

Open session

Board meeting: 15 February 2023

Agenda item: 8

Subject: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the profession

Action: To approve

Purpose

To approve the actions ARB will take to play our part to help create a profession that better reflects the makeup of society. These actions will be published alongside our analysis of the Register, as discussed in the Board workshop in September 2022.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board agrees that ARB undertake and publicly commit to the actions identified in paragraph 2.12 below.

Author/Key Contact


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1. Open Session

2. Background and Key points


- 2.1. ARB's Corporate Strategy makes the following commitment to promoting diversity in the profession:

We know that the profession is deeply unrepresentative of the society we serve. Although there have been some improvements in the diversity of students training to become architects, the gap is still unacceptable. ARB needs to do more than just shine a light; we need to take positive action to help bring about change. This action needs to be reflected in standards for institutions; in our review of the Code of Conduct and Practice for architects; in our own systems, processes and



recruitment policies. We have a leadership role also to play, recognising that while ARB must take action, we can also ensure we work with other stakeholders to encourage change across the sector.

- 2.2. To understand how we can improve representation in the profession, it is important that we understand the current makeup of the Register and how this compares to society. We have therefore analysed data we collect and intend to publish this so that all interested stakeholders can share our understanding.
- 2.3. Architects must give us some specific information in order to join the Register, including their (binary) gender (see further information in paragraph 2.6 below) and the address at which they are based. Additionally, 70% have completed our optional Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) survey with further information.
- 2.4. In September 2022 the Board participated in a workshop in which ARB staff presented initial analysis on:
 - The makeup of the architects' profession in 2022;
 - The makeup of new architects joining the profession each year between 2016 and 2021;
 - How the makeup of the profession compares to the UK population at large.
- 2.5. To compare the profession to the UK population we used the best available data, which at that point used the 2011 census. Results of the 2021 census have been published, topic by topic, from November 2022.
- 2.6. In December 2022 we changed the gender option on the application portal to include an 'other' category. We felt it was important to take this step and have therefore made this change ahead of other actions identified in this paper. In the future, on the new portal that is being developed through the transformation programme, we will only ask one question on gender and it will be framed in a more inclusive way. Further information about how we will change the survey is set out in the actions we intend to take, in paragraph 2.12.
- 2.7. Since the Board workshop, we have taken additional steps to prepare our analysis for publication. We have been able to compare our data to recently published data on the 2021 census, thus bringing it more up to date. We have quality assured the data and completed final checks on it. Lastly, we have also analysed the characteristics of stakeholders we have engaged, where they have shared this data with us (e.g. through survey responses). A copy of the new data has been sent to Board members; it has been sent in confidence, whilst it is prepared for publication.



2.8. We intend to publish our analysis and key findings in a graphically design format, and a data table with all the figures used in our analysis (with steps taken to ensure anonymity). The publication will be strengthened by strategic communications (summarised in the communications section below).

2.9. Our analysis, as previously shared with the Board, identified that:


- There are specific areas of underrepresentation in the architects' profession across gender, some ethnic groups, location, and disability.
- Representation is improving consistently year on year for some ethnic groups, and inconsistently for women.
- There are significant gaps in our information about – and therefore in our understanding of – the profession.

2.10. Having completed our quality analysis and reviewed the Register in comparison to the updated census data on society, these high-level findings have not changed. However, some of the statistics show shifts in the extent to which the profession is representative of society – for example, the representation of some ethnic groups in the UK population has changed between the 2011 and 2021 census, meaning the underrepresentation of those groups in the profession is slightly worse. This has been reflected in our updated analysis as sent to the Board in confidence, ahead of publication.

2.11. In light of our commitment in our Corporate Strategy, and the greater understanding of the makeup of the profession afforded by our analysis of the Register, it is recommended that the Board agree to the following actions. These will be undertaken in 2023. The majority of them (for example, those associated with the education review) are already enshrined in ARB's Business Plan. They have been developed by the Senior Leadership Group and therefore apply collectively across all ARB directorates.

2.12. The actions we recommend taking are set out below:


- We will take action through our **education review** to:
 - collect additional data from institutions to help us better understand how students' progress through initial education and training;
 - set clear expectations of learning providers in relation to EDI, and test through accreditation whether they are meeting their stated commitments;
 - develop the academic and practice outcomes a professional must achieve in order to join the Register, to more explicitly signal the



importance of respect, and advocating for equality, diversity and inclusion.

- We'll use our planned **review of the Architects Code of Conduct** to reinforce that architects should treat each other, clients and communities with the professionalism and respect they deserve, and advocate for equality, diversity and inclusion. This will also include looking at the expectations of how those in leadership roles can support students on placements and architects early in their careers.
- We'll update our **EDI survey** so that it reflects more modern approaches to language and research. In particular we will:
 - change the Registration process so that people only answer one question on their gender, and ensure that question includes multiple (not binary only) options, drawing on the format in the census;
 - change our question on disability to better match the census format, and promote awareness of different forms that disability can take, to help people answer our question on it;
 - change our question(s) on social mobility and better explain how we will use responses.
- We'll **continue to analyse and publish** the characteristics and makeup of new architects joining the profession each year (in the same format as our analysis of new registrants between 2016 and 2021) to understand whether the profession is changing.
- We'll continue to **capture information through our consultations** so we can know whether we are getting a proper and wide range of views on our policy proposals, and so that we can understand whether those proposals are inclusive.
- We'll **work with other organisations** in the profession and across the built environment industry to find out more about what they're doing, what they think we could do more of, and what insight they might have for our own work so that we can address the issues together.

2.13. The changes to the EDI survey will be developed internally and are intended to match existing good practice (i.e. the census, or questions that employment agencies ask about socio-economic background). They will be implemented through the transformation programme over the summer, to appear in the new registrant portal in September. They will not require statutory consultation.



However, we will use the connections we form at the roundtable to engage people about the new questions.

3. Resource Implications


- 3.1. Most actions are already accounted for as part of existing work programmes, including the education review, research into professionalism, and our stakeholder engagement programme.
 - 3.2. The resource required to make changes to, and better explain the importance of, the EDI survey can be absorbed within the Registration and Communications teams respectively.
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4. Risk implications

- 4.1. There is a risk that by publishing our analysis of the profession and making these commitments, we raise expectations about our ability to influence the makeup of the profession. We cannot solve all problems, for example structural issues in society that are reflected in the profession, nor does our regulatory scope extend to all aspects of education or employment for architects. We will mitigate this risk through clear and honest communications, and take the opportunity to continue explaining our role and remit stakeholders.
 - 4.2. Not publishing this analysis and not taking action would prove a greater risk, in that the architects' profession would be more likely to continue not to represent the society in which it operates. This would mean that buildings and spaces could be designed by people who may have no experience of the lives of the people who will use them, which may impact on the quality of the design.
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5. Communication

- 5.1. We intend to publish our analysis of the profession in order to:
 - Be transparent and meet other commitments made in our Corporate Strategy;
 - Demonstrate our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion by sharing what we know about the profession, and showing how we will use it to improve our regulatory work such as our education reform;
 - Show leadership and illustrate our regulatory role, reminding stakeholders that ARB's Register is the only source of comprehensive information about the entire profession.

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- 5.2. Our communications approach is focused on sharing information about the profession with architects and explaining ARB's role and what we can do to help improve representation. In addition to architects, we have identified various other stakeholder groups we believe would be interested in this work and would find the information useful. This work is an opportunity to reach new audiences who are passionate about inclusivity but may not be familiar with ARB's role and remit.
 - 5.3. Our tactics will include an invite only roundtable in advance of publication, to share our analysis with key stakeholders across different groups that are underrepresented in the profession, and other representative bodies. We'll invite people with a genuine interest in EDI in architecture, who can help to share and promote our analysis when we publish it. We hope to work with new stakeholders who can help us deliver the actions in this paper and achieve the aims in our strategy.
 - 5.4. We will publish an interactive webpage, a designed report, and a supplementary data table. We will directly email all architects on the Register and stakeholders identified through our engagement. We will pitch the key facts and figures, along with information about what we intend to do differently, to relevant media outlets.
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6. Equality and Diversity implication

- 6.1. The actions recommended in the paper are specifically intended to use ARB's scope of regulatory influence to help develop a profession that reflects the makeup of society, and shared value information in public about the current makeup of the profession.
 - 6.2. We are mindful that many of our changes relate to improved data collection to enhance our understanding of the profession and how we can support people appropriately. Some people will experience difficulties completing online data collection surveys. We will ensure that our future online Registration portal meets accessibility standards, and that we give people opportunities to request information in different formats or contact us to request reasonable adjustments.
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7. Recommendations

- 7.1. It is recommended that the Board agrees that ARB undertake and publicly commit to the actions identified in paragraph 2.12 above.
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