

Cadent

Your Gas Network

Disability Confident **Report 2023/4**



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Foreword



“We’re proud to hold Disability Confident Leader status.

I’ve been inspired by the positive action to embed equity, diversity, and inclusion over the last 12 months, there is much to be celebrated. The actions we have taken have truly made a positive impact on colleagues across our diverse footprint.

We have improved our diversity across our ‘Future Talent’ programmes, and we have been recognised by our regulator Ofgem for the inspiring work we do.

We’re focused on challenging the status quo and working hard to break the mould of the traditional utilities sector. I am excited for the next stage of our journey, building on this progress over the coming year.”

Martin Rimmer
Chief People Officer



We’re proud of our diversity and inclusion journey so far and we’re already seeing so many benefits to the changes we’ve made to date. Using the Equality Act 2010 as a guide, we’re excited to improve our culture and processes more and to see just how far we can grow at Cadent. We continue to look for ways to improve, increase inclusion and empower individuals to make a real difference to what matters to them.

In 2021, we changed our terminology, and we now define ED&I as equity, diversity, and inclusion, rather than ‘equality’. This is because ‘equality’ means to treat everyone in the same way, whereas ‘equity’ recognises that to achieve a fair outcome we may need to provide different opportunities to our colleagues to give them an equal chance.

Our ED&I Steering Group sets our strategic direction for ED&I, and the senior leaders who sit on the Steering Group sponsor and support our Employee Communities with initiatives and progressive policy change.

Our Working Groups aim to deliver real change and include members from all over our business and from each of our communities, to make sure that changes are positive for everyone. The Working Groups drive progress areas against three of our ED&I strategic priorities: Inclusive Leadership, Fair and Inclusive processes and Culture, where our current priority is to become an Anti-Racist organisation.

Our *Employee Communities*

One way we're making sure ED&I is embedded into who we are as a company is through our seven Employee Communities: Thrive!, Women in Cadent, Men's Engagement Network, Embrace, Pride at Work, Grief Awareness and the Cadent Military Community.



Thrive! Employee Community



We're pleased to have achieved Disability Confident Leader status.

One important way we're supporting disability matters within in the business is through **Thrive!**. Thrive! is an employee-led community created to raise awareness on the spectrum of disabilities across Cadent.

This community plays an important role in integrating a diverse workforce, creating an inclusive culture and keeping employees engaged and motivated. It acts as a critical friend within Cadent helping to drive change and empower people.








The community is split into several groups, offering support to a wide range of colleagues, including those living with visible and invisible disabilities, ensuring there is a place for everyone.

We're proud to be a



and we strive for more...

Recent impacts and successes include:

	Achieving Lexxic's 'Neurodiversity Smart: Committed Employer' status
	Encouraging and supporting referrals to Lexxic for neurodiversity assessments
	Working with the charity 'Blind in Business' and hosting seven of their students for a week of work experience and are working with them to get more students into Cadent
	Holding a silent 'lunch and learn,' all carried out in British Sign Language
	Working with Transport for London (TfL) and the Highways Agency on a new app which will help our engineers to support customers who are disabled
	Installing Smart Beacons in our Head Office, Ansty, that can be programmed with any message which is accessed via a free app. We use these to support people with visual impairment, new starters or guests navigating around the site
	Holding visual impairment events to provide greater empathy with our colleagues and customers' needs within the office and how they interact with our 'street works' programmes

Creating *inclusive* working environments

Working with the Cadent Property Management team to implement a new-build property blueprint providing:

- ✓ Wide access doors with low handles
- ✓ All external doors are automatic – no ‘push’ or ‘pull’
- ✓ All accessible toilets are gender neutral, and 50% of them have a Radar lock
- ✓ Reception desks with sections in two different heights – for those standing and for those in a wheelchair
- ✓ 10% of desks have adjustable heights
- ✓ In addition to individuals having DSE chairs where required, there is a ‘pool’ of DSE chairs in every department for visiting employees
- ✓ Living walls inside and out, to create a calm environment
- ✓ Quiet spaces with sofas and ‘tree’ wallpaper to make a cosy calm environment to take a break
- ✓ Sound proofing everywhere, and all call centre equipped with noise-cancelling headphones
- ✓ Plug and USB sockets on desks not the floor
- ✓ Large easy-view monitors on every desk



Leadership Action on

Diversity and Inclusion



We're driving our Thrive! Initiatives from the top

Our Executive Committee has created their own ED&I Action Plan which focuses on tangible, outcome-focused actions which will have a real impact, specifically where our senior leaders can make the most difference. These actions include ensuring we develop an ED&I plan within each business function, reviewing the diversity and representation at committees annually, and seeking to have a diverse pool for all senior leader appointments.

Feeling supported and valued by our managers and leadership team is key to feeling included. We want to equip our leaders with the tools and knowledge to make sure their teams feel safe and included. We have a working group dedicated to inclusive leadership.

In 2023, we launched Leadership & Development learning modules through the Management Effectiveness programme. This is a significant step forward in supporting our people on their leadership journey, ensuring that we are giving them the tools, skills, and knowledge to equip them for a successful career with Cadent. One of the modules on offer is a one-day ED&I course and two pilot Accelerated Development programmes have been completed for women, and for ethnic minority colleagues.

The trial feedback has led to us developing a programme which forms part of our 'Future Leaders' framework, where specific topics, which typically affect all marginalised groups, are covered ensuring these groups received equity of development and support.

Feedback from the induction has been positive and we have seen colleague engagement rise from an NPS (net promoter score) of 2.65 to 4.81 in just nine months.

Occupational

Health and Wellbeing

We recognise the importance of our colleagues feeling happy and healthy at work, while we actively promote a culture of good health and wellbeing.

Over two years ago, we made the decision to insource our Occupational Health and Wellbeing Service. This was designed to increase continuity of care and speed up access to support for colleagues, both reactively when they were most in need, but also to work preventatively to help maintain good health, to help stop colleagues becoming unwell in the first place.

The service has seen usage increase significantly, in comparison to when it was an outsourced provision, demonstrating that the service has embedded well within the business, and this is confirmed through positive feedback. The service includes a highly skilled team of Occupational Health Advisers and Technicians who provide a management referral service, pre-employment assessments and health monitoring.

The team can refer colleagues on to specialist support provided by both psychological and physical rehabilitation. This includes access to Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and self-referral for physiotherapy, plus access to toolkits and education materials.

We also provide access to a 24/7 Employee Assistance Programme, which can support colleagues with their mental health and facilitates access to financial, money, debt, and legal support, alongside a Managers' Helpline.

Our business has a network of Mental Health First Aiders and Champions who are trained and support colleagues with their mental health and wellbeing.

We have continued to build our financial wellbeing hub for colleagues, providing personal finance information together with access to external support through webinars covering debt and budgeting, pensions, and pension investments.



Health and Wellbeing

In addition to our in-house occupational health services, we're supporting wellbeing with a state-of-the-art gym at our new operational office in Ansty and have provided all colleagues with access to a new Gympass. This Gympass benefit allows access to hundreds of gyms, wellbeing coaches, nutritionists, apps and tools.

Last year, we introduced a virtual 24/7 GP-service to all employees and their households, further supporting everyone with all their day-to-day family health needs.

Leading the Way in our Sector

Alongside our Gender Pay report, we're one of the first utilities to report our Ethnicity Pay gap for the first time. This shows our ongoing commitment to transparency and improving outcomes for underrepresented groups. We recognise the need to reduce pay gaps and we're confident that the work we're doing in all areas of our business will help us to achieve this.

Other ways in which we are leading the way in our sector can be recognised in becoming one of the first in the sector, and the first in the Gas sector to be accredited as a Menopause Friendly Employer. As well as this achievement, we became the first in the sector to be accredited as a Fertility Friendly Employer.

In a recent focus group, our colleagues told us that the work-life balance and flexibility Cadent offers plays a big part in the reason why they stay at Cadent. Although we have some way to go to make flexible working accessible across all our operational footprint, we understand the benefits that flexibility brings to our colleagues and retaining them.

We've launched the updates to our Family Provisions policies following the launch of our new 'Time off for Fertility Treatment' policy last year. Key changes include:

- Our Maternity Policy now includes enhanced provisions for expectant mothers meaning they can take a full year paid maternity leave (subject to eligibility)
- We also have increased paternity leave (subject to eligibility) to 4 weeks' paid leave.
- A new Carers Policy will be launched this year in line with the Carers Leave Act 2023 which comes into force on 6th April 2024.

[Click here to access our 2022/23 and 2023/24 reports](#)



Recruitment and Attracting

Diverse Talent

Employability & Internships

We have historically run an Employability Scheme to source unpaid (interns) and paid employment.

The initial scheme worked with schools for children with SEN, close to the original Cadent head office building, Ashbrook Court in Coventry, bringing in students to placements in departments across the building. The students would attend during term time, spending some time each day in a classroom onsite followed by a few hours in their placement.

The scheme was designed to help the individuals to understand a working environment. Several of the students were successful in securing paid employment once their placements ended, either with Cadent or our suppliers. Details on the initial Employability scheme is reported on our website [here](#).

Our Future Talent Programmes

We've reviewed and reduced the barriers to entry for our Future Talent intake for 2023/24 including reducing the number of GCSEs required for apprentices and the removal, where appropriate, for a degree to increase the diversity across our intake development programmes. The impact of this is that we have seen a 9% increase in starters from an ethnically diverse background.

Our job adverts and the job advertising platforms we choose are now focused on increasing the diversity and suitability of our candidates. We have also implemented a shortlisting matrix to reduce unconscious bias and introduced a requirement for diverse interview panels for all roles.

Developing skills and expanding our training capabilities

In 2022, we expanded the capability and breadth of our Learning Delivery Function's capability. This included bringing in-house the capability to create our own digital learning content, significantly enhancing our ability to produce and roll out high-quality multimedia content across all learning needs.

Our Internal Apprenticeship development programmes continue to improve in both impact and size, maintaining a steady stream of Apprentices into Operational roles that are critical for the business. Additionally, we are working with external Training Providers to expand the provision and deliver specialist qualifications to support us and our people's specific needs across all functions in the business.

External Partnerships

At Cadent, we're constantly aiming to make an impact that matters through our extensive network and partnerships. We have a number of partnerships which help us achieve our ED&I strategy, vision and ambitions:



Embedding ED&I into our

culture and future

For us, it's fundamental that our culture allows our colleagues to thrive, feel empowered, respected and included. We create environments where colleagues feel safe to share their experiences and educate themselves on ED&I, and we're proactively seeking to be an Anti-Racist organisation.

To ensure it's truly part of what we do as an organisation, not standalone or siloed, we're collaborating across different business areas (i.e. Leadership and Training, Property, Talent Acquisition, Employee Experience, Future Skills and Health, Safety and Wellbeing) to drive tangible change for better outcomes for disabled (and underrepresented groups) to put ED&I at the heart of our culture.

Supporting our disabled colleagues is crucial to the experience and opportunities that they have, as well as to enable Cadent to be successful and sustainable. 23% of the working population (this is up to 1391 people in Cadent) are reported to have a disability and up to 1 in 5 people are considered to have a neurodiverse condition (up to 1281 people in Cadent).

Whilst we know that our disclosure levels do not meet this, it does not stop us from taking action to strengthen our position as an employer who confidently leads on disability matters. We believe that our diverse workforces' views, input, experiences and knowledge enable us to offer a better customer service experience for the 11 million people we serve; and for our 6000+ colleagues a culture which allows them to come to work and thrive.



Surveys and insights

Count Me In Campaign

After the launch of the Count Me In Campaign in 2021, where colleagues were asked to tell us personal details including disability status, religious beliefs, preferred sexual orientation etc, the business has been working with colleagues to create a safe and inclusive environment where everyone feels that they can be themselves and bring their whole selves to work.

This includes feeling confident in Cadent, our culture, policies and practises, to disclose their disability status. The impact of this campaign saw disclosure increase from 45% to 85%. Our disability disclosure increased by 2.23% from 0.3% to 2.53%.

In February 2024, we introduced a new employee system with SuccessFactors which allows employees to confidentially fill in their personal data without the need to go through a third party.

Our ambition, through these system changes is that we will soon be in a position to report more thoroughly on the true percentages of disabilities within our workforce to enable us to continue to support everyone and their working needs.

ED&I Ambitions

We have a number of ambitions to help drive representation and to support underrepresented groups. To achieve these ambitions, we've set ranges, instead of targets to drive the right behaviours. These data ranges are in line with ONS and data from the Energy and Utility Skills Inclusion Commitment. We look forward to reporting further on these in the future.

Safe+Well Survey

We recently launched our Safe+Well employee survey, which provided us with insights into both physical and psychological safety and how much employees feel they belong at Cadent. As well as local plans to mature our survey scores, a wellbeing Steering Group has been initiated to improve outcomes for our colleagues. We're due to launch our second survey in the coming months so we can realise the insights from the last 12 months.

The Big Meet

To celebrate ED&I success, and reward our volunteers, in February 2024 we held our third annual 'ED&I Big Meet', a chance for all those involved in ED&I activities at Cadent to come together, reflect on our achievements and celebrate our successes. For the first time the whole all-day event was BSL signed. To reach a company-wide audience and to embed our ED&I progress, activities and achievements, we also have an internal quarterly newsletter as well as a monthly 1% More Inclusive initiative which will enable Cadent to become 12% more inclusive in a years' time.

Is it Ok to Ask?

Led by the ED&I team in collaboration with Employee Communities, we've hosted a number of 'Is it Ok to Ask?' sessions and podcasts on sensitive topics where we create a safe space for colleagues to be curious about asking questions about ED&I matters, where previously they may not have asked through fear of 'saying the wrong thing' or offending someone.

Awareness Days

To educate and amplify the many awareness and inclusion days, each year we hold scores of employee events using all our channels, intranet, Viva Engage, webinars, face to face and online via Teams, amplifying key dates and themes such as Neurodiversity Celebration Week, International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

We're proud to be a



and strive for more...