



WIG

The Whitehall & Industry Group
connecting the sectors

'People' Series

Tackling Structural Inequalities in the UK

Expert Insight

We were joined by Siobhan Morris, Coordinator of the UCL Grand Challenge of Justice and Equality and Matthew Whittaker, CEO at Pro Bono Economics to discuss how to tackle structural inequalities in the UK. They touched upon points including:

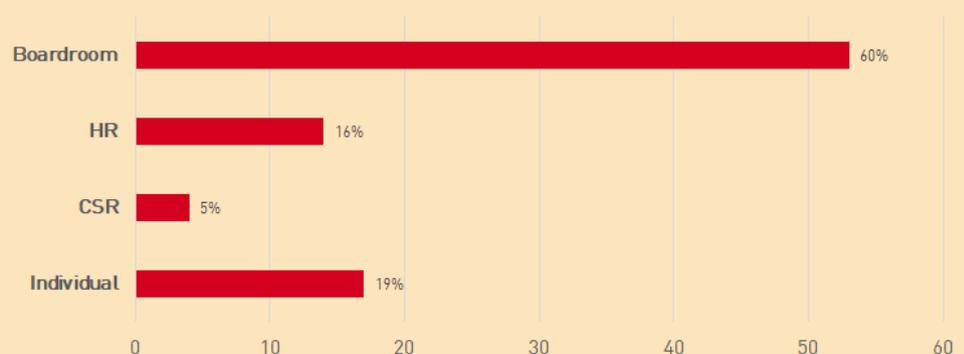
- Although we have made many strides forward in dismantling structural inequalities, they still remain embedded in our society. This can be seen for example in the 19-year gap in healthy life expectancy between the most and least deprived areas in England.
- Covid-19 has had a proportionally higher impact on the UK's most deprived areas. These impacts are stark and multiple, but they are not new: they are the product of the structural inequalities in our society that have worsened over decades.
- Amid the tragedy, we are seeing a renaissance of social capital, for example through more volunteering and support for key workers. As such, Covid-19 provides an opportunity to build back better by focusing on the principles outlined below.
- **The 2019 UCL and Resolution Foundation report 'Structurally unsound'** found five key principles for how to approach equity: recognise that language matters, shift the focus onto equity, ensure diversity of evidence in decision-making, alter the structure of society by changing who designs it, and adopt a place-based approach.



Cross-sector Opinion

Over 100 attendees from the breadth of our cross-sector membership listened in, we asked them:

Where do you feel responsibility for tackling inequalities lies in a business?



Our Members' Questions

Our members raised some challenging questions to be answered, some of the big issues raised included:

- The risk of equalities legislation hindering organisations' ability to shift the focus to equity due to accusations of positive discrimination.
- Finding and making use of robust data, particularly on intersectionality.
- The role of the capitalist system driving structural inequalities when we continue to use GDP as a measure for growth.
- The impact of the legacy 'class' system in the UK and approaches to lessening its effects.
- How to overcome the regional divide between London and the rest of the country and devolving decision-making to outside of London.

WIG members can listen to Siobhan's and Matt's presentation [here](#) to see our full program of webinars at www.wig.co.uk