

**UK
THEATRE**

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UK Theatre Business Plan 2024

24 June 2024

Introduction & contents

Following the strategic review process conducted in 2023 and the development of five-year strategic goals, this business plan sets out how we intend to work towards these goals in 2024 and beyond.

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Please note - This is a UK Theatre Business Plan and we work in partnership with Society of London Theatre (SOLT), our sister organisation. We will use the word 'organisations' throughout this document to represent both SOLT and UK Theatre.

President's Vision

Jon Gilchrist & Stephanie Sirr MBE

It is a huge privilege to be joint Presidents of UK Theatre at this time of challenge, change and success for our industry, and for UK Theatre.

The talent, creativity, resilience and ingenuity of our sector gives us reasons to be optimistic about what the future holds. But we are all too aware of the challenges that so many of us across the sector are facing.

That is why the renewed focus of UK Theatre, in partnership with the Society of London Theatre, on being a powerful voice for the sector is so important.

All aspects of the theatre ecosystem need to be successful for us all to succeed, now and in the long-term. With the general election happening this year, UK Theatre's enhanced advocacy team will, alongside partners in the sector and beyond, be influencing candidates and the incoming government to focus on the policies and investments that can create a more sustainable future for us all.

Training and developing the theatre workforce remains a priority for UK Theatre, directly through our own courses and my working with partners, including ABTT, the Association of British Orchestras, Federation of Scottish Theatres and Independent Theatre Council, to provide discounted rates on their courses.

Our three-year union agreements with Equity and the Musicians Union have also given us stability with our workforce and have given us the space and opportunity to think strategically about the future and collaborate with our unions on areas of common interest, including a focus on digs. Our settlement with BECTU has given us an opportunity to review the entire BECTU agreement with the goal of improving and modernising the existing terms and conditions and to explore the possibility of a touring agreement.

With a deeper focus on addressing the climate challenge, alongside our support for the Theatre Green Book and other initiatives across the sector, we will be introducing carbon literacy training to support our members to better understand their carbon impact and identify further areas where they can make a difference.

We look forward to discussing common challenges and opportunities at our events throughout the year. Please do continue to share your data and insights to build the evidence base and knowledge to advocate for solutions and change,



Photo: Stephanie Sirr & Jon Gilchrist at the UK Theatre Awards 2023

to participate in meetings, committees, member forums – and encourage your senior staff members to do the same where appropriate.

We are deeply optimistic about the future of UK Theatre, working with and for our members, to create conditions where we can all of us can thrive

Jon Gilchrist & Stephanie Sirr

Joint Presidents

Welcome: Co-Chief Executives

Claire Walker & Hannah Essex

SOLT and UK Theatre are here because theatre matters.

Theatre changes lives for the better, cements communities, challenges our thinking and provides great entertainment. It also is an economic powerhouse for the country, generating 205,000 jobs and attracting tourists to the UK.



Photo: Claire Walker & Hannah Essex at the UK Theatre Awards 2022

Our members are at the heart of this vibrant sector. In 2024, producing, presenting and running theatre/s is not easy – it is complicated, risky and leaders must overcome multiple challenges to succeed. Emerging from the pandemic, our members still face challenges from rising production costs, technical skills shortages, audience retention and growth, a cost-of-living crisis, supporting the workforce in a post-pandemic context, perception around ticket prices, inflation and political turmoil. And yet, every day our members find a way to overcome these pressures to deliver outstanding art, community and entertainment to diverse audiences in welcoming environments.

UK Theatre is here to support our members in achieving their ambitions, tackling challenges and optimising opportunities. In 2023, we conducted a strategic review of the organisation alongside Society of London Theatre and as a result we have further aligned the organisations and created a revised and joint, vision and mission and strategic goals for the next five years.

Vision

The world we want to see

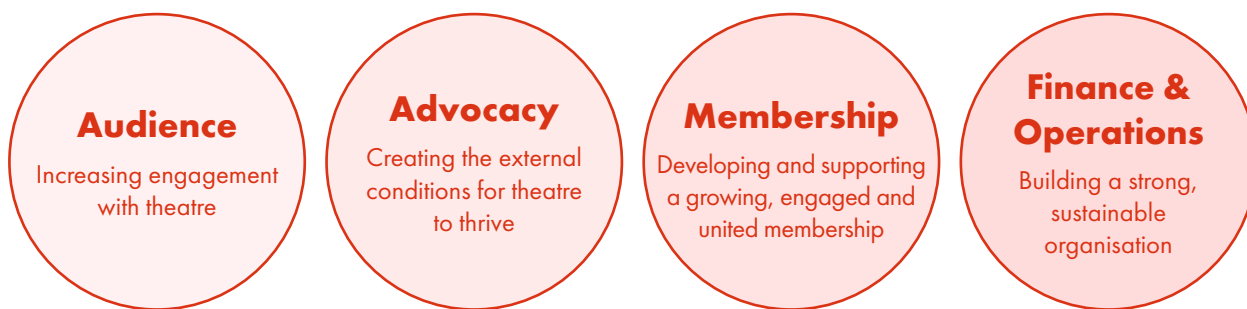
A dynamic, sustainable, world-class theatre sector

Mission

The role we will play in achieving this

To champion theatre and support our members to thrive

The work of both SOLT & UK Theatre will be focused on achieving the following goals:



2024 is the start of our long-term, five-year plan to deliver our mission and goals. This plan will evolve over the coming years to adapt to changes in our industry and the world around us.

We will continue to grow audiences through our ticketing and Tokens initiatives, and through celebrating the diversity and creativity of our theatre sector through the Olivier Awards, UK Theatre Awards, West End LIVE, Kids Week and the New Year Sale. These events will showcase our members to a global audience.

Building on recent successes around Theatre Tax Relief, SOLT & UK Theatre have significantly invested in an advocacy function to help us make the case for the sector ahead of this year's General Election.

Our key manifesto ask, for all political parties, is our Theatre for Every Child campaign. Our members do brilliant work ensuring that thousands of children access the theatre. We want all political parties to commit to every child, regardless of their background, experiencing the magic of theatre before they leave school. We believe this will be a catalyst for a deeper, more equitable engagement with the arts. And it is essential to inspiring a new generation of theatregoers.

Members will be at the heart of all we do. Core to our strategy is to have more opportunities for our members to be involved in informing and shaping our work and priorities, including new joint (SOLT & UK Theatre) sub-committees of our Boards. We also have working groups on a range of issues that impact our sector, so that we can harness the expertise and knowledge of our members. This includes supporting the development of the Creative Industries Independent Standards Authority (CIISA), our awards programmes and industrial relations with our union partners.

We continue to develop and improve our member services across employment relations, legal support and risk and sustainability. In response to extensive feedback through the strategic review, we will additionally develop a new HR and EDI service to be launched later in the year to ensure we can support our current workforce and strive for a more diverse workforce in the future.

We will work with our members to identify and respond to the challenges and opportunities brought by changes in our sector and the world around us; from AI to fluctuations in economic conditions, changing employment law and more. We will work towards these goals while also ensuring that our team are set up for success and that we secure a sustainable future for our organisations.

Our team at SOLT & UK Theatre are passionate about what they do and why they do it. We will invest in their training and development, including building their knowledge of the theatre sector, so that they are even more able to champion and support our members, represent the sector and inspire audiences now and in the future. We will also re-focus on our core values, equality, diversity and inclusion, ensuring that we effectively implement our own guidance and good practise, to become more reflective of wider society.

At SOLT & UK Theatre we have embarked on a modernisation programme across the organisations, introducing core systems to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our team. In the coming years we will need to invest in further digital developments, and in our buildings – Rose Street and the TKTS Booth – to protect and enhance these valuable assets and maximise the benefit they deliver to our members.

Whilst the development of this strategy and realignment of both organisations behind our goals has not been without its challenges, as Co-CEOs we firmly believe that we have set the organisations on a path which, building on the successes of the past, will deliver even greater benefit and value to our members in the years to come.

It remains a privilege to be leading these vital sector bodies and our committed and talented team who work tirelessly every day to support and champion theatre throughout the UK.

Claire & Hannah

Co-Chief Executives

Headline objectives for 2024

To help us deliver our mission to champion theatre and support our members to thrive, we have set some core objectives for each area of work.

Audience

Increasing engagement with theatre

1. **Raise the profile of theatre** and the work of our members through headline events and key campaigns
2. **Ensure that all our audiences feel informed and engaged**, by delivering relevant and compelling marketing to grow and diversify audiences
3. **Grow our income** needed to deliver against our goals, primarily through audience development and commercial partnerships

Advocacy

Creating the external conditions for theatre to thrive

4. **Increase influence** by identifying relationships that help raise our voice and visibility
5. **Build credibility and trust** by commissioning, developing and presenting evidence-based data and information
6. **Position** the sector as a force for good, an economic powerhouse that delivers transformative social good in communities up and down the country

Membership

Developing and supporting a growing, engaged and united membership

7. **Retain a strong membership community** through a sector-leading membership offer; and exclusive opportunities, resources, events and membership forums.
8. **Address the industry's current priorities**, creating the 'go to' hub of knowledge and expertise across the areas of HR, EDI, Risk, Sustainability, Employment Relations
9. **Identify and respond to the industry's future needs/ challenges** through horizon scanning and member engagement we will consider how we are front footed on behalf of the sector

Finance & Operations

Building a strong, sustainable organisation

10. **Equip the organisation for success**, by upgrading our systems, tools and skills in ways that help us plan and deliver better
11. **Ensure consistency and cost-effectiveness**, by streamlining how we generate, use and manage our funds
12. **Enable the business to function effectively** in a digital world, by implementing technologies that help us transform how we do things

Audience

Increasing engagement with theatre

It is vital to the sustainability of our sector that we continue to raise the profile of theatre and work with our members to retain and reach new and diverse audiences. We aim to build on the success of our high-profile events programme, ticketing and Tokens services, and other initiatives such as our access guides, Kids Week, and schools guide to reach new audiences.

While much of this work has primarily been focused on London as SOLT initiatives – for example through Official London Theatre and TKTS – programmes such as Theatre Tokens and the UK Theatre Awards have benefits throughout the country. The Love Your Local Theatre campaigns in 2022 and 2023 have enabled us to develop the infrastructure needed to share more of the benefits of our audience engagement work across the UK.

As we further enhance our audience development initiatives, we aim to ensure that we deliver even greater value to our members, while also ensuring that SOLT & UK Theatre are sustainable organisations, able to deliver for our members across all priority areas.

As not-for-profit organisations, income generated from our commercial activity funds our other activity – for example, our increased Advocacy work – to the benefit of all our members.

Following the strategy review of the organisations, we have created an Audience and Commercial directorate which leads on our event and audience development work and additionally supports the broader work of the organisations through developing sponsorship and partnerships, and delivering targeted marketing and communications across all our audiences.

In creating this directorate, we have merged our ticketing and Tokens expertise, and created a brand-new marketing function to promote our members work and that of the advocacy and membership teams. We also have a dedicated events team to deliver our year-round programme of major events including the Olivier Awards, UK Theatre Awards, the Theatre Conference and West End LIVE, and we now have a dedicated resource to focus on business development and sponsorship for the organisations.

Our Audience objectives for 2024 are:

1. **Raise the profile of theatre** and the work of our members through headline events and key campaigns
2. **Ensure that all our audiences (members, customers and partners) feel informed and engaged**, by delivering relevant and compelling marketing and communications

- 3. Grow our income** needed to deliver against our goals, primarily through audience development and commercial partnerships

To achieve these objectives, key activities in 2024 will include:

- 1. Raise the profile of theatre**

- Build on the success of the Olivier Awards and secure a global broadcast partner and ensure the event breaks even commercially
- Work with Westminster City Council to deliver West End LIVE on 22 & 23 June 2024
- Explore ways that members can raise the profile of their work through our existing events and activities

- 2. Ensure that all our audiences feel informed and engaged**

- Deliver a fresh marketing and communication strategy for membership comms and review our branding
- Develop and deliver a campaign to celebrate 40 years of Theatre Tokens

- 3. Grow our income**

- Roll out online redemption for Theatre Tokens with Spextrix and explore new ticketing solutions to future proof our operations and add value for our members
- Maximise our new retail partnerships to increase Token sales and identify new operating partners to improve customer experience and efficiency
- Work with a new digital partner to improve the user journey for our website and increase conversions



Photo: An audience applauding at the theatre

Advocacy

Creating the external conditions for theatre to thrive

SOLT & UK Theatre are uniquely well placed to champion theatre, represent the needs and ambitions of our sector to policy makers, and campaign for changes which enhance the ability or our members to thrive. Our members were clear in our strategic review, that this was the critical area we needed to invest in.

It is essential that in the coming years we further develop our evidence base to enable us to be an even stronger advocate for our sector. Working with the diversity of our members, we will identify and advocate on the common issues that will make the biggest difference to our members; and we will work with specific parts of our membership where needed to make the case for change.

Our Advocacy objectives for 2024 are:

- 4. Increase influence** by identifying relationships that help raise our voice and visibility
- 5. Build credibility and trust** by commissioning, developing and presenting evidence-based data and information
- 6. Position** the sector as a force for good, an economic powerhouse that delivers transformative social good in communities up and down the country

In this critical election year, key activity to achieve these objectives will include:

Access: Launched in October 2023, we are continuing to deliver the Theatre for Every Child campaign that aims to achieve political support for funding every child to attend the theatre at least once before they leave school, as well as highlight the fantastic work that our members do across the UK to enable and encourage children's access to theatre.

Capital: Building on the welcome announcements for the National Theatre and Theatr Clywd in the Spring Budget, we are also calling for systemic and sustained capital investment in theatre infrastructure. Incredible buildings house our world-class theatre and without them, audiences will be left unable to enjoy the bold and vibrant productions that our sector is famous for.



Photo: Claire Walker speaking at the Theatre for Every Child launch

Engagement: We will be equipping our members to engage with their local candidates in the local and general elections; to build their understanding of the power of theatre and to ensure we are in a strong position to work with and influence any new administrations.

TTR: Working with members and partners, SOLT & UK Theatre secured a new permanent rate of Theatre Tax Relief of 40%, and 45% for touring productions in the Chancellor's Spring Budget, delivered on 6 March 2024. We will now work to monitor the effectiveness of the new permanent rate and continue to celebrate the bigger, bolder productions that TTR brings.

Evidence centre: we will further develop this tool, so we are able to tell the story of our sector through compelling insight, building a picture across the whole ecosystem. In practice this means upskilling members to use the evidence centre, onboarding more UK Theatre members, building on those that have already supplied their data, and working with SOLT members to onboard their data.

Membership

Developing and supporting a growing, engaged and united membership

SOLT & UK Theatre work with and on behalf of our members and are committed to providing exceptional services and support meaningful connections and delivering tailored solutions in response to the evolving needs of our members.

We have a range of members with unique needs, preferences and expectations; however, they are often united by common interests, goals, and aspirations so we are continuously evolving and responding to their needs. By prioritising innovation, responsiveness and collaboration, we aim to create a dynamic member service where every member feels valued, empowered and inspired to thrive.

Industrial Relations with our partners in the unions remains a core focus on our work. Having already agreed multi-year deals across most of our agreements, our priority for the year ahead is to support members in implementing the agreements; collaborating with unions on areas of common interest; and engaging in working parties across various issues.

Our focus will be driven and shaped by the interests of our members or reflect and respond to new challenges affecting our industry.

Our Membership objectives for 2024 are:

- 7. Retain a strong membership community** through a sector-leading membership offer; and exclusive opportunities, resources, events and membership forums
- 8. Address the industry's current priorities**, creating the 'go-to' hub of knowledge expertise and providing sector leading training across the areas of HR, EDI, Risk, Sustainability and Employment Relations
- 9. Identify and respond to the industry's future needs/challenges** through horizon scanning and member engagement we will consider how we are front footed on behalf of the sector

To achieve these objectives, key activities in 2024 will include:

- 7. Retain a strong membership community**
 - Building strong relationships with Unions and supporting members to apply the relevant collective agreements
 - Investigating new patterns of work with unions and exploring pilots around 5-day rehearsals and flexible working
 - Ensure that the Theatre Conference is relevant to all our members in both the commercial and subsidised sector and that event, at least, breaks even

- Creating opportunities for members to connect through networking events, forums and at our flagship Theatre Conference

8. Address the industry's current priorities

- Developing new ways of working to support and engage directly with membership including a cohesive engagement programme to support and recruit new members
- Creating and delivering courses that offer relevant and practical content ensuring members remain adaptable and resilient. Ensuring that our courses enhance skills & knowledge, keeping members up to date with best practice and support continuous workforce improvements
- Further developing our member services, including the new HR & EDI Service, in response to member feedback and changing needs
- Providing updates and guidance on relevant laws and regulations and supporting the member adoption of Martyn's Law and the compliance requirements that may impact operations

9. Identify and respond to the industry's future needs/challenges

- Prioritising current needs and future priorities of members using insight tools including the member matrix
- We will work with the MU to review EDI across the industry with the intention to develop a robust strategy to improve wider representation within the musical workforce
- Promoting awareness around sustainability and corporate social responsibility initiatives, encouraging members in sustainable working practices and our ongoing support of the Theatre Green Book
- Working in partnership with stakeholders to support positive cultural changes within the industry including promotion of the Creative Industries Independent Standards Authority



Photo: Lewis Iwu speaking at the Theatre Conference 2024

Finance & Operations

Building a strong and sustainable organisation

Our ambition for our organisations is rooted in solid and sustainable finances, enabling opportunities to be realised for the benefit of members over the short and longer term. We will harness the opportunity from technology to be efficient and effective, and to attract and retain a high-quality workforce with the right skills to deliver.

Our Finance & Operations objectives in 2024 are:

- 10. Equip the organisations for success**, by upgrading our systems, tools and skills in ways that help us plan and deliver better
- 11. Ensure consistency and cost-effectiveness**, by streamlining how we generate, use and manage our funds
- 12. Enable the business to function effectively** in a digital world, by implementing technologies that help us transform how we do things

To achieve these objectives, key activities in 2024 will include:

10. Equip the organisations

- Roll out new finance and HR systems, strengthening control processes, and building financial and people management skills in our staff
- A phased development plan for Rose Street ensuring that the building is fit for purpose and systematically addressing maintenance and compliance
- Streamline governance processes

11. Cost effective management of funds

- Implement a multi-year planning process, to include rolling capital planning and clear funding strategy in support of long-term growth and financial sustainability

12. Technological transformation

- Rolling improvement programme for current technical infrastructure – with a specific focus on reducing cost, improved security and compliance issues
- Strengthen IT governance - a subgroup of the Board to work with executive on digital transformation
- Organisational development work to ensure conditions are defined and developed

How to get in touch

Members can get in contact with the team directly at members@soltukt.co.uk and enquiries will be directed to the relevant team member.

You can call us on **020 7557 6700**

You can also book an online meeting or visit us in person at:

**32 Rose Street
London
WC2E 9ET**

For more information on visiting our office, please see the dedicated page on our website: uktheatre.org/contact

Committee structure

The Co-CEOs report to the Presidents of UK Theatre and the Board, who meet at least quarterly (i.e. four times per year). The Board consist of members, some of whom are elected by the rest of the membership and others who are co-opted by the Board. Elected Board members can serve up to six years (split into three-year terms) and elections take place each year before our AGM. Co-opted Directors may serve for three years and are appointed after the AGM.

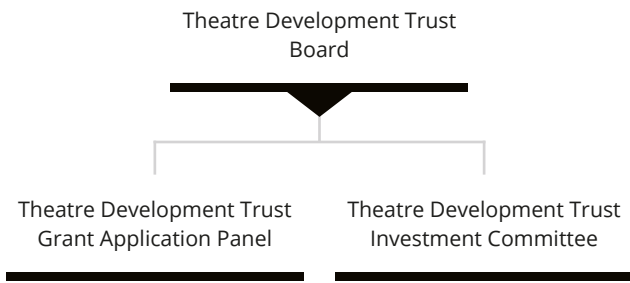
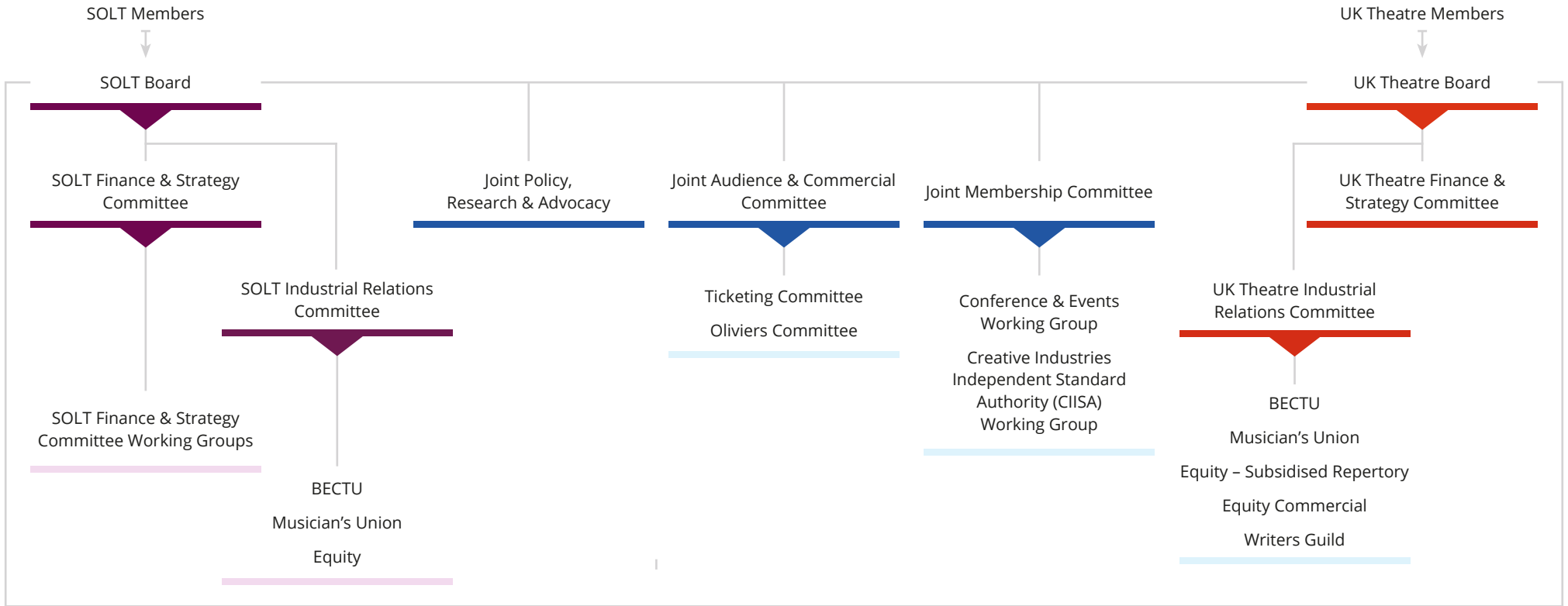
UK Theatre has a Finance & Strategy Committee (FSC) which reports into the Board, generally comprised of members of the Board. The FSC is responsible for considering financial and strategic matters in detail and making recommendations to the Boards for approval.

There are three Joint SOLT & UK Theatre Committees, covering the work of Membership; Policy, Research & Advocacy; and Audience & Commercial Directorates. These joint committees are responsible for considering in detail matters raised within each Directorate and making recommendations to the Boards for approval.

There are also several sub-committees working on specific issues, which report into and make recommendations to the Joint Committees or FSC.

Finally, there is an Industrial Relations Committee, responsible for union negotiations and comprising experts in industrial relations matters drawn from UK Theatre member organisations. A number of negotiating committees responsible for negotiations with specific unions report into the Industrial Relations Committee.

Governance structure



Team structure

The organisation is made up of five teams under each director. Following the restructure, our headcount remains the same. A full staff list can be found on the members' area of our website.

