

HEADLONG'S JUSTICE PLAN

RACE

At Headlong it is our firm belief that making great art is inextricably linked with the pursuit of justice.

We have been fortunate to work with talented ethnically diverse colleagues, but not nearly frequently enough. Our hope is that through structural change we can address this imbalance, earn trust in our existing relationships, and begin meaningful new ones in the years to come.

As we tackle structural inequality at Headlong, the intersectionality of justice will be present throughout our planning, encompassing disability, class, LGBTQI+ communities, religion and gender. However, in the wake of the police murder of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter protests, we are specifically addressing systemic racism at Headlong in this document, which is the first part of a larger Justice Plan.

Below are some action points and the practical ways in which we intend to achieve them. These commitments and the language we use throughout this document refer to all ethnically diverse people and people who experience racism. We understand the term 'ethnically diverse' to comprise, African Diaspora people, South, East and South East Asian diaspora people, and all other ethnically diverse people, but whenever possible, we will be much more specific. As the language and terminology surrounding these issues are constantly evolving, this is a working document and will remain under review as we learn and grow.

ACTIONS:

1. Transparency

We will publish the data we have on employment for as far back as we have access and this data will remain on our website permanently. Going forwards we will publish each year's data on our website.

You can see this data on our website, www.headlong.co.uk/ventures/justice-plan-race

This Justice Plan will also remain on our website.

2. Who is making shows at Headlong?

As evidenced in our employment data, historically the artists that have made shows at Headlong, our core staff, and other employees have been majority white. From 2017-2020, 74.3% of our casts, and 92.4% of our creative teams have been white. Currently 81.8% of our core staff and 75% of our board is white. The following therefore makes up one strand of a larger action plan to address this:

- With immediate effect, the lead actor on at least one show every 2 years, and at least a third of our casts will be ethnically diverse.

- At least two members of the creative team on every show will be ethnically diverse.
- At least a third of our core staff will be ethnically diverse by the end of 2023.
- At least a third of our board will be ethnically diverse by the end of 2023.

3. What stories are we telling?

Our ambition is for the work we produce to be as culturally rich as contemporary British society. On average, Headlong commissions four writers a year and from 2017 - 20, 81.2% of our play commissions and 100% of our produced plays were written by white playwrights.

Here are the initial commitments we are making to ethnic diversity to address this over-representation:

- We will commission 3 ethnically diverse writers in the next 12 months.
- We will continue with our current commitment of 25% of commissions per year being by ethnically diverse writers.
- At least one of our productions per two-year cycle will be written or directed by an ethnically diverse person.

4. Who is Headlong making shows for?

One of our goals is to reach diverse audiences. However, as a touring company without a building, we only have limited access to audience data. As a result, we have less information about our audiences than we would like.

We also have a lot of thinking to do on how our work speaks to all audiences, as well as analysing the effectiveness of our points of entry for them. This includes reviewing how we invite audiences (the offer), how we build the bridge with disenfranchised audience members (packaging the offer) and how we welcome the audience (environment at the event or performance).

We will update this section with action points in the next six months.

5. Who is reviewing?

We recognise that the theatre critics of the mainstream media are majority white. We currently make space for less traditional forms of reviewing by inviting bloggers, YouTubers etc. to engage with our work and we will continue to do so. Going forward we will be proactive in inviting a wider circle of critics to all of our press nights. We are committed to calling out racism in reviews of our shows and will continue to do so. Whenever possible we will promote ethnically diverse artists in press opportunities.

6. How will Headlong support the next generation of ethnically diverse artists?

Once a year, on a show we lead-produce, we will have a paid trainee position for an emerging artist, with a clear support structure during their time with us. We will encourage ethnically diverse applicants to apply for these positions.

We will continue to support directors who are living and making work outside of London through our Headlong Origins artist development scheme. We will commit to at least half of the Origins directors that we support being ethnically diverse, an increase from a third. We are improving the recruitment process for this scheme in order to address barriers faced by these applicants

We will also continue Headlong Futures, our ambitious programme that connects communities across the UK. We will ensure that the artists and partners we engage in Headlong Futures represent the communities they serve, and that we are engaging with ethnically diverse communities.

7. How will Headlong better support employees going forwards?

We will review how we support ethnically diverse employees and freelancers at Headlong, especially on tour, from both a practical and pastoral perspective.

We will review our complaints procedure at Headlong so that it better serves all of our employees. We will make sure that we are providing safe, discrete reporting options.

8. How will we hold ourselves accountable to these actions?

We will ensure that sufficient human and financial resources are allocated for this action plan to be carried out effectively.

We currently hold internal weekly justice meetings at Headlong, attended by staff, to scrutinise and come up with solutions for possible exclusion and the systemic structural issues that may allow biases to be perpetuated within our processes and projects. For example, safeguarding against tokenism and communicating our openness to change. We commit to continuing these meetings and we will collaborate with external consultants who have expertise in structural justice reform to review best practice.

Once every 8 weeks we will reflect on the discussions, actions and outcomes of the preceding sessions. A board member will attend this session for a presentation of the work done and our plans moving forward.

We will ensure that justice is kept at the top of the agenda at all levels at Headlong and will continue to discuss anti-racism, structural inequality and justice at every board meeting. A staff member from the Justice Working Group will attend every board meeting at this point in the agenda to contribute to the discussion.

Through these sessions we will create an in-depth 5-year plan for justice at Headlong. We will then publish key points from the approved plan on our website.

The staff and board at Headlong will undergo training designed to combat systemic racism and biases, which will help us explore our own understanding, as well any limitations in our existing systems and how to prevent those limitations from pervading our structures in future.

We will rigorously review our recruitment processes at Headlong, and also ensure with immediate effect that our recruitment panels are no longer overly representative of one identity group.