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# Together for Inclusion, Diversity and Equity

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TIDE Strategy 2026-30



**NWG**  
*living water*



## CONTENTS AND ACRONYMS

# Welcome to our 2026 TIDE Strategy Report



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### WHAT DO WE MEAN?

AfBE-UK	Association for Black Engineers
BITC	Business in the Community
EDI	Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning. "+" represents other sexual orientations or gender identities and non-binary people
NWL	Northumbrian Water Limited
NWG	Northumbrian Water Group
REACH	Race, Ethnicity and Cultural Heritage
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics
TIDE	Together for Inclusion, Diversity and Equity
WiSTEM	Women in STEM



## INTRODUCTION

# We care about our people and the communities we serve

We aim to make a positive difference both now and for generations to come.

To have the most impact, we need a diverse and inclusive workforce, so that we can serve everyone in our communities. Our TIDE strategy is important to all of us at Northumbrian Water Group (NWG). We started developing TIDE in 2021, and we've been turning its words and ambitions into actions and reality ever since. We've come a long way, but we recognise there is still more for us to do.

Our 2026-30 TIDE strategy builds on the significant progress made through our 2022-25 strategy and sets out the next stage of our ambition. It reflects what we have learned over the last four years, the approaches that have worked well, and the areas where we want to go further.

We're scaling up what works. Some of the greatest impact has come from change led by our colleagues, visible and accountable leadership commitment, inclusive everyday behaviours and strong governance. These elements remain central to our strategy, ensuring continuity and focus while scaling what has proven to work across the organisation.

From momentum to targeted impact, the next phase sharpens our priorities to deliver enhanced and more equitable outcomes. The 2026-30 strategy strengthens inclusive leadership capability at every level, deepens our focus on communities and early careers, and uses data more intelligently to target action where it matters most.

The evidence is clear: 86% of colleagues say NWG is a great place to work, and we have seen measurable improvements in key areas including representation, colleague engagement and our gender pay gap. The 2026-30 strategy sets out the next phase of delivery, with clearer priorities, stronger accountability and a continued focus on creating workplaces where all colleagues feel included, valued and able to contribute.

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**“Through our Together for Inclusion, Diversity and Equity strategy, we made real progress in creating a more inclusive organisation - one where people feel they belong and can do their best work. That progress gives us confidence, but it also brings a responsibility to keep setting high standards for inclusion, diversity and equity across our sector. As we move towards 2030, we will keep turning ambition into action, using TIDE to shape how we lead, make decisions and create a workplace that reflects the communities we serve.”**

**Heidi Mottram, CEO**

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**Our TIDE strategy is important to all of us at Northumbrian Water Group.**

## JOURNEY AND PROGRESS

# Our journey so far



### 2022

- First TIDE strategy published
- Colleague networks for ethnicity (REACH) and LGBTQ+ (Rainbow) established
- Signed BITC Race at Work Charter

- **Thisability** colleague network established
- Power of Difference delivered to all Senior Leaders introducing **Inclusive Behaviours**
- **Great Place To Work** Top listing for Super Large organisations
- Launched diversity focused talent programme, **Innovate Futures**, in partnership with Association for Black Engineers (**AfBE-UK**)
- Membership of Business Disability Forum
- **WiSTEM** colleague network formally launched
- **Let's Talk About** webinar series launched, designed to improve understanding of EDI and the benefits for all colleagues
- Management development programmes refreshed to incorporate Inclusive Behaviours



### 2023



### 2024

- **Inclusive Behaviours** workshops for people managers rolled out
- **One Team** sessions designed and delivered on request
- Ranked top 20 **Best workplaces for Women**
- **Licence to Recruit** sessions for hiring managers launched, reducing the risk of bias and improving inclusion
- **Safe To Say** voluntary self-disclosure and reporting launched
- **Equitable Welfare Facilities** project started

“Female workforce, female managers, and new hires at their **highest levels.**”

- Female workforce, female managers, and new hires at their **highest levels**
- Continued focus on colleague networks - over **700** members



### 2025

## JOURNEY AND PROGRESS

# Our foundations

### COLLEAGUE-LED NETWORK GROUPS

We have four colleague-led network groups that provide insight, support and advocacy through shared lived experiences:

- **Thisability** – disability and neurodivergence
- **WiSTEM** – Women in STEM
- **REACH** – Race, Ethnicity and Cultural Heritage
- **Rainbow Support Network** - LGBTQ+ colleagues and allies

These networks create safe spaces for colleagues and allies to learn, ask questions and contribute to positive change. Their insights help shape our policies, training and workplace culture.

Alongside these networks, we also host colleague-led forums including Mind Mates (mental health first aiders), Mankind (male health) and Early Careers Community (young professionals). We will continue to develop training and support for network and forum leads as they play an important role in our EDI journey.



### LICENCE TO RECRUIT

We deliver Licence to Recruit sessions for all hiring managers to promote inclusive recruitment practices. These sessions enable greater understanding of best practice and modern recruitment processes. This training, alongside other management development modules, will become mandatory for all people managers.



### SAFE TO SAY

Our Safe to Say portal enables colleagues to report concerns about workplace culture or behaviours, providing anonymity if necessary. It is supported by mandatory e-learning, helping to raise awareness of inclusive behaviours and encourage colleagues to speak up with confidence.

We also encourage colleagues to self-disclose personal information to support better monitoring of workforce diversity and equity pay gap data and reporting.



### LET'S TALK ABOUT

Our Let's Talk About sessions raise awareness of different lived experiences and are often aligned with key awareness dates such as International Women's Day, Pride and Black History Month. Guest speakers support open dialogue, helping to create a more inclusive workplace and improve customer experience.



### INCLUSIVE BEHAVIOURS

We deliver Inclusive Behaviours sessions for people managers to reinforce their role in leading and creating positive and inclusive workplace cultures. More than 250 managers have attended so far, with feedback leading to the rollout of more bespoke, behaviour-based training across the organisation.



## JOURNEY AND PROGRESS CASE STUDY

# Let's Talk About... **F1**

Former F1 senior technician Calum Nicholas spoke to NWG colleagues during a Let's Talk About session during Black History Month in October 2025.

While Calum spoke fondly about his journey, he mostly talked about being a racial minority in the motorsport world. At one time, for a long time, he said that Lewis Hamilton and himself were the only people of colour in the racing paddock. While he loved his time there, he spoke about the challenges faced in terms of culture and belonging. As a born and bred Londoner with a lived experience in diversity, being the only person of colour sometimes felt a little lonely in the white, male dominated world of motorsport. Calum now works as an ambassador for Red Bull, often encouraging other under-represented communities to consider the opportunities in motorsport.

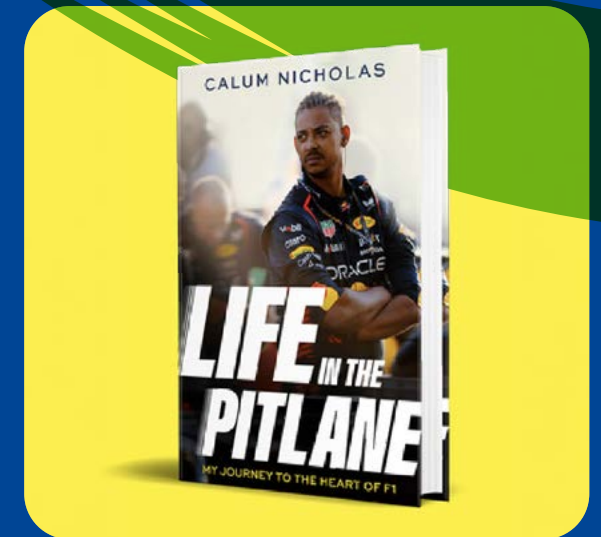
He confirmed that it is changing and there are certainly more women in the sport than there ever has been.

Calum now has a big presence on social media (@f1mech), had a starring role in the first Netflix series of 'Drive to Survive' and published a book about his F1 journey; Life in the Pitlane. It's fair to say that his appearance was our best attended in the Let's Talk About series so far. He answered questions from the virtual audience and the feedback from the session was overwhelmingly positive.

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**“Being the only person of colour sometimes felt a little lonely.”**

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## JOURNEY AND PROGRESS

# Our impact so far

Focus Area	Baseline (2021)	Current (2026)
Gender	32%	<b>34%</b>
Ethnicity	1.9%	<b>3.2%</b>
Disability	4.5%	<b>9.6%</b>
Gender Pay Gap	15.7%	<b>9.9%</b>
Self-disclosure	No data	<b>44%</b>

Data relates to total workforce

“Disability representation has more than doubled since we launched our first TIDE strategy.”

“With targeted work we have seen our Gender Pay Gap reduce by **5.8 percentage points.**”



## OUR APPROACH

# The story so far



### AWARENESS

We raise awareness of EDI so that difference, challenges and discomfort are acknowledged by our people managers. Their learning and awareness gives them the skills and insight to have difficult conversations and support colleagues in their working environment. Our Inclusive Behaviours sessions and other EDI training will continue and be expanded to all managers throughout our organisation.



### DIALOGUE AND INSIGHT

We create opportunities for dialogue and insight to learn from a range of voices, participate in a variety of conversations, and contribute to how we improve things within our business and beyond. Our Let's Talk About series and TIDE internal articles encouraging learning and dialogue will continue. The EDI contributions from our network members have given authenticity to the dialogue as colleague voices and lived experiences make a difference.



### SOLUTIONS

We have made changes to our recruitment procedures and will continue to deliver Licence to Recruit training for hiring managers to enable best practice and inclusive processes. We have enhanced policies and procedures to ensure inclusion is a priority across the board, delivered manager training on best practice, and embedded inclusive processes and targeted recruitment initiatives.

We have created targeted programmes, such as Innovate Futures, accommodating eight to 15 young people from diverse backgrounds with meaningful work experience opportunities each year, along with our annual Young Citizens Innovation Festival which provides over 400 Year 10 students with work experience and exposure to potential employers.



## OUR AMBITIONS FOR 2026-2030

# Overview

### REPRESENTATION

Our commitment to better reflect our customers will continue with diversity ambitions for the duration of this strategy. While no longer having overarching targets for ethnicity and disability representation, we will focus on improving female representation in our total workforce by maintaining a target for this, including for managerial roles. For both ethnicity and disability representation, we will aspire to achieve stated ambitions in respect of our new hires.



### RECRUITMENT

Our recruitment processes will continue to evolve so that new hires exceed overall workforce ambitions. We are committing to having organisational ambitions across our under-represented groups for new hires.

### TIDE ACTION PLANS

Leaders will draft and deliver TIDE action plans for their business areas, outlining their own diversity ambitions based on recent internal data and insight. These ambitions will cover gender, ethnicity, LGBTQ+, disability and self-disclosure. This approach reflects best practice, to enable leadership direction and influence to deliver diversity commitments. These plans will continue to evolve throughout this strategy.



### SELF-DISCLOSURE

We will continue with activities to deliver greater colleague self-disclosure rates. This will enable accurate data for all statutory equality pay gap reporting and enable regular monitoring of workforce profile. We aim to report on ethnicity and disability pay gaps for 2026, before the statutory requirement to do so.

### DISCRIMINATION

We will continue to have zero tolerance of discriminatory behaviour.

### BENCHMARKING

We will use current and new partnerships to externally benchmark our EDI progress and achievements.

## OUR AMBITIONS FOR 2026-2030



Total workforce	2026 (actual)	2030 (target)
Gender Pay Gap	9.9%	7%
Female	34%	36%
Managers (Female)	44%	50%
Self Disclosure	44%	75%

“We hope to **reduce** our Gender Pay Gap to **7% by 2030.**”

New Hires	2026 (actual)	2030 (ambition)
Female	37%	40%
People from ethnic minority backgrounds	5%	7%
Disability	2%	6%

“We hope to **raise** the disability hire rate by **4 percentage points** over the next **4 years.**”



## ACHIEVING SUCCESS BY 2030

# For our people



Belonging and inclusion



Diverse representation



Reduced pay gaps

### TRAINING

We will continue to train our managers to ensure that Leadership Shine remains a priority, including mandatory training modules for leaders on EDI practices and legislation. We will continue with other internal EDI sessions, engaging with colleagues to widen awareness of different lived experiences. Having greater empathy and understanding of difference will have a positive impact on our working environments, enabling the inclusivity that enhances colleagues' working experience.

### MENTORING

We will use mentoring and coaching to create opportunities for shared learning and dialogue/perspective. Our internal Mentoring Programme will support colleague development and encourage knowledge sharing. We will look to work with other organisations on a bespoke career mentoring programme where the participant profile aligns with our diversity ambitions.

### ACCESSIBILITY

We will continue with work to improve accessibility on our older sites, with the completion of our equitable welfare project to improve female facilities. Further reviews will decide other improvements that need to be delivered across our assets and workplaces. We will continue dialogue with colleagues on improving our workplaces and making them as accessible as possible for all colleagues and visitors.



### COLLEAGUE VOICE

We will enhance our engagement with colleagues across the organisation, knowing that their voices and experiences will assist in targeting focus areas and improving support. Trade Unions play a significant role both in their representative capacity and in joint working initiatives, including ongoing support for this strategy. Being a Great Place To Work for All is a key measure of success. To achieve this, we will ensure Great Place To Work and TIDE annual action plans created by leaders are aligned.

### WELLBEING

Our programme of wellbeing events and activities will continue to provide support for colleagues across a range of health-related matters, from menopause advice to mental health support from our mental health first-aiders (Mindmates).

## ACHIEVING SUCCESS BY 2030

# For our communities



Reflective workforce



Education outreach



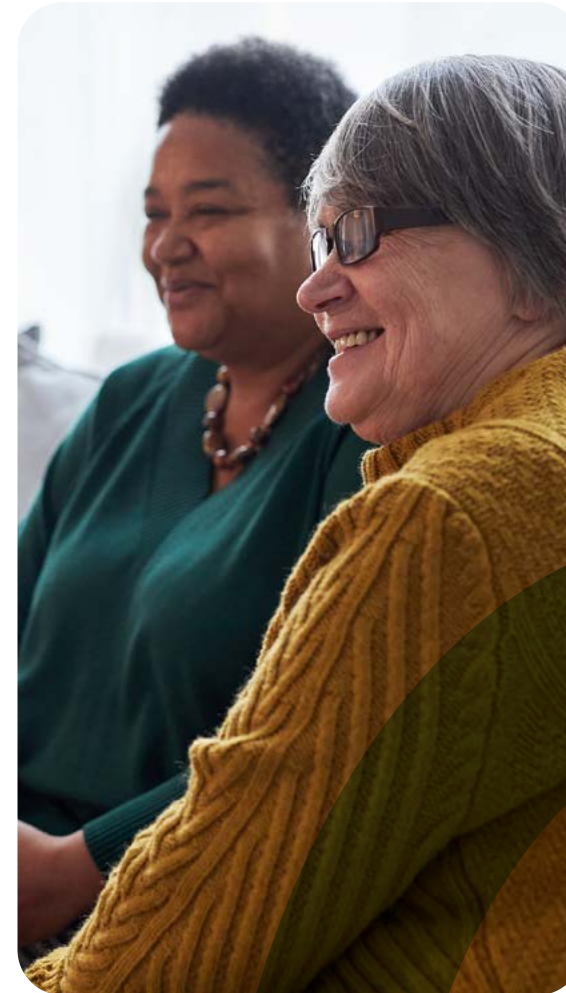
Local partnerships

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We will need to have a consistent and sustainable connection with minority communities and candidates to help us achieve our ambitions for a more diverse workforce. Some of the communities in our regions are among the smallest and poorest in the UK. We will build relationships in those communities to enable greater awareness of our opportunities. Our Customer Inclusivity Strategy includes bespoke training for customer colleagues and collaboration with other utilities and partners to ensure we follow inclusion best practice to support customers.

### NWG FUTURES ACADEMY

NWG Futures Academy helps current and future employees develop the skills and knowledge needed to support the company's goals now and in the future. Our ambitions for diversity in the Early Careers space makes connecting with diverse communities a priority. We will target our educational outreach efforts with a focus that reflects our EDI ambitions. Annually we also explore opportunities for our executive leadership team to engage in reverse mentoring sessions (where junior employees mentor senior leaders) with people from diverse backgrounds. We will work with local organisations that are progressive, supportive of diversity and have a focus on inclusion. The Outreach Ambassadors initiative, led by our NWG Futures Academy team, will expand to give the best representation of our organisation.



### SOCIAL VALUE

Our social value framework will build on partnerships and collaborations with organisations as we continue to learn and evolve our EDI approach. We will work with our partners to enable full understanding of our NWL values and our commitment to inclusive working environments for the benefit of all. The social value framework will also include our workforce wellbeing, a direct alignment with this strategy, and we will take a proactive approach with partners to ensure our procurement is inclusive of our social values commitment. Procurement processes now require a commitment from suppliers on EDI, and we continue to look at other measures to increase supplier diversity.

## ACHIEVING SUCCESS BY 2030

# For our organisation



Innovative thinking



Better performance



D&I leader

### DATA

Our EDI data has improved, and we now have invaluable insight on the achievements we have made and what needs to be our future focus. We will expand access to data and give managers at all levels valuable understanding and ownership of our diversity ambitions on:

- Recruitment (including Early Careers)
- Self-disclosure rates
- Managerial demographic
- Other relevant data.

Leaders will draft EDI action plans for their areas, taking ownership of our EDI commitments and monitoring progress.

### INNOVATE FUTURES

The annual Innovate Futures programme will continue as we use different ideas and initiatives to bring diversity into our organisation and early career opportunities. We will identify and build the appropriate partnerships and collaborations to deliver this consistently and progressively.



### RECOGNITION

It is important that colleagues see that our EDI commitments and successes are being recognised externally. Our ambition is to remain a recognised Great Place to Work – we want to be consistently in the top 30 super large companies. We will continue to communicate with them so that they can see that their efforts and support are being rewarded and lauded by others in our sector and beyond. This recognition will assist in the ambition to be an EDI leader in the sector.

### GOVERNANCE

A TIDE Board, constituted of business area leaders, colleague network leads and trade union reps, will have oversight of the strategy delivery and the progress we are committed to making. The Board will meet quarterly. Board members will have access to all available EDI data, insight, and reports to give clear direction and focus to their advisory work.

### ANNUAL EDI REPORT

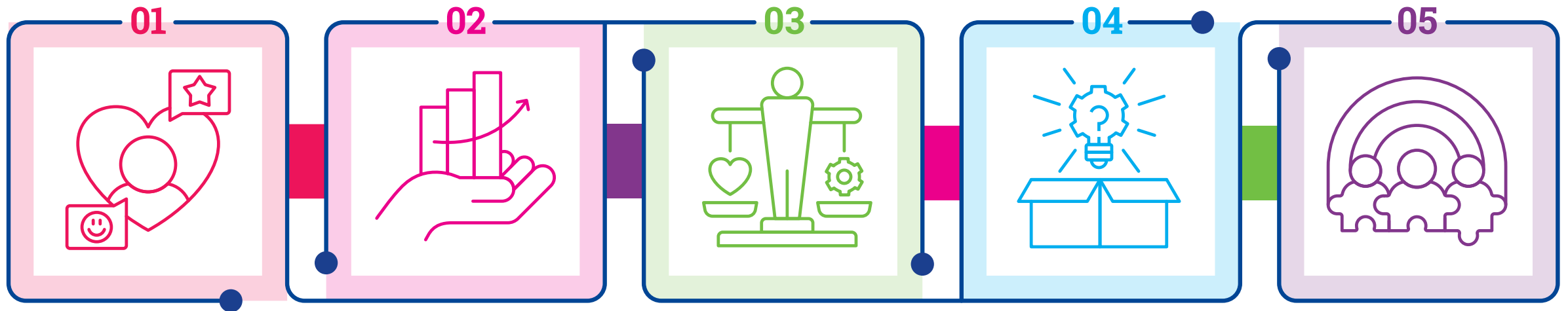
The report will highlight EDI activities, progress on strategy delivery, and workforce profile changes. It will detail business area actions plans, and any diversity improvements made. It will also feature colleague voices and experiences throughout the lifetime of this strategy.

# Our values

Our values are the set of guiding principles which collectively define who we are, what we do and how we do it.

People across our business from field teams to our customer teams and support services teams, live these values every day.

They make us different from the rest and allow us to make decisions and take actions which drive us towards our vision. Our values can be seen throughout the business, and are at their most powerful when they are demonstrated through everything we do.



## CUSTOMER FOCUSED

Understanding, caring for, and delighting those we serve.

## RESULTS DRIVEN

Playing a part to achieve great outcomes.

## ETHICAL

Every action has a consequence, think and act with care.

## INNOVATIVE

Stay curious, better never stops.

## ONE TEAM

We're all in this together.



## Useful information

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- [→ More information about diversity, inclusion and equity at NWG](#)
- [→ Working for NWG](#)
- [→ Our Customer Inclusivity Strategy](#)
- [→ Find out more about Great Place to Work data](#)
- [→ nwg.co.uk](#)