How we're working towards an ambitious vision of inclusive heritage

25/08/2021

Equality, diversity and inclusion

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Review identifies strong progress as well as areas for us to build on to achieve our ambition.

The Review, launched in June 2020, drew on internal expertise and evidence, commissioned external research and examined best practice in the heritage sector and beyond. We set out to define an ambitious vision of inclusive heritage for ourselves and the sector.

It was led by Andrew White, Director of The National Lottery Heritage Fund in Wales, and overseen by an independent Task Force, chaired by Trustee, Maria Adebowale-Schwarte.

Maria said: "As Chair of the Task Force, I and colleagues were committed to undertake an honest assessment of The Heritage Fund's current activities and performance.

"Along the way we found a lot of positives. However, we also found that barriers to true equality, diversity and inclusion exist within many of our practices and processes. The Review sets out a clear plan of action."

What we found

Positively, our:

- research into the development of our new investment management system was wide-ranging and diverse
- colleagues are committed to our values and engaged with our culture programme
- colleagues are keen to learn from each other and share ideas around EDI

We need to improve:

- the diversity of our governance, consultants and workforce to ensure we are representative of the communities we work with across the UK
- how we collect data about access to heritage and the organisations we support
- the breadth of our definition of 'inclusive projects' and the perception of our mandatory inclusion outcome

What we're doing

We are committed to doing the work to become a more equal, diverse and inclusive employer and grant-giver, and using our leadership position to inspire the heritage sector to share this ambition.

However, it is important that we take the time to do things thoroughly, effectively and collaboratively.

To achieve this we are retaining the Task Force for another year to provide support, guidance and challenge, and report progress on implementation of actions to our Board.

Those actions include:

- providing more support for applicants, particularly those with projects run by/exploring the heritage of under-represented communities
- reviewing the accessibility of our processes, communication channels and the language we use
- providing training and support to our Board and committees to better understand EDI
- diversifying our decision making, like we did with our Kick the Dust programme
- exploring the use of dedicated recruitment agencies to increase the diversity of our governance and workforce
- delivering a programme of interactive staff sessions around race and heritage and supporting the development of staff networks
- giving equal consideration to behaviours and achievements in staff performance appraisals

Explore the full EDI Review report to find out more about what we learned and what we're doing next.

Change is an ongoing process

Ros Kerslake, Chief Executive of The Heritage Fund, said: "The aim of the Review was to determine whether we were doing enough to open up heritage to a wider range of people, and identify ways to accelerate and drive greater change within our organisation and across the heritage sector.

"We have been making good progress throughout the Review process, but there is still much work to do. Bringing about change is an ongoing process, and something we're are committed to – for ourselves and the wider sector. Because heritage with inclusion at its heart is incredibly powerful in bringing people together and creating a fairer society for all."







Cleaning an antler behind the scenes at Norfolk Museums

Our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion