



NAVCA Members Allyship Programme

Our aim as a network is to promote equality, equity, diversity and inclusion (EEDI). We work with communities across England and have significant reach. Our aim is to add more intentionality and structure to our approach, through developing an allyship network to offer training and support and increase our impact.

Local infrastructure organisations are leaders in their local voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors, and the NAVCA network reaches around 165,000 charities and community groups across England. This is an opportunity for NAVCA members to make a real difference locally and nationally, emphasising the important role of local infrastructure and the wider VCSE sector in driving social change and improving community wellbeing. Taking part in the NAVCA Members Allyship Programme means being part of a network of allies making positive change locally.



What is the Allyship Programme?

Allyship is the practice of actively supporting and advocating for individuals or groups who are marginalised, underrepresented, or facing discrimination. It involves using one's own privilege, power, or position to promote equality, equity, inclusion, and social justice.



The Allies will be a network of dedicated individuals who champion and promote a culture of inclusion, allyship, inclusivity, and belonging within their organisations and the wider voluntary and community organisations, charities and social enterprises that they work with. They serve as role models, sponsors, advocates, and change agents, fostering an environment where all employees and volunteers feel valued, respected, and supported. Allies and their organisations will be at different stages of their EEDI journey, our aim is to work with where people are at.

The following are key aspects of allyship:

- **Awareness:** Recognising and understanding systemic inequalities and biases.
- **Education:** Continuously learning about the experiences and challenges faced by marginalised groups.
- **Action:** Actively working to challenge discrimination and promote inclusivity.
- **Support:** Amplifying the voices of marginalised individuals and groups.
- **Responsibility:** Taking accountability for one's own biases and mistakes.
- **Listening:** Paying attention to the needs and perspectives of marginalised communities.
- **Solidarity:** Standing alongside marginalised groups in their fight for equality.
- **Self-reflection:** Examining one's own privileges and how they can be used to benefit others.
- **Ongoing commitment:** Recognising that allyship is a continual process, not a one-time action.

We aim to build and develop an allyship network across the membership and beyond based on these attributes.

The allyship programme will be overseen by the NAVCA EEDI group. The first cohort will be identified for a 12-month period, when we will review the approach to inform further developments.

Why is allyship important?

Allyship is important in various contexts, including workplaces and social settings. It aims to create more equitable and inclusive environments for all individuals, regardless of their race, gender, sexual orientation, disability status, or other characteristics. The key principles are set out below.

- **Promoting equality:** It helps create a more equitable society by addressing power imbalances and systemic discrimination.



- **Amplifying voices:** Allies can use their privilege to elevate marginalised voices that might otherwise go unheard.
- **Sharing the burden:** It relieves marginalised groups from always having to advocate for themselves.
- **Building understanding:** Allyship promotes empathy and cross-cultural understanding among diverse groups.
- **Challenging norms:** It helps question and dismantle harmful societal norms and stereotypes.
- **Supporting mental health:** Allyship can reduce feelings of isolation and stress among marginalised individuals.
- **Enhancing diversity:** It encourages diverse representation in leadership and decision-making roles.
- **Creating safer spaces:** Allies help create environments where people feel safe to be themselves.

Benefits of taking part in the NAVCA Allyship Programme

Taking part in the NAVCA Allyship Programme will bring many benefits to your organisation, including:

- **Improved workplace culture:** Fosters a more inclusive and respectful environment where all members feel valued and supported.
- **Enhanced diversity and inclusion:** Helps attract and retain diverse talent by demonstrating a commitment to equality.
- **Leadership development:** Provides opportunities for members to develop empathy, cultural competence, and inclusive leadership skills.
- **Employee engagement:** Increases job satisfaction and engagement as members feel more supported and understood.
- **Increased awareness:** Educates members about different perspectives, challenges, and experiences of marginalised groups.
- **Better communication:** Encourages open dialogue about sensitive topics, leading to improved understanding among members.
- **Reputation enhancement:** Improves the organisation's reputation as a socially responsible and progressive entity.
- **Productivity improvement:** Creates an environment where all members can focus on their work without feeling marginalised or excluded.
- **Network expansion:** Builds stronger connections both within the organisation and with external communities.



The Allyship Programme – how it will work

The allyship programme will start with a small cohort of up to 20 people to work together and support development over a 12-month period initially. The focus of this cohort might vary between the individuals selected, but we anticipate key roles and responsibilities of Allies would include:

Advocate and Challenge: Actively promote allyship, diversity, equity, and inclusion principles within their organisations. Address instances of discrimination or exclusionary behaviours respectfully and constructively.

Educate and Share: Participate in allyship training, continuously educate yourself on EEDI topics, and share knowledge and resources with colleagues. Organise educational events or workshops to raise awareness.

Mentor and Support: Provide a safe environment for colleagues to share experiences and concerns. Mentor others on becoming active allies and upstanders, offering guidance and emotional support when needed.

Collaborate and Engage: Work with the Allyship Steering Committee, Employee Resource Groups and Staff Networks to develop and implement initiatives. Actively participate in allyship-related discussions and activities.

Lead by Example: Demonstrate allyship behaviours in daily interactions, model inclusive language, and practice active listening. Challenge biases and microaggressions respectfully.

Foster Inclusive Spaces: Facilitate inclusive discussions during team meetings, ensure all voices are heard, and create safe spaces for dialogue on sensitive topics related to allyship and inclusion.

Drive Organisational Change: Advocate for policies and practices that promote EEDI within the organisation. Identify and escalate systemic barriers hindering inclusivity.

Network and Collaborate: Participate in Allyship meetings to share best practices and challenges. Collaborate with other Allies on joint initiatives.

Recognise and Celebrate: Acknowledge colleagues who demonstrate exemplary allyship behaviours. Share success stories and positive impacts of allyship efforts within the organisation.



Successful applicants will be notified by 20 December, to start in January 2025. Allies will be expected to be an active part of the programme, with quarterly training sessions and network events. The first of these will be:

Wednesday 22nd January, 10am – 12pm - induction/introduction session (2 hours)

Wednesday 12th February, 3pm – 4:30pm - first network meeting (90 minutes)

Thursday 13th March, 11am – 12:30pm - training session (90 minutes)

Training thereafter will be quarterly. We will agree with the cohort how frequently they want the network sessions to be, and what other support might be helpful, for example working in pairs to offer peer support, online connections etc.

What are the time commitments and benefits of being an Ally?

Time commitments will vary between individuals depending on the nature of their role and organisation's size. You will be expected to commit to the programme, and the training and network sessions.

As an Ally, you will:

- **Receive induction and training in your role.** For many, this will build on work you already do, so will focus on sharing experience and skills as well as training in different aspects of allyship. Training will include topics such as:
 - Allyship principles and best practices
 - Bias and its impact
 - Inclusive communication and behaviour
 - Challenging inappropriate behaviour and difficult conversations
 - Advocacy and upstander strategies
- **Have access to Diversity Online**, a comprehensive set of Equity, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion resources full of EEDI learning, help, advice and information curated by Diversity Marketplace.
- **Access a collaborative network of likeminded individuals**, giving the opportunity to share experiences and learn from others, as well as a supportive space to develop.
- **Ongoing development opportunities** will be provided to ensure you stay up to date with the latest knowledge and skills.



Commitment and recognition

Allies are expected to actively participate in the programme and fulfil their roles and responsibilities. Their contributions will be recognised through various means, such as:

- Acknowledgment in organisation communications and events
- Inclusion in the organisation's employee recognition programmes
- Opportunities for professional development and leadership roles

By defining clear roles, responsibilities, and expectations, the Allies can effectively contribute to creating a more inclusive and supportive work environment, promoting allyship behaviours, and driving positive change within the organisation.

Review and evaluation

We will review and evaluate this first stage of the programme over its first year, with a view to refining and expanding our approach. Allies will be asked to gather feedback and inform that process. You will be asked to contribute insights for enhancing its effectiveness and provide recommendations for development and improvement. We will also be sharing stories and experiences via the NAVCA website and social media where appropriate.

Eligibility and applications

Allies should be passionate about EEDI and committed to creating a more inclusive and supportive work environment. They should demonstrate:

- Ethical conduct and respect for others
- Effective communication and interpersonal skills
- Openness to learning and self-reflection
- Ability to influence and inspire others

Allies will be selected through an application and evaluation process, ensuring a diverse group. If you are interested in applying, please complete the [application form](#) and send it to navca@navca.org.uk by 29 November, indicating endorsement from your organisation.

Applications will be reviewed by an independent panel comprising NAVCA members and Diversity Marketplace, and successful applicants will be informed by 20 December to form the first cohort of allies. We look forward to receiving your application!