

FORSTERS



Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Strategy

2 0 2 4 - 2 0 2 6

F

Our Ambition

Our Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) strategy is focused on supporting and encouraging diversity within our workforce and making Forsters a truly inclusive place to work. We continue to strive to improve understanding and communication, break down barriers and encourage and embrace people's differences so that every individual can thrive.

Forsters' D&I strategy will underpin everything we do as a business. Having a diverse and inclusive workforce will mean we are better able to respond to challenges, attract top talent and meet the needs of different client bases. An ambitious D&I strategy will support the firm's growth and business priorities, whilst also empowering everyone at the firm to expect and demand a working environment where they feel valued and included.



FORSTERS

pure STILL water

Our Goal

Over the next two years our aim is to gather and use diversity related data to inform our decision-making and help us to target specific D&I related projects and commitments which we wish to prioritise. We will keep the firm and our stakeholders (where appropriate) updated on a regular basis in relation to what these projects and commitments are, and our progress in delivering them.

Our continuing commitment to D&I within the workplace is absolutely essential to our success in living out our values on a daily basis and to achieving our business objectives.

Forsters values



We collaborate
for excellence



We are driven
by what really
matters



We support
every person
to achieve



We take
happiness
seriously

Our Four Areas of Focus

Our strategy will see us commit to four main areas:



Inclusive and supportive culture

What do we want to achieve?

We want to foster an inclusive culture and we understand that the responsibility for doing so starts with the leadership of the firm.

We want to ensure that Forsters' values are being lived out and we have a truly inclusive culture within teams on a day-to-day basis.

We want every person at Forsters to thrive rather than survive, and to feel that they belong rather than simply be accepted.

We want everyone at the firm to understand that it is each individual's responsibility to create and maintain this culture – we need everybody on board.

What are we going to do?

We will continue to support and encourage our seven D&I support networks; in the short term we will revisit and clarify the objectives of each of these support networks and will continue to monitor this throughout the period of this strategy to ensure that each network has clear objectives and purpose (appreciating that the networks all play slightly different roles and will have their own unique style). We will also ensure that those in leadership roles at the firm understand the importance of engaging with and supporting the networks.

We will continue to encourage collaboration between our support networks to incorporate an intersectional approach, acknowledging the complexity of different identity categories.

We will focus on allyship and look at all the ways that each individual at the firm can be an ally. We recognise and want everyone to understand that allies have an important role to play in championing those in under-represented groups to effect change.

We will continue to look at easy, sensitive and supportive ways those at the firm can share incidents or things that are affecting them, actively encourage people to come forward with concerns and give people the confidence that any such concern will be dealt with in an appropriate way.

We will continue to use initiatives such as Collaborative Mentoring to foster a sense of belonging and inclusivity, and to ensure that everyone feels able to reach their potential.

We will raise awareness of the need to be inclusive and promote inclusive leadership.



2

Diverse workforce

What do we want to achieve?

We want to attract and, importantly, retain diverse talent at every level of the organisation – we want Forsters to be a place where people from all backgrounds want to work and can see themselves working.

We want to access a wide talent pool and ensure that we are able to attract applicants from under-represented communities and groups.

When we have people working in the business who are from under-represented communities and groups, we want to be sure that they are confident that they can progress in their career and thrive in the business.

We want to harness the power of a diverse workforce, which has been shown to improve performance and deliver the benefit of varied ways of thinking – we know that to innovate and succeed as a business we need to avoid “groupthink” and we believe that a diverse and inclusive workforce is critical to achieving this.

We want to play our part in widening access to the legal profession and the many careers within it.

What are we going to do?

We will continue to use tools such as Rare Recruitment contextualised data, disabilityjob.co.uk, MyPlus Consulting and unconscious bias training to ensure that when we recruit, we are looking at the widest pool of talent possible, particularly applicants from under-represented communities.

We will review our recruitment processes across the firm to ensure that we are accessing applicants from diverse backgrounds and under-represented groups. Some of the D&I tools and processes we currently use only in our graduate/early years recruitment programme, so we will investigate how we can expand these tools and processes (or alternative, more suitable D&I tools and processes) to firm recruitment at all levels.

We will continue to support the widening of access to the legal profession by working with external organisations to deliver initiatives such as Solicitor Apprenticeships, mentoring and social mobility work experience programmes.

Once we have the data to do so, we will analyse this data to understand the retention rate of those who work at Forsters who are from under-represented groups against those who are not, with a view to ensuring that there is no disparity here. If we find a disparity, we will look to put in place strategies to address this.

3

Engagement and embedding

What do we want to achieve?

We want to continue to put in place policies and processes which embed D&I into the everyday life of the firm.

We want to ensure that everyone across the firm is informed and knowledgeable about diversity and inclusion issues and understands their responsibility to support D&I.

We want to be bold and innovative with the projects we put in place to engage everyone across the firm with D&I issues, practices and activities.

What are we going to do?

We will continue to raise D&I awareness and engagement by using impactful internal communications and events and by continuing to celebrate diversity within the firm.

We will meet with and partner with those leading on D&I initiatives at other law firms and companies within the sectors we work in, to share what we are doing and look to collaborate wherever it would be useful to do so. We want to be at the forefront of D&I best practice.

We will use the annual review process to focus in on how our employees and business leaders at all levels can play their part in creating an inclusive workplace and embracing D&I. We want to make it clear that those at the firm who commit time and energy to D&I initiatives are valued and recognised, and that this is an important part of everyone's role.

We will organise tailored D&I training to support and educate employees and business leaders.



4

Accountability

What do we want to achieve?

We want to weave D&I into all areas of business strategy so that D&I underpins everything we do as a business.

We want to remain up to date with best practice in the D&I arena, staying abreast of what other businesses in our field (and farther afield) are doing and taking inspiration from those who are leading the way.

We want to hold ourselves to account and measure our progress, using data wherever possible to do so objectively and transparently.

What are we going to do?

We will look to improve our data collection so that we can access D&I data in respect of the firm and use this data to ensure we are making progress and holding ourselves to account.

We will use engagement surveys and “listening” exercises to ensure that the individuals who work at Forsters can be honest and open about their experiences at the firm and whether they feel we are meeting our ambitions and aims to be a truly inclusive place to work.

We will develop our confidence to challenge inappropriate behaviours and micro-aggressions in the workplace; we will do so by way of focussed training and awareness raising of the importance of “calling out” and “calling in” such behaviours.

We will monitor and seek to assess (wherever possible using data) whether there are any disparities in experience, remuneration and career progression for those from under-represented groups, and if we find there to be we will look to put in place strategies which address this.

During this period, we will, where possible, align ourselves with D&I best practice frameworks and accreditations and benchmark ourselves accordingly.

We will share our commitments and progress with our clients and wider stakeholders.



The focus for the first 12 months



Data Collection

Without data it's difficult to properly measure progress in improving the diversity within the Forsters' workforce. We will address how we can collect diversity related data from everyone so that we can hold ourselves to account.



Allyship

We believe allyship is critical to advancing our D&I practices at Forsters. We will be setting up a working group to look at ways of promoting allyship across the firm in addition to supporting our seven D&I networks.




Recruitment

We have successfully implemented a number of practices which help us to access a more diverse set of applicants and contextualise applications from graduates/early years. We will establish a working group to explore further practices and consistency of roll out to ensure that we are accessing the most diverse set of applicants for all positions and consequently improving the diversity of our workforce at all levels.



Inclusion

We know that staff retention is absolutely linked to how happy and included people feel at work and we want to ensure that everyone at Forsters feels valued and included. We will be setting up a working group to generate ideas for improving inclusion at the firm.



Get in touch

To get involved or if you have questions,
please contact:

Amy France and Charles Miéville

Diversity and Inclusion Committee Leads

amy.france@forsters.co.uk

charles.mieville@forsters.co.uk

Alison Fairchild

Head of HR and Talent

alison.fairchild@forsters.co.uk

Diversity and Inclusion Committee

dandicommittee@forsters.co.uk

FORSTERS