

EQUALITY AUDIT

21 OCTOBER - 11 NOVEMBER 2025



HISTORIC
ENVIRONMENT
SCOTLAND

ÀRAINNEACHD
EACHDRAIDHEIL
ALBA

Methodology

Diversity Scotland conducted a three-stage quantitative and qualitative review model, assessing organisational standards against inclusive best practice and our proprietary EMBED Inclusion Maturity Model.

1

Workforce Survey

Comprehensive survey deployed across the organisation receiving 571 responses. Assessed nine inclusion domains: Awareness, Leadership Commitment, Cultural Openness, Psychological Safety, Equity, Respectful Workplace, Manager Support, Belonging, and Wellbeing. Plus demographic data capture across a range of characteristics.

2

Interviews and Focus Groups

Multiple in-depth interviews with senior stakeholders holding strategic responsibility. 2 focus groups: one with Employee Resource Group representatives, one with broader staff including operational sites. Deep exploration of barriers, risks and opportunities.

3

Analysis and Triangulation

Findings from all data sources triangulated to identify convergent themes, contradictions and areas requiring further investigation. Evidence strength assessed as Strong, Moderate or Limited. Benchmarked against inclusion best practice.

RAG Rating Framework

GREEN: 86%+ agreement

AMBER: 70-85% agreement

RED: 69% or below

Executive summary

571 survey responses | multiple senior leader interviews | 2 focus groups | 1,666 free-text priorities

22% believe senior leadership
is committed to EDI

26% trust the people who
make decisions

74% have witnessed or experienced
inappropriate comments

78% of colleagues do not feel
included at work

Positive indicators



83% of colleagues understand why EDI is important for the organisation. Awareness is not the issue.



81% feel their manager considers their views. Line management relationships are broadly functioning.



80% say people willingly help, cooperate and share resources. Peer relationships are a strength.



86% have not personally experienced behaviours qualifying as sexual harassment. This is the only GREEN metric.



571 colleagues responded to the survey and shared their priorities. Staff care about the organisation and want to engage.



Several senior colleagues disclosed personal commitment to driving change, even at personal cost. There are champions within the system.

Leadership trust

The scale of the challenges

22%

believe senior
leadership
is committed to EDI

22%

confident concerns
will
be addressed fairly

26%

trust the people who
make decisions

33%

believe no one would
deliberately
undermine them

In a healthy organisation, these metrics would typically exceed 80%

The awareness-behaviour gap

Structural and cultural interventions are needed.

83%

understand why EDI is important

AWARENESS

VS

26%

have never witnessed inappropriate
behaviour

BEHAVIOUR

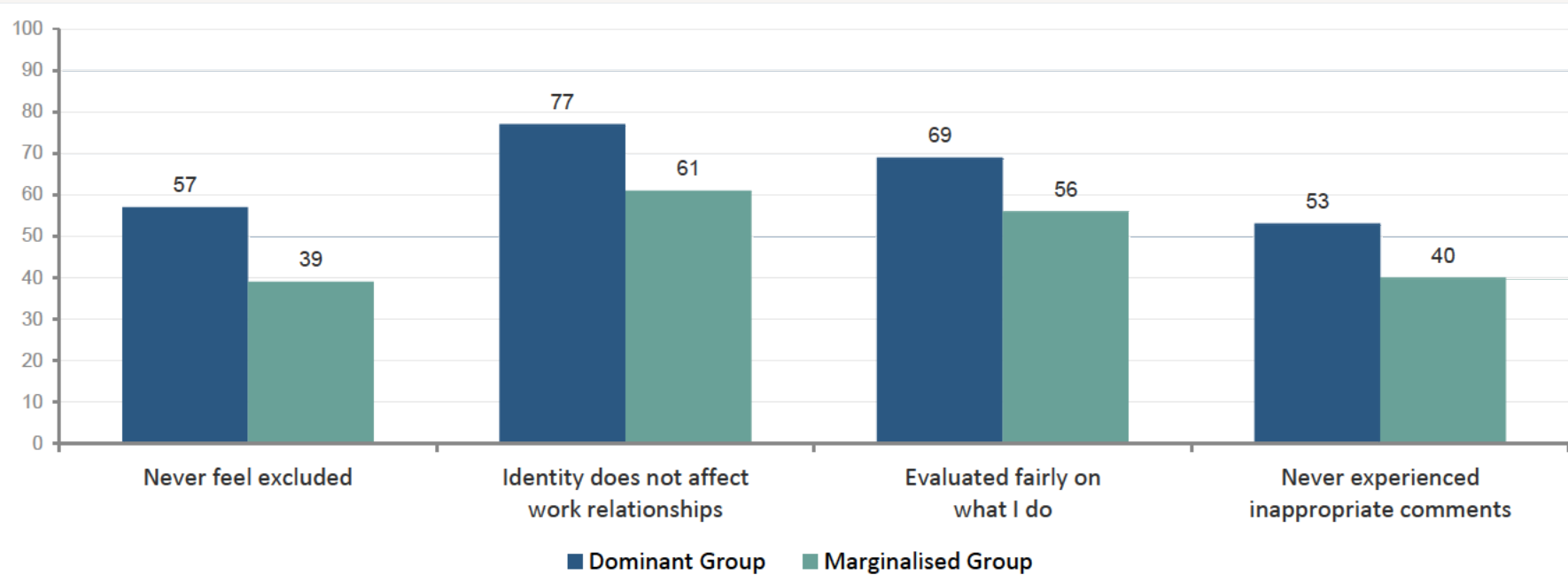
This is not an awareness problem.

74%

of colleagues have witnessed or experienced
inappropriate comments, jokes or personal put-downs

Only 26% have never witnessed | Only 46% have never experienced

Marginalised vs dominant group experience gaps



+18pp

+16pp

+13pp

+13pp

Colleagues from marginalised groups are having materially different experiences within the same organisation.

Staff priorities (themes)

Zero tolerance enforcement and consequences	HIGH
Leadership accountability and behaviour change	HIGH
Trust rebuilding and transparent communication	HIGH
Policy review, clarity and consistent application	MOD-HIGH
Manager capability and accountability	MOD
Site/HQ equity and inclusion of operational staff	MOD
Action not words/following through	MOD

Staff are asking for enforcement, not new policies

Actions based on recommendations

Leadership accountability statement

Comprehensive policy review

Forum review

HES for All inclusion training

Leadership development programmes

Senior leaders begin 360 feedback

HIVE survey in September 2026 and Wellbeing survey in 2027 to monitor progress

Commence an inclusive hiring review to identify how we can diversify our workforce pipeline through inclusive recruitment practices

Quarterly reporting to ELT and People committee on progress