

Diversifying Real Estate: Intersectionality

2026

This guidebook aims to support individuals and organisations in making central London’s real estate sector more welcoming and inclusive by recognising how overlapping aspects of identity shape people’s everyday experiences.

It provides best-practice examples, signposts to relevant resources and offers practical guidance for applying intersectional thinking across the property sector. The guidebook also explores how the built environment can be planned, designed and managed in ways that better respond to complexity, reduce exclusion and support spaces that work for a wide range of lived experiences.

The research has been informed by a London Property Alliance roundtable attended by members, co-opted experts and stakeholders from local government, alongside insights from lead consultant Priya Aggarwal-Shah, Founder and Director of PREACH Inclusion®.

We hope the guidebook will inform and inspire Westminster Property Association (WPA) and City Property Association (CPA) members, helping to embed intersectionality into practice and, collectively, to shape a profession that better reflects and serves London’s diverse communities.

The guidebook is part of a series of themed diversity publications commissioned by WPA and CPA’s NextGen networks, produced by London Property Alliance, and supported by PREACH Inclusion®.

Foreword

When I first began my journey in the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) space, my objective was clear: the built environment must reflect the communities it serves. At the time, it was evident that the property industry was missing vital perspectives, and meaningful change would only come by bringing those voices to the table.

In response, I founded BAME in Property, a network that focused primarily on racial equity. This was an essential starting point – shining a light on the barriers faced by minority ethnic communities in our sector, from the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 to the everyday challenges of representation and visibility. Yet, as the conversations deepened and my own learning expanded, it became clear that focusing on a single strand of identity was not enough. Race, gender, sexuality, faith, socio-economic background and disability – these do not exist in isolation. We are all shaped by a multitude of overlapping identities, and it is in their intersection that the most profound experiences of inclusion and exclusion are felt.

That realisation led me to evolve and reposition the organisation as PREACH Inclusion® (Promoting Race, Ethnicity and Cultural Heritage) – a consultancy dedicated to advancing intersectional inclusion across the built environment. This evolution was not about moving away from the vital work on race, but about embracing the complexity of our multi-layered identities and responding to the realities around us.

This journey has taught me that inclusion is never static. It must grow as our understanding deepens, adapt as society changes, and expand as new voices and experiences are brought into the conversation. By embracing this change, we can create places where everyone belongs.

Over the years, I have been privileged to lead conversations about intersectionality – whether hosting roundtables such as the one that informed this guidebook, speaking at industry events, or contributing to media debates. I have never shied away from challenging or uncomfortable topics, because it is in those spaces that progress is made. My work has always been about amplifying voices, sparking dialogue, and encouraging leaders to step into perspectives that may feel unfamiliar.

The progress we have made in the built environment sector is significant. We have seen greater recognition of the importance of DEI, more networks and initiatives, and a growing appetite for collaboration across the sector. Yet there are still many gaps: diverse representation at senior levels continues to lag, barriers to progression persist, and intersectional experiences are too often overlooked.

This guidebook is significant because it marks the seventh – and final – publication in the London Property Alliance’s *Diversifying Real Estate* series. Building on earlier editions that explored race, sexuality, gender, faith & religion, disability and social mobility, it now brings these strands together through the lens of intersectionality. It comes at a time when DEI is facing mounting pressure in the UK and internationally, and provides a framework to move beyond single-issue thinking towards more holistic approaches. Serving as both a culmination and an introduction to the series, it draws together themes from previous publications and examines how overlapping aspects of identity shape experiences across the real estate sector.

Intersectionality is not an abstract concept; it is a lived reality. It requires us to understand privilege in its relativity, to practice empathy in responding to our ever-changing society, and to recognise that we have more in common than our differences suggest. It also requires courage: the courage to ask questions, to make mistakes, and to learn. By embedding intersectionality into our work, we can design cities, buildings and workplaces that actively reduce inequalities.

Everyone has a role to play in advancing diversity within the property sector. My hope is that this guidebook will empower practitioners to embrace intersectionality with integrity, empathy and action. Together, we can build places where everyone feels they belong and ensure that inclusion is not just a value we espouse but a practice we live.



Priya Aggarwal-Shah
Founder & Director of
PREACH Inclusion®
(Promoting Race,
Ethnicity and Cultural
Heritage)

Introduction

This guidebook on intersectionality is the seventh publication in the London Property Alliance’s (LPA’s) *Diversifying Real Estate* series, commissioned by its Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee and supported by its NextGen committee champion, Gardiner & Theobald. The series aims to promote diversity within the property sector and make it more accessible to people who remain underrepresented in the built environment.

Building on previous guidebooks that each focus on a single theme, this edition brings them together through the lens of intersectionality – a holistic approach that explores how different aspects of identity overlap and shape everyday experiences. Its launch comes at a pivotal moment when progress on DEI is increasingly under pressure in the UK and internationally. In the current polarised landscape, it is vital to recognise that the strength of the property sector lies in its diversity; its ability to create successful, welcoming neighbourhoods for London’s multi-layered communities depends on how well it reflects the population it serves.

With varied ideas and perspectives, the sector is better placed to drive innovation, creativity and competitiveness, and find solutions to some of our most pressing challenges. The business case for creating an ethnically diverse workforce is stronger than ever. McKinsey & Company’s *Diversity Matters Even More* report found that companies in the top quartile for ethnic diversity on executive teams were 39% more likely to outperform their peers in profitability than those in the bottom quartile.¹

Despite this, the sector continues to fall short on representation, particularly in senior roles. Among senior property professionals, 51% are white men from higher socioeconomic backgrounds.² Persistent barriers also shape progression: for every 100 men promoted, only 81 women advance, and just 54 Black women.³

Everyone has a role to play in driving diversity within the property sector. This guidebook offers ideas and inspiration to help practitioners move beyond single-issue thinking and towards a more representative and inclusive industry. Links are included to the other guidebooks in LPA’s *Diversifying Real Estate* series, which provide deeper exploration of specific themes.

Why intersectionality matters in the built environment

In recent years, DEI has faced growing scrutiny and political pushback in the UK and internationally, highlighting how contested and fragile progress can be, and how deeply policy and regulation affect lived realities – from how people use and navigate spaces, to whether they feel safe, included and able to participate in civic and working life.

Industry voices reveal that many organisations now feel pressured to adopt more cautious or conservative language around DEI to avoid becoming entangled in politicised debates. Despite this, many property companies remain committed to advancing a progressive DEI agenda, recognising that inclusion is essential to the success of individuals, businesses and the wider industry.

In parallel, the rapid rise of AI brings new risks of bias, as many systems are trained on monocultural or incomplete datasets that fail to reflect diverse experiences. These distortions can appear in recruitment tools, planning algorithms, customer-facing systems and everyday workplace technologies, potentially reinforcing inequalities if left unaddressed.

For the built environment, diversity matters profoundly. Our cities, buildings and workplaces are not neutral backdrops – they actively shape people's experiences of inclusion or exclusion. For property companies, a commitment to diversity and inclusion helps create a stronger employer brand that attracts top talent who increasingly value fairness, representation and social responsibility when choosing where to work.⁴

What is intersectionality?

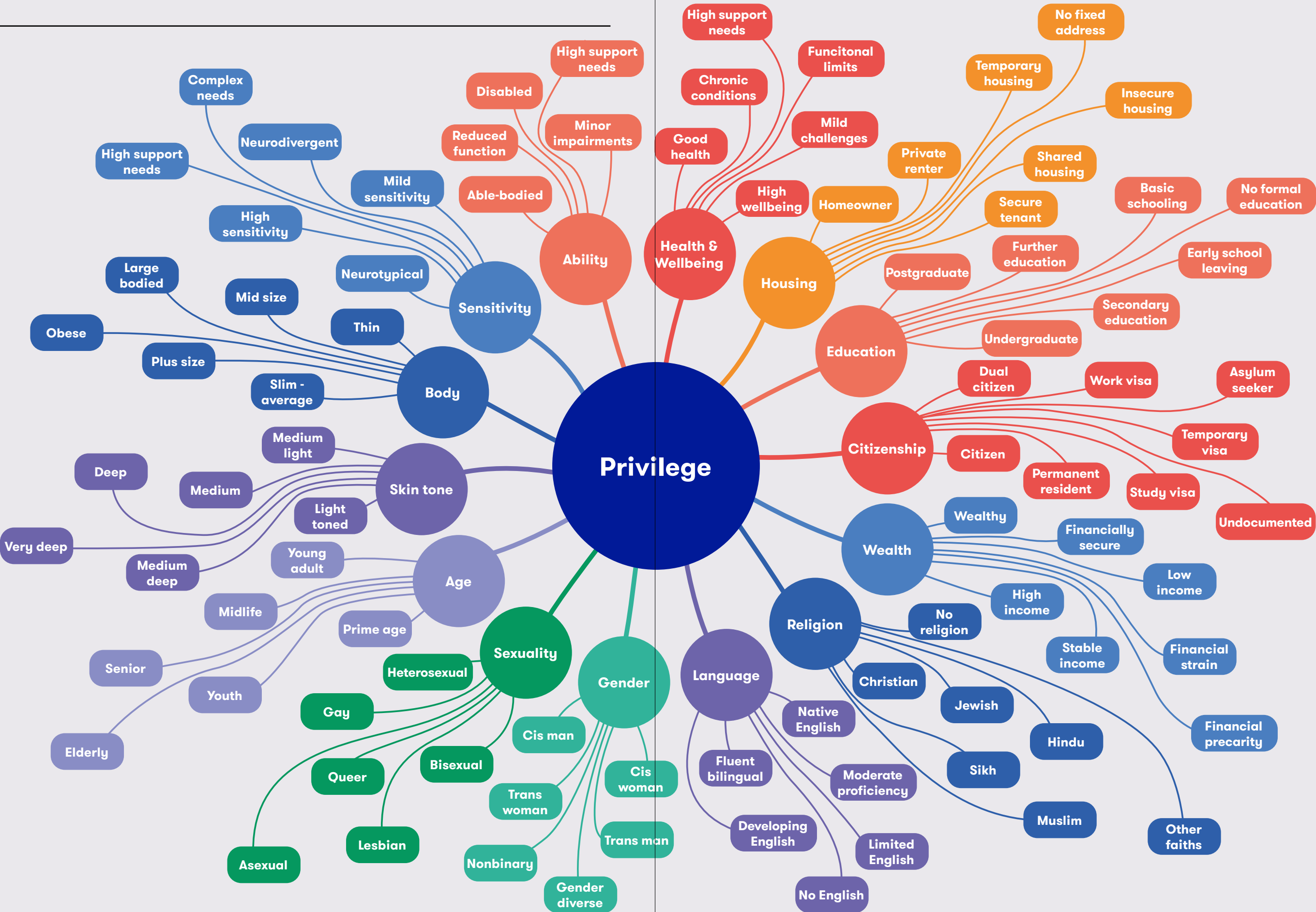
Intersectionality is a framework for understanding how various aspects of a person's identity (like race, gender, class, sexuality, disability) overlap and interact to create unique experiences.

An intersectional approach helps to see not just difference, but connection: the common pressures, systemic barriers and shared aspirations that allow people to relate across social divides.

From this perspective, inclusion work can become more empathetic, nuanced and effective – supporting individuals not as representatives of a group, but as whole people shaped by intersecting influences.



Privilege and the intersectionality ecosystem



Privilege and the intersectionality ecosystem

To understand intersectionality, we must first understand how privilege shapes lives. Privilege is not fixed; it shifts with context, environment and life stage. It is relational, shaped as much by the structures around us as by our own self-perception. What feels like an advantage in one setting may not hold in another, because identity is continually refracted through social, cultural and spatial contexts.

Recognising this naturally leads to an intersectional understanding of privilege and disadvantage, which are shaped by the interaction of multiple identities and how they are received by society. To make this more tangible, the **Intersectionality Ecosystem** diagram on the previous spread illustrates how identities are formed through different characteristics, none of which operate independently. Inspired by the widely used *Wheel of Privilege*, it has been updated to relate to a British context.

Each theme in the ecosystem represents a spectrum of identities, from those most aligned with social power in the UK at the centre, to those more likely to face structural barriers toward the outer edges. The ecosystem challenges our instinct for simple categories and encourages us to engage with the discomfort that intersectionality can surface.



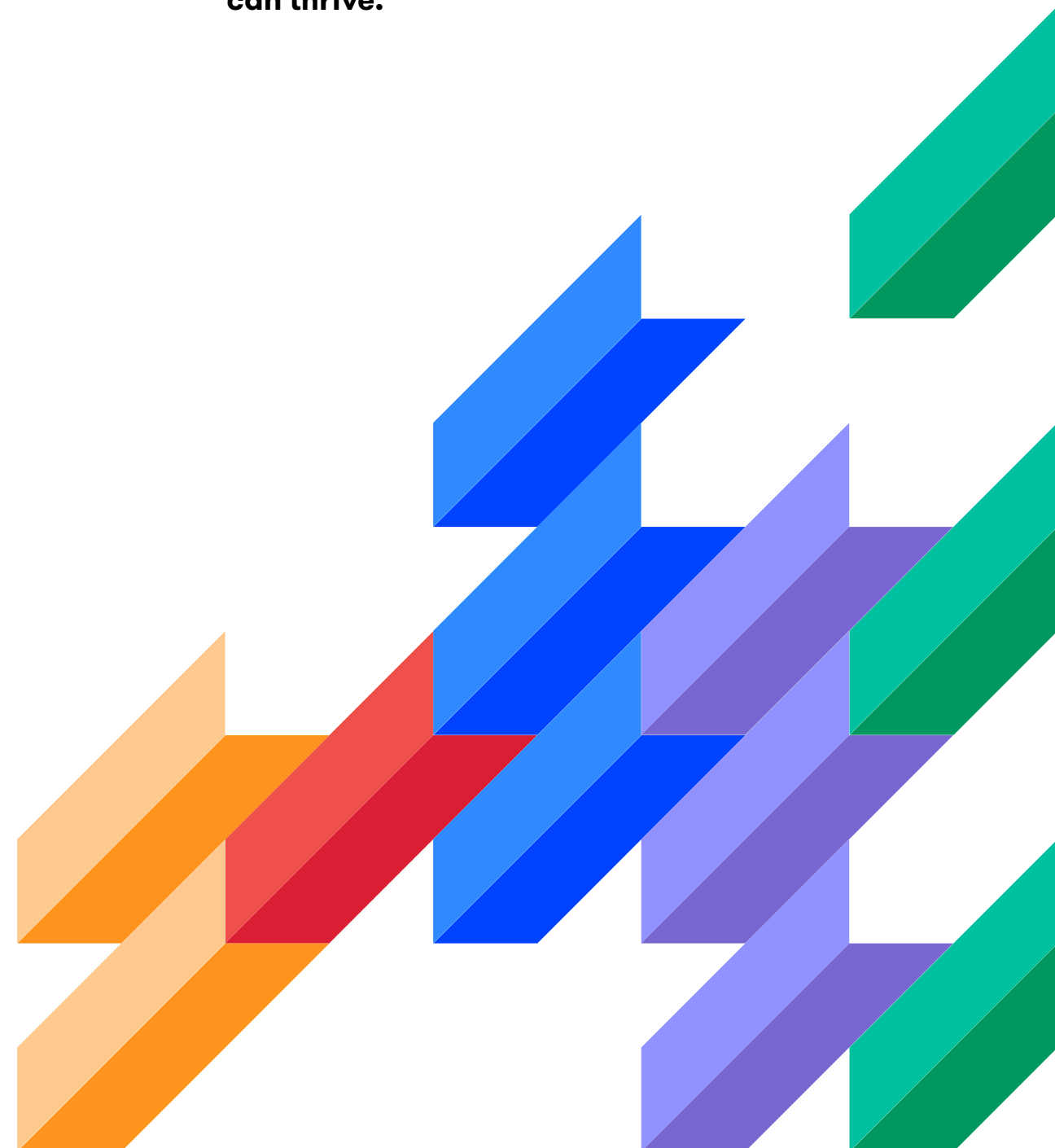
The challenge is that we tend to bucket people into fixed identities. What intersectionality does is to see the whole person, acknowledging their many facets.”

- Mark Gettleson, Interim Director of Campaigns & Engagement at the City of London Corporation

Applying an intersectional lens in practice

Embedding intersectionality into organisational practice – across leadership, governance, operations and culture – helps shift the focus from issue-based initiatives to strategic change.

The following sections outline five focus areas where applying an intersectional lens can help organisations create workplaces and developments where people with diverse identities can thrive.



1. Embedding intersectionality in strategy and governance

Creating a more representative and equitable real estate sector can be supported by leadership that is not only diverse, but actively inclusive – embedding equity within governance, decision-making and organisational culture, and recognising the role that leaders and colleagues play in driving systemic change.

Effective allyship is ongoing, accountable and rooted in action. It involves listening with humility, reflecting on privilege and using positional power to challenge inequity and open up opportunities for others. Inclusive leaders go beyond mentorship to sponsor minoritised talent, and they speak out against exclusion or bias, even when doing so is uncomfortable.

By integrating intersectional thinking where possible into decision-making, risk management, recruitment, promotion and resource allocation, organisations can build structures that not only prevent exclusion but actively enable people with different identities and needs to thrive. Leadership that consistently models and champions this approach sets the tone for the entire organisation and lays the foundations for meaningful, lasting change.

Reverse mentoring: promoting allyship and inclusive leadership
Reverse mentoring has become a valuable tool for organisations seeking to embed DEI into their leadership culture. By pairing senior leaders with junior colleagues, it inverts traditional hierarchies and creates space for fresh perspectives, lived experiences and underrepresented voices to be heard. This approach fosters empathy, strengthens allyship and ensures decision-makers are informed by the realities of those they lead.

Case study: MentorMacs and Real Estate Balance
Two programmes illustrate the impact of reverse mentoring in practice. At Macfarlanes, the **MentorMacs** scheme has been running since 2020, pairing partners, directors and senior managers with junior colleagues who bring perspectives aligned to the firm’s inclusion networks. These cover race and ethnicity, LGBTQIA+ identities, socio-economic background, neurodiversity, health conditions and work-life balance. Many mentors bring intersectional lived experiences, offering senior leaders deeper insights into the challenges faced by colleagues across the firm. MentorMacs provides a supportive space for both mentors and mentees to explore differences, build understanding and strengthen inclusive culture.

Since 2023, **Real Estate Balance (REB)** has extended this model across the property sector. Its reverse mentoring sessions bring together 20–50 participants from different organisations, promoting intergenerational collaboration and cross-company relationship building. Junior mentors are matched to senior mentees based on the diversity topics they wish to explore, ranging from social mobility and ethnicity to gender, parental policies and intersectionality. At a reverse mentoring session hosted by Turley in July 2025, half of junior mentors and nearly a third of senior mentees chose to focus explicitly on intersectional issues, such as the interplay of gender and age. This highlights how intersectionality naturally emerges when inclusive spaces are created.

Together, MentorMacs and REB demonstrate how reverse mentoring empowers junior colleagues, broadens senior leaders’ perspectives and embeds inclusivity into organisational culture.

Case study: Intersectionality in Action – a more inclusive digital experience
At **Gardiner & Theobald (G&T)**, creating an equitable experience for everyone who engages with the company is central to how the company designs and maintains its digital platforms. Its digital inclusion strategy recognises that users may experience compounding barriers – from disability and neurodiversity to language diversity, socio-economic background or age-related needs. These factors can shape how someone navigates G&T’s website, careers information or early talent outreach. G&T has invested in adaptable online accessibility tools that allow users to personalise how they engage with them. Adjustable text, reading support, translation options and tailored display settings help reduce barriers for those with multiple or compounding needs. Each month, an average of 50 unique users rely on these tools and G&T benchmark engagement against industry standards to understand its impact and ensure its platforms remain accessible, equitable and responsive.

Further reading: [G&T launches Inclusive Online Experience](#)

2. Cultivating an inclusive culture

An inclusive culture begins with creating a positive narrative around difference – one that encourages curiosity about one another and fosters a welcoming atmosphere where people feel able to express their full selves. Where possible, this can be supported by approaches and facilities that respond to diverse needs (such as flexible leave policies, multi-faith and wellness rooms, internal and external support networks), with even small adjustments often having a significant impact.

In practice, an intersectional approach frequently involves compromise and negotiated solutions. Decisions could be grounded in the needs of specific users and situations, which may require tailored or hybrid approaches rather than one-size-fits-all responses.

Embedding inclusion also means when possible reviewing policies, initiatives and communications to ensure they account for intersecting identities. This is particularly important when designing spaces, initiatives and events, which can unintentionally exclude when shaped too narrowly around a single strand.

Employee groups and networks can play a vital role in building visibility, community and allyship. Keeping them open to all – including those who don’t personally identify with them – helps prevent siloes from forming, reinforcing that intersectionality is for everyone. Meaningful cultural change emerges when colleagues recognise their place within the spectrum of identity and share responsibility for nurturing more inclusive places.

Case study: Grosvenor ‘Time to Talk’

Grosvenor has been piloting a ‘Time to Talk’ initiative – adapted from the charity [Race Equality Matters](#) – which creates a safe and informal space for colleagues to share perspectives and ask questions. Rather than focusing on a single strand of diversity, the team broadened the format to include topics represented across their staff networks – including race, sexuality, disability and religion – encouraging open dialogue on issues that may not arise in day-to-day conversations. Colleagues were invited to submit questions either in person or anonymously, helping to lower barriers and build confidence around sensitive topics. The session was run as a panel, with network leads posing questions to one another and inviting reflections from the audience as each theme unfolded. Feedback was extremely positive, with attendees highlighting the format as a constructive way to build understanding and psychological safety. Grosvenor plans to continue the series in 2026, expanding it to explore areas such as social mobility, intergenerational working and gender.

Case study: Montagu Evans ‘Now is the Time’

National Inclusion Week 2025 at **Montagu Evans** drove meaningful conversations under the theme Now is the Time, which focused on practical steps to embed inclusion. A highlight was an engaging session on social mobility from Toni Kent (a keynote speaker and visionary voice in the field of equity), which inspired colleagues to share personal journeys and aspirations. This dialogue deepened understanding of diverse experiences, reinforced the value of opportunity and strengthened the company’s commitment to creating an inclusive culture where every colleague feels seen, heard and empowered to succeed.

Case study: Macfarlanes Directory System pronunciation tool

As part of **Macfarlanes’** commitment to creating a more inclusive workplace, the firm has a pronunciation tool on the internal Macfarlanes Directory System (MDS), which was designed by the IT team. Everyone at the firm is encouraged to submit an audio clip pronouncing their name which is uploaded onto the MDS. If someone has recorded an audio clip, people will be able to click on a speaker icon to hear how they would like their name pronounced. To ensure the tool continues to be used, all new joiners are encouraged to record their name during their induction session and the inclusion team follows up by sharing how-to instructions.

3. Fostering collaboration and shared learning

Progress towards a more inclusive property sector depends on collective action, open dialogue and a shared commitment to learning.

While conversations around DEI have matured, no single organisation holds all the answers. Working in partnership with industry networks such as PREACH Inclusion®, Real Estate Balance, Freehold, The Social Mobility Foundation and others enable more meaningful knowledge exchange and strengthens impact across the sector.

Approaching difference with openness helps ease anxieties around ‘getting it wrong’ and shifts inclusion from an individual concern to a shared responsibility. These collaborations also help identify blind spots, broaden participation and create stronger platforms for underrepresented voices.

By connecting efforts across organisations and networks, the sector can foster a wider ecosystem of learning and accountability, supporting lasting change and shaping a property sector that better reflects and serves London’s diverse communities.

Case study: Empowering Creativity – supporting emerging diverse artists

Since partnering with Creative Debuts – a platform that bridges artists and art lovers – six years ago, **Montagu Evans** has celebrated creativity by showcasing more than 400 works from emerging artists across the globe. The partnership sees the company invest in artists and amplify their voices, transforming Montagu Evans’ London office space into vibrant hubs of creativity. To date, its collaboration has celebrated diversity through collections featuring Black, LGBTQIA+, South Asian and female artists, reinforcing cultural significance and inclusion. Supporting emerging talent enriches workplaces, fosters connection and strengthens the art world’s cultural legacy, ensuring new voices are seen, heard and celebrated. The partnership has also provided opportunities for learning and conversation from employees within the organisation.



4. Measuring and evolving

Inclusion strategies tend to evolve alongside workplaces, communities and identities, so it can be helpful to regularly review, test and refine practices.

Inclusion strategies tend to evolve alongside workplaces, communities and identities, so it can be helpful to regularly review, test and refine practices. Tracking progress through meaningful, intersectional data gathering and analysis – such as annual surveys, confidential interviews and open conversations – can offer valuable feedback loops that create a deeper understanding of different realities.

Data may be gathered at key points across the employee journey – from recruitment and onboarding to promotion and exit – to map where barriers to inclusion and progress can emerge. External platforms or third-party analysts can support organisations that lack capacity to generate credible, actionable insights in-house.

Building trust is a key consideration to allow people to feel safe to speak honestly. This begins with asking the right questions, being transparent about why data is collected and including options that are relevant and inclusive. Crucially, data should be analysed through an intersectional lens. Simple categorisation into single identities risks masking overlapping barriers – for example, the distinct experiences of disabled women, Black LGBTQIA+ professionals or parents from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

The optional guide on the next page outlines possible approaches that organisations may choose to adopt, depending on their capacity and context, to gather and analyse intersectional data. The guide draws on established intersectionality theory and UK guidance on equality monitoring, workforce data analysis and ethical disclosure, including work by Kimberlé Crenshaw, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), Office for National Statistics (ONS), Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) and Race in the Workplace: The McGregor-Smith Review (2017).

A guide to gathering and analysing intersectional data

- ☐ Be transparent about why data is collected and ensure surveys are voluntary and anonymous.
- ☐ Cross-tab identities (e.g., gender × ethnicity × disability) rather than analysing single categories.
- ☐ Analyse patterns across the employee lifecycle – recruitment, onboarding, progression, pay, development access, retention and exit.
- ☐ Use small-group suppression (e.g., fewer than five respondents) to protect anonymity.
- ☐ Conduct outlier or spotlight analysis to identify identities with disproportionately low / high outcomes.
- ☐ Blend quantitative and qualitative insights, using interviews or focus groups to explore trends revealed by data.
- ☐ Benchmark internally and externally to gauge if disparities are organisational, sector-wide or structural.
- ☐ Translate findings into action, ensuring insights inform policy, culture change and leadership decisions.

Case Study: LSH's 'Count Me In' Campaign

Lambert Smith Hampton (LSH) launched the Count Me In campaign to encourage colleagues across its 30 UK offices to voluntarily share diversity data. The initiative was designed to be fully anonymous, with results used only in aggregate form, ensuring trust and transparency.

Recognising that effective DEI strategies depend on understanding the demographics of its workforce, LSH sought to capture data that reflects the complexity of identity. Drawing on the Office of National Statistics as a framework, the campaign asked questions across multiple dimensions – gender, pronouns, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, caring responsibilities and socio-economic background. This intersectional approach allowed LSH to see how overlapping identities shape experiences in the workplace, from accessibility needs to faith-based requirements such as prayer rooms.

The campaign was communicated primarily via email, supported by office heads and service line managers, and reinforced through desktop backgrounds and ongoing DEI communications. Transparency about how the data would be used was central to building trust, helping colleagues understand both the organisational and commercial importance of participation.

Since its launch in August 2024, completion rates have risen from 19% to 49%. With a target of 65% set for 2026, the campaign continues to evolve as a cornerstone of LSH's DEI strategy – ensuring that networks, events and workplace environments reflect the diverse and intersecting identities of its people.

5. Community outreach and engagement

Developers and built environment professionals are uniquely positioned to lead change by embedding inclusive practices throughout the development process. For example, co-design activities can help identify needs that standard processes may overlook.

Similarly, community engagement is less effective when it assumes a single “community voice;” recognising that no one group’s experience represents the whole enables designers and developers to co-create places that are not only more inclusive, but more resilient, trusted and socially valuable. Audits can help track who is participating – and who is missing – while transparent feedback loops demonstrate how community input informs decisions. Inclusive governance structures, such as DEI advisory panels or shadow boards with diverse representation, help ensure that engagement is meaningful rather than symbolic.

Case study: Earls Court Development

The **Earls Court Development Corporation’s (ECDC)** approach to engagement is centred on inclusivity and representation, particularly from those often excluded from development processes. Working in collaboration with ZCD Architects, a Public Realm Inclusivity Panel (PRIP) was set up to ensure voices of lesser heard groups were listened to when shaping the development plans. The members are aged 15 to 80 with a range of different abilities and life experiences. All of them live in the project’s host boroughs, Hammersmith & Fulham and Kensington & Chelsea. Across 24 PRIP sessions to date, the panel members have been trained in understanding drawings and planning applications and have explored multiple topics relating to the public realm across the site.

Design and development team members regularly attend the PRIP sessions, prompting them to consider a broader range of perspectives and embed inclusive thinking in their work at Earls Court. The members’ views have directly shaped the emerging landscape design and influenced how the design team communicates with local people. Uniquely on a project of this scale, every recommendation or ask has been incorporated in the project’s Design Codes and subsequently endorsed by this group. Feedback collected from PRIP sessions was integral to facilitate a broader understanding of lived experiences within the team. This then influenced ECDC’s design and approach more broadly. The feedback received on early designs was shared with the project team and directly informed the updated masterplan, presented to the public in November 2023.

Embedding an intersectional approach in the real estate sector

The following table sets out a series of suggestions for how different groups can help embed an intersectional approach within the real estate sector. These points are practical ideas that each group may wish to consider and are intended to prompt reflection and encourage small but meaningful actions.

At Board level
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Embed intersectionality in organisational strategy, governance and decision-making, recognising leadership’s role in driving systemic change.• Champion active allyship to challenge inequity and speak out against exclusion or bias.• Integrate intersectional thinking into recruitment, promotion and risk management.• Set the tone for an inclusive culture by consistently modelling inclusive leadership and sponsoring minoritised talent.
At middle management
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Foster inclusive team cultures by encouraging openness, curiosity and a positive narrative around difference.• Review policies, initiatives, communications and day-to-day practices to ensure they account for intersecting identities.• Support negotiated or hybrid solutions that respond to specific needs and contexts, recognising that small adjustments can have significant impact.• Support employee groups and networks to build visibility, community and allyship.
At NextGen
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create opportunities for students and early-career professionals to take part in learning and dialogue that build awareness of the sector.• Support access to inclusive networks, mentoring and sponsorship opportunities that help early-career professionals build confidence and progression pathways.• Engage with emerging professionals to surface perspectives that shape more inclusive organisational practices.• Involve young people in inclusive engagement or co-design activities, enabling them to contribute to shaping places and practices that reflect diverse identities and needs.

Intersectionality framework

The intersectionality framework presented in this section has been designed to inspire organisations that are translating intersectionality strategies into practice. It draws together shared priorities from across the LPA’s Diversifying Real Estate guidebooks and highlights how overlapping identities interact with organisational systems, culture and design.

When developing policies, projects or workplace initiatives, practitioners and organisations are encouraged to use the framework to explore:

- How intersecting identities can be accommodated.
- If policies address single issues or consider layered experiences.
- If someone – or something – has been overlooked.

Leadership and representation

- ☐ Aim for senior representation and visible role models across intersecting identities.
- ☐ Offer leadership programmes that support diverse colleagues into senior roles and raises awareness of intersectionality and multiplicative disadvantage.
- ☐ Supply team leaders with toolkits and guidance to progress DEI ambitions and establish reverse mentoring programmes to learn from colleagues.
- ☐ Establish internal support networks and connect staff to external support systems.
- ☐ Appoint a dedicated DEI lead within the organisation and embed a diversity strategy into core business planning.

Workplace culture

- ☐ Consult directly with diverse users to adopt flexible policies that respect different needs and preferences.
- ☐ Foster a culture of curiosity and shared learning through accessible resources, training and networks.
- ☐ Where possible, provide inclusive facilities, such as including gender-neutral and single-sex facilities, faith rooms, sensory-friendly spaces and accessible layouts.
- ☐ Design events to be accessible, welcoming and relevant to people across all identities.
- ☐ Encourage colleagues to share pronouns (e.g. in email signatures or profiles) to normalise gender diversity and signal a safe environment for trans and non-binary staff.
- ☐ Try to ensure that uniforms, PPE and dress codes accommodate religious requirements (e.g., hijabs, turbans, modest dress), and provide safe, practical alternatives where needed.

Learning and allyship

- ☐ Consider training on unconscious bias, microaggressions and intersectional privilege, with input from lived-experience speakers.
- ☐ Support employee networks – such as faith, disability, LGBTQIA+, gender or social mobility groups – as spaces for learning, allyship and shared perspectives.
- ☐ Encourage shared learning between groups – including participation from people who do not identify with their characteristics – to raise awareness and understanding.
- ☐ Challenge stereotypes and support staff to call out inappropriate behaviour, ‘banter’ and microaggressions, and actively support colleagues who experience them.

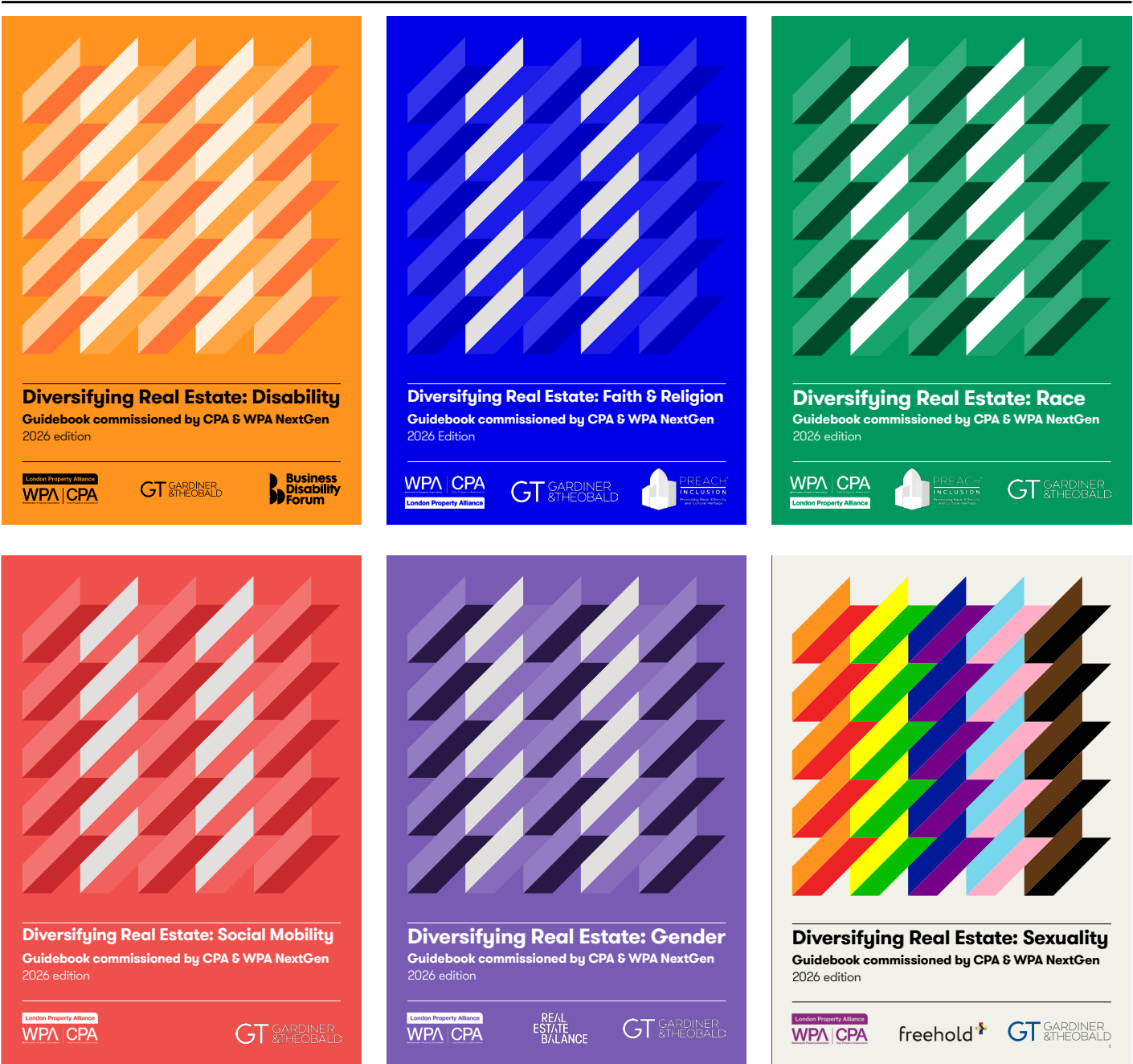
Recruitment and access to opportunity

- Where possible, combine blind recruitment with contextual hiring (which assesses candidates' achievements in context of personal circumstances) to create a level playing field.
- Reduce reliance on informal networks or hiring people already known to the organisation, which can entrench socioeconomic privilege.
- Use flexible scheduling and inclusive interview practices (for example, offering different time options and formats) to ensure a fair recruitment process.
- Monitor recruitment data to identify patterns and track progress toward diversity objectives.
- Review parental leave, return-to-work support and childcare assistance so they support all genders, reducing the mid-career 'brain drain' that disproportionately affects women.
- Provide onboarding checklists – simple guides that outline support options, workplace adjustments and resources – so everyone knows what is available to them.

Community and engagement

- Partner with local schools, youth groups, communities and faith networks to co-design developments that reflect real demographic complexity.
- Inspire people of all ages, backgrounds and identities to embark on a career in the built environment through inclusive and hands-on engagement as part of regeneration and development schemes.
- Use mixed engagement methods – in-person, digital and outreach through trusted community leaders – to ensure everyone can participate.
- Involve diverse, relatable role models to raise awareness of the built environment sector and the breadth of opportunities it offers.

Other guidebooks in this series



References

1

McKinsey & Company (2023). Diversity Matters Even More: The case for holistic impact. <https://nsga.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/McKinsey-Diversity-Report-December-2023.pdf>

2

The Bridge Group and JLL UK Foundation (2025). Building for the Future: Socio-economic diversity and inclusion in UK Real Estate. <https://www.thebridgegroup.org.uk/s/JLL-UK-Foundation-Building-for-the-Future-V20.pdf>

3

Shape Talent (2025). The Three Barriers to Women’s Progression: What organisations can do about them. 3rd Edition. <https://shapetalent.activehosted.com/f/102>

4

Blenkinsopp, L. (2025). The Power of Diverse Talent. <https://reciteme.com/news/the-power-of-diverse-talent/>

Thank you to the following people for their contributions: Priya Aggarwal-Shah – **PREACH Inclusion®**; Charlotte Allen – **DP9**; Wesley Ankrah – **Savills UK**; Jade Baltrop – **Earls Court Development Company**; Sue Brown – **Real Estate Balance**; Molly Davies – **Gardiner & Theobald**; Mark Gettleson – **City of London Corporation**; Sarah Hayford – **The Land Collective**; Natalia Lusty – **Real Estate Balance**; James Manning – **Grosvenor**; Bhavini Shah – **Montagu Evans**; Gareth Sinnamon – **Stace**; Donna Smith – **Lambert Smith Hampton**; Emma Thomas – **Make Architects**

