

Strategic Equality Action Plan

g39 | warp

2022-23

Since 2020 we've taken a step back to reflect deeply on how g39 can most effectively fulfil our mission to bring art and artists into more people's lives. As a team we took a collective decision to review every aspect of the organisation in terms of equality, diversity and inclusion. This plan is a series of actions and goals that can build on these efforts throughout g39's operation. Our aim in this Plan is to address equalities as a question of power and powerlessness, not difference and sameness.

The Plan was written by g39 staff and reviewed by g39's board of trustees. It is a working document and we welcome comment from our peers, beneficiaries, audiences and people who may feel excluded from working with us or visit g39.

What is this plan for?

The focus of this plan

Black, Asian and Global Ethnic Majority

Socio-economic barriers to working in the arts

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What is this plan for

This plan defines our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and sets targets for how we will implement this in our work. It outlines what g39 will do to be a more equal organisation, and why.

Dismantling systemic inequality requires coherent effort and awareness at every level: the individual, the organisation and the sector.

G39's plan sets out a holistic approach across the organisation for responding to systemic injustices and barriers - those experienced by people who have protected characteristics recognised in the Equalities Act 2010, and those who are affected by wider socio-economic barriers of income, class, education and location.

The many artists, participants and organisations that we've connected with have collectively shown us how we can develop a sustainable and authentic approach to equality, diversity and inclusion. We know from feedback and evidence that we will always have work to do, but we continue to accumulate a

wealth of experience and knowledge to succeed in making all aspects of our operation more accessible for everyone through the targets set out in the plan, making the whole organisation more 'porous'.

We have seen how porous working (programming in dialogue with intended new audiences and beneficiaries) is a good way of attracting new people to g39. But we've also seen that it doesn't always attract our core audience (ie contemporary artists). While this needn't be an issue, we want to explore how porousness can be relatable to existing audiences and new audiences equally.

We have drawn on many sources to inform this Plan, including our own commissioned research (listed in the references) and any consequent outcomes we've observed. The actions of this Plan are based on that learning feedback loop. It also takes into consideration ongoing wellbeing training for g39 staff and resident artists.

Our focus

We want to take an intersectional approach to tackling inequality; however there are certain priorities within this plan. We know it's important not to create a false hierarchy of protected characteristics, but we have identified areas that we want to address in some depth, outlined in the next three sections:

- **Black, Asian and Global Ethnic Majority**
- **Socio-economic barriers to working in the arts**
- **Disability**

We discussed the basis for this plan in 2020 in the context of a pandemic that had highlighted the gross inequalities of our society, the urgency of Black Lives Matter and the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on communities. We address this area in the section **Black, Asian and Global Ethnic Majority**.

During this time the precarious gig economy collapsed, jeopardising artists and art workers who rely on it for their livelihoods. This plan outlines ways g39 is challenging the structures that perpetuate this gig economy, particularly efforts to understand and minimise **socio-economic barriers to working in the arts**.

Evidence suggests that D/deaf and disabled people were among the hardest hit during the pandemic. Much of the disparity is caused by social and economic factors, such as "region, population density, area deprivation, household composition...

and occupation" (ONS). The issue of discrimination is particularly pressing and g39 will continue with current plans and explore greater support, provision and training for d/Deaf artists, neurodiverse artists, artists with disabilities or long-term health difficulties in creating and presenting work and developing audiences, challenging inequality and implementing change.

Each section includes a detailed checklist of actions, and those are summarised in the Action Plan with timescales ranging from immediate, short term and longer-term structural change.

Black, Asian and Global Ethnic Majority

g39 commits to taking a long-term approach to tackling systemic racial injustice. Our guiding principle is that we will ensure artists and practitioners from Black, Asian and Global Ethnic Majority groups do not carry the emotional and physical labour of anti-racist work at this time.

We want to be direct: g39 is an anti-racist organisation. We acknowledge where we have failed to be actively anti-racist in our past work, and we continue to welcome comment on our performance.

We aim to work proactively with other arts organisations, cross-sector groups and partners across Wales, nationally and internationally to recognise and fight inequality in all its forms.

Representation of artists from Black, Asian and Global Ethnic Majority groups in the visual arts in Wales is lower than in the equivalent population demographic. We know that available data in Wales does not currently give a complete picture to understand entry points into the visual arts and career progression for these groups.

Here is a checklist of what we will do:

1. **We will be honest about the history of the place and themes in which we work**, and their links – direct or indirect – to empire, colonial exploitation, partition, slavery and slave ownership. It is important to re-frame Wales' narrative as a site where we were both colonised *and* beneficiaries of colonialism and empire.
2. **We will continue to increase the diversity of our programmed content.** We'll use our networks, partners, curatorial research and independent programme reviewers to inform meaningful inclusion of artists from Black, Asian and Global Ethnic Majority groups and artists with protected characteristics in our exhibitions, screenings, mentoring, workshops, resources and online content.
3. **Our events and residencies will promote inclusivity and wider engagement**, opening up schemes and resources to overlooked groups and encouraging more work produced by those groups.
4. G39 has policy of **Positive Action**, allowing proportionate action to achieve fuller and more effective equality outcomes for people who identify as economically disadvantaged or excluded, or who otherwise face the consequences of past or present discrimination or disadvantage.
This benefits g39's curatorial processes by attracting a broader demographic of artists from which to select and introducing us to artists that may subsequently feed into the curated programme.
5. **We will engage community groups** (particularly in our locality) via targeted activity and resources. Building relationships with these community groups helps us connect with a wider range of beneficiaries who might not otherwise have sought out g39.
6. **We will review our programming choices annually** in relation to this plan's aims. We will invite an artist(s), curator(s) and/or arts

professional(s) to take part in this review to ensure Black, Asian and Global Ethnic Majority groups are appropriately represented in our programme.

See also: Action 20 (Offer bias training)

Socio-economic barriers to working in the arts

Socio-economic inequality in the arts remains a huge but often overlooked issue. Research shows that individuals from higher socio-economic backgrounds are currently overrepresented in most creative occupations (particularly in leadership roles), and that the profession is socio-economically unrepresentative of wider society.

There is strong evidence that those from lower socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to suffer as a result of not having the right networks, the right set of cultural references, and the knowledge of the right way to present themselves to get ahead¹. These challenges can often be more acute in the visual arts due to less defined career routes, often with limited job security.

We want to make some structural changes within g39 to address this:

7. g39 does not wish to contribute to the precarity of cultural workers' wages as part of a gig economy, so we will **review salary scales and payment structure at g39** to achieve more equal value and remuneration to roles throughout the organisation. We are proposing the introduction of **a single rate of pay** that dismantles the hierarchies of value connected with different jobs. This includes freelancers who will be paid an equivalent rate as salaried staff as a minimum.

8. We commit to the **Paying Artists** guidance (g39 is a 'Category A' organisation in the Framework). We ensure commissioned artists manage their fee appropriately to ensure a fair level of pay for themselves.
9. **We will undertake a review of voluntary labour in g39** to ensure our offer of volunteer placements and short term experience are not exploitative, is attractive to a diverse range of people, and is a rewarding experience for them
10. **We will continue to make resources, training and information sharing available at low/ no cost** to artists. We will ensure that the Warp offer of resources and access is available to those artists that need it. In the current financial climate we propose introducing a membership structure that will not put any financial barriers in place. The Warp Library offers resources for artists or for those who have taken alternative education routes. G39 and Warp have an important role as a supportive space offering access and different routes for development.
11. We will ensure that **people are paid promptly** including **freelancers**, contracted professionals, and partners and staff.

See also: Action 21 (Inclusive data collection) and Action 12 (Improve access considerations)

¹ Socio-Economic Diversity and Inclusion in the Arts

Disability

Our relocation in 2011 was driven mainly by the desire to increase our physical access for participants and artists. The current large open-plan venue addresses many of the obstacles that were presented by our previous three-storey building, and we've worked with D/deaf and disabled artists as a way of demonstrating and testing the accessibility of the new venue. In recent years g39 has utilised this improved physical access to nurture good working relationships with the disability arts sector in the UK. In particular we have worked with DASH, DAC and Unlimited on a number of artist commissions and presentations. This has led to an increase of D/deaf and disabled artists independently connecting with g39 to take advantage of our various schemes and resources which, in turn, enables us to develop a more in-depth and nuanced understanding of D/deaf and disabled artists' working practices.

We are now routinely connecting with a range of disabled artists to offer advice and support for pursuing their practice via our schemes. This has prompted us to develop a best practice approach for g39 to using access riders, and to understand how to anticipate likely access costs when budgeting for a project. During this year we plan to hold a workshop for artists focussing on these topics.

With several years' experience of working with D/deaf and disabled artists, we recognise an opportunity to extend this focus to our workforce. Our research has identified the

Disability Confidence accreditation scheme as a useful framework for guiding this focus.

We advocate the Social Model and use it as a guiding principle for our work (as opposed to the Medical Model). Here is a checklist of what we will do:

12. **We will improve access considerations in g39's artist opportunities** (including commissions, bursaries and residencies), in consultation with disabled artists/ people by developing a best practice approach to using access riders, and budgeting appropriately for likely access costs
13. **We will achieve Disability Confidence level 1 accreditation** via our recruitment and making the workplace accessible.
14. **We will nurture existing partnerships and build new connections with individuals who identify as disabled, disability-led / disability-focused organisations and groups**, resulting in increased programme content by disabled artists and/or about access, and attracting more diverse beneficiaries and audiences.

The compound effects of intersectionality

Although we have outlined certain priorities of focus within our strategy, we know it's important not to create a hierarchy of protected characteristics. We intend to take an intersectional, joined-up and holistic approach to tackling inequality, which addresses root causes of inequality rather than attempting to treat the symptoms.

A problem with tackling inequalities one at a time is that it treats them as mutually exclusive and tends to overlook the fact that social groups are not homogeneous. This can lead to the most powerful and privileged members of a group maintaining the strongest voice and influence.

Intersectionality tells us that different elements of identity can intersect and co-exist in a single individual. We recognise that people's identities and social positions are shaped by multiple factors, contributing towards the creation of qualitatively different world experiences and perspectives. All forms of discrimination are interconnected and reinforce one another.

Our aim in this Plan is to address equalities as a question of power and powerlessness, not difference and sameness. With this holistic approach there are commitments that connect throughout this Plan:

15. We want the people involved in g39 - those applying to and securing commissions, opportunities and employment - to reflect the communities we serve. We will do this by **ensuring application methods are accessible** (clear and transparent language, alternative methods, advice sessions, circulating via

broader networks). We are committed to supporting more applications and commissions from people whose background and/or identity is under-represented in the programme, in our resources and our staff and board of g39.

This includes, but is not limited to, artists from Black, central, West, South & East Asian and ethnically diverse backgrounds, artists from lower socio-economic backgrounds, d/Deaf artists, neurodiverse artists, artists who identify as disabled or with long-term health difficulties and artists with LGBTQIA+ identities. With their consent we will work to make these lived experiences seen and heard through our artistic programme (See also Actions 2, 3, 4)

16. **We will review g39's approach to marketing** to identify ways we can make g39 more accessible and inclusive
17. For transparency we will develop a **code of conduct** for collaborators, staff, artists and board of trustees that reflects these commitments. It will be an element in any agreements that we enter into, with partners, artists, staff and trustees.
18. **We will consult creatively with participants, audiences and communities** to responsively develop the ways we serve them and gain a better understanding of the fullest range of artists' working practices, including barriers.
19. **We will increase the ways that people can comment on our work**, welcoming both critical and positive feedback. We need

to know when we have got things right as well as when we need to do things differently.

20. **We will continue to offer bias training for staff, board and artists.** We are committed to raising our self-awareness of our biases as individuals and as an organisation, and taking steps to help us overcome their more negative influence across our work. We will fundraise to support this as a workshop(s) opened up to all artists, committing to an active process of anti-racist learning.

See also: Action 4 (Positive Action) and Action 19 (Comment)

Measuring and monitoring

Biases that perpetuate inequality are often unconscious and automatic. So real change takes more than well-intentioned policies and activity – it requires an objective picture of what is happening, followed by reflection and review.

We've gone to great lengths to accurately record and measure the diversity of people who interact with g39, and to be transparent about why we're asking people for their information. We've developed a consistent approach throughout the organisation and across all schemes, but often this still leaves us with an incomplete picture. For example, we often measure open opportunities either by the applicants or the selected participants, but not both. By looking at both groups we will be able to understand how well our selection and curation processes are helping us to achieve the ambitions in this plan.

We are committed to raising our self-awareness as individuals and as an organisation of our biases, and taking steps to help us see their influence across our work through training.

In decision making, we have found it helpful to bear in mind the types of conscious and unconscious biases that we might hold, and that exist historically and currently in the arts world, and try to be more aware of how these affect our judgements. We are grateful for conversations with Jerwood Arts in shaping this work.

We need to undertake further work to understand why some people, artists and audiences may not wish to work with us or visit. The systems we have in place at the moment only give us

the picture offered by those participants that we can speak to. There will be artists or audiences who may not volunteer for focus groups. Concerns of confidentiality and low psychological safety may also limit attendance. Addressing this needs to be a priority in any research carried out as part of this plan.

We want to monitor representation in detail across the organisation, looking in turn at each area to ensure that the picture is not distorted. We don't want to manipulate data to conceal inequality by using, for example, a high proportion of minoritised groups in one activity or role to boost the overall presence across the organisation.

We also need to look at representation within g39's offer of resources, e.g. the library and commissioned critical texts.

We will continually review access support in dialogue with those who need it, approaching this provision with flexibility.

In the longer term we also want to work with colleagues in the sector to develop benchmarking to measure ourselves, particularly against other organisations and also in reference to national statistics and demographics for Wales.

21. **We will make our collection of accurate data and qualitative evidence as inclusive and positive as possible.** This Plan is about people, and gathering data is only useful if it helps us understand and respond to the needs of those people.

Summary of actions

Area	Where are we currently?	What do we want to achieve?	What are we going to do? Who is doing it? (<i>all Staff / Management / Board</i>) By when?
Programme	<p>Diversity of programme</p> <p>We set targets for diverse representation in our programmes</p> <p>We do not use CVs (ie formal education) when making curatorial decisions</p>	<p>We want to programme responsively according to the needs and priorities of a diverse creative sector.</p>	<p>We will:</p> <p>2) and 6) Continue to increase the diversity of our programmed content, and review this annually (S, 2022).</p> <p>5) Ensure Warp library resource engages as broad a range of people as possible via ongoing review of existing content and introducing new titles (S, 2023)</p> <p>12) Improve access considerations in g39's commissioning process (M, 2022).</p> <p>18) Consult creatively with participants, audiences and communities to responsively develop the ways we serve them (S, 2022).</p>
	<p>Diversity of applicants</p> <p>We have trialled Positive Action within open calls and observed increases in diversity among applicants.</p> <p>We ensure application methods are accessible (clear and transparent language, alternative methods,</p>	<p>The people involved in g39 (those applying to and securing commissions, opportunities and employment) reflect the communities we serve</p>	<p>We will:</p> <p>15) Ensure application methods are accessible (S, 2022)</p> <p>4) Include Positive Action methods within g39's Artistic Policy (M, B, 2022).</p>

	<p>advice sessions, circulating via broader networks)</p> <p>We use independent selectors when assessing applications; they are granted casting votes to ensure impartiality.</p>	<p>We want to blur the boundary between professional and non-professional in art practice</p>	
<p>People: Beneficiaries and audiences</p>	<p>Building trust and effective partnerships</p> <p>We need to build trust with people from overlooked groups who wish to engage with g39 / the visual arts – whether as artists, employees, volunteers etc.</p> <hr/> <p>We have a good track record of partnership working that attracts more diverse beneficiaries and audiences via engaging programme content and services.</p>	<p>People from overlooked or hardly reached groups trust g39 as a place that understands their working practices and priorities. Our schemes, opportunities and structures are suited to their needs</p> <hr/> <p>The people we work with reflect the diversity of the communities we serve.</p>	<p>We will:</p> <p>3) Promote inclusivity and wider engagement in our events and residencies (S, 2022)</p> <p>18) Consult creatively with participants, audiences and communities to responsively develop the ways we serve them (S, 2022).</p> <p>1) Be open about the history of the places and themes in which we work (S, 2022)</p> <p>5) Engage community groups via targeted activity and resources (S, 2022-23)</p> <p>14) Nurture existing partnerships and build new connections with individuals who identify as disabled, disability-led / disability-focused organisations and groups (M, B 2022-23).</p>
	<p>Accountability</p> <p>Our porous approach is effective for hearing from people and groups who already trust and respect g39, but independent consultation</p>	<p>G39 is fully accountable and welcomes comment on its plans and activities</p>	<p>We will:</p> <p>19) Increase the ways that people can comment on our work, including a clear process for complaints and concerns to be raised anonymously (M, 2022-23)</p>

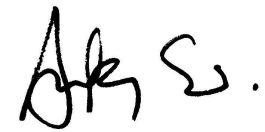
	indicates that some groups feel unable or reluctant to criticise our activities.		
People: Artists	<p>360° monitoring</p> <p>We have a consistent and transparent approach throughout the organisation and across all schemes, but sometimes this gives us an incomplete picture</p>	<p>We want a complete picture of the people who connect with g39, and to understand why some people may not wish to work with us or visit</p> <p>We want to use qualitative as well as quantitative data to achieve this.</p>	<p>We will:</p> <p>21) Make our collection of accurate data and qualitative evidence as inclusive and positive as possible (M, 2022).</p>
People: staff, board and volunteers	<p>Team training</p> <p>The following team training has been delivered during 2020-21: Mental Health Awareness (staff); Beyond Bias (staff, board and artists); Wellbeing sessions (staff and artists).</p> <p>Our 2020 target to develop a Code of Conduct has not yet been met, but is in discussion</p> <hr/> <p>Board diversity</p>	<p>All people who work at g39 understand and adopt the priorities in this plan and endorse / invest in it</p> <p>g39's visitors and beneficiaries are clear about our Equalities policies and practices</p> <hr/> <p>The diversity of 39's board of trustees continues to represent the communities we serve</p>	<p>We will:</p> <p>17) Develop a Code of Conduct for collaborators, staff, artists and board of trustees (S, 2023)</p> <p>20) Fundraise to offer bias training for staff, board and artists (M, 2022-23)</p>

	Following a recruitment drive 39's board diversity has increased		
	<p>Volunteers</p> <p>We no longer rely on voluntary labour to carry out basic functions of the organisation (eg Front of House).</p>	<p>Removing inequalities to accessing opportunities to gain work experience.</p> <p>Removing socio-economic barriers for people we employ.</p>	<p>We will:</p> <p>9) Undertake a review of voluntary labour in g39 (M, 2022-23)</p>
Financial	<p>Improving pay, reducing socio-economic barriers</p> <p>Current paycales and payment structures establish hierarchies of value connected with different jobs.</p> <p>We follow guidance in the Paying Artists campaign when setting artist fees</p> <p>We provide free access to resources for artists through the Warp programme.</p>	<p>We want to reduce socio-economic barriers that limit the extent artists and people are able to work with us and benefit from our services</p>	<p>We will:</p> <p>8) Ensure adequate budget allocation to honour fees according to the Paying Artists campaign (M, 2022)</p> <p>7) Review salary scales and payment structures at g39 to achieve more equal value and remuneration to roles (including freelancer roles) (B, 2022-23)</p> <p>10) Continue to make resources, training and information sharing available at low/ no cost to artists. (M, 2022)</p> <p>12) Improve access considerations in g39's artist opportunities (M, 2022).</p>

Signed: Chris Mooney-Brown, Company Director



Anthony Shapland, Creative Director



REFERENCES

Previous g39 research

- DASH *Tu Fewn* evaluation report (2016)
- *Sticky Little Touchstones Called Plans* g39 audience development research project (2016-17)
- Diversity Arts Wales research (from Butetown History & Arts)
- Independent review of g39's reports and policies (2019)
- G39 audience consultation (Sarah Boiling, 2018)

Equality and Human Rights Commission

Services, public functions and associations Statutory Code of Practice

Long but really useful, in particular Chapter 10 (p113) which details Positive Action

Understanding PSED: resources for the third sector in Wales

And resources for the third sector

Disability Confident

This government scheme helps employers attract, recruit and retain D/deaf and disabled people

List of relevant legislation and guidance that we should be observing in our work:

- [Equality Act \(2010\)](#)
- [Wellbeing of Future Generations \(Wales\) 2015](#)
- [APW portfolio handbook](#)
- [ACW Corporate Plan: For the benefit of all](#)

Weston Jerwood: Socio-economic diversity and inclusion in the arts

A toolkit for employers

Institute of International Visual Arts

CVAN Black Lives Matter discussion

with Site Gallery and Wysing (password: BlackLivesMatter) and the [accompanying Q&A page](#)

Wysing's Code of Conduct

Wysing display their CoC in public areas of their building and provide a copy to everyone they work with, all participants and every visitor.

Site Gallery BLM Statement & Resources

[How the art world can step up for Black Lives Matter](#)

This article from the Independent might help support some of our reflections and thinking.

Training

- Unconscious bias:
<https://racereflections.co.uk/events/beyond-bias-training-for-organisations>
- <https://www.brap.org.uk>