

Summary of Bluecoat's Race Equality Action Plan

	Action	Progress to date, Dec 2021	Next steps
1	Internal change		
1.1	Set up an action-focused mechanism to drive change	<p>We established a Bluecoat Race Equality Task Force (RETF) during summer 2020. We drew up terms of reference and created an action plan. Our RETF continues to meet fortnightly to develop and review the action plan and ensure implementation, updating staff and reporting to the Board.</p> <p>In July, two new members of Bluecoat staff joined the RETF.</p> <p>We have reviewed and redesigned our action plan in order to make it SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and anchored within a Time Frame). The Action Plan addresses three key strands: internal change, supporting artists, and speaking out.</p>	<p>Membership of our Race Equality Task Force will be regularly reviewed to ensure its effectiveness. It will continue to communicate with staff throughout the organisation to deliver the action plan.</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> <p>The plan's key strands will be integrated into a revised Equality and Diversity Plan for the new business plan by early-2022.</p>
1.2	Diversify Bluecoat staff including freelancers and contractors	<p>During the year delivered 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 launched a group to support our workforce (staff and volunteers) who have experienced racism, feel racialised or may have been marginalised due to their race or ethnicity. The group's main purpose is to be a safe space to discuss issues that they might be facing and to provide valuable peer support.</p>	<p>We will reflect diversity throughout our new 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 their 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>In order to embed anti-racist action within our organisation, we launched an 'everyday anti-racism' programme targeted at all our staff and volunteers. The programme has been 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>The 'everyday anti-racism' programme is being rolled out 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' training initiative.</p>
1.4	Diversify the Bluecoat Board	<p>The makeup 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 monitoring.</p>	<p>We will continue to monitor and report on the makeup of the Board and actively recruit board members to make it more reflective of protected characteristics we have prioritised, including race.</p>

		The Board is actively engaged in ensuring we strive to become a more inclusive and anti-racist organisation, and race equality is a standing item at all of 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 plan to 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 is being updated as part of our forward planning and will be submitted to Arts Council England, in early 2022.</p> <p>We have 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 have 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>In early 2022 we will undertake a more in-depth review of our Equality and Diversity Action Plan to align this with our Race Equality Action Plan. In addition, as part of an annual review, we are reviewing all of our policies to ensure that race equality underpins everything we do at the Bluecoat.</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 develop a Memorandum of Understanding with our creative community 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.</p> <p>We remain committed to providing opportunities for dedicated 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>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. A major curated exhibition in October 2022 will present the work of selected emerging Black Artists and 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 (see also 2.2).</p> <p>We will continue to monitor the diversity of the artists we work with.</p> <p>We will develop ways to disseminate and make more accessible our diverse arts history over the next two years.</p>

2.2	Create opportunities for new curators/producers/gate keepers	<p>We created a new post (started June 2021) of Project Curator (Cultural Legacies) to interrogate Bluecoat’s history working with diverse artists. Project funded by John Ellerman Foundation.</p> <p>We created a new post (started May 2021) of Project Facilitator (Colonial Legacies) to work with young people at The Greenhouse Project in Toxteth to interrogate Bluecoat’s history and archive and produce a public programme in response. See 3.4 below.</p>	<p>Our Project Curator (Cultural Legacies) is researching and developing an exhibition focused on Bluecoat’s history and bringing this into dialogue with new artists, to be staged Autumn 2022-Spring 2023.</p> <p>Our Project Facilitator has made great progress with the Colonial Legacies project and creating connections within different communities in Liverpool. A public programme including an archival display at Bluecoat will run from March-May 2022.</p> <p>We will ensure we are working with a broad range of voices and perspectives through curators and cultural producers, both with staff and freelance contracts.</p>
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>For Slavery Remembrance Day 2021, we developed a detailed blog about the Bluecoat 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</p>	<p>We aim to raise awareness of different cultural celebrations across the year through our communication channels, as well as contributing to the 2022 Black History Month and Slavery Remembrance Day.</p>

3	Speaking Out		
3.1	Participate in city-wide discussions	<p>Bluecoat’s Director of Cultural Legacies (DCL) is the cultural sector representative on Liverpool’s Race Equality Task Force, commissioned by Liverpool City Council in 2020.</p> <p>Our DCL continues to chair the Liverpool Arts Regeneration Consortium (LARC) Race Equality Action Group which, following a review of its first six months, is now developing a manifesto for LARC and COoL (Creative Organisations of Liverpool).</p>	<p>Our DCL worked with Liverpool’s Race Equality Taskforce, which completed its report into Education in 2021, with further reports into Health & Wellbeing, and Employment & Skills in the pipeline.</p> <p>We will contribute to the race equality manifesto being developed by the LARC Race Equality Action Group by Spring 2022, and implement its recommendations at the Bluecoat.</p>
3.2	Take part in sector-wide discussions	<p>In October 2020, 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. We drafted terms of reference for a new LARC Race Equality Action Group.</p> <p>We have participated in debates around decolonisation, with particular reference to our building’s colonial legacies and the arts centre’s history of working with diverse artists. Contributions made include to Rita Keegan Archive Project (2020) and Association for Art History conference (2021).</p>	<p>We will continue to actively participate in LARC’s race equality work and to chair its Race Equality Action Group’s fortnightly meetings.</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 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 we will need to work with other organisations to realise this.</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</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>any in-kind support we can give to campaigns and organisations.</p> <p>In 2022 we will continue these discussions in order to agree a formal proactive approach to becoming an anti-racist organisation, working towards racial justice.</p>
3.4	Interrogate the colonial history of the Bluecoat building	<p>We developed a Colonial Legacies strand in our <i>Echoes & Origins</i> heritage participation project, funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund over two years, working with young people from The Greenhouse Project, Toxteth and elsewhere, to explore Bluecoat's origins in relation to their own cultural backgrounds. Staff were appointed May 2021 and workshop sessions have started. Through a series of open days in August, more young people were recruited. An Instagram feed has been established to chart the work of the programme and can be found at bluecoat.colonial.legacies.</p> <p>We continued to research the transatlantic slavery links of founder of the former charity school that occupied the Bluecoat building, Bryan Blundell and his family, and other donors. Local Black Lives Matter discussions and supervising a PhD student interrogating this history have helped inform this.</p> <p>We advised Liverpool Blue Coat School in relation to its response to Black Lives Matter petitions to decolonise its history (connections to transatlantic</p>	<p>The Colonial Legacies strand of <i>Echoes & Origins</i> heritage participation project will culminate in a display at Bluecoat and public programme of events in March-May 2022.</p> <p>New research on our building's links to transatlantic slavery and other colonial legacies will be added to the Bluecoat's new website. A blog was published in early 2022 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 who is recipient of a Collaborative Doctoral Award with University of Liverpool and Bluecoat, to be published on the website. The article can be found here https://www.thebluecoat.org.uk/about/news/bryan-blundell-and-the-origins-of-the-blue-coat-school.</p> <p>We will mark Slavery Remembrance Day (23 August) through a detailed blog about the building's heritage and links to the transatlantic slave trade (see 2.3).</p>

		<p>slavery). We provided material and gave a presentation to students there about our work with artists interrogating this history.</p>	<p>We will continue our dialogue with Blue Coat School about our shared history, and work towards collaborative creative projects that interrogate it.</p>
3.5	<p>Diversify and respond to new, representative audiences</p>	<p>We are actively diversifying our audiences for family activities, investing in a summer campaign aimed at city centre families and those in Liverpool 8.</p> <p>We have aimed our family campaign at the Liverpool 8 community, including leaflet door drops and poster campaign in this specific area.</p> <p>We have established a new visitor experience team who 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.</p> <p>We have recruited a Community Engagement Coordinator, who is building networks with community groups and organisations and actively encourages groups to visit Bluecoat. The coordinator has developed communication tools to invite community groups in for tours and for our summer family programme. They are also undertaking research activity to find out more about how Bluecoat can support specific community groups.</p>	<p>We will undertake a series of campaigns to test different strategies for attracting a more diverse audience to Bluecoat.</p> <p>We will commission new photography to reflect our audiences by end March 2022.</p> <p>We will develop a more representative roster of creatives - photographers, filmmakers and graphic designers.</p> <p>Using intelligence from the visitor experience, we will develop a new communication policy for audiences, our creative community and staff.</p>

3.6	Log and respond to feedback and criticism effectively	We have created a feedback log to keep track of all comments coming to us with regard to our race equality activity. We are using feedback to inform how we communicate our work here.	We will continue to monitor and respond to feedback to improve communications with regard to race equality activity.