

Proud to be naturally inclusive

Proud of who we are

On 25 August 2019 in Manchester, something great happened. We flew the flags and righteously supported the Manchester LGBTQ+ community. We marched with colleagues from BPDTS, the Department for Work and Pensions, HMRC, Home Office and many other government departments under one unified banner – A Proud Civil Service. We stood strong and shoulder to shoulder with our civil service allies and told Manchester just how proud we are of our LGBTQ+ colleagues.

The theme of the day was deep space, imagining a world with total equality. From inflatable aliens, to pink wigs, bubble guns, gender bending cyborgs right through to what matters... smiles from ear to ear, we celebrated bursting with pride about who we are, what we do and where we come from.

Naturally Inclusive

Creating a naturally inclusive environment where people can be themselves, thrive, celebrate their differences and succeed is so important to us at BPDTS. Our goal is to make diversity and inclusion part of everything we do, rooted deep into our culture, policies, strategies and the way our people think and act.

Diversity to us, means understanding that each person is unique and individual. We recognise these differences and acknowledge that they may be visible and they may not. Differences can include anything from gender and ethnicity through to beliefs, disability, sexuality and family status.

Inclusion to us, means understanding and valuing individual differences. We strive to build a culture within our organisation for our people to prosper and flourish. This means our individuals are supported, respected, engaged, have a voice, and are able to develop skills and talents in line with BPDTS's values, aims and goals.

By creating an environment in which people can be authentic and true to themselves, we'll help them to unlock their potential and support them to be their very best. Working with colleagues from diverse backgrounds will bring fresh ideas, make us more creative and innovative – and we'll deliver more.

We help build digital solutions for a rich and diverse nation, so we want the diversity of our people to reflect this.

Proud of what we have done so far

Over the past few years we have worked hard to build the foundations of an

organisation where diversity and inclusion runs through our DNA. Whilst we have ambitious plans as to how much more we want to do, we're proud of the progress we have made to date.

For example:

- our BPDS Women in Digital Network run events across the country promoting and supporting women in digital and technology roles
- we've been awarded Disability Confident Employer status
- we have an apprenticeship scheme in place, encouraging a wider range of people to embark upon a digital career or progress within the digital community, regardless of socio-economic background
- trained mental health first aiders to support our people who are both living with mental health issues and caring for those who experience mental issues
- we've worked closely with other areas of the civil service to ensure our people have access to some really great and established people networks
- we've signed and committed to the Tech Talent Charter – a commitment by organisations to a set of undertakings that aim to deliver greater inclusion and diversity in the UK tech workforce

Our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

But we know that there is much more to do. So we've developed a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy that sets out what we'll do to embed our approach and commitment to diversity and inclusion. For 2019 to 2020 we will focus on 3 main areas.

Supporting our people

This means being able to be who we are, recognising our differences and respecting each other. It's about listening to each other and letting people be heard, raising our awareness of our individual and collective needs.

Creating our environment

Creating the kind of place where we all want to work, free from discrimination and harassment, with fair working practices and where we can feedback. Somewhere we can be understood and gain recognition for who we are and what we've achieved.

Attracting and retaining diverse talent

For example looking at how we recruit people – the way job adverts are written attract different people, they may have a gender bias or be off putting for people with certain needs. This also needs to include opportunities that come up internally and for people returning to work.

Underpinning and delivering this strategy will be an action plan delivered by our Diversity and Inclusion Group and people networks, self-organising teams of volunteers, dedicating time to delivering our goals.

Joe Tetley, Diversity and Inclusion Group chair says:

We want everyone at BPDTS to be happy in the workplace and to be able to be who they are. Our mission is to give advice to corporate teams and take practical action to support diversity and inclusion.

Our Employee Pledge

We've launched also an Employee Pledge so that we can all commit to champion diversity and inclusion:

- I will treat all my colleagues as equals, respecting, acknowledging and valuing who they are as an individual
- I will create a space and a culture where we can all be ourselves, free from discrimination or unfair treatment
- I will stand by all of my colleagues as an ally

It has been signed by hundreds of people already.

At BPDTS we're creating a naturally inclusive environment where people are supported and encouraged to be themselves and to flourish. Manchester Pride was such an amazing opportunity for us to stand up and shout about it. To everyone who marched, everyone who watched and everyone who helped – you have my heart and my eternal thanks! Here's to next year...