

The Neighbourhood

NEWSLETTER / ISSUE 8 / 2025



The Neighbourhood

HTA's equality, diversity & inclusion newsletter

Over the past year, we've continued to share and celebrate both personal and professional EDI experiences across HTA and with our wider network of industry partners and collaborators. We've strengthened long-standing relationships with schools such as Trinity High School in Manchester, Mossbourne Academy in Hackney, and the London School of Architecture.

We have done this through the delivery of our ongoing social value and outreach programmes. At the same time, we've built new connections with schools such as Drummond High in Scotland, The City Academy in Hackney, and The University of the West of England in Bristol.

This year, we have also developed many of our industry relationships. Our partnership with Beyond The Box CIC has grown in 2025, with HTA being a proud headline sponsor of the People's Pavilion. We were also delighted to collaborate with BTB on a talk about Co-Design for the London Festival of Architecture, host a design workshop in our office, and help with the physical build of the pavilion.

This 8th edition of The Neighbourhood, HTA's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion newsletter, highlights just some of the work from the past year, shaped by our evolving EDI Strategy.



Lucy Smith (Partner for Communications, Engagement & Interior Design), Stephanie Warner (People Team), Hussain Al-Khirsan (Senior Graphic Designer), Shawn Adams (Outreach Lead), and Daisy Moray (Events Coordinator) have been instrumental in leading, supporting, and producing this issue.

HTA remains committed to creating a safe, inclusive workplace where diverse voices and experiences drive success. We know that many communities are underrepresented in our industry, and we are dedicated to driving meaningful change both within our practice and across the built environment sector. Through our efforts, we seek to make a positive impact and inspire others both in and outside of the built environment industry.

We hope you enjoy reading this edition of The Neighbourhood and celebrating our EDI and social value highlights with us.

“Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) is about our shared humanity. If you care about humanity, then you will be consciously, intentionally, and actively kind and embracing of those who are familiar with oneself, and those who are not” – Stephanie Warner, Head of People & Inclusion

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Architecture LGBT+ Life Drawing

On April 25, we held another successful Life Drawing event for Architecture LGBT+ in our London studio. This was a great opportunity to sketch while speaking with other LGBTQIA+ people from the industry.

The evening fostered a warm, creative atmosphere that encouraged meaningful conversations and new connections among attendees.

Architect and organiser Mauro Mosca said that it was an enjoyable night and that everyone loved our office space.



Proud Leaders in Housing

This year, we hosted an event with HouseProud + Planning Out to celebrate Pride month. The evening highlighted Pride London's core values of visibility, unity, and equity, and explored how these values can thrive in the social housing sector.

During the event, a discussion panel featuring special guests took place. This panel included Patrick Franco, CEO of Notting Hill Genesis, Shahron Shah, CEO of Waltham Forest Housing Association, Andy Hulme, Group Chief Executive at Hyde Group, and Helen Randall, Chair of Trustees, Stonewall Housing.

Thank you to our sponsors at Wates and Savills for their generous support.



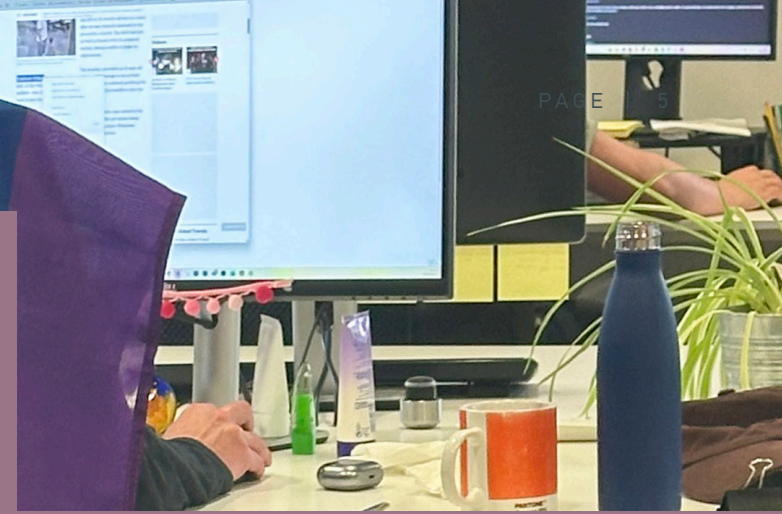
Pride Month

Pride Charity Breakfast

For Pride Month, we hosted a charity breakfast to raise money for Not A Phase. This trans-led, nationwide charity is dedicated to uplifting and improving the lives of trans+ adults. They do this through awareness campaigns, community projects, and by funding trans-led initiatives. For the charity breakfast, we served a delicious treat of cinnamon French toast topped with whipped cream or yogurt and fresh berries.

Pride Quiz

For the third year running, we held our Pride Pub Quiz across our offices in London, Bristol, Manchester, and Edinburgh. Hosted by our resident quizmaster, Hussain Al-Khirsan, this year's winners were the London team, who claimed the title from Manchester, who had held it for the past two years.



LGBTQ+ Champion in Architecture: Lucy Smith

We're incredibly proud to share that Partner, Lucy Smith, has been recognised by Architects' Journal as an LGBTQ+ Champion 2025.

Lucy has played a pivotal role in shaping HTA's approach to inclusivity. As the co-founder of our internal LGBTQ+ staff network, she has helped create a safe, supportive, and empowering space for open conversation, mutual respect, and community pride within the practice.

Her leadership also extends well beyond HTA. Lucy is a passionate advocate for inclusive practice across the wider architecture profession and dedicates time to mentoring the next generation of LGBTQ+ voices in the industry.



BLACC x Black History Month

For Black History Month in 2024, BLACC@HTA (Black African marked the month with food, craft, and knowledge sharing. A full programme was planned, offering something for everyone to enjoy and engage with.

This year's theme, 'Reclaiming Narratives', highlighted the importance of acknowledging Black history and culture. It focused on bringing untold stories, lived experiences, and historical truths to the forefront, correcting inaccuracies and celebrating the richness and success of Black heritage.

On 31st October 2024, we had a vibrant Charity Lunch + Fundraiser. The event brought colleagues together to enjoy an incredible spread of food, drinks, and music rooted in African and Caribbean traditions.

From the rich aromas of curry goat and jerk chicken to the comforting warmth of mac and cheese and spiced sorrel, every dish told a story of heritage, celebration, and resilience.

The food was wonderfully prepared by Sue Gerald and team, with contributions from Senior Associate Stephanie Warner's husband, Sam Warner. BLACC@HTA also curated a playlist made up of Black artists from across the globe

This year, BLACC@hta chose to support Cancer Black Care (CBC). This is a UK-based charity offering essential, culturally sensitive cancer support to Black and minority ethnic communities.

Together, we raised £430 through staff contributions, which was match-funded by HTA for a total donation of **£860**. This is an excellent result for a worthy cause.

Following the event, we were honoured to receive a heartfelt message from Paul Campbell, CEO of Cancer Black Care. He expressed his gratitude, saying:

“Your commitment to fostering understanding, respect, and allyship aligns with the values we hold dear at CBC. We're honoured to be part of your Black History Month celebrations through this contribution - Paul Campbell, CEO of Cancer Black Care



Paint + Sip | Ubunifu with Built By Us + Surface Matter

For Black History Month 2024, we proudly hosted Ubunifu in partnership with Built By Us, Danna Walker, and Surface Matter. Ubunifu is a Swahili word that embodies creativity, imagination, and innovation.

Held at HTA Design's London office, this vibrant evening brought together guests to celebrate and reflect on the power and beauty of Black artistry. Curated with the support of Surface Matter and Built By Us, the evening highlighted the creative resilience of people of colour. Through presentations, shared experiences, and art, we explored how creativity can challenge stereotypes, break boundaries, and reclaim space.

The evening concluded with a lively Paint & Sip session where guests could unleash their imagination and engage with the spirit of Ubunifu.



Makery Make Arican Lino Printing with Bianca Baidoo

As part of our Black History Month celebrations, architect Bianca Baidoo hosted an interactive creative workshop that offered staff a hands-on introduction to traditional African design. Participants explored the rich history and symbolism behind African patterns, learned the fundamentals of lino printing, and applied their new skills to create personalised tote bags.

“It was great to share Ghanaian culture with peers and see their interpretations of the Akan symbols and how they resonated with them - Bianca Baidoo, Architect at HTA





POC in Architecture Exhibition

This year, we were honoured to host POC in Architecture's summer exhibition, which marks the conclusion of their 4-month mentorship programme. This initiative offers students of Black and Mixed heritage the opportunity to be mentored by experienced architects and built environment professionals.

POC in Architecture is a Community Interest Company (CIC) dedicated to driving representation in architecture in the UK. Through mentorship, community, and meaningful support, they seek to empower the next wave of POC architects and designers

“The work of Savannah Williams and the rest of the POC in Architecture team is both inspiring and necessary. We are super proud to support the initiative and look forward to seeing what they go on to do next – Shawn Adams, Outreach Lead at HTA



Race Equality Week

In February, we took part in Race Equality Week 2025, a national initiative organised by Race Equality Matters to help address racial inequality in the workplace. This year's theme, #EveryActionCounts, highlighted how even small, intentional actions can lead to meaningful change.

As part of the week, we encouraged staff to take part in the 5-Day Challenge, which is a series of short, daily exercises designed to prompt self-reflection and inspire positive action. The Challenge encouraged thoughtful engagement around behaviours and assumptions. Staff were invited to make a 'Big Promise' at the end of the week – a personal commitment to continue driving change.

Keeping that spirit going, we encouraged staff to revisit the #MyNameIs campaign, recognising the importance of correct name pronunciation and inclusive communication.

Wear Red Day

This year, we once again took part in Wear Red Day, helping to raise money for Show Racism the Red Card. SRtRC is the UK's leading anti-racism education charity. The charity works to challenge racism by empowering role models in communities, organisations, and sports to dismantle racism in society.



RaceEqualityMatters.com



#EveryActionCounts



Refugee Week

At HTA, we marked our first-ever recognition of Refugee Week, embracing it in the spirit of allyship and solidarity. On Tuesday, 17th June, Head of People & Inclusion, Stephanie Warner hosted an informal lunchtime screening of short films that explored the refugee experience, giving voice to stories that are often unheard and offering us the opportunity to listen, reflect, and connect. Refugee Week is a national initiative that celebrates the resilience, creativity, and contributions of refugees and people seeking sanctuary.



COMMUNITY
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SUPERPOWER

16-22 June 2025

Neurodiversity Celebration Week

HTA marked Neurodiversity Celebration Week (17th – 23rd March 2025) by raising the awareness of the incredible strengths and contributions of neurodivergent individuals both within and outside HTA Design.

HTA is committed to creating a workplace that recognises and values the strengths of every individual. We are proud to have neurodivergent talent amongst us, and we want to actively work to ensure everyone feels supported and empowered to thrive.

We were also pleased to share the launch of the Architects' Mental Wellbeing Forum (AMWF) Neurodiversity Toolkit, an excellent resource for the industry. HTA will be reviewing the document to help guide our ED&I Strategy, action planning, and workplace policies.



National Apprenticeship Week

For National Apprenticeship Week, we're proud to celebrate our apprentices Sia Musa, George Beer, and Yeni Ope-Ewe.

Sia began her Level 6 Apprenticeship with HTA in 2023, combining her Part 1 undergraduate studies with hands-on practice. She has honed her skills in SketchUp, Revit, Lumion, Affinity, and Adobe tools, and is our go-to expert for 3D printing and model making across multiple projects.

George, based in our Bristol studio, is completing the Level 7 Architectural Apprenticeship at UWE while taking on professional responsibilities. He works with our PlaceCraft team on large-scale masterplanning and urban design schemes nationwide, with a particular focus on projects across the South West of England.



Mental Health Awareness Week

Mental Health Awareness Week 2025 took place from 12–16 May, with this year's theme focused on 'Community'. To mark the week, Becca Taylor, People & Inclusion Advisor, shared a reminder with all staff about the wellbeing resources and support available at HTA.

A highlight of the week was a morning mindfulness session led by Simon Shillito, offering staff a chance to pause, reset, and reflect. Mental Health Awareness Week highlights the importance of caring for ourselves and the crucial role a supportive workplace community.

These initiatives reaffirm our commitment to fostering an environment where every team member feels valued, connected, and empowered to prioritise their wellbeing.



South Asian Heritage Month

To celebrate South Asian Heritage Month, we embraced the rich culture and traditions of the region through a series of events.

Throughout the month, our studios enjoyed a variety of South Asian culinary delights, bringing colleagues together over delicious food and conversation.

On Friday, 8th August, Senior Graphic Designer, Shiny Thaper and Head of People & Inclusion, Steph Warner led a self-guided heritage walk through East London, exploring the area's vibrant South Asian history and cultural landmarks.

The evening concluded with a shared curry dinner on Brick Lane, offering a perfect opportunity to reflect, connect, and celebrate the contributions of South Asian communities.



Women @ HTA

For International Women's Day (IWD) on 8th March 2025, we celebrated the amazing contributions of women at HTA and around the world. In the UK built environment industry, women have made significant strides over the years, but challenges remain.

This year, HTA marked IWD with a focus on action, reflection, and progress. The 2025 theme, #AccelerateAction, encouraged us to take meaningful steps toward gender equality – a commitment we continue to champion.

In March, we hosted a lunchtime event titled 'Sharing Experience,' where colleagues took part in informal conversations on gender equality, guided by discussion prompt cards. We also shared stories of pioneering women in the built environment, including Dame Zaha Hadid, Jocelyn Frere Adburgham, Sylvia Law, and Gertrude Jekyll, and held group photos across our studios.

Founded by three Edinburgh-based colleagues, Women@HTA has played a key role in shaping a more inclusive workplace. Their early research identified barriers including confidence gaps, lack of role models, and challenges around maternity. Their work has led to HTA providing flexible working policy improvements, developing training programmes for women in architecture, and having more visible female role models.

“My advice for women would be to be bold, speak up, and don't be afraid to lead on the decision-making process because you are very well placed to do so! – Natalia Roussou, Landscape Design Director at HTA Design



Parents and Families

On 25th April, we hosted a Parent + Baby Afternoon Tea, which was a warm and welcoming event for colleagues currently on maternity and paternity leave.

The afternoon provided a relaxed opportunity for new parents to reconnect with colleagues and introduce their little ones to the studio.

A selection of soft play mats and toys kept the babies entertained, while parents enjoyed tea, scones, and plenty of conversation. It was a lovely afternoon full of smiles, laughter, and catch-ups.

In May 2025, we held our second Parents' Forum, led by Kirsten Wood. This event is part of our continued effort to support working parents within the practice.

The lunchtime session covered a variety of topics, such as the personal changes that come with parenthood, body image, and how to manage parental guilt while balancing a career. It was a reflective afternoon filled with open and honest discussions.



The People's Pavilion 2025

HTA has been a proud supporter of Beyond The Box CIC's People's Pavilion initiative for several years, sharing a deep commitment to empowering young people and fostering inclusive design. Beyond the Box is a London-based creative practice that is dedicated to creating positive change in the world.

This year, we are proud to be a headline sponsor for the project and have been actively involved in the programme. We have hosted and supported workshops, put on an event as part of the London Festival of Architecture, and volunteered in the construction of the pavilion.



“Beyond the Box has been working alongside HTA for over five years. They have been long-standing supporters of our work and mission to ensure a more equitable built environment and creative sector. A particular highlight has been their support for our award-winning People's Pavilion initiative, where the team at HTA has provided sponsorship, space, mentoring, and advice in the program's development- Neil Onions, Beyond The Box CIC

People's Pavilion Design Workshop

As part of the People's Pavilion programme, we hosted a workshop in our office. This workshop was part of a weeklong programme of sessions organised by Beyond the Box to empower young people to engage in collaborative design.

For this session, students were divided into groups and tasked with exploring different aspects of the pavilion's design.

Once the students had developed their ideas, they presented them to our Architectural Assistants, Evan Hall, Rosie Bannerman, and Indigo Leveson-Gower. Architect, Mauro Mosca, and Outreach Lead, Shawn Adams, who provided guidance and feedback on their designs.



London Festival of Architecture Event

As part of the London Festival of Architecture, we collaborated with Beyond the Box to host 'Youth at the Helm: Shaping Public Spaces Through Co-Design.' This event brought together an intergenerational mix of young people, industry professionals, and thought leaders to explore the power of community-led design.

The discussion highlighted youth-driven initiatives that are actively reimagining public spaces through co-design, showcasing the impact of inclusive and collaborative approaches.

Panellists included HTA Outreach Lead Shawn Adams, Bongani Muchemwa, Sam Elbahja, Peter Moore, Bianca Quiring, Cy Sherliker, and Ayaz Akyol. The event was co-chaired by Neil Onions FRIBA, Founder of Beyond The Box CIC, and aspiring architect Isata Kamara.



People's Pavilion Build Volunteering

On Monday 4th, HTA Outreach Lead Shawn Adams took part in the 2025 People's Pavilion Build. Over the course of the week, more than 90 volunteers came together to help construct the pavilion, located in the grounds of the William Morris Gallery.

The following week, Part 1 Architectural Assistants Evan Hall and Emily Kajdi joined the team for the final build day, contributing to the assembly of the remaining elements ahead of the official launch. Their involvement was part of HTA's ongoing commitment to supporting socially-driven design and hands-on learning opportunities for emerging practitioners.

The completed pavilion now stands as a powerful example of co-design in action, reflecting the creativity and collective effort of young people, local communities, and industry professionals alike. We're proud to have been part of such a meaningful and impactful project.

“Volunteering on the People's Pavilion this year was a truly inspiring experience – Evan Hall, Part 1 Architectural Assistant



Mentoring

At HTA Design, mentoring is an integral part of our culture of continuous learning and professional growth. We are committed to providing training and development opportunities that unlock potential, enhance skills, and deliver the highest quality outcomes for our clients.

Mentoring at HTA is designed to help individuals reflect on their experiences, make informed decisions, and take confident steps toward their goals. Mentoring is open to all employees at any career stage.

Rather than giving direct instructions, mentors support mentees in exploring ideas, planning career development, and solving problems. This process is both enriching and rewarding for both the mentor and the mentee.



University of West London Studio Visit

On November 13th, our Bristol office hosted 18 students and four graduates from UWE's International Architecture Foundation course for a presentation about our projects, career transitions, and working in practice.

“It was an absolute pleasure to have the opportunity to introduce our International Foundation students to their first UK practice - Kate Byrne, Course Lead



Trinity High School

On Monday, 16th June 2025, we delivered an 'Architecture Day' at Trinity High School in Manchester. This was a full-day event aimed at introducing students to careers in the built environment.

The day began with a short introduction and icebreaker. Students then listened to a series of rapid-fire career presentations by industry professionals, followed by a panel discussion where they asked questions about the speakers' roles and career journeys. This section of the day concluded with a masterplanning activity, where students worked in small groups to redesign Manchester using building cut-outs.

Later, students were taken on a guided site tour of Circle Square, led by landscape architects from Planit. The tour provided insight into real-world urban design and green infrastructure. Students then returned to the school to prepare for the afternoon session.

Once back in the classroom, students were split into groups of five to participate in a hands-on design competition. After sketching their ideas, they built physical models of their proposed buildings.

The models were then presented to the wider group and reviewed by the professionals. Later prizes were given out for the 'Best Use of Colour,' 'Best Use of Materials,' and 'Most Sustainable Design,' along with an HTA Design goodie bag.



Hackney 100

In September 2024, as part of our commitment to social value, we supported the Hackney100+ Skills programme. This initiative is aimed at adults aged 25+ who are eager to work but face barriers due to a lack of skills or experience. The 12-week programme offers employability training, paid work experience at the London Living Wage, and the opportunity to gain Level 2 qualifications, while also improving soft skills, English, and maths.

We provided Hackney resident, Tannika Foote, with a Studio Assistant placement for two days a week for 12 weeks. From the outset, Tannika's enthusiasm, commitment, and eagerness to learn made a strong impression. Her contributions quickly proved invaluable to the team. After her initial placement, we were delighted to offer her a full-time role.

We were honoured to be named Best Employer of the Hackney 100 programme in recognition of our commitment to supporting emerging talent. Programmes like Hackney 100 play a vital role in opening doors to employment, and we are proud to be part of this initiative.

“Since starting at HTA, the phrase ‘teamwork makes the dream work’ perfectly captures my experience - Tannika Foote, Studio Assistant





Manchester School of Architecture Studio Visit

On Thursday, February 20th, we welcomed 14 students from the Manchester School of Architecture to our office in Hackney Wick.

Their visit began with a guided tour led by our Studio Manager, Erica Hera White, followed by lunch in our LunchTables area.

After lunch, Senior Architect Harry Hamberger and Part I Architectural Assistant Evan Hall gave a presentation on HTA's recent projects at Milton Heights and Haddenham, developed in collaboration with Greencore Homes. Greencore specialises in high-quality, factory-built, climate-positive homes using closed timber-frame panels insulated with natural materials.

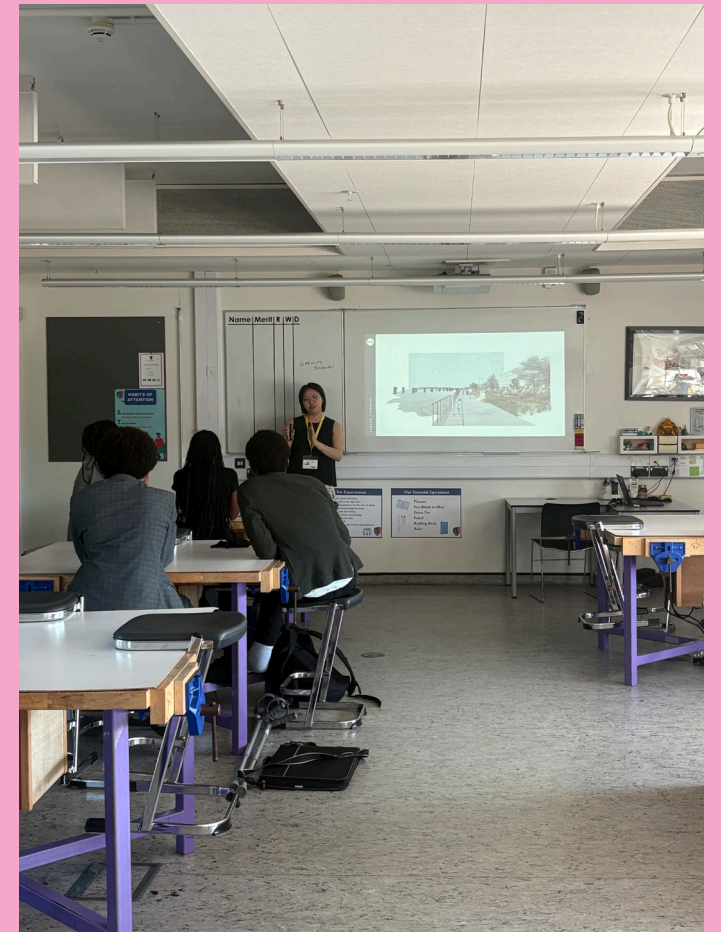
During the presentation, Harry and Evan discussed panel systems, housing, and sustainable drainage design. Later in the day, Associate Partner and Senior Architect Kwame Ohene-Adu introduced our modular projects, including One Lansdowne Road, Savoy Circus, and Ten Degrees. He spoke about modular design, the installation process, and how the modules are delivered to the site. Overall, it was a great experience for everyone involved.



City Academy School Workshop

Following the success of our ongoing partnership with Mossbourne Academy, the Assistant Principal at City Academy, Hackney, approached us to explore a similar collaboration. Their goal was to deliver an engaging outreach programme that introduces students to the built environment and inspires interest in architecture as a career path.

For City Academy, we developed a tailored programme for their students, starting with an Introduction to Architecture Workshop. This workshop provided a broad overview of the built environment sector through interactive activities, a presentation, and direct engagement with HTA professionals.



Work Experience

We recognise the value gained by young people who are provided with opportunities to undertake good-quality, practical work experience whilst still in education. This can help them to develop a good understanding of the 'world of work' and assist them in making important decisions about their future career.

Over the last year, we have welcomed a total of over 20 students in our London, Edinburgh, Manchester, and Bristol offices.



“I enjoyed getting to learn about SketchUp and 3D printing the model I created. I also enjoyed talking to everyone at HTA, they were all so lovely to me - Work Experience Student



Useful resources & activities

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HTA subscribes to Health Assured - Employee Assistance Programme providing 24/7 help and support when you need it. Now available in the palm of your hand via their Health e-Hub App.

The Architect's Benevolent Society has teamed up with Anxiety UK to launch a new mental health support helpline specifically for Architects, Architectural Assistants, Landscape Architects, Technologists, and their families.

D&I: Do you have any Diversity & Equality events planned?

If you are planning to arrange or attend any diversity and equality related events or meetings within the next few months, please let us know about it!

We would be interested to hear what others are doing both internally and externally, please also send any photos of the event if appropriate to do so.

London Festival of Architecture Portfolio Support

As part of this year's London Festival of Architecture, we were delighted to host a drop-in portfolio review session designed for architecture students and recent graduates.

The event provided a valuable opportunity for emerging talent to showcase their work, discuss their career aspirations, and receive constructive feedback from professionals working across various disciplines within the built environment.

Special thanks to Rhea Shepherd, Becca Rose, Segolene Morand, Kyracios Contonou, Kexin Zhu, Emily Kajdi, Rosie Bannerman, and Evan Hall for generously volunteering their time and expertise. Their insights and guidance were instrumental in making the session enriching and meaningful for everyone involved.

We're proud to support the next generation of architects and designers and look forward to hosting more events like this in the future.



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