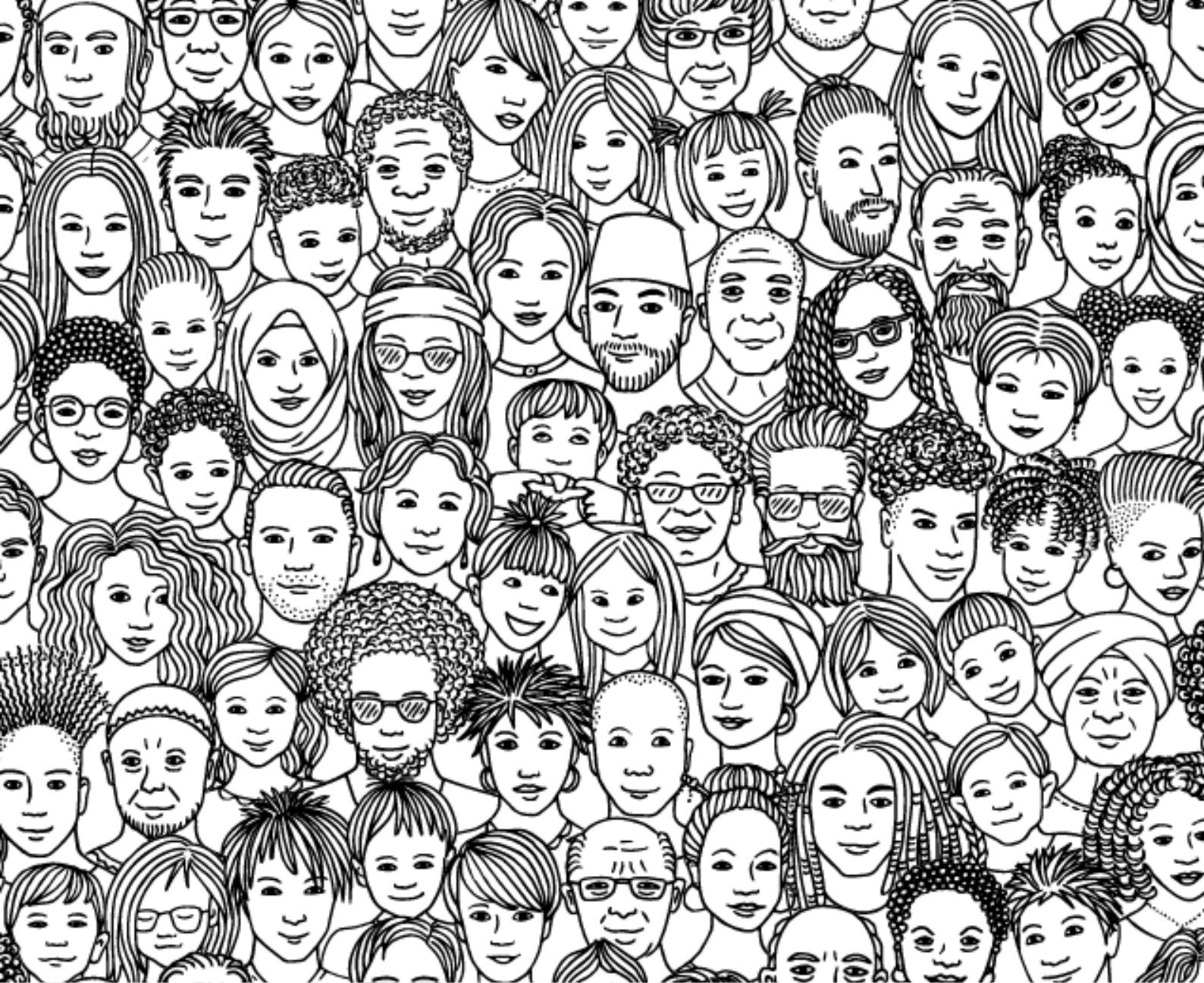


The Diversity Trust x TSL

Impact Report
April - December 2023

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Introduction

Year 3 of the partnership between The Diversity Trust and TSL continued the work of Year 2, with the reporting period running from April to December 2023, making it a bit shorter than usual, because we reoriented as a team. It made sense to report in a calendar year, helping to streamline our work and create a reporting period that aligned with how we work as a team. Despite the shorter reporting period for this year, we didn't find ourselves short of goals.

Our projects began to realign under the banner of 'healthcare equality' as we focused on wider social issues that have far-reaching and intersectional outcomes for people, especially those whose communities are minoritised and marginalised.

Social Justice, the collective move to address the inequalities that exist in our society, including economic, racial, gender, disability, health, and climate and environmental inequalities, became foundational to the work we did together. Creating a fairer, safer society doesn't stop at one event or problem, but happens throughout all areas and sectors, often in ways we don't even see. Our third year of working together opened these areas and gave us scope for creating new connections, establishing new work streams, and developing language which reflects equality, diversity, equity and inclusion.

To create a fairer and just society, we must reorient. To listen to people from marginalised communities, who have lived experience of inequality, is to change how we understand the issues people face. Recognising the limitations of the words we use to talk about social inequalities, and their impacts, gives us the opportunity to develop and use inclusive language. And understanding that we have a responsibility to eliminate inequality in our society opens us to ways of working, building, and manufacturing which actively tackle those inequalities.

Our partnership has reoriented together, forging new paths, creating new ideas, and increasing the outcomes of our work together. This report reflects the unfolding dynamics of a flexible, responsive team dedicated to the work of making the world a better place. We invite you to join us for the future we all deserve.



The Partnership Team

Berkeley Wilde

The Diversity Trust, Founder and CEO

Background: Berkeley's career began in Bristol in the early 90's, where he started as a volunteer, before being appointed to work in the regional HIV / AIDS charity in 1995. He's worked in health inequalities including mental health, domestic violence and abuse, sexual health, substance misuse and youth work, and has worked at a local, regional, national, and international level.

Mission: To bring about positive social change and dismantle inequality and discrimination in our society. Berkeley's ultimate goal is to establish The Diversity Trust as a leading organisation in the EDEI sector, building it upon solid and sustainable models of practice that support it into the future.

Favourite thing: Exploring the Scottish landscapes with his husband and working up a sweat at the gym.



Laura Broadbent

TSL Healthcare, Category & Marketing Manager

Background: Laura's career is built around consumer insight. Driven by the psychology of human motivation, she draws upon her experience in sales, marketing, and category management to anticipate and satisfy the everyday needs and desires of consumers.

Mission: Laura's dedication to leveraging her skills and position underpins her drive to push for better representation in retail.

Favourite thing: Live music



Keir Hayter

TSL Healthcare, Head of Multi-channel Sales

Background: Keir's role is underpinned by market dynamics, what the trading customer requires and what the consumer needs. It is Keir's responsibility to align these elements to the business goals and objectives and develop go-to-market strategies that work for all.

Mission: Driven by a determination to see tangible growth within her role, Keir thrives on building a team to consistently produce greatness. The product set she is currently responsible for delivers opportunities to make a real difference to the everyday lives of her customers end users.

Favourite thing: Family



Annie Moon

The Diversity Trust, Deputy CEO; Lead for Corporate Partnerships; Diversity in Menopause; Co-Lead for The Equalities Podcast

Background: A JNC qualified youth and community worker, Annie has 30+ years' experience in the impact space, bringing experience in partnerships development and volunteer management to the Trust. A member of the LGBTQ+ community, with lived experience of mental health issues and domestic violence, Annie's passions centre lived experience and working alongside community groups and small charities at a grass roots level.

Mission: Acting as an ally to level the playing field for the most minoritised and marginalised groups ensuring that no one is left behind.

Favourite thing: Sipping a latte somewhere peaceful while admiring a stunning landscape.



Khesha Patel

The Diversity Trust, Race & Bias Team Coordinator

Background: Khesha's background in the employment sector has given her key insights into corporate social responsibility and the barriers faced by people from marginalised communities. Her work at the Trust is infused with her expertise in recruitment and human resources, which she uses to support her team and the clients she works with.

Mission: Khesha's lived experience in education and employment have set her on the path to support the marginalised communities, with the ambition to embed equality and inclusion across sectors and help bring about positive social change.

Favourite thing: Cats! No wait, music! Actually, it's got to be food! And traveling!



S E Black

The Diversity Trust, Development & Design

Background: Sam is one of the LGBTQ+ Team Coordinators at the Trust, working across teams to help plan and organise projects. He has a background in philosophy and writing, and has previously supported in the development of community mental health services as a Lived Experience Service User. He writes, designs and develops the partnership's impact reports.

Mission: Sam is hell-bent on leaving the world in a better state than what he found it in.

Favourite thing: A metal playlist with a cup of chamomile tea on a sunny autumn morning.



Partnership Update

Year 3 Work

After an eventful second year in the partnership, The Diversity Trust and TSL turned their eyes to Year 3. Even though it's a shorter reporting year, our work together continued to develop into new and exciting areas, drawing from mutual aims and passions around social justice.

Team meetings were held bimonthly, meeting need as it arose, and acted as valuable touch points throughout the year, something that we've come to value and enjoy. Increased input and support from TSL, as the partnership transformed from the original agreement with Skin Deep in December 2020, has been an important development, resulting in both partners expanding the work we could achieve together.

Laura's meeting notes, now legendary within the partnership, provide detailed accounts of meetings and clear actions to be carried forward, making them highly prized assets within the partnership. It makes a significant difference for us to be able to trace our workflow and see how ideas, plans, and projects are developing over time. Editor's Note: It also makes reporting a lot easier...

When not functioning as co-design and production spaces, these meetings act as forums where we can keep each other apprised of work that we're doing, opportunities on the horizon, such as attending Lunch and Learns at the Trust, and attending Anniversary events and AGMs together (see below for images of our 2023 AGM!)

The Trust continued its anti-racism work during National Hate Crime Awareness Week (NHCAW) by producing a podcast on the intersections of race, ethnicity, gender, and disability. Facilitated by Alex Raikes CEO of Stand Against Racism and Inequality (SARI), the podcast heard from participants from The Diversity Trust, Khesha Patel, Joni Clark, and Samantha Renke, and Police Hate Crime Lead Inspector Gurdeepak Kenth, who all have experience as people from marginalised backgrounds. You can listen to the episode [here](#) or by scanning the QR code.



Listen to Episode 14 of The Diversity Trust's Equalities Podcast!

Long standing partners of the Diversity Trust, SARI - Stand Against Racism and Inequality - host a panel of experts, sharing their knowledge, lived experience, and professional viewpoints around Hate Crime, for Hate Crime Awareness Week, 2023.

TSL worked to raise awareness of The Diversity Trust by talking with new customers, resulting in an uplifting of the Trust's profile. A notable connection was made with the Absorbent Hygiene Product Manufacturer's Association (AHPMA), opening a discussion around inclusive language and supporting marginalised communities, and facilitating the development of EDEI training for AHPMA in the near future.





Period Poverty and Period Equality

The scope of work in Year 3 built upon the discussions in Year 2, broadening further to incorporate explorations of specific social problems such as Period Poverty and campaigns for Period Equality. These topics took centre stage throughout Year 3, and The Trust and TSL explored the inequalities around access to period care and what changes need to be made to end period poverty, leading to a greater understanding of the communities that TSL supplies, the issues faced in the sector, and the solutions that can make a difference.

For TSL, the focus landed in Education, where 64% of girls aged 14-21 have missed a part or full day at school because of their period [LINK to plan-uk]. After successfully embedding in key Public Sector Frameworks and building strategic partnerships, TSL have been able to provide products directly to schools, colleges, and universities in areas across Scotland, working within the [Period Products \(Free Provision\) \(Scotland\) Act 2021](#).

The Act came in to force in August 2022, giving the right to access free period products within any public space in Scotland. Whether this be a school, place of work, library, bus station, restaurant or hotel – the organisation must ensure that they have a provision of period products in their washrooms, just like toilet paper or hand towels.

TSL developed the Care & Protect Free-Vend solution with manufacturing experts to ensure that product could be accessed hygienically, whilst supporting organisations to manage budgets and forecast demand.

After their success in Scotland, TSL's goal is to take the learning from that work and expand it into England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, and increase provision for period care products in educational spaces.



Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Act 2021

Built on the existing voluntary provisions in education and community settings that have been funded by the Scottish Government since 2018, the Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Act 2021 (the Act) ensures that everyone can access free period products throughout Scotland.

The Act charges local authorities and education providers with the legal requirement to make period products available, free of charge, as and when required. Products must be easy to access, in a way that respects people's dignity, and include a range of items such as pads and tampons.

This landmark piece of legislation is a vital step towards ending period poverty. And it makes Scotland the first country in the world to protect in law the right to access period care products for free.

Outside of formal education settings, TSL's Care & Protect department was invited to participate in a major tender to support a national sporting organisation ahead of the world cup, to improve experiences and retain their younger players within their grass roots clubs. A key element of this is the toilet facilities, and importantly the provision for good period management and disposal facilities.

Research shows that absence of this provision can result in the loss of player participation and on the spectators on the supporter side. To address this, TSL developed a package of free dispensers, sanitary bins (not serviced), and an initial selection of sanitary products, including pads, tampons and disposal bags, with TSL's new period care brand, Care & Protect.

So far, more than 300 grassroots clubs have benefitted, with more to follow across 2024 and 2025. Keir reflects: "To work with such a large organisation and support them with the implementation of a period provisions scheme was a fantastic experience. We were delighted to see period equality being prioritised within their structure. We need similar organisations to do the same as they play such a pivotal role."

Intersectionality became a focus as exploration of issues continued within the partnership. An essential element to consider when working to address social inequalities, careful examination of intersectionality in period poverty revealed the overlapping challenges faced by young people in accessing pads and tampons. TSL's examination of these challenges found that some products don't meet the need of people from diverse racial and religious backgrounds and identified that some items aren't age-appropriate for younger users. In response to these issues, TSL developed the Free-Vend dispensers to cater for diversity in need, providing units which dispense pads and tampons, and units that dispense only pads. This provided better access to the products young people need the most, based on need and preference.

Whilst working to improve access to period care products, TSL worked alongside The Diversity Trust to develop a deeper understanding of language and how using the right words has a profound impact on the people accessing the essential items they need. Together, we explored how language which includes trans and non-binary people who menstruate doesn't mean using terms that then exclude women and girls. TSL's Period Pack copy was reviewed within the partnership and made more relevant for today's society, and more accessible to the audiences it reaches. "The Diversity Trust has been really important as a sounding board as we redesigned our period care products."

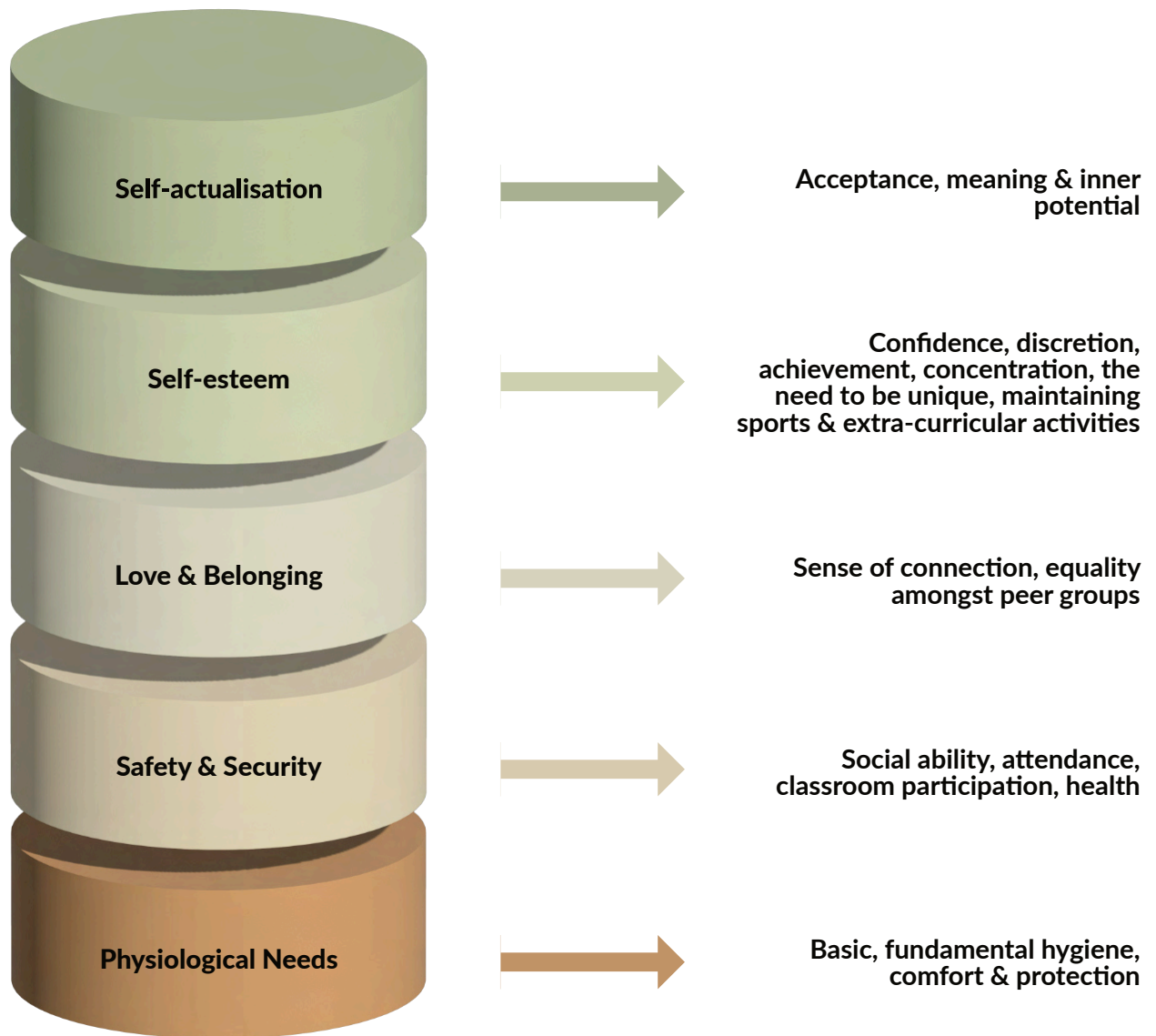
Working with the Trust in this way has helped TSL to develop their own language and approaches around products, moving away from the typical models used by other brands. Having The Diversity Trust as an expert voice has given TSL the confidence to make these changes and forge a new, more inclusive path in healthcare products.

"Being on your period, or not being able to access care products, shouldn't mean you have to miss out on education, sports, or any of the things you enjoy."



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

We all have basic needs, which Maslow's Hierarchy identify as physiological needs, safety and security, love and belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualisation. For the upper levels to be fulfilled, the immediate needs must be met. Applied to period care, we see how effective provision can lead to better need fulfilment for people who menstruate.



Menopause Awareness

During May 2023, The Diversity Trust began developing a programme of work centred on the experiences of menopause. Led by Annie Moon, the project was shared with TSL, adding richness to the expanding landscape of social campaigning that had found a home within the partnership.

The project includes steps to create a series of white papers on the topic, examining it through the lens of Disability, LGBTQ+, and Race and Ethnicity. We'll continue to develop the project throughout the coming year with the aim to offer training to businesses and manufacturers, and to support a Menopause Awareness event that will bring together multiple product categories and key partners.

We revisited our anti-racism work, focusing on Asian Hate Crime with a literature review developed by Khesha Patel, which highlighted the increase in incidents in the community since the pandemic. With the review completed, we mutually agreed to pause this work to focus on period equality, and plan for further development around our anti-racism campaign.

As with the previous two years, this year came with its share of learning opportunities. Our ambitions in Year 2, to develop and host a Period Poverty Roundtable event, were reoriented as we explored the topic further and saw a greater opportunity within our original plans. As our conversations deepened, and the nuances of period equality unfolded we found that we needed to slow the pace. Before we can launch the event we need to establish relationships in the industry. We redeveloped our strategy, connecting with AHPMA, and began forging the connections needed to take our vision of a roundtable into the future.

It's our goal to hold the roundtable on Period Poverty to not only present this important social issue within the industry, but to invite organisations and corporations to work together and eradicate period poverty, globally. It's ambitious. Bold. But Period Poverty must become a thing of the past. The most important resource to support our ambition is time, so we've focused our work in Year 3 to developing relationships, raising awareness within the sector, and creating the momentum to carry the project into its development stage when everyone we need is standing alongside us.

At The Diversity Trust, we continued with our Equalities Podcast series and rediscovered our grass roots. We worked on an episode in collaboration with the India Diversity Forum (IDF) with the aim of exploring the corporate side of equalities and aligning our approach in the series with this. We learned that the right approach for the Trust is in grass roots movements, activism, and campaigning, in talking with people that are working on the ground around social inequalities and social justice.

With our convictions renewed, we started to make connections with activists around the world campaigning for access to education. At the same time, we faced one of our biggest challenges in the series: reaching activists in countries where speaking out is dangerous. The people whose voices we wanted to amplify were almost impossible to connect with, due to legitimate risks of repercussions for engaging and speaking in a public domain.

For activists and campaigners living in countries where human rights abuses are an everyday occurrence, the reality of being identified and killed for their work meant that we

have to work with extreme discretion and provide as much protection through anonymity as we possibly could. Unfortunately, in one instance, we lost contact with one of these individuals, and we don't know what happened to them.

It's easy to reflect on the work we've done and think that everything is going well but the truth is, we still face global issues that prevent all of us from having a conversation around social justice and equality because of the threat of violence and death. This reality makes the work we do in our partnership even more immediate and vital. We must work together, all of us, for a world where every person can live free from violence, discrimination, and inequality.

**“Without confidence,
you're less likely to make
these important leaps.”**



CarbonNeutral.com





Many people choose to use a combination of towels and tampons

Pads are usually the first product of choice and then people transition as they get older

Over 60% of users choose pads as their product of choice to manage their period

Users are split almost 50/50 when it comes to using applicator or non-applicator tampons

Even if the product is 'flushable', 'biodegradable' or 'plant-based' it must not be flushed



In the UK, around 1.5-2 billion disposable items are flushed down the toilet every year

Used sanitary waste is extremely difficult to recycle so it is usually incinerated or sent to landfill as 'offensive / hygiene waste'



Organic materials do help reduce the amount of sanitary waste that goes to landfill

While organic alternatives can cost up to twice as much vs conventional products, they use around 60% less plastic

PLASTIC-FREE PERIOD

The PE wrapping used in period pads is 100% recyclable, unlike plant-based plastic wrapping which cannot be widely recycled yet

Reusable products such as washable pants and menstrual cups are on the rise and make up around 8% of the market in the UK



Organic, reusable and conventional products all feel, look and perform very differently



Social Responsibility: TSL's Journey

Supporting People

- Internal mental health first aid colleagues appointed in 2023
- Offer & promote flexible working to office colleagues, allowing for a greater work/life balance
- 50% of TSL's leadership team are women, surpassing the 30% Club target
- Partner with private health insurance to offer cover, including mental health, to our colleagues

Sustainability

- Solar power installed at TSL head office & warehouse in 2023
- Avoided 67 tonnes of plastic through packaging redesigns
- 76% of our electricity comes from sources other than coal & gas. This will be 100% by 2025
- 100% of our plastic & cardboard outer packaging is recycled
- All colleague flights carbon offset since 2023



Certified
CarbonNeutral® since 2023

TSL's path to becoming a socially responsible corporation began in 2015. Since then, they've laid the foundations for the company to become a sustainable force in their sector, with a clear drive for social justice. Here are some of their achievements during 2023, and insights into things to come...

Social Justice

- Support Period Poverty campaigns with retailers and charities, such as The Brick, through donation of stock
- Partners with The Diversity Trust since 2020, promoting allyship & educating on diversity. We donate a proportion of our profits to The Diversity Trust annually
- Donated over £200,000 of stock to support the Ukraine relief effort by partnering with Yorkshire Aid Convoy

Corporate Responsibility

- We lead in sustainable product innovation; we have created the World's first fully biodegradable, high-performing period care range with patented technology
- We also promote washable period care products
- We will ensure our top 3 manufacturing partners install solar power by 2025
- Our Asia to Europe shipping will be carbon neutral from February 2024

We will be **Net Zero**
CarbonNeutral® by 2040



Year 3 Donations

Year 3 donations see an increase in revenue for The Diversity Trust as TSL uplift the amount through an additional source of sales. As Skin Deep sales transition into own label in retail, this ultimately impacts the donations. Recognising the increasing scope of the work we do together in healthcare equality, TSL incorporated the sales of their period care dispenser sales, increasing the donation amount to the Trust.

“Keeping the donations under Skin Deep alone wouldn’t be a fair reflection of the partnership,” Laura says, “because of how much we’ve achieved together and how we’re now working in broader capacity across a range of social issues.”

The increase in donations for 2023 enables the Trust to do more. Every donation that we receive makes it possible for us to extend our campaigning and outreach, allowing us to do more in the communities that we work with.

Working with The Diversity Trust, as a partner or a client, means that you’re working with an organisation that invests its profits in the places where it matters most: working with young people, providing mentoring in schools, delivering awareness-raising courses, supporting people around their mental health and wellbeing, and supporting people from displaced and marginalised communities. The more investment we have, the more we can amplify the key messages within our campaigns, and this has been a growing outcome of our work with TSL, in how we’re expanded and embedded into other areas of social justice.

Looking internally, increased investment has just as significant an impact. Everyone employed at The Diversity Trust is from a marginalised community, and the Trust strives to actively work to remove barriers that people from marginalised communities face in employment. For example, we use a flexible, remote working model which allows employees with families and care needs, and disabled employees, to work from home.

Revenue from partnerships and donations, like that received from TSL, supports The Diversity Trust’s organisational development and growth, to become a better employer and to model what we encourage others to do in their own organisations.

Thank you to Laura, Keir, and to TSL. We couldn’t do it without you.

With 10% from Skin Deep profits and 10% from the Free-Vend dispenser profits (backdated to September 2023 when dispenser sales began), TSL are proud to donate £5,900.00 to The Diversity Trust for Year 3 of the partnership.



Product Updates

Skin Deep

TSL created Skin Deep before the murder of George Floyd, before the subsequent media attention and public recognition of systemic, structural and institutional racism, and before organisations really understood the need to represent the communities they serve. The goal from the outset was to make inclusivity commonplace in the first aid market. And in that, we have seen success and driven a market shift.



One of the reasons that brands are useful is because there are high Minimum Order Quantities (MOQs) that must be achieved to make a product affordable; the more of a product we can buy, the cheaper each individual product becomes.

At the time of Skin Deep going to market, retailers did not know how much skin tone plasters would sell – there had been no precedent set – therefore it's far less risky to stock a branded product than to create their 'own brand' or 'private label' products which may end up having to be thrown away if they didn't sell before their expiry date.

So, Skin Deep was picked up by Sainsbury's, Superdrug, Waitrose, Wilko, Savers and Well Pharmacy.

Skin Deep, and the customers who buy it, have proven that the model works. People want choice in their essential healthcare, and it does sell! This gave retailers the confidence to move from Skin Deep to their own private label ranges – enabling them to retail their own skin tone plasters at an even lower price, therefore making them even more accessible.

As outlined in the last Impact Report, Skin Deep is also available in schools. Providing only one shade of plaster can make students who have different skin tones feel marginalised from a very young, formative age. This advancement fosters environments where students feel valued and represented.

The fact that Skin Deep may not be as visible in the retail market is in no way a loss; Skin Deep moved the market and took a big step forward towards that original goal: making inclusivity commonplace in the market.



Care & Protect Period Care

Care & Protect started as a continence care brand within TSL and after careful planning, it now includes all the available absorbent products available through the company. This consolidates the marketing into a single brand, creating a more efficient way of managing and increasing the distribution of essential care products.

During 2023, the Period Care range, including the Free-Vend dispensers, became the focus for distribution as TSL and the Trust worked to highlight the need for Period Equality, with the Period Equality movement bringing everything to market faster.

Care & Protect will continue to develop its marketing and distribution strategies to ensure that products are accessible to the people and communities that need them the most.

The Podcast

Year 3 of the partnership saw three episodes of The Diversity Trust's Equalities Podcast developed and released. Episode 13 featured a two-part interview with reproductive activist, Renee Bracey Sherman, discussing the importance of abortion rights and how the current climate of control around reproductive rights directly impacts marginalised communities.

Launched during National Hate Crime Awareness Week 2023, Episode 14 of the series explored the intersectional experiences of disability, race, and gender identity in Hate Crime. Featuring a panel of guest speakers with lived experience, the episode explores the everyday realities of marginalised people who face hate crime, and the impacts of challenging incidents and having positive experiences in reporting hate crime to the police.

The podcast series is hosted on SoundCloud, and now on Spotify! Scan the QR codes to listen!



Renee Bracey Sherman is a reproductive justice activist, abortion storyteller, and writer. She is the founder and executive director of We Testify, an organisation dedicated to the leadership and representation of people who have abortions and share their stories at the intersection of race, class, and gender identity.

Renee is an executive producer of Ours to Tell, an award-winning documentary elevating the voices of people who've had abortions, and the co-author of the forthcoming book, Countering Abortionsplaining, from Amistad/Harper Collins.



Mara Clarke is a self described American woman, living in London. She is the co-founder of Supporting Abortions for Everyone (S. A. F. E.), a charity providing funding, infrastructure and ensuring sustainability for the grassroots activists who are helping people access abortions across Europe.

Prior to this, she launched the Abortion Support Network, and watched it grow from five volunteers and a bucket of change to the international abortion fund powerhouse is today.

Mara acts as a Non-Executive Director at The Diversity Trust.

Listen to Episode 13, Part 1 of
The Equalities Podcast!



Listen to Episode 13, Part 2 of
The Equalities Podcast!





Samantha Renke (she/her) is an actress, presenter, speaker, writer and disability rights campaigner who has written a multitude of articles on what it is like to be disabled in a disabling world, as well as several sociocultural criticisms on patronising attitudes, body image, bullying, LGBTQ+ issues, ableism and the financial and social costs of being disabled. For the Diversity Trust, Samantha is the Disability Lead and a Consultant in Disability Awareness. In this podcast episode, Samantha will focus on her personal experience with hate crime as a person with a non-normative body, and on how she has been affected by it throughout her life.

Joni (they/them) is a Trainer and joint LGBTQ+ Team Coordinator at The Diversity Trust. Driven by a passion to make a positive difference for the trans and non-binary community, they have previously worked at Non-Binary Leeds as a community organiser and support group facilitator, a part of for which they delivered Trans Awareness and Inclusion training to various partners across Leeds and West Yorkshire. They were also a member of the organising team behind Trans Pride Leeds 2019 and 2020. In this podcast episode, they will be talk about dealing with hate crime as a gender non-binary person.

Khesha Patel (she/her) is the Race & Bias Team Co-ordinator at the Diversity Trust. Her contributions include working on a wide range of initiatives, from shaping policies and report writing to leading qualitative and quantitative research, facilitating focus groups to creating surveys and delivering training nationally and internationally. As a British person of South Asian descent, she has lived experience of being a target of racial discrimination. She discusses this in this podcast episode, as she revisits a hate crime experience that occurred while she was still at school.

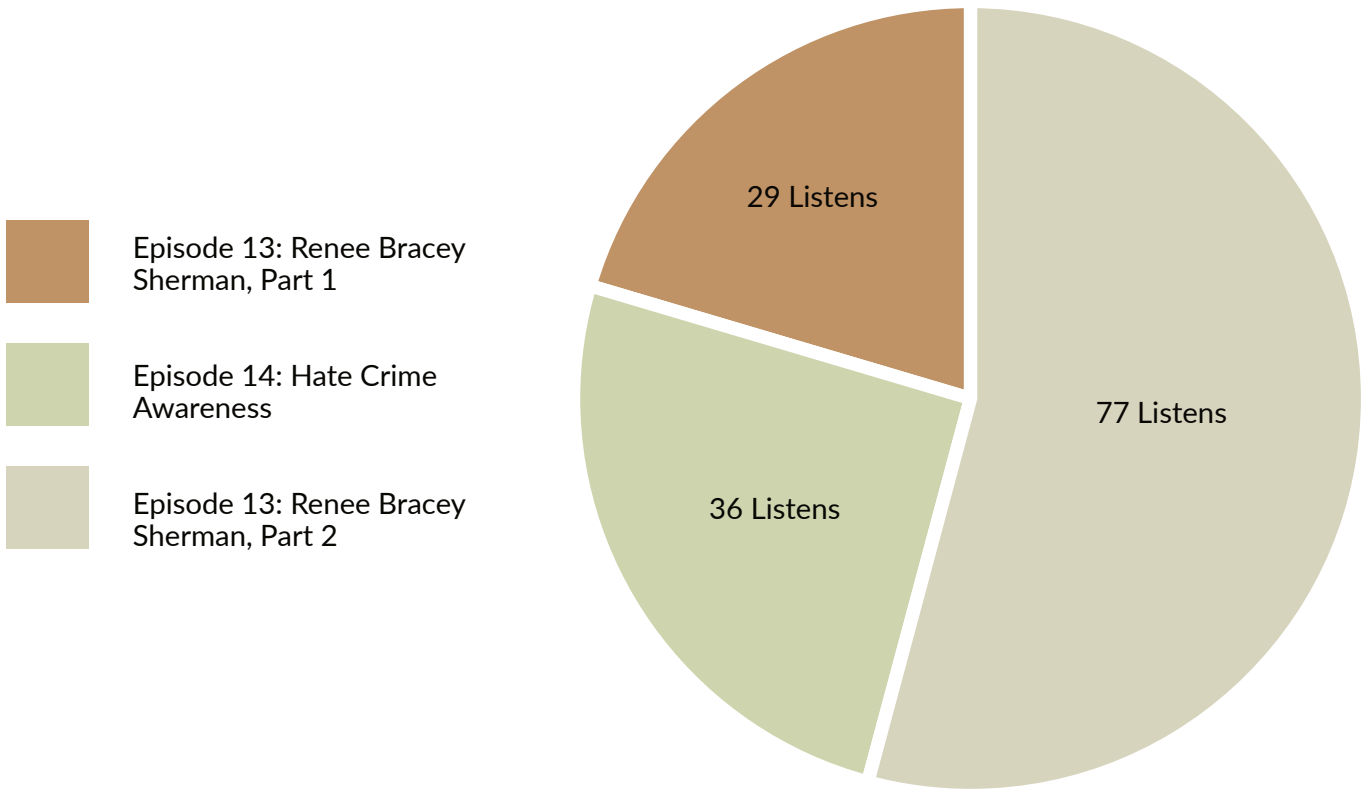
Deepak Kenth (he/him) is a Police Chief Inspector for Bristol East Neighbourhoods. He has over 20 years' experience of policing service, during which he has worked in leadership roles on patrol, neighbourhoods, firearms, roads policing, custody and offender management. Deepak's ambition is to make policing more inclusive and representative of its communities. In this episode of the podcast, Deepak references the role of the police in dealing with hate crime attacks and listens attentively to the other guests' lived experiences. He touches on the police procedures once a hate crime report has been submitted, and the issues that need to be addressed from within the police, to provide adequate help to the victims of hate crime assaults.

Alex Raikes (she/her), interviewer for this podcast episode, is the Strategic Director at SARI (Stand Against Racism and Inequality) with 30 years of experience as a caseworker and with an Honorary Degree, Doctor of Laws, from the University of the West of England. She delivers SARI's strategic and operational functions to keep victims of hate crime and communities safe. As a dual heritage individual impacted by several equalities themes, Alex also has first-hand experience of hate crime.

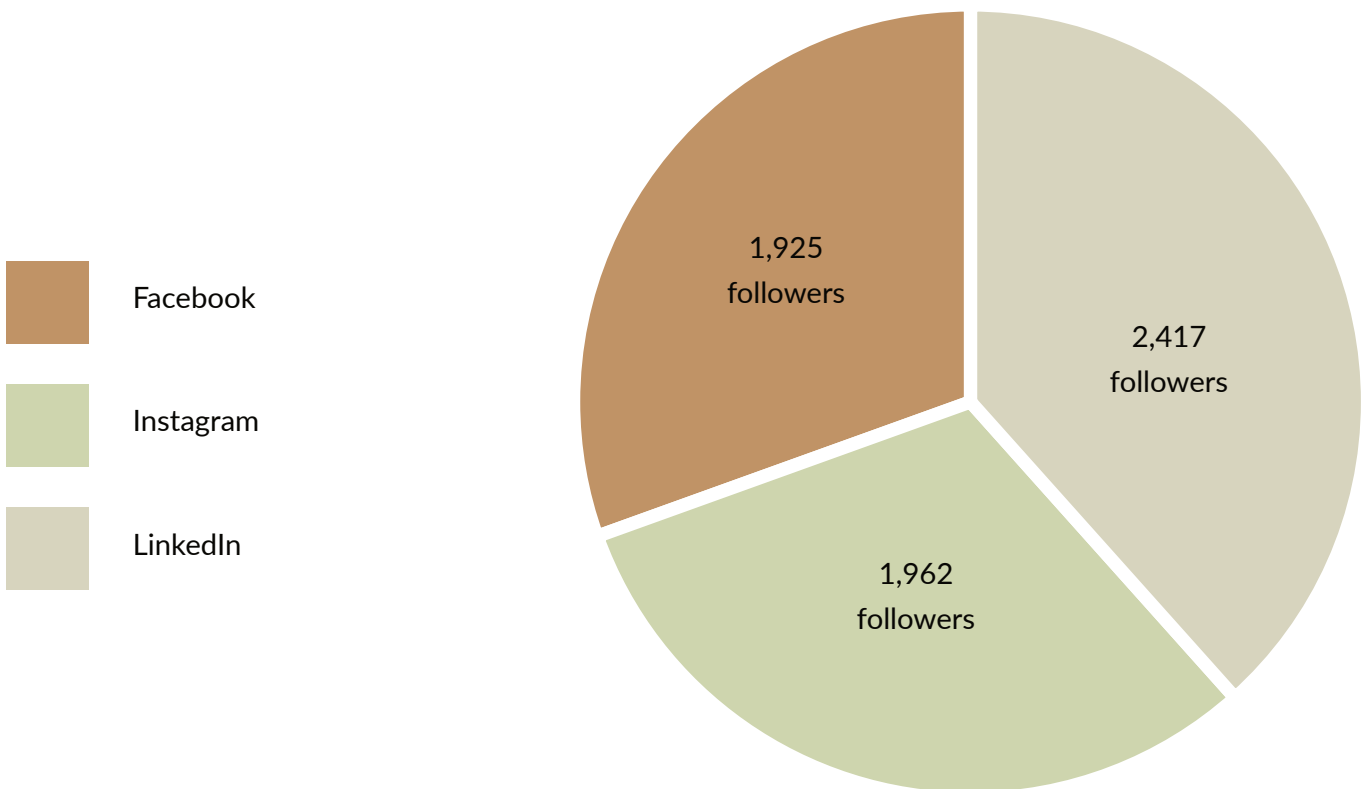
**Listen to Episode 14 of
The Equalities Podcast!**



Podcast Listens



Our Social Media Reach



As an anti-racist organisation The Diversity Trust, alongside many other organisations, have taken the decision to disengage from Twitter-X. We will not support or enable platforms that promote hate, and we will call out and challenge hate and racism whenever we see it.

**“You need to build the
foundations before you build
the movement.”**



In Focus: Period Poverty



Period poverty is a global issue, impacting the lives of people who menstruate [insert convo box around inclusion]. In the UK, Plan International reports that 28% of women and girls aged 14-21 are struggling to afford period care products.

The lack of access to safe and appropriate menstrual products, hygiene facilities, and education needed for people who menstruate to effectively manage their periods. Period poverty can be caused by:

- Unaffordable products
- Stigma
- Lack of products and facilities in public spaces such as schools, toilets, venues, and offices.

In the absence of appropriate products, alternatives such as socks, toilet paper, and strips of cloth are being used. These materials aren't absorbent enough, or hygienic, leading to risks to the physical health of people who menstruate. Lack of proper items can lead to infections and issues with sexual and reproductive health.

But it's not just physical health that's impacted when someone goes without pads or tampons, which are essential healthcare items. A person's mental health also

comes under pressure as they experience stress around their periods, social isolation from missing out on activities such as school, sports, and time with friends, financial impacts for having to miss work, depression, anxiety, and shame because of menstruation being seen as 'unclean' and stigmatised.

Economic barriers make menstrual supplies unaffordable, while a lack of awareness and inadequate facilities hinder proper menstrual health management. Additionally, the economic burden of menstrual products and the long-term health costs of poor hygiene contribute to the overall impact of these issues.

We might ask ourselves why we need to pay attention to period poverty, especially when we might not menstruate. Period poverty represents an ongoing inequality in our societies, woven through with centuries of misunderstanding and stigma. It doesn't matter if you don't menstruate, you will know someone who does, and they may be facing days where they must choose between buying food or buying essential period products, attending their university lectures or missing out on their education, because they don't have the items they need to manage their period in comfort and safety.

CASE STUDY: Jess (She/They), 24

"The price of a pack of pads now is ridiculous. I don't like using tampons or anything you'd put inside, because it feels uncomfortable, and you also can't change or dispose of them properly sometimes because there aren't any public toilets that are easy to access.

I've used strips of an old t-shirt when I've run out of pads. It's not very good, you end up leaking everywhere. It's even worse if the flow is heavy. It's so embarrassing. If I'm on my period now, I try not to make any plans because I don't know if I'll have the stuff I need.

I'm always worried about people noticing and thinking I'm dirty, but I can't help it if I can't afford the pads. Having a period is normal and it should be normal to access pads wherever you might need them."



People who menstruate? You mean women and girls, right?

When we use the phrase 'people who menstruate', we're recognising everyone who experiences periods. This includes women, girls, trans men, trans boys, and non-binary people of all ages.

Including gender diversity doesn't erase the experiences of women or girls. Instead, it creates space for people who are excluded from conversations, support, and provision around period care.

We believe that trans and non-binary people deserve to be seen and supported, which is why we refer to 'people who menstruate' in place of referring only to women and girls.

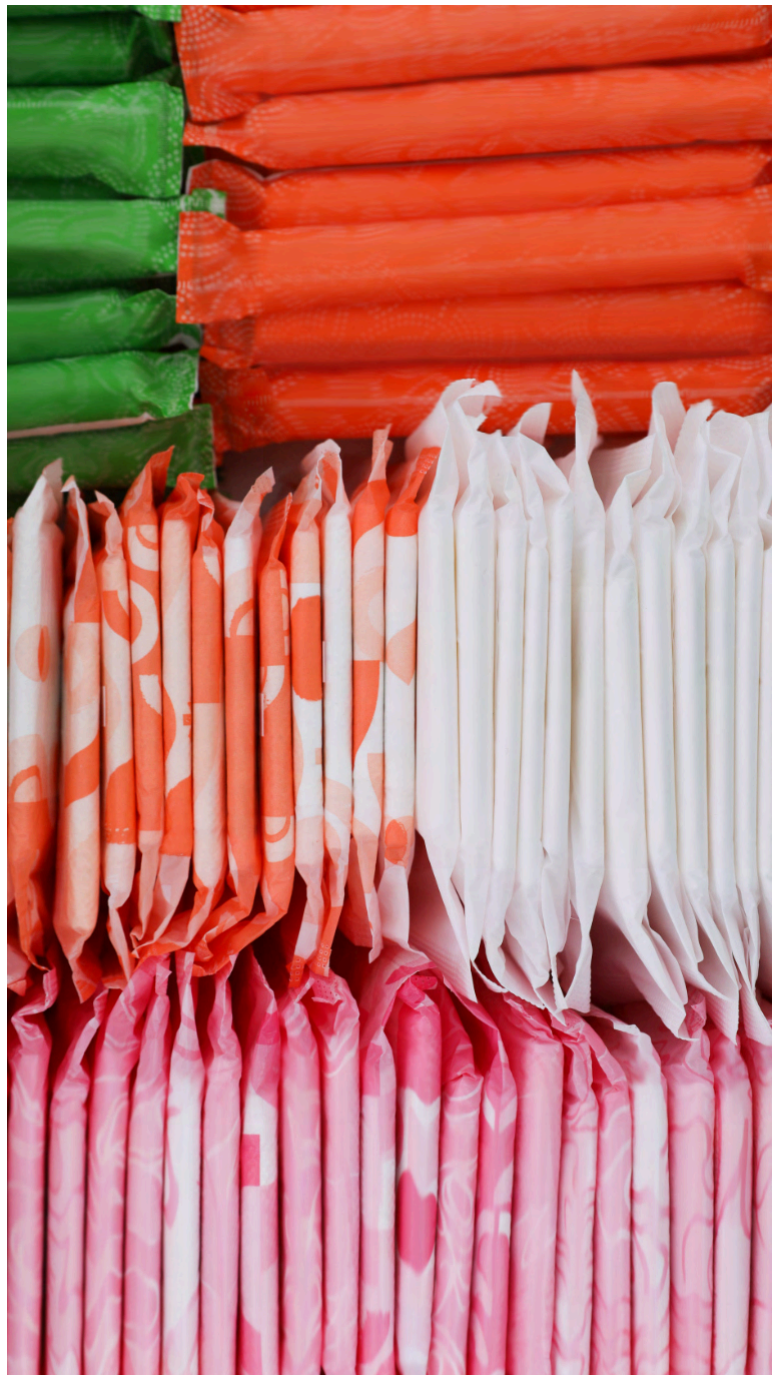
We're also acknowledging that not every woman menstruates, for a variety of reasons. When we assume menstruating is an inherent part of being a woman, we can unintentionally exclude those who do not, regardless of whether they are cisgender or transgender.

It's time to end this inequality. TSL and The Diversity Trust are working together to heighten the profile of period poverty and move towards Period Equality. TSL's work to provide Free-Vend dispensers to organisations and retailers in Scotland is part of the expanding work within businesses and campaigns to bring an end to Period Poverty. At the Trust, we're raising awareness across our networks and providing consultations to groups and organisations to help them understand the gaps in Period Equality and how to eliminate them. We provide educational support for LGBTQ+ experiences of Period Poverty, covering areas such as inclusive language that doesn't erase, and how to make period care products more accessible in public spaces.

To bring an end to period poverty, we need to focus on these key areas:

- Increasing access to menstrual products
- Making them accessible in places other than toilets
- Reducing the costs of period care items
- Diversifying period care options
- Providing updated and stigma-free education to everyone
- Support people who menstruate including women and girls, trans men, and non-binary people
- Advocating for policy changes
- Challenge misinformation about menstruation

At The Diversity Trust and TSL, we're doing our part to take on the task that so many others are campaigning for. Period poverty doesn't have to exist. We can end it, in the UK and globally, and we can do it by working together.



In Focus: Thought Leadership

From the Trust's perspective, thought leadership begins with centring lived experience, one of the leading principles that the organisation is built on.

Lived experience provides the foundations for meaningful engagement and opens discussions around the issues that matter the most. The benefit of lived experiences is that it provides accurate and diverse perspectives around a topic, often in ways that will go unheard and unconsidered if lived experience is left out of the equation. But perspectives aren't the only thing that it can bring to the table; solutions from a lived experience input are richer, more meaningful, and identify ways forward that will be effective rather than generic. In business, lived experience input and coproduction can result in better outcomes for projects, and can often save resources over time because you're getting it right earlier in the work.

Underpinned by lived experience, thought leadership within the Trust prioritises listening to people from marginalised communities, identifying gaps and areas of need in discussions. Because we're a part of those groups, we're best placed to gather the voices of our peers, acting as experts in our fields, authentic contributors, and conduits for community engagement. The learning from these conversations is shared with the people we work with, whether this be our funders, commissioners, clients, partners, communities, or donors, influencing businesses, organisations, and groups in positive and proactive ways.

An example of thought leadership within the partnership with TSL has been advocating for

equitable access to period care products, highlighting the importance of including groups who are overlooked in period care provision, such as trans men and transmasculine non-binary people. Our discussions have identified why it's important to provide products in accessible places for trans men and non-binary people, and how products can be diversified to meet people's different period care needs.

Thought leadership is important. Historically, marginalised communities have had less access to spaces, resources and influence; we act, as an organisation, to address that imbalance. As members from and of marginalised communities, we're able to provide organisations with the support to become better in their practices and engagement. This support, for example, can help improve employment policies, increasing diversity in the workforce, and developing new employment opportunities. This ultimately benefits people from marginalised communities, and organisations.

The benefits of becoming diverse and inclusive as an organisation don't just apply to the administrative side of operations; having diversity in any company benefits the social good, opening avenues to unexplored ideas and approaches, and providing opportunity for people who might typically be excluded. Businesses mitigate the risk of becoming stagnant and "white-washed" and move away from practices that are exclusionary and harmful to marginalised people. All of this can and does happen, because of the conversations had through thought leadership.



TSL: Our 3 Year Plan

We love a bit of ambition in this partnership, if you couldn't already tell. When looking to the future, we thought it'd be aspirational (and fun) to develop a little plan for the next three years within the partnership, and for TSL more widely. Here's what we came up with...

Diversify Our Customer Reach

This is a simple one: the more diverse our customers are, the more we can do to develop the products they need, and the more we can do to support them. It makes sense as a business, too, as diversity helps us become and remain sustainable. Speaking of business...

Working Our Core

No, we're not subjecting ourselves to crunches every morning. TSL will be working to develop and maintain the core of the business which, like diversifying our customer base, is a fundamental requirement if we're to continue supplying essential healthcare products and continue our work in social justice.

Walking the Uneven Line

We'll develop strategies that will create long-term sustainability in an unstable market. From the shipping crisis to global conflicts, anything and everything can impact how a business operates. We learned from the Pandemic that we need to be resilient and ready to move with time and tide, so that's exactly what we're going to do.

Evolution

TSL's products continue to develop as need increases and becomes more complex. We'll be working to develop our continence care range, and expanding into products and solution centred around menopause and menopause awareness. With the work that The Diversity Trust are carrying out around this important area of healthcare, we'll naturally be working alongside them to help create the best outcomes.

Equity in Everything

A lot of our work focuses on the healthcare needs of women and girls, something that we're always going to champion and strive to improve access to. But what about the guys? Equity in healthcare for men and boys, including trans and non-binary men, is a topic not often discussed. Any number of challenges can impact their lives, from cancer to continence issues, and accessing much-needed period care in safe spaces. We'll be exploring how we can start to make things easier for men and boys, by looking at what they need and raising awareness around the issues they experience.

Continuing Professional Development

TSL are committed to ongoing development within the organisation and will be enlisting The Diversity Trust to provide regular training to the business. We'll be monitoring the outcomes and reporting back around changes and developments, addressing gaps as they appear and celebrating achievements as they arise.

With the next three years of TSL's plans mapped, it's time to look at The Trust's plans...



Trust the Process

Cultivating Growth

The EDEI sector is under constant development. With each year that passes, we meet the challenges that emerge from our society and work to respond to them. From anti-racism to climate emergency, to trans rights, The Diversity Trust will be building its portfolio of training and consultancy to ensure that we're providing responsive education that counters the growing wave of misinformation and hate.

Continuing Professional Development

The Diversity Trust are developing a programme of integrated monthly learning opportunities for the Trust's staff, to support people in their roles and develop their skills. The sessions will cover topics including understanding individual learning styles, mental health awareness, hate crime awareness, and menopause awareness.

Embedding Wellbeing

We'll be developing our staff training to incorporate wellbeing and mental health support, building a coproduced wellbeing plan, and embedding mental health champions in the Trust. As part of this, we'll be designing trainings that focus on wellbeing in marginalised communities.

Developing Systems

As the Trust continues to grow, we'll be developing client relationship and learning management systems, and working to expand our presence in England, and Wales, having now established a presence in Scotland. We'll be working to update the systems and technology that staff use in their roles and applying for funding for research and innovation with our academic partners in the university sector.

The Next Generation

The Diversity Trust has provided student placement opportunities for the past three years, and we've worked with some incredible people as a result. We plan to extend these placement opportunities for students, and model ways of working together that embody a community approach to employment and career development.

Training and Events

The Trust's Lunch and Learn sessions will continue, providing free taster sessions of our trainings to everyone. Alongside, we'll be expanding our events engagement by attending local Prides, and organising activities around key dates such as Hate Crime Awareness Week.



Looking to 2024

At the time of writing this report, Year 4 of the partnership is well underway, and we're excited to share our developments with you in our next annual impact report. For now, here's a taster of what we've got coming up:

- Period Poverty is transforming into Period Equality as we begin planning for a roundtable event. TSL will be launching their Period Equality website in 2024, which will feature work from The Diversity Trust.
- The Diversity Trust will be starting a brand new LGBTQ+ Voice and Influence project in the southwest of England, funded by the National Lottery Community Fund.
- We'll be delivering LGBTQ+ training to AHPMA, supporting attendees in getting to grips with key concepts and inclusive language.
- In August 2024, the Trust will be celebrating its 12 Year Anniversary with our annual event held in Bristol. Our AGM will be held in London in October 2024, with partners and colleagues invited to both.)
- Series 6 of the Trust's Equalities Podcast will launch, exploring health inequalities faced by men.
- TSL and The Diversity Trust are planning an Away Day in Autumn 2024 to strategic and sustainable approaches to the partnership, and for the Trust to deliver EDEI training to TSL staff.



For a fairer...



... and safer society

Contacts

We've introduced a lot of people in this report. To find out more and connect with them, you can contact them across their social media accounts and websites:

The Diversity Trust

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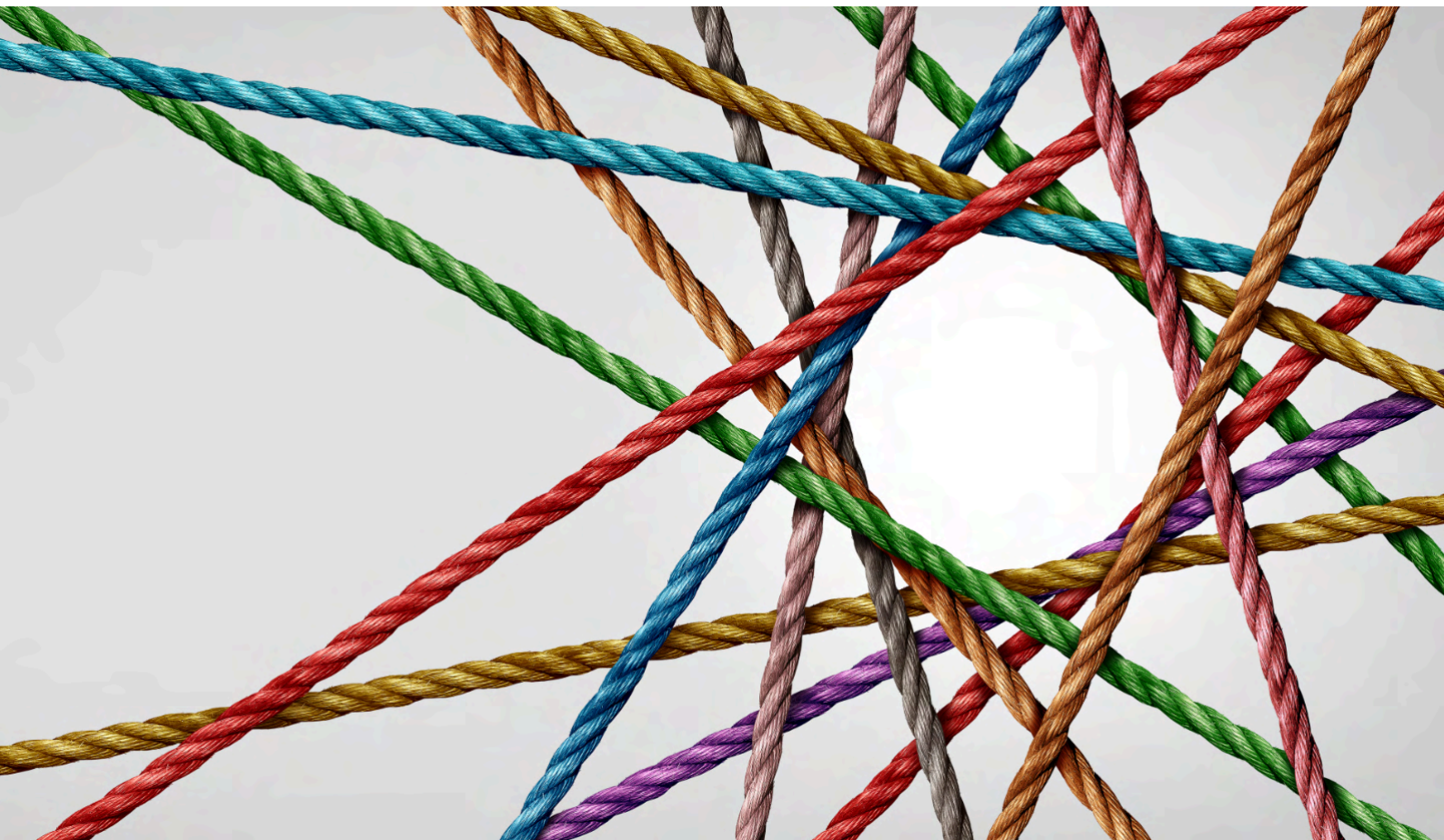
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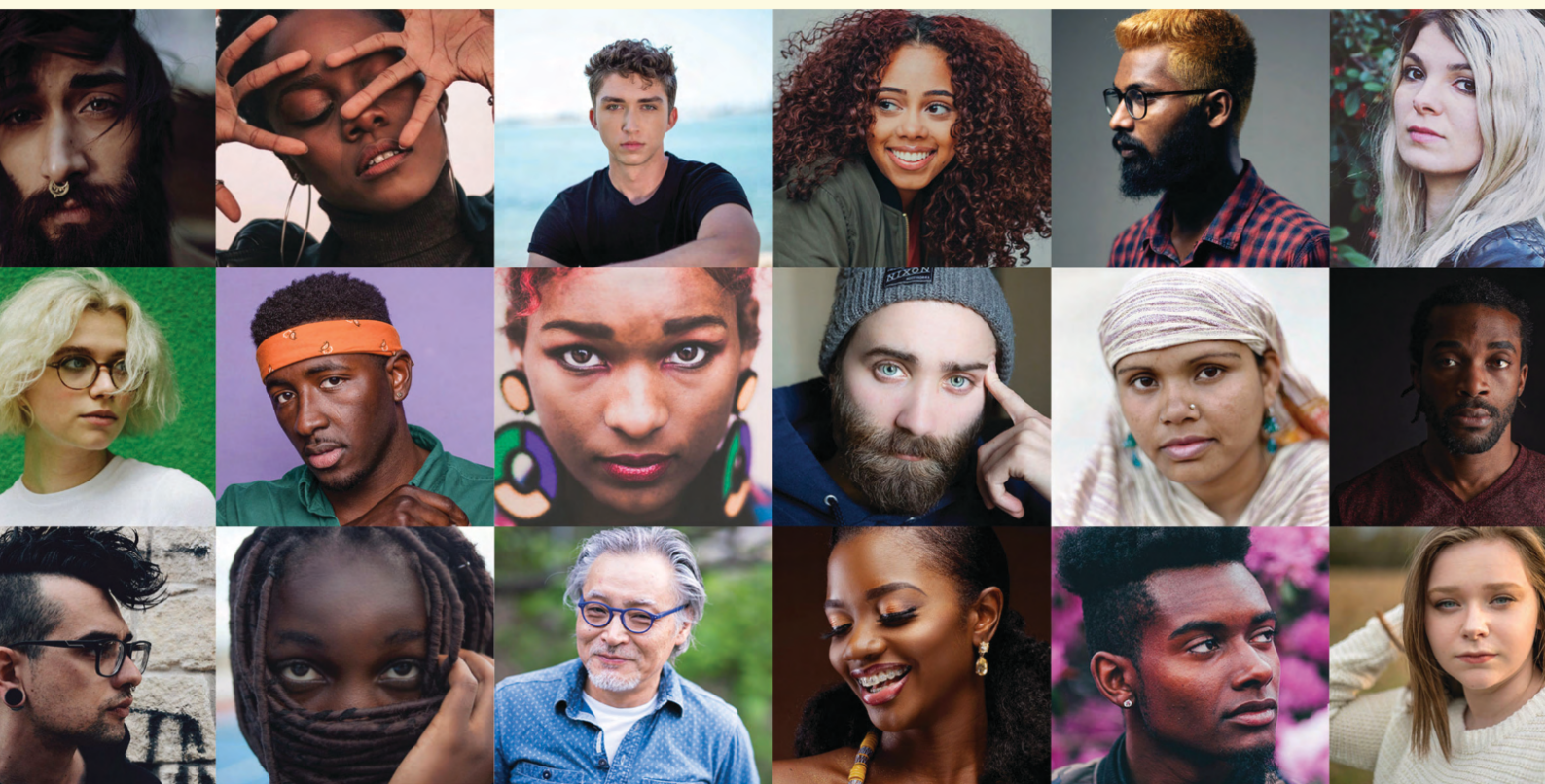
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THE 
DIVERSITY TRUST
INFLUENCING SOCIAL CHANGE



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