



# Diversity & Inclusion Toolkit

SW London Music Services



When we're not able to see ourselves in leadership roles, or in certain industries, we believe it's not a path we can take.

# Contents

## 1. Introduction

## 2. The Current Music Landscape

## 3. Diversity at SW London Music Services

### 3.1 Diversifying Recruitment

### 3.2 Unconscious Bias

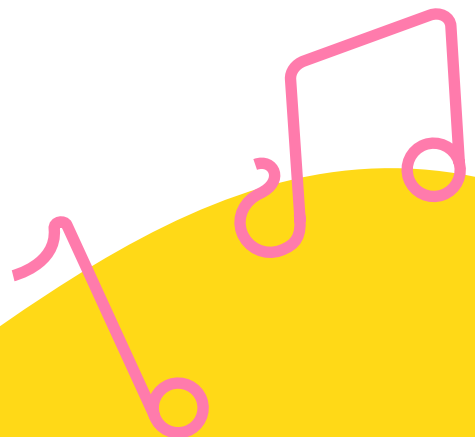
### 3.3 Improving Inclusion at Each Music Service

## 4. Creating a Sense of Belonging

- o Checklist

### 4.1 Inclusivity Development Plan

## 6. Closing Statement





# 1. Introduction to the Toolkit

SWLMEP is a partnership of seven music services which serve over 500 schools across South West London. The seven boroughs (Croydon, Hounslow, Kingston, Merton, Richmond, Sutton, Wandsworth) cover an area of significant diversity in terms of ethnicity, demographic profile, education attainment and socio-economic backgrounds. SWLMEP applied for funding from Sound Connections to help with its mission to diversify the service offering to be truly inclusive of each local community.

This toolkit will be a guide on how to create a more inclusive practice which enables every child to unlock their musical potential.





Image sourced from SW London Music Services

## 2. The Current Music Landscape

Lack of representation and inequality is a challenge for the music industry as a whole. In 2018, research from [Quartz](#) found that only 76 classical concerts among 1,445 performed worldwide included at least one piece composed by a woman. Amy Phelps, a cello instructor who wrote her PhD dissertation about gender discrimination in orchestras, said that women were discouraged from playing instruments that might distort their facial features.

Research by [Christina Scharff at King's College London](#) showed that of 629 orchestral players, "only 11 (1.7%) could be identified to be from a Black and Minority Ethnic background." These statistics show us that children and young people in the industry have a lack of role models which can often contribute to a feeling that they do not belong.

Knowing the results of this kind of research gives us a better understanding of what the current challenges are so we can make the necessary changes to improve representation. SWLMEP has a unique opportunity to reflect and adopt the changes in this toolkit to ensure each and every single child is given an equal and accessible opportunity to play and enjoy music.

### 3. Diversity at SW London Music Services

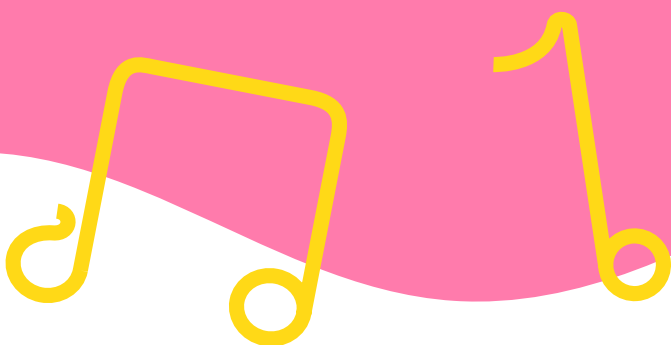


SWLMEP provides a service for children and young people to unlock their musical potential. Each music service recognises that it must provide equal access and opportunity to ensure that each young person can succeed during their time with the service.

As a result, the Head of Service of each borough discussed the mission and values of their organisation and the particular set of challenges in meeting those goals.

These were the following:

- **Increasing the diversity of candidates in the recruitment process**
- **Raise awareness of Unconscious Bias and how it influences interactions with staff and students**
- **Improving the service offering to be as inclusive and diverse as possible by reflecting and celebrating the music of the community**
  - Amplifying diverse voices in the service and supporting all children equally
- **Fostering a sense of belonging for staff and children at each service**



## 3.1 Diversifying Recruitment

As Chi-chi Nwanoku, founder of Europe's first professional orchestra of black and minority ethnic musicians, puts it "BME music students see so few professional musicians who look like them, that often they immediately assume this is not a career for people like them." It becomes a self-perpetuating dilemma: "the fewer role models young BME musicians have, the fewer who choose to become professional musicians."

**Here are some tips and guides on how to diversify the workforce.**

Job Description Checklist
<p><b>Gender-Neutral Language</b></p> <p><i>TIP: Use a platform like Text.io which removes any mentions of he/she, and <a href="#">this app</a> will identify if you're using sexist language in the job description</i></p>
<p>Avoid long bullet point lists - break it down into 'Must-Haves' and 'Nice-to-Have'</p>
<p>Include a note at the end of job adverts about your commitment to diversity, inclusion and equality. Eg. "Our Music Service is proud to be committed to hiring a diverse workforce"</p>
<p>Post adverts outside of your network, as our own ones tend to be homogenous. Reach out to different networks, and groups that are dedicated to finding diverse candidates for roles.</p>
<p>Could this opportunity be open to six-form/college students? Providing young people with work experience can encourage them to take up a career in music and become a role model for younger children.</p>

### The Interview Process

One in seven people are neurodivergent in the UK. To ensure the interview process is inclusive for all applicants, it is recommended that you don't ask multiple questions at the same time. In fact, if you are able to provide interview questions ahead of time and allow applicants to bring notes and mind maps in the interview process it is highly encouraged. To find out more about neurodiversity, there are a number of sources available online such as the Universal Music Creative Differences report which you can find [here](#).

## 3.2 Unconscious Bias

A stereotype is an oversimplified idea or belief about a person, group or thing. Over time, our stereotypes can form into unconscious bias. It is natural, but left unchecked it influences our decision-making and how we behave towards certain groups, both negatively and positively.

Our actions, as a result of unconscious bias, can mean certain groups of people are overlooked for job roles, promotions and recognition. It can also impact the way we engage and behave around people, including children from different backgrounds. While it's not intentional, our subconscious can kick in and play up to stereotypes and underlying beliefs in our minds.

### Here are some steps to help you work against your unconscious bias:

#### 1. Take the [Harvard Implicit Bias Test](#)

By being aware of what your biases are, you can then understand what you need to change.

The test surfaces the groups you may have preferences for which helps you to understand where you may have existing biases.

#### 2. Diversify your network

Do people look like you or come from a similar background? This means we're only exposed to stories and experiences that echo our own.

Expanding our network means hearing stories from people who have lived a different life. This improves our ability to empathise and shows us how the World treats us differently. This helps challenge our preconceived ideas of certain groups of people.

#### 3. Find your Triggers and Slow it Down

Think about where your bias may be strongest. Is it during high-stress situations? Or around particular groups?

When making decisions give yourself time to analyse all the available information. Try not to make your decision under time pressure.

Take a moment and do some deep breaths. This will switch off your 'flight or fight' mode and allow you to make more rational decisions that are not influenced by unconscious biases.

Our brain takes in 11 million pieces of information every single second. We then capture 50 pieces and process only 8 pieces of information. Our brain is making shortcuts. These shortcuts can mean we miss out vital information and rely on misconception and internalised stereotypes to make decisions, and behave around certain groups.

#### TIP

Spend the next 15 minutes on social media looking for people to follow that are dedicated to diversifying the music industry, or play music that isn't traditionally Western. Here are some pages to get you started:

[Chineke Foundation](#)

[Gal-Dem Magazine](#)

#### REMEMBER

Don't look to minority groups to tell you why something is racist, offensive or inappropriate. That's emotional labour. It's not the responsibility of minorities to explain everything or give you their viewpoint. Research for yourself.

## 3.3 Improving Inclusion at Each Music Service

### Improving your Awareness

Recommended approach	What are some ways I can achieve this?
Have you done an audit of your organisation? Do you know who's engaging with the service and how this reflects the demographic makeup of your borough?	<i>Are you doing enough? What can you change to make children feel welcome?</i>
Are you up-to-date on the latest news and research about the music industry?	<i>Research the latest papers. For example: <a href="https://annenberg.usc.edu/research/aii">https://annenberg.usc.edu/research/aii</a></i>

### Creating a Space for Sharing

Recommended approach	What are some ways I can achieve this?
Involve the children from the very beginning. Invite them to bring music from their own background and culture to share with the group.	<i>Start with sharing your own culture and background, how you got involved with music, to encourage others to share theirs too.</i>
Is every child able, and comfortable to share their own ideas and skills? If not, connect with them and their friendship group to get them excited about a project that's important to them.	<i>Can you think of a way to create a more welcoming space for sharing? Could you dedicate a specific day for 'show&amp;tell', or introduce a suggestion box? What about a collaborative Spotify playlist that everyone can add a song to?</i>

### Getting Involved with Events

Recommended approach	What are some ways I can achieve this?
Are you attending industry events? Going to events about music, business and other industries help you meet others from different backgrounds and keeps your ideas and approaches fresh.	<i>Have a scan on Eventbrite, or other sites, for some upcoming events you could attend and list them below. What do you hope to learn?</i>



## Diversifying your Consumption

Recommended approach	What are some ways I can achieve this?
<p>Watch news channels not based in the UK. Listen to radio stations in a different language. Watch a speech made by someone in a different country. Click on a YouTube video for a dance group based outside in another country.</p>	<p><i>What things have you noticed and learned by taking yourself out of the Western lens?</i></p>

## Empowerment

Recommended approach	What are some ways I can achieve this?
<p>Don't rely on the most confident children to be at the forefront of performances and events. Encourage quiet children who may not see their own potential yet. Show them their value and the possibilities ahead of them.</p>	<p><i>Are you putting the more quiet and shy children forward for opportunities? If not, how could you change that? Be mindful that some children may suffer from social anxiety so speak to them before putting them in a potentially triggering situation.</i></p>
<p>Encouraging children to apply for external programmes and initiatives in and around London.</p>	<p><i>Are you aware of initiatives that are available to the children? Can you help them through the process and keep them engaged?</i></p>

## Seeking out Partnerships

Recommended approach	What are some ways I can achieve this?
<p>Look into partnerships with relevant organisations that are also working on tackling inequality in the creative industry.</p> <p>Some examples of organisations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">She Is The Music</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Modulate</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Pride in Music</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">She Said So</a></li> </ul>	<p><i>Who have you reached out to? What have you learned and what're the next steps?</i></p>
<p>Connect with local cultural, religious dance groups. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Upahaar School of Dance</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Orleta - Polish Folk Song and Dance Group</a></li> </ul>	<p><i>Who have you reached out to? What have you learned and what're the next steps?</i></p>

<p>Invite influential speakers to do workshops, talks and mentoring particular those that identify with marginalised identities.</p>	<p><i>Who have you seen that you would like to invite for the children to speak to and see perform?</i></p>
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## External Marketing

Recommended approach	What are some ways I can achieve this?
<p>Regularly update the website so pictures and content are no more than a year old.</p> <p><i>This will help children, young people and parents feel like they know the service before they've joined. Children also love seeing themselves on the website and will feel included in the service.</i></p>	<p><i>Note down here when you are due for the next website refresh.</i></p>

## Open Feedback

Recommended approach	What are some ways I can achieve this?
<p>Think about adopting reverse mentoring. Invite one of the young musicians to mentor you to give you a fresh perspective.</p> <p><i>Some tips:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pair mentors with a mentee they are not usually taught by.</li> <li>• Try &amp; hold sessions that are in a 'neutral-zone' - i.e. outside of teaching areas.</li> <li>• Both the mentee &amp; mentor must be fully committed to make this a success.</li> <li>• Create a clear structure for the mentoring programme.</li> <li>• Ensure that you:                             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Set achievable bite-size actions &amp; targets.</li> <li>2. Actions are fulfilled and not pushed back unless completely necessary.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	<p><i>Write down your learnings here and what you plan to implement.</i></p>
<p>Clear and honest 360 feedback with the willingness to listen and change behaviours. We're not always aware of how our actions impact others so it's important to put aside our defensiveness and listen to feedback.</p>	<p><i>What was difficult to hear and what have you learned from the feedback of your peers?</i></p>

## 4. Creating a Sense of Belonging

Here is a useful checklist for your team to use in your music service. This will help create a more inclusive environment and foster a sense of belonging amongst staff and children.

Adopted gender-inclusive forms and applications. E.g.

NAME:

THE NAME YOU WANT ME TO CALL YOU IN CLASS:

PRONOUNS: They/Them/Theirs, She/Her/Hers, He/Him/His

MAY I USE THESE PRONOUNS IN FRONT OF THE CLASS? Yes/No

WHEN I CONTACT HOME? Yes/No

Adopted inclusive bathroom signs (and place sanitary products in all bathrooms).

Create a handbook which introduces new children to the service, detailing all the processes and expectations. This should include a tour of the building, with explanations of each room's purpose and when they can be used.

Are you empowering everyone to contribute something of their own heritage? Or are you allowing people from more dominant groups to contribute?

Does everyone have a buddy that helps them through their time at the service?

Who is the point of contact in your Music Service on all things diversity and inclusion?

Are the images on your website up-to-date and less than a year old?

Do you remember children's names equally? Have you done your best to memorise the pronunciation of names you're unfamiliar with?

Are all the composers and materials you teach from based all over the World, or only in Europe? Do you need to diversify the curriculum?

## 4.1 Inclusivity Development Plan

*What is your personal commitment to encouraging diversity and inclusion in the music service?*

*What have you learned from a recent diversity and inclusion workshop that you wish to implement in your service?*

*What is your biggest concern with diversity and inclusion in your service? How do you plan to overcome this?*

*What unconscious biases have you noticed in yourself? What will you do to increase your self-awareness and ensure your unconscious bias doesn't influence your decision-making or how you treat those in your music service?*

*Were there any areas of this topic you would like to explore further? Write down below how you will research it.*

*Which initiatives will you prioritise over the next 3 months?*

*What do you picture your service looking like in a year's time? How does this compare to today? What steps will help you reach your ambitions?*

# Thank you

This toolkit is a guide for you and your team to create a more inclusive workplace, and diverse offering for children in your borough. The content reflects the discussions and workshops that were led by Fresh and Fearless. It includes relevant advice, insight and actions which were identified by Fresh and Fearless as being the most helpful.

If you have any further questions, or would like a follow-up consultation, please get in touch with the team at [info@freshandfearless.uk](mailto:info@freshandfearless.uk).



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## About Fresh and Fearless

Fresh and Fearless was founded by Sara Chandran in January 2020 with the mission to help organisations build brave initiatives that welcome, and appreciate difference. Having worked in PR and Communications, and Inclusive Marketing, Sara decided that overcoming inequality in the workplace needed a combined approach of knowledge and insights, with powerful and effective communication.



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