



About the CITB Be Fair Framework

Working towards a fairer, more inclusive and respectful industry
with an equality accreditation framework for construction

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Section 1

The CITB Be Fair Framework

Helping the industry to overcome its challenges

More and more companies within the construction industry are looking to equality standards to demonstrate their commitment to addressing unfair practices and inequalities within the sector.

The fragmented nature of the industry makes it difficult to gain headway in meeting challenges around these issues.

What is needed is a unified effort by all participants in the industry, from the small sub-contractor to the larger main contractor; from public sector bodies to specialised individual groups set up to address the challenges. Only through a sector-wide joined up approach will the industry be enabled to make changes that will eventually result in a more fair, diverse and profitable workforce.

Key challenges for the construction industry include general lack of awareness of obligations relating to equality and diversity, image and recruitment, skilled people leaving the industry and issues around late payments.

CITB has been committed to promoting Equality and Diversity within the industry for a number of years and this has been brought into sharper focus following the introduction of the Equality Act in 2010. The CITB Be Fair Framework was developed to help the Construction and Built Environment sector address the challenges it faces around Fairness, Inclusion and Respect. It serves as guidance for those in the sector making a commitment to change.

It is also the basis for anticipating and delivering solutions that help companies adopt new practices, training and skills reflecting their commitment to FIR within their organisations.

Bubble: 48% of respondents in an industry survey were of the opinion that business benefits are an important factor in driving their organisation to address the equality and diversity agenda.

The Fairness, Inclusion and Respect (FIR) Guiding Principles

These are the fundamental tenets underpinning the objectives of the Framework. They are the ideals upon which an organisation can base its commitment to making positive change.

Fairness is about treating everyone equally, without bias or injustice, whilst understanding that at times this may mean some people require extra support.

Inclusion is about allowing people to be themselves, valuing difference and letting them know that their contribution is valued, regardless of whom they are and what their background is. It's about developing an environment where no-one feels left out.

Respect is ensuring your behaviour towards teams, colleagues, clients or contacts is appropriate and does not cause offence. It's about treating people how they would expect to be treated and maintaining an environment where individual differences are respected.

Section 2

The CITB Be Fair Framework Structure

The CITB Be Fair Framework structure is an industry specific standard that provides a structure for employers to address fairness, inclusion and respect within their organisation.

The accreditation is awarded by CITB to achieving companies and will help them realise the business and commercial benefit of fully understanding, embracing and harnessing the diversity of the workforce, their customers and the culturally diverse environment in which they work.

The Framework Modules

There are other standards available; however these do not reflect the complexities of the construction industry i.e. the mobile workforce, the subcontracting practices and the split working environments, both on-site and in the office.

The CITB Be Fair Framework includes “industry specific” content in the form of core modules designed to feature criteria reflecting all of the protected characteristics within the Equality Act 2010, as well as the challenges and needs unique to the construction and built environment. The modules include criteria around leadership, recruitment, management, monitoring, training and procurement.

The modules are intended to be taken up by different members of the organisation depending on the content of the module and the role of the individual in the company. In some cases, more than one individual may be leading on the module over a number of sites. This approach facilitates embedding equality throughout the organisation, particularly at site level.

Bubble: “The Framework being construction specific and having modules dedicated to supply chain and site environment was extremely helpful. Although we had Investors in Diversity we were eager to do a construction specific EDI standard for a number of reasons. Being construction specific it understands the issues and challenges faced in terms of EDI and how these can be addressed.”
Gemma Concannon, Divisional Head of HR, VINCI PLC

Description of the five core Framework modules

Module 1: Commitment

This module looks at how the organisation engages with its customers and community. The focus is on leadership and incorporates budget, strategy and governance in its content.

It also requires an organisation to communicate its commitment to FIR to its clients and through opportunities arising out of various networking activities. It encourages being able to plan strategically how it will meet FIR requirements, demonstrate leadership and use its influence to further the FIR agenda.

Module 2: Policies and Procedures

This module clearly outlines the requirements for an organisation to comply with the protected characteristics covered in the Equality Act 2010 and ensures the relevant policies and procedures are in place to facilitate these requirements. It is predominantly paper-based with the aim of making sure the organisation has the correct foundation in place to enable behavioural change to take place.

Module 3: Employment

This module focuses on the organisation’s approach to employment practices and monitoring of those practices. It is concerned with how staff are managed and strategically considered in the workplace. A key element of this module is that the organisation maintains fair, inclusive and respectful treatment of its workforce and demonstrates this through its recruitment practices as well.

Module 4: Site Environment

This module looks at embedding the principles of Fairness, Inclusion and Respect into current site practices. This module is important for the Framework because the site environment is where practices are implemented and behaviours can be observed. This is where the organisation can see the impact and results of the FIR measures it has put into place.

Module 5: Supply Chain

It is important to understand the role of the supply chain in an organisation's commitment to FIR and this module looks at how FIR is driven down the supply chain. The emphasis is on working with protecting the supply chain rather than passing on the risk. If change is going to occur within the industry, the supply chain must be brought on board. This module provides the organisation with the means to monitor and influence interactions with their supply chain around FIR and ensure compliance during the procurement process.

Note: In circumstances where an organisation has a minimal supply chain, the supply chain module may be inapplicable.

Section 3

Getting Started

The Be Fair framework consists of a self-paced set of modules designed to support an organisation in operating a fair, inclusive and respectful workplace. An organisation can get started with the framework by:

1. Downloading the freely available Be Fair Modules and Resources
2. Work through the Modules using the appropriate Resources

Accreditation in Be Fair is strongly encouraged, but is optional. An organisation simply needs to contact an approved Be Fair Provider to find out more.

Accredited organisations will be added to a public list of accredited companies and receive a plaque and certificate along with their assessment report. They will also have the right to use the Be Fair Accredited logo that will be provided on request.

All the Modules and Resources, along with details of Approved Providers, can be found at www.citb.co.uk/befair

What are the costs associated with accreditation and how long will it take?

The following considerations should be taken into account when determining how much accreditation of the Framework may cost and how much time it could take.

There is a CITB registration fee of £500 (ex VAT) that includes:

- Assessment report
- Accreditation certificate and plaque

In addition there will be a licensed provider cost that will vary from provider to provider, however, these rates should reflect the level of assessor skills/knowledge and experience required for the assessment.

The length of time to complete the Framework depends on the time an organisation can commit to progressing through it. Typically, a small sub-contractor requires 1 to 2 days of provider support and guidance, which includes the assessment of paper-based evidence and interviews.

On the other end of the scale, organisations in the category of larger main contractors typically take longer due to the sample size necessary for site interviews; this could be from 4 to 5 days of support, guidance and assessment. Your chosen provider will be able to provide more information should you choose to apply to become accredited.

Find out more about how to get CITB Be Fair Accreditation at: www.citb.co.uk/befair

The CITB Be Fair Framework is created and managed by CITB as part of our commitment to Fairness, Inclusion and Respect and promoting equality and diversity in the construction industry.