

Our Foundation Practice Rating results

(3 minute read)

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We are delighted to announce that John Ellerman Foundation has achieved an **A rating** in the 2023 results for [the Foundation Practice Rating \(FPR\)](#).

The FPR is a rating system that assesses the practices of UK-based trusts and foundations in relation to diversity, accountability and transparency, allowing those rated to understand their strengths and weakness in these areas and how they can make improvements. Giving Evidence, a philanthropy research consultancy, undertakes the assessment, and the FPR assigns a rating of A, B, C or D to each of the three 'pillars' of diversity, accountability and transparency, which then results in an overall rating being given.

This year, **seven** Foundations achieved an A rating, which is an improvement on last year when the FPR announced its first ever set of results and awarded three A ratings. The Foundations that received an A rating this year are diverse in size and structure, and comprise the following, in addition to John Ellerman Foundation: Oxfordshire Community Foundation, Walcot Educational Foundation, Blagrove Trust, Wellcome Trust, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

Last year, we received a B rating, broken down into a C for diversity, a B for accountability and an A for transparency. This year our numerical scores in all three areas improved from the year before, and our A rating breaks down into a B for diversity, an A for accountability and an A for transparency.

The FPR provides each foundation it assesses with a write up of their results and a breakdown of how they scored against each criterion. This supports us to make tangible improvements in how we work and the report that details the full set of results also provides insights and examples of effective practices employed by other foundations. As a result of the FPR, some of the changes that we have made over the last 12 months are summarised below:

1. Producing our funding guidelines in Welsh.
2. Including the diversity of our Trustees in our annual report.
3. Publishing our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy on its website (although this was done for other reasons too, beyond participation in the FPR).
4. Including information on our website about when funds will be distributed after a grant is made, and all the details about what is requested in progress and final reports.
5. Making it clearer that it is our Trustees who make grant decisions.
6. Publishing our gender pay gap in our annual report.
7. Adding ReciteMe – an accessibility tool – to our website.
8. Updating our Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to make it clearer about what to do if you're not happy about any aspect of the funding process.

Some of the changes above were already on our radar, say within the diversity strand, but others like providing our funding guidelines in Welsh, outlining our reporting and payments process in detail on our website, and adding an accessibility tool to our website were prioritised and realised because of the FPR.

Following the release of this year's results, all foundations that have been rated have also been asked to commit to three actions for the year ahead. Our three commitments for the year ahead are to:

1. Complete an **accessibility audit** in relation to our grantmaking and consider ways in which the findings from this can be implemented, in order to enhance our grantmaking and application offer.
2. Update our **complaints process** so that it is clearer within the FAQs in our funding guidelines what an organisation can do if they are unhappy about any part of the application process, as well as considering whether we should make this offer of complaining more explicit within our declination emails.
3. Commission nfpResearch to **complete another independent perception audit** for us with our grant-holders and applicants to assess our grantmaking processes and act on the findings.

We are part of the funder collaboration, led by Friends Provident Foundation, that is providing multi-year funding for the design and implementation of the FPR. We are particularly supportive of the outward-facing way in which the assessment criteria for the FPR has been designed and selected for inclusion, and that the criteria and [results](#) are all shared publicly as a resource for others to make use of.

Being part of initiatives like the FPR support us to fulfil our ambition to be a transparent, accountable and effective grantmaker. We hope that year on year, everyone that works with us can benefit from the ongoing improvements we make to how we work and how we make grants.