

# Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Big Change

(V1, Sept 2022)

## Why DEI?

In 2020, following the killing of George Floyd in the United States, *Diversity, Equity and Inclusion* (DEI) was rightfully pushed to the forefront of the social and political agenda. For Big Change, it was recognised that continuous learning and making progress towards DEI would be critical in helping us create a fairer, more inclusive society, where every young person is set up to thrive in life, not just in exams.

## Our Aim

To put DEI at the heart of everything we do, from the young people and project partners we work with, to the way we behave and operate as a charity, and to the people we welcome into the organisation.

We want our progress towards DEI, to be measured by our actions, and are keen to encourage feedback, challenge, and new ideas from everyone we work alongside.

## Defining DEI

We understand there is no single way to define or approach DEI, however having some sort of mutually agreed definition will help us in our learning and ability to make progress towards our goal of diversity, equity, and inclusion<sup>1</sup>:

“Diversity” includes various elements of human difference, including age, gender, race and ethnicity, religion/belief, sexual orientation/identity, disability, lived experience, caring responsibilities and education.<sup>2</sup>

“Equity” involves the promotion of justice and equality of opportunity and outcomes within the procedures, processes and distribution of resources by institutions or systems. Tackling inequity requires an understanding of the underlying or root causes of disparities, both at the point of access and in terms of outcomes, within our society.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> These definitions are based on the work of the D5 Coalition, a five-year initiative in the US to advance philanthropy's approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion (adapted from Grantcraft [2018] 'From Words to Action: A practical philanthropic guide to diversity, equity and inclusion')

<sup>2</sup> Nuanced definitions of diversity also recognise the intersectional nature of identity and the complex and cumulative ways in which different forms of discrimination (based upon these attributes) combine, overlap, and intersect.

<sup>3</sup> We use the [The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion \(DEI\) Data Standard](#) to support us identify and address structural inequity, and ensure that the reach of our funding and our funding practices are fair and just.

“Inclusion” refers to the degree to which diverse individuals are able to participate fully in all aspects of activity, including decision-making.<sup>4</sup>

## Our DEI principles

We’ve developed the following principles which will guide our thinking and action on DEI:

1. DEI is not a tick-box exercise; our efforts must be thoughtful and authentic.
2. DEI is an opportunity, not a challenge; it will make us better and stronger as a team, organisation, and society.
3. Everyone should feel they belong and can be themselves at Big Change; all are welcomed, respected and treated fairly.
4. We will foster a culture of respectful curiosity in which we are able to have candid conversations and challenge one another with courage and kindness, and where concerns can be raised and addressed freely and safely.

## Our objectives

We recognise that change only happens when we work together and we are therefore all accountable for our DEI objectives at Big Change, both as individuals and as an organisation.

Each team has laid out objectives and actions they will take forward as part of their ongoing work, ensuring DEI is firmly embedded across the organisation. This whole-of-organisation approach will ensure a collective DEI mindset forms part of the Big Change culture.

Given that most of our DEI objectives are embedded within our day-to-day work and not standalone, we’ll work in Q1 2023 to develop the best strategy to hold ourselves accountable and allow us to report on our progress.

## How we’ll hold ourselves to account

To make sure we’re not just paying lip service to DEI, the Big Change team will hold ourselves to account by:

1. Making relevant DEI commitments, and progress against these commitments, public via our website;
2. Compiling an annual DEI report that summarises the team’s performance against our DEI objectives and targets;

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<sup>4</sup> While a truly ‘inclusive’ group is necessarily diverse, a ‘diverse’ group may or may not be ‘inclusive.’

3. Nominating a member of the Leadership Team to sponsor BC's DEI work and task a diverse and representative DEI working group to drive efforts forward;
4. Nominating a Trustee to audit the team's DEI work on an annual basis, and then report back on progress to the wider Board;
5. Conduct periodic internal listening exercises to understand the team's experiences, hear ideas and identify opportunities for improvement.

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Thank you for coming on this journey with Big Change. We hope to look back on the above plan in a year's time and see that we have become an even more diverse, equitable and inclusive organisation.