

colt

# DEI Progress Report 2024





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## Welcome

**We know people matter, including each other. That's why we are on a mission to empower Colties through our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) at Colt.**

We welcome diverse voices, backgrounds and perspectives with open arms, knowing that diversity of thought and experience makes us more innovative, creative and productive as a company. Our people - every one of you - are what truly set us apart.

I'm proud to share our **DEI Progress Report for 2024**, which highlights the impact of our recent programmes and initiatives that have supported us to become a more diverse, equitable and inclusive company. It also outlines the steps we've taken to enhance and embed an inclusive employee experience.

While I'm pleased with our progress which is set out in this report, I know there is more we can do to make everyone feel included and empowered at work. With every stride towards belonging and inclusion for all, together we are creating a stronger Colt for the future.

**Keri Gilder, CEO**



# Summary and insights

**Delivering on our Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) ambition needs a long-term, strategic approach. In 2024, we gained momentum and made progress. This was made possible through the commitment and collaboration of our Colties. Here are some highlights:**

## Driving belonging

Achieved a belonging score of **81** and an overall inclusion score of **84** in our People Matters survey. We will continue to build on this.

## Inclusive programming

Successfully hosted an Inclusive Leadership programme attended by over **200** managers, promoting awareness and practical strategies for inclusivity. We also launched our Neuroinclusion Programme to help raise awareness and provide guidance for employees and managers.

## Community engagement

Partnered with numerous organisations to support marginalised communities, in particular [Kids.org](#) and [Pure India Trust](#). We also helped to facilitate our most accessible bike ride ever.

## Employee-led change

Expanded the reach of our employee networks, creating safe spaces for connection and advocacy. This helped to raise **€42,000** for charities that support people with disabilities.

We consult with our networks on a range of activity that impacts our people. **1300** colleagues are now part of an employee network and **460** people have signed up to our newest network for early in career Colties, Next@Colt.

## Connection and allyship.

**400** employees joined one of our allyship events and **98%** said they would recommend a session to a colleague. **88%** of people surveyed believe that it contributed to a more inclusive workplace.

**2024 was a successful year. Let's work together to make 2025 even better.**

Brussels

Frankfurt

# DEI journey so far

Our Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) journey began in 2017 and for the last seven years, we have taken steps to build a more inclusive organisation.

Our efforts have produced some significant highlights. Here you can see some of those highlights and our plans for 2025.

2017-2018	2019-2020	2021-2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>Laying foundations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>First UK Gender Pay Gap report in the UK and initial action plan launched</li><li>Colt's first employee network, Network 25 launched (now called Women+@Colt)</li><li>Introduced Best Brave Self, development programme</li><li>Joined TechSheCan and other initiatives centred on attracting young people into tech.</li></ul>	<b>Strategic Intent</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>First Global Diversity, Equity &amp; Inclusion strategy in place</li><li>Held a Diversity Day focused on ensuring everyone understood the approach</li><li>All leaders completed Inspiring Inclusion development module</li><li>Launched a range of global policies linked to inclusion</li><li>Launched Pride Matters, Disability Accessibility Network (DAN) and YOUnited, our race &amp; cultural awareness network.</li></ul>	<b>Setting a baseline</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Launched portal within HR system to capture diversity data</li><li>Introduced targets for women in senior roles</li><li>Introduced Conscious Inclusion concept and mandatory e-learning</li><li>Expanded Employee Networks globally</li><li>Implemented changes to make recruitment more Inclusive including training for hiring managers</li><li>Launched our Menopause guidelines and awareness campaign.</li></ul>	<b>Driving change</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Inclusion embedded into Colt's Employee Value Proposition</li><li>Explored Allyship behaviours through our Allyship in Action, programme</li><li>Launched our Optimising Accessibility roadmap</li><li>Took part in external neurodiversity research</li><li>Achieved Menopause Friendly Accreditation and Stonewall Gold, UK</li><li>Next@Colt network in place for early in career colleagues.</li></ul>	<b>Increased focus</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>DEI Centre of Excellence (our DEI steerco) in place</li><li>Set target to achieve 38% women by 2030</li><li>Agreed Digital accessibility principles and launched accessibility guidance on <a href="http://www.colt.net">www.colt.net</a></li><li>Inclusive Employers Bronze award achieved</li><li>Launched tech re-skilling programme and strengthened focus on gender balance in tech</li><li>Introduced Brave Spaces for male allies.</li></ul>	<b>Embedding</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Greater focus on inclusion by design</li><li>Behavioural nudges to embed inclusion into everyday activity</li><li>Culture &amp; Inclusion champions in place globally</li><li>Further embed accessibility into programme lifecycle</li><li>Strengthen &amp; expand our Neuroinclusion programme</li><li>Explore AI tools to further embed inclusion</li><li>Research impact of AI on gender balance in tech.</li></ul>

## Our DEI ambition

**Our ambition for our organisation is to create a place where everyone feels included.**

We want to bring individuals together and celebrate their uniqueness whilst building a culture, a community and a sense of belonging. Here is our DEI strategy, including our strategic areas on the right. The next few pages explore some of the programmes delivered under these key areas.

### Vision

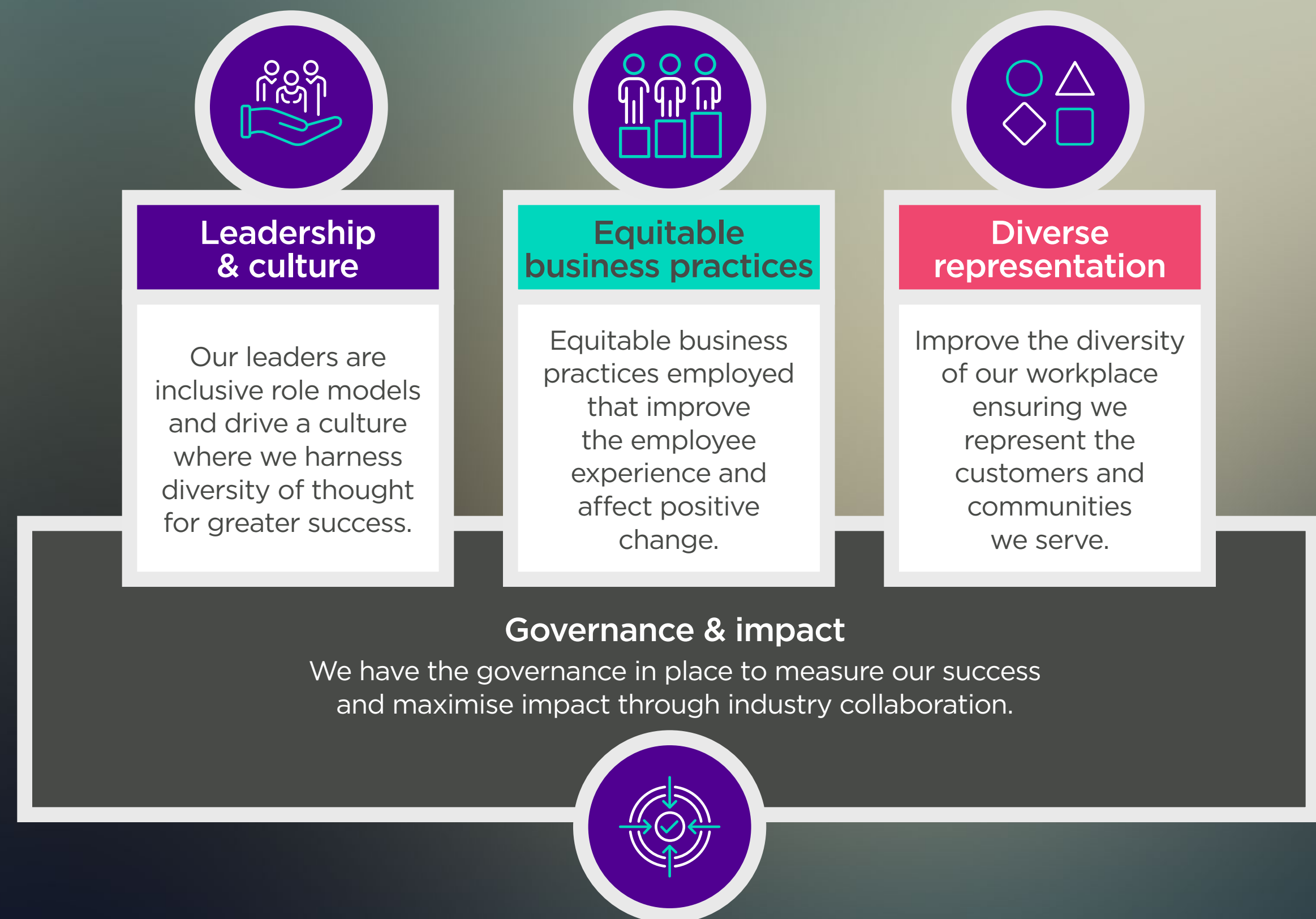
To attract and develop the best and brightest from all walks of life and create an environment where everyone can make their mark.

### Mission

Drive an inclusive culture and cultivate a sense of belonging for our Colties.

### 2030 goal

To be the most inclusive Telco.



## Focus on: leadership and culture

**This strategic area focuses on our inclusive culture, ensuring that it is one that thrives on diversity. Our leaders play a central role in building this culture and leading in an inclusive way. However, everyone plays a part in being inclusive and this is where allyship comes in. The work of our fantastic employee networks also contributes to a culture of inclusion and belonging.**

### Inclusive leadership programme

**In 2024, we decided to launch an updated Inclusive Leadership Programme focusing specifically on people managers and tailored to address individual teams and cultural challenges. We piloted this programme in India.**

Kicking off in August, we started with the leadership team who all made clear personal commitments. They attended a full day session covering topics such as self-awareness, inclusive decision making and supporting diverse teams.

By the end of 2024, nearly 200 managers had attended the sessions with around 50% of these continuing their journey by attending additional coaching circles.

This feedback has provided reassurance that we are making positive impacts on our DEI journey.

### Allyship in action

**Colt's allyship initiative is one of our key programmes focused on building a culture where everyone belongs and feels supported. Allyship includes speaking up for others, using inclusive language and ensuring all voices are heard.**

We launched our Allies programme in 2023, aimed at bringing allyship behaviours to life. We launched our Allyship Charter, where we asked colleagues to choose one of eight allyship behaviours and pledge to practice this behaviour as part of their development.

Now over 500 Colt colleagues have taken the pledge and many have shared their learning journey with us in our Allies in Action blog series. [Read more about the allyship work later in this report.](#)

“All people managers should attend this training.”

“It was a very interactive session, learning truly shaping our personality.”

“The most important learning is to understand the importance of the role we have to play in ensuring that inclusion and diversity is embedded.”

## Focus on: diverse representation

**This area centres on ensuring we represent the customers and communities we serve. Representation of women is a key measure for us and there are specific measures in place as part of our Gender Action Plan. However, we want to attract and retain the best and brightest talent from all walks of life.**

Our work in this area is underpinned by creating ways to make our people processes inclusive for people of all backgrounds. Meanwhile, we continue to gather baseline data for all demographic groups so we can better support people from a wider range of backgrounds and experiences, through our diversity data sharing initiative.

[\(see Focus On: Governance & Impact\).](#)

Here are some of the things we've done in 2024:

### **Inclusive recruitment is a foundation of our diverse representation work**

This programme focuses on removing barriers within our hiring process to ensure we attract a broad range of candidates from diverse backgrounds. While ensuring job adverts are attractive to a wide range of applicants, we've also worked to make sure our recruitment process is fair and consistent to reduce the impact of bias and make it as inclusive as possible.

By analysing recruitment data, we have identified trends and barriers to inclusion. We've been able to make improvements that have led to better, fairer, more inclusive and balanced recruiting in 2024.

We have also launched inclusive recruitment e-learning for managers to complete before they conduct hiring activities.

### **Mark your mark!**

We revamped our Employee Value Proposition (EVP) to showcase our commitment to inclusivity. We are using our new EVP pillars to underpin a social media campaign highlighting women in tech with stories, [click here](#).

### **Aspire2Tech**

This is a focused initiative to drive better representation of women in our technical functions. The Aspire2Tech programme is designed to help women transition into technical roles or help to strengthen existing skills.

Launched with an initial cohort of 30, participants will go through a 6-9 month flexible learning intervention including taught modules, on-the-job skills development and mentoring circles.

Upon completion, participants will have enhanced technical skills and increased career opportunities within the company.



# Focus on: equitable business practices

Equitable business practices are also accessible ones. Accessibility refers to physical and digital spaces. This work has centred on making Colt a more accessible organisation for our colleagues and customers, through our accessibility roadmap, Optimising Accessibility. This was launched in May 2023 and we are now in the second year of a five year improvement plan.

## Year 1

The first year involved reviewing programmes, policies and practices to break down potential barriers for people with disabilities. A large part of our work involved laying the foundations and early building blocks, so we had a sound base to build on. This involved having a strong focus on Awareness & Skills to build employee advocacy.

- Developed **Digital Accessibility Principles** in collaboration with our Digital Information Office
- Developed internal **champions** and ran two high profile engagement campaigns
- We carried out a training needs analysis which resulted in over 500 upskilling / **training opportunities**
- Alongside the quick wins, we put in longer term plans to make accessibility improvements to our **high-profile sites and portals**
- Launched accessible **recognition platform and built accessibility into our new intranet design**
- Reviewed our **onboarding content** for accessibility and made improvements
- Devised guidance for our Workplace Services team to ensure our offices are more **accessible for neurodivergent colleagues**.

## Year 2 (so far)

- **Devised accessibility guidance** for our developer community, Programme Management Office and product managers community. This was incorporated into our **accessibility portal** and launched this summer.
- We improved process to request **assistive tech tools such as screen readers, software to support neurodivergent colleagues and other tools, via our IT request system**.
- Launched a collaboration with IT team to raise awareness of tools in **Microsoft 365 and Windows 10 and 11, which will continue into 2025**.



## Focus on: governance & impact

**This focus area ensures we are data driven and have the right governance around our plans. It also sees us using external benchmarks to gain further insights and compare progress with our peers. We also collaborate with other organisations for greater success.**

Colt signed the UN Global Compact's Women Empowerment Principles (WEPs) in 2024, showcasing our support and commitment to gender equality in the workplace. Colt also joined the UN Global Compact Gender Accelerator, a nine-month programme to help in setting and achieving ambitious targets for women's representation. While we already had targets in place, the programme helped us to benchmark against a best practice framework and we are incorporating the learning into our Gender Action Plan.

### Did you know?

Colt achieved bronze on the Inclusive Employers Standard this year. This prestigious accreditation reflects our commitment to fostering an inclusive workplace.



**We are proud of the positive feedback we received, especially in areas like:**

- Embedding inclusion in our corporate strategy
- Proactively engaging employees through various initiatives
- Strong leadership and sponsorship framework
- Robust inclusion and diversity policies
- Positive impact of our employee networks

This achievement energises us to continue enhancing our culture of belonging and making a positive impact within our organisation and the wider industry.

### Count Me In campaign

Small things can make a big difference, which is why we've been asking our people to share their diversity data.

We want to make sure that Colt is a great place to work for everyone, regardless of race, ethnicity, disability status, age, sexual orientation or expression, background, or gender. Taking part is voluntary and the data is anonymous.

By gathering this information, it will help us understand how far we have come on our journey in attracting and retaining fantastic talent from all backgrounds and walks of life. We will also use this data to identify what more needs to be done. Having this data means we will be better placed to promote equal opportunities for all.

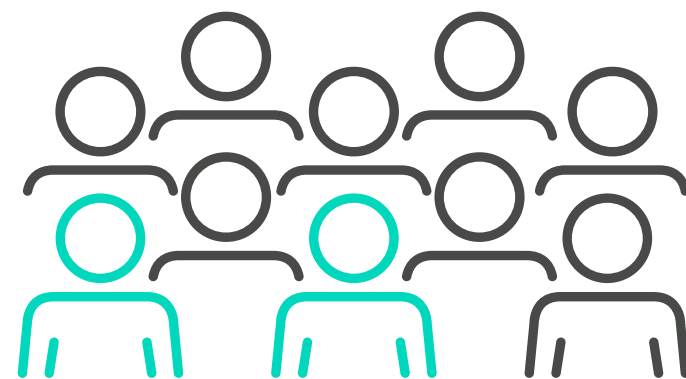


# Building neuroinclusion

**Neurodiversity is a critical element of DEI and by embracing and investing in neurodiversity, we are enhancing inclusivity and diversity and enriching our culture. Inclusivity is at the heart of our core values and over the past year, we've stepped up our focus on how we can better support our neurodivergent colleagues.**

In addition to contributing to the [#ChangeTheFace](#) research study on neurodiversity, we have made strides in raising awareness about it. This includes producing a suite of resources available for employees including a guide for managers on how to support neurodivergent team members.

## Did you know?



**Between 15% and 20% of the population is neurodivergent?**

We also developed guidance to make sure that our physical and digital spaces are accessible, including for those who are neurodivergent. This includes office spaces, our website and our apps. By investing in neurodiversity as an organisation and providing appropriate adjustments, we have created a more supportive work environment.

**Here are some of the measures we have implemented over the past year to increase neurodiversity awareness.**

- **We published neurodiversity toolkits:** One guide for Colties who want to seek further information and one guide for managers who want to know more about how to support their neurodivergent colleagues
- **We trained our people and culture function** on how to recruit and support neurodivergent employees and ensure a best practice approach to making adjustments
- **We collaborated with Uptimize** to host fireside chats, educating our people further on neurodiversity and fostering better understanding
- **We've added more items to our assistive technology catalogue** that support our neurodivergent colleagues such as tools to help with writing and focus
- **We're looking at how we can use AI tools** to support those who are neurodivergent such as Microsoft Copilot

We have made good progress over the last year with activities under our four DEI areas, but we know there is always more to do. Going forward, we will continue to find ways to provide greater sensitivity to individual needs so that everyone can thrive.



# Allyship deepdive

**Allies play a pivotal role in the pursuit of gender equity and inclusion. Research shows that when men are involved in gender inclusion programs, 96% of women in those organisations perceive real progress in gender equality, compared to only 30% in organisations where men are not engaged.**

In April, we launched a series of events to engage and inspire our allyship community and in particular connect with more men in the organisation. We started off by launching some listening circles, asking the men in Colt to discuss what might be holding them back from leaning into conversations on inclusion. We built our series based on this feedback, for instance our webinar, “Help I don’t know what to say” focused on inclusive language by creating a safe space for people to share their concerns and discuss with the group how to manage some everyday inclusion conversations.

Over 400 people came along to one of the events in our series and out of these 98% would recommend the event to a friend. Overall, 88% of participants to our survey felt that the programme led to a more inclusive workplace.

**In our [Allies in Action](#) blog series, we hear from some of our allies as they share their experiences.**

“I remember walking into one of Colt’s Women@Tech events as an executive sponsor and the feeling of being the only male in the room. It made me realise what it must feel like to be in a minority, not to be part of the majority clique. There was an unease, a vulnerability about it. Being an ally made me realise just how serious the gender disparities are in our industry.”

**Ian Cunningham, VP Enterprise Sales**



“Mentoring non-binary Gen-Z and seeing their acceptance of all forms of human diversity, including gender fluidity, has further connected me with my own culture. In Hindu society, people of non-binary gender expression have played important roles for over 2000 years.”

**Hiranmayi Narayanan, Legal Counsel**



“Joining my Muslim colleagues to fast for Ramadan was far more educational than I thought it was going to be. I gained a whole new level of understanding and appreciation of what it must be like to share workspaces with colleagues who are not fasting while you are. It made me think of how much more respectful and supportive I could be to those who fast.”

**Mark Beckett, Programme Lead – Implementation Office**



# Spotlight on pride

Pride Matters in Tech (PMIT) is an initiative developed by DEI professionals & Pride Network leads in tech, founded by Colt Technology Services, working with representatives from our partner firms, customers and suppliers.

## Collaborating for greater impact

The group is a community that wants to drive LGBTQ+ inclusion in the tech industry.

PMIT's strategy focuses on balancing internal community-building with sharing best practice.

This dual-purpose approach ensures that members receive meaningful support, networking and development and the ability to co-create and share tangible resources within their organisations.

Over the next three years, PMIT aims to position itself as a leading voice for LGBTQ+ inclusion within the tech industry. Objectives include expanding the community and establishing a comprehensive library of tools and resources.



## India entrepreneur initiative

Transgender people experience unique challenges around the world. These challenges are particularly hard to battle in India. Only 6% of transgender individuals are formally employed.

To help combat this, Colt, has **empowered 32** transgender individuals to transition from lives impacted by hardships. With our support these individuals have become entrepreneurs, starting their own businesses. Offering services as diverse as tailors, beauty salons, flower and vegetable stands and home-based food services, they have been able to create new lives for themselves.

Let's use this week to advocate for greater inclusion and support for transgender individuals in education and the workplace.

**#TransAwareness #PrideMatters.**



# Exploring embrace

**Our Embrace Your Best development programme is enabling women and allies to realise their personal and professional potential in the Technology sector.**

The programme was conceived with the primary aim of supporting women in the industry to achieve their goals through interactive development sessions and building community. It is delivered in collaboration with Women+@Colt, taking into account their members' feedback and building upon the successful Best Brave Self programme. However, everyone is welcome to join the sessions.

Since it's launched in 2021, an average of **100** people have attended one or all of the sessions. In 2024, **150** people took part in a blend of online workshops, self-directed activities, and facilitated discussions. These focus on identifying strengths, purpose discovery, and fostering courageous conversations.

A highlight is the opportunity to network with colleagues across the business and be part of a supportive community of learners.

Feedback from participants has been overwhelmingly positive, with **100%** recommending the programme. Ninety percent gained a deeper understanding of their strengths, and **93%** report applying what they learned in their daily work.

To find out more about the programme, which will run again in 2025, please contact [Inclusion@Colt.net](mailto:Inclusion@Colt.net).



# Events round up

## Black history month

Colt celebrated Black History Month in October by hosting several drop-in sessions. With the theme 'Reclaiming Narratives', the focus was on bringing attention to people's true stories, perspectives and history.

**B:M2025**  
DIG DEEPER, LOOK CLOSER, THINK BIGGER

One highlight was the webinar '**Empathy in the Workplace**' with **Shola Kaye**. Shola is a coach, TEDx speaker and inclusion consultant. The session featured practical steps to enhance empathy and inclusion, making the workplace supportive and welcoming for everyone.

In the UK, we welcomed **Tony Warner from Black History Talks** who used storytelling and video footage to take us on an interactive tour of London's Black History!

We also held a series of intimate, interactive sessions to talk about race and cultural awareness in the workforce. Listening to people's feedback and experiences is key to learning and the insights have been used to form an action plan to be delivered in 2025.

## Menopause reframed

Creating a culture where the menopause experience is understood and supported, is important to us.

Our Menopause awareness programme aims to reduce the stigma around menopause so we can discuss it openly. We held a series of events in 2024 with external wellness professional **Hayley White**, covering topics such as nutrition and sleep and the myths surrounding menopause. We also ensured our team of menopause champions gained accreditation to be able to better support colleagues.

**"Menopause is something we all need to understand, a subject we should all feel comfortable discussing at work. The more awareness we have, the better we can support our colleagues, friends, and family,"** said **Jenni Sach, Director Activation Marketing.**



## Leading with heart: a celebration of international men's day 2024

INTERNATIONAL  
**MENSDAY**

On International Men's Day, a group of our employees participated in **Masculinity in the Workplace 2024 - Leading with Heart**. This annual event aims to foster critical conversations about masculinity, leadership, and emotional intelligence in professional spaces.

As proud sponsors, our Colties were excited to support an agenda designed to challenge traditional notions of leadership while promoting inclusivity, empathy, and authentic connection in the workplace.

**Darren Burns**, Director of Diversity & Inclusion for The Timpson Group & Head of the Timpson Foundation, shared his personal journey in **"From Leading with Hurt to Leading with Heart."** Darren's story of growth and transformation offered a vulnerable and inspiring example of how addressing personal challenges can lead to stronger, more compassionate leadership.

## Events round up

### Equality in sports: Anne Wafula Strike MBE



On 3 December, we welcomed Anne Wafula Strike MBE, Olympian, motivational speaker and Commonwealth special envoy Champion for Equality in Sports to join us to share her insights.

Anne talked about growing up with a visible difference and her experiences being one of the first female wheelchair racers from Kenya to compete at the Paralympics in Athens.

The event was an opportunity to connect, discuss, and deepen our understanding of inclusivity and accessibility.

**International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD)** is a day that raises awareness and promotes action to foster an inclusive, accessible, and sustainable world for everyone.

### Sunflowers blooming in Japan

Following the launch of the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Scheme in London, Barcelona, Bangalore and Gurgaon, we launched this initiative in our Tokyo office in June 2024.

We know that some disabilities are hidden, meaning people may face disregard or disbelief of their disability and difficulty in accessing support. We don't want this to be the case at Colt. By wearing a sunflower lanyard or badge, individuals highlight that they have a non-visible disability/health condition, signalling the need for support or understanding, without having to explain what it is.



Keep a look out for sunflowers blooming in your local office, as we roll out the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Scheme globally.

If you have any questions or want more information, reach out to [AskDan@colt.net](mailto:AskDan@colt.net).

## Our partnerships

As a company, we firmly believe in creating an inclusive workplace for all. We have taken significant steps towards achieving this and we will continue to strive to be better and make Colt as welcoming as possible.

These memberships, awards and accreditations show we're on the right track and making progress towards our goal.



## What's coming up

**Following the acquisition of Lumen EMEA in 2023, inclusion is central to integrating. As we develop our extraordinary culture, we'll be working to ensure inclusion threads through our culture plans.**

- This includes supporting our leaders to drive inclusion within their teams and finding ways to embed inclusion into everyday activity for people managers.
- We will continue work with our Employee Networks and on our Allies in Action programme

We'll continue with our Gender action plan and diverse talent attraction, which includes expanding our Aspire2Tech reskilling programme and commissioning research on the DEI impact of AI in telco. We'll continue to embed inclusion into our recruitment practices to widen our talent pools.

We'll continue to measure our inclusion and belonging levels through our People Matters survey.

In order to be able to set targets to support other demographic groups, we will continue our drive to collect workplace demographic data. This is anonymous and voluntary for employees to take part, but we encourage our employees to share this data – which can't be tied back to an individual – so that we can track workforce trends.

Having a DEI strategy underpinned by data, with good governance & benchmarking against industry standards is important to us. We will continue to use the Inclusive Employers Standard, which we achieved Bronze in last year. We continue to work with the Environmental Social Governance (ESG) team on our non-financial reporting commitment and to get ready for legislative changes in the EU which impact our DEI strategy, such as the EU Pay Directive.

Another key focus will be to further embed our Optimising Accessibility Roadmap, focusing on both digital and physical accessibility. We will improve Workplace Adjustments for those with disabilities and ensure we expand our programme to support neurodivergent employees including support tools and manager training.



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