



JANUARY 2022

In October 2021 we celebrated a year since the launch of the EDI Network and as we welcome in 2022, we look back on what we achieved in the final quarter of last year.

It was great to see our latest network members get fully settled during Q4, getting involved from the outset on a number of initiatives.

We also took some exciting steps, holding Paragon's first listening circles. The first was to discuss racial diversity in the workplace during Black History Month and the second was held during Disability History Month, for carers and employees with disabilities.

Our 2022 e-learning programme has kicked off with a new EDI module, looking at what it is, why it matters, what we're doing about it and how you can help. It's packed with informative videos and quizzes, so make sure you take a look.

During February, we'll also be running some focus groups to get feedback from you on the work the EDI Network is doing, so keep an eye on the Hub for further information.

I hope you had a restful Christmas break and are excited for what the next year has in store.

## Richard Rowntree

Executive Sponsor of the EDI Network



### Black History Month: October

October was Black History Month, dedicated to celebrating black history and culture around the world.

We collaborated with black artist, Olivia Glasgow to create a colourful art installation that was positioned over the entrance to our Homer Road office.

Paragon's first listening circle was also held, where members of the EDI Network and some black employees from across the Group met with Dave Newcombe and Pam Rowland to discuss racial diversity in the workplace.

The EDI Network fundraised for ACLT (The African Caribbean Leukaemia Trust), pledging to complete the distance from Land's End to John O'Groats by walking, running and jogging. They raised over £400 for the charity.

Throughout the month, we also heard stories from Paragon's people, shared resources on the Hub and had a delivery of Jamaican patties to our Homer Road, Earlswood Court, London and Southampton offices.

### Diwali: 2 – 6 November

During Diwali, we explored how it is traditionally celebrated, shared events for employees to get involved in and looked at some of our favourite Diwali-centred campaigns shared by brands to celebrate the festival.

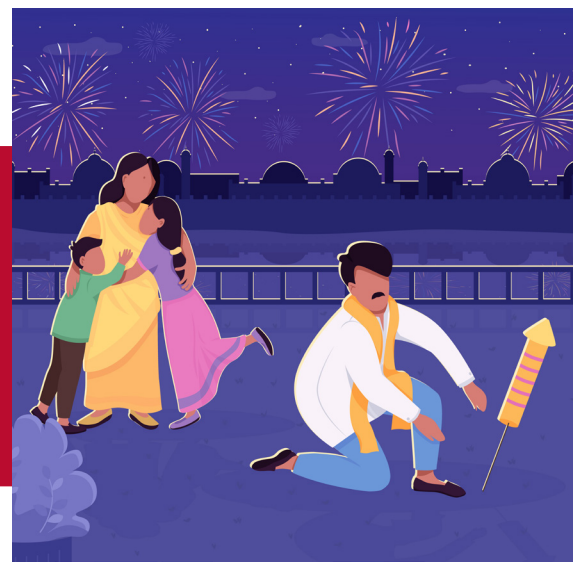
### INTERNATIONAL MENS DAY November 19

### International Men's Day: 19 November

To celebrate International Men's Day, John Halpin, Category Manager and EDI Network Member, told us about his journey to parenthood so far and the challenges he and his husband have faced as a same sex couple.

Claire Jenkins, Lead Project Manager and Wellbeing Rep, discussed the importance of men's health and how it should be a priority for both men and women and Harry Russell, Sustainability Analyst, explored what International Men's Day means to him being raised without a male role model.

Steve Peters, Senior Business Analyst, also shared how he strives to be the best role model for his two sons.



### My WHOLE self

During Baby Loss Awareness Week in October, **Becky Karpeta, Collections Associate**, SME lending, bravely shared her story after suffering three miscarriages.

On World Menopause Day, **Karen Bowron, Operations Manager** in Motor Finance, discussed how she became aware that she was experiencing menopausal symptoms and sought help to support her wellbeing.

In support of National Adoption Week, **Beth Stevens, Operational Risk Manager**, and **Kirstie Stevens, Test Analyst**, shared their story of the highs and lows of the adoption process, after welcoming their son into their family.

We also heard from **Neal Moy, Deputy Managing Director** in Development Finance, who shared how he and his wife cared for their daughter during a particularly hard four years as she overcame an eating disorder.

## Disability History Month: 18 November – 18 December

The theme for this year's Disability History Month was 'Disability and Hidden Impairments' and we collaborated with the Wellbeing team to share a number of education pieces and people stories about life with hidden impairments.

We heard from Roger Hook, Compliance Manager, who told us about his two sons, Rohan and Steffan, who both have learning difficulties and have overcome many challenges throughout their lives.

On 10 December, the EDI Network hosted its second listening circle, for carers and employees with disabilities, hidden impairments or learning difficulties. The group met with Richard Rowntree and Ben Whibley to discuss their experiences.

Paragon also signed up to the Government's **Disability Confident Scheme**, which aims to help employers make the most of the opportunities provided by employing and developing disabled people.

“It was fantastic that Paragon celebrated Disability History Month and helped recognise the achievements of disabled people. Disabilities are not always visible and from a wellbeing perspective, both physical disabilities and hidden impairments have a massive impact on people's lives. By educating ourselves about disability and making ourselves more aware of what people go through, this helps us break down barriers to equality that disabled people experience.”

Jennie Smith, Chair of the Wellbeing team



## WHAT'S COMING UP IN Q1 2022?

<b>17 January</b>	World Religion Day
<b>25 January</b>	Burns Night
<b>February</b>	LGBT+ History Month
<b>1 February</b>	Chinese New Year
<b>8 March</b>	International Women's Day
<b>18 March</b>	Holi Festival
<b>27 March</b>	Mothering Sunday
<b>28 March</b>	Palm Sunday
<b>29 March – 3 April</b>	Autism Awareness Week

### LGBT+ History Month: February

LGBT+ History Month is a month-long annual celebration of lesbian, gay, bisexual trans, and non-binary history, including the history of LGBT+ rights and related civil rights movements. In the UK it is celebrated in February each year. If you would be willing to share your own story or experiences on the Hub, we would love to hear from you. Just email [edi@paragonbank.co.uk](mailto:edi@paragonbank.co.uk)

### International Women's Day: 8 March

International Women's Day is a global day to celebrate the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. We will be sharing content across the Hub, including stories from some of Paragon's women.



“Too often migrants to the UK are unfairly portrayed with certain stereotypes

## EDI MEMBERS IN FOCUS



### Stereotypes: Why I've never described myself as a Polish migrant...

Too often migrants to the UK are unfairly portrayed with certain stereotypes.

A stereotype is a fixed idea that many people have about a thing, person or a group that may often be untrue or only partly true.

This month, EDI Network member, Aga Wilson, discusses how stereotypes have impacted her...

“Being Polish and due to stereotyping, I frequently find myself in a position where I need to somewhat justify certain things, such as why I moved to the UK. I have also experienced unfair treatment in previous jobs and outside of work.

The Oxford dictionary defines a migrant as “a person who moves from one place to another, especially in order to find work or better living conditions”. When describing a migrant, people usually default to someone who's a political exile or an economic migrant. Those two groups are likely to feel differently about their homeland and new country and will face different challenges.

My “migration” to the UK happened gradually and organically. I was invited to come for a two-month work placement and planned to then return to my happy life in Poland. I was in fact asked to stay longer and despite missing Poland, have remained until this day.

Due to unfair stereotypes, I have never described myself as a migrant. This is not a political stance, it's a personal expression of admiration for all those who have made the brave decision to leave what they know and move to the unfamiliar, for reasons far more wide-spanning than what stereotypes often imply.”



History in its broadest aspect is a record of man's migrations from one environment to another.

Ellsworth Huntington, US Geographer



### Get in touch

Send your feedback, ideas and stories to  
[edi@paragonbank.co.uk](mailto:edi@paragonbank.co.uk)

We'd love to hear from you!

Would you like to invite a member of the EDI Network along to a team meeting to discuss any topics or provide an update from the network? Just email [edi@paragonbank.co.uk](mailto:edi@paragonbank.co.uk).



### Recommended listening

The Diversity Gap: Bethaney Wilkinson

When it comes to diversity, good intentions are only the beginning. In this series, Bethaney Wilkinson, Coach and Facilitator, explores the gap between good intentions and good impact across equality, diversity and inclusion.



### Recommending reading

What If?: Short Stories to Spark Inclusion and Diversity Dialogue by Steve L. Robbins

From incomparable storyteller and beloved diversity and inclusion expert, Steve L. Robbins, comes the 10th Anniversary Edition of his classic book used by scores of companies globally for diversity training.

It features 10 new stories written by Dr. Robbins that help readers gain deeper insight into the role our brains play in shaping our thoughts and actions, and what we can do to be more curious and open-minded in our diverse world.