

# Diversity and inclusion award

## Winner

# PageGroup

**D**iversity and inclusion is an extremely wide umbrella term, so most companies tend to focus on one area at a time. But for PageGroup it was all or nothing. It has done the near-impossible and instigated (or is about to launch) a D&I programme for every segment of society.

The journey started in 2012 when CEO Steve Ingham launched 'Women@Page – where women succeed at work'. The aims were to demonstrate the business' commitment to gender equality and increase the number of female senior leaders. It's certainly achieving those: between 2012 and 2016 the number of UK female operational directors rose from 25% to 39%, in 2016 43% of promotions at management level were female, and the UK workforce stood at 49% female 51% male.

Many women reported struggling to balance work and family so the next strand was 'Maternity@Page', launched a year later in 2013. This included a maternity timeline, guidelines for line managers, signing the Working Forward Pledge, and launching pre/post maternity workshops. Again the initiative was a smash hit; maternity return rates increased from 76% in 2012 to 87% in 2015, saving the business approximately £900,000. It's also benefitted the women greatly: since 2013 75% of operational directors have returned to work on a different pattern that gives them greater flexibility.

But the company realised parenthood is more than just mothers – working families, adoptive parents, carers, and same-sex parents all need help too. So in 2015 the third D&I strand was born: 'Parents@Page – where families and carers come first'. The business introduced resources to help those who did not necessarily benefit from Maternity@Page.



These include parenting seminars, an online portal and advice service, a Parents@Page network, global 'bring your kids to work' days, affiliation with the P3 network in support of LGBT parents or those with LGBT children, and introducing enhanced paternity pay. PageGroup was now batting three for three; and has seen a 322% increase in the uptake of paternity leave since raising the pay, and a 23% increase in both men and women working flexibly since 2012.

To further embrace a culture of acceptance without exception the business instigated the fourth strand, 'Pride@Page – where sexual orientation and gender identity don't matter', also in 2015. It conducted focus groups to learn of any real or perceived barriers LGBT+ staff face, and its 'Pride Month' in June is a

concentrated way of raising visibility. Since then PageGroup has made it onto Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index every year.

The D&I momentum did not stop there. In 2016 the company launched 'Ability@Page – where disability doesn't hold you back'. Making reasonable adjustments is common across PageGroup, but it also participated in Time to Talk day, appointed mental health champions, set up

a confidential employee assistance programme, and partnered with the Business Disability Forum. It has now achieved Clear Company's 'Proud to be Clear Assured' status in recognition of its efforts.

To underpin all this hard work the business added a sixth string to its D&I bow – Dynamic Working – in January 2017. This marks a commitment from senior leadership to embrace more flexible and effective ways of working. Part of this is a flexible benefits portal where staff can buy and sell benefits to complement their individual circumstances. And having already covered all that, PageGroup is looking to launch 'Age@Page – where age is just a number' and 'Unity@Page – where a multicultural workforce thrives' over the next 12 months.

Judges praised PageGroup for having a clear strategy, strong senior ownership, and investing in good practice. It's clear that diversity really starts from page one at PageGroup.

## Shortlisted

L&Q

Metro Bank

Touchstone

Virgin Money

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