



Workforce Development Strategy Update September 2019

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Improve the diversity of the theatre and performing arts workforce

Address long term culture change in the professional development of theatre and the performing arts

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Mid Term Objectives

Improve the quality, visibility and impact of **pre-career** advice and guidance

Inspiring the Future of Theatre

A wide-reaching industry initiative which aims to show young people the range of careers available in theatre, and to encourage and strengthen connections between schools and their local theatres. Inspiring the Future of Theatre was launched in July 2018 by SOLT and UK Theatre in partnership with the charity Education and Employers. Over 1,000 Ambassadors have signed up to the campaign, 500 invitations from schools have been accepted, and volunteers have directly engaged more than 56,000 school children. The second annual #InspiringFutureTheatre Day took place on 3 July 2019 with events at theatres across London. The day also featured a social media campaign which trended nationally. The second year of the campaign will focus on increasing the number of accepted invitations and getting more volunteers into schools. [Find out more.](#)

Get into Theatre

An online careers resource delivered by The Stage and funded by SOLT, UK Theatre and the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation. It is aimed at a young and diverse audience and gives practical information about routes in to the sector. The website was launched to the sector in March 2019 and to the public in early May 2019. Work continues to ensure the industry is aware of the website. <https://getintothetheatre.org/>

Creative Careers Programme

Announced in December 2018, this industry-led initiative aims to raise awareness of opportunities for work across the creative economy. The Creative Industries Federation, ScreenSkills and Creative & Cultural Skills are the lead delivery partners, and DCMS has provided £5m funding. The programme aims to reach around two million young people with advice about pursuing a creative career. It will include activity such as work experience placements and involvement in a new national week to open doors to young people. SOLT and UK Theatre are working with the delivery partners to shape the programme, ensure our work is connected to it, and to share information about how to get involved with the theatre and performing arts sector. [Find out more.](#)

Theatre Careers Resources

SOLT and UK Theatre are working with theatre partners to produce a handout for schools and young people outlining the different careers available in theatre and where to go to look for more information. This resource will be available for TheatreCraft 2019 and onwards.

TheatreCraft

SOLT work alongside Masterclass, Royal Opera House and Mousetrap Theatre Projects to present TheatreCraft. It is the largest free careers event for young people seeking an off-stage career in theatre. TheatreCraft is an annual one-day event which is open to anyone aged 16-30. It offers attendees the opportunity to:

- Take part in workshops and talks led by industry leading theatre makers
- Explore a marketplace of UK theatre, companies and education providers
- Meet high profile and influential people in the industry
- Make connections and network with like-minded emerging theatre makers

TheatreCraft 2019 will take place on Monday 11 November. <http://www.theatrecraft.org/>

Big Bang Fair and Skills London

SOLT and UK Theatre partner with organisations and theatres such as the National Theatre, Royal Opera House, White Light, Disney and the Roundhouse to showcase the world of backstage theatre at annual careers fairs.

Advocacy

SOLT and UK Theatre have responded to the following Government consultations and reviews:

- Consultation on the importance of character and resilience in young people
- Consultation on the implementation of T Levels
- Augar Review: Post-18 education and funding review

Open up and improve the coordination of early career programmes and support

Coordination of Entry Routes across the sector

SOLT and UK Theatre continue to work with partners including Creative & Cultural Skills and the National College for the Creative Industries to agree a coordinated approach to entry level opportunities. In March 2019 we worked with Creative & Cultural Skills to create a suite of guides to help theatre organisations understand the different entry routes into our sector. We have produced guides on:

- Understanding Entry Routes - know what sort of placements and qualifications theatres can use
- Key Players - a list of key players in education and what they are responsible for
- Common Terminology - definitions of some of the most common language used in skills and education
- Progression Pathways – understand the different levels of qualifications

[Find out more.](#)

T Levels

SOLT and UK Theatre have identified several issues with T Level placements, so we have met with and continue to speak to the Department for Education (DfE), DCMS and the Gatsby Foundation to help them understand the issues and find possible solutions. We invited theatres across the country to attend DfE roundtables to better understand employers' needs for T Levels and have written a [paper](#) that collates theatres' thoughts and concerns. This paper was sent to DfE, DCMS and the Gatsby Foundation, and to Ministers Anne Milton, Minister of State for Skills and Apprenticeships, and Michael Ellis, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at DCMS. Additionally, we conducted a survey of our members to understand the potential regional provision of placements across the UK, and the survey responses identify that T Levels as currently proposed are not an appropriate structure to meet the entry route gaps we have, and our sector does not have the capacity to manage them. We raised this issue with the Government's Creative Industries Council's Skills Sub-group, and we are now in the process of writing a joint paper on T Level placements along with other creative industry bodies.

Apprenticeships

SOLT and UK Theatre continue to work with Government bodies and industry organisations to ensure apprenticeships are viable and fit for purpose in the theatre and performing arts industry.

New apprenticeship standards

SOLT and UK Theatre sit on the Creative Industries Council's (CIC) Education and Skills Subgroup. The group has suggested 16 new Apprenticeships Standards for the Creative Industries to help our sector recruit more apprentices into standards that we really need and are appropriate to our industry. We are working with CC Skills to set up Trailblazer groups to help create four new technical apprenticeships for theatre: Scenic Automation, Scenic Artist, Scenic Construction and Theatrical Hair, Makeup and Prosthetics.

Apprenticeship Levy

SOLT and UK Theatre are exploring how we can help theatres (both those who pay the apprenticeship levy and those who do not) with an apprenticeship levy transfer service. For guidance on hosting an apprenticeship and information for both levy and non-levy paying organisations, please visit the [National College Creative Industries \(NCCI\) website](#).

Advocacy

SOLT and UK Theatre arranged for five apprentices from our membership to attend the Creative Industries Council's annual Autumn reception in parliament in November 2018.

In association with the Creative Industries Council and Screen Alliance UK we placed a feature in the New Statesman on Apprenticeships during Apprenticeships Week 2019. http://www.newstatesman.com/sites/default/files/ns_skills_apprenticeships_supp_march_2019_0.pdf

TheatreCraft

[Please see above.](#)

Hull Truck Theatre's Technical Skills Training Programme

This programme ran in August 2018 supported by UK Theatre and funded by the Theatre Development Trust.

Enhance and improve the range of **mid-career** advice, guidance and training available

UK Theatre's training programme

Conferences, courses, events and networking opportunities are offered by UK Theatre as one of the core professional services that we provide to the industry.

<https://uktheatre.org/training-events/>

Support and improve measures to identify, develop and diversify **executive leadership**, particularly outside London

Common Purpose Meridian Programme

UK Theatre has introduced the Common Purpose Meridian programme for senior leaders to its training programme.

<https://uktheatre.org/training-events/courses/common-purpose-meridian/>

Leadership Development training course

In Autumn 2019 UK Theatre will look to develop its own training course on Leadership Development.

Improve the range and quality of support and training available for freelance workers**Freelancer guides**

SOLT and UK Theatre are working with CC Skills, the Creative Industries Federation, and other sector bodies to produce two best practice guidance documents: one for organisations working with freelancers, and one for freelancers working in our sector. This work forms part of the [Creative Careers Programme](#).

Theatre Helpline

Launched by SOLT and UK Theatre in June 2018, the service is used by around 30 people a month. Connect Assist deliver the helpline and provide regular updates on usage. <https://theatrehelpline.org/>

IPSE partnership

SOLT and UK Theatre have held ongoing conversations with the Association of Independent Professionals and the Self Employed (IPSE) about partnering to provide support to freelancers and self-employed individuals in the theatre and performing arts sector. Unfortunately, we have not been able to come to a suitable arrangement, but we will continue to stay in touch with IPSE to see if a partnership could work in future. In the meantime, we are exploring alternative options.

TAP card

We have held discussions with the SOLT and UK Theatre Technical Committee (SUTC), the Royal Opera House, National Theatre and ABTT about redeveloping the TAP card scheme which records technical training. There does not seem to be significant interest within the industry.

Advocacy

SOLT and UK Theatre have responded to the following Government consultations and reviews.

- Taylor Review consultation on measures to increase transparency in the UK labour market
- Taylor Review consultation on employment status

Establish a culture of valuing continuous professional development and modernise organisational management practices**Safer and Supportive Working Practices programme of work**

SOLT and UK Theatre continue to coordinate industry-wide action to ensure that everyone in theatre and performing arts can prevent and tackle harassment and abuses of power; and ensure theatre and the performing arts is a safer, more supportive and inclusive working environment for all in the future.

Theatre Helpline

[Please see above.](#)

Dignity at Work training

UK Theatre and SOLT offer a range of dignity at work training to support individuals working in the industry to lead a respectful working culture, identify and address issues, have clear procedures in place and build confidence in embedding a respectful working culture for all. <https://uktheatre.org/training-events/courses/dignity-at-work-introduction/>

Encouraging safer and more supportive working practices in theatre handbook

We published a handbook in April 2018 which includes:

- 10 Principles to encourage safer and even more supportive working practices in theatre
- Information about the Theatre Helpline
- A legal checklist to ensure organisations have clear, up-to-date policies and procedures for preventing and dealing with harassment and bullying
- Example policies, procedures and initiatives from SOLT and UK Theatre members across the country
- A summary of the key themes arising from open forums we held across the country in February 2018, and suggestions of good practice arising from those events
- A list of organisations and individuals with specialist skills to help deal with sensitive issues

[Find out more.](#)

Focus on well-being

The UK Theatre Board has asked us to explore the potential for an industry task group and/or campaign to address well-being and mental health in the sector. The Theatre and Touring Symposium 2019 also highlighted that we could be doing more in this area.

Mental Health Index

We are currently drafting a research proposal for a 'Mental Health Index' of the theatre workforce.

National Arts Wellbeing Collective (NAWC)

The National Arts Wellbeing Collective UK was launched in April 2019. The Collective has been established to link like minded organisations and individuals around the UK to improve health and wellbeing in the arts and cultural employment sectors. SOLT and UK Theatre hosted the first meeting in September 2019 to agree the way forward for the collective, including its terms of reference and the role of key strategic partners. The NAWC plans to run a couple of industry events in 2020.

HR support for the industry

SOLT and UK Theatre are undertaking research to ascertain if HR support would be beneficial to our memberships. This research will help us to understand what issues require assistance, and what form any additional support should take.

Parents in Performing Arts (PiPA)

SOLT and UK Theatre offer financial and advisory support for PiPA to find and establish long term, creative strategies to increase access to work for people with caring commitments. PiPA have undertaken a survey to investigate the link between caring responsibilities and career progression in the performing arts to inform necessary steps for a collective approach to increasing business resilience by supporting the carer and parent workforce in the industry. [Read more.](#)

Workforce Development category at UK Theatre Awards

Following a review of the UK Theatre Awards in 2018, a new award category has been added for 2019 onwards. The 'Workforce Development' award recognises work that specifically promotes a commitment to professional development and the opening of entry routes to off stage roles.

Promote and improve **inclusivity** in the workforce

Stage Sight

A collaborative network of theatre and performing arts organisations working to widen the diversity of the off-stage workforce to make it more reflective of society. Stage Sight's website was launched in March 2019 and exists to showcase good practice in this area. Stage Sight was founded by Prema Mehta, a freelance Lighting Designer, and is delivered by SOLT and UK Theatre. The network has generated significant support, with over 55 organisations involved. We received positive responses from The Mayor of London's Office, the Creative Diversity APPG, and Shadow Ministers for DCMS office in Labour and Lib Dem. We arranged for Prema to meet with Shadow Minister for DCMS Kevin Brennan, and have received a quote of endorsement from Justine Simons, Deputy Mayor for Culture and the Creative Industries.

<https://www.stagesight.org/>

Diversity in Casting

UK Theatre commissioned Lucy Kerbel to design a toolkit to improve diversity in casting. The toolkit has been developed as a website and is now in a final phase of consultation and testing. The steering group has been asked for feedback and the website will launch in Autumn 2019.

d/Deaf and Disabled Access Training

UK Theatre has developed and offers a modular course on best practice for d/Deaf and disabled people in the theatre workforce and audiences. The course gives attendees a solid foundation to base planning and policy-making around disability equality and build confidence and knowledge in discussing and tacking access within their organisations.

<https://uktheatre.org/training-events/courses/disability-equality/>

Cultural Governance Alliance

UK Theatre is a founding partner of the Cultural Governance Alliance (CGA), developed and run by Clore Leadership. The CGA is a light-touch collective of agencies, organisations and advocates working strategically to champion, share and promote best practice in the governance of culture.

<https://culturalgovernancealliance.org/>

Excellence in Inclusivity category at UK Theatre Awards

Following a review of the UK Theatre Awards in 2018, a new award category has been added for 2019 onwards. The 'Excellence in Inclusivity' award recognises the promotion of inclusivity within programming, workforce and audience/community engagement.

Advocacy

- Ed Vaizey MP is the Chair of the new All-Party Parliamentary Group on Creative Diversity. SOLT and UK Theatre have given support and connected the APPG with Stage Sight, and attended the launch in July 2019.
- SOLT and UK Theatre responded to the Performers' Alliance APPG's Class Ceiling Inquiry on the barriers of a career in the arts to those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

Celebrate and champion the off-stage theatre workforce

AK Bennett-Hunter Award

An award for Backstage Journalism launched in October 2017 to help meet the need for more journalists specialising in back stage and technical theatre. The award is a partnership between The Stage, the ABTT, SMA, Skillscene, SOLT and UKT.

Skillscene

SOLT and UK Theatre are part of this collective of industry bodies and organisations which work to promote the skills of technicians, encouraging the acquisition of qualifications through training and life-long learning as a way of recognising those skills.

Many of the projects that SOLT and UK Theatre are involved with as part of the workforce development strategy achieve this objective but are listed elsewhere. Examples include [Inspiring the Future of Theatre](#), our work on [T Levels](#) and [Apprenticeships](#), [Stage Sight](#) and the UK Theatre Awards.

Improve the potential to build a career outside London and/or sustain a career within London

Parents in Performing Arts (PiPA)

[Please see above.](#)

Project Objectives

Establish financial resilience of the workforce development strategy

Theatre Development Trust

The workforce development strategy is significantly funded by the Theatre Development Trust, which includes staffing costs and seed funding for projects.

Ensure leaders, influences and stakeholders across theatre and the performing arts support and contribute to the development of the workforce development plan.

Workforce Consortium

A consortium of industry employers and sector bodies has been formed to help SOLT and UK theatre shape Workforce Development Strategy projects.

The consortium is made up of:

- Kris Bryce, Pitlochry Festival Theatre
- Simon Dancey, Creative & Cultural Skills
- Prema Mehta, Freelance Lighting Designer
- Caro Newling, Neal Street Productions
- Jo Pitman, Royal Shakespeare Company
- Emma Rees, London Theatre Consortium
- Deborah Sawyerr, Mercury Theatre Colchester
- Nancy Shakerley, Disney Theatrical Group
- Anna Williams, Birmingham Royal Ballet

Regular engagement with Government bodies

- APPG for Theatre
- DCMS
- Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
- Department for Education
- Labour and Lib Dem DCMS team
- Labour and Lib Dem DFE team
- Arts Council England
- Arts Council Wales
- Culture Counts

SOLT and UK Theatre responded to various Government consultations, reviews and inquiries touching on the issues raised in the Workforce Review. In April 2019 SOLT and UK Theatre held a Parliamentary Drop-in alongside ABO and One Dance UK.

Regular communications to SOLT and UK Theatre members

- Workforce Development Strategy resources and updates on SOLT and UK Theatre websites
- Blogs and updates via UK Theatre Newsletter and SOLT News

Regular engagement with industry stakeholders

- Creative Industries Council sub-group for education and skills
- Creative and Cultural Skills
- National College of Creative Industries
- Skillscene
- SOLT's Education Forums
- Creative Industries Federation's HE/FE working group
- Stage Sight
- Session relevant to the Workforce Development Strategy at SOLT and UK Theatre's annual Theatre and Touring Symposium

Cross sector working

- Crafts Council
- BFI
- Once Dance UK
- UK Music
- Screen Skills

Implement a system for the regular gathering and analysis of data on the size and profile of the theatre and performing arts workforce