

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION PROGRESS REPORT, OCTOBER 2025

Background

Against a backdrop of high-profile social justice movements, the charitable sector, including funders, has come under heightened scrutiny in recent years. In light of this, in June 2020, we created a working group of trustees and staff to improve our performance with respect to diversity, equity and inclusion.

The response to the Coronavirus pandemic, and in particular the way the pandemic affected more marginalised groups in society, created a further focus and urgency for change. Here at SCF we take this very seriously and have taken time to understand more about concepts like intersectionality and adopted an approach of continual improvement.

This, our third progress report, highlights what we have done so far and what our next steps will be. It also provides an analysis of who we are. We recognise that there's much more we can and must do. Please do let us know your thoughts on this report.

Progress since our last survey

As a charity and employer

1. We have recently introduced new staff and trustee recruitment policies designed, in part, to increase our reach and attractiveness to people from diverse backgrounds.

As a funder

2. We have developed and piloted a different approach to directly funding highly deprived neighbourhoods that have not previously accessed our funding.
3. Based on insights provided to us by people with autism and learning disabilities, and their carers, we have agreed with a funder to establish a dedicated endowment to provide long-term support for a self-advocacy service.

- Similarly, led by the wishes of care-experienced young people, including unaccompanied asylum seekers, we have designed and started to deliver a 4 year programme of funding to support their transition into independent living outside the care system.

In our influencing role

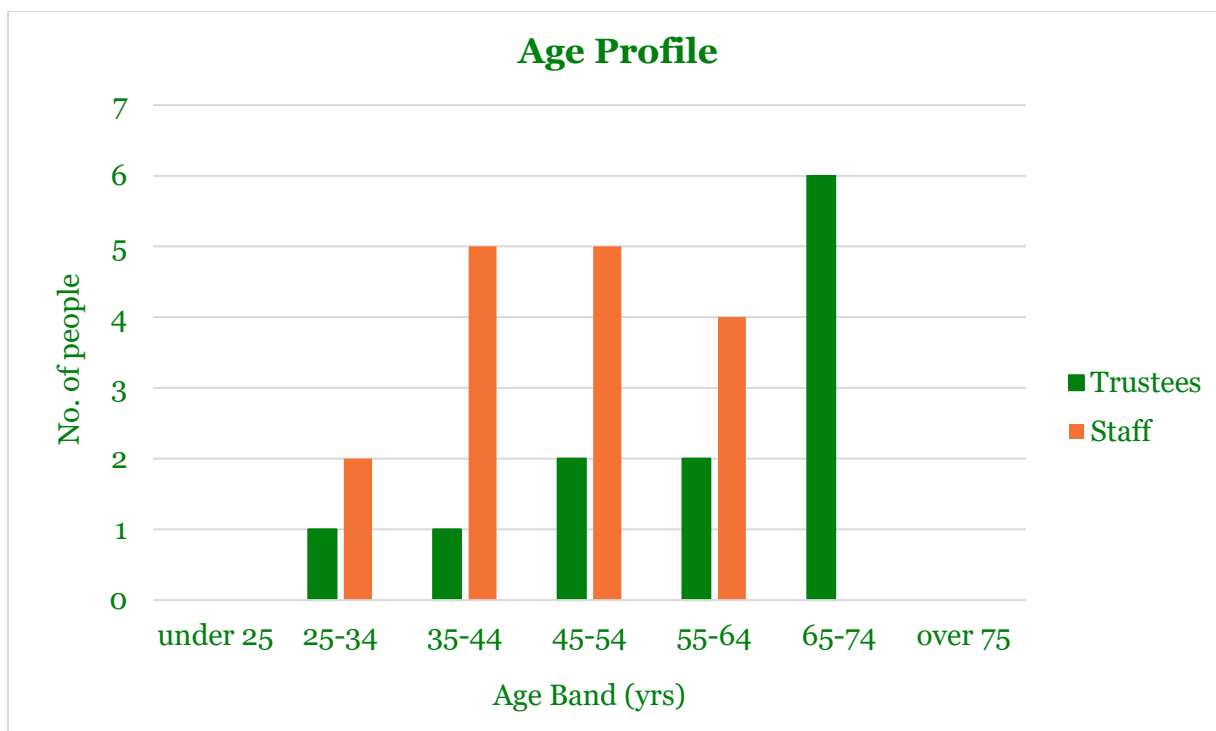
- In partnership with IVAR and Devon Community Foundation we are leading and have agreed to contributed funding to, launch a research project to understand how equitably philanthropy and funding responds to the needs of rural communities.

Who we are today¹

Metric	Benchmarks		Our Board	Our Staff	Combined
	UK	Somerset			
Female:Male	51:49	51:49	50:50	75:25	66:33
% identifying other than straight/heterosexual	11%	10%	0	6%	4%
% self-identify living with disability	17%	19%	0	6%	4%
% from Black, Asian or other non-White backgrounds	18%	4%	0	0	0%
% educated to degree or above		32%	75%	81%	85%
% in receipt of benefits growing up			0	50%	21%

Please note, due to an error in the survey, a key question about neurodiversity was missing. One member of staff voluntarily added this in a comments section. In addition one person reported there are registered disabled, but preferred to self-identify as such

¹ Based on survey Oct/Nov 2025



Since the last survey 4 members of staff and 1 trustee have left, and 4 staff and 2 trustees have joined the Board.

With such a small team (at the time of the survey, the number of trustees and staff combined was 28, so one person represents approximately 4% of the respondents), we have to be careful of attaching too much statistical significance to these results.

Even allowing for this the survey reveals that while we continue to have a level of diversity within the organisation, it has reduced.

We can note that at the time of survey:

- We have an equal gender balance on our Board, and a significant weighting towards women within our staff, many of whom have caring responsibilities.
- We no longer have anyone directly involved in the Foundation who comes from Black, Asian or other non-White backgrounds, although one respondent identified as being 'White-other'.
- The number of people self-identifying as living with disability has dropped significantly.
- While we have representation across the age range within the organisation, the Trustee average age has fallen slightly to just below 59 (which is close to the UK average for charity boards), and the staff average age as risen slightly to just above 47.
- The Trustees and staff team are, overall, educated to a higher level than the general Somerset population.

- We saw an increase in number of staff who grew up in financially disadvantaged households.

Next steps

We'll continue in our efforts to better reflect, and become more inclusive of, the communities we serve. In the coming year we have a number of priorities and actions:

As a charity and employer

1. Improve our staff and trustee recruitment processes to better reach people from a broader range of backgrounds to ensure we are attracting the best talent and bringing lived experiences into our organisation.
2. Ensure our diversity survey in future takes account of people living with long-term illness and neurodivergence.
3. Organise a session for trustees to review and agree culture and practices that create a more inclusive environment for everyone.

As a funder

4. Develop at least one long-term (between 5 and 10 years) commitment to invest in historically underfunded communities and ensure we help establish a permanent self-advocacy organisation for Somerset.
5. Use our new CRM system to create a system for recording how our funding reaches historically underfunded communities, including groups led by minority ethnic groups.
6. Convene a review panel of people with 'expertise by experience' around a theme to guide our funding.

In our influencing role

7. Commence the research project on equity within UK philanthropy with respect to rural communities.
8. Re-commence 'Hidden Somerset' reports to highlight areas of hidden disadvantage and inequality.

This list is not meant to be exhaustive but it does reflect the next steps we feel we can and should take at this stage.

Annex 1: Resources used by Trustees and staff

DEI Coalition - Transforming UK Philanthropy

<https://deicoalition.com/>

ACF - DEI: The pillars of stronger foundation practice

https://www.acf.org.uk/common/Uploaded%20files/Research%20and%20resources/Stronger%20foundations/ACF_DEI_Thepillarsofstrongerfoundationpractice_final.pdf

CAF - From the margins to the mainstream

<https://www.cafonline.org/docs/default-source/about-us-policy-and-campaigns/from-the-margins-to-the-mainstream--philanthropy-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-in-our-society-june-2020.pdf>

Grant Givers Movement - Discrimination, prejudice and isomorphism

https://www.grantgiversmovement.org/files/ugd/oed318_096bd55a4f7f410e896646af6d3e86aa.pdf