

Introduction to Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in the UK Archive Sector

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About your facilitator

Hello!

Background working in the UK archive sector
(outreach, digitisation and project management)

MA Archives and Records Management and PhD in
Information Studies from UCL

Current post: Lecturer in Digital Information
and Curatorial Practice in Manchester
Metropolitan University's iSchool



Overview of training

Presentation 1: The external context of equality, equity, diversity and inclusion

Presentation 2: Exploring equality, diversity and inclusion in the UK archive sector

Presentation 3: Developing existing practice

At the end of each presentation: self-guided task or knowledge check

Learning outcomes

At the end of this module, you will be able to

- Understand definitions of a series of key terms and the background context for increased interest in equality, diversity and inclusion work
- Identify relevant UK legislation and schemes in equality, diversity and inclusion (e.g, access to work, reasonable adjustments)
- Become more familiar with relevant archive sector policy and historical initiatives to take action in this area
- Identify opportunities for developing your knowledge through future development
- Feel empowered to discuss potential changes to service practice



Tone of training



Assumes no (or little) existing knowledge



Targeted at archive sector workers/volunteers at any level of experience



Pre-recorded presentations to allow you to move through training at your pace



Captions are available

Notes on terminology

- Language changes over time
- Effort has been made to use inclusive language in the development of this training (produced in 2022)
- Feedback is always welcomed

The external context of equality, equity, diversity and inclusion

Presentation 1

Presentation 1: Outline

Definitions of key terms

Relevant legislation

Public and private sector equality frameworks

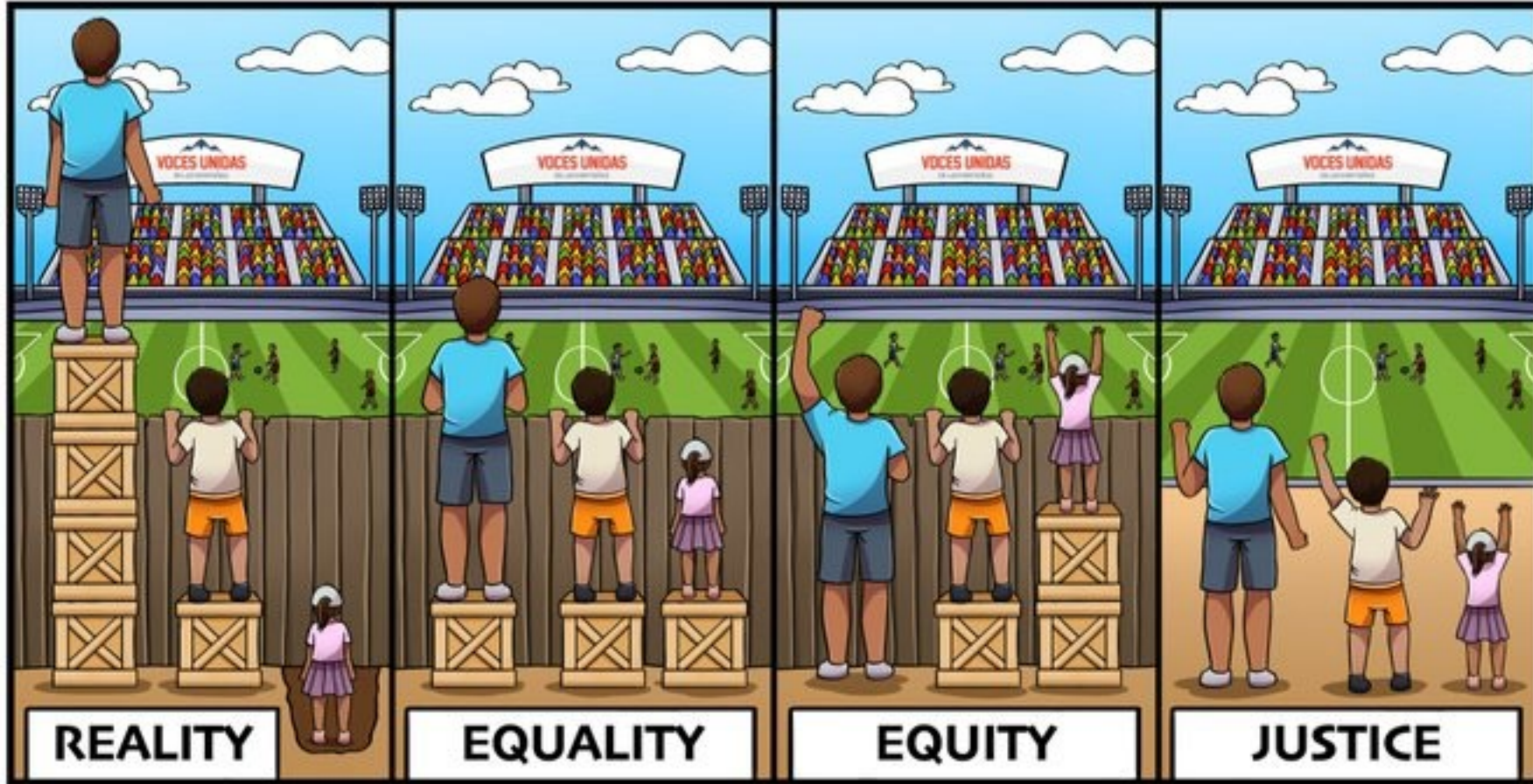
Examples of common organisational issues and concerns

Potential outcomes

Key terms: equality and equity

“**Equality** suggests that everyone is at a particular starting point and should be treated the same. It seeks to promote fairness, but it can only work if everyone starts from the same place and needs the same level of support.” (Solomon-Pryce, 2015)

“**Equity**, by way of contrast, aims to give everyone what they need to be successful. It focuses on ‘equality of outcomes’. This involves taking into account structures which might put particular groups at a disadvantage.” (Solomon-Pryce, 2015)



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Key terms: diversity and inclusion

- “**Diversity** is recognising, respecting and celebrating each other's differences. A diverse environment is one with a wide range of backgrounds and mindsets, which allows for an empowered culture of creativity and innovation.” (University of Edinburgh, no date)
- “**Inclusion** means creating an environment where everyone feels welcome and valued. An inclusive environment can only be created once we are more aware of our unconscious biases, and have learned how to manage them.” (University of Edinburgh, no date)

Consider what makes you feel welcome in a space

In work, leisure, and education spaces

Key law: Equality Act (2010)

- Protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation based on one (or more) characteristics.
- In work, when accessing public services (e.g., hospital, education), when using businesses, when using transport, when participating in clubs, in contact with public bodies
- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation



Types of discrimination

- **Direct** – treating someone worse than another person due to a characteristic
- **Indirect** – a person/group is disadvantaged due to a rule or policy
- **Harassment** – violating a person's dignity, creating a hostile environment
- **Victimisation** – a person is treated unfairly when taking action against discrimination (or supporting someone else to do so)



Organisations have responsibilities under the Equality Act if they...

01

Let or manage premises

02

Provide goods or services

03

Employ people

04

Carry out specific activities (e.g., provide transport, education)

Public sector equality duty

Requires public authorities to do the following when carrying out their functions:

- “Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation”
- “Advance equality of opportunity”
- “Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it”

(gov.uk, no date)

Standards for the private sector

- No additional mandatory legal duty, enforced in law, as in the public sector
- However, equality standards have been developed (e.g., NES) which guide organisations to assess their organisation and develop action plans



Examples of issues related to equality, diversity and inclusion

- Pay gaps
- Discrimination in recruitment
- Limited career progression
- Bullying and harassment
- Exclusion in professional networks
- Indirect discrimination in events

(CIPD, 2019)

Potential actions

- Positive action initiatives
- Creation of policy documents and action plans
- Creation of procedures for management of complaints and grievances
- Adaptation to traditional working methods
 - Hybrid, remote, flexible working
- Changes to existing policy and procedures
 - Consultation



Potential outcomes/benefits of work



An organisation's reputation as an employer is improved – attraction and retention of staff



Increased understanding of and reputation within specific communities



Diversity of perspectives enables more creative decision making, more diverse skill sets, and the provision of better services



Fast staff turnover is more expensive than managing diversity

(Department for Business Innovation and Skills, 2013)



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Knowledge check

Well done! You've finished this presentation.

Test your knowledge by completing a short online quiz, available via Kahoot.

Access the quiz through the following link:

<https://kahoot.it/challenge/002856631>



Exploring equality, equity, diversity and inclusion in the UK archive sector

Presentation 2



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Presentation 2: Outline



Building upon presentation one

Archive services will have legal obligations decided by the sector of their parent organisation

Equality Act (2010)

Public Service Equality Duty

These obligations can inform the development of specific initiatives, policy documents and organisational strategy



We have *legal* responsibilities but also *ethical* and *moral* responsibilities over the collections, communities and users we work with, and to our colleagues across the sector

Communities are immensely diverse and not monolithic

LGBTQ+

Global Majority

Women

Working class

People with disabilities

Example: what it means to “be a woman”
and be supported as a woman will differ
from individual to individual

Where do we stand right now?

Workforce

- Gender pay gap
- Women under-represented in leadership roles
- Low ethnic diversity
- Fewer people with disabilities in the workforce

(CILIP and ARA, 2015)

Published experiences of workers

- Entry routes to profession
- Career progression
- Isolation/otherness
- Feeling unsafe
- Lack of support
- Unconscious bias

(Fife and Henthorn, 2021)

Where do we stand right now?

Organisational and sector-wide barriers to substantial change (anti-racist work):

- Absence of plans and budgets to support statements of intent
- Lack of organisation-wide commitment to anti-racist EDI work
- Poor relationships with Global Majority communities
- An unrepresentative workforce and uncomfortable working environments
- Lack of co-ordination and collaboration within networks/from funders

(Sharma, Riccardi and Islam, 2022: 7)



Why should workers in our sector develop this knowledge?

“Archives are for everyone because they are about everyone - past, present and future.”

(The National Archives, 2019)

- To redress past failures
- To best represent society through collections
- To better serve users and communities
- To build a better sector, together



Which areas of archival practice are relevant to equality, equity, diversity and inclusion?

Workforce – who we are

Audience – who we serve

Practice – how we work

Position – our global role

(The National Archives, no date)



What does strategy say?

“Remove barriers to access, and engage audiences reflecting the diversity of the UK today.”

“Increase the visibility and diversity of archive collections – working more actively and equitably with marginalised and under-represented individuals and groups to together develop collections that are reflective of our communities and society.”

“Open up entry routes into the profession to build a skilled, diverse and inclusive workforce that is fairly and openly recruited, more resilient and more representative of our current and potential audiences, partners and collections.”

“Listen and learn from one another, including those who currently feel marginalised and excluded. Value the sum of lived experience, work experience and education to support holistic and collaborative learning across the sector.”

(The National Archives, 2020)

Local policy (organisation-specific)

“Our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion is fundamental to our vision and our core values, ensuring our future as a dynamic and relevant archive with a positive and supportive culture, where all staff and people who engage with us feel empowered and respected. At all times our work to embed equality, diversity and inclusion is anchored in our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, particularly in relation to people with protected characteristics.

We recognise that equality, diversity and inclusion require a strong and active commitment and concerted action to build an inclusive environment where opportunities are open to all, diversity is valued, and where everybody can reach their full potential without fear of harassment, prejudice, or discrimination.”

(London Metropolitan Archives, 2022)



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Existing action - ARA joint statement of intent for the heritage sector (2020)

“We commit to pro-actively support

- representing our members across the heritage sector, acknowledging that our nation’s history and heritage is an invaluable tool in the fight against racism and discrimination.
- anti-discrimination debate and discussion in the care of and access to heritage collections.
- seeking, and taking care of the needs of a diverse heritage workforce.
- members to develop diverse collections.
- asking questions and challenging practices that support racism in all of its forms.
- that now is the time to be anti-racist.
- doing the work involved to end discrimination here and now.”

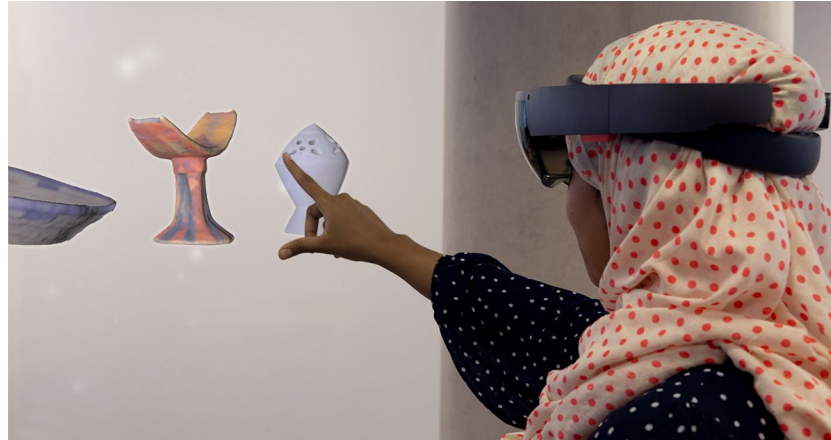
(Archives and Records Association, 2020)

Existing action – archive projects

Everyday Muslim

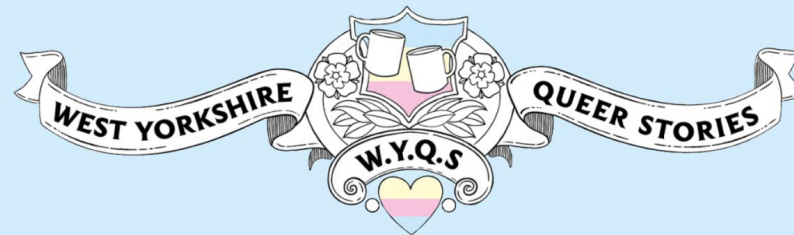
Documenting Muslim heritage in the UK

SOLAR FLARES
DEAF HERITAGE



Nomad Project

MUSEUM OF
TRANSOLOGY



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Existing action – programming

- Creative events integrating archival materials
- Opportunity to platform projects and speakers
 - Be conscious of payment and tokenism
- Presence in national initiatives
 - Black history month
 - LGBT history month



Existing action – workforce

- National traineeship programmes (e.g. Bridging the Digital Gap, Transforming Archives)
- Individual organisational traineeship schemes
- Targeted scholarship and bursary programmes
- Development of level 7 apprenticeship standard (Archivist and Records Manager) by the National Archives

Evaluations to date

- Limits of project-based approach
 - Example: community heritage projects led by people of colour have increased, but outputs from externally funded projects are not being collected/have short life spans (Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Education Trust, 2017)
 - Projects are “low-impact” (Dabiri, 2019: 6)
- ”Done to us not by us” / “at us not with us” (Dabiri, 2019: 40)
 - Little evidence to suggest diversity work has involved meaningful cooperation/collaboration with minoritised groups
- Traineeships would benefit from structural changes, including further support progressing in the sector and alternative routes to progression (Bolton and McKenzie, 2017: 26)



Evaluations to date: “if nothing changes, nothing changes”

“after decades of EDI initiatives and working with Global Majority communities being a priority for funders, the heritage sector still seems to struggle to tell more honest and nuanced stories about Global Majority history, ensure Global Majority communities and people are centred, and the workforce is still so overwhelmingly white.” (Sharma, Riccardi and Islam, 2022: 5)



Moving forward: recommendations

- EDI work positioned as core within organisations
- Statements should be supported by action plans
- Resources must be made available
- Greater accountability for EDI work across the sector
- A more nuanced approach to global histories
 - Speak honestly about legacies of colonialism
 - Work ethically in collaboration with communities
 - Targeted collecting
 - Do not marginalise within programming – e.g. perceptions that specific topics are only relevant to specific audiences

(Sharma, Riccardi and Islam, 2022: 9)



Knowledge check

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Developing existing practice

Presentation 3



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Presentation 3: Outline



Picking up from presentations 1 and 2

Archive organisations have legal obligations relating to equality, diversity and inclusion

Archive workers also have ethical and moral responsibilities

Issues have been identified in the sector relating to collections, workforce, users and our practice

Some actions have been taken, but this work has not necessarily been coordinated or had structural impact

This presentation focuses on ways to move forward and work together towards a more inclusive and equitable sector!

Tools from other sectors: arts sector and equality action plans

An equality action plan outlines how your equality and diversity policy (or strategy) will be implemented, setting SMART objectives, assigning responsibilities to specific teams/staff, and outlining success measures.

Review: Arts Council England guidance for producing equality action plans and objectives

Example: [London Metropolitan Archives](#)



Example action plan

Equality strand	Action	How will the impact of the action be monitored?	Who is responsible for monitoring?	What are the timeframes?	Early success indicators

(Arts Council England, 2017)

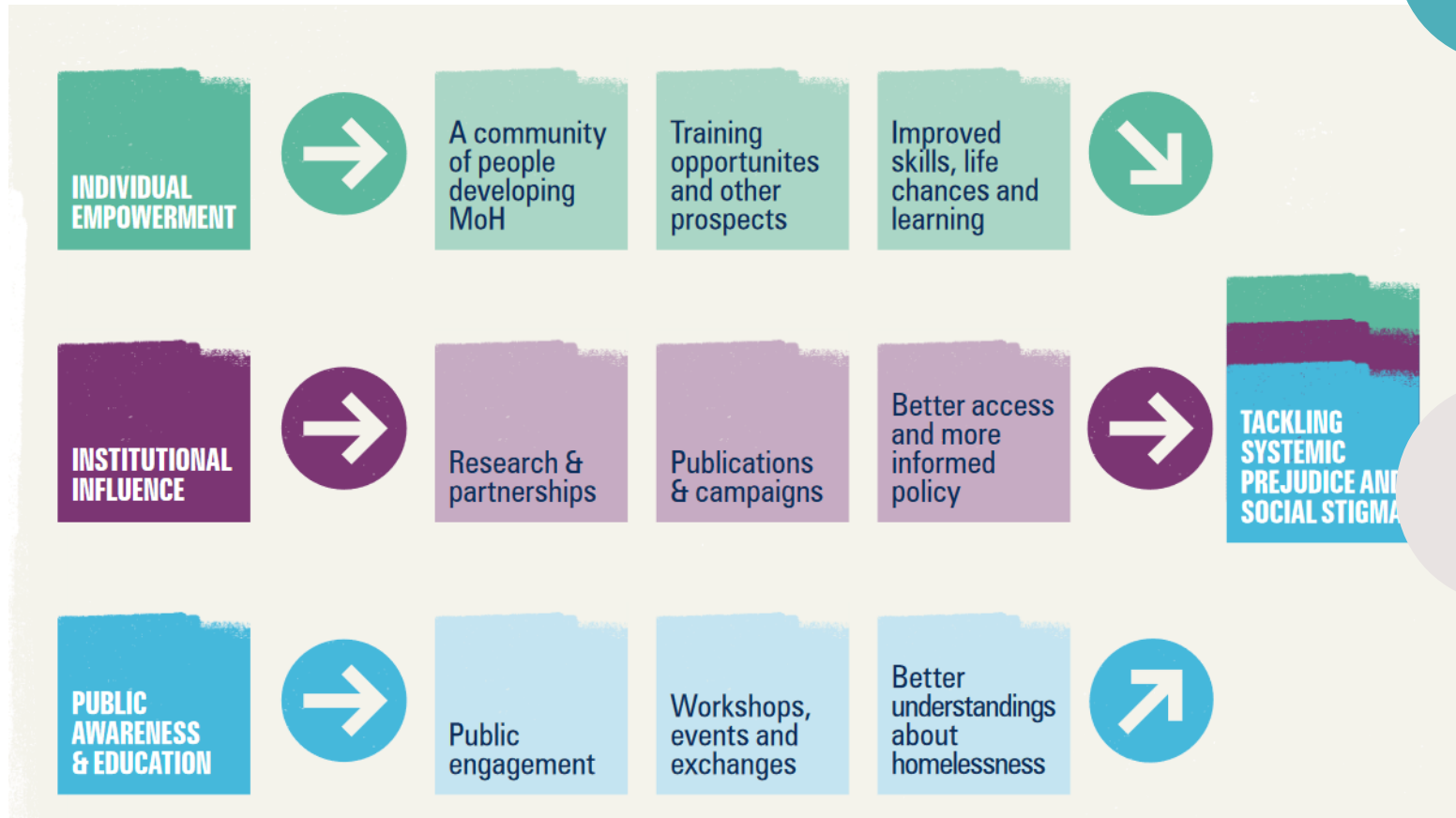


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Learning from other sectors – museums and theory of change

- A theory of change is a method which explains how a series of interventions is expected to lead to structural change
- Often used for evaluation purposes (outcomes-focused) and can be used to document objectives



© Museum of Homelessness

Learning from the museum sector: Re:Collections – Anti Racist Museums Wales

- Collaboration between Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Education Trust and Association of Independent Museums, (beginning in 2022). Offering heritage organisations
 - Mentoring
 - Workshops
 - Funding
 - Skills and knowledge sharing opportunities

(Association of Independent Museums, 2022)



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Learning from other sectors – libraries and diversity audits

- Using catalogue data to evaluate diversity of collections, highlighting specific geographic biases
 - Data analysis can be used to create recommendations, in funding bids, and to influence policy edits (e.g. collections development policy)
- Example: Manchester Metropolitan University [diversity audit template and guidance](#)



Free opportunities for development

- Some sectors (for example, third sector) can access free local opportunities
- Join listservs and local mailing lists and encourage staff CPD by circulating events
- Start an internal skills/knowledge sharing initiative, enabling conversations across teams
- Libraries Connected – e-learning freely available to people working in public libraries
- W3 [digital accessibility foundations](#) (free online course about web accessibility)
- Visit other local archive services engaging in EDI work

If your organisation has budget

Consider commissioning specialist training sessions (e.g., Gendered Intelligence, National Autistic Society, Racial Justice Network, Intersectional GLAM)



Sector networks

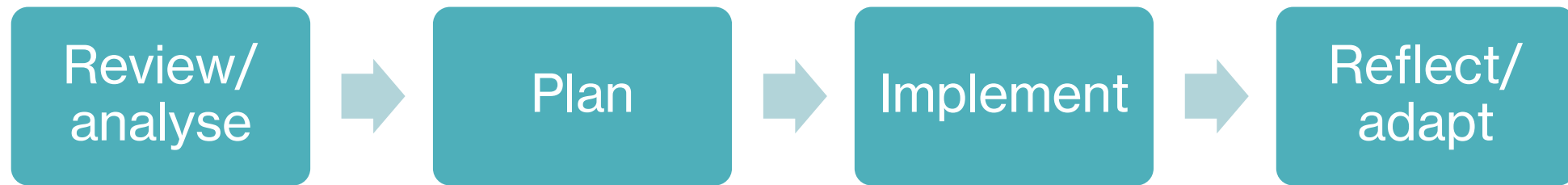
- ARA Diversity Allies
- Archives Download
- Museum Detox
- Museum as Muck



**MUSEUM
DETOX**



Moving forward



Step 1: Review and analyse

- Determine what you are trying to find out and your objectives
- Gather existing data sources
 - Catalogue/collection data
 - User data
 - Workforce data
 - Key documents/policies/strategy
- Analyse data
- Summarise key findings – what's going well, and what needs to be improved



Step 2: Plan

- Have open, honest conversations across your organisation
 - Encourage dialogue and collective imagining
 - Identify changes
- Build action plans collaboratively, work with specific groups where appropriate
- Assign responsibility
- Assign/apply for resources to support work
- Establish how to measure success
- Be realistic but imaginative



Step 3: Implement

- Take action and put your plans into practice!
- Prepare to make mistakes and learn from your practice
- Gather formal and informal feedback where appropriate
- Gather data for future review
- Keep dialogue going

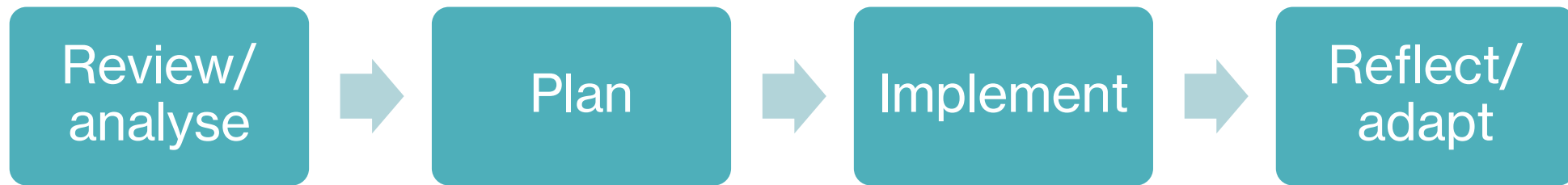


Step 4: Review and adapt

- Review data gathered during work
- Collaboratively reflect on work, again integrating staff, users, community stakeholders and audiences where appropriate
- Identify both successes and points for improvement
- Adapt practices based on review period



...and repeat, because EDI work is ongoing



Knowledge check

Have a look at one of the following case studies. What do you think about this example? Could a similar method or initiative work in your organisation? Can you see any limitations of these examples?

[The Inclusive Archive of Learning Disability History](#)

[Sheffield Archives collaboration with Désirée Reynolds \(writer-in-residence\)](#)

[Positive histories project \(London Metropolitan Archives\)](#)

[Inclusive cataloguing \(The Keep\)](#)

Add your thoughts to a shared Padlet. Access via the QR code or [this link](#).



Thank you!

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