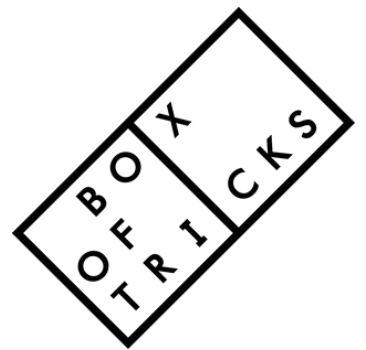




BOX OF TRICKS THEATRE COMPANY



ANNUAL EQUALITY & DIVERSITY REPORT

AUGUST 2021 - JULY 2022

Annual monitoring report

OUR COMMITMENT TO POSITIVE ACTION

We are living through extraordinary times. Covid-19 has impacted all our lives. The entire theatre industry is in jeopardy as we head into the deepest recession in living memory. Those who have long been marginalised stand to lose the most. Against this backdrop, the Black Lives Matter movement has highlighted the pernicious nature of racism and how it infects the systems that uphold power.

We will not stand idly by as discrimination, prejudice and inequality go unchecked. Box of Tricks commits to equality and fairness in everything we do. Our work is enriched by a diversity of voices and a variety of stories. In the wake of this crisis, it is essential that we educate ourselves, challenge ingrained habits and develop new ones to amplify diverse voices and stories as we rebuild for a better future.

"At a time of unprecedented challenge for the Arts, working with Box of Tricks has underlined for us the importance of the whole creative sector in nurturing and developing new writers... We have uncovered some truly exceptional new talent from the North... unique stories to tell that will resonate with audiences of both stage and screen"

Vicky Wharton, Executive Producer, Sky Studios

A woman with long braids, wearing a bright orange two-piece outfit, is captured in a dynamic pose on a stage. She has one arm raised high and is looking towards the camera with a slight smile. The background is dark, and a white chair is partially visible behind her.

Where we are
TODAY

OUR COMMITMENT TO A FAIRER FUTURE

- We will stand up to discrimination and prejudice wherever we encounter it and whatever form it takes. We will stand shoulder to shoulder with our peers to root out ableism, sexism, racism, religious intolerance, homophobia, transphobia and classism within our industry.
- We will fight for equality inside and outside Box of Tricks. We will champion voices we feel are currently underrepresented on our stages. No aspect of identity – disability, neurodiversity, gender identity, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation and/or lower socio-economic background – will prevent your voice from being heard.
- Our working environment will be one where everyone can thrive free from discrimination or prejudice. Whether on stage or off, we will challenge instances of discrimination and support the individuals that encounter it.
- We will reflect the wider society beyond our theatres - in the stories we tell, the individuals we employ, the audiences we engage. We will make plays that are as rich and varied as those communities. We will empower playwrights and creatives to tell the stories they want to tell and embrace their unique perspective on the world.
- We will build audiences that reflect the communities where we stage our work. We will develop marketing and audience development strategies to attract new audiences beyond the already culturally-engaged.
- We will gather data on our Core Team, Board and freelance creative workforce so we can identify areas of low diversity - comparing statistics against current local and national averages to gauge our progress - and implement positive change to increase representation.
- We will celebrate the individual and their lived experience. We will not group disparate identities to meet diversity quotas or use unhelpful acronyms that further obscure and entrench discrimination.
- We will remove barriers to access wherever we find them and prioritise access needs wherever they are required. We will increase the accessibility of our workplace and future productions so no one is excluded.
- We will combat structural discrimination through positive action. We will actively identify and develop talent from all backgrounds and forge future pathways within the industry.
- We will be transparent and open in how we achieve change. We will seek feedback, invite discussion, listen and learn. We will be open to criticism and hold our hands up when we make mistakes. We will be the change we want to see.





Delivering on our 2022 TOP PRIORITIES



1. Identify areas of low diversity and underrepresentation in Box of Tricks' operations and take action.

Having identified low engagement with writers and theatremakers of British East Asian and South East Asian heritage, we aim to increase engagement with these communities over the next twelve months with a view to actively increasing representation now and in the future.

Our progress this year is limited and there's more work for us to do. We have engaged 4 actors (6.5%) of East Asian heritage and no East Asian writers (0%) compared to circa 12% of the local population in the North West. We acknowledge that we need to continue championing creatives of South Asian and East Asian heritage and ensuring their stories are represented within theatre and told authentically.



2. Increase representation at Board level.

Through a targeted recruitment drive, we will expand our Board and increase diversity and representation.

New appointments made to the Board have increased representation amongst target groups this year. However, this is an ongoing process and we are further expanding our Board next year, through an active Board recruitment drive focussed on skills diversification and increasing representation.



3. Prioritise underrepresented groups for future appointments within our Core Team.

Roles will be advertised widely, targeting areas of underrepresentation. All candidates who meet a role's essential criteria and identify as being from an underrepresented group will be shortlisted for interview under our Positive Action Policy.

We collaborated with Arts Emergency (an organisation dedicated to helping young people from historically excluded and underrepresented backgrounds break into the arts) and funded a paid producing internship for a new role 2 days a week from January to July.



4. Launch a programme of professional development to increase diversity within our creative and backstage teams.

Through our Associate Artists programme (2021-22), we explored the lack of diversity in offstage teams and developed training schemes to encourage new offstage talent from underrepresented groups.

Throughout the year we have supported new offstage talent from underrepresented groups through providing work experience and interning opportunities for our various projects throughout the year. We facilitated a ToolBox workshop during our Play Makers takeover at HOME led by our associate artist Katie Scott.





5. Facilitate safe spaces for open conversations with artists and creatives

– where discrimination, prejudice and institutional barriers can be openly discussed – which will inform future practice. We piloted various events throughout 2022 that fuel positive change.

In January 2022 we facilitated workshops and panels at HOME through our Playbox and Screen/Play takeovers where we discussed the importance of supporting mental health and selfcare as creatives. During this time we also facilitated panel discussions surrounding inequality within theatre and the realities of being a creative with protected characteristics.

Throughout the year we have also hosted a variety of coffee mornings and culture cafes offering opportunities for theatre creatives to come together, air frustrations and build our community of playmakers. Although we are committed to facilitating those safe spaces, we acknowledge there is still room to continue these discussions in the future.

“I’ve really loved Pen Pals. I feel like I understand my voice as a writer more and my interests more”

Pen Pal 2021

“My work depicts working-class life in the North East... The stories I share are the stories behind the statistics. I want to show the realities of living in a town and community that’s been scarred by a long-gone industry.”

Sarah Tarbit, Screen/Play Award





MONITORING DATA

AUGUST 2021 - JULY 2022



Two years on from our commitment to Positive Change, we've increased representation across the board amongst our family of writers and artists that we have supported and developed year-on-year.

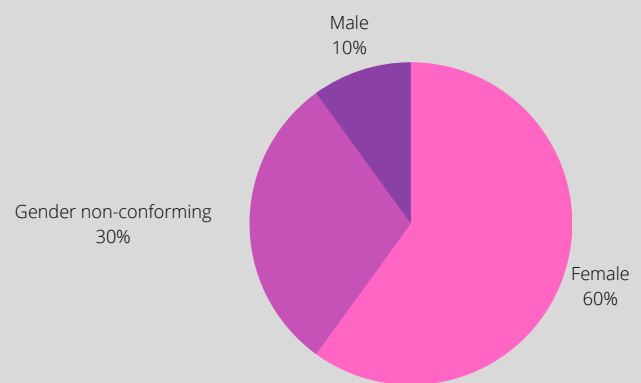
Over the last 12 months, every writer we have engaged, developed or directly supported was sent a monitoring survey as well as all freelance creatives, core team and board members; we received 105 responses (91% of creatives we have worked with) , the results of which are on the following page.

**In the last 12 months we have commissioned
10 playwrights:**

Six writers are **female**, three are **gender non-conforming** and one is **male**.

Two writers are **writers of colour**, and a third are **disabled**.

Six out of ten are part of the **LGBTQ+ community** and seven writers identify as being from a **low socio-economic background***.



* Individuals from a low socioeconomic background would generally identify with at least two of the following criteria: spent time within the care system; registered as a young carer as a child; first generation of their family to attend university (or another Higher Education setting), or no one from the family has attended university or another HE setting; attended a non-selective state school from age 11-16; eligible for free school meals (if attending school after 1980); have been in receipt of Universal Credit (or equivalent state benefits e.g. housing benefit, income support, working tax credits, job seeker's allowance)

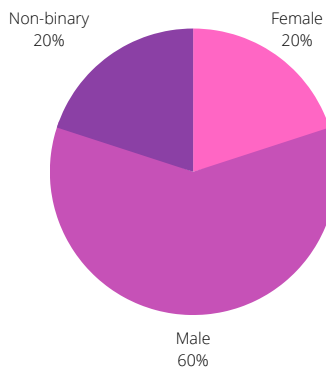


A spotlight on our Board and Core Team:

One of our top priorities for this year has been to diversify the voices that are represented on our Board and core team.



Currently our board has six members: **three male** and **three female**. **Two members** of our board are from **low socio-economic backgrounds**. One board member is a part of the **global majority** and one is a part of the **LGBTQ+ community**. No board members have identified themselves as having a disability.



Our core team has had five members this year.

Three male, one female and **one non-binary person**.

One core team member is from a **low socio-economic background**. One member is a part of the **global majority** and two are a part of the **LGBTQ+ community**.

Two core team members have identified themselves as having a disability.



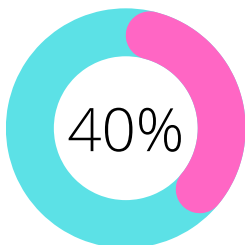
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Results from all respondents - including playwrights, actors, creatives and core team - are below. Not all respondents answered every question and the percentages below reflect the number of blank responses in each category.

We've supported 41 **writers, actors and creatives of colour** – over a third of the total supported in the last 12 months. The industry average is 14%.*



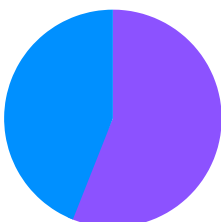
42 survey respondents are from the **LGBTQ+ community**. This is 4 times higher than the average within arts organisations of 10%*.

Over the past year we have engaged with **12 trans, non-binary and gender non-conforming** individuals. This is 12 times the industry average of just 1-2%*

51 respondents are **female** and 40 are **male** meaning we have engaged with more female and gender non-conforming people than men this year.



We have also supported **24 disabled writers and artists** compared to an industry average of just 7%*.



56% of respondents come from a **low socio-economic background**. This is double the average in the creative industries of 26%**.



A spotlight on our Associate Artists:

In 2021, we welcomed five new **Associate Artists**, supported by the Genesis Foundation's KickStart fund. These artists come from a range of disciplines, ranging from movement direction to sound design.

Of the **five Associate Artists**, four are **female**, and one is **male**...

...Two are of **mixed heritage**.

...Two identify as **LGBTQ+**.

...No Associate Artists identify as having a **disability**.

...And all five come from a **low socioeconomic background**.



