Understanding how we can be a more inclusive and equitable funder

28/09/2022

See all updates

Explore the findings from our independent research examining perspectives on heritage, inclusion and barriers to accessing our funding.

Attachment	Size
PDF View EDI Research Findings and Recommendations – full report as PDF(762.27 KB)	762.27 KB

Equality, diversity and inclusion

Between December 2020 and March 2022 we interviewed 86 organisations across the UK, surveyed a further 82 people and consulted with 90 of our own staff.

External contributors were existing grantees, previously unsuccessful applicants and those interested in applying for a grant. We focused on five groups we identified as currently and historically under-served by our funding:

- diverse ethnic communities
- disabled people
- LGBTQ+ individuals
- young people
- those from low socio-economic backgrounds

The research – conducted by The Social Investment Consultancy (TSIC) – provided invaluable insight on how organisations view and define heritage, their support needs and expectations of us as a funder.

> Heritage belongs to everyone, but we recognise there is more we must do to ensure under-served groups have equitable access to our funding.
>
> *Eilish McGuinness, Chief Executive of the Heritage Fund*

What we learned

Organisations believe heritage is important for promoting wellbeing, social equity and community cohesion. They understand it can also support skills development for individuals. However, they would like to see definitions of heritage that include greater focus on wellbeing and social equity.

The research also revealed some misconceptions about the requirements of our mandatory inclusion outcome and how to meet them.

External contributors – many of whom work at small scale – told us they need more capacity building support. They also challenged us on how we can adapt our investment approach to better meet these needs. This included highlighting

potential barriers in the application process and how we could reduce them.

What we are doing

TSIC identified 10 recommendations for the Heritage Fund, which can be grouped into four key themes:

- perceptions of heritage: the way we understand and present the concept and value of heritage
- inclusive practice: how we can ensure our investment processes and funded projects are inclusive
- addressing support needs: ways we can support under-served groups as applicants and within the wider sector
- understanding inclusion: how we monitor and ensure we continuously build on progress

Eilish McGuinness, Chief Executive of the Heritage Fund, said: “Heritage belongs to everyone, but we recognise there is more we must do to ensure under-served groups have equitable access to our funding.

“We have already begun to address some of these recommendations as part of the delivery of our EDI Review actions.

“This research will also help inform the development of our refreshed strategy and our new 10-year vision, which we will launch early next year. Heritage with inclusion at its heart is incredibly powerful in bringing people together and we want everyone to access and be involved in the future of UK heritage.”

Find out more

Read the full report in the PDF above, and learn more about our commitment to achieving greater equality, diversity and inclusion within our organisation, and across the heritage sector.

This report builds on the findings from the first phase of the research, published in August 2021.

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.



We helped the Pinnacle Club mark 100 years since the women's rock-climbing club was founded.

Inclusive heritage