built into our physical environments. Too often, the design of equipment, welfare facilities, and safety protocols defaults to a “one-size-fits-all” model. For the offshore wind sector to be truly inclusive, we must tackle these structural oversights head-on.



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PPE that fits everyone

Most standard PPE has historically been designed around anthropometric data drawn primarily from white male body dimensions. This method means that women and non-binary people, but also individuals with different body shapes, religious dress requirements, or access needs, often end up with ill-fitting gear that’s not only uncomfortable but also unsafe.

What works:

- Suppliers offering gender-specific sizing and inclusive design options.
- Procurement policies that prioritise inclusive PPE as standard, not an exception
- Actively involving diverse workers in PPE trials and feedback loops.

Toilets, hygiene, and welfare units

Providing accessible and well-designed toilets and hygiene facilities is a foundation of employee wellbeing. Inclusive facilities that cater to the full diversity of the workforce create a sense of belonging and show that every team member is valued and supported. By offering accessible, gender-neutral, and well-equipped hygiene spaces, organisations not only enhance comfort and safety but also strengthen retention and productivity. Investing in these essentials sends a clear message that everyone’s needs matter.

Safety beyond the basics

Safety protocols often focus on physical risk, but inclusion and psychological safety are just as critical. Women, racialised workers, LGBTQIA+ employees, and others may face additional hazards, including harassment or exclusion in isolated or in environments with limited diversity.

Practical Tips

- Include inclusive risk assessments that account for gender-based safety needs (e.g. lone working policies, lighting, radio protocols).
- Equip line managers and safety officers with training on microaggressions, inclusive communication, and reporting routes.
- Embed zero-tolerance policies for bullying and harassment into safety culture, not just HR.



SSE & Harlum Services: Installation of a welfare unit

The Harlum offshore welfare unit trial at the Beatrice offshore wind farm has succeeded, marking a significant milestone in the offshore wind industry. This initiative has set a new standard for offshore welfare, demonstrating the feasibility and benefits of providing adequate welfare facilities in challenging offshore environments.

The need for offshore welfare facilities has been increasingly emphasized by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). The HSE issued a prohibition notice on other sites due to the lack of welfare facilities on the Offshore Substation Platform (OSP), highlighting that relying solely on vessel-based facilities was insufficient. SSE Renewables, aware of the scrutiny on welfare provisions, took proactive steps to address this issue during the Beatrice Inter-Array Cable Replacement Works. This journey aims to create an offshore environment where everyone, regardless of gender, race, or physical condition, feels valued and supported.

The Trial

The trial involved deploying two Harlum offshore welfare units to Wick, which were then loaded onto the WTG and OTM platforms via BOWL chartered Crew Transfer Vessels (CTVs). The units were positioned and fastened by SSER Operations, with third-party support for servicing and waste management. The trial aimed to ensure zero harm, maintain the integrity of Wind Turbine Generator (WTG) assets, reduce commercial impact, and learn lessons for future readiness.





Success Factors

Several factors contributed to the success of the Harlum offshore welfare unit trial:

- 1. Robust Design:** The units were designed with marine-grade steel/composite construction, anti-slip floors, double seals, and were proven to withstand North Sea storms without corrosion.
- 2. Ease of Use:** The units featured captive master-links for easy lifting, watertight seals, and spare cartridges for onshore waste management.
- 3. Enhanced Welfare:** The units provided proper toilet and hand-washing facilities, good lighting, and a sealed waste tank that could be serviced quickly.
- 4. Positive Impact on Workforce:** The availability of welfare facilities improved team health and morale, supported female participation, and boosted staff retention and recruitment. Technicians reported higher job satisfaction and felt more included and valued.
- 5. Safety and Environmental Compliance:** The units eliminated the need for high-risk lifting operations, reduced vessel fuel burn, and supported environmental, social, and governance (ESG) targets. The sealed system prevented waste discharge, ensuring compliance with environmental regulations.



This case study is a key example of how material conditions signal greater inclusion. The Harlum offshore welfare unit enables women, minorities, and workers with medical needs to participate fully in offshore work without unnecessary barriers. The success of this trial paves the way for broader adoption of offshore welfare units, ensuring that offshore workers have access to the facilities they need to perform their jobs safely and effectively.

Underrepresented groups

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Inclusion begins with recognising who is being left out and understanding why. In the context of EDI, underrepresented groups are individuals or communities who have historically had limited access to opportunities, resources, and recognition in the workplace.

However, the sector is increasingly acknowledging these issues and taking meaningful steps to address them. Encouragingly, we are beginning to see progress in the growing representation of underrepresented groups and the commitment of organisations and individuals. As the sector comes together to tackle these long-standing challenges, the motivation to drive change and build a more inclusive future shines through.

These groups are protected under key legislation such as the Equality Act 2010. Furthermore, they remain significantly underrepresented across leadership, engineering, technical, operations, and site-based roles. As a result, their voices and experiences can be missing from decision-making spaces, which limits equity and long-term workforce sustainability.

This section outlines these groups' key challenges at work and provides practical, inclusive strategies for better support. Recognising and responding to underrepresentation is essential to building safer and future-ready workplaces across the offshore wind industry.

Gender, sex, gender identity

Sex and gender are not the same. Sex is the biological classification typically assigned at or before birth, usually as male or female. Gender, on the other hand, is a socially constructed identity that exists along a spectrum. Gender identity is a person's internal sense of their own gender, which may or may not align with their sex assigned at birth, and exists along a spectrum as a socially and personally defined construct.

Despite efforts to improve gender representation, women remain underrepresented in offshore and technical roles across the wind sector. Most are still concentrated in onshore corporate, commercial, or support roles. Barriers range from recruitment practices and cultural perceptions to the structural realities of offshore work, such as accommodation and deployment patterns. A further challenge arises from patterns in the education system; for example, achieving an equal gender balance in engineering is difficult when too few females choose maths, technology, and engineering subjects.

The sector cannot achieve better inclusion without actively listening to women and acting on what they say. Representation alone is not enough. Being invited into the room does not mean being heard, and being listened to does not guarantee influence.

"I think having women in an interview helps. There should be a gender balance when interviews are taking place."

— Female, Engineer

"If you see role models who are like you—who think like you, who look like you—you're much more likely to believe you can do something like that."

— Female, Process Engineer

"It helps having female CEOs and female CFOs. They usually have engineering backgrounds too, so I think they are excellent role models within the industry."

— Female, Senior Engineer

Male allies

In an industry where men still dominate most offshore and technical roles, their role in inclusion is not to speak for women, but to help create the space, back the change, and challenge the norms.

Gender, sex, gender identity — practical tips

Design inclusion into structures, not just events

- Involve women in designing offshore roles, training pathways, and rota patterns, not just in focus groups, but in steering decisions.
- Require gender-balanced consultation for operational policy changes (e.g. offshore living conditions, kit design, shift rotations).
- Build women's decision making authority into governance structures, extending representation to positions with budget authority and strategic oversight

Elevate women's expertise, not just their identity

- Shift the spotlight from "inspiring stories" to operational insights. Showcase women's contributions to engineering, logistics, and innovation.
- Resist framing women as representatives of 'diversity'. Instead, frame them as subject matter experts who also bring unique perspectives.
- Create platforms specifically for sharing technical insights and operational improvements, where expertise takes precedence over demographic representation.

Avoid the 'one woman on the panel' trap

- Do not overload the same few women with every EDI or outreach ask. Broaden the pool and compensate for time taken away from core roles.

Link voice to influence

- Create structured pathways where women's input directly shapes policy outcomes, not just informs discussions
- Establish feedback loops that demonstrate influence by explicitly communicate back to contributors how their input shaped final decisions, creating visible connections between voice and organisational change
- Avoid consultation without consequence by building mechanisms that require decision makers to justify when recommendations are not adopted

Avoid: "Let's get a female voice on this panel."

Instead: "Let's ensure women have decision-making power in this process."

Avoid: "We did a women's roundtable once."

Instead: "We run regular feedback loops with female offshore staff and publish the resulting actions."

Avoid: "We asked women to share their stories."

Instead: "We included women in drafting the policy that affects their shift schedules and PPE access."

Gender Equity includes men, too.

Too often, gender equality work is misunderstood as being “for women only.” But real equity benefits everyone, including men. In offshore wind, men are the majority of the workforce, especially in operational roles. That brings its own risks: isolation, pressure to perform, stigma around asking for help, and rigid expectations about what it means to be a “good worker” or “man” in the sector.

The offshore wind sector benefits from exploring how workplace cultures can limit wellbeing, voice, and career choices for everyone, including men.

Practical example:

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Challenge: A technician wants to reduce time offshore to care for ageing parents but fears being seen as “less committed.”

Solution: Frame and support flexible rota requests as legitimate for all staff, not just women or parents of young children.

Gender Equity delivers for everyone

Gender equity is not about taking opportunities away from men, it is about challenging the outdated systems that narrow everyone’s options. By addressing the pressures men face and supporting their needs alongside women’s, the sector becomes better for all workers.

*Equality does not mean less for you,
it means more for everyone.*



Ørsted: Women in Wind

To address the gender imbalance in the sector, Ørsted developed the Women into Wind programme, which was launched as a practical initiative to equip women with industry-specific skills and connect them directly with employers in the sector.

The programme was designed with the dual purpose of providing technical training and improving access to job opportunities. It allowed women to complete Global Wind Organisation (GWO) accredited safety and technical training, delivered by 3t Training Services, funded through the Green Skills Bootcamp. This targeted intervention aimed to break down the barriers preventing women from entering operational offshore roles and create a clear, supported pathway into the industry. Nine women completed the intensive three-week programme. Seven participants successfully secured full-time employment within the sector.

Looking Ahead

The Women into Wind programme has shown that with the proper training, support, and industry collaboration, it is possible to create new, inclusive pathways into technical roles for women. However, for initiatives like this to scale, the sector must address systemic barriers. The next step is to embed these learnings into sector-wide practice and make gender balance a shared priority across the offshore wind supply chain.

Participant Spotlight: Lisa Suggett

Lisa Suggett's journey from the Armed Forces to becoming a wind turbine technician at Ørsted is a powerful example of resilience and career transformation. During the COVID-19 lockdown, she discovered a passion for renewable energy by teaching herself to install solar panels. Motivated to work offshore, she connected with industry professionals and joined the Women into Wind programme, where she completed key offshore training and received career support. Lisa now thrives in her dream role on the UK's West Coast and plays an active role in Ørsted's Women in the West network, inspiring more women to join the offshore wind sector.

Ethnicity, race, and racialised groups

“We need more open conversations about ethnicity and race. Creating space to share our differences would be a really positive step.”

— Male, Asian British, Mechanical Service Engineer

Ethnic diversity brings invaluable perspectives, experiences, and ideas, especially in a complex sector like offshore wind. With its reliance on global partnerships and ties to local communities, the industry stands to benefit from a workforce that reflects a wide range of cultural and lived experiences. This diversity helps organisations engage more effectively with stakeholders, build trust, and solve problems more creatively. Yet despite the apparent benefits, people from ethnically minoritised backgrounds remain underrepresented in the sector, particularly in offshore, technical, and leadership roles.

Understanding race and racialisation

Race and racialisation refer to how people are socially categorised based on perceived physical or cultural differences. Race is often associated with ideas of physical or perceived behavioural differences, while ethnicity is more closely linked to cultural identity and shared heritage. Both are part of broader concepts of descent-based difference that combine culture, history, and geography. Because “race” can be a sensitive term in some contexts, it is best to respect how individuals identify. Self-identification is key, and it is essential to recognise that not everyone fits neatly into a single category.

In the workplace, individuals from racialised groups can face unique barriers that affect their sense of inclusion and career development. To address these challenges, organisations need more than just diversity policies; they need actively anti-racist practices that identify and challenge structural inequalities.

Leadership commitment and inclusive cultures

Organisational leaders must take clear and sustained action to improve ethnic inclusion, especially at senior levels. Techniques include setting measurable goals, monitoring progress, and being transparent with stakeholders.

Day-to-day experiences are critical in contributing to an inclusive culture. Anti-racism and cultural competence training should be a standard part of development at all levels, including for offshore teams and contractors. These sessions must go beyond surface-level bias awareness to address deeper issues like structural racism and microaggressions, and empower people to step in when discrimination occurs. Celebrating cultural diversity through events, storytelling, and shared experiences can build stronger team connections.



VIBE: Empowering Inclusion Through Employee Networks at ScottishPower Renewables

VIBE demonstrates the value of employee networks in creating bottom-up momentum for cultural change. It shows how meaningful participation from across the business can embed inclusion into everyday work.

What could be more potent than empowering people to bring their whole selves to work?

That drives VIBE – Voice of Inclusion and Balanced Ethnicity – an employee-led network at ScottishPower. Founded and driven by passionate colleagues, VIBE exists to champion diversity, foster inclusion, and celebrate the richness of ethnicity and belief across our organisation.

Rooted in the principles of the Equality Act 2010, VIBE supports and raises awareness of protected characteristics such as race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, and religion or belief. We believe these identities are not only to be respected but also embraced as sources of strength, creativity, and innovation.

Our Mission

“To create a diverse and open environment that thrives on the contributions of ethnically diverse employees—driving greater creativity and innovation across ScottishPower, now and into the future.”

What We Do

VIBE provides a safe, confidential space for members and allies to share experiences, voice concerns, and contribute ideas. Core principles guide our activities focused on the recruitment, retention, and progression of ethnically diverse talent.

We’ve partnered with our People Organisation team to:

- Implement mandatory EDI training for all line managers.
- Launch company-wide EDI e-learning.
- Develop tools to collect and communicate D&I data effectively.

Innovation in Action

Innovation is at the heart of VIBE. Some of our proudest initiatives include:

- Launching the first company-wide “Fasting for a Day” campaign to build empathy and understanding.
- Creating the first “Contemplation Room” at ScottishPower—an inclusive space for people of all faiths.
- Partnering with Black Professionals United Kingdom (BPUK) during Black History Month and sponsoring their IAmBlack Conference to promote careers in renewables.

Ethnicity and Race Data Collection Techniques

Accurate ethnicity data is essential for understanding who is represented in your workforce, identifying disparities in hiring, progression, and pay, and evaluating whether your workplace is equitable and inclusive. Without this data, it is difficult to design targeted interventions or hold the organisation accountable for change. Many employees choose not to disclose their ethnic background when completing workforce data forms in the sector.

Possible reasons for non-disclosure

- Falling into one or more categories
- Fear of being treated differently or unfairly
- Lack of clarity on how the data will be used
- No visible outcomes or change from previous disclosures
- Past negative experiences related to identity at work
- Feeling that identity is complex or does not fit neatly into standard categories

How to encourage safe and informed disclosure

Create channels for confidential disclosure, but avoid requiring a formal diagnosis—frame disclosure as a collaborative dialogue focused on support, not a gatekeeping exercise.

- Communicate openly about why ethnicity data is being collected, how it will be used, and how it will not be misused. Emphasise its role in driving change, not surveillance.
- People are more likely to share information when they see that past disclosures have led to improvements such as more inclusive policies, better representation, or targeted support.
- Ensure that ethnicity categories feel relevant and respectful. Allow space for self-description where possible and acknowledge that identities are nuanced.
- Be transparent about how data will be stored, who will access it, and how confidentiality will be maintained.
- Day-to-day experiences matter. People are more likely to disclose when they feel safe, respected, and seen at work. Inclusion must be lived, not just measured.



Tackling differential attainment through co-creation

Norwich Medical School has taken collaborative action to address differential attainment and racial harassment experienced by Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students. BAME is used throughout this referenced case study and is now considered outdated (see Glossary for more information and updated terms).

Two key initiatives:

- A mentoring scheme offering junior BAME medical students one-to-one support from senior BAME peers, focused on academic guidance and shared experiences.
- Bystander intervention training is embedded into the consultation skills curriculum, using role play to build students' confidence and ability to intervene in situations of racial harassment.

These initiatives were co-designed by two paid student ambassadors and the school's diversity lead, with strong support from senior leadership. Despite time constraints faced by the student ambassadors, collaboration within the working group helped maintain momentum. Evaluation is ongoing, and plans are to share the learning more widely.

Many of the principles in this case study can be adapted to the offshore wind sector as outlined in the table below.

Ethnicity, race, and racialised groups — practical tips

Co-creation	Involve underrepresented employees (e.g., women, racial minorities, neurodivergent staff) in designing inclusion initiatives.
Valuing lived experience	Pay individuals for EDI work, especially when it draws on personal or marginalised experience. Avoid relying on goodwill or unpaid labour.
Embedding inclusion	Incorporate inclusion practices into operational structures like toolbox talks, HSE briefings, leadership programmes, and project team dynamics.
Visible leadership commitment	Leaders must actively sponsor EDI work, allocating time, resources, and strategic backing.
Action before perfection	Like Norwich Medical School, do not delay action, waiting for perfect data. Pilot, evaluate, iterate.

Religion and belief

“We have a dedicated self-compassion room, which can also be used for prayer.”

— Female, Associate Director

Religion and belief, including non-belief, influence how many people live, eat, dress, and connect to others.

In offshore wind, the nature of shift work, remote sites, and limited facilities can make it harder to meet religious needs. But practical steps, like offering halal, kosher, or vegetarian meals; creating space for quiet reflection or prayer (even offshore); and planning rotas that consider key religious dates, can make a big difference. Faith and belief aren't always visible, and not everyone wants to share. Create an environment where people feel safe to speak up, without being labelled or 'othered'.

Religion and belief — practical tips

- Celebrate religious and cultural holidays with care, and do not forget those who do not follow a faith; secular and non-religious worldviews deserve the same respect.
- Ensure PPE and uniforms accommodate religious dress (e.g., turbans, hijabs, modesty needs).
- Include multifaith and non-faith options in wellbeing spaces and policies.
- Avoid scheduling essential meetings or offshore deployments on major religious holidays.
- Provide diversity calendars and inclusive training for line managers.
- Be consistent—respecting religion and belief should be involved in daily leadership.

Social mobility

“We should offer scholarships for Black or mixed-race individuals, especially those from lower-income backgrounds.”

— Male, Black African, Process Engineer

Social mobility is a change in social and economic position. The change may reflect the ability of a person to improve their social and financial position in life, no matter their background. In a fair society, people should have equal chances to succeed based on their skills and effort and not be limited by where they grew up, what school they attended, or what their parents did for work. However, many people from working-class or low-income backgrounds face barriers such as fewer connections, limited access to work experience, financial pressures, and bias based on postcode or perceived “fit.”

Overlooking social class can mean missing an important dimension of inequality, which intersects with factors such as race, gender, disability, and geography.

Social mobility — practical tips

Organisations can help improve social mobility by removing these barriers and creating fairer pathways into and through work. Inclusion efforts include offering paid internships and apprenticeships open to everyone, using fairer recruitment practices, and valuing potential over polish. Supporting career progression through mentoring, training, and fair promotion processes is also essential. Finally, building a workplace culture where people feel they belong regardless of background can make a big difference. Talking openly about social class and access to opportunity is a key step toward inclusion.

The Social Mobility Foundation works with young people who face structural barriers in education and work because of their socioeconomic background. One way organisations can support this work is by encouraging employees to volunteer

as mentors. Mentoring not only provides young people with guidance, networks, and insights into different career paths but also enables companies to engage directly in addressing social inequality. By doing so, organisations play an active role in widening access to opportunities and supporting greater social mobility.

Rethink ‘professionalism’

Standard expectations around communication, dress, or presentation can unconsciously privilege middle-class norms. These markers often become gatekeeping tools rather than indicators of competence.

Be explicit about unwritten rules

Explain the game. From how to navigate organisational politics to what “stakeholder engagement” actually means, do not assume this knowledge is universal. This also helps neurodivergent individuals.



RenewableUK: Promoting Social Mobility Through Paid Internships

In 2024, RenewableUK took a strategic step to support social mobility and enhance socioeconomic diversity in the clean energy sector by partnering with the Social Mobility Foundation (SMF). This initiative aimed to create meaningful entry routes for young people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, ensuring the industry benefits from the broadest possible talent pool.

RenewableUK built on successful models from other major infrastructure programmes, such as the Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster. This development led to RenewableUK's commitment to launching a pilot internship scheme in collaboration with SMF. Together, RenewableUK and SMF co-developed two paid internship opportunities. These roles were created within RenewableUK's Offshore Wind Delivery Team and Public Affairs function. Both positions were designed with input from SMF to ensure they would offer valuable and challenging experiences while being accessible to individuals from the SMF's network. As part of RenewableUK's Living Wage accreditation, the internships were paid at least the London Living Wage—an essential commitment to ensuring inclusivity and removing financial barriers to participation.

The impact of the internships has been significant. The interns contributed meaningfully to their respective teams. For example, one played a central role in organising events at Parliament, while the other led on procurement processes and supported RenewableUK's internal work on equity, diversity and inclusion.

Notably, both internships have resulted in the intern being offered and accepting a full-time permanent position in another part of the organisation. This outcome exemplifies the long-term potential of such initiatives—not only to offer short-term experience but to provide a sustainable pathway into the sector for talented individuals who might otherwise be excluded.

Looking ahead, RenewableUK is continuing its collaboration with the Social Mobility Foundation. Discussions are underway to offer future internships and develop broader measures promoting social mobility across its wider membership base.

Disability

“There needs to be more support for people with disabilities—especially those that are hidden or not immediately visible.”

— White, Neurodivergent Male, Site Manager

Disability inclusion strengthens safety culture, enhances problem-solving through diverse perspectives, and helps attract and retain skilled talent. Legal frameworks such as the Equality Act 2010 mandate reasonable adjustments, but this guide advocates further embedding inclusion by design.

Key Principles of Disability Inclusion

- While many barriers disabling people are social and environmental, recognising both social context and individual experience is essential to inclusion.
- Build environments, processes, and policies to be accessible from the start.
- Inclusive and affirming language
- Disabled employees should be actively involved in designing, evaluating, and implementing accessibility solutions
- Understanding intersects with other identities (e.g., gender, ethnicity, age), compounding disadvantage.
- Inclusive practices benefit all employees, not only those with disabilities.

Disability — practical tips

From adjustments to anticipation

Challenge: Industries often rely on individual requests for ‘reasonable adjustments’ rather than proactively designing inclusive environments.

Practical Action: Apply Universal Design principles to vessel access, PPE, welfare units, site inductions, and digital platforms (e.g. remote monitoring dashboards, training tools).

Critical Note: If accessibility is only considered when someone discloses, it is already too late. Inclusion should be grounded into the design phase of sites, not retrofitted.

Virtual Adjustments: Not everyone can attend face-to-face events, for example, those with disabilities or caring responsibilities. To ensure inclusion, virtual options or other alternatives should be identified so that everyone can participate.

Disability — practical tips continued

Core strategies to promote and embed an inclusive culture for disabled people:

- Leaders and managers set the tone. When they openly support inclusion, challenge ableism, and share personal learning journeys, it signals that disability inclusion is not a niche issue but an organisational priority.
- Treat workplace adjustments as a routine enabling performance, not as special treatment. Create processes that are quick, transparent, and confidential so that people do not feel they are taking a risk by asking for what they need.
- Challenge stereotypes that associate disability with weakness or low productivity; highlight the skills and contributions of disabled people.
- Build in regular check-ins on accessibility during project planning, team reviews, and meetings. Ensure people can contribute in ways that work for them, whether speaking, writing, or using assistive tech.
- Encourage employees at all levels to learn about disability inclusion and become active allies. This encouragement includes offering support, respecting privacy, and avoiding assumptions.
- Make it easy for disabled employees to share concerns, ideas, or feedback, anonymously or directly. Act on that feedback and communicate what changes have been made.
- Share success stories of what's working, from inclusive equipment procurement to flexible shift adaptations. Highlight how inclusion benefits individuals and teams.
- Do not spotlight disabled employees only during awareness campaigns. Make inclusion part of ongoing conversations, not an annual initiative.
- Use data, staff input, and reflective learning to improve workplace culture.
- Engage with and promote initiatives that advocate for disabled people. For example, the sunflower badge supports those with hidden disabilities.



Inclusive STEM engagement for SEND and alternative provision students

Dogger Bank Wind Farm is a joint venture partnership between Equinor, SSE Renewables, and Vårgrønn. Equinor will lead operations from a bespoke Operations & Maintenance (O&M) base in South Shields, North East England. Together, the wind farm and its O&M base support over 400 long-term, locally based roles.

One of Equinor's standout EDI initiatives focuses on proactively engaging young people attending Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) schools and Alternative Provisions (APs) in STEM and careers education. Recognising that these groups are frequently excluded from mainstream industry outreach efforts, the initiative aims to challenge this inequality through direct and sustained engagement.

Objectives

- To ensure young people in SEND and AP settings are actively included in STEM and careers activities.
- To improve long-term employment outcomes for SEND and AP students in the region.

Approach

The initiative combines responsive and proactive outreach. It recognises that waiting for schools to make contact can perpetuate exclusion. This proactive stance has led to tangible partnership opportunities.



Impact and Outcomes

The initiative has begun to shift internal culture as well as external perceptions. Specific impacts include:

- Increased internal interest among employees in participating in STEM outreach, driven by visible social value and authentic engagement.
- Greater openness among staff to discuss personal experiences with autism or other neurodivergences.
- An improved reputation with local schools, councils, and combined authorities, positioning the organisation as a responsible, inclusive local employer.

Strategic value linked to social value commitments: many major supply chain contracts require evidence of engagement with NEET populations, who are statistically more likely to be from low-income backgrounds or have SEND.

Disability inclusion delivers for everyone

This is known as the curb cut effect, and it refers to the phenomenon where changes made to benefit disabled people end up improving things for everyone.

- curb cuts were originally made for wheelchairs but are now used by cyclists and those with prams too
- electric toothbrushes were initially designed for those with motor issues but are now widely used
- assistive voice tech and audiobooks were created for blind people and those who struggle with mobility, but so many of us use them now

Framing disability inclusion as a collective gain rather than a niche accommodation shifts mindsets. It moves us from “How do we adapt this job for someone with a disability?” to “How do we design work better for everyone, from the start?”. It is still important to consider disabilities specifically and include disabled voices in the design.

Inclusive design is not extra work. It is better work.

Potential considerations for offshore wind:

- Accessible welfare units: units designed for wheelchair access also better serve injured workers, older staff, and anyone needing more space or privacy (e.g. for menstruation or prayer).

Rethinking disability in the context of offshore roles

- **Challenge:** Employers can often determine that the nature of offshore work presents insurmountable challenges for disabled people due to physical demands and medical certification.
- **Practical Action:** Companies can separate tasks that need physical ability from those that are just traditionally part of a role. Could elements of offshore work (monitoring, remote diagnostics, supervisory tasks) be decoupled and performed by disabled professionals onshore?

Disability workforce development and representation

- **Challenge:** Disabled people are significantly underrepresented in technical, engineering, and offshore leadership roles.
- **Practical Action:** Partner with specialist disability employment services to review job design.
- **Practical Action:** Create apprenticeships and retraining routes aimed explicitly at disabled candidates.
- **Practical Action:** Ensure disability is included in all workforce reporting and inclusion benchmarking.

Critical Note: If your disability statistics are not disaggregated or reported, they might be ignored. Representation matters, especially in STEM fields where ableism is prominent.

Neurodiversity

“It’s not that neurodivergent people are any less capable; it’s that the systems are set up for neurotypical people. So, you’re not giving them the same starting point, are you? If you can make small adjustments and accommodations, it can make a world of difference.”

— Male, Line Manager

Neurodiversity recognises and values natural variation in cognitive functioning and learning styles. How neurodivergent individuals think, process information, feel, and act differs from neurotypicals, who represent the dominant neurotype. Neurodivergent individuals may process information and interact differently from neurotypical peers, bringing unique strengths and perspectives. Many workplace processes and environments were designed with neurotypical needs in mind; increasing awareness of neurodivergence enables improved design for everyone. Organisational cultures, work processes, and technology that do not accommodate diverse thinking styles can marginalise neurodivergent staff (CIPD, 2024).

Neurodiversity refers to the natural variation in how human minds work, including neurodivergent conditions such as autism, ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia, and Tourette syndrome

Current studies indicate that at least 20% of people identify as neurodivergent, but this may be a conservative estimate. In sectors like STEM, the percentage is likely much higher. STEM fields often attract neurodivergent individuals. Specific skill sets common among neurodivergent individuals that benefit these fields, including hyper focus, visual acuity, logical thinking, problem solving, innovative thinking, pattern recognition, creativity, and an affinity for technology.

Neuroinclusion means creating workplaces and practices that value and support diverse neurological profiles, recognising these differences as sources of unique skills and perspectives. Along with the moral case, there is also a strong business case for greater neuroinclusion. A key point to consider is whether we are expecting neurodivergent individuals to adjust to fit into the workplace, or whether we are genuinely building an inclusive environment. Many of the recommendations outlined here will benefit all neurotypes, not just those who are neurodivergent.

Pro tip: If someone seems disengaged, check whether they are overstimulated, not underperforming.

Offshore work environments

Offshore settings often present intense sensory stimulation. For example, noise from turbines, machinery, bright lighting, and limited control over shared living spaces. Rigid shift patterns, long rotations, and isolation from HR or mental health support can amplify stress and discomfort. Privacy is limited, and informal social norms may feel unclear or overwhelming.

Neuroinclusive practical tips:

- Provide line manager training that builds understanding of neurodivergence through lived experience storytelling and practical adjustments.
- Step-by-step visual onboarding materials and buddy systems to support early adjustment.
- Plain language safety briefings, with written formats provided before verbal delivery.
- Access to noise-cancelling equipment, quiet zones, and more flexible shift transitions where feasible.
- Regular supervisor check-ins to surface concerns early and build trust.

On-site environments (e.g., manufacturing, construction, and operation and maintenance hubs)

On-site roles are often fast-paced, unpredictable, and task-intensive. Sensory overload from noise, lights, or physical demands, and unclear expectations can present barriers for neurodivergent employees; clarity, structure, and supportive adjustments help mitigate these challenges.

Neuroinclusive practical tips:

- Establishing predictable routines, using visual cues, and task-specific instructions to reduce uncertainty.
- Providing access to low-stimulation break areas where staff can recharge.
- Delivering inclusive safety briefings using visual aids and clear, concise language.
- Allowing for job crafting where possible, designing tasks and roles around individual strengths and preferences.

Office-based work

Office settings can be overwhelming due to open-plan distractions, constant social interaction, unclear feedback, and multitasking demands. Sensory issues (e.g., lighting, noise, temperature) and unspoken cultural norms (e.g., meeting etiquette or dress codes) may also cause stress or confusion.

Neuroinclusive practical tips:

- Implementing meeting-free days to support focused work and reduce cognitive overload.
- Providing email templates and structured communication formats.
- Ensuring quiet zones, flexible hours, and task-based roles that support autonomy.
- Promoting inclusive communication through agendas, visual tools, and clear follow-ups.
- Supporting neurodiversity employee resource groups (ERGs), mentoring, and sensory aids (e.g., fidget tools, lighting adjustments) in meeting spaces.

Remote and hybrid work

Remote work can reduce some sensory demands but often brings challenges around isolation, lack of structure, and digital fatigue. Neurodivergent staff may experience miscommunication, missed cues, or under-recognition of their contributions in virtual settings.

Avoiding common traps when talking about neurodiversity

Avoiding Common Traps When Talking About Neurodiversity
When talking about neurodiversity, it is important to avoid two common and unhelpful extremes:

1. The deficit trap

This framing focuses only on what neurodivergent people “lack” compared to a neurotypical norm, such as assuming they are less capable, less reliable, or more difficult to manage. It pathologises difference and leads to exclusion, micromanagement, or low expectations. While some neurodivergent individuals do experience significant challenges, especially without support, this perspective ignores their strengths, autonomy, and the role that environments play in either disabling or enabling them.

2. The “superpower” or romanticising trap

This well-meaning narrative over-emphasises the exceptional talents of neurodivergent people, like saying autistic people are all geniuses or ADHD leads to creativity. While it is true that many neurodivergent individuals bring valuable perspectives or abilities, these framings can be reductive. They risk ignoring the everyday barriers people face and creating pressure to ‘perform’ extraordinary value in order to be included or accepted.

A more respectful and accurate approach recognises neurodiversity as a form of human variation. It means understanding both the potential contributions and the structural barriers, and designing workplaces where all individuals, regardless of neurotype, can thrive.

Neuroinclusive practical tips:

- Shifting to output-focused performance models and introducing digital wellbeing strategies (e.g., workload monitoring, screen breaks).
- Offering optional video participation in meetings and maintaining structured weekly rhythms.
- Using visual dashboards and timelines to provide clarity on expectations.
- Creating no-meeting days and establishing online peer support spaces (e.g., neurodivergent Teams channels, check-in calls).
- Adopting inclusive digital tools that accommodate varied sensory and cognitive preferences (e.g., live captions, dark mode, reduced visual clutter).

3 Key Actions for Leaders

- Train teams on neurodiversity and inclusive practices.
- Offer universal design adjustments to all staff.
- Create safe disclosure pathways and celebrate neurodivergent leadership.

University of the West of England, Bristol: Energising Equity

Achieving net-zero carbon by 2050 demands radical innovation, creative thinking, and the ability to see problems from new angles. These strengths are commonly associated with neurominorities (e.g., ADHD, dyslexia, autism). Despite this, neurodivergent professionals face structural and cultural barriers that hinder their progression, especially in high-impact sectors like energy.

Our recent qualitative study explored the lived experiences of 25 neurodivergent energy researchers working across academia and industry, alongside insights from three HR professionals and a neurodivergent C-suite leader from a major gas company.

Key Findings

Across both academia and industry, fear of stigma was a recurring theme, especially in early career stages. However, overall, industry participants generally felt more confident disclosing their neurodivergence, especially when working in organisations that demonstrated inclusive leadership practices.

Industry roles offered more flexibility in how success was measured. Especially those in R&D roles could contribute through problem-solving and creative thinking without being held back by publishing norms. However, both sectors occasionally undervalued interdisciplinary thinking, as participants described friction when their approaches didn't align with conventional practices.

Support for neurodivergent individuals varied widely. In the industry, better support was evident. Some organisations provided accommodations (like software tools) to all staff without requiring formal diagnoses. Others funded diagnostic assessments, removing a key barrier to accessing support.

Across both sectors, neurodivergent leaders significantly positively impacted team dynamics and career progression for others. Participants with neurodivergent supervisors felt more understood, trusted, and encouraged to innovate. These leaders fostered cultures of psychological safety and flexibility, where differences were seen as assets rather than deficits.

Promising practices identified

- **Universal accommodations:** Offering support tools (e.g., assistive technology) to all employees without requiring a diagnosis.
- **Recognition of alternative contributions:** Moving beyond narrow definitions of success, especially in academia, to value creativity, collaboration, and funding achievements.

Implications for practice

- Develop and implement more **comprehensive support systems** and reasonable adjustments for neurodivergent staff, tailored to their needs.
- **Neurodiversity awareness and inclusive leadership/research supervision training** to reduce stigma and foster open discussions and trust within teams.
- **Mentorship programmes** where they can pair with senior neurodivergent colleagues who can provide understanding, support, and encouragement for their innovative and interdisciplinary work.

LGBTQIA+ community

LGBTQIA+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, and others) individuals continue to face barriers to workplace inclusion, ranging from subtle forms of exclusion and discrimination to more overt harassment or career limitations. In male-dominated and remote environments, these challenges may be compounded by a lack of representation, visibility, or an inclusive culture. When LGBTQIA+ workers feel safe offshore, retention improves, teamwork strengthens, and the risks of isolation or attrition drop.

LGBTQIA+ community — practical tips

To support LGBTQIA+ inclusion, organisations should begin with firm policy and legal foundations.

- Anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies must explicitly reference sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression, and these commitments should be reflected in onboarding materials, diversity training, and codes of conduct.
- Promoting visible allyship at all levels of the organisation, especially in leadership and offshore teams, where close working conditions may magnify workplace culture. **Offshore this could take the form of assigning trained allies on each vessel/rotation, clearly identifiable via lanyards, stickers, or team briefings, who are empowered to step in and escalate incidents.**
- The use of inclusive language, such as referring to “partners” instead of assuming heterosexual relationships and using correct pronouns, helps to normalise diversity and prevent exclusion.
- Resourcing LGBTQIA+ networks or providing safe spaces, whether virtual or in-person, enables staff to connect, access peer support, and help shape organisational practices.
- Education and awareness are key drivers of inclusion. Regular LGBTQIA+ inclusion training should go beyond basic awareness to include lived experiences, intersectionality, and the tools to address unconscious bias.

LGBTQIA+ community – practical tips (continued)

- Equipping line managers with the knowledge and confidence to respond to inappropriate behaviour, challenge microaggressions, is especially important for creating safe spaces.
- Visibility and representation also matter. Organisations should meaningfully mark key awareness days such as Pride Month and Trans Day of Visibility, not as one-off gestures, but as part of sustained inclusion efforts. Sharing stories and profiles of LGBTQIA+ employees, with their consent, increases visibility and signals a culture of belonging.
- Offshore-specific considerations are crucial. Reviewing policies, facilities, and living arrangements to ensure they meet the needs of LGBTQIA+ staff supports both psychological and physical safety. Rotating inclusion champions or trained allies on offshore installations can help cultivate inclusive microcultures, and anonymous feedback channels provide a safe route for raising concerns, especially in remote or isolated settings.
Remember that many site-level workers or contractors won't read HR documents. Translate policies into induction briefings, toolbox talks, and team briefings, especially before offshore deployment.

It is also important to measure whether inclusion efforts are working. Track anonymous offshore feedback by identity group (where safe), monitor retention and progression rates for LGBTQIA+ staff, and report progress publicly.

LGBTQIA+ inclusion in the offshore wind sector requires more than statements of support. It demands sustained, everyday commitment to equity and belonging.



“Belonging in SSE” Campaign: Making the uncomfortable, comfortable

Through its eight ‘Belonging in SSE’ communities, SSE listens to and engages with employees on diverse subjects. The dialogues these communities open across the business help more people understand the lived experiences of others and champion inclusion.

To actively encourage employees to bring their full selves to work and feel entirely comfortable doing so. Over 2024/25, all communities increased membership, bringing the total membership to 4,450 employees, an increase of 35% since 2023/24. A key theme identified across the eight communities is that many common areas exist. As a result, 2024/25 has been focused on identifying opportunities to collaborate, highlight intersectionality, and create joint spaces for discussion.

Below is a list of the “Belonging in SSE” communities.

- Ethnicity and culture
- Gender balance
- Working families
- LGBTQIA+
- Health and well-being
- Disability, neurodiversity, and chronic health
- Armed forces
- Menopause

Belonging in the SSE community spotlight: LGBTQIA+

In September 2023, SSE sponsored Shetland Pride, Perthshire Pride, and Reading Pride. SSE was honoured to demonstrate support for LGBTQIA+, its commitment to Tackling Inclusion and Diversity in Energy (TIDE), and to learn how to better align its company values with the pride values of equality, respect, and pride. In addition, SSE Airtricity partners with The Rainbow Project and LGBT Ireland to offer support services for the LGBTQIA+ community across Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

In September 2023, SSE also launched its Transition Support Guide to support colleagues at different stages of their gender transition journey. This guide, developed in partnership with LGBTQIA+ and Gender Balance’s ‘Belonging in SSE communities’, is designed to assist employees and their managers with practical information on the workplace support available for everyone transitioning at SSE. It also helps colleagues support family and friends transitioning thoughtfully and respectfully.

Pregnancy, maternity, paternity, and caregiving

“Flexible working is important because many of us want to have families—we want to be mothers and fathers. But we also want a career, and we want to be good at our job. Sometimes that means we need slightly more flexibility, because we’re potentially the primary caregiver. So could we work early mornings, later in the evenings, or different days?”

— Female Health and Safety Specialist

Pregnancy

Pregnancy is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, meaning employees must not be mistreated because they are pregnant or dealing with pregnancy-related illness. This protection starts as soon as someone is pregnant, regardless of their length of service.

Good Practice Tips:

- Make reasonable adjustments to support health and comfort (e.g., flexible hours, rest breaks, remote work).
- Avoid assumptions about capability or plans; ask the individual what support they need.
- Ensure pregnant employees are not excluded from training, development, or promotion opportunities—particularly relevant for offshore and on-site employees.
- Conduct a risk assessment to ensure a safe working environment, particularly in physically demanding or hazardous roles.

Maternity

“I feel like a more structured return to work approach would have helped me return from maternity leave better.”

— White woman, Consenting Team

Maternity refers to the period during and after childbirth. In the UK, eligible employees can take up to 52 weeks of maternity leave, with statutory maternity pay available for up to 39 weeks.

Good Practice Tips:

- Provide clear information on maternity leave and pay entitlements.
- Keep in touch during leave through agreed “KIT” (Keep in Touch) days, without pressuring the employee.
- Support a smooth return to work through phased returns, updated training, or check-ins.
- Avoid career penalties for taking maternity leave, and ensure that returning employees can access the same opportunities as others.

Paternity

Paternity leave allows partners to take time off after a child's birth or adoption. Eligible employees can take up to two weeks of statutory paternity leave, and some may qualify for shared parental leave. Leave can be longer depending on company policies.

Good Practice Tips:

- Encourage all parents, regardless of gender, to take their full paternity or shared leave without stigma.
- Challenge assumptions that only mothers need time off or flexible work after a birth.
- Provide equal support to all parents in managing their work-life balance.

Caregiving

"I think moving away from that office space to a more hybrid approach is suiting a lot of people. I'm finding that many individuals—especially women in my team—are experiencing it as a better way of working. It is giving them opportunities they might not have taken previously because of childcare issues."

— Female Team Leader

Caregiving responsibilities extend beyond parenting and may include caring for elderly parents, disabled partners, or other family members. Many carers balance full-time work with demanding care duties.

Good Practice Tips:

- Foster a flexible working culture where carers feel comfortable requesting adjustments without fear of judgment.
- Consider offering carer's leave, flexible hours, remote work options, or compressed weeks.
- Train managers to recognise the pressures of unpaid care work and respond with empathy and fairness.
- Avoid assumptions—carers can be any age, gender, or job level.

Supporting Menopause and Fertility

“Menopause support and fertility leave are areas for improvement.”

— White woman, General Manager

Menopause and fertility journeys are often deeply personal, medically complex, and socially stigmatised. Yet they are common life stages experienced by a significant portion of the workforce. Without appropriate support, individuals may face avoidable distress, reduced productivity, and even premature exit from the workforce. Proactive support for menopause and fertility promotes well-being and workplace equity.

Menopause can bring a range of physical and cognitive symptoms (e.g., fatigue, anxiety, memory issues, hot flushes) that can significantly impact daily functioning and work performance. These symptoms may be unpredictable and vary in intensity, making it challenging for individuals to manage their workload consistently. Menopause is only one stage in a broader transition, so it is essential also to recognise the peri-menopausal and post-menopausal phases, acknowledging that for many women the physical, emotional, and workplace challenges can persist, sometimes for the rest of their lives. Fertility challenges, including IVF, miscarriage, and other reproductive health treatments, can be emotionally and physically demanding, yet often invisible or unsupported at work. Below is a list of strategies to support individuals affected by menopause or fertility challenges.

Supporting Menopause at Work

- Develop clear, compassionate menopause policies
- Provide flexible time off for symptom management and medical appointments
- Train managers to understand menopause and support employees empathetically
- Normalize menopause conversations through awareness campaigns and peer support groups
- Offer reasonable adjustments (e.g., temperature control, access to water, flexible breaks)
- Ensure private, comfortable spaces for rest or symptom management
- Include menopause in health and wellbeing initiatives and occupational health services
- Regularly gather feedback to improve support mechanisms

Supporting Fertility at Work

- Establish inclusive fertility leave policies covering treatments and recovery.
- Allow flexible time off for medical appointments and procedures such as IVF.
- Train managers to handle fertility discussions with sensitivity and confidentiality
- Normalise fertility conversations to reduce stigma and increase awareness
- Provide access to counselling and mental health support specific to fertility challenges
- Include fertility support in broader wellbeing programs and employee assistance schemes
- Promote a culture of understanding and privacy around fertility journeys
- Continuously review policies to ensure they meet employee needs



Spotlight: Flexible and Family policies

SSE works with the Working Family Community to promote informal flexible working arrangements to make work-life balance easier for everyone, especially those with caring responsibilities. Flexible First is SSE's set of principles that offers employees flexibility and enables people to consider roles that they would usually not be able to apply for. The proportion of employees who can work flexibly across SSE has now increased from 36% in 2017 to 85% in 2023/24

In addition to Flexible First, SSE's family leave offering aims to ensure that all new and prospective primary and secondary parents at SSE feel supported, regardless of personal or family circumstances and where they are on the journey to becoming a parent. It also has a Gradual Return from Maternity or Adoption Leave Policy, which allows all new parents who take at least three months' leave to return on 80% of contractual hours whilst still receiving full pay and benefits for a period of time. 98% of women returned after parental leave over 2023/24. (2022/23: 97%)

Other groups to support

5.

Age groups and apprenticeships

“It is about that early STEM engagement—showing young girls and boys what engineering careers are, how they can be valued in organisations, and progress in these fields.”

— Female, Site Duty Lead

A genuinely sustainable workforce must work for all ages. As the offshore wind sector grows rapidly, it must attract younger generations while also valuing and retaining the knowledge and expertise of older workers. Young people entering the workforce bring fresh perspectives. At the same time, many experienced workers, particularly those with long careers in energy, engineering, and construction, hold deep technical knowledge and leadership insight vital to navigating industry challenges.

Bridging a potential generational gap involves building a culture where everyone, regardless of age, feels valued and supported. Intergenerational mentoring schemes, flexible working options for older employees, and clear progression pathways for early-career staff can help. Investing in continuous learning is also key; older workers must be given the same access to training and upskilling, especially as technology evolves.

The Role of Apprenticeships

“You’ve got to let people see that women are doing it. For me, that’s something I really like to see—the advertisement of a woman doing the job. You’ve got to make it visible and make other women feel like they could do it too.”

— Female, Wind Turbine Apprentice

Apprenticeships offer a hands-on, financially accessible entry point to the sector, opening doors for individuals who might not follow a university path. However, there’s still work to ensure these opportunities are truly inclusive. Employers in offshore wind need to go beyond surface-level outreach and take practical steps to widen access, partnering with local schools and community organisations, simplifying application processes, and offering tailored support. Representation matters here, too. Apprentices should see a range of people reflected in who teaches, supports, and leads them. Mentors and visible role models from different backgrounds can make a real difference in challenging stereotypes and helping young apprentices feel like they belong. Fair pay, meaningful responsibilities, and a clear route into permanent roles transform an apprenticeship from a short-term scheme into a real career path.



RWE: Championing Armed Forces Inclusion

RWE has demonstrated sector-leading commitment to supporting the Armed Forces community (service leavers, veterans, reservists, and military families). This long-term focus has positioned RWE as a role model for inclusive practices targeting an often-overlooked minority community.

RWE's formal support began with a pledge to the Armed Forces Covenant, a promise to ensure that those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces, and their families, are treated fairly. In recognition of its sustained efforts, RWE became the first offshore wind developer to achieve the Ministry of Defence's prestigious Gold Employer Recognition Award, marking it as a leader in championing the integration of ex-military talent into the renewable energy workforce.

Driving Change at the Sector Level

Through its leadership in the Offshore Wind Industry Council (OWIC) Military Working Group, RWE has provided both the previous and current chairs, as well as the current vice-chair. These individuals serve as industry ambassadors, advocating for the value Armed Forces personnel bring to offshore wind and shaping policies to enhance their inclusion.

In partnership with Mission Renewable, RWE led the creation of the Offshore Wind Sector Guide—a practical resource designed to support Armed Forces leavers, veterans, and their families in exploring careers within the sector.

Embedding Inclusion Within Corporate Structures

Internally, RWE is establishing a Veterans and Champions Network. The network is complemented by a new Armed Forces Council, which aims to ensure strategic alignment with corporate inclusion goals and amplify the lived experience of military-connected employees. Further corporate initiatives include a dedicated Armed Forces careers page on the RWE website and a volunteering platform that actively supports military charities by promoting relevant opportunities to employees.

Taking Inclusion to the Project Level

RWE is working to implement Armed Forces Engagement Strategies across its UK offshore wind joint ventures. These strategies are being developed with input from the Defence Relationship Management team and the Career Transition Partnership. While initially focused on local engagement with service leavers and veterans, the strategies may expand to include cadet forces, military charities, and regional employer collaborations.

RWE further supports veteran inclusion in the supply chain by encouraging veteran-owned businesses to participate in the Supplier Transparency and Engagement Programme (STEP). These businesses are also invited to key skills events, helping open new employment pathways for veterans and reinforcing the ecosystem around military-inclusive hiring.

Offshore workers

“The whole job needs a rethink if you want to increase diversity offshore. The way the job is crafted and structured would need to be redesigned.”

— **White Male, Wind Turbine Technician**

Offshore roles are vital to the sector’s success, but they are often overlooked in EDI strategies. The nature of offshore work presents unique challenges: fixed rotations, limited access to networks and communication tools, and few flexible working options.

Supporting offshore workers through an inclusive lens means recognising the constraints of the offshore environment and actively designing solutions that meet their needs.

Practical Tips

Rethink Flexibility

- Explore alternative patterns of flexibility that work in offshore settings, such as job-sharing, phased return-to-work schemes post-leave, or predictable, transparent rotation schedules.
- Where possible, offer input into rota planning and support for managing personal or caring responsibilities.

Inclusive Work Design

- Review job roles and rotations to assess whether they can be restructured to broaden access (e.g., shorter rotas, shared roles, or tailored physical requirements).
- Consider how job demands impact women, older workers, disabled staff, and primary caregivers differently—and address those gaps structurally.

Communication & Engagement

- Ensure offshore workers access key organisational information (EDI policies, updates, opportunities) through briefings, posters, pre-shift meetings, or mobile-accessible formats.
- Create time and space for offshore workers to share feedback or join company-wide initiatives even asynchronously.

Representation & Visibility

- Proactively highlight role models in offshore roles, including women, racially minoritised staff, and neurodivergent workers, through profiles, case studies, and recruitment materials.
- Include offshore staff in EDI working groups and forums, offering dial-in or asynchronous participation options.

Fair Access to EDI Support

- Make sure EDI initiatives extend to offshore staff. For example:
 - Ensure EDI training reaches offshore teams in engaging, relevant formats.
 - Access confidential support, such as reporting mechanisms or helplines, during rotations and rest periods.

Health, Wellbeing & Rest

- Respect rest time when workers are off-rotation; avoid placing administrative or training demands during downtime.
- Provide access to mental health resources that consider the isolation and intensity of offshore work, including peer support or dedicated well-being check-ins.

Armed forces

Service leavers, veterans, reservists, and military families bring highly transferable skills that are well-matched to the offshore wind sector, such as leadership, resilience, safety culture, problem-solving, and technical expertise. They also represent a highly diverse group, including individuals with varied pre-service backgrounds, female engineers and technicians of different ages, and a wide range of experiences distinct from those in the civilian community. Many seek a second career midway through their working life, offering the industry an opportunity to bring in people with fresh perspectives who are not just beginning their career journey. However, transitioning into civilian employment isn't always easy. Supporting this community is a strategic opportunity to strengthen the talent pipeline in a sector facing significant skills shortages.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality recognises that people's experiences at work and in life are shaped by multiple, interconnected parts of their identity. For example, someone may be a woman, Black, and a parent; or disabled and from a working-class background. These identities do not exist in isolation, they overlap and can create unique barriers or advantages.

In the offshore wind sector, this matters because it helps reveal the full picture of inclusion. A policy designed to support women may not address the experiences of women from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds. Similarly, flexible working policies might not reach offshore workers who are also caregivers. Considering how different aspects of identity interact allows organisations to design solutions that work better for everyone.

Learn more:

Watch Kimberlé Crenshaw's short TED Talk, "The Urgency of Intersectionality" (TEDWomen, 2016), for a clear explanation of how overlapping identities shape people's experiences of discrimination and privilege.

https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality



Anglia Ruskin University: Staff Inclusivity Networks with a Cross-Strand Approach

Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) revitalised its approach to staff equality networks through a major redevelopment initiated in 2014. A former women's network, active since the 1990s, had lost momentum.

In response, a steering group of academic and professional/support staff led a redesign. This initiative coincided with a university-wide event attended by over 1,000 staff, which was used for consultation and engagement.

Intervention Details

Four new staff networks were created alongside the renewed women's network [terminology has been updated since this case study]:

- BME staff network
- LGBT staff network
- Disabled staff network
- Part-time and flexible workers forum

Key characteristics of the initiative include:

- **Staff-led structure:** Networks are led by staff members, not senior management or HR. This grassroots approach is seen as central to their success.
- **Cross-strand collaboration:** Network leads meet regularly, and many staff are members of multiple networks. Several co-leads hold dual roles across networks, promoting intersectional perspectives.
- **Joint events and shared learning:** Cross-network events foster shared experiences. One example was a 'Human Books' project, where individuals shared personal stories that surfaced intersectional themes.
- **Mentoring scheme:** Developed across networks, allowing flexibility in matching mentors and mentees with overlapping protected characteristics.

- **Institutional support:** Senior management endorsed the initiative, encouraging line managers to give staff time and flexibility to participate. Senior leaders also engage with the networks out of personal commitment.

Impact

- Reported high levels of staff satisfaction and engagement.
- Positive changes observed in areas such as work-life balance and communications.

The initiative contributed to changes in flexible working policies, which were commended.

Transferability

The ARU model demonstrates that intersectionality in practice does not require creating new structures from scratch, but reconfiguring existing ones to be more inclusive, staff-led, and collaborative across strands. This approach supports authentic engagement and avoids siloed thinking.

- Enable co-leadership across networks to reflect intersecting identities.
- Provide institutionally supported time and autonomy for staff to lead and participate.
- Encourage joint events and storytelling to deepen empathy and awareness of intersectionality.
- Link networks with policy influence mechanisms to ensure they inform organisational change.

Conclusions

6.

The offshore wind sector stands at a crossroads. As the demand for clean energy accelerates, so does the need for a resilient, diverse, and inclusive workforce that reflects the communities it serves and the challenges it must overcome.

If we are serious about sustainability, we need to ensure EDI is a core part of how the sector works and who it works for. That means embedding it into how jobs are designed, decisions are made, who gets listened to, and what counts as good leadership.

Many barriers people face are systemic, shaped by long-standing processes that were not originally designed with inclusion in mind. They are built into systems that were never designed with inclusion in mind. To achieve different outcomes, we may need to rethink existing systems, including working conditions, organisational cultures, and assumptions about who thrives in offshore and technical environments

The insights shared by those working in the sector confirm that change is possible and underway. But meaningful progress requires sustained action, honest reflection, and accountability. It demands we move from talking about diversity to embedding equity into how offshore wind operates.

As this guide has shown, no single intervention is enough – true inclusion is cumulative.

The invitation to every organisation is to move beyond intent. Make inclusion your infrastructure.

Glossary



Inclusive language is important because it affirms individuals (showing respect for who people are) and helps build a culture where everyone feels valued and included. The words we use can foster belonging, or they can exclude and cause harm. By choosing our language carefully, we demonstrate that differences are respected and celebrated.

It is essential to consider how our views on identity are shaped by society. Our ideas on identity, like gender, ethnicity, or neurodiversity, often feel fixed or rooted in biology. However, many of these categories are socially constructed. This process means they are shaped by how society labels, interprets, and responds to difference. Over time, our collective ideas, language, and systems have built shared understandings of what is considered 'normal' or 'different'. These social labels do not describe reality; they actively influence how people are treated, how opportunities are distributed, and how individuals come to see themselves and others. In short, social construction shapes not only how we understand identity, but also how the world is shaped and how we interact with the world around us.

This glossary is not exhaustive or definitive, but a guide to help improve our understanding and use of inclusive language. It is mainly UK-based, drawing on the Equality Act 2010, though we recognise that terminology and guidance vary across contexts. This guide recognises that language is fluid because individuals may have personal preferences about terminology. Inclusive language also changes with time and social understanding. Where language preferences differ across communities, the preferred self-identification of individuals takes precedence. The key is to remain open, respectful, and willing to adapt as we continue building a more inclusive offshore wind sector.

Glossary

Ableism	Discrimination or prejudice against disabled people or the assumption that non-disabled ways of living are superior.
Accessibility	Accessibility means ensuring everyone can carry out tasks with a similar level of time, effort, and independence as those without a disability. Accessibility applies to physical spaces (such as workplaces or shopping centres) and digital spaces (including online meeting spaces, websites, apps, and other online products).
Accountability	Accountability is the responsibility individuals and organisations have to uphold their commitments, values, and actions, and to recognise the groups to whom they are answerable. In EDI, accountability means being visible, transparent, and committed, with clear goals and processes. It requires active participation and ownership of outcomes, whether driven internally or through external expectations.
Ally	An ally consciously recognises the privilege linked to their demographic group and works in solidarity with marginalised communities they are not part of. Being an ally means actively learning, raising awareness, and challenging oppression while supporting and advocating for those who face discrimination.
BAME / BME	The acronyms BAME (Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic) and BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) were previously used by government departments, public bodies, and the media in the UK to refer to people who are not White. However, these terms are not commonly used by the people they describe to identify themselves. They are also problematic because they focus on specific ethnic groups (Black and Asian) while excluding others, such as Mixed, Other, and White ethnic minority groups. Using these broad terms can hide differences between individual ethnic groups and lead to misleading interpretations of data. In March 2021, the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities recommended that the government stop using the term BAME; however, you may see the term still used in outdated material. Instead of using BAME, the government encourages the use of more specific terms that reflect individuals' self-identified racial or ethnic groups.
Bias	A prejudice or preference, sometimes unconscious, that unfairly favours one person, group, or perspective over another.

Glossary

Caring responsibilities

Caring responsibilities refer to the unpaid support and assistance individuals provide to family members, friends, or others who may be older, disabled, chronically ill, have mental health needs, or require support due to age or other circumstances.

Cisgender (Cis)

A term for someone whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth.

Disability

A disability, as defined by UK law, means an impairment with a substantial and long-term negative effect on day-to-day activities; but the social model focuses on disabling barriers in society not the impairment itself

Disabled

A term describes individuals who experience long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments that may create barriers to full participation in society. Many disabled people experience physical, sensory, or chronic health conditions that affect mobility, communication, fatigue, or pain. Others live with long-term mental health conditions that may be invisible yet significantly impact daily functioning and workplace participation.

Discrimination

The unfair or unequal treatment of individuals based on characteristics such as race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, disability, religion, and others

Diversity

The recognition and valuing of differences between people, both visible and non-visible. These differences may include, but are not limited to, the protected characteristics defined by law. A diverse population encompasses a range of backgrounds, cultures, ethnicities, and experiences.

Equality

Ensuring people are treated fairly and barriers to opportunity are removed, recognising that some groups have historically faced discrimination.

Equal Opportunities

The principle that everyone should have the same chance to reach their potential, free from discrimination.

Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 is a key piece of UK legislation that consolidates anti-discrimination laws and makes them easier to understand. It highlights unlawful behaviours, clarifies expected behaviours, and ensures a consistent approach across all protected characteristics. The Act helps employers protect employees at higher risk of discrimination and is a preventative measure. Being aware of the law is also an essential aspect of workplace risk management.

Glossary

Equity	Equity ensures everyone can access the same opportunities while recognising that people face different barriers and advantages. Equity acknowledges different starting points, equality treats all starting points the same.
Ethnic background	Ethnic background refers to the full range of racialised and cultural identities, including White ethnic groups. This term is intended to reflect the diversity of lived experiences influenced by ethnicity, acknowledging that all individuals have an ethnic background.
Ethnicity	Ethnicity is a social construct used to categorise and describe distinct populations. It relates to cultural identity and expression, grouping people based on shared beliefs, habits, behaviours, communication styles, and thinking patterns.
Gender	Gender can refer to an individual's gender identity or the broader social construct, which has traditionally been understood as a male/female binary based on behavioural or cultural traits.
Gender Identity	A person's internal sense of their own gender, such as male, female, or another identity, which may or may not align with the sex they were assigned at birth.
Gender Reassignment	A protected characteristic under the UK Equality Act 2010, referring to a person who is proposing to undergo, is undergoing, or has undergone a process to change their sex through physiological or other attributes. It is now commonly understood as the transition from one gender to another, which may include medical interventions and social changes, such as updating name, pronouns, and gender expression. The document uses this term as it's the legal terminology in the Equality Act 2010, but it should be acknowledged that "gender transition" is often preferred in practice.
Gen Z	A generational category for people born roughly between 1997 and 2012. They grew up with digital technology, social media, and smartphones, influencing how they communicate and interact with the world.
Unconscious Bias	Associations and attitudes that people hold automatically, without conscious awareness. These biases can influence how we perceive, interact with, or make decisions about others, often based on underlying stereotypes. Our background, cultural environment, and personal experiences shape them.

Glossary

Intersectional / Intersectionality	A framework for understanding how multiple systems of oppression overlap and interact in the lives of people with more than one marginalised identity. Intersectionality highlights the unique challenges created by overlapping forms of discrimination, which cannot be fully addressed by tackling each type separately.
Labelling	Closely linked to stereotyping, labelling occurs when an individual or group is categorised based on someone else's subjective views, experiences, or opinions. These assumptions can lead to biased treatment and discrimination.
LGBTQIA+	An acronym representing lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, and questioning individuals, as well as other marginalised sexualities and genders. The "+" ensures inclusivity for those whose identities may not align with the specific letters, including (but not limited to) intersex, asexual, and pansexual individuals.
Lived Experience	First-hand knowledge or perspective from those directly impacted by an issue, used to inform research or practice.
Masking	The act of a neurodivergent individual hiding or suppressing traits to conform to neurotypical behaviours and societal expectations. Examples include forcing eye contact, monitoring speech and actions in social settings, or suppressing tics or stimming behaviours. Masking requires conscious effort, and prolonged periods can negatively affect well-being.
Microaggression	A statement, action, or incident that subtly or indirectly communicates discrimination against members of a marginalised group, whether intentional or unintentional. Microaggressions are often hostile, derogatory, or harmful in nature.
Millennials	A generational category for people born roughly between 1981 and 1996. They came of age during the rise of the internet and social media, influencing their work, lifestyle, and social habits.
Neurodivergent	Describes individuals whose neurological development and functioning differ from what is considered typical. This umbrella term includes, but is not limited to, autism, ADHD, dyslexia, and other related neurotypes.
Neurodiversity	The concept is that all humans vary in their neurocognitive abilities. It encompasses the full range of neurotypes, including both neurotypical and neurodivergent individuals.

Glossary

Neurotypical	Refers to individuals whose neurological development and functioning align with what is typical in the general population.
Non-binary	A term for individuals whose gender identity does not fit neatly within the categories of “man” or “woman.” Non-binary identities are diverse; some may identify with certain aspects of binary genders, while others reject them entirely.
Oppression	The unjust treatment of a social group by a more powerful group, often for political, economic, or social gain. This combination of power and prejudice results in discrimination and harassment that limits opportunities, rights, and freedoms for the targeted group.
Overstimulation	In neurodivergent individuals, Sensory overload occurs when someone is exposed to more sensory input than they can comfortably process. Overstimulation can include loud or busy environments, bright lighting, certain textures, or specific smells. Prolonged overstimulation, sometimes called “sensory overload,” can cause emotional distress or meltdowns. Stimming refers to self-directed sensory behaviours used by neurodivergent people to self-regulate and manage sensory overload.
Person-First vs Identity-First Language	Current best practice indicates a strong preference for identity-first language in neurodiversity (“autistic person” not “person with autism”) with mixed preferences in Disability with growing support for identity-first language. We recommend asking individuals their preference.
Privilege	Advantages or benefits granted to individuals because of their membership in a particular social group. These aspects of identity can include race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, as well as wealth or social class.
Pronouns	Words used to refer to people, such as ‘he/him’, ‘she/her’, ‘they/them’, or ‘ze/zir’. In English and many other languages, pronouns often convey information about a person’s gender. It is respectful and inclusive to use the pronouns a person identifies with. If unsure, especially when meeting someone for the first time, you can ask, “Which pronouns do you use?” or “What are your pronouns?”
Protected Characteristics	Under the UK Equality Act 2010, nine characteristics are legally protected from discrimination: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage or civil partnership; race; religion or belief (including non-belief); pregnancy and maternity; sex; and sexual orientation. Discrimination based on any of these characteristics is unlawful.

Glossary

Psychological Safety	A shared belief within a workplace that it is safe to take interpersonal risks. This includes (but not limited to), voicing ideas, asking questions, admitting mistakes and raising concerns without fear of humiliation, punishment, or backlash.
Race	Race is a social construct created to group individuals by their race, colour, and nationality, ethnic or national origins.
Racialised groups (also referred to as racially marginalised groups)	A term used to describe individuals and communities who experience marginalisation or inequity based on perceived race, ethnicity, or cultural background.
Reasonable Adjustments	Reasonable adjustments are changes or accommodations made to support individuals with a disability or long-term health condition, helping to remove or reduce barriers they may face at work. Under the UK Equality Act 2010, employers are legally required to make such adjustments. In practice, reasonable adjustments can also extend beyond disability to support carers, colleagues requesting flexible working, remote workers, pregnant employees, those returning from long-term sick leave, individuals experiencing menopause symptoms, and people undergoing gender transition.
Religion and Belief (including non-belief)	For UK equality law, the Equality Act 2010 defines religion and belief to include both traditional religions and philosophical beliefs, as well as non-belief. This law covers belief in a god or gods, or a broader system of teachings or philosophy that guides personal or institutional practices. Non-belief, such as atheism, is also recognised under the law. There is a wide diversity of religions and belief systems worldwide, all protected from discrimination.
Sex	Refers to the biologically determined classification of individuals, typically assigned at birth based on physical characteristics such as genitalia. It can also include a broader set of biological traits, including chromosomes, gonads, and hormone levels.
Sexuality/Sexual Orientation	Refers to a person's attraction or lack of attraction to individuals of a particular gender or genders. It can involve emotional, romantic, sexual, and/or affectionate connections with others.
Stereotypes	Fixed and oversimplified ideas or assumptions about particular groups of people. These often involve attributing the same, usually negative, characteristics to all group members.

Glossary

Transgender/Trans

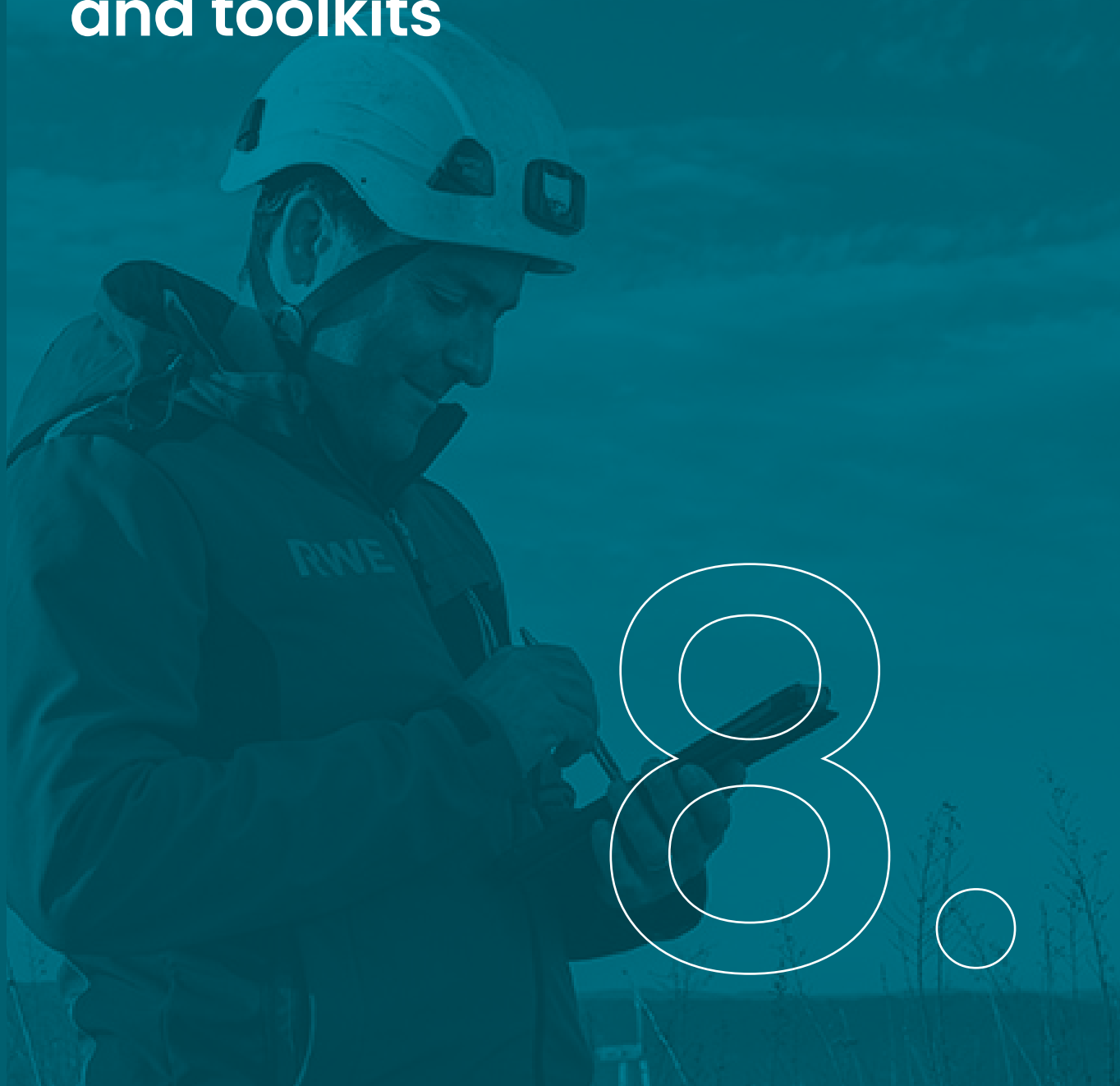
An umbrella term for people whose gender identity does not align with, or is not fully defined by, the sex they were assigned at birth. “Trans” is an adjective, so correct usage includes “transgender people” or “trans people.” “Transsexual” is an older term and should only be used if someone explicitly self-identifies that way.

Transitioning

The process by which a trans person makes changes to their gender expression, legal status, and social life to better align with their gender identity. Each individual’s transition is unique. It may involve medical interventions, such as hormone therapy or surgeries, though not all trans people choose or have access to these. Transitioning can also include coming out to friends and family, adopting different clothing or presentation, and updating official documents.

This glossary has been adapted from The Institute of Engineering and Technology EDI Glossary.

Resources, references, and toolkits



Resources, references, and toolkits

Sector

[G+ Offshore Wind Health and Safety Organisation](#) is the global health and safety organisation, bringing together the offshore wind industry to pursue shared goals and outcomes. It is run in partnership with the Energy Institute, which provides the secretariat and supports its work.

[G+ Medical Fitness Assessment for Wind Turbine Workers](#) is a guidance document to provide a framework to assist in undertaking the medical fitness assessment for personnel working in the wind energy sector.

[RenewableUK / Offshore Wind Industry Council](#): Wind Industry Skills Intelligence Report

Legislation

[Equality Act \(2010\)](#): Government guidance.

[The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service \(Acas\)](#) provides guidance on preventing discrimination and promoting equality in the workplace.

Core EDI, toolkits, and training

[Tackling Inclusion & Diversity in Energy \(TIDE\)](#) is a cross-industry group to improve Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion across the energy industry.

[Royal Academy of Engineering Report. EDI Engine](#): Business benefits of equality, diversity, and inclusion in engineering.

[Royal Academy of Engineering Report](#): Inclusive Cultures in Engineering

[RAiUK](#): EDI Toolkit

[Right Track](#): Diversity and Inclusion Training and Toolkits

[The Institute of Engineering and Technology Inclusive Events Guide](#) supports organisations in delivering inclusive and accessible events.

Intersectionality

[ICE Community](#): 5 ways to develop an intersectional approach at work. Ollie Folayan, co-founder of the Association of Black and Minority Ethnic Engineers, offers advice on considering individual lived experiences.

Glossary

Gender diversity

[WISE Gender Equity Framework](#) is an inclusion diagnostic and offers practical support for STEM organisations.

[POWERful Women Annual State of the Nation Report](#): ‘Female representation in the UK energy industry’

[POWERful Women: Women We Are Losing Report](#): ‘the triggers that make women leave their jobs in energy – and lessons for companies on retaining talent’

[McKinsey & Company: Diversity Wins Report](#). “Why Inclusion Matters” 2020

Benchmarking and leadership

[The Investment Association](#): Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Data Survey – November 2023

[POWERful Women Fifth Annual Report of Energy Leaders Coalition](#): ‘Investing in the diverse skills, strengths and talent needed for our energy future’

Social Mobility

[The Social Mobility Foundation](#) works with young people who face structural barriers in education and work because of their socioeconomic background.

[The Social Mobility Index](#) is used to assess progress in improving social mobility in the UK and to promote social mobility in England.

Disability

[The Sunflower Badge Initiative](#) is a simple tool for you to share that you have a hidden disability voluntarily. Simply by wearing the Sunflower, you’re just letting everyone know that you might need extra help, understanding, or just more time.

Neurodiversity

[The Institute of Engineering and Technology](#): Understanding neurodivergence at work toolkit

[CIPD Neuroinclusion at Work Guide](#) is for people professionals and leaders across functions who want to learn more about neurodiversity, the benefits of having a neuroinclusive and fair organisation, and how they can support neurodivergent people to be comfortable, confident, and booming at work.