

### 1. Context and purpose

Over the past two years, CLOA has continued to strengthen its evidence base around Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), building on the foundations set out in earlier EDI Champion reports.

Our focus has been twofold:

- to better understand the composition of our Executive Committee and wider membership across protected characteristics; and
- to use that insight to inform practical, values-led action that supports inclusion, representation and leadership development.

In 2024 and 2025 we collected updated data across the nine protected characteristics, enabling us to compare trends over time and to explore differences between leadership and membership. This report summarises what the data tells us, how we have responded, and where our priorities now lie.

### 2. Data quality and confidence

It is important to note differing response rates:

- **Executive Committee:** 100% response in 2024 and 92% in 2025 (near-census)
- **Membership:** 25% response in 2024 and 30% in 2025

This means we can be highly confident in trends observed within the Executive. Membership data provides valuable insight but should be treated as directional rather than definitive, particularly for smaller groups.

### 3. Key findings

#### *Age profile*

- Both the Executive and membership continue to show a strong concentration in the 45–64 age range, reflecting CLOA's position as a membership organisation for people in senior roles.
- There is no clear evidence yet of an increase in under-45 representation within the membership.
- The Executive shows a slight shift towards the 35–44 age band between 2024 and 2025, which is meaningful given the very high response rate.

**Interpretation:** Progress towards attracting younger leaders is tentative and currently more visible at Executive level than across the wider membership.

#### *Gender representation*

- **Membership:** Women consistently make up a majority of respondents (around 57%) across both years.
- **Executive:** Women are consistently under-represented compared to the membership, falling from 45% in 2024 to 41.7% in 2025.

While small Executive numbers mean year-on-year change should be interpreted carefully, the direction of travel is clear: women are less well represented at leadership level than within the membership.

**Interpretation:** This could represent a structural pipeline issue rather than a participation issue within the membership. That being said women tend to respond at a higher rate to surveys than men, which also needs to be taken into account when analysing the data.

### *Disability and disclosure*

- **Executive:** The proportion of Executive members reporting a long-term condition increased between 2024 and 2025, driven largely by people reporting non-limiting conditions. With near-census response rates, this suggests increased confidence to disclose.
- **Membership:** Reported disability decreased overall, particularly in non-limiting conditions. Given lower response rates, this cannot be interpreted as a real decline and may reflect response bias.

**Interpretation:** The Executive data suggests positive movement around openness and disclosure. Another indication of trust is the low 'prefer not to say' selection across both the membership and executive. Membership trends are inconclusive and require further work to understand.

## 4. Action taken in response to findings

CLOA has already taken a number of practical steps aligned to these insights:

### *Supporting women in leadership*

Recognising the drop and ongoing under-representation of women on the Executive, CLOA marked International Women's Day with a targeted campaign focused on 'paying it forward'. Members of the Executive shared advice they would give to their younger selves, highlighting:

- confidence and self-advocacy;
- navigating leadership pathways;
- the value of peer support and sponsorship.

This activity aimed to increase visibility of women in leadership and to strengthen the pipeline into the Executive.

### *Disability inclusion and accessible leadership*

CLOA hosted a roundtable discussion:

#### **Inclusive Culture: Co-creating accessible experiences and workplaces**

This roundtable underpins our ongoing commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. The session was chaired by Zsuzsi Lindsay, CLOA's EDI Champion, and featured keynote speaker Andrew Miller MBE, one of the UK's most influential disability advocates.

Andrew brings extensive experience across the arts, film and TV sectors and works with leading cultural organisations to improve access and create new opportunities for disabled people.

The roundtable also showcased four case studies from CLOA members demonstrating:

- co-creation with disabled people;
- inclusive marketing and communications;
- practical approaches to accessibility and representation in leadership and delivery.

### *Supporting the next generation of leaders*

To strengthen pathways into senior leadership and broaden future Executive representation, CLOA launched the Aspiring Leaders Awards.

The awards recognise and celebrate outstanding work taking place across the United Kingdom and reflect CLOA's understanding of its role in supporting emerging leaders.

#### **Award winners receive:**

- one year's membership of CLOA; and
- coverage across CLOA's social media platforms.

This initiative directly supports our ambition to open up leadership opportunities to a more diverse range of future leaders.

## **5. Strategic priorities going forward**

Based on the data and learning from the past two years, our priorities remain:

1. Strengthening the leadership pipeline – particularly for women and younger senior leaders.
2. Building confidence and trust around disability disclosure, supported by visible leadership and inclusive practice.
3. Improving the robustness of membership data, including higher response rates and potential weighting, to better track change over time.

CLOA will continue to combine data-led insight with practical action, storytelling and partnership to ensure EDI is embedded not as a standalone activity, but as part of how we lead and operate as a sector body.

The EDI Working Group is open to all. If you would like to contribute to CLOA's EDI journey, please contact [info@cloa.org.uk](mailto:info@cloa.org.uk).

**#everyonecanlead**

**Zsuzsi Lindsay, EDI Champion for the Executive Committee**