EVERSHEDS SUTHERLAND

Making a world of difference

Our global approach to diversity and inclusion

Career Panel for Black History Month 2018, London

Celebrating International Women's Day 2019 in Hamburg

International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2018, UK

Hong Kong LGBT+ Inclusion Awards 2018

Atlanta Pride 2018

The Times Top 50 Employers for Women Celebrations 2019

1 US Eversheds Sutherland Scholars

Working Wiser 2019 with Global Counsel Leaders Circle, US

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Our vision

A diverse team and an inclusive culture that places respect and support for everyone at its core and empowers all of our people around the world to fulfill their potential.

Diversity is difference; it's all the things that make each of us who we are.

Inclusion is valuing that difference, and helping each one of us to be at our best while at work.

We are committed to developing a culture that embraces everyone and internal systems that align with our vision. Our aim is not just to ensure that there is no disadvantage to anyone, but to ensure that everyone can thrive.

"Diversity and inclusion is a core part of our strategy and how we ensure our purpose and values are brought to life. Building a culture which is inclusive of everyone, where everyone can bring their true selves to work and where everyone can thrive, is crucial to us.

In addition, we are both committed to ensuring our culture encourages professional growth and values differences. We know we still have a lot of work to do and we are excited by the passion and engagement of our people. Together we can drive positive change across the firm and achieve our diversity and inclusion vision."

Mark Wasserman
Co-CEO

Lee Ranson
Co-CEO

Our commitment

At Eversheds Sutherland, the case for diversity and inclusion (D&I) is clear, it underpins our values and is at the heart of our strategy. We recognize that having diverse talent across our business brings many benefits, and we are committed to accessing a wide range of views and thinking in all that we do.

A culture of inclusion, where each person feels able to be their true self at work and reach their full potential is key. We recognize that bringing together the perspectives of individuals of all backgrounds and life experiences is critical if we are to serve our global client base, people and communities as a leading global law firm.

"I'm committed to working together with our people to advance all areas of our diversity and inclusion strategy to ensure a working environment where everyone feels valued and is able to realize their full potential. It's important that we continue our work in this area, evaluate our progress carefully and deliver against our objectives. Eversheds Sutherland has an opportunity, as well as a responsibility, to lead change in this area, and I'm delighted to be involved."

Diane Gilhooley
Global Practice Head Employment, Labor and Pensions
Diversity and Inclusion Partner Sponsor (International)

"I focus on identifying and eliminating opportunity gaps across difference, and ensuring that we are leveraging the unique talents that our diversity efforts bring to the firm. Because we know that our goals must be more than aspirational, we are focused on deploying innovative inclusion strategies, measuring tangible progress, and consistently holding each person accountable to our collective commitment."

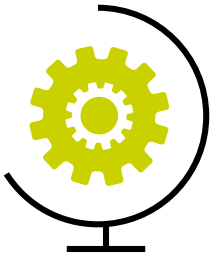
Vanessa Scott
Partner, Tax (ERISA and Employee Benefits)
Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer (US)

Our purpose

Helping our clients, our people and our communities to thrive.

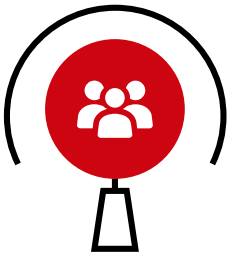
Our values

Diversity and inclusion includes everyone and all of our people have a role to play in embedding our values, individually and collectively, as we work to deliver on our purpose. Our five shared values sit at the heart of our culture, defining how we behave in everything we do.



Collaborative

We leverage our collective talents for the benefit of our clients and each other and we prize teamwork and relationships.



Inclusive

We foster a diverse and inclusive culture that places respect and support for everyone at its core and empowers all our people to fulfill their potential.

Open

We are approachable and nurture a culture of transparency and openness.

Creative

We are innovative and creative problem-solvers, providing an enhanced client and employee experience by not being bound by custom or convention.

Professional

We deliver quality and excellence and act with the utmost integrity at all times.

Our strategy

Our strategy is focused on both diversity and inclusion. The pillars that guide our strategic planning focus on local priorities, embracing intersectionality and leveraging difference to ensure that everyone has a platform to thrive.

Leadership and accountability

We are all responsible for understanding and delivering on our commitment to D&I. Our partners and our leaders have an additional responsibility as role models and to ensure that D&I is embedded in everything we do.

We upskill our leaders, so they feel competent and confident to talk about D&I, both internally and externally, and we highlight opportunities to actively support D&I activities.

Our focus on inclusive leadership is supported by our feedback and development culture and our leadership development programs.

Across the firm, we have D&I objectives for many legal and operational areas. In addition, all of our partners are asked to explain the steps they have personally taken to support D&I on an annual basis.

Consistent leadership commitment is key to our D&I success.

Evaluating our progress

We use internal and external data to drive our D&I progress to ensure we become an employer of choice for diverse talent at all levels, respecting any national restrictions on data collection. We see the effective use of data as key to ensuring that our focus is on point, and our activities are having an impact. We believe that reporting on our progress is crucial to delivering our objectives and building trust with our clients, our people and the communities in which we are based.

While everyone is responsible for D&I, we will use internal and external surveys to identify and celebrate where a person or team has had a direct and tangible impact on our progress.

We recognize that what gets measured gets done.

Balancing global and local

Our work crosses innumerable borders, and our client base is comprised of businesses operating in multiple jurisdictions. As a global business, it is important we have a global perspective regarding D&I. We aim to maximize the strengths of being a global firm through collaboration in our D&I activities. At the same time, we must have the awareness and agility to respect the cultural and societal differences at a local level.

We recognize that one size doesn't fit all.

Recruiting diverse talent

We aim to be an employer of choice for a broad range of candidates, and we want the best possible talent at all levels in our firm. Whether it's bringing in new people from outside, or promoting from within, we seek to ensure diverse and inclusive recruitment through activities such as showcasing diversity, contextualized recruitment, strength-based interviewing, diverse interview and promotion panels and promoting flexible and agile working practices.

Awareness and career support

It is essential that all of our people at each stage in their career and in all areas of our business have access to career development planning that enables them to fulfill their potential. At Eversheds Sutherland, we have development programs tailored to the needs of our people at all stages of their career, including some programs directly related to D&I.

We recognize the support that may be needed by one person (or group of individuals) may be different to that required by another and that the support required may differ at various stages throughout a career. We do not make assumptions about a person's career aspirations based on their personal circumstances, nor assume that potential comes in one particular form.

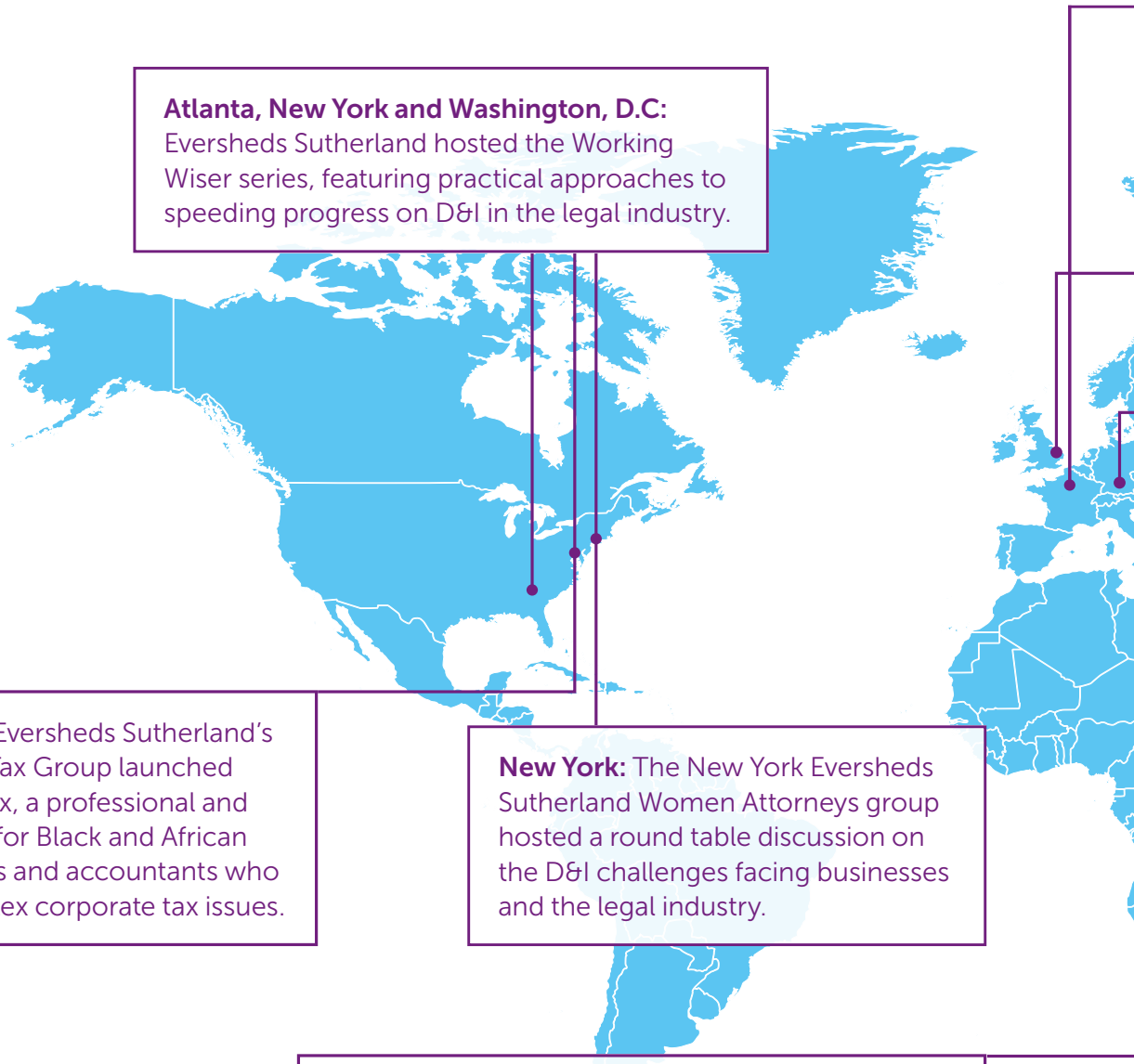
We maintain an open dialogue with all our people.

Clients and collaboration

Our approach to D&I is collaborative. We work with our clients, our communities and across the legal sector, to share best practice and thought leadership, develop joint initiatives and further build relationships, so we are better able to meet current and future needs.

We seek opportunities to work and learn together.

Diversity and inclusion around the globe



Atlanta, New York and Washington, D.C: Eversheds Sutherland hosted the Working Wiser series, featuring practical approaches to speeding progress on D&I in the legal industry.

Washington, D.C: Eversheds Sutherland's Washington, D.C. Tax Group launched Black Leaders in Tax, a professional and networking group for Black and African American attorneys and accountants who specialize in complex corporate tax issues.

New York: The New York Eversheds Sutherland Women Attorneys group hosted a round table discussion on the D&I challenges facing businesses and the legal industry.

Abu Dhabi and Dubai: Eversheds Sutherland volunteers participated in projects such as painting parts of the Modern Alternative Education School, which provides high-quality education to special needs students and passionately believes in the message of inclusion for those with disabilities.

Paris: Signatory to the Charte de la Diversité. We support Club XXIème Siècle's programs, including the mentoring of culturally diverse young women in order to break their double glass ceiling.

UK: Across the UK, we have set targets for gender and ethnicity. To support our activities, we work with specialist organizations, eg the 30% Club, and are signatories to the Women in Law pledge and the Race at Work Charter. In 2020 we will voluntarily publish our UK ethnicity pay data alongside our annual gender pay report.

Munich: Signatory to the Charta der Vielfalt, a corporate initiative to promote diversity in companies and institutions.

Hong Kong: The Hong Kong office achieved Gold Standard in the 2019 Hong Kong LGBT+ Inclusion Index, organized by not-for-profit organization Community Business, similar to the Stonewall Employer Index in the UK. We were also recognized as one of the Top 3 LGBT+ Friendly Employers in the legal sector and part of the overall Top 10 LGBT+ Friendly Employers.

Singapore: The Eversheds Sutherland Harry Elias team successfully acted for a client in a landmark High Court case involving the first-reported contested adoption involving a gay man seeking to adopt his own biological child.

Our progress

We are proud of the progress our people have made towards embedding D&I and good practice across Eversheds Sutherland. Below are some examples of the organizations we are working with, and awards we have received.

Signatory to the German Diversity Charter since 2019

Signatory to the French Diversity Charter since 2008

Top 25 Best Law Firms for Diversity

A founding law firm to a 2019 collaboration to further D&I in the legal profession

Signatory to champion disability inclusion since 2019

Mansfield Rule 2.0 Certified Plus – Boosting Diversity in Leadership

Improved Hong Kong LGBT+ Inclusion award from Silver in 2017 to Gold in 2019

Signatory to the Diversity Charter Ireland since 2017

Best place to work for LGBT+ Equality for 9 years in a row

A top 50 Social Mobility Employer since the index began in 2017

Top 100 Employer for LGBT+ Equality 11 years in a row

Top 50 Employers for Women 13 years in a row

Gold ranking in D&I Index in 2016. Signatory to Women in Law pledge since 2019

Founding Member of the 30% Club since 2011

Recertified in 2018 as a Gold Standard Firm

Certified as a Disability Confident Employer since 2016

Signatory since 2018

Minority Corporate Counsel Association Innovator Award 2017

Black Asian Minority Ethnic Gold Awards 2016. Champion partner of race equality campaign since 2019.

Signatory to the Time to Change Employer Pledge since 2018

Our activities

Our activities reflect a balance between global and local, and we respect that different countries are at different stages in their D&I journey. Below are examples of activities from across Eversheds Sutherland's worldwide offices focusing on those which are global, or multi-country, or are key events for a country.

Affinity groups and employee networks

Over 1,000 of our people globally are actively involved in networks and affinity groups generating high levels of engagement across the business in many countries. Our network groups, based across Eversheds Sutherland International, include Gender, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (LGBT+), Disability and Wellbeing, Ethnicity and Faith. Our affinity groups, based in Eversheds Sutherland US, embrace LGBT+ Attorneys, Women Attorneys and several groups that help create internal professional communities for employees from various racial and ethnic backgrounds, including Hispanic, Asian, Black, and Middle Eastern/ North African.

Gender

We are committed to greater representation of women at all levels. Our global Development Plus program was launched in 2018 with 130 participants from the UK, Ireland, France, Germany, Middle East, Asia and the US. We have targets for female partner representation across Eversheds Sutherland.

In 2018, we developed our US Women's Leadership Initiative which features best practices to maximize business opportunities, programs that charter the path to internal leadership opportunities and the development of strategic alliances designed to ensure the retention and promotion of women attorneys.

We have undertaken coordinated activities across our global offices in recognition of International Women's Day.

We are a supporter of sector-specific gender activities in many countries, and we support and host many external women's networks around the globe.

Recognition of our people globally has included the 2019 HERoes Women Role Model List where our Co-CEO Lee Ranson was identified as an Advocate Executive, and Diane Gilhooley, Global Head of Employment Labor and Pensions was nominated as a Woman Executive.

Sexual orientation and gender identity

Recently the firm participated in the global recognition of International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT) by launching a social media campaign featuring over 100 commitment statements from our people across France, Germany, Hong Kong, Ireland, Luxembourg, and the UK and US.

In 2019 we were rated 100% in the HRC Corporate Equality Index (USA), ranked 66th in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index (UK) with our LGBT+ network being Highly Commended, and achieved Gold Standard in the 2019 Hong Kong LGBT+ Inclusion Index. In France, we are a signatory to Autre Cercle's LGBT+ charter, an organization with whom we have a pro-bono partnership; their project is to create lists of French LGBT+ Role Models and Allies.

We have supported Pride marches across the world including Atlanta, Birmingham, Cardiff, Dublin, Leeds, London, Manchester and New York, as well as Pink Dot in Hong Kong.

Recognition of our people globally has included our Co-CEO Lee Ranson as OUTstanding Executive LGBT+ Ally in 2018, and Irish Litigation partner Aisling Gannon for the same award in 2019. Litigation partner Rachel Shek was named as a finalist for the 2019 Hong Kong LGBT+ Executive Sponsor award.

Dublin Pride 2018

Social mobility and pipeline programs

Our commitment to addressing issues of social mobility and developing a pipeline of diverse talent is a global effort.

We've been running our award-winning UK Unlocked program for over ten years and our award-winning US Scholars program for nearly 15 years. Unlocked has given over 1,000 state-educated students access to coaching, work experience as well as financial support through our charitable trust bursary scheme. Over 100 partners have provided mentoring to students.

Eversheds Sutherland Scholars is an intensive, three-week, 40-hour summer program for recent college graduates and rising college seniors from a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds, focusing on students from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). The program is designed to ensure the success of minority students in law school by exposing them to everything they will need to be successful. Guest instructors and panelists have included general counsel from Fortune 100 companies, presiding judges, and university deans and law professors. To date, more than 400 students have graduated from the program and have gone on to attend prestigious law schools. In 2018, Eversheds Sutherland announced its partnership with a client to co-host its Scholars program in the Atlanta office.

To drive our commitment for greater social mobility we were one of the original founding members of PRIME in 2011, the UK sector-led response to improving access to the profession.

Disability and wellbeing

We are a signatory to the Valuable 500 global campaign to champion disability inclusion, and participate in the #PurpleLightUp global campaign to raise disability awareness.

We have identified a number of globally recognized dates to focus our activities on, for example, the UN's International Day of Persons with Disabilities, and World Mental Health Day.

Our International wellbeing strategy, launched in 2018, focuses on physical health, mental health and sustainable high performance. We recognize that priorities differ around the world and within the framework of our overall strategy we encourage and support local initiatives.

In addition to our internal activities, we are working across the legal profession and with clients on a number of initiatives, including the Mindful Business Charter.

Ethnicity

We are committed to greater representation of people of color, and those from different ethnicities and races. We have ethnicity employee networks and affinity groups which are open to all of our people globally.

Across our locations, we seek opportunities to work on these themes with our clients, for example, the UK's 2018 and 2019 innovative work program for undergraduate university students, and Washington, D.C's Black Leaders in Tax professional networking group; with our communities, for example, our Paris office's support for Club XXIème Siècle's program to mentor culturally diverse young women in order to break their double glass ceiling; with specialist organizations; and across the legal profession.

As aspirations to increase D&I of people of color and those from different ethnicities and races do not translate easily into global level programs, many of our initiatives are focused at a country level. For example, we have representation targets and long-running social mobility programs (Unlocked and Eversheds Sutherland Scholars – detailed above) within our two largest locations.

Targets and data

Our D&I targets and demographic summary data are focused at the local and global level. This is to ensure we comply with the restrictions some countries place on data collection, and to ensure we are reflecting local priorities while having a strategic global view.

For example, our target of 10% Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) partners by 2025 applies within the UK. The US has a 15% target for diverse partners – including racial and ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+, lawyers with disabilities and veterans – by 2025. In our International offices we have a target of 30% female partners by 2021.

Please speak with your local contact for more detail.

Ramadan Sharing Fridge Dubai 2019

What our people are saying

It really can change lives – it did for me.

I want to live in a world where all people are accepted without exception.

We are all human whatever our make-up or background.

The confidence I needed and pride in who I am, to no longer have any hesitation in being open with colleagues and clients alike.

It's important to integrate, and work with people from different backgrounds.

To me it doesn't matter what someone looks like, it's all about being inclusive. As long as the person shows kindness, caring, compassion, then to me it doesn't matter.

Our contacts

If you would like to learn more about our D&I approach, please contact our global team:

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