



EDIgest

OCTOBER 2021

October marks one year since we established the EDI Network and reflecting on all we have achieved in that time alone makes me really proud, not only to be sponsor of the network but also a part of Paragon. I can't quite believe we are already at the end of Q3. The network has been working hard on a number of initiatives once again, including the roll-out of the 'This is me' campaign and the plans for Paragon's Birmingham Pride walk.

It's also been really encouraging to see the network grow as we welcomed five new recruits: Joel Hughes, Jenny Davies, Steve Peters, Aga Wilson and Kevin Meddings.

On a personal level, my work with the City of London's socio-economic taskforce has continued. I was able to partake in some filming for a video to be released by the taskforce later this year, which aims to share the success stories of members from across the spectrum of socio-economic backgrounds. I'm really glad I was able to share my story.

I hope you enjoy this quarter's update and we look forward to sharing more stories with you soon.

Richard Rowntree

Executive Sponsor of the EDI Network



HIGHLIGHTS

The Big Survey – July

In our Group-wide employee survey we asked some demographic questions for the first time.

The results are being analysed to compare different experiences of our people. These will be used in conjunction with the data you provided through your Diversity profiles on CoreHR to help make Paragon a better place to work.

Eid Al Adha – 12 - 23 July

We spoke to Naeem Mulla, Customer Services Officer, who shared his thoughts on what Eid al-Adha means to him.

Eid al-Adha, also known as the 'Festival of Sacrifice', is the latter of the two Islamic holidays celebrated worldwide each year and one of the most important.

To Naeem, Eid al-Adha is a time to reflect on the sacrifices made by his loved ones and for his entire family to come together to celebrate and honour them.

It is one of the very few times where his entire extended family gets together in person (or more recently - video call) to catch up, share stories and have plenty of food. It's really important to Naeem's family, and others across the world, to have this time to be able to come together in this way.

'This is me' – September

Throughout September we were asking you to tell us more about your personal characteristics, your socio-economic background and your responsibilities outside of work, so that we can ensure that we keep improving as a place to work and supporting you as best we can.

The data will most importantly help us to identify the steps that we need to take to make Paragon a more inclusive place to work and allow us to check that employees from different backgrounds are all being offered access to the same opportunities.

Thanks to you completing your Diversity profiles during September, we managed to raise £880 for our charity of the year, Alzheimer's Society.

We're **committed to providing equal opportunities** to all of our employees regardless of their background or circumstances and collecting this data has meant we can check that we're doing this. It will also enable us to **continue to take action** to make working at Paragon the **best it can be for you**.

Andrea Knott
Head of HR Governance and
Chair of the EDI Network

National Inclusion Week – 27 September – 3 October

Inclusion Week aims to celebrate everyday inclusion in all its forms and brings organisations together from round the world to celebrate, share and inspire inclusion practices.

My WHOLE self

In line with his work with the socio-economic taskforce, **Richard Rowntree, Managing Director of Mortgages**, spoke about how his upbringing on a deprived council estate drove ambition and a restless curiosity to excel.

Maura Bibby, Operations Manager, has been a foster parent for over ten years alongside her husband James and shared her story.

Amy Knight, Team Leader in Group Operations, discussed how she transformed her health and wellbeing during the pandemic. Despite managing two different life-long health conditions, Amy told us how she successfully adjusted her lifestyle and regained her sparkle!

Rae Pattinson, Executive Assistant bravely spoke about her grief, following the tragic loss of her husband and what has helped her through the hardest 12 months of her life.

Steve Dunne, Sales Manager at CTS, reflected on his journey since experiencing suicidal thoughts ten years ago and how his battle with depression has shaped his life today.

Birmingham Pride Parade – September

This year, for the very first time, Paragon took part in the Birmingham Pride Carnival Parade, which set off from Victoria Square on the 25 September and wound its way through the city centre, down to the festival site at the top of Hurst Street.

We were lucky enough to secure places for 50 people to walk together to represent Paragon and the group had a fantastic day. Along with the other companies that were there to celebrate and show their support, Paragon paid a fee to take part in the Parade which went towards funding the event.



WHAT'S COMING UP?

- October:** Black History Month
- 10 October:** World Mental Health day
- 18-23 October:** National Adoption Week
- 4 November:** Diwali
- 10 December:** Hannukah
- 25 December:** Christmas



Black History Month: october

Black History Month is intended to recognise the contribution and achievements of those with African or Caribbean heritage. It's also an opportunity for people to learn more about the effects of racism and how to challenge negative stereotypes.

We are doing lots to celebrate Black History Month this October, so keep your eyes on the Hub.



Hanukkah: 28 November - 6 December

Chanukkah, or Chanukkah, is also sometimes called the Feast of Dedication, Festival of Lights, or Feast of the Maccabees.

It is a Jewish festival that is celebrated for eight days and reaffirms the ideals of Judaism, commemorating in particular the rededication of the Second Temple of Jerusalem by the lighting of candles on each day of the festival.

Aside from the lighting of candles, other Hanukkah celebrations have become popular in recent years. Many families will give out presents during Hanukkah, usually with one given each night of the holiday.



“Black History Month is a great opportunity to **celebrate the influential people** that have impacted the **African and Caribbean community**”

EDI MEMBERS IN FOCUS

This month, EDI Network member, Rina Pabari, discusses Black History Month and why it's important that it's celebrated.

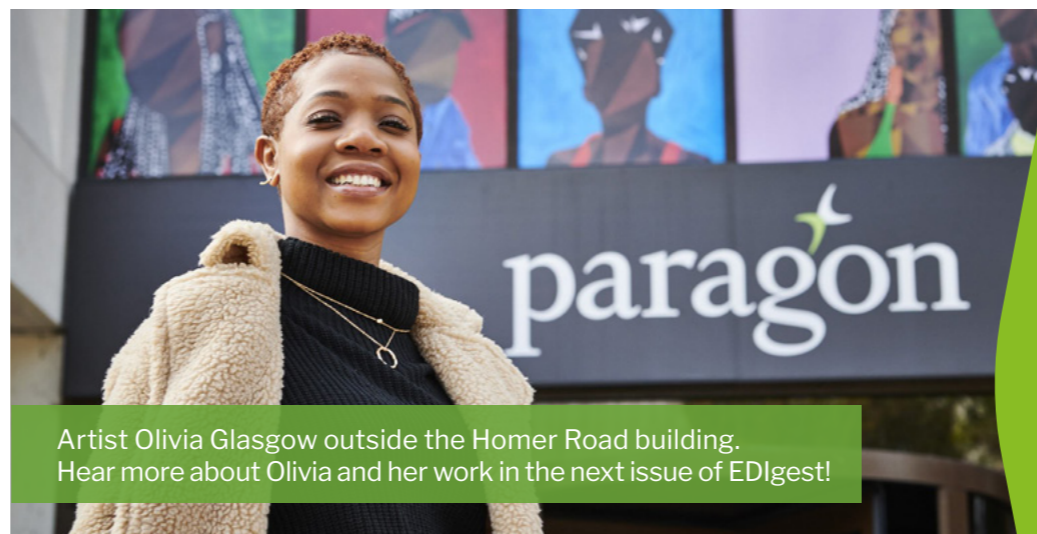
We are celebrating Black History Month to honour the achievements of African and Caribbean heritage and to educate and raise awareness about the effects of racism and inequality on their society.

Strong role models within the Black communities are helping to break barriers they, their families or ancestors have had to face so the newer generation can be protected and be proud of their heritage and culture.

Black History Month is a great opportunity to celebrate the influential characters that have impacted the African and Caribbean community in a positive way and show

the progress made, not only to combat racism and inequality but also for the wider audience to learn and recognise the contribution Black people have made across the world.

It's important that we celebrate this month, not only for Black people but for all people, because through their stories and experiences, we take a universal message of social justice, perseverance, resilience, and achievement and this can resonate in any one of us no matter what our backgrounds are.



Artist Olivia Glasgow outside the Homer Road building. Hear more about Olivia and her work in the next issue of EDIgest!



Get in touch

Send your feedback, ideas and stories to edi@paragonbank.co.uk

We'd love to hear from you!



Recommended listening

Diversity: Beyond the checkbox

In this podcast series, Jackie Ferguson, CDE, hears from industry leaders on what diversity means to them and why it's important that businesses focus on diversity and inclusion.



Recommended reading

How to be an inclusive leader: Your role in creating cultures of belonging where everyone can thrive

Diversity and inclusion expert, Jennifer Brown, provides a step-by-step guide for the personal and emotional journey we must undertake to create an inclusive workplace where everyone can thrive.