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Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Provision in **Swindon and Wiltshire**: Current Landscape and Future Directions

2024

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A note about language - ‘Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)’?

Throughout this report, we refer to the topic as Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) to engage a wider audience, as this is the most widely used terminology. We recognise and encourage the shift towards using the term Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), as this reflects a deeper awareness of systemic and institutional inequalities and emphasises the importance of fairness. Additionally, we recognise that organisations may also prefer to use the term corporate social responsibility (CSR). However, as we aim to raise awareness of this provision and its benefits in Swindon and Wiltshire, we have chosen to use the most recognised term.

Introduction

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) is essential for building resilient, innovative, and competitive businesses. A diverse workforce brings significant benefits, including improved financial performance, innovation, and enhanced reputation. Companies in the top quartile for ethnic diversity have a 39% increased likelihood of financial outperformance compared to those in the bottom quartile,¹ highlighting how diverse perspectives can contribute to the creation of new solutions and help break away from traditional ways of thinking enhancing organisational success.² Research has also shown that there is a potential £15 return for every £1 invested in inclusion initiatives across organisations due to increased creativity and problem-solving abilities.³ These advantages underline the importance of EDI in achieving business success in regions including Swindon and Wiltshire.

Swindon and Wiltshire is home to a diverse range of industries, including Automotive, Transport and Logistics, Health, Social Care and Life Sciences, Agriculture, Agritech and Land Management, Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering, as well as Construction and the Built Environment. Inclusive practices are vital for addressing skills gaps and increasing workforce retention across these industries. Embracing diversity allows businesses to tap into a wider pool of talent, particularly at a time of skills shortages, improving both performance and productivity.⁴

This project is a small sub-project as part of the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP),⁵ which aims to make post-16 technical education and training more responsive to employer needs. Our research as part of the LSIP highlighted that businesses recognise the role of EDI in enhancing workforce inclusivity and competitiveness, however, many challenges were highlighted by businesses in ensuring EDI within their industries. Reported challenges included limited workforce diversity,

¹ McKinsey & Company, 'Diversity matters even more: The case for holistic impact' (December 2023) [Why diversity matters even more | McKinsey](#)

² Desmond Adams, 'Harnessing The Power Of Diversity For Profitability' (March 2022) [Harnessing The Power Of Diversity For Profitability](#)

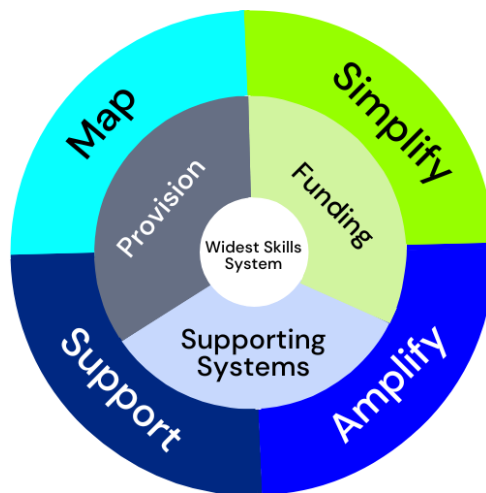
³ Diversity Digest, 'Invest in Inclusion: The Business Case for EDI' (November 2020) [Invest in Inclusion: The Business Case for EDI – Diversity Digest](#)

⁴ CIPD, 'The case for disability workforce reporting' (October 2023) [The case for disability workforce reporting](#)

⁵ Business West, Local Skills Improvement Plan – Swindon and Wiltshire [Local Skills Improvement Plan - Swindon and Wiltshire | Business West](#)

retention issues, mental health struggles, knowing how to support marginalised or neurodivergent employees, inaccessible hiring practices, and attracting a more diverse range of candidates. The EDI sub-project was therefore developed to gain further insight into the supply and demand for EDI training and wider support in the region. The sub-project supports the wider LSIP objectives (see LSIP Stage 2 Objectives below) and is guided by three key objectives:

1. **Mapping Existing EDI Provision:** Identifying the EDI training and support available to businesses and individuals in Swindon and Wiltshire.
2. **Identifying EDI Demand:** Offers a glimpse into the demand for EDI training and support based on the organisations engaged with for this project.
3. **Actioning Requirements:** Providing practical recommendations to address gaps and help businesses embed EDI more effectively within their work culture.



1. LSIP Stage 2 Objectives

Methodology

The first part of this research project aimed to identify what already exists in Swindon and Wiltshire in relation to EDI within the post-16 technical education and skills landscape. This included desktop research to identify and map EDI-related training, initiatives and wider support in the local area. Gustavo Guntren, Policy Analyst at Business West, conducted additional desktop research to identify relevant secondary sources of research and labour market intelligence. See Appendix A for

the full list of EDI-related training we found in our research. We have also included a spotlight on some of the wider support organisations and networks in Appendix B. In doing so, we hope to amplify the training and wider support available and simplify the process for individuals looking to start or enhance their EDI journey by providing a breakdown of some of the training and support they can access in the local area.

The second part of this project was focused on gaining further insight into the demand for EDI training and support in Swindon and Wiltshire. This was gained directly from the providers and support organisations we engaged with by discussing the numbers of learners on their courses and accessing their support, how the demand has fluctuated for their services over the past several years, and any triggers for an increase/decrease in demand. See '[Insights into the Demand for EDI Training and Support](#)' for an analysis of the demand for EDI training and support based on the organisations we engaged with.

In total, we contacted more than 40 organisations and engaged with 16 providers, businesses, support organisations and other regional stakeholders in Swindon and Wiltshire to gain their input into the project. This allowed us to gain qualitative data into EDI needs, challenges, and gaps in support, as well as quantitative data from providers into the numbers of learners on their training programmes. Further engagement is however recommended to ensure input from a wider range of organisations and continued collaboration.

The final part of this project was focused on developing a set of recommendations based on our findings and feedback from the stakeholders we engaged with. Please see the '[Recommendations for Improving EDI Support and Training in Swindon and Wiltshire](#)' for our recommendations. This report alongside the recommendations will be shared with local stakeholders including Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council to strengthen EDI initiatives in the local area.

Scope

To align with the scope of the core LSIP research, this EDI research and report has mapped post-16 workplace training only. EDI training has been interpreted to include any training relevant to the

protected characteristics in the Equality Act⁶, as well as any training designed to improve workplace wellbeing. The research has mapped training provision provided by further education, higher education, and independent training providers.

Further Benefits of Cultivating a Diverse Workforce:



⁶ Equality Act 2010

⁷ **Increased Innovation:** Juliet Bourke, 'The diversity and inclusion revolution: Eight powerful truths' (Deloitte Review, issue, January 2018) [Eight truths about diversity and inclusion at work | Deloitte Insights](#); **Enhanced Problem Solving:** David Rock and Heidi Grant, 'Why Diverse Teams Are Smarter' (Harvard Business Review, November 2016) [Why Diverse Teams Are Smarter](#); **Greater Creativity:** Desmond Adams, 'Harnessing The Power Of Diversity For Profitability' (Forbes, March 2022) [Harnessing The Power Of Diversity For Profitability](#), **Empathy Enrichment:** King College London, 'Invest in Inclusion: The Business Case for EDI' (Diversity Digest, November 2020) [Invest in Inclusion: The Business Case for EDI – Diversity Digest](#)

Financial and Economic Impact⁸



Market Competitiveness and Social Responsibility⁹



⁸ **Financial Performance:** Dame Vivian Hunt, 'Diversity matters even more: The case for holistic impact' (McKinsey & Company, December 2023) [Why diversity matters even more | McKinsey](#); **Return on Investment:** King College London, 'Invest in Inclusion: The Business Case for EDI' (Diversity Digest, November 2020) [Invest in Inclusion: The Business Case for EDI – Diversity Digest](#); **Economic Contribution:** Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, 'BME individuals in the labour market: analysis of full representation' (Gov.UK, February 2017) [BME individuals in the labour market: analysis of full representation - GOV.UK](#); **Reduced Risk of Underperformance:** see 'Financial Performance' reference under footnote 8;

⁹ **Employee Wellbeing:** CIPD, 'Neuroinclusion at Work Report 2024' (CIPD Survey Report, February 2024) [Neuroinclusion at work report 2024](#); **Social Impact:** see 'Financial Performance' reference under footnote 8; **Market Expansion:** Max Nathan, Neil Lee, 'Cultural diversity, innovation and entrepreneurship: firm-level evidence from London' (LSE Research Online, August 2014) [lse.ac.uk_storage_LIBRARY_Secondary_libfile_shared_repository_Content_Nathan,M_Cultural_diversity_Nathan_Cultural_diversity_2014.pdf](#); **Investment Success:** Paul Gompers and Silpa Kovvali, 'The Other Diversity Dividend' (Harvard Business Review, August 2018) [Finally, Evidence That Diversity Improves Financial Performance](#)

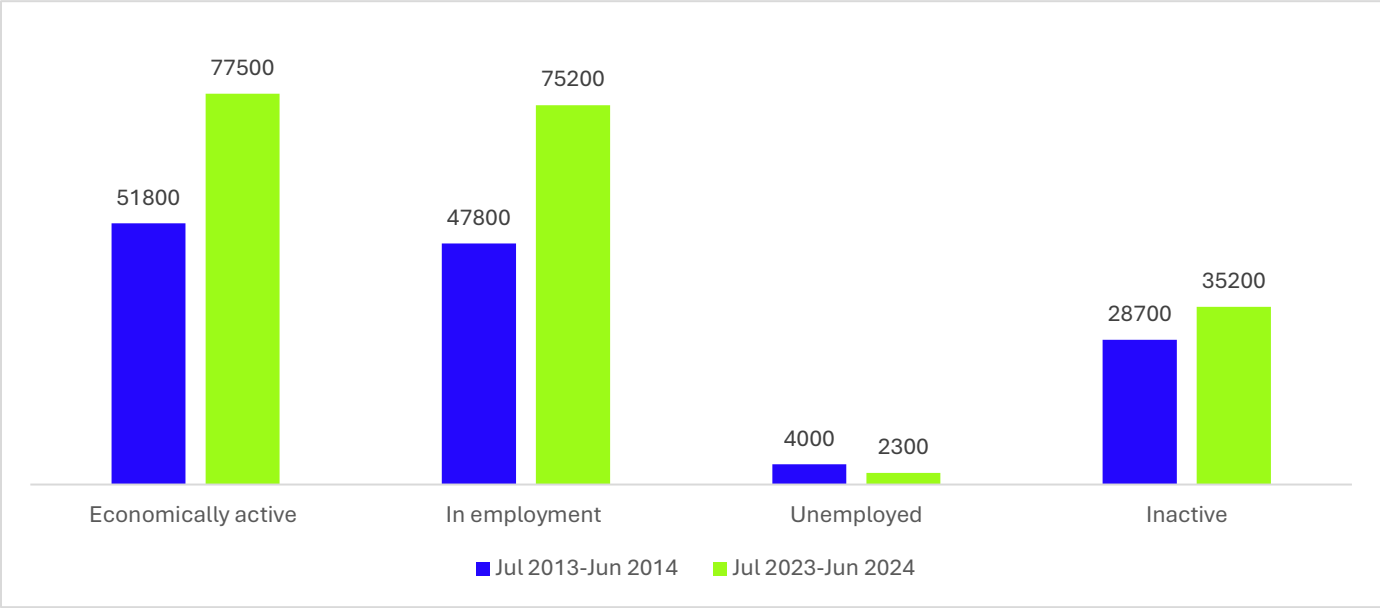
Demographics of Swindon and Wiltshire

The data for the three charts below is based on the ONS Annual Population Survey 2024.

Swindon and Wiltshire Economically Active Population with Current or Work-Limiting Disability by Status (Jul 2013 - Jun 2014/Jul 2023-Jun 2024)¹⁰

The chart below shows the number of people with a current or work-limiting disability who are economically active, in employment, unemployed or inactive, please see below for a definition of each of these terms:

- **Economically active:** People aged 16 and over who are either in employment or unemployed.
- **In employment:** Consists of people aged 16 years and over who did one hour or more of paid work per week and those who had a job that they were temporarily away from (for example, because they were on holiday or off sick).
- **Unemployed:** includes people, without a job, who have been actively seeking work in the past four weeks and are available to start work in the next two weeks, as well as those out of work, who have found a job and are waiting to start it in the next two weeks
- **Inactive:** Economically inactive people are those without a job who have not actively sought work in the last four weeks, and/or are not available to start work in the next two weeks.¹¹

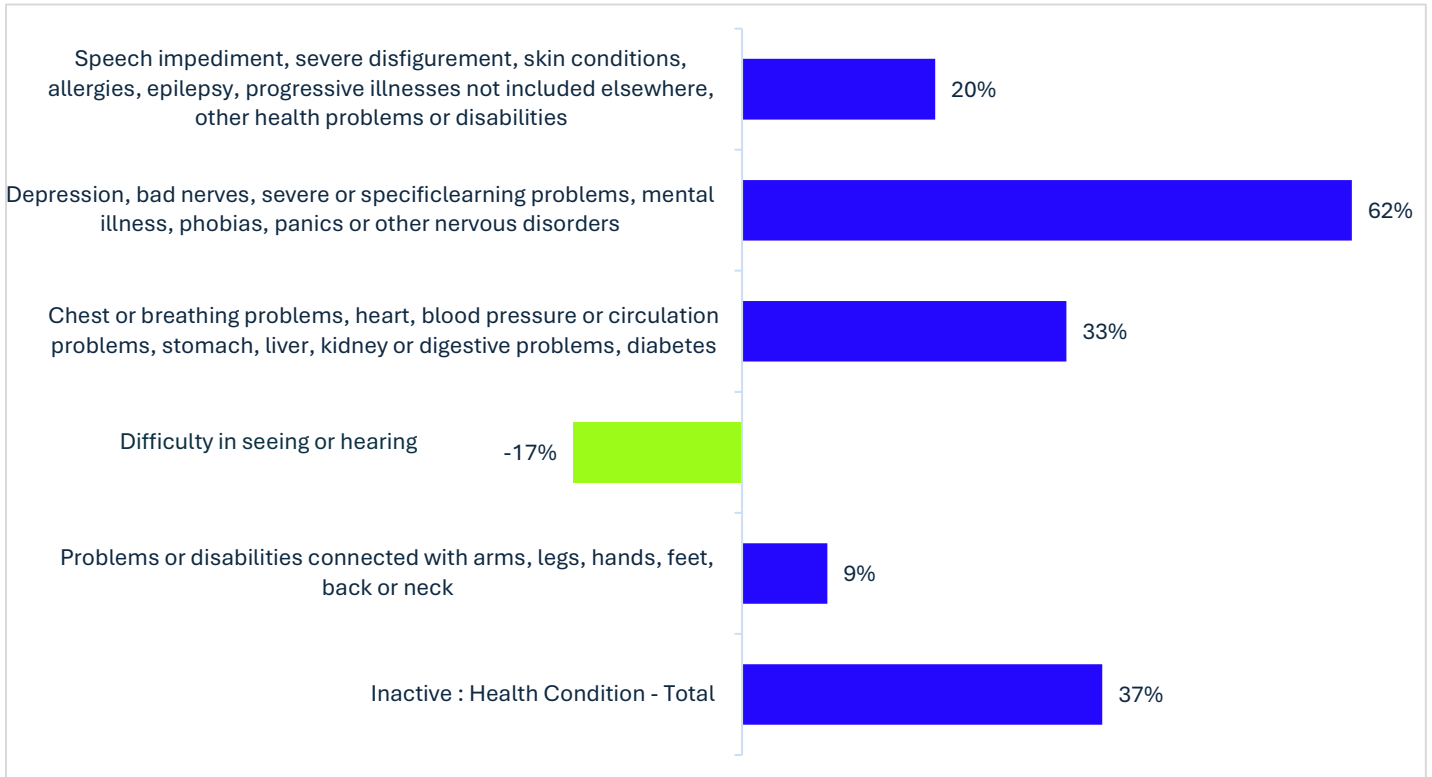


¹⁰ Source: ONS (2024), Annual Population Survey

¹¹ Debra Leaker, 'A guide to labour market statistics' (ONS, June 2020) [A guide to labour market statistics - Office for National Statistics](#)

Percentage Difference Health Related Inactivity (Jul 2013-Jun 2014/Jul 2023-Jun 2024)¹²

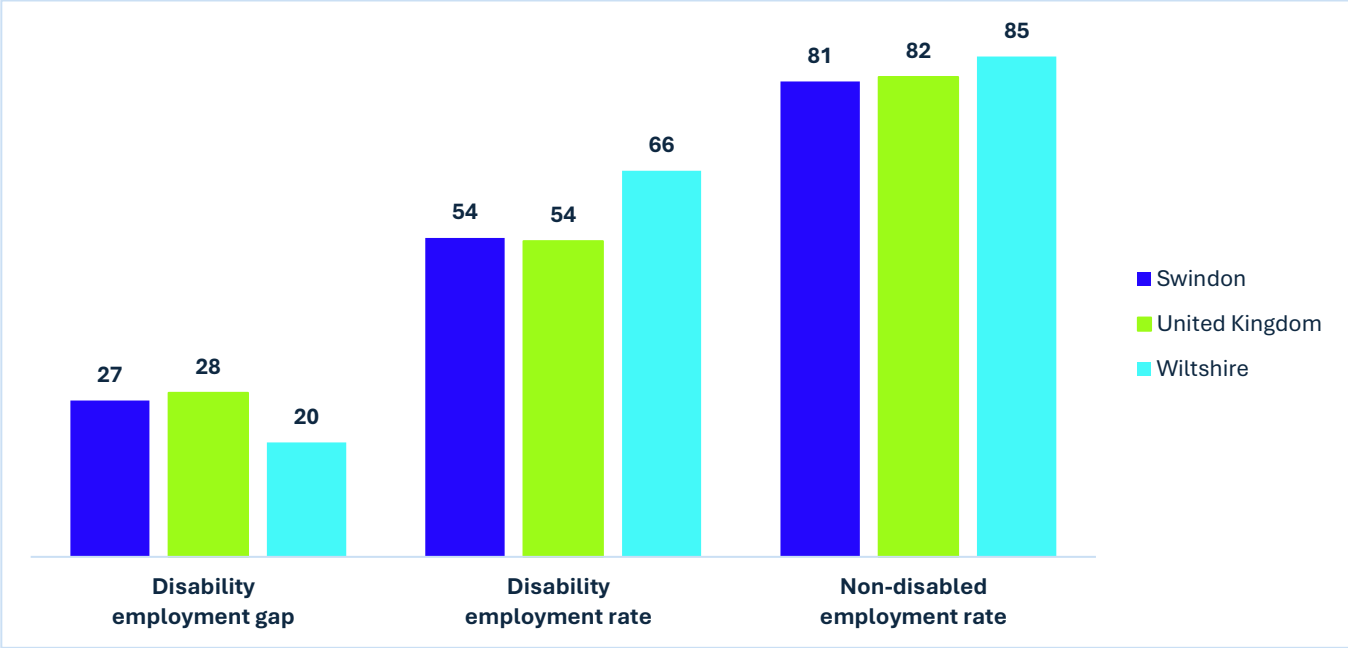
The below chart highlights the changes across various health conditions contributing to inactivity between July 2013–June 2014 and July 2023–June 2024 in the Swindon and Wiltshire local area (see the definition above of inactive).



¹² Source: ONS (2024), Annual Population Survey

Employment Rate: Disabled and Non-Disabled Economically Active Population (2024)¹³

The below chart shows the disability employment gap in Swindon and Wiltshire, and how this compares to national statistics.



¹³ Source: ONS (2024), Annual Population Survey

Highlights from EDI Engagements

This section provides an overview of the key themes from our discussions with organisations.

Scope of EDI Training and Support

A recurring theme from our engagements was that EDI extends beyond the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010. Instead, it is about cultivating inclusion and ensuring positive experiences for all individuals.¹⁴ At its core, as highlighted by our engagements, EDI is about making people feel welcome, underpinned by principles of kindness, empathy and active listening. With engagements saying EDI is about “positive people experience” and “making everyone welcome by being kind and listening”.

Support organisations have embraced a broad definition of ‘disability’ to include both physical and mental conditions. This inclusive approach reduces the risk of exclusive systems where organisations only provide support to individuals with specific disabilities or who meet strict eligibility requirements which can inadvertently frustrate those trying to access support. Similarly, the majority of EDI training providers offer training to organisations across all industries, and many training courses are also open to individuals looking to support friends or family members, again helping to ensure a wider reach of support.

Most providers and networks we engaged with highlighted how their primary outreach strategy relies on word of mouth, which ensures they are attracting individuals and businesses that are motivated to improve their approach to EDI. Whilst this approach ensures participants are proactive and committed to making lasting changes, it could exacerbate the challenges of businesses knowing where to start and what support is available to them. Without targeted communication efforts or visible, centralised resources, businesses lacking existing EDI networks or knowledge may remain excluded. This could particularly affect smaller businesses, which may lack the internal capacity to proactively seek EDI support.

¹⁴ The Equality Act (2010)

Motivations for EDI Training and Network Participation

Various motivations for businesses currently engaging in EDI initiatives were identified:

- **Personal Connections:** The main reasons for people seeking EDI training or joining a local network were due to lived experiences that have led people to want to promote greater inclusivity.
- **Regulatory and Funding Compliance:** External pressures like government certifications further influence demand.
- **Reactive Needs:** Most EDI engagement is still reactive, triggered by workplace events or regulatory requirements (e.g., Ofsted or Care Quality Commission), funding/grant mandates, or addressing specific crises.
- **Proactive Measures:** Forward-thinking businesses pursue training to build a culture of inclusivity or meet strategic objectives like obtaining B Corp certification.

Person-Centric Approaches to EDI Support

Several support organisations highlighted the benefits of taking a person-centric, strengths-based approach when working with the individuals they support. By focusing on the unique aspirations and abilities of individuals, organisations have reported improved retention rates and more inclusive workplace cultures, with Workfit Swindon seeing 95% of employees with down syndrome kept on in their placement a year after they start work¹⁵. A person-centric and strengths-based approach shifts the narrative from "what support will this individual require?" to "what can this individual contribute?", which organisations have found incredibly beneficial.

Leadership and Workplace Culture

Effective EDI requires commitment from the top down; leadership must authentically champion EDI and ensure this message is embedded within the workplace culture, while attitudes among the workforce must reflect a genuine desire to cultivate inclusivity.¹⁶ Embedding an inclusive culture

¹⁵ From our conversation with Roy Perrett, WorkFit Liaison Officer at Workfit Swindon

¹⁶ Ben Nancholas, 'The role of leaders in promoting diversity and inclusion' (University of Sunderland, May 2024) [The role of leaders in promoting diversity and inclusion - University of Sunderland](#)

within an organisation is crucial for promoting greater business performance and productivity and should be a shared goal amongst employees, of all levels.¹⁷ A genuine interest in equality, diversity and inclusion is equally as important – whilst the leadership should drive EDI within the workforce and show a clear ambition to do better – it is important that people want to contribute, without just being told. This is to encourage more meaningful action and help ensure the longevity of any EDI initiatives. One of the ways businesses can achieve this is by encouraging employees to identify their individual reasons for wanting to promote EDI. These reasons can differ amongst employees, some reasons are below:

- **Personal Experiences:** Lived experiences of barriers to equality diversity and inclusion which drives an individual to champion greater EDI
- **Workplace Culture:** Improved recruitment and retention of employees with an improved more inclusive workplace culture
- **Community:** A desire to contribute positively to the wider community
- **Innovation and Creativity:** A diverse workforce brings unique perspectives and drives innovation and problem-solving
- **Compliance and Risk Management:** Understanding the need to meet legal requirements and mitigate risks of non-compliance
- **Health and Wellbeing:** An inclusive environment positively impacts employees’ mental health and wellbeing, reducing stress and creating a more supportive workplace
- **Learning and Growth:** Interest in continuous personal and professional development

Leaders looking to ensure that the company’s EDI strategy is embedded into the workplace culture could consider incorporating EDI actions into staff appraisals. For example, including an opportunity for staff to show the positive action they have taken to support the company’s EDI strategy and their own personal development. This could involve completing specific training, sharing resources on EDI-related topics to raise awareness and encourage greater action, or taking part in a network.

¹⁷ CIPD, ‘The case for disability workforce reporting’ (October 2023) [The case for disability workforce reporting](#)

Some of the top skills that organisations highlighted in our engagements as key for inclusive businesses are:

- Positive attitude
- Proactive approach to being more inclusive
- Open-minded and willing to take steps to be more inclusive
- Empathy and compassion
- Active listening
- Allyship

Challenges to EDI Training and Implementation

Fear of Getting it Wrong

A major obstacle for businesses avoiding EDI action is due to fear of making a mistake and possible negative repercussions, such as reputational damage. This hesitation, especially among leadership, can often lead to inaction. However, feedback highlighted how inaction can be more harmful than trying and making a mistake. Businesses starting their journey to improve their EDI strategy and implementation have looked at examples of others leading the way in this space for inspiration and guidance on where to start, they have also shown a willingness to take ownership of any mistakes made whilst doing their best to get it right.¹⁸

Resource Constraints

Limited time and funding present challenges, particularly for smaller businesses. EDI can often fall on passionate employees as an additional reasonability on top of their existing workload and commitments, sometimes without adequate support or recognition.

¹⁸Iñigo Gallo, Why Making Mistakes Is Essential for Growth as a Real Leader (Harvard Business Review, November 2023) [Why Making Mistakes Is Essential for Growth as a Real Leader - SPONSOR CONTENT FROM IESE](#)

Skill Gaps within Leadership

Effective leadership is critical to EDI implementation, but concerns were raised over the leaders who have found themselves in their position because they excelled in their role, but are not appropriately trained with the skills and experience to handle difficult conversations, address biases, or implement a more inclusive workplace culture etc. With leadership crucial to implementing an effective EDI strategy, dedicated training for leaders in this area is recommended. See the 'Inclusive Leadership' courses in Appendix A for local training to address this need (page 29 for funded/free courses, and page 36 for paid for courses).

Inclusive Hiring Practices

A challenge that many organisations raised in our engagements was how recruitment processes often unintentionally exclude diverse candidates. Some of the reported barriers to standard recruitment practices include unconscious bias in job descriptions and hiring processes, limited outreach when organisations are advertising for a job, and accessibility issues in the hiring and interview process.¹⁹ Successful local initiatives, such as Workfit Swindon's efforts to create accessible application processes for people with Down Syndrome, highlight the benefits of inclusive hiring practices.

Data Challenges

Tracking workforce demographics is vital for identifying shortfalls and addressing disparities, yet many organisations struggle to collect reliable data due to employee hesitations about sharing personal information. Clear communication about the purpose of data collection, ensuring anonymisation and secure access to the data can help alleviate concerns. Some organisations have moved this data collection and analysis away from HR, with those working in EDI now handling the process as a way of encouraging confidence.

¹⁹ TalentAlly, 'Navigating the Barriers to Diverse Recruiting: A Guide for HR Leaders and Recruiters' (LinkedIn, September 2024) ([24 Navigating the Barriers to Diverse Recruiting: A Guide for HR Leaders and Recruiters | LinkedIn](#)); Zoe Talent Solutions, Overcoming Common Barriers to Recruitment Diversity (Zoe Talent Solutions, October 2023) ([Overcoming Common Barriers to Recruitment Diversity | Zoe Talent Solutions](#))

Rural and Accessibility Challenges

The unique dynamics of rural areas like Wiltshire, present additional barriers. In 2020/21 there were 549,000 businesses registered in rural areas, accounting for 23% of all registered businesses in England.²⁰ Disabled individuals face significant challenges if they cannot drive, and access to work and education is heavily hindered by public transport difficulties, with unreliable public transport reported to have let down 58% of rural SMEs.²¹ Virtual or hybrid training therefore helps to reach more people despite geographic constraints.²²

Insights into the Demand for EDI Training and Support

Mental Health Courses

Providers have highlighted how the demand has been high for Mental Health related courses, with the Mental Health First Aid and Men's Mental Health courses seeing an increase in demand. The demand for these courses has drastically increased in recent years and post-pandemic. Whilst many providers that offer training in Swindon and Wiltshire are also able to deliver Mental Health training outside of the region, local funding has driven demand for training that engages more local businesses.

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

There has also been an increase in demand for the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Skills For Life course, largely attributed to the number of Afghan re-settlers in Wiltshire.

Understanding Autism

Understanding Autism was also reported to be a popular course, with businesses as well as individuals who want to learn more about Autism to support colleagues, friends and family.

²⁰Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, 'Official Statistics: Rural business statistics' (July 2022)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/rural-enterprise/rural-business-statistics#businesses>

²¹British Chambers of Commerce, 'Public infrastructure and access to labour splits UK small businesses down rural-urban divide' (March 2023) <https://www.britishchambers.org.uk/news/2023/03/public-infrastructure-and-access-to-labour-splits-uk-small-businesses-down-rural-urban-divide/>

²² Sean McPheat, 'What is Virtual Training and its Benefits?' (SkillsHub , 2022) [What is Virtual Training | Skillshub](#)

LGBTQ+

There has been a drop in demand for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and more (LGBTQ+) courses, with some providers reporting to have seen a decrease in demand from employers this year, whilst other providers reported a decline post covid which they felt was exacerbated by politics, with interest in LGBTQ+ training increasing with the new government.

Mode of Delivery

Flexible virtual short courses are a popular choice from providers and learners alike, with 68 of the 79 courses found for this project being virtual courses (including the courses where learners can choose between virtual or face-to-face delivery. There has been a lot more demand for flexible and virtual approaches given the region's rural and accessibility challenges; virtual/hybrid courses enable providers to reach a much wider audience.

Recommendations for Improving EDI Support and Training in Swindon and Wiltshire

Based on the challenges and insights gathered, this section outlines several recommendations to strength EDI provision in Swindon and Wiltshire.

To Promote a More Proactive Approach to EDI:

1. Overcome Fear of Mistakes

Many businesses hesitate to act on EDI due to fears of “getting it wrong.” Employers are encouraged to adopt a proactive mindset: trial initiatives, seek guidance from local networks, and learn from mistakes.²³ Demonstrating authentic effort signals a genuine commitment to EDI and builds trust

²³ Thom Dennis, ‘Why fear stops inclusion and 14 ways to break the cycle’ (HR Director, May 2021) [Why fear stops inclusion and 14 ways to break the cycle | theHRD](#); Daisy Auger-Domínguez, ‘Getting Over Your Fear of Talking About Diversity’ (Harvard Business Review, November 2019) [Getting Over Your Fear of Talking About Diversity](#)

among employees and stakeholders. As one organisation we spoke with stressed: “Employers just need to be open and try!”

2. Adopt Inclusive Hiring Practices

Non-inclusive recruitment systems can be a barrier to ensuring a diverse workforce. Review your current hiring process, from job descriptions and applications to interviews and post-interview actions, to ensure greater accessibility. Inclusive hiring broadens the talent pool and helps address regional skills gaps.²⁴

3. Utilise EDI Networks for Collaboration

Internal and cross-organisational EDI networks provide a platform for collaboration, accountability and shared learning. Effective networks should have clear objectives, metrics for success, and executive buy-in where possible to ensure recommendations lead to action. See Appendix B for local EDI networks and support organisations.²⁵

4. Embed EDI in the Organisational Culture

Encourage greater organisational buy-in by helping employees identify personal motivations for promoting EDI. Different people may be inclined to promote EDI for different reasons, understanding the diverse drivers can cultivate more meaningful engagement. There needs to be a clear connection between leadership and the wider workforce, to avoid a gap between stated values and actual practices. Leaders should engage meaningfully with employees across all levels, to ensure EDI values are championed at the top and consistently reinforced throughout the organisation.²⁶ By ensuring EDI values are championed at the top and successfully embedded within the workplace

²⁴ CIPD, ‘Inclusive recruitment: Guide for people professionals’ (CIPD, November 2024) [Inclusive recruitment: Guide for employers | CIPD](#)

²⁵ Labour Laws UK, ‘The Role of Employee Networks in Promoting Diversity and Inclusion’ (Labour Laws UK, June 2024) [The Role of Employee Networks in Promoting Diversity and Inclusion - Labour Laws UK](#)

²⁶ Mahroo Shahbaz and Rachel Dekker, ‘Inclusive Workplace Culture: The Case for Integrating EDI Across Your Organisation’ (Embedding into Culture, April 2024) UCL, ‘Embedding a successful EDI culture – in eight steps’ (UCL Faculty of Life Sciences) [Embedding a successful EDI culture – in eight steps | UCL Faculty of Life Sciences - UCL – University College London](#)

culture, organisations can expect to see improved performance, retention, and employee well-being.²⁷

5. Expand Leadership Training

Equip leaders with the skills to manage biases, lead challenging conversations, and drive inclusive practices. Strong leadership is a cornerstone of successful EDI integration, ensuring top-down and bottom-up alignment on EDI goals.²⁸

Strengthening Strategic EDI Support

6. Enhance Accessibility and Outreach

Address accessibility challenges, especially in rural areas, by promoting hybrid and remote training options and improving transportation access to in-person sessions. Targeted efforts should also focus on connecting underrepresented groups with EDI resources and networks.²⁹

7. Simplified EDI Support and Signposting

Simplify the process for businesses seeking support by providing clear, actionable guidance on available resources, courses, and funding opportunities. Creating centralised EDI resource hub could provide local businesses with the tools and information to support them on their EDI journey. This could sit within the local council's webpages and include a directory of providers and networks, case studies and best practices, as well as upcoming event and networking opportunities listings.³⁰

²⁷ Dame Vivian Hunt, 'Diversity matters even more: The case for holistic impact' (McKinsey & Company, December 2023) [Why diversity matters even more | McKinsey](#); King College London, 'Invest in Inclusion: The Business Case for EDI' (Diversity Digest, November 2020) [Invest in Inclusion: The Business Case for EDI – Diversity Digest](#); CIPD, 'Neuroinclusion at Work Report 2024' (CIPD Survey Report, February 2024)

²⁸ See the 'Inclusive Leadership' courses in Appendix A for local training to address this need (see page 29 for funded/free courses, and page 36 for paid for courses).

²⁹ Sheryl Trent, 'How to Facilitate Inclusive Community Outreach and Engagement' (ICMA, May 2021) [How to Facilitate Inclusive Community Outreach and Engagement | icma.org](#)

³⁰ For a list of local EDI training see Appendix A, for further resources see Appendix B. You can also view the West of England and North Somerset Equality Diversity and Inclusion Report (2024), and Gloucestershire Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Report (2024) on the LSIP Resources Page - [LSIP Resources | Business West](#)

8. Continued Collaboration

A more joined-up collaborative approach is recommended to ensure continued engagement with businesses, providers, and support organisations to monitor progress, address existing and evolving challenges, and strengthen EDI strategies.³¹

Conclusion

The findings and insights from this Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion sub-project highlight the importance of encouraging inclusive workplaces in Swindon and Wiltshire. By embracing EDI, businesses can address critical workforce challenges, bridge skills gaps, and unlock further opportunities for innovation and growth. This report provides a summary of local training opportunities and a glimpse into the demand for EDI training alongside the barriers businesses face in embedding inclusivity within work cultures. While this was a small sub-project into the supply and demand for EDI in Swindon and Wiltshire, it is hoped that this research encourages further collaboration and continued engagement with local stakeholders to strengthen EDI initiatives.

Effective EDI implementation requires a proactive and collaborative approach, with strong leadership, effective training, robust networks and support organisations playing crucial roles. The recommendations outlined aim to empower businesses, training providers, and stakeholders to take actionable steps in driving meaningful change. By investing in EDI, organisations can cultivate environments where all individuals feel valued, respected, and empowered, which has been shown to enhance a company's performance, retention, and overall workforce well-being.³²

³¹ John Estafanous, 'How To Measure And Promote Inclusion And Collaboration In The Workplace' (Forbes Human Resources Council, February 2023) [How To Measure And Promote Inclusion And Collaboration In The Workplace](#)

³² Dame Vivian Hunt, 'Diversity matters even more: The case for holistic impact' (McKinsey & Company, December 2023) [Why diversity matters even more | McKinsey](#); King College London, 'Invest in Inclusion: The Business Case for EDI' (Diversity Digest, November 2020) [Invest in Inclusion: The Business Case for EDI – Diversity Digest](#); CIPD, 'Neuroinclusion at Work Report 2024' (CIPD Survey Report, February 2024)

Appendix A

EDI Provision in Swindon and Wiltshire

The below tables provide an overview of the funded/free and paid for EDI training in Swindon and Wiltshire. Courses were found through desktop research and by reviewing course prospectuses of all local colleges, additional courses were highlighted in conversations with local organisations. Please note that due to the evolving landscape there may be additional EDI-related courses in the local area that are not listed below. Many providers also deliver **bespoke training courses**, see their webpages for more information.

Funded/Free EDI Training

The funded/free training courses list includes courses where funding is available, this includes courses that are either completely free or with reduced rates. Some have eligibility criteria attached for the funding, please view the course website for more information. Where it was unclear if the course was free or paid for, the courses have been included in the funded/free training section, please see the providers webpages for more information.

Anti-Racism

Provider (A-Z)	Level	Name of Course	Virtual/In Person	Length of Course	Ages/Eligibility	Funded or Cost Fee
Black Mothers Matter, Health Innovation West of England, Representation Matters and BCohCo	Not applicable. Two courses delivered: one for senior leads and one for perinatal teams	Black Maternity Matters	In-person and virtual	6 months	Staff working in maternity and neonatal service	Funding available, contact for more information

General Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Courses

Provider (A-Z)	Level	Name of Course	Virtual/In Person	Length of Course	Ages/Eligibility	Funded or Cost Fee
Aspire Training Team	Introductory	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Training	Virtual	Contact for more information	All employees	Contact for more information
Aspire Training Team	Introductory	Unconscious Bias Training	Virtual	30-35 minutes	All employees	£10 + VAT
Aspire Training Team	Level 2	Certificate in Equality & Diversity – For Your Team	Virtual	3 weeks	No eligibility	Contact for more information
Learning Curve Group	Level 2	Level 2 Course in Equality And Diversity	Virtual	Flexible delivery	To study the course for free, learners must be 19+ and meet further eligibility requirements, see website for more information	Funding available, otherwise £399
New College Swindon	Level 2	Equality and Diversity Level 2	Virtual	1 year	Ideally, you will have a Level 2 in English or be working towards this	Free for those aged over 19 who meet the residency requirements for Adult Skills Funding in our area
Wiltshire College & University Centre	Level 2	NCFE Level 2 Certificate in Principles of Team Leading	Virtual	8 weeks	Learners must be 19+, see the provider's website for full eligibility information.	Fully funded
Wiltshire College & University Centre	Level 2	NCFE Level 2 Certificate in Equality and Diversity	Virtual	16 weeks	Learners must be 19+, no qualifications are required. See the provider's website for full eligibility information	Free

Disability Equity Courses

Provider (A-Z)	Level	Name of Course	Virtual/In Person	Length of Course	Ages/Eligibility	Funded or Cost Fee
Aspire Training Team	Introductory	Disability Awareness & Inclusion Training	Virtual	Contact for more information	All employees	Contact for more information
Aspire Training Team	Introductory	Epilepsy Awareness Training for Schools & Carers	Virtual	45 minutes	No eligibility, open to anyone	Contact for more information
New College Swindon	Level 2	Specific Learning Difficulties Level 2 Certificate	Virtual	Part-time, 3 months	Learners must be aged 19+ with L2 English. 19-23 must already have a full Level 2 qualification	Fully funded
New College Swindon	Level 3	Autism Level 3 Certificate	Virtual	1 year	Learners must have a minimum of Level 2 Literacy	Fully funded if learners meet the eligibility requirements or £600, see provider's website for more information
Wiltshire College & University Centre	Level 2	NCFE Level 2 Certificate in Principles of Working with Individuals with Learning Disabilities	Virtual	Four months	Learners must be aged 19+	Fully funded
Wiltshire College & University Centre	Level 2	STEP - SEND	Virtual	10 weeks	Learners should ideally have at least 3 GCSEs or equivalent	Funding available, see provider's website for more information.
Wiltshire College & University Centre	Level 2	NCFE Level 2 Certificate in Understanding Autism	Virtual	16 weeks	Learners must be aged 19+, no qualifications are required.	Fully funded

					For full eligibility information see the provider's website	
Wiltshire College & University Centre	Level 2	NCFE Level 2 Certificate in Understanding the Care and Management of Diabetes	Virtual	16 weeks	Learners must be aged 19+, no qualifications are required. For full eligibility information see the provider's website	Fully funded

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Provider (A-Z)	Level	Name of Course	Virtual/In Person	Length of Course	Ages/Eligibility	Funded or Cost Fee
Aspire Training Team	Introductory	Mindfulness Training	Virtual	Bitesize sessions: 10-minute training	All employees	Contact for more information
Create Support Integrative Creative Counselling	Introductory	Creative Counselling and Therapeutic Groups using arts	In-person	Sessions every week, times vary	Anyone 18+	Reduced rates for 18-25, and those in receipt of certain benefits, see provider's website for more information
My White Dog	Introductory	Adult Mental Health Aware	Virtual	4 hours	No eligibility, open to anyone	Funding available through Wiltshire Council
My White Dog	Introductory	Mental Health First Aid	In-person	2 days	No eligibility, open to anyone	Funding available through Wiltshire Council
My White Dog	Introductory	Adult Mental Health Champion	In-person	1 day	No eligibility, open to anyone	Funding available through Wiltshire Council

New College Swindon	Level 2	Awareness of Mental Health Problems Level 2 Certificate	Virtual	Part-time, 6 months	Learners must be 19+ with L2 English. 19-23 must already have a full Level 2 qualification	Fully funded
New College Swindon	Level 2	Understanding Children and Young People's Mental Health Level 2	Virtual	1 year	Learners must have L2 English qualification. Learners who are aged 19-23 must already have a full Level 2 qualification	Fully funded for learners who meet the eligibility, see the provider's website for more information
New College Swindon	Introductory	Healthy Lifestyle	In-person	3 days	Open to those 19+ and who have been a resident in the UK or EU for the last 3 years	Free for those who meet eligibility, otherwise £78
Wiltshire College & University Centre	Level 2	NCFE Level 2 Certificate in Awareness of Mental Health Problems	Virtual	16 weeks	Learners must be 19+, see provider's website for more information	Fully funded
Wiltshire College & University Centre	Level 2	NCFE Level 2 Certificate in Children and Young People's Mental Health	Virtual	16 weeks	Learners must be 19+, no qualifications are required. See provider's website for more information	Fully funded
Wiltshire College & University Centre	Level 2	NCFE Level 2 Certificate in Understanding Working with People with Mental Health Needs	Virtual	16 weeks	Learners must be 19+, no qualifications are required. See provider's website for	Fully funded

					more information	
Wiltshire College & University Centre	Level 2	NCFE Level 2 Certificate in Awareness of Men's Mental Health Problems	Virtual	28 weeks	Learners must be 19+, see provider's website for more information	Fully funded
Wiltshire College & University Centre	Level 2	NCFE Level 2 Certificate in Understanding Mental Health First Aid and Mental Health Advocacy in the Workplace	Virtual	16 weeks	Learners must be 19+, no qualifications are required. See provider's website for more information	Fully funded
Wiltshire Wildlife Trust	Introductory	Wild Workplaces Programme	In-person/online	Contact for more information	Employers and employees in Wiltshire	Fully funded
Wiltshire Wildlife Trust	Introductory	Men's Wellbeing Programme	In-person	12-week	Men aged 20-59	Fully funded

Inclusive Workplaces

Provider (A-Z)	Level	Name of Course	Virtual/In Person	Length of Course	Ages/Eligibility	Funded or Cost Fee
Aspire Training Team	Introductory	Sexual Harassment Awareness Training	Virtual	Contact for more information	No eligibility, open to anyone	Contact for more information
Training South West	Introductory	Free Intercultural Training Course	Virtual	1 hour 20 mins	All employees	Fully funded
Wiltshire College & University Centre	Level 2	NCFE Level 2 Certificate in Understanding Workplace Violence and Harassment	Virtual	8 weeks	Learners must be aged 19+, see provider's website for more information	Contact for more information

Wiltshire College & University Centre	Introductory	Skills For Life	In-person	1 year	No entry requirements but learners will have an EHCP and suitable funding in place from the local authority	Contact for more information
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Inclusive Leadership Training

Provider (A-Z)	Level	Name of Course	Virtual/In Person	Length of Course	Ages/Eligibility	Funded or Cost Fee
Aspire Training Team	Introductory	Bullying & Harassment Training for Managers	Virtual	Contact for more information	Leaders and managers	Contact for more information

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

Provider (A-Z)	Level	Name of Course	Virtual/In Person	Length of Course	Ages/Eligibility	Funded or Cost Fee
Wiltshire College & University Centre	Introductory	Business Management for ESOL	In-person	10 weeks	No entry requirements	Funding is available for learners aged 19+ who meet eligibility requirements (see provider's website for more information). Otherwise £80
Wiltshire College & University Centre	Introductory	ESOL for Employment	In-person	10 weeks	No entry requirements	Funding is available for learners aged 19+ who meet eligibility requirements (see provider's website for more information). Otherwise £80

						information). Otherwise £80
Wiltshire College & University Centre	L1-L3 options available	ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) Skills for Life	In-person	1 year	A basic knowledge of English. See provider's website for more information	Contact for more information

Paid for EDI Training

Anti-racism

Provider (A-Z)	Level	Name of Course	Virtual/In Person	Length of Course	Ages/Eligibility	Funded or Cost Fee
Wiltshire Training	Introductory	Terminology and the Language of Race	In-person /Virtual	1-hour	Contact for more information	£35

General Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

Provider (A-Z)	Level	Name of Course	Virtual/In Person	Length of Course	Ages/Eligibility	Funded or Cost Fee
Aspire Training Team	Introductory	Unconscious Bias Training	Virtual	30-35 minutes	All employees	£10 + VAT
Training South West	Introductory	Equality & Diversity	In-person /Virtual	1 day	Contact for more information	£1,400 excluding VAT
See Change Happen	Introductory	Equality and Diversity in the Workplace	In-person /Virtual	2 – 4 hours	Workplace, Club, Organisation	Cost/Fee, contact for more information
See Change Happen	Intermediate	Equality and Diversity in the Workplace	In-person /Virtual	2 – 4 hours	Workplace, Club, Organisation	Cost/Fee, contact for more information
Wiltshire Training	Introductory	Equality and Diversity in the Workplace	In-person/Virtual	1/2 day	Contact for more information	£75

Disability Equity

Provider (A-Z)	Level	Name of Course	Virtual/In Person	Length of Course	Ages/Eligibility	Funded or Cost Fee
Sign Together UK	Level 1	British Sign Language Level 1	In-person	12 weeks	Contact for more information	£165
Wiltshire Centre for Independent Living	Not applicable	Make Someone Welcome, various training sessions including How to be a Disability Ally, What is a Strengths-Based Approach and What Does it Look Like in Practice? Creating a Community Movement for Change	In-person/Virtual	Tailored to suit learners	No eligibility, open to anyone	Negotiable cost, contact for more information
Wiltshire Centre for Independent Living	Not applicable	Pioneer Programme: Leading the Way to Create Systems that Work for People	In-person/Virtual	Tailored to suit learners, from ½ day – 1 year	No eligibility, open to anyone	Negotiable cost, contact for more information
Wiltshire Training	Introductory	Epilepsy Awareness	Virtual	2 hours	No eligibility, open to anyone	£56 per person or £365 per group (up to 14)
Wiltshire Training	Introductory	Embracing Neurodiversity: Strategies for Inclusive Work Environments	In-person/Virtual	1/2 day	Contact for more information	£75

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Provider (A-Z)	Level	Name of Course	Virtual/In Person	Length of Course	Ages/Eligibility	Funded or Cost Fee
Aspire Training Team	CPD/introductory	Mental Health Awareness Training	Virtual	45 minutes	All employees	£10 + VAT
Aspire Training Team	Introductory	Mental Health Awareness Training	Virtual	40-45 minutes	No eligibility, open to anyone	£10 + VAT
Aspire Training Team	Introductory	Stress Awareness & Management Training	Virtual	30-35 minutes	Employers, safety representatives and employers	£10 + VAT
IT Training Solutions	Introductory	Coaching for Wellbeing??	In-person/Virtual	1 day	Contact for more information	Paid for, contact for more information
IT Training Solutions	Introductory	Managing Employee Mental Well-being - Managing Stress in Others	In-person/Virtual	1 day	Contact for more information	Paid for, contact for more information
My White Dog	NA	Adult MHFA Refresher Training	In-person/Virtual	4 hours	For individuals who have completed the 2-day Mental Health First Aid and the 1-day Mental Health First Aid Champion	£150
Training South West	NA	Stress Management	In-person/Virtual	One day	Suitable for anyone who feels the need to reduce their stress levels at work or home.	For groups of 20 people, the fee is equivalent to an individual investment

						of £70 per head.
Wiltshire First Aid Training	Level 2	Level 2 Award in First Aid for Mental Health	In-person/Virtual	1 day	Contact for more information	£100 + VAT per person
Wiltshire First Aid Training	Level 3	Level 3 Award in Supervising First Aid for Mental Health	In-person/Virtual	2 day	No eligibility but course more suited to those in a Managerial position or who have supervisory responsibilities.	£200 + VAT per person
Wiltshire Training	Introductory	Mental Health Training Courses	Virtual	3 hours	No eligibility, open to anyone	£69 per person (inc. VAT) or £430 per group (up to 14)
Wiltshire Training	Intermediate	Mental Health at Work	Virtual	4 hours	Adults, workplace-focused	£79 per person or £550 per group (up to 14)
Wiltshire Training	Advance	Supporting Young People's Mental Health	Virtual	4 hours	For those working with young people	£79 per person or £550 per group (up to 14)

Inclusive Workplaces

Provider (A-Z)	Level	Name of Course	Virtual/In Person	Length of Course	Ages/Eligibility	Funded or Cost Fee
Aspire Training Team	Introductory	Bullying & Harassment Training	Virtual	20-30 minutes	All employees	£10 + VAT
SARSAS	Introductory	Business and non-profit sexual harassment training	In-person/Virtual	Contact for more information	Businesses/non-profit organisations	Paid for, contact for more information
See Change Happen	Introductory	Building a Trans and Gender Diverse Workplace Culture	In-person/Virtual	120 -180 minutes	All employees	Cost/Fee, contact for more information
See Change Happen	Introductory	Empowering Effective Trans Allies	In-person/Virtual	60-90 minutes	All employees	Cost/Fee, contact for more information
See Change Happen	Intermediate	Enabling Courageous Conversations in the Workplace	In-person/Virtual	Half day- Full day	All employees	Cost/Fee, contact for more information
See Change Happen	Intermediate	Creating a Diverse and Inclusive Recruitment Culture	In-person/Virtual	Half day- Full day	Recruiters and Hiring Teams	Cost/Fee, contact for more information
See Change Happen	Intermediate	Powerful Workplace Allies	In-person/Virtual	Half day- Full day	All employees	Cost/Fee, contact for more information
See Change	Advanced	Bringing Trans and Nonbinary Inclusion Policies to Life	Contact for more information	Multi-day program	Workplace, Club, Organisation	Cost/Fee, contact for more information

See Change	Advanced	Supporting Transitioning in the Workplace	Contact for more information	4-8 hours	Workplace, Club, Organisation – suitable for Managers, HR or business owners	Cost/Fee, contact for more information
Wiltshire Training	Introductory	Creating an Inclusive Workforce	In-person/Virtual	1/2 day	Contact for more information	£75
Wiltshire Training	Introductory	Cultural Competence in the Community	In-person/Virtual	1/2 day	Contact for more information	£75

Inclusive Leadership Training

Provider (A-Z)	Level	Name of Course	Virtual/In Person	Length of Course	Ages/Eligibility	Funded or Cost Fee
Training South West	Introductory Level	Change Management	In-person/Virtual	One day	Change Project Managers HR practitioners Team leaders Staff with responsibility for change programmes	£1,400 excluding VAT
Training South West	Introductory Level	Emotional Intelligence for Leaders	In-person/Virtual	One day	Managers and leaders	£1,400 excluding VAT
Training South West	Introductory Level	Managing Multicultural Teams	In-person/Virtual	One day	Managers and team leaders as well as those in more senior positions within multicultural teams	£1,400 excluding VAT

See Change Happen	Introductory	Building an Inclusive Recruitment Process	In-person/Virtual	60 – 90 minutes	Leaders and managers who have recruitment responsibility	Cost/Fee, contact for more information
See Change Happen	Intermediate	Your Journey to Conscious Inclusion	In-person/Virtual	Half day- Full day	Managers, HR professionals or business owners	Cost/Fee, contact for more information
See Change Happen	Intermediate	The Inclusive Leaders Journey	In-person/Virtual	Half day- Full day	Aspiring and experienced leaders and managers	Cost/Fee, contact for more information

Appendix B

Additional resources

General EDI

[Institute of Directors Inclusion and Diversity Hub](#)

[CIPD's Resources for supporting staff](#)

[Why Equity over Equality](#)

[Intersectionality Resource Guide and Toolkit by UN Women](#)

[Creating Organisational Cultures that Champion Inclusion and Diversity](#)

[Wessex Community Action](#)

[Wiltshire Community Foundation](#)

Support Accessing Employment and Education

[Community First, Building Bridges and Inspire Swindon Programmes](#)

[Work Wiltshire, Wiltshire Employment Support Team](#)

Workplace Wellbeing

[5 Ways to Wellbeing at Work](#)

[Wiltshire Mind](#)

[Swindon & Gloucestershire Mind](#)

Disability

[Access to Work Guidance](#)

[SeeAbility](#)

[Seetec Pluss](#)

[Neuroinclusion at Work Guide](#)

[Wiltshire Local Offer](#) (services to those in the 0-25 years special educational needs and disability community)

[Wiltshire Autism Hub](#)

Anti-Racism

[Building anti-racist and compassionate workplaces](#)

[Nilaari](#)

[Black Families Education Support Group](#)

Gender Equality

[Women's Work Lab](#)

LGBTQ+

[Resources for creating an LGBTQ+ inclusive workplace](#)

[Swindon & Wiltshire Pride](#)

[Salisbury Pride UK CIC](#)

[Trowbridge Town Tigers](#)

Inclusive Job Boards

[Even Break](#)

[Vercida](#)

[The Diversity Dashboard](#)

[Women in Tech](#)

[Disability Job](#)

[BME Jobs](#)

[LGBT Jobs](#)

[Neurodiversity Jobs](#)

[Creative Access](#)

[Proud Employers](#)

Sector-specific resources

Construction

[EDI in construction - how to support diversity in construction | FMB, Federation of Master Builders](#)

[Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion | CIOB](#)

[Wellbeing Support for Construction](#)

[Equality and diversity policy - CITB](#)

Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing

[Reports | Make UK](#)

[How we can achieve full equality, diversity and inclusion in engineering - EngineeringUK | Inspiring tomorrow's engineers.](#)

[Diversity in engineering - EngineeringUK | Inspiring tomorrow's engineers.](#)

Automotive, Transport and Logistics

[Workplace Wellbeing Support for the Automotive Industry](#)

Agriculture Agritech and Land Management

[What we do | Newsite \(scrubditchcarefarm.org.uk\)](#)

[RABI helping farming people](#)

[Why inclusion matters - TIAH](#)

[Diversity & Inclusion in Agriculture: Leading With Intentionality - Foundation for Food & Agriculture Research \(foundationfar.org\)](#)

Creative Industries

[Creative Access EDI Resources](#)

[Creative Access Research webpage](#)

Health, Social Care and Life Sciences

[Black Maternity Matters - Health Innovation West of England](#)

Additional Local Networks and Support Organisations

Home | Swindon Inclusion & Diversity Network

- Free, member only, network aimed at business leaders, HR Directors, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Professionals, and anyone with the desire and power to effect change within their organisation.

Voluntary Action Swindon (VAS)

- Supports other charities and coordinates voluntary activity in the local area. Provides a forum through which local voluntary and community organisations and statutory sector organisations can communicate with each other and work together.

Wiltshire Centre for Independent Living (Wilts CIL)

- Wilts CIL is an organisation led by and working for disabled people. Wiltshire CIL can work with organisations, supporting them to attract, employ and retain disabled people. Disabled people are currently underrepresented in our workforce, which means employers are missing out on an untapped workforce, Wiltshire CIL are working to address that.

Workfit Swindon

- Supports adults with Down's syndrome into work-related activities (paid jobs, volunteering roles, work experience and traineeships) and also supports employers to facilitate this.

Wessex Community Action

- Works with and for the social sector providing practical support to develop products and services to build social value, stimulate connectivity, facilitate growth and build a collective voice.

Independent Living Centre, Semington

- Promotes independence for older individuals and people of all ages with disabilities

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- Zoe Talent Solutions, 'Overcoming Common Barriers to Recruitment Diversity' (Zoe Talent Solutions, October 2023) [Overcoming Common Barriers to Recruitment Diversity | Zoe Talent Solutions](#)
- For a step-by-step guide for more inclusive recruitment see CIPD, 'Inclusive Recruitment: Guide for People Professionals' (CIPD, November 2024) [Inclusive recruitment: Guide for employers | CIPD](#)

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All research was conducted between August-December 2024. This Report was published in December 2024.