

## ERCS Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Commitment

### August 2026

#### Statement aims

The aim of this statement is to reflect ERCS's commitment to ensuring equity, diversity, and inclusion within all areas of our work.

This commitment applies to:

- how we deliver our work programmes to promote environmental justice
- how we create and sustain a fully accessible workplace culture
- how we recruit and support trustees, members and volunteers.

#### ERCS's purpose, mission and values

##### Our Vision

**Our vision is of a Scotland where every person's right to a healthy environment is respected, protected and fulfilled.**

Our [Strategy 2026 – 2029](#) sets out our strategic aims, priorities and actions, and takes a human-rights-based approach by promoting the five PANEL principles: participation, accountability, non-discrimination and equality, empowerment and legality.

##### Our purpose and role

There is a clear unmet need within communities and civil society relating to the understanding of legal rights and remedies in environmental matters. At the same time, the environment has no voice in the Scottish courts and relies on individuals, communities and environmental non-governmental organisations (eNGOs) to be that voice.

Our purpose is to increase the capacity and opportunity of individuals, groups and organisations to challenge environmental injustice at neighbourhood, local authority and national levels.

Environmental justice is about ensuring a fair distribution of environmental benefits and burdens. It acknowledges that marginalised groups and communities are more exposed to environmental burdens (such as pollution, proximity to landfill and the impacts of climate change) and have fewer environmental benefits (such as accessible and nature-rich greenspace). It also recognises that these groups are least responsible for contributing to environmental damage on local and global scales. Yet, they have less resources and opportunities to challenge harmful practices and protect the environment now, and for future generations.



ERCS promotes environmental justice in two ways:

1. **Substantive:** by using the law to improve environmental protection and restoration and securing the highest standards for a clean, healthy and sustainable environment for everyone.
2. **Procedural:** by working for equitable participation in environmental decision-making, recognition of robust and enforceable environmental rights, and for fair, equitable, timely and affordable access to legal remedies.

## Our mission: what we do

ERCS is the only organisation in Scotland that provides free legal expertise in public interest environmental law. Our mission is to assist everyone, especially people who face the biggest barriers, to exercise their rights in environmental law and to protect the environment. We do this through:

1. **Rights awareness and outreach** to support equitable participation in decision-making.
2. **Free legal advice and representation** to hold public authorities and polluters to account and increase access to justice.
3. **Strategic / public interest litigation** to strengthen the rule of law.
4. **Advocacy in policy and law reform** to improve environmental law.

We cover law relating to land-use planning, climate change, pollution control, environmental health, the conservation of biodiversity, and any other field (e.g. cultural heritage, transport, energy) to the extent that it impacts on the natural environment and the right to live in a healthy environment.

## Our values: principles we work within

- Open, accessible and approachable in how we offer our services.
- Respectful, collaborative and enabling in how we deliver our services.
- Evidence-based and assertive in how we advocate for policy and law reform.
- Trusted and authoritative in how we pursue environmental rights and litigation.
- Transparent in how we evaluate our impacts and improve our overall effectiveness.



# Workplace culture and recruitment

## Workplace culture

Inclusion is one of ERCS's key commitments, to which anyone working for or with ERCS<sup>1</sup> is expected to give their support. We enable everyone to participate equally and ERCS is committed to creating and sustaining a fully accessible workplace culture.

ERCS has an Equity Diversity and Inclusion Policy which applies to all aspects of ERCS's work, including the selection and recruitment of staff, interns, volunteers, ERCS's trustees and members and any activities, events or communications of ERCS.

## Equity and non-discrimination

It is the policy of ERCS to provide equal opportunities and ensure that no employees, job applicants, interns, volunteers, contractors, trustees, members and our partners are unlawfully directly or indirectly discriminated against on the basis of their age, disability, gender identity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity.<sup>2</sup> In terms of our organisation we will also consider other forms of discrimination and disadvantage such as social class, poverty, Care Experienced people, carers and refugees and asylum seekers.

Furthermore, ERCS will ensure that no requirement or condition will be imposed without justification which could unfairly disadvantage individuals purely on any of the above grounds.

In order to create conditions in which this goal can be realised, ERCS is committed to identifying and eliminating unlawful discriminatory policies, practices, procedures and attitudes. ERCS expects everyone working with or for the organisation to support this commitment and to assist in its realisation in all possible ways.

## Staff Recruitment

ERCS has a recruitment policy which recognises that the achievement of its goals is dependent on the recruitment and retention of a skilled, committed and well supported workforce. We aim to ensure that we attract and appoint applicants with the right skills, knowledge and experience to meet the needs of our vacancies. We ensure that we appoint on the basis of merit and without discrimination.

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<sup>1</sup> This refers to everyone employed by or representing ERCS. It includes but is not limited to paid staff, interns, volunteers, trustees, and other representatives.

<sup>2</sup> This list has been adapted from protected characteristics as outlined the Equality Act (2010). In order to be more inclusive, we use the term 'gender identity' rather than 'gender reassignment'.



Advertisements for recruitment will encourage applications from people who are Black or from minority ethnic communities, disabled people and people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds as they are underrepresented in the sector.

ERCS is a [Disability Confident Committed employer](#) to demonstrate our commitment to welcoming disabled applicants for all roles. We commit to making reasonable adjustments during the recruitment process so disabled job applicants have the best opportunity to demonstrate that they can do the job. We also commit to supporting employees and making adjustments during employment.

## Trustees, members and supporters

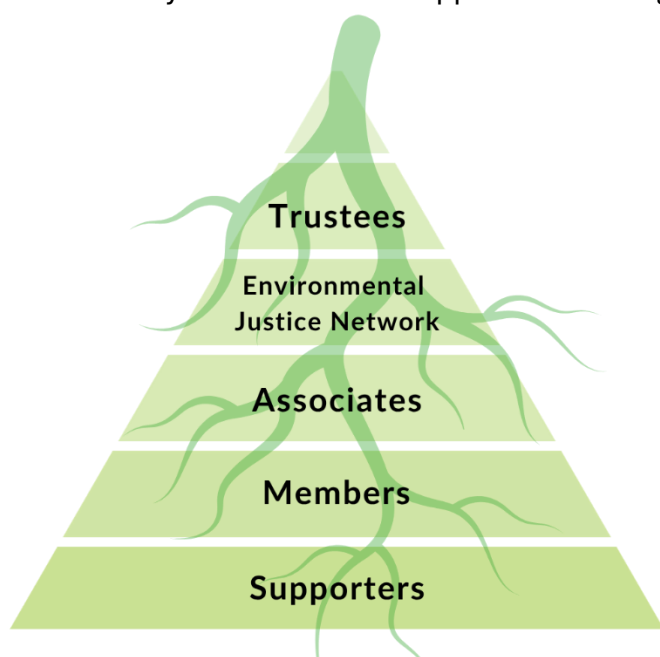
### Trustees

The AGM is an opportunity to appoint new trustees to the Board. The role of trustees is to provide effective governance for ERCS and be responsible for ensuring that the charity works to achieve its charitable purposes.

The Board seeks to achieve a gender balance and represent the diversity of Scottish society and encourages applications from people of all backgrounds including disabled, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) candidates as they are currently underrepresented in the sector.

### Membership & supporters

ERCS has a two-tier Constitution which means that it is membership-led by the Board of Trustees. The Membership & Supporters Pyramid - *ERCS's roots: our supporters*, outlines the different ways members and supporters can engage with ERCS and support our vision.



### ERCS's roots: our supporters



## Supporters

Supporters are the largest group, and they contribute to our shared vision by keeping up to date with ERCS's work, attending events and responding to our calls to action.

**Join:** If you are interested in how we can use law to defend the environment, join us as a supporter and encourage others to do so by [signing up to our mailing list](#).

## Members

Our formal members proactively support [our vision and work](#) by raising awareness of ERCS's work. Members have important powers under [our Constitution](#) including who governs ERCS by electing our trustees.

**Join:** Anyone living in Scotland and over 16 can [apply to be a member](#) for free and applications are approved by trustees. Find [more information about our membership](#).

## Associates

Associates are members who are invited to offer their experience and expertise to support ERCS's work programmes, acting as 'critical friends' and extending our connections across civil society and policy sectors.

**Join:** Associates are nominated and elected by our Trustees. [See our current associates](#).

## Environmental Justice Network (EJN)

The [Environmental Justice Network](#) are a peer network of community campaigners. The network shares knowledge and experiences from their campaigns and supports ERCS to identify gaps in the enforcement of environmental regulations, raise awareness of the barriers to environmental justice and campaign for reforms.

**Join:** Membership is open to clients of ERCS's Law Service and rights awareness work and are approved by the Network.

## Trustees

ERCS's Board of Trustees is the smallest group of our membership with the most responsibilities. It is made of up to 12 members who provide effective governance for ERCS and are responsible for ensuring the organisation works to achieve its charitable purposes and mission and adheres to our [Constitution](#).

**Join:** Find out more about what the role involves in our [trustee recruitment pack](#). Trustees are elected by our members at the Annual General Meeting.