

Working Culture Working Group: Terms of Reference

Background

SOLT and UK Theatre's [2017 Workforce Review](#) indicated that the theatre industry faces a range of long-term challenges relating to the sector's working culture, some of which have been exacerbated by and added to by the Covid-19 pandemic. These challenges include stagnant organisational cultures, accusations of inappropriate behaviour in working environments, a lack of support for freelance workers and the need for improved wellbeing support.

Our research and recent bullying, sexual harassment and racism accusations reveal a sector that still needs guidance in what appropriate behaviour looks like, what positive welcoming working cultures look like, and clarification of organisations' responsibilities in relation to the 2010 Equality Act. The Presidents of SOLT and UK Theatre have identified this work as a priority for our organisations and the sector.

UK Theatre and SOLT's ambition is to implement a range of working culture initiatives to support the mental health and wellbeing of those working in theatre, embed healthy and productive ways of working into our culture, and support the sector in tackling bullying, harassment and discrimination issues. Our work in this area will also be dovetailed with the work the creative industries are doing more widely on bullying, harassment and discrimination. We aim to engage theatre leadership in taking a proactive approach to mental health and wellbeing in the theatre sector and generate a sense of collective responsibility and empowerment across the industry, including with freelance, self-employed workers and visiting companies.

Our work on the industry's working culture complements the other aspects of SOLT and UK Theatre's workforce development strategy which focuses on improving diversity and inclusion, and skills and training.

Purpose

This Working Group has been formed to:

1. Clarify what the main issues and challenges are facing the theatre workforce in relation to working culture
2. Help shape SOLT and UK Theatre's response to these issues
3. Help assess the current levels of support provided by the industry, and identify gaps in provision
4. Where relevant, ensure that the consultation process to determine solutions are inclusive of people with lived experience of bullying, harassment and discrimination
5. Assist SOLT and UK Theatre in gathering and interpreting relevant data and subsequently creating appropriate actions
6. Promote and share best practice and learnings from the sector
7. Advise on prioritisation of projects

Reporting

The Working Group makes recommendations for solutions to the SOLT and UK Theatre Boards.

Working Group Members

- The Working Group should comprise a maximum of 10 people
- The Working Group must include representatives of the SOLT and UK Theatre Boards (approx. 4)

- The Working Group should include a mix of as many of these skills and demographics as possible:
 - Representing commercial and not-for-profit organisations
 - Representing different sections of the industry, e.g. venues, touring companies, production companies, sector support organisations.
 - Representing the four nations (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales)
 - Representing as wide a range of demographics as possible across the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation
 - People with lived experience of bullying, harassment and discrimination
 - Skills to include:
 - Equality, diversity and inclusion
 - Human Resources/people management
 - Employment law
 - Safeguarding
 - Strategy/policy development
 - Senior leaders

Working group members can be appointed through:

- Representation from individuals who contact SOLT/UK Theatre and set out their relevant experience
- Proposal and recommendation from existing working group members or SOLT and UK Theatre Board members.

Working Group meeting structure and procedure

- We anticipate holding four meetings a year, initially online due to the pandemic
- The Working Group will be chaired between the Presidents of SOLT and UK Theatre or participating members of the SOLT and UK Theatre Boards.
- Meetings will be called by SOLT/UK Theatre, giving ideally one month but a minimum of one week's written notice to all members of the Working Group
- Decision-making will be based on a simple majority
- Minutes will be taken and shared with the Working Group
- The quorum will be whichever is the higher of 3 and 50% of Working Group membership.
- Payment for attendance at Working Group meetings is available for freelancers on request, at a rate of £150 per meeting
- Live captioning / BSL sign-language interpretation can be made available for meetings if required

Consultation process

- Due to the sensitive nature of this work, and the issues involved, there may be some work undertaken by this group that requires consultation with our membership, or with those who have lived experience of the issues involved. If the group feels that consultation is required, the wellbeing of those involved will be prioritised, and they will be supported and protected through any process.

Review

The continued need for and role of the Working Group, and the makeup of the constituents, should be considered every year.

20 April 2022