



Diversity Statement

Artlift was set up as a project run by a Steering Group of arts and health professionals in 2007 and set up as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation in 2013. Our mission is to use creativity to enable the widest possible diversity of people to find and sustain improved health and wellbeing and to inform best practice in the wider Creative Health sector.

The significance of events in 2020, and campaigns they have inspired, call for us to become more proactive in addressing all kinds of oppression.

We have begun, and will continue to, interrogate and improve our working practices. We will continue to remove barriers to access and promote inclusivity.

This work will be consultative and considered. It must be embedded throughout Artlift, in our processes and programme, for it to be impactful.

Addressing health inequality is central to our work, and to that of our stakeholders including NHS Gloucestershire. We will continue to prioritise new work and/or adapt existing programmes to address bringing down barriers to our services for marginalised communities.

What follows is a set of commitments in response to the Black Lives Matter movement. Here's how we will start:

Fundraise and invest

- We are applying for funds to support a Quality Standards project that includes a commitment to diversity, including appointment of a Black Change Agent.
- We will continue to co-produce with Black Artists, Black-led organisations and participants and fundraise for targeted initiatives and projects.

Consultation and expanding internal awareness

- Artlift ran an online session for all staff led by a Black Diversity consultant to benchmark where we are as an organisation and to explore our response to BLM. This resulted in formation of a (phase 1) working party and devising of a Cultural Diversity Action Plan. We will continue to review and develop our Plan with Minority Ethnic colleagues and, subject to funding, the Change Agent we plan to appoint in 2022.
- We have built a relationship with UMOJA, a cooperative of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic professionals based in Gloucestershire, who aim to work with others to respond positively to BLM. Subject to receipt of funding, UMOJA representatives will mentor our Change Agent.
- We worked with paid consultants from the All Nations Community Centre and Gloucester Hindu Cultural Association to co-produce and co-promote a 2021 Artist recruitment campaign in partnership with Art Shape.
- We are engaging in a Representation Programme (Autumn 2021 – Spring 2022) with peer organisations in other parts of the UK, led by Mabadiliko CIC, through which we'll develop awareness and refine our action plan around cultural diversity.
- We will continue to consult on organisational language and imagery used to ensure we eradicate any barriers to access we may be sub-consciously creating.

Recruitment

- Artlift ran a targeted recruitment campaign in 2021 to, with partner Art Shape, to diversify our Creative Health Practitioner workforce. This has been done alongside Black and Asian-led partner organisations.
- Plans have been formulated with Art Shape to run a Trainee Scheme designed to bring through a next generation of diverse Creative Health practitioners and managerial / administrative staff. Whilst an initial application to support this was declined, we share a commitment to continue to seek funds for this.
- We partnered with Black-led youth CIC Your Next Move in 2020 to support diversification of our workforce and artform offer.
- We are including a positive action statement in all our advertised jobs and opportunities, including our summer 2021 recruitment campaign for Volunteers.
- We have recruited an Asian Board member, who recently co-wrote a paper on Health Inequalities and are issuing a call out for more new Trustees in spring 2022 to diversify our Board.
- We will review our procedures around recruitment to identify and remove barriers that disproportionately affect applicants of colour, and those with other protected characteristics. This process will be informed by the voices of those with protected characteristics.

Programmes

- Artlift launched in 2020 and '21 new courses within its programmes with likely appeal to participants of colour, including a hip hop graffiti and rap course, and a carnival arts course.
- Subject to funding, we plan to undertake an analysis of Minority Ethnic participants over the past 3 years and to identify any useful patterns or learning to inform future planning and removal of potential barriers.
- We are forging partnerships and relationships through which to reach a broader diversity of participants and have opened 2 programmes to self-referral with an aim to bring down barriers.
- Current and future business plans will include an ongoing commitment to targeted projects and initiatives where there's an identified gap in participation.
- We will amplify the voices of minority ethnic artists, volunteers and participants where appropriate and mutually agreed, and support relevant debate, through a range of means including promotional activity and events.

Listen

- We will contribute to, and learn from, emergent thinking across the Creative Health sector, including continuing to work on diversifying the sector with the national Arts & Mental Health micro-network and through our 2021 funder The Baring Foundation.
- We are excited to think more about intersectionality. Artlift has a proud history of working with and for disabled people including those with mental health issues. It is important that we listen and learn more about how the issues affecting these groups interface with issues of race.

This is just the beginning of a commitment to refocus the organisation's efforts towards listening to, supporting and amplifying the creative voices of the most marginalised people in our community.

We will draw on anti-racism resources and reading materials to become better informed about privilege as an organisation at all levels. We will continue to keep a dialogue open.

We promise to hold ourselves accountable and to listen. We are open to discussion and will take action when we make mistakes.

Contact Executive Director Cath Wilkins if you'd like to talk – cath@artlift.org.