Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Data Standard update

This article references the DEI Data Standard – more information about it can be accessed [here](#).

All the way back in August 2020, I joined a group of charitable funders that met on Zoom for the first time to talk about diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) data, and how we could capture such data through a shared framework (classification, language and approach) that allowed us to see as individual organisations and as a collective who we were, or were not, funding. This group eventually became the DEI Data Group, responsible for the DEI Data Standard, which committed to the following areas of work:

1. The development of a **DEI related taxonomy**, which acts as a classification system that can be applied to organisations and the work they are doing. The taxonomy is updated as needed and was last updated in December 2022.
2. An **approach to implementing the taxonomy**, both for applicant organisations and grant-holders.
3. **Guidance** that ensures the DEI Data Standard is applied consistently against those implementing it, which allows for funders to benchmark and compare their results and ensures that applicant organisations are asked questions about the DEI Data Standard in a similar way.
4. **Promotion** of the DEI Data Standard so that it is piloted and adopted by as many charitable funders as possible.

In April 2021, the taxonomy had been developed through in-depth research and analysis by Bonnie Chiu at The Social Innovation Consultancy and Tania Cohen at 360Giving. Attention then turned to how it could be implemented as part of application processes in ways that didn't place undue burden on those applying and our own organisations.

Here at John Ellerman Foundation, we had no hesitation in adopting the principles and methodologies set out by the DEI Data Standard. Several operational factors have however delayed us in the implementation of the DEI Data Standard. Firstly, it was figuring out how to use the DEI Data Standard as a core costs funder, rather than as a project costs funder. Then it was working out how to build the form on our grants database in a way that was user-friendly. This was also in the context that for most of 2022 we had interim grants staff in place, due to staff vacancies, absence and a restructure, with our new permanent Grants Team joining us in November and December 2022.

So, a whole two years on, we are delighted to share that the DEI Data Standard is finally part of our first stage application process!

The first thing to make clear is that the data we collect about an organisation in relation to the DEI Data Standard **will not** be used as part of our assessment processes. There is no judgment or preference for particular responses, and applicants also have the option of selecting 'prefer not to say' if they wish.

By collecting this data in aggregate for at least 12 months, we will be able to gain a better understanding about the kinds of organisations that are applying to us and that we go on to fund. This will allow us to discern if there are any correlations between the organisations we reject or progress, and their approach to DEI, as set out in the DEI Data Standard. We can even use the

data to compare, or benchmark, our results with other organisations using the DEI Data Standard and other datasets relating to UK population demographics primarily. These findings will enable us to commit to internal learning and improvements in our practice that may be required in order to make sure we are a diverse, equitable and inclusive funder. Over the coming years, we should also be able to see the way in which the data we are collecting through the DEI Data Standard is changing, or not, and how this compares with other funders and their work on DEI.

If you are considering an application to JEF and have questions about the DEI Data Standard, then you can contact the Grants Team to discuss this on grants@ellerman.org.uk.