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Foundation

Diversity and inclusion in Community Land Trusts

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Foreword

Tom Chance
Chief Executive, Community Land Trust Network

You are about to read a really rich piece of work, the first of its kind, exploring what diversity and inclusion means, and how it operates, in the Community Land Trust movement in England and Wales.

Every community has diversity, and that diversity is associated with exclusion. Whether it is young people in Cornwall unable to afford housing costs near their family and place of work, or people of colour in London displaced from their homes and businesses by gentrification.

In theory, Community Land Trusts (CLTs) should rise to these challenges.

CLTs are over-represented in parts of the country that are most deprived, or in greatest housing need. They can bring everyone in a community together – minoritised and majority, excluded and advantaged – to collectively address local needs. To not only meet the needs of those who are excluded, but give those people the power and capability to be agents of their own change.

But in practice, we know little about how diverse the membership and leadership of CLTs is. We have found through this project that most CLTs don't, either. They simply aren't collecting the data.

Nor do we know much about how diversity and inclusion is considered, its place in their vision and strategy, its practical application in the way CLTs work and the projects they develop. What comes across in this research is that there is a diversity of approaches to these questions.

This is a challenge to our movement. Not only to reflect on effective strategies to improve diversity of inclusion. But to be clear on what we think CLTs are really about.

Are CLTs in essence a way to provide what a community needs, particularly affordable homes? Dedicated people set them up and run them, and what matters is that the affordable homes get built, the workspace renovated.

Or is the essence also about how they do this? The CLT movement has its roots in a deeper ambition: not to create another set of paternalistic enterprises, but to give power and control to those who most need it. To foster the enrichment of community politics, conservation of community life and the creation of participatory governance. This implies that diversity and inclusion should be at the heart of how CLTs operate, and who they are, as much as what they do.

I hope this research will stimulate a lot of reflection and debate in our movement, and beyond.



Executive summary

Research and anecdotal evidence have highlighted that the CLT movement could improve the diversity and inclusion of their membership to ensure they are led by, and are empowering, the full range of people and communities in their local area. The Community Land Trust Network (CLTN) commissioned The Young Foundation to specifically look at the barriers to improving diversity and inclusion for CLTs, particularly in relation to ethnic minorities, young people (of working age) and those on low incomes. The project was also interested in examining the practices which support diversity and inclusion within the movement.

The project used a peer research methodology. Peer research is a participatory research method in which people with lived experience of the issues being studied take part in directing and conducting research. In this project, The Young Foundation recruited and trained eight peer researchers from across England and Wales. These peer researchers conducted 30 interviews to examine diversity and inclusion in the movement.

The research found that CLTs have different understandings of what diversity and inclusion is. There are also varying levels of willingness to make the movement more diverse and inclusive, whether a CLT is in an urban or rural area is a key factor. A lack of knowledge about CLTs and a lack of representation on CLT boards were identified as barriers to diversity and inclusion. Many CLTs in the research had active strategies to improve the diversity of their membership and included targeted activities such as family fun days and specific outreach such as the provision of advice. Working with organisations who supported diverse groups was also another strategy employed to improve diversity.

The report ends with key recommendations to improve diversity and inclusion in the movement: a diversity audit, targeted support for diverse groups to increase their knowledge and capacity to develop their own CLTs and more support for CLTs such as diversity and inclusion training and funding for community connectors.

The peer researchers hope that this research will be a catalyst for the change required to make the CLT movement more diverse and inclusive.

The wider context

CLTs started off as a movement in the US in the 1960s rooted in the civil rights movement. Core to the CLT movement is the centrality of community control. Community control is achieved through community ownership of land and assets which captures benefits of rising land values for the whole community and recycles wealth locally. Therefore, CLTs can be viewed as a membership-based place-shaping tool and way of bringing a community together (The Young Foundation, 2011). CLTs can drive area-based change because they are a genuine model of community empowerment: neighbourhood governance, service delivery, and provision of facilities for members. The members of CLTs are individuals who live or work in the area the CLT is based in.

In England and Wales, CLTs have increasingly become popular and the number of CLTs has doubled since 2017 to over 300 (Davis et al., 2020). While CLTs are not intended solely for housing developments, it has been widely used as 'an innovative yet strenuous approach to facilitate collective access to affordable housing' (Aernouts & Ryckewaert, 2013, p. 503), and as a model for low-income housing provision (Midheme & Mouleart, 2018). CLTs are formed by self-help groups who are seeking to tackle problems in their rural and urban communities related to a lack of housing supply, gentrification and displacement of local people, and speculative private house building at the expense of affordability (Moore and Mullins, 2013).

There is a dearth of research on diversity and inclusion in the CLT movement in the UK. There is a growing literature focusing on diversity in the cohousing movement, though the beneficiaries and participants of cohousing are very different to those in CLTs. The demographics of the population benefitting from the growth of co-housing, tend to be very similar: white middle-class, educated homeowners, often older women and may exclude people of colour or those from a working-class background (Arbell, 2021). Some of the reasons behind this trend are barriers such as the time required to participate in building and managing the cohousing communities, and the time lag for housing projects to be developed in relation to housing need (Garciano, 2011). Involvement in the development and management of cohousing communities usually requires high levels of education, experience, and confidence (Huber, 2017).

Some of these findings may be applicable to CLTs, and suggest further research would be useful. Previous research on urban CLTs shows that there is a diverse range of beneficiaries from CLT homes, ranging from those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, young people and those on low incomes (Moore et al., 2018). Building on this research, the CLT Network launched the Cohesive Communities Fund (CCF), funded by M&G Investment and Power to Change in 2019, to support a more diverse and inclusive community-led housing. The CCF sought to help CLT groups build truly cohesive communities. The CCF funding has the objective of supporting CLTs to improve the diversity and inclusion of their membership to ensure they are led by, and are empowering, the full range of people and communities in their local area.

Diversity is taken to mean the recognition and value of differences between people and inclusion is taken to mean the experience people have in which everyone feels that they belong, no matter their background, identity, or circumstances. To improve diversity and inclusion in the CLT movement, it is important that CLTs are led by, and build greater engagement with, a representative range of people from their local community as leaders, CLT members, or practitioners.





The research

The CLT Network commissioned The Young Foundation to support its members to examine how to make the CLT movement more diverse and inclusive. This project specifically looked at the barriers experienced by people in several CLTs in the CCF, and others in the CLTN membership. This research aimed to understand how the barriers to setting up and participating in CLTs can be removed and, the types of support and practices that will encourage a more diverse group of people to engage with CLTs.





Peer research methodology

The research design for this project was a participatory and qualitative strategy. The project used a peer research methodology which enables people with lived experience of the issues being studied to take part in directing and conducting research.

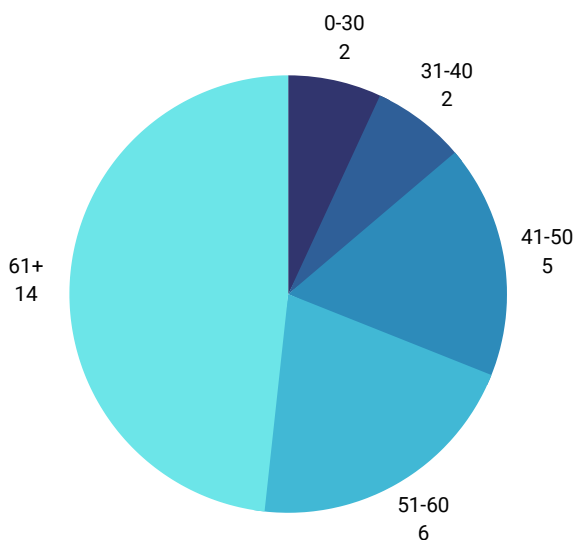
As such, we worked with members of the CLT movement to draw on their networks and relationships. Other CLT members are more likely to respond honestly and openly, and feel they can speak more informally, to an interviewer they relate to on a personal level. Peer research also deepens insights on an issue because of the added value of lived experience, providing 'insider knowledge' and understanding of the issues being studied. Therefore, peer research can deliver more nuanced data.

Eight peer researchers were recruited and trained as peer researchers to conduct in-depth interviews with members of CLTs across England and Wales. The peer researchers co-designed the interview that would help examine how to make CLTs more diverse and inclusive. The peer researchers conducted 30 interviews with 29 individual CLTs and one group in search of community-led housing options. These CLTs represent approximately 12% of the CLTN's membership and are located across England and Wales. The interviews took place in February and March 2022. The peer researchers co-analysed the findings from the interview data to make recommendations on how to improve diversity and inclusion within CLTs.

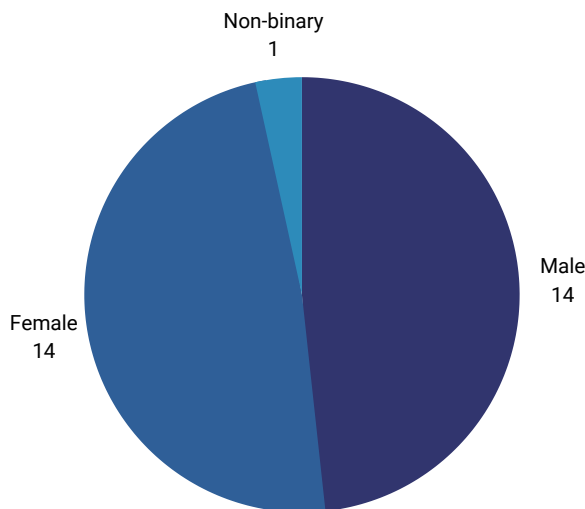
About the sample

The demographic profile of participants is presented in this section but not all the participants provided their demographic information. Of the participants who responded, two people had an income below £16,000 and two people said they had long term illnesses or disabilities.

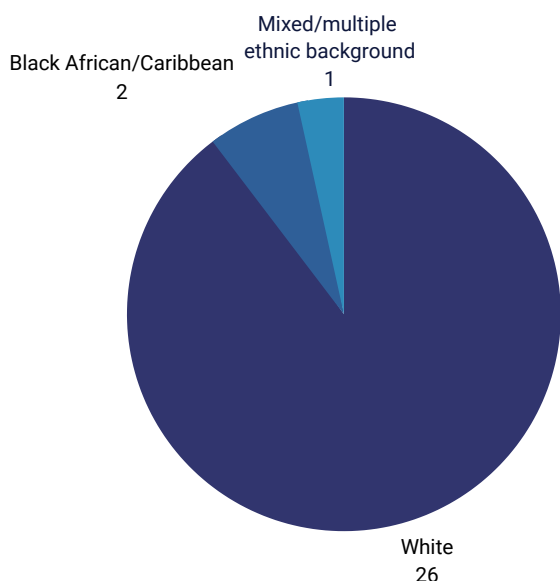
Age



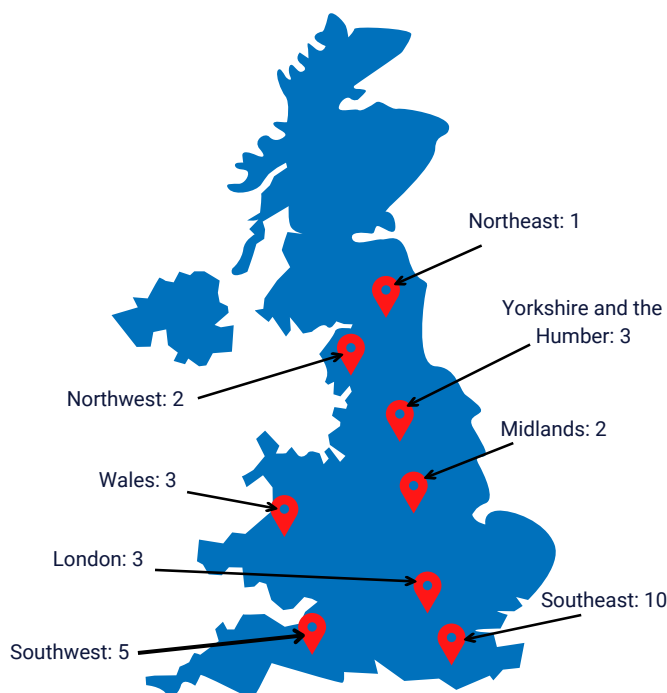
Gender



Ethnicity



Geographic location





Research findings



The co-analysis of data in peer research means that the peer researchers brought their knowledge and experiences of CLTs to enable in-depth discussions of diversity and inclusion within the CLT movement. The peer researchers were keen to adequately represent the information shared with them in the interviews and put forward the interviewees' perspectives. The views and opinions expressed by the interviewees do not necessarily reflect the views of the peer researchers.

The research findings presented in this report are from a sample of CLTs across England and Wales and are not intended to be representative of all CLTs. These findings elucidate our understanding of and give us deeper insights into diversity and inclusion in CLTs. The findings provide a good indication of the different barriers to diversity and inclusion and the practices which can facilitate a diverse and inclusive movement.

This research contributes evidence to the levels of diversity within the CLT movement. While the CLT practitioners that participated in this research can be said to be diverse in terms of age, sex and gender, and sexuality, more needs to be done to increase the number of CLT practitioners (board and members) who have disabilities, are from ethnic minority and low socioeconomic backgrounds.



Diversity and inclusion in CLTs today

Diversity and inclusion mean different things within the CLT movement. It also appears essential to have a critical mass of diverse groups of people in a geographical location for diversity and inclusion to become a salient issue. There are various approaches to diversity and inclusion which are influenced by the development phase of CLT, the purpose of the CLT, and the previous experience of board members.

Defining diversity and inclusion

An understanding of what diversity and inclusion means in the context of the CLT movement is important to help shape how we can improve diversity and inclusion.

Some people offer relatively generic definitions of what diversity and inclusion means, focusing on equality of access and openness:



"Everyone having equal access to everything"

"Engage with everybody and are as open as possible to all and you include all"

Others define diversity and inclusion in a way that is more specific to the CLT movement and centre housing need as a consideration for diversity and inclusion:



"Diversity and inclusion is about being even-handed as to who is allocated properties"

"[We] are representative of both the local community and also the people who you're hoping will benefit the most"



"We provide housing based on a point scoring system, so that those with the greatest need will be the ones who get housing"

One practitioner identified a concern about how defining diversity as difference can be neoliberal^[1] and can take away from questions like power and access, thereby problematising certain groups, as seen in the excerpt below:



"[Some groups are] hard to reach, when you think about reaching them, you have to be proportionate about how much effort you're going to put in."

To make the movement more diverse and inclusive, this practitioner suggests that CLTs reflect on their policies and practices.



"Is the playing field equal?' - 'And what do you do in order to make sure you ensure access is more equal? What can you actively do to make sure that happens?'"

Through active strategies, CLTs can then fully engage with the diverse groups of people that most need affordable homes aided, provided or promised by participation in their CLT. However, active strategies for reaching those in need is more likely to be implemented where there is a critical mass of people in need.



Reaching a critical mass

Local population demographics in rural areas meant that some CLTs did not necessarily have a wide range of people from different backgrounds; they are more likely to be white, middle-class and retired. Typically, the people interviewed from rural CLTs understand diversity in terms of ethnicity and visible differences (such as disability) and so do not see diversity and inclusion as a salient issue locally.



"We have sexually diverse people in the village, and nobody worries about that, but they are so few and far between it would be very difficult to include them".

"We don't have those groups. You see, we're in South-west England. We're not in a town - you only find these groups in towns don't you really?"

Although there was a better awareness of socio-economic differences between 'outsiders and locals' in some CLTs, no active strategies were identified to attract members from low socio-economic backgrounds.



"We could do a mail-shot round those five houses, but I'm not sure that it would be of any particular advantage. We don't need them. As I say, they live here rather than being involved in the community, so I don't really see the need for it."

What was more common in rural CLTs was that CLT practitioners felt that it was important to have diversity of thought - that is, to have individuals with different skills required to make the CLT successful.

On the other hand, urban CLTs were more likely to be diverse - understandably because of their geographical location and the profile of the local population; as such there was also far greater likelihood that they can reach a critical mass for diversity and inclusion to be a salient issue. This might be because in larger populations such as in a city, it is possible for minority groups to meet and to form in a way that sub-populations of smaller communities may not be able to. It may be harder to organise around shared experiences when there are insufficient numbers.

Approaches to diversity and inclusion

The CLTs included in the research are on a spectrum of approaches to diversity and inclusion. The approaches range from passive strategies where the diversity has been "totally luck so far", to having specific equality, diversity and inclusion policies, to more conscious decisions on how to make their CLT more inclusive. Several factors influenced the different approaches seen in this research:

- Development stage of the CLT: some of those who are at the start of their CLT journey or in the development phase of their CLT projects do not view diversity and inclusion as priorities. Some want to have projects to use as tools to attract a more diverse group of people
- Purpose of the CLT: there are CLT practitioners who are concerned about housing insecurity and want to be part of the solution to helping marginalised groups into affordable secure housing – these typically had active strategies for making their CLT more diverse and inclusive
- Funding: availability of funds to support outreach and community engagement impacts on the type and number of activities that are undertaken to reach a wide range of people. One CLT who benefitted from the Cohesive Communities Fund (CCF) explained how the fund facilitated their ability to reach a wider range of people
- Prior experience: where board members have previous experience of diversity and inclusion, they use this knowledge to influence the design of outreach activities, actively seeking ways to make the CLT more diverse and inclusive

The board's understanding of what diversity and inclusion is can impact the approach to diversity and inclusion taken by CLTs both positively and negatively. In some cases, there was a misunderstanding of what diversity means.



"You know, it's not popular now, to treat everyone the same. You have to treat certain groups differently, because they are in the group. And I really violently object to that. Everyone is the same."



"The CLT does not have a diversity policy but does instead have an equal opportunities policy. The reason for this is that the CLT does not want to create diversity by only targeting specific groups but instead want to be inclusive of everyone in the area."

- **Allocation criteria:** some CLTs used their allocation criteria to target specific groups while others had more strict definitions of beneficiaries of CLT projects



"There is an allocation policy which recognises some categories of people above others, that is, ex-service people."

"If the allocations criteria is strictly local people, you want to represent those people because that's the point but then you don't allow yourself to be open to those flows [of more diverse people]."

"We would love to recruit and increase membership from a wider area, but we are restricted by the nature of their demographics and the stipulation from the Church Commissioners as to the recipients and beneficiaries."

There is also differentiation between board diversity, membership diversity and service user diversity, as is the case for CLTs who have community facilities. It appears to be a pyramid of diversity with service users as the base being more diverse and boards at the pinnacle being less diverse. The barriers to diversity and inclusion which may explain the attrition rate will be explored later in this report.

Building the rationale for diversity and inclusion

For current CLT practitioners in this research, there are several indicators used to assess how diverse and inclusive their CLTs are: equal access for those in their geographical location (however defined); extent to which beneficial for those in housing need; and diversity of thought. Therefore, a rationale for improving diversity and inclusion in the movement could be that:



“It taps into resources that we don't currently have ... If we are tapping into different communities, then we're bringing their energy, their skills, their knowledge. Their networks. An organisation has to be stronger by having that plurality of voices and approaches and everything else.”

From academic and policy evidence, those who need housing are more likely to be young, ethnic minorities and those from low socioeconomic backgrounds. This research supports existing evidence.



“We're supporting [a group representing people of an African background] to put in a bid to develop a particular site because they want a community building ... For them, it's about serving their organisation and, by extension, serving their particular community.”



They're requiring quite a lot of capacity-building support to get them to do that because they've never done this before ... We've got a single parents' group that we're working with, groups of young people. They are disadvantaged by the current system: working young people with no capital who can't get on the housing ladder, single parents who want a different, mutually supportive way of living and are looking for a co-housing solution.”

In building the rationale for CLTs to become more diverse and inclusive, a practitioner questions whether CLTs comprised of the usual demographics (white, middle-class and retired) should be seeking to improve their CLTs through outreach. It is a critique about “reaching out, rather than starting from kind of within those communities.” This draws our attention back to the original intentions of the CLT movement, to serve as a community empowerment tool. However, structural constraints have made it more difficult for diverse communities to start their CLT projects regardless of their willingness, energy, and enthusiasm.



“We know, based on our experience, that those sites [available for development by a community group] in white, working-class areas are less likely to have anyone come forward to develop them. In other areas of the city, where there's more of a culture of activism or more middle-class people, we would expect more of a take-up ... It might partly be because of people's social capital, it might be to do with education, it might be to do with the lack of community anchor groups in those particular places ... just that there isn't that critical mass or there isn't that infrastructure, or they haven't seen it done locally.”



Barriers to diversity and inclusion

The key barriers identified to making CLTs more diverse and inclusive include: the lack of knowledge, skills and confidence in how to set up CLTs; time lag between when projects are ready and immediate housing need; lack of representation on the board; practical barriers to participation; and allocation policy.

Lack of knowledge, skills and confidence

The lack of knowledge that the CLT movement exists as a solution to housing need or insecurity is a barrier. Many people simply do not know that they are able to set up homes themselves.



“What does that mean? The name CLT doesn't really mean anything. It's meaningless and of no relevance to the Joe Bloggs on the street - say what you do on the tin.”

From engagement events that CLTs carry out, they say there is a lack of general understanding of what community-led housing is. There is also a lack of distinctive information about CLTs. For example, one group of African-Caribbean people were unaware of how CLTs operate. They were yet to join the CLT Network as they were unaware of the self-help element of creating homes for themselves and believed it to be a charitable model of doing good for others.



“When we're looking at CLTs, we just thought, if we're going to invest that much time in getting land, working with different people, getting houses, we wanted to do for ourselves first ... So the CLT is you're holding land in trust for other people, not necessarily yourself. We wanted to be able to get secure housing for ourselves first, and then replicate the model in which we used to help other people like us ... We would have considered that [CLT]. It was never presented to us.”

The setting up of a CLT requires a level of expertise that is not necessarily available to all groups which in itself can be a barrier to making the movement more inclusive. It requires groups to have knowledge, skills, and confidence “in presenting a case, negotiating with authorities, bid writing, engaging stakeholders, house design skills (overview), house building skills”.

This lack of capacity in navigating policy and funding, project management, construction, and soft skills can hinder diverse groups from starting their own CLTs.



Mistrust of local authorities

Part of the success of CLTs is the support from local authorities in securing land for CLT projects. For ethnic minority groups and those from low socio-economic backgrounds, there is a lack of trust in local authorities' willingness to help them set up given their past experiences and a lack of success with local authorities. However, for one of the groups, it felt like there was an additional barrier of racism. After a meeting about accessing the Empty Homes Scheme, they felt they were not given an allocation because they are a BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) group.



"But I wasn't sure, you know, and the only thing I could go on was that all the groups that we knew had gotten access to some of the portfolio were white groups."

Timescale for developing housing

The length of time for developing CLT housing projects has meant that the groups of people who need it the most are less likely to become members because of the immediacy of housing need. They do not have the luxury of waiting long periods for their housing needs to be met. Either people get in touch and then do not participate or participate then drop out.



"We have a lot of people getting in touch, but they can't participate in the CLT because it's a five- to 10 year dream - that's another difficulty".

"This guy said 'So how long is it going to take then?' and I said, 'well, it's hard to say ... 18 months?'. He said, 'Oh, I'm not sticking around [for that]'."

Lack of representation on the board

The CLT practitioners in this research were primarily from middle-class backgrounds, with many of them sitting on the board of their CLT. Consequently, there can be a sensitivity about perceptions of how diverse and inclusive a CLT is because of a perception of the people already involved.



"The group have been accused of being white, middle-class hippies by some in relation to their desire to build environmentally friendly houses".

"The board itself is a barrier. They are all stereotypically white, male, well-to-do retired professionals and this can be daunting for potential members".

"One of the things we saw was, so nobody looked like us. So, we just thought, well, nobody looks like us. They don't really understand. That's what we thought. Everybody is white ... and everybody to us seemed well-off. And everybody can afford to do what they're doing because they don't have housing insecurity".

Some of the barriers to improving representation of board membership include:

- **Them vs us culture:** in some CLTs, there is a disconnect between those who own the land and those who rent from CLT housing developments. This is sometimes compounded by the separation of the CLT from the management of, or even any visible association with, the homes it built due to an intermediary like a housing association



"The way it's worked out is that the people who live in the homes have all come from outside the village ... So no, they don't have a great community interest, really. They might, in time, but you know, they might equally move on and go somewhere else."

- **Lack of knowledge, skills and experience:** in areas where there is a lack of capacity, board members are not being recruited from the wider membership pool because of the view that board members need to have professional experience, technical know-how and confidence to lead the CLT. In one CLT, a 19-year-old joined the board but felt excluded because not enough time was given by the board to support this person to build their capacity and experience in keeping up with the jargon and speed of the meetings
- **Recruitment process:** in many CLTs, the recruitment process meant more of the same types of people because of a reliance on social circles



"It's a small community, and you just you get to know people who are prepared to put themselves forward."

"When the next one [board member] wants to retire from there, I think there'll be people about in the community to replace them. I don't think they'll come from the affordable homes..."

-
- **Time requirements:** In developing and managing a CLT project, there is a time requirement that many people do not have due to work and family commitments. For example, lack of childcare can prevent attendance at meetings in the evenings and daytime meetings are not accessible to individuals who work



Practices that improve diversity and inclusion

One of the aims of this project was to collate evidence of best practices from CLTs who are actively seeking to improve diversity and inclusion. Targeted activities, outreach, and partnerships are central to improving diversity. A 'zero tolerance' and supportive approach are important for inclusion.

Targeted activities

An awareness of the different groups that could benefit from the CLT projects means that CLTs have different ways for ensuring that diverse groups know about them and can take part. They increase their visibility in the community and facilitate participation.



"I think that they would feel more included if we had more events and situations where we're talking to people about what they want to see us do."

A range of strategies have been adopted:

- Using a variety of communication channels, eg local newsletter which goes out in normal print, large print and online, as well as face-to-face meetings
- Creation of a youth sub-CLT to encourage participation from young people
- Providing a creche to encourage families attend meetings
- Providing translation services
- Providing transport to attend meetings, eg a minibus service
- Organise events like family fun days, eg with creepy crawlies and donkey rides, kids craft activities, and pub events with themed bands. T-shirts and event posters help to raise the profile of the CLTs
- Targeted leafleting/emails specific to the communities they want to attract into membership
- Plug-in feature on CLT's website including forms which allows language changes with the 10 top ethnicities and languages spoken in the borough being represented, allowing non-native English speakers the option of choosing their own language

Outreach

At the heart of outreach is "meet people where they are at": go to the meetings that are already existing instead of expecting them to come to CLT meetings/events. CLTs can set up pop-ups in places where it is free and open for anyone to access them such as market stalls or community cafes. These are chances for the community to talk to the CLT rather than CLT talk to them.

Increasingly, CLTs are setting up specific 'spaces' to have one-to-one conversations such as through community-led housing enabling hubs. Spaces could also be a premises or a community hub where events can take place and support can be provided.



"Helping people with benefits-related advice ... basic cookery skills in the food bank ... a lot of elderly people don't know how to apply for their blue badge, so we could do a little advice session on that. There's gonna be a whole mix of supportive things going on for various people in the community who are at present socially isolated or marginalised through poverty, you know, food and fuel poverty. A lot of it's going to happen in a way that hasn't before because we'll have the amenities to house these things".

Alternatively, given how the pandemic has made technology-enabled conversations possible, 'virtual cuppas' can also increase reach for those who may not be able to attend face-to-face events.

Partnership working

For the CLTs who have managed to achieve greater socio-economic and ethnic minority diversity, it was typically achieved through partnership working. Due to limited capacity (people and funding), working with local groups who already support the groups they would like more participation from is essential.



“Also, we tend to work in partnership with local institutions, again this is due to capacity, as we don’t have the manpower and resources required to accomplish this”.

For some, it was critical “not to reinvent the wheel, as CLTs don’t have the capacity, skills set or resources, and CLTs must intentionally work with those community groups that do”.

Improving board diversity

The CLTs who have diverse boards are not restrictive about the level or type of knowledge, skills and experience required.



“One thing that worked for us as a CLT is to deliberately get diverse people involved at the board level. It’s not always about the best person in the interview but saying “actually, we’ve just not got a diverse staff team here”.

This requires a willingness of “showing people the ropes”, a mentor to support “a process of reflection, regular check-ins to support their integration into the CLT and building their capacity”.

Several shared examples of the targeted recruitment they used. CLTs feel it is important to give opportunities and encouragement and, when recruiting, being mindful to look beyond the usual suspects and directly approach people from less-represented groups.



“To try and help us break down the BAME barrier we recruited a local GP from the community to help us with the integration of our CLT and the community. This was to help with the BAME residents [who] feel more comfortable speaking to someone of the own faith and culture and who could explain to them what our CLT represented ... they would also be able to communicate with them better if language was a barrier.”

“Some of them needed a little bit of encouragement and persuasion ... We have said, 'don't worry, you're not going to be made to do public speaking, but you're a builder, you've got some really valuable stuff you can tell us.' And since they've joined, you can see they've grown in confidence and are contributing greatly.”

Fostering an inclusive environment

It is not just enough to attract diverse people as members or board members; an inclusive environment is vital to create a sense of belonging. One CLT shared an example of how they were able to sustain an inclusive environment for all. The CLT had evidence of a member who had transphobic views and there was a concern about how this would impact their inclusivity.



“We wanted to respect trans people’s validity to be who they are. And we didn’t want any member to feel put off by the extreme views of another member from joining us”.

They were able to be transparent to this member about their inclusivity objectives which was helpful in their conversation. The CLT was quite clear that having an explicit and written down commitment to inclusion supported the difficult conversation they had.



“The fact that we’ve got really clear objectives published on our website actually meant that in a time of crisis we could always fall back on those”.



A group of diverse people in a meeting. A man in a grey blazer is smiling and pointing at a whiteboard. A woman with curly hair is looking at the whiteboard. A woman in a white shirt is in the foreground, looking down. The background is a light blue wall.

Recommendations

The recommendations are based on strategies that could address the barriers to diversity and inclusion discussed. The recommendations also build on the practices identified in the previous section.

Targeted support for diverse groups

While diversity has been discussed in terms of acute and immediate housing need, as is the case with any housing scheme, CLTs cater to medium- to long-term housing needs. What differentiates CLTs from other mainstream housing schemes is community involvement and control. Considering this, becoming more inclusive and diverse for groups who are likely to be in need requires raising awareness of CLTs and offering support to diverse groups. Addressing the lack of knowledge and skills will enable diverse groups to know that CLTs can be viable option for overcoming some of the structural barriers and meet their housing needs. There are several ways that the CLTN could do this:

- Increase visibility of diverse membership through the CLTN's ambassadors programme
- Organise educational events to let people know what CLTs are and what they do, providing opportunities for people to ask questions
- Use short videos and factsheets in different languages and formats such as on what a CLT is and processes involved in starting and managing a CLT
- Facilitate partnership working on a national scale with groups that work with marginalised groups and are actively engaging with diverse groups
- Run a communications campaign to highlight the benefits of starting and/or joining a CLT. For example, highlight to young people that this could be a way to move away from home and own their home
- Offer capacity building funds and training to support diverse communities in setting up their own CLT projects

More support for CLTs seeking to improve diversity and inclusion

Given that a lack of funding and capacity are some of the main reasons cited for the less active approaches to diversity and inclusion, support to do this work is needed.

The list of support to provide is not exhaustive but represents the most common suggestions:

- Provision of a 'how-to' toolkit for engaging with diverse groups
- Availability of grants for CLTs to apply for to support activities using different and innovative approaches to diversity and inclusion. An idea suggested by the peer researchers is the development of a Quality Mark for the CLT movement. The Quality Mark would be a set of guidelines to say that a CLT has achieved a 'minimum' benchmark to signify the CLT is diverse and inclusive
- Provision of diversity and inclusion training to help CLTs craft their diversity and inclusion strategies to be delivered by specialists from within diverse communities. Strategies could include the use of the CLT's allocation policy to achieve more diversity in members
- Funding for roles such as community organisers and community connectors

Diversity audit

To help the CLTN understand the demographics and culture of the movement, a diversity audit in the form of a survey of network members will help to identify the specific factors that will help create a diverse and inclusive movement. A diversity audit helps you generate a real and unbiased picture of the state of diversity and inclusion in the movement, providing a holistic view of the opportunities and pathways to achieve a diverse and inclusive movement. Conducting a diversity audit provides a benchmark, an evidence-base to drive future actions for ensuring that the full range of people and communities can lead and be part of the CLT movement.



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