UKSG's commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion

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Joanna Ball, Chair, **UKSG**

I'm excited to begin the new year by updating you on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) at UKSG.

About a year ago, the UKSG Trustees put out a call for a consultant to help us with an EDI audit to examine all our activities, groups, policies and initiatives and make recommendations as to where we should take action. We had made some bold statements as part of our 2022 strategic vision: we were committed to representing the diversity of our community, addressing areas of under-representation and providing a voice for all members of the community. Looking around the virtual table of predominantly white, British, librarian trustees, it was clear that despite our commitment, we had some way to travel.

As part of the audit, our consultant, **Hannah Kibiridge**, conducted focus groups and individual interviews with community members to examine culture and values, representation power and decision-making, learning and awareness, partnerships and collaborations, policies and processes to inform her audit. We are very grateful to all the members of our community who gave their input to this consultation.

We were encouraged to hear that our community had confidence in us and our efforts to address under-representation. Many of our existing initiatives were already having an impact, for example, funding of EDI-related initiatives, support for under-represented groups to attend our November conference, and building relationships with other sector organisations working in this area.

The audit showed that there were some experiences of marginalisation in our internal culture, which, in many ways, reflected the wider information sector. Consultation participants wanted us to be bolder and more ambitious in our approach. With input from Hannah's recommendations, we have agreed upon several specific initiatives to centre EDI more purposefully in how we work and promote EDI across our sector.

One of the first steps the Trustees have taken is to develop an EDI statement outlining why this is important to UKSG and what it means for our organisation. We are pleased to share this statement, the result of a collaborative process between all members of the Board. Our statement reflects our commitment to you, our community, on how we will work to make UKSG a more inclusive organisation.

Over the coming months, we will establish an EDI task force with representation from Trustees, our volunteer networks, and external experts to oversee the development of a resourced and measurable EDI action plan that will embed EDI into our work and culture. This plan will include:

- Systematic collection of data around EDI to enable us to identify areas of underrepresentation and measure progress
- Taking steps to bring in underrepresented members and groups to our Board and Sub-Committees (the changes outlined by **Tasha Mellins-Cohen** in eNews in December are the first step in that process).
- Ensuring our existing activities are as inclusive and accessible as possible and that we are amplifying contributions from underrepresented backgrounds
- Training for our Board and Sub-Committees to build understanding and confidence in applying EDI in practice
- Deepening our existing relationships with other community groups, and targeting our existing initiatives and funding opportunities to more explicitly support EDI and support career progression and improve the experiences of underrepresented people in our sector

Cultural change is a complex process that requires ongoing reflection, dialogue, and intentional actions. Statements, task forces and action plans are important tools. However, we acknowledge that they are just one part of the broader collective shift in attitudes, behaviours, and mindsets required to set EDI at the heart of UKSG.

This is just one step on a much longer shared journey, and we will keep listening and learning together as we go.