

Cripplegate Foundation

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy: Priorities, Plans and Progress 2022 - 2026

Last updated: July 2025



**Team volunteering day at Pooles
Park Primary School, April 2025**

Introduction

Diversity is one of the many reasons why Islington is such a great place to live and work. As an organisation, we value that and acknowledge that a more diverse and inclusive organisation leads to more innovation and better decision making.

However, we recognise systemic and structural inequalities that disproportionately impact particular communities or social groups in one or multiple levels in Islington and beyond. Identities such as gender, sex, race, class, sexuality, religion or disability can combine to create unique forms of disadvantage in life.

We are committed to working for social justice and equality for all communities and our aim is to ensure that we understand, consider and address inequalities in everything we do at Cripplegate Foundation and Islington Giving. In doing so, we strive to become a more diverse and inclusive organisation that truly reflects the community.

We will do this by:

- Considering and addressing inequalities locally through our grant making, advocacy, and convening, and to ensure our funds get to where they are needed most.
- Enabling and ensuring our grantees and partners adhere to agreed equalities principles.
- Ensuring that our organisation and processes are robust and fit for purpose to enable us to achieve our ambitions in this area, including but not limited to our policies, investments, recruitment, procurement, communications, events and governance.
- Creating inclusive environments and spaces, including in the workplace, in which individual contributions and differences are recognised and valued, and where individuals can raise concerns or make suggestions to enhance our inclusivity or make changes.

Cripplegate has been considering its role in embedding DEI within the organisation for several years. We established a DEI workplan in 2020, from which we made significant progress in diversifying our board and establishing a DEI trustee committee. The latest version of our DEI strategy (see below) links directly to our overarching Cripplegate Foundation strategy and each of our DEI objectives flows directly from these wider organisational strategic goals, as demonstrated in the list of priorities in the table below. We see DEI as an integral part of our organisational mission.

Working definitions: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Our understanding and working definitions of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion are:

Diversity: the existence of differences within a given setting. These differences may include, but are not limited to, gender, age, race, class, sexuality, religion, disability (hidden or apparent), background, heritage, ethnicity, and nationality. We also recognise that it is organisations and groups that are “diverse”, rather than individuals themselves; however, an individual can bring a diverse range of perspectives and experiences that, along with others, creates a more diverse and inclusive environment.

Equity: recognising that everyone has different needs, challenges, opportunities, and experiences. People from marginalised groups, for example, often have barriers to accessing opportunities and resources than those from more privileged groups. We also recognise that systemic and structural inequalities have and can disproportionately impact communities and social groups in one or multiple levels. e. Equity is a strategic approach that recognises the differences between individuals and groups and strives to provide equal access and outcomes for all.

Inclusion: a proactive approach in ensuring that everyone feels recognised, valued, and respected. It is about creating environments and spaces that are collaborative, supportive, and respectful of individual needs and differences. As an organisation, we aim to foster a culture of inclusion for our employees, partners, and groups we work with. This includes striving to address and tackle any barriers, internally and externally, which are affecting an individual or group’s ability to fully engage with us and the work we do.



Images: Help on Your Doorstep, New River, Good Neighbours Scheme, Nov 2021

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy: Priorities, Plans and Progress – 2022-26

(Updated Summer 2025)

CRIPPLEGATE FOUNDATION STRATEGY PRIORITIES		DIVERSITY EQUITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGY APPROACH	PROGRESS TO DATE
Priority 1 – Listen, Learn and Act			
1	Conduct a new research project into the impact of the pandemic on the most disadvantaged residents in the borough and adapt our grant making and wider work as a result.	Community-led research to be developed and implemented with a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion lens and focus.	This work was completed in 2023. We continue to use the community-based findings to inform our work.
2	Expand the ways people from all backgrounds can get involved in our work, including developing our residents' led grant making panels.	Work further towards sharing power by increasing the number of opportunities for local residents to get involved in our work e.g. community-led research, participatory grant making (PGM) panels, using expertise of panel alumni.	- We held our first Community Panel, for people of all ages (18-80) to come together to make funding decisions. The panel comprised 13 people including three panel members who disclosed a disability or long-term health condition, and three panel members had caring responsibilities. The panel included people from Asian, Middle Eastern, European, African and Caribbean backgrounds. Groups funded by the panel included Remark! Community, a playscheme for deaf children, Maa Shanti, supporting women from the South Asian Community, Stuart Low Trust, for people with a mental health challenge, and a community gardening project for learning disabled people. - We held our second grant giving panel for unpaid carers. Four people with caring responsibilities awarded funding to groups supporting local carers. - We continued development of our Alumni Project, to support residents who have taken part in one of our grant-making panels or our community research. As a result, we now have residents taking part in a range of decision-making committees across our organisation, including the Islington Giving Grants Committee, the Islington Council Community Chest panel, and our Make It Happen awards panel.

			• Alumni have taken part in a range of other activities including presentations about our work, fundraising events, and visits to funded projects to report on progress. A group recently visited the Mayor of Islington to talk about their experiences. An Alum with first-hand experience also joined the Council's Borough of Sanctuary grant making project, which awarded money to local refugee and asylum groups. • Two former Alumni have also joined our staff team. • Cripplegate's Development Partner project around domestic abuse continues to involve both professionals and residents with lived experience in the co-design and delivery of the project.
3	Better engage with our key partners and stakeholders and develop a strategic approach with people and organisations who can help us to achieve our goals.	Review how we currently engage with our key partners and stakeholders to see how this could be improved and whether there are communities we are not engaging.	• Published our working DEI plan online with regular updates. • Conducted a social media content audit focused on DEI and accessibility. • Produced programme reports that include DEI-specific information and data where available, e.g. our Islington Council's Community Chest reports. • We continue to bring together our funded groups to share learning and get to know each other. For example, we hosted all our main grant recipients at a networking event. This included our original main grantees and those groups led by and for the communities in which they work. We also coordinated with The Richard Cloudesley Foundation a borough-wide event for groups providing advice as part of their work, many of which work in community settings. • We continue to offer applicant groups the opportunity to apply via a video submission option and we are always open to talking with and meeting all applicants to address potential challenges. We are also offering enhanced support to some of our community funded groups, to help with organisational and fundraising challenges.
4	Review each programme we fund and our overall impact, communicating and using this information to better inform future grant making and our wider work.	Taking our grants equality audit a step further with a focus on understanding where gaps exist, why they exist and possible solutions.	• We are currently reviewing our Disability Fund, which supports groups to make their activities accessible for disabled people, and to train staff around access issues. The review aims to widen access to the fund and increase the number of grants awarded. • Updated our 360 Giving grant-making data and included dedicated pages with links on both websites. • We produced a review of all our participatory grant making work over the last eight years, which we shared via a round table learning event. • As described below, we reviewed our funding to groups led by and for minoritised communities.

5	Reach out to new local organisations to develop new grant programmes in response to local need.	• Taking our grants equality audit a step further with a focus on understanding where gaps exist, why they exist and possible solutions.	• In 2022 we launched a new Cripplegate fund to support groups led by and for minoritised communities, including disabled people and LGBTQ+ people. In 2025, we reviewed this fund, meeting with current grantees and some new organisations and then awarded £500,000 in core funding to 15 groups. The funding for new groups supported our aim to reach as many different communities as we can in the borough. Grants included those going to the Islington Bangladeshi Association, The Islington Chinese Association, One True Voice (led by and for migrant women, particularly from Somalia), and Eritrean Community In the UK, amongst others. • We renewed grants to some organisations funded under our Mind the Gap programme, providing mental health support for homeless people with complex needs. Continuation grants were made to Street Storage and the Kurdish and Middle Eastern Women's Organisation (KMEWO). • In the third year of our Food Fund focused on food poverty, we sought to address a range of needs, including helping food projects become more sustainable. We recognised that needs have increased around support for refugees and asylum seekers as Islington is one of the Home Office's designated temporary holding centres. Many people are living in hotels without access to cooking facilities or consideration of their cultural needs around food. We continue to contribute our growing knowledge of this sector to the development of a broader framework and plan around food security.
---	--	--	---

Priority 2 – Raise funds, make grants

1	Make grants to local organisations and projects.	Taking our grants equality audit a step further with a focus on understanding where gaps exist, why they exist and possible solutions.	• See point above for descriptions of various funds. • In addition, the ongoing Islington Council Community Chest fund provides an opportunity for small community groups to apply for up to £5,000 a year. This fund has been a launch point for many groups now well established in the borough. In the last 12 months, over half the groups funded defined themselves as working with people from Asian, Black, a mixed or other ethnic background. 58% supported women and 38% people with a health condition. • Through Islington Giving's Make It Happen Fund, we offer £500 grants to small groups of residents to fund ideas to make their communities happier and healthier. We try to make the application
---	---	--	--

			process as easy as possible, so do not ask applicants to disclose DEI data for their ideas. However, we have funded many projects supporting minoritised groups. Galbur Foundation held a mother and daughter football event, with a particular focus on the Somali community. Life Chances, who support people from the Ethiopian community, collaborated with AFLAH and hosted a summer event to bring the local Somali and Ethiopian communities together to share traditional foods. The fund also supported a resident to run a life drawing class for Pride Month, a support group for Queer China UK, and United Communities CIO, a support group for LGBTQ+ people over 50.
2	Engage more supporters with our vision and increase our voluntary income from individual donors, Trusts and Foundations and corporate organisations through our work with Islington Giving, and our work in partnership with Islington Council.	Create a compelling case for support, sharing the need, people's stories and evidence, that will engage a broad range of donors, from individual Islington residents to Trusts & Foundations.	• We have refreshed both websites and shared more stories from residents and groups to amplify the voices of those we partner with, including marginalised communities across Islington. For example, our Participatory Grant Making reports and annual impact report, news and stories on our websites, alongside the various events we run where we hear directly from our partners and residents. • Continuing to monitor accessibility of both websites including a comprehensive plugin audit. • Explored new communication channels to reach more diverse communities for the Make It Happen fund. • Worked with local groups to create diverse range of case studies to raise awareness of need. • Produced and published annual Islington Giving Impact reports showcasing a diverse range of community groups. • Commissioned photo shoots and case study discussions with local groups to reflect a broad range of Islington residents. • We hosted our first 'We Made It Happen' event, a vibrant community gathering showcasing the impact of our Make it Happen resident-led micro-grants. Attended by past and new grantees, the event celebrated community-driven projects, lived experiences and diverse voices. • Launched the community-led research report with 100 local stakeholders from a range of organisations and communities. • Planning a digital skills webinar to support Islington Council's Community Chest grantees to amplify their work both online and offline and engage their local councillors in promoting this inclusive fund.
3	Invest our endowment responsibly and strike a balance between maximising income for our local work with at least one social impact investment.	Explore social impact investment opportunities and review the Foundation's Investment policy to ensure these mirror our wider DEI goals.	• We have updated our investment policy, reviewed our Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) principles and increased our focus on specific DEI measures for company voting and engagement (including Board diversity, and equality pay gap reporting).

- We regularly attend events provided by Charities Responsible Investment Network (CRIN) to learn from research and peers about best practice in responsible investment, including DEI, and have now joined Shareaction's Good Work Coalition, which campaigns and engages directly with employers on key issues of inequality, such as Living Wage, Board diversity, and diversity pay gap reporting. This also provides the opportunity to participate in collaborative actions on DEI issues.
- We recently changed one of our investment managers where we were not satisfied with ESG and wider performance. We continue to meet regularly with our Investment Manager, to review and question performance on key DEI metrics.
- We have signed up to participate in a collaborative commissioning process for a new investment manager with a number of other funders (the Investing Olympics). The focus of this collaborative and open tender process is to ensure transparency, with a strong focus on environmental sustainability and ethical conduct, including DEI.
- The commissioning process for the Investing Olympics includes the 'Future Generations Panel', to involve a group of young people in helping shape the investment direction of part of our endowment, and a former Islington Giving young grant maker will be taking part in this panel.
- We have identified DEI criteria for selecting future impact investments, agreeing a focus on SDG 10 (reduced inequalities) and SDG 5 (participation of women). We continue to monitor the social impact of our first impact investment providing housing for survivors of domestic violence.

Priority 3 – Amplifying Local Voices

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| 1 | <p>Use our independence and local networks to increase and amplify the experiences and ideas of our partners, local organisations, residents and supporters.</p> | <p>Change the narrative and perception of our donors and grantees – emphasise that everyone has something to give in challenging poverty and inequality.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In partnership with fellow funder Cloudesley and our funded advice groups (Citizens Advice Bureau, Islington Law Centre, the Islington BAMER Advice Alliance and Help on Your Doorstep), we are commissioning a small research project to use the evidence from their work to highlight issues around access to housing repairs in the borough. The project grew from repeated examples of poor conditions in which some social housing residents are living, with particular focus on the difficulty people face in getting repairs done to their properties. Nearly all the clients supported by our advice |
|---|---|--|---|

			partners are living with a disability, either their own or someone they care for, or have language and other access challenges. We hope the project will enable those most impacted to have a voice in the solutions. - Continued to share more stories and experiences to change the traditional donor / beneficiary narrative, challenge preconceptions, and develop a collective purpose in challenging local poverty and inequality - Delivered social media campaigns and marked several awareness days / weeks to amplify local stories and experiences including mental health awareness week (working with local Mental Health orgs to share real stories), International Women's Day (Sharing DEI Committee quotes), Neurodiversity Week, Carers' Week, and included personal staff reflections around faith celebrations like Ramadan. - During Small Charities Week we amplified the voices of local groups and people, including our resident Alumni and recent Make it Happen and Islington Council's Community Chest grantees - Introduced new Governors and staff members (including DEI committee members) on website / social media platforms. - Co-created content for social media with Young Grant Makers and our Alumni group to tell their own stories. - As part of marking 15 years of Islington Giving, we launched our latest Impact Report (May 2025) - including statistics, quotes, and stories from residents - with a celebration event which centred and amplified the experiences and perspectives of resident grant makers, local people and community partners. Rather than a traditional report launch, we created an interactive, accessible space where impact was showcased through a range of creative forms: from presentations and spoken word poetry to interactive art displays and storytelling.
2	Produce and implement a plan for raising awareness of local issues that contribute to poverty in Islington, as experienced by our partners, grantees, and residents, to galvanise more support for residents.	Use existing research, partner experiences and new research to create an annual content plan to highlight the main areas of poverty and inequality in Islington.	- Created an annual content plan to amplify local and diverse voices around stories and key awareness moments. - Using data from Islington Council's '2024 State of Inequalities' report and Trust for London to share the latest evidence of need – this is used in our impact reports, the annual report, on our websites and in social posts. 2024 Council Tax appeal produced in collaboration with Islington Council, focused on combating isolation, encouraging residents to share messages of kindness, and in 2025 we centred the lived experience of someone on our carers' panel. - Completed a community-led research project in November 2023 and published the results online and at an event.

3	Bring together organisations, partners and others for discussion, learning, collaboration, advocacy and sharing good practice.	Continue to engage with our partners and networks to keep learning and sharing good practice and trial innovative ways of doing so	• Attended partnership meetings focused on DEI, including Funders for Race Equality Alliance and London Funders Equalities group. • Joined the Diversity Forum, signed up for Manifesto 2.0, and aligned it with our DEI plan. • Hosted regular internal "Lunch and Learn" sessions on DEI topics, open to all organisations in our office building. • Held networking sessions for Cripplegate grantees, and for grantees receiving catalyst awards, food fund donations and advice partners. • Cripplegate Foundation represented at BAYES Masters Charity Finance course, London Funders, Association of Charitable Foundation event, Beacon Philanthropy events, the Islington-wide VCS and Council conference and other platforms.
---	---	--	---

Priority 4 – Organisational Excellence

1	Produce and implement an action plan to push forward on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) ambitions in all that we do, creating an inclusive organisation where everyone is welcomed, valued and supported.	Make DEI a transparent and embedded part of the organisation that can clearly be demonstrated in our day- to-day work with a commitment to ongoing learning and collaboration.	• Published this DEI plan online and we are communicating our progress (both internally and externally) online, at team meetings, at board meetings and through external blogs and social media. • All foundation staff participated in training around organisational culture and inclusion. • DEI Working Group mapped our current DEI strategy against the commitments made in the DEI Forum Manifesto. • Commissioned initial research on the origins of the Foundation's wealth, and further research and discussions taking place with our Board.
2	Identify specific ways we will work to improve the environmental sustainability of our work and the work that we support, in line with our mission and with the Funder Commitment on Climate Change.	Develop a sustainability plan in line with the Funder Commitment on Climate Change	• An action plan developed for our commitment to climate change as a member of ACF's Funder Commitment to climate change. • An internal sustainability working group has been established meeting to review and develop the action plan.
3	Ensure the Foundation's operational structure and governance arrangements have the right skills, systems and processes in place and are as efficient as possible.	Ensure the operational review of the organisation includes an analysis of key DEI metrics of our staff/board, and the whole organisation.	• Redeveloped the Foundation's DEI Monitoring form for use during recruitment and continue to evaluate its effectiveness and the wider approach towards data collection. • Unconscious Bias training delivered by The Big House at a Cripplegate Foundation Governors' away day as part of our journey towards being a more equitable organisation. • Recruitment of new Cripplegate Governors continues to diversify the Board, as has staff recruitment, helping to ensure that the Board and staff team are reflecting diverse perspectives and experiences. • Led a discussion with the Islington Giving Board (chaired by Cripplegate Governor) on sharing power and DEI within and across Islington Giving.

			This has led to the creation of three alumni/resident roles on the Islington Giving grants committee.
4	Embed long term financial planning to deploy our resources in the most effective manner. To include: three-year financial forecasting alongside the annual budget, ensuring a balanced budget on a rolling three-year basis.	Provide adequate and sustainable resourcing to allow our DEI ambitions to become reality.	• Three-year budgeting process includes specific financial provision for DEI work including external consultancy as needed. • We have also increased our funding available in 2025 for our main grants to groups led by and for the communities they serve. This now runs on a three yearly renewal cycle.

Cripplegate Foundation

Registered Charity No: 207499
13 Elliott's Place, London N1 8HX
www.cripplegate.org