

Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy, Practice & Action Plan

Unicorn Equal Opportunities Policy

The Unicorn is committed to treating every individual fairly and with generosity of spirit. In service of this, we operate a policy of equal opportunity for all those we engage with, and will actively challenge discrimination wherever it is found. We are committed to working towards equality in employment practice, Board composition, marketing and public communications, artistic policy, and its services to audiences and users.

The Unicorn believes that discrimination in all its forms is wrong. But we also believe that how we live and work together is more than a set of rules. So while we are mindful in all our practice of the scope of legislation including but not limited to the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Equality Act, and our policies cover all the protected characteristics recognised under formal legal protection – age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation – we also promote our own Respect at Work framework that aims to promote an organisational culture that is non-proscriptive, tolerant, open-handed and humane.

This policy, which is promoted to all staff, will be accompanied by an active and organic Equality Action Plan which grounds the theory in our operational practice.

As an organisation, and as individuals, we therefore commit:

- to challenge discrimination in all its forms;
- to reflect and celebrate the UK's cultural riches and diversity in all our activity, from our recruitment policies to the work we present on stage;
- to work proactively with our staff and freelance artists to ensure that everyone takes responsibility for creating an environment of tolerance and diversity;
- to safeguard the rights of minority groups and interests in all areas of our practice.

A Diversity Working Group meets quarterly to discuss and improve practice, and this policy will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees every two years in line with best practice and changing legislation, or as required. It will next be reviewed by the Unicorn Board in 2022.

**Unicorn Theatre
Updated January 2020**

UNICORN THEATRE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES ACTION PLAN

1. Progress to Date

Recruitment

We continue to work with peer organisations including, specifically, the Arts Council through their annual monitoring and the London Theatre Consortium, to benchmark and track progress against our objectives. In 2020 we have circulated a Workforce Development Strategy that aims to strengthen our practice and broaden our organisational understanding of our place in the ecosystem of cultural employment. We now:

- Try to achieve longer time periods for job adverts, and wherever we can we have offered a much larger number of first interviews in order to offer interview opportunities, widen the catchment, hear different voices, and interrogate our own assumptions and the strictures of the written application process.
- Where budget allows, we pay for recruitment advertising with Creative Access (e.g for the REACH Co-ordinator, Drapers' Placement).
- We offer Skype for recruitment interviews, so candidates don't necessarily have to spend money on travel to get here.
- We put considerable thought into the make-up of panels – adjusting when they are made up solely of white women. We seek external help when we want expertise and to show better representation: e.g. from Trustees or freelancers with specialisms.
- We held a recruitment day for ushers in July 2019. Local company Employ SE1 also brought us candidates as an experiment in moving away from written applications for people applying for jobs in which written English isn't an essential skill.

Training

It is always frustrating that budget limits the investment we would like to make in staff, but we try to focus on training that will underpin and promote a strong and inclusive Unicorn culture.

- We undertook Inclusion Training led by Pluribus in April 2019; this looked at self-awareness and inclusive dialogue. It was attended by 15 staff representing several departments, including freelancers and casual staff.
- In February '19 Gendered Intelligence training was delivered in partnership with Team London Bridge (we provided the venue, they paid for the training). We held a refresher in the All Staff Meeting in August 2019, and the resources are accessible to all in the All Staff folder.
- We hope and try to cultivate a culture of openness, empowering staff at every level to participate in conversations around diversity. This includes encouraging a wide variety of staff to attend events, eg. Panic! at the Barbican June 2018, BRIT School Careers Fairs and CV clinics for young people.
- The Unicorn currently has a Guardian in place, (<https://www.oldvictheatre.com/about-us/guardians-programme>) with several other staff also attending the introductory training.
- In January '20, we introduced Volunteering Days for staff: three days which may be spent volunteering in a charitable capacity, away from the Unicorn but on Unicorn time. We hope that this will build capacity for staff to be able to share their expertise, connect with their communities, and enrich the city as a whole.
- Three staff members speak regularly at Inspiring the Future events, a schools' speaking programme to encourage career pathways into the arts.
- We support staff interests outside their work here: staff can use rehearsal and meeting rooms for their own projects whenever they are available (we include this in all our

- recruitment postings); one member of staff has recently qualified as a yoga instructor, and is building up her teaching hours by holding staff yoga sessions in the building after work.
- Shadowing internally – Stage Door, FOH and Box Office staff early in their careers as directors or production staff have been welcomed into the rehearsal room and into technical rehearsals.
 - We arrange shadowing days for our staff to meet peers at other organisations; in 2019, these included networking with staff at the Southbank Centre and the National Theatre.
 - We have shared initiatives with the Stage Sight Forum , and presented this on our Diversity Working Group in June '19. Attendance at Stage Sight events is offered to different members of the Diversity Working Group, with three members due to attend the January '20 meeting.

Artistic & Core Staffing

We're acutely aware of the whiteness of our core team. 10% of applicants for the role of Executive Director identified as people of colour, and one of the three final interviewees was a woman of colour and – more predictably, perhaps – all were women, but we still have a far less than representative staff workforce. It has proven much easier, under two successive Artistic Directors of colour, to diversify our creative teams.

- We have altered our Equal Opps form designs to incorporate extra fields for gender, and a free text field for sexual orientation. In 2020 we will be incorporating questions about how people identify their class (by means of parents' employment, schools attended).
- The Diversity Working Group is self-selecting and meets three or four times a year. It currently has representatives from Marketing & Comms (inc Box Office), Stage Door, Community, Production, and Finance. As the group includes casual members of staff, we try to schedule at the beginning / end of shifts, and casuals are paid for the additional hour of their time, or are paid for the hour if they Skype in on a non-working day.
- The Executive Director participated in conversations with ACE Band 3 (i.e. the most highly funded) theatres around the lack of diversity in EDs across the UK theatre sector. She had further conversations with younger people of colour who were pursuing careers in senior theatre admin.
- The Unicorn has engaged readily with the recent global conversations around sex and gender, as we have welcomed more trans and gender non-conforming people onto our staff and creative teams.
 - In September 2019, all back of house toilets were made All Gender.
 - We have established non-gendered Back of House calls, replacing 'ladies and gentlemen' with 'everyone' or the company name.
 - We are in consultation with partner schools about All Gender toilets front of house and this would be welcomed with effective design, so requires further capital planning
- Since 2018 we have held a reasonable adjustment form in the Staff folder to support disabled staff members.
- We mailed all staff about the challenge of microaggressions in October 2019.

2. DIVERSITY ACTION PLAN COMMITMENTS & UPDATES 2020+

Disability

- Associate Director Rachel Bagshaw has been employed on a freelance basis since November 2018. Rachel is disabled, and uses a wheelchair, and provides very welcome

provocation when we fail to be diligent about considering disability in our thinking. She is directing *The Bee in Me* in the Weston in Spring 2020, and co-directed *Aesop's Fables* alongside Justin in Summer 2019. She heads up the Critical Conversations project (discussing the climate emergency with young people).

- We continue to support FOH staff with learning disabilities through our Usher+ scheme, where trained Unicorn staff take the place of support workers. Due to staff turnover, a new cohort of Usher + staff will be trained in spring 2020.
- We have met with Inclusion London and hope soon to be part of the placement plan for their programme 'Supported Pathways into the Creative Industries' in summer '20.
- We have added 'Not Every Disability Is Visible' signs onto the accessible toilets BOH and FOH / across the building.

Apprenticeships, Secondments, Routes into the Industry

The draft Workforce Development Plan is attached as an addendum and is being discussed and developed by a Unicorn working group.

- In spring '20, the Unicorn is excited to host a 15 week, part-time, paid (London Living Wage) placement in the Wardrobe Department, funded by the Drapers' Company. We hope that this will be the start of a rolling programme of perhaps two paid wardrobe placements annually. We interviewed 9 people for this role, in line with our commitment to see as many candidates as is practical, especially for junior roles.
 - The Joanna David Award will go this year to emerging white working class Director Hannah Quigley, who will assist Justin on *Robotology*.
 - We host 10-12 work experience placements each year, prioritising students who live or study in Southwark, or from our partner schools.
 - In August '19 we welcomed our second Birkbeck placement (students in the second year of the Directing MA at Birkbeck). Our first Birkbeck placement has moved into freelance paid employment with us, including directing a Play in a Week and assisting with Phosphoros' weekly sessions. Both Birkbeck placements have been women from outside London.
 - We are supporting our residence Associate Company Phosphoros by sharing expertise eg. In Safeguarding practice and Board development. (Their show *Pizza Shop Heroes* played in the Clore for its two final performances, to a young audience of refugees and asylum seekers.)
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APPENDIX 1

THE UNICORN: FUTURE WORKFORCE STRATEGY, January 2020 [working document]

The Unicorn is the UK's leading theatre for young audiences. Making excellent theatre for young people is our purpose. We are based in central London but our work tours the UK and beyond. As citizens of a global community, we believe in collaboration, internationalism, and in engaging young people through art.

We make theatre to inspire and provoke our young audience, not to teach or tell them.

We are driven to explore the complexity of the world around us, not to reduce it to easy platitudes.

We celebrate the local, the national and the international. We love collaboration and co-production and partnership and exploration. It's how we refresh our brains.

We develop talent by putting it onstage. We take risks because that is how theatre evolves.

We are the custodians of a public space and it is our mission to ensure our audience reflects our community.

1. Our Aims for Leadership in Future Workforce Development & Training – Opening the Doors to Theatre

At the Unicorn, we're acutely aware of the workforce challenge in the cultural industries. Pathways into theatre and the wider arts remain limited, not enough has been done to encourage people entering from different communities, pay is often unattractive and we expect junior staff to make significant commitments to our organisations even when remuneration is limited and training budgets restricted. Training opportunities tend to be esoteric and ad hoc rather than structural – this can work brilliantly, but it can be stifling for some people.

We can't address every element of this. But we know that have work to do in our own recruitment and staff professional development. We need to better address representation: class and social background, disability, ethnicity and culture. For some of these areas – class in particular – we don't even have shared language or benchmark starting point from which to address our achievement. We can't even discuss where we are failing or how we compare with other industries.

What we *can* say, however, is that we are committed to opening the doors of our theatre to new staff, new audiences and to voices and experiences hitherto underrepresented in our cultural hegemony. We make this commitment not just because we want to employ differently, but because we'll be better at making theatre for young audiences if we can get better at engaging with other people.

2. Underlying Principles

- We *hope* that people developing skills through us *will* want to stay in the arts, and pass their learning and opportunities on, but we also believe in the transferability and

applicability of working in the arts. Our opportunities are valid if we can build the skills and capacities of young people who would not otherwise be developed in this way.

- Pay is important. But we are stuck in a bind: without cutting other areas of our work (and therefore decreasing our public benefit), or taking work from existing staff, we can't see a way to ensure that all areas of what we are calling 'new ways in' are paid. What we can do, by making partnership with other reputable higher and further education establishments, is give people placement opportunities as part of their formal learning. In 2020, we will establish which organisations we can best make partnerships with, where we can achieve the biggest workforce/educational impact (geographically, demographically, and across our departments), and how to evaluate these opportunities with our partners.
- Otherwise, we *have* to pay placements. This will always be above the Minimum Wage, but is unlikely to be above the London Living Wage – some of our own staff are paid below this.
- We will endeavour to give our staff time to undertake activities relating to theatre and arts workforce development. In spring '20, we will announce three additional days off in the year to undertake provable charitable volunteering, to build their own professional practice and skills and to 'give back'.
- We want to work with the current educational and vocational infrastructure to change the future workforce, so finding key institutional partnerships will be vital to our work here.
- We will continue to encourage Unicorn staff to join schools' Governing Boards, or the Boards of cultural and / or charitable organisations. We encourage them to mentor and be mentored via the UK Theatre Mentoring Scheme, and participate via UK Theatre's Inspiring Future Theatre programme. Staff will attend schools' careers days and panel discussions as part of this work. These sessions, wherever practicable, may be undertaken in Unicorn time.

3. What We Will Do

For Our Staff

- Core staff will receive three 'free' days off from their work each year to undertake volunteering as approved by their line manager. They can use this for any charitable organisation. We hope that this continues to expand staff skills and horizons, and ensure a good working environment in which they are nourished.

For Teenagers

- We will continue to offer 12 week-long placements for secondary school students aged between 13 and 18. We will embed this in the organisation by better encouraging different departments' involvement – e.g. emphasising the need for participation as a requirement at STOP or the All Staff meeting. These placements will be for young people from state sector schools, and students who attend our partner schools.
- Three Unicorn staff are currently Inspiring Future Theatre Ambassadors; they introduce students to the possibilities of working in the industry. We will continue to encourage them, suggest participation to other staff, and maintain our organisational relationship with UK Theatre in order to continue to explore opportunities.

For HE and FE Students

- We will continue to offer three college-level placements each season in Stage Management and Technical Theatre, and we are considering which institutions function best as a regular partner in delivering these. It may be that a good strategy for us would

be to offer one regular placement to an accredited drama school in London, and one to a more grassroots organisation. We will need to continue to monitor carefully how unpaid internships form an accredited part of each student's course, in line with ACE Guidelines on Internships in the Arts. We will continue to offer three technical placements, at this point mainly in our Stage Management team though that may change. These are likely at the time of writing to be aligned to further education courses at Central and Mountview, and this will be pursued in 2020.

- We will offer one further work experience offer for a young person still in school in Stage Management and Technical Theatre. In 2019, we had a young Brit School student, for instance.
- We will continue to offer a place for a Second Year student on the Birkbeck Directing MA Course. This year-long placement is an accredited part of the course, and includes at least three opportunities to take the role of Assistant Director on a Unicorn show. The student will become embedded in the artistic and outreach processes of the Theatre, attending Producers and Artistic Planning meetings, reading scripts, and observing and participating in schools' workshops, outreach work and holiday programmes.

For Other Young People

- We will continue to offer the Joanna David Award – since 2011 this has been awarded annually to a young person from a non-traditional background to undertake a placement at the Unicorn, usually but not exclusively based around Assistant Directing. In 2020 this will be Hannah Quigley.
 - In 2019 we are recruiting the first ever Drapers' Company Costume Placement. A young person aged under 25 from a background currently underrepresented in the theatre sector will undertake a 15 week paid placement learning about costume. We hope that this in particular might help to open a new sphere of theatre to a young person who perhaps doesn't know that this area of theatre exists at all. If this Placement delivers against our aims, we hope to work with the Drapers' Company to roll it out in future years.
 - We offer ad hoc opportunities throughout the year for HE and FE students to 'shadow' our Artistic Director in his directing practice. These vary from a day to a week. We will encourage other freelance Directors to host these as part of their own process where possible. We outline this opportunity clearly on our website, in the Jobs section, to keep the playing field level.
 - We cannot yet afford apprenticeships, but we will continue to review funding possibilities around these, and to work with LTC on the develop of relevant courses, and by offering tickets and visits to apprentices at other theatres.
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