



## **Diversity, equity, inclusion policy**

This policy was last reviewed on 25 April 2024.

Action plan data was updated in March 2026.

### **1. Introduction**

This document sets out ACF's commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) in its policies and practices and is a framework for our members and the wider sector to hold us to account. We recognise that this policy is a work in progress and as our understanding develops and we refine our approach, we will need to continue to ask ourselves hard questions and go further as we strive to represent good practice within the charity sector.

ACF believes that Diversity, Equity and Inclusion are all essential aspects of a charity's approach to delivering its mission. We believe that

- Many groups face barriers to participation in and are under-represented at ACF, in the foundation sector and at ACF's events and networks. This includes communities experiencing racial inequity, people with disabilities, people from working class backgrounds and people from the LGBT+ community. These barriers are compounded when these identities intersect.
- As a membership association we have a responsibility to represent diversity in our practice and across our programme of work.
- As a membership association we have the opportunity to share our platforms with others, exposing ourselves and our members to different ideas, voices and approaches.
- Diversity of people brings diversity of perspective, skills and experience, which in turn can deliver richer creativity, better problem solving and greater impact for ourselves and our members.
- Leaders have a vital role in creating change by modelling positive behaviour and taking action.
- Everyone, no matter their background, should be able to access opportunities to fulfil their potential on a fair and equitable basis.
- Our services to members will be strengthened if our board and staff team has a broad range of direct experience and both lived and learned expertise.

### **2. Our aims for ACF**

- We will recruit and retain board members and staff who are diverse both in terms of demographics, talent and thinking.
- As a national infrastructure body, covering the whole of the UK, we will strive to ensure that the composition of our board and staff reflects the population of the UK.
- Our practice will embed the value and best practice of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.
- We will value lived experience, the ability to draw from one's lived experience and to bring insights to an organisation that can develop its work.
- We will support our members to strengthen their own DEI practice through our activities and publications, including our Stronger Foundations initiative.

### 3. Our strategy

This section sets out what we will do to achieve our aims using key themes from our Stronger Foundations *Diversity Equity and Inclusion* report.

#### Governance

- Comply with UK law on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.
- Endorse ACEVO's 8 DEI [principles](#).
- Invest resources, where necessary, in order to achieve our aims.
- Reflect, review and renew our organisation's strategy through a DEI lens.
- Embed inclusion by enabling all our board members and staff to participate in decision-making processes as appropriate

#### Processes

- Embed equity – through: justice, impartiality and fairness in our procedures and processes.
- Apply the principles of equity and inclusion in recruitment practices, recruiting for potential, not perfection.
- Offer flexibility in working arrangements in order to make our roles attractive to as wide a range of people as possible.
- Ensure individuals with protected characteristics under UK law are encouraged to stand for election to the ACF board.
- Provide fully accessible venues.
- Make all our website and publications accessible for those with visual impairment.

#### Knowledge and Data

- Our board and staff members will be given opportunities to learn about racial bias and how it impacts leadership decisions and operational practice.
- We will measure progress against our aims.

#### Openness and Accountability

- Publish DEI data on our own practices.
- Clearly state our commitment to diversity equity and inclusion on our website.
- Use diverse images in our literature and communications.
- Seek independent, anonymous feedback on our activities.

#### Events, networks and conferences

- We will gather data on the diversity of speakers at our events and networks and use this to improve the diversity of our speakers and develop this policy
- We advocate for diversity across all protected characteristics and socio-economic status at all ACF events and in events we participate as a panellist, speaker, or take any role in organising
- We will take steps to make all our events and networks inclusive spaces, and to ensure that when organising panels, demonstrable efforts have been made to reflect the diversity of the UK population. This includes but is not limited to ethnicity, disability, socioeconomic, gender, age and LGBTQ+ inclusion.
- We will issue guidance to members convening sessions at ACF signature events and conferences that we only accept panels where demonstrable efforts have been made to reflect the diversity of the UK population. This includes but is not limited to ethnicity, disability, socioeconomic, gender, age and LGBTQ+ inclusion

- We will only accept invitations to speak on panels and events convened by other organisations where demonstrable efforts have been made to reflect the diversity of the UK population. This includes but is not limited to ethnicity, disability, socioeconomic, gender, age and LGBTQ+ inclusion.
- We actively share our policy with other conference and event organisers and advocate for representative diversity on panels

Review

We view this policy as a starting point. It will be constantly evolving as we develop our DEI practice and we will keep it under regular review.

**ANNEX**

**ACF’s Board – Diversity**

ACF has up to 12 trustees elected by the membership, who each serve for a three-year term. The board can also co-opt up to five further trustees. All of our board members must be connected to a member of ACF when they join ACF’s board, for example as a trustee or a member of staff. Each serves for a three-year term. Six years is the maximum term that an ACF trustee can serve without a break, with the exception of the chair, who may serve an additional period on the board.

ACF Trustees	2025-26	England and Wales population 2021 Census
Proportion women	58%	51.1%
Ethnic minorities (excluding white minorities)*	25%	18.5%
Proportion disabled*	25%	17.8%

\* As a UK-wide infrastructure body we are striving to ensure that the composition of our board reflects the population of the UK. To monitor this we are using the same groups as the Westminster Government in its 2021 census. For more information see the gov.uk guide [Writing about ethnicity](#)

\*\*The figure for the board shows the proportion of trustees who have faced challenges relating to a disability or health condition and so is not directly comparable with the England and Wales census 2021 figure.

ACF’s board carries out regular skills audits which, combined with the diversity characteristics included in this published data helps us to identify gaps in our board. We indicate to members

as part of the call for nominations if there are gaps in skills and lived experience that the board would like to fill.

ACF’s trustees are chosen by a vote of our membership and their voting decisions are based on many factors, including a desire to see all parts of the UK represented on our board. We recognise that other diversity characteristics are important including LGBT+, a range of ages, and individuals from a range of socio-economic backgrounds.

## **ACTION PLAN ACF STAFF**

### **ACF staff - diversity**

As at March 2026 ACF had a head count of 18 staff.

ACF staff	2026	England and Wales population 2021 Census
Proportion women	82%	51.1%
Ethnic minorities (excluding white minorities)*	18%	18.5%
Proportion disabled**	29%	17.8%

\* As a UK-wide infrastructure body we are striving to ensure that the composition of our staff team reflects the population of the UK. To monitor this we are using the same groups as the Westminster Government in its 2021 census. For more information see the gov.uk guide [Writing about ethnicity](#)

\*\*The figure for the staff shows the proportion of staff who have self-declared that they have faced challenges relating to a disability or health condition. It is not directly comparable with the England and Wales census 2021 figure.

### **Staff training**

All staff will be trained in diversity, equity and inclusion awareness.

Staff responsible for hiring, promotion and management will be trained in addressing unconscious bias.

### **Staff development**

We have a learning and development policy that ensures all staff have equitable access to learning and development opportunities.

## **Recruitment**

We will review and keep under review our advertisements, job descriptions, application forms, person specifications and tests to remove:

- exclusionary language
- exclusive recruitment criteria
- sector-specific jargon

We will, wherever possible advertise our vacancies in ways that will reach a diverse community of possible applicants.

Our advertisements will encourage applications from underrepresented groups and will include a statement regarding our flexible working practices so that we can attract a wide range of candidates.

To tackle unconscious bias in our recruitment we will, so far as is practical given the size of our organisation: -

1. Advertise and appoint to posts within our agreed wage bands.
2. Anonymise CVs when used for candidate selection.
3. Train our staff in recognising and addressing unconscious bias and challenge assumptions that are not based on clear evidence from the application form, question replies or test outputs.
4. Only ask questions to test the criteria in the person specification.
5. Score candidates and offer the job to the candidate who scored the highest mark with all the panel's scores having equal weighting.
6. Encourage interviewers to reflect on whether implicit bias has impacted their decision before making a job offer to the successful candidate.
7. Ask for feedback on the recruitment process from people appointed/not appointed.
8. Encourage applicants to complete an anonymous equality and diversity monitoring form and use this information to improve our practice.

## **An inclusive workplace**

ACF will provide fully accessible offices.

We have flexible working practices that will support the needs of carers, parents, women, older and younger team members, those who have disabilities or long- term illnesses. These include home working, part time employment and flexible hours.

ACF is a London Living Wage employer.

We will invite anonymous feedback from our staff on the implementation of our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy and review the Policy and Action plan in response to this feedback and changes in best practice.

We will work to create an open, supportive, welcoming culture that is inclusive and celebrates diversity.

Our appraisal process will encourage all staff to have a personal development plan.