

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSIVITY (EDI)

An Introductory Guide



University
of Exeter

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About this guide

This toolkit is designed to empower businesses, community leaders, and organisations in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly to create inclusive, equitable, and thriving workplaces and communities. It provides practical resources, strategies, and insights to address key challenges and opportunities, fostering a culture of health, equality, and innovation.

The guide is structured around the following Good Growth Principles:

- **Encouraging a Healthy Lifestyle:** Discover how promoting physical and mental wellbeing in the workplace can boost productivity, reduce absenteeism, and create a positive work environment. Learn about simple, cost-effective changes you can make to support employee health.
- **Reducing the Gender Pay Gap:** Understand the importance of pay equity and explore actionable steps to close the gender pay gap, even if your business is not legally required to report it.
- **Employing People with Disabilities and Ill Health:** Gain insights into creating an inclusive workplace that supports employees with disabilities or long-term health conditions, including mental health, through reasonable adjustments and a culture of trust.
- **Maximising Opportunities for Neurodiverse Individuals:** Learn how to embrace neurodiversity in the workplace, adapt environments to meet diverse needs, and unlock the potential of a neurodiverse workforce.
- **Supporting the Ageing Workforce:** Explore strategies to retain and support older workers, ensuring their skills and experience continue to benefit your business while promoting their wellbeing.
- **Empowering Young Entrepreneurs:** Access resources and strategies to nurture the next generation of business leaders, fostering innovation and economic growth in Cornwall.
- **Strengthening Community Leadership:** Learn how to build capacity and foster place-based leadership to drive positive change and resilience within local communities.
- **Advancing Equality of Opportunity:** Understand how to promote fairness and inclusion for people with protected characteristics, ensuring equal access to opportunities and reducing disadvantages.
- **Helping People Overcome Employment Barriers:** Discover ways to support individuals facing complex barriers to employment, creating pathways to meaningful work and economic stability.
- **Supporting Local Businesses with Mappa:** Explore how the innovative Mappa project can help raise awareness of local businesses, bridge skills gaps, and foster economic growth in Cornwall.

This toolkit is more than just a collection of resources, it's a call to action. By implementing the strategies and tools outlined here, you can contribute to a more inclusive, healthy, and prosperous Cornwall and Isles of Scilly. Whether you're a business owner, community leader, or policymaker, this guide offers the knowledge and inspiration to drive meaningful change.

Together, we can build a future where everyone has the opportunity to thrive, and where businesses and communities grow in harmony with the values of fairness, sustainability, and innovation. Let's take the first step today.

Encouraging a healthy lifestyle

Promoting a healthy lifestyle in the workplace is not only beneficial to the health and wellbeing of employees but can also contribute to a more positive and productive work environment, reduce sickness absence and improve your overall business.

Health and Safety Executive statistics show that around 677,000 workers each year suffer a new case of ill health which they believe to be caused by or made worse by work. This is costly both to business in terms of lost productivity, but also of course to the worker – the impact on quality of life and financial loss can be devastating.

You can make cheap and easy changes in the work environment, for example, encourage employees to make the most of the green and blue spaces available to us in Cornwall; promote walking meetings and taking lunch away from the workplace, for example.

Creating a pleasant work environment, encouraging work-life balance and enabling flexible working where possible have all been shown to have positive effects on employee health.

Resources:

Developing workplace health interventions: employer toolkit
www.gov.uk/government/publications/developing-and-evaluating-workplace-health-interventions-employer-toolkit
Healthy Cornwall Award
www.healthycornwall.org.uk/organisations/healthy-workplace/healthy-cornwall-award
Cornwall Council Workforce Health & Wellbeing Programme
www.whwccornwall.co.uk



Reducing the gender pay gap

Closing the gender pay gap is crucial for fostering fairness and equality in the workplace. Since 2017 any organisation with 250 or more employees has been required by law to publish specific figures about their gender pay gap which is measured by calculating the average hourly earnings of men and women.

IN CORNWALL, THE
GENDER PAY GAP IS

12.2%

In Cornwall, the gender pay gap is 12.2% (Office for National Statistics, 2023) **whilst the gap nationally is 8.2%.**

However, we know there are very few businesses in Cornwall with more than 250 employees, so our small businesses here have the opportunity and flexibility to effectively address this issue and create an inclusive environment where all employees have equal opportunities to succeed and be compensated fairly.

You can calculate whether there is a gender pay gap in your organisation (look at any bonus payments as well as salaries) and take steps to correct it as a means of implementing best practice, even though you may not have to legally report it.



Calculate your gender pay gap:

[cipd.org.uk/knowledge/guides/
gender-pay-gap-reporting/](https://cipd.org.uk/knowledge/guides/gender-pay-gap-reporting/)

Resources:

UK Government Equality Office – Closing the Gender Pay Gap
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7f0cd9ed915d74e622814b/
Government_response_-_Closing_the_Gender_Pay_Gap.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7f0cd9ed915d74e622814b/Government_response_-_Closing_the_Gender_Pay_Gap.pdf)
Equality and Human Rights Commission – Closing the Gender Pay Gap
www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/closing-the-gender-pay-gap_0.pdf

Employing people with disabilities and people with ill health (including mental ill health)

Roughly 20% of Cornwall's population identifies as disabled (Cornwall Council, 2023). We need to remember that many disabilities are not visible, and not everyone will wish to declare their disability or health condition if they have one, so creating an environment of trust where disclosure of ill health or a disability is met with support rather than any negative response is crucial.

Historically there has always been a significant gap between the number of non-disabled employed people and disabled employed people. Maximising work opportunities for people with disabilities and long-term health conditions, including mental ill health, involves creating an inclusive and supportive workplace environment that values diversity and accommodates varying needs.

By implementing proactive strategies, businesses can harness the skills and talents of all employees, contributing to a more productive and inclusive workplace.

If you employ someone who has disclosed a disability you must offer, by law, 'reasonable adjustments' to ensure their job is accessible for them.

Reasonable adjustments for disabled employees include:

- Make changes to a disabled persons working pattern
- Providing training or mentoring
- Making alterations to a premises
- Ensuring that information is provided in accessible formats
- Allowing extra time during 'tests'
- Modifying or acquiring equipment

Resources:

GOV.UK - Employing Disabled People and People with Health Conditions.
www.gov.uk/government/publications/employing-disabled-people-and-people-with-health-conditions/employing-disabled-people-and-people-with-health-conditions
Equality and Human Rights - Employment Statutory Code of Practice (Chapter 5/6).
www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/employercode.pdf
Health & Safety Executive Management Standards
www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards
Health & Safety Executive Disability Best Practice
www.hse.gov.uk/disability/best-practice/workplace-culture.htm?utm_source=press.hse.gov.uk&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=disabled-workers-principles

Maximising work based opportunities for those with SEND

(Special educational needs and disabilities)

The term SEND is increasingly used in a move away from the medicalised concept that neurodivergent diagnoses such as autism, ADHD and dyslexia are “disabilities” or “illnesses” which impair people and which need to be cured.

The concept of neurodiversity recognises that neurodivergent individuals have been disadvantaged by a world that can be inaccessible as it is built for ‘normal’ or neurotypical brains. We should be trying to fix the environment, not the person, in order to ensure that everyone is able to work to their best potential; in other words, we should be adapting the environment to the needs of the individual, rather than expecting the individual to adapt to the environment.

The benefits of taking a more imaginative, proactive approach to embracing and nurturing neurodiversity in the workforce are tangible. It has been shown to increase wellbeing, decrease absences and increase productivity – it’s not just a tick box exercise.

SEND includes neurodiversity such as:

- Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)
- Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD)
- Learning Disabilities
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Physical Disabilities
- Sensory Impairments
- Long Term Conditions

Resources:

Resources to Support Learners with SEND to Find and Sustain Work

www.et-foundation.co.uk/professional-development/special-educational-needs-disabilities/employers-and-employability/support-for-learners-with-send

Stevens & Bolton – Two Minds don’t Think Alike

www.stevens-bolton.com/site/insights/news/maximising-the-potential-of-your-neurodiverse-workforce
Supporting Employers: Working with Young People With SEND

<https://resources.careersandenterprise.co.uk/supporting-employers-working-young-people-special-educational-needs-and-disabilities-send>

Supporting the ageing population to remain economically active

Between now and 2031, there is projected to be a 25% increase in the number of people aged 65 to 79 and a 4% decline in the number aged 20 to 34 who are economically active. Whilst there are clearly economic benefits to keeping the older population economically active there are also many mental and physical health benefits.

We know that the ageing population of Cornwall is a significant demographic trend with important implications for the region. Cornwall Council data indicates that the economically active population (this means people aged 16 and over who are either working or actively seeking work) in Cornwall is just 55.8%, compared with 78.4% nationally.

An age-inclusive workforce promotes knowledge transfer and intergenerational collaboration, benefiting both older and younger employees. Research by the Centre for Ageing Better demonstrates that diverse, multigenerational teams are more productive and innovative. According to the Office for National Statistics, the number of people aged 50 and over in the UK will increase by nearly 20% by 2030, so tapping into this experienced talent pool is essential.

Supporting older adults to remain in good work contributes not only to financial security which in itself leads to improved health outcomes, but also to their overall wellbeing by offering social interaction, a sense of purpose, and personal growth opportunities, creating a more inclusive and supportive society for all generations.

In short, supporting the ageing population in Cornwall to remain economically active can contribute to the region's economic growth, address labour shortages, reduce health issues and promote social cohesion.

Ways to support an ageing workforce:

- **Steer clear of stereotypes:** pigeonholing older workers as those employees that have technological impotencies is dangerous and wrong. This stereotype will make it harder for the team to function
- **Know your workforce** - use analysis to understand your demographic and make strategic changes accordingly
- Ensure older employees have access to any necessary training that younger employees may have had externally prior to employment
- Understand the needs of the older employees
- Make sure policies around health and wellbeing are up to date
- Offer flexible hours and competitive wages
- Address and change cultural bias

Resources:

Government Office for Science – Future of an Ageing Population
<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5d273adce5274a5862768ff9/future-of-an-ageing-population.pdf>
CIPD – Understanding Older Workers
www.cipd.org/globalassets/media/knowledge/knowledge-hub/reports/understanding-older-workers-report_tcm18-107672.pdf
Sage – 6 Ways to Support an Ageing Workforce
www.sage.com/en-gb/blog/support-aging-workforce
Brookings- Two Solutions to the Challenges of an Ageing Population
www.brookings.edu/articles/two-solutions-to-the-challenges-of-population-aging/#:~:text=Providing%20opportunities%20for%20the%20elderly,pressures%20related%20to%20aging%20societies.
Centre for Ageing Better – How to Support your Older Workers
<https://ageing-better.org.uk/blogs/how-support-your-older-workers>

Supporting young entrepreneurs

We are lucky in Cornwall to have a business community that encourages entrepreneurship in young people, as well as further and higher education institutions on our doorstep that give young people the tools to develop their entrepreneurialism.

Cornwall Chamber of Commerce celebrates the '30 Under 30' each year, and British Business Bank's start up loans have helped 140 young entrepreneurs to date. Here are several strategies to effectively support young entrepreneurs:

Supporting young entrepreneurs requires a holistic approach that addresses their diverse needs and challenges. By providing access to funding, mentorship, education, a supportive regulatory environment, technology and infrastructure, market opportunities, and recognition of achievements, stakeholders can empower young entrepreneurs to succeed and contribute to economic growth and innovation. Investing in the next generation of entrepreneurs not only fosters entrepreneurship but also creates opportunities for job creation, social impact, and sustainable development.

Resources:

Prince's Trust

www.princes-trust.org.uk/help-for-young-people/support-starting-business

BIF285 - Starting a Business While Under 18 - Cobweb Business Information Factsheet

https://ciosgrowthhublinks.cobwebinfo.com/W9qldP_JTaHx8F_AM6IS78ZIEEnYtQpJy3agOkM2c7sY

British Business Bank - Support and Funding for Young Entrepreneurs

www.startuploans.co.uk/business-advice/support-for-young-entrepreneurs



Increasing capacity and place-based leadership in our communities

Increasing capacity and fostering place-based leadership within communities is essential for empowering local residents to drive positive change, address challenges, and enhance community well-being.

By building on local strengths, promoting collaboration, and providing support, communities can cultivate effective leaders and expand their capacity to tackle issues and achieve collective goals.

This all requires a concerted effort to harness local assets, foster collaboration, provide leadership development opportunities, support grassroots initiatives, enhance communication, advocate for local empowerment, and celebrate achievements. By investing in community-driven approaches and empowering residents to take proactive roles in shaping their futures, communities can build resilience, achieve sustainable development goals, and create inclusive environments where all residents thrive.

Strengthening place-based leadership fosters a sense of pride, ownership, and collective responsibility, driving positive change and improving quality of life for everyone in the community.



Resources:

Community Networks – Info on local (council led) community networks and their contacts
www.cornwall.gov.uk/people-and-communities/community-networks/about-community-networks
Locality – membership network for local community organisations
<https://locality.org.uk>

Engaging with your community
<https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/engaging-with-your-community-in-a-meaningful-way>
How to hold effective public engagement (UK Research & Innovation)
www.ukri.org/what-we-offer/public-engagement/

Advancing equality of opportunity for people with protected characteristics

Increasing capacity and fostering place-based leadership within communities is essential for empowering local residents to drive positive change, address challenges, and enhance community well-being.

The protected characteristics as listed in the Equality Act (2010) are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

The Equality Act says authorities should act to remove or reduce disadvantages suffered by people because of a protected characteristic, meet the needs of people with protected characteristic and encourage people with protected characteristic to participate.

Positive action allows additional help to be provided for groups of people who share a 'protected characteristic' (for example, race, sex, or sexual orientation) in order to ensure people are treated fairly and equally. You can take proportionate action that aims to reduce disadvantage, meet different needs and increases participation.

Positive action is not positive discrimination. Positive discrimination is unlawful in Great Britain.

If an action treating a particular group more favourably does not meet the statutory requirements in the Act for taking positive action, then it is likely to be unlawful direct discrimination under the Act, irrespective of the motives behind taking it.

Resources:

Citizens Advice- The Equality Duty: The Equality Duty
www.citizensadvice.org.uk/law-and-courts/discrimination/public-sector-equality-duty/what-s-the-public-sector-equality-duty/
ACAS – Using a Protected Characteristic to Make a Decision
www.acas.org.uk/employer-decision-protected-characteristic
GOV.uk – Positive Action in the Workplace
www.gov.uk/government/publications/positive-action-in-the-workplace-guidance-for-employers/positive-action-in-the-workplace

Helping people with complex employment barriers to access job opportunities

Helping people with complex employment barriers access job opportunities in Cornwall requires a multifaceted approach that addresses their specific needs and leverages local resources.

Employers can play a crucial role in helping individuals with complex barriers to employment enter and succeed in the workforce. Here are several strategies employers can adopt:

Assess needs and barriers:

Understand the specific barriers faced by potential employees and current workforce.

Develop inclusive policies:

Create and implement policies that promote inclusion and accommodate diverse needs.

Engage with community partners:

Build relationships with local organisations, agencies, and support services that can assist with recruitment and employee support.

Design training and support programme:

Develop tailored training programme, support services, and accommodations that address the identified needs.

Foster an inclusive culture:

Promote an organisational culture that values diversity and inclusivity through awareness training and inclusive practices.

Monitor and evaluate:

Continuously assess the effectiveness of support strategies and make improvements based on feedback and outcomes.

By adopting these strategies, employers can create a more inclusive workforce, helping individuals with complex barriers to employment integrate into the workplace and succeed in their roles.

Resources:

Support in Cornwall

www.pentreath.co.uk/projects/adults/ips-employment-specialists

Supporting young people facing complex barriers to employment

<https://www.youthemployment.org.uk/overcoming-barriers-to-life-and-employment>

Supporting adults with complex barriers to employment

www.stgilestrust.org.uk/what-we-do/adults-facing-complex-barriers

Mappa: an alternative view of Cornwall

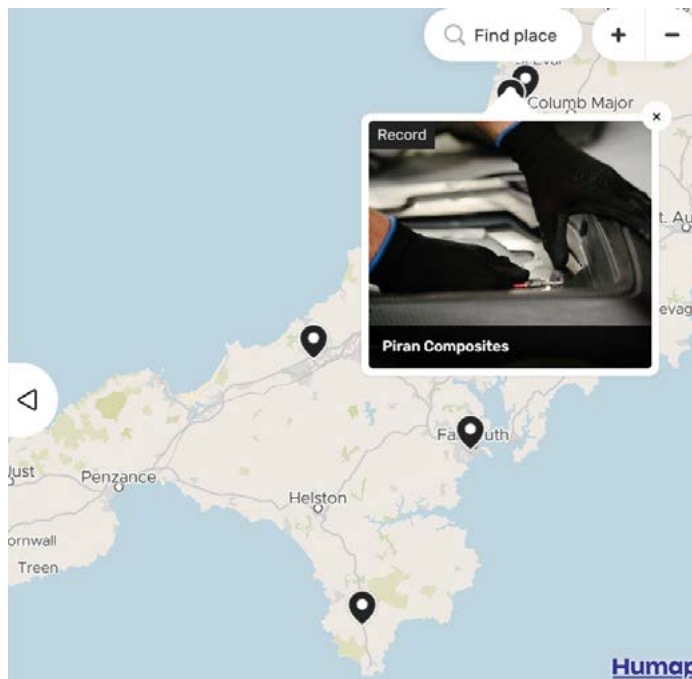
The Institute of Cornish Studies (ICS) is launching Mappa, an innovative interactive digital map to serve as both a communication and research tool, aiming to showcase a broader and richer narrative of Cornwall.

Cornwall is often portrayed as either a picturesque tourist destination or an economically stagnant rural area, with much of its broader reality overlooked. While its natural beauty and economic challenges are well-known, Cornwall is also a dynamic center of creativity, and innovation. Our objective is to broaden the common narratives of Cornwall by highlighting often-overlooked advancements and sharing more detailed information about the county.

Despite Cornwall having a healthy research community, much of its research is disseminated through specialised academic channels, which rarely reach the general public. As a result, local residents mainly rely on legacy and social media, which often lack in-depth coverage. The decline of local journalism and the rise of misinformation on social media further exacerbates this problem.

ICS is a research institution focused on Cornwall's cultural heritage, social issues, economy, and regional identity. With Mappa, ICS aims to make research and trustworthy information about Cornwall's life and work more accessible and engaging to the public.





What is an Interactive Map?

A digital interactive map is an online tool that allows users to engage with geographic data in ways traditional maps cannot. HUMAP, the provider selected for Mappa, specialises in interactive maps for the humanities.

Some key features of interactive maps include:

- **Zooming and panning:** Users can explore different areas by zooming in and out.
- **Layering:** Various data layers, such as traffic or demographic information, can be toggled on or off.
- **Clickable elements:** Users can click on locations for more detailed information like images or descriptions.
- **Search functionality:** Specific addresses or landmarks can be searched.
- **Data visualisation:** Maps can display complex data visually, such as demographic patterns or economic indicators.

A Tool for Communication and Research
Interactive maps present data in an accessible format, reaching broader audiences, including the general public, educators, and policymakers.

By making geographic data relatable and interactive, these maps can effectively communicate complex trends, highlight regional differences, and provide essential context, making them a powerful storytelling tool.

For researchers, interactive maps offer a means to analyse spatial data and uncover patterns that might not be evident in other formats. They allow users to explore relationships between variables, such as population density and economic activity, in a specific location.

The vision for Mappa

The Mappa project aims to run for a minimum of five years and will involve collaboration with university departments, local authorities, businesses, and the third sector. The ICS will use an action research approach to this project, which involves identifying problems, developing solutions, and analysing outcomes. One identified challenge is the inaccessibility of certain types of information about Cornwall. Mappa will help make this information easier to find and use, fostering better understanding and solutions for the region.

Supporting local businesses

Mappa is not only about research but also about supporting the local economy. There are several ways it will do so:

1. Raising awareness of opportunities:

Many hidden businesses in Cornwall operate from industrial estates or home offices, making them less visible. Mappa will help raise awareness of these enterprises, connecting them with customers and skilled workers. It will also highlight growth sectors like green energy and technology, helping businesses align with economic trends.

2. Bridging skills gaps:

By clearly communicating the skills needed in various sectors, Mappa will bridge the gap between businesses and the local workforce. When workers know which skills are in demand, they can seek relevant training, increasing employability and business growth.

3. Supporting entrepreneurial growth:

By providing insights into Cornwall's evolving economic landscape, Mappa will inspire entrepreneurship. Individuals will be better informed to start new ventures or expand existing ones, driving innovation and development in the region.

4. Enhancing business networks:

By improving communication, Mappa will facilitate collaborations between businesses, educational institutions, and government bodies. This will create a more cohesive and supportive business ecosystem.

5. Access funding opportunities:

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) will benefit from information on available resources such as grants and training programs, which are often hard to find. Mappa will help businesses navigate regulatory changes and access necessary funding.

6. Enhancing public perception:

Clear communication about the contributions of local businesses will improve public perception, encouraging customer loyalty. It will also build workforce confidence by showcasing career opportunities in emerging industries.

7. Supporting long-term economic development:

As Cornwall's economy evolves, ongoing communication will help businesses adapt. Aligning with regional strategic goals, Mappa will promote sustainable economic growth and resilience.

Evolve futures partnership

This project is supported by Evolve Futures, an organisation that connects businesses with experts, researchers, and peers to foster sustainable growth. Funded by the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund, Mappa is part of Cornwall Council's effort to support economic development in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

For more information
about Mappa, contact
l.p.akerman@exeter.ac.uk.



Empowering growth journeys

EVOLVE FUTURES, designed and delivered by the University of Exeter in partnership with [Cornwall Chamber of Commerce](#) and [Cornwall Rural Community Charity](#), connected enterprises with industry experts, world-class researchers, state-of-the-art facilities, and a strong support network of peers and mentors. It provided valuable opportunities to expand knowledge, enhance skills, and gain real-world business expertise. The program empowered early-stage, high-growth, and social enterprises to build networks, explore innovation, adopt solid business practices, access new markets, and become investment-ready for long-term success.

Powering transformational change

[Exeter Innovation](#) is a partner for transformative innovation. We harness the world leading research and education of the University of Exeter to create real and lasting impact, by working with organisations of all types and sizes on their innovation journey. Connect with our team today by emailing Elsupport-cornwall@exeter.ac.uk

Evolve Futures was funded by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Cornwall Council has been chosen by Government as a Lead Authority for the fund and is responsible for monitoring the progress of projects funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.



**Funded by
UK Government**





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PROJECT TOOLKITS

GREEN FUTURES: A GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE

Net Zero, Circular Economy,
Environmental Growth and
Energy Reduction

This guide provides an introduction to the four key areas, outlining essential principles and offering practical tools and actionable steps that enterprises can take to harness commercial, social, and environmental opportunities.

BETTER BUSINESS

An Introductory Guide

This guide is designed to support businesses in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly in creating a more equitable, productive, and sustainable future for their workforce and communities.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSIVITY

An Introductory Guide

This guide is designed to empower businesses, community leaders, and organisations in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly to create inclusive, equitable, and thriving workplaces and communities.

SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT

A guide to implementing impact and
social value in your organisation

This guide provides practical help to support enterprises to understand, measure and demonstrate their social value, incorporating editable templates and links to useful resources.