Erasmus+
Enriching lives, opening minds.

Inclusion and Diversity Strategy (2026–2027)

November 2026

EUROPEAN UNION
UK Government
Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government
Northern Ireland Executive
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1. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to set out the priorities for inclusion and diversity in the Erasmus+ programme in the UK. This reflects priorities identified by key stakeholders that are relevant to the UK context and sets out the approach that will be taken by the UK's National Agency to align with the guidance for implementation of the inclusion and diversity strategy for Erasmus+ and UK government priorities.

The Erasmus+ programme

> seeks to promote equal opportunities and access, inclusion, diversity and fairness across all its actions. Organisations and participants with fewer opportunities themselves are at the heart of these objectives. With this in mind, the programme puts mechanisms and resources at their disposal. When designing their projects and activities, organisations should have an inclusive approach, making them accessible to a diverse range of participants.[1]

As the organisation set to be the UK's National Agency for Erasmus+, the British Council recognises its important role in supporting projects with a view to being as inclusive and diverse as possible and ensuring that the programme is open and accessible to everyone. Our inclusion and diversity strategy and action plan set out priorities to best address the needs of participants with fewer opportunities and to support the organisations working with these target groups in the four nations of the UK, including those who are newcomers to the Erasmus+ programme. This reflects the priorities of the governments of the four nations as well as the education, training, youth and sport sectors.

In developing the strategy and action plan, we have drawn on the implementation guidelines for the Erasmus+ inclusion and diversity strategy and the expertise and experience of the SALTO (Support, Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities for Youth) Resource Centres and their role in gathering knowledge and conceiving and running capacity-building activities for our staff and programme beneficiaries. We have also consulted with stakeholder groups from each sector of the Erasmus+ programme.

As the UK is joining the Erasmus+ programme in the final year of the current Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) (2021–2027), this strategy will cover one full year of operation plus the preceding mobilisation phase. A full review will be undertaken in 12 months. This will also consider alignment with the 2028–2034 Erasmus+ MFF programme, should the UK continue to associate.

[1] Erasmus+ Programme Guide 2026

2. Aim, vision and principles

The aim of this strategy is to set out the ambition of the Department for Education (DfE) (National Authority) and the British Council (National Agency) for the inclusion and diversity priority for Erasmus+, in collaboration with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), the Department for Work and Pensions and the devolved governments.

Studies across Erasmus+ demonstrate the positive impact that the programme delivers for learners, professionals, staff and volunteers who participate in the programme from the perspective of better learning outcomes, improved skills and resilience and sense of agency and belonging. Furthermore, those who experience disadvantage and face barriers to success benefit from Erasmus+ to a greater extent than their peers with greater advantages.[2]

Our inclusion and diversity vision for Erasmus+ in the UK is as follows:

> Erasmus+ supports inclusion and diversity in education, training, youth and sport in the UK and enables people, regardless of the barriers to opportunity they face, to benefit from learning, work, connections and collaboration with Europe and beyond.

The vision is underpinned by four guiding principles that will steer decisions on the set-up of the National Agency as well as the specifics of the inclusion and diversity action plan for 2027.

Diversity as a strength:

We live in an increasingly globalised world and the UK is becoming more diverse, bringing both opportunities and challenges as society navigates the changes in communities. The opportunities that Erasmus+ offers will enable diverse UK citizens and organisations to connect with and experience a broad range of cultures and communities and to build intercultural skills that will equip them for life in the UK and beyond. Furthermore, people from other countries will have the opportunity to learn about and engage with the diversity of the UK and build lasting connections that are mutually beneficial.

Equity:

Access to opportunity and success in education and employment is unequal, with some people facing barriers that limit their success. As the National Agency, we will work with applicants and beneficiaries to ensure that barriers are acknowledged and understood and that support is put in place to reduce or remove the obstacles that people with fewer opportunities face. In doing so, we will strive to make the Erasmus+ programme open to all and ensure that background and characteristics do not limit the opportunities and benefits that Erasmus+ brings.

[2] International youth projects benefit most those with fewer opportunities

Intersectionality:

People experience challenges and barriers that are unique and based on multiple factors, including their characteristics, backgrounds and circumstances. To overcome these challenges, support needs to be tailored to specific needs and experiences. This means we will encourage participants of Erasmus+ to articulate the support required in their specific situation and encourage beneficiaries to put in place support and request appropriate funding. As the National Agency, we will provide advice on approaches and funding to ensure suitable support is received.

Delivering impact:

In line with the UK government's commitments to widening opportunity in the UK, we will focus on the participation of people with fewer opportunities in order to deliver the greatest impact for the UK. Evidence from studies on Erasmus+ and similar mobility programmes shows that the benefits of international mobility for those who experience these barriers are equal to or greater than the benefits for those who do not. We will also ensure that the pathways for engagement in Erasmus+ are well understood and that support organisations are best placed to work with people with fewer opportunities to benefit from Erasmus+ opportunities.

3. Policy and strategic context

Erasmus+ contributes to the core European Union (EU) principles of equality and diversity, addressing the need to navigate increasing diversity and build more inclusive and cohesive societies. Central to this is the inclusion of people who face barriers to or have fewer opportunities in education and training as well as in youth and sports activities. This is embedded in relevant EU policy frameworks and actions, including the European Education Area Strategic Framework, the EU Youth Strategy and the EU Work Plan for Sport, and reflected in the design of Erasmus+.

Education, training, youth and sport are devolved policies in the UK, but there are common objectives across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to reduce inequalities in access and outcomes in these sectors.

The UK government's Opportunity Mission, supported by Youth Matters, the National Youth Strategy for England, aims to break the link between a child's background and their future success. In practice, this means that every child and young person should have every opportunity to succeed, no matter who they are, where they come from or how much their parents earn.

The Scottish Government's National Improvement Framework 2026 aims to ensure that every child and young person has the same opportunity to succeed and places equity as one of the priorities. It also aims to close the poverty-related attainment gap.

The Welsh Government's Programme for Government 2026 to 2030 recognises education as a national priority and focuses on raising standards, creating a more connected education system from early years through to employment, and tackling child poverty.

The Northern Ireland Executive's Programme for Government 2024–2027 is underpinned by a commitment to support everyone at all stages of life, ensuring that all who live there have the

opportunity to succeed and improve their life chances. This reflects the Northern Ireland Executive's ambition to build a more equal and inclusive society where opportunities are available to all, regardless of background or circumstance.

Across the four nations of the UK, there is targeted funding for addressing inequalities in education, including the pupil premium (England), pupil equity funding (Scotland), the pupil development grant (Wales), additional allocations for disadvantage through the Common Funding Framework for grant-aided schools (Northern Ireland), funding for enrichment activities in school (England) and a recent investment in youth services (England).

At higher education level, all four nations have policies and programmes to broaden access to higher education. This includes the Blueprint for Fairness in Scotland and Reaching Wider in Wales. In England, the Office for Students oversee Access and Participation Plans for all higher education institutions. The Department for the Economy in Northern Ireland is currently reviewing policies for widening access.

The International Education Strategy for the UK sets out an ambition to 'create opportunities for more young people in the UK to study, work and volunteer abroad, building the confidence and the skills needed to thrive in a globalised world'. The strategy also recognises the UK's capacity to share expertise, including in special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and the need to tackle inequalities in education, such as by improving access for women and girls and by strengthening foundational learning. This is further reflected in devolved nations' plans, such as the Welsh Government's commitment to ensuring young people in Wales can live, study and work in Europe by maximising opportunities for Welsh students arising from the UK rejoining Erasmus+ and examining options for the future of Taith.

There is strong alignment with both domestic and international policy priorities in the UK and the opportunities that Erasmus+ offers. This provides a positive environment for implementing the strategy and delivering on inclusion and diversity, including through support for people with fewer opportunities.

4. Definitions and barriers to participation

The Erasmus+ regulation defines 'people with fewer opportunities' as follows:

> people who, for economic, social, cultural, geographical or health reasons, due to their migrant background, or for reasons such as disability or educational difficulties or for any other reason, including a reason that could give rise to discrimination under Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, face obstacles that prevent them from having effective access to opportunities under the Programme.

The **Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps inclusion and diversity strategy**[3] sets out a range of barriers to participation, based on experience of programme implementation (See Table 1). This provides a common understanding of the barriers participants experience and support consistent application of the requirements of the programme guide.

Table 1: Overview of barriers in accessibility and outreach from the Programme Guide

Barrier	Description
Disabilities	This includes physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder someone's full and effective participation in society on the same footing as others.
Health problems	Barriers may result from health issues, including severe illnesses, chronic diseases or any other physical or mental health-related situation that prevents someone from participating in the programmes.
Barriers linked to education and training systems	Individuals struggling to perform in education and training systems for various reasons, early leavers from education and training, NEETs (people not in education, employment or training) and low-skilled adults may face barriers. Although other factors may play a role, these educational difficulties, while they may also be linked to personal circumstances, mostly result from an educational system which creates structural limitations and/or does not fully take into account the individual's particular needs. Individuals can also face barriers to participation when the structure of curricula makes it difficult to undertake a learning or training mobility abroad as part of their studies.
Cultural differences	While cultural differences may be perceived as barriers by people from any backgrounds, they can particularly affect people with fewer opportunities. Such differences may represent significant barriers to learning in general, but all the more for people with a migrant or refugee background – especially newly arrived migrants – people belonging to a national or ethnic minority, sign language users, people with linguistic adaptation and cultural inclusion difficulties, etc. Being exposed to foreign languages and cultural differences when taking part in any kind of programme activities may put off individuals and somehow limit the benefits from their participation. Such cultural differences may even prevent potential participants from applying for support through the programmes, thereby representing a barrier to entry altogether.
Social barriers	Social adjustment difficulties such as limited social competences, anti-social or high-risk behaviours, (former) offenders, (former) drug or alcohol abusers, or social marginalisation may represent a barrier. Other social barriers can stem from family circumstances, for instance being the first in the family to access higher education or being a parent (especially a single parent), a caregiver, a breadwinner or an orphan, or having lived or currently living in institutional care.

[3] Implementation Guidelines: Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Inclusion and Diversity Strategy, p 10

Barrier	Description
Economic barriers	Economic disadvantage, like a low standard of living, low income, learners who need to work to support themselves, dependence on the social welfare system, in long-term unemployment, precarious situations or poverty, being homeless, in debt or with financial problems, etc., may represent a barrier. Other difficulties may derive from the limited transferability of services (in particular, support to people with fewer opportunities) that needs to be 'mobile' together with participants when going to a far place or, all the more, abroad.
Barriers linked to discrimination	Barriers can occur as a result of discrimination linked to gender (gender identity, gender expression, etc.), age, ethnicity, religion, beliefs, sexual orientation, disability or intersectional factors (a combination of one or several of the mentioned discrimination barriers).
Geographical barriers	Living in remote or rural areas, on small islands or in peripheral/outermost regions, in urban suburbs, in less serviced areas (e.g. with limited public transport, poor facilities) or in less developed areas in third countries, etc., may constitute a barrier.

There is an acknowledgement that many people are not impacted by a single issue, but have multiple, intersecting and cumulative barriers to accessing opportunities in the education, training, youth and sport sectors.

The comprehensive analysis of barriers provides an important framework for examining the UK context and identifying the priority barriers to address in the implementation of Erasmus+.

5. National situation analysis

The implementation guidelines for the inclusion and diversity strategy for Erasmus+ were introduced by the European Commission in 2021 for the current MFF, when the UK was not associated to the Erasmus+ programme. Consequently, there is limited recent data for the UK on the participation of people with fewer opportunities. In order to assess the inclusion and diversity issues that are relevant to Erasmus+ in the UK, we have drawn on data on education and employability outcomes and broader studies of participation in mobility programmes.

Disabilities and health problems

People with disabilities (including those with chronic health problems) are significantly less likely to be employed than those who do not have disabilities. In 2023, the employment rate of disabled people in England was 54.2 per cent, compared to 82 per cent for people who are not disabled.[4] Similarly, the unemployment rate was substantially higher for people with disabilities (5.6 per cent) compared to those who are not disabled (3.6 per cent).[5] In other UK nations, similar gaps exist. In Scotland and Wales, just over 50 per cent of disabled people were

[4] Disabled people in employment – House of Commons Library

[5] Disabled people in employment – House of Commons Library

in employment in 2025, compared to just over 80 per cent of those who are not disabled.[6,7] Northern Ireland has the UK's largest disability employment gap, with 41.3 per cent of people with disabilities employed in 2025, compared to over 82.2 per cent of those without disabilities.[8]

Progression to higher education is also more limited for people with disabilities. For example, those identified as disabled in Scotland in 2018-19 were much less likely to participate in higher education than those without disabilities (20 per cent compared to 41 per cent).[9] Only 1.5 per cent of UK students with a disability participated in **outward mobility** in 2015–16. Students with two or more conditions engaged with mobility at the lowest rate (0.9 per cent), while students with a physical impairment or mobility issues had a 1 per cent participation rate and blind or visually impaired students participated at a rate of 1.1 per cent.[10]

People with disabilities and health issues are also less likely to participate in youth activities and sports due to the multiple practical and social barriers they face. In 2025, between 5 and 16 years of age, only 3 per cent of disabled children[11] were considered active – moving for 60+ minutes per day – compared to 48 per cent of all children.[12] On the other hand, there is significant evidence of the positive impact of participation in both youth and sports on young peoples' health and well-being.[13]

Mental health is an increasing barrier to educational participation and employment outcomes. In 2024–2025, nearly half (45 per cent) of young people who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) in the UK reported having a disability, more than double the figure (21.1 per cent) recorded in 2013–2014, with mental health problems stated as the principal driver of this increase.[14]

Barriers linked to education and training systems

Language learning has significantly decreased in the UK over the past decade.[15] This was, for many learners, a primary driver for engaging in international mobility in schools and higher education, particularly in Europe. In the higher education sector, few programmes, beyond language courses, have credit-bearing international mobility built into the course structure, thereby limiting the options for student mobility.[16] Shorter mobilities have become more prevalent in response to a policy drive to widen participation.

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[6] Helping disabled people access work - mygov.scot

[7] Barriers to employment for disabled people: Survey of SME employers

[8] Employment in NI: Does Northern Ireland have the largest disability employment gap in the UK?

[9] National Performance Framework - disability perspective: analysis

[10] Widening Participation in UK Outward Student Mobility A picture of participation

[11] Only one in four disabled children can always join in school sports

[12] Children's activity levels rising but inactivity remains too high

[13] New findings show impact of exercise on children's mental health conditions

[14] Young people and work: interim report

[15] The Languages Crisis: Arresting decline Megan Bowler

[16] Erasmus+ 2028–34: Universities UK International position paper

Adult education is a key sector where there is very little international mobility. There are multiple reasons, including lack of funding opportunities for mobility, limited local authority funding for the sector and learners' caring and work responsibilities.[17]

Cultural differences

While educational outcomes in England at age 16 are lower for majority white pupils than most minority ethnic pupils in England (except black Caribbean and mixed white and black Caribbean pupils), their longer-term employment outcomes are more favourable. People from ethnic minority backgrounds are significantly more likely to be unemployed than their white counterparts. In 2022, 3 per cent of people from a white ethnic group were unemployed, compared with 6 per cent of people from all other ethnic groups combined. People from the combined Bangladeshi and Pakistani (9 per cent), Asian 'other' (7 per cent) and black (7 per cent) ethnic groups had the highest unemployment rates.[18] The situation is similar in Scotland, where in 2024 the further education or training and employment participation rate among minority ethnic groups (96.1 per cent) was higher than for those from a white ethnic group (93.1 per cent), driven by a higher rate of participation in education (87.6 per cent versus 68.8 per cent).[19] While ethnic diversity in Wales is lower, in the three-year period ending June 2025, 13.9 per cent of young white people were estimated to be NEET, compared to 9.7 per cent of young black, Asian and minority ethnic people.[20] In Northern Ireland in 2021, recent newcomers to the country achieved significantly lower General Certificate of Education (GCSE) results (33 per cent achieve five GCSEs at grade A to C, compared to 78 per cent of all students), while former newcomers who have achieved good standards of English do slightly better than average (80 per cent).[21]

Data from England shows that people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds are less likely to be active and engaged in organised sport activities.[22] Barriers include fear of discrimination, lack of role models and financial factors as well as the intersection of ethnicity and gender.[23] Black young people are more likely than white peers to be involved in youth clubs, particularly faith-based groups.[24]

In 2015–2016, black and minority ethnic students represented 22.2 per cent of the student cohort in UK higher education but only 17.6 per cent of the outwardly mobile group. The highest representation was from students from Asian or Asian British (Indian), Chinese and other (including mixed) ethnic group backgrounds (1.7 per cent), whereas Asian or Asian British

[17] Adult education: the past, present and future

[18] Unemployment – GOV.UK Ethnicity facts and figures

[19] Annual Participation Measure for 16-19 year olds in Scotland 2025

[20] Understanding inequity in tertiary education Data analysis key findings

[21] Education - Equality Commission Northern Ireland

[22] https://www.sportengland.org/research-and-data/research/ethnicity

[23] Physical activity – Gov.uk

[24] Youth Clubs - Youth Endowment Fund

(Bangladeshi) students and Asian or Asian British (Pakistani) students had the lowest participation rates (0.6 per cent and 0.8 per cent, respectively).[25]

Social barriers

There is a link between the universities that have a high intake of socially disadvantaged students and those with a lower share of mobilities abroad. Disadvantaged students tend to enrol in universities and subjects where the opportunities of mobility are lower. A study looking at the 2014–2015 cohort found that enrolling in a university that has ten per cent more disadvantaged students decreases the probability of Erasmus+ uptake by as much as 1.4 percentage points.[26]

In 2015–2016, only 75 care leavers participated in outward mobility. This represents a 1.0 per cent participation rate among care leavers in universities, which is below the sector average of 1.7 per cent.[27]

Economic barriers

In the UK, there is a strong correlation between socio-economic background and educational and employment outcomes. A key indicator of disadvantage is eligibility for free school meals (FSMs). Over the five years from 2020–2021 to 2024–2025, the proportion of children on FSMs grew from 19.7 per cent[28] to 25.7 per cent.[29] There is significant evidence that children eligible for FSMs achieve lower education and employment outcomes, including lower progression to further and higher education and poorer longer-term employment prospects. In terms of **attainment at GCSE level**, in 2023 43 per cent of pupils eligible for FSMs in England earned a standard pass (Grade 4) in English and Maths, compared with 72 per cent of their more affluent peers.[30] In Wales, a similar gap exists, with 70 per cent of those not eligible for FSMs achieving GCSEs at Grade C or above, compared to 41.6 per cent of those who were eligible in 2022.[31] In Northern Ireland, data from 2023–2024 shows that 51.8 per cent of school leavers eligible for FSMs achieved at least five GCSEs at grades A* to C or equivalent, including GCSEs in English and Maths, versus 77.0 per cent of school leavers not entitled to FSMs.[32]

In England, the proportion of children eligible for FSMs who **progressed to higher education** in 2023–2024 was 28.9 per cent, which compares to 45.8 per cent of other students,[33] with the gap narrowing slightly from the previous year. The disparity is more pronounced in Wales, where data from 2024 shows that learners eligible for FSMs were less than half as likely to

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[25] Widening Participation in UK Outward Student Mobility A picture of participation

[26] Is unequal uptake of Erasmus mobility really only due to students' choices?

[27] Widening Participation in UK Outward Student Mobility A picture of participation

[28] Free school meals: Autumn term 2020/21

[29] Schools, pupils and their characteristics 2024/25

[30] The state of education: what awaits the next government?

[31] Schools in Wales: Testing times as pupil gaps widen

[32] Qualifications and Destinations of Northern Ireland School Leavers 2023-24

[33] Widening participation in higher education, Academic year 2023/24 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK

enter higher education (19 per cent) than leaners who were not eligible for FSMs (43 per cent).[34] In Northern Ireland, comparable data is not available; however, data for 2024–2025 shows that 75.1 per cent of school leavers progress to institutions of higher or further education compared with 61.1 per cent of leavers who were entitled to FSMs.[35]

Longer-term earnings are also significantly lower for students in England who are eligible for FSMs, with data from a longitudinal study from 2022 showing that only half of FSM students in England earned more than the equivalent of the minimum wage by the age of 30.[36]

There is also a wealth of evidence to show that student **mobility opportunities** are disproportionately taken up by individuals from a higher socio-economic background, across all European countries, including the UK.[37] In 2015–2016, students from higher socio-economic backgrounds were 65 per cent more likely to participate in outward mobility than their peers from lower socio-economic backgrounds.[38] Degree subject also matters; the more a field of study is taken up by less privileged students, the lower the Erasmus+ uptake. However, if students study European languages, their socio-economic background is not directly linked with student mobility.

Financial barriers are also a significant barrier to young people's engagement in youth and sport activities. Activity targets for young people from low-income families and areas are less likely to be met, and these young people face structural barriers to accessing sport[39] and organised youth activities.[40]

Barriers linked to discrimination

In the youth sector, there is evidence of how a range of barriers based on discrimination impact on youth participation. Females are less likely to participate in groups and clubs, while males are less likely to participate in volunteering and social action. People from minority ethnic backgrounds (excluding white minorities) are less likely to participate in groups and clubs for as long and are less likely to participate in uniformed groups. LGBTQ+ young people are less likely to participate in sports. They are also more likely to cite not having anyone to go with, a lack of awareness of activities in their area, issues around their physical or mental health and issues around confidence as reasons for non-participation. Intersectional vulnerabilities also play a role. White respondents from a lower-income background, females from a lower-income background and females with SEND face specific challenges with having their voice heard.[41]

Since the 1990s, there has been a higher percentage of women undertaking Erasmus+ mobilities across participating countries compared to men. In 2024, 60 per cent of mobility

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[34] Understanding inequity in tertiary education Data analysis key findings

[35] Qualifications and Destinations of Northern Ireland School Leavers 2024-25

[36] Why free school meal recipients earn less than their peers - Office for National Statistics

[37] Further up the road. Six years of growth for outward student mobility in the UK (from 2007-08 to 2012-13)

[38] Widening Participation in UK Outward Student Mobility A picture of participation

[39] Supporting youth in low-income neighbourhoods stay active through sport

[40] Barriers and enablers to participation in youth activities: executive summary

[41] Youth matters state of the nation

opportunities were taken up by women. The gender distribution varies depending on the field of education; adult education had the highest percentage of women in 2024 (69.3 per cent), followed by school education (65.3 per cent), higher education (60.4 per cent), youth (57.6 per cent), vocational education and training (VET) (54.3 per cent) and sport (41.7 per cent).[42]

In the higher education sector, students from low socio-economic backgrounds, black and minority ethnic students and students with a disability who participated in mobility programmes were all less likely to undertake longer mobility and more likely to undertake short-term mobility (one to four weeks) than their peers.[43] Shorter mobilities for people with fewer opportunities have been an increasingly important part of the mobility offer.

For black and minority ethnic students from low socio-economic backgrounds, Erasmus+ participation rates were lower than their white counterparts from the same socio-economic background (1.2 per cent for black students and 1.0 per cent for Asian students compared with 1.6 per cent for their white peers).[44]

Geographical barriers

In some areas of the UK, there is a concentration of poor outcomes in terms of employment, education and health, which is measured by the multiple deprivation index. This, alongside the Office for Students 'participation of local areas' data (POLAR4), which shows the proportion of 18- to 19-year-olds who participate in higher education, gives a clear indication of which geographical locations have significantly higher barriers to participation. This is often concentrated in rural and coastal areas and other areas with limited provision.

Where students come from within the UK also makes a difference to their chances of undertaking outward mobility. In 2015–2016, the participation rate for Erasmus+ was 1.8 per cent for students from areas with high participation in higher education and 1.0 per cent for students from low-participation areas.[45] There is also a considerable difference between the four nations of the UK. In the 2022–2022 cohort, Erasmus+ uptake was highest in Northern Ireland with 5.9 per cent, followed by Scotland with 4.7 per cent and lowest in England and Wales with 3.4 per cent.[46]

The situation analysis above, while limited in terms of specific data on participation in Erasmus+, demonstrates the relevance of the inclusion and diversity barriers identified in the programme guide to the UK context as well as the often complex and intersecting ways in which they are experienced. This, together with the sector specific priorities outlined below, this will inform the focus of the inclusion and diversity action plan.

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[42] Gender equality mainstreaming

[43] Widening Participation in UK Outward Student Mobility A picture of participation

[44] Widening Participation in UK Outward Student Mobility A picture of participation

[45] Widening Participation in UK Outward Student Mobility A picture of participation

[46] UUKi Gone international a new generation.pdf

6. Sector-specific priorities

Sector-based policies and priorities across the UK include reference to Inclusion and Diversity priorities that are relevant for both mobility and partnership actions. This includes recent and emerging policies and strategies launched by the UK government and devolved governments as well as those that are sector-driven, particularly for higher education. Table 2 summarises the priorities and shows their relevance to the Erasmus+ sector offers.

Table 2: UK sector policy priorities and relevance to Erasmus+

Policy	Scope	Key priorities	HE	Schools	VET	Adult ed	Youth	Sport
Opportunity Mission	National	Breaking the link between disadvantage and success	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Every Child Achieving and Thriving (White Paper)	England	Reducing the gap in enrichment activities; strengthening SEND provision		✓	✓		✓	✓
National Improvement Framework	Scotland	Achieving equity – ensuring every child and young person has the same opportunity to succeed		✓	✓			
Well-being of Future Generations Act	Wales	A more equal Wales – a society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Post-16 Education and Skills (White Paper)	England	Breaking down the barriers to opportunity in post-16 education – funding targeted at disadvantaged young people and adults	✓		✓	✓		
Programme for Government	Wales	Continuing a long-term programme of education reform; ensuring educational inequalities narrow and standards rise	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Policy	Scope	Key priorities	HE	Schools	VET	Adult ed	Youth	Sport
Programme for Government	Northern Ireland	Underpinned by a commitment to support everyone at all stages of life, ensuring that all who live in Northern Ireland have the opportunity to succeed and improve their life chances; reflects the Northern Ireland Executive's ambition to build a more equal and inclusive society where opportunities are available to all regardless of background or circumstance	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Welsh Language Strategy	Wales	Increasing the number of speakers to a million and more by 2050; doubling the daily use of the language; ensuring that the language belongs to all in Wales	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Increased student support	Northern Ireland	Continuing support from the Department for the Economy to students through a range of financial measures; for academic year 2026–2027, this includes a 2.7% increase in maximum maintenance loans and grants, a 10% increase in Disabled Students' Allowance and a 54% increase in the maximum Postgraduate Tuition Fee Loan	✓		✓			

Policy	Scope	Key priorities	HE	Schools	VET	Adult ed	Youth	Sport
Special Educational Needs Post 16 (Skills Fund)	Northern Ireland	Three-year Skills Fund launched by the Department for the Economy in July 2024 to consider options for skills and training provision post 16 for young people with special educational needs and to improve access and outcomes for young people	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
TransformED	Northern Ireland	Roadmap for educational excellence targeting five key pillars, including the mitigation of educational disadvantage		✓				
A Blueprint for Fairness	Scotland	32 recommendations from the Commission on Widening Access, accepted by the Scottish Government	✓					
Youth Matters – the National Youth Strategy	England	Halving the participation gap in enriching activities between disadvantaged young people and their peers		✓			✓	✓
National Youth Work Strategy	Scotland	Tackling inequality and poverty; supporting mental health and well-being					✓	
Youth Work Strategy	Wales	Ensuring young people are thriving and youth work is inclusive and accessible					✓	

Policy	Scope	Key priorities	HE	Schools	VET	Adult ed	Youth	Sport
Stronger Futures (subject to ongoing consultation)	Northern Ireland	Ensuring that all young people have access to consistent, convenient, and inclusive youth provision – a balance of fun and learning, adaptable to individual needs, with trusted workers to broaden horizons and provide safe places where all voices are heard					✓	
Uniting the Movement – Sport England	England	Improving access and opportunities for people from under-represented groups						✓
Access and Participation Plans[47]	Higher education institutions in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland	Enabling more equitable access and outcomes for disadvantaged and under-represented students	✓	✓	✓			
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategies and plans	Institutions	Addressing access to education/services for disadvantaged and under-represented groups	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategies and plans	Institutions	Addressing under-representation of women, minorities and people with disability in staffing and senior management	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategies and plans	Institutions	Addressing inclusive teaching and curricula/participatory methods	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

[47] These are known as Access and Participation Plans (England), Fee and Access Plans (Wales), Widening Access Plans (Scotland) and Widening Access and Participation Plans (Northern Ireland).

Policy	Scope	Key priorities	HE	Schools	VET	Adult ed	Youth	Sport
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategies and plans	Institutions	Addressing inclusive hiring and management practices	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

As shown by the national and institutional policies outlined in Table 2, including people with fewer opportunities is a priority for all sectors in the UK and across the devolved nations. While there are many common groups that applicants and beneficiaries will prioritise as participants in the programme, there is some variation by sector (see below).

The priority groups closely align with the analysis in this section and reflect which groups experience the greatest barriers to education, training, youth and sport as well as the groups experiencing less positive broader outcomes, including in employment.

UK priorities: people with fewer opportunities by sector

The Tables 3–8 below identify the groups that are a priority for the different sectors covered by Erasmus+, based on input from the DfE, the DCMS, the devolved governments and stakeholder groups established to inform the set-up of the Erasmus+ programme.

Table 3: Higher education

Disability and health	SEND students; students experiencing mental health issues
Education and training systems	Part-time students; students on courses with non-credit-bearing mobility
Cultural differences	Black and minority ethnic students; students who are refugees or asylum seekers
Social barriers	Parents and caregivers; care leavers/care-experienced students; students who are the first in the family in higher education; students with limited family travel
Economic barriers	Students from low-income families; students estranged from families; students who are benefit recipients
Barriers based on discrimination	Black and minority ethnic students; women in science, technology, engineering and maths; students discriminated against because of gender identity
Geographical barriers	Students in rural and coastal areas with less access to transport hubs; students in communities with limited provision; students in low-participation areas

Table 4: Schools

Disability and health	SEND students; students experiencing mental health issues
Education and training systems	Students in systems with curriculum pressures/priority on Maths and English
Cultural differences	Black and minority ethnic students; students who are refugees or asylum seekers

Social barriers	Parents and caregivers; care leavers/care-experienced students; students with limited family travel experience; students with parental reluctance
Economic barriers	Students from low-income families; students eligible for FSMs
Barriers based on discrimination	Black and minority ethnic students
Geographical barriers	Students in rural and coastal areas that are less accessible to transport hubs; students in communities with limited provision

Table 5: VET

Disability and health	SEND students; students experiencing mental health issues
Education and training systems	NEETs and students at risk of becoming NEETs
Cultural differences	Black and minority ethnic students; students who are refugees or asylum seekers
Social barriers	Parents and caregivers; care leavers/care-experienced students; youth justice system-experienced students
Economic barriers	Students from low-income families; students working to support themselves
Barriers based on discrimination	Black and minority ethnic students; girls/boys in subjects where they are under-represented
Geographical barriers	Students in rural and coastal areas that are less accessible to transport hubs; students in communities with limited provision

Table 6: Adult education

Disability and health	SEND students; students experiencing mental health issues
Education and training systems	Students in systems with financial constraints and requiring multiple approvals; NEETs and students at risk of becoming NEETs
Cultural differences	Black and minority ethnic students; students who are refugees or asylum seekers; students with English as a second language
Social barriers	Parents and caregivers; care leavers/care-experienced students; youth justice system- and prison-experienced students
Economic barriers	Students from low-income families; students working to support themselves; students who are long-term unemployed; students who are benefit recipients; students taking paid/unpaid leave
Barriers based on discrimination	Black and minority ethnic students
Geographical barriers	Students in rural and coastal areas that are less accessible to transport hubs; students in communities with limited provision

Table 7: Youth

Disability and health	SEND students; students experiencing mental health issues
Education and training systems	NEETs and students at risk of becoming NEETs
Cultural differences	Black and minority ethnic students; students who are refugees or asylum seekers

Social barriers	Parents and caregivers; care leavers/care-experienced students; youth justice system- and prison-experienced students
Economic barriers	Students from low-income families; students experiencing homelessness
Barriers based on discrimination	Black and minority ethnic students; female students
Geographical barriers	Students in rural and coastal areas that are less accessible to transport hubs; students in communities with limited provision

Table 8: Sports

Disability and health	SEND students and students with disabilities; students experiencing mental health issues
Education and training systems	NEETs and students at risk of becoming NEETs
Cultural differences	Black and minority ethnic students; students who are refugees or asylum seekers
Social barriers	Parents and caregivers; care leavers/care-experienced students; youth justice system- and prison-experienced students
Economic barriers	Students from low-income families
Barriers based on discrimination	Black and minority ethnic students; female students; LGBTQ+ students
Geographical barriers	Students in rural and coastal areas that are less accessible to transport hubs; students in communities with limited provision

In our engagement with sector organisations and potential applicants, we will highlight that participants experiencing the barriers identified above will be eligible for inclusion support under Key Action 1. However, it should be noted that this list is not exhaustive and other barriers will be considered with appropriate justification. During stakeholder consultation, the fact that people may face multiple barriers was also highlighted – this can impact on people's ability and/or motivation to participate in Erasmus+ opportunities.

Recent research into the barriers and enablers to participation in youth activities helpfully categorises barriers as practical and psychological, as summarised in Table 9. This helps to understand how individuals are impacted.

Table 9: Barriers that impact young people's participation

Practical barriers	**Psychological barriers**
Cost and affordability concerns	Low confidence and apprehension about new environments
Time and competing commitments	Anxiety about safety and well-being
Physical accessibility issues	Concerns about discrimination
Lack of access to information about application processes	Perception that opportunities are 'not for people like me'

Given that the role of the applicant organisation is critical to supporting participants with fewer opportunities, these concerns are likely to be more prominent in informal or semi-formal mobility contexts, such as youth exchanges, where participants may not have the institutional support present in education and training environments. Furthermore, both types of barriers are more acutely felt by young people from low-income families, making them less likely to participate even where provision nominally exists. A lack of awareness compounds this effect: many young people report that they do not know what opportunities are available, how to access them or whether they would be welcome.

These insights are being built into the marketing, sector support, and policies and processes of the National Agency in order to implement an approach that prioritises participants with fewer opportunities and contributes to inclusive policies and practices across the sectors.

7. Stakeholder engagement

This strategy has been developed with input from sector-specific Stakeholder Groups set up by the Department for Education (DfE) and Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), which were established prior to the official announcement that the British Council was set to be the National Agency for Erasmus+. Further information was gathered through a limited survey[48] focused on potential applicants and their awareness of and intention to apply for Erasmus+, which was circulated to DfE and DCMS networks.

Overall, engagement through the stakeholder groups demonstrated significant support for Inclusion and Diversity as a horizontal priority, the participants had positive ideas on how the sectors and applicant organisations could proactively target and support the participation of people with fewer opportunities. There was also a call for the National Agency to reach out to support organisations that had not previously benefited from Erasmus+ to provide support to help them navigate the application process.

The survey results show there is a good level of awareness among respondents about the Inclusion and Diversity priority of Erasmus+, with a significant proportion of potential applicants seeing Erasmus+ as an opportunity to contribute to their inclusion and diversity and widening participation goals. This was higher among respondents from organisations who had benefited from Erasmus+ funding (67 per cent) than newcomer organisations (50 per cent). This suggests that there is an opportunity to promote the potential of Erasmus+ to contribute to this theme among newcomer organisations.

By sector, universities and further education colleges (over 80 percent) involved in the survey were more likely to be motivated by inclusion and diversity goals of Erasmus+, whereas this was much lower among schools (31 per cent). While we do not have qualitative data to understand the reasons for this, it is likely to be linked to the high priority nationally on the widening participation agenda in the higher education sector. It also indicates there is an opportunity to make the link with UK priorities for schools, adult education, youth and sport more visible to encourage participation in Erasmus+.

[48] Findings from the survey are for guidance only as the sample was small, at just over 500 participants.

Safeguarding concerns were cited by some respondents as a reason for not applying for Erasmus+, particularly for secondary schools; however, this was at a much lower level than for concerns about staff capacity, funding levels and the complexity of the application process.

These insights have informed the development of the strategic objectives and the action plan for 2026 and 2027.

During 2027, we will continue to engage with key stakeholders through the Sector Stakeholder Groups. We also propose to set up an inclusion and diversity Stakeholder Group made up of inclusion and diversity experts in education, training, youth and sport and people with fewer opportunities who have experience of Erasmus+. This group will meet at least four times per year and will take a role in monitoring the action plan and steering the inclusion and diversity strategy for 2028–2034.

8. Strategic objectives

In order to deliver the Inclusion and Diversity vision for Erasmus+, we will focus on five strategic objectives, shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Strategic objectives



Objective 1: Inspire and support the participation of people with fewer opportunities

As set out above, there is evidence that some people experience barriers to engaging in international opportunities that limit their potential for building skills, relationships and new

perspectives. We will work with applicants and beneficiary organisations to ensure that as many people as possible, including those with fewer opportunities, can benefit from the potentially life-changing experiences that Erasmus+ offers. This will include awareness and guidance on the use of the flexible offers and the inclusion support funding that is available. This will also include supporting effective safeguarding to ensure risks and vulnerabilities of disadvantaged people are factored into programme design.

Objective 2: Support the participation of diverse organisations

Many organisations, including those who work with people with fewer opportunities, such as those working with underserved communities and local organisations and sports clubs, have limited awareness and capacity to benefit from the international opportunities that Erasmus+ offers. We will offer targeted support to these organisations, including building awareness of the elements of Erasmus+ that are more accessible to newcomer and less experienced organisations as well as the inclusion support available. We will aim to ensure that organisations across the UK benefit from Erasmus+. This will include proactive engagement with Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and throughout England, including areas that have higher levels of disadvantage such as the North East, North West, East Midlands, South West and coastal areas.

Objective 3: Contribute to inclusive systems and practice in education, training, youth and sport

We will work across the sectors to harness the power of partnerships and collaborative working to contribute to stronger and more inclusive practice in the sectors. This will be achieved through promoting the opportunities for applicants to develop innovative practice that supports the inclusion of people with fewer opportunities and by influencing policy, systems and processes in education, training, youth and sport that deliver longer-term and sustainable change and promote effective safeguarding. We will work with organisations applying for Erasmus+ opportunities to enhance their contribution to inclusion and diversity and facilitate the sharing of the approaches, tools and learning developed under the programme.

Objective 4: Promote good practice, learning and continuous improvement on inclusion and diversity and safeguarding

We recognise that while there has been significant effort and progress in addressing persistent inequalities in education, training, youth and sports, there are no quick fixes. Furthermore, strategies and approaches that have been effective in some contexts may not work or might need significant adaptation. We will support learning, innovation and the sharing of practice with countries participating in Erasmus+, with national agencies, and within and between sectors and applicant organisations in the UK and devolved nations through training and cooperation activities. This will support a culture of continuous improvement and learning on inclusion, diversity and safeguarding. This will include opportunities for UK participation in international training and cooperation activities focused on inclusion and diversity.

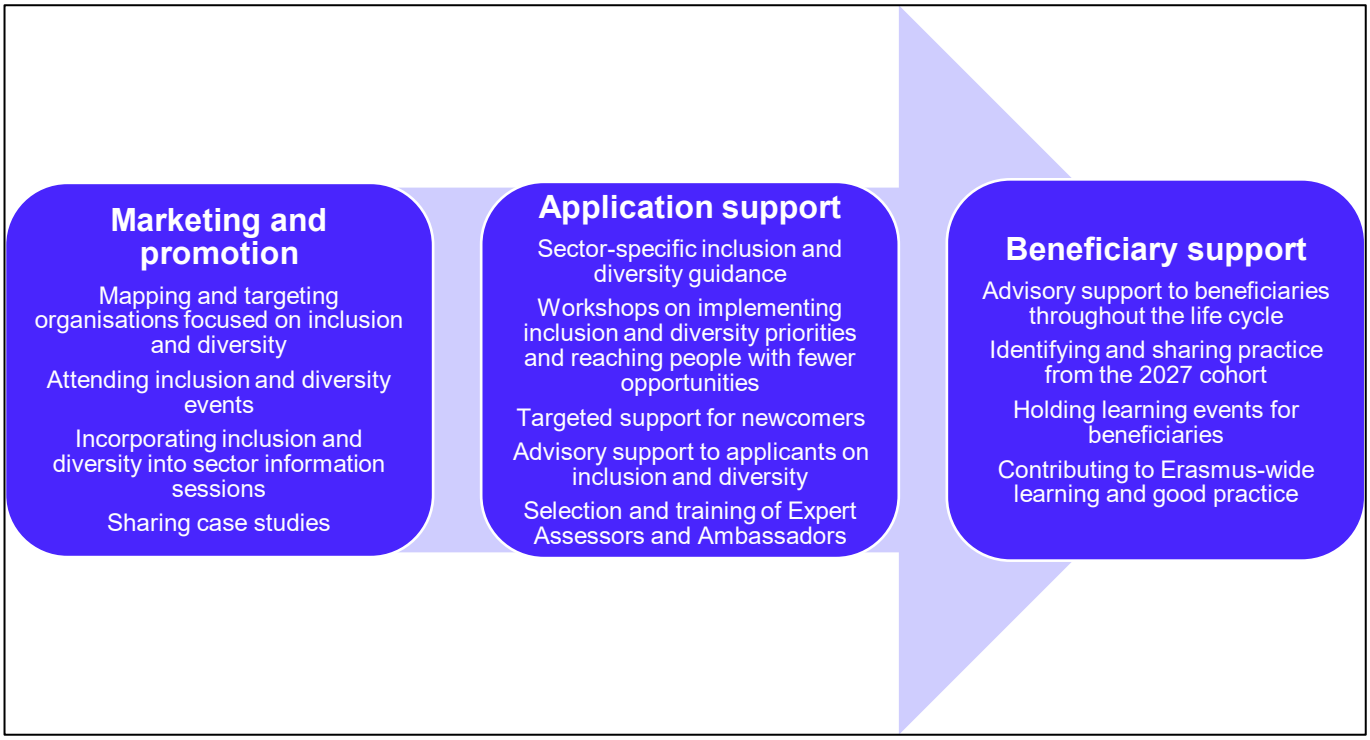
Objective 5: Embed inclusion across the National Agency's culture, management and delivery

This objective fully aligns with the British Council's equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) policy and strategy and will focus on the National Agency's culture and practices in order to complement and support the external delivery of the inclusion and diversity strategy. This will include a focus on safeguarding and as well as broader EDI policies and practices that all staff of the National Agency will need to be aware of and follow. It will also include setting up and delivering the National Agency's social value commitments, specifically in providing work placements and apprenticeships and supporting staff volunteering to benefit people with fewer opportunities.

9. Action plan

The action plan which supports the strategy will take a twin-track approach. This will involve integrating the inclusion and diversity priorities into our marketing and communications plan and sector engagement plan. We will also undertake specific actions to highlight inclusion and diversity as a horizontal priority for the programme and to support applicants to include people with fewer opportunities as participants in the programme (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Summary action plan



The detailed action plan for 2026 to 2027, including indicators, is set out in Appendix 1.

10.Monitoring, evaluation and learning

The performance indicators for the inclusion and diversity strategy and action plan are aligned with the overall performance framework agreed between the National Authority and the National Agency.

Strategic priority

The inclusion and diversity strategy is focused on the key **strategic priorities** set by the UK. This is relevant to Objective 1 of this strategy.

By 2030, 60% of all UK mobility (KA1) Erasmus+ participants are people with fewer opportunities

The longer-term priority is to be achieved over time and will draw on learning from the 2027 cohort, which will be the first year of the UK's participation in Erasmus+.

For the purposes of the 2027 cohort, we have set an interim aspirational target that supports the National Agency to focus efforts on encouraging the participation of people with fewer opportunities, though we recognise the need to have a clearer baseline to build from for future cohorts and the need to learn from the first year of activity and the outcomes achieved.

Table 10: The sector targets for the 2027 cohort that the UK will work towards

Key performance indicator per Sector	**Higher education KA131**	**Higher education KA171**	**Schools**	**VET**	**Adult education**	**Youth**	**Sports**
The share (%) of participants with fewer opportunities taking part in activities under Key Action 1* funded from the 2027 cohort.	30	30	30	30	30	30	30

Key performance indicator per Sector	Higher education KA131	Higher education KA171	Schools	VET	Adult education	Youth	Sports
Estimated share (%) of participants with fewer opportunities at application stage in the 2027 cohort	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
Total number of people with fewer opportunities taking part in Key Action 1 funded from the 2027 cohort (higher education, schools and VET sectors)	At least 22,000 for higher education, schools, VET	At least 22,000 for higher education, schools, VET	At least 22,000 for higher education, schools, VET	At least 22,000 for higher education, schools, VET	-	-	-
The number of newcomer organisations and institutions taking part in the programme under Key Actions 1 and 2*	5	5	81	38	43	72	19

Note: *These indicators are required for the National Agency's annual work plan.

The target of 22,000 people with fewer opportunities taking part in Key Action 1 funded from the 2027 cohort from the higher education, schools and VET represents 30 per cent of the total expected participants based on British Council modelling.

In addition, the share (percentage) of projects addressing inclusion and diversity objectives under Key Action 2 will be tracked in the 2027 cohort with aim of setting a target for future cohorts.

Outreach and engagement will be recorded via the number of events held (number focused on inclusion and diversity) and the number of people attending events (by nation).

The data will be collected through the European Commission reporting systems based on information provided by the beneficiaries.

Performance indicators for the inclusion and diversity action plan

At a more operational level, we have set measures to track the implementation of the inclusion and diversity action plan. These are provided in Appendix 1.

We will also gather feedback from target groups to monitor the quality of the support provided by the National Agency.

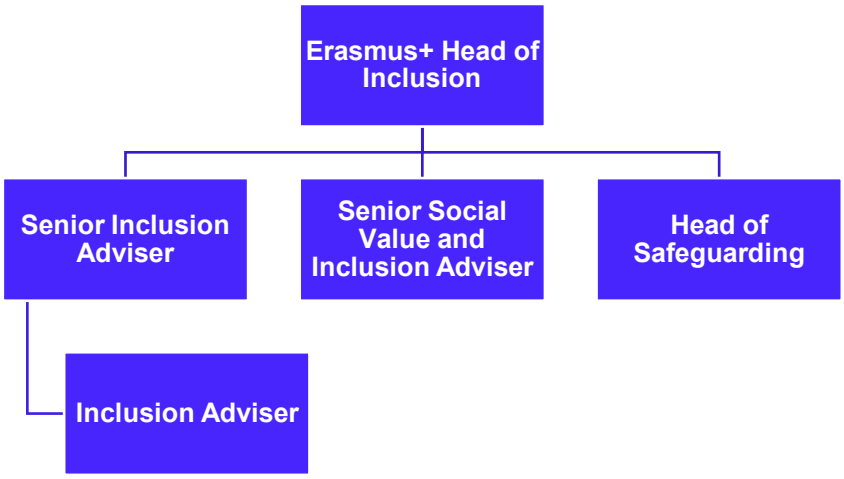
We will also seek feedback through the Sector Stakeholder Groups to ensure that the priorities and actions are adapted to the specific needs of each sector.

11. Internal organisation and governance

The Director of the National Agency is the Senior Responsible Officer for the inclusion and diversity strategy. This reflects the priority placed on inclusion and diversity in the management, delivery and impact of Erasmus+ by the European Commission, the DfE and the British Council.

The Head of Inclusion for Erasmus+ is responsible for the development, delivery and monitoring of the strategy and action plan. This role will lead and drive awareness across all National Agency staff and ensure the strategic objectives are built into planning and delivery in all teams. The Head of Inclusion is also the key point of contact for external stakeholders.

Figure 3: Inclusion, Safeguarding and Social Value team structure



The Inclusion, Safeguarding and Social Value team (see figure 3) will be responsible for delivery of the action plan, working alongside other teams, in particular Marketing and Communications; Sectors; Customer Services; Grants; Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning; and Finance and Audit. They will provide multifaceted support across social value, EDI and safeguarding. They will ensure that the programme is inclusive, safe and socially impactful by embedding strong EDI, safeguarding and social value standards across all processes and

sectors. The team will support equitable access and uphold safeguarding frameworks while also monitoring risks and compliance through robust data, reporting and assurance activity. The team will provide expert guidance, training and tools to staff and grant holders, lead on incident response and risk escalation, and work closely with the DfE, grant teams and sector stakeholders to ensure transparent, responsible delivery. Through ongoing insight and continuous improvement, the team will drive a culture of safety, inclusion and meaningful social value across the programme. This team will be both externally facing and internally facing by providing advice and technical support to target groups, applicants and beneficiaries of Erasmus+.

The team will also provide technical support including information sessions, advice and training to support Erasmus+ applicants and beneficiaries to guide them to reach participants with fewer opportunities and build inclusion and diversity themes throughout the project lifecycle.

The team will also be responsible for training and development of National Agency staff, Assessors and Ambassadors on the inclusion and diversity priorities and support – both financial and non-financial – available to applicants and beneficiaries. All staff will be required to complete the British Council's mandatory equality, diversity and inclusion training. Specific training on the inclusion and diversity strategy for Erasmus+ staff will also be designed and delivered by the team. This will be tailored to the specific roles ensuring all National Agency staff are aware of and equipped with the skills to contribute to the strategy and plan.

The resources and approaches promoted by the team will draw on good practice from across the Erasmus+ programme, drawing on the SALTO Resource Centres for inclusion and diversity in Education and Training and Youth.

In order to facilitate effective planning and delivery of the inclusion and diversity strategy and to drive inclusive culture and practice across the National Agency, we will establish an **inclusion and diversity working group**. This will include at least one representative from each team and will serve to champion and drive delivery of the strategy in their functional area.

12. Risks, ethics and safeguarding

Our approach to implementing the strategy is informed by the British Council's internal policies and by learning from the SALTO inclusion and diversity resource centres for Education and Training and Youth.

We recognise that there are sensitivities involved in identifying people with fewer opportunities, which may present further barriers for engagement in Erasmus+ opportunities. We will take an approach which positively promotes the opportunities available, including the financial support, and we will encourage applicant and beneficiary organisations to prioritise the inclusion of people with fewer opportunities.

This will include:

- supporting organisations that are closest to participants with fewer opportunities, to put appropriate support in place
- trusting applicant organisations to identify barriers that may not be as obvious and which they are best placed to determine

- limiting the additional documentation that is required to evidence inclusion support.

While the nature of international mobility brings safety risks to all participants, targeting people with fewer opportunities is likely to bring additional risks. These risks include the following:

- **Increased vulnerability:** Some groups with fewer opportunities (e.g. youth with disabilities/SEND/additional learning needs (ALN), care experienced young people, young women, minority ethnic youth) may be more susceptible to abuse and exploitation, experience greater social isolation and have less ability to set boundaries or advocate for themselves – particularly when outside their normal environment and without access to social networks and support.
- **Communication and reporting barriers:** Individuals may face barriers to reporting abuse or other safeguarding concerns due to communication needs, language barriers, fear of the consequences of reporting or lack of understanding of what constitutes abuse.
- **Contextual risk factors when travelling:** While mobility has many benefits, there are also additional risks associated with travelling and being in an unfamiliar environment. These include risks of harm and abuse, risks to safety and security of belongings, susceptibility to isolation and mental health challenges, and lack of access to specialist medicines and adaptive support for people with SEND/ALN.

In order to effectively manage safeguarding risks, the Safeguarding Lead will develop a safeguarding plan for Erasmus+, which will consider the additional risks for people with fewer opportunities. Also, guidance and support will be provided for applicants and organisations, and duty of care responsibilities and reporting mechanisms for any safeguarding incidents will be established. This will be available before mobility programmes start in 2027.

13. Reviewing and updating the strategy

The strategy will be updated in October 2027 based on learning from the first year of implementation. This will also consider the new MFF period, from 2028 to 2034, should the UK continue to associate to Erasmus+, in order to align with any policy developments in the new agreement. It is expected, however, that inclusion and diversity will continue to be an important horizontal priority for both Erasmus+ and the four nations of the UK; therefore, the key features of the strategy are likely to stay the same.

We will collate and review data following the first call for applications in March 2027 to provide some immediate analysis of the progress that has been made against the key performance indicators. However, it is also important to acknowledge that data will be incomplete until later in the project cycle for the 2027 cohort. The action plan for 2027 will be revisited in April 2027 with a view to adapting the approach for the optional calls.

As the National Agency is being established during the period when the strategy is being developed, there has been limited consultation with the priority groups for the strategy. In particular, there has been limited consultation with:

- people with fewer opportunities, in order to understand the barriers they face to participating in mobility programmes and what can overcome them
- newcomer organisations, to understand the barriers to applying for Erasmus+ and what support is most effective to enable them to benefit.

During the year, we will establish mechanisms for consultation with these groups. This will include incorporating inclusion and diversity questions into the youth consultation process that was instigated in July 2026. The input from these key stakeholders will be important in shaping the detailed actions to deliver the strategy and in making adaptations for the next MFF.

Appendix 1: diversity and inclusion action plan 2026–2027

Promotion and marketing

Time frame	Activity	Strategic objectives	Indicators	Responsible
From June 2026	Map and target organisations and networks focused on inclusion and diversity and working with people with fewer opportunities in education, training, youth and sport through Erasmus+ marketing.	1, 2, 3	Number of inclusion-and-diversity-focused organisations reached	Inclusion team
Ongoing	Raise awareness of inclusion and diversity as a priority for Erasmus+ through all communication channels and sector outreach.	1, 2, 3	Inclusion and diversity information included in all sector presentations	Sector leads, Inclusion team
Ongoing	Engage with organisations and professionals focused on inclusion and diversity and those experienced with people with fewer opportunities, highlighting Erasmus+ opportunities, inclusion funding and flexible mobility formats.	1, 2, 3	Number of face-to-face/online presentations delivered at external Inclusion-and-Diversity-focused events	Inclusion team
Ongoing	Include content on the inclusion and diversity priorities in Erasmus+ webinars.	1, 2, 3	Number of National Agency-led webinars with inclusion and diversity content	Sector team, Inclusion team

Time frame	Activity	Strategic objectives	Indicators	Responsible
November 2026 and ongoing	Design accessible, targeted information to raise awareness of diverse mobility options and available support.	1, 2	Number of visitors to Erasmus+ inclusion and diversity web pages and resources	Marketing team, Inclusion team
November 2026 and ongoing	Deliver webinars for each sector on inclusion and diversity priorities and available support.	1, 2, 3	Number of webinars delivered and number of attendees/participating organisations	Inclusion team, Sector team
From June 2026	Identify and share case studies and success stories of partnerships addressing inclusion and diversity priorities of Erasmus+.	1, 2, 3	Number of high-quality inclusion-and-diversity-focused case studies	Inclusion team, Marketing team
September 2026 and ongoing	Develop and maintain Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) relevant to diversity and inclusion	1, 2, 3	User-friendly FAQs available and easily accessed via Erasmus+ website	Inclusion team, Customer Service team

Application process

Time frame	Activity	Strategic objectives	Indicators	Responsible
From September 2026	Contribute to an accessible application process and creation of guidance that effectively communicates the national inclusion and diversity priorities.	1, 2, 3		Inclusion team

Time frame	Activity	Strategic objectives	Indicators	Responsible
From July 2026	Ensure inclusion and diversity priorities are considered in the recruitment of Erasmus+ Expert Assessors.	1, 2, 3, 5	Number of Experts with demonstrable inclusion and diversity expertise	Inclusion team

Support for applicants and beneficiaries

Time frame	Activity	Strategic objectives	Indicators	Responsible
From October 2026	Train customer service and sector staff who provide support and advice to applicants to offer basic guidance on issues related to inclusion and diversity and provide accessible information.	1, 2, 3, 5	Number of staff trained	Inclusion team
From October 2026	Develop and share sector-focused guidance/fact sheets on inclusion and diversity priorities and available support	1, 2, 3	Guidance materials available by sector	Inclusion team, Grants team
From October 2026	Design and deliver workshops on: - addressing inclusion and diversity themes in Key Action 1 - engaging and supporting people with fewer opportunities before, during and after mobility – including through personal empowerment support, linguistic support (short language courses), cultural preparation support and educational, administrative and personal support. - Inclusion Support	1	Number of high-quality workshops delivered	Inclusion team, Sector team, Training and Cooperation Activities (TCA) team

Time frame	Activity	Strategic objectives	Indicators	Responsible
From October 2026	Engage UK participants in tailored international partnership building activities – focused on inclusion and diversity themes and international partnership building for specialist organisations.	1, 2, 3	Number of UK participants supported	Inclusion team, Sector team, Training and Cooperation Activities (TCA) team
From November 2026	Provide technical advisory support on inclusion and diversity to potential applicants and beneficiaries.	1, 2, 3	Number of applicants and beneficiaries supported	Inclusion team
From October 2026	Provide tailored information on inclusion and diversity priorities for partnership actions (Key Action 2).	3	Guidance materials available	Inclusion team
From June 2026	Identify and share case studies and success stories of mobility partnerships addressing inclusion and diversity priorities of Erasmus+.	1,2,3,4	Number of inclusion-and-diversity-focused case studies	Inclusion team, Marketing team
From January 2027	Facilitate engagement of UK participants in international training and cooperation activities focused on inclusion and diversity themes.	1,2,3,4	Number of UK participants engaged in international training and cooperation activities	Inclusion team, Sector team, Training and Cooperation Activities (TCA) team

Monitoring, evaluation and learning

Time frame	Activity	Strategic objectives	Indicators	Responsible
From October 2026	Collect and review feedback from potential applicants and adapt support provided on inclusion and diversity.	4	Updated guidance in accordance with feedback	Inclusion team, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning team
From September 2026	Contribute to Erasmus+ learning and development platforms, including SALTO Inclusion and diversity resource centres for Youth and Education and Training.	4	Number of meetings and conferences attended	Inclusion team
From April 2027	Review and analyse relevant inclusion and diversity data from the application process and outcomes to inform optional calls.	4	Updated guidance and approach to supporting applicants	Inclusion team, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning team
From August 2027	Hold workshops and training sessions with beneficiaries and potential applicants to share good practice on implementing inclusion and diversity priorities for the 2027 cohort.	4	Number of good practice sharing sessions delivered	Inclusion team, Training and Cooperation Activities (TCA) team
From August 2027	Review and update the inclusion and diversity strategy for the 2028–2034 MFF.	4, 5	Updated strategy	Inclusion team

Systems and processes in the National Agency

Time frame	Activity	Strategic objectives	Indicators	Responsible
From August 2026	Contribute to policy and guidance on the evidence required for inclusion support in order to minimise the administrative burden to grant holders (beneficiaries) while also ensuring appropriate use of funds.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Clear guidance available	Inclusion team, Grants team, Compliance team
From October 2026	Develop inclusion and diversity content for training packages and deliver training for Grant Assessors on UK priorities for Erasmus+.	5	Number of workshops delivered	Inclusion team
From January 2027	Establish an 'inclusion support committee' to review and advise on complex or out-of-scope requests to ensure compliance with European Commission guidance and ensure the Inclusion Support funding is used appropriately.	5	Inclusion support guidance updated monthly to reflect decisions	Grants team, Inclusion team
From November 2026	Establish clear safeguarding policies and processes for the National Agency.	5	Safeguarding policies published	Inclusion team
From January 2027	Provide briefing, guidance and workshops to all National Agency staff on safeguarding policy and procedures.	5	Number of staff trained	Inclusion team
From March 2027	Develop and deliver a programme of workshops/training sessions on safeguarding targeted at applicants and grant beneficiaries.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Number of workshops delivered	Inclusion team, Training and Cooperation Activities (TCA) team

Time frame	Activity	Strategic objectives	Indicators	Responsible
From November 2026	Develop a social value framework for the National Agency in line with UK government and British Council policy.	5	Social value framework	Inclusion team
From February 2027	Design and deliver work placements and apprenticeships targeting people with fewer opportunities, and deliver social value interventions, including work placements and apprenticeships.	5	Number of work placements and apprenticeships delivered	Inclusion team