

**COMIC RELIEF**



**OUR DIVERSITY  
EQUITY INCLUSION  
AND BELONGING  
(DEIB) STRATEGY**

**2023 TO 2026**

# WHAT DRIVES US

## THE WORLD TODAY

Comic Relief's Strategy (2023-2027) recognises that in the UK and around the world, too many people are being left behind. Whether it be increasing poverty levels, extreme weather or war, too many people are facing pain and suffering.

If you happen to be an asylum seeker, disabled, LGBTQ+, Muslim, a person of colour, a woman or working-class, then these crises are even worse, full of more challenge and injustice.

But our strategy also recognises that there is still hope. Helping others isn't charity, it's humanity. When we come together to help others, we unleash the best in all of us.

And our humanity compels us at Comic Relief to commit to become a more diverse, equitable, inclusive, and anti-racist organisation.





# **OUR VISION**

## **AN ORGANISATION FREE FROM INJUSTICE**

**We believe everyone should be free from poverty.**

To live life with dignity and respect regardless of their age, asylum status, disability, gender, gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation, or social class.

We will do what we can to put an end to all forms of discrimination; we will model this by how we work and treat each other. There is no room in a just society or a just organisation for people to face barriers because, for example, they happen to love somebody of the same sex, or they happen to have fled war, climate catastrophes or tyranny. We want it to be clear that people can choose whether to bring their whole self to Comic Relief, regardless of their age, class, disability, gender, gender identity, race, religion or sexual orientation.



# OUR MISSION

## TO BUILD AN ORGANISATION THAT IS **DIVERSE, EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE**

Comic Relief is not an island fortified from the biases, discrimination and subsequent injustices that exist in society.

As such, we acknowledge that racism and all forms of discrimination exist in our organisation and sector.

So we accept that we have to work hard to build an organisation that truly operates in line with our values of diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging.

We will be courageous in this endeavour. We will set goals that are Specific Measurable Ambitious Realistic Timebound Inclusive and Equitable (SMARTIE).

Our measurements of success will be based on our understanding of intersectionality. Intersectionality for us means the interconnected nature of social categories like race, class and gender, as they apply to a given of individual or group which create overlapping and independent systems of discrimination and disadvantage.

**We acknowledge** that racism is systemic and will examine our systems to dismantle built-in biases. We will do this with a DEIB and intersectional lens to ensure we meet our goals.

**We will adhere** to the Equality Act 2010, and go beyond it to learn from, develop and implement just practice in this field.

**We recognise** that sufficient resources will need to be allocated for this strategy to be successful; we will review current resources and commit to more where necessary.

# WHERE WE'LL FOCUS FOR IMPACT

Our organisation strategy outlines three key impact areas, each of which addresses DEIB in different ways.

## 01

**Alleviating poverty's consequences and grip on people's daily lives**

We fund programmes that help people and communities overcome the many challenges they face



## 02

**Tackling the injustices that keep people in poverty**

We support organisations and movements that strive for fairness and equity



## 03

**Standing with those in poverty who are most harmed by climate change**

We work in places and with people who are already vulnerable and dealing with the effects of climate change right now

**Our DEIB Strategy is inspired by aligned with these key impact areas, and across them all we have prioritised three pillars for our DEIB work:**

- ✔ **Inclusive Culture**
- ✔ **Anti-racism**
- ✔ **Diverse Representation**



**As we make progress with these pillars, we expect they will affect our main areas of work as follows:**

Through our Public Engagement work we will raise awareness and build understanding of our DEIB principles. We'll use our platform to amplify the voices of those most marginalised by discrimination.

Our Fundraising efforts will continue to inspire people to donate towards a just world free from poverty. We will deliver fundraising campaigns for diverse audiences that connect donors with the impact their contribution can have. We'll work with partners who want to invest in impact aligned with our DEIB vision.

We will increase our Funding to organisations who are tackling the causes and consequences of poverty which often coincide with the causes of exclusion, discrimination and injustice.

Our DEIB Strategy will be embedded in the Convening work that we do. We will use our profile and networks to bring together people and organisations, to gather insight and inspire collective learning around the three pillars of our DEIB Strategy, to identify and share the solutions we need to create a world free from all injustices.

The actions in this strategy are supplemented in a separate roadmap which details what we need to do, how we'll do it, when we'll do it by, and with whom responsibility lies. Key to the realization of the roadmap will be for all areas of the organisation to set annual DEIB objectives with associated action plans.

# OUR JOURNEY SO FAR

In 2020 we launched our first Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.  
The focus areas were to:



Build an inclusive workforce



Improve representation in our fundraising and communications



Draw on our change process to lead by example in the sectors we work with.

Each focus area had 56 assigned actions. Despite the majority of the actions being implemented progress has been slow on staff representation of people of colour (POC) and disabled people.

## IN JANUARY 2020

**23%**

of staff were POC\*

**11%**

of staff disclosed a disability

## IN 2023

**26%**

of staff were POC

**2%**

of staff disclosed a disability\*\*

\*The target was to reach 32% by 2022

\*\*Disabled people comprise 16% of the workforce nationally

## More recently we have:

- Created the DEIB Steering Group. Group members are the Senior Leadership Team and Employee Network Group Chairs. The Group is ultimately responsible for the implementation and success of our DEIB Strategy. We recognise that to effect real change and dismantle structural biases the work has to start at the top
- Delivered the Anti-racism Leadership Programme. The Programme has engaged twenty senior managers on how to be an anti-racist leader
- Approved an updated DEIB Policy
- Launched the We-Can Employee Network Group
- Delivered Inclusive Leadership Training
- Introduced short-term EDI objective setting for all staff
- Partnered with Stonewall and the Business Disability Forum
- Appointed an external recruiter to attract more diverse candidates.

These recent developments are a promising foundation on which to build an ambitious DEIB change programme through this strategy. We will follow the following change process<sup>1</sup> and believe that we are between Stage 1 and 2 of our journey. By 2026 we aim to be at Stage 3. We recognise that to progress through these stages, we will need to focus internally to begin with, shifting to more external focus over time. We will measure and report on our progress annually against the Key Performance Indicators in this strategy. This monitoring and evaluation will be accompanied with actions targeted where progress is slow.

### STAGE 1

#### Foundations Laid

Shared understanding and commitment.

### STAGE 2

#### People Equipped

Mindset change, knowledge, skills and systems are in place.

### STAGE 3

#### Change Begins

Barriers to marginalised people are removed.

Organisational culture and behaviours change.

Comic Relief is more representative and inclusive.





# PILLAR: INCLUSIVE CULTURE

**Our goal: To create an organisational culture that is inclusive and cultivates belonging and well-being.**

We want Comic Relief to be a place where people choose to be their authentic self, without the pressure to code switch or hide significant aspects of their lived experience.

## **Context:**

To be representative requires cultural change. The low level of disability disclosure at Comic Relief could be an indication that staff do not feel safe to share information about their health conditions or disabilities. We want to change this and embrace the Social Model of Disability. We recognise the barriers that disabled people face can be removed through physical and attitudinal changes. We will work to remove those barriers at Comic Relief.

We would like everybody to feel comfortable to bring their whole-self to work, but we understand that we cannot expect that if we haven't built trust and a safe, truly inclusive space.

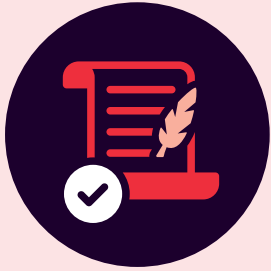
## **What are we already doing externally?**

We currently fund organisations both here in the UK and in the Global South that improve and increase access to mental health support for those from marginalised groups. 26% of all our funding is spent on Global Mental health. With 11% of this funding spent in the Global South and 15% here in the UK.



## Actions

To cultivate a culture of belonging we will:



Create an Inclusion Charter.  
This will include guidance on:

Key terms and definitions, the roles of leaders, managers and our HR colleagues in creating our change programme towards greater diversity

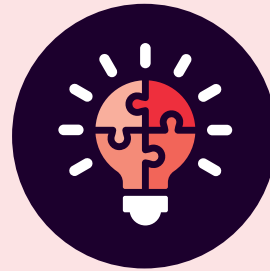
Inclusive behaviours at an organisational and personal level.



Examine our systems and policies with a DEIB and Anti-Racist lens. We will make all necessary improvements to ensure that our policies and procedures are robustly in line with the Equality Act 2010, covering all 9 protected characteristics, plus social class and carers.



Devise a programme to support disabled staff, including awareness sessions and events on disability justice. We will set up a clear and supportive process to request adjustments. This will be part of our work to become disability and neurodivergent confident.



Develop a culture of learning. We will use the Inclusivity calendar as an opportunity to learn about a specific aspect of equality; we will invite suggestions from staff on speakers, articles, books or films to watch to keep building our knowledge and understanding.

## Key Performance Indicators

- All policies and processes have undergone a DEIB and Anti-Racist audit by 2026.
- Staff survey results on belonging and inclusivity improve by **10%** annually.
- **70%** of all staff feel positive about diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging by 2026.



# PILLAR: ANTI RACISM

**Our goal: To actively work to combat racism in our organisation and the work we do.**

**Context:**

We focus our anti-racism pillar on people of colour, as every socio-economic indicator still demonstrates that people of colour fare the worst, from maternal mortality rates to educational achievement. People of colour in the UK are twice as likely to be in 'deep poverty'.

We want every aspect of our work to embody our commitment to become anti-racist, from our fundraising campaigns, to our senior management team to the comedy that we help to produce.

**What are we already doing externally?**

In 2020, we established the Global Majority Fund in response to the disproportionate impact the Covid-19 pandemic had on communities of colour by providing targeted support. We worked with Intermediary Technical Partners, organisations that are led by and for communities experiencing racial injustice, to distribute funding to smaller specialist grassroots organisations leading the way





## Actions

We will:



Make a commitment to be Anti-Racist. Inherent in this is our determination to take action, be held accountable and communicate widely where we are on our journey and where we want to be.

**This will include:**

- Writing and publishing our anti-racism and DEIB statement with internal input, consultation and ownership.
- Making public our commitment to annually review progress, and take necessary action where progress is slow.



Establish a programme to secure the retention, progression and recruitment of POC.

**The initiatives will include:**

- Shortlists for all future vacancies with team-by-team targets for those shortlisted to be people of colour.
- Diverse shortlisting and interview panels without placing undue pressure on marginalised staff. If necessary, we will ask partner organisations to provide interviewers in exchange for shadowing opportunities, use of our facilities or networks.

## Actions

We will:



### Progression paths for all staff of colour, including:

The allocation of stretch assignments to staff of colour (or from marginalised groups) with appropriate pay and rewards, and consideration of secondment opportunities



### Widen our current Anti-Racism training offer to:

- Make the training session mandatory for all staff. While making it mandatory we will explain why the training is important, ask managers to support the training, encourage staff to attend, make time for colleagues to attend and hold participants accountable for future action and personal change.
- Include anti-racism (AR) training as part of the induction package. The training will include modules on key concepts of DEIB, all forms of discrimination, power, privilege, oppression, and solidarity.

## Key Performance Indicators

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# PILLAR: DIVERSE REPRESENTATION

**Our goal: To reflect the communities we belong to and support.**

We want to improve our internal diversity and to be more representative of the communities in which we are based. To do this we will ensure that we have diverse and inclusive recruitment practices.

We want Comic Relief to be at least representative of the London population and ideally to go further in acknowledgement of the global majority.

We also want to reflect this through our external communications, our storytelling and content, and through the talent that partner with us, both in front of and behind the camera.

## **What are we already doing externally?**

Earlier this year we held RE-ROOTED, an exhibition curated with Syrian and BAFTA award winning documentary filmmaker, Hassan Akkad, to showcase the voices and stories of seven refugees from across the globe who came to the UK seeking sanctuary from war and persecution. Through a collection of interviews, photography, and short film we represented the diversity of experiences of refugees as they navigated and rebuilt their lives in the UK.



## RELEVANT DATA

**18%**

UK POC Population

**25%**

Comic Relief POC  
Senior Leadership

**46%**

London POC Population

**26%**

Comic Relief POC Staff

**16%**

Disabled people  
in the Workforce

**2%**

Disabled people  
at Comic Relief

**16%**

UK LGBTQ+ Population

**8%**

LGBTQ+ Staff  
at Comic Relief

We have set targets for improved representation and disclosure for race, disability and sexual orientation. We have prioritised these areas because of levels of discrimination and harassment faced by these groups, our historical funding in these areas, staff interests and organisational investment.

Our prioritisation does not mean that we are complacent about all the other forms of discrimination as covered by the Equality Act 2010. As well as diversifying our staff group, we want to retain and see the progression of staff from marginalised groups. Our targets, and actions to reach them, reflect this.

## Actions

We want to improve the diversity of our staff across all grades, including senior grades, and across all departments.

To cultivate a culture of belonging we will:



Improve DEI data validity and reliability by creating an EDI data dashboard which will record equality monitoring data (including socio-economic and caring status) on job applicants, who gets shortlisted, who gets appointed, promoted, bonuses, pay grades, grievances, disciplinaries, retention, training opportunities, content and contractors.



Diversify our workforce by asking SLT members to set specific targets for their functions in relation to representation in our content and staff profile.



De-bias our recruitment, progression and retention processes.

## Key Performance Indicators

We will monitor the diverse representation in our external communications ensuring fair representation in our content creation, our funded partners and the communities we work with

**Improve our staff diversity to be representative of the London population:**

- 46% of staff are POC
- 16% of staff are disabled.
- 16% of staff are LGBTQ+.

DEIB Steering Group to work with departments and teams to set relevant targets, which will ladder up to our organisational KPI, for what proportion of those we work with, and contract are people of colour and from other under-represented groups, at Comic Relief.



# HOW WE'LL MOVE FORWARD

We need commitments and targets.  
And we also need to learn.

We acknowledge that this strategy  
may evolve as we move forward  
and that we will continually improve.  
We aim to demand progress  
for our organisation, whilst being  
transparent, honest, and forgiving.

**COMIC  
RELIEF**

