

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION (DEI):

THE PILLARS OF STRONGER FOUNDATION PRACTICE

1

INVESTS TIME AND
RESOURCES IN
UNDERSTANDING
AND DEFINING
DIVERSITY, EQUITY
AND INCLUSION

2

PRODUCES
AND REVIEWS
STRATEGIES THAT
WILL IMPLEMENT
DEI PRACTICES

3

COLLECTS, TRACKS
AND PUBLISHES DEI
DATA ON ITS OWN
PRACTICES AND
PERFORMANCE

4

HAS A DIVERSE
TRUSTEE BOARD
AND STAFF TEAM,
BOTH IN TERMS OF
DEMOGRAPHICS
AND EXPERIENCE

5

REFLECTS AND
IMPLEMENTS
DEI PRACTICES
IN ITS FUNDING
ACTIVITIES

6

EXPRESSES ITS
DEI COMMITMENT,
POLICIES AND
PRACTICES
PUBLICLY

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MAKES ITSELF
ACCOUNTABLE TO
THOSE IT SERVES
AND SUPPORTS

8

USES ITS OWN
POWER TO
ADVOCATE FOR
AND ADVANCE
DEI PRACTICES

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COLLABORATES
WITH OTHERS TO
PROMOTE AND
IMPLEMENT DEI
PRACTICES

A STRONGER FOUNDATION:

In relation to diversity, equity and inclusion, a Stronger Foundation is one that can demonstrate or is pursuing the following “pillars of practice”. These have been developed by ACF and are based on the evidence gathered by the working group (including case studies of practice by foundations in the UK and elsewhere), the wider literature and the contributions of experts from beyond the foundation sector.

Examples of each pillar do exist in UK foundation practice, but we have not identified any foundation that is demonstrating them all. We anticipate that the majority of foundations will be at an early stage of their journey.

The way the pillars are interpreted and implemented will vary from one foundation to another, but we believe that all of them can be pursued, no matter what a foundation’s size, source of income, or area of focus.

While some foundations may want to pursue all of the pillars, others may want to start with one or two. What matters most is to start, and strive to do more.

The bullet points below each pillar in this summary indicate some of the ways that each one could be implemented in practice. These points are described in more detail in part one of the report.

1

INVESTS TIME AND RESOURCES IN UNDERSTANDING AND DEFINING DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

- ▶ Considers how DEI relates to the foundation’s history, mission and current work
- ▶ Has a clear understanding and competency in terms of its definition of DEI
- ▶ Recognises that discrimination and unconscious bias might exist within its organisation and takes steps to identify and tackle this
- ▶ Its board and staff receive training and support on DEI issues in order to enable them to carry out DEI practices in an effective and informed way

2

PRODUCES AND REVIEWS STRATEGIES THAT WILL IMPLEMENT DEI PRACTICES

- ▶ Its board and staff teams take time to reflect on, review and develop strategies that specifically seek to implement DEI practice and improve DEI performance against measurable outcomes
- ▶ Extends to the development of policies across the organisation, such as finance, recruitment and human resources, as well as funding support on DEI issues in order to enable them to carry out DEI practices in an effective and informed way

3

**COLLECTS, TRACKS
AND PUBLISHES DEI
DATA ON ITS OWN
PRACTICES AND
PERFORMANCE,
INCLUDING:**

- ▶ The diversity of its board and staff
- ▶ The way that its funding is allocated (e.g. by topic, geography and communities)
- ▶ The participants at its own events (both speakers and attendees)

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**HAS A DIVERSE
TRUSTEE BOARD
AND STAFF TEAM,
BOTH IN TERMS OF
DEMOGRAPHICS
AND EXPERIENCE**

- ▶ Applies DEI practices to its approach to recruitment and retention, and monitors and reviews outcomes
- ▶ Regularly reviews and seeks to enhance the diversity of its board and staff teams
- ▶ Continually strives to strengthen its governance, particularly in terms of diversity, and offers tailored support to trustees

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**REFLECTS AND
IMPLEMENTS
DEI PRACTICES
IN ITS FUNDING
ACTIVITIES**

- ▶ Ensures that DEI issues are identified and addressed at every stage of the funding cycle
- ▶ Incorporates DEI practices in its programme design, application processes and criteria, funding conditions and monitoring
- ▶ Addresses the structural inequalities of gender, race, disability and class, and their intersectionality

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**EXPRESSES ITS
DEI COMMITMENT,
POLICIES AND
PRACTICES
PUBLICLY**

- ▶ Creates and publishes a DEI statement, and develops clear and measurable outcomes to be pursued
- ▶ Undertakes an annual review of progress towards fulfilling its commitments and summarises this as part of its annual report
- ▶ Shares its approach to DEI with wider audiences

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MAKES ITSELF ACCOUNTABLE TO THOSE IT SERVES AND SUPPORTS

- ▶ Invites, seeks and actively facilitates feedback from grantees and applicants about its practices
- ▶ Consults its communities as part of strategic reviews and in development and delivery of grants programmes
- ▶ Offers opportunities for challenge, feedback and appeals

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USES ITS OWN POWER TO ADVOCATE FOR AND ADVANCE DEI PRACTICES

- ▶ Speaks out about key issues affecting civil society and particularly underrepresented groups, including government policy changes, legislative developments and funding programmes that may cause harm
- ▶ Provides platforms for people and communities that are less frequently listened to, and enables them to access the corridors of power
- ▶ Understands and values the role that grassroots and user-led organisations play in securing and advancing social justice and reducing inequality, and actively supports them
- ▶ Applies a DEI lens to its supply chains

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COLLABORATES WITH OTHERS TO PROMOTE AND IMPLEMENT DEI PRACTICES

- ▶ Understands that DEI is a foundational issue relevant to all areas of work and its partners
- ▶ Supports foundation sector initiatives that seek to implement DEI practices
- ▶ Engages in DEI initiatives taking place across wider civil society

A **rapporteur’s report** of the meetings of the DEI working group, which informed the pillars of stronger foundation practice, is presented in part two, followed by a list of **further reading** that contributed to the group’s discussions.