

How can the Heritage Fund be more inclusive of under-represented groups?

16/08/2021

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We commissioned independent research to understand perceptions of our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion, and barriers to accessing our funding.

Attachment	Size
EDI Research Findings and Recommendations – phase one Equality, diversity and inclusion	327.85 KB

The research – conducted by The Social Investment Consultancy (TSIC) – focused on organisations with characteristics currently and historically under-represented in our funding portfolio: race and ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, socio-economic background and young people.

TSIC conducted 38 interviews and gathered data through an online survey completed by 82 grantees between December 2020 and March 2021. Participants had received a maximum of two grants from us between 2013 and 2019. Due to time constraints, only grantees based in England were involved in this phase.

The research provided important findings and recommendations for us, which we are now working to implement. We will also carry out a second phase of research across Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, and with under-represented organisations that have been rejected or have not received funding from us before.

Findings

The research found that:

- The role of heritage was very important with wellbeing, social equity, community cohesion and developing skills being the most common themes that define the role of heritage.
- There is a perception gap between what we think we communicate, and what respondents perceive.
- Our [mandatory inclusion outcome](#) is valued but is perceived as difficult to comply with.
- There is a need for us to support capacity building of smaller organisations in different ways to larger organisations.
- Our grant data does not sufficiently identify organisations led by or with lived experience.
- Grantees have four main expectations of us:
 1. supporting small organisations
 2. become a champion for marginalised communities in the heritage sector
 3. for a definition of heritage that includes wellbeing and social equity considerations
 4. advocacy and action to prove the importance of heritage

Recommendations

TSIC recommend that we:

- Adopt a more nuanced approach to equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Adopt a social equity and wellbeing approach to heritage in monitoring, communication and strategy.
- Review our communication strategy to ensure organisations know that our funding is relevant to them.
- Use our influential position and convening power to support capacity building, particularly for smaller organisations and those led by under-represented groups.
- Improve our EDI data collection and conduct analysis on existing data to better understand our funding from an EDI perspective.
- Encourage power-sharing to include organisation leaders, volunteers and users in decision-making processes.
- Communicate our EDI objectives and vision clearly with staff and ensure our EDI strategy is implemented at every level.

Find out more

Read the full report in the PDF above, and [find out more](#) about our commitment to achieving greater equality, diversity and inclusion within our organisation, and across the heritage sector.

Heritage with inclusion at its heart is incredibly powerful in bringing people together and creating a fairer society for all.

Our research and evaluation

We regularly conduct research to discover what is happening in the heritage sector, and we evaluate our work to better understand the change we are making. [Read more of our insight](#).