

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
Action Plan



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Introduction

This is the latest Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan. There has been considerable development and growth since the last one. As an organisation we continue to learn and respond, and this document sets out our determination to ensure that our organisation continually works towards access and inclusion for all.

Britten Pears Arts has been actively working towards establishing a more equitable, diverse and inclusive culture amongst our audiences, participants and workforce including freelancers, volunteers, and trustees. This document presents some of our achievements to date and sets out our aspirations for the future. The capital building programme, currently due to be completed in 2026, will enable us to address significant areas of this action plan.

We want those we work with and for, and those we would like to work with and for, to feel embraced by Britten Pears Arts. We want to continue open and honest conversations with artists, audiences and communities around equity, diversity and inclusion. Please do get in touch if you would like to take part in our ongoing work. There is still much to do.

Sarah Bardwell
Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Lead,
Britten Pears Arts

Statement

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion



Britten and Pears had a vision for music and the arts to be useful, to help people enhance, and bring joy into, their lives. To achieve this vision, equity of access is paramount.

It is our responsibility to take active steps towards better educating ourselves to challenge and dismantle systemic inequalities, internally and externally.

We acknowledge the trauma inflicted by racism, classism, sexism, ableism, ageism, and sexual orientation discrimination across the sector. These are unacceptable and have no place in our society. We recognise that when a person has marginalising experiences, the more disadvantaged they become.

Our organisation aims to be welcoming, open to all and to live our collaborative, empowering, rigorous and pioneering values by being equitable, diverse, and inclusive. We acknowledge that diversity enhances talent, and encourages innovation, and that these are vital elements of the creative output of Britten Pears Arts.

While we are making progress in some areas, we continue to strive to learn from those with lived experience and to evaluate and monitor our progress against the objectives set out in this action plan.

Our commitments are:

1. To be honest and transparent

2. To assess and allocate proper resources when required

3. To provide mandatory training and resources for staff, volunteers, and trustees to broaden mindsets and extend knowledge

4. To involve our communities in open conversation as part of this process, specifically those who have been historically underrepresented at Britten Pears Arts

5. To create and update our Action Plan and include details of how we are making change and holding ourselves to account

6. To embed the work of our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion steering group across the organisation

Framework

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion



EDI sits within an established framework that allows the organisation to manage and assess progress. The EDI working group is cross-organisational committee chaired by the Executive Director who is the EDI lead. They meet once a month to review progress and develop new initiatives.

The Executive Director reports on EDI matters directly to the board and there is a standing EDI agenda item at every board meeting. One board member is the nominated Inclusivity Champion. The Executive Director is also a member of the national EDI Network Group where ideas and progress are shared and discussed. In addition, Britten Pears Arts is a member of Black Lives In Music, work with Aspire Black Suffolk and has a number of community ambassadors that hold us, and our work, to account.

Context

The county of Suffolk has a population of 760,000 people, 95.2% of whom identify as white. 14% of children are living in low-income families and Suffolk has a higher average than the rest of the East of England of people not in education, employment or training.

The largest town in Suffolk is Ipswich which is one of the most ethnically diverse areas in the East of England. 55% of children speak English as a second language, there are 122 different languages and dialects spoken as mother tongue across the county. Ipswich has a relatively young population compared with the rest of Suffolk, 65.7% of working age. 17.1% of the population of Ipswich are from black and other ethnic group, 2,000 refugees live in Suffolk the largest proportion of whom live in Ipswich.

It is within this context we have set out 2024 to 2026 EDI aims and goals and established our audience development priorities.

Programme

Participants | Artists | Freelancers

We continue to present an extremely wide range of genres and styles delivered by a diverse group of musicians and performers. Diverse performance activity is an important way of us developing the audience that attend. Whilst we remain below our target of 25% of artists and 30% of creative project teams engaged from underrepresented groups the Artistic Toolkit has continued to be used and remains useful. We have realised that our targets are too generic and challenging to measure and achieve so for the 2024 to 2026 we have agreed more specific, broken-down targets across a wider area.

Audience Development

The priority for audience development areas for Britten Pears Arts from 2024 to 2026 are:

- those who identify as neuro diverse
- those who are part of the global majority
- families

Case Study – Power of Stories

From October 2022 to February 2023, we hosted the award-winning exhibition *The Power of Stories* in partnership with Marvel Studios, Aspire Black Suffolk, the Association of Suffolk Museums, and Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service. A range of activities took place to compliment the exhibition including two workshops for Black and African Caribbean community members in East Suffolk who created artwork which formed part of the exhibition. Unconscious bias and specific exhibition training was given for front of house staff and volunteers. All-age West African-drumming workshops and two performances in the Snape Maltings Concert Hall one by Hannabiell & Midnight Blue collective and one by Sefo Kanuteh and The African Choir of Norfolk particularly attracted a new and diverse audience. A special edition of *Belongings* was recorded by BBC Radio Suffolk about the project. During the period of the exhibition, we collected data for 1093 new contacts.



People

Staff | Volunteers | Audiences

Britten Pears Arts is an equal opportunities employer and has appropriate policies in place. New recruitment methods have been used since 2021 with the aim of diversifying the workforce. Partners have included Suffolk Refugee Support, Diversity Dashboard, and Black Lives in Music. First interviews are offered online, together with help with travel costs for interviews in person.

We have also defined a clearer process to recruit for volunteers, work experience, apprenticeship, internship, and community training programmes which we hope in turn will mean a more diverse work force as each of those areas can lead to permanent employment.

Since 2021 an inclusive language document has been written and shared with staff, volunteers and board and is available on our website. Inclusivity training is now standard across the organisation for all new starters. We will now look towards creating a clear code of conduct or a kindness and expectations document.

Goals

- Establish a clear code of conduct for everyone who uses, works at or visits Britten Pears Arts
- Identify ongoing EDI training opportunities to be offered annually for all staff
- Continue to encourage volunteering, work experience, apprenticeships, internships and community training programmes to make better progress towards a more diverse workforce



Ethos & Place

Access | Culture | Governance | Board

We have embedded our EDI ethos and continue to ensure that it is shared within all areas of our work and particularly when engaging with the public, especially in catering, retail, and front of house volunteer, usher and visitor assistant roles. This has been achieved to date through training and policies as well as leadership and senior managers modelling appropriate behaviours. There is still work to do.

We are continuing to work to improve accessibility and to ensure access to all is extended by exploring how the barriers of geographical limitation, the demographic of the region and the remote locations of our sites can be overcome. Since 2021 we have worked to develop alternative travel options and there is now a bookable, environmentally sustainable and cost effective bus available to Snape Maltings.

We have developed online resources that help better explain access to two of our public venues and we are working to ensure that all spaces have this option available.

Since 2021 we have developed further diversity within the board and will continue to aim to recruit new trustees with a particular consideration for diversity.

Goals

- Ongoing EDI culture encouraged to permeate through every meeting and touch point
- More extensive access information and visual stories to be published on our website
- Board skills and diversity audit and review
- Capital programme will increase accessibility of the sites



Social Responsibility

Sustainability | Environmental initiatives

Since 2021 we have established an ethics policy with a broad scope that covers fundraising, sustainable sourcing and investments. This policy has been approved by the board. We trialled pay what you can initiatives with some success and have now developed a targeted £10 ticket offer with half-price tickets available at all prices for under 30s.

We regard sustainability and the environment as part of our social responsibility and are now working to ensure that we can reduce our energy use through creating sustainable alternatives and ensuring our buildings are more efficient.

Reducing waste is an important part of our social responsibility and we are continually working to achieve our goals. Our ambition has been to reduce our landfilled waste from 43% to 25% meaning that 75% of our waste would be recycled. We have now improved on that target and 85.4% of total waste is now recycled.

Goals

- Review of ethics policy and create a simplified version for wider sharing.
- 90% of total waste to be recycled.
- Capital programme will enable us to make significant change to our energy use.
- To source products as ethically as possible guided and informed by the Ethical Trading Initiative Base Code.



Targets

Workforce

Gender balanced – at least 50% of our workforce are female or gender non-conforming	
Under-represented groups (ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, physical or neuro-diverse participants, 16-25 year olds and 55 and above.)	20%

Audiences and visitors

Bookers under 30 / family groups	15%
First time bookers	25%

Performers / workshop leaders / presenters

Gender balanced at least 50% of our freelancers are female or gender non-conforming	
Global majority representation	10%

BPYAP / AYM / Residency Participants

Under-represented groups (ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, disability, physical or neuro-diverse participants)	30%
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