

EQUITY, EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

Communities 1st - What We Stand For Policy Statement (4)

Introduction

Communities 1st, in partnership with our Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations, acknowledges the profound impact that issues of Equity, Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EEDI) have on the vitality of our communities. These challenges, deeply intertwined with the broader struggles against social inequality, require our concerted effort and resolve. Our commitment enriches society by aiming for systemic transformations and emphasises the distinct and critical contributions of the sector, beyond statutory approaches. We envision a society where every person, regardless of their background, can access equal opportunities and resources, ensuring a community that thrives on diversity and mutual respect.

The Inequity Impasse: Bridging Divides

Within our communities, the journey toward EEDI is hindered by systemic biases and structural inequalities, creating significant gaps in access to opportunities. Despite advancements in inclusivity, these entrenched barriers persist, denying many individuals the chance for prosperity and full participation in society. The path to a truly inclusive society is fraught with challenges, ranging from unconscious bias to overt discrimination. Overcoming these obstacles necessitates a united, collective effort to understand the varied experiences of individuals across society, fully acknowledging the gaps that exist and proactively working to bridge the divides.

Our Pledge

As Communities 1st and our member organisations, we commit to:

- Intensify our efforts to integrate and enrich EEDI principles into all facets of our practices and community outreach, distinctively amplifying the VCSE's impact.
- Proactively encourage ongoing training, education and awareness for our staff and volunteers, focusing on unconscious bias, inclusive language, and cultural competency.
- Engage with our communities, seeking to understand their unique needs and tailoring our services to meet them.
- Advocate for systemic change, challenging the prejudices and biases that perpetuate inequality and exclusion.

Our Ask of Decision-Makers and Influencers

We call upon our politicians, senior leaders, and officers within governments, local councils, the NHS, and other public sector bodies to commit to our cause. We ask that they:

1. Recognise and support the unique role of the VCFSE sector in advancing EEDI to enrich our communities and provide the necessary support and resources to amplify our impact.
2. Implement policies that address systemic biases and structural inequalities, ensuring equitable access to opportunities and resources for all.
3. Establish cross-sector partnerships that enable knowledge sharing and best practices in EEDI across different fields and industries.
4. Advocate for inclusive decision-making processes that actively involve representatives from diverse communities in shaping policies and programmes that affect them.