



## **Abel & Cole's commitment to Anti-Racism – last updated on: 10<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

Here at Abel & Cole, a diverse, equal and inclusive culture is non-negotiable to us. We believe our workplace should be inclusive and positive; welcoming people with a diverse range of identities and backgrounds to feel comfortable bringing their whole selves to work, to have a sense of belonging, and to feel that their voices matter.

### **Where did we start?**

We introduced an Equality & Inclusivity Committee in September 2019, to hold open and honest conversations in a safe environment to improve equality, diversity and inclusion within Abel & Cole. From there, we introduced Champion roles: LGBTQ+, Race & Ethnicity, Physical & Mental Health, and Gender Equality / Women's Champions.

Next, we introduced an Anti-Racism Charter in July 2020, to be clear internally on our commitment to being an Anti-Racist organisation, making an active and conscious effort to improve our diversity. The action plan continues to help ensure this is embedded in every part of our activity as a business, and we regularly review and improve our plan. The plan consists of five key pillars to help people within and outside of the business.

- **Our Colleagues:** How can we educate and support our people to make sure we are connected on diversity, inclusion, culture and values?
- **Our Recruitment:** What improvements can we put in place to encourage a workforce that is diverse in its make-up and inclusive in its behaviour?
- **Our Content:** How will we make sure that our content is truly diverse and inclusive?
- **Our Charity Initiatives:** How will we support and advocate BAME charities?
- **Our Corner of Organic:** How can we make the world of organic a more diverse place?

### **One year on, and what have we achieved?**

- **Our Colleagues:**
  - We created two email addresses (Equality & Inclusivity and Directors) to encourage our colleagues to speak up, be heard, and share opinions to help challenge and shape business decisions.
  - We encouraged employees to share their gender pronouns and add these to their signature box.
  - Equality & Diversity training was undertaken by all employees, including our leadership team.
  - We established Equality & Inclusivity Champions to share information and knowledge on matters to all employees to promote inclusivity.
- **Our Recruitment:**
  - We evolved our recruitment procedures to help remove unconscious bias. We now request that all personal details (including education, home address and D.O.B) be removed from applications as part of the recruitment process, to support the company's commitment to diversity.
  - We work with recruitment agencies that hold similar values, and agree to support our commitments and efforts.

- **Our Content:**
  - We audited our recipe archive for non-inclusive language.
  - We made inclusive representation a key, ongoing objective for the Creative & Content team.
  - We prioritised inclusivity when working with external agencies on content production.
  
- **Our Charity Initiatives:**
  - We formed a charity partnership with Blueprint for All (formerly the Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust) who work with disadvantaged young people and communities to enable them to thrive, whilst driving systemic change in organisations and society.
  
- **Our Corner of Organic:**
  - Recognising that racial justice, land justice and climate justice, to name just a few pressing, social issues of our time, are all different sides of the same coin, we've reached out to organisations who are working to promote the solutions we need, such as the Ecological Land Cooperative and the Soil Association.
  - Considering only a small proportion of British farms are organic, sourcing with an aim to increase the diversity of our supplier base is a challenge. Our Responsible Supplier Programme, however, has a section on the proportion of our suppliers' workforces that come from underrepresented groups, so we can get a better picture of our supply chain. We're hoping to eventually use this information and work with our suppliers to better understand how inclusivity can benefit their operations and brands, and celebrate the diversity many of them have, perhaps unbeknownst to us, achieved so far.

### So much more to be done

Whilst we celebrate our achievements to date, we know there's so much more we can do, by reviewing and improving our Anti-Racism Charter. We continue to listen, learn and grow, and encourage our colleagues to listen, making Abel & Cole the inclusive company we want it to be, where colleagues feel they can bring their whole selves to work.



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