

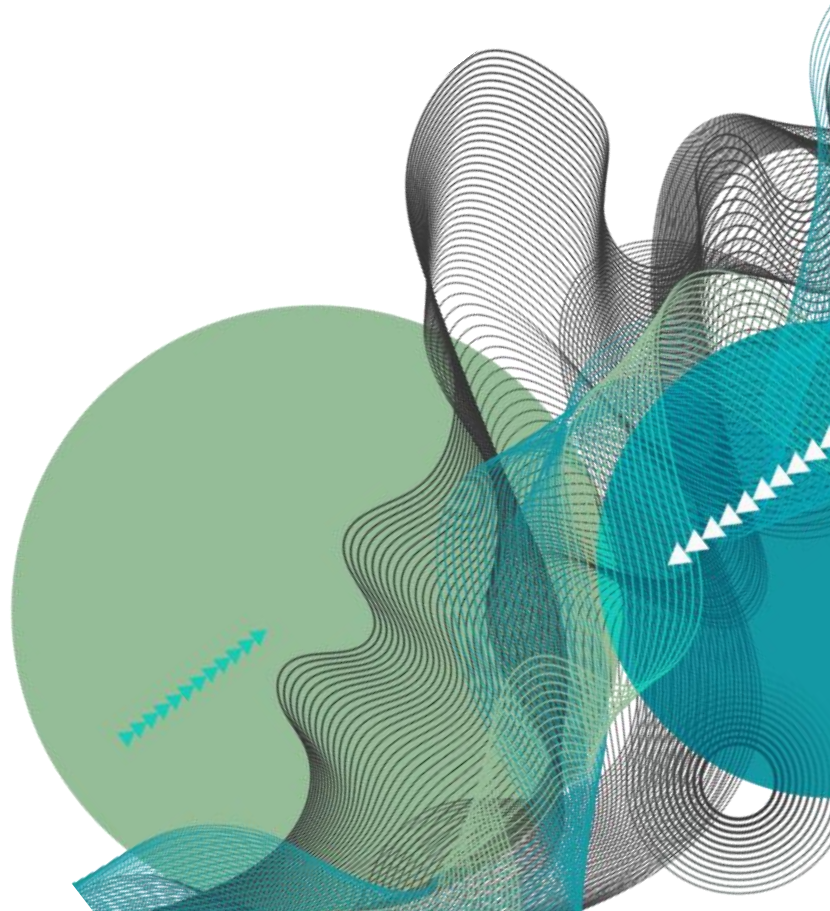


2024 -
2029

BIOS | BRITISH AND IRISH
ORTHOPTIC SOCIETY

Building an Inclusive Future: BIOS Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy

Release Date - 11/12/2024
(To be reviewed in 3 years)



British and Irish Orthoptic Society (BIOS) EDI Strategy Document

Objective: Enhancing Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) within the Orthoptic Profession

1. Introduction

The British and Irish Orthoptic Society (BIOS) is committed to fostering a culture of equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) within the orthoptic profession. This strategy document outlines our objectives and actions to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for all members, students, and professionals in the orthoptic community, while directly addressing the Foundational Culture Priority within the overarching BIOS 5-year strategy. By aligning our EDI efforts with this key priority, we aim to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for all members, students, and professionals in the orthoptic community and ensure long-term progress.

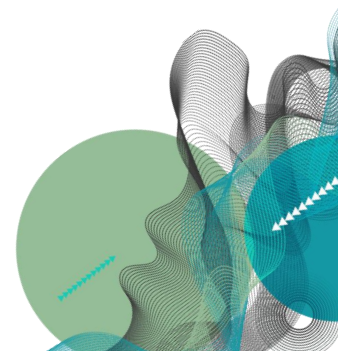
2. Objectives

2.1 Increase Representation

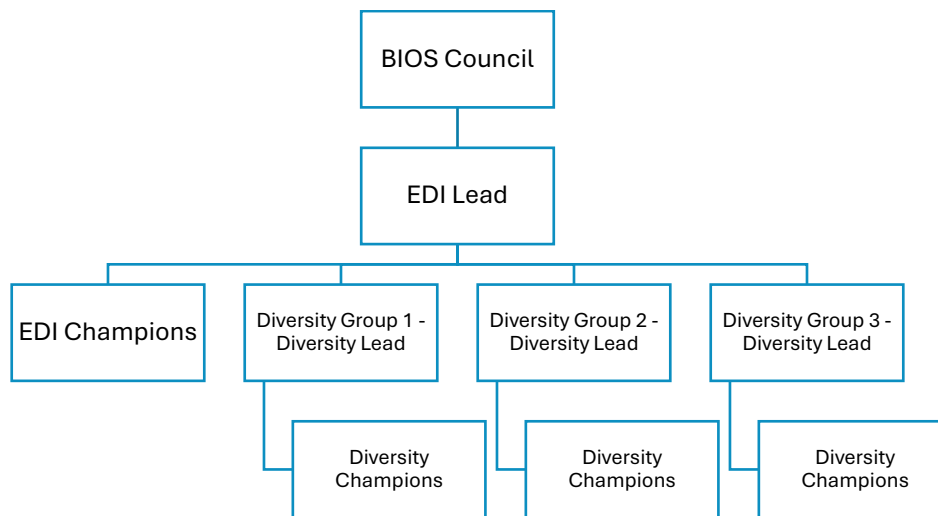
Goal: Establish a clear and effective hierarchy to drive the EDI strategy across BIOS, ensuring representation and leadership within all key diversity groups.

Actions:

- **EDI Leadership Structure:**
 - EDI Lead is responsible for overseeing the overall EDI strategy and initiatives within BIOS.
 - Establish Diversity Leads for each specific diversity group (e.g., gender, ethnicity, LGBTQ+, disability), who will lead the Diversity Group and report progress to the EDI Lead.
 - Appoint Diversity Champions, who will work on grassroots EDI initiatives. These champions will actively raise awareness of the group's mission and values by regularly raising awareness of the group on social media and at key events whilst also providing localised support and feedback.
 - Develop EDI Digital Badges to recognise exceptional contributions across the profession and empower individuals to showcase their achievements.



Proposed structure example

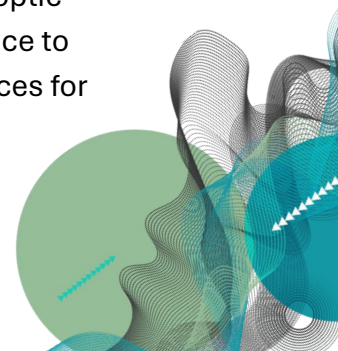


Expected Outcomes:

- A robust leadership structure that ensures all diversity groups are represented and actively engaged in shaping BIOS policies and practices.
- Enhancements to recruitment methods to clearly define role expectations in alignment with the BIOS EDI Strategy, encouraging individuals to step forward and commit their time.
- Enhanced communication and collaboration between EDI Lead, Diversity Champion Leads, and Diversity Champions, driving grassroots EDI initiatives effectively.
- Showcasing EDI Digital Badges reinforces BIOS’s commitment to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusivity, enhancing its reputation as a forward-thinking and inclusive professional body, whilst also increasing visibility of the profession. Recognising an individual’s positive contributions creates an awareness of the individual’s involvement and fosters a culture of appreciation and acknowledgment, potentially leading to new opportunities for career growth, and leadership roles. Moving towards digital badges could also help motivate others within the profession to engage in EDI initiatives.

2.2 Support for Disabled Learners

Goal: Create comprehensive resources and robust support networks for orthoptic students with disabilities, to ensure they have the necessary tools and guidance to excel in their studies and careers. Additionally, provide targeted online resources for





clinical tutors to effectively support and accommodate these students on their educational journey.

Actions:

- **Resource Development:**
 - Create a dedicated section on the BIOS website offering resources tailored to the needs of orthoptic students with disabilities.
 - Develop guidelines for clinical tutors on making reasonable adjustments in the workplace and educational settings.
 - Establish a support network or peer mentoring program for students with disabilities, offering guidance, encouragement, and a platform to share experiences.

Expected Outcomes:

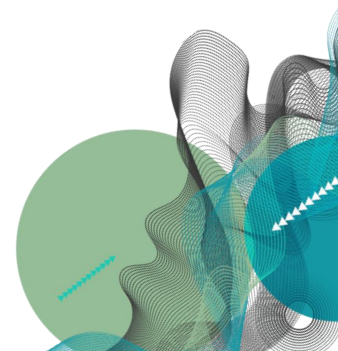
- Increased accessibility and support for disabled orthoptic students, leading to improved academic and professional outcomes.
 - Better-equipped clinical tutors who can confidently support students with disabilities, fostering an inclusive learning environment.
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2.3 Resource Development

Goal: Conduct a comprehensive review of BIOS resources and develop new materials that promote inclusivity and reflect the diverse needs of our members.

Actions:

- **Resource Review:**
 - Request for members to share existing EDI resources that are currently in use across the profession to help support the production of national resources.
 - Audit the latest EDI resources that are available to BIOS members, including the BIOS website, NHS-England content, local trusts, other professional bodies and HEI educational content, to identify gaps in EDI representation.
 - Catalogue these resources on the BIOS website to raise awareness of their existence.





- Collaborate with diversity groups and Diversity Champion Leads to develop new resources that address the needs of underrepresented groups within the profession.
- Restructure the BIOS website to ensure it is user-friendly and inclusive, with easy access to EDI resources and support.

Expected Outcomes:

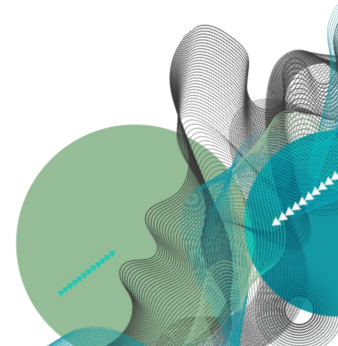
- A rich and diverse range of resources that promote a culture of inclusivity within BIOS and the broader orthoptic profession.
 - A plan to regularly review and update these resources to ensure they remain up to date.
 - An improved BIOS website that serves as a central hub for EDI resources and support, easily navigable by all members.
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2.4 Staff Training

Goal: Deliver comprehensive training to BIOS staff and BIOS officers to enhance their knowledge and skills in effectively responding to EDI-related conflicts. This training will ensure staff feel confident, educated, and equipped to handle such situations with sensitivity and professionalism.

Actions:

- **Training Needs:**
 - Conduct a survey or hold focus groups with BIOS staff to assess their current understanding and identify specific areas where additional EDI training is required.
 - Collaborate with EDI experts to design a tailored training program that covers key topics such as conflict resolution, inclusive language, unconscious bias, and best practices for addressing EDI-related issues.
 - Identify any policies or practices that may inadvertently create barriers to equality or inclusion.
 - Develop a toolkit of resources, including guidelines, templates, and FAQs, to support staff in responding to EDI-related conflicts confidently and consistently.



Expected Outcomes:

- Development of a targeted EDI training program based on identified staff needs and barriers.
 - Increased staff confidence in handling EDI-related conflicts effectively.
 - Identification and revision of any policies that may hinder equality and inclusion.
 - Availability of comprehensive resources to support consistent EDI responses.
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2.5 Review and Improve Policies

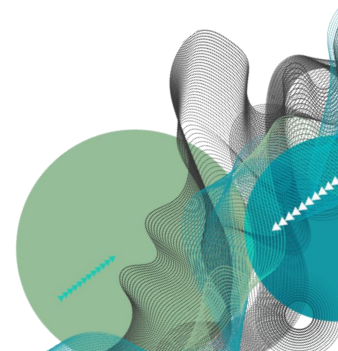
Goal: Conduct a thorough review of existing BIOS policies, job roles, procedures, and practices to identify and eliminate any barriers to equality and inclusion.

Actions:

- **Policy Review:**
 - Develop a standardised protocol for addressing new EDI-related conflicts. This should include setting clear expectations on the BIOS website regarding response times, considering the size of the professional body. The protocol should also involve consulting the EDI/Diversity Lead associated with the underrepresented group for guidance on appropriate wording in the response.
 - Establish a task force led by the EDI Lead to review all BIOS policies, job roles, procedures, and practices.
 - Identify any policies or practices that may inadvertently create barriers to equality or inclusion.
 - Revise and update policies to ensure they reflect the commitment to EDI, with clear guidelines and expectations for all members and staff.

Expected Outcomes:

- BIOS establishes clear expectations for addressing new conflicts, ensuring BIOS staff feel well-supported in their response. Members are provided with a transparent timeline for when they can expect a response from BIOS.
- Updated and inclusive policies that reflect BIOS's commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- Elimination of systemic barriers that may hinder the participation or advancement of underrepresented groups within the profession.



2.6 Monitor and Evaluate Progress

Goal: Establish clear metrics to measure the effectiveness of EDI initiatives and regularly review progress to ensure continuous improvement.

Actions:

- **Metrics Development:**
 - Define key performance indicators (KPIs) and metrics to evaluate the success of EDI initiatives, such as representation rates, feedback from diversity groups, and resource utilisation.
 - Conduct regular surveys and feedback sessions with members, students, and staff to assess the impact of EDI initiatives and identify areas for improvement.
 - Implement an annual review process led by the EDI Lead, reporting progress to the BIOS board and making recommendations for further action.

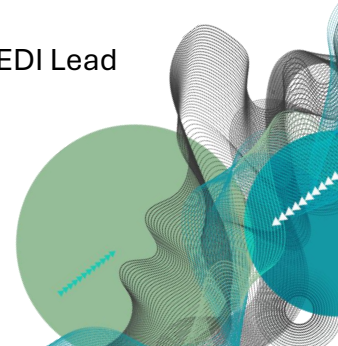
Expected Outcomes:

- Implementation of a regular survey to specifically assess the state of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) across the profession, to enable BIOS to regularly measure progress, identify challenges, and continuously enhance its EDI strategy.
- Establish a schedule of regular meetings for diversity groups to provide updates and feedback to the EDI Lead.
- The EDI Lead to compile and present a progress report at regular BIOS Council meetings, detailing advancements across each diversity group.

3. Conclusion

The BIOS EDI strategy is designed to create a more inclusive, supportive, and equitable environment for all members of the orthoptic profession. By increasing representation, supporting disabled learners, developing inclusive resources, reviewing policies, and monitoring progress, BIOS aims to lead the way in promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion within the healthcare sector. This strategy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains effective and aligned with the evolving needs of our community.

For further information or to get involved in EDI initiatives, please contact the EDI Lead at EDILEAD@orthoptics.org.uk.





This strategy document provides a clear roadmap for BIOS to enhance EDI within the orthoptic profession, with actionable steps and expected outcomes for each objective.

