



We are pleased to invite ACF member representatives, including foundation trustees, to express an interest in joining one of four Stronger Foundations' working groups.

Stronger Foundations is a flagship two-year ACF project, which aims to help charitable foundations and grant-making trusts identify and pursue excellent practice. Through this process, ACF will support its members to be ambitious, effective and expert, so that foundation resources are allocated for social good in a way that maximises the potential benefit to the individuals, communities and causes they support.

Central to the initiative will be six working groups, each of which will focus on a different thematic area. The principal purpose of each group is to examine, discuss and debate a series of challenging questions about foundation practice related to its theme. They will be comprised of foundation representatives (including trustees) drawn from across ACF's membership. You can read the working groups' full terms of reference [here](#).

The [Diversity, Equity & Inclusion](#) working group began in May 2018, and [Impact & Learning](#) in July 2018.

Two new working groups will launch in December, with the final two launching in February 2019.

- Transparency & Engagement (first meeting **Tuesday 11 December from 2pm-4.30pm**)
- Strategy & Governance (first meeting **Wednesday 12 December from 1.30pm-4pm**)
- Funding Practices (starts February 2019)
- Intentional Investing (starts February 2019)

After its initial meeting, each group will meet a further 6 times over the following 15 months, concluding their work in early 2020.

We invite you to review the material overleaf, and let us know if you or a colleague would like to join one of the groups. Please include your contact details, including name and role within the organisation (e.g. trustee, grant manager), and preferred working group(s). **Please submit your expression of interest to us by Friday 16th November by sending a message to policy@acf.org.uk.**

We are seeking a balance of foundation representation from across ACF's membership, including by grant spend, geographical location, constitution, funding source, and staff size. To enable as many members to take part as possible, a foundation can only be represented on one of the working groups. If we are unable to offer you a place on a working group, we will ensure you have further opportunities to get involved, for example at regional member engagement events.

We look forward to hearing from you,

Max Rutherford (Head of Policy) & Esther Thompson (Head of Learning and Events), ACF

Stronger Foundations – background information

Earlier this year, we launched the [Stronger Foundations initiative](#), a flagship two-year project which aims to help grant-making charitable foundations identify and pursue excellent practice. Through this process, ACF will support its members to be ambitious, effective and expert, so that foundation resources are allocated for social good in a way that maximises the potential benefit to the individuals, communities and societies they support.

Essential to the initiative will be contributions from those beyond the foundation community. This will include experts from other sectors, funding beneficiaries, and academics, who will be invited to be involved in a variety of ways throughout.

Central to the initiative are six thematic areas, which were identified through consultation with ACF members and others, and are the focus of 6 working groups (detailed below).

Member involvement

It is intended that a very broad range of ACF members will be involved, and we hope all members will have opportunities to contribute. ACF will support this in a variety of ways, including working groups, regular communications, regional events across the nations of the UK (in collaboration with existing funder networks), and member surveys on particular issues.

Working groups

Around 75 member representatives will be directly involved through one of six working groups, each of which will focus on a different thematic area. The principal purpose of each group is to examine, discuss and debate a series of challenging questions about foundation practice related to its theme. They will be comprised of foundation representatives drawn from across ACF's membership, including a member of ACF's board.

Each group will meet up to 7 times over a 15 month period. Meetings will vary in format depending on the topic and desired content, but are likely to include presentation of evidence (by internal and external experts), small group discussions, whole group exercises and visits.

The groups are:

- [Diversity, Equity & Inclusion](#) (began in May 2018), chaired by Denise Ramsey, UnLtd
- [Impact & Learning](#) (began in July 2018), chaired by Jane Steele, Paul Hamlyn Foundation
- Transparency & Engagement (starts December 2018), chaired by Paul Ramsbottom, Wolfson Foundation
- Strategy & Governance (starts December 2018), chaired by Jerry Wright, Wates Foundation
- Funding Practices (starts February 2019), chaired by Chris Llewellyn, CriSeren Foundation
- Intentional Investing (starts February 2019), chaired by Danielle Walker-Palmour, Friends Provident Foundation

External engagement

Charitable foundations are both an integral part of civil society, and major supporters of it. Stronger Foundations provides ACF with a great opportunity to engage members and enable conversations across the foundation sector, but the process must also be informed by (and communicate with) those outside of it. Therefore, ACF will ensure that external contributors are involved throughout, including critical friends, sector colleagues, funding recipients, academics and policy-makers.

Intended products and outputs

ACF will publish a range of outputs throughout, including articles and blogs, and engage in conversations through webinars and via social media using the hashtag [#StrongerFoundations](#). You can many of these on the individual Working Group pages.

All of these activities will contribute significantly to the raw material gathered through the initiative as a whole, from which ACF will create a variety of products. These are likely to include:

- A 'rapporteur's report' of the working groups, which will summarise the breadth of discussions and evidence gathered;
- A self-assessment tool for foundations to consider their practice and steps they could take to become 'stronger' across a range of domains; and
- A narrative summary highlighting key principles and case studies of excellent practice.

A reference group will be formed towards the end of the initiative, to sense-check and refine significant products as they emerge, which will be comprised of the chairs of each working group, ACF board members and others.