EDI Podcast Two – How to Start

Jo	Welcome everyone to the second in a series of three podcasts for the Rebuilding Heritage programme about Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. Rebuilding Heritage has been funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and coordinated by the Heritage Alliance. My name is Jo Hussey and I'm here today with Sally Ward, a consultant with EMBED. We've been commissioned to produce three podcasts to support people in the Heritage Sector improve their working practices around EDI. EMBED and DCN, in partnership with the Rebuilding Heritage programme have already delivered two public webinars about implementing inclusive working practices in the heritage sector. These three podcasts are complementary to the webinars. The three topics we will be covering are • How to Talk • How to Start • How to Recruit Each of the podcasts – which are all about 10 minutes - can be accessed and listened to individually but you will probably find it easier to start with podcast 1 and work your way through.

	So, let's get going. Sally over to you.
Sally	Thanks Jo. Our second podcast is "How to Start". We know that EDI is a huge area of work and sometimes it can feel overwhelming. Where to start? How to start? So we're going to talk about some simple steps you can take as a heritage organisation to achieve a more inclusive way of working.
Jo	Great, so let's get started – and in fact – where do you, as organisation start if you're thinking about EDI for the first time?
Sally	There are so many things that need to be looked at – what is the most important? What will have the most impact in the shortest amount of time? So that you can understand where your organisation is on its EDI journey, first of all, do some research, ask questions. The best people to speak to are the people already working in your business from minority groups. Set up a focus group of interested people from across the organisation and ask them what their lived experience is at work. Are they able to be their authentic selves? What barriers have they witnessed? Do they have any suggestions to make the lived experience better? The answers to these questions will then give you further information about where you need to start.
Jo	Research seems so frustrating Sally when all you want to do is just get on with the job. If you haven't done your research you won't know what the current picture is. Speak to colleagues who have a disability to understand how easy they find it navigating around their working environment. Take time to meet colleagues from

	different religions to understand what barriers they might be experiencing or opportunities they might have observed. Use that information to build your picture of what is currently happening and what might need to change. So once you have done your research do you just need to write new policies and make sure your building is accessible? If you just do that it won't create the right culture and mindset across the whole business. It's about creating a sense of belonging for each person. If you can be yourself in your workplace, it means there is greater engagement and creativity. Ask yourself why embedding EDI into your organisation is important. Unless you understand the "why", how will you know the "what". Are you doing it to be legally compliant? Or do you genuinely want your organisation to be more inclusive? Whatever the motivation, take time to understand what it is you want to achieve in the short, medium and long term. Think about watching or listening to the webinar recording for more information about the benefits and reasons for embedding EDI. For real change to happen, everyone, especially senior management, need to buy into the importance of belonging. Both intellectually and emotionally. If this doesn't happen, it can lead to EDI being seen as a tick box exercise.
Jo	So, we understand it's a huge subject and that people can feel overwhelmed but what key things should an organisation be focussed on? Is there a sequence of events you would recommend?
Sally	One of my most frequent pieces of advice to organisations about EDI is that less is more. Do two or three things really well

	rather than try to fix everything at the same time. It's just not possible. It's also easier and more manageable, to think of several streams of activity happening at the same time. Our advice would be 1. Gather diversity data to demonstrate improvements over time. If you don't have the resources to gather data at the moment, use the diversity information provided by the Office of National Statistics. Collecting diversity data about employees and setting diverse recruitment targets in order to address a perceived imbalance in EDI won't create an inclusive culture. But what it will do is give you a benchmark to use to demonstrate year on year that your initiatives are enabling change. 2. Review the EDI policies and other people related policies you have in place already such as flexible working, workplace adjustments and recruitment and selection 3. Engage senior leaders and get EDI on the agenda at your organisations' board meetings. Get a senior level sponsor for EDI as soon as possible. This sponsor will be able to open doors to other senior people and be seen by the business as a role model for EDI.
Jo	But how long does this process last? Realistically what are the expectations for delivering a programme of improvement for inclusive practice?
Sally **Jo**	Deciding to embed inclusive practices in your business can seem sometimes like trying to change direction in a cargo ship. Even though you are turning the wheel, the ship won't seem to be changing direction quickly enough. And this can lead to a sense of failure or lack of progress. Which is why it's important

	to have structure in your process. What are your short, medium and long term objectives? There will be things you can do in the short term that will signal to everyone the business is serious about embedding the right behaviours as well as recruiting diverse talent and having diversity policies. I always think that a few "small wins" can make a huge difference and also demonstrate to employees the organisation is serious about its commitment to EDI.

Can you give us some examples of small wins Sally

For example, shift regular meetings to start after 9am and end before 5pm to support individuals who have childcare or carer responsibilities. When you're in a meeting, pay attention to the different communication styles used. Make sure everyone has the opportunity to speak and that no-one is interrupted. Don't be distracted by who speaks loudest or last – give credit where credit is due. Think about having lunchtime or late afternoon activities so you don't exclude people who can't easily attend after hours. Set up a reverse mentoring scheme so junior employees from minority groups can mentor senior managers. Ask the diversity sponsor to write a blog. Start a story telling campaign, asking people to share their stories of difference. Film them speaking on your phone and upload it to your intranet.

Find out what other organisations are doing in your sector. It's better to adapt something that already exists and is successful rather than create something from nothing. |
| **Jo** | When businesses are thinking about inclusive practices, what sort of financial, resource and time commitments are needed? What if there isn't a team or a person in place to support EDI? |

Sally	There are three things behind the successful implementation of embedding EDI in an organisation: • Budget • Support • Tools It can be difficult to justify spending money and proving what the return on investment for EDI initiatives will be. But there are things that can be done for little or no cost, such as running a focus group or conducting a staff survey to understand how engaged employees are and what their thoughts are about EDI. You could think about creating an EDI Forum, made up of EDI change agents from across the business. Forum members can champion change across the business. A great tool to use is the Passport – I've heard people talk about the passport, can you give me a bit more information a word document that captures agreements between managers and individuals about reasonable adjustments. It's called a passport because the individual takes it with them if they move around the organisation. Again, watch the webinar to get more information about this If you don't have an EDI team in place, and you are interested in getting involved, speak to your Head of HR or a senior manager and discuss whether its possible for you to take a lead role in embedding EDI.
Jo	So where should I go if I want to do more but have a very limited amount of time to spend looking for help or advice?
Sally	The first thing I would recommend is speaking to other organisations in your sector. Find out what other businesses are

	doing and learn from them. Other organisations such as EmployAbility will work with you to remove any biases in your recruitment process and Jobcentre Plus offer a range of recruitment services to employers. There is very helpful information on the CIPD website. McKinsey and Deloitte have done amazing research into EDI.
Jo	That's great – thank you Sally. Well, we've come to the end of our second podcast and I hope you've found our conversation helpful. We look forward to seeing you on the final podcast in the series where we talk about How to Recruit. Until then, goodbye.