

**Anthony
Collins**

Governance 13.7



Certified



Corporation

Governance

What we said we would do

We set out to strengthen diversity, inclusion, and accountability across our business. Our goals included increasing female representation on the Board, publishing environmental targets, reporting stakeholder engagement results to the Board, embedding social and environmental performance in job descriptions, and maintaining our pledges to Women in Law, Race Fair Commitment, Halo Code, and Real Living Wage Employer.

What we've achieved over the last 12 months

We made significant progress on representation, including:

- Introducing Anna Dabek and Donna Holmes to the Board 2025, creating a more balanced demographic.
- Introducing diverse reverse mentoring, enabling senior leaders to learn from colleagues in junior roles and underrepresented backgrounds.
- Our ED&I strategy continued to gain momentum, with initiatives such as a Ramadan policy and external recognition through ED&I awards. Halo Code accreditation was confirmed, reinforcing our commitment to inclusion.
- We have broadened our internal events calendar to celebrate cultural moments and raise awareness. Highlights include an International Women's Day event with an external speaker, team participation in Birmingham Pride, internal celebrations of religious and cultural festivities, internal and external events for Black History Month in October and a partnership with a blood donation drive to support health equity.
- On governance, we completed the Great Place to Work (GPTW) survey in November 2024 and developed action plans for the firm, departments, and ED&I priorities.

What we're planning next

We set out ambitious goals last year and our progress reflects a strong foundation for future action. We will build on these achievements by finalising environmental reporting, integrating sustainability into job descriptions, and continuing to champion diversity and inclusion through measurable outcomes. These steps ensure we remain accountable to our pledges and committed to creating a workplace that reflects our values as a B Corp.



95%

of people feel Anthony Collins has made progress in equity, diversity and inclusion in the last year

Why ED&I is central to good governance

An interview with Christina Blacklaws, non executive director

Christina, why is representation so critical to governance in professional services?

Representation isn't just a moral imperative – it's a business one. When leadership reflects the diversity of the communities it serves, decision-making becomes more inclusive, more innovative, and ultimately more effective. In governance, representation ensures that different perspectives are heard, valued, and acted upon. That's how you build trust, accountability, and resilience.

You've led major initiatives around gender equity in law. What did you learn from that experience?

During my time as President of the Law Society of England and Wales, I led the Women in Leadership in Law project – the largest global research initiative of its kind. We engaged over 14,000 lawyers and uncovered systemic barriers that prevent women from reaching leadership roles. What stood out was the universality of these issues – across jurisdictions, cultures, and career stages. We distilled our findings into the Women in Law Pledge, which remains a powerful tool for organisations to drive change through transparency and accountability.

How does ED&I contribute to stronger governance frameworks, especially in the context of B Corp?

B Corp is about balancing profit with purpose, and governance is the backbone of that balance. ED&I strengthens governance by embedding fairness, integrity, and long-term thinking into leadership structures. It's about creating systems where diverse voices shape strategy, risk management, and culture. That's not just good governance – it's smart governance.

What practical steps can firms take to improve representation at the governance level?

Start with data – understand who's in your organisation and who's missing from decision-making roles. Then commit publicly to change. Appoint accountable champions, set measurable targets, and create inclusive pathways to leadership. Representation must be intentional. It doesn't happen by accident – it happens by design.

Christina, what does being part of a purpose-led law firm like AC mean to you?

I choose to work with AC because it's more than a law firm – it's a force for good. For AC, being purpose-led means using the law as a tool for justice, not just for transactions. It's about championing equity, access, and inclusion, both inside the firm and in the wider world. AC doesn't simply follow the rules; it strives to shape them for the better. That commitment to leadership and impact is exactly what drew me in – and what our profession and society need most.



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