

Skills and Development 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 skills and training challenges.

These issues relate to skills shortages, a lack of in-career training and development, poor support for freelance staff, high barriers to entry and poorly signposted routes into the sector. Research from Freelancers Make Theatre Work, PLASA/We Make Events and our own surveys of membership indicate that many of these issues have been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

UK Theatre and SOLT's ambition is to implement a range of skills and development initiatives to nurture the future workforce and support and invest in the current workforce. Our aim is to ensure that the appropriate skills and expertise are in place to allow the theatre and performing arts workforce to thrive for many years to come.

Purpose

The working group has been formed to:

- Guide the SOLT and UK Theatre Boards on development and delivery of a skills and development strategy for the sector
- Help shape SOLT and UK Theatre's response to skills and development issues, providing support in the implementation of any relevant initiatives
- Ensure that initiatives involve the input of those directly affected by the challenges each project is addressing
- Help assess the current gaps in training and development provision provided by the industry
- Advise on prioritisation of projects
- Provide sector input into SOLT and UK Theatre's public affairs work in this area

Reporting

The working group makes recommendations for solutions to the SOLT and UK Theatre Boards.

Working Group Members

The working group should include a mix of as many of these skills and demographics as possible:

- Experience of running or developing an apprenticeship scheme
- Experience in areas where there are known skills shortages in the sector: technical theatre, marketing, HR
- Education, learning and participation
- Equality, diversity and inclusion
- Human Resources/people management
- Recruitment
- Skills development
- Training and continuous professional development

- Representing commercial and not-for-profit organisations
- Freelancers working in the theatre and performing arts industry
- Representing the four nations (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales)
- Representing as wide a range of demographics as possible across age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, caring responsibilities and socio-economic background

The working group will be made up of SOLT and UK Theatre members and will include representatives of both the SOLT and UK Theatre Boards (approx. 4 total), as well as representation from freelancers (up to 2 total). The working group will comprise a maximum of 20 people.

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 online meetings a year
- The working group will be chaired by the Head of UK Theatre and Workforce Development 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
- Notes 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, at a rate of £150 per meeting
- Live captioning / BSL sign-language interpretation can be made available for meetings if required

Review

The continued need for and role of the working group, and the makeup of the constituents, should be considered on an annual basis.

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