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# **Friends Provident Foundation**

# **Diversity, Equity and Social Justice Plan**

## **Overview**

Friends Provident Foundation believes that Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) is key to the successful pursuit of our mission of a fair and sustainable economy. Our goal of transforming the economic system means that we are addressing a system underpinned by the marginalisation of black, LGBTQIA+ and disabled people; the undervaluing of the contributions of women; and the unequal hoarding of wealth. A commitment to diversity and inclusion must therefore be central to our efforts to build a fair economy.

DEI must also be central to how we do all that we do including staff and Trustee recruitment and management, our Investment management and engagement, grantmaking, communications and engagement with the wider community. We are aware of the power dynamics of our position as a holder and distributor of wealth.

This updated paper outlines where we are in the development of our DEI work strategically and in terms of our internal operations, grantmaking and wealth management. This is work that will never be ‘done’ and we are aware of how far we have to go. Internally it has been driven up until the end of 2023 by a Working Group – from 2024 it will be owned by our Trustee-led Resources Committee.

Our general approach can be summarised as follows:

* This work is explicitly framed as learning. It is not about presenting neat answers but about sharing the questions we are asking and the journey we are taking to answer them. Our approach should be one of humility, sensitivity, and transparency.
* A deep turning that needs to be made in our understanding – if we want to centre equity justice and marginalised voices this will entail a different type of understanding of what change is and how it happens and a conscious recognition of the structures of power of which we are a part.
* Our ‘building blocks’ are not there yet – our strategy, language and ways of thinking need to develop as we learn. It is important that we openly acknowledge and accept this and build our understanding that equity and diversity is a key part of what we are working towards.
* We will engage with and learn from best practice in the sector and seek to share our learning with others – we have for example drawn on the work on the Foundation Practice Rating and the DEI data standard.

We are conscious that changing our practices, work culture and increasing our understanding of equity and social justice issues takes time and is a continuous process. This paper shares some our thinking and work we have undertaken to date in a spirit of transparency and accountability. Equity and social justice for us is a continual process*.*

*“This means dispensing with the idea of social justice as a place at which we arrive or for which we strive. Instead, the work of social justice is the striving; it is not a place but rather a process. The process of social justice means striving for each other’s wellbeing. As such, a more socially just world is more people striving for and with each other*” (Huffman, 2014: p.3).

**Internal Operations**

**Recruitment and Trustee/staff management**

The Foundation will not unlawfully discriminate in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy FPF seeks to adopt best practice in areas such as:

* Person and job specifications will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job. We do not ask for example for degrees or unnecessary qualifications
* We recognise that previous discrimination/disadvantage can be entrenched in an individual’s previous salaries and therefore do not ask for these as part of our recruitment practice.
* We always clearly state our salary offer as part of our recruitment process.
* We use anonymized application review and shortlisting.
* Candidates for employment or promotion will be assessed objectively against the requirements for the job, taking account of any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with a disability.
* Disability will not form the basis of employment decisions except where necessary
* We collect, analyse and review DEI data on all recruitment exercises
* We have created a new Associate Trustee post to allow us to widen access to strategic experience and training for those who may not have this opportunity before and to enrich our board by bringing in people with different skills and experience.
* We have published the following statement on our website:

*We are committed to recruiting a diverse and talented workforce as we continue to disrupt and aim to create a fairer and more sustainable economic system. If you think you’ve got something to offer us, please take a look at our current opportunities.*

**HR/Working practices**

* If an employee requests a change to their working hours or other reasonable adjustment the Foundation may take account of any needs that they have as a result of a disability
* If an employee requests a change to their working hours or other reasonable adjustment the Foundation may take account of any needs that they have as a result of caring responsibilities
* The Foundation will refuse such requests only if it considers there are good reasons, unrelated to any protected characteristic, for doing so.
* The Foundation will comply with its obligations in relation to statutory requests for changes to hours of work.
* The Foundation will also make reasonable adjustments to standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability.
* A programme of DEI training for staff and Trustees started in 2023 and will continue into 2024. Initial training has focused on personal privilege and self reflection.

**Trustee and Staff Diversity**

We monitor and publish statistics on our Staff and Trustee diversity. This is reviewed by our Resources Committee alongside DEI data from our recruitment exercises.

Our most recently recorded statistics (2023) show that:

* 11 out of 14 people identified as white; 3 identified as a person of colour
* 4 out of 14 people identified with having a disability
* 9 out of 14 people identified as a woman, 4 identified as a man and 1 identified as non-binary
* 3 out of 14 identified as non-heterosexual.
* We have an evenly distributed age group
* 8 out 14 people have caring responsibilities
* 11 out of 14 attended a state school, 2 attended school outside the UK and 1 attended a private school (with scholarship)

**Inclusion**

The Foundation respects and values staff as individuals, providing support and commitment so that everyone has a sense of belonging and is able to achieve their best.

All employees have a personal responsibility to treat colleagues, Trustees, contractors, applicants, visitors, volunteers and members of the public in accordance with the Foundation’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy.

In employment practices and in providing services, the Foundation requires all employees to:

* Support a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued;
* Act fairly and, provide equality of opportunity;
* Recognise that everyone is different and that these differences must be equally respected;
* Be aware that people must not be treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic;
* Challenge discrimination so that the Foundation can demonstrate its commitment to equality and diversity and do not exclude people or make them feel isolated;
* Not unlawfully discriminate, for example, as staff responsible for decisions on recruitment, selection, promotion or transfer;
* Not induce or attempt to induce others to practice discrimination, nor yield to pressure from others to discriminate;
* Not victimise or attempt to victimise individuals on the grounds that they have made complaints under the Equality Act or provided information about discrimination;
* Not harass, abuse or intimidate other employees, member organisations, partners etc; where employees commit such action, they will be liable to disciplinary action;
* Draw to the attention of management apparent breaches of this Code of Practice;
* Line Managers and supervisors have a particular responsibility for ensuring that staff act appropriately.

**Our Role as a Foundation – The Foundation Practice Rating**

The Foundation seeks to challenge itself and the wider Foundation sector to do philanthropy better advocating for greater accountability and embodying the changes we want to see in the funding sector. As part of this we have driven the development of the Foundation Practice Rating – an initiative that assesses UK Foundation’s on the basis of their diversity, accountability and transparency. The Foundation is also assessed against these criteria - this year our score for diversity is B, showing that there is still room for improvement.

**Investment and management of our endowment**

Our Investment principles state that:

*We believe the purpose of investment should be to direct capital to socially and environmentally useful activity, to create social as well as economic value, and to help address societal challenges; rather than to focus on short-term financial returns*

This involves the intentional and mindful use of all of our endowment in line with our mission including the pursuit of a fair economy. Our actions here include:.

For direct investment:

* We particularly favour companies that offer employees decent work and fair pay (including a focus on pay ratios and gender/ethnicity pay gaps).
* We will not invest in companies that advocate discrimination and incitement to hatred.

As a shareholder we seek to actively engage and influence on areas such as:

* fair pay (pay ratios, pay transparency)
* decent work (dignity and justice in the workplace)
* diversity in management (more accurately reflecting society regarding gender, class and ethnicity in upper management, training/career progression, diversity of thought).

**Grant Making**

Our grantmaking standards of practice include an explicit statement that: *We will seek to treat all applicants and grantholders with equity and dignity and seek to be aware of our biases and privileges.*

**Programme focus**

We have made Equity and social justice a specific focus our grantmaking – our main funding streams are:

* Supporting a strong and diverse movement for new economic thinking and acting in the UK
* Supporting outsider voices pushing for a fair transition to the 4D economy

In addition our small grants programme was created to try to create a route for new entrants and in particular those from marginalised communities, into the new economy movement. All applications whether specifically created with the aim of increasing diversity and social justice are assessed on the basis:

* *Has the applicant built considerations of equality and diversity into their application?*
* *Has a convincing case been made as to how the* *applicant’s proposal/idea will seek to avoid replicating existing disadvantage/structures of inequality?*

**Grantmaking practice**

We have worked to ensure that we deliver our grantmaking programme in line with good practice and as such have participated in and learnt from initiatives such as:

* The Foundation Practice Rating
* The DEI data standard (currently being implemented for grants and social investments)
* IVAR’s Flexible Funders
* The Race Report
* Internally commissioned advice and support from external DEI advisors.
* Feedback from grantholders

Actions we are taking include:

* Ensuring that we are open and available for conversation before people apply
* Exploring providing different ways of applying other than our online application form.
* Moved from arrears to advance payments to ensure that cashflow and size of organisation shouldn’t preclude them from doing the work.
* Collecting data on who we fund and who is or isn’t successful in accessing our programme – and using that information to make changes where necessary.

**Communications.**

We have worked to integrate DEI considerations both into what we communicate and how we do so.

Recently we have:

* Developed an communications accessibility checklist and statement
* Ensuring documents are available in alternative formats.
* Invested in a tool which can translate our website into different languages and provide accessibility tools.

We are working towards the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.1 AA standard and aim to have 90% conformance by the end of 2024. We have identified priorities for action including:

* Consistent text alternatives for non-text content
* Our site's structure and information architecture
* Improving our user interface components for better compatibility with assistive technologies
* Navigation and interactivity for keyboard-only users and those using screen readers.
* Design and visual presentation for better readability and usability, especially for those with visual impairments

**Priorities for 2024 and beyond**

* Publish this plan to increase transparency and accountability
* Further training and resources for Trustees and staff
* Learn from and adapt our small grant scheme to increase its impact at supporting marginalised groups into the movement.
* Further progress on our website accessibility following website audit
* Explore options for targets around recruitment diversity targets (staff, Trustees, advisors).
* Review DEI statistics from recent recruitment rounds.
* Explore ways to make our application processes more supportive and whether we can offer a wider range of application approaches.
* Review the idea of paid Trustee positions.
* Review the impact of the Associate Trustee scheme.

## **Appendix One – Key terms and definitions**

**Inequality – unequal access to opportunities**

Currently the economic system does not work for everyone – it is both the cause and the result of systemic inequality.

Examples of inequality include: gender and ethnicity pay gaps, the fact that working class individuals less likely to be high income earners despite their abilities and achievements, or the fact that trans people are more likely to be unemployed owing to their gender identity.

**Equality - treating everyone the same**

Many people conceive of equality as treating everyone the same, however, there are individuals and groups of people who do not start from the same starting point. Therefore, it is impossible to achieve social justice through equality alone. However, we should recognise that it has been powerful tool in creating an increased respect to marginalised people.

Examples of equality include: horizontal economic theories, Equality Act (2010),

**Equity - is when you apply a range of tools to address inequality**

Whilst equality treats everyone in the same way, equity seeks to understand and give people what they need as a means of ensuring fairness.

It is important for us to look at other models to achieve equality through an equity and social justice lens, we do not have all the answers and we believe that there are multiple ways in which to achieve this. At the time of this writing the Foundation feels that it needs to sit within the equity space, as it is a new way of thinking for the foundation.

**Social Justice – everyone being able to access tools and opportunities and reach their full potential**

We seek to remove the barriers that prevent equity and equality by creating the conditions for change to occur. We do not have a model, as we believe this would become reductionist in our approach and not reflect the communities we seek to serve.

We would eventually like to fix the economic system by removing barriers and ensuring people having both tools and opportunities to influence and be equally part of the economy. We can do this by creating an approach which seeks to remove the barriers that prevent equality.

It should be noted that we see environmental and sustainability issues as a social justice issue.

Below is an illustration which nicely demonstrates these definitions:



**Appendix Two: Meyer Spectrum Tool (adapted)**

We are using this tool as grounding and reflective exercise to see where we are and where we need to get too.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Equity and Social Justice Component**  | **Not Yet Started** | **Ready to Start** | **Launched** | **Well on the Way** | **Exemplary or Leading** |
| Equity and Social Justice Vision | Does not see it as relevant  | We Recongise the importance of Equity and Social and we are complementing next steps[We are developing an action plan] | Equity and Social Justice programme launched | Have developed Equity and Social justice and is integrated within our work | Have integrated Equity and Social Justice within our organisational mission and statements, and these are being actively used.  |
| Commitment  | Does not have an interest in advancing DEI work | Is interested in advancing equity and social justice work and is considering how to do so[We are developing an action plan] | Interested in advancing equity and social justice work and has put some strategies or actions in motion  | Is actively engaged in advancing equity and social justice. | Fully committed at all levels for equity and social justice. |
| Leadership | Trustees and staff have not taken on equity and social justice issues. | A few members of trustees and staff are leading equity and social justice work | An equity and social justice is leading the organisaiton’s equity and social justice work | All levels of management are actively taking leadership on equity and social justice [some trustees and staff involved] | Building the field and best practices and is accountable.[e.g. FPR] |
| Policies | Does not have any policies | Does not have but interested in developing policies | May have some equity and social justice language within policies [DEI policy] | Has a policy/plan but not sure how to implement it | Has a plan with clear goals, strategies and indicators |
| Infrastructure  | Has not had an internal discussion about the organisation’s equity and social justice work | Has had some internal equity and social justice discussions, but doesn’t have an infrastructure to guide the work | Smalls groups are guided by equity and social justice but not in the wider organisation | Has internal committees that have power to be able to implement changes [Equity and Social Justice Working Group] | Work on equity and social justice is integrated into every aspects of the organisation  |
| Training | Has not done any equity and social justice training | Is contemplating doing training [Training menu] | Some staff or trustees have attended equity and social justice training | All trustees and staff are involved in equity and social justice training and capacity building | Has ongoing training. Staff and trustees are accountable |
| Diversity | Does not see the need to have a diverse board and staff team | Has had conversations about the importance of having a diverse board and staff team [In trustee meetings] | Beginning to attempt to diversify the board | Actively works to increase diversity of the board and staff team | Has policies and strategies to increase diversity on board and staff team |
| Data | Does not collect demographic data | Currently does not collect demographic data but see it as a future goal [grant making, make up of staff/trustees] | Collects some data but not in a systemic way | Collects data across programmatic and other areas but might not know what to do with the data | Collects data across programmatic and other areas but knows what the data represents. |
| Community/Marginalised groups | Does not see the point of engaging with marginalised groups | Value the idea of of building partnerships but does not know how | Beginning to build partnerships but has not yet implemented accountability [e.g. Decolonsing Economics] | Actively works to build relationships and partnerships. | Has mutually beneficial, accountable and equitable relationships that has addressed power issues  |
| Decisions | Equity and social justice issues do not factor into decision-making | Interested in factoring equity and social justice, may say it is an add on | Decisions are occasionally made because of equity and social justice [Investment Engagement/Grants] | Decisions about governance is informed by using an equity and social justice lens | Decisions about govenance are systematically guided by equity and social justice |
| Accountability  | Equity and social metrics are not used in staff or trustees  | Values Equity and social metrics [Ongoing discussions on what is the best way to achieve this]. | Preparing to include Equity and social metrics | Equity and social metrics used across some of the organisation  | Equity and social metrics used across the organisation |
| Inclusion | Does not see the need to create an inclusive organisation | Values the idea of being an inclusive organisation  | There is space for equity and social justice and inclusion discussions but individuals are required to conform to the dominate culture | The voices of staff and trustees who experience marginalisation are heard and the organisation is in transition from a dominant culture to an inclusive – multicultural culture | All staff and trustees feel valued and listened too. The organisation has transited to an inclusive multicultural organisation and have policies in place to keep this. |