



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Review

Brief for external consultant

1 Introduction and background

The Connection at St Martin-in-the Fields (CSTM) is a well-known and respected homelessness charity based in Central London. The Connection provides a wide range of services to a diverse client group of around 2500 people per year in order to support them to make a move away from the streets and to recover. CSTM currently employs around 120 committed and hard-working staff based across services in Westminster and Clapham.

Over the past year consciousness and commitment regarding EDI has been raised across the organisation in part as a result of wider societal awakening, anger and commitment to addressing institutional and societal discrimination highlighted by movements such as Black Lives Matter and the Sarah Everard campaign. The Connection has experienced significant change over the past few years and is facing further change as we move forward with our new, post-lockdown service delivery model. Recent discussions with the staff team have also highlighted a desire to achieve a step-change in EDI across the organisation and to address EDI problems that have existed, to a greater or lesser extent, for many years.

The organisation has a Diversity and Inclusion working group who are very engaged and pro-active and who are committed to working with the Leadership Team and Board to push forward this agenda. A budget has been allocated to this work for 2021/22, principally to support a review and the development of a plan to achieve the step-change that is needed.

To achieve this, we intend to engage an external consultant to conduct a full review of the charity's EDI systems, approach, policies and procedures and make recommendations for a refreshed approach. From the review report and recommendations, we will develop a business case and plan for EDI development and secure the funding required to deliver this plan over the coming three years.

2 The future of EDI at The Connection

We would like The Connection to be characterised by:

- i) Approaches to recruitment, retention and professional development that attract, retain and promote the best candidates and build a diverse workforce at every level of the organisation
- ii) Policies, procedures, training and support which reflect best practice in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- iii) High levels of confidence, skill and expertise across the staff team in equality, diversity and inclusion including how this relates to work with clients, internal colleagues and external organisations
- iv) Improved confidence in communicating on issues related to EDI both within the organisation and externally.
- v) External assessment and endorsement of our EDI approach including charter marks where this is useful.
- vi) A vibrant and celebratory culture that values difference and deals with discrimination effectively, pro-actively and supportively.

We would like the EDI review to provide honest, well informed, direct and constructive feedback on how we can achieve improvements in our practices and approach. This should include highlighting what we already do well, what we need to stop doing and what we need to do more of to achieve best practice. We are open to both small, incremental changes to build on what is already in place and more radical proposals.

3 Where we are now

CSTM has many positives on which to build this EDI improvement work including:

- i) Many staff members who are committed to EDI and want to push ahead this agenda.
- ii) A clear commitment from the Board of Trustees and Leadership Team that this is a priority that will be given sufficient attention, support and investment.
- iii) An internal Diversity and Inclusion group that can act as a useful vehicle to support the implementation of any plans
- iv) Governance and oversight of this work from the Remuneration and Nomination sub-committee to the Board.

There are, however, a number of issues that require attention and where improvements need to be made including:

- i) The Board of Trustees are not as diverse as is necessary, particularly with regards to ethnicity, age and socio-economic background. Steps have been taken to try to address this, including the use of specialist recruitment agencies for Board recruitment, but this has enjoyed limited success to date.
- ii) The Leadership team are also not as diverse as is necessary, particularly with regards to ethnicity and gender.
- iii) The training programme within the organisation is currently weak and was abandoned during the early stages of the Pandemic impacting significantly on staff professional development around EDI.
- iv) The organisation's recruitment approach and processes require modernisation. There are plans to work with a consultant to completely overhaul this critical aspect of our HR and EDI must feature strongly in this review.
- v) Feedback from staff suggests that we need to improve the processes for raising issues of discrimination within the organisation and also need to improve anti-discriminatory practice.

4 Reviewing EDI within The Connection

The following section provides some guidance on the potential shape of a review. However, we are also open to alternative methodologies if the same end report and recommendations are achieved

Area 1 – Developing a Diverse and Inclusive Workforce

We would like to review our approach to recruitment, retention and promotion/succession planning within the context of EDI. The review should cover four key areas of recruitment:

- Board Recruitment
- Senior Management Recruitment
- General Recruitment
- Volunteer Recruitment

This will include exploring how CSTM's overarching recruitment approach is likely to attract a diverse workforce; where improvements are possible, and what changes we need to make to our recruitment approach and policy.

The review will also look at staff development including systems for supporting professional development of staff; induction and training; supervision and career planning.

Expected activity: desk-based review of policies; discussion with Deputy CEO, Trustee, Volunteer Manager, HR Manager, at least one Manager and Lead and a focus group with volunteers and staff.

Area 2 – Developing Anti-Discriminatory Practice

We intend to develop a culture and internal systems that support and facilitate anti-discriminatory practice and challenge discrimination. This will involve reviewing relevant policies, procedures and training and making recommendations for improvement. We would also like the review to consider any support mechanisms that could be put in place for staff e.g. for when incidences of discrimination occur.

Expected activity: desk-based review of policies and training plans, discussion with Deputy CEO, HR Manager, at least one Manager and focus group with volunteers and staff.

Area 3 – Working Towards Excellence

The review will consider the range of quality standards and charter marks that exist in the EDI space and which, if any, THE CONNECTION may want to work towards. Where possible the review will provide a benchmark of where we are in relation to the standards along with recommendations that will form the basis of a 3 year plan. Where a number of standards or charter marks are recommended these should be prioritised taking into account the roles and capacity available to take forward this work.

Expected activity: Scoping of potential standards/charter marks. Benchmarking of THE CONNECTION against these standards. Focus groups with volunteers, clients and staff to test assumptions from the initial feedback and benchmarking and to consult on a draft plan.

Once the review is completed, the delivery of this plan will be the responsibility of the Deputy CEO with support from the Diversity and Inclusion working group. The Deputy CEO will report progress to the Remuneration and Nomination committee.

The budget for undertaking the review and delivering a report is £10k (which includes VAT), with the expectation that it will take place in the Summer/Autumn of 2021 and be completed by Christmas 2021. We anticipate that those undertaking the review will be on site for some of the time to enable direct contact with staff and clients.