

Case Study – IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion). Challenge, change and culture. Ensuring IDEA drives an organisation forward with one voice.

Background

In the beginning IDEA was the responsibility of one senior member of Leicestershire Music. Training was given by this member of staff and there was buy-in from certain members of the organisation. However, there was a need to share the workload and ensure the importance of IDEA is shared amongst the organisation, to become the golden thread throughout all activity.

The initial support for IDEA came from the MEHEM (Music Education Hubs of the East Midlands) in the form of an external EDI consultant who looked at a strategic overview across the six MEHEM hubs, comparing data but also devised a strategic plan for each individual music hub.

To drive the strategic plan, it was essential that a shared responsibility and ownership was in place, so Leicestershire Music created a paid position for an EDI Champion who was not part of the existing Leadership Team. This ensured that the IDEA message was being championed at different levels and by more than one voice throughout the organisation.

Staff training as a tool for dialogue

During a staff development session, an example from our website was used as a Think Piece. Leicestershire Music had put out a call to young people to recruit to our youth council. The phrasing that we used on our website was as follows:

- **Are you aged 16 to 25?**
- **Want to have a voice and support music-making for young people in Leicester and Leicestershire?**
- **Do you identify as; black, Asian, ethnically diverse, disabled or have a protected characteristic?**

Then there was a response to this advert from a member of the Leicestershire Music team:

"I've got a slight concern about some of the language- the part that says, "we are looking to recruit young people who identify as...." I think for 100% inclusivity, maybe the wording is more along the lines of "we wish to have representatives from all backgrounds as to truly reflect the diversity both locally and nationally".

How would you respond?

Youth Voice

- Are you aged 16 – 25?
- Want to have a voice & support music making for young people in Leicester & Leicestershire?
- Do you identify as Black, Asian, Ethnically Diverse, Disabled or have a *protected characteristic?



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The team were asked to discuss the statement and give an appropriate response. A brave space was created so everyone could share their views and one team member stated ‘we have the answer in the room’. This was a pivotal moment and a real coming together of minds.

It was emphasised to staff that there was absolutely no blame about having different starting points of understanding. Positive relationships and trust were reinforced between all and the message was reinforced that *we are continually learning about IDEA and it’s ok to view the world through our own lens, but we need to develop our lens so that is inclusive of those with protected characteristics.*

Widening understanding

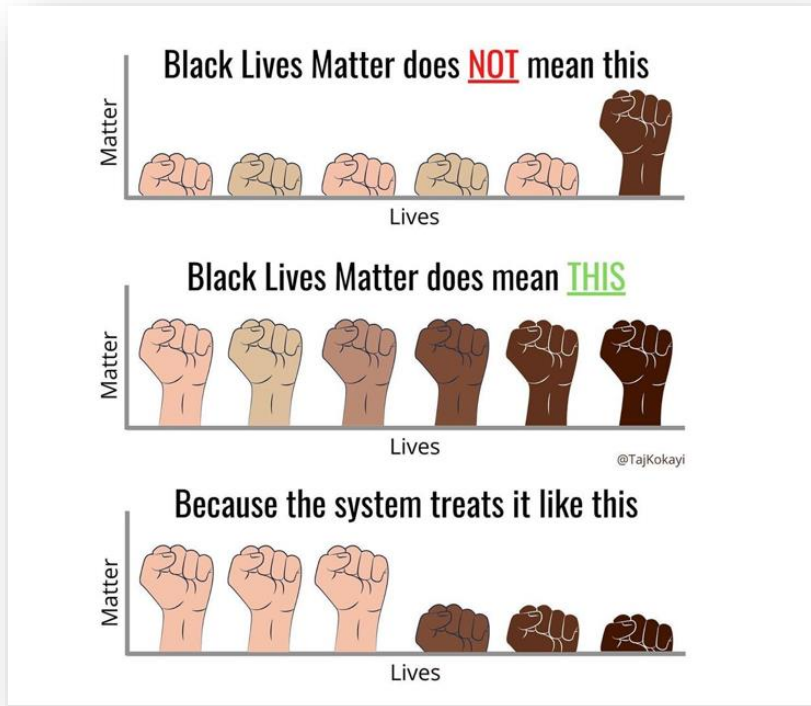
An explanation about the reasoning behind the wording of the statement was developed and shared.

‘By putting a call out specifically for underrepresented groups to be part of the youth voice group, we are welcoming those voices who are usually excluded from the conversation viewing this through a white heterosexual/able-bodied lens looks very different to a truly inclusive lens.

The statement asking for underrepresented groups to be involved is about equity this is deliberate because it is good practise and inclusive. A common misconception here is that this is seen as simplifying the validity of able bodied / white / privileged people this is most definitely not the case.’

The concerned comment may have been interpreted as parallel to the Black Lives Matter movement (when we’re thinking about race) where some championed the call that ‘all lives matter’.

Here is an infographic that illustrates why we need to take an equitable approach.



The session ended on a real high, conversations about IDEA continued into the coffee break and team members asked if they could do more of this type of discussion activity.

This was a real positive step for our organisation, a real shift in culture. It is of paramount importance that the relevance and strategy for IDEA is led by staff from different levels within an organisation and a true sharing of ideas and views can take place in a supportive environment without the fear of being shut down for 'getting it wrong.' Conversations like this will continue to be on the agenda and IDEA is the golden thread that runs through our organisation, driving change and supporting a fresh vision for inclusion, diversity, equity, and access.