

Solidarity and EDI Strategy

This strategy sets out how we intend to make progress towards our commitments and informs our more detailed annual Action Plans. It should be read alongside our Solidarity and EDI Statement.

This strategy will be reviewed annually, in line with our usual reporting cycles. We are inviting feedback on this document and will undertake an initial review in March 2024.

Our commitment to Solidarity and EDI

Our commitment to solidarity and EDI requires strong leadership but is everyone’s responsibility at SMK. We are pro-active about learning from others, interrogating our own assumptions, and being held to account. We expect this statement, and our Solidarity and EDI Strategy, to evolve as we do.

Priority Area	Objectives	Current Status	Next Steps to March 2025	Longer-Term Aspirations
Clear leadership, shared responsibility	SMK’s commitment to solidarity and EDI has clear leadership from SMK’s Board and CEO, but responsibility for action is shared by everyone.	<p>We established a Solidarity and EDI Working Group (comprising Board and staff members including leadership) to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - oversee development of this strategy - ensure actions are prioritised across SMK’s work - monitor and report on progress <p>Responsibility for chairing and minuting meetings is rotated.</p>	Solidarity and EDI Working Group continue to meet eight times each year to implement this strategy, and more frequently in response to difficulties arising.	

		<p>A proportion of the working group rotate regularly to share responsibility across team.</p> <p>All SMK staff and Board were involved in compiling this strategy.</p>		
Accountability	<p>SMK hold, and take seriously, a range of accountabilities within our organisation, to wider stakeholders including clients and funders, and to the campaign communities we exist to serve.</p> <p>We recognise that how we think about these accountabilities, as well as how we are held account for our approach to solidarity and ED, are central to achieving this strategy.</p>	<p>We are actively seeking feedback on our approach and progress towards our solidarity and EDI commitments from a range of stakeholders.</p>	<p>Solidarity and EDI Working Group will review this statement and strategy after three months, in response to feedback, before moving into an annual review cycle.</p> <p>Review and update complaints procedure to ensure clear process for raising and responding to concerns.</p>	<p>We recognise that being accountable to diverse campaign communities is central to achieving our mission, and this strategy. We are interested in exploring what this might look like. We do not intend to limit our reach by moving towards a membership model but are considering ways to bring campaigners into a more explicit accountability structure.</p>
Learning and development	<p>We recognise that solidarity and EDI are long-term commitments that require continuous attention, action, and reflection.</p> <p>We are committed to learning alongside others to deepen our own understanding of solidarity and EDI.</p>	<p>Solidarity and EDI Working Group take action to stay up to date with evolving conversations and guidance.</p> <p>We collate and distribute research, commentary and training opportunities relating to EDI, and insights from our own Solidarity and Social Change programmes to staff and Board.</p> <p>This year, we have dedicated our board and staff away day and a staff team day to</p>	<p>We will commission tailored in-house training for staff and Board with anti-oppression consultant (subject to funding).</p> <p>We will review and improve SMK's internal knowledge sharing processes to support ongoing learning.</p> <p>Ensure our approach to solidarity and EDI is included in all staff and Board induction.</p>	<p>Secure resource for on-going learning around solidarity and EDI, including by trying to build it into all project and core funding.</p>

		exploring what solidarity and EDI mean to us at SMK.		
Monitoring	We consistently track progress made towards our solidarity and EDI commitments.	We have built in monitoring, accountability and transparency to this strategy from the start.	We will provide quarterly updates on progress towards this Solidarity and EDI strategy to SMK staff and Board. We undertake a comprehensive annual review of this strategy and progress made towards it.	
Transparency	We share progress and challenges in implementing this strategy openly. We publish clear data about diversity within SMK on our website.	We are sharing this strategy with a clear invitation and mechanisms for feedback. We publish data about the diversity of SMK staff and Board.	We publish regular (minimum bi-annual) blogs to update on progress and learning in service of this commitment. Publish clear data about the diversity of programme participants and the communities we reach.	
Mitigating risk	We recognise that the risk of harm related to how SMK works towards its mission is distinct from risk of harm to SMK and its reputation. We know that efforts towards solidarity and EDI can become tokenistic or deprioritised against other workstreams. The commitments set out above are in place to mitigate these risks.	Solidarity and EDI appears on SMK's risk register. We have considered mechanisms to help us pick up on issues quickly as part of creating this strategy.	We will review this strategy after three months, following feedback. We have been working on a draft Capabilities Model to develop our understanding of who we can call on to help us achieve our mission. We will develop this to include how we will take steps to address the risk of harm to individuals in working with us.	The greatest risk to this strategy is lack of capacity or budget for implementation. We are taking steps to secure further resource as set out above.

Our people and culture

We work to create clear, accessible pathways to working at and with SMK. We take steps to ensure our culture and working practices support the wellbeing and professional development of all staff equitably and engender a sense of belonging and challenge. We regularly ask our staff, Board and partners how we're doing, and adapt our approach.

Priority Area	Objectives	Current Status	Next Steps to March 2025	Longer-Term Aspirations
Recruitment	<p>The SMK Board, staff and associates are diverse and broadly representative of change-maker communities in terms of both characteristics and experience.</p> <p>There are clear and accessible pathways to working at and with SMK. We take steps to reach people from communities most excluded from work in the sector.</p>	<p>We use anonymised, proportionate selection procedures.</p> <p>We have a minimum of two staff on recruitment panels, with representation from project participants on panels for related posts.</p> <p>We promote flexible, hybrid working for all vacancies, and consider part-time working.</p> <p>We #ShareTheSalary.</p> <p>We share all opportunities widely, including eg via specialist recruitment agencies.</p> <p>We ask applicants to (voluntarily) disclose some protected characteristics (e.g. gender, race, disability), so we can monitor progress made on creating accessible pathways to working with us.</p> <p>The Board conducts an annual diversity and skills audit. We</p>	<p>We intend to review and publish our recruitment policy and procedure, with attention to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - anonymised applications v targeted appointments - promoting consistent and transparent practice across staff, Board and Associate appointments - submitting applications via video or other means <p>We received some feedback from staff about the questions we asked in our initial diversity monitoring survey. We will review the format of this survey, this year, then aim to maintain consistency to enable us to track trends and progress.</p> <p>We intend to recruit new Board members in response to identified gaps. We will take action to reach beyond existing networks, including a free workshop for people to explore what joining SMK's Board entails.</p>	<p>Review EDI survey to ensure proportionate and relevant. Publish annually against consistent criteria to monitor performance.</p> <p>Secure funding and develop partnerships to offer a programme of paid internships as routes into campaigning roles.</p>

		<p>invite applications to join the Board on a rolling basis and advertise when gaps arise.</p> <p>We offer travel and childcare expenses, training and alternating meeting times for Board members to help overcome barriers to recruitment and accommodate different needs.</p>	<p>We will publicise staff benefits on website.</p> <p>We will develop our draft Capabilities Model to challenge our assumptions about who we can call on or partner with to help us achieve our mission.</p>	
Remuneration and professional development	<p>SMK staff feel valued and are supported equitably in their professional development.</p>	<p>We pay a Living Wage.</p> <p>SMK's remuneration policy includes annual salary review to ensure job is compensated fairly and competitively, and an annual cost of living award to maintain relative value of remuneration.</p> <p>SMK benchmarks compensation against comparable orgs and roles in the sector.</p> <p>Cost of Living increases and awards are based on CPI and sector benchmarking. In 2021/22 and 2022/23 a one-off award was made on a tiered basis to help off-set cost of living pressures. In 2022/3 the Cost of Living award was tiered.</p> <p>We operate full office closures in August and December in addition to Annual Leave</p>	<p>In late 2022 SMK embarked on a comprehensive strategic review process drawing on multiple sources of feedback and involving all staff and the Board.</p> <p>An objective of the review is to clarify roles and responsibilities, so all staff are clear as to how they contribute to SMK's performance.</p> <p>Identified priorities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creating formal informal opportunities for peer learning and knowledge exchange between staff - Finalising the new Impact Framework, and using insights to strengthen our approach to performance management, with more tangible, transparent staff objectives - Reviewing strategic training priorities 	<p>SMK is a small organisation, which currently has very limited resource for CPD or opportunities for career progression. Further research for how we can address these key issues is needed.</p> <p>Review staff benefits package offered in addition to salary.</p>

		<p>entitlements, meaning staff now have 32 days leave in total (pro rata).</p> <p>Annual Review meetings include discussion of personal support needed and developmental goals.</p> <p>Dedicated CPD budget for staff training.</p>		
Working practices	<p>SMK's working practices empower staff to give of their best and provide a balance of support and challenge.</p> <p>We believe that hierarchical structures can be helpful in making power explicit in an organisation. We are committed to developing greater transparency and power-awareness across all our decision-making processes.</p>	<p>In 2022 SMK appointed its first Operations and Systems Manager. This increased capacity has allowed us to invest significant time in reviewing operations, working practices and culture to improve staff experience.</p> <p>Revised staff contracts are now in place, and SMK has appointed new HR advisers with staff point of contact.</p> <p>We introduced a new on-line HR system for all staff that keeps policies and records in one place.</p> <p>SMK conducts an annual working practices review based on in-depth interviews with individual staff. Findings are shared with the whole team and any decision discussed before implementation.</p>	<p>We will review project management and decision-making processes in response to needs identified by the staff team.</p> <p>The final step of this year's strategic review is to update all staff job descriptions to ensure staff have clear responsibilities and accountabilities, aligned with organisational mission.</p> <p>We will undertake an annual review of the Staff Handbook, to include, for example, rotation of Board wellbeing contact.</p>	<p>As a small social change organisation, our staff work hard. Sometimes too hard. We are working on clarifying practices such as decision-making and prioritisation as part of our strategic review. We know there is more to do to make workloads achievable and equitable across the organisation. This is a problem throughout the sector. We will hold this under continuous review.</p>

		<p>We now operate a fully hybrid working policy, with agreed office working time.</p> <p>Appointed mental health first-aider and wellbeing point of contact on Board.</p> <p>Comprehensive Line Management handbook and IT and cyber security policy in place.</p> <p>Clear disciplinary and grievance procedures in place to address inappropriate behaviour.</p>		
Organisation culture	<p>SMK's organisational culture engenders a sense of belonging and allows each person to grow their potential and contribute ideas and concerns.</p> <p>We recognise that organisational culture is closely linked to leadership and are committed to modelling power-sensitive leadership behaviours.</p>	<p>Regular whole team meetings and Team Days with a focus on strengthening working culture and relationships.</p> <p>Our revised Staff Handbook includes a wellbeing policy, mental health first-aider and a Board point of contact for wellbeing,</p>	<p>Revise meetings and Away Day schedules to include an active, strategic commitment to strengthening an organisation culture that prioritises self-awareness, reflection and dialogue.</p> <p>Develop and implement annual working culture and wellbeing survey.</p>	<p>We are a small, ambitious team with high standards and a high commitment to the work we do.</p> <p>We are actively seeking to shift our culture to one with a clearer balance of challenge and support, excellence and wellbeing. We will continue to research and talk about culture change within our organisation to prioritise this shift. However, our success will always be dependent in part on funding and resource. This is a long-term commitment to be held under continual review.</p>

Our support for change-makers

We take action to grow our reach so we can help the widest possible communities of change-makers. We ask for feedback, and update and adapt both the content and processes of our support, so it is accessible and relevant for diverse groups.

Priority area	Objective	Current Status	Next Steps to March 2025	Longer-Term Aspirations
Training & consultancy design & content	<p>Insights from SMK's power and solidarity work are embedded across all programmes, to support equitable campaigning.</p> <p>We offer tools to help change-makers think clearly about better power dynamics – in their work and in their organisations – to support more equitable approaches to working together.</p>	<p>Campaign Carousel includes distinct module Lived Experience, Solidarity, and Social Change.</p>	<p>Update four core Campaign Carousel modules to include power and solidarity insights.</p> <p>Consult widely to identify content gaps (consider e.g. public miro board or survey for campaigners/ training alumni and targeting specific campaigner communities).</p>	<p>Develop and pilot a Solidarity in Social Change consultancy offer.</p>
Relevance & reach	<p>Content of programmes reflects and supports the needs and aspirations of the diverse campaigning community.</p> <p>Programmes reach, and create opportunities for connection across, a wide social change ecosystem.</p>	<p>We ask training participants to (voluntarily) disclose some protected characteristics (e.g. gender, race, disability), so we can monitor progress made on improving our reach.</p> <p>We gather feedback on all our training and consultancy to monitor relevance and impact.</p> <p>As part of our strategic review this year, we have begun mapping the difference SMK makes and to who.</p>	<p>Implementing priorities identified by 2023's Impact Working Group and our strategic review, including developing a better understanding of our current reach, identifying gaps and actions.</p>	<p>Consider and establish mechanisms through which representatives of the campaign community can participate in developing SMK's programmes.</p> <p>Establish partnerships with organisations that access communities where our reach is limited (including e.g. disability, LGBTQI, black equity).</p> <p>Secure resource to undertake targeted work to deepen relationships with underrepresented groups.</p>
Contributors	<p>Associates represent a diverse range of identities knowledge</p>	<p>Equitable payment terms for programme contributors</p>	<p>Recruit new Associates in response to identified gaps,</p>	

	and experience from across the campaign community.	regardless of 'lived' or 'learned' experience.	taking action to reach beyond existing networks.	
Accessibility	<p>SMK's training & consultancy is accessible to all who need it.</p> <p>Accessibility is properly resourced and embedded across all programmes of work. We pro-actively pre-empt and seek to overcome barriers to participation and to accommodate different needs</p>	<p>We check accessibility requirements for all training participants and strive to meet them all.</p> <p>Content is shared through a range of media (text, visual, video) to suit different learning preferences</p>	<p>Publish clear accessibility statement online with our commitment to welcome inquiries about accessibility needs we can accommodate. List those we are currently routinely able to meet.</p>	
Financial equity	<p>SMK makes all its core training content freely available online.</p> <p>SMK partners with funders to broaden access to the support we offer.</p>	<p>In 2023 SMK secured funds from Wikimedia to produce a 'Change-makers Toolbox', to make three core Campaign Carousel modules freely available online.</p> <p>SMK convene a five-year capacity building programme for organisations funded by Oak Foundation's UK Housing and Homelessness programme. This provides training in SMK's core content alongside opportunities to support peer learning and collaboration towards solidarity in social change.</p> <p>Two places for early-career campaigners in small-medium Oak-funded organisations reserved on each Campaign Carousel.</p>	<p>We will publish the Change-makers Toolbox in February 2024.</p>	<p>SMK has a long-held ambition to host a Centre for Campaigning Excellence – an open-access, on-line training resource and shared learning hub for the whole campaign community. It remains a key fundraising goal.</p> <p>SMK used to be funded to host the Grassroots Action Support – or 'GAS' Awards. This fund gave small unrestricted grants to very early-stage campaigners along with mentoring and support from the SMK team. Some of today's most prominent campaigners were GAS Award recipients. It would be great to start the programme again.</p> <p>We would like to secure funding for additional bursaries (both free and discounted places) for all SMK's training and events.</p>

Our voice & convening

We build our networks, strengthen our position, and use our influence to advocate for deeper solidarity in change-making. We listen to change-makers and gather as many perspectives as possible, to understand changes to the campaigning space. And we collaborate with diverse people and organisations to strengthen our own campaigning efforts.

Priority Area	Objectives	Current Status	Next Steps to March 2025	Longer-Term Aspirations
Commitment to solidarity in our campaigning	<p>SMK connects and champions the whole campaign community – from those working on their own to those in large organisations; and from those working deep in the community to those seeking to change government policy or social norms.</p> <p>SMK has always worked hard to ensure that this community is both representative of and porous to those who experience disadvantage, prejudice and exclusion. We stand in solidarity with these individuals and communities and are committed to using our voice and platforms to raise and champion theirs.</p> <p>We actively seek out and maintain partnerships that broaden our perspective and challenge our assumptions.</p> <p>We ensure diverse voices in our campaigns.</p>	<p>We pay people who participate in our campaigning activity if they're not in a salaried role.</p> <p>We refuse to speak on platforms that are not diverse.</p> <p>Delivery of The Power Project – a three-year participatory research programme exploring how social sector organisations can work in deeper solidarity with those with first-hand experience of poverty and inequality.</p>	<p>In our work to protect the space to campaign, we will endeavour to recognise and amplify the barriers faced by a diverse range of campaigners – our analysis stretching beyond the charitable sector and into civil society as a whole.</p>	<p>We would like to create a diverse network of change-makers committed to acting in solidarity to protect the space to campaign.</p>

<p>Celebrating a diverse range of campaigners and solidarity in campaigning on our platforms</p>	<p>We support people to tell their own stories, seeking out and sharing evidence and examples of solidarity in practice.</p> <p>We share reflections on our own, and others' deepening practice.</p>	<p>SMK features the stories of a diverse range of campaigners and change makers on our website and in our communications.</p> <p>Where we seek out change-makers to share their experiences and analysis, we pay for their time if they are not already in a salaried role.</p>	<p>Gathering and sharing Stories of Solidarity to illustrate the diversity of what solidarity means in practice.</p> <p>Publishing the first of five annual Learning Reports from our Oak-funded Solidarity in Social Change programme, sharing insights, challenges and themes emerging from programme participants.</p>	<p>Our 20th anniversary in 2025 is a huge opportunity to make visible all kinds of change-makers, and to create new connections with those working for change in ways and places we do not currently reach.</p>
<p>Celebrating a diverse range of campaigners through our Annual Campaigner Awards</p>	<p>The annual SMK National Campaigner Awards celebrate a very wide range of campaigners and change makers. Very often, these are people and organisations working outside the status quo, from the grassroots, working from their own lived experience and with minimal resource.</p>	<p>The Awards are free to enter and to attend. We pay travel and where necessary accommodation costs for those not in established organisations.</p> <p>We seek to meet accessibility requirements of all event attendees, whether in-person or online. We have introduced closed captions, BSL interpretation, and ensure venues are wheelchair accessible.</p> <p>We have created as light-touch a nomination process as possible – asking only for the basic information judges need to make an informed decision. Entrants are invited to share videos, web content or other means of communicating their work. SMK staff are available to support nominees of shortlisted campaigns to</p>	<p>We would like to do more to elevate the stories of our winners on our website from next year, and plan to host a winners' networking event to encourage greater connectivity and solidarity between each years' cohort.</p>	<p>SMK used to have funds to offer paid mentorships for Award winners. In fact, this is where SMK started 18 years ago. We'd love to be able to offer on-going support to our Award winners and will continue to seek funds to do so.</p>

		<p>collate the information they need for a strong application.</p> <p>We work to ensure our judging panel represents a diverse range of campaigners and allies each year.</p> <p>We have been able to bring the stories of some of our winners to a national audience via our media partner, Tortoise.</p>		
Using our voice: policy and advocacy	<p>SMK works to understand the views and perspectives of a diverse range of campaigners.</p> <p>SMK identifies barriers to campaigning and social action and, where possible, works to remove them.</p> <p>We seek to work in solidarity with disadvantaged and minoritised communities, which we recognise face particular barriers and risks in campaigning, by bringing their experiences and strengths to the attention of the wider campaign community and other stakeholders.</p>	<p>Annual Campaigner Survey capturing experiences of diverse range of campaigners.</p> <p>Work to defend civic space including recent Democratic Space report that captures particular risks posed to specific communities.</p> <p>In our face-to-face research and advocacy activities, we pay those who are not in a salaried role to take part and cover travel and accommodation costs.</p> <p>SMK is a founding member of the Civil Society Voice Group coordinating action to protect the rights and freedoms of all campaigners.</p>	<p>SMK is currently talking to funders about our on-going work in defence of democratic space.</p> <p>We will seek to understand more about those who complete the 2024 Campaigner Survey by asking them to (voluntarily) disclose some protected characteristics (e.g. gender, race, disability).</p>	<p>Funding bids include resource to look at a broad range of campaigners' experiences & extend our networks.</p> <p>Future SMK Campaigner Surveys reflect a broader set of campaigner experiences.</p>
Championing solidarity amongst change-makers	<p>We champion the value of solidarity in social change through our own convening and participation.</p>	<p>SMK set up the Charity Reform Group (CRG) to bring together CEOs of high-profile, mainly domestic, charities.</p>	<p>A principle of the CRG was to test whether bigger, wealthier charities were willing to support</p>	<p>An ambition is to grow the CRG so that there is a bigger and more diverse network of</p>

<p>through our convening</p>		<p>Members have come together to champion the reforming role of charities, encouraging more confidence for leaders to speak up and building a more positive understanding of our sector's role and value within government and other sectors.</p> <p>We have been funded to offer 'solidarity' memberships to the Charity Reform Group, to ensure that higher profile but lower income organisations can be represented, helping diversify the group and so our conversations.</p> <p>SMK also hosted the 'Social Power Scotland' network between Spring '21 and Autumn '22. This network pro-actively brought together people from across the whole of civil society in Scotland with an invitation to work together to tackle thorny problems and offer mutual support.</p>	<p>an initiative working on behalf of the social sector as a whole.</p> <p>Feedback from the Social Power Scotland pilot project was extremely positive. SMK is now talking to a partner in Scotland and the funder with a view to the network continuing.</p> <p>We are discussing with NCVO the possibility of hosting a major campaigners' event with, at a minimum, free access for smaller organisations and unsalaried campaigners.</p>	<p>charities and leaders championing and the reforming role of our sector.</p> <p>SMK would like to have resource to more pro-actively 'hold' and connect the change maker community right around the UK building connections and common cause. We have considered and rejected a paid membership model on the basis of exclusivity.</p>
<p>Accessibility</p>	<p>We prioritise and embed accessibility principles at SMK across our digital infrastructure such as the website and digital marketing; our programme design such as resources and delivery; and for both online and face to face events.</p>	<p>SMK follows international guidance and best practice on web accessibility. We're committed to ensuring that everyone can access and use our website on multiple devices. This includes people with sight, hearing, mobility and cognitive impairments.</p>	<p>We continue to invest, where possible, in ensuring the website is heading towards an AA level of accessibility.</p> <p>We aim to be able to offer over and above accessibility requirements to attendees at our online and face to face events.</p>	<p>We can offer the highest level of support to people that come to SMK with both general and high accessibility needs including, for example, providing content in different languages.</p> <p>We recognise that accessibility goes beyond needs that we can identify and are committed to</p>

		<p>We have an accessibility statement on our website</p> <p>We invested in a full website accessibility audit with an external agency. We implemented some of the most critical actions from the audit.</p> <p>We check accessibility requirements for all event attendees and strive to meet them all.</p> <p>We work with designers who implement accessibility best practice in our design outputs such as reports and training resources.</p>	<p>We aim to allocate a higher budget percentage to accessibility requirements in design projects, so we can meet the needs of most (or all) users of screen reader technology.</p>	<p>continually checking-in and developing resources to meet the needs of all those who access our work.</p>
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