



# Our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion

Our charitable mission is to *educate the public in the art of dancing, in all its forms*. To continue to realise this goal, we must acknowledge that the world we live in today is very different from that of our founders in 1904. We are committed to promoting and achieving equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) across all levels of the Society. The recent protests, demonstrations and outpouring of lived experiences from the black community across the world have demonstrated deep seated inequalities, and this has acted as our catalyst for reflection and action.

Our first step has been to spotlight the issues; taking time to reflect and listen and beginning the process of consulting with dancers, teachers, students and staff from under-represented groups, to better understand the barriers to access a dance education. By undertaking a deep and meaningful review across the Society we can establish what practices within the organisation might stifle, or discourage, engagement.

We know that our sector is neither representatively diverse nor inclusive and that in particular, children and young people's access to arts and culture remains unequal. We are committed to changing this by working with our members to provide equity of access and experience to all regardless of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, race, religious background and sexual orientation.

We want to make certain that this commitment is not simply a tick-box exercise; but that we continue to place equity, diversity and inclusion at the forefront of our conversations and decision making. Through this, we will achieve a more representative membership and ensure that learning dance is truly for everyone.

As a first step we have created a steering group, comprising Trustees, Staff and Members, in order to understand a range of perspectives and formulate a plan of action. We are now committed to the following action:

1. Undertaking an internal review: Providing training for our Staff, Examiners and Members; reviewing policies and procedures to identify barriers and embed equity practices throughout the Society; gathering data about who accesses our services and setting targets to improve EDI.
2. Taking active steps to broaden access to the work of the Society by reaching out to under-represented groups. We have made a start by working in partnership with the Royal Opera House on the Chance to Dance programme; by providing training for our members to translate their work for different groups and settings; and by

establishing bursaries for learners on low incomes to access our teaching qualifications. We plan to build on this by targeting children and young people in areas of social and economic deprivation; establishing inclusive assessment processes for disabled young dancers and increasing financial support to overcome barriers to access and progression.

3. Reviewing our syllabus to ensure that requirements for uniform and use of gender terms are fully inclusive; that cultural references are appropriate for 21<sup>st</sup> century and that we champion diversity within the profession.
4. Recognising that role models are an important factor in promoting and inspiring engagement from a more diverse range of dancers and teachers. We are proud to have Patrons that reflect our EDI goals and we are committed to taking further action to build access and progression routes through the Society's workforce and diversity within Council and Grand Council.

The Arts Council Chief Executive, Darren Henley, recently stated 'I have often said that talent is everywhere, but opportunity is not. Although nearly all cultural spaces are formally open to everyone, in practice they may only be accessible to a select group who have the financial, social or cultural capital to feel at home in them. Even leaving aside the economic or social arguments for greater diversity, which are compelling, this situation is unjust.' We fully support this sentiment. We know that learning dance can be a life-enhancing, and life-changing, activity and we are committed to long term action to ensure that all children and young people can access and share the joy of dancing.



**Ginny Brown**  
Chief Executive