



# Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy: **'Wild About Inclusion'** | 2020-2025



# Welcome

Our first Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy: Wild About Inclusion, sets out The Wildlife Trusts' commitment to do more, much more, to ensure that everyone can benefit from nature. We know that many people feel unwelcome and unsafe in greenspaces, or are unable to access much of the outdoors. We are determined to change this, and we have a long journey ahead.

We will stand in solidarity with our communities for the sake of climate, ecological and social justice. It is vital for the wellbeing of our communities, wildlife, and our planet, that we have fundamental, systemic change. We will not allow the perpetuation of discrimination, privilege and oppression prevent everyone from benefiting from nature and being able to take action to help our wildlife.

The Wildlife Trusts movement is about community, people working together. This means all communities, this mean everyone. People of all identities, cultures, backgrounds and abilities. We know we have mountain to climb and we will climb it together.

**Craig Bennett**

Chief Executive, The Wildlife Trusts



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# About Us

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The Wildlife Trusts are a grassroots movement of people from a wide range of backgrounds and all walks of life, who believe that we need nature and nature needs us. We have more than 850,000 members, 38,000 volunteers, 2,000 staff and 600 trustees.

There are 46 Wildlife Trusts, and each is an independent charity formed by people getting together to make a positive difference to wildlife and future generations, starting with where they live.

Collectively, The Wildlife Trusts are committed to bringing about nature's recovery, so that people can live close to nature, with land and seas rich in wildlife. To achieve this, the individual Wildlife Trusts work together and through a central charity, the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts, which supports the development of the movement and strengthens its collective voice.

This Strategy sets out the central charity's 5 year plan to support The Wildlife Trusts to become inclusive of people from all backgrounds, identities and abilities and better reflect the diversity of society by putting wildlife at the heart of modern life for **all** communities.



# Becoming Wild About Inclusion

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We aim to put equality, diversity and inclusion at the heart of The Wildlife Trusts, to ensure that **everyone** has the opportunity to experience the joy of wildlife in their daily lives.

We're **Wild About Inclusion!** To us, this means inspiring, empowering and engaging people from all backgrounds, cultures, identities and abilities, to change the natural world for the better. It means creating workspaces where difference is celebrated, **everyone** can be themselves and flourish, just like nature.

We aim to better understand and address the inequalities experienced by many communities in accessing and connecting with nature. This includes recognising that the conservation sector is one of the least diverse professions in the UK and that access to careers and educational opportunities needs to be significantly improved.

We believe being **Wild About Inclusion** is critical to the future of The Wildlife Trusts, the health and wellbeing of our communities and to wildlife



# What is Equality, Diversity and Inclusion?

## Equality

**Equality** is about creating a fairer society, where everyone can participate and has the opportunity to fulfil their potential. It's about identifying patterns of experience based on group identity, and challenging processes that limit someone's chance to succeed. Our approach to equality recognises that our social identity, which includes gender, race, disability, age, social class, sexual orientation and religion, will impact on our life experiences.

## Diversity

We are all different - **Diversity** is about recognising the value of difference. It's about understanding each other and truly embracing the diversity of every individual. **Diversity** is about valuing different identities, knowledge, skills, ideas and experiences, and using these differences to create an effective and innovative workforce and increase our effectiveness as a movement.

## Inclusion

**Inclusion** is about positively striving to meet the needs of different people and communities. It's about taking deliberate action to create environments where everyone feels respected, able to contribute and achieve their full potential. **Inclusion** creates a sense of belonging, feeling respected and valued. Everyone has a part to play in promoting inclusivity and creating an environment where everyone can flourish.

# Why we're Wild About Inclusion

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There are huge benefits to being Wild About Inclusion and embracing equality, diversity and inclusion, for The Wildlife Trusts, for our people and for nature.

- **More people will have access to, and will benefit from wildlife** and the natural environment and people from all parts of society will be supporting nature's recovery.
- **Our staff will be happier, healthier and more productive.**  
An inclusive working environment creates a workplace where everyone has equal opportunity to develop, progress, be rewarded and recognised at work. We'll also better attract and retain diverse talent.
- **Our organisational performance will be stronger.**  
Diverse and inclusive organisations have higher innovation and employee satisfaction, increased creativity, and improved leadership and decision making.
- **Our volunteers and supporter base will increase and diversify.** By being more inclusive and relevant to diverse communities, we will attract and engage a wider range of people in our work, whilst improving our reputation as an inclusive and accessible movement.



# Our Vision

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**For The Wildlife Trusts to fulfil our vision of ‘people close to nature, with land and seas rich in wildlife’, we must ‘become more relevant to more people by increasing the diversity of our Trustees and staff, growing our presence and profile in towns and cities, engaging with the full breadth of the communities where we work, and actively expressing this in our communications and imagery.’**

(The Wildlife Trusts Development Strategy 2017 - 2022)





# To achieve this, our vision for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is:

- **More people, from all parts of society, are engaged in the work of The Wildlife Trusts and are closer to nature as a result of us becoming reflective of, and more meaningful to, our communities.**
- **Our people are ‘Wild about Inclusion’ and embrace increasing the diversity of our staff, Trustees, volunteers and members as crucial to our success in bringing about nature's recovery.**



# Our Priorities

for becoming Wild About Inclusion are:

## 01 Diverse & Inclusive Leadership

- our movement will be led by diverse, inclusive and effective leaders who embrace the challenge of increasing our diversity and the contribution diversity makes to our movement and to wildlife.

## 02 Increasing our Diversity

- we will become more relevant to more people by ensuring our staff, Trustees, volunteers and members reflect the diversity of the communities in which we live and work, by increasing opportunities and reducing barriers for marginalised and underserved groups.

## 03 Cultivating an Inclusive Movement

- we will cultivate a culture where our staff, Trustees and volunteers are Wild About Inclusion, where difference is celebrated, everyone can be themselves, feel respected and able to contribute to their full potential.

## 04 Communicating Inclusively

- the ways that we connect with our staff and communities will be intentionally inclusive and nurture a sense of belonging. We will demonstrate solidarity for people from different backgrounds, abilities and identities, and ensure they are empowered to change the natural world, for the better.

## 05 Access and Engagement for Everyone

- we will increase our engagement with diverse communities, to better understand and overcome barriers to accessing and engaging with nature and to ensure that everyone can benefit from the joy of wildlife in their daily lives.

# 01 Diverse & Inclusive Leadership

our movement will be led by diverse, inclusive and effective leaders who embrace the challenge of increasing our diversity and the contribution diversity makes to our movement and to wildlife.

## The central team will do this by:

- Providing advice and guidance which supports an increase in board diversity across the movement, with a focus on addressing the under representation of ethnic, gender and age diversity, and ensuring EDI is central to board effectiveness, leadership, and decision making
- Carrying out improved monitoring of Trustee diversity and board inclusivity, to better understand and respond to improving representation on Trustee boards
- Building strong leadership capability and governance processes which support our approach to EDI, by ensuring The Wildlife Trusts Council, its Committees and the central leadership team regularly consider the movement's approach to EDI and its relationship to other strategies, such as health and wellbeing
- Provide training and development opportunities to Trustees, CEOs and senior leaders, which support the development of inclusive leadership behaviours and governance structures
- Supporting the development of Trust led youth councils to improve the voice of young people across the movement

## What will success look like?

- Representation on all our Boards of Trustees will be improved for ethnicity, gender and age diversity
- All Trustees will take part in The Wildlife Trusts Diversity Survey
- All boards of Trustees will take part in and prioritise equality, diversity and inclusion training
- All boards of Trustees will have developed and taken action on equality, diversity and inclusion priorities
- Leaders across the movement will be visibly championing equality, diversity and inclusion
- The approach of all boards of Trustees will be underpinned by Principle 6 of the Charity Governance Code 'Diversity – the board's approach to diversity supports its effectiveness, leadership and decision making'
- All Trusts provide opportunities for young people to influence the work of the movement through the development of local youth councils or forums

# 02 Increasing our Diversity

we will become more relevant to more people by ensuring our staff, Trustees, volunteers and members reflect the diversity of the communities in which we live and work, by increasing opportunities and reducing barriers for marginalised and underserved groups.

## The central team will do this by:

- Producing and distributing best practice inclusive recruitment guidance which aims to eliminate bias and promote equal opportunities for diverse talent
- Supporting Trusts to develop trainee programmes, apprenticeships and other entry level employment opportunities which target under-representation in workforce diversity
- Encouraging Trusts to demonstrate commitment to inclusive recruitment and workplace inclusion through membership of employer schemes which promote inclusivity for diverse groups (e.g. disability confident, mindful employer)
- Carrying out improved monitoring of workforce diversity and organisational inclusivity across the movement
- Exploring partnership and funding opportunities which support a sector wide transformation programme to bring about a step change in increasing ethnic diversity, through improved access to training and employment opportunities
- Support Trusts to take 'positive action' to address under-representation in workforce diversity and pro-actively tackle barriers which prevent marginalised and underserved groups in accessing employment and volunteering opportunities

## What will success look like?

- All staff will have taken part in The Wildlife Trusts diversity survey
- The Wildlife Trusts diversity survey results reflect an increase in diversity of marginalised and underserved groups and Trusts are more reflective of their local communities
- All Trusts will have introduced or improved diversity monitoring processes of staff, Trustees and volunteers and members
- All Trusts will have signed up to Level 1 of the Disability Confident scheme or equivalent employer equality scheme
- All Trusts websites and recruitment platforms will actively promote The Wildlife Trusts as an inclusive employer
- All Trusts will be using best practice inclusive recruitment processes

# 03 Cultivating an Inclusive Movement

we will cultivate a culture where our staff, Trustees and volunteers are 'Wild About Inclusion', where difference is celebrated, everyone can be themselves, feel respected and able to contribute to their full potential.

## The central team will do this by:

- Developing an active and connected community of Inclusion Champions across the movement, who take action to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion are at the heart of everything we do
- Developing an active and connected network of Human Resources practitioners to embed inclusive policy and behavioural standards into everyday working practices
- Develop and share best practice family friendly, flexible working and inclusive workplace policies and guidance, which actively support Trusts to promote inclusion for staff of all identities and enable a culture of 'everyday inclusion'
- Developing a range of toolkits, resources and assessment tools which support Trusts to develop, embed and action equality, diversity and inclusion priorities
- Provide learning and development opportunities for staff, trustees and volunteers which support our priorities to increase diversity and improve inclusivity
- Developing a compelling business case for making The Wildlife Trusts more equal, diverse and inclusive, as the foundation for driving change and engaging a range of stakeholders

## What will success look like?

- Staff across the movement believe that equality, diversity and inclusion is central to bringing about a stronger Wildlife Trusts movement and bringing **everyone** closer to nature
- All Trusts will have a nominated Inclusion Champion/s who is supporting their Trust to progress and prioritise equality, diversity and inclusion
- All Trusts have taken part in equality, diversity and inclusion learning and development opportunities e.g. training, workshops, webinars etc
- A range of policies, toolkits and guidance documents are published on Wildnet and are actively being used by Trusts to support their equality, diversity and inclusion priorities
- An active Wildnet community which supports progress on equality, diversity & inclusion

# 04 Communicating Inclusively

the ways that we connect with our staff and communities will be intentionally inclusive and nurture a sense of belonging. We will demonstrate solidarity for people from different backgrounds, abilities and identities, and ensure they are empowered to change the natural world, for the better.

## The central team will do this by:

- Meaningful stories that promote improved access and engagement with nature for diverse groups are regularly shared across the movement and on Trusts social media channels
- Co-ordinating a calendar of community and cultural events and communications, which celebrate the diversity of our staff, volunteers and members and promote inclusion of people from all backgrounds, abilities and identities
- Improving the representation and visibility of diverse roles model and ambassadors, which reflect the diversity of society and engage a more diverse supporter base
- Ensuring the images and materials used in our campaigns and communication platforms are representative of and to accessible to diverse audiences
- Coordinating and supporting Trusts to improve networking, consultation and engagement opportunities which improve the voice of staff and volunteers from a diverse range of backgrounds, abilities and identities

## What will success look like?

- Meaningful stories that promote diversity of people and experience are regularly shared across the movement and on Trusts social media channels
- All Trusts using images which reflect diversity of society and local communities on their websites and other media channels
- Members of our ambassador's programme are more reflective of the diversity of society
- Trusts are regularly promoting community or cultural events and networking and engagement opportunities to their staff, members and communities



# 05 Access and Engagement for Everyone

we will increase our engagement with diverse communities, to better understand and overcome barriers to accessing and engaging with nature and to ensure that everyone can benefit from the joy of wildlife in their daily lives.

## The central team will do this by:

- Supporting Trusts to make our natural spaces and visitor centres welcoming and accessible for everyone and actively engaging people from all backgrounds, abilities and identities
- Sharing best practice innovative community engagement projects and resources, which inspire diverse communities to connect and engage with wildlife, in ways that are relevant and accessible
- Collaboratively working with and building key networks to improve our understanding of the barriers experienced by diverse communities in accessing nature and engaging with The Wildlife Trusts, to inform innovation and improve our reach
- Harnessing our approach to nature, wellbeing and education to improve health and social inequalities and increase access to education and engagement for diverse groups

## What will success look like?

- More of our nature reserves and visitor centres are accessible to people with diverse access needs and information is effectively promoted on our websites and other platforms
- All Trusts are engaging diverse groups through innovative community engagement initiatives and sharing stories which provide inspiration across the movement
- Our health and wellbeing, education and engagement initiatives are actively and intentionally engaging people from diverse groups, such as minority ethnic groups, people with mental health needs, young people, older people, people living with dementia, lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans communities, faith groups and people with disabilities





## Get in touch

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