

**NEWS RELEASE**

**End unpaid and unadvertised work opportunities to beat arts sector ‘class crisis’, landmark Toolkit urges employers.**

New guide by Jerwood Arts and the Bridge Group urges employers to advertise posts in community centres and ditch arts jargon.

A landmark blueprint for tackling the arts sector’s ‘class crisis’ is launched today to show employers how they can take practical steps to change their organisational cultures to attract and retain a more socio-economically diverse workforce.

[*Socio-economic Diversity and Inclusion in the Arts: A Toolkit for Employers*](https://jerwoodarts.org/projects/weston-jerwood-creative-bursaries-2017-19/toolkit/) is published by Jerwood Arts and the Bridge Group. It draws on the Weston Jerwood Creative Bursaries programme’s decade of working with employers and influential research by the Bridge Group on increasing socio-economic diversity in the workplace and fostering inclusive and enabling organisational cultures.

The guide, which features case studies from arts employers, argues that socio-economic background should be given the same consideration as ethnicity, disability, gender and other ‘protected characteristics’ which are legally protected from discrimination.

Its five key recommendations call on employers to:

* Measure and publish information on socio-economic diversity, with occupation of parents when the applicant was 14 years old recommended as the key indicator and full guidance on how to collect and analyse the relevant data.
* Reflect on use of key terms like ‘talent’ and ‘merit’ – and avoid reference to potentially alienating words such as ‘disadvantage’ and ‘privilege’.
* Create more inclusive work cultures, for example by ending ‘informal sponsorship’ and considering specific support needs that those from lower socio-economic backgrounds might have.
* End unpaid and unadvertised work opportunities, with payment recommended for any work period over four weeks.
* Reform recruitment processes, for example by inviting candidates to reflect on their professional and personal journeys and any obstacles or barriers they have experienced.

The guide focuses specifically on socio-economic background but also explores the ways in which socio-economic background can intersect with protected characteristics including gender, ethnicity and disability.

The Toolkit urges employers to take a strategic rather than piecemeal approach to levelling the playing field for people from low income backgrounds and aims to go beyond merely promoting the social mobility of individuals to putting the onus on employers to create sustainable institutional change within their organisations.

Jerwood Arts Director Lilli Geissendorfer said:

“Evaluation of our work has given us a unique view on what does and doesn’t work in recruiting those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, and the Toolkit shares what we now know. We hope it will help anyone with the power to appoint and promote to make strategic changes to embed inclusive practices, and make the arts more excellent for all.”

Darren Henley, Chief Executive of Arts Council England, one of the main funders of the Weston Jerwood Creative Bursaries programme 2017-19, said: “We want to make sure that the people who create artistic work and run cultural organisations are representative of the way that England looks and feels today – and the same is true for audiences too.  Our investment in this new toolkit is a step in helping this to happen – but there is still much to do.”

Nik Miller, Chief Executive of the Bridge Group, added: “Of all sectors, the arts must be where diversity and inclusion should be taken most seriously. Works that explore, challenge and reflect contemporary society are naturally richer if they are informed by a wider range of social perspectives and experiences. We hope this guide supports organisations and individuals to make another important step in this direction.”

Launch of the Toolkit at Manchester International Festival coincides with publication of the evaluation of the third edition of the Weston Jerwood Bursaries Creative Bursaries (see Notes to Editors) and will be followed in the autumn by a series of workshops exploring the Toolkit recommendations in detail. **The first event will take place at Dance4 in Nottingham on Tuesday 15th October from 12-4pm. Please follow this link to book a free place:** [www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/socio-economic-diversity-and-inclusion-in-the-arts-workshop-tickets-64228321639](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/socio-economic-diversity-and-inclusion-in-the-arts-workshop-tickets-64228321639)**. Further dates and venues will be announced shortly.**

**You can download the Toolkit here:**

<https://jerwoodarts.org/projects/weston-jerwood-creative-bursaries-2017-19/toolkit/>

**Note to editors**

1. The Labour Force Survey data published in the *Panic! Report 2018* shows extensive evidence that those from lower socio-economic backgrounds suffer for not having the right networks, the right set of cultural references, and the knowledge of the right way to present themselves to get ahead. Although the ‘working class’ are 35% of the working population, they make up only 13% of publishing, 18% of music, performing and visual arts, 12% of film, TV, video, radio and photography, and 21% of museums, galleries and libraries. See Orian Brook, David O’Brien, and Mark Taylor. (2018) [*Panic!* Social Class, Taste and Inequalities in the Creative Industries](https://createlondon.org/event/panic2018/).
2. Significant momentum has been building in recent years around the need for socio-economic background to be recognised as a ‘protected characteristic’ alongside other identity markers such as gender, sexuality, disability, ethnicity under the Equality Act 2010. Without this protected status, social-economic background will remain an under-researched, under-funded, ‘hidden barrier’ in the arts. This Tool Kit builds on existing guidance for organisations to recruit a more diverse workforce, most notably Arts Council England’s [Culture Change Toolkit](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/culture-change-toolkit) (2017). We focus specifically on socio-economic background to address a current gap in research and practice; and we also make significant reference to the important ways in which socio-economic background can intersect with protected characteristics including gender, ethnicity and disability.
3. Research from the Bridge Group and the Cabinet Office indicates that if one question is asked to measure socio-economic background, occupation of parents when the applicant was 14 years old is the key indicator. The main reasons for this are because it is a strong predictor of adult outcomes, it is internationally applicable, and response rates at employers across sectors have been relatively positive. It is also the indicator used in many national surveys, including the Labour Force Survey.
4. When those from lower socio-economic backgrounds opt out of particular careers or professional and artistic routes, it is rarely about lack of ambition or awareness and more to do with battling feelings of not belonging – negotiating low-level but constant micro-aggressions in the workplace – and access to opportunities. Most practical initiatives focus on helping under-represented groups assimilate into majority group cultures, rather than tackling the cultures themselves. The latest research strongly suggests the sector needs to switch its priorities to changing organisational culture to affect real, long lasting change.
5. Jerwood Arts is the leading independent funder dedicated to supporting UK artists, curators and producers to develop and thrive. The Weston Jerwood Creative Bursaries is a national programme supporting arts organisations to expand their approach to diverse recruitment and talent development, and build their capacity for outstanding artistic production. The programme addresses the socio-economic barriers that outstanding graduates face and was open to those who were in receipt of a full maintenance grant throughout university within two years of graduating.   
     
   <https://jerwoodarts.org/projects/weston-jerwood-creative-bursaries-2017-19/>
6. The Bridge Group is a non-profit consultancy that uses research to promote social equality. We do this by supporting organisations of all kinds with independent expertise, research and practical know-how to enable them to make real and lasting impact on socio-economic diversity and equality. Our objective is to make real and meaningful change, now. Our vision is a higher education system and labour market where outcomes are determined by competence and hard work, and not by socio-economic background. The Bridge Group is a charity. We are non-partisan and are not associated with any political party.

<https://www.thebridgegroup.org.uk/>

1. Evaluation from the Weston Jerwood Creative Bursaries 2017-19 edition shows how the [programme](https://jerwoodarts.org/projects/weston-jerwood-creative-bursaries-2017-19/) had an impact on three fronts by: supporting change at organisational level; having significant impact on the employment prospects of the latest Fellows; and transforming the employment potential of alumni.

**Supporting organisational change**

* 71% of hosts said the programme made them think differently about recruitment and interview processes (with host organisations widening publicity of work opportunities, simplifying application processes and making interviews more informal). One host reported: “*The [programme’s recommended] recruitment process has made a real impact on our recruitment process and these insights will be of real benefit to the industry.”*
* 87% of hosts said the fellow contributed new ideas/perspectives to the organisation.

**Improving employment prospects for the new cohort of Fellows**

* 90% said the programme had raised their aspirations & had increased their confidence
* 58% had never had a paid job in the arts before and 73% had never had an internship in the arts
* 88% said it had helped equip them to find a job
* 90% are currently either in a job or have set up a freelance practice
* Over half are staying on with their hosts either on a short-term or permanent contract.
* *“The WJCB was an added bonus for me, it propelled me at a rate I couldn't have done on my own - I was aware of what I wanted to do and this has affirmed that passion and well equipped me.”*

**Transforming employment potential for the future**

* 95% of alumni responding to the survey said the programme had helped progress their careers (many stating this strongly)
* 74% said it had had an important influence on them
* Alumni are moving into leadership positions, such as Director of Chisenhale Dance Space in Tower Hamlets; Artistic Director of Birmingham’s Fierce Festival; Curator at the Whitworth Gallery in Manchester; Producer with English Touring Theatre; Classical Music Programme Manager for the British Council; Arts Development Officer, Orkney Islands Council; and Creative Producer, National Science and Media Museum in Bradford. Others are developing successful freelance careers as artists, photographers, performers, musicians and producers.

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