



SUNDERLAND CULTURE'S ANTI-RACISM PLEDGE

In June 2020, Sunderland Culture joined together with the North East cultural sector to denounce racism <https://www.cultureagainstracism.org/>

We have taken time to reflect on the way the Black Lives Matter movement challenges the work we do and how we do it. Along with ethnically diverse trustees and staff at Sunderland Culture, we have consulted with people with lived experience of racism through a leading minority youth and community organisation, Young Asian Voices, and the University of Sunderland's Staff Black, Asian and Minority Network, comprising ethnically diverse staff and allies, to act as critical friends and advise on our thinking in the development of this pledge, and will continue to work with them to monitor our progress.

We appreciate that our position as a cultural organisation receiving public funding means we have an opportunity and a duty to do more than before and ensure our actions go beyond being not racist, to being actively anti-racist. So, a group of Sunderland Culture staff from all corners of the organisation have pulled together this practical plan of action to change our organisation for the better.

We have already started the work required to be actively anti-racist and our pledge below illustrates our commitment to working harder and being held to account.

OUR MISSION

We stand together in solidarity with individuals and organisations that are anti-racist, and we embed equality and tolerance in our organisation's aims and day-to-day activities.

OUR PLEDGE

- We monitor progress on our anti-racism actions in our Equality and Diversity Group which meets every 2 months and reports progress to the Board twice yearly.
- We will establish a reading group to support staff, Trustees and volunteers to engage in a review of anti-racist writing and provide necessary literature and discussion space.

- We will continue to regularly review our recruitment practices, and in particular, our pilot of blind shortlisting for all candidates applying to us for paid-for and voluntary positions, to ensure that our decision-making is equitable.
- We will carry out staff training every year on Anti-Racism, Equality and Unconscious Bias, and include anti-racism pledge in new staff/trustee inductions, to ensure that our venues and activities are a Safe Space for ethnically diverse visitors, participants, artists and staff, who can be assured that they will be welcomed by Sunderland Culture staff with dignity and respect.
- We actively challenge language, actions and behaviours exhibited in our communities and venues and online that are explicitly and implicitly racist and provide support and seek to remedy where possible.
- We do not work with organisations whose values do not align with ours. We will maintain a Code of Conduct detailing the standards we expect from suppliers, artists and partners.
- We avoid tokenism and encourage inclusivity in the wording and imagery that we use.
- We will continue to consult, to ensure our programme and the way in which we communicate it, is reflective of and relevant to the ethnically diverse communities we serve.
- We actively champion and engage with ethnically diverse creative practitioners, artists and freelancers to amplify the diverse voices of art and culture in our programme.
- Where our collections or content of an exhibition has links to colonialism, inequality or racism, Sunderland Culture will actively engage in this discourse and address this through its interpretation and appropriate inclusion in the learning and engagement programme across our venues and in our community work.

We appreciate we will not always get this right, but we will continue to play active role in learning, development and adaptation.

We are open to constructive criticism and open conversation and dialogue.

We will also continue to develop partnerships to address any issues and concerns.

If you have any questions or comments, or would like to work with us, please contact:

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