

CAST Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Plan

Introduction

The Centre for Climate Change and Social Transformations ([CAST](#)) is a collaboration between Bath (the Lead University), Cardiff, Manchester, York, and East Anglia Universities, and the charity Climate Outreach. CAST is funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). The Centre aims to be a global hub for understanding the profound societal changes required to address climate change, and does so by working collaboratively across the social sciences and with non-academic partners. Achieving this aim requires developing solutions that are fair and involves diverse groups to ensure a sustainable future that benefits everyone.

The CAST Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Plan embodies the principles of **Respect, Equality, Diversity, Inclusivity** and **Transparency** in all of CAST's activities – both **internally** within the Centre and **externally** in its engagement with stakeholders and the public. We believe everyone has a right to be treated with dignity and respect, and to be provided with equal opportunities to flourish in an environment that enables them to do so. Our aim is to foster an inclusive culture that is fair, values diversity, and maintains a working and social environment in which the rights and dignity of our staff, students, and stakeholders are respected. We recognise that many people face structural inequalities and that to address these, proactive and targeted support is needed to help level the playing field.

The plan has been developed by the CAST EDI Working Group, which includes representatives of several partner institutions who have different job types, levels of seniority, and personal characteristics. It has drawn on the evidence base (e.g. [UKRI resources](#), [CCC EDI Plan](#)) and on EDI plans of other UKRI centres ([CREDS](#), [UKERC](#)) and been refined through discussion and feedback across CAST and following review by external reviewers with EDI expertise. This second version was approved by the Executive Group in December 2023. It remains a living document and is reviewed and updated regularly.

Responsibilities and Awareness

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires that we conform to the UK's [Equality Act 2010](#) by not discriminating based on protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, social or economic background, sex and sexual orientation. These characteristics can be intersectional, meaning individuals can fall into more than one category and can face compounded forms of exclusions and oppression as a result.

However, diversity also includes different job types (academic and non-academic) and levels of seniority, and means valuing different skill sets and personal characteristics. This plan therefore goes well beyond legal EDI requirements and seeks to address wider issues of diversity, openness, and respect. In the spirit of the public sector duty regarding socio-economic inequalities, we seek to recognise, and where possible in our work, reduce and address the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage.

Since CAST is not a legal entity, the legal duties lie with our host institutions as employers, but this does not lessen our moral obligations as managers, collaborators, and colleagues to prevent bullying and harassment, to show respect in our interactions, to be an ally to those that may experience discrimination, and to champion EDI in our work. This plan therefore identifies areas where CAST can directly achieve EDI outcomes, and where we will work with and seek to influence host institutions, funders, and others, to achieve them.

In line with the [evidence base](#) on EDI interventions, achieving our EDI principles will involve: collaboration across the organisation; commitment from senior management; and embedding EDI awareness and initiatives within our organisational and research culture. We will regularly review progress and update this Plan. The Director is ultimately responsible for EDI in CAST, with support from the Centre Manager, supported by a CAST EDI working group. Annex 1 provides an overview of the actions in this plan

(stemming from CAST EDI work, feedback from CAST colleagues, input from Advisory Board and Executive Group – see section below), how progress will be measured, and current status.

In November 2022, following the launch of the EDI Plan, the first CAST EDI experiences survey and monitoring questionnaire were sent to all CAST staff, students, and affiliates. The survey elicited EDI-relevant attitudes and experiences of working within CAST, while the questionnaire collected data on key demographics and protected characteristics to provide a profile of Centre staff/students. The survey was repeated in Autumn 2023. Our most recent survey results are attached at Annex 2.

In 2023 we offered training to all CAST staff and affiliates around racism and whiteness. This was provided by Change Makers UnLtd and 30 members of staff took part. This training sought to build awareness of the unique forms of bullying commonly faced by marginalised groups e.g. racist micro-aggressions and to support staff in CAST with identifying the practical actions that they can take. We will look at areas for further training, using feedback from the CAST EDI survey.

Action 1: Regularly review and publish the EDI plan on the CAST website, distribute within CAST (sent by Director), and include in CAST induction packs.

Action 2: Regularly survey CAST members, affiliates, and advisors to identify experiences, opportunities and challenges relating to improving EDI and respect within CAST; feed these insights into this plan.

Action 3: Set a clear expectation for all CAST members to undertake EDI training offered by their host institutions and offer additional training to all CAST members, affiliates, and advisors informed by feedback from the CAST survey.

Governance and Leadership

[Evidence](#) shows that performance is improved by having a more diverse organisation; and that more inclusive decision-making improves decision quality because it incorporates a wider range of perspectives and expertise. For these reasons, CAST has embedded co-production in its research, and will work to ensure our decision-making is inclusive of diverse perspectives, as defined above.

CAST's governance structure comprises an Executive Group (EG) and Advisory Board (AB). The EG is chaired by the Director and includes the Centre Manager, Deputy Directors and Associate Directors representing different career stages, disciplines, and institutions. There is also an annual rolling early career researcher (ECR) position on the EG to offer management experience and to ensure that ECR views (including those of PhD researchers) are fed into the management of the Centre. In early 2023 we reviewed the membership of our Advisory Board to gain input from a wider range of voices.

Input from the AB has helped to shape this second iteration of our EDI Plan and we will continue to invite their advice and challenge to shape our work plan and actions.

Action 4: Table EDI as an agenda item at each Executive Group meeting and at CAST Assemblies, reviewing progress on EDI Plan actions and identifying further steps needed.

Action 5: Table EDI as an agenda item at least annually and seek input and challenge from the CAST Advisory Board on our EDI Plan and actions. When reviewing AB membership, actively seek representation from under-represented groups.

Recruitment

[Research](#) has shown that the UK energy and climate research community is insufficiently diverse, particularly at senior levels. Indeed, the environment sector is one of the least diverse in the sector, according to the [Race Report](#), with only 4.8% identifying as ethnic minorities (compared to 12.6% across all UK professionals). We take our responsibility to address these existing inequalities seriously. Within CAST, while gender representation may be better than in similar centres, other groups remain under-represented.

CAST will ensure that EDI is considered in all recruitment processes. Although participating institutions oversee their own recruitment policies, we will seek to encourage good practice, signpost staff to resources, and monitor our progress towards achieving a more diverse research community. This includes making our job, study and internship opportunities widely available and recruiting through channels that reach under-represented groups (e.g. [bmejobs.co.uk](https://www.bmejobs.co.uk), [disabilityjob.co.uk](https://www.disabilityjob.co.uk), [lgbtjobs.co.uk](https://www.lgbtjobs.co.uk)), as well as explicitly encouraging applications from these groups in job adverts. It also means ensuring hiring panels are diverse, have undergone EDI (e.g. unconscious bias, anti-racism, allyship) training, and consider diversity and barriers to entry for diverse groups when shortlisting.

Disability Confident is a government initiative which aims to enable employers to engage proactively with disabilities and to improve the recruitment and retention of disabled workers for their skills and talent. The University of Bath has successfully renewed Disability Confident Leader Status. As part of this the University must ensure inclusive and accessible recruitment, guarantee to offer an interview to all applicants with a disability provided they meet essential criteria; anticipate and provide reasonable adjustment as required and support any employee who acquires a disability or long-term health condition enabling them to stay in work.

Considering inclusive recruitment is not restricted to paid roles; we should also be inclusive in the opportunities we offer for study and work experience within CAST and in seeking Affiliates. Paid internships offer students or graduates a way to gain relevant knowledge and the skills required to succeed in a specific career field while being paid for their time. Providing payment for internships ensures that those from less privileged backgrounds can access these opportunities. Furthermore, advertising these positions ensures that it is not only those confident enough to proactively approach CAST for work experience who can benefit from them. We can also actively improve diversity within CAST by recruiting Affiliates from under-represented groups.

Action 6: Adverts for CAST jobs will include explicit statements encouraging applications from under-represented groups, avoid gendered or exclusionary language, adopt inclusive interview strategies, and use diverse recruitment channels to reach these groups.

Action 7: In Phase 2, we aim to offer internship opportunities for undergraduate students and promote these to students who are from under-represented groups, focussing on those receiving bursaries. All internships will be paid at least living-wage rate.

Action 8: Actively encourage CAST Affiliate applications from under-represented groups. This action will be taken forward by CAST researchers and we will measure progress through our CAST EDI monitoring.

Flexible and Remote Working

Keeping employees motivated so they remain with CAST, is an integral part of our plans to build capacity, help staff/students obtain and improve their skills and knowledge, and ultimately help CAST achieve its aims. Academia has a 'long hours' culture, and [surveys](#) indicate that staff in HE are working more than two unpaid days (50.4 FTE hours) per week. We recognise that the career progression of those with demands outside the workplace or long-term health conditions can suffer, and that staff wellbeing and performance are enhanced by ensuring workloads are manageable as well as enabling flexible working practices.

While remote working can improve work-life balance for some (as well as reducing travel emissions in line with CAST's Sustainability Charter), it may also limit social interactions and can be draining in other ways (e.g. long online meetings). Therefore, online and in-person events should be managed with staff wellbeing and inclusion in mind.

Action 9: We will promote host institutions' flexible and home working arrangements (including part-time work, career breaks, and remote/hybrid working) within job adverts and to existing staff/students (via CAST induction pack).

Action 10: For CAST events, we will carefully consider the balance of virtual and face-to-face (or hybrid) meetings; ensure venues are accessible; ensure online events include regular breaks; provide plenty of notice of in-person events (e.g. CAST Assembly); and where possible be inclusive in time scheduling (e.g. avoiding meetings outside of 10:00 till 16:00 or during religious festivals).

Action 11: We will support staff in healthy diary management by signposting guidance and including this in CAST induction packs. For example, avoiding back-to back meetings and scheduling meeting-free time.

Inclusive Career Progression

We acknowledge that there are systemic barriers to career progression in UK academia for people from marginalised groups - especially those at the intersections (e.g. fewer than 1% of the UK's professors are black women). Therefore, CAST will actively seek to champion the career progression of Early Career Researchers (ECRs) from marginalised backgrounds. As part of CAST's commitments to capacity building and to inclusion, we have put in place various mechanisms to support ECR leadership and development.

- a) ECRs have formed a *network* that meet regularly through virtual activities including webinars, at the Annual Assembly and residential winter retreats. The ECR network has its own budget to spend on training and other activities. This complements the wider programme of training and support offered within host institutions. All five of CAST's UK-based universities are signatories to the "[Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers](#)". PhD researchers are empowered to identify their own training needs and to invite input from CAST colleagues and beyond to address these.
- b) As appropriate to their project, PhD researchers can undertake PhD *placements* at partner organisations to explore applications of their research and understand the challenges that practitioners experience, thus furthering their research experience and broadening their perspective on potential post-doctoral career pathways.
- c) ECRs have been included in CAST as project leads and as *Co-Investigators*. They have also been paired with established academics as joint Theme Leads who offer support and mentorship. This structure is designed to encourage their contribution to research design and execution, provide leadership experience, and support capacity building throughout the lifetime of the Centre. ECRs are represented on the Impact Fund Panel, EDI Working Group, and Executive Group.
- d) ECRs are actively involved in the conceptualisation and writing of CAST *publications*. CAST commits to including ECRs, interns and paid research assistants, as named authors on all publications for which they provide a substantive contribution. Lead authors should take career seniority into account when determining authorship order. To ensure that all substantive contributors are included in the author list of CAST publications, lead authors will complete a credit contributor statement for all CAST publications.
- e) In addition to formal supervision, informal support can be provided by a *mentor*. The CAST mentoring scheme offers every ECR the opportunity to be supported by a mentor. The mentor will be a member or affiliate of CAST. They will not be from the organisation where the mentee is supervised and will identify with a different primary research discipline.

Action 12: ECR Network activity to be monitored via ECR lead representation and report to the Executive Group monthly (Deputy Director to act as liaison).

Action 13: Mentoring Scheme activity to be monitored and evaluated by the Executive Group via annual reports prepared by the Centre Manager.

Bullying and Harassment

Bullying and harassment is detrimental to individuals' wellbeing and their careers, and leads to loss of talent [that damages research quality and culture](#). Bullying and harassment of staff, students, and external

stakeholders is unacceptable and will not be tolerated within CAST. We expect all CAST partners to promote a culture of respect and we will set this out in a code of conduct for our staff and partners.

All of CAST's UK host institutions have clear procedures within which to make and handle complaints concerning bullying and harassment, and we will promote awareness of these and ensure they are followed. Moreover, we will encourage CAST members and affiliates to call out disrespectful and bullying behaviour if they witness it. Where both the complainant and subject of any complaint are employed by the same institution, we expect the issue to be addressed within the procedures of that institution. Where the complainant and the subject of the complaint are in different institutions, the complaint can be made via the procedures of either or both employing institutions.

Action 14: Ensure that all CAST staff are made aware of mechanisms for reporting bullying and harassment, flexible working, and related procedures of their employing institution by including references to these policies in the CAST Induction Pack and resharing this information with existing staff.

Action 15: Convene a working group to develop a 'code of conduct' and include signposting and advice on how to report bullying/harassment and address disrespectful behaviour.

Impact Fund

CAST has established an Impact Fund to support CAST members/associates to collaborate with non-academic practitioners and generate research impact. The main aims and objectives of the Fund are: to expand the scope and reach of CAST's impact activities; to build stronger links between CAST and those outside the Centre; and to support activities that are particularly innovative and/or led by early career researchers. We support diversity by encouraging ECRs to take on leadership roles and by explicitly requiring EDI be considered in all Impact Fund applications, and taken into account as part of evaluation.

Action 16: Impact Fund evaluation will include an assessment of how effectively EDI and ECR leadership have been addressed, including identifying which publics or stakeholder communities (e.g. excluded groups) have benefited from Impact Fund projects.

Communications

Through our internal and external communications, we can help shape norms and culture within research and wider society. We are committed to ensuring that our communications, digital presence, events, and engagement activities are accessible and inclusive. We acknowledge that improving the inclusivity of our communications is an ongoing process of learning, listening and change. Currently, we:

- a) Ensure communication uses inclusive language and where appropriate translation. For events in Wales, for example, and for publications aimed at Welsh audiences we will ensure communication is available bilingually (in English and Welsh) and that Welsh contributors to events have the option to present through the medium of Welsh, with translation into English.
- b) Consider access requirements when planning physical events and online events, including providing a clear channel for people with access needs to discuss how we can meet those needs, providing clear pre-event information, and where appropriate live transcription.
- c) Gather feedback on events to help improve accessibility. This will include seeking information on people's accessibility needs before events and seeking feedback afterwards, to understand experiences and learn for future events.
- d) Use accessible social media techniques, such as formatted hashtags for readability and including alt text.
- e) For reports and briefing papers, following [accessibility best practice](#) (e.g. using easier-to-read colours, larger fonts, keyboard-only navigation, figure captions)

- f) Actively seek new and diverse voices in our internal seminar series and external events including the CAST Showcase Event in 2024, including use and promotion of resources such as the [Climate Reframe](#) directory and [Global South Climate Expert Database](#) to find expertise and speakers from diverse backgrounds.

Action 17: Communications and Engagement Officer to improve website accessibility (e.g. optimising for screen readers), complete an audit of imagery used on our website (using collections such as [nappy.co](#) to find diverse stock and apply Climate Visuals 7 principles to choose appropriate images), and ensure all images have appropriate alt text. We will share best practice guidance on how to make CAST communications accessible.

Action 18: Invite input from people invited to CAST events about specific requirements and accessibility needs and seek to accommodate these. Ask for feedback after events so that we can learn from their experiences.

Action 19: Ensure a diverse range of voices are represented at CAST events and platforms (e.g., blog, website). Our Communications and Engagement Officer will monitor diversity of speakers and publication authors, and identify corrective actions where needed.

Research

As creators of knowledge, CAST is committed to actively and openly supporting and promoting EDI in its research activity. Furthermore, the quality of social research can be improved by ensuring diversity and inclusion of researchers and (researcher-)participants. To help us achieve this we consider the causes of inequity and put in place interventions to address these by having a diverse research workforce (see above) as well as through:

- a) *General approach*: supporting decolonisation of research, acknowledging our own limitations and positionality, considering [citation politics](#) by referencing research by under-represented groups (e.g. from the [Global South](#)), incorporating wider perspectives sensitively and respectfully, and exposing inequalities as part of our research and identifying opportunities to intervene to address them.
- b) *Recruitment of participants*: extending our reach to include a broad range of participants and providing scientific justification for excluding any groups in our research. Requiring that any external contractors engaged by CAST are transparent about their contributions (e.g. if they are not using diverse samples).
- c) *Conducting empirical research*: demonstrating sensitivity when working with other cultures, acknowledging differences, and sharing the benefit derived from our research insights.
- d) *Conducting non-empirical research*: in our documentary analysis and reviewing, drawing attention to sample limitations (e.g. geography, income) or biases, and engage critically with terminology.

Action 20: Through CAST-provided EDI training and signposting, we will raise awareness of decolonisation and anti-oppression in our research activities, and share good practice in the field of Research and EDI, available from organisations such as [UKRI](#), [ACSS](#), the [British Psychological Society](#), and academic institutions (e.g. [Sussex](#), [Bath](#)) (starting Jan 2023). We will set up a shared drive to share relevant materials with everyone in CAST, and highlight new content through our blogs and newsletter.

Reporting and Review

This Plan and progress against targets will be monitored quarterly by the EG, as noted above, and as set out in Annex 1. The Plan will be revised in line with these regular reviews and feedback from staff gathered through surveys and at CAST Assemblies. We will also report progress to ESRC in our annual report.