



# FIR Strategy

2022 - 2025

APRIL 2023 UPDATE





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# Introduction

At VolkerWessels UK we are proud of our inclusive culture. We are determined that our business continues to be one where everyone feels included, valued and free to be their authentic selves – a sustainable business which is enriched by diversity, and is an attractive and comfortable workplace for our employees and stakeholders; one which can attract, and retain, the best people.

Respect for each other is the message that underpins our approach which is why, in this refreshed version of our strategy, you will see a change in terminology from Equality, Diversity and Inclusion to Fairness, Inclusion and Respect (FIR). For VolkerWessels UK, this means:

**Fairness** – treating people as individuals, without bias and in a way that meets their needs.

**Inclusion** – making everyone feel part of the team.

**Respect** – accepting somebody for who they are, even if they are different to you

As the CEO of VolkerWessels UK, I recognise that the board are pivotal to maintaining momentum to ensure our employees always feel empowered to manage and lead by example, supported by our extensive network of FIR Champions around the business. We have an excellent programme of campaigns which raise awareness of characteristics protected under the Equality Act, supporting our corporate desire to help our colleagues truly understand each other and using this to build teams based on diverse thoughts, experiences and perspectives to enhance productivity and employee wellbeing.

At VolkerWessels UK, we are determined to ‘build inclusion together’ – ensuring fairness, inclusion and respect is prioritised as a key strategic focus for our business and the conversation is kept alive.

**Richard Offord**

Chief Executive Officer

# Our excellent foundations

**Our FIR journey to date has built on our entrepreneurial, collaborative, and inclusive culture, with our progress recognised through our re-accreditation with Investors in Diversity. We have also won a number of FIR awards including 'Engineering Company of the Year' and Large Company of the Year, and were recognised as the 15th most inclusive company across all industries in the 2022 National Centre for Diversity Awards.**



**FAIRNESS | INCLUSION | RESPECT**

We have built some excellent foundations, which form the basis of our refreshed FIR strategy, with key activities including:

- A bi-annual survey, asking our employees and supply chain to share their views about FIR
- Exploring unconscious bias through our business-wide FIR training programmes, and the delivery of an enhanced inclusive leadership training programme for our senior leaders
- Empowering our network of 100+ cross-business champions to support and challenge behaviours and promote key local and regional initiatives and campaigns, such as National Inclusion Week, Pride and celebrating diverse faiths. All Champions are also invited to attend a monthly call to share their experiences
- Hosting Champions Conferences which provide an opportunity to address a range of inclusion topics and develop our strategic vision
- FIR Leadership Roundtable events, open to all, facilitated by our senior leadership team to raise awareness of important topics
- The creation of community groups through which our team members can support each other and share information on a range of topics including LGBTQ+, Parents and Carers and Menopause
- Forging strong relationships with selected membership and accreditation partners including Inclusive Employers, Investors in Diversity, Black Professionals in Construction, Women into Construction, Stonewall and the Armed Forces Covenant. We are also registered as Disability Confident Committed



# Our strategic vision

Our vision is to create a truly inclusive working environment where employees and stakeholders of VolkerWessels UK feel valued, appreciated, and at ease to be their authentic selves; where they strive to achieve their highest potential in work environments that are enriched by a diversity of perspectives, cultures and backgrounds; characterised by fairness and equality of opportunity.



We will achieve this vision by adopting three overarching objectives that will be supported by detailed implementation plans.

1



## Internal engagement

To engage with our operational and office based teams to ensure they are fully equipped to lead, manage and work inclusively.

2



## Embedding an inclusive culture

To create a fully embedded culture of inclusion throughout our business.

3



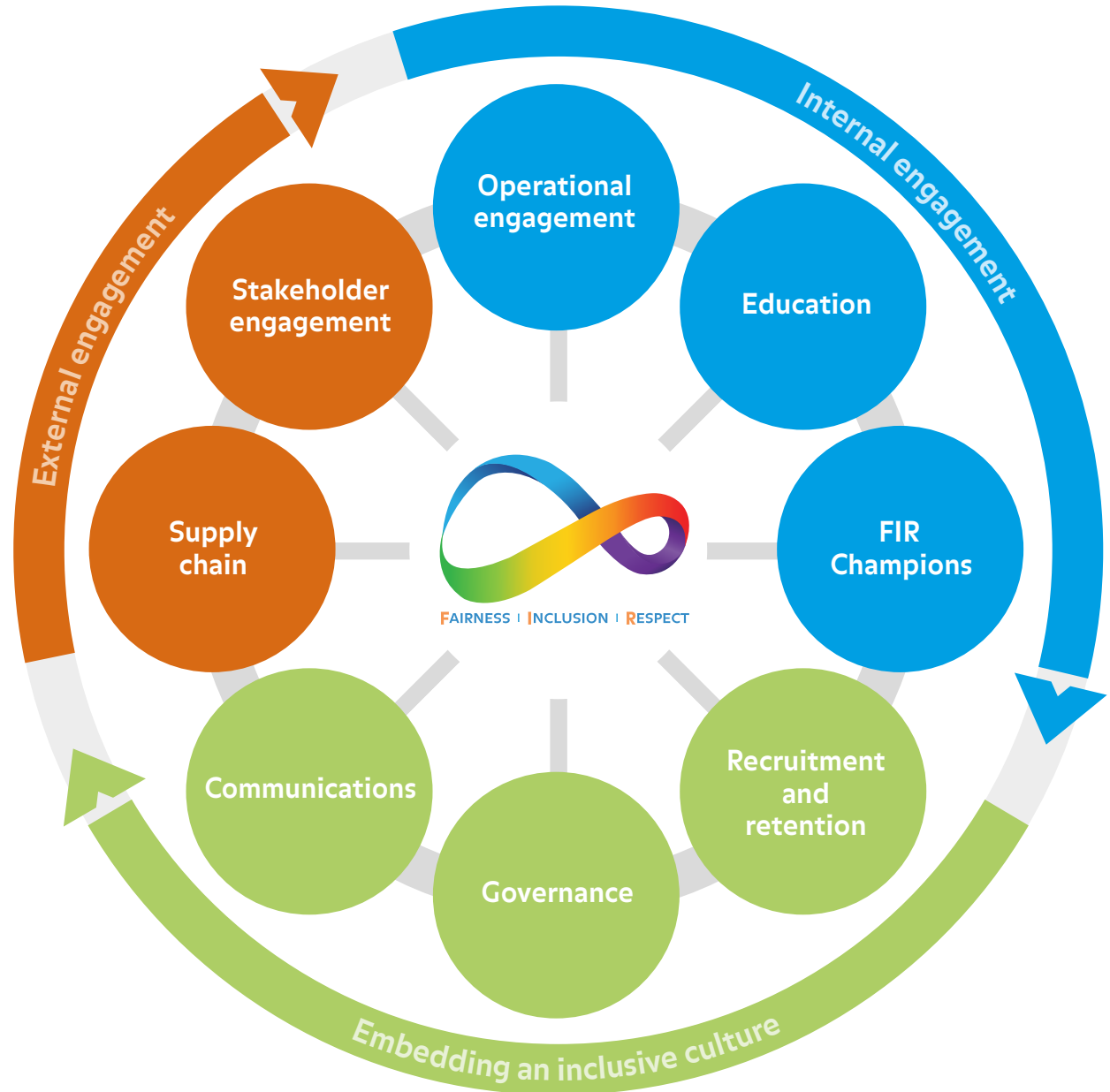
## External engagement

To engage and work collaboratively with all our stakeholders including our clients, supply chain, partners, local communities and all those we work alongside and with, to mutual benefit.



# Delivery

We have identified eight FIR focus groups to help us deliver our three objectives. Each group has a senior sponsor, lead and delivery team, and is supported by our board of directors.



# Internal engagement

To engage with our operational and office based teams to ensure they are fully equipped to lead, manage and work inclusively.

## Operational engagement

Delivering a tailored approach for our operational teams to promote inclusive behaviours and raise awareness of all aspects of FIR.

### INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

- A **bespoke campaign** to help our operational teams embed an inclusive site environment
- **Guidance to support our operational management** to ensure our sites are inclusive for all
- **Training** for our operational teams, to **eliminate unconscious bias** and promote appropriate behaviours
- Provision of **appropriate, inclusive PPE** for all our workforce
- **Focus groups** to support targeted diverse employees at VolkerWessels UK



## Internal engagement

### Education

Providing opportunities for people at all levels in the organisation to enhance their FIR awareness, in both formal and informal settings. We will provide coaching and support to ensure our managers are equipped to lead consistently at all times.

### INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

- Our workforce will receive **mandatory FIR awareness training** on commencement of employment
- Creation of an **FIR training matrix** to identify mandatory and voluntary training for our employees
- Continue to **review and grow the suite of learning materials** to enable our workforce to lead, manage and work inclusively and to eliminate unconscious bias





## Internal engagement

### FIR Champions

A group of volunteers from across the business who actively promote the understanding of FIR principles with their colleagues through awareness and information sharing, and can act as a 'safe person' to support and guide everyone at VolkerWessels UK.

#### INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

- By 2025, at least **6% of our total workforce will be a FIR Champion** (with at least 50% of these drawn from our operational workforce)
- Facilitation of **community groups** to support and provide safe spaces to share experiences, information, and best practice
- The creation of **FIR awareness campaigns**, roundtables and other events to raise awareness of protected characteristics and other FIR related topics
- The provision of ongoing **training awareness and events for FIR Champions** to enable collective learning and support them in their role



# Embedding an inclusive culture

To create a fully embedded culture of inclusion throughout our business.

## Recruitment and retention

We will attract and retain a diverse range of individuals from a wide talent pool and create equal opportunities for all. This commitment relates to all positions, including our early careers such as apprentice and graduate programmes as well as those in more senior roles.



## INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

- Targeted use of appropriate **inclusive recruitment platforms**
- All individuals in the business who are responsible for recruitment and internal promotions will receive **inclusive recruitment training** to eliminate unconscious bias and promote conscious inclusion
- Use of **gender decoding technology** in all our role profiles and job adverts
- Our **family, flexible working and leave policies will be reviewed** and refreshed so they are an attractive benefit to employment at VolkerWessels UK
- Continue to **proactively attract women** into our business and support them at all levels, in order to **address the gender pay gap**
- The creation of a **returners programme** that supports individuals back to work after not being in employment for a period of time due to family, caring or other reasons
- Creation of a **recruitment dashboard** to track the diversity of our applicants, candidates and hires, to enable us to take proactive action where required

## Embedding an inclusive culture

### Governance

Responsible for ensuring a clear strategic direction for FIR, through the development and adoption of effective policies and visible commitments alongside maintaining effective memberships and accrFIRtations to appropriate and aligned partners.



### INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

- Continue to develop and **build partnerships** with carefully chosen external specialist membership schemes and certification bodies
- All relevant VolkerWessels UK **policies and procedures**, training material and communications will be reviewed, to ensure they are inclusive and promote equality and diversity in the workplace
- Continue to support Inclusive Employers '**National Inclusion Week**' as well as other applicable awareness campaigns
- Progress our membership with Investors in Diversity to '**Leaders in Diversity**'
- Progress our membership to the **Disability Confident Scheme** to Level 2
- A year-on-year improvement in the number of people in the business who voluntarily share their **sensitive information** with us via our HR platform to help us better understand the diversity of our workplace. This includes information relating to religion, ethnic origin, nationality, sex identifier, gender reassignment, sexual orientation and disabilities



## Embedding an inclusive culture

### Communication

Ensuring communication is engaging, two-way, effective and inclusive; sending strong, clear and consistent messages about our commitment to FIR. We will listen to our stakeholders about what is important to them, giving individuals a voice to share their experiences, so that we will all benefit from broadening our awareness, knowledge and understanding.

### INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

- Creation and delivery of an **FIR campaign calendar** to share engaging content internally and externally
- All of our **communications will be inclusive** and representative of our inclusive culture
- The sharing of **evidence of our successes**, both internally and externally. To ensure transparency and validity, our quantitative data will be obtained from our HR systems, recruitment platforms and survey results, and qualitatively, we will use personal stories and accounts to share our journey



# External engagement

To engage and work collaboratively with all our stakeholders including our clients, supply chain, partners, local communities and all those we work alongside and with, to mutual benefit.

## Supply chain

Engage with our supply chain to share our FIR values, commitments, and expectations, and promote a collaborative working relationship to challenge and support each other on our FIR journeys.



## INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

- Through our partner memberships with the Supply Chain Sustainability School we will encourage our supply chain to have completed the **SCSS FIR Ambassador programme**
- The collation of **FIR data from our supply chain** to enable us to understand their diversity status, and to allow us to take proactive action and support, to create a diverse supply chain that is representative of society as a whole
- Proactive provision of **training, awareness and sharing of information to our supply chain** that is relevant and engaging
- **Collaboration** with our supply chain to bridge knowledge gaps
- **FIR objectives** will become embedded into all new supply chain agreements



## External engagement

### Stakeholder engagement

Embed the principles of FIR into our wider community engagement activities, as outlined in our People-Planet-Purpose sustainability framework, and continue to proactively engage with our clients and other stakeholder partners to mutual benefit. We will ensure we have a consistent approach to sharing our FIR work and activities, capturing and reporting associated social value.

### INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

- FIR principles embedded into our **education and employability programmes**, and our charity, volunteering and community engagement work, as part of our People-Planet-Purpose sustainability framework
- Continue to **work alongside our clients, partners and local communities** to support each other to work and learn collaboratively
- The creation of a **structured and consistent method of learning from each other**, gathering information and case studies to document our FIR journey and share with our stakeholders



# Responsibility and accountability

The boards of VolkerWessels UK and its related businesses, take ultimate accountability for achieving our vision by consistently leading inclusively, challenging inappropriate behaviours, driving a culture of diversity and inclusion through consistent messaging across our business and for promoting continuous improvement within their areas of responsibility.

Key decisions relating to FIR strategic implementation will be reviewed by the VolkerWessels UK People Committee and VolkerWessels UK board of directors.

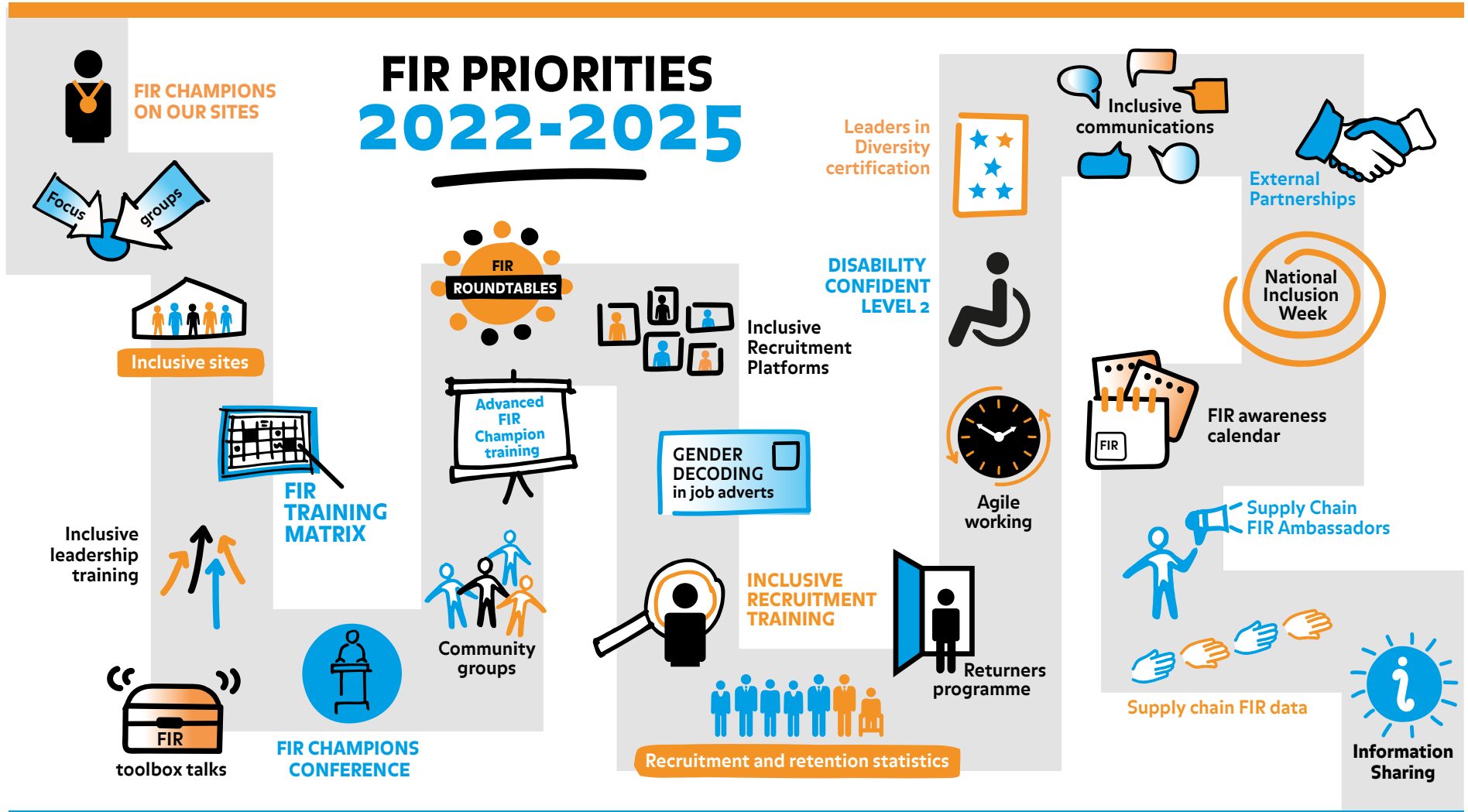
In accordance with our People-Planet-Purpose sustainability framework, every employee has a responsibility to make decisions informed by an inherent culture to do business in the right way – to ensure everyone feels included and respected, and can reach their full potential at VolkerWessels UK.

“ Since the launch of our Fairness, Inclusion and Respect (FIR) strategy in 2021, it has been our resolute aim to make VolkerWessels UK a business where everyone feels valued and free to be their authentic selves. At the very heart of this is a simple message to respect our colleagues, even if they are different to you.

Emma Ward,  
Head of sustainability and inclusion



# FIR priorities







# FIR Strategy 2022 - 2025



For more information about our approach to Fairness, Inclusion and Respect, please email [FIR@volkerwessels.co.uk](mailto:FIR@volkerwessels.co.uk) or visit [www.volkerwessels.co.uk](http://www.volkerwessels.co.uk)