**COMMONWORD EQUALITY ACTION PLAN 2018 - 2022**

This document represents Commonword’s Equality Action Plan and sets out our duties under existing legislation, The Equality Act 2010, as well as representing Commonword’s own determination to work in the most positive and responsible manner across all equality matters.

Promoting equality and diversity is at the heart of Commonword’s values. We plan to work beyond compliance in order to continue to advance our reputation as a leader in inclusive practice within literature and spoken word, and promote best practice for our staff, partners and service users.

The aim of the Equality Act is to ‘harmonise discrimination law and to strengthen the law to support progress on equality. It replaces and extends the existing equality legislation on race, disability and gender, covering a total of 9 ‘protected characteristics’.

The Actions in this plan were developed in a number of ways, for example through points and concerns identified by:

* staff and volunteers;
* the Management Committee;
* data collection;
* an awareness and understanding of current equality issues in literature, the arts generally and in professional practice.

Commonword is a writing development agency with a governance and organisational structure that is flexible and responsive to the concerns raised by staff and service users, to new developments in legislation, and to research and best practice in the sector. Although our equality action plan for 2018 - 22 is thorough, we anticipate that additional achievable and interesting actions will be added to this Plan over the next four years.

This plan is organised into the following sections:

1. Strategic and organisational objectives
2. Specific objectives: Programme Delivery

The action points under ‘Race’ include all of the protected characteristics. In working specifically with BAME/PoC writers we are including gender, disability and sexual orientation as a normal part of our work. Where we are working specifically with other protected characteristics this is included in its own section.

1. **STRATEGIC & ORGANISATIONAL OBJECTIVES**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Action** | **Staff** | **Timing/****completion** |
| 1. **Diversity and decision making**
 |
| 1.1 Establish relevant equality objectives for Management Committee, e.g. with reference to their composition, roles and decision-making | MC, PK, MDM | 2019 |
| 1.2 Establish new partnerships and ways of working in order to widen the diversity and inclusion of service users  | MDM  | 2019 |
| 1.3 Continue to improve statistical collection, monitoring and reporting in relation to equality and diversity | MDM  | Ongoing |
| 1.4 Provide publicly available information regarding diversity within the organisation and service users on an annual basis as part of our annual report | MDM, PK | Ongoing |
| 1. **Data capture and use**
 |
| 2.1 Set targets and develop strategies for the use of data to guide planning decisions to promote equality and diversity | MC, PK, MDM | ongoing |
| 2.2 Review methods of collecting and collating data in order to make long term improvements | MDM | ongoing |
| 1. **Setting new actions**
 |
| 3.1 To continue to be responsive to issues raised by staff and service users through appropriate feedback mechanisms, e.g. staff meetings and evaluation questionnaires | MC, PK, MDM | Ongoing |

1. **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES: PROGRAMME DELIVERY**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action** | **Target** | **Staff** | **Timing/****completion** |
| 1. **Race**
 |
| 4.1 Develop and maintain paths to publication for advanced writers inc Crime Fiction project. | 15 emerging BAME/PoC writers/year 4 writers published in national anthologies or recognised literary magazines or websites | MDM, PK | Ongoing |
| 4.2 Diversity in Children’s Writing Prize | 20 PoC writers; at least 1 published and 1 gets agent | PK | 2019 |
| 4.4 Mentoring programme | 4 BAME/ PoC writers/year | MDM | Ongoing |
| 4.5 Develop new programme in partnership with refugee community organisations | 10 refugees/people seeking asylum take part | MDM | 2020 |
| 4.6 Promote Middle East writing | 2 new public texts or events | All | 2020 |
| 4.8 Work with PoC poets/short fiction writers to achieve publishable standard | 6 PoC writers/year | PK, MDM | Ongoing |
| 4.9 Promote the work of emerging PoC poets/short fiction writers | 4 PoC writers | PK, MDM | 2022 |
| 4.10 Promote digital narratives by emerging PoC writers, including on platforms such as social media, mixed media and mobiles. | 2 PoC writers/year |  MDM | Ongoing |
| 4.12 Biennial Black Writers Conference | 70 attendees | PK, MDM | 2018, 2020,  |
| 1. **Race & Gender**
 |
| 5.1 Work with PoC female writers to develop and produce one woman show (Kenya Sterling…?) | 2 PoC female writers | PK, CM, MDM | 2022 |
| 1. **Race & Disability**
 |
| 6.1 Promote writing by disabled PoC writers | 8 PoC disabled writers | MDM, CM, PK | 2020 |
| 6.2 Identify and support emerging disabled PoC spoken word performers to take part in events | 10 PoC disabled writers | CM, MDM | 2022 |
| 1. **Sexual Orientation**
 |
| 7.1 Mentoring programme | 2 LGBQT+ writers/year | All/ MDM | Ongoing |
| 7.2 Performance support programme, identifying and supporting new LGBQT+ spoken word artists to write for and/or take part in events | 20 LGBQT+ writers | All | 2022 |
| 7.3 Queer Manchester writing competition | 20 entries per competition | PK, MDM | 2020 |
| 1. **Disability**
 |
| 8.1 Live story events told entirely in sign language | 2 hearing impaired writers | PK | 2021 |
| 8.1 Accessible publications | Make all new books available in e-formats | MDM | 2020 |
| 8.2 Web accessibility | Improve website accessibility as outlined in the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines  |  MDM | 2020 |