



Town and Country Planning Association
Working to secure homes, places and communities
where everyone can thrive

Equality, diversity, inclusion and equity strategy

The TCPA's strategy
2022 - 2026



Cover photograph courtesy of Bournville Village Trust



Equality, diversity, inclusion and equity strategy

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Town and Country Planning Association

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About the TCPA

The Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) works to challenge, inspire and support people to create healthy, sustainable and resilient places that are fair for everyone. To this end we aim to improve the art and science of planning in the UK and abroad and work to secure fresh perspectives on major issues, including planning policy, housing, regeneration and climate change. Informed by the Garden City Principles, the TCPA's strategic priorities are to:

- Work to secure a good home for everyone in inclusive, resilient and prosperous communities, which support people to live healthier lives.
 - Empower people to have real influence over decisions about their environments and to secure social justice within and between communities.
 - Support new and transform existing places to be adaptable to current and future challenges including the climate crisis.
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1 The importance of equality, diversity, inclusion and equity to the Association

In January 2021, the TCPA published a new five-year strategic plan¹. It sets out that the Association's vision is for homes, places and communities in which everyone can thrive. And that its mission is to challenge, inspire and support people to create healthy, sustainable and resilient places that are fair for everyone. As set out below, social justice has always been a critical part of the TCPA's work and this runs through both our vision and mission.

To achieve our vision and mission, the TCPA will need to operate in a certain way. The strategy commits us to being guided by our values, which are that we are:

- inclusive;
- collaborative;
- practical;
- creative; and
- bold.

Equality, diversity, inclusion and equity are critically important for the Association. The TCPA was founded by the originators of the Garden City movement, who sought to transform the way that places are created for the common good. This approach enabled the practical achievement of beautifully designed and sustainable places for everyone, secured by reinvesting the wealth generated by development for the benefit of the whole community. Achieving social justice was, and remains, the driving ambition of the Garden City movement.

Through our work today, the Association advocates for greater diversity and inclusion in the way that places are created. We seek to empower people to have real influence over decisions about their environments and to secure social justice within and between communities.

But we also have a role as an organisation – through the way we operate, our staff team, volunteers and members, the other organisations, partners and consultant we work with and through the events we curate. Through all of this we recognise the value and importance of equality, diversity and inclusion. They are relevant to everyone involved in the organisation. And therefore, everyone has responsibility for seeking to embed them in how we operate day to day and reflect our values through our work.

¹ *Working to secure homes, places and communities where everyone can thrive: the TCPA's strategy January 2021 – December 2025*. TCPA Jan. 2021. <https://tcpa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/strategyfinal.pdf>

2 Defining equality, diversity, inclusion and equity

When talking about equality, diversity, inclusion and equity it is important to have a common understanding of what these words mean, and how they relate to each other.

Diversity takes account of the differences between people, and groups of people, and places a positive value on those differences.

Inclusion creates an environment where everyone feels valued, respected, and able to fulfil their potential.

Equality means treating everyone the same. This involves removing all forms of discrimination throughout the organisation, such as providing equal opportunities during recruitment and eliminating harassment and bullying.

Equity involves treating everyone fairly. This acknowledges that people have different needs, experiences, and opportunities and requires the organisation to recognise and take additional steps to address these.



Photograph credit: Caroline Brown/David Lock Associates

3 Our approach and what we have done so far

The Association recognises that prejudice, discrimination and harassment remain part of everyday society for many people and it is committed to doing all it can as an organisation to achieve a fairer, more equitable society. We must, therefore, do more than simply comply with equality and diversity legislation.

Back in 2019 the whole staff team attended two half days of equality and diversity training. Informed by that training, a diversity and inclusion vision statement was developed:

The TCPA advocates for greater diversity and inclusion in the way that places are created. In its work, the TCPA empowers people to have real influence over decisions about their environments and to secure social justice within and between communities.

The TCPA embeds social justice in all its activities. It is aware that discrimination based on sex, race, ability, sexuality, class, gender, religion, age, maternity, parenthood or other characteristics can be consciously or subconsciously replicated in its undertakings and will eliminate any form of discrimination in its activities. To achieve this the TCPA regularly reviews and monitors the measures it takes to eliminate discrimination.

Across its membership, staff and Board the Association seeks to represent society in all aspects of diversity. The TCPA holds its stakeholders to the highest standards of inclusion and diversity.

To realise this vision statement, a Diversity and Inclusion Working Group was established which leads the development, implementation, monitoring and review of an action plan. While this Group helps drive forward the agenda day to day, responsibility for delivering the vision statement sits across the whole organisation.

Internally focused progress to date includes:

- Establishing a **new staff recruitment process** that seeks to reduce the risk of unconscious bias, is inclusive and aims to enable a diverse staff team.
- Undertaking a **staff survey and a member survey to establish baseline data** that will enable us to look at trends and assess progress.

- Becoming a signatory to the Future of London diversity pledge² and seeking to **ensure the events we organise are diverse, accessible and inclusive**.
- Launching a new **regular column on diversity and inclusion** in our Journal, Town & Country Planning, called Created Equal.

Through our recent project work we have:

- Supported the revitalisation of Planning Aid for London. This included working with a number of **community, residents and tenants' groups to enable them to influence the future of where they live** by effectively engaging with the planning system.
- Facilitated discussions between the community and decision makers in Belfast to try to **secure more affordable housing for vulnerable people**.
- Published guidance and undertaken **training for London Borough Councils to embed equality and inclusion in planning policy**.
- Developed and promoted guidance for communities to explain how flood risk is dealt with in the English planning system and how they **can effectively get their voices and concerns heard in planning decisions**.
- **Secured important improvements in minimum space standards and in relation to access to natural light for new homes** delivered through permitted development rights.

As a small charity we believe this is important progress. But there is much we still need to do.

² See <https://www.futureoflondon.org.uk/networks/diversity/diversity-pledge-signatories/> for more information about the pledge

4 Our equality, diversity, inclusion and equity priorities

Objective 1: Continue to develop and embed an inclusive culture across the Association

To achieve this, we will:

For the staff team

- Support a culture that enables all staff to achieve their full potential. This will include us sustaining a workplace where the dignity and rights of all are respected and protected.
- Implement, and refine, if necessary, our updated recruitment processes.

For the staff, Trustees and membership

- Equip staff and Trustees with the knowledge and skills needed to embed and promote equality, diversity, inclusion and equity.
- Identify and eradicate any discrimination and harassment if they do occur.
- Work to grow and diversify our membership.
- Seek to diversify our governance.

For the Association and wider audiences

- Continue and further our attempts to make sure the events we organise are diverse, accessible and inclusive.
- Work to ensure the partners we work with through our campaigns but also if we commission any work are diverse and not simply the 'usual suspects'.
- Build on the new regular column in our journal, Town & Country Planning, and further diversify the contributors to it.

Objective 2: Empower people to secure greater diversity and inclusion in the way that places are created

To achieve this, we will:

- Continue to implement funded projects that empower communities, particularly those from marginalised and under-represented communities, to influence planning processes and place-shaping processes that sit outside the formal planning system.
- Campaign for higher quality new homes and the delivery of genuinely affordable homes.
- Develop project proposals and seek to secure funding to enable us to work to tackle social injustice within and between communities.

Review and implementation

This strategy is underpinned by a diversity and inclusion action plan that was developed and overseen by the Diversity and Inclusion Working Group. As noted above, however, responsibility for achieving the objectives above sits across the Association, including with the Board of Trustees and the management team.

Progress will be monitored by the Working Group so that feedback can be acted upon in a timely manner. Updates will be provided regularly to both the staff team and the Board of Trustees. From time to time, consideration will be given to sharing progress of the strategy across the Association and to wider audiences. If gaps in the strategy or in progress are identified, the management team will work to address them or, if necessary, raise them with the Board of Trustees to be fed into an early refresh of this document.



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