



the national governing body for group exercise

Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan – 2024 - 2025

Introduction

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As the national governing body for group exercise, EMD UK has a unique role to play in a sector which has the potential to open its doors to the broadest range of people. From our stakeholders and commercial partners to the third sector, instructors and, participants the diverse offer which group exercise provides is an opportunity for all. However, as an activity which over indexes on women, this is the place where we feel we can best start our journey and as such, our initial priority, via our DIAP, is to grow the involvement of women from diverse backgrounds. Our DIAP outlines the start of the process in realising the ambitions of our EDI Strategy, our commitment to tackling inequalities and making our sector inclusive and diverse; a group activity which is welcoming to all and can provide an offer for everyone.

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Samantha Cullum, Chair, EMD UK



Background to EMD UK

EMD (Exercise, Movement & Dance) UK is the national governing body for group exercise.

Our strategic direction is focussed on ensuring that EMD UK is the go-to organisation for participants, instructors, organisations and the media for expert advice about all things related to group exercise. We are determined to grow the sector so we have recently revised our strategy to focus on providing quality membership offers, content and resources, as well as providing ongoing help and advice to instructors, supporting them at every stage of their career.

Our vision 'Healthier communities through group exercise' and our Mission is 'Supporting group exercise instructors to be the best that they can be'.

We know that our Vision can be achieved because of the physical, mental and health benefits that group exercise brings to all individuals and communities. Our Mission will be achieved by supporting our instructors to not only get qualified and insured but we'll also support them to develop professionally, follow best practice and sustain their businesses. We believe that people make the difference in ensuring that we meet our strategic objectives, and so we are unwavering in our commitment to them; both in terms of our members but also those that lead and work in our organisation.

EMD UK started life as EMDP (The Exercise Movement & Dance Partnership).

Formed in 2006, EMDP was constituted to facilitate and support dance fitness organisations. EMDP was formed from The Fitness League (now FExercise), the Keep Fit Association (KFA) and the Medau Society. In 2016, we became the national governing body for group exercise, with a remit to support and grow the sector and since then, we have worked with Sport England to help deliver the government's national physical activity agenda.

Our approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

“Our approach is much more than compliance with the law; it is at the heart of our culture and values as a company. We believe in the positive benefits of equality, diversity, and inclusion, not just for society but as a foundation to enhance the service and performance of our organisation. We believe group exercise breaks down barriers, fosters positive behaviours and offers an accessible activity that creates healthy communities.” Furthermore, our Behaviours and Values reflect this commitment “We are Inclusive. Group exercise is for everyone. We strive to ensure that all instructors have the same opportunities from us, regardless of their status, background and diversity”.

The EMD UK Strategy 2022-2027 [EMD UK Strategy 2022 - 2027 - FULL DOCUMENT](#) firmly highlights our commitment to ED&I

This Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) is an integral part of our newly formulated [EDI strategy](#) which contains 3 overarching ambitions; to be Ready for Change, to Influence & Stimulate Change and to See Change, underpinned by our principles of listening, learning and leading. The DIAP, the EDI Strategy and our organisational strategy will drive our efforts by being ambitious, bespoke and proportionate.

Our Board and SLT are responsible and accountable for our EDI work and this is reflected in the Board Agenda, Minutes and Staff work [programmes](#) . In addition, we revised our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy in 2023, it was discussed and approved by the Board in June and is available on our website here [EMD-UK-Equality-Diversity-and-Inclusion-Policy.pdf \(emduk.org\)](#)

Context

2023 was a time of flux for EMD UK. We have had to make difficult decisions which have led to significant changes in our leadership team; both our Chair and CEO are recently appointed and there have been periods of substantial organisational change during the last 18 months. Our Head of Inclusion has left and will be replaced shortly by a newly created post of People Manager who will have senior staff responsibility for our EDI work.

Our sector is still recovering from:



Cost of living – this is having a huge impact on predominantly self-employed sector, costs of venues have risen, as have costs of fuel and the restricted income of participants are all putting pressure on the ability to earn a suitable income (see EMD UK Cost of Living Report 2023 <https://emduk.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/EMD-UK-survey-Cost-of-Living-Report.pdf>)



Pay - A lack of pay awards within the sector, in some cases for 2+ decades (see Recommendations for Instructor Pay, EMD UK 2023 <https://emduk.org/instructor-pay-2023/>)



Energy costs – Where facilities have had to focus their budgets to staying open and keeping pools in operation, this has in cases been to the detriment of other areas of their physical activity offer, including condense class timetables



Venue closures – no venue, no classes. All of this is having an impact on instructor health and wellbeing (See EMD UK Instructor Wellbeing Report and Recommendations 2022 <https://emduk.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/EMD-UK-Instructor-Wellbeing-Report-Recommendations-18-Oct-2022.pdf>)

Our Board is accountable for EDI and has an EDI Board Champion, supported by a small group of EDI Staff Champions and COO who cover the following staff teams; Marketing, Insight & People. They will formalise and establish a small working group and agree Terms of Reference with further diverse staff representation, meet 6 times a year and lead an EDI work programme based upon the EDI Strategy and this DIAP. In initial discussions, it has been agreed that the main focus for the group in its foundation year will be to listen and learn from peoples' lived experiences. We are keen and curious to engage with people who we have not always connected with, to better understand their experiences of engaging with EMD UK and the sector and to learn from those to plan appropriate work.

This DIAP will be closely aligned with the ambitions within the People Plan ([link needed here](#)).

This DIAP will give us a blueprint for the next 12 months which will frame our EDI journey. We recognise that both the new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and the DIAP provide huge opportunity and impetus for our EDI work and we are genuinely excited to be moving into this next phase of our work.

Where are we now?

Data & Insight



Our female participants are:

13%

Age 18 – 24

35%

Age 25 – 49

9%

Age 50 – 64

12%

Age 65+

When looking at gender and ethnicity, our females are:

1%

Mixed

6%

Asian/Asian British

3%

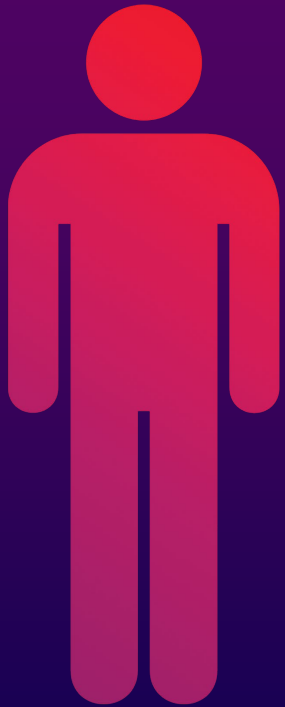
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British

59%

White

Where are we now?

Data & Insight



Our male participants are:



When looking at gender and ethnicity, our males are:



Where are we now?

Data & Insight

Of those participants who declared a disability :

53%

are females

47%

are males

Participants identified their sexual orientation as:

89%

Heterosexual

2%

Lesbian/Gay

1%

Bisexual

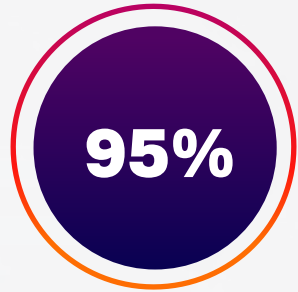
7%

Prefer not to say



Our Board and Staff membership surveys (2023) tell us that:

Of the 20 members of staff:



are female



are married or in a relationship

Age 26 – 35 **45%**

Age 36 – 45 **40%**

Age 46 – 55 **5%**

Age 56+ **10%**

90% are white and 85% identify as British, English, N Irish or Scottish.

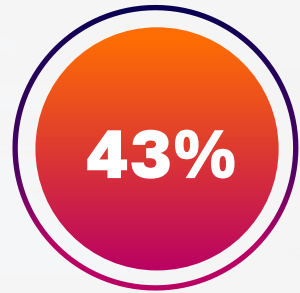
85% do not have a disability and 85% are straight/heterosexual.

65% do not have a religion and 90% have not been recently pregnant or on maternity leave.

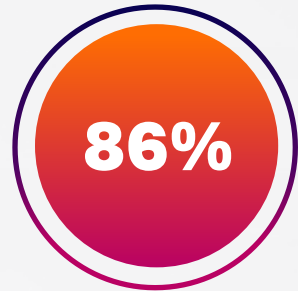
30% of our staff have caring responsibilities and 15% came from LSEG backgrounds.

Our Board and Staff membership surveys (2023) tell us that:

Of the 7 Board members:



are female



are married or in a relationship

Age 36 – 45 29%

Age 46 – 55 43%

Age 56+ 28%

86% are white and 71% identify as British or English.

86% do not have a disability and 86% are straight/heterosexual.

71% do not have a religion and 90% have not been recently pregnant or on maternity leave.

57% of our staff have caring responsibilities and 29% came from LSEG backgrounds.

The data shows us that our Board, workforce and our participants are predominantly female. We know from previous surveys that this is also the case for Group Exercise Instructors who help make up our membership.

But within those women, there is less diversity and that is where we need to focus. For example, we have a high percentage of females identifying as white in both our Board and workforce – 86 & 90% respectively - which is not reflective of the 2021 Census data showing that 82% of the population is white and nor is it reflective of our participants.

Our Board and workforce disability stats are reflective of each other at 14-15% but not of the general population which is at nearly 20%, and our LSEG data shows that the average Board/workforce representation is at 21% whilst the Census shows that 52% of households are deprived (by at least one measure of employment, education, health & overcrowding).

Our EDI priorities

It is clear from our data sources that group exercise involvement is over-indexed by women both from a workforce and a participants' perspective.

This is partly for historical reasons, including the perceived 'safe space' for women to be and the higher social status it brought. Other reasons include the makeup of the membership of our founder member organisations, but our current data demonstrates the need to increase the diversity of those women across all the protected characteristics, including socio-economic backgrounds to reflect our participants, members and the national population more accurately. The data also provides evidence that we should increase the number of men involved in group exercise and our organisation, but that is a longer-term ambition. Our current priority is growing the involvement of women from diverse backgrounds and with a variety of lived experiences which we will focus upon for the lifetime of this 12 months DIAP.

We will revise our policies, strategies and programme development activity through this intersectional lens, with the intention of increasing the diversity of group exercise instructors as well as their class participants, as per our commitment in our EDI strategy. By doing this, we will fulfil our role as a System Partner for the sport sector in addressing the gender participation gap as well as the gender in sport and physical activity enjoyment gap by women from all backgrounds and experiences.

As well as using the data above, we led a staff consultation exercise in 2023, and have identified that our immediate focus and priority for EDI will be on the internal operations of EMD UK such as seeking out and listening to different lived experiences, increasing the diversity of our Board, the formal establishment of an EDI working group, providing ongoing training and support to our Board & staff, increasing the utilisation of EDI data and insight in key decision making and reviewing our recruitment practices. We recognise that unless we get the basics right then we will not succeed in achieving what we wish to regarding the ambitions of our EDI strategy, both in terms of being a leader for our sector but also in direct delivery. However, as the year progresses and confidence increases, we will increasingly turn our attention to external EDI priorities such as the revision of organisational policies, identifying best practice, promoting case studies and engaging with key audiences and the organisations that represent them, in the places where they meet.

We will also ringfence additional resources such as funding and staff time to EDI activity

This DIAP has the following areas of focus that align with our new organisational structure:

-  **1. Leadership**
-  **2. Governance**
-  **3. Stakeholders**
-  **4. Communications & Marketing**
-  **5. Data & Insight**
-  **6. Representation**

Leadership

Leading EMD UK on all EDI matters including increasing Board diversity, aiming to improve decision-making and being more representative of the communities we serve.

Priorities & Governance Code Requirement	Actions	Responsibility	Timescales	Measures of Success	Outcomes
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Promotion of the Board's commitment to EDI.
2.2

Statement developed, signed off by the Chair and EDI Board Champion. Circulated to all members, staff and available on our website & social media channels.

Chair, Board EDI Champion, CEO

April 2024

Statement on the EMD UK website and is included in the EDI strategy.

Visitors to the EMD UK website, Board, staff and members are aware of this commitment.

Board EDI Champion has a clear role description.
2.2

Review Role description and amend as appropriate.

Chair & CEO
People Manager

April 2024

Role description formulated and agreed by the Chair & CEO.

The Board EDI Champion is clear on role responsibilities and feels confident to implement them.

All Board to receive EDI training.
2.2

Conduct skills analysis of the Board.
Develop appropriate training and recruit deliverers. Agree timetable for delivery.

Board EDI Champion &
People Manager

June 2024

Board have received the training and feedback analysis shows a level of confidence.

Board with greater EDI confidence and an enhanced ability to facilitate robust decision-making, measured by feedback analysis.

Priorities & Governance Code Requirement	Actions	Responsibility	Timescales	Measures of Success	Outcomes
Board decisions pay due regard to EDI implications 2.2	EDI implications section included in all Board papers.	Chair, EDI Board Champion & People Manager	June 2024 and onwards	Board EDI Champion feedback and analysis of decisions made.	EDI considered and embedded into key decision-making processes.
Agree and adopt appropriate targets for Board representation 2025-2027. 1.3 & 2.1	Annual on-line Board diversity survey conducted. Use findings to discuss actions.	Board EDI Champion & People Manager	September 2024	Survey completed and analysed in conjunction with the skills analysis. Appropriate targets and actions agreed.	Gaps in under-representation are addressed, skilled & competent Board members are recruited on an ongoing basis.
Review of the DIAP every 6 months by the Board. 2.3	Review led by the EDI working group.	Chair & Board EDI Champion	October 2024 and onwards	Six monthly review conducted, findings provided and if appropriate, fed into Board actions & papers.	Board is accountable for and leading DIAP progress and achievements.

Governance

Embedding EDI decision making and accountability at the highest level of the organisation and throughout the whole staff team.

Priorities & Governance Code Requirement	Actions	Responsibility	Timescales	Measures of Success	Outcomes
<p>The EMD Board is the body with responsibility for EDI accountability & decision-making.</p> <p>2.2 & 4.1</p>	<p>Agreement on accountability.</p> <p>Inclusion of appropriate wording within Boards ToR.</p>	<p>Chair, Board EDI Champion and EDI Working group</p>	<p>April 2024 and ongoing</p>	<p>Updated Board ToR.</p>	<p>Inclusion of EDI considerations and implications in Board papers at every meeting.</p>
<p>EDI decision making is informed by quantitative & qualitative data and insight.</p> <p>4.1</p>	<p>Agree what insight is needed and when it will be provided.</p>	<p>Chair, Board EDI Champion and EDI Working group</p>	<p>June 2024 and ongoing</p>	<p>Regular provision of high-quality insight and data and its usage in decision making.</p>	<p>Greater EDI informed decision making and accountability.</p>
<p>Establish an EDI Working Group with a diversity of stakeholders to fully embed EDI in work programmes</p> <p>4.1</p>	<p>Develop ToR.</p> <p>Advertise opportunity throughout workforce.</p> <p>Recruit diverse membership to the Group.</p>	<p>Board EDI Champion & staff EDI Champions</p>	<p>September 2024</p>	<p>Establishment and operation of the Group with diverse membership.</p>	<p>Greater profile, ownership and confidence amongst workforce on EDI.</p>

Stakeholders – Staff

EMD UK staff are the lifeblood of our organisation and without their drive, skills and expertise we cannot deliver our vision, mission and our strategies. We want EMD UK to be an employer of choice, that is people centred and where everyone can flourish. This is critical for the success of our EDI work.

Priorities & Governance Code Requirement	Actions	Responsibility	Timescales	Measures of Success	Outcomes
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Establish baseline demographics of the staff.

2.1 & 3.4

Annual on-line survey circulated. Ensure full completion. Analyse findings.

People Manager and Staff EDI Champions

April 2024 and ongoing

Survey completed and results analysed in timely fashion.

Gaps in representation identified and communicated to Board, SMT and staff. Appropriate actions agreed including support of existing staff and potential targeted recruitment.

All staff to complete a Training Needs Analysis (TNA) and receive EDI training.

2.1 & 3.4

Complete TNA. Analyse the results. Develop appropriate staff training with timetable and list of training programmes.

People Manager and Staff EDI Champions

July 2024

Staff have received appropriate training.

A knowledgeable staff team with greater EDI confidence and an enhanced ability to understand their role in delivering EDI commitments, to be measured by feedback analysis.

All staff to have actions that underpin the EDI commitments in the EDI Strategy

2.2

At least one EDI training opportunity to be provided in all staff development plans.

People Manager and EDI Staff Champions

September 2024

Updated staff plans include clear EDI work objectives.

Responsibility for EDI is understood and delivered by everyone throughout the organisation.

Priorities & Governance Code Requirement	Actions	Responsibility	Timescales	Measures of Success	Outcomes
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All staff to have access to EDI development & training opportunities that are individualised and relevant for their roles.

2.2 & 3.4

At least one EDI training opportunity to be provided in all staff development plans.

People Manager and EDI Staff Champions

September 2024

Updated staff development plans which include ongoing EDI training and support opportunities.

Managers ensure that training is completed.

Staff have the confidence and capability to deliver their EDI work objectives.

Completion of a staff satisfaction survey.

3.4

Development & delivery of a robust annual staff satisfaction survey.

People Manager, Chief Operating Officer and EDI Staff Champions

October 2024

Survey completed and analysed in conjunction with the skills analysis. Appropriate targets and actions agreed.

Gaps in under-representation are addressed, skilled & competent Board members are recruited on an ongoing basis.

Development and adoption of an inclusive Recruitment Policy that helps address the gaps in the staff team.

2.2 & 2.3

Review and update the current policy. Revise to include communications, job requirements, make up of selection panel, to ensure greater diversity and accessibility. Promote through a wide variety of EDI focused organisations.

People Manager

December 2024

Data capture and feedback throughout the recruitment and selection process that provides information towards continuous improvement in diverse representation.

A recruitment process that reduces barriers to diverse recruitment.

A more diverse staff team that will benefit from a wider variety of perspectives and experience.

Stakeholders – Group Exercise Instructors

Our mission and key strategic goals relate directly to supporting group exercise instructors to be the best they can be. We want to respond to their needs and develop their confidence, competence and inclusive practice.

Priorities & Governance Code Requirement	Actions	Responsibility	Timescales	Measures of Success	Outcomes
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Establish baseline demographics of GEX Instructors.

2 yearly on-line survey completed. (Survey completed in Dec 2023).

Head of Insight & People Manager

June 2024

YouGov commissioned on-line survey completed and results analysed. CRM system that tracks membership demographics.

Better understanding of the demographics of instructors & members and where there is underrepresentation.

Consultation on what EDI support is needed by Instructors.

Develop annual on-line survey to find out support needs. Ensure diversity of respondents. Survey completed.

Head of Workforce

September 2024

Consultation held.

EMD UK is listening to its members and providing leadership and support on EDI.

Provision of targeted support for Instructors on EDI.

Support could include development of appropriate guidance notes, FAQs & communications on specific issues.

EDI working group

December 2024

High levels of satisfaction reported by Instructors.

Better supported and more EDI confident Instructors.

Clarification of EMD UK members' responsibilities with regards to EDI.

Enhanced Code of Conduct and highlighting of values.

EDI working group

December 2024

Updated Code of Conduct circulated to all members as well as EMD UK values.

All EMD UK Group Exercise Instructors aware of the importance EDI to the organisation.

Communications & Marketing

Priorities & Governance Code Requirement	Actions	Responsibility	Timescales	Measures of Success	Outcomes
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DIAP is accessible on our website & via our social media channels and updated every 6 months.

Publication of DIAP once signed off by Sport England.

EDI staff Champion (marketing)

April 2024 (depending on sign off)

DIAP is reviewed and refreshed on a regular basis.

An up to date and relevant DIAP driving our EDI work.

Conduct a comprehensive Communications Audit as it relates to EDI, including accessibility & relevance to all protected characteristics.

Audit to cover website, images, communications & marketing content and all marketing produced by EMD UK. Audit conducted.

EDI Staff Champion (marketing) & team

September 2024

Completion of audit, analyse findings and recommendations developed on changes needed.

Greater understanding of importance and relevance of communications relating to diverse audiences.

Develop an EDI Communications & Marketing Plan based upon the findings and recommendations of the Audit.

Plan developed and agreed by Board.

Head of Marketing & Commercial Strategy, EDI Staff Champion (marketing) & team

September 2024

Plan fully understood and adopted by staff team.

Organisational understanding of the findings of the audit leading to identification of key diverse audiences and incorporation of these within the Plan.

Start delivery of the EDI Communications & Marketing Plan including the sourcing of EDI stories, case studies, linking with wider EDI events such as International Women’s Day and Black History Month.

Delivery is embedded within staff work programmes.

EDI working group

December 2024

Delivery commenced.

Work with diverse audiences and key strategic partners who represent them to develop pilot approaches in specific communities.

Data and insight

It is clear from the above actions that regular and accessible data & insight will be crucial to the success of our DIAP. We will use quantitative data, such as demographic studies of Board, staff and Group Exercise Instructors membership and qualitative data such as that gleaned from staff satisfaction surveys and what EDI support is needed by our instructors to underpin our actions. But we will also use the data and insight to review and revise our actions on an ongoing basis so if the evidence shows that we need to change any action to achieve our EDI ambitions, then we will.

Representation

We want everyone to see themselves within the EMD UK family. We want people, whether they are staff or Board members, participants in group exercise or instructors, to feel welcomed and included. Within the 12 months lifetime of this DIAP, we will conduct EDI reviews of our Communications Policy and our Recruitment Policy because how we communicate, how we present ourselves and how we recruit future talent into our workforce, are often the first touch points of contact with EMD UK by people outside our organisation and the sector, and therefore it is critically important that these policies are as inclusive and accessible as possible.