



# **Capsticks' Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy and Plan 2021-2025**

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WHAT DRIVES US

Strategy  
2021 - 2025

Capsticks

# Delivering results that matter

2021

HOW WE'LL GET THERE >

**Motivated Teams**  
Who thrive and succeed

OUR FOCUS AREAS

- Personal growth
- Fair deal
- Wellbeing at work

KEY INITIATIVES >

- Launch of the Capsticks Academy, our re-structured learning programme
- Reinvigorate participation in 'Objective Manager' at all levels
- Continue the expansion of our leadership development programme
- Develop and publish our vision for employer of choice
- Set up ongoing employee satisfaction monitoring programme
- Review and update current rewards package to deliver consistency
- Implement a refreshed diversity and inclusion strategy

HOW WE'LL MEASURE SUCCESS >

- 3\* Best Companies rating
- Employee Net Promoter Score to 50
- 50% female & 15% BAME in partnership, 30% female & 10% BAME in EPs
- Equal retention of BAME and white staff

2025



Click + to discover how we'll achieve our goals

# EDI Executive Statement



**MARTIN HAMILTON**  
**MANAGING PARTNER**

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Equity, diversity and inclusion are fundamental to our purpose and vision – to deliver results that matter and to be the go-to advisors for those who work to make a difference. Thank you for reading this report; I'm really pleased to share with you our EDI strategy for the next five years. I hope it reflects the valuable feedback so many of you within the business gave us in the summer of 2021 from our first-ever inclusion survey. At Capsticks we also recognise that to be go-to advisors, we must reflect clients' own EDI priorities. I'm looking forward to working with everyone to achieve our strategic aims: to be accountable for the change we want to see; to build a diverse talent pipeline; and to foster an inclusive culture. My parents both left school at 15 and I was the first in my family to get to university and the law. I have my own, socio-economic experience of joining the legal profession without points of reference or a network, and of setbacks along the way. As Capsticks EDI Executive Sponsor and an ally, I bring my own personal perspective, and my own personal commitment, to building a truly diverse and inclusive business, for the benefit of us all.



**RACHAEL HEENAN**  
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Our job as leaders at Capsticks is to leave the firm and the profession in a better place. Progress has been made over the years so that women like myself without a privileged background and the first in her family to go to university, have the opportunity to lead a firm like Capsticks. This is our most important strategy to date – we want to provide opportunities for everyone (whatever their background) and as allies to shout the loudest for the underrepresented groups and progress social mobility in our firm and profession. Our values – People First, Doing the Right Thing and Forward Thinking - are at the core of our EDI strategy and plans to 2025.



**MICHELLE FOX**  
**HEAD OF TALENT AND DIVERSITY**

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Publishing this EDI strategy is a real milestone for Capsticks. It sets out not just how we will ensure a more diverse and inclusive workplace, but why. Above all, it gives us an ongoing platform for progress and accountability. I care deeply about people – I care about people having equal access to opportunities and about people growing and succeeding. As someone who identifies as bi and with a working class background, I have at times hidden my identity to fit in. Instead of channelling my energy into growing and succeeding, my energy was spent on worrying and doubting myself. Through a lot of hard work, I have realised my passion and my value, which is in creating spaces and opportunities for people to unlock their potential. I'm delighted to have been appointed Capsticks' first ever Talent and Diversity Lead to lead on developing and delivering the EDI strategy and plan and I'm proud to play my part in creating a workplace where no one is left behind or forgotten.

# EDI strategy and plan mid-strategy update, August 2023

We're 18 months in to delivering our five-year EDI strategy and plan, which felt like a good time to review and refresh the strategy. We wanted to use this opportunity to ensure we're making steady progress against our aspirations and targets, and above all, ensure that we're continuing to do everything we can to create a more diverse, equitable and inclusive workplace. Below are some important highlights and outputs, and a bit about the impact we've been seeing since we launched our strategy in October 2021.

- We're delighted to report that we've exceeded our aspirational target of 50% female at Partner – we're now at 50.5%, up from 36% 12 months ago.
- We're participating in the 10,000 Black Interns scheme this summer with three Black undergrads joining us for a six-week paid internship.
- We've recruited an Early Careers Business Partner (a brand new role) to help us build a pipeline of emerging Black and ethnically diverse talent.
- We're working with our external EDI consultants, the Clear Company, to roll out inclusive interview training to everyone with hiring responsibility to ensure we are eliminating bias at interview and ensuring our interviews are culturally sensitive, inclusive and accessible.
- All Partners attended our Inclusive Leadership workshop with Linbert Spencer at annual Partner Conference in October 2022.
- All Partners attended Anti-racism practice training with Jess Mally in November 2022.
- We've partnered with BlueSky who specialise in parental coaching for law firms, to step up our efforts to address gender representation at more senior levels within the firm, and to ensure women feel supported and included in progression opportunities. We now offer all women going on mat leave access to 1:1 coaching and networking sessions for before, during and after maternity leave.
- We're working towards becoming a neuro-inclusive firm – we produced manager guidance on neurodiversity in the workplace, we held a training session on neurodiversity in the workplace hosted by Daniel Aherne, and we joined the Legal Neurodiversity Network.
- We're increasingly seeing the relevance of our EDI strategy and plan to the work we're doing with our clients, whether that's in advising the NHS on inclusive HR best practice or working with our regulatory clients on reviewing inequality of outcomes in their processes.
- We've run a series of EDI focused events including; a Lunar New Year celebration in our Birmingham office, a trans-awareness session with Tate Smith to mark LGBT+ History Month, and a panel event featuring truly inspiring women at Capsticks to celebrate International Women's Day.
- And to cap it off, we were nominated for an EDI award at the Birmingham Law Society's annual legal awards in March 2023.
- Finally, we're launching a reciprocal mentoring programme in autumn 2023 to support the career development of our Black, Asian and Minoritised Ethnic colleagues.

There's a real spirit of inclusion spreading throughout Capsticks and we see this show up most often in the pockets of EDI activity happening across our offices and divisions; our Corporate and Commercial division has set up an EDI book club, our Housing and Regeneration division has appointed a Partner to its newly established Wellbeing Champion role, and our Regulatory and Claims divisions have established 'EDI task forces' to look at, for example, work allocation and attraction and recruitment of early careers diverse talent.

Finally, many of our divisions are creating space in their team meetings to give colleagues, who we otherwise might not hear from, an important platform, and a voice, to share their personal story, whether that's their experience of being LGBT+, Black, from a socio-economically diverse background, or a woman in the workplace. We're finding that these experiences are creating valuable opportunities for connection among colleagues, with the added benefit of raising awareness for all colleagues around identity and belonging in the workplace.

## What have we updated?

The main updates are to the EDI plan in the appendix on page 10 – previously we had 54 commitments and we've now streamlined these into a more manageable 30 commitments. We've also set out when we expect to achieve each of these commitments e.g. in year 1, 2, 3 or 4 to make it easier to track where we are and where we need to focus.

Year 1: October 2021 – October 2022

Year 2: October 2022 – October 2023

Year 3: October 2023 – October 2024

Year 4: October 2024 – October 2025 (strategy review and renew from October 2025)

## Definitions

**Equity** means everyone being given the support, access and services they need. Equity recognises that everyone is different and has differing needs and circumstances. (Equity is not to be confused with equality, which is about treating everyone the same and is somewhat flawed as it assumes we're all the same without taking into consideration people's differing needs.)

**Diversity** is what makes us different. Education, background, culture, ethnicity, race, nationality, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, neurodiversity, religion and beliefs are all examples of differences.

**Inclusion** is about embracing and valuing those differences. For us it's a business priority to ensure that diversity is celebrated. For each of us, an inclusive environment ensures we feel respected and valued for who we are, we feel we have a voice, we feel able to be ourselves, and ultimately feel we can do our best at work.

## At a glance – EDI at Capsticks

### Why EDI?

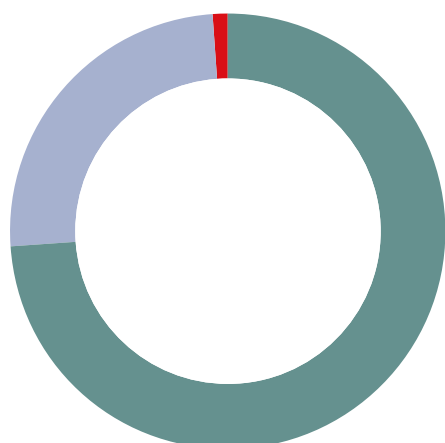
Diversity and inclusion are fundamental to our values. 'People first' is a core Capsticks value and how we treat each other says everything about who we are. Decency, respect, fairness and inclusion are words we live by. We are committed to increasing the diversity of our firm and ensuring everyone feels included, regardless of their education, background, culture, ethnicity, race, nationality, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, neurodiversity, religion and beliefs, because for us, it is simply the right thing to do.

In delivering our vision to be the go-to specialists in our chosen markets, known for building lasting relationships and delivering great outcomes for our people and clients, it's a real priority to ensure everyone feels they can contribute to this vision, and that everyone feels engaged, motivated and importantly, included.

There are business benefits to increasing diversity and inclusion, and legal obligations too:

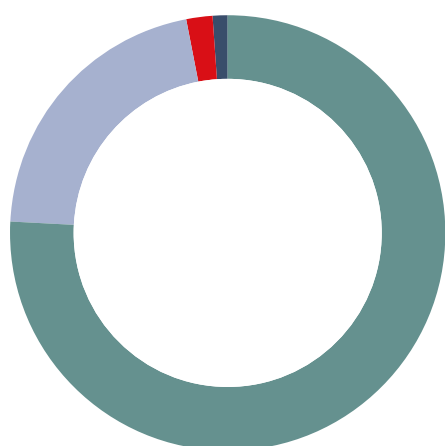
- **Greater creativity and innovation:** Diverse teams bring different ideas, perspectives, and experiences together, having richer and more productive brainstorming sessions – and making better decisions – but also because simply having a diverse workforce changes for the better the way that people in that environment think and behave. Research backs this up, for example [a study](#) from McKinsey shows that ethnically diverse companies outperform industry norms by 35%, and that gender-diverse companies and companies with gender-diverse boards outperform industry norms by 15%.
- **Higher levels of engagement and productivity:** An inclusive workplace allows people to thrive and succeed in an environment where they can bring their full, authentic selves; employees are most productive in a workplace where they feel valued and have a sense of belonging.
- **EDI is a law firm differentiator:** Law firms should reflect the diversity of the legal community and the companies and clients they serve. Increasingly, law firms that can't demonstrate to clients that they have the appropriate ratio of diversity in their workforce, may not be selected to do the work.
- **Legal and regulatory requirements:** And of course we must meet our duties under the Equality Act 2010 to avoid discrimination in employment and service provision; and principle six of the SRA Principles states that: "you [must] act in a way that encourages equality, diversity and inclusion."

# Who we are in 2023



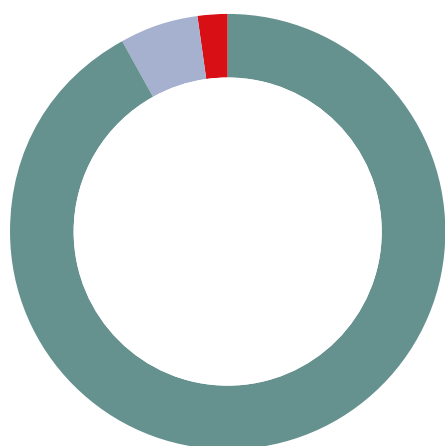
## Gender

- Female (74%)
- Male (25%)
- Other (1%)



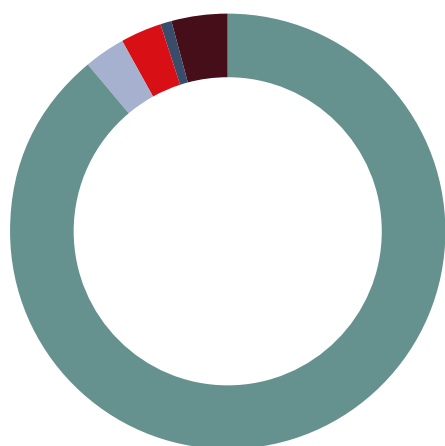
## Ethnicity

- White (76%)
- Black, Asian and Minoritised Ethnic (21%)
- Other (2%)
- Prefer not to say (1%)



## Disability

- Not declared disability (92%)
- Declared disability (6%)
- Prefer not to say (2%)



## Sexual Orientation

- Heterosexual (89%)
- Bisexual (3%)
- Gay/lesbian (3%)
- Other (1%)
- Prefer not to say (4%)

# Our first ever inclusion survey – key findings and recommendations

In the summer of 2021 we ran our first-ever inclusion survey to gain insight into how we are performing as a firm – we wanted to understand the impact of our practices, whether you face any barriers in the workplace and how our culture affects you. The survey asked you questions related to your experience and perceptions across seven areas; team environment, leadership, opportunity, challenging behaviour, work allocation and accessibility. 70% of the firm participated, and below are the headlines of what you've told us. Thank you for all your feedback – it's given us a real sense of what you think we've done well so far, where we can make further progress, and what recommendations you'd like us to take forward.

- 90% of you feel Capsticks is committed to EDI and 88% of you feel able to bring your whole-self to work.
- You recognise and value the firm's continued efforts to educate and inform about issues relating to diversity and inclusion. EDI is clearly recognised as a strategic priority.
- Overall feedback is largely positive and indicates there are no systemic or major cultural issues; and that action following this survey is not about being reactive, but proactive to make lasting progress.

## Where you would like us to make progress

- The survey results suggest that women feel more strongly than men that more can be done to achieve EDI.
- Women and disabled staff are less likely to raise concerns or challenge both colleagues and team leaders if they behaved in a way that made them feel uncomfortable.
- Black, Asian and Minoritised Ethnic and female staff feel less confident in the process when escalating bullying or harassment concerns.
- 25% of all staff are unsure or disagree that leader decisions are fair and transparent; and similarly, 27% feel that decision makers don't clearly follow and consistently apply policies and processes around career progression decisions. Opinions are significantly lower amongst women, whose opinions are consistently lower than men across all career and development questions.

## Your recommendations

The feedback themes suggest that you think the firm should:

- Develop and share a clear and visible plan on how we take EDI forward.
- Encourage greater involvement from those of us from diverse backgrounds, identities, and abilities.
- Ensure a "psychologically safe" environment for individuals to speak up and challenge peers and team leaders on anything considered inappropriate.
- Establish a baseline of expected EDI behaviours – what is right (and 'not so right') and encourage individuals to reflect on their interactions with others.
- Ensure education, alignment, and transparency on recruitment and promotion processes to ensure they are unbiased and fair (to address perceptions they are not).

Thank you for all of this feedback. We've incorporated it into the strategy that we explain in the rest of this report.

## Our EDI strategy – Our work to date

Our first EDI strategy ran from 2018 to 2021 and during that time we've achieved a lot together. Our emphasis has been on, and continues to be on, bringing our whole self to work and since then we've become more open and better as a place to work. During the last three years we've also implemented a series of important and foundational diversity and inclusion initiatives including; publically reporting our [Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap](#), signing the [Race at Work charter](#) and the [Mindful Business Charter](#), as well as signing up to [Stonewall's Diversity Champions Programme](#). We are proud to be involved in the following initiatives;

- We are a [Living Wage Employer](#).
- We are corporate members of the [Black Solicitors Network](#).
- We have adopted [The Halo Code](#), the UK's first Black hair code, which explicitly protects employees who come to work with natural hair and protective hairstyles associated with their racial, ethnic, and cultural identities.
- We have a paralegal and solicitor apprenticeship scheme, providing an alternative route into the legal profession that involves working and studying concurrently. This is aimed at widening access to the legal sector for underrepresented groups and removing the financial barriers of higher education.
- We have various schools partnerships including with [The Ahead Partnership](#), who work with businesses to deliver social value projects that overcome inequality, promote opportunity and deliver positive change within society.
- We have hosted Capsticks Connections speaker events on various EDI topics including; Black History Month with Cheryl Samuels and Janet Hills MBE, South Asian Heritage Month with Sathnam Sanghera, women's rights with Nazir Afzal OBE, trans rights and trans identities with Dr Robin White and Tate Smith, neurodiversity with Daniel Aherne and much more.



### WOMEN IN LAW PLEDGE:

a commitment for gender equality across the legal profession



In partnership with byrne+dean



Capsticks is proud to celebrate UK Pride



Capsticks is proud to celebrate Black History Month



## Our EDI strategy – The future

But we know there's much more to do to make Capsticks a truly diverse and inclusive firm. We're really committed to holding ourselves accountable – to be the change we wish to see – in our new EDI strategy, which will run from now to 2025, guided and supported by our dedicated D&I team.

Our five-year EDI strategy has three very straightforward **strategic aims**, to ensure everyone can perform at their best:

1. **Demonstrate leadership commitment and accountability** – demonstrate leadership and accountability through inclusive policies, messaging and behaviours to advance the firm's diversity and inclusion goals.
2. **Build a diverse talent pipeline** – step up our efforts to attract, hire and promote people from diverse backgrounds to make sure that we have a breadth of skills and perspectives, and that our people represent the clients with whom we work.
3. **Foster an inclusive culture** – cultivate an inclusive and welcoming work environment that values diversity, allows everyone to be their authentic self, develop and succeed, and feel that they belong.

## Guiding principles

The following **principles** underpin our EDI strategy:

- **Data** – we will use evidenced-based insights, data and experience to progress our diversity and inclusion commitments.
- **Allyship** – we recognise the importance of having allies to create an inclusive environment.
- **Leader and manager capabilities** – we recognise the need for everyone to feel connected, heard, and valued. Team leaders have a key role to play in fostering a psychologically safe environment and a sense of belonging.
- **Positive behaviour change** – we recognise the difficulty in creating change; default behaviours and old habits can get in the way. But we will start with gentle inclusion nudges and small actions to positively change behaviour towards inclusiveness.

## EDI framework

The following **framework** will further embed EDI across the firm:

- **4 Diversity and Inclusion Employee Network Groups** (ENGs) – Prism (LGBT+), CREATE (race and ethnicity), Shine (mental health, wellbeing, disability and medical conditions) and OWN (women including trans and non-binary people and allies)
- **6 agendas; Gender, Ethnicity, LGBT+, Wellbeing, Disability and Social Mobility**
- **5 Diversity and Inclusion campaigns** – we're committed to marking and celebrating these flagship campaigns every year to raise awareness and educate. These campaigns are; International Women's Day (March), Mental Health Awareness Week (May), LGBT+ Pride (July), South Asian Heritage Month (July) and Black History Month (October)
- **1 EDI Council** made up of senior representatives to drive the EDI strategy and to hold the firm accountable for progressing and delivering the strategy.

## EDI plan 2021-2023 – A snapshot

So, that's the EDI strategy. To deliver that, we've also developed an EDI plan which sets out our commitments to address diversity and inclusion. These commitments fall under one of four areas of work / pillars; **operational excellence**, **education**, **talent** and **accountability**.

There are 30+ commitments in total set out in the [appendix](#). But don't worry – we don't expect you to remember all of them! The Talent and Diversity Team, working with the SMT and the wider HR team, will be responsible for keeping track of the plan. While all of these commitments are important to creating a diverse and inclusive culture, we want to draw your attention to some key areas of work, which we feel are both fundamental and will have the greatest impact.

### Operational excellence

The response rate for our first ever inclusion survey was 70% which is a good start, and we recognise we can go further to break down barriers to participating in our diversity data collection initiatives. In order to really understand any current challenges that our colleagues are facing, and in order to measure whether our initiatives are working, we need to understand the make-up of our workforce. We will launch a diversity monitoring awareness campaign with the aim of building trust among our people about why and how we request, monitor, analyse, interpret and store people's diversity data. Ideally this will take us closer to 100% participation in future inclusion surveys.

### Education

- We will be implementing a comprehensive programme of inclusion training including; unconscious bias training within recruitment and progression for hiring managers; an ally programme giving all staff the skills, tools and confidence to step up as inclusive allies and challenge inappropriate behaviours, and a reciprocal mentoring programme for Black, Asian and Minoritised Ethnic staff.
- We will also design and roll out a dedicated session on diversity and inclusion for new joiners to the firm to complete within their first three months of joining.
- We will implement EDI training for all staff to cover Sex, Gender and Gender Identity Awareness, Race Awareness, LGBT+ Awareness and Disability Awareness.

### Talent

While we are proud to have equal retention of Black Asian and Minoritised Ethnic staff, there is still work to do to achieve gender balance and increase Black, Asian and Minoritised Ethnic staff representation in leadership:

- We will develop and implement a Black, Asian and Minoritised Ethnic recruitment action plan, which includes improving quality of data at application and short list stages.
- For all senior leadership hires including Principal Associate, Legal Director and above, we will strive to have a diverse shortlist for interview.
- All hiring panels to be gender diverse to improve candidate experience and provide diversity of thought in decision making.
- All hiring panels for trainee and associate positions to be ethnically diverse to improve candidate experience and provide diversity of thought in decision making.
- We will establish a reciprocal mentoring programme to improve the career development opportunities of Black, Asian and Minoritised Ethnic colleagues.

## Accountability

- We have an executive level project sponsor appointed, Martin Hamilton, Managing Partner who is accountable for driving our EDI work forward.
- All Heads of Division and Directors of Business Services now have an annual SMART EDI objective as part of their performance review to lead their division's contribution to the firm's EDI strategy and plan, to develop a more diverse and inclusive culture, and increase our diversity representation at all levels.
- We have an established EDI Council made up of senior representatives from all divisions and departments to drive the EDI strategy and to hold the business as a whole accountable for progressing the EDI plan.

## How we will measure success

We will be looking at some key deliverables to ensure our EDI strategy and plan is having the greatest impact. This is how we will know we are making significant change:

- A suite of diversity statistics to be produced and analysed by HR quarterly.
- Improve our gender diversity at wider partnership and EP level by 2025; 50% and 30% respectively.
- Improve representation of Black Asian and Minoritised Ethnic people at wider partnership and EP level by 2025; 15% and 10% respectively.
- Maintain equal retention of Black Asian and Minoritised Ethnic people and white people.
- Continue to see progress on reducing our gender and ethnicity pay gaps.
- Run the Capsticks inclusion survey in 2023 and achieve an 80% response rate.
- A comprehensive programme of EDI training rolled out across the firm, with 90% of attendees reporting that the training has helped them to understand how to apply the learning in their role.
- The EDI strategy and plan next reviewed in May 2024.



# Appendix

## EDI plan 2021 - 2025

The following table sets out the 30 commitments Capsticks will achieve over the next five years. This activity will be led by the Talent and Diversity team with support and input from our EDI Executive Sponsor, SMT, the EDI Council and our Employee Network Groups.

Key:

**Action – something we've already done and / or will continue to do**

**Commitment – a new piece of work that we will deliver on**

### Operational excellence

Operational excellence refers to our policies, processes and systems. We will review such activity and then take action to ensure application and outcomes are free of bias.

Activity	Year	Our measures of success
1. Update our HR system in 2023 to enable us to monitor our diversity recruitment data (at application, short list and hiring stages), and throughout the employee life cycle including during onboarding, career progression and leaver stages allowing us to establish baseline D&I statistics and goals and inform EDI actions.	Year 2	Delivering these commitments will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide baseline D&amp;I statistics and goals</li><li>• Ensure we can demonstrate impact and track progress</li><li>• Ensure greater transparency</li><li>• Result in improved engagement with senior leadership with people feeling they are being listened to</li><li>• Mitigation of bias in our decision-making</li><li>• Greater clarity about our firm's commitment to EDI</li></ul>
2. Develop and launch a diversity monitoring campaign to build trust among our people about why and how we request, monitor, analyse, interpret and store people's diversity data at Capsticks.	Year 2	
3. Continue to monitor and publish our diversity population data annually and every two years to the SRA.	On-going	
4. Conduct an annual (or bi-annual) all-staff inclusion survey and use the results to report back to the firm on progress and areas for development. We will set a target of an 80% response rate for our inclusion survey in 2023.	On-going	



5. Design and implement a micro-aggression reporting tool for anonymous reporting of bullying or harassment, to give us insight into any trends and inform prevention work across the firm.	Year 3	
6. Annually review and update our HR policies to ensure they are inclusive e.g. that they explicitly include people of all identities, backgrounds, experiences and abilities etc., and that they use inclusive language.	On-going	
7. New policies recently launched; new inclusive dress code, flexible working, transitioning at work, pregnancy loss, perimenopause and menopause, and our leave policy has been updated to include time off for assisted conception.	Year 1	

## Education

Education is fundamental to understanding and embracing difference. We will create opportunities, safe spaces and training programmes for everyone at Capsticks to be able to explore difference, ask questions, and build confidence and skills to step up as allies. We will develop our people, behaviours and culture to become a recognised employer of choice for equality, diversity and inclusion.

Activity	Year	Our measure of success
8. Develop and deliver a dedicated session on diversity and inclusion for new joiners to the firm to complete within their first three months of joining.	Year 3	Delivering these commitments result in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A positive change in behaviours where people have the confidence, skills and language to speak up and challenge inappropriate behaviour</li> <li>A kinder, more inclusive culture with increased trust, collaboration and sharing</li> <li>A shared understanding in our culture and our people's different experiences</li> <li>A firm-wide consistent understanding of our values and EDI principles</li> <li>Greater confidence in how to talk about diversity and inclusion</li> <li>Increased visibility of diverse role models, whereby more people feel able to be themselves and whereby difference is better understood across the firm</li> </ul>
9. Implement EDI training for everyone to cover; Gender dynamics, Anti-racism practice, LGBT+ Awareness, Disability Awareness and Neurodiversity Awareness in the workplace.	Year 1 - 2	
10. Develop and introduce a new series of learning and development inclusion programmes including; Everyday inclusion, Role Models training and How to be an ally.	Year 3 - 4	
11. Providing inclusive leadership training to all people managers to equip them with the skills, tools and confidence to tackle all forms of bullying, harassment and discrimination.	Years 2 - 4	
12. Provide tailored and people first-led mental health and wellbeing support including; therapeutic support via our Reflective Practice Forums, vicarious trauma training for teams dealing with difficult and sometimes traumatic situations, and mental health skills for managers training for all people managers	On-going	

<p>13. Continue to raise awareness of EDI campaigns and initiatives through Capsticks Connections speaking engagements including during LGBT+ History Month, International Women's Day, Neurodiversity Celebration Week, Mental Health Awareness Week, Pride season, South Asian Heritage Month, Black History Month, World Mental Health Day and Disability Awareness Week etc., while also reviewing opportunities for further awareness raising such as during Baby Loss Awareness week, Lunar New Year, Ramadan and Eid, and Trans Awareness Week etc.</p>	<p>On-going</p>	
<p>14. We have four well-established Employee Network Groups; CREATE is our race and ethnicity network, Prism is our LGBT+ network, Shine focuses on mental health, wellbeing and disability including medical conditions, and OWN is our women's network including trans and non-binary people. The aims of these groups are to provide peer-to-peer support, raise awareness and act as a critical friend to the firm advising on inclusion best practice. All groups are open to allies.</p>	<p>Year 1</p>	

## Talent

One of our core values is 'people first' because we recognise that our people are most valuable asset. It's important we place an inclusion lens over our talent management practices so we understand how the decisions we make as leaders affect our people.

We will audit, develop and improve our recruitment, development and progression processes and practices to ensure these are free from bias, transparent, and take into account our colleagues' and candidates' diverse range of needs and experiences.

Activity	Year	Our measure of success
<p>15. Review, develop and improve our recruitment processes in full to eliminate bias at every stage and ensure they are culturally sensitive, inclusive and accessible including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support our hiring managers through inclusive interview training.</li> <li>• Review and develop a graduate recruitment plan to attract more diverse graduate talent including; reviewing our paralegal and solicitor apprentice programmes, designing a graduate vacation scheme, participating in 10,000 Black Interns, and continuing to establish partnerships with organisations focused on improving access to the legal profession and committing to key activities that increase representation of people from socio-economically diverse backgrounds at Capsticks.</li> <li>• Develop and implement a Black, Asian and Minoritised Ethnic recruitment action plan.</li> <li>• For all senior leadership hires including Principal Associate, Legal Director and above, we will strive to have a diverse shortlist for interview.</li> </ul>	Years 2 - 4	<p>Delivering these initiatives will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make Capsticks an employer of choice and boost application rates from currently underrepresented groups</li> <li>• Reduce bias in hiring processes</li> <li>• Improve diversity of shortlists that translate into hires</li> <li>• Enable us to retain people from diverse backgrounds and progress their careers at Capsticks</li> <li>• Ensure high potential diverse talent are moving into more senior roles</li> <li>• Higher levels of trust from staff who can see themselves represented at all levels of the organisation</li> <li>• Everyone, regardless of their education, background, culture, ethnicity, race, nationality, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, neurodiversity, religion and beliefs, is treated fairly</li> <li>• Everyone feels they have a voice, their contribution is valued, and are able to be themselves at work</li> <li>• Create transformational change and enable a culture of diversity, equity and inclusion, where the power of difference is valued</li> </ul>

<p>16. To increase representation of Black, Asian and Minoritised Ethnic staff at partner and EP level, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a reciprocal mentoring programme for Black, Asian and Minoritised Ethnic people to support their career development.</li> <li>• Review the representation of Black, Asian and Minoritised Ethnic people on our pitch panels to ensure that our ethnically diverse colleagues have equal access to business development opportunities.</li> <li>• Establish a leadership development programme which ring fences a minimum of 20% of places for Black, Asian and Minoritised Ethnic Senior Associates and Principal Associates to support their career progression to Partner.</li> </ul>	Years 2 - 4	
17. Review, develop and improve our talent management processes in full, including our promotion panels, to eliminate bias at every stage and ensure they are culturally sensitive, inclusive and accessible.	Year 4	
18. Review and update our careers site to ensure it showcases the breadth of EDI activity at Capsticks making us a more attractive firm for diverse talent.	Year 2	
19. All new joiners gain a strong sense of our commitment as we share information about our employee networks, our HR policies, our line manager guide, and a statement of commitment from our SMT about the importance of diversity and inclusion at Capsticks. This is followed by mandatory EDI e-learning training in their first three weeks.	Year 1	



## Accountability

We know that leadership accountability is essential to the successful delivery of our ambitions. We want our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion to be led from the top.

Activity	Year	Our measure of success
20. Executive level project sponsor appointed to be accountable for driving this forward (Martin Hamilton, MP).	Ongoing	<p>Delivering these commitments will ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior leadership accountability for EDI commitments</li> <li>• Action where leaders underperform</li> <li>• Diversity of thought and perspectives at senior leadership level to help guard against groupthink and expert overconfidence, ensure bias in decision making is mitigated and help meet the firm's strategic objectives</li> <li>• Leaders seek to promote fairness by questioning trends in decision blind-spots, such as hiring, work opportunities and performance reviews</li> <li>• Ensure we can demonstrate impact and track progress</li> <li>• Everyone feels they have a voice, their contribution is valued, and are able to be themselves at work</li> <li>• Everyone, regardless of their education, background, culture, ethnicity, race, nationality, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, neurodiversity, religion and beliefs, is treated fairly</li> </ul>
21. All heads of divisions have an annual SMART EDI objective as part of their performance review to lead their division's contribution to the firm's EDI strategy and plan, to develop a more diverse and inclusive culture and increase our diversity representation at all levels.	Year 1	
22. Refresh our competency frameworks at all levels to ensure they better reflect our values and inclusion focused behaviours.	Year 2	
23. We have established an EDI Council made up of senior representatives to drive the EDI strategy and be held accountable.	Year 1	
24. Capsticks is committed to increasing representation of females and Black, Asian and Minoritised Ethnic staff at partner and EP level. Our diversity targets to 2025 are; 50% female and 15% ethnic minority people in partnership; 30% female and 10% ethnic minority people in Equity Partnership; and equal retention of ethnic minority people and non-ethnic minority people.	On-going	
25. Continue to publish annually and see progress on reducing our gender and ethnicity pay gap data.	On-going	
26. Achieve Disability Confident employer status.	Year 3	
27. Maintain and improve our Best Companies accreditation.	Year 2	
<p>28. Ensure we continue to deliver on our EDI corporate signatory responsibilities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the five Race at Work Charter commitments</li> <li>• the four pillars of the Mindful Business Charter</li> <li>• the Law Society's Women in Law pledge</li> <li>• the Menopause Workplace Pledge</li> </ul>	On-going	

29.Continue working with our partners, clients and suppliers to create a more inclusive industry by sharing best practice and collaborating on industry-wide EDI events and initiatives.	On-going	
30.Review and set diversity requirements for our supply chain through our procurement processes.	Year 4	