

Summary of Bluecoat's Race Equality Action Plan

	Action	Progress to date, 20 May 2023	Next steps
1	Internal change		
1.1	Set up an action-focused mechanism to drive change	<p>The Bluecoat Race Equality Task Force (RETF), established during summer 2020 for a two-year period and reporting to the Board, was tasked with creating a Race Equality Action Plan.</p> <p>This Action Plan addresses three key strands: internal change, supporting artists, and speaking out. It has been reviewed and redesigned to make it SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and anchored within a timeframe).</p> <p>The plan has also been integrated into a revised Bluecoat Equality and Diversity Plan for our current business plan, 2022-26.</p>	<p>Following a review of its two years' life, the Race Equality Task Force is being reconfigured to monitor implementation of the Race Equality Action Plan and to ensure it chimes with the LARC/COoL <i>Liverpool Arts & Culture Race Equality Manifesto</i> (being launched 25 May 2023).</p> <p>The SMART action plan will be rolled out across the organisation and built into the work plans and job descriptions of all staff.</p>
1.2	Diversify Bluecoat staff including freelancers and contractors	<p>Over its two years, the RETF work informed a targeted recruitment programme aimed at reaching a more inclusive field of candidates for several new project-funded posts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advertising in local Black/diverse community publications and spaces • targeted marketing campaign using social media and other networks 	<p>We will use the learning from this recruitment programme to inform our 2030 strategy by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analysing data from recruitment drives • creating and maintaining effective networks to share job opportunities • developing an inclusive induction programme for new positions

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more accessible and inclusive application packs • anonymising applications • more diverse selection and interview panels 	<p>We will continue to reflect diversity throughout our website, and within its opportunities section.</p> <p>We will allocate funds for recruitment campaigns, informed by research into appropriate channels, to attract diverse applicants, and monitor the campaigns' effectiveness.</p>
1.3	Implement staff training programme	<p>We developed a plan and content for open conversations with staff about race equality, racism and speaking out, and piloted it.</p> <p>We conducted a survey and collated feedback from staff that participated in the conversations in order to refine and inform the roll out of our approach.</p> <p>To embed anti-racist action within our organisation, we launched an 'everyday anti-racism' programme targeted at all our staff and volunteers. The programme was designed to help them make anti-racist action an everyday experience.</p>	<p>We are rolling out the open conversations pilot with more staff groups and developing a training plan based on these.</p> <p>We aim to also roll out the 'everyday anti-racism' thinking to our audiences via social media to raise awareness of key issues.</p> <p>We will analyse and monitor the training plan, as well as the 'everyday anti-racism' initiative.</p>
1.4	Diversify the Bluecoat Board	<p>The make-up of the Board is monitored against targets set in our Equality and Diversity Action Plan and reported to Arts Council England, as part of National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) monitoring.</p> <p>The Board is actively engaged in ensuring we strive to become a more inclusive and anti-racist</p>	<p>We will continue to monitor and report on the make-up of the Board and actively recruit board members to make it more reflective of the protected characteristics we have prioritised, including race.</p> <p>Board member profiles continue to be published on our website: https://www.thebluecoat.org.uk/board-members</p>

		organisation, and race equality is a standing item at all its meetings.	
1.5	Organisational partnerships review and development	<p>We are continuing to review the partnerships we have with a view to further develop these.</p> <p>We have created a reference document for all staff on values/brand pillars strategy. Our management is reviewing the first draft in line with Bluecoat's 2030 strategy.</p>	<p>We will communicate race equality values to our existing partners and develop a Memorandum of Understanding and/or shared statement with them.</p> <p>We will forge relationships with more diverse cultural organisations and groups, providing and receiving mentoring where appropriate.</p>
1.6	Review policy gaps	<p>Our Equality and Diversity Action Plan was updated and submitted to Arts Council England in 2022 as part of our revenue funding bid. The arts centre was successful in this bid for continued NPO support.</p> <p>We reviewed our current whistleblowing policy and are exploring mechanisms for creating a robust whistleblowing system specifically in order to proactively respond to race equality.</p> <p>We developed a terminology guide to support our staff team to talk and write confidently about diversity. The document summarises some of the latest thinking about terminology, specifically the BAMEOver debate, details of which can be found here: https://incarts.uk/%23bameover-the-statement.</p>	<p>Following an in-depth review of our Equality and Diversity Action Plan in 2022 to align it with our Race Equality Action Plan, we will continue to monitor how these plans are working together and also their alignment with the LARC/COoL <i>Liverpool Arts & Culture Race Equality Manifesto's</i> Action Plan.</p>

1.7	Creative community	We are reviewing how our values around inclusion and race equality can be integrated into the tenancy agreements of our on-site creative community.	We will continue to actively to increase the racial diversity of our creative community when opportunities become available to do so, and develop a Memorandum of Understanding with our current tenants around our values.
2	Supporting artists		
2.1	Profile Black Artists and Artists of Colour in the programme	<p>Creating a rich and varied programme, with different voices and perspectives, continues to be a priority. Our website provides an overview of the artists we're currently working with, while the library section of our website includes substantial information on our exhibitions history including our support for the British Black arts movement: https://www.thebluecoat.org.uk/library/british-black-arts-movement</p> <p>We remain committed to providing opportunities for solo exhibitions or substantial presentations of work, continuing Bluecoat's profiling of Black artists that began in the mid-1980s. This exhibition and performance history, much of it archived and available on the library section of our website, is generating increased interest from artists, students and academics.</p> <p>Most recently, a guest-curated exhibition in our galleries, <i>breathe, spirit and life</i> 呼吸、靈魂與生命 (October 2022-January 2023), presented the work of</p>	<p>We are continuing to explore further opportunities to commission new work by Black Artists and Artists of Colour in this and other new contexts, as well as supporting public discourse around their work.</p> <p>We will continue to monitor the diversity of the artists we work with.</p> <p>Over the next three years we will develop ways to disseminate and make more accessible our diverse arts history, focusing on our digital archive, archival displays in the building, postgraduate research and curatorial collaborations.</p>

		emerging Artists of Colour, set in the context of our work with diverse artists since the mid-1980s presented in an accompanying archive display charting this history.	
2.2	Create opportunities for new curators/producers/gate keepers	<p>We created a new post (June 2021-April 2023) of Project Curator (Cultural Legacies) to interrogate Bluecoat’s history working with diverse artists, funded by John Ellerman Foundation and deliver an exhibition, <i>breathe, spirit and life</i> 呼吸、靈魂與生.</p> <p>For our two-year heritage participation project Echoes and Origins, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund (completed December 2022), we created Project Facilitator posts for its two strands, Looked After Children and Colonial Legacies, which engaged young people at The Greenhouse Project in Liverpool 8 to interrogate Bluecoat’s history and archive, and produce a public programme in response. See 3.4 below.</p>	We will take the learning from the past two years’ temporary curatorial and project facilitator positions to inform further opportunities to diversify the staff we work with, including freelancers, on our arts, heritage and participation programmes, which will engage with a broader range of voices and perspectives.
2.3	Diversify Bluecoat's celebration calendar	<p>As part of our ongoing planning cycle, we have identified key cultural dates throughout the year for potential collaborations in order to embed and mainstream more diverse cultural programme activities beyond Black History Month and Slavery Remembrance Day.</p> <p>Building on our previous Slavery Remembrance Day participation - with a blog about the Bluecoat</p>	We aim to raise awareness of different cultural celebrations across the year through our communication channels, as well as contributing in 2023 to Black History Month and as a venue along the Walk of Remembrance on Slavery Remembrance Day in August.

		<p>building's links to the transatlantic slave trade through involvement in it by several funders of the original charity school in the eighteenth century: https://www.thebluecoat.org.uk/about/news/bluecoat-and-international-slavery-remembrance-day - we participated again in Slavery Remembrance Day 2022 as one of the stopping points for the Walk of Remembrance.</p>	
3	Speaking Out		
3.1	Participate in city-wide discussions	<p>Bluecoat's Director of Cultural Legacies (DCL) continued to chair the Liverpool Arts Regeneration Consortium (LARC) Race Equality Action Group, which merged in 2022 with a representative group of members of COoL (Creative Organisations of Liverpool) to develop a Race Equality Manifesto. The Bluecoat has signed up to this, with full endorsement by its Board.</p>	<p>The <i>Liverpool Arts & Culture Race Equality Manifesto</i> will be launched in May 2023 and the LARC/COoL 'Task & Finish' group will review its role in monitoring and evaluating its implementation and progress in its first year, 2023-24.</p> <p>The Bluecoat will support the Manifesto and actively implement its pledges.</p>

3.2	Take part in sector-wide discussions	<p>In October 2020, the Bluecoat prompted LARC’s discussion of Black Lives Matter in relation to the arts and culture sector and, from this, a collective response and strategy has been developed leading to the <i>Liverpool Arts & Culture Race Equality Manifesto</i> (see above).</p> <p>The arts centre has continued to contribute to debates around decolonisation, with particular reference to our building’s colonial legacies and the arts centre’s history of working with diverse artists. Over the last year, we participated in several discursive events, including British Art Network 10th anniversary conference (which DCL convened) related to decolonial practice and decentering the narrative of British art, including through 'marginalised' voices.</p>	<p>We will continue to actively participate in LARC/COoL’s race equality work and to chair the next iteration of the <i>Manifesto's</i> Task & Finish group, if required.</p> <p>We will continue to be active and vocal in local and national networks and debates around race equality and decolonisation in the arts and culture sector; and we will look for further opportunities to discuss Bluecoat’s colonial legacies in public forums.</p>
3.3	Build external alliances	<p>We have an ambition to be an actively anti-racist organisation, but we know we can’t do this alone and will need to work with other organisations to realise this.</p> <p>A team of staff, Board and external voices produced a discussion document exploring what it means to be an anti-racist organisation, working towards racial justice.</p>	<p>We will continue to research and be open to anti-racist and race equality alliances, as well as using our organisational voice to openly support anti-racist and related campaigns. We will consider if there is any in-kind support we can give to campaigns and organisations.</p> <p>In 2023 we will continue these discussions towards a proactive approach to becoming an anti-racist organisation, working towards racial justice.</p>

3.4	<p>Interrogate the colonial history of the Bluecoat building</p>	<p>We delivered a 'Colonial Legacies' strand in a heritage participation project, <i>Echoes & Origins</i>, funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund over two years (to December 2022). Working with young people from The Greenhouse Project, Liverpool 8 and elsewhere, it explored Bluecoat's origins in relation to their own cultural backgrounds and culminated in a successful public programme of exhibitions and events in 2022, as documented here: https://www.thebluecoat.org.uk/coloniallegacies</p> <p>Resources from it are available here: https://www.thebluecoat.org.uk/colonial-legacies-resources</p> <p>We continued to research the Bluecoat's links to transatlantic slavery. In 2022 a blog was published concerning Bryan Blundell, Blue Coat School co-founder and a merchant involved in Liverpool's slave trade. This linked to a new piece of research into Blundell and his family's continuing involvement in the school and in transatlantic slavery, undertaken by PhD student Michelle Girvan, a recipient of a Collaborative Doctoral Award with University of Liverpool and Bluecoat: https://www.thebluecoat.org.uk/about/news/bryan-blundell-and-the-origins-of-the-blue-coat-school</p>	<p>New research on our building's links to transatlantic slavery and other colonial legacies will be added to the library and news sections of the Bluecoat's website.</p> <p>As indicated above, in 2023 we will mark Slavery Remembrance Day (23 August).</p> <p>We will build on our dialogue with Blue Coat School about our shared history, and work towards collaborative creative projects that interrogate it.</p> <p>In Summer 2023 we will submit a 'resilience' application to the Heritage Fund to research how we further develop our work relating to Liverpool's colonial history, and our building's mercantile specific links, bringing these into dialogue with local communities.</p>
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3.5	Diversify and respond to new, representative audiences	<p>We are actively diversifying our audiences for family activities and invested in a summer campaign in 2022 aimed at city centre families and those in Liverpool 8. We aimed our family campaign at this community, including leaflet door drops and poster campaign in this specific area.</p> <p>A new visitor experience team was established in 2021/22 to provide a warm welcome to visitors, with a specific focus on inclusion and understanding of cultural differences. The visitor experience team is receiving training to help understand and articulate issues of race equality. A temporary Community Engagement Coordinator started to build networks with community groups and organisations and actively encourage groups to visit Bluecoat.</p> <p>New photography was commissioned for our promotional publicity in 2022 to reflect a more inclusive audience.</p> <p>A more diverse cohort of photographers, filmmakers and graphic designers was also developed across the year.</p>	<p>Using our new Audience Development Plan, completed in early 2023, we will undertake a series of campaigns to test different strategies for attracting a more diverse audience to Bluecoat.</p> <p>We will continue to develop a more representative roster of creative freelancers to work with, including photographers, filmmakers and graphic designers.</p> <p>A new communication policy for audiences, our creative community and staff will be developed using intelligence from the visitor experience team.</p>
3.6	Log and respond to feedback and criticism effectively	<p>We created a feedback log to keep track of all comments coming to us with regard to our race equality activity. We use feedback to inform how we communicate our work here.</p>	<p>We will continue to monitor and respond to feedback to improve communications relating to race equality activity.</p>

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