



RTPI

Royal Town Planning Institute

Two years of CHANGE

Our progress on creating an inclusive profession.

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We are now two years into the delivery of our [CHANGE action plan](#) and vision:

“to be, and promote the planning profession to be, as diverse as the communities it represents; to act inclusively, treating everyone fairly and seeking to provide a culture which delivers the best outcomes for the diverse society in which and for whom we work”

Launched in February 2020, **CHANGE** set out six themes that taken together provide a road map towards the genuinely representative planning profession that is needed to solve problems like climate change now and in the future.

Those themes are:

- a) EDI strategy;
- b) RTPI governance;
- c) RTPI standards;
- d) Education sector;
- e) Leadership and culture;
- f) Attract and retain diverse talent.

Activity over the last 12 months

As set out in last year's report, we have focused on the following actions:

1. To work with members, stakeholders and partners, in particular, BAME Planners Network, Women in Planning, Neurodiversity in Planning and Planning Out to develop, and advocate, a robust business case for EDI for the profession.
2. To review how best the Institute should collect data on and from the profession, with a particular view on filling gaps in our understanding, for example, to ascertain the number of people with disabilities working in planning. We will also provide new guidance for staff on diversity data analysis, description and language to be as inclusive and respectful as possible.
3. To review the RTPI bursary programmes and look for additional ways to maximise their potential to support people from underrepresented groups into a career in planning.
4. To work with education stakeholders, employers and partners BAME Planners Network, Women in Planning and Neurodiversity in Planning to explore and pilot how we maximise potential of apprenticeships to open up options for talented individuals for whom the traditional route may not work.

We have extended our relationships with partners including a [Memorandum of Understanding with the BAME Planners Network](#).

We are also trialling additional data collection through the RTPI elections, and have issued inclusive guidance for RTPI staff and will look to use this learning to develop support for members and volunteers more widely.

A review of our [bursary schemes](#) has been completed which now include an optional additional opportunity of providing bursary recipients with access to a coach/mentor to help students think through career choices. This is in direct response feedback from the review of the scheme from past recipients about in addition to financial help providing support about career options and advancement. We intend to deliver this element with support from key partners.

We were honoured that the RTPI Trust received a bequest from the family of the late Michael Welbank. We have been able to develop a scholarship for planning students in London.

Over the last year, both the RTPI Education Team and Membership Team have been focused on getting the Institute ready to receive the first set of apprentices through the formal End Point Assessment. Once apprentices fully graduate and achieve Chartered Town Planner status after passing through the APC, we will have a good picture of who has achieved their apprenticeship and be able to review how and whether it is reaching as diverse an audience as possible.

We were also honoured last December to be recognised at the BPIC Awards as [Best Industry Institute](#).

In addition to the progress in those areas we have also already made some significant progress in a range of other initiatives as noted in the table below. Taken together these projects meet the objectives of the CHANGE themes in the following ways.

	2022 initiatives					
CHANGE themes	EXPLORE work experience	Regional EDI champions	Inclusive Employer Framework	Internal Working	E-learning opportunities, knowledge and skills	Collaborative working with other professional membership bodies
EDI strategy			▲		▲	▲
RTPI governance		▲		▲		
RTPI standards			▲			
Education sector	▲					
Leadership & culture			▲		▲	▲
Attract and retain diverse talent	▲		▲			



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EXPLORE work experience

The work experience pilot scheme aims to encourage young people particularly those from Asian, Black, minority ethnic communities and lower socio-economic backgrounds to 'try planning' and experience and explore the fantastic career of being a planner. Following a procurement process Clever Egg were appointed to deliver this programme with placements happening in June 2022. We are on track to exceed our target of 100 young people engaging with the range of planning employers that have signed up. It is delivering one of the RTPI Corporate Strategy commitments.

Regional EDI Champions

Launched this year, the scheme will see the appointment of a volunteer Champion in each region to form a bridge between EDI Manager and work being undertaken in RTPI regions. Many have already signed up and had an initial induction with support from the Regional Co-ordinator team.

The purpose of the role is to translate CHANGE into achievable outcomes that can be delivered at a local level, including supporting RTPI work experience and schools' engagement programmes and understanding the diversity of our profession by focusing on local performance measures of comparing membership data with national statistics and internal benchmarks.

At present the champion roles are focused on English Regions but the aim is to extend this work to include RTPI Nations.

Inclusive Employer Framework

Improving professional practice across the profession is one of the key actions set out in CHANGE. This new framework will recognise external organisations that are championing and proactively demonstrating action across four aims:

- To build an inclusive culture,
- To recruit equitably,
- To invest in staff CPD and training in diversity and inclusion, and
- To have policies and processes in place that drive and support equity, inclusion and diversity.

The scheme will launch this year and is intended for all organisations that provide a planning service and employ Chartered Town Planners to do so. The scheme therefore encompasses private consultancies, public bodies, multidisciplinary agencies, and local planning authority planning departments.

Improved Internal Working

For CHANGE to happen in full then it must be embedded as 'business as usual' across the Institute and the profession. To support this happening, we are piloting a new way of working in which we see a series of strategic projects 'appoint' an EDI project lead with the specific purpose of:

- Ensure actions and outcomes of the project are consistent with CHANGE.
- Provide critical challenge to the project and its objectives from EDI perspective and advice on EDI matters throughout the lifecycle of the project.

Each EDI project lead will be supported by the EDI Manager and over time the aim is to develop capacity of all staff colleagues across RTPI to embed equity, diversity and inclusion into their work.



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E-learning opportunities, knowledge and skills

We, rightly, place an expectation on our members to understand their responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010. We are therefore taking action to support members to develop awareness and maintain that understanding through the creation of a new RTPI Learn e-academy module on an introduction to the Act. This will be published and available as CPD free for members this year. Over time this will be joined by additional content to help members develop their skills, knowledge and professional practice on EDI.

Collaborative working with other professional membership bodies

In February at a meeting chaired by the RTPI, senior representatives from the CIOB, RIBA, RICS, ICE and the LI met to discuss how as professional membership bodies we can work together to make the sector more diverse, equitable and inclusive. There was broad consensus that there are opportunities for collaboration and that the collective strength of over 350,000 professionals could be a powerful foundation for change. The next phase is developing a Memorandum of Understanding to set out joint commitments on EDI and how we should work together to improve understanding and make improvements across the built environment sector.

Commitments ahead for Year 3:

Since our last report we have made some great strides and are at, or ahead, of the early actions and stages of our journey set out in CHANGE. However there is no quick fix.

To keep on track **over the next twelve months we will be focusing on:**

1. Completing the first year of EXPLORE work experience pilot project and analysing its impact on participants and work through what any future iteration of the programme might look like.
2. Developing our work with regional EDI Champions particularly in terms of how a regional voice can help to improve the data that we have on our members.
3. Sign the Memorandum of Understanding with other professional membership bodies to challenge us all to agree a joint plan by July 2022 on EDI actions. We look forward to working with our friends on '*creating a more diverse, equitable and inclusive built environment sector*' and jointly launching it at an event.
4. This summer a new round of RTPI elections will open and we will build on the work started in last year's elections to, more accurately, record the ethnicity data of those seeking office more accurately by working with BAME Planners Network to increase diverse participation with our elections.
5. In the autumn we will be taking stock on the delivery of CHANGE and its actions after three years and designing a new more inclusive timeline as we move into the next phase of the programme.

Next year we look forward to updating members on the new progress we have made.